



THIRD GRADE PROMOTION POLICIES

OVERVIEW

The state of Tennessee has had a student promotion and retention law in place since 2011. During the 2021 Special Session, the Tennessee legislature updated that law to ensure that all students have the support to read and perform on grade level no later than the 2022-23 school year. If a student does not pass the third grade section of the ELA TCAP (a student who receives an approaching or below score), they will be provided support to ensure they are ready for grade level ELA lessons in fourth grade. If a student’s family does not wish to take advantage of these supports, the student will be retained to third grade to ensure that they receive an additional year of instruction and can participate fully during their fourth grade ELA classroom moving forward.

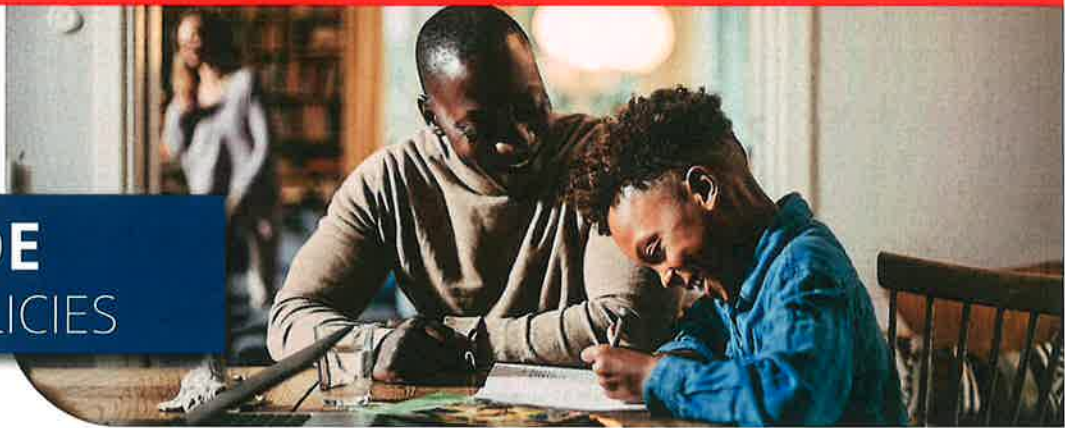
WILL MY CHILD/STUDENT BE RETAINED?

If your child scores “Approaching” or “Below” on the third grade ELA TCAP, your child will **NOT** be retained if **ANY** of the following are true:

YOUR CHILD SCORES “APPROACHING”	YOUR CHILD SCORES “BELOW”
My child has a disability that impacts reading.	My child has a disability that impacts reading.
My child is an English learner and has received less than two (2) years of English instruction.	My child is an English learner and has received less than two (2) years of English instruction.
My child has been retained previously.	My child has been retained previously.
My child has a suspected disability* that impacts literacy development.	My child has a suspected disability* that impacts literacy development.
My child was on-grade level on the re-take test.	My child was on-grade level on the re-take test.
I enrolled my child in summer programming with 90% attendance and made adequate growth.	I enrolled my child in summer programming with 90% attendance.
	AND
	I allow my child to receive free tutoring at school during 4 th grade.
I allow my child to receive free tutoring at school during 4 th grade.	

**Children who are suspected as having disabilities should be evaluated in accordance with the processes required for the identification of students with disabilities as outlined in the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and state laws regarding services to students with disabilities. Those conversations, evaluations, and decisions must be reviewed for each individual child, just like any other case where a child may have a disability.*

If any of these are true, your child will **NOT** be retained. If your child does not meet one of these 6-7 categories that prevents retention, families may also submit an appeal that demonstrates how their child has demonstrated proficiency in reading. Appeals must be submitted by parents/legal guardians.



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Information for Families

Fall:

- Your child will take a universal reading screener.
- You will receive your child's home literacy report by **October 5**, which should include information on your child's current reading development, the support the school is providing your child in reading, and what to do to support literacy at home.
- Discuss results with your child's teacher.

