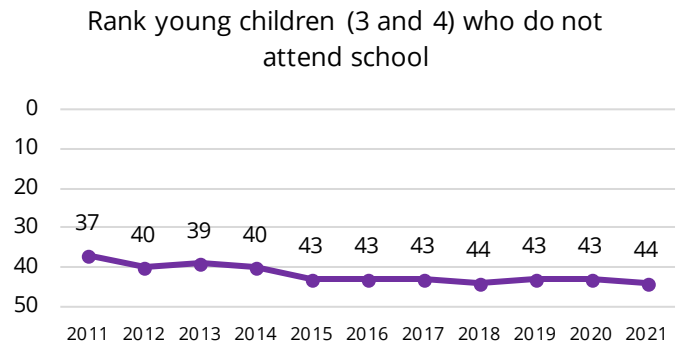
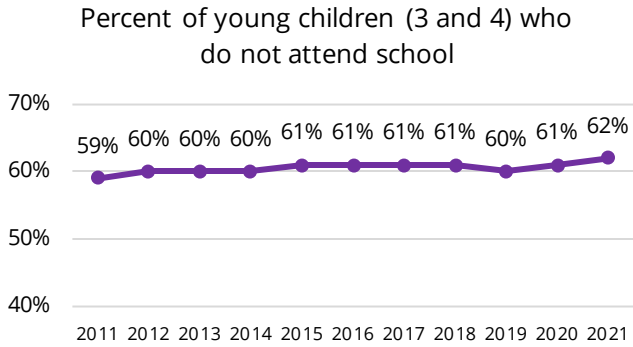
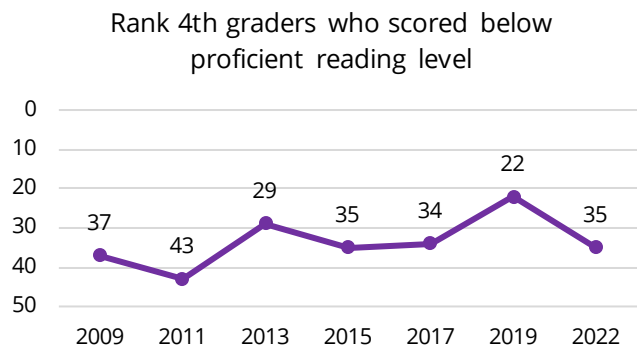
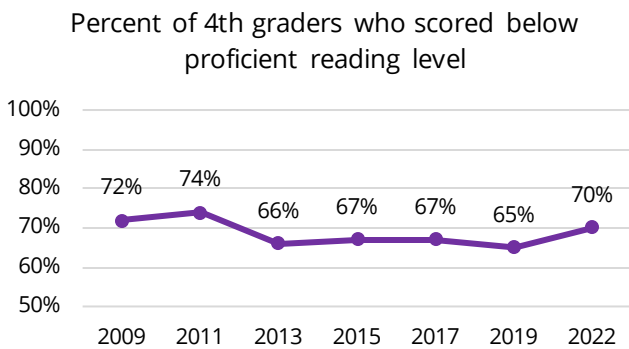
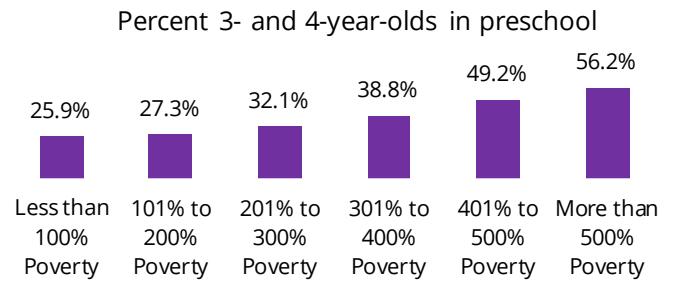


Education

The four indicators making up the Education domain are the percentage of children ages 3 and 4 not attending school, the percentage of 4th-graders scoring below proficient levels in reading, the percentage of 8th-graders scoring below proficient levels in math, and the percentage of high school students not graduating on time.



