

Tennessee Education Talking Points

Question 1

How should we continue strengthening ways to measure student progress toward meeting state academic standards?

- Align testing requirements to federal minimums.
- Measurement of student progress is best through collaborative sharing of student work products using a content-specific peer review system.
- Increase flexibility and autonomy for interpretation of standards while also increasing accountability through peer review systems.

Question 2

How could we strengthen the current state assessment system?

- Clarify the requirement for when using Title II funds to create/improve educator evaluation systems, the systems should be based in part on student achievement.
- Recommend that educator evaluation systems incorporate multiple measures (survey responses, peer reviews, observations, etc.) in addition to student achievement.
- Student achievement should be based on state and local assessment measures according to well-rounded education content taught by teachers and not based solely on scores of traditionally tested subject areas.
- Ensure that assessment systems and instruction are aligned with state standards.
- A state content director in each well-rounded content area that has a set of state standards, including those in the visual and performing arts, to create teacher support systems to meet evolving standards and assessments would strengthen the system.

Question 3

Given that Tennessee's district accountability system is new how might we strengthen it?

- A state content director for each well-rounded subject area, including those in the visual and performing arts, would help to strengthen the district accountability system, particularly in districts without district arts supervisors.
- Support professional development and teacher support efforts that extend beyond the traditionally tested subjects.

Question 4

What other system quality measures might you include in the district accountability framework?

- All current laws and policies regarding student access to well-rounded subjects such as those in the visual and performing arts are being implemented with fidelity.
- Track, review, and report the number of arts classes offered and the number of students who participate in arts classes as part of the framework. See www.artseddata.org for information on how other states are using these data.

Question 5

What measures of school quality or student success should be included in the school accountability framework?

- Track access to and participation rates for well-rounded subjects including visual and performing arts education, as part of ESSA's "other indicator determined by the State".
- New Jersey and Connecticut include access and participation in the arts as part of their accountability systems and have provided the U.S. Department of Education with models to share with states.

Question 6

How can the department support the use of evidence-based strategies for school turnarounds in a way that both provide districts with structure and guidelines while providing them as much flexibility as possible?

- Consider using Targeted Assistance programs to fund additional visual arts, performing arts and arts integration programs which provide support to targeted students in meeting state academic standards.
- The President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities (PCAH) currently works with 36 school districts in 15 states, and the committee has identified arts integration as a viable school turnaround model that may be replicated in districts and schools. Tennessee is poised to take advantage of this arts-based school turnaround model by replicating successful arts programs already in Tennessee.

Question 7

Tennessee also has the option to provide some or all turnaround services via a statewide system of support. What do district and schools most need from a statewide turnaround support system?

- Funding and support to implement district led turnaround services may prevent the need for state turnaround programs such as State Takeover and ASD.
- Access to a state support system for arts-based school turnaround models such as arts integration which may include professional development, funding for work with teaching artists, and guidance and leadership from a state-level arts integration coordinator.

Question 8

How should the state's accountability and education systems, particularly at the school level, factor in English language proficiency? For example, what should be the entry and exit criteria for English learners, supports that should be offered for English learners, and reporting requirements?

- Consider research showing increased reading readiness among other benefits to English Language Arts for ELL students who participate in arts education and arts integration. Multiple assessment strategies should be included to demonstrate understanding.

Question 9

How can Tennessee best support a well-rounded education within the requirements of the law? For example, how should Tennessee's accountability and education systems take into account providing a healthy and safe school environment or integration of technology?

- Instructional time for visual and performing arts education should be protected with the same fidelity as other well-rounded subjects.
- Provide example tools as districts undertake needs assessments in well-rounded subjects as separate areas as identified under ESSA.
- Gather input from teachers of visual and performing arts during the needs assessment process as schools and districts strive for access for all students to visual and performing arts education.
- Review the criteria within the checklists of the Opportunity-to-Learn standards which indicate where schools and districts stand and reflect the capacity for implementing new arts standards.
- Provide guidance language that includes examples of how visual and performing arts can be offered in after-school programs to supplement but not supplant existing visual and performing arts programs during the school day

Question 10

How should our state encourage equitable access to highly effective teachers for all students?

- Teachers should have equitable access to job openings and opportunity to apply and interview for positions.
- Implement teacher support systems across districts particularly for arts teachers in rural, underperforming, and isolated schools to encourage and increase retention of highly effective teachers.

Question 11

Which, if any, innovative ESSA programs should Tennessee consider? (e.g. the innovative assessment pilot, student-based budgeting, teacher and school leader preparation academies or other)

- Consider innovative ESSA programs that support a well-rounded education that includes visual and performing arts as well as interdisciplinary programs such as STEAM, with support by state content directors of well-rounded subjects including those in the visual and performing arts.

Question 12

What do you like most about Tennessee's schools?

Question 13

Do you have any additional input for Tennessee's ESSA plan?

- Provide guidance to school districts on the allowable use of Title I funds for the support of fine arts programs.
- Title II dollars are traditionally spent on professional development for core content subjects. The visual and performing arts should be included in district plans for the spending of teacher PD dollars.