



2025 MASTER PLAN ANNUAL REPORT





INTRODUCTION

The Tennessee State Board of Education (“State Board”) is charged in state law with developing and maintaining a master plan for public education, kindergarten through grade twelve, and providing recommendations to the executive branch, the general assembly, local boards of education and directors of schools regarding the use of public funds for education. The State Board’s master plan provides a lens through which all Tennesseans can examine state-level efforts and determine if rules and policies are positioning school districts to effectively prepare Tennessee students for the workforce, post-secondary success, and engaged citizenship.

This report is designed to publicly share the key initiatives of the State Board and outcomes for each annual goal set within the master plan. The State Board regularly evaluates progress toward these goals and updates its master plan to inform its recommendations for Tennessee education every three years.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State Board's 2025 Master Plan Report shares how Tennessee is doing when it comes to preparing students for success in school and beyond. Each year, the State Board tracks progress in four key areas: increasing literacy rates, preparing students for postsecondary education and careers, recruiting and maintaining effective teachers and leaders, and strengthening community engagement and accountability. This year's report highlights the strides made across the state and our efforts to ensure that state policies reflect what students and educators need most.

Key Highlights

This year's report indicates Tennessee's continued growth over the last three years in literacy proficiency, college and career readiness, and in our efforts to recruit and retain effective educators.

- More third-grade and eighth-grade students are reading at grade level—meaning more students are ready to tackle high school with confidence.
- More high school students are prepared for college and career—meaning more students have greater opportunities for work and an increased potential for economic independence.
- More newly licensed educators are choosing to remain in the classroom—meaning more students have access to experienced educators.

These gains reflect meaningful momentum, but we recognize that the work is far from finished. The State Board remains committed to celebrating progress while transparently addressing areas where improvement is needed.

Looking Ahead

Every three years, the State Board conducts a comprehensive review of statewide progress across the key areas identified in this report to update its Master Plan and to provide additional insight to the state's education funding review committee as it crafts recommendations for strategic investments in public education. This ongoing reflection ensures that our goals remain aligned with the needs of Tennessee's students and educators. We believe that sustained focus and collaboration across all four priority areas will help every student graduate ready to thrive.

To explore previous reports and learn more about our goals, visit the [State Board's website](#). Together, we're building a brighter future for Tennessee's children.

ABOUT THE STATE BOARD

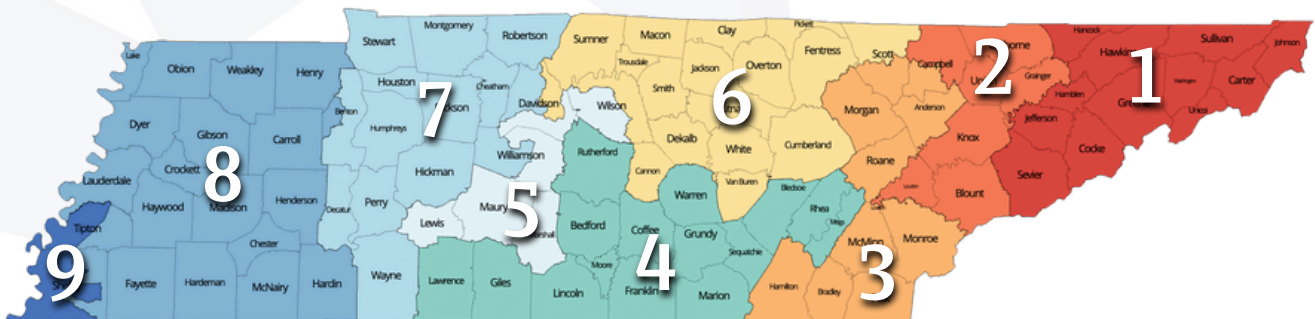
The State Board is a gubernatorially and legislatively appointed board charged under the law with rule and policymaking for K-12 education. The Board is composed of 11 members with one from each of Tennessee's nine congressional districts, including a voting student member, and the executive director of the [Tennessee Higher Education Commission](#) ("THEC") who serves as an ex-officio, non-voting member. Dr. Sara Morrison serves as [Executive Director](#) of the State Board. Board members serve unpaid, five-year terms and may be re-appointed. The student member serves a one-year term.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the State Board is to ensure rules, policies, and systems are in place so that all students are prepared for success after graduation.

 Ms. Krissi McInturff District 1	 Mr. Jordan Mollenhour District 2	 Mr. Robert Eby District 3	 Mr. Warren Wells District 4	 Mr. Ryan Holt District 5	 Dr. Ina Maxwell District 6
 Ms. Marsha Johnson District 7	 Mr. Larry Jensen District 8	 Mr. Darrell Cobbins District 9	 Ms. Britain Sapp Student Member	 Dr. Steven Gentile THEC Executive Director	 Dr. Sara Morrison Executive Director

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS



The Role of the State Board

in Student Success



Directed by State Law

Through legislation, the Governor and General Assembly direct the State Board to develop rules that further define what's established in law related to K-12 education.

