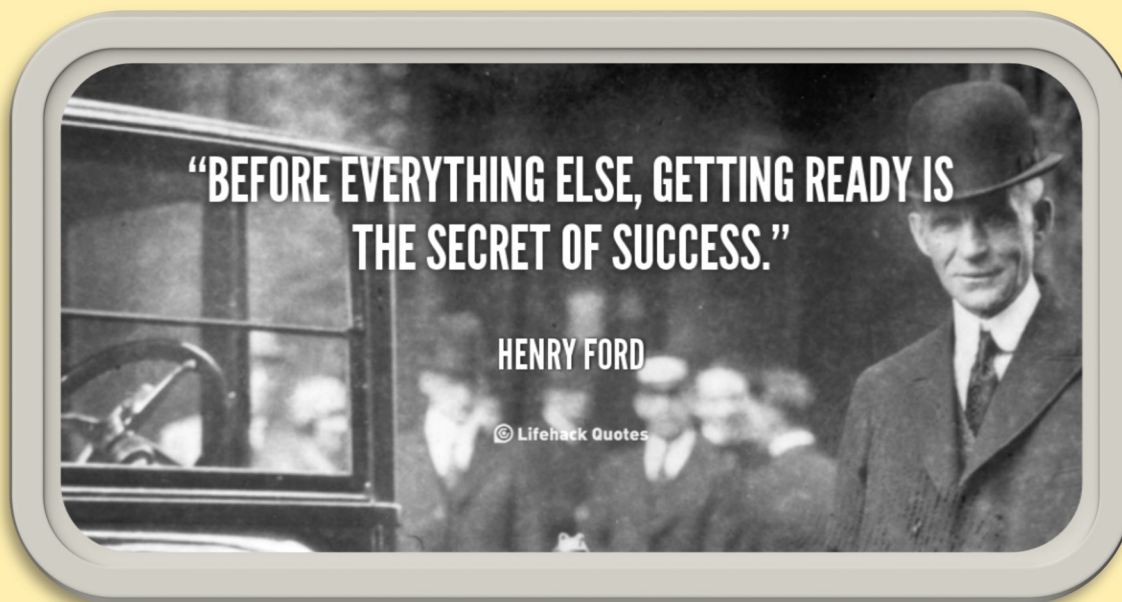




Sumner County Schools News

Committed and Focused on Growing Learners

School Year 2015-16 Issue 2



The Henry Ford, an educational institution, promotes Henry Ford as a 20th century innovator who transformed the "... automobile from an invention of unknown utility into an innovation that profoundly shaped the 20th century and continues to affect our lives today." The organization also points out:

Innovators change things. They take new ideas, sometimes their own, sometimes other people's, and develop and promote those ideas until they become an accepted part of daily life. Innovation requires self-confidence, a taste for taking risks, leadership ability, and a vision of what the future should be. Henry Ford had all these characteristics, but it took him many years to develop all of them fully.

With a mission to promote pioneers for change in the 21st century, Sumner County Schools (SCS) and leaders at the Tennessee Department of Education are collaborating on goals and plans with a course of action to prepare all SCS students to be college and career ready. SCS embarks on this journey with effective, high-quality instruction focused on the state standards while including many opportunities to develop students' writing skills, problem-solving that requires multi-step processing, and competency in the use of technology. The new assessment tool to determine our achievement of these goals is TNReady. This edition of SCS News will provide the reader with a sneak peek at all that is being done to "ready" our students. More questions? Please ask your child's teachers!

TNReady Resources for Families, Students, and Schools

TN Department of Education's (TDOE) TNReady Why and How Information:

<https://www.tn.gov/education/topic/tnready>

TDOE's Parent Guide to being TNReady (FAQs, examples of test questions, and technology features of the online format):

https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/tnready_parent_guide.pdf

TNReady Information on redesigned Parent Reports:

<https://www.tn.gov/education/article/tnready-redesigned-parent-reports>

TNReady at-home Practice for Question Types and built-in Support Features:

<http://support.micatime.com>

2015 Report from Tennessee Task Force on Student Testing and Assessment (purpose of assessment, assessment principles, task force's recommendations and next steps):

https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/tst_assessment_task_force_report.pdf

TDOE's Strategic Plan for Student Success, *Tennessee Succeeds*:

http://tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/strategic_plan.pdf

TN Colleges and Universities Affirmation of TNReady:

<http://tnclassroomchronicles.org/higher-ed-shows-support-tnready/#lightbox/1/>

Sumner County Schools revised Vision and Mission Statements:

<http://www.sumnerschools.org/index.php/vision-and-mission-statement>

Sumner County Schools 2015-16 Testing Calendar:

<http://sumnerschools.org/images/Instruction/tcap-scs15.pdf>

Sumner County Schools Instructional Technology Team's Tools4TNReady:

<https://www.smore.com/cxp3t>

<http://www.symboloo.com/mix/scs-tools4tnready-prek-5>

Recent Articles providing Rationales for continued Assessment and TNReady:

<http://www.tennessean.com/story/news/local/sumner/2015/10/22/sumner-schools-continue-see-gains/74391950/>

http://tnclassroomchronicles.org/tennessee-still-fastest-improving-state/?utm_campaign=shareaholic&utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=socialnetwork

Sumner County Schools Prepares for TNReady

Sumner County Schools' Take-Aways from TNReady Trainings

- ⇒ The best preparation for TNReady is strong instruction delivered each and every day.
- ⇒ At the end of the day, TNReady is about the application of skills described in the TN State Standards.
- ⇒ Just as we take our children to the doctor for their annual check-ups, TNReady will offer a new and improved academic check-up each year to make sure all students are moving forward and are on track to graduate from high school and be successful in college or the workplace.
- ⇒ We know that in college, technical schools, and in most jobs, communication is done electronically – it is the way of our world. We must prepare students for their future and that will require comfort with technology. So, the majority of TNReady will be taken online. The online test will be more engaging and will better match students' individual needs.
- ⇒ With any new test – and especially one that moves beyond just the traditional multiple-choice questions to assessing what students really know and can do – first-year test scores will probably drop when compared to the previous state assessments. However, current data has proven that Tennessee students and teachers respond quickly to higher expectations and new assessments. Therefore, it is expected that first year results from TNReady will set a new baseline to measure rapid progress in the years to come.
- ⇒ There are six types of items in TNReady math: equation, graphic, multiple choice, multiple select, performance tasks, and technology enhanced items (TEI).
- ⇒ There are five types of items in TNReady ELA: writing tasks, technology enhanced items, multiple choice, multiple select, and evidence-based selected response.
- ⇒ Technology skills should be often blended into teaching and learning to make the transition to the testing environment seamless.
- ⇒ Practice in the TNReady formats (MICA-sample items and MIST-practice tests) must be done often to increase students' comfort and familiarity with the online platform.
- ⇒ Schools must plan with “why use technology” and “how are students learning and how are teachers using technology” as top considerations before deciding upon the “what technology devices should be used.”
- ⇒ Teachers should be certain students understand the question item types. They must scaffold the ability to pause and deconstruct the question for students. Modeling is a necessity.
- ⇒ Students must develop persistence, endurance, and stamina along with patience to prepare for TNReady.

LPE's Parent Information Night—Are You TNReady?

Lakeside Park Elementary (LPE) had a Parent Information Night on Thursday, September 17th, to help parents/guardians learn how the changes in state testing may impact their children. LPE faculty shared information regarding English language arts and mathematics for all grade levels and modeled the biggest changes for the families. Children in third, fourth, and fifth grades are now expected to take the test online and be able to type, drop and drag, highlight, and more. Whew!!! Big, but necessary expectations for the students! LPE also addressed changes affecting K-2 students.

Understanding that parent involvement and awareness are key to a child's success, Mrs. Shelton, LPE principal, presented an overview of the new assessment plan, and teachers discussed specific areas of mathematics, English/language arts, social studies, writing, and science. Additionally, parents/guardians were provided a list of websites such as MICA, the parent guide for TNReady, and the Tennessee Department of Education's details about standards for all subjects and grade levels. LPE includes these links on the school website.

LPE has found Study Island to be a wonderful resource for preparing students for the state's assessments. Study Island can be used at school and at home. LPE faculty and staff believe that their students will be TNReady.



OES and Bridging the Math Gap to be TNReady

At Oakmont Elementary School (OES), faculty and staff believe that family involvement is the key to ensuring that students are TNReady. It is for this reason that OES is hosting a number of Title I Parent Nights to educate their families about new developments in curriculum and testing procedures. At the last Title I meeting, students participated in "Reading under the Stars." At this event, students enjoyed reading books together in tents while their parents/guardians spent time in the cafeteria learning about the new math curriculum and its support for the Tennessee academic standards.

In the parent session, teachers offered parents/guardians an overview of the Bridges Math program. Then, attendees were given an opportunity to experiment with the math manipulatives to fully understand the hands-on approach of

the program. Teachers were on hand to guide in navigating the highlights of the new curriculum and to answer any questions that arose about how to better assist students at home.

In the past, many parents/guardians were apprehensive about helping their children with what they consider "new math." However, once they got a chance to see firsthand how the manipulatives can help bring math to life, the family members felt much more comfortable helping their students with their math homework. By educating the families about the new Bridges Math program, OES is essentially bridging the gap among students, the curriculum, and parents/guardians. This "bridge" will help ensure that OES students are TNReady!



GES—Dedicated to Growing a Community of Writers to be TNReady



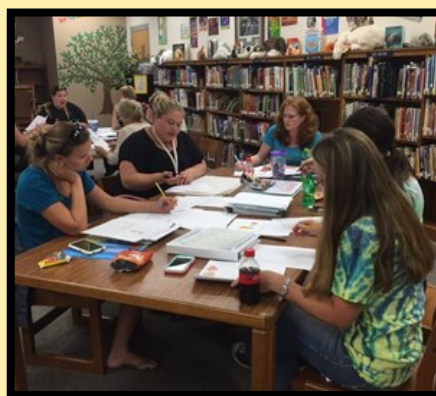
Guild Elementary (GES) teachers are focused on strengthening themselves as writing facilitators in order to share the POWER of writing with their students. With rigorous standards and the writing expectations of TNReady, teachers have made the commitment to growing a community of writers at GES. Through the leadership and guidance of Lead Educator, Heather Whitaker, and Teacher Leaders, Heather



Hays and Sandy Dilbeck, teachers began with the big picture . . . What do the students need to know/do to be strong writers? To answer this question, teachers dug deep into the expectations of the TN State Standards and determined each grade level's instructional needs for ensuring GES students grow as writers from year to year.

During weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), teachers collaborated to develop rubrics that would help communicate the writing expectations to their students. The next step after development was to give the rubrics a test run. Teachers brought student writings to the PLCs to assess the application of the newly developed rubrics. Through this assessment step, it was apparent that some revising and fine-tuning was needed in order for the rubrics to be as effective as possible. Teachers then were able to make additions and changes and put them into practice before the students attempted the Writing Quarterly Assessment.

The collaborative process to strengthen student writing at GES opened conversations that traced the path of how students were developing as writers in response to teacher instruction. One teacher reflected on this process, "I walked away knowing more about my students as writers, but also more about what they need from me as their writing teacher!" This authentic, collaborative process was a turning point to make writing instruction a priority at GES.