Winter:

- Your child will take a mid-year universal reading screener.
- You will receive another home literacy report by **February 1**. This literacy report will also indicate whether your child may be at-risk for retention.
- Schedule a parent-teacher conference to review the results of your home literacy report, if needed.
- Sign your child up for summer programming to support their literacy development, if needed.

Spring:

- Your child will take an end-of-year universal reading screener and the TCAP.
- You will receive a final home literacy report by **May 17** which should also indicate whether your child may be at-risk for retention.
- Schedule a parent-teacher conference to review the results of your home literacy report and any necessary next steps including a testing retake opportunity, if needed.
- Sign your child up for summer programming and/or tutoring to support their literacy development.
- Review third grade ELA retake and appeals information (if appropriate).
- Collect necessary information and file an appeal (if appropriate and desired).

Supports Available on Best For All Central

Families

[Family Reading Resources](#)

[TCAP Family Resources](#)

[Governor's Early Literacy Foundation Family Reading Time at Home Guides](#)

[At-Home Decodable Reading Series](#)

[At-Home Decodable Reading Digital Sample](#)



THIRD GRADE PROMOTION TIMELINE

2022-2023 School Year

TIMELINE		ADDITIONAL LEA CONSIDERATIONS
December 5 - February 3	Complete Winter Universal Reading Screener	
February 1	All districts/schools must provide parent notification for any student who is at-risk for retention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These notifications should be attached to the Home Literacy Report required for students with a significant reading deficiency • Recommended attachment: Summer Programming Application (for pre-planning in staffing and budget and prioritizing conversations with families) 	Launch of District Summer Programming Prioritized Registration Recommend Additional Literacy Acceleration for At-Risk Students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-dosage, low-ratio tutoring • Literacy grants to families for after-school tutoring • Partnerships with after-school providers to support literacy • RTI² programming adjustments
April 10 - May 12	Spring Universal Reading Screener Assessment (K-2 Pre and Post Assessment-Adequate Growth)	
April 17 - May 2	3 rd Grade ELA TCAP Testing Window	
May 19	3 rd Grade ELA TCAP Raw Data Due to Districts	Information may not be used in place of scale scores but can reasonably be used to identify those students likely to be at "Below" or in the bottom half of "Approaching." Some parent notifications can begin
May 26	Raw Score to Scale Score Tables Released to Districts Districts can determine student proficiency	

THIRD GRADE PROMOTION TIMELINE



2022-2023 School Year

continued

TIMELINE		ADDITIONAL LEA CONSIDERATIONS
May 30 - June 5	3 rd Grade ELA TCAP Retake Option (48-hour score return)	
May 30	Parent Appeal Portal Opens	
May 30 - June 13	Parent Appeal Window (Parents have 14 days to complete an appeal)	
June 7	All 3rd Grade ELA TCAP Retake Scores reported	
June 24	Final Retention notification for families (who did not participate in intervention options)	This date applies for schools starting July 24. If school starts later, notification to families must be disseminated at least 30 days before the first day of school
June 26	Launch of Post Test for Summer Programming and window for the retest	
June 30	Parent Appeal Portal Closes	
July 14	Final Retention notification for families (who participated in summer programming)	This date applies for schools starting July 24. If school starts later, notification to families must be disseminated at least 10 days before the first day of school




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THIRD GRADE PROMOTION FAQS

The Tennessee General Assembly passed two key pieces of legislation during the 1st Extraordinary Session of 2021—the Tennessee Literacy Success Act and the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act—to help ensure Tennessee students could recover from the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and close gaps in students’ learning. As part of this legislation, the General Assembly revised the state’s law regarding the promotion

of students from 3rd grade, T.C.A. § 49-6-3115. The statute was also revised during the regular 2021 legislative session. T.C.A. § 49-6-3115, which becomes effective in the 2022-23 school year, ensures students who are determined to need additional supports in reading, receive them before being promoted to 4th grade. The following FAQ’s provide guidance to local education agencies (LEAs) and public charter schools to use as they implement this new law.

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. If a student is not proficient on the 3rd grade English language arts (ELA) section of the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) assessment, what are the pathways for promoting them to 4th grade?**

Third grade students are eligible for free supports if they scored “approaching” or “below” on the ELA section of their TCAP test. These are outlined in Question 2, below.

