



Teaching Tennessee's Kids to Read: An Update

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Executive Summary

In February 2000, the Office of Education Accountability issued a report titled *Teaching Kids to Read: Is Tennessee Doing Enough?* as mandated by Public Chapter 130, 1999. After reviewing the report, the General Assembly, through Public Chapter 911, directed the Office of Education Accountability to issue a follow-up report evaluating the state's progress in improving reading.

This report highlights progress made toward making reading a priority in the state. It also indicates that there is still much work to be done. Specifically, the report illustrates the actions that have taken place since February 2000:

- The 2000 TCAP results show little improvement in reading. (See page 4.)
- The State Board of Education created a literacy council and a smaller advisory council that analyzed standards, teacher quality, parent/community involvement, assessment/intervention, and accountability and presented comments and recommendations to the State Board. (See page 4.)
- The State Board of Education approved the Reading Initiative Action Plan on final reading in its January 25, 2001 meeting. The Action Plan consists of three key areas – appointing a council to develop a P-8 reading initiative, recommending that the Department of Education complete standards revisions, and mandating that the council make specific recommendations about teacher preparation and licensure. The January meeting also included a status report on the reading initiative that described a delivery model consisting of four key actions – professional development through reading coaches, regional literacy centers, a Governor's Institute on Reading and Literacy, and the use of technology for ongoing professional development. (See page 5.)
- The Governor is proposing a reading initiative based in part on the recommendations of the literacy and advisory councils. (See page 7.)
- The Tennessee Department of Education has made some progress in focusing on reading. Two new reading specialists have been added to the Department staff, and a third revision of the application for a Reading Excellence Act Grant is nearing completion. The Department has finalized the K-2 reading accomplishments, a supplement to the state's content standards in English/language arts, which are being revised out of cycle this year. The Department has not completed its Focus on Reading web site, and is still lacking the funds to provide adequate professional development, specifically for early educators. Finally, the Department's two parental involvement/reading programs are expanding. (See page 7.)
- The Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the State Board of Education have partially addressed teacher preparation programs as mandated in Public Chapter 911. (See page 11.)

- The State Board of Education, the Tennessee Higher Education Association, the Department of Education, and the business community are collaborating on various components of a reading initiative. (See page 12.)
- The Basic Education Program (BEP) Review Committee has postponed a decision on the inclusion of reading specialists in the BEP funding formula, but has recommended that English as a Second Language be proposed as a new component of the BEP. (See page 14.)

Beginning on page 14, the report offers the following recommendations:

- The Tennessee Higher Education Commission in consultation with the State Board needs to complete an analysis of the state’s teacher education programs and whether they are adequately preparing teachers to teach reading and writing as previously mandated by the General Assembly in Public Chapter 911.
- The State Board, the Department of Education, and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission should continue to communicate and collaborate on the reading initiative and on other joint ventures.
- The State Board of Education, the Department of Education, and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission should continue to evaluate the need for a literacy center.
- Because it is unclear how the reading coaches as described in the Governor’s proposal would be trained, this office recommends that a detailed plan for training be written.
- The State Board of Education and the Department of Education should evaluate the effectiveness of technology both for the classroom and professional development.
- The State Board of Education, the Department of Education, and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission should continue to inform the literacy council members on the status of the reading initiative, and should engage in an ongoing evaluation of the reading initiative components.
- The Department of Education should look into developing an evaluation for its two parent involvement programs, *Parents as Reading Partners* and *Smart from the Start*.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Methodology.....	1
Background.....	2
Analysis and Conclusions.....	4
Recommendations.....	14
Appendices.....	16
Appendix A: Public Chapter 130, 2000.....	16
Appendix B: Public Chapter 911, 1999.....	18
Appendix C: Individuals Interviewed for the report.....	21
Appendix D: 2000 TCAP Achievement Results.....	22
Appendix E: Members of the Literacy Council.....	23
Appendix F: Recommendations Made by the Literacy and Advisory Councils.....	25
Appendix G: Survey for Prekindergarten through 3 rd Grade Teachers in the State.....	29
Appendix H: K-2 Reading Accomplishments, Tennessee Department of Education.....	35

Introduction

In February 2000, the Office of Education Accountability issued a report titled *Teaching Kids to Read: Is Tennessee Doing Enough?* as mandated by the General Assembly in the Tennessee Literacy Initiative Act of 1999 (Public Chapter 130).¹ This report resulted in a series of observations and recommendations about teaching reading in Tennessee.

After reviewing the report, the General Assembly directed the Office of Education Accountability, with help from the State Board of Education and the Tennessee Department of Education, to issue a follow-up report evaluating the state's progress in improving reading (Public Chapter 911, 2000).² Specifically, the General Assembly requested:

- Information provided by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) and the State Board of Education on whether teacher candidates in Tennessee receive adequate training in teaching reading;
- Background provided by THEC and the State Board of Education on the development of an information center at a state university for research and information on reading;
- Information from the Basic Education Program (BEP) Review Committee dealing with the inclusion of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers and reading specialists in the BEP funding formula; and
- General information on the current status of literacy initiatives in the state.

This report updates the General Assembly on these issues.

Methodology

The information provided and recommendations made in this report are based on the following:

- Interviews with staff of the Tennessee Department of Education;
- Interviews with and background materials provided by staff of the State Board of Education;
- Interviews with members of the newly initiated literacy council;
- An interview with the Executive Director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC);³
- A visit to Middle Tennessee State University's (MTSU) Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia;
- A review of Tennessee teacher education programs; and
- The 2000 Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) reading results.

¹ See Appendix A for Public Chapter 130.

² See Appendix B for Public Chapter 911.

³ See Appendix C for a list of people who were interviewed for this report.

Background

The report titled *Teaching Kids to Read: Is Tennessee Doing Enough?*⁴ issued in February 2000, disclosed information showing that Tennessee was doing very little to promote reading. Specifically the report concluded that:

- **Two separate assessments indicate that most Tennessee students are not successful in the area of reading.** Both the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) indicated that Tennessee students are performing well below proficiency in reading.
- **States that have maintained good reading scores or raised their reading scores over time have established reading as a funding and/or policy priority.** The report pointed to Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Texas as states that have placed reading at the top of their agendas and have made significant progress on the NAEP reading assessment.
- **Tennessee is the only Southeastern state without a state-funded reading initiative.** Tennessee's 1998 reading initiative, *Tennessee Come Read with Me*, is unfunded and has not had the resources necessary to support a full-fledged reading initiative.
- **Tennessee lacks a reading infrastructure.** No full-time staff at the Tennessee Department of Education were devoted specifically to reading, and no coordination between state agencies (or between state and non-state agencies) on reading initiatives was occurring.
- **Three prominent sources have rated Tennessee's standards for language arts as very low.** The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, the American Federation of Teachers, and *Education Week* have all given Tennessee's language arts standards extremely low grades, indicating that the standards are vague, unmeasurable, do not contain appropriate content, and lack evidence of a clear audience.
- **The state sponsors no professional development workshop or class that deals with reading assessment strategies for the developmental grades.** The professional development training that the Tennessee Department of Education now provides addresses assessment only in relation to TCAP and the new Gateway tests, not in reading strategies.
- **Many Tennessee teachers may lack the expertise needed to assess or assist children with reading difficulties.** Unlike some states, Tennessee does not mandate certain courses for teacher candidates in reading methodology, and the teacher education reading competencies are not specific enough to provide a strong guideline for reading preparation to higher education institutions.
- **Some local education agencies may lack the knowledge base to select reading programs and appropriate assessments that are supported by the latest research.** Because of the current status of reading requirements in Tennessee's teacher education programs, many teachers lack information on current reading initiatives and research. As a result, local education agencies may not be choosing reading programs appropriate to their students' needs.
- **Tennessee's teachers may not have access to sufficient professional development opportunities to bring them "up to speed" regarding the latest reading**

⁴ This report can be found at www.comptroller.state.tn.us/orea/reports/literacy.pdf.

methodology research. Since some pre-service training may be lacking, teachers need a means to increase their knowledge base regarding reading instruction.