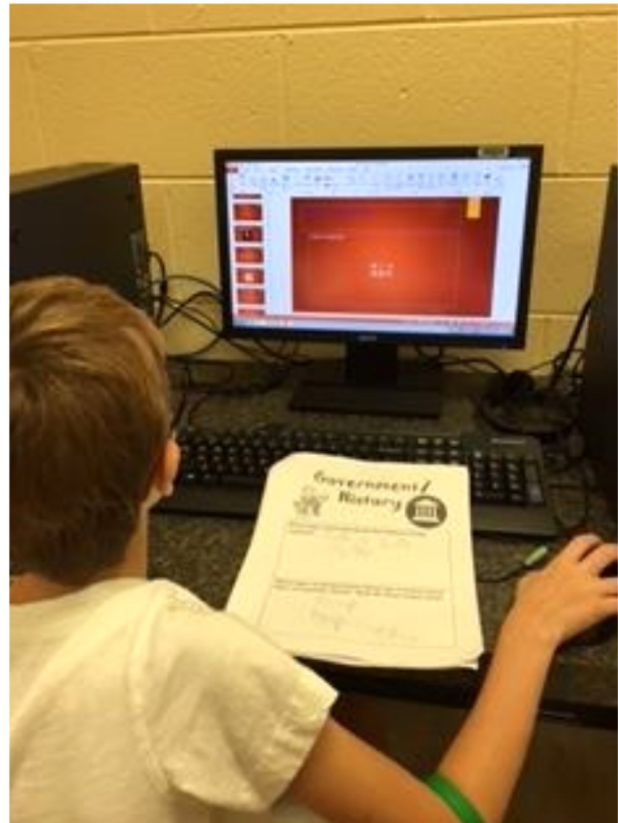
GWE, Rigor, and TNReady

Sumner County Schools and George Whitten Elementary (GWE) are gearing up for TNReady, the state's new and improved TCAP test for English/language arts and math in grades 3–11. TNReady will differ from previous TCAP assessments in that the upper elementary grades (3–5) will take most of the test online. Also, the assessment will require multiple select responses, short answers, constructed responses, and essay writing.

Preparing students to become TN Ready at GWE encompasses many different learning strategies. For starters, a focus on writing was emphasized in a professional learning opportunity on October 9, 2015, with teachers being trained on evidence-based writing techniques. Also, teachers are intensifying rigor with text complexity across all grade levels, and students are frequently practicing typing skills. Furthermore, critical thinking skills are being amplified in math with our new Bridges curriculum.

To prepare GWE parents/guardians for the upcoming TNReady assessment, a TNReady Family Guide was sent home. In addition, a link to the guide has also been included on the school's website. Teachers will also have conversations with parents/guardians about TNReady during parent/teacher conferences to answer questions and clarify concerns.

More preparation by GWE teachers to ensure that the students are TNReady involves the use of programs and questions too. Programs are MICA, MIST, TNCORE Education assessment tasks, myON Reader, and Study Island. Teachers at GWE are going the extra mile by asking and answering the following questions during grade level PLCs: What do we want our students to know? How will they know it? What will they do when they do not know it? What will we do when they do not know it? GWE is dedicated to educational excellence and *RIGOR, RIGOR, RIGOR!*



NSE, Learning Strategies, and TNReady



North Sumner Elementary (NSE) is using many proven practices to ensure that students learn all the academic standards that must be mastered to be successful and TNReady. NSE is fully embracing the needs of the students through RTI². Related arts teachers are assisting with small groups as well as reinforcing Tennessee State Standards taught in the classroom. Students are participating in read-alouds as evidenced by the picture above of Ms. Wade's first grade class reading with a visitor from St. Louis, *Flat Stanley*.

Also, with TNReady being administered on the computers this year, several technology programs are being used to familiarize students with the computer keyboard. The programs include MI-CA, MIST, and Dance Mat typing. Expe-

rience and practice are key to the preparation for TNReady.

NES reminds parents/guardians that one of the easiest ways for them to help their children with reading is to ask questions as they read together and have the child find the evidence for answers in the text/story. While TNReady assesses many areas of learning, an emphasis is placed on critical thinking. The more that essential skill is practiced, the easier it will become at test time and in life.



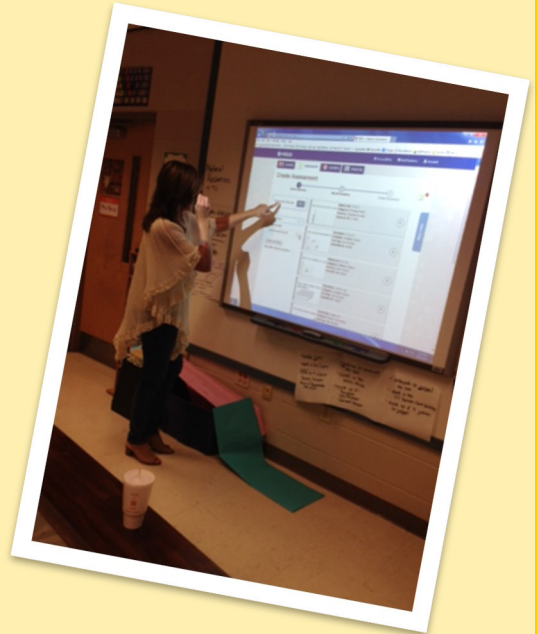
MCE, Diligence, and TNReady

The staff at Madison Creek Elementary (MCE) have been strategically preparing the students for the new TNReady assessment. To prepare our students for college or the workplace, the Tennessee State Standards that align with the new assessment are more rigorous than in previous years. However, MCE believes with collaboration and team work, the students will be mentally and physically prepared to take TNReady.

MCE teachers always work to prepare the students with the skills and standards that lead to a successful performance on any tests or assessments that they must take. The groundwork for TNReady will be no different. However, the results will provide teachers with a better understanding of their students' progress and achievement. Instead of the students receiving just multiple-choice questions, TNReady will require answers in the format of written responses, matching, and multiple-select. Also, unlike years before, most of the test will be taken electronically. This will allow the students to be more engaged and use different skills other than memorization.

MCE educators are diligently working together to make sure all students are prepared. Each teacher commits to providing effective instruction in the new standards in order for their students to be successful this school year. Aside from everyday instruction, MCE has been using programs for TNReady practice such as MICA. MICA is set up in the TNReady format. After several trainings using this program, they believe it will prepare the students to be successful on the test. This type of practice will give the students a better understanding of what to expect in the upcoming months. MCE also provided the student log-in information to parents/guardians to give them an opportunity to become familiar with the program as well.

MCE students have really adapted to the new learning thus far. With teamwork, collaboration, dedication, and the ability to provide proven practices, MCE is confident that the students will succeed this school year.



JWWE, a Growth Mindset, and TNReady

J.W. Wiseman Elementary (JWWE) is doing a lot of great things to be TNReady. Every week, teachers create common formative assessments using the TNReady framework. In PLCs (Professional Learning Communities), grade-level teams share the results of these assessments. They look at individual students and discuss whether additional support, re-teaching, or extension is needed. PLCs are a safe place to ask for instructional advice and share celebrations. PLCs are student-focused and play a huge role in preparing JWWE students for TNReady.

Allowing students more time and exposure to computers is another way in which JWWE is preparing students for TNReady testing. Knowing that much of TNReady will be administered electronically, JWWE has decided to add Computer Lab to the Related Arts rotation. Students are learning to type and to navigate MIST, the platform in which the TNReady question types are practiced. This additional time spent on technology will give students the skills they need to approach TNReady with confidence.

Jaycee, a proud first grade student at J.W. Wiseman, shares her Student Data Folder with her mom, JamiAnn, at Parent Teacher Conferences.

Another step the school is taking in preparation for TNReady is schoolwide implementation of data folders. Inside each Student Data Folder, quarterly assessments, common assessments, mastery of essential standards, benchmarks, and other pertinent grade-level information is tracked and stored. Data folders go home with students every 4.5 weeks with updated information on student progress. Students also shared their data folders during Parent-Teacher Conferences. The implementation of schoolwide data folders will be a great tool in helping parents stay informed on their child's progress toward being TNReady.

JWWE faculty and staff want students to not only be prepared, but "Ready" to succeed at the next level. This means setting goals and pursuing and achieving whatever dreams they have. At JWWE, they want to instill a growth mindset in all students.



JAE, Robotics, and TNReady



The 4th and 5th graders of Jack Anderson Elementary (JAE) have a new club, the Robotics Club, that is creating lots of excitement and assistance in student readiness for TNReady. Enthusiasm is abundant with 75 students signed up to participate in the after-school club which meets one hour weekly for eight weeks. During the eight-week course, students will learn about robotics while using Cubelets, fifteen cube-shaped robots with varying functions that can be linked together to form robots with unlimited capabilities. Cubelets are produced by the Modular Robotics Company based in Boulder, Colorado.



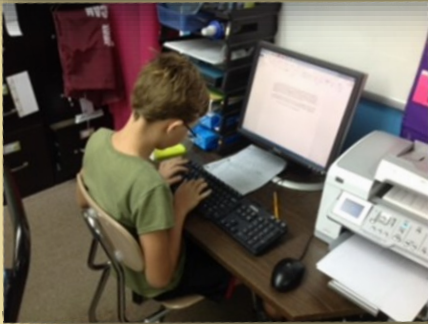
Six Jack Anderson teachers, Cindy Sentell, Joy Clark, Kristen Goodfellow, Robin Madison, Erin Hutton, and Shelby Meikrantz, are leading the club. The teachers are excited to offer such an innovative opportunity to the students of JAE. The Robotics Club will provide unique, hands-on experiences for students to utilize scientific inquiry, critical thinking, collaboration, and logic while problem-solving with the Cubelets.



The Robotics Club is just one of the many STEM initiatives taking place at JAE during the 2015-2016 school year. With such a positive response from the older students, Jack Anderson plans on offering the club to second and third graders next semester. These types of experiences are preparing the students to be the scholars that they need to be for TNReady.



WHE, Stamina, and TNReady



“What is Watt Hardison Elementary (WHE) doing to ensure their students are TNReady?” many might ask. The answer would be that schoolwide, WHE is focusing on Tier I and enrichment instruction. The teachers are unpacking Tennessee State Standards and assuring the students know what they are to learn. Teachers are writing very specific lesson plans with high expectations, providing exemplar lessons, and using common assessments at each grade level to determine the degree of student learning and support needed. To guarantee the students have no surprises this spring, common assessments are being written to mimic the question types they will find on the TNReady assessment.

The WHE computer lab has been moved to a larger room allowing all students in a class to use desktop computers at one time. The purchase of more computers is expected to allow the students to

access technology on a more regular basis. MICA is one technology-based program that is being utilized to create tests and assess the intermediate students. This data is then being used to drive instruction. In addition, the primary students are utilizing technology, such as myON Reader and Reading Eggs, for literary activities to prepare for their future TNReady assessments.

Reading and writing stamina is being addressed as the students are being provided rigorous academic tasks. Writing is also being addressed in PLCs where students’ work samples and the accompanying scoring rubrics are being analyzed. Math curriculum includes math tasks from the TNCore site, Bridges lessons, and activities which are aligned to Tennessee State Standards. At WHE, all stakeholders are working diligently to secure TNReady success for the students!

WES, Welcomed Change, and TNReady

The TNReady assessment is quickly approaching. It is important to take advantage of the programs and resources available to ensure students are prepared for the test. In order to make sure Westmoreland Elementary (WES) students are totally ready, teachers spend weekly computer lab time working on an excellent program, MICA.

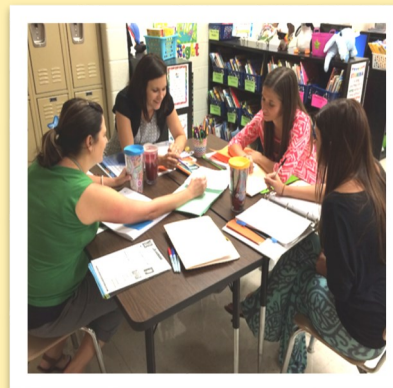


MICA has many different options to help with preparation for TNReady. Not only does it have standards available by grade level for practice assessments, it also gives students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the format and types of questions that TNReady will use. The transition from paper tests to computerized test might cause anxiety for some students, and this program allows students to practice with the TNReady format to overcome those concerns. Teachers also have the opportunity to log on and work through the different question formats with students. MICA allows for practice with computer-formatted questions, and it gives easy-to-read reports and standard-based questions for teachers to review. Teachers then have the opportunity to focus instruction based on these reports and students' needs.

WES teachers will take advantage of the MIST practice tests that will be offered three times this year and began with the first window of opportunity in October. MIST will provide more chances for students to work with questions formatted like TNReady. Also, WES teachers are collaborating in PLCs on areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in teaching essential standards at each grade level to ensure student-focused success.

If WES parents are feeling anxious about this new way of testing, then there are various resources that they can read to alleviate concerns about TNReady. A parent guide to TNReady may be found on the Tennessee Department of Education website. Also, the computer platform, MICA, gives the opportunity for parents to log on and look at practice questions. The website that will allow parents to do this is <http://support.micatime.com>.