Your student’s school will notify you if your student is eligible for retention and will provide information to you about the pathways that are available to your student to be able to move on to 4th grade, including free summer school and/or tutoring supports.

2. If my student scores “below” or “approaching” on the ELA section of the TCAP assessments, are there any exceptions to exempt them from the retention requirement?

If your child scores at “approaching” or “below” on the 3rd grade ELA TCAP, your child will NOT be retained if any of the following are true:

YOUR CHILD SCORES “APPROACHING”	YOUR CHILD SCORES “BELOW”
My child has a disability that impacts reading.	My child has a disability that impacts reading.
My child is an English learner and has received less than two (2) years of English instruction.	My child is an English learner and has received less than two (2) years of English instruction.
My child has been retained previously.	My child has been retained previously.
My child has a suspected disability* that impacts literacy development.	My child has a suspected disability* that impacts literacy development.
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I allow my child to receive free tutoring at school during 4 th grade.	

**Children who are suspected as having disabilities should be evaluated in accordance with the processes required for the identification of students with disabilities as outlined in the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and state laws regarding services to students with disabilities. Those conversations, evaluations, and decisions must be reviewed for each individual child, just like any other case where a child may have a disability.*

If any of these are true, your child will **not** be retained. If your child does not meet one of these 6-7 categories that prevents retention, families of students who score “approaching” on the ELA section of the TCAP may also submit an appeal that demonstrates how their child has demonstrated proficiency in reading. Appeals must be submitted by parents/legal guardians.

3. How does the new law impact LEA and public charter school decisions on the promotion and retention of students?

While promotion and retention decisions generally are determined by the LEA or public charter school in accordance with the State Board of Education and local promotion and retention policies, the new law requires that, beginning with the 2022-23 school year, a 3rd grade student, determined NOT to be proficient in ELA, may not be promoted to the next grade level, without certain conditions being met, which could include the student receiving additional interventions in reading.



4. Who determines whether an individual student meets one of the circumstances provided in question #2?

LEAs and public charter schools must determine whether an individual student meets one of the circumstances that exempts the student from retention. All decisions regarding exemptions must be made on a case-by-case basis considering the unique needs and circumstances of the individual student and documented in the student's file.

5. Why is it not possible for the Tennessee Department of Education (department) to determine which students have a disability or a "suspected disability" at the state level?

As provided in question #4 above, all decisions as to whether a student has a disability or a "suspected disability" must be made on a case-by-case basis considering the unique needs and circumstances of the individual student. This is consistent with state and federal law regarding the appropriate party for such decisions.

Most of the exemption decisions will be easily and quickly determined by an LEA or public charter school based on the student's records, but some will require a more in-depth analysis that will need to include conversations among parents and local educators with knowledge of the student after a review all of the individual student's records. For example, the determination of whether a student has a disability or a suspected disability that impacts reading must be determined locally by parents and educators with knowledge of the student, just like the development of IEPs, Section 504 plans, or other supports designed for students by an LEA. The department does not have the information about individual students to make those decisions.

6. Should a student identified as having the characteristics of dyslexia always be deemed to have a "suspected disability" for purposes of being exempt from the retention requirement in the law?

No. A student identified as having the characteristics of dyslexia could, based on the unique needs and circumstances of the student, be considered to have a "suspected disability" but that may not always be true.

For example, a student who has been identified as having the characteristics of dyslexia, may have already been evaluated by the LEA under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and been deemed to not have a disability due to a lack of adverse impact on the student's educational performance requiring specialized education provided pursuant to an IEP or Section 504 Plan. Similarly, after a review of a student's RTI data pursuant to the State Board of Education's rule, policies and department procedures regarding the ILP-D process, an LEA could determine that services under an ILP-D are all that is needed to improve the student's reading proficiency.

7. Would it be appropriate to deem all students identified as having the characteristics of dyslexia as having a “suspected disability?”