- **Tennessee lacks an adequate number of English as Second Language (ESL) teachers.**
- **Tennessee schools employ few reading specialists.**

Based on these findings, the Office of Education Accountability issued two legislative recommendations and seven administrative recommendations.

The report suggested that the General Assembly consider making reading a state priority by passing and funding a comprehensive reading initiative. In addition, the report concluded that the General Assembly may wish to consider fully funding the State Board of Education's Early Childhood Education Plan.

The seven administrative recommendations are as follows:

- The Tennessee Department of Education should inform teachers about current strategies and methods for reading instruction and assessment.
- The Department should expand teachers' professional development opportunities to address assessment strategies other than standardized testing that are appropriate for students in grades K-3.
- The Department should make certain that the needs of poor readers in middle and high schools are addressed.
- The State Board of Education and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission should address specifically whether teacher candidates in Tennessee receive adequate training to teach all children to read.
- The State Board of Education and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission should consider developing an information center at a state university for research and information on reading for preschool through 12th grade teachers.
- The Department may want to consider requiring local education agencies with consistently low scores to develop reading programs, methods of assessment, and planned professional development activities.
- The Department should encourage districts to develop programs and prevention services that increase parents' involvement in teaching their children to read.

Analysis and Conclusions

- **The 2000 TCAP results show little improvement in reading.**

TerraNova, CTB/McGraw-Hill's assessment used in TCAP, has five achievement levels to evaluate student performance: step 1, progressing, nearing proficiency, proficient, and advanced. CTB/McGraw-Hill explains: "Students who have attained proficient and advanced placement for a particular content area have met or exceeded appropriate curricular goals for the exiting grade of the grade group. Students who have obtained partially proficient placement (step 1, progressing, nearing proficiency) are on the path to proficiency, but need to continue progressing toward proficient and advanced."⁵

The 1999 TCAP data indicated that 70 percent of the state's 5th graders and 60 percent of the 8th graders were below proficient in reading. The 2000 data show that 62 percent of 5th graders and 63 percent of 8th graders were below proficient.⁶ The statewide report card gave the state a C in reading achievement for grades K-5 and grades 6-8, and a B for value added gain in both grade clusters.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2000 reading results are set to be released in the upcoming months. These results will help Tennessee further evaluate its performance in reading.

- **The State Board of Education created a literacy council and a smaller advisory council to develop recommendations for a reading initiative.**⁷

After examining the directives of Public Chapter 911, the State Board of Education determined that one way to begin addressing them was through the creation of a literacy council, called the Tennessee Reading and Literacy Advisory Council. Representatives from the State Board of Education, the Tennessee Department of Education, and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission selected the council members, which totaled 55 and consisted of key players in literacy issues in the state.⁸

The council was divided into five working groups:

- strengthening content and performance standards;
- teacher quality;
- parent/community involvement;⁹
- assessment and intervention; and
- accountability.

The group met on November 8, 2000, with the purpose of identifying best practices and beginning the development of a set of recommendations for a statewide pre-kindergarten through 8th grade reading initiative.

⁵ CTB/McGraw-Hill, Performance Level Handbook: *TerraNova*, p. 9.

⁶ See Appendix D for the state and national performance levels in reading for 3-8 grades.

⁷ This section is based on interviews with Dr. Douglas Wood, Executive Director, State Board of Education (12/15/00, 1/2/01, and 1/25/01) and on materials provided by the State Board of Education.

⁸ See Appendix E for a list of members of the literacy council.

⁹ Shirley Brice Heath, professor of education at Stanford University, provided advice for the parent/community involvement section of the literacy council.

In general, literacy council members gave positive feedback.¹⁰ Members in each subgroup on the council suggested that the appropriate players were present, and that no key group (private interest/business, teachers, parents, policy leaders, etc.) was missing from the council. Some members suggested that the council's main (if not only) purpose is to provide the players with a sense of ownership. That ownership, it was suggested, may be the key factor in a statewide adoption of any reading initiative. A few members indicated that they were never given a clear picture of the timeline for the council and of their participation requirements.

Following the meeting of the literacy council, a small group of literacy advisors from across the country met on November 13, 2000, to review and specify the findings.^{11, 12} The advisory council analyzed the five areas – standards, teacher quality, parent/community involvement, assessment and intervention, and accountability – and presented a detailed list of recommendations to the State Board.¹³

- **The State Board of Education approved the Reading Initiative Action Plan on final reading in its January 25, 2001 meeting.**¹⁴

The Action Plan consists of three key areas:

- Appointing a council to develop a P-8 reading initiative;
- Recommending that the Department of Education complete revisions of content and performance standards in grades K-8 in reading and writing; and
- Mandating that the council make specific recommendations to the State Board about teacher preparation and licensure.

The January meeting also included a status report on the council's work on the P-8 reading initiative. The council, in conjunction with the State Board of Education, the Department of Education, and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, has developed a delivery model that consists of four key actions – professional development through reading coaches, regional literacy centers, a Governor's Institute on Reading and Literacy, and the use of technology for ongoing professional development.

¹⁰ This section is based on interviews with Jan Bushing, Department of Education (12/15/00), Lynn Faust, parent (1/5/01), George Yowell, Tennessee Tomorrow (1/10/01), Dr. Claudette Williams, Department of Education (12/14/00), Dr. Diane Sawyer, Middle Tennessee State University (1/16/01), Nancy Duggin, Tennessee Education Association (1/12/01), and Dr. Connie Smith, Department of Education (12/15/00).

¹¹ This section is based on interviews with Dr. Douglas Wood (12/15/00, 1/2/01, and 1/25/01) and Dr. June Scobee Rodgers, Tennessee Higher Education Commission (1/8/01) and materials provided by the State Board of Education.

¹² The group of advisors consisted of June Scobee Rodgers, Tennessee Higher Education Commission; Courtney Borden Cazden, Harvard Graduate School of Education; David Denton, Southern Regional Education Board; Thomas Hehir, Harvard Graduate School of Education; Dixie Goswami, Strom Thurmond Institute of Government and Public Affairs at Clemson University; and Victoria Risko, Vanderbilt University.

¹³ See Appendix F for a list of the recommendations.

¹⁴ Agenda for the Tennessee State Board of Education meeting on January 25, 2001, Action Item III.C.1.

*Reading Coaches for K-8*¹⁵

The advisory council suggested that at least one reading coach be assigned to each K-8 school in the state. These reading coaches, who would be selected from teachers in the schools by fellow teachers and principals, would be trained at regional literacy centers. Their training would consist of electronic pre-training, a two-week summer session to focus on pedagogy, and a final electronic evaluation. The reading coaches would receive a supplement in addition to their normal salary and would also receive three semester hours toward the recertification process.