TNReady is a major change in assessment for teachers, students, and parents. However, it can be a welcomed change that will provide a better education for the children of Tennessee. With the resources available and the practice going on in Sumner County Schools, WES believes that they are going above and beyond to prepare their students for this change and for success.



VSE, Practice, and TNReady

The faculty and staff of Vena Stuart Elementary (VSE) believe that TNReady is more than just a new TCAP. It is a new way to assess what our students know and what we can do to help them succeed in the future. TNReady will measure students' understanding of our current state standards in English/language arts and math.

Parents may find a description of the new test and sample questions at:

<http://tn.gov/education/-parent-guide>.

Parents are encouraged to try the sample questions with their child. They should realize from the questions how important it is for parents to assist their scholars in achieving their learning goals..

Teachers currently have access to the TNReady item sampler online via the MICA platform which can be accessed from anywhere at www.micatime.com. Parents have access to practice questions online at support.micatime.com. The practice questions cover content in math and English/language arts by grade level. These practice questions also allow parents to try out the built-in support features (e.g., highlighter, notepad, answer

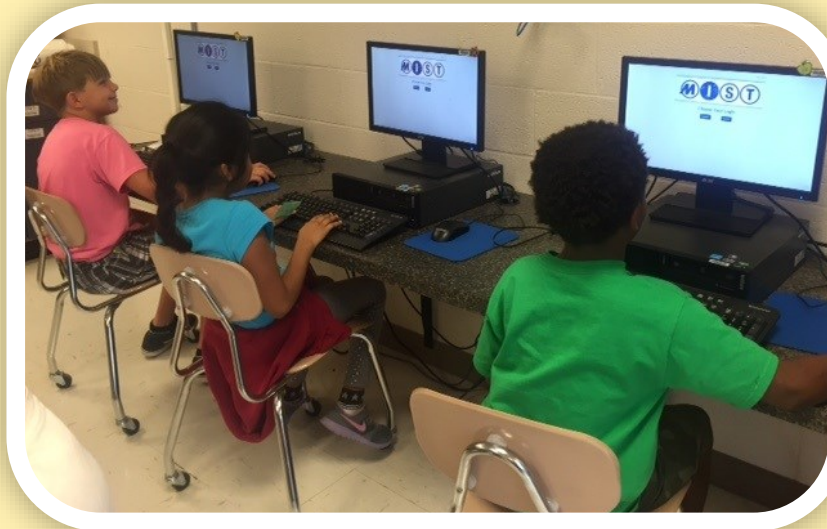
eliminator) that will be available to all students during the actual TNReady test.

Three times throughout the school year (October, January, and March) teachers will have access to a practice test which will provide an option to expose students to the question types that will be assessed on the test. Practice tests are available in math, English/language arts, and social studies for every grade level. The practice test will be located

on the MIST platform.

Beyond the use of MICA and MIST, students in grades 3-5 will be given bi-weekly common assessments that are formatted and aligned with

TNReady (i.e., complex/rigorous, frequent, and spiraling non-mastered standards). Teachers will be using data from these TNReady-aligned common assessments to guide instruction for the following quarters to best prepare students for the actual test which begins in February 2016. VSE is also excited to offer the students the opportunity to learn keyboarding skills in their classrooms as well as in the computer lab through www.learning.com.



GBE, Technology, and TNReady

The faculty and staff at Gene Brown Elementary (GBE) are actively preparing students for great success on TNReady in several different ways! One way is a focus on increased exposure and experiences with technology. Since the majority of TNReady will be taken online, GBE wants to provide every opportunity for students to be familiar with and competent in typing and navigating on computers. Each classroom has at least four computers which students have access to during the day. All students have extended computer lab time. Lab time has expanded from 45 minutes each week to 90 minutes. The school is able to do this because of the addition of a second computer lab.

During lab time, students work on writing tasks that are similar to TNReady expectations, keyboarding skills, Kahn Academy (a standards-based online math program), and Study Island. The school has a class set of iPads on a portable cart as well. The iPads allow teachers the flexibility to enhance the learning opportunities of students. Lastly, GBE has implemented two Technology Enhanced Classrooms (T.E.C.) in the third grade in which every student in those classes has his/her own laptop. This pilot 1:1 program allows these students to be fully immersed in technology on an individual level and on a daily basis.

Another way GBE is gearing up for the new TNReady is through the use of data. GBE teachers are creating and administering common assessments with a focal point on Tennessee State

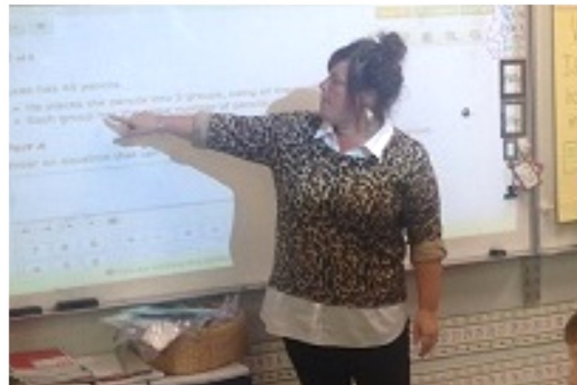
Standards. During weekly grade level PLCs, teachers focus on the results of these assessments to guide future instruction. Mastered skills are celebrated and non-mastered skills are targeted for re-teaching, small group instruction, or other remediation. Vertical PLCs also meet monthly to analyze data that has been gathered from weekly writing and math tasks and SCS Quarterly Assessments. The PLCs also spend a great deal of time researching best practices and teaching strategies to implement in the classroom.

A final example of GBE preparation is through collaboration with parents. Parent-Teacher Conferences are held to inform parents/guardians of their child's progress and to review important data gathered from the quarterly assessments, AIMSweb testing, and more. The school sent home information on the different online programs being utilized, along with log-in information, in order for students to practice at home if possible. Parents are able to explore the work their children are doing and assist them when needed. Through all of these things, GBE is committed to preparing students for TNReady and for life outside the classroom!



BBE, Scopes of Work, and TNReady

Benny Bills Elementary (BBE) is preparing students for TNReady by utilizing a plethora of programs and strategies schoolwide. Teachers and interventionists are rigorously teaching the standards that will be on TNReady and representative of the SCS Scopes of Work (SOW). Engaging lessons are based on the SOWs for each nine weeks and align with TNReady expectations.



BBE teachers are using the MICA platform with students to ensure learner familiarity with TNReady questions and question structure. MICA is an online program that consists of questions that are similar to assessment questions that will be on the TNReady. Instructors are also implementing a game-based computer platform, Kahoot!, which students use for assessments. It allows the teacher to receive immediate feedback on any standards not mastered by the learners.

TNReady will be a rigorous online assessment of specific, grade level standards. BBE recognizes that the difference in past assessments which were paper and pencil and the upcoming TNReady assessment will be a concern with some students. Therefore, practice happens weekly to teach students to utilize the online format and the various tools located in the assessment to answer postulated, multiple-part questions. This practice will help students feel at ease during testing time.

Parents/Guardians can assist with their child's success on TNReady by allowing him or her to practice any typing program at home. Learners will have to manipulate the computer and keyboard to take this assessment and need as much exposure to this practice as possible. Working together, BBE faculty and other stakeholders will lead the students to a positive learning outcome.



BES, Informed Families, and TNReady

The teachers at Beech Elementary (BES) know that most Tennesseans have heard about the new TNReady state assessment. However, BES wants to share that it's not just a new, more challenging exam. It's a whole new way of taking a state test. It is the inaugural push for testing to be done online and in a format that will mimic future life experiences. TNReady will include a variety of question types as well as writing pieces. Students will also solve multi-step math problems. "TNReady will measure a student's actual understanding of grade level concepts/skills rather than rote memorization of facts. Stakeholders will have a better understanding of student achievement rather than the ability to take a test," said Selena Butt, the school's Lead Educator.



When asked about the work that teachers at BES are doing

to prepare students for TNReady, Dr. Joanna Humphrey, 4th grade teacher, said, "It is eye-opening how different it is from the TCAP test. The test is much more comprehensive. We discussed the kinds of things we anticipate students having difficulty with from having to scroll down the page to read a text to having to choose more than one correct answer to a question. In addition, the students will need to type their answers to some questions. Next, we looked at the current resources we have and saw we must either create our own or pull

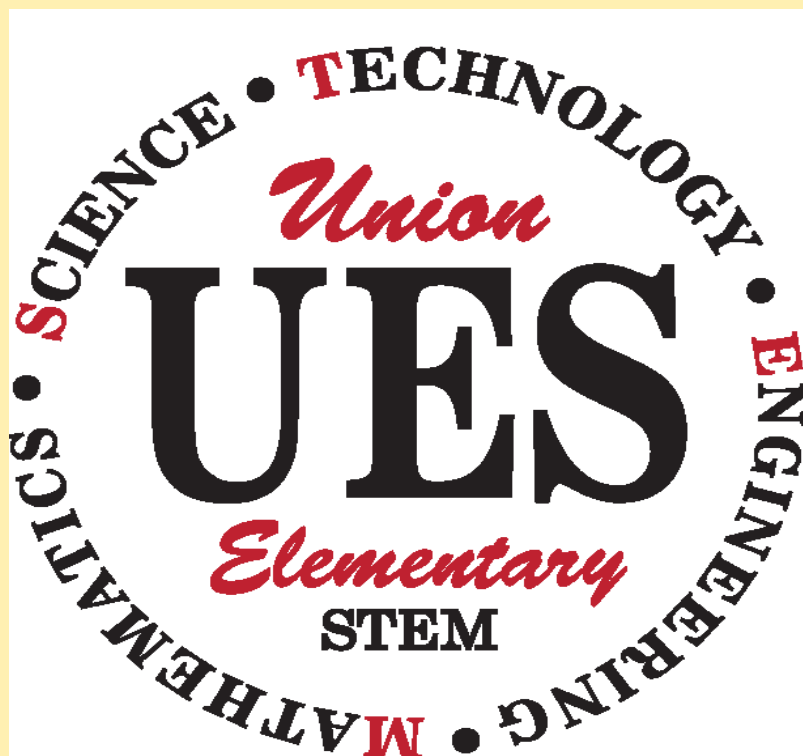
from online resources to fill in the gaps. We also plan to utilize the MICA and MIST computer platforms during whole-class instruction."

Dr. Humphrey was also asked what BES parents/guardians can do to help their children prepare for the test. "Sumner County parents have always been a source of great support," continued Dr. Humphrey. "We want them to help with homework and studying at home and continue to encourage their children to do their best. For more information, the state has released a TNReady Parent Guide that can be accessed online: <http://tn.gov/education/article/tnready-parent-guide>." To keep families appropriately informed, Ms. Angie Cabler, 5th grade teacher, said, "We have talked about having a family night for 5th grade parents. They would visit the computer lab and see what the test looks like. Seeing what is expected of their child could be a real revelation."

While the unknowns of a new assessment may leave parents and students with some apprehension, BES teachers want to share that they are working diligently to make sure their students are ready. It is their intent to ensure that all uneasiness is put to rest. BES students are engaged in the learning that will bring them academic success.



UES, STEM, and TNReady



Union STEM Kids —on the way to being TNReady!

At Union Elementary (UES), the teachers are preparing the students to be TNReady. Teachers are digging deep within the SCS Scopes of Work for ELA and math. Grade level teachers are working together during PLCs to develop common assessments that are rigorous and address a great depth of knowledge. Students are utilizing diverse computer software programs including but not limited to Khan Academy, MyON Reader, Education City, Math Magician, and Code.org to practice problem-solving skills. In keyboarding classes, students are furthering their knowledge of the keyboard in preparation for computer testing. Teachers look for unique ways to incorporate science and social studies across the curriculum and use the Tennessee Blueprints provided by the state as guides.

