

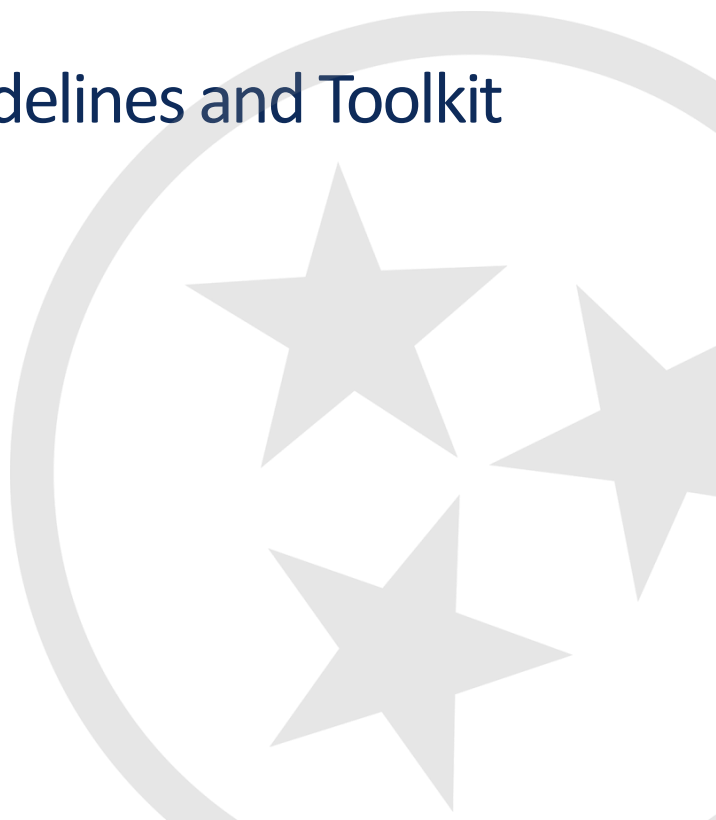


Promotion & Retention Guidelines and Toolkit

Third & Fourth Grade

Tennessee Department of Education | April 2024

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Summary

The Tennessee General Assembly passed two key pieces of legislation during the 1st Extraordinary Session of the 112th General Assembly—the Tennessee Literacy Success Act and the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act. As part of this legislation, the General Assembly updated the state’s third grade promotion law, T.C.A. § 49-6-3115, to ensure students receive additional supports before promotion to fourth grade. In 2023, the Tennessee General Assembly made additional updates to T.C.A. § 49-6-3115 that have implications for promotion and retention for students in kindergarten through grade four.

The [Conference Committee Report on HB2326/ SB2183](#) is pending the Governor's signature and assignment of Public Chapter number. Upon being signed into law, students who were required to score proficient or demonstrate adequate growth on the fourth grade ELA TCAP but did not meet the requirements may be promoted to fifth grade through a conference pathway if certain conditions are met.

Overview of Changes

The following provides a high-level look at the updates and changes included in the 2023-24 Third and Fourth Grade Promotion & Retention Guidelines and Toolkit. This overview is not intended to provide an all-inclusive list of updates but does provide a quick summary of changes found within the document.

Changes throughout represent those necessary to align requirements, guidance, and resources to T.C.A. § 49-6-3115. **Notable updates included in the latest release are listed in red below.**

Key Terms

The following terms have undergone updates:

- *Characteristics of Dyslexia* – The definition for Characteristics of Dyslexia has been updated to align to the [Updated RTI² Manual](#) released in August 2023.
- *State-Provided Benchmark Assessment* – The term state-provided benchmark assessment has replaced the more general term of “benchmark assessment.” The purpose is to intentionally reference the assessment (Aimsweb) to be used in the 50th percentile promotional pathway available to students whose highest performance level on the ELA TCAP or ELA TCAP retake is “approaching expectations.”
- *TN ALL Corps* – TN ALL Corps is used to reference a high-dosage, low-ratio tutoring model delivered by a trained tutor rather than only referring to tutoring programs receiving grant dollars. Useful information regarding alignment of tutoring and RTI² guidance is outlined in the [Required Tutoring for 2023-24](#) (updates pending for 2024-25).
- Other updates may include the addition of key terms or clarity of language for stronger alignment to legislative requirements and/or recently released department communication.

