TN Department of **Education**

LITERACY
in Tennessee

WHY IT MATTERS

Reading is the foundation for all learning, and reading proficiently by third grade is a critical milestone for every student. Even with remarkable growth over a decade, Tennessee still faces a persistent literacy challenge. Now is the time for the next phase of our work, with a bold vision so all children read proficiently.

- Before the COVID-19 pandemic, *only one-third of Tennessee third graders and 27 percent of eighth graders* were proficient in English Language Arts.

- Data from the Nation's Report Card shows that *reading proficiency of fourth graders in Tennessee has remained relatively unchanged* for the past 7 years.

- If students *cannot read on grade level by third grade,* it is much harder for them to catch up with their peers and to succeed in their education.

- Children who are *reading on grade level by third grade* are significantly more likely to stay on grade level over time; to graduate from high school, enter and complete post-secondary programs; and become gainfully employed later in life.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Improving reading is good for our students and good for our state. Low literacy negatively impacts our students' ability to learn, become employed, provide for their families, and achieve their lifelong goals.

TENNESSEE LITERACY SUCCESS ACT

This legislation lays a policy foundation for literacy in Tennessee to ensure…

every STUDENT builds strong reading skills grounded in phonics, and every EDUCATOR is supported with training and resources to become a strong literacy instructor.

✔ Every district must use phonics-based literacy skills to teach reading	✔ Free Tennessee universal reading screener option to gauge student progress
✔ Require educator preparation providers to provide training on foundational literacy skills	✔ Required foundational skills training for teacher candidates in educator preparation programs
✔ District Foundational Literacy Skills Plans to boost literacy for all students	✔ Required reporting to the legislature and public on statewide literacy progress