TNReady Preparations

Teachers are:

- ♦ digging deep within the SOWs (Scopes of Work)
- ♦ working together during PLCs to create common assessments

Students are:

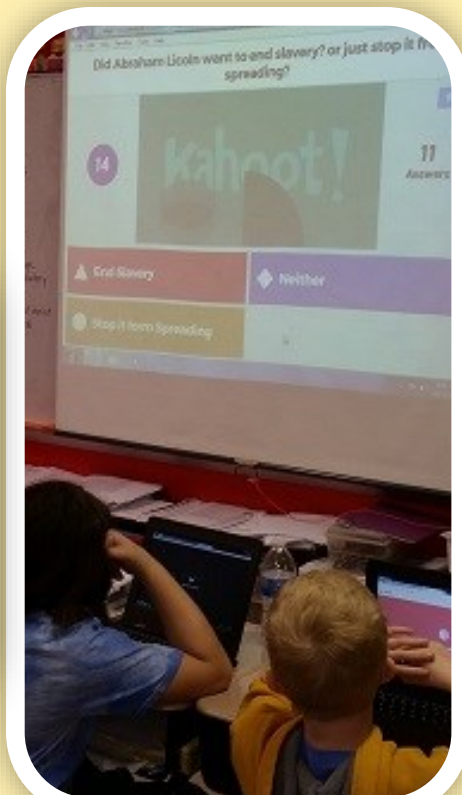
- ♦ Practicing problem-solving skills
- ♦ Gaining keyboard knowledge in preparation for testing

BPE, Communication, and TNReady

The students and teachers at Bethpage Elementary (BPE) have begun the task of preparing for the TNReady state assessment. One way that the teachers are utilizing the preparation resources are through laptops. Each fifth grade student has access to an individual laptop funded through Title I. These are used in the classroom setting. The students are exposed to the MICA website using it for instruction and testing. They may access primary sources, visual representations, or articles while having online tools such as highlighters or pop-up glossaries to use. Students master research, media, and technology standards through web-based class activities.

Instruction may vary with its focus such as SCS Scopes of Work, Bridges math, or language arts integration with science and social studies. Close reading of articles with grade appropriate Lexile levels is also used. Students practice finding answers supported with evidence-based text. They have teacher-made assignments and assessments in a format similar to TNReady.

Communication is vital whether it be with parents or staff members. Parent communication tools such as newsletters, the BPE school website or class webpages, Remind 101, and weekly Wednesday folders keep parents/guardians informed. They know what their children are studying, when assessments will be given, and what the assessment will be like through this timely interaction. PLC groups are used with staff members in grade groups or collaboration with the Related Arts team to determine how scopes of work, common assessments, and best practices are most effectively used to facilitate learning and student achievement. We believe that our stakeholders will see that BPE is taking all measures necessary to prepare our students for TNReady!

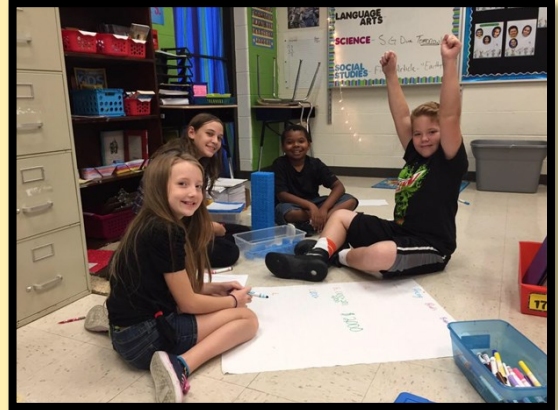


MES, Collaboration, and TNReady



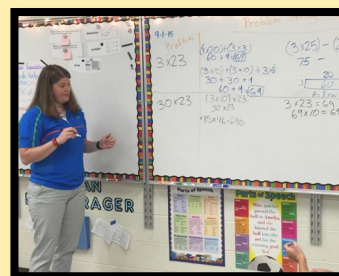
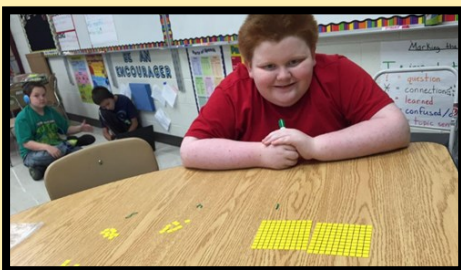
Millersville Elementary (MES) is preparing its students for the TNReady test by practicing strong instruction and rigor every day in classrooms. Bridges is the new math curriculum that is being implemented in elementary schools by the school district. It allows students to use many manipulatives and really stretch their thinking by using problem strings and math forums. Rachel Young, one of the fifth grade teachers, was selected to be the 5th grade demonstration classroom for the county to showcase the new math curriculum. The students are enjoying and learning how to be star mathematicians while helping Ms. Young welcome other teachers for the collaborative partnerships this will build. The Bridges curriculum and state standards will help MES students be prepared for the TNReady test.

MES has also provided extra time in its daily schedule and newly-remodeled computer lab for the students to take practice tests using the MIST format. These tests provide example questions



for every standard that will be assessed on the test. The teachers have also worked together during a recent professional learning day to create practice tests for TNReady on MICA.

Every grade level at MES is utilizing Lucy Calkins' Units of Study to train and coach the students in the fundamentals of writing. Each teacher, including the Related Arts teachers, are writing across the curriculum to enhance students' writing skills. The fifth grade enrichment students have been using a standards-centered learning approach through project-based learning activities (PBLs) with a social studies or science focus. The students selected topics based on a standard of interest. Each child then researched the topic and created a song, poem, rap, or model to share what was learned. The Related Arts teachers were able to teach writing and promote their skill sets with the PBLs. Millersville Elementary is definitely practicing to be a TNReady school in middle Tennessee!



WFE, POW and Power, and TNReady



Walton Ferry Elementary School (WFE) has started the year with a bang! Students are enjoying learning and have been working hard to prepare for TNReady. An exciting addition

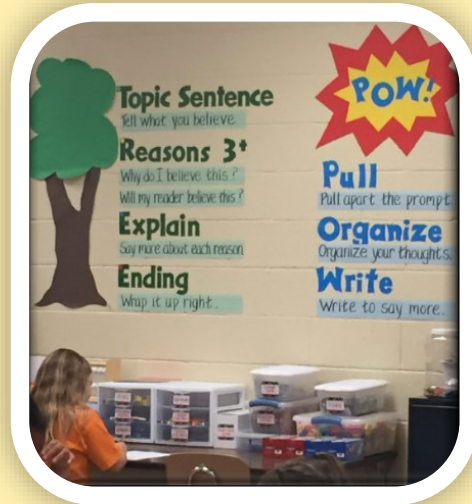
to WFE is two new computer labs for students to use! They are learning keyboarding skills for online assessments. Also, several programs, such as MICA Time, Moby Max, and Study Island are being used to reinforce the standards for TNReady after they have been taught. This practice is necessary because TNReady will require a comprehensive assessment in English/language arts to be written on a computer.

In Math, TNReady will involve selected responses including multiple choice and drag/drop items. The new Bridges math curriculum is an instrument to prepare the students for the assessment by incorporating real-world math problems and tasks. This hands-on approach allows for discussion on what each algorithm represents. It also allows practice of practical applications.



WFE students in grades 3-5 are working to improve writing skills. They are using the POW TREE organizer to organize their ideas and create a strong structure. Students are given prac-

tice prompts on a regular basis to help them make practical writing applications. K-2 students use a "Roll with The Tide" graphic organizer which leads to the introduction of POW TREE.



This year, each classroom is focusing on Twelve Power Words. These 12 Power Words are words most commonly used in questioning on assessments and are being practiced and applied during formative assessments. Mrs. Griffin's third grade students have created motions and a song to help them remember the 12 Power Words.



With TNReady and all educational endeavors, family support for student learning is essential. WFE parents/guardians should have students practice Study Island and Moby Max at home. They can also review missed standards on assessments/assignments when they come home, as well as, help with culminating projects.

CRE, Focus, and TNReady

At Clyde Riggs Elementary (CRE), the goal is to get students ready for college or the workforce. Every step they take in their educational lives should help prepare them for the grown-up world in which they will become a part. CRE faculty and staff want to do everything they can to help students achieve their goals and exceed their expectations. TNReady is the new assessment that our state will use to measure how students are doing on their pathways to success. TNReady will test a deeper level of student knowledge in math and English/language arts than previous TCAP tests. TNReady will give students a variety of ways to show what they know and can do.

The teachers at CRE are constantly collaborating with one another and other colleagues to provide the most rigorous lessons for students. With technology usage and writing being strong components of TNReady achievement, CRE has placed emphasis on the topics when planning for this year. CRE believes in commitment to its students.

Having two computer labs on the CRE campus allows the teachers to use many technology-based programs to familiarize the students with the electronic communication tools that will be a continuous part of their worlds. CRE teachers know that college and most jobs will require these tools. Therefore, creating a comfort level for the students will prepare them for their futures as well. One way of achieving this goal is encouraging daily use of a technological device through class sets of iPads or tablets and desktop computers.



Providing technology usage in a low-stress setting will be conducive to testing success when the time comes for TNReady.

Front Row Ed, Splash Math, Reading Eggs, Brain Pop, MyON Reader, Flocabulary, and Study Island are a few of the programs that students use during computer lab each week. These programs align with the standards covered on the TNReady test.

Furthermore, teachers in grades 3, 4, and 5 are urged to engage students with MICA, a computer-

based platform, that is comparable to the TNReady assessment that will be given on the MIST platform. This will assist students in learning the technology tools that will be used on TNReady. Students have already had one opportunity to use MIST to take a practice test to show them how the TNReady assessment will look.

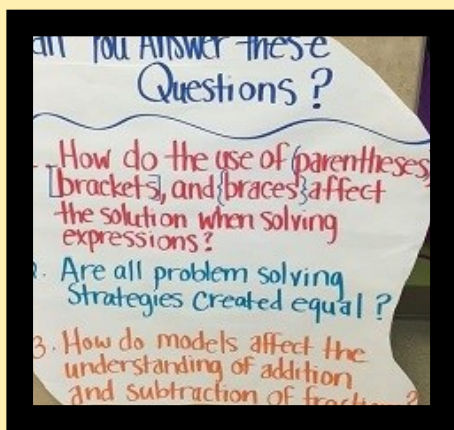
Another component that will have a strong presence on the TNReady assessment is writing.

Writing is no longer associated with only English/language arts. It is a part of science, social studies, and math. With writing as a strong element of TNReady, students are encouraged to write daily across multiple subject areas and in Related Arts classes. In all classes, students use writing to gain deeper, reflective understanding of the lesson content. CRE students have writing portfolios to help them organize and develop their writing. Teachers participate in bi-monthly PLCs and attend ongoing professional learning sessions on best practices for writing instruction. These include such evidenced-based programs as Lucy Calkins' Units of Study, Writer's Workshop, and SRSD Bridge to Practice. Technology education has included interactive presentations with Doug Eaton and Lori Elliott. Also, Kathy Pryor, Title I, offers Tech Tuesday once a month to showcase technology programs to use with students.

The following mission statement for CRE truly embodies the focus for learning and for being TNReady . . . It is the mission of Clyde Riggs Elementary to provide a challenging, educational environment in which all students develop learning skills in order to prepare for college and career readiness. We want to align ourselves with parents and stakeholders to ensure the success of our students while they are at CRE and as they journey through life. CRE stakeholders believe that as they put this mission into action, the students will become more than TNReady achievers. They will be life achievers as well.

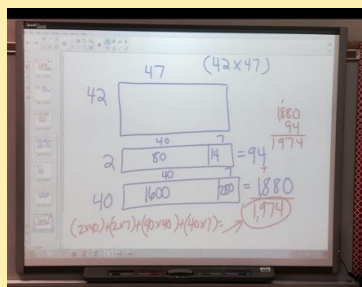


SCE, Persistence, and TNReady

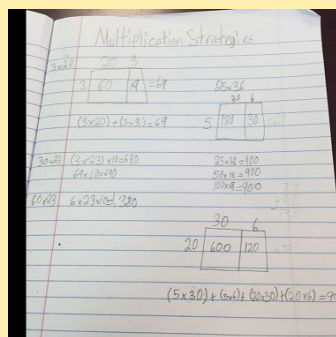


Station Camp Elementary (SCE) teachers, staff, and students have been busily preparing for TNReady since the doors opened for this school year. Lessons and common assessments are consistently designed for students to have a clear understanding of learning targets that align and match the depth and format of the TNReady Standards. Teachers look closely at the standards so that they can capture the true intent to present the material accurately and provide practice opportunities which will better prepare students to illustrate proficiency on the TNReady assessments.