Promotion Criteria for Students Identified for Retention

- Updated to align with requirements of T.C.A. § 49-6-3115
- **Updated to include Fourth Grade Promotion Requirements**

Appeals

- Revised to include:
 - All parties who may file an appeal on behalf of a student
 - Updated appeal criteria
 - Time parameters for which an appeal based on a catastrophic situation may apply

Toolkit

- **Updated and additional letter templates**
- **Third and fourth grade student record templates**

Key Terms

Adequate Growth: Adequate growth is a key metric considered for students at-risk for retention who participate in certain promotion pathways. Adequate growth checks will be completed by the department to ensure students participating in certain promotion pathways demonstrate an increased understanding of the standards that will allow them to successfully access and accelerate mastery of ELA standards the following school year. The specific definitions of adequate growth for 3rd grade and 4th grade students are in the State Board of Education [Promotion and Retention Policy 3.300](#).

Approaching Expectations: A TCAP performance level category that demonstrates a student is approaching understanding and has a partial ability to apply the grade/course-level knowledge and skills defined by the Tennessee Academic Standards. A student who scores “approaching expectations” on the ELA section of their third grade TCAP must complete intervention options or be retained unless they are covered under an exception in the law or granted an appeal due to a catastrophic situation that impacted their ability to perform on the third grade TCAP.

Authorized School Personnel: A principal, guidance counselor, teacher, or other administrator of a student’s school who has obtained the student’s parent or legal guardian’s written consent to file an appeal on their behalf.

Below Expectations: A TCAP performance level category that demonstrates that the student has a minimal understanding and has a nominal ability to apply the grade/course-level knowledge and skills defined by the Tennessee Academic Standards. A student who scores “below expectations” on their third grade ELA TCAP, and is not covered under exceptions in the law, must complete intervention options or be retained.

Characteristics of Dyslexia: As defined by TISA Rule 0520-12-05 and State Board of Education Dyslexia Individualized Learning Plans Rule 0520-01-22, a score below the 25th percentile on a state-approved universal reading screener (K-3) or a nationally normed universal reading screener (4-8) AND displays deficits in 50% or more of grade-appropriate subtests as identified by the [K-3 URS Minimum Matrix](#). See [Dyslexia Resource Guide](#).

English Learner: A student who has a native language other than English as identified on a home language survey and who qualifies for English as a second language services (ESL) via a department-approved English language proficiency assessment.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): A federal law (20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.) that ensures services to children with disabilities throughout the United States. IDEA provides clear legal expectations on how states and local education agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A school, student and family agreement that specifies specialized instruction and related services a student must receive in accordance with IDEA.

Individualized Learning Plan-Dyslexia (ILP-D): A school, student and family agreement developed in

accordance with State Board of Education Dyslexia Individualized Learning Plans Rule 0520-01-22 that specifies supports and services children with the characteristics of dyslexia will receive from their school to assist their academic growth and progress.

Intervention: Academic supports such as summer programming, high-dosage, low-ratio tutoring or RTI² for individual students at-risk for reading challenges. Intervention is intended to accelerate learning in reading and ensure students are meeting grade-level literacy expectations.

Learning Loss Bridge Camp: A four-week summer camp that extends the school year for rising fourth through ninth graders, providing four hours of reading and math instruction, an hour of play, and an hour of intervention daily in small group settings with the goal of accelerating learning and ensuring a student is on-grade level at the beginning of the year.

Literacy: The ability to read text fluently, comprehend information or narrative while reading, and apply this new knowledge to grade level standards.

Meets Expectations: A TCAP performance level category that demonstrates the student has a comprehensive understanding and has a thorough ability to apply the grade/course-level knowledge and skills defined by the Tennessee Academic Standards. This student would **not** be at-risk for retention.

Reading: The process of matching sounds to letters and letter combinations, decoding letters into words, and the ability to put words into sentences and fluently build comprehension from texts both orally and silently.

Retention: The practice of not promoting a student to the next grade level as a result of the student not meeting expectations for proficiency of grade level content. In third grade, a student must receive a “met expectations” or “exceeds expectations” score on their ELA TCAP assessment to demonstrate sufficient mastery of grade level content.

Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²): A multi-tiered approach focused on prevention and early intervention that uses a data-driven problem-solving model to identify and address areas of academic need. RTI² is founded on high-quality core instruction for all students (i.e., Tier I), targeted intervention for some students (i.e., Tier II), and intensive intervention for a few students (i.e., Tier III).

