



Tennessee Education Savings Account Annual Report

Tennessee Department of Education | December 2024



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Introduction

The ESA program allows eligible students who are zoned to attend a Memphis-Shelby County Public School, a Metro Nashville Public School, a Hamilton County Public School, or a school that was in the Achievement School District (ASD) on May 24, 2019, to use state and local funding toward pre-approved education expenses, including tuition and/or fees at approved, participating non-public schools. The program allows eligible families to choose the type of education that best meets the needs of their children. Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § [49-6-2606\(c\)](#), the department shall produce an annual report that is accessible on the department's website with information about the program for the previous school year.

Student Participation

In total for the 2023-24 school year, **2,088 students** were enrolled in a non-public school and used an Education Savings Account (ESA). For many of these students, the 2023-24 school year was their second year of ESA participation. The ESA program had 21 students who were enrolled as seniors (12th grade) or graduated from a high school.

Withdrawals

During the 2023-24 school year, 74 students used an ESA at an approved non-public school during the school year but withdrew before the end of the year. The students terminated their participation in the program by enrolling in a public school, enrolling in a Category IV or V non-public school, moving out of state, or for a reason not shared with the department.

Assessment

Tenn. Code Ann. § [49-6-2606\(a\)\(1\)](#) requires all participating ESA students in grades 3-11 to take the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) tests for math and English language arts (ELA). The department worked to coordinate with school testing coordinators to provide a smooth and secure testing administration for Spring 2024.

Information for individual schools' Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) scores can be found on the [department's TVAAS site](#). For schools with ESA students in grades 3-11, the information available from Spring 2023 and Spring 2024 testing is listed below.

There are several important facts to consider when examining the TCAP data. First, although ESA students are required to take the TCAP in math and ELA in grades 3-11, the TCAP is not the typical

assessment administered in non-public schools. Non-public schools typically measure achievement with results from a nationally standardized achievement test in ELA and mathematics administered at least once per school year pursuant to SBE Rule 0520-07-02.

Further, TCAP tests measure student mastery of Tennessee’s Academic Standards, and non-public schools are not required to teach these same standards. Although overlap exists between standards at public and non-public schools, the sequencing and pacing of standards can be significantly different. This means students who take the TCAP in a non-public school may be assessed on content they have not covered in that given school year. These facts should be considered when interpreting TCAP results for ESA students in the information below.

Additionally, the department analyzed how ESA students performed compared to economically disadvantaged students in their home districts, which showed economically disadvantaged students in the ESA program outperformed their public school peers in ELA and math. Further, nearly half (46%) of ESA participants identify as Black or African American, and 33% as White, showcasing the program’s broad reach.

Testing Group	Year	Subject	Below	Approaching	Met	Exceeded	Proficiency Rate
			Expectations	Expectations	Expectations	Expectations	(Met + Exceeded)
All TN K-12 Public Schools	2022-23	ELA	20.2%	41.8%	29.0%	9.0%	38.0%
	2023-24	ELA	19.6%	41.4%	29.4%	9.6%	39.0%
	2022-23	Math	37.1%	29.2%	24.0%	9.7%	33.7%
	2023-24	Math	26.2%	37.1%	26.4%	10.3%	36.7%
All ESA Students	2022-23	ELA	24.5%	52.7%	21.6%	1.2%	22.8%
	2023-24	ELA	22.1%	50.7%	23.8%	3.4%	27.2%
	2022-23	Math	51.6%	37.1%	10.9%	0.4%	11.3%
	2023-24	Math	39.2%	43.2%	15.4%	2.2%	17.6%
Davidson County Public Schools	2022-23	ELA	32.4%	40.2%	20.7%	6.7%	27.4%
	2023-24	ELA	28.5%	41.0%	22.5%	8.0%	30.5%
	2022-23	Math	54.3%	24.3%	15.3%	6.1%	21.4%
	2023-24	Math	36.9%	36.8%	18.8%	7.5%	26.4%
Davidson County ESA Students	2022-23	ELA	21.0%	55.0%	24.0%	0.0%	24.0%
	2023-24	ELA	19.4%	51.8%	25.7%	3.1%	28.8%
	2022-23	Math	56.4%	30.7%	12.9%	0.0%	12.9%
	2023-24	Math	39.8%	44.5%	14.1%	1.6%	15.7%
Memphis-Shelby	2022-23	ELA	34.5%	43.7%	18.1%	3.7%	21.8%
	2023-24	ELA	31.7%	44.6%	19.4%	4.3%	23.7%