Regional Literacy Centers

Using the Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia at Middle Tennessee State University as a model, the advisory council is suggesting that regional literacy centers be developed. These centers would be staffed by faculty from higher education institutions with select K-12 teachers serving as adjunct faculty. The purpose of the centers would be to gather information on current reading research and serve as clearinghouses on best practices in literacy. The centers would also serve as the location for various professional development programs, including the training of the K-8 reading coaches described above. The Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia provides workshops that train teachers to work with dyslexic students, and also attempts to train teachers to work with other teachers at their respective schools. This professional development component, which encourages peer education, provides one model for the regional literacy centers' professional development goals.

Governor's Institute on Reading and Literacy

Based on the advisory council's suggestion to create an executive council for reading and writing, the State Board suggested the creation of a Governor's Institute on Reading and Literacy. Its members would have the following responsibilities:

- Assembling reports on the progress of reading in the state;
- Writing grants and garnering private funds for reading initiatives;
- Concentrating on professional development in reading; and
- Recording parental and community involvement, teaching quality, remedial approaches to reading, assessments in reading, and accountability for reading initiatives.

Technology and the Delivery of Information

Tennessee currently has a statewide technology infrastructure, ConnecTEN, that the State Board is considering for use in the reading initiative. The existing structure allows every school in the state to access the internet through the same server, eliminating troubleshooting and providing consistent access. The technology could be used for professional development purposes by allowing teachers to communicate with higher education groups, reading coaches, literacy centers, and other teachers on issues affecting reading. Content, lesson plans, mini-conferences, and other resources would also be available on-line.

¹⁵ This section is based on interviews with Dr. Douglas Wood (12/15/00, 1/2/01, and 1/25/01), Dr. Mary Jo Howland, State Board of Education (1/25/01), and Karen Weeks, State Board of Education (1/25/01) and on the Reading Initiative Status Report distributed at the January 25, 2001 State Board meeting.

Technology could be used to continuously monitor schools' progresses in reading through an assessment that would be delivered to schools electronically. This assessment would assist teachers and principals in identifying areas in need of improvement in reading instruction, and could also be used as an informal report to parents about reading gains in the schools. In addition, the literacy council would be in charge of developing diagnostic tools that would help identify reading skills in the early years (kindergarten through 2nd grade) and help schools determine the gains and deficiencies of their reading programs.

- **The Governor is proposing a reading initiative based in part on the recommendations of the literacy and advisory councils.**¹⁶

In his annual State of the State speech on January 29, 2001, Governor Don Sundquist proposed several education initiatives that included elements from the State Board, Department, and THEC work. His reading initiative includes a proposal that would assign at least one teacher in each school as the designated reading coach, whose job is to teach other teachers about reading and involving parents in the process. The initiative also includes working with volunteers to teach them how to teach reading more effectively. The Governor is also proposing that teachers who attend reading training sessions receive additional money to purchase reading materials for their classrooms.

The Governor's education initiative includes other components that relate to reading. The Governor is calling for an investment in teaching resources, including scholarships for teacher education programs, a web site listing teacher job openings for the state, mentoring, and additional money for teachers who receive National Board Certification. He is also asking that discretionary spending for teachers be doubled – to \$200 per teacher with a five-year goal of \$500 per teacher. In addition, the Governor is proposing that pre-kindergarten be available for all four year old children in the state by 2005. For the middle grades, the Governor is asking for additional assistance for students who are falling behind in 7th and 8th grade. Finally, Governor Sundquist is calling upon the higher education community to analyze teacher education programs in collaboration with K-12 educators.

- **The Department has made some progress in focusing on reading.**

*New Reading Specialists on Staff at the Department of Education*¹⁷

Two new staff members with expertise in reading have been added to the Department of Education staff. One specialist, the elementary director in reading, works with grades K-3. The other director works with 4-12 grades. With the addition of these two specialists, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction at the Department of Education now has four staff members who have graduate degrees in reading. The Department of Education did not increase its numbers through the additional staff; rather the Department shifted responsibilities to create the two new reading positions.

¹⁶ This section is based on Governor Don Sundquist's State of the State address (1/29/01).

¹⁷ Information provided by Dr. Claudette Williams, Department of Education (12/14/00 and 1/24/01).

*Reading Excellence Act Grants*¹⁸

The Reading Excellence Act, signed into law in 1998, appropriated \$260 million to improve reading in the nation; \$241.1 million of this is designated for state grants to help states improve reading achievement. Tennessee's first two applications for a federal Reading Excellence Act grant were rejected for three main reasons according to the Department. First, there is no reading initiative in the state, which implies that there would be no sustainability for any grant-funded program. Second, the two earlier applications did not describe the role of professional development satisfactorily. Third, the Department explained that reviewers of the application did not think that there was a solid commitment to a reading initiative by appropriate personnel.

Staff at the Tennessee Department of Education are more optimistic that the latest revision will be accepted, particularly because the Department has been working with the State Board of Education and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission on the grant and the reading initiative in general. The Department has suggested that for Tennessee to get a Reading Excellence Act grant, the state needs to have a funded reading initiative already in place. Sue Goodwin, Grant Writer for the Department of Education and author of the three applications, explains: "I tried to build the case in the 1999 and 2000 applications that the [Reading Excellence Act] program would build strength into Tennessee's reading program across the state by serving as a model, and while there is truth in that, it would be a well-funded model in a desert."¹⁹

Additions to the 2001 grant application will include:

- A collaborative effort between the Department and institutes of higher education through a professional development network proposal. A meeting was held on January 23, 2001, to discuss the beginning stages of this initiative.
- A more thorough and thoughtful approach to professional development.
- The results of a survey that was designed by the Department in collaboration with the State Board of Education and sent to pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade teachers at 400 schools.^{20,21} These results will help to pinpoint professional development needs. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission is assisting with the analysis of the survey results.²²
- A more specific description of areas that were questioned in the earlier two applications, including but not limited to the role of higher education, kindergarten difficulties, and English as a Second Language students.

The State Board of Education is collaborating with the Department on the revision for the grant. Both the Department and the State Board have discussed the importance of sustainability in a Tennessee reading initiative, a significant aspect of the application process. With the development of a literacy council, better collaboration between

¹⁸ Information provided by Sue Goodwin (1/10/01).

¹⁹ Information provided by Sue Goodwin (1/10/01).

²⁰ See Appendix G for a copy of this survey.

²¹ The idea for the survey came from the small literacy advisory council and from Sue Goodwin and Nancy Duggin (conversations with Doug Wood, 2/9/01 and Sue Goodwin, 2/9/01).

²² These results were not compiled at the time of the publication of this report.

organizations, and a mapped out reading initiative that may be funded, the Department and the State Board seem more optimistic that this third application may be accepted.

The Completion of the K-2 Reading Accomplishments^{23,24}

The Department of Education has written new K-2 reading accomplishments, a supplement to the state's content standards in English/language arts, and there are plans for 3rd grade reading accomplishments to be added in the next year. Dr. Claudette Williams, Executive Director of the Office of Curriculum and Instruction at the Department, has proposed that pre-K reading accomplishments be added to the supplement by the Office of Special Programs.

The K-2 reading accomplishments were adapted mainly from the National Research Council's *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, with help from New Standards, the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement, and other leading research. Supervisors, teachers, and other education specialists offered their feedback on the reading accomplishments.