Section 504 Plan: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794) states that no individual should be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. To ensure this law protects students with disabilities in K-12 schools, this is a formal plan developed to support students who have physical or mental impairments that substantially limit daily life activities. Section 504 plans include regular or special education and related aids and services designed to ensure students have access to participate fully in school and school activities.

Specific Learning Disability in Reading: A specific learning disability in reading is a type of student disability supported by an individualized education program (IEP). Multiple assessments are used to

identify with a SLD-R (Specific Learning Disability in Reading) focusing on the following areas: basic reading, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Basic reading skills include the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds in language; to identify printed letters and their associated sounds; to decode written language. Reading fluency is the ability to read with sufficient accuracy and rate to support comprehension. Reading comprehension is the ability to understand and make meaning of texts. A student with an IEP that outlines a specific learning disability in reading would be excluded from the new third grade retention requirements.

State-Provided Benchmark Assessment: Defined as the Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (Aimsweb) and provided by the Tennessee Department of Education. This is the only state-provided benchmark assessment approved for a promotion pathway to the fourth grade. A Spring administration window will be available to districts.

Summer Post-test: A TCAP-aligned assessment given at the end of summer programming used to determine how much a student learned during summer programming. For rising fourth grade students, post-test results are compared to third grade ELA TCAP or TCAP retake results to determine summer camp adequate growth for promotion to the fourth grade for applicable students. T.C.A. § 49-6-1503 requires a post-test be administered at the end of summer programming.

Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act: The *Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act* was passed by the Tennessee General Assembly in a special legislative session to address the learning loss of students due to COVID-19 related school closures. It requires all school districts to offer learning loss remediation summer programs for students that need additional support.

Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) Tennessee's summative assessment system is designed to assess the mastery of grade level standards. Students can score "exceeds expectations", "met expectations", "approaching expectations", and "below expectations" in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies.

TN ALL Corps (required high-dosage, low-ratio tutoring model): A learning acceleration student support that reinforces Tier I grade-level ELA standards that is provided to students in very small groups of 3:1 in grades K - 4 in two to three sessions per week for 30 – 45 minutes per session by trained tutors, and occurring during, before, or after school hours. This is required for fourth grade students that were promoted via a tutoring pathway.

Universal Reading Screener: A norm-referenced, skills-based assessment used to identify students who might be at-risk for a reading deficiency. As part of the *Tennessee Literacy Success Act*, districts are required to administer an approved universal reading screener to all students in grades K-3 during three [administration windows](#) each school year, and report data to the Tennessee Department of Education.

Interventions to Support Student Learning

Early intervention is the key to ensuring that students are successful in third grade and throughout their educational experiences. Students who struggle to achieve mastery of third grade ELA standards are likely to continue to struggle. Third grade proficiency is a strong indicator of high school graduation, higher rates of economic success, and improved medical health. Lower literacy rates not only negatively impact our children during their early grades, these significant reading challenges impact children's future opportunities.

Students should have the opportunity for interventions, tutoring, and summer programs. If students struggle in third grade and do not score "met expectations" or "exceeds expectations" on their third grade TCAP, schools and districts must provide intervention to help the student accelerate their learning progress.

The *Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act* updated the state's third grade retention requirements and requires intervention for some students before they can be promoted to fourth grade. Starting in the 2022-23 school year, third grade students who score "below expectations" or "approaching expectations" on the third grade ELA TCAP shall not be promoted to the fourth grade unless they meet the requirements.

If a student does not receive a "met expectations" or "exceeds expectations" score on their ELA TCAP in third grade, elementary schools in Tennessee must provide multiple opportunities for intervention, including

1. **Retake of the ELA section of the third grade TCAP:** This option is available for students who scored "approaching expectations" or "below expectations" on the ELA section of their third grade TCAP. The department will provide a retake option over the summer prior to the student's fourth grade school year.
2. **Summer Learning Loss Bridge Camp:** This four-week summer camp would occur between the third and fourth grade school year. A student must attend 90% of summer camp and, if the student scored "approaching expectations", must make adequate growth on their post-test at the end of summer camp.
3. **TN ALL Corps (high-dosage, low-ratio) Tutoring:** Fourth grade high-dosage, low-ratio tutoring that occurs two to three sessions per week for 30 – 45 minutes per session by trained tutors in a 3:1 ratio. This tutoring must occur for the duration of the fourth-grade school year. Participating students must meet the adequate growth target on the fourth grade ELA TCAP to be promoted to the fifth grade.

Please note if a student scored "below expectations" on their ELA section of TCAP, the student must participate in multiple interventions including summer camp and TN ALL Corps (high-dosage, low-ratio) tutoring, if the parent and district elect a path other than retention.