Rule & Policy Development

Based on requirements in state law, the State Board engages stakeholders to craft rules and supporting policies related to topics like graduation requirements, teacher evaluations, and state assessments.

Other Key Responsibilities

The State Board manages processes for several important requirements, including academic standards, educator licensure discipline, and TISA accountability hearings.

State Agency Collaboration

Working collaboratively with the TN Department of Education, the State Board engages with stakeholders to determine if rules and policies are effectively supporting the work of our local districts and schools.

Partners in Education

The State Board works in partnership with our educators, school leaders, support staff, and communities to ensure all students are prepared for success after graduation.



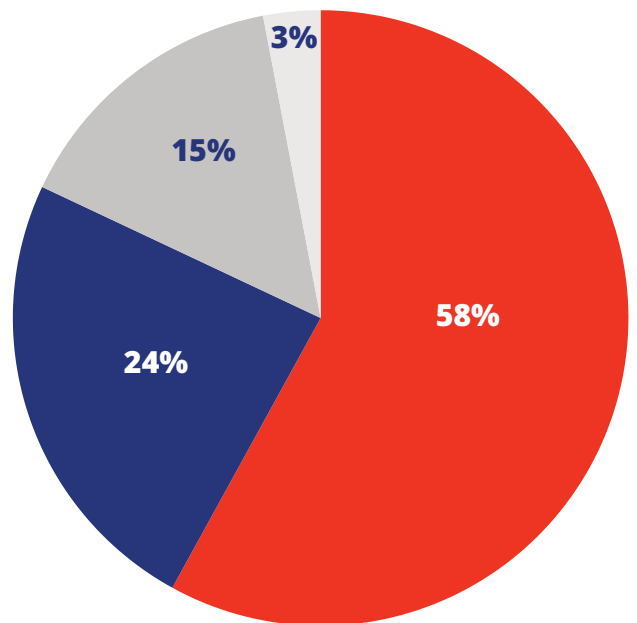
TENNESSEE BY THE NUMBERS



971,741
STUDENTS

Student Demographics

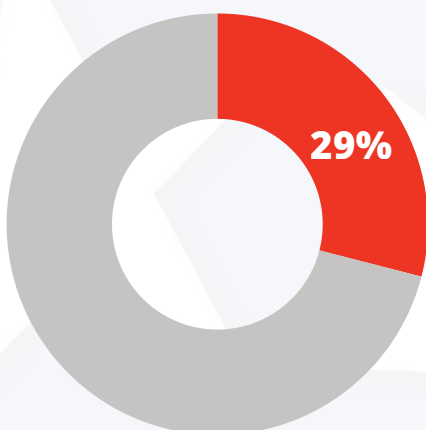
- White
- Black or African American
- Hispanic
- Asian



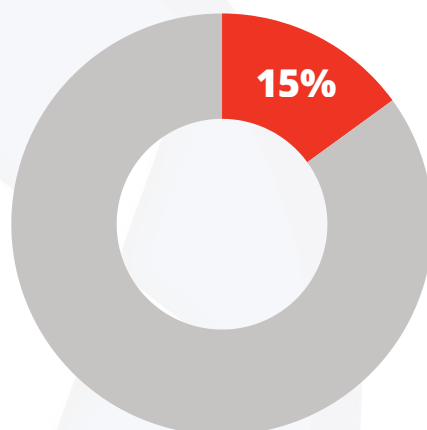
58,811
TEACHERS



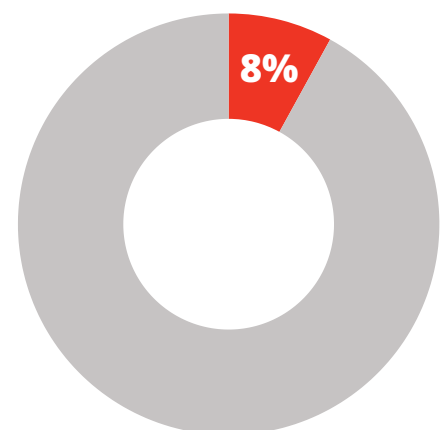
1,905
SCHOOLS



Economically Disadvantaged



Students with Disabilities



English Learners

OUR MASTER PLAN

The State Board's Master Plan highlights four strategic focus areas: Literacy, Postsecondary and Career, Teachers and Leaders, and Engagement and Accountability. Each focus area includes annual incremental goals that are designed to move Tennessee toward attainment of each strategic focus area's overarching goal.