The Department is contracting with teachers to assist in the alignment of the K-2 reading accomplishments to K-3 assessments because the state requires that school systems track 1st and 2nd grades. The K-2 assessments are not part of the state-mandated assessment program (the TerraNova norm-referenced test begins in grade 3²⁵). Rather, school systems can opt to purchase the tests to monitor their own gains and deficiencies and to be able to report to the Department. The K-2 tests are individualized, unlike the group-focused norm-referenced tests that are required in grades 3-8.

*K-8 English/Language Arts Content Standards*²⁶

The Department of Education has committed to the revision of the K-8 English/language arts standards – out of cycle for the typical revisions – because of poor showings in the nation's leading standards reports and at the request of the State Board of Education.²⁷ Board staff point out the importance of this action noting that it is key to the success of any reading initiative. The revision began in January 2001, but will only address certain areas and will not be a sweeping revision. Department staff indicate that an outside organization may be brought in to assist with the standards revisions. The new standards will be derived from extensive research and in collaboration with both teachers in the public school systems and higher education faculty. The standards will also be aligned with the state's assessments so students would be tested on subjects they have learned.

²³ Information provided by Dr. Claudette Williams (12/14/00).

²⁴ See Appendix H for a list of the K-2 reading accomplishments.

²⁵ A norm-referenced test is designed for a large number of students and includes a general cross-section of subject material. Students may or may not have received instruction on all aspects of a norm-referenced assessment; rather, these tests are used to make a broad comparison across a state that would have varying curricula.

²⁶ Information provided by Dr. Claudette Williams (12/14/00 and 1/25/01).

²⁷ Reports include those of the American Federation of Teachers' *Making Standards Matter '99*, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation's *The State of State Standards*, and Education Week's *Quality Counts*.

*Focus on Reading Web Site*²⁸

In response to a recommendation in *Teaching Kids to Read: Is Tennessee Doing Enough?*, staff from the Department of Education stated that they were planning a Focus on Reading web site that would include resources for teachers. The site is not operational, but there are still plans to complete it if resources are available. The new K-2 reading accomplishments have been added to the general Department of Education web site, but there is not a separate “Focus on Reading” section.²⁹

*Difficulties with Professional Development*³⁰

Some professional development opportunities for reading are available through the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education at the Department, but lack of resources prevents a serious dedication to professional development. In 2000, the Department sponsored two conferences on reading. One conference included a full-day session in which publishers of reading materials presented their information to the school system participants. The publishing companies were required to show how their reading products addressed the Reading Excellence Act definition of reading.³¹

The second conference, in October 2000, was a cross-state tour by Marilyn Jager Adams. Adams, a reading specialist who has been a visiting scholar at Harvard University’s School of Education, addressed over 900 people – many of whom were representatives from the state’s colleges of education – in her “Learning about Print” tour.

Staff at the Department of Education discussed the need for individualized professional development in reading, but lack of resources is forcing other areas in elementary and secondary education to take precedent. The Department suggests that systems use assessment data to match their needs to their professional development requests and has provided some workshops for local education agencies on data use. However, it is unclear if this tactic has been effective in targeting Department resources in professional development.

Lack of funding for early childhood work also hinders professional development. The Department offered some best practices and brain development sessions for professional development in early childhood. Early childhood teachers have also been included in professional development programs for other offices in the Department. Other than these examples, however, the Department has no other coordinated statewide professional development efforts for early childhood educators.

²⁸ Information provided by Dr. Claudette Williams (12/14/00).

²⁹ The reading accomplishments can be found at www.state.tn.us/education/ci/cireadaccompk2.htm.

³⁰ Information provided by interviews with Dr. Claudette Williams (12/14/00) and Jan Bushing, Department of Education (12/15/00).

³¹ Section 2252 (4) of the Reading Excellence Act defines reading as: 1) the skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes, or speech sounds, are connected to print; 2) the ability to decode unfamiliar words; 3) the ability to read fluently; 4) sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension; 5) the development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print; and 6) the development and maintenance of a motivation to read.

*Parental Involvement*³²

The *Parents as Reading Partners* program has greatly expanded since its inception in March 2000. In March, the Department sent out 85,000 membership cards for the program, which requires that parents read to their children for a minimum of 30 minutes a day. School systems asked the Department to begin the program at the start of the school year, so in September 2000, over 131,000 membership cards were sent out. Samples of a K-2 brochure on reading aloud also were sent to each system, and a Spanish version of the brochure is available. Posters, information on reading at home, and a certificate of completion were included as well. These materials were sent to the *Tennessee Come Read with Me* partners throughout the state, who then coordinate the dissemination of materials and recruit new members through meetings and information sessions. Though Department staff indicate that the feedback has been positive, there is no tracking of the program's effectiveness.

The *Smart from the Start* early childhood development program, which began in the early 90s, is still being used. This program seeks to reach every new mother with a guide on raising children from birth to kindergarten. The Department worked with pediatricians to develop the guide, which used to be distributed through the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, but is now distributed through the hospitals at the time of delivery. The guide includes early development skills that are essential to becoming a good reader. There is no follow-up work, such as tracking or surveys, being done to ensure that new mothers are actually receiving the guide and being told how to use it effectively.

- **The Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the State Board of Education have partially addressed teacher preparation programs as mandated in Public Chapter 911.**³³

Addressing Whether Teacher Candidates Receive Adequate Training to Teach all Children to Read

Both THEC and the State Board have taken some initial steps toward focusing on teacher preparation, but more work needs to be done. THEC held a meeting with the deans of education and faculty at East Tennessee State University, the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and Tennessee Technological University. However, Chapter 911 mandates: "By the 2001 annual joint meeting...the State Board of Education and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission shall address specifically whether teacher candidates in Tennessee receive adequate training to teach all children to read." Though the meetings with deans are a step in the right direction, a more detailed analysis needs to be completed to determine where shortcomings exist in the state's teacher preparation programs. Individual teacher preparation programs may be reviewing their reading course requirements, but there is no general effort to promote more aggressive work in reading courses in teacher preparation programs. An informal review by the Office of Education Accountability of the majority of the state's teacher education programs indicates that

³² Information provided by Dr. Claudette Williams (12/14/00) and Jan Bushing (12/15/00).

³³ Information provided by Dr. Richard Rhoda, Tennessee Higher Education Commission (12/13/00), Dr. Douglas Wood (12/15/00, 1/2/01, and 1/25/01), and Sue Goodwin (1/10/01).

most programs require only one course in reading skills, with a select few offering two or three courses in reading.

THEC has a few small initiatives that relate to teacher preparation in higher education, but no expansive programs. The Minority Teacher Education Grant Program, administered through THEC, funds schools based on a grant process with the purpose of encouraging and supporting minority students to pursue teaching for a career. A recent report on the Minority Teacher Education Grant Program found that 66 percent of the students in the program teach in the state.³⁴

THEC also administers grants using Eisenhower Title II federal grant money for professional development purposes. Eighty-five percent of all Title II funds are utilized by the Tennessee Department of Education and 15 percent are given to THEC to administer. THEC's focus for these grants previously has been on math and science, but this year THEC chose to include reading and special education professional development programs and initiatives as well.

THEC collaborates with institutions to improve existing strengths in a university through its Centers and Chairs of Excellence programs. One example of a Center of Excellence is the Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia at MTSU. Other Centers of Excellence that relate to reading include the Center for Applied Psychological Research at the University of Memphis, the Center for Early Childhood Learning and Development at East Tennessee State University, and the Research and Policy Center on Basic Skills at Tennessee State University.