Each promotion decision and associated data and pathway should be documented in the student's record. Sample [third](#) and [fourth](#) grade student record templates are available for district customization.

Promotion Criteria for Students Identified for Retention

Third Grade Promotion Requirements

Students scoring “below expectations”

Students whose highest performance level on the third grade ELA TCAP or ELA TCAP retake is **“below expectations”** may be promoted if:

- The student is an English learner and has received less than two years of ELA instruction,
- The student has a disability or suspected disability that impacts reading, **OR**
- The student was previously retained in grades K-3 prior to their current third grade year.

Additionally, students whose highest performance level on the third grade ELA TCAP or ELA TCAP retake is “below expectations” may be promoted if:

- The student attends a learning loss bridge camp, maintains a 90% attendance rate at the camp, **AND**
- The student receives TN ALL Corps (high-dosage, low-ratio) tutoring for the entirety of fourth grade and must score proficient or meet their adequate growth target on their fourth grade ELA TCAP.

See the [Conference Committe Pathway](#) section for opportunities for a student who does not score proficient or meet their adequate growth target on the fourth grade ELA TCAP.

Students scoring “approaching expectations”

Students whose highest performance level on the third grade ELA TCAP or ELA TCAP retake is **“approaching expectations”** may be promoted if:

- The student is an English learner and has received less than two years of ELA instruction,
- The student has a disability or suspected disability that impacts reading, **OR**
- The student was previously retained in grades K-3 prior to their current third grade year.

Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, students whose highest performance level on the third grade ELA TCAP or ELA TCAP retake is “approaching expectations” may be promoted if:

- The student scores at or above the 50th percentile on the spring administration of the state-provided benchmark assessment (Aimsweb), **AND** the student receives TN ALL Corps (high-dosage, low-ratio) tutoring for the entirety of fourth grade. The student’s parents must be informed, in writing, of the benefits of enrolling the student in a learning loss bridge camp and encouraged to do so.

Students whose highest performance level is “approaching expectations” but do not have a spring state-provided benchmark assessment score at or above the 50th percentile may be promoted if the following interventions are provided:

- The student attends a learning loss bridge camp, maintains a 90% attendance rate at the camp, and demonstrates adequate growth on the post-test, **OR**
- The student receives TN ALL Corps (high-dosage, low-ratio) tutoring for the entirety of fourth grade.
 - If a student is promoted to the fourth grade through TN ALL Corps (high-dosage, low-ratio) tutoring, then the student must score proficient or meet their adequate growth target on the fourth grade ELA TCAP.

- See the [Conference Committee Pathway](#) section for opportunities for a student who does not score proficient or meet their adequate growth target on the fourth grade ELA TCAP.

Finally, the law provides an opportunity for families of students scoring “approaching expectations” to appeal a third-grade retention decision as defined by the [State Board of Education Promotion and Retention Rule](#). School personnel may file on behalf of the parent or legal guardian if authorized in writing to do so. See the [Third Grade Family Appeals Process](#) for more details. The option to appeal is not available to families of students scoring “below expectations.”

Fourth Grade Promotion Requirements

Fourth grade students in the following scenarios **must score proficient or successfully meet their adequate growth target on their fourth grade ELA TCAP to be promoted to fifth grade:**

- a student whose highest performance level on the 3rd grade ELA TCAP or ELA TCAP retake assessment was “approaching” and was promoted to fourth grade on the condition of receiving tutoring for the entirety of fourth grade, or
- a student whose highest performance level on the 3rd grade ELA TCAP or ELA TCAP retake assessment was “below” and was promoted to fourth grade on the conditions of attending summer learning loss bridge camp with 90% attendance prior to fourth grade and receiving tutoring for the entirety of fourth grade.

Conference Committee Pathway (Pending the Governor's signature and assignment of Public Chapter number)

If a qualifying student, as described above, **does not** score proficient or meet their adequate growth target on the fourth grade ELA TCAP, the LEA or public charter school shall convene a conference with the student’s principal, ELA teacher, and parent or legal guardian to determine whether the student will be:

- promoted and receive tutoring for the entirety of fifth grade, or
- retained in the fourth grade. A student may only be retained in fourth grade one time.

If a unanimous decision is not reached during the promotion discussion, each participant category (principal, ELA teacher, and parent/guardian) may make a single recommendation for consideration in the decision. The decision is determined by a majority of the category of participants.

