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## **New Comptroller Review Shows Improvement in 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading**

The Tennessee Comptroller's Office of Research and Education Accountability (OREA) has completed its second annual review of the implementation of the Tennessee Literacy Success Act (TLSA).

The Comptroller's review found that, overall, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) and local districts and charter schools continue to implement the major directives of the Tennessee Literacy Success Act. While this review of TLSA did not include an analysis of causation, more 3<sup>rd</sup> graders scored proficient on TCAP's English language arts assessment in 2022-23 than they have in the last six years.

Key conclusions of the TLSA implementation review include:

- Universal reading screeners are administered three times per year to all K-3 students. Screener results from school year 2022-23 show improvement in each scoring category throughout the year. Students scoring at or above grade level increased while there was a decrease in students scoring at levels indicating a significant reading deficiency or a risk of a reading deficiency. Linking results from one grade level in 2021-22 with the next year's grade level in 2022-23 shows that most student cohorts demonstrated improved performance.
- A total of 49,664 licensed educators (or about two-thirds of all licensed instructional staff in Tennessee schools) received the TLSA-required foundational literacy skills instruction from summer 2021 through summer 2023. TDOE offered two approved literacy skills instruction courses, at no cost to educators or schools, for educators to meet this professional development requirement.
- To meet one of the requirements in the TLSA legislation, TDOE developed a new reading test for candidates who are seeking to obtain, renew, or advance teaching licenses (with endorsements relevant to K-3 instruction) or instructional leader licenses. The new test – the *Tennessee Early Literacy Assessment* – has a passing score of 80 percent and was approved by the State Board of Education in June 2023.

Passed during the General Assembly's 2021 Special Session on Education, the TLSA seeks to ensure that students in early grades are on track to become proficient readers by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The Comptroller's Office has been tasked with reviewing the implementation of the TLSA's provisions and reporting its findings to state education leaders. This report is the second such review, and it also includes the third annual review of district and charter school foundational literacy skills plans required by the TLSA.

To find the one-page snapshot and the full report, please visit the Comptroller's website at: [tncot.cc/orea](https://tncot.cc/orea).

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