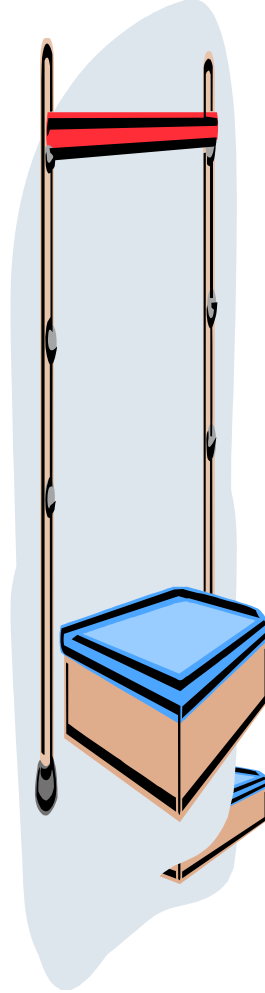


Raising The Bar In Tennessee Schools



**Questions & Answers About
The Tennessee Diploma Project**

The Problem



- Students will have 10-14 jobs by age 38
- Competition for jobs is now worldwide
- Technology is causing profound changes
- U.S. no longer holds a corner on the market for “highly qualified” workers
- Workers require more education than ever
- U.S. is losing manufacturing jobs and gaining service jobs
- Future jobs require
 - Higher order thinking skills
 - Ability to problem-solve
 - Ability to approach a situation analytically
 - Ability to think “outside the box”

What About Tennessee?



- Ranks 41st in the nation for student achievement
- Tennessee students don't score as well nationally
- Majority of 8th graders are not proficient in math or reading according to NAEP
- 1.2 million Tennesseans over the age of 18 don't have a diploma/GED
- 21% of Tennesseans over 18 cannot fill out an application, read a food label or read a story to a child
- Of every 100 9th graders, only 72 will graduate high school and only 17 will graduate college within 6 years of leaving high school

What Has Tennessee Done?



- Launched Tennessee Diploma Project which sets new curriculum standards for ALL Tennessee Students
- State Board of Education has approved
 - New college and work ready standards
 - More rigorous graduation standards
 - Single path diploma
- Changes begin 2009-10 school year

Graduation Requirements – The Major Changes



- Total credit requirements increased from 20 to 22
- One diploma for all students (no tracking or paths)
- Students will be required to take a math course every year
- Students will complete an elective focus earning no less than three credits
- Personal finance will be required for all students
- An additional half credit of PE is required

How Will These Changes Affect Pre-K to 12 Students?



- Concepts will be taught earlier
- More challenging content, homework and tougher tests
- New Standards will require higher level thinking and a deeper comprehension of the subject matter
- Students will now take end-of-course exams which will count up to 25% (phased-in)
- Students will take college-readiness pre-tests in 8th & 10th grades to identify areas of concern

How Will This Affect Test Scores?



- The new and more rigorous testing will almost certainly result in lower scores
- PLUS: School districts will take a double “hit” this year on scores because the state will establish a new “baseline” to measure achievement
- This will result in lower scores for a majority of districts in the state
- Public relations problem: How do we explain this to the community and local media?

Why a New Baseline



- Progress has been measured by the average achievement established by 1998 testing
- Our schools have been doing so well that since that time we have “outrun our base”
- Statistically the baseline should be re-averaged every five years or so
- State will set a new “average” based on the 2009 scores
- This will NOT affect prior year grades

How Does a New Baseline Change Things



- New standards should be viewed as the minimal expectation for student academic progress
- New baseline will allow all schools to meet new and higher standards in future years
- Initial impact will be lower grades on report cards both in November when the report cards come out and again next year when new tests begin