SCE teachers are using a variety of programs to prepare students for the task at hand. MICA, an online software tool provided by TDOE, allows teachers to create common assessments online that they can present to students as practice. Students will have the opportunity to complete TNReady practice assessments three times per year through MIST, a state-developed site that presents the material in the same format as TNReady. Teachers are still using Study Island, another online tool that mimics components of the TNReady program. The SCS Quarterly Assessments, created by teachers



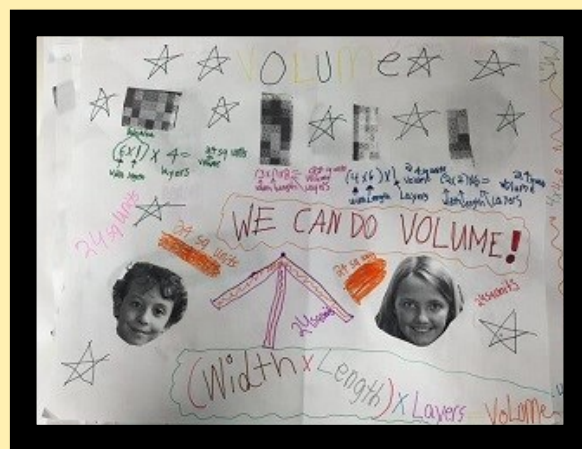
at the district level, are being used in classrooms to measure students' progress each nine weeks. This assessment provides teachers with information that illustrates both a student's level of mastery on various standards and readiness for the TNReady format. Teachers have also begun using the new math series, Bridges, along with adding in more writing benchmarks. A variety of new social studies materials are being introduced and used



to expand the knowledge in this subject and to introduce students to more primary sources.

Along with keeping students up to speed and engaged, SCE teachers are working

persistently to apprise parents/guardians of what TNReady entails. Not only do they make every effort to keep them informed of student data, but they share the new standards and expectations that are part of the TNReady program. The teachers are using tools such as social media, educational websites, parent conferences, group study sessions, and daily homework practice sessions. All of this is an effort to engage students and parents in this learning venture. SCE teachers, staff, and administration strive daily to go that extra mile.



ILE, Balance, and TNReady

TNReady or not--here comes Indian Lake Elementary (ILE)! Discussion of tackling the new testing format began at ILE well before the students began the school year. ILE determined that an emphasis on increasing writing across the curriculum and technology support while still maintaining strong teaching of the standards would continue.

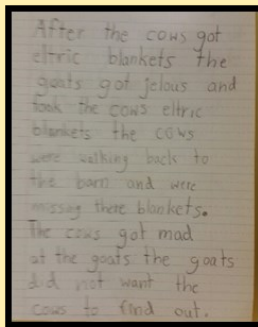


It is the belief of ILE faculty and staff that a key factor in preparing for TNReady is to include all stakeholders; therefore, it is important to inform parents/guardians. During Parent Night,

teachers presented a PowerPoint highlighting important areas to consider. The state TNReady parent website was included in the presentation that also had an explanation of the change in types of questions and testing windows. This PowerPoint may be found on ILE's website. The faculty and staff of ILE consider parents/guardians as vital members in the preparation for TNReady.

At ILE, students and teachers are focused on writing. The leadership team at ILE met to decide a course of action to ensure students will have many opportunities to write. Students will write to prompts in response to text on a regular basis. In addition, teachers will encourage best practices by sharing exemplar writing texts from the students' grade levels.

In-depth thinking and writ-



ing in mathematics is being utilized daily through the use of the Bridges math series and Number Corner. The rigor of questioning and activities provide students with practice for TNReady because it also

includes areas for writing in math.



Students at ILE are ramping up their typing skills with the use of Typing Club. Third, fourth, and

fifth grade students have the option to use a program that teaches lessons about keyboarding and proper finger placement. Students will be able to utilize the lab in which they will be testing and access the site from home for additional practice.

Technology is an important component of TNReady because a portion of the assessment is given online. Teachers are becoming familiar with a practice site called MICA. This website will allow teachers to assign practice questions similar to those on TNReady to students. Teachers also have the option of looking at multiple question types with the entire class. Both options allow for teachers and students to experience the technology and rigor that will be found in TNReady. Two other areas of technology to which students are being exposed are Reading Eggs/Reading Eggspress, a hands-on website which allows students to move and manipulate aspects of the program to select an answer, and i-Ready. i-Ready is a web-based program that allows students to practice reading and math in a computer system where they will have to manipulate answer choices. It then provides teachers specific feedback about the student while allowing a student to follow an individualized learning pathway. iReady allows for continued practice of technology while also emphasizing standards that have been taught in the classroom.



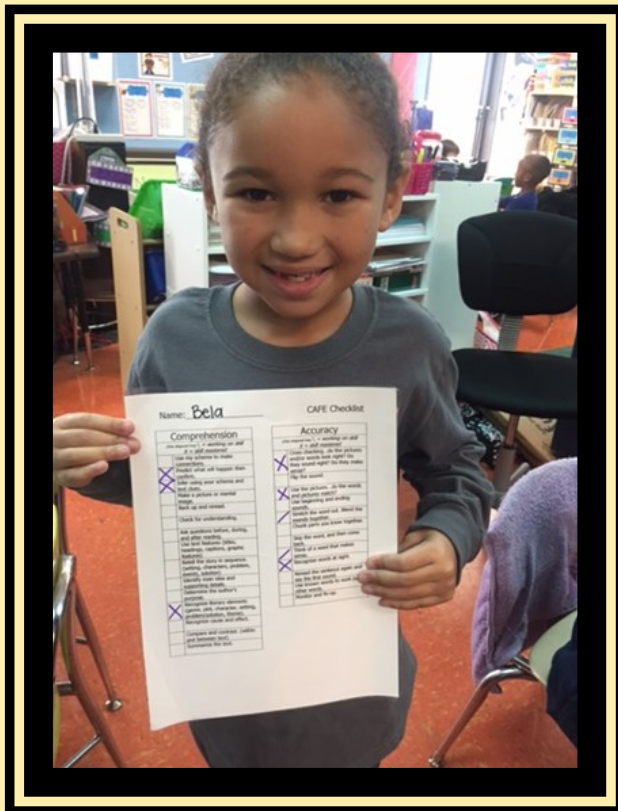
As a part of TNReady groundwork, ILE feels strongly that preparing the whole child is an important piece to ensuring success. While TNReady preparation occurs, students continue with their day-to-day activities as well. The balance of these will allow students to be prepared mentally and physically. TNReady preparation is in full force, in all grades, at Indian Lake Elementary!



rigor of questioning and activities provide students with practice for TNReady because it also

HES, Goalsetting, and TNReady

Howard Elementary (HES) is preparing students for the new testing format, TNReady. Students in grades 3-5 are using MIST practice tests online. This allows students an opportunity to see how the new state assessment will look, and it gives students a chance to work with the various technology options in the program. Teachers will use the data from these practice tests to help guide their instruction and to meet the needs of individual students.



All students at HES have individual learning goals toward which he or she is working. These goals might be to increase reading fluency/speed, increase comprehension, develop stamina, etc. All students are given the opportunity to have a stake in their learning journeys by setting weekly goals and by tracking the progress toward them.

PGE, High Expectations, and TNReady



Portland Gateview Elementary (PGE) celebrated Tennessee Reward School status with a group picture of current fourth and fifth graders. PGE has seen amazing growth since it opened its doors in 2009. The Reward School status is the culmination of excellent leadership and teaching from current and past principals and teachers. PGE is very proud of the teachers, support staff, students, and parents who worked together for this great accomplishment. As PGE looks toward the new state assessment, TNReady, they have HIGH EXPECTATIONS for continuing this success!



PGE teacher, Jennifer Anglin, celebrates getting a laptop mobile lab. She immediately began to use them in her classroom to teach writing, which will be an essential component of TNReady. Students are receiving great instruction, becoming internet researchers, practicing keyboarding, and becoming TNReady at PGE.

NBE, Student Confidence, and TNReady

Students, parents, faculty, and staff at Nannie Berry Elementary (NBE) are gearing up for the TNReady assessment. Last spring, NBE began teacher exposure to TNReady during professional learning time by cultivating a positive mindset concerning the changes in the testing format, assessing technological needs, and changing how students will be assessed in the classroom to mirror the TNReady format. Since then, the faculty and staff have hit the ground running to prepare.

To set the stage for TNReady, NBE is continuing to address the TNReady technological needs, to involve students in the TNReady format,

and to allow students to frequently interact with the new format. Now that the school has two separate computer labs, it has dedicated one specifically for TNReady practice. An organized scheduling system that allows all students an opportunity to get in extra time in the sandbox with the new interface is being utilized. Teachers are also providing practical hands-on experiences and reworking classroom assessments to mirror the new testing format rather than using only multiple choice.

NBE's Bulldog Tutoring Program, which includes TNReady practice with two of their tested subgroups, is in full force,. Marked academic improvement is already occurring in skill areas. The

students are also utilizing new apps and programs on the school's iPads and laptops to aid in TNReady practice for more classroom application. In a true collaborative effort, the Related Arts staff is even involved in learning how to support student achievement by implementing the new format within their assessments.

During NBE Open House night, teachers shared the TNReady PowerPoint, supplied by the Tennessee Department of



Education, to connect with parents and establish a common language to support students. The teachers communicate daily with parents regarding student progress and areas of needed support. Parent-teacher conferences

also include a focus on helping parents to support their students with testing challenges. Keeping the lines of communication open, NBE hopes to create a world of support around students where they can thrive and demonstrate daily what they know.

Going the extra mile with students, parents, and teachers is truly producing a "we're all in this together" mindset, and NBE knows the strength of its community will mean more confidence for all. NBE's expectation is that this newly-found confidence will inspire great student success.

William Burrus Elementary: Sumner County's Newest Elementary School

Sumner County Schools is proud to announce Dr. William Burrus Elementary (WBE) is opened! While they are not yet in the new building, WBE is still deeply focused on developing a community of leaders and learners. The teachers and staff, along with KDMS personnel, are going the extra mile to make sure all students feel safe in the middle school building. They are committed to high expectations and helping students reach their potential and become leaders in the community. WBE has implemented schoolwide professional learning communities to ensure teachers collaborate on standards and instruction while preparing for TNReady expectations as well.

WBE faculty and staff are already putting activities in place to begin creating a positive school culture. They are proud to have launched afterschool clubs which were developed to support standards and provide students with a variety of learning environments. The Burrus Reading Club is working in Socratic seminar to discuss novels and ideas. They finished reading *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate. After fall break, they began to dig into *The Man Who Walked between the Towers*. A technology club, Mission Mustangs, has been learning how to use code to create their own games.

Burrus Girls on the Run Club was excited to meet

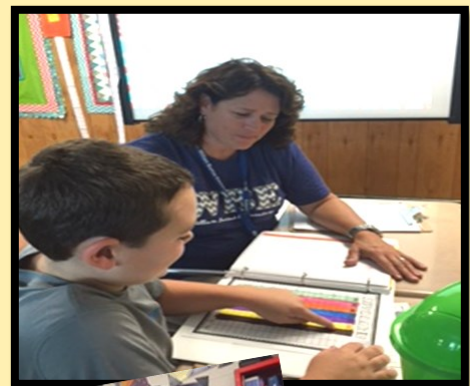


Mrs. United States at their last meeting. The girls are working on self-confidence, leadership, and healthy choices. Another club, the A Team, celebrated the wonderful bus drivers for WBE with treats and banners. This team of students recog-



nizes positive happenings at Burrus. The school also has a chorus club, drama club, and sports club. Art and STEM clubs are coming in the future.

Burrus Elementary hosted its first student-led conference night on October 8. WBE was excited to have students meet with their parents and teachers to discuss their learning. Students used their data notebooks to explain their learning goals and progress towards mastery of standards. The faculty of WBE believes this process will develop an ownership of learning for Burrus students. Pictured below is Bennett sharing his data with his mom, Burrus principal Dr. Reynolds.



