



Cannon County Schools

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Tennessee Makes Historic Gains in Third Grade Reading, Offers Strong Support for Students

Summer Learning Camps Open for Eligible Families

NASHVILLE, TN & Woodbury, TN. – Today, the Tennessee Department of Education released statewide average scores that show historic gains in third grade reading after the launch of a new, comprehensive K-3 literacy strategy for Tennessee public schools. The department also shared multiple pathways to support student promotion to fourth grade.

“The ability to read at grade level determines a student’s success in the classroom and beyond, and we’re encouraged that our strategic literacy investments have already resulted in historic gains across the state,” **said Governor Bill Lee.** “As we continue our work to deliver strong reading skills to benefit every student, we’re committed to giving families multiple pathways that will support student promotion and achievement.”

On the spring 2023 Tennessee Comprehensive Academic Program (TCAP), third grade students showed significant improvement in English Language Arts (ELA), including:

- The largest increase in a single year of third graders whose ELA scores met or exceeded expectations since Tennessee updated its ELA academic standards in 2017.
- Forty percent of third grade students scored proficient in ELA – a 4.3 percentage point increase from the previous year.
- The largest percentage of third grade students scoring in the top performance category in over a decade, with overall proficiency growing by almost eight percentage points from 2021 decreases impacted by the pandemic.

"Students, teachers, districts, and families have worked incredibly hard to improve reading proficiency in Tennessee and their efforts should be celebrated," **said Commissioner Penny Schwinn.** "The significant gains that we see on the 3rd grade ELA TCAP reflect the success that schools across the state are seeing under Reading 360 and other literacy efforts and will change the lives of thousands of students. While we still have a long way to go before we reach the goals laid out in legislation, I appreciate the ongoing efforts of Tennessee schools as they implement summer and tutoring programs to provide students not yet on grade level with the supports they need to thrive."

“Tennessee continues to work hard to achieve high standards and achievement for our students,” **said House Education Administration Chairman Mark White.** “I want to thank all our Tennessee teachers for their work in creating this success for our students!”

“These results demonstrate that our state’s literacy strategy is working,” **said Senate Finance, Ways, and Means Chairman Bo Watson.** “It is not easy work, but it shows if we stay the course we can make a positive difference.”

Reading is the foundation to all learning, and third grade is a critical milestone for every student. Before the pandemic, only one-third of third graders in Tennessee had met expectations on the TCAP in English Language Arts (ELA), the best standardized proxy for reading achievement. The department’s Reading 360 initiative as well as other supports have created a comprehensive approach to ensure Tennessee can boost reading skills in kindergarten through third grade students who can read on grade level.

In reviewing third grade ELA proficiency since 2017, statewide TCAP data shows the positive impact of enhanced ELA academic standards that went into effect in 2017, the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and related school closures, and the post-pandemic rebound achieving the state’s highest ever rates of third grade ELA proficiency.

Statewide Averages of Third Grade ELA Performance, 2017-2023

Solutions to Boost Literacy

Governor Bill Lee and the Tennessee General Assembly convened a special legislative session in January 2021 to pass meaningful legislation to mitigate learning loss and strengthen Tennessee’s [K-3 literacy strategy](#), including the Tennessee Literacy Success Act and the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act.

Beginning this summer, students who will benefit from additional learning supports may qualify for a summer learning camp opportunity and [participation requirements for promotion to fourth grade](#). In the coming weeks, districts and schools will work with families to determine the best pathway for their student.

This year, Gov. Lee and the Tennessee General Assembly passed [legislation](#) to extend summer learning camps and expand the eligibility age to rising kindergarten through 9th grade. Beginning this summer, students who will benefit from additional learning supports may qualify for a summer learning camp opportunity and [participation requirements for promotion to fourth grade](#). In the coming weeks, districts and schools will work with families to determine the best pathway for their student.

“With today’s release, the increase to 40% of third graders being proficient in ELA is an exciting indicator that as a state we are moving in the right direction,” **said Senate Education Chairman Jon Lundberg.** “However, we know we have more, hard work ahead to keep building upon this growth and accelerating student achievement.”

“We received our Third Grade Scores late Friday Afternoon, May 19th, 2023,” said **William Freddy Curtis, Director Cannon County Schools.** “We are currently determining a pathway to Fourth (4th) Grade for each individual Third (3rd) Grade Student based upon multiple data points, including Third (3rd) Grade ELA Assessment Retakes that have taken place for some students. Elementary School Administrators have been in contact with Parents/Guardians regarding the appropriate pathway to Fourth (4th) Grade for their child.”

Multiple Pathways for Students and Strong Support for Families

On Friday, individual ELA scores for third graders were shared with Tennessee school districts, which are responsible for communicating with families about their student's score and [pathways to fourth grade promotion](#), including the TCAP retake opportunity, free summer camp and/or tutoring in the upcoming school year.

Third grade students who scored "below" or "approaching" are eligible and will be prioritized for these supports, although some students may meet [certain exceptions](#) outlined in the law.

Families can find critical [timeline information](#) posted on the department's website and should coordinate with their student's school to ensure they can make informed decisions about their student's education.

For additional information about Tennessee's third grade acceleration strategy, visit <https://www.tn.gov/education/top-links/learning-acceleration.html>.

For more information on Reading360, visit <https://www.tn.gov/education/reading-360.html>.

For media inquiries, contact Edu.MedialInquiries@tn.gov.

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