All students are on grade level in English language arts (ELA) as measured by the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) results.

- ▶ The percentage of all third-grade students on grade level in ELA will increase by 4 points annually; economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities will increase by 5 points; and English learners by 6 points.
- ▶ The percentage of all eighth-grade students on grade level in ELA will increase by 5 points annually; economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities and English learners will increase by 6 points.



All students are prepared for success in high school, postsecondary, and career.

- ▶ The percentage of all students demonstrating readiness for postsecondary and careers after high school will increase by 4 points annually; economically disadvantaged will increase by 5 points and students with disabilities and English learners will increase by 6 points.
- ▶ The percentage of students enrolling in a postsecondary institution following graduation will increase by 3 points annually.



All schools are staffed with qualified and effective educators.

- ▶ The percentage of newly licensed teachers who remain teaching in Tennessee public schools for at least three years will increase by 0.5 points annually.
- ▶ 65% of the educators teaching on a permit will obtain a full and valid practitioner or professional license within three years.



Our public meetings will ensure transparency, accountability, and effective implementation of education policy.

- ▶ The State Board will annually identify its rules and policies for review and update based on changes in law or opportunities to improve student outcomes, as needed.

For additional details regarding the data points used to set the annual goals included in the State Board's Master Plan, please see the State Board's [Master Plan Supplement](#).



LITERACY

Strategic Focus

All students are on grade level in English Language Arts (ELA) as measured by [TCAP](#) results.

Information the Board Considered to Inform Decisions

- The State Board heard presentations from the Tennessee Department of Education regarding an automated essay scoring pilot for state assessments during its [quarterly workshop on May 29, 2025](#), as well as the 2025 state TCAP assessment outcomes at its [quarterly workshop on August 14, 2025](#).
- The State Board's [Educator Preparation Report Card](#) now provides data on the first-time pass rates for educators taking the new Tennessee Early Literacy Assessment.
- The State Board's standards review process for ELA began in 2024 and spanned throughout all of 2025 with 21 competitively selected educators and 8 appointed education leaders leading the charge to review and revise the ELA academic standards. The State Board collected over 48,000 public comments regarding proposed revisions to the standards and will approve the revised ELA academic standards at its May 2026 board meeting.

Actions of the Board

- The State Board approved updates to its standards for foundational literacy skills outlined in Policy 5.505 to ensure candidates are adequately trained to support students with reading deficiencies at its [quarterly meeting on May 30, 2025](#).
- The State Board approved updates to its standards for foundational literacy skills outlined in Policy 5.505 to ensure teacher candidates are adequately trained to support students with reading deficiencies at its [quarterly meeting on May 30, 2025](#).

The Work Ahead

While Tennessee continues to see encouraging gains in student proficiency in ELA, none of the State Board's annual incremental goals were met this year. As the State Board works to update the goals and actions of its Master Plan, the potential for adjustments to its annual literacy measures will be taken into consideration. Additionally, the State Board intends to expand this focus area to also include numeracy and will work collectively with education stakeholders to determine the right grade levels and metrics to use as a guide for understanding how students are progressing in these critical skills. The State Board is committed to data-informed decision-making and continuous improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students statewide.



