

A Resolution of the Tennessee State Board of Education

By Mr. Ryan Holt,

WHEREAS, TCA 49-1-302 (a) specifies “It is the duty of the board, and it has the power to: Study programs of instruction in public schools, kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12); Analyze the needs of such public schools; Study the use of public funds for such public schools; Include the conclusions of the studies and analyses in its annual recommendations to the governor and general assembly for the funding of public education”; and

WHEREAS, TCA 49-1-302 (a) (3) specifies it is the duty of the board to “Develop and maintain current a master plan for the development of public education, kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12), and provide recommendations to the executive branch, the general assembly and the local boards of education and directors of schools regarding the use of public funds for education”; and

WHEREAS, the members of the State Board of Education share a common commitment to the academic success and intellectual growth of Tennessee’s students with the Governor, Legislators, parents, teachers and students alike; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee, under the leadership of its general assembly and Governor Bill Lee, and through the countless hours of work on the part of its educators, has taken bold and strategic steps toward ensuring students have the skills and resources they need to achieve academic proficiency in English language arts; and

WHEREAS, the passage of the Tennessee Literacy Success Act in 2021 set forth numerous excellent provisions ensuring that students in grades K-3 are provided instruction grounded in foundational literacy skills, an evidence-based method of teaching students to read that includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension that enables students to develop the reading skills required to meet Tennessee's academic standards; and

WHEREAS, the passage of the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act in 2021 set forth numerous excellent provisions governing supports and added instruction for students who are not at grade level in English language arts before promotion to the third or fourth grade; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the passage of the Tennessee Literacy Success Act in 2021 grades K-3 are now the grades where students are provided foundational literacy skills instruction to support their ability to read; and

WHEREAS, when the Tennessee Literacy Success Act and Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act were enacted, the earliest grade level with reliable literacy data was third grade; and

WHEREAS, since this time Tennessee students began taking three reading screeners a year beginning in kindergarten and continuing through first and second grades; and

WHEREAS, the data from these reading screeners can be utilized to trigger key supports, interventions, and retention decisions earlier in the student’s academic career; and

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WHEREAS, Tennessee offers an optional but widely administered second grade cumulative assessment; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of students, families, and the state to promote children who have mastered the fundamentals of literacy; and

WHEREAS, retaining a student in grades K-3 rather than grades 3-4 will ensure that students who are in the most need of additional reading support will have access to foundational literacy skills instruction at a critical point in their foundational literacy development should they be retained; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee should not retreat from its commitment to academic excellence evinced in this work; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we do hereby respectfully request the Governor and General Assembly reconsider the provisions of the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act of 2021 by maintaining the excellent supports for struggling readers, but moving retention provisions to the grades Kindergarten through three rather than the third and fourth grade.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor and members of the Senate Education Committee and members of the House Education Instruction and Education Administration committees, and be posted on the State Board of Education Website with this final clause omitted from such copy.

Primary Sponsor _____

Co-sponsor(s) _____

Considered _____

Chair's Signature _____

Adopted: _____