EMS, Purposeful Action, and TNReady

What is Ellis Middle School (EMS) doing to help students and parents be TNReady? When this question was asked, the answer was:

- EMS has added a new computer lab. A cooperative effort between the Ellis PTO and the school district technology vision has made a new computer lab at EMS become a reality. This lab will be used daily for instruction to all students and provide more technology access to students than ever before.
- The focus of Back-to-School Open House was to inform families of the role of technology in a student's education. EMS invited each grade level on a separate night to provide more opportunity to dialogue with parents about their children. Each teacher presented an overview of how technology will play a significant role in instruction and homework this year. Parents were given information on TNReady standards and assessment. Guidance was also provided on how the family can take an active role in helping students use technology responsibly.
- This year, each teacher at EMS is expected to utilize technology-enhanced instruction. This is providing students more computer time for instruction than was offered in the past. Many teachers are in collaboration to plan instructional tasks such as web quests, writing prompts, and research-based activities to complement the state standards being taught. Students are also being exposed to new types of assessment items that help them unlock depth and com-

plexity of their learning.

- Teachers are providing computer-based assessments for students each month. These assessments measure student knowledge, and they also help students become comfortable with online platforms that are new or unfamiliar.
- Many EMS teachers are supplementing or replacing old-fashioned worksheets with more meaningful skill practice using online resources such as NoRedInk, Study Island, Mathia, and Edulastic. These websites help students see the content in varied ways and assist teachers with measuring student progress while also using the research-based practice of differentiating instruction for diverse learners.
- The EMS staff is very aware and proactive in supporting students with limited or no computer access at home. The students are able to use technology during the school day, and teachers are intervening by using printable resources that mimic online screens so that students are still practicing the various skills needed for TNReady.
- For the third year in a row, EMS 7th and 8th grade students are able to bring their own technology devices to school. Approximately 30% of 8th graders and about 15% of 7th graders use a tablet or laptop during the day. This number is steadily growing, and the teachers are committed to helping student learn how to use devices efficiently and conscientiously.



WMS, Content, and TNReady

Teachers and students at Westmoreland Middle School (WMS) are busily working to prepare for the TNReady state assessment. Teachers are working in collaborative groups sharing ideas on how to best teach the students while following the SCS Scopes of Work that were created by teachers from all over the school district. Learning assignments and tests have the



standards listed on them in order for the students to see the importance of learning each standard. Students are taking common formative assessments in each content subject in all three grade levels at WMS.

Content groups are having PLC meetings to celebrate students' learning and discuss what can be done if a student is not achieving proficiency. Related Arts teachers are having their students complete close reading and writing assignments bi-monthly. RTI² teachers are

working closely with all content teachers to ensure students are progressing in reading and math. Data meetings are held every two weeks with teachers, teacher leaders, and the WMS lead educator to review each student's RTI² progress.

Teachers and families are working together as teams to prepare the students to be TNReady. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to support the school in ensuring that students' assignments are completed and to have discussions with their children on what they are learning. WMS notifies parents/guardians of assignments, tests, and celebration announcements using Remind 101. Remind 101 allows families to receive text messages about what is happening in the child's classroom. All members of the Staffulty of WMS and WMS families are collaborating for student success!



PEMS, Enrichment, and TNReady



As schools in Tennessee prepare for the implementation of the new TNReady standardized tests, Portland East Middle School (PEMS) is employing a variety of methods to better assist students to meet and exceed expectations on the new form of assessment. The primary focus of the practices is not only to prepare students to take this test, but also to fully integrate it with all aspects of the academic content. At PEMS, teachers utilize an enrichment system which is geared toward prepping students for TNReady while also enriching their education through more supplemental instruction. PEMS is strongly emphasizing the importance of developing quality writing and typing skills while connecting them to cross-curricular content.

The enrichment program places students into daily rotating classes to ensure that they receive supplemental instruction to specifically hone reading, writing, and study skills. Then, the students connect this content to life and TNReady expectations. Likewise, teachers are expected to take their students to the computer lab at

least once a week to focus specifically on improving typing skills. The duration of classes in the computer lab is substantial as students take the time to type full-length papers and respond to “articles of the week” in some courses. Time in the computer lab is also used for other practice tests, such as the Edulastic and MICA programs, which are highly regarded by the faculty of PEMS. For general education classes, a common assessment is given at least twice every nine weeks to ensure that students are amply prepared for the content and rigors of the upcoming TNReady assessments.

PEMS is committed to enriching students through TNReady preparation. The faculty and staff have considerably tailored their foci around the skills that are conducive to student success. This will be evident not only on TNReady but for the continuation of the students’ academic careers and lives outside the school walls.

HMS, Google Classroom, and TNReady

Hawkins Middle School (HMS) is in the midst of TNReady preparation just as schools are all over the state. Several teachers at HMS are using computers and/or iPads on a regular basis for instruction. Since the school district has provided teachers with Google Classroom, they can assign students work to do online and to submit in an online format. This is preparing the students by allowing them to use technology to practice the completion and uploading of written assignments. It also gives HMS parents an opportunity to get involved with and support their children's learning.

The teachers at HMS are using Edulastic, an online testing site, to create tests with question types aligning to the TNReady question types. Students are being exposed to the use of multiple select, short response, drag and drop, etc. This practice takes the students beyond the simple multiple choice format and requires a

deeper thought process and understanding of the content.

In addition, close reading and writing is a common thread throughout the school. HMS students are expected to practice reading skills, and then, they apply those skills to writing tasks in all classes. Student writing is assessed based on five basic writing conventions that were collectively established by the teachers prior to the first day of school.

To keep families informed, HMS has posted a link to the Parent Checklist for TNReady on the school website and social media outlets. This tool can aid parents in helping their children prepare for the upcoming assessments. HMS teachers are going above and beyond to ensure that their students are aware and familiar with the standards that will be on the TNReady assessment.



TWH, Parent Involvement, and TNReady

Students and staff at T.W. Hunter Middle School (TWHMS) are working hard to be TNReady. In all academic classrooms, students are putting their writing abilities to use in positive ways. They are building on skills every day to become better writers. Teachers are also collaborating in effective ways to use common assessments to bring success for students in all content areas.

TWHMS students are practicing with the MIST program to help them become more confident in using the tools in the TNReady program. It will improve their

capabilities as writers as well. In addition, students are preparing for proficiency in the standards through teacher-created questions that use primary sources and the multiple choice format that will be used this year in TNReady.

In the home setting, TWHMS staff encourages students and parents to attempt the application of the skills that students are learning in the areas of comprehension, analysis, description, citing, evaluating, and explaining. Knowledge of what is ahead will help the students achieve their goals. Home support makes that even more possible.



WHMS, Positive Experiences, and TNReady

The administration, teachers, and staff at White House Middle (WHMS) want every child to feel successful and maintain a positive attitude during this school year while preparing them for TNReady. Since this test will be online, teachers are using sample questions from online programs such as MICA, Study Island, and Edulastic. These programs align with the new state standards. Students are writing and typing various types of essays in preparation for the writing portion. Teachers are using Google Docs and Google Classroom to share and edit writing samples with their students. This provides timely feedback and effective communication for teachers and students.



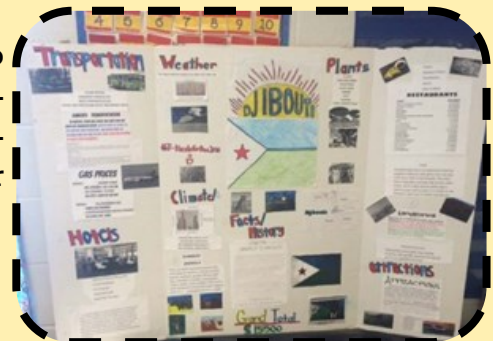
WHMS is also offering students a project-based learning approach to enrichment. These classes allow them to experience real-world applications of skills that are tied to the mastery of required standards. The computer education teacher, Ms. Brinn, introduced geometric shapes and patterns using quilting. Students designed the shapes and have learned about the history of the American quilt by reading and outlining non-fiction articles. Ms. Langford, art teacher, has immersed students with Chinese culture

through magazine articles and the creation of Chinese art such as a Wishing Tree. Ms. McCullough, teacher of Family and Consumer Services, allowed the students to write a proposal to create a restaurant, design a menu, and cook food items. PE



teachers, Mr. Monday and Ms. Carlson, have taught CPR, first aid, and healthy nutrition.

Students have completed research and written persuasive articles to promote items of interest for discussion. In a science-centered enrichment class, students have designed an extensive biome project. The science students researched biomes and gathered information from articles/texts explaining how a biome is important to the ecosystem. They also had to research the biome area and configure costs to travel and live in that area. Students are applying skills, writing articles, and are motivated by use of real world applications. WHMS cares for each student and wants parents to know that the goal is for this initial TNReady year to be a positive experience for all.



PWMS, Reaping Rewards, and TNReady

TNReady??? How in the world do teachers and parents/guardians help the students of Portland West Middle School (PWMS) get ready for this new state evaluation? At PWMS, they have been working hard to do this and prepare the students for academic and life success. Strategies implemented include:

- at least four hours of computer time per month for every student using a variety of websites.
- online assessments that model the format that will be used for TNReady testing.
- a school-wide focus on informational text reading and comprehension.
- collaboration between the library teacher and classroom teachers to help students develop stronger research skills and learn problem-solving strategies.
- a new math textbook with tons of real-world problem-solving examples.
- enrichment and academic support classes to meet each student at his/her level of learning and need.
- numerous monthly teacher meetings designed to facilitate teaching and learning between subjects and grade levels.

While these activities are just a few examples of the hard work the students at PWMS are involved in at school every day, there are ways that parents/guardians can help at home as well. Suggestions are:

- Support your child with praise for all the

hard work he/she does. If the kids already knew everything, they wouldn't need school. Mistakes will happen. No one is perfect. Choose to focus on the positive while encouraging good choices.

- Commit to making sure your child has reading material – online or print. The Portland Public Library has great programs for students in all grades and is just ready and waiting to offer help to your child! <http://www1.youseemore.com/portland/>
- Stay involved in your child's education by using ParentPortal to check grades and communicate with teachers as needed. All PWMS teachers want your child to succeed!

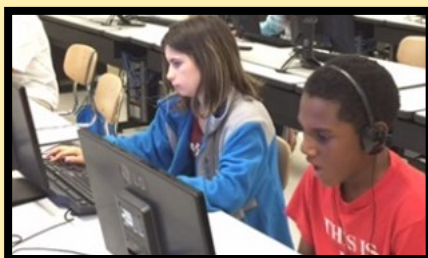


- Set priorities for homework, studying, and reading. Life gets super busy. Make sure your child knows how important a good education is, and the opportunities it will provide.

- If you have internet access at home, have your child practice keyboarding skills. The TNReady assessment will require students to be able to type. Links to practice keyboarding sites may be found at <http://pwm.sumnerschools.org>, then click on Teacher Resources and Keyboarding Practice websites.

PWMS believes that they have the best parents and students in Sumner County! Last year, PWMS earned Tennessee Reward School Status for student progress because of the hard work and dedication of all school stakeholders. This year, they say, "Let's keep going strong!"

SMS, Resources, and TNReady



Shafer Middle School (SMS) is excited to be piloting the i-Ready Diagnostic and Instruction Tool with students and teachers. i-Ready is an online student assessment that creates an action plan for success for each student. The program focuses on math and ELA standards and skills to evaluate students' abilities throughout the school year and provides lessons based on each individual student's needs. These lessons may be teacher-led or online. SMS knows that parents/guardians will be glad to learn that i-Ready may be used at school or at home. At school, students utilize a SMS computer lab at least two times each week and work on individual lessons in math and ELA with i-Ready. RTI² students focus on individualized interventions in the computer lab two to four additional times per week.

Recently, SMS purchased a classroom set of iPads. The iPads have been integral to the implementation of the i-Ready tool. The vocabulary app has been particularly helpful to the RTI² classes. Students are able to work on their specific vocabulary levels while working in the app which allows each student the practice he/she needs on a personalized level.



