

Putnam County Autism Research

Analysis of Academic Performance

Prepared for JP Associates

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Background Information

Over the last several years, the number of students with autism in Putnam County Schools has grown tremendously. Currently the number of students total 109 in PreK through twelfth grade in Putnam County Schools. In the State of Tennessee, students begin state assessments in third grade with PreK-2 students using benchmark assessments to track the individual progress of each student.

The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) is a criterion-referenced exam taken each spring in four content areas of Math, Reading/Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) have allowable accommodations that are decided upon by the IEP team. The selected accommodations must be applied in the classroom setting throughout the school year in order to be used on the state assessment. Such accommodations may be individualized testing, extra time, read aloud, small group setting, and others.

There are three forms of the state assessment by which students with disabilities may be evaluated: 1) the Portfolio, the collection of a student's individual work throughout the school year in all content areas, assessed individually by State personnel; 2) the TCAP Modified Academic Achievement Standards (MAAS), an alternative assessment to the regular TCAP assessment which "provide a more appropriate means of measuring the skills of a student whose disability interferes with performance on large scale assessments" (<http://www.tn.gov/education/assessment/altMAAS.shtml>, 2011); and 3) the TCAP assessment.

The MAAS assessment is only given in grades 3-8 and is intended to evaluate individual learning needs of students with disabilities over the same state curriculum for typical students in the State of Tennessee. This type of assessment allows a more accurate reflection of student academic progress while also guiding instruction based on individual student needs (TDOE, 2011). Each district has a cap of 2% based on the entire tested population of appropriate grade levels; the scores of proficient and advanced can be used for Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP). There is a one percent (1%) cap for students assigned to the Portfolio assessment.

The State of Tennessee developed new curriculum standards in 2009 and applied them to state assessments in 2010. With the new standards in place, an adjustment was made in the state assessment in order to bring Tennessee students closer to the national arena of education. During the curriculum change, the State developed more appropriate annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in order to meet the federal requirements of *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)*. Table 1 below shows the new AMOs for districts, schools, and the State at the K-8 level and High School level.

Table 1. AMOs for State of TN

K-8	Math	R/L	HS	Alg. 1	Eng. II
2008-09	86%	89%		83%	93%
2009-10	20%	32%		25%	49%
2010-11	40%	49%		44%	61%
2011-12	60%	66%		74%	63%
2012-13	80%	83%		81%	87%
2013-14	100%	100%		100%	100%

Analysis of Achievement Results

In the spring of 2011, 70 of the 109 students took the state assessment in grades three through twelve. The K-8 assessment is referred to as just the TCAP assessment while at the high school level it changes to End-of-Course exams (EOC). The following table shows the number of students assessed on each assessment in both Reading/Language Arts and Math along with the AYP results, the percent proficient and advanced. The MAAS students in Reading/Language Arts were within nine percentage points of meeting the AMO outright (Table 2).

Table 2. No. of Students Tested & Percent of Proficiency in 2011

Type of Test	# of Students				Percent Prof./Adv. 2011	
	Math		R/L		Math	R/L
	P/A	Total	P/A	Total		
Portfolio	11	11	13	13	100%	100%
TCAP MAAS	5	20	8	20	25%	40%
TCAP Achievement K-8	7	33	8	25	21%	32%
TCAP EOC Exams HS	0	2	5	12	0%	42%

After compiling the results of 2011, a comparison of the same students from 2010 to 2011 was completed. The results showed that students who were assessed by the Portfolio increased to 100% proficiency in both Math and Reading/Language Arts compared to the 71%

and 57% proficiency in 2010, respectively. Similar increases were shown in comparing the MAAS results from one year to the next. In 2010, the proficiency level in Math was 9% and 15.8% in R/L. The results of the 2010 MAAS assessment showed an increase to 25% proficiency in both content areas. The TCAP results of the regular assessment show the least increase of the three types of assessment. In Math, the proficiency levels increased one percent; in Reading/Language Arts they decreased three percent. The *overall* increases are dramatic and allow the district to show significant progress with this group of students (Table 3).

Table 3. Comparison of 2010 & 2011 State Assessment Results

	Percent Proficient & Advanced 2010		Percent Proficient & Advanced 2011	
	Math	R/L	Math	R/L
Portfolio	71.4%	57.1%	100%	100%
MAAS	9%	15.8%	25%	25%
TCAP	20%	24.1%	21%	21%

The results of the TCAP and MAAS assessments are also used to track the progress of students on an individual basis. As a group last year, eighteen students showed an increase in one subject whether it was Math or Reading/Language Arts with seventeen students showing an increase in both subjects. This equates to 35 of the 60 students (58.3%) having an increase in one or both of the subjects. This data was collected through the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) comparing a student’s Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) score or their proficiency level where appropriate. This is an important factor and critical to the longitudinal tracking of students and their results of becoming College and Career Ready after HS.

With the vision of Dr. Kathleen Airhart, Director, and the leadership of Special Education Supervisor Melanie Bussell, the Putnam County SPED program, students, and parents continue with success in meeting the unique needs of their children/students with ASD. The Putnam County School System continues to be actively involved in the whole picture of student needs, professional development of their teachers and paraprofessionals, and commitment to students and parents alike. The disaggregation of student achievement will be continued to track all students including our ASD students.

Resources

Pearson Access, (2011). Class Reports. Retrieved June, 2011 from

<https://pearsonaccess.com/tn>.

Tennessee Department of Education (2011), Special Education Assessments – MAAS. Retrieved August 25, 2011 from http://www.tn.gov/education/assessment/alt_MAAS.shtml.

Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) restricted website, 2011. Retrieved August 23, 2011 from <http://www.state.tn.us/education>.