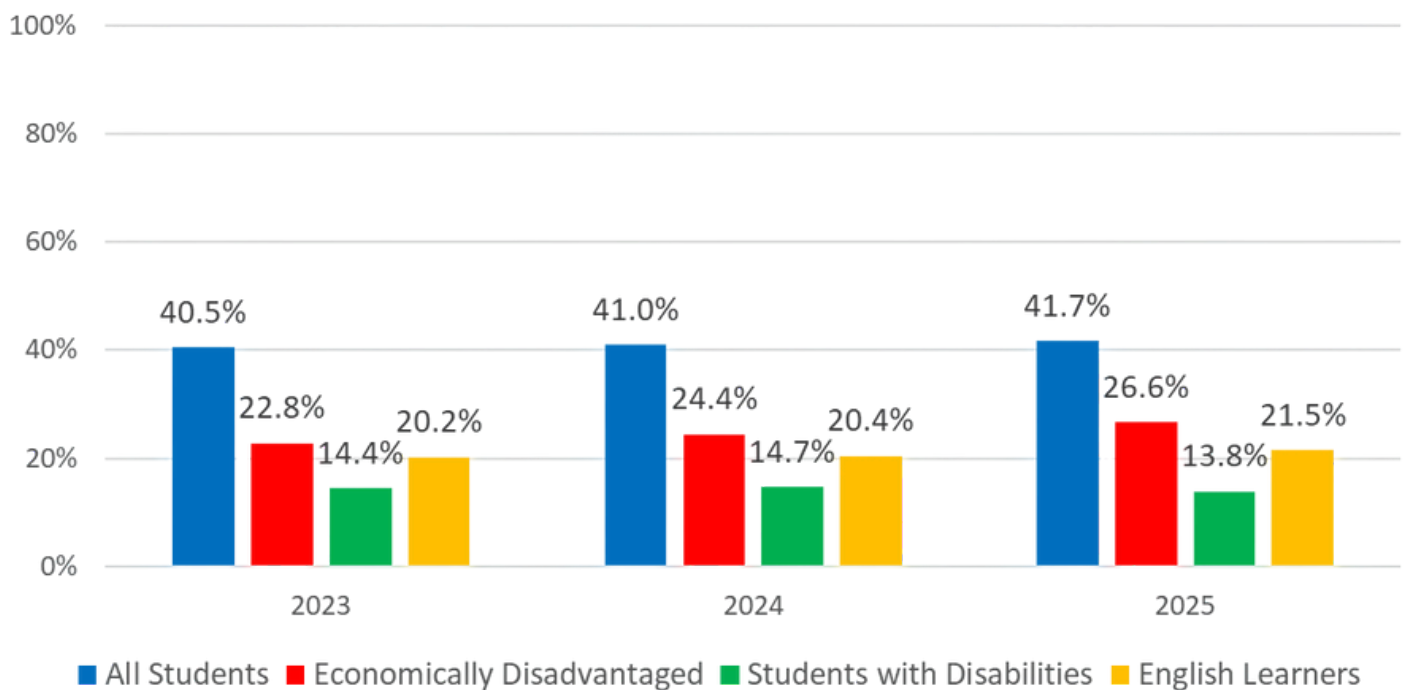
LITERACY

Annual Goal

The percentage of all third-grade students on grade level in ELA will increase by 4 points annually; economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities will increase by 5 points; and English learners by 6 points.

- ❌ Goal Not Met: In 2025, the percentage of all third-grade students on grade level in ELA increased but only by 0.7 points.
- ❌ Goal Not Met: In 2025, the percentage of third-grade economically disadvantaged students on grade level in ELA increased but only by 2.2 points.
- ❌ Goal Not Met: In 2025, the percentage of third-grade students with disabilities on grade level in ELA decreased by 0.9 points.
- ❌ Goal Not Met: In 2025, the percentage of third-grade English learners on grade level in ELA increased but only by 1.1 points.