Current fourth grade students in the following scenarios are not required to score proficient or meet an adequate growth target on their fourth grade ELA TCAP or participate in tutoring to be promoted to fifth grade:

- a student whose highest performance level on the 3rd grade ELA TCAP or ELA TCAP retake assessment was “approaching” and was promoted to fourth grade by meeting summer learning loss bridge camp attendance and adequate growth requirements,
- a student who received an approved appeal, or
- a student who was exempt from retention.

The law does not provide an opportunity for families of students to appeal a fourth-grade retention decision.

Students with Disabilities and Suspected Disabilities

The retention and promotion requirements outlined in the law apply to **all** students. The law also contains

specific provisions related to students with disabilities. The state retention law does not supersede federal requirements of IDEA and Section 504, and students may not be retained based solely on their disability or suspected disability. In accordance with T.C.A. § 49-6-3115, a student with a disability or a suspected disability that impacts their ability to read cannot be retained. This provision applies to third and fourth grade students. Retention and promotion decisions for a student with a disability or a suspected disability must be made on a case-by-case basis and in consultation with the student's IEP and/or 504 team to determine whether the student's performance on the ELA TCAP was due to the student's disability. Such consultation includes, but is not limited to, a review of evaluation and eligibility data, input from the student's teachers and parents, benchmark assessments, and classroom performance.

If a student is exempted under the category of "suspected disability," the LEA must follow Child Find procedures. If a disability is suspected and the exemption status for retention purposes is being pursued, referrals should be made in a timely manner to allow for IEP teams to complete evaluations and eligibility determinations in time for promotion consideration. Please see the [Suspected Disability Exemption Guidance](#) for additional information.

Summer Programming

As part of the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act, summer programming is available to provide students additional time and small learning groups to address learning gaps. Summer programming may benefit early grade students who are at risk for not demonstrating proficiency on the third grade ELA TCAP assessment.

Learning loss bridge camps provide four weeks of additional reading and math instruction as well as intervention and activity for students who may have incomplete learning. Learning loss bridge camps serve priority students (as defined under the Act) entering grades four through nine. Camps must include six hours of daily programming, including four hours of reading and math instruction, one hour of intervention, and one hour of physical activity or "play."

Third grade students demonstrating a significant reading deficiency on the winter universal reading screener should be prioritized and encouraged to attend summer programming. In addition, any student demonstrating deficiencies on grade-level formative assessments for ELA standards should be prioritized when planning for summer programs. Many districts begin planning for third-grade summer programming in early winter to ensure a high-quality intervention to support students not demonstrating proficiency.

TN ALL Corps (High-Dosage, Low Ratio) Tutoring

TN ALL Corps (high-dosage, low-ratio) tutoring must be made available to students who require access for their fourth grade promotion pathway. High-dosage, low-ratio tutoring ensures that learning gaps are removed and that a child can perform work on grade level and consists of intensive tutoring that occurs at least two to three times per week for 30 to 45-minute sessions. Sessions must be provided by a qualified tutor to help all students accelerate their learning through individualized, intensive support.

For a district's tutoring intervention to qualify as high-dosage, low-ratio tutoring, the district must ensure

the student attends two to three tutoring sessions per week for 30 to 45 minutes each for the entirety of the year. Tutoring should reinforce Tier I grade-level ELA standards in small groups of 3:1 and must be provided by a trained tutor. Tutoring may occur during, before, or after school hours. Students must also receive progress monitoring monthly to track learning improvements.

Districts are to examine student data to determine on an individual basis the best intervention pathway for students who may require both tutoring and RTI² Tier II or Tier III. RTI² Tier II or Tier III may be used as the tutoring promotion pathway as long as both the minimum tutoring requirements and the Tier II or Tier III requirements are met. Although intensive skill interventions may be required to address deficits, opportunities to access Tier I instruction should also be provided.

Please reference the [Required Tutoring for 2023-24](#) for additional details for tutoring requirements for students in kindergarten through grade four and the [Response to Instruction and Intervention Manual](#) for additional RTI² requirements.

Third Grade Appeals Process

TCA § 49-6-3115 requires interventions for third grade students who are not proficient on the ELA TCAP. Interventions are the best way a students can improve their basic reading skills and improve their standards- based literacy performance.

If a student does not score “meets expectations or “exceeds expectations” on the ELA TCAP, the student would have the opportunity to demonstrate proficiency on a retake of the third grade ELA TCAP assessment and/or the opportunity to participate in interventions. If the student does not demonstrate proficiency on the retake assessment, participate in the interventions, or does not meet expectations of the intervention, the student will be retained in third grade.