That action would not be accurate or in the best interest of students. It would not take into account the range and level of issues that have contributed to a student’s reading proficiency and the need to differentiate instructional supports based on those unique issues and needs. It is also important not to over-identify students as having a “suspected disability” simply because they need additional supports in reading as many students do. The goal of the new law is to identify students who have a deficiency in reading that is not caused by a disability or lack of acquired English language skills and to provide those students with additional general supports to improve their reading proficiency before they are promoted to the next grade. A student with a disability, a suspected disability, or a student who is an English language learner may require special education and other unique supports and services to address their disability or lack of English language skills as required under state and federal law.

8. Is there an appeal procedure available for a 3rd grade student who has been determined to not be proficient in ELA and therefore may not be promoted to the next grade level without meeting one of the conditions listed in question #4?

Yes, for students who have achieved the performance level of “approaching” on the ELA portion of the TCAP. Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-3115(d), the State Board of Education promulgated rules to establish an appeals process, to be administered by the department, for a student who is identified for retention in 3rd grade based on the student’s achieving a performance level rating of “approaching” on the ELA portion of the student’s most recent TCAP test. The law and subsequent rules require that if an appeal is filed, the filing must be made by the student’s parent or guardian.

9. How does an LEA make a promotion decision for a 3rd grade student who does not have a score on the ELA portion of the TCAP?

Based on the language of T.C.A. § 49-6-3115 (a), if a 3rd grade student does not take the TCAP or generate a score on the ELA portion of the TCAP and does not qualify for an exemption described in question #2 above, the student should be treated as if the student is not proficient in ELA. The law states, “Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, a student in the 3rd grade shall not be promoted to the next grade level unless the student is determined to be proficient in English language arts (ELA) based on the student’s achieving a performance level rating of “on track” or “mastered” on the ELA portion of the student’s most recent Tennessee comprehensive assessment program (TCAP) test.” To be promoted, the student would have to meet one of the conditions provided in question #2 above or if applicable, appeal the decision pursuant to question # 8 above.

10. If a student elects to attend a learning loss bridge camp as a condition to being promoted to 4th grade and does not attend at least 90% of the days of the camp, will they automatically be retained?

The law requires a student to maintain a 90% attendance rate at the camp as a condition of being promoted to the next grade. So, unless the student meets one of the other conditions to be promoted, as listed in question #2 above, the student would have to be retained.

However, the law does not prevent LEAs and public charter schools from developing local board policies to provide opportunities for students to make up camp days missed as long as the days made up are properly documented. An LEA or public charter school must have a clear policy in place that requires students to meet any missed days in the summer.

11. What is the Tennessee Department of Education's role in implementing this new law?

The department's specific role in implementing this law is limited to reviewing appeals in accordance with the State Board of Education rule and providing a report to the General Assembly. The department will focus on providing technical assistance to LEAs and public charter schools on the interventions that improve a student's reading proficiency while also allowing the student to meet the conditions for promotion listed in question #2.

The goal or mission of this new law is not to retain students. It is to provide every student with the necessary interventions to improve the student's reading proficiency as soon as possible. The department is confident that LEAs and public charter schools will be laser-focused on that mission.

12. What does the TCAP retake entail and when will it be available?

The TCAP retake assessment will be multiple choice/multiple choice select to allow for immediate scoring of the assessment. It will be administered on a computer and pre-equated, to allow for a scale score to be produced for the LEA within two (2) business days. The retake window will take place between May 30 and June 5th, to provide students the opportunity to retest before the full start of summer programming.

13. What information is available regarding the pre-test and post-tests for summer programming?

The TCAP will serve as the "pre-test" for summer programming. The "post-test" will be comprised of TCAP-aligned items and is designed to take less than one hour to complete. The assessment will be administered online and will allow for accommodations.

14. How will adequate growth be measured for summer programming?

The Adequate Growth Measure will be determined based on growth between the "pre-test" and the "post-test." The calculation of what constitutes adequate growth will be determined annually using a standard psychometric process, as is also done with the TCAP. The calculations will be reviewed by the department's Technical Advisory Committee (a group of national assessment experts and psychometricians who also provide feedback and consultation on the state assessment).



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