

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

TerraNova Second Edition Spring 2009

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

In June 2009, your child's school sent home copies of the 2009 *TerraNova* Second Edition (TN/2) *Individual Profile Report* for each Grade 2 student who took the TN/2 in April, along with a short letter from the Superintendent of Schools and an interpretation guide explaining what the most important scores mean. Additional information regarding the TN/2 score report is provided below.

What is the purpose of the TN/2?

The main purpose of the TN/2 is to help your child's school determine the strengths and needs of its instructional program in the following five areas: reading, language, language mechanics, mathematics, and math computation. It is a norm-referenced assessment, which means it is designed to give information about how your child performed in relation to a representative sample of children across the United States.

What academic content was tested on the TN/2?

The front page of the *Individual Profile Report* lists five TN/2 subtests: reading, language, language mechanics, mathematics, and math computation. Several objectives are listed under each subtest. For example, the objectives listed under reading are basic understanding, analyze text, evaluate/extend meaning, and identify reading strategies.

The *Individual Profile Report* also provides a general description of the TN/2 content. Please note that on the back page, the section describing language arts indicates that students were asked to complete a writing section. **There is no writing section on the Grade 2 TN/2.** The writing section is administered only to students in higher grades.

What is the format of the TN/2?

The TN/2 is a multiple-choice test.

The TN/2 score report states that my child's grade is 2.7. What does this mean?

Grade 2.7 means your child was tested in Grade 2 in the seventh month after September (in other words, April).

There are many scores on the score report. Which ones should I pay attention to, and what do they mean?

TN/2 test scores are provided in several ways. Some scores are useful to parents and guardians and others are designed specifically for school and district analyses. The three scores that are useful to parents and guardians are—

1. Objectives Performance Index (OPI) (front side)
2. Mastery (front side)
3. National Percentile (back side)

These scores are described below.

1. Objectives Performance Index (OPI)

The Student OPI score is an estimate of the percent of items that **your child** got correct out of a possible 100 percent. The National OPI indicates the average OPI score for students in the **national sample**. To evaluate your child’s performance, compare his/her Student OPI score with the National OPI. The Difference indicates how much higher or lower your child’s Student OPI score was compared with the national average score. The maximum possible OPI score is 99.

Please note that OPI scores cannot be translated into letter grades. An OPI score of 70 does not mean your child got a “C” on that objective. The best way to interpret an OPI score is to examine whether your child’s score was above, within, or below the Moderate Mastery Range.

2. Mastery

Each objective is associated with a Moderate Mastery Range. For example, the Moderate Mastery Range for Reading–Basic Understanding is 41 to 82. The range for each objective is represented by a shaded grey bar under the column heading, *Objectives Performance Index (OPI)*. You will notice that the Moderate Mastery Range is different for each objective on the report. This means that for some objectives a student has to score higher to be considered at the “mastery” level, and for other objectives, a lower score will qualify as “mastery” level.

Your child’s OPI score is illustrated in the *Objectives Performance Index (OPI)* column with a circle. **High mastery** is shown with a black circle to the right of the shaded grey moderate mastery bar. If the OPI score is a black circle, this indicates your child mastered that objective. **Moderate mastery** is shown with a half-filled circle inside the shaded grey bar. If the OPI score is a half-filled circle, your child approached, but did not yet attain, mastery on that objective. **Low mastery** is shown with a white circle to the left of the shaded grey moderate mastery bar. A white circle indicates the child’s OPI score was below the moderate mastery range, and he/she performed at low levels on that objective.

3. National Percentile

Your child's performance on each of the subtests is compared with the performance of a national sample of students. The comparison is made through a National Percentile ranking. You can find this ranking on the back side of the report.

The percentile rank indicates the percent of students in the national sample who scored below your child. For example, if your child scored at the 64th national percentile, it means your child scored as well as or higher than 64 percent of his/her peers in the national sample. The National Percentile Range indicates where your child's true percentile ranking likely falls. For example, if your child scored at the 64th national percentile and the national percentile range is 54–74, it is almost certain that your child's true ranking falls somewhere between the 54th and 74th percentile. The National Percentile Range graph illustrates your child's national percentile score with a diamond, and the lines to the right and left of the diamond indicate the national percentile range.

Does the TN/2 test help me understand if my child has learned skills he/she will need for success in Grade 3 and beyond?

Yes, performance at or above the 70th national percentile on the TN/2 Reading subtest is one of the Seven Keys to College Readiness. Students who score at or above the 70th national percentile in TN/2 Reading in Grade 2 are more likely to score “advanced” in reading on the Grade 3 Maryland School Assessment (MSA). To find out more about the Seven Keys to College Readiness, visit the website at www.mcps7keys.org.

Can the TN/2 tell me if my child should receive additional help in an academic area or if he or she should be accelerated?

Scores on the TN/2 do not definitively indicate whether a child should skip a grade, be accelerated or retained, or receive additional help in an academic area. We encourage parents, teachers, and school leadership to consider **several** indicators of individual student learning and performance, not just scores on one test. When interpreting TN/2 results, other indicators of learning and understanding should be considered, such as class work and assessments that your child's teacher administers throughout the year. It is important to remember that the TN/2 is not a diagnostic assessment, which means it is not intended to identify learning disabilities. If you have questions or concerns about your child's performance and academic needs, please contact the school to discuss this issue further.

My child's score report indicates that he/she received a special accommodation. What does this mean?

Two accommodations may be listed on the score report. A calculator accommodation indicates that the child was allowed to use a calculator during portions of the mathematics and math computation subtests. A read-to accommodation indicates that the child had all or part of the test read aloud, including sections that students were expected to read independently. The use of a calculator or read-to accommodation can impact the interpretation of some TN/2 scores. If your child received a calculator or read-to accommodation, contact your child's school to discuss his/her academic progress.

What should I do if I have additional questions about what TN/2 scores mean?

If you have concerns about your child's performance on a specific objective or subtest, please contact his/her teacher. If you need general information about the TN/2, please contact Ms. Margaret Gheen, evaluation specialist, Testing Unit, Office of Shared Accountability, at 301-279-3174 or via e-mail at Margaret_H_Gheen@mcpsmd.org.