Ensuring that Teacher Candidates Are Properly Trained and Qualified

Chapter 911 continues: "The State Board is further directed to revise teacher training and certification requirements, as needed, to ensure that teacher candidates are properly trained and qualified." The State Board has begun work on teacher licensure issues, specifically on what the state wants teachers to know and be able to do in teaching reading. A draft time frame for work on teacher training standards includes:

- Development of K-8, preK-4, and 5-8 standards in reading for teachers;
 - Presentation of the standards to the Advisory Council on Teacher Education;³⁵
 - Input and feedback from various sources;
 - Presentation to the State Board for first reading at the April 27, 2001 meeting and for final approval at the July 20, 2001 meeting.
-
- **The State Board of Education, the Tennessee Higher Education Association, the Department of Education, and the business community are collaborating on various components of a reading initiative.**

³⁴ *The Minority Teacher Education Grant Program Evaluation 1989-2000*, Tennessee Higher Education Commission.

³⁵ TCA § 49-5-110 establishes the creation of Advisory Council on Teacher Education and Certification, managed by the State Board of Education. In the January 25, 2001 State Board meeting, the State Board approved the new appointments to the Advisory Council for 2001-2003. Agenda for the State Board of Education January 25, 2001 meeting, Action Item III.D.

As previously noted, the Department of Education has asked the Tennessee Higher Education Commission to assist in the analysis of results from a recent survey developed by the Department and the State Board of Education. The survey, distributed to pre-K through 3rd grade teachers, was designed to show gaps in teacher preparation in teaching reading and writing. It also will help reveal professional development needs.

TCA § 49-1-302 requires the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the State Board of Education to meet annually “for the purpose of reviewing the expenditures and programs of public education.”³⁶ This year, the group met in January 2001. The meeting focused on reading, largely because of the directives of Public Chapter 911. The agenda at the meeting included a speech by Governor Don Sundquist, who advocated for the statewide reading initiative, and a presentation on reading by Dixie Goswami, Senior Scholar at the Strom Thurmond Institute for Government and Public Policy at Clemson University.

It is important to note that Dr. Wood at the State Board and Dr. Rhoda at THEC serve as *ex officio* board members at the other’s organization. Dr. Rhoda also served on the literacy council, as did another staff member from THEC. June Scobee Rodgers, a board member for THEC, served on the advisory council that met following the literacy council’s meeting.

Throughout the work on the reading initiative, the State Board and the Department of Education have worked with Tennessee Tomorrow, Inc., an economic development group that focuses in large part on education issues.^{37,38} The Executive Director of Tennessee Tomorrow, George Yowell, served on the literacy council and also serves on the Tennessee Commission on Education Quality, a joint public-private venture started by Tennessee Tomorrow whose mission is to improve teaching quality and student achievement. The latter group met for the first time in October 2000 and again in January 2001, and concluded that its focus should be on four areas: reading, early childhood, teacher quality, and higher education.

The Tennessee Commission on Education Quality also discussed the importance of public awareness in education initiatives. Tennessee Tomorrow has hired a public relations firm to begin constructing a statewide public awareness campaign for education issues.

³⁶ TCA § 49-1-302.

³⁷ Information provided by Dr. Douglas Wood (12/15/00, 1/2/01, and 1/25/01) and George Yowell (1/10/01).

³⁸ Tennessee Tomorrow was started in 1992 by several business leaders in collaboration with then-Commissioner of Economic and Community Development Johnny Hayes. Various corporations in the state helped to fund a survey to uncover the need for an economic development group and illustrate the critical areas in economic development in the state. The survey clearly pointed out that the state needed an economic development strategic plan and organization. Tennessee Tomorrow founders were originally granted \$500,000 from the state and raised an additional \$1.4 million through private funding. Tennessee Tomorrow now is financially self-sustainable.

- **The Basic Education Program (BEP) Review Committee has postponed a decision on the inclusion of reading specialists in the BEP funding formula, but has recommended that English as a Second Language be proposed as a new component of the BEP.**³⁹

Because of the statewide interest in reading and the potential adoption of a statewide reading initiative, the BEP Review Committee began looking at the various issues surrounding the inclusion of reading specialists and English as a Second Language teachers in the BEP funding formula. The BEP grew out of an unconstitutional system of education funding, which led the legislature to ensure that any changes to the BEP would be difficult to make.⁴⁰

The component review subcommittee of the BEP Review Committee discussed the inclusion of reading specialists, but the group was aware of the reading initiative currently in development by the State Board of Education and the Department of Education. The subcommittee postponed a recommendation on reading specialists until the reading initiative recommendations were finalized.

The Review Committee proposed that English as a Second Language teachers be added to the BEP funding formula.⁴¹ In its December meeting, the State Board of Education accepted the recommendations of the BEP Review Committee, which included English as a Second Language teachers, on first reading.⁴²

Recommendations

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission in consultation with the State Board needs to complete an analysis of the state’s teacher education programs and whether they are adequately preparing teachers to teach reading and writing as previously mandated by the General Assembly in Public Chapter 911. Though the State Board of Education has developed a plan specifically to address teacher standards as prescribed in Chapter 911, THEC and the State Board still need to assess the effectiveness of the state’s teacher education programs.

The State Board, the Department of Education, and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission should continue to communicate and collaborate on the reading initiative and on other joint ventures. Research in states with successful P-16 initiatives shows that active participation by each party is essential to success. Regular communication between these entities and the private sector should continue.

³⁹ Agenda for the Tennessee State Board of Education meeting, October 26, 2000, Report Item II.E.

⁴⁰ Tennessee Annotated Code 49-3-350 and Agenda for the Tennessee State Board of Education meeting, October 26, 2000, Report Item II.E.

⁴¹ Agenda for the Tennessee State Board of Education meeting, December 8, 2000, Action Item IV.B.

⁴² Minutes from the December 8, 2000 State Board of Education meeting read: “Vice Chairman Frazier noted that the Board is accepting the recommendations of the Basic Education Program Review Committee on first reading with the understanding that they would undergo further review and revision by the Board and the Commissioners of Education and Finance and Administration.”

The State Board of Education, the Department of Education, and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission should continue to evaluate the need for a literacy center. Though these entities looked into the development of regional literacy centers to be used as resource centers for best practices and professional development, the centers are not included in the final reading initiative. As recommended in the report, *Teaching Kids to Read: Is Tennessee Doing Enough?*, the three groups should consider the development of a single resource area, housed at a higher education institution, that would consist of literacy resources and a web site to inform educators of the latest developments in literacy and teaching reading.

Because it is unclear how the reading coaches as described in the Governor's proposal would be trained, this office recommends that a detailed plan for training be written. Existing resources for additional training are limited, and training for the reading coaches appears to be essential to the effectiveness of this aspect of the reading initiative.

The State Board of Education and the Department of Education should evaluate the effectiveness of technology both for the classroom and professional development. The State Board of Education has met with various technology groups to analyze ways to incorporate technology in the reading initiative, and the State Board is attempting to use the existing technological system (ConnectEN) in its reading initiative. However, the impact of technology on student outcomes is unclear, and more research should be done to analyze its effectiveness, particularly in its use for professional development.

The State Board of Education, the Department of Education, and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission should continue to inform the literacy council members on the status of the reading initiative, and should engage in an ongoing evaluation of the reading initiative components. To maintain quality control, a group should be assigned the responsibility of objectively looking at the reading initiative components to determine that resources will be prudently used with the purpose of affecting student outcomes in reading.