Percentage of Third-Grade Students on Grade Level in ELA





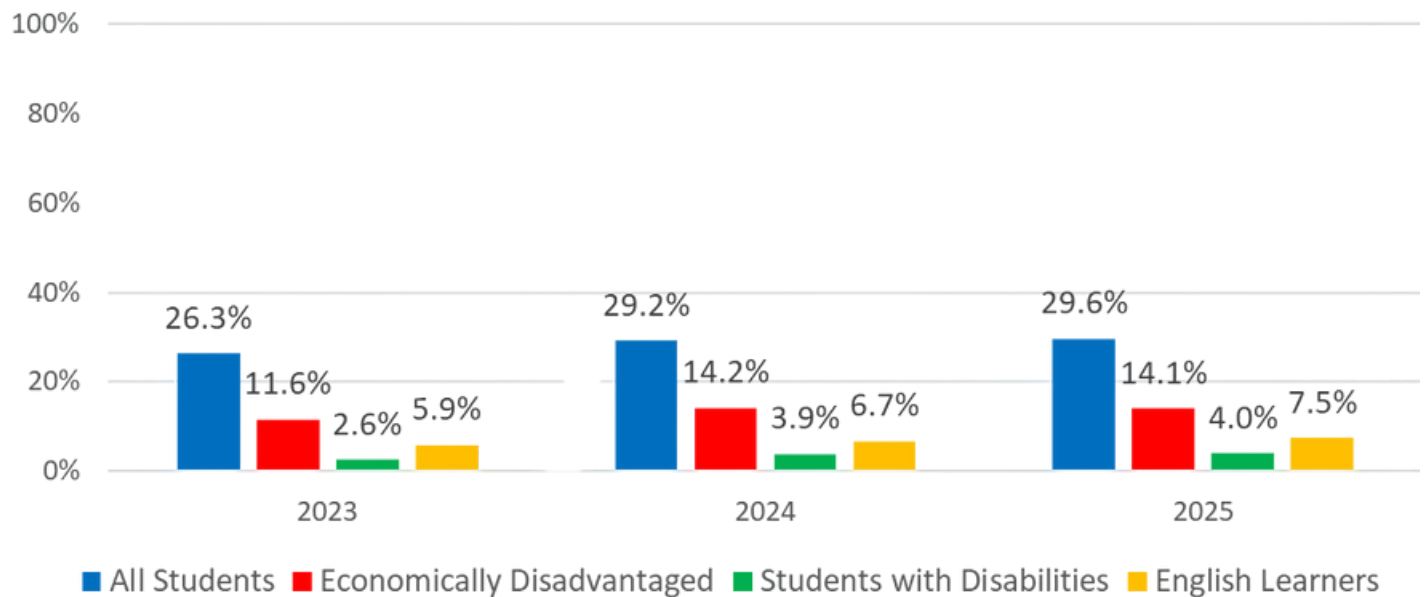
LITERACY

Annual Goal

The percentage of all eighth-grade students on grade level in ELA will increase by 5 points annually; economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English learners will increase by 6 points.

- ❌ Goal Not Met: In 2025, the percentage of all eighth-grade students on grade level in ELA increased but only by 0.4 points.
- ❌ Goal Not Met: In 2025, the percentage of eighth-grade economically disadvantaged students on grade level in ELA decreased by 0.1 points.
- ❌ Goal Not Met: In 2025, the percentage of eighth-grade students with disabilities on grade level in ELA increased but only by 0.1 points.
- ❌ Goal Not Met: In 2025, the percentage of eighth-grade English learners on grade level in ELA increased but only by 0.8 points.

Percentage of Eighth-Grade Students on Grade Level in ELA





Strategic Focus

All students are prepared for success in high school, postsecondary, and career.

Information the Board Considered to Inform Decisions

- The State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) presented to the State Board on its Impact Credential Framework and the organization's work to better understand the impact of earning a career and technical industry credential on future opportunities at the State Board's [quarterly workshop on February 20, 2025](#).
- The State Board received an update from Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) staff on the percentage of students enrolling in a postsecondary institution after graduation, including those enrolling in a public or private university, community college, or technical education program, during its [quarterly workshop on August 15, 2025](#). THEC staff also provided the State Board with an overview of its updated Master Plan and discussed opportunities for further alignment between the state education agencies.
- In 2025, the State Board reviewed multiple reports and heard presentations related to mathematics, including a [presentation from BEST NC](#) on advanced mathematics pathways offered in North Carolina, a [report on Algebra II course alternatives](#), and the results of a landscape analysis commissioned by the legislature on [mathematics support practices in Tennessee](#).
- At the State Board's [quarterly workshop on November 20, 2025](#), the TN Department of Education presented on its new Future Ready initiative that's focused on ensuring students have quality learning and career experiences in high school and seamlessly transition between high school and college, military, and career pathways.

Actions of the Board

- Chairman Eby called for a study on world language requirements in high school and convened a listening session in July 2025 to consider potential changes to Tennessee's world language graduation requirement to allow for more flexibility for students. The State Board continued discussing potential revisions to the world language requirements at its [quarterly workshop on November 20, 2025](#) and Chairman Eby plans to bring proposed changes to the requirements in early 2026.



Actions of the Board *(Continued)*

- The State Board approved revisions to the academic standards for several career and technical education courses, each of which incorporated standards related to artificial intelligence and its potential impact, and revised the academic standards for fine arts during each of its [quarterly meetings](#) in 2025. The State Board also approved the creation of a new career cluster and courses related to technology in agriculture.
- The State Board approved flexibilities for high school students by reducing the number of mathematics credits a student is required to earn while in high school from four to three requirements at its [quarterly meeting on February 21, 2025](#).

The Work Ahead

While 2025 data revealed a small backslide in the percentage of Tennessee students enrolling in a postsecondary institution, we are encouraged by the numerous school districts around our state that are expanding opportunities for students to engage in college and career experiences while still in high school. As we look to the next three years of our Master Plan, the State Board will seek to elevate the innovative partnerships between our local districts and their universities, community colleges, technical education programs, and local business communities. Additionally, the State Board will advocate for opportunities to consider the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in shaping the future of education, college readiness, and career preparation. As AI continues to transform how students learn and how educators personalize instruction, the State Board will explore policy approaches that ensure Tennessee students are prepared to thrive in an increasingly technology-driven world.





POSTSECONDARY & CAREER

Annual Goal

The percentage of all students demonstrating readiness for postsecondary and careers after high school will increase by 4 points annually; readiness for economically disadvantaged students will increase by 5 points; and readiness for students with disabilities and English learners will increase by 6 points.

Outcomes Pending: Student readiness outcomes will be updated upon release of the Tennessee Department of Education's 2024-25 Report Card.





