

# Education

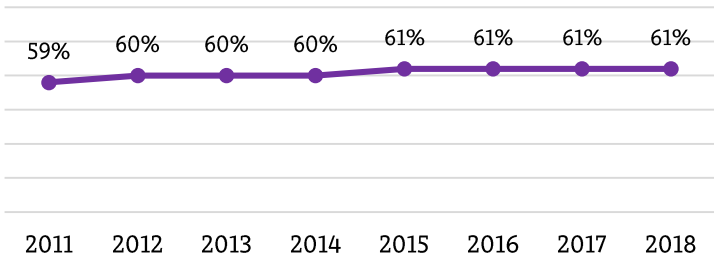
# Tennessee Rank: 29

The early years of a child's life lay the foundation for lifelong success. Establishing conditions that promote educational achievement for children is critical, beginning with quality prenatal care and continuing through the elementary years. With a strong, healthy beginning, children can more easily stay on track to remain in school and graduate on time, pursue postsecondary education and training and successfully transition to adulthood. Yet our state continues to have significant gaps in educational achievement by race and income in all age groups.

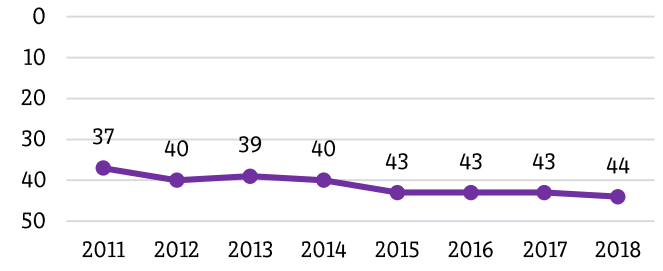
## Percent of young children (age 3 and 4) who do not attend school

High-quality preschool programs for 3- to 4-year-olds help set the stage for future skill development, well-being and learning, particularly for those from low-income households. Tennessee has ranked poorly on this measure since the beginning of the rankings, and the state's position is getting worse. It is further back than the years displayed, but Tennessee saw some improvement when Voluntary pre-K was implemented. Unfortunately, the program is just for 4-year-olds and is only able to serve about 1 in 4 of them. Head Start, private programs and additional locally-funded LEA programs also offer pre-K services.

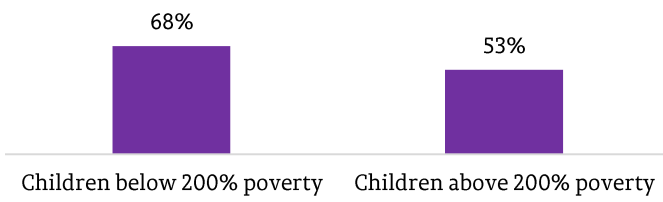
Percent of young children who do not attend school



Rank of young children who do not attend school



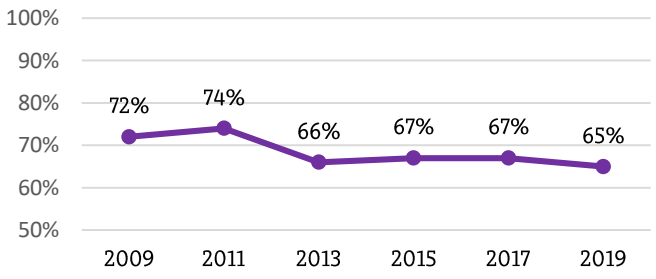
On this measure, race is only a factor for Hispanic youth, but income is a factor across races



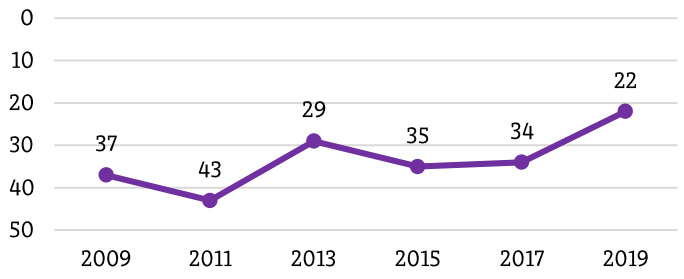
## Percent of 4th graders who scored below proficient reading level

Tennessee has been improving steadily in the percent of children proficient in reading in the 4th grade. This improvement has accompanied a rank improvement, so it shows Tennessee is improving faster than the nation.

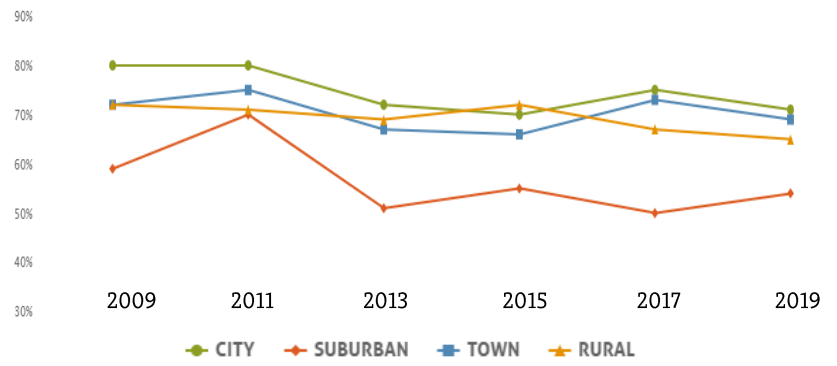
Percent of 4th graders who scored below proficient reading level