The Department of Education should look into developing an evaluation for its two parent involvement programs, *Parents as Reading Partners* and *Smart from the Start*. To determine if these models are effectively involving parents in the education of their children, substantive evaluations need to occur.

Appendix A

PUBLIC ACTS, 1999

CHAPTER NO. 130

HOUSE BILL NO. 676

By Representatives Williams, Tindell, Armstrong, Larry Turner, Stulce, Ferguson, Caldwell, Winningham, Fraley, Hargrove, McDonald, Bone, Lewis, Hood, Eckles, Robinson, Arriola, Odom, Pruitt, Sherry Jones West, Sands, McMillan, Rinks, Kisber, Ridgeway, Maddox, Pinion, Ronnie Cole, Brenda Turner, Cooper, Lois DeBerry, Brooks, Langster, Fitzhugh, White, Dunn, Jackson, Davidson and Mr. Speaker Naifeh

Substituted for: Senate Bill No. 1240

By Senators Haynes, Cooper, Burks, Rochelle, Graves

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 1, to enact the "Tennessee Literacy Initiative Act of 1999".

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 1, is amended by adding a new part as follows:

Section 49-1-901. This part shall be known and may be cited as the "Tennessee Literacy Initiative Act of 1999".

Section 49-1-902. It is the policy of this State that local education agencies and the Department of Education move toward the goal of every public school student being able to read at an appropriate level before being promoted beyond the third grade.

Section 49-1-903. (a) The Office of Education Accountability in the Office of the Comptroller, with the assistance of the Tennessee Department of Education and the State Board of Education shall evaluate the reading proficiency of Tennessee's elementary schoolchildren and shall make recommendations to ensure that each child can read at an appropriate level before leaving the third grade.

(b) The report shall include any relevant test data from Tennessee and shall include a listing of all pilot projects and grants administered by the Department of Education that promote literacy in Tennessee's K-12 public schools. The report shall also include information on other states' efforts to increase reading proficiency in grades K-6.

(c) The office of education accountability shall issue its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly no later than November 1, 1999.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.

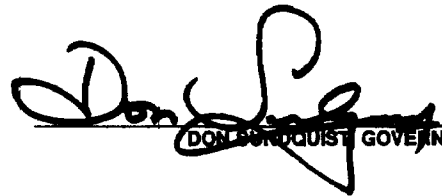
PUBLIC ACTS, 1999

PASSED: May 3, 1999


JIMMY RAIFEH, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES


JOHN S. WILDER
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

APPROVED this 12th day of May 1999


DON SUNDQUIST, GOVERNOR

Appendix B

PUBLIC ACTS, 2000

CHAPTER NO. 911

SENATE BILL NO. 2485

By Haynes, Burks, Harper, Dixon, Cooper

Substituted for: House Bill No. 2738

By Williams, Hargrove, Cooper, Hood, Lewis, Eckles, Towns, Brooks

AN ACT To amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 1 and Title 49, Chapter 6, relative to the Tennessee Literacy Initiative Act of 1999.

WHEREAS, Chapter 130 of the Public Acts of 1999, codified as Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 1, Part 9, the "Tennessee Literacy Initiative Act of 1999", recognized the paramount importance of literacy in the 21st century and established a state goal that every public school student would be able to read at the appropriate level before being promoted to the 3rd grade; and

WHEREAS, As part of the "Tennessee Literacy Initiative Act of 1999", the Office of Education Accountability within the Office of the Comptroller of the Treasury was directed to evaluate the reading proficiency of Tennessee's elementary school children and make recommendations to ensure that the goal of appropriate reading proficiency before the 3rd grade be accomplished; and

WHEREAS, The Office of Education Accountability conducted its study and found that:

(1) Two separate assessments indicate that most Tennessee students are not successful in the area of reading;

(2) States that have maintained good reading scores or raised their reading scores over time have established reading as a funding and/or policy priority;

(3) Tennessee is the only southeastern state without a state-funded reading initiative;

(4) Tennessee lacks a reading infrastructure;

(5) Three prominent sources have rated Tennessee's standards for language arts as very low;

(6) Currently, the state sponsors no professional development workshop or class that deals with reading assessment strategies for the developmental grades. The professional development training that the Tennessee Department of Education now provides addresses assessment only in relation to TCAP (TerraNova) and Gateway testing;

(7) Many Tennessee teachers may lack the expertise needed to assess or assist children with reading difficulties. As in many states, future teachers educated in Tennessee's state universities are often required to take only one course in reading

PUBLIC ACTS, 2000

methodology. Researchers indicate that this amount of preservice training is inadequate;

(8) Some LEAs may lack the knowledge base to select reading programs and appropriate assessments that are supported by the latest research;

(9) Tennessee's teachers may not have access to sufficient professional development opportunities to bring them "up to speed" regarding the latest reading methodology research;

(10) Tennessee lacks an adequate number of English as Second Language (ESL) teachers; and

(11) Tennessee schools employ few reading specialists; and

WHEREAS, A state-supported and state-funded reading initiative may enhance Tennessee's ability to secure competitive federal grants targeting literacy; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 1, Part 9, is amended by adding the following new sections:

Section 49-1-904. The State Department of Education shall identify schools with consistently low reading scores in kindergarten through twelve (K-12) and assure that measures for improvement are addressed in the schools' improvement plans.

Section 49-1-905.

(a) By the 2001 annual joint meeting required by Section 49-1-302(a)(10), the State Board of Education and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission shall address specifically whether teacher candidates in Tennessee receive adequate training to teach all children to read. The state board is further directed to revise teacher training and certification requirements, as needed, to ensure that teacher candidates are properly trained and qualified.

(b) The State Board of Education and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission in conjunction with the University of Tennessee and the State Board of Regents shall consider development of an information center at a state university for research and information on reading for preschool through twelfth (12th) grade teachers and report their findings by the 2001 joint meeting.

Section 49-1-906. The Basic Education Program (BEP) Review Committee, created by Section 49-1-302(a)(4), shall examine whether English as Second Language (ESL) teachers and reading specialists should be included in the BEP funding formula created by Section 49-1-302(a)(4).

Section 49-1-907. The State Board of Education and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, and the State Department of Education shall report at least annually to the Joint Oversight Committee on Education as to what actions are being taken to implement the provisions of this part.

PUBLIC ACTS, 2000

Section 49-1-908. The Office of Education Accountability shall follow up on its study and report to the General Assembly by February 15, 2001, on the current status of literacy initiatives in the State of Tennessee.


SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 6, Part 60, is amended by adding the following language as a new appropriately designated section:

Section _____. The State Department of Education shall study failure rates of students taking the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program test in any county having a population of not less than eight hundred twenty-five thousand (825,000) nor more than eight hundred thirty thousand (830,000) according to the 1990 federal census or any subsequent federal census, report on the factors influencing such rates, and shall make appropriate recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before February 1, 2001, to ensure that the goal of appropriate proficiency on the assessments is accomplished.

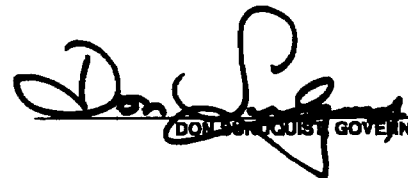
SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming law, the public welfare requiring it.

