



STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
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Memorandum

To: Directors of Schools, Supervisors, Assessment Coordinators, Principals of Schools
Grades 3-8, School Counselors grades 3-8, and Special Education Teachers grades 3-8

From:  Joseph Fisher, Assistant Commissioner

Subject: Initial Guidance on Use of the New TCAP-Modified Academic Achievement Standards
Assessment (TCAP-MAAS) for Students with Disabilities Enrolled in Grades 3-8

Date: March 25, 2009

Cc: Tennessee State Department of Education Staff

As many of you are already aware, Tennessee is engaged in the development of an additional assessment for students with disabilities in grades 3 through 8, the TCAP-Modified Academic Achievement Standards (TCAP-MAAS) assessment. When this assessment passes USDE peer review in accordance with NCLB regulations, the assessment will provide a more appropriate means of measuring educational progress for students with disabilities receiving instruction from IEP goals aligned with grade-level standards, but not meeting those goals in the same time frame as other students.

The field testing of the TCAP-MAAS is underway and many of you have been asked to participate. Your participation is appreciated and will be a service to all students with disabilities in the state. The larger initiative surrounding the TCAP-MAAS will provide additional training and guidance for teachers regarding standards-based IEPs, use of assessment results to design IEPs, and generally designing and implementing high quality IEPs. Please note the following:

- The field test will include students with disabilities and a small number of students who do not have an identified disability.
- Associated with field assessment activity, teachers will be asked to complete surveys regarding the students who participated in the field assessment.
- As a part of the larger initiative, special education teachers will be asked to complete a survey of their training needs.
- Plans are underway to conduct some “cognitive lab” activities with students to assess student functioning on individual assessment items. Students will be interviewed to obtain specific information on assessment performance and problem-solving.

Initial Guidance on Use of TCAP-MAAS

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- Initial instructions are attached to this memo and should be distributed to any staff involved in large scale assessment and/or IEPs for students. Additional guidance will follow after the field test is completed and results have been analyzed. All schools should follow the initial procedures (attached).
- The Department of Education, Division of Special Education, will be conducting training and awareness sessions regarding the TCAP-MAAS and Standards-Based IEPs beginning this spring and continuing during this summer. Ongoing training sessions will be scheduled and training materials will be made available for new teachers and staff.

Tennessee has been awarded a General Supervision Enhancement Grant by the USDE to assist with the development and implementation of the TCAP-MAAS. The Project Manager is Donna Parker. She can be reached at Donna.Parker@state.tn.us or call 615-253-0052. For technical questions about administration of the test or the field test, contact Lori Nixon at Lori.Nixon@state.tn.us. Thank you for your participation and support of this important initiative.

**Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program-
Modified Academic Achievement Standards Assessment
TCAP-MAAS
Initial Procedures to be by IEP Teams
Spring 2009**

Because the TCAP-MAAS is still under development, the following procedures must be used until the field test process is complete. After the field test is completed and results are analyzed, additional guidance regarding individual student participation in the assessment will be issued. Students will be made eligible for the TCAP-MAAS for the spring 2010 administration. Keep in mind that this assessment is for students in grades three (3) through eight (8) ONLY.

- 1. The attached initial guidance materials should be reviewed and distributed to all staff involved in large-scale assessment and/or development of IEPs.**
- 2. The eligibility criteria should be used to discuss the assessment with parents in spring 2009 IEP meetings. Although a firm decision for participation in the TCAP-MAAS cannot be made at this time, parents should be informed that their child MIGHT be eligible for the assessment in the future. If those meetings have already occurred, there will be other opportunities to discuss the assessment with parents well ahead of the spring 2010 administration.**
- 3. If the IEP team has reviewed the eligibility criteria and concludes the student would not be eligible for the assessment at that time, notes should be made in the comment section of the IEP.**
- 4. Keep in mind that the decision will be made for each individual student and for each individual content area (reading/language arts, math, etc.). Additional guidance will be provided to IEP teams to assist in making these decisions and entering them appropriately on the IEP.**
- 5. If the IEP team feels the student may be eligible for the assessment, make a note in the proceedings of the IEP team meeting and give the parent a copy of the Parent and School Initial Guidance (attached).**
- 6. In fall 2009 or prior to the spring 2010 assessment, the IEP team will be able to document any changes in a student's participation in assessment by using an IEP addendum, unless a parent or IEP team member requests a meeting. IEP teams should keep in mind that use of this assessment should be a fluid process. Using objective evidence, based on multiple measures, and collected over a period of time, IEP teams must determine annually which component of Tennessee's assessment program is appropriate for each student.**

3-19-2009