



SNAPSHOT

REVIEW OF LITERACY SUCCESS ACT: SECOND-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION

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During its 2021 Special Session on Education, the Tennessee General Assembly passed the Tennessee Literacy Success Act (TLSA), which seeks to ensure that students in early grades are on track to become proficient readers by the end of 3rd grade. In 2022, the General Assembly passed a law requiring the Comptroller's Office to annually review the implementation of the TLSA and report its findings to the chairs of the Senate and House education committees and the State Board of Education by November 1 of each year. This report is the second such review, and it also includes the third annual review of district and charter school foundational literacy skills plans required by the TLSA.

In summary, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) and local districts and charter schools continue to implement the major directives of the Tennessee Literacy Success Act and, overall, are in compliance with its requirements. While this review of TLSA did not include an analysis of causation, more 3rd graders scored proficient on TCAP's English language arts assessment in 2022-23 than they have in the last six years.

Key Points

- Universal reading screeners are administered three times per year to all K-3 students. Screener results from school year 2022-23 show improvement in each scoring category throughout the year. Students scoring at or above grade level expectations increased while there was a decrease in students scoring at levels indicating a significant reading deficiency or a risk of a reading deficiency. Linking results from one grade level in 2021-22 with the next year's grade level in 2022-23 show that most student cohorts demonstrated improved performance.
- A total of 49,664 licensed educators (or about two-thirds of all licensed instructional staff in Tennessee schools) received the TLSA-required foundational literacy skills instruction from summer 2021 through summer 2023. TDOE offered two approved literacy skills instruction courses, at no cost to educators or schools, for educators to meet this professional development requirement. Based on responses to an OREA survey, over 84 percent of K-5 classroom teachers in school districts (76 percent of districts responded) and 78 percent of teachers in charter schools (22 percent of charter schools responded) had met this TLSA professional development requirement as of August 30, 2023.
- To meet one of the requirements in the TLSA legislation, TDOE developed a new reading test for candidates who are seeking to obtain, renew, or advance teaching licenses (with endorsements relevant to K-3 instruction) or instructional leader licenses. The new test – the *Tennessee Early Literacy Assessment* – has a passing score of 80 percent and was approved by the State Board of Education in June 2023. TDOE used a grant from the Council of Chief State School Officers to partner with ANet, a nonprofit organization, to develop the 25-item test, which the law requires to be provided at no cost to candidates or educator preparation providers.
- Although 2023 was not a required foundational literacy skills plan (FLSP) submission year, 42 local districts and seven charter schools (or their charter management organizations) submitted FLSP updates to TDOE. The majority changed their universal reading screener for the 2023-24 school year. Two charter schools that opened in the 2022-23 school year had not submitted FLSPs as of October 2, 2023.

Additional conclusions, as well as policy options, can be found in the full report, which is available [here](#).