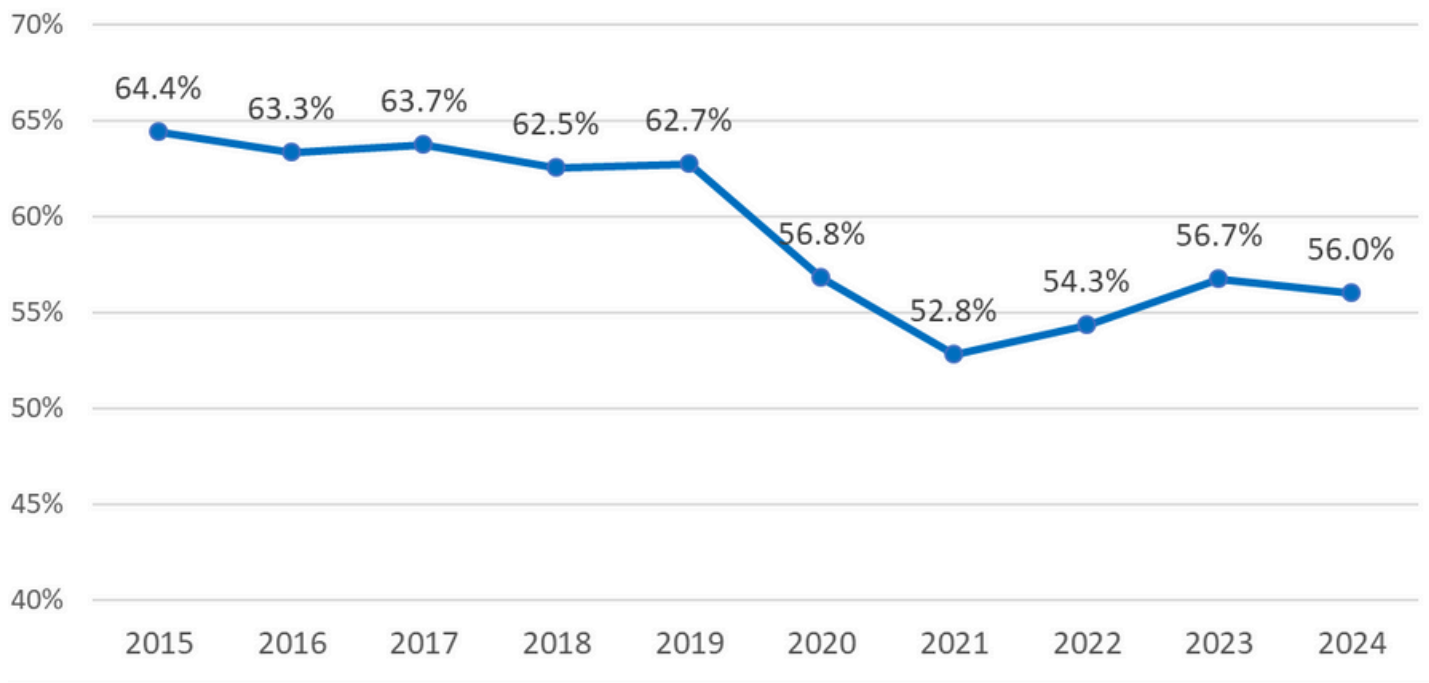
POSTSECONDARY & CAREER

Annual Goal

The percentage of students enrolling in a postsecondary institution following graduation will increase by 3 points annually.

- Goal Not Met: The percentage of students enrolling in a postsecondary institution decreased for the class of 2024 by 0.7 points.

Percentage of Students Enrolling in Postsecondary





TEACHERS AND LEADERS

Strategic Focus

All schools are staffed with qualified and effective educators.

Information the Board Considered to Inform Decisions

- The State Board heard a presentation from the Tennessee Education Research Alliance regarding the results of the annual educator survey during its [quarterly workshop on February 20, 2025](#).
- The Director of Schools for Metro Nashville Public Schools presented on the district's Leadership Playbook during the State Board's [quarterly workshop on May 29, 2025](#).
- The State Board received a report from the Tennessee Department of Education on the state's educator vacancy data and the teacher evaluation landscape analysis during its [quarterly meeting on November 21, 2025](#).

Actions of the Board

- The State Board updated and published its annual [Educator Preparation Report Card](#) via its website on February 15, 2025 and approved one new educator preparation provider at its [quarterly meeting on August 15, 2025](#).
- The State Board established two new early education endorsements at its [quarterly meeting on February 21, 2025](#) and approved changes to clinical practice requirements at its [quarterly meeting on May 30, 2025](#).
- The State Board approved a phase-out of the edTPA requirement for candidates completing an educator preparation program and removed pedagogical assessment requirements for educators seeking to reactivate a license following completion of a preparation program with a job-embedded clinical practice at its [quarterly meeting on May 30, 2025](#).
- The State Board approved an increase to the state minimum teacher salary at its [quarterly board meeting on May 30, 2025](#).