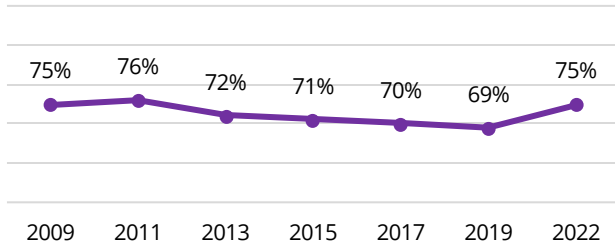
- The percent of young children attending school has changed little since it first improved with the start of Voluntary Pre-K (VPK). VPK continues to serve just about 1 in 4 children of qualifying age. Tennessee is moving slowly backward on this measure, and our rank on this measure is flat in the low 40s and unlikely to change without new program offerings.
- There is some disproportionality by race, with Hispanic children less likely to attend school at age 3 and 4. Both federal and state programs target children with the most risk factors for services, and African American children are as likely to attend school at this age as white children. Nonetheless, there is a strong correlation between higher income and 3- and 4-year-old preschool attendance.
- High-quality pre-k programs for 3- and 4-year-olds can improve school readiness, with the greatest gains accruing to the highest-risk children. Head Start and the expansion of state-funded programs have increased access to preschool, but many children, especially 3-year-olds, continue to be left out.



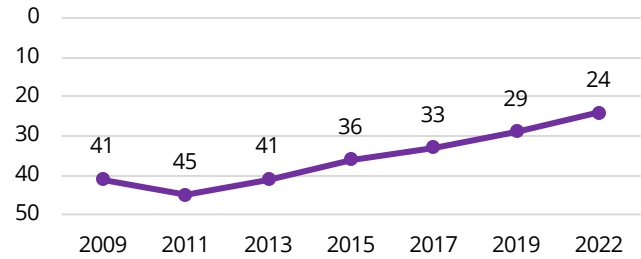
- Tennessee students' decade-long improvement in proficiency and rank took a downturn in 2022. Children nationally showed a post-pandemic decline in reading proficiency, but Tennessee's rank drop shows our children lost more than average. TCAP (in-state) reading scores showed significant improvement between 2022 and 2023. New NAEP tests will be administered in winter 2024.

- There are still racial differences in reading proficiency with 63 percent of white children, 78 percent of Hispanic children and 87 percent of black children lacking proficiency in 4th grade. Only 4 percent of English language learners and 12 percent of students with disabilities demonstrated proficiency.
- Proficiency in reading by the end of third grade is a crucial marker in a child's educational development. Beginning in fourth grade, children use reading to learn other subjects, and mastery of reading becomes a critical component in their ability to keep up academically. Children who reach fourth grade without being able to read proficiently are more likely to drop out of high school, reducing their earnings potential and chances for success.

Percent 8th graders who scored below proficient math level

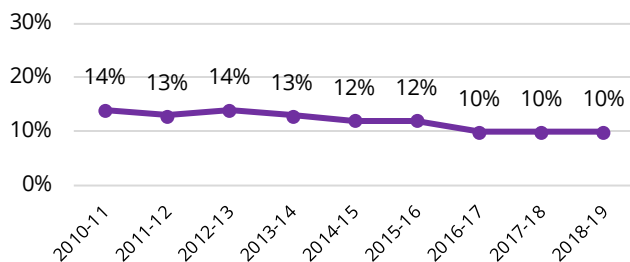


Rank 8th graders who scored below proficient math level

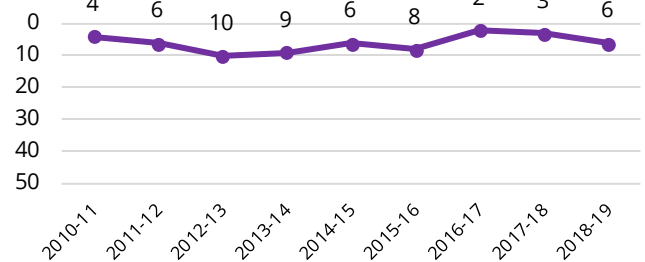


- Tennessee students had improved steadily in 8th-grade math proficiency over the last decade, though pandemic-related losses are clear in 2022. Nonetheless, Tennessee children improved their rank, showing their losses in math skills were smaller than in the nation as a whole. Rank improvement in 2022 places Tennessee in the top half of states for the first time.
- There are still racial differences in math proficiency, with 68 percent of white children lacking proficiency while 87 percent of Hispanic children and 92 percent of black children do.
- Competence in mathematics is essential for success in the workplace, which increasingly requires higher-level technical skills. Students who take advanced math and science courses that require a strong mastery of math fundamentals are more likely to attend and complete college and have higher earnings over time.

Percent of high school students not graduating on time



Rank high school students not graduating on time



- Good public policy, including requirements that youth stay in school until age 18 and attend school in order to get a driver's license, contribute to Tennessee's continued strong showing.
- About 82 percent of Hispanic students do not graduate on time, though black students have improved to 85 percent and white students ticked up slightly to 93 percent. Post-pandemic national data was not available, but Tennessee data shows recovery in 2022 from a slight drop in 2021.
- Students who graduate from high school on time are more likely to continue to postsecondary education and training; they are more employable and have higher incomes.