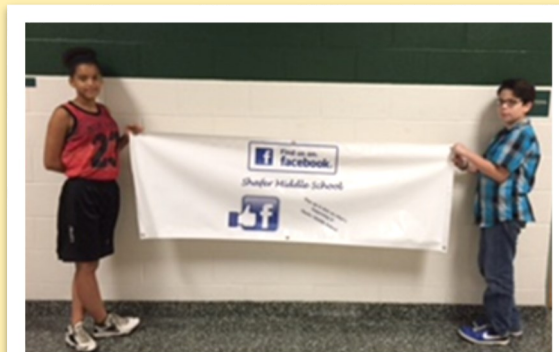
Furthermore, the iPads are an important part in teaching the social studies standards. In lieu of working in textbooks, students are using the iPads for research. Students locate standards-based information and place it into

a graphic organizer. These graphic organizers are used when managing information for writing about a topic being studied.

In Mrs. Givens' art class, social studies standards are reinforced by studying cultural art from groups such as Native Americans, Africans, Mexicans, and African Americans. Students created an art project based on a culture of their choice. Pictured are Nyahoth Kuoth & Jaliyah Webb holding up traditional Sudanese handicrafts created by Nyahoth & her mother.



SMS strives to inform families of school information including TNReady preparation. The school added a Facebook page that allows parents/guardians to check on school events by phone or computer and at work or home. Another way SMS keeps in touch with families is a monthly newsletter. The newsletter allows families to know about academic and social events that are occurring.



Additionally, Shafer Middle School's library applied for a Dollar General Youth Literacy grant last year to purchase nonfiction books to support the current standards and TNReady. The school is proud to announce that they received the full amount of \$4,000. With this generous Dollar General donation, 273 nonfiction library books have been purchased.

KDMS, Blended Learning, and TNReady

Knox Doss Middle School (KDMS) had a busy start to the year to ensure that students are ready for both parts of the TNReady assessment. To better prepare for the writing portion that will be in February, students at KDMS have been writing across the curriculum. Teachers met in PLCs to discuss how they can help each other facilitate and students accomplish this task. In the PLCs, a grade level group of teachers discussed what was being taught in all subjects. Then, English/language arts (ELA) teachers offered suggestions on how teachers of other content areas may take a topic of discussion and turn it into a writing prompt for a paragraph or essay.



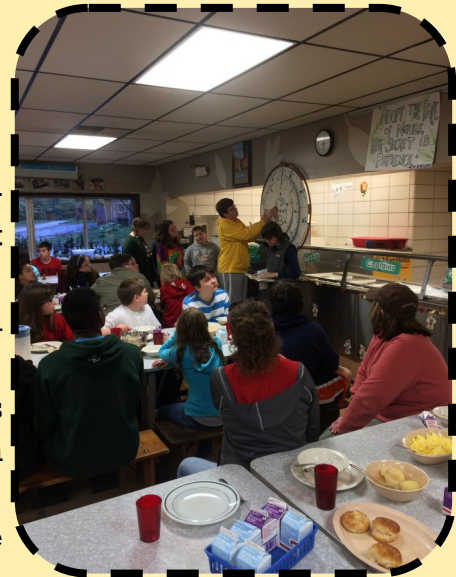
For example, in social studies, the students might write about something they are discussing regarding South America. The social studies teacher would walk them through the prompt and writing while looking specifically at content (elaboration/support). Then, the students would bring that same prompt, pre-writing, and draft to their ELA teachers. The ELA teachers would address grammar conventions/mechanics/usage, focus/organization, and style for the paper

with the students. This blended learning allows students to be exposed to writing in all content areas and provides much needed practice.

Another way that KDMS students are being prepared to be TNReady is through teacher collaboration on a weekly and monthly basis.

This teamwork ensures that teachers within a content level, as well as a grade level, are covering

the academic standards that will be assessed on TNReady. ELA and math students have access to weekly computer lab time to offer extra support to students. Also, mid-nine weeks, the teachers are creating and using SCS Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) to cover a skill or set of skills to assess where the students are in achievement and progress. If the students are lacking mastery, the CFAs help the teachers know what needs to be retaught or addressed. In addition, data meetings are held with each grade level of teachers, KDMS administration, and the instructional coach to see how those CFAs are working, where students' strengths are, and things to be improved.



RSMS, Effective Tools, and TNReady

How does Rucker-Stewart Middle School (RSMS) know that students are TNReady?

Teachers and students are going the extra mile to adapt and master new state standards and initiatives. Students are using special programs and tools on the computer, as well as, common assessments that are created by teams of their teachers that are linked directly to state standards. Data and progress show growth and mastery.



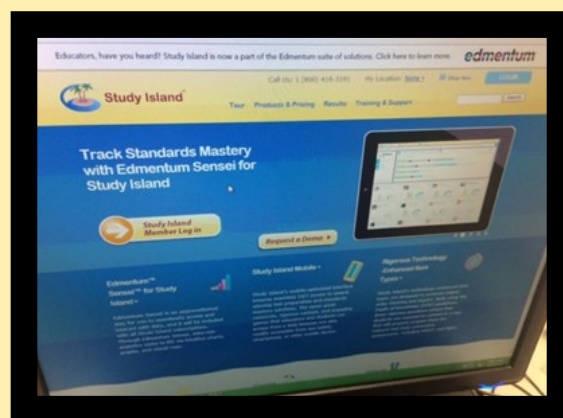
TNReady Prep by RSMS:

MICA, Study Island, Mathia, MIST Practice testing, common assessments administration, argumentative essay instruction, and writing prompt practice are all being used.

Ram – Tough and TNReady!



RSMS teachers have worked conscientiously to utilize PLC time, professional learning opportunities, and common planning to analyze



student data and align assessments and instruction across the curriculum. They use programs, such as Study Island, to get the students computer-ready and comfortable navigating new programs. The practice in these types of programs is imperative and something that parents may support at home.

“The common assessments are hard, but I am getting used to them. They are teaching me to work through and solve problems, and I will be very prepared in math for the future.”
~ Logan Gonzalez (RSMS 8th grader)

Common Assessment # 3

1. One serving of almonds contains 5 grams of carbohydrates, which is 2% of the recommended daily allowance. What is the total recommended daily allowance of carbohydrates?

a. 10 grams
b. 40 grams
c. 250 grams
d. 500 grams

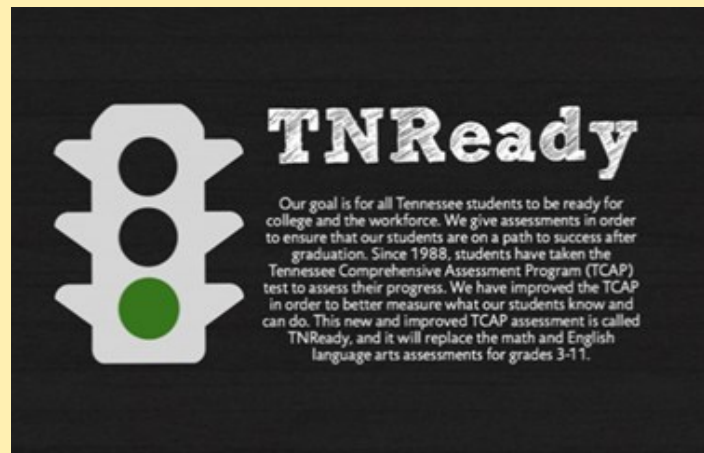
RSMS 7th Math Name _____
Common Assessment #3 Raw: _____

1) _____ 7) _____ 13) _____
2) _____ 8) _____ 14) _____
3) _____ 9) _____ 15) _____
4) _____ 10) _____ 16) _____
5) _____ 11) _____ 17) _____
6) _____ 12) _____ 18) _____

19) Constant of Proportionality: _____
Equation: _____



PHS, Common Formative Assessments, and TNReady



TNReady is designed to help students familiarize themselves with technology similar to that of college classes. In anticipation of the upcoming assessment, Portland High School (PHS) has made several improvements to the school and adjustments in schedules to warrant TNReady success at PHS!

PHS Enhancements:

- Construction of a computer lab with over 60 computers
- Tested subject area meetings monthly in PLCs (Professional Learning Communities)
- Administration of common formative assessments (CFAs) to better assess where each child is and what needs to be retaught
- The incorporation of TNReady question types into assessments of non-tested subject areas to help students practice with the rigor of that style of questioning
- Inclusion of primary sources into every class

What are CFAs?

"Not standardized tests, but

rather teacher-created, teacher-owned assessments that are collaboratively scored and that provide immediate feedback to students and teachers."

-REEVES VIA HAWAII STATE DEPT OF EDUCATION OFFICE OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND STUDENT SUPPORT JANUARY 08, 2013

Next Steps:

Teachers can use the results of CFAs to:

- ♦ diagnose student learning difficulties.
- ♦ set individual teacher goals for student improvement.
- ♦ set team goals for student improvement.
- ♦ identify and share effective instructional strategies.
- ♦ plan differentiated instruction.

(Ainsworth and Viegut, 2006).

What can Parents Do?

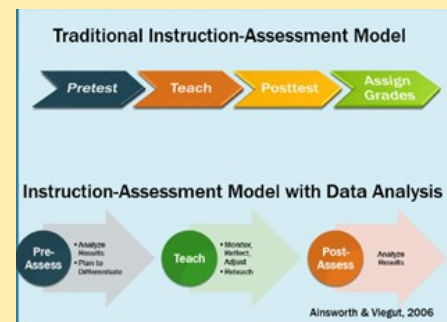
A child's teacher is always the best resource for questions about TNReady. Also, the use of the following websites will prepare and keep families up-to-date on TNReady:

- ♦ Website with TNReady practice questions: <http://support.micatime.com>
- ♦ Tennessee Department of Education's webpage fo-

cused on TNReady information and resources:

<http://tn.gov/tnready>

- ♦ Tennessee Department of Education's website section with details about academic standards for all subjects and grade levels: <https://www.tn.gov/education/topic/academic-standards>
- ♦ Tennessee Department of Education's blog site which features teacher perspectives and inspiring stories: <http://tnclassroomchronicles.org>
- ♦ Tennessee Department of Education's Twitter account: <https://twitter.com/TNedu>



CFAs change the Traditional Instruction-Assessment Model

WHS, Effective Planning , and TNReady



In preparation for the inaugural TNReady state assessment that will occur this 2015-16 school year, teachers at Westmoreland High School (WHS) dedicated part of their August professional learning (PL) days to building common course syllabi that directly correspond to Part I and Part II of each test's blueprint. All teachers within a tested field worked collaboratively to address specific standards within definite time frames to best gear students for TNReady expectations. Through the use of an Excel-based lesson plan format that is consistent with the Sumner County Schools (SCS) format, each teacher was able to create a course syllabus that would partially populate a full semester of lesson plans and allow them to easily modify or enhance their original plans from accessible "pick-from" menus. Allowing teachers the autonomy to customize their lesson plans while ensuring that they are consistent with the new blueprints was a key element behind the initiative led by WHS's teacher leader, Jonathan Gray. Additionally, August's PL days allowed for the creation of general pacing guides for Algebra I, Alge-

bra II, and Geometry which were submitted to SCS for consideration for system-wide use.

September professional learning community (PLC) meetings at WHS introduced teachers to the new test-prep formats, MICA and MIST. For math and ELA teachers, these formats present the opportunity to create online simulations that not only correlate directly to the standards being tested but provide students a chance to experiment with the technology they will encounter with TNReady testing. As teachers implement common formative assessments (CFAs) as a means of gauging student preparedness with state standards, MICA and MIST were deemed as suitable options for that level of measurement.

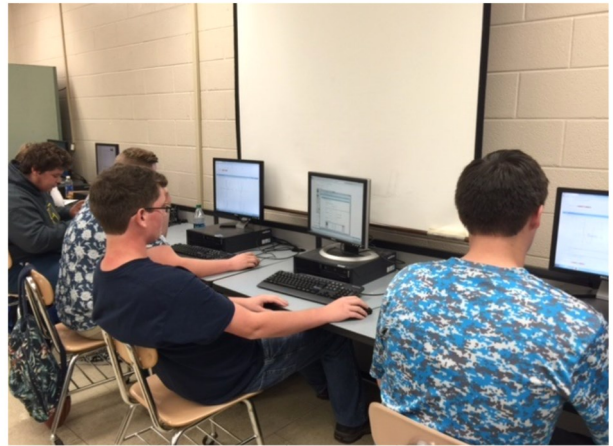
To lay groundwork for student success with online testing, WHS recently installed a computer lab with 29 additional computers to prepare for and deliver the new online assessments. In addition, students in all TNReady tested subjects were exposed to at least three online encounters with MICA before the first, full-fledged TNReady test in November. In order to ensure students were adequately prepared, each engaged in a full practice of Part I testing through the MIST platform which is the online-format for both Part I and Part II. WHS will continue to be TNReady!