A family of a student scoring “approaching expectations” can choose to appeal the decision for retention if the student meets one of the grounds outlined below. The option to appeal is not available to students whose highest performance level is “below expectations.”

Ground 1: Parent, legal guardian, or authorized school personnel agrees they were provided notice of all requirements of a Ground 1 appeal and the following requirements are met:

- For the 2023-24 school year, the student scored at or above the 40th percentile on a State Board-approved universal reading screener;
- An academic remediation plan is developed in coordination with the student’s parent, principal, teachers, IEP and 504 team, if applicable, school counselor, and other appropriate school personnel. The plan will include evidence-based strategies tailored to the student’s needs including at least one of the following:
 - Adjustment to current instructional strategies or high-quality instructional materials;
 - Additional instructional time;
 - Modification to the student’s classroom assignment to ensure the student receives instruction from a teacher with a level of overall effectiveness of above expectations (level 4) or significantly above expectations (level 5); or

- Placement of the student in a classroom with a reduced class size.
- Student received unanimous recommendation from current ELA teacher and principal that the student should be promoted to 4th grade; and
- Student receives TN ALL Corps (high-dosage, low-ratio) tutoring for the entirety of 4th grade.

For the 2023-24 school year, districts may submit qualifying composite scores from the Spring administration of Aimsweb, if available, and one other State Board-approved benchmark assessment for Ground 1 appeal purposes. Student data must be provided by the vendor to the department for use in appeals.

For the 2024-25 school year and thereafter, the state-provided screener (Aimsweb) will be the only allowable screener for a Ground 1 appeal.

Ground 2: Documentation of a catastrophic situation occurred on the test date or within sixty (60) calendar days leading up to the third grade ELA TCAP test administration (and any makeup opportunities) that impacted the student and impeded the student's ability to demonstrate the current level of knowledge on the test. Examples of a catastrophic situation include, but are not limited to, a death in the immediate family, loss of a family home, or significant medical diagnosis.

An appeal may be filed by the student's parent, legal guardian, or, with written consent, authorized school personnel. Authorized school personnel (principal, school counselor, teacher, or other administrator) of a student's school must obtain written consent from the student's parent or legal guardian to file an appeal on their behalf. Parents must be fully informed of available fourth grade promotion pathways prior to signing the consent form. A written consent form will be provided by the department for use by all districts. Signed consent forms should be maintained for monitoring purposes.

Schools should help support families seeking to appeal a retention determination by providing relevant data and information required to complete and submit an appeal to the department.

Any student who receives an approved Ground 1 or Ground 2 appeal may be enrolled in summer programming and/or tutoring opportunities provided space is available.

Toolkit Resources

Sample Talking Points

At the beginning of the school year, a district is required to notify all third and fourth grade students of promotion and retention requirements. Districts should provide robust communications on student progress in reading development and standards-based literacy development. Additionally, in communications to parents, districts can discuss early intervention opportunities available to support reading skills and standards-based literacy development.

Consider the following strategies:

1. Track the progress of student performance on universal reading screeners (administered three times a year as required under the *Tennessee Literacy Success Act*). In addition to notifying parents via home literacy reports, districts should consider scheduling parent-teacher conferences, maintaining ongoing communication with parents, and making parents aware of student support opportunities throughout the year.
2. Use “at-risk” designations on screeners to prioritize students in interventions in early grades.
3. Utilize additional assessments, such as survey level assessments, benchmarks, and additional progress monitoring tools, to refine interventions if a child is not progressing in reading or standards-based literacy development. Support teachers in having conversations with parents.

Below, sample talking points for directors of schools, school leaders and educators are provided as optional resources to support planning communications to families.

Directors of Schools

- We believe that all students should have the opportunity to successfully experience on-grade-level lessons and to master grade level content. Some students need more supports than other students.
- Student learning and growth is measured in a variety of ways—including classwork, benchmark assessments, exams, and the statewide annual assessment.
- One of the most important things we want to know is how our youngest students are progressing towards becoming strong readers by third grade. Research shows it is a milestone for achievement that impacts their future in many ways.
- Your student’s TCAP score, specifically in English Language Arts, indicates they need some additional support to be ready for success in fourth grade.
- We have a strong plan to provide that support to those students.
- Our district has high-dosage, low-ratio tutoring, summer programming, and RTI² to ensure that students have supports tailored to their unique learning needs.
- It may benefit some students to participate in these learning opportunities before they take their third grade TCAP.
- In the event that a third-grade student struggles and does not demonstrate proficiency in English Language Arts on the TCAP, we want to ensure that additional learning supports are in place.

