



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 1, 2015

For more information, contact:

Anne Marie Farmer, 615-295-8733, annemarie.farmer@reetn.org

GRASSROOTS GROUPS ACROSS TENNESSEE ISSUE CALL FOR TESTING TRANSPARENCY

TCAP questions spark call for accountability

(Nashville, TN) – More than a dozen grassroots organizations that support strong public schools across Tennessee are joining together to demand accountability from the Tennessee Department of Education in the wake of confusion created by the latest release of “quick scores” and associated raw “cut scores” from recent TCAP tests.

“The correlation between the quick scores and the raw cut scores is not well understood,” said Lyn Hoyt, President of Tennesseeans Reclaiming Educational Excellence (TREE). “The Department of Education has not communicated well with school systems or the general public. What do these scores mean? How do they determine cut scores? What’s the math involved in pre-equating and post-equating? These are among the questions we believe the DOE should have already answered. We’re calling on Commissioner McQueen to provide clear, direct answers immediately.”

The groups are jointly distributing a [petition](#) outlining some basic principles regarding testing going forward. The petition includes the following four principles that all groups believe should guide Tennessee testing policy going forward:

1. The process for determining cut scores should be clear and cut scores should be set and released before tests are administered.
2. Tests must be transparent. Questions and answers should be available within a reasonable time after test administration.
3. Standardized test scores should not be counted as a portion of a student’s final grade.
4. Standardized test scores should not be used in teacher evaluation.

"We believe these principles are fair and represent what parents want: Fair tests used to assess student learning relative to standards. By adopting these principles and the policies they would necessitate, we can return testing to its rightful place as one of many tools used to improve education, instead of the ultimate measure of student and teacher performance."

"It's imperative that we move toward testing transparency – access to the questions and answers on the standardized tests – in order to ensure the tests are reliable and valid assessments of the standards being tested."

"We're calling on the Department of Education to take immediate action to address these concerns."

Groups participating in this network include:

TREE (Tennesseans Reclaiming Educational Excellence)

Strong Schools (Sumner County)

Williamson Strong (Williamson County)

SPEAK (Students, Parents, Educators Across Knox County)

SOCM (Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment)

Momma Bears Blog

Gideon's Army, Grassroots Army for Children (Nashville)

Advocates for Change in Education (Hamilton County)

Concerned Parents of Franklin County (Franklin County)

The Dyslexia Spot

Parents of Wilson County, TN, Schools

Friends of Oak Ridge Schools (City of Oak Ridge Schools)

TNBATs (State branch of National BATs)

East Nashville United

###

Petition Link: <https://www.change.org/p/bill-haslam-candice-mcqueen-tn-department-of-education-institute-fair-testing-policies-for-statewide-testing>

Tennesseans Reclaiming Educational Excellence (TREE) is a state-wide volunteer advocacy organization rooted in fighting for strong, equitable public education and is committed to growing child-centered education policy. treetn.org