The Work Ahead

As the State Board considers adjustments within this focus area, we are encouraged to see that more newly licensed educators are remaining in the classroom. The State Board will continue to track outcomes in this area as we push to ensure that every Tennessee classroom is led by a qualified and effective educator. To further advance this work, the State Board will expand this focus area in the next version of the Master Plan to include the role of school leaders as we consider the impact of effective leadership on educator retention. We will also continue to invest in robust data collection and research initiatives aimed at identifying successful strategies and uncovering persistent challenges. These insights will guide our efforts to strengthen educator and leader preparation, recruitment, and retention statewide.



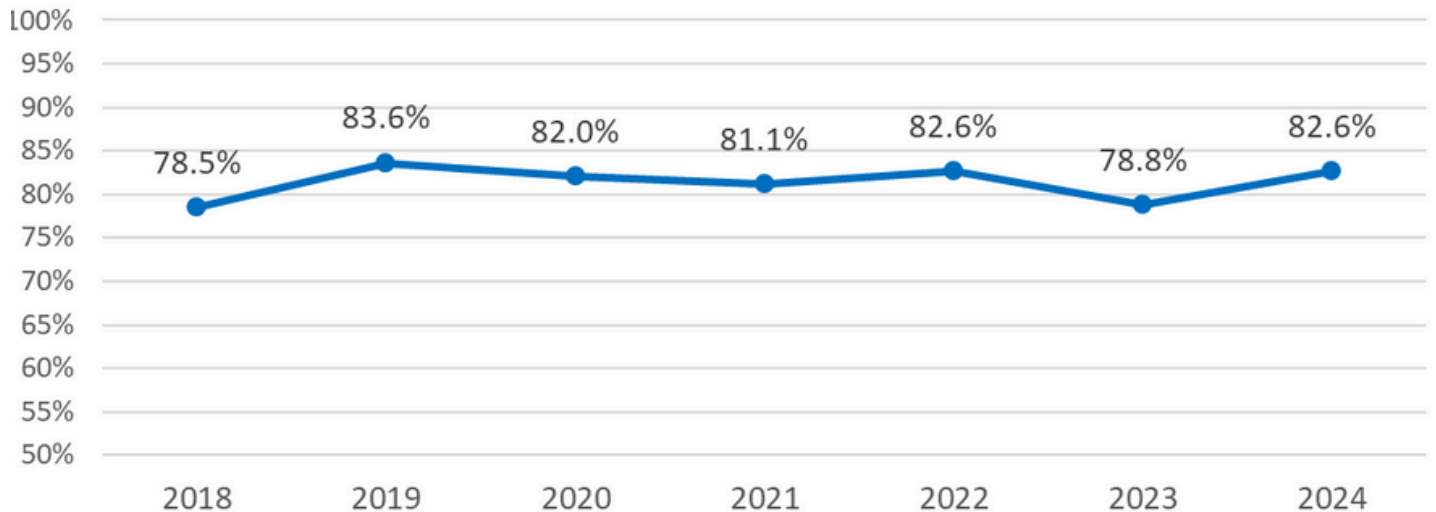
TEACHERS AND LEADERS

Annual Goal

The percentage of newly licensed teachers who remain teaching in Tennessee public schools for at least three years will increase by 0.5 points annually.

- Goal Met: Between 2023 and 2024, the percentage of newly licensed teachers who remain in Tennessee public schools for at least three years increased by 3.8 points.