- Students will be prioritized for summer programming to receive small group extended learning time to develop those third-grade literacy standards not met during the school year. Students will be provided an opportunity to re-take their ELA TCAP assessment and, at the end of camp, students will be given an opportunity to demonstrate growth from their camp experiences.
- Additionally, our district will offer TN ALL Corps (high-dosage, low ratio) tutoring for your student to receive support throughout their fourth-grade year. This will ensure that your student has the needed supports to be successful in fourth grade and beyond.
- These are important learning opportunities that are not available to every student but are prioritized for students who could benefit the most.
- Attendance is critical to a child's success in school. If a child misses multiple days a month, they can easily fall behind in the daily instruction that their teachers are delivering. Attendance is critically important.
- However, if your family chooses not to engage in additional supports for your student, your child may not move ahead to the next grade.
- Extra learning time is a valuable and exciting opportunity for our students. We encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities and partner with us to help keep your student on track.
- If your student scored "approaching expectations" on the third grade ELA TCAP, you may choose to file an appeal with the state department, which may require additional documentation.
- For more information about the supports your school offers, please talk with your student's principal or teacher.

School Leaders

- We believe that all students should have the opportunity to successfully experience on-grade-level lessons and to master grade level content. Some students need more support than other students.
- Student learning and growth is measured in a variety of ways—including classwork, benchmark assessments, exams, and the statewide annual assessment.
- One of the most important things we want to know is how our youngest students are progressing towards becoming strong readers by third grade. Research shows it is a milestone for achievement that impacts their future in many ways.
- Your student's TCAP score, specifically in English Language Arts, indicates they need some additional support to be ready for success in fourth grade.
- We have a strong plan to provide that support to your student. *[Insert specific supports.]*
- Please schedule a meeting with your student's counselor to review your student's home literacy report and the supports that we have at our school.
- In the event your child struggles in their universal screening or benchmark assessments during third grade, we will offer summer programming seats for your student to receive small group extended learning time to develop those third-grade skills not mastered during the school year. Students will be provided an opportunity to re-take their ELA TCAP assessment and, at the end of camp, students will be given an opportunity to demonstrate growth from their camp experiences.
- Additionally, our district will offer high-dosage, low ratio tutoring for your student to receive

support throughout their fourth-grade year. This will ensure that your student has the needed supports to be successful in fourth grade and beyond.

- These are important learning opportunities that are not available to every student but are prioritized for students who could benefit the most.
- Daily attendance is critical to a child's success in school. If a child misses multiple days a month, they can easily fall behind in the daily instruction that their teachers are delivering. Attendance is critically important.
- However, if your family chooses not to engage in additional supports for your student, your child may not move ahead to the next grade.
- Extra learning time is a valuable and exciting opportunity for our students. We encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities and partner with us to help keep your student on track.
- Our district sincerely hopes that your child takes advantage of any and all learning acceleration opportunities and partners with us to keep your child on track.
- If your student scored "approaching expectations" on the third grade ELA TCAP, you may choose to file an appeal with the state department, which may require additional documentation.
- For more information about the supports your school offers, please talk with your child's counselor or teacher.

Educators

- We want to support your student and accelerate their learning *Schedule a time to walk parents through the home literacy reports, benchmark reports or other literacy data to help the family understand these reports).*
- It appears that your child has some learning gaps in their literacy that may put them at risk for having a significant deficiency in reading. That means we need to really work on developing their reading skills and helping them meet academic expectations for their age.
- As educators, we review universal screener data and ELA assessments to track your child's progress in third grade, and a student's score on a universal screener would show lack of significant progress in reading development and classwork and unit assessments provide us with evidence of third grade standards development.
- We have several supports in our school to help support your student's learning including *[Insert specific supports.]*
- I also want to take time to support your child's learning at home. *(Discuss ways to support learning at home.)*
- Remember that attendance is essential. (Please tailor this conversation to the child's attendance record).
- Finally, I want to make sure that we stay in close contact about your child's progress. I will be setting up the following strategy for us to communicate. *[Insert specific strategy.]*

2023-24 SY Sample Timeline

Note: This table is a representative example. Some dates are based on third party vendors or local district discretion and may be subject to change.