PASSED: June 9, 2000


JOHN S. WILDER
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE


JIMMY NAIFEH, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROVED this 19th day of June 2000


DON SUNDQUIST, GOVERNOR

Appendix C

The following individuals were interviewed for this report:

- Jan Bushing, Director, School Based Support Services, Tennessee Department of Education
- Ethel Detch, Director, Offices of Research and Education Accountability, Office of the Comptroller of the Treasury, State of Tennessee
- Susan Doughty, Director, Family Literacy Programs, Tennessee Department of Education
- Nancy Duggin, Instruction and Professional Development Coordinator, Tennessee Education Association
- Lynn Faust, Parent
- Sue Goodwin, Grant Writer/Consultant, Tennessee Department of Education
- Dr. Mary Jo Howland, Research Associate, State Board of Education
- Dr. Richard Rhoda, Executive Director, Tennessee Higher Education Commission
- Dr. June Scobee Rodgers, Commission Member, Tennessee Higher Education Commission
- Dr. Diane Sawyer, Executive Director, Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia, Middle Tennessee State University
- Dr. Connie Smith, Executive Director, Division of Accountability, Tennessee Department of Education
- Penny Smith, Manager of the Workforce Investment Act, Tennessee Higher Education Commission
- Karen Weeks, Research Associate, State Board of Education
- Dr. Claudette Williams, Executive Director, Office of Curriculum and Instruction, Tennessee Department of Education
- Dr. Douglas Wood, Executive Director, State Board of Education
- George Yowell, Executive Director, Tennessee Tomorrow, Inc.

Appendix D

2000 Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) Achievement Results

	3 rd Grade		4 th Grade		5 th Grade		6 th Grade	
	TN	Nation	TN	State	TN	Nation	TN	Nation
Percent Proficient in Reading	14	14	26	24	38	33	16	18

	7 th Grade		8 th Grade	
	TN	Nation	TN	State
Percent Proficient in Reading	24	25	37	33

Appendix E

Members of the Literacy Council

Chair

Dr. Douglas Wood, State Board of Education

Members

Dr. Marty Alberg, University of Memphis

Dr. Deborah Alexander, Kingston Elementary School

Dr. Marino Alvarez, Tennessee State University

Dwayne Beydler, Memphis Area Chamber of Commerce

Dr. Bill Brozo, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Tony Burks, Crockett Elementary School

Dr. Lynn Cagle, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Dr. Murphysteen Campbell, Alcy Elementary School

Dr. Vernon Coffey, Tennessee Department of Education

Dr. Martha Collins, East Tennessee State University

Mary Craighead

Luisa D' Arista

Carol Darling

David Dotson, The Dollywood Foundation

Lynn Faust

Charles Frazier, State Board of Education

Dr. Douglas Fuchs, Vanderbilt University

Albert Ganier, III, Education Networks of America

Dr. Darrell Garber, Tennessee Technological University

Patsy Garriott

Lynda Gunter, Kenrose Elementary School

Sally Jackson, Anderson County Schools

Dr. Peggy Killough, Tennessee Education Association

Dr. Charles Kinzer, Vanderbilt University

Tony Lancaster, Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents

Diane Mackey, Rutherford County Schools

Betty Naifeh

Gregory Patterson, Una Elementary School

Rebecca Renfrow

Sheila Reynolds, Williamson County Schools

Dr. Richard Rhoda, Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Dr. Victoria Risko, Vanderbilt University

Dr. June Scobee Rodgers, Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Dr. Valerie Copeland Rutledge, State Board of Education

Dr. Diane Sawyer, Middle Tennessee State University

Jill Speering, Metro Nashville Reading Recovery

Edward Sullivan

Dr. Dan Tollett, Tennessee School Boards Association

Dr. Carol Thigpin, Nashville READ
Hulon Watson, Rutherford County Schools
Dr. Karen Weddle-West, University of Memphis
Denise Wilburn, Anderson County Schools
Dr. Jerry Woods, Covington City Schools
George Yowell, Tennessee Tomorrow, Inc.

Staff

Eileen Amaba, Education Networks of America
Jan Bushing, Tennessee Department of Education
Susan Doughty, Tennessee Department of Education
Nancy Duggin, Tennessee Education Association
Sue Goodwin, Tennessee Department of Education
Dr. Mary Jo Howland, State Board of Education
Steve Minton, Tennessee Department of Education
Rosemary Mosier, Tennessee Department of Education
Jeff Roberts, Tennessee Department of Education
Penny Smith, Tennessee Higher Education Commission
Karen Weeks, State Board of Education
Dr. Claudette Williams, Tennessee Department of Education

Resource People

Dr. Courtney Borden Cazden, Harvard University
Dr. David Denton, Director, Southern Regional Education Board
Dr. Dixie Goswami, Clemson University
Dr. Thomas Hehir, Harvard University
Dr. James Maddox, George Washington University
Dr. José Martinez, Oakland Unified School District
Dr. Jacqueline Jones Royster, Ohio State University
Dr. Shirley Brice Heath, Stanford University
Dr. Andrea Lunsford, Stanford University
Dr. June Rivers, SAS in School
Dr. Marty Rutherford, RPP International

Appendix F

Recommendations made by the literacy and advisory councils to the State Board of Education, the Tennessee Department of Education, and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission

The advisory council recommended that the reading initiative include several actions that would not require legislation and that should be completed before June 2001. These actions include:

- Appointing an advisory committee that will be responsible for finalizing the P-8 reading policy and ensuring its collaboration with the Tennessee Department of Education’s work on revising the reading and writing standards for the state.
- Instructing the literacy council to develop a survey to be sent to both school systems and teacher education programs to help pinpoint gaps in teacher preparation for reading and writing.
- Requesting recommendations from the State Board of Education’s Advisory Council on Teacher Education and Certification, an established council, on the licensure of new teachers.

The advisory council also suggested that the General Assembly consider specific legislative actions.

The Formation of the Tennessee Reading and Writing Renaissance

The advisory council suggested that the General Assembly consider passing a law that would create a summer conference in 2001 to initiate the *Tennessee Reading and Writing Renaissance*. Representatives from every district in the state, along with leading literacy advisors, would attend. The conference has several purposes:

1. To serve as the kickoff to a reading initiative and to encourage participation by key leaders in the community.
2. To provide as one of the foci an emphasis on reading in the middle grades.
3. To create a networking opportunity for education leaders in the state and give them an opportunity to exchange ideas and hear best practices in literacy.
4. To distribute information on the Governor’s Reading and Writing Community Compact Grants, which would be awarded to schools to develop reading and writing instruction and administered by a newly-formed executive council for literacy, the Tennessee Executive Council for Reading and Writing.⁴³

The Formation of the Tennessee Executive Council for Reading and Writing

The advisory council recommended that the Tennessee General Assembly pass a statute requiring the formation of an executive council, called the Tennessee Executive Council for Reading and Writing, whose purpose is to report on the status of reading and writing in Tennessee to its constituencies and to the Joint Oversight Committee. The constituent members of the council would include representatives from the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents, the Tennessee Education Association, the Tennessee Higher

⁴³ The advisory council established specific criteria for these grants. See appendix C.

Education Commission, the Tennessee branch of the Parent/Teacher Association, the State Board of Education, the Commissioner of Education (or other representatives from the Tennessee Department of Education), the Tennessee Senate, the Tennessee House of Representatives, and the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce. The advisory council recommended that this body be in place no later than September 1, 2001.

