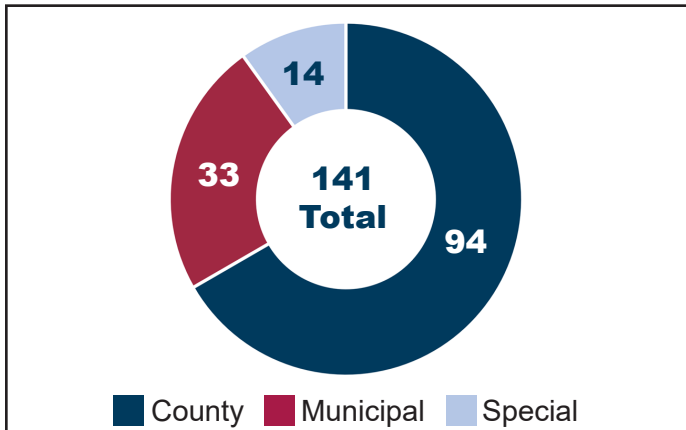


Mapping Tennessee Education

Type of school district

Tennessee contains 141 public school districts, not including those operated by the State Board of Education and the Achievement School District. The state has 94 county school districts, 33 municipal (or city) school districts across 22 counties, and 14 special school districts across seven counties.

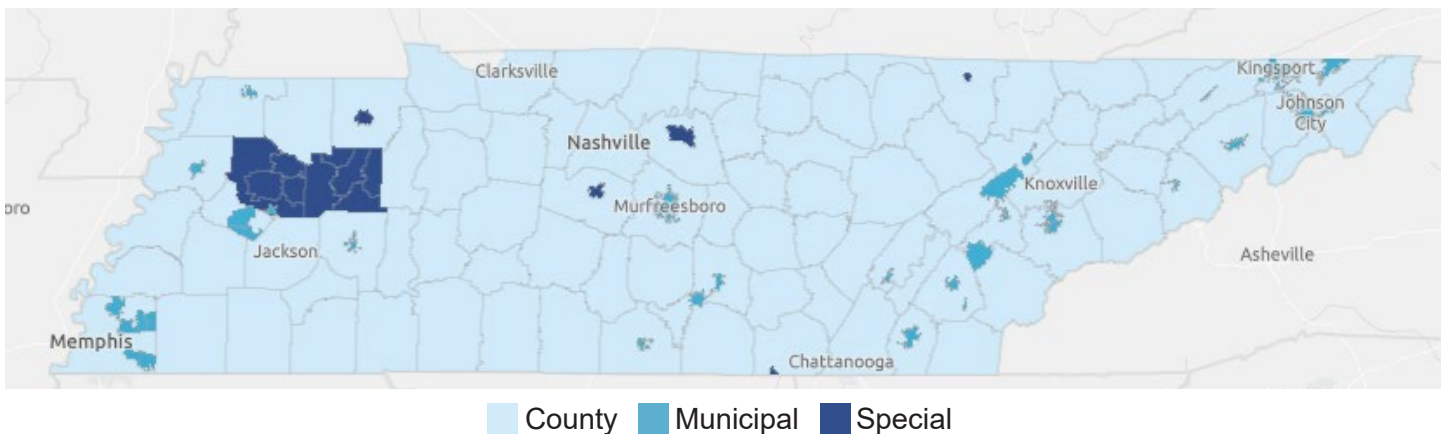
Exhibit 1: Types of districts in Tennessee



Source: Tennessee Department of Education.

OREA's Mapping Tennessee Education website features an interactive map of all Tennessee school districts by type (county, municipal, and special). Each district type must follow certain statutory requirements for funding and operation. Website users can click on each district to view data points such as enrollment, number of schools, student demographics, and average classroom teacher salary.

Exhibit 2: Map of Tennessee districts by type



Source: Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury. Mapping Tennessee Education tncot.cc/mappingeducation.

County school districts

Ninety-four of the state's 95 counties operate a county school district. Under state law, counties must operate school districts unless all students within the county are served by municipal or special school districts or unless a combination of counties operates a multi-county system. Gibson County does not operate a county district because all of its students are served through municipal and special districts. Carroll County operates a county school district, but it is unlike all other county districts in Tennessee. Carroll County Schools does not operate a K-12 program but does provide certain services to the five special school districts within the county. No multi-county systems have been established in Tennessee.

County boundaries (with the exception of areas carved out for any municipal or special districts) geographically define which students are eligible for county school district enrollment and which voters are eligible to elect county school boards. Counties must apportion any school bond proceeds and county revenues collected for general school operations and maintenance among all public school districts within the county on the basis of average daily attendance.

Municipal school districts

Municipal, or city, school districts are generally authorized under city or town charters and are not required to offer all grade levels. Municipal boundaries geographically define which students are eligible for enrollment and which voters are eligible to elect municipal school boards. Municipal school districts typically receive a designated portion of city tax revenues in addition to their share of county tax revenues and their state Basic Education Program (BEP) funds. A municipality can choose to cease district operations and transfer administration of its district to the county board of education under procedures set by state law.

Special school districts

Special school districts are established by private acts of the state legislature. The private acts establish special school districts' boundaries – which do not necessarily align with existing city or county boundaries – and geographically define which students are eligible for enrollment and which voters are eligible to elect special school district school boards. Fourteen special school districts operate across seven counties.

Because special school districts are not tied to the taxing authority of a county or a municipality, they must have the state legislature's approval for any tax levy to support operations. These revenues provide additional funding to the district's prescribed share of county education revenue and its state BEP funding and do not have to be shared with any other district. Special school districts are not required to offer all grade levels and can choose to cease operations and transfer administration of the district to the county board of education under procedures set by state law.

For more information on Tennessee's school districts, see OREA's Mapping Tennessee Education website at tncot.cc/mappingeducation.