



Tennessee Education Savings Account Annual Report

Tennessee Department of Education | October 2023



In the 2022-23 school year, the ESA program allowed eligible students who are zoned to attend a Memphis-Shelby County Public School, a Davidson 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 education expenses, including tuition and/or fees at approved non-public schools. The program allows eligible low-income 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 2022-23 school year, **452 students** were enrolled in a participating school and used an Education Savings Account (ESA). For each of these students, the 2022-23 school year was the first year of ESA participation. No students were enrolled as seniors (12th grade) or graduated from a high school during the first year of the ESA Program.

Withdrawals

During the 2022-23 school year, 16 students used an ESA at a participating 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, or for a reason not shared with the department.

Assessment

Tenn. Code Ann. § [49-6-2606\(a\)\(1\)](#) requires all participating students in grades three through eleven to take the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment (TCAP) for math and English language arts. The department worked to coordinate with school testing coordinators to provide a smooth and secure testing administration for Spring 2023.

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 testing is below.

"I'm very pleased and thankful for this blessing. It is not easy being a single parent, but we have been blessed. Everything was smooth." –Memphis mother of a kindergarten ESA student

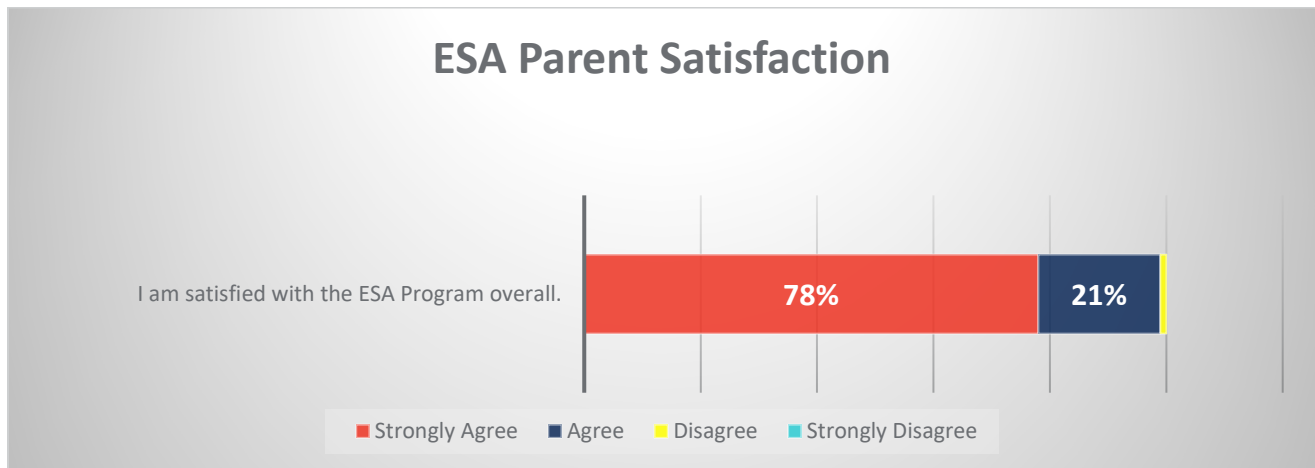
Testing Group	Below Expectations	Approaching Expectations	Met Expectations	Exceeded Expectations	Subject
All TN K-12 Public Schools	37.1%	29.2%	24.0%	9.7%	Math
All TN K-12 Public Schools	20.2%	41.8%	29.0%	9.0%	ELA
Davidson County Public Schools	54.3%	24.3%	15.3%	6.1%	Math
Davidson County Public Schools	32.4%	40.2%	20.7%	6.7%	ELA
Memphis-Shelby County Public Schools	58.2%	26.8%	12.0%	3.0%	Math
Memphis-Shelby County Public Schools	34.5%	43.7%	18.1%	3.7%	ELA
All Participating ESA Schools	51.6%	37.1%	10.9%	0.4%	Math
All Participating ESA Schools	24.5%	52.7%	21.6%	1.2%	ELA
Davidson County Participating ESA Schools	56.4%	30.7%	12.9%	0.0%	Math
Davidson County Participating ESA Schools	21.0%	55.0%	24.0%	0.0%	ELA
Shelby County Participating ESA Schools	46.9%	40.8%	10.9%	1.4%	Math
Shelby County Participating ESA Schools	26.9%	51.0%	20.0%	2.1%	ELA

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 demographic data and satisfaction data.

*"Estoy muy agradecida con la escuela. Son muy atentos y amables.
I am very grateful to the school. They are very attentive and friendly."
–Mother of Nashville sixth grade ESA student*

ESA Program Satisfaction



Ninety-nine percent of account holders agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with the ESA Program overall. Account holder responses in the open-ended sections included praise for quick replies to emails and helpful department members. Some families noted that they would like to use funds for school lunches, field trips, or extracurricular sports activities, which are currently not allowed uses of funds pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § [49-6-2603\(a\)\(4\)](#).

Account holders also expressed a desire to have an online platform for both the application and spending, which is in progress for Year 2. The overwhelming parent response was appreciative and reflective, noting how grateful families are for this program and the educational opportunities now available to their children.

Account holders were asked if they planned to apply for the 2023-24 school year. **Only 3% of respondents claimed they were not going to apply;** of those, one planned on re-enrolling in public school, one reported that the family moved out of state, and the others were no longer eligible due to a family increase in income.

“Thank you so much. It’s like a dream come true for my child. This would not be possible without ESA.” –Nashville father of a fifth grade ESA student

Conclusion

In the 2023 legislative session, Tennessee's 113th General Assembly expanded the ESA Program's scope in terms of both geographic area and student eligibility. Based on Chapter 328 of the Public Acts of 2023, the program's geographical availability expanded to include students zoned to a school in the Hamilton County school district. Additionally, Chapter 171 of the Public Acts of 2023 expands student eligibility to students who were enrolled in a public school for an entire year or began kindergarten between 2019 and 2022. The department anticipates the number of enrolled students in the program will continue to grow as more eligible families participate in the Hamilton County area. Data concerning these expansions will not be available until next year.

"My children struggled with finding their crowd before this school. I have noticed a shift in my daughter's perspective, conversation, crowd, and self-worth. At my daughter's age I was failing high school – not my daughter. She has every credit needed and has decided on a number of colleges that she is interested in. Did I mention she was against the idea of college prior to the exposure she has received because of this amazing program? My twelve-year old son has picked up baseball, band, theater, and has found a niche for presentations. I hear outbursts of laughter from his bedroom in the evenings. He has come out of his shell." –Mother of two Nashville ESA students

*"We are beyond blessed for the ESA Program. My children and I are even appreciative of the staff. The individual that processed our applications was SO KIND with wonderful energy and great patience! Even the staff at the physical location were polite and helpful. AMAZING TEAM all around!"
–Mother of two Nashville ESA students*

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