3-Year Retention Rate for Newly Licensed Teachers in Tennessee Public Schools





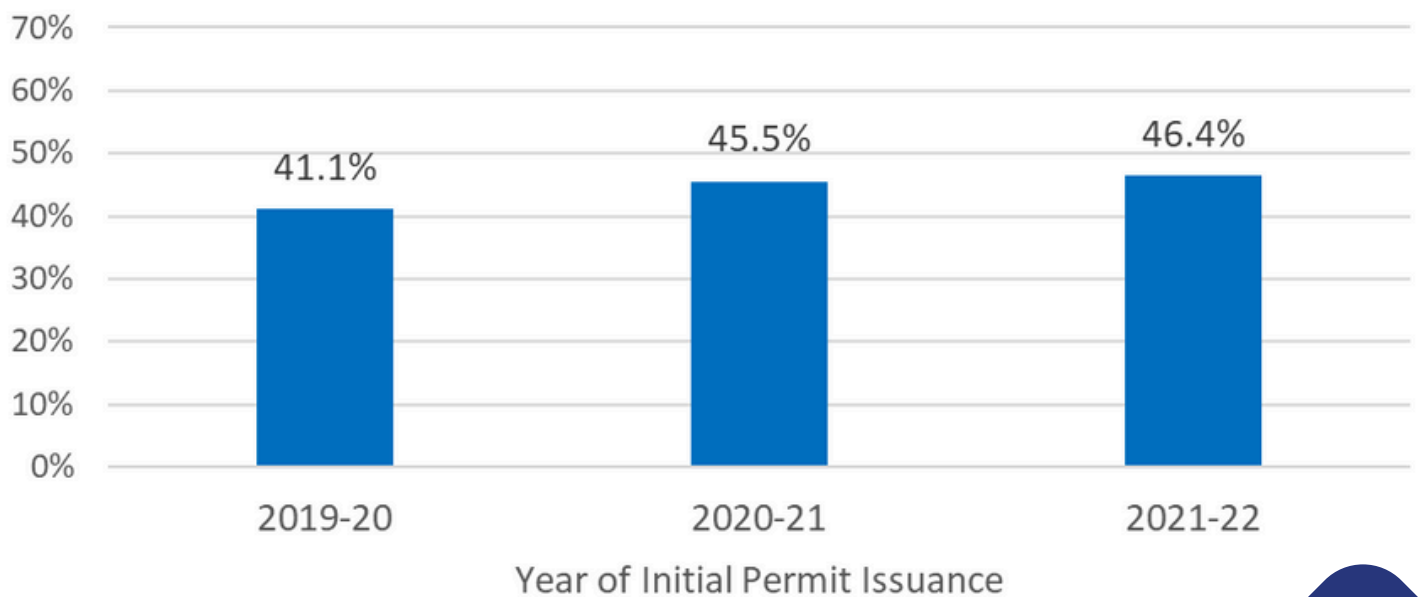
TEACHERS AND LEADERS

Annual Goal

65% of the educators teaching on a permit will obtain a full and valid practitioner or professional license within three years.

- Goal Not Met: By the end of the 2024-25 school year, the percentage of educators teaching on a permit who obtained a full and valid practitioner or professional license within three years increased by 0.9 points to 46.4%.

Percentage of Educators Teaching on a Permit Who Obtained a Full and Valid License within 3 Years





ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Strategic Focus

Our public meetings will ensure transparency, accountability, and effective implementation of education policy.

Information the Board Considered to Inform Decisions

- State Board members and staff engaged with several key education stakeholders throughout the year, including legislators, superintendents, district staff, school leaders, educators, students, local school board members, local business leaders, parents and families, as well as through collaborative convenings such as [SCORE's Future Forward Summit](#) and annual conferences organized by [Education Commission of the States](#) and [National Association of State Boards of Education](#).
- The State Board received a report from the Tennessee Department of Education on fiscal accountability standards during its quarterly meeting on February 21, 2025, a local education agency compliance report for the 2024-25 school year at its quarterly meeting on May 30, 2025, and a report on virtual education at its quarterly meeting on August 15, 2025.
- Throughout the year, the State Board heard presentations and engaged in discussion with The New Teacher Project (TNTP) on its Opportunity Makers Report, SCORE on its TN2030: Data Driven Goals for Tennessee, and State Board staff regarding school letter grades during a Member Learning Session.

Actions of the Board

- The State Board approved the results of its 2024 [charter school authorizer evaluations](#) during its board meeting on February 21, 2025, and approved its Accountability Hearings Rules at its quarterly meeting on August 15, 2025.
- In May 2025, the State Board began a nine-month process to update the goals and actions of its current Master Plan, which will be before the State Board for final approval in February 2026.
- Following the conclusion of the 2025 legislative session for the 114th General Assembly, the State Board updated various rules and policies at its quarterly meetings in August and November to reflect recent changes in state law.

The Work Ahead

The State Board's fourth and final focus area in its Master Plan represents its central role as the rule and policy-making body in Tennessee. State Board members seek to serve as engaged citizens focused on publicly asking the right questions to increase transparency, remove barriers that stand in the way of progress, and highlight effective efforts in the pursuit of improved outcomes for students. Over the next three years, the State Board will begin holding its Accountability Hearings, as authorized in T.C.A. § 49-3-112(c), and will continue to engage, listen, and act through development of and adjustments to its rule and policies, when necessary, to ensure that all students are prepared for success after high school graduation.



ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Annual Goal

The State Board will annually identify its rules and policies for review and update based on changes in law or opportunities to improve student outcomes, as needed.

- Goal Met: State Board made necessary revisions to its rules and policies based on changes in law and recommendations from stakeholders in alignment with the accomplishment of its mission.



CONNECT WITH THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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