County Public Schools	2022-23	Math	58.2%	26.8%	12.0%	3.0%	15.0%
	2023-24	Math	43.5%	37.8%	15.0%	3.7%	18.7%
Memphis-Shelby County ESA Students	2022-23	ELA	26.9%	51.0%	20.0%	2.1%	22.1%
	2023-24	ELA	23.5%	51.4%	21.9%	3.2%	25.1%
	2022-23	Math	46.9%	40.8%	10.9%	1.4%	12.3%
	2023-24	Math	39.0%	42.3%	16.0%	2.7%	18.7%
Hamilton County Public Schools	2022-23	ELA	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	2023-24	ELA	21.1%	40.0%	28.9%	10.0%	39.0%
	2022-23	Math	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	2023-24	Math	28.0%	35.3%	26.4%	10.3%	36.6%
Hamilton County ESA Students	2022-23	ELA	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	2023-24	ELA	23.3%	44.5%	27.4%	4.8%	32.2%
	2022-23	Math	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	2023-24	Math	38.0%	43.9%	16.8%	1.3%	18.1%

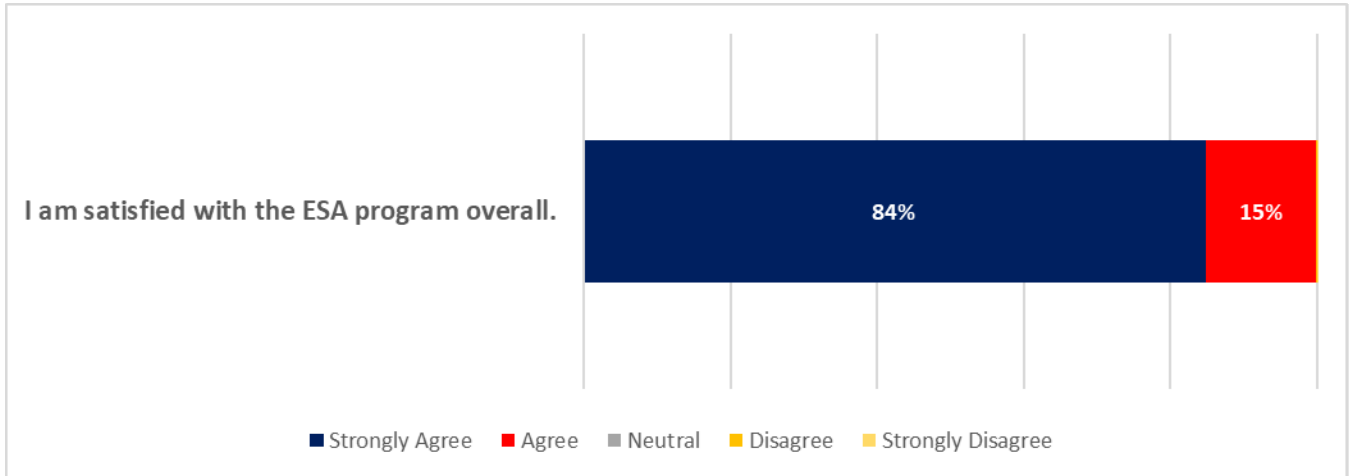
Parent Satisfaction Feedback

Account holders (parents of participating students) received a survey, as required by Tenn. Code Ann. § [49-6-2606\(b\)\(2\)](#), via email to gather satisfaction data. The survey questions were designed to address statutory requirements to capture parent satisfaction, reason for program exit (if applicable), and suggestions for program improvement.

“My family has greatly appreciated the ESA program. It has allowed us to place our children with learning differences in smaller classrooms with specialized care.”

-Father of 3 ESA students

ESA Program Satisfaction



Nearly all account holders (99%) agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with the ESA program overall. Additionally, account holders indicated that they were overwhelmingly satisfied with the communication, helpfulness, and resource materials provided by the department.

The open-ended sections included responses that were appreciative for the ESA program, with many families sharing that they are grateful for the new educational opportunities available to their children.

Account holders were asked if they planned to apply for the 2024-25 school year. Nearly all respondents (99%) claimed they had already reapplied or were planning to reapply. Only 1% of respondents claimed they were not going to apply; of those respondents, the majority said they were no longer eligible due to a family increase in income.

"I very much appreciate this opportunity to receive this grant award. The information provided by ESA is excellent, and the support team is awesome. I am grateful for this team. Response time is quick!"

- Grandparent of two ESA students

Conclusion

In the 2023-24 application cycle, the department saw an increase in the number of application submissions, application approvals, and enrolled students in the program. Most notably, students enrolled in the program increased by 362% as compared to the first year of implementation.

In January 2024, the department fully transitioned to the online portal for all ESA functions, including application submission, enrollment submission, and funds disbursement. ESA account holders can now expend all pre-approved funds for educational expenses in the online portal, including, but not limited to, making school tuition and fee payments, booking tutoring sessions, and purchasing technology devices.

The department looks forward to building on the foundation of a successful online portal launch and anticipates the number of enrolled students in the program will continue to grow as the online user experience improves accessibility for families.

"Participating in this program has been incredibly transformative for my daughter. This program has provided her with a quality education and is allowing her to be equipped with essential knowledge and skills. It has also made it affordable, removing a significant barrier to her academic pursuits. This support has set her up for success, making her more competitive and marketable in the job market. She is gaining a strong foundation to build upon, and I am confident that the opportunities this program has created will positively impact her future."

-Mother of an ESA student

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