Rank 4th graders who scored below proficient reading level



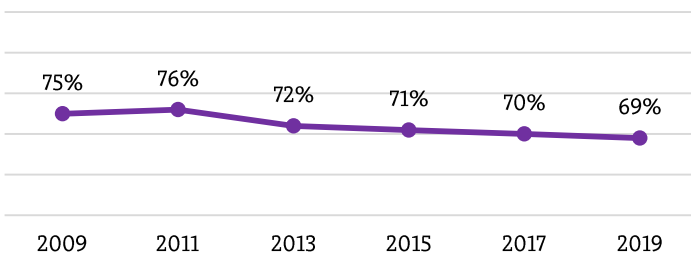
There are noticeable differences in reading proficiency by geographic location in Tennessee, with suburban 4th graders consistently performing better in this measure. Race is also an important factor in reading proficiency, with about 4 in 5 Hispanic and African American children scoring below proficient levels in Tennessee, while just 3 in 5 white children have similar non-proficient scores.



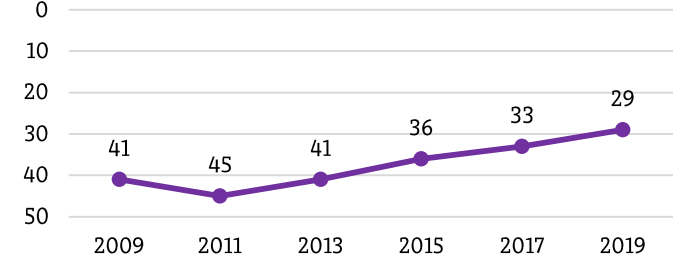
## Percent of 8<sup>th</sup> graders who scored below proficient math level

As with 4<sup>th</sup>-grade reading, Tennessee 8<sup>th</sup>-graders have improved steadily in math proficiency, in both percentage and rank. There are, however, significant differences by race. Asian students perform best on this measure, with fewer than a third demonstrating below-proficient skills. White children have twice as many struggling in math at 62 percent. Hispanic and African American children are struggling the most. Over 8 in 10 Hispanic children, and almost 9 in 10 black children scored at below proficient levels.

Percent of 8<sup>th</sup> graders who scored below proficient math level

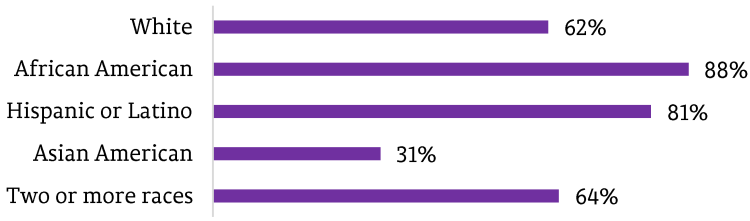


Rank 8<sup>th</sup> graders who scored below proficient math level



Tennessee's 8<sup>th</sup> grade math proficiency is one of the state's strongest ranks but has differences by race

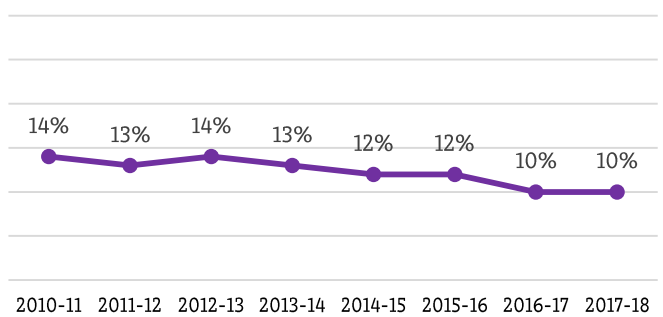
8<sup>th</sup>-grade math proficiency has stark differences by race, with almost 9 in 10 African American 8<sup>th</sup>-graders in Tennessee scoring below proficient levels in math. Hispanic students have slightly better outcomes but still show 8 in 10 scoring below proficient levels. Asian American students perform best with about 1 in 3 scoring below proficient levels.



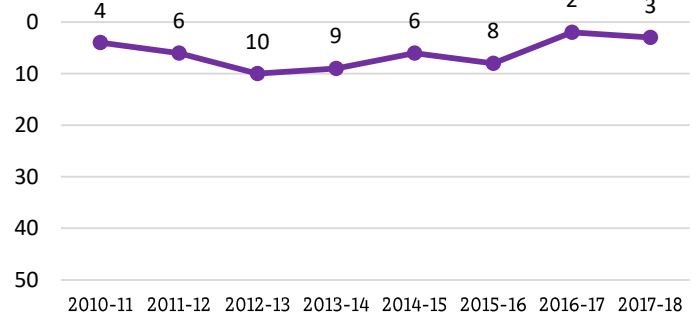
## Percent of high school students not graduating on time

Tennessee has long had one of its best ranks for the percentage of high school students who do not graduate on time. Tennessee requires youth to attend school until age 18 and to be in school in order to obtain a driver's license. These requirements do not fully prevent teens dropping out of school, but it keeps Tennessee near the top on this measure. Tennessee has improved in recent years on both the actual percentage and the rank.

Percent of high school students not graduating on time



Rank high school students not graduating on time



Graduating students from high school on time is one of Tennessee's strengths. Nonetheless, the state does show differences by race and by population density. Students in urban areas have lower graduation rates, and African American and Hispanic students have lower graduation rates.

Tennessee's high school graduation rates compare well nationally but disparities between groups do exist