WHHS, Perseverance, and TNReady

Even with a major school renovation in progress which has closed off hallways and areas of the school, teachers at White House High School (WHHS) are thinking outside the box and the regular school day to help students prepare for the change in the state standardized tests. In early October, the school hosted an evening ACT workshop through ZAPS/Doorway to College. As part of the WHHS modified block schedule, students engage daily in a fifth enrichment and advisory block. During this time, several classes are dedicated to ACT preparation or intervention classes to help students improve math, reading, and language arts skills. ACT prep classes use the Shmoop program which was a school district purchase to help students be more successful on college entrance exams.

Librarians encourage students to utilize the Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL) tools to access test practice at home. Through Learning Express on TEL, students may create an account with just an email address. In the School Center of Learning Express, students may work on a range of skills from creating equations to reading informational texts. The school



journalism club is set to promote the site to the school community in its next broadcast. An online link and more information about TEL may be found on the school library website, www.BDPLibrary.com.

Much of this year's professional learning at WHHS is dedicated to educating teachers on how to prepare for and administer the new state assessment, TNReady. The first Friday of students' fall break had teachers in small groups rotating stations to learn different testing strategies and practices. At one station, teacher leaders, Jessica Watson and Lynne Hall, provided guided practice on the MIST system; educators were able to take practice tests, so they would have more working knowledge of what their students will face. Another station had educators practice devising writing prompts and collaborating on strategies to practice writing for writing assessments. WHHS teachers know that TNReady assessments are quickly approaching for high school students, and they are giving their instructional all to prime the students of WHHS.



GHS, Waves of Preparation, and TNReady

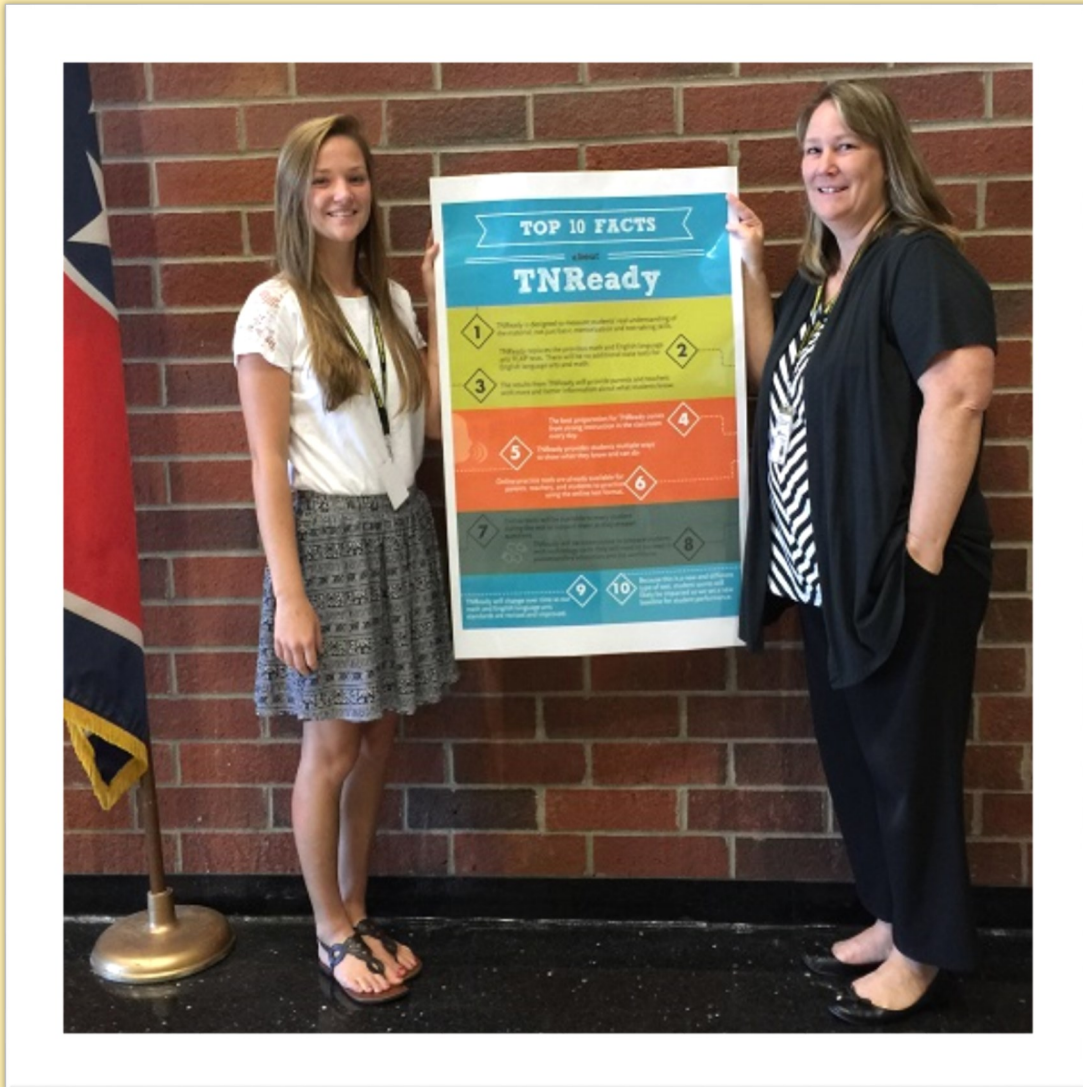
In anticipation of the technology required for TNReady testing, Gallatin High School (GHS) has opened a new computer lab. The new lab, featuring 60 PCs, gives even more students the opportunity to become familiar with using computers across the curriculum. In addition, the Plato Lab and Media Center Mac Lab are available to teachers and students for practice testing. Funding is in place to create an additional lab in the near future.

Beyond the technology, teachers are busy helping students prepare their minds for the exams. In meetings, teachers of tested areas are studying student progress and data to pinpoint where stu-

dents need additional practice. Small groups of students work with teachers during the Green Wave Block (RTI²) to fill in learning gaps. All tested students are also using MICA for practice in answering test questions and learning how to utilize the computer tools offered on the exams. Additionally, to create a better understanding of the student experience, all GHS teachers took a TNReady sample test during a professional learning day. It was an interesting experience. Finally, parents/guardians were able to become more familiar with school resources in sessions offered during Parent-Teacher conferences. GHS knows that we are all in this together, and we are ready to achieve excellence!



HHS, Diverse Thoughts, and TNReady

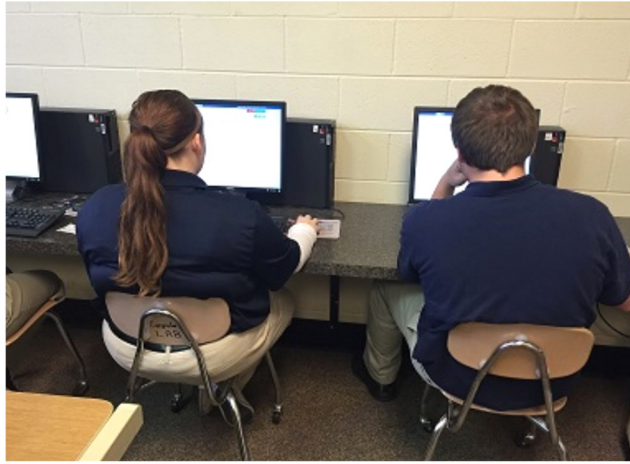


Jenna Galbreath, a senior student at Hendersonville High School (HHS), and her mother, Stephanie Galbreath, a teacher at HHS, have positive but differing opinions about TNReady.

Jenna states, “I like learning in diverse ways. I don’t always learn like everyone else in my classes, and my teachers teach in a variety of ways. The new TNReady assessments will allow me to demonstrate my knowledge in a way that fits my learning style.”

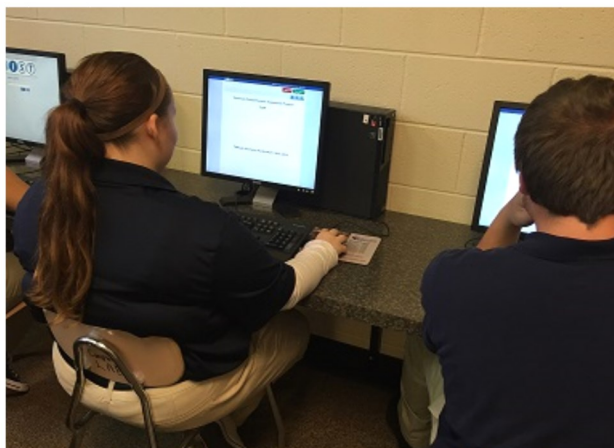
Ms. Galbreath says, “As a teacher and a parent, I find that students learn better when they can connect a concept to knowledge they already have. Just memorizing facts and terms doesn’t indicate that they really understand the material or academic standards. With the new TNReady assessment, the hope will be that students are able to demonstrate more of that understanding. I think it will help students who aren’t good test takers or good at guessing the correct choice. It will be easier for them to demonstrate proficiency.”

RTF, Student-Driven, and TNReady



R.T. Fisher Alternative School (RTF) has been working hard to prepare its students for upcoming state assessments. The RTF elementary class is using quarterly assessments across the curriculum to determine the standards needing more instruction. The middle school group has the new SCS Scopes of Work (SOW) in ELA and math to guide learning targets. The teachers at RTF believe that positive results will occur when meaningful plans and student-driven lessons are in place.

In addition, R.T. Fisher High School is utilizing MIST practice tests for students to get the "feel" of what EOCs will look like in the next few months. More work to achieve this occurs when the RTF faculty and staff go the extra mile to ensure that students know the standards that will be assessed. This is accomplished by the teachers participating in PLCs that focus on sharing best practices and supporting each other in middle and high school vertical teams while reflecting on the data gleaned from common formative assessments.



E.B. Wilson Students are taking Flight...Phoenix Flight Getting Prepared for TNReady



E.B. Wilson Virtual High School (EBW) is going the extra mile to ensure its students take flight and soar on the TNReady EOC assessments for school year 2015-16. Because EBW is a virtual high school, the students have already become more acclimated with utilizing technology for instruction and assessments. Although the students use a learning management tool called PLATO for daily instruction, EBW teachers are taking extra steps such as incorporating MICA – Phoenix Flight Assignments into the daily curriculum. MICA stands for Measurement Incorporated Classroom Assessment, and it is an interactive web-based classroom assessment tool for Tennessee educators. This tool affords the students a glimpse of similar problems and questions they will encounter on the TNReady assessment.

Not only are EBW faculty preparing the students, but they are communicating information to the parents/guardians regarding what they can do to assist their child in getting TNReady. EBW has posted links on the school website which includes a parent checklist and dates of upcoming TNReady assessments. Communication to families about TNReady and

other school information is included in the monthly school newsletter.



Last, but certainly not least, EBW students are set up in Google Classroom. Students utilize Google Classroom to access their Phoenix Flight Assignments, participate in classroom discussions, and submit writing prompts. This tool allows the students of EBW to spread their wings and not only be TNReady, but to be college and career ready! New principal, Tanya Coleman, states, “We are Phoenix!”

School Year 2015-16 at Sumner County Middle College High School

Sumner County Middle College High School (SCMCHS), located on the campus of Volunteer State Community College, is off to a great start for its second year of inception! Last year, SCMCHS graduated 19 students. This year, it anticipates 32 graduates. Of those 32 students, 21 are returning students from last year. Fifteen of them will receive their Associates Degrees as they receive their high school diplomas! They have a head start on college and a competitive edge without the cost of tuition. Sumner County covers the cost of Vol State tuition and books which makes college a reality for

students who want to accelerate their educational endeavors.

New SCMCHS students, Autumn Hemmelgarn (Portland), Erin Lindsey (Portland), Destiny White (Station Camp), and returning student, Brandon Street (Gallatin), are pictured below as they study for their middle college courses. Parents and students who are interested in the Middle College should visit the school's website <http://scmc.sumnerschools.org> to learn about requirements and the application process.