Timeline	Communication
Mid-October	Home Literacy Report 1- needed interventions in tutoring and summer programming
February	Home Literacy Report 2- at-risk for retention
March	Summer programming prioritized sign-ups for at-risk students
May 20	Initial TCAP data results available. Results should be used to identify prioritized students.
May 21 – June 3	Parent notification, explanation of available student interventions, and development of parent agreements/retention plans
May 22 – May 31	Grade 3 TCAP ELA Retake
May 28 – June 28	Parent appeal process for students scoring “approaching” opens and appeals accepted
May 28 – June 28	Department reviews appeals and returns decisions
June – July	Possible choice for Summer Programming launch
June – July	Parent notifications of promotion and retention decisions

Sample Letter and Resource Templates

These optional resources are provided for interested districts as examples and templates, editable and customizable for use at the district’s discretion. Please note that in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-1-905(d) (4), districts must provide notice to parents or guardians of students in third grade who have an achievement level of “approaching expectations” or “below expectations” on the ELA portion of the student’s most recent TCAP test.

Third Grade Resources

Fall Welcome Letter for Third Grade Students

The [Fall Welcome Letter template letter](#) is an example of a letter to parents from school leaders to communicate how important third grade is in a student’s development and to encourage strong parent-teacher engagement. The Pathways to 4th Grade Flowchart is a helpful visual for communicating promotion pathways to parents. Multiple size options of the flowchart are available on the [Learning Acceleration](#) page.

October Third Grade At-Risk Home Literacy Report

The [October At-Risk Home Literacy Report template letter](#) from school leaders to parents helps explain the student's data after the first administration of the district's selected, state-approved universal reading screener, and encourages discussion about specific intervention options available to the student.

January Third Grade At-Risk Home Literacy Report

The [January At-Risk Home Literacy Report template letter](#) from school leaders to parents highlights a need for interventions to support a student's demonstrating reading deficiencies in universal reading screener data. The letter encourages a school-and-family meeting and encourages the family to register their child for summer programming. If used, this letter could be shared with teachers to ensure seamless communications with families to schedule meetings, discuss the data, and help register for summer programming.

May TCAP Non-Proficient Letter

Two template letters, tailored for students scoring [approaching expectations](#) and students scoring [below expectations](#) notifies families of their child's performance on TCAP and provides the intervention options necessary for promotion.

TN ALL Corps (High-Dosage, Low Ratio) Tutoring Parent Promotion Agreement

The [Fourth Grade Promotion Plan template letter](#) supports parents in understanding expectations and requirements for students receiving TN ALL Corps (high-dosage, low-ratio) tutoring in lieu of retention. This [Sample Tutoring Agreement template letter](#) notifies families of the expectations required and has the parent or guardian agree to the requirements of this intervention.

Summer Programming Parent Promotion Agreement

The [Summer Programming template letter](#) supports parents in understanding expectations and requirements for students participating in learning loss bridge camp in lieu of retention.

Third Grade Promotion Student Record Template

The [Third Grade Promotion Student Record](#) is an example template for districts/schools to use when documenting promotion decisions for students. Score reports and documents used in promotion decisions should also be included in the student's record. These records are particularly important when students transfer to a new school or district.

Fourth Grade Resources

Fall Welcome Letter for Fourth Grade Students

The [Fourth Grade Fall Welcome template](#) letter is an example of a letter to parents from school leaders reminding parents of the tutoring requirement and to encourage strong parent-teacher engagement.

Midyear Tutoring Reminder Letter

The [Midyear Tutoring Reminder template letter](#) is an example of a letter to parents who may need a reminder of the requirement for their student to participate in tutoring.

Fourth Grade Student Demonstrated Adequate Growth Parent Letter

The [Fourth Grade Student Demonstrated Adequate Growth Parent Letter](#) is an example letter to parents of students who demonstrated adequate growth and will be promoted for fifth grade.

Fourth Grade Student Did Not Demonstrate Adequate Growth Parent Letter

The [Fourth Grade Student Did Not Demonstrate Adequate Growth Parent Letter](#) is an example letter to parents of students who did not demonstrate adequate growth and will require a conference to determine the student's fifth grade promotion decision.

Fourth Grade Promotion Student Record Template

The [Fourth Grade Promotion Student Record](#) is an example template for use when documenting promotion decisions for students. Score reports and documents used in promotion decisions should also be included in the student's record. These records are particularly important when students transfer to a new school or district.