The advisory council suggested that the Tennessee Executive Council for Reading and Writing focus on the five key areas analyzed by the literacy council: strengthening content and performance standards, teacher quality, parent/community involvement, assessment and intervention, and accountability. The advisory council's recommendations listed below are taken from those made by the literacy council. Slight changes in these areas were added by the advisory council, but in general the material was compiled by the 55-member literacy council.

Parent/Community Involvement

The key components of the advisory council's parent/community involvement recommendations include:

- Partnering with parents and schools through family literacy programs, day care, and parent/teacher organizations;
- Creating "community learning centers" at schools with before- and after-school programs, computer labs and libraries, social services, and family literacy;
- Promoting authors and involving celebrities in reading programs;
- Concentrating on pre-kindergarten reading skills through family literacy, promoting the Department's early childhood development program called *Smart from the Start*, partnerships with other organizations, early childhood centers, the *Parents as Teachers* program or *FIRST STEPS* program, the adoption of universal pre-school for four year olds, professional development of pre-school teachers, and alignment between pre-school and kindergarten;
- Increasing the number of certified ESL teachers and family literacy programs;
- Promoting parental involvement in a school reading initiative through a Compact for Reading;
- Training parents through ongoing adult education;
- Involving businesses by requesting funding from private companies for ESL and adult education classes for employees and families;
- Collaborating with local and state agencies;
- Applying for Reading Excellence Act funding;
- Improving teacher education and preparing teachers to work in literacy and with parents; and
- Establishing a tracking system that would show parent and community involvement.

Strengthening Content and Performance Standards

The advisory council suggested a focus on best practices in the use of standards through:

- Maintaining on-line access to the revised standards;
- Creating strategies for teachers to evaluate their own successes and/or failures;
- Adapting to changes in best practices and developing on-going research of literacy issues; and

- Focusing on student outcomes.

Teacher Quality

Under the advisory council's recommendations, licensure standards would change by:

- Adding a reading section to the general education licensure standards;
- Promoting well-researched reading methodology in courses and requiring that teacher candidates fully understand the reading methodology;
- Mandating that reading be taught through at least the 8th grade;
- Using direct instruction to learn teaching strategies in reading;
- Evaluating programs by including, in part, reading achievements;
- Adding an emphasis on middle school reading courses;
- Requiring Title I teachers to be certified in reading;
- Appealing to higher education groups to reward programs that encourage teacher candidates' involvement in the schools;
- Aligning of the PRAXIS test (and specifically the PRAXIS reading test) and state licensure standards; and
- Determining use of PRAXIS reading test.

Assessment and Intervention

According to the advisory council, the reading component of state assessments should include the following aspects of reading development: oral language, phonics, reading and listening comprehension, study skills, vocabulary, fluency, print concepts, self-monitoring of reading and writing skills, and narrative and expository texts.

Other recommendations included:

- Aligning assessment to instruction through work sampling, daily records, and surveys;
- Creating a kit of materials for teachers that would help teachers administer and understand assessments. Kits could include a teacher's guide, intervention ideas, sheets for recording student work, a summary sheet for ongoing assessment, stories, on-line resources, and administration requirements.

Accountability

To monitor the effectiveness of a reading initiative, the advisory council recommendations included:

- Using the regional literacy centers to create a data collection process, manage and analyze the data, and report student performance;
- Holding the state, universities, schools, and communities accountable for teacher education programs, reading preparation for new teachers, hiring practices, support and professional development for teachers, parent and community involvement, expenditures, allocation of resources, evaluations, alignment of tests with curriculum, disaggregation of data, school instructional leadership, use of phonics, small classes, interventions, reading time allocation, and reading specialists.
- Holding the state, universities, schools, and communities accountable by ensuring that students are at or above grade level in grades 3, 5, and 8 in reading, ending performance gaps between students, creating assessment data systems for school use,

ensuring that high school graduates are skilled in reading and writing, and distributing an annual report card.

Appendix G

Survey Distributed to
Prekindergarten through Third Grade Teachers in the State

SURVEY
Please circle, check or fill in the best response to each of the following items.

1. What grade(s) are you currently teaching? Circle all that apply.

PK K 1 2 3 Ungraded: specify age Group(s) _____

2. How many years have you taught? Circle range of years.

1-4 years 5-10 years 11-15 years 16 or more years

3. Please name the reading program(s) or series currently being used in your classroom.

4. Please name any supplemental program(s) or materials currently being used in your classroom.

5. To what extent did your teacher preparation program prepare you to teach all children to read? Circle one.

Not at all Small Extent Moderate Extent Great Extent

6. How well prepared do you feel to implement a balanced reading program in your classroom? Circle one.

Not at all Small Extent Moderate Extent Great Extent

7. Are you adequately prepared to diagnose a child's reading difficulty? Circle *yes* or *no*.

Yes No

8. What is your greatest need in supporting students who are not reading on grade level in your classroom?

9. Please complete the following regarding parent involvement.

**9(a) Do parents work with you to help their children become better readers?
Circle *yes* or *no*.**

Yes

No

9(b) If YES, how do you encourage their involvement?

9(c) If NO, what are the barriers?

10. Do you have adequate time for reading and writing curriculum objectives in your classroom? Circle *yes* or *no*.

Yes

No

10(a) If NO, what are the barriers?

11. Please circle the approximate number of hours per day focused on reading and writing curriculum objectives in your classroom.

Less than 1 hour 1 hour 1 - 2 hours 2 - 3 hours More than 3 hours

12. If a child is having difficulty learning to read in your classroom, what do you do? Check all that apply.

- 12(a) _____ Diagnose problem
- 12(b) _____ Refer to a specialist
- 12(c) _____ Refer to a consultant
- 12(d) _____ Implement intervention program
- 12(e) _____ Other (Please describe.)

13. Please identify your greatest need for professional development in the following components of a balanced reading program. Rank order each component from 1 (your area of GREATEST need) to 6 (your area of LEAST need).

Component	Ranking 1 = greatest need 6 = least need
13(a) Phonemic awareness (how phonemes, or speech sounds, are connected to print)	_____
13(b) Decoding: systematic, explicit instruction in phonics and structural analysis	_____
13(c) Fluency	_____
13(d) Background information and vocabulary to foster comprehension	_____
13(e) Active comprehension strategies	_____
13(f) Motivation to read and appreciation of literate forms	_____

14. Rank order each of the following activities from component from 1 (MOST frequently used) to 8 (LEAST frequently used).

Activity	Ranking 1 = MOST frequent 8 = LEAST frequent	Activity	Ranking 1 = MOST frequent 8 = LEAST frequent
14(a) Oral Reading	_____	14(e) Writing	_____
14(b) Silent Reading	_____	14(f) Computer-based instruction (Accelerated Reader)	_____
14(c) Direct Instruction in Reading	_____	14(g) Computer-based instruction (Other)	_____
14(d) Talking about books	_____	14(h) Worksheets	_____

15. Have you had an opportunity for professional development dealing with reading in the last 12 months? Circle *yes* or *no*.

Yes

No

16. Approximately how many hours did you spend on professional development dealing with reading in the past 12 months? In column A check the **FORMAT** of the activity. (Check all that apply.) In Column B, indicate the number of hours for each activity.

	Column A Activity Format	Column B Number of Hours
15(a) _____	Professional teacher association meeting or conference	_____
15(b) _____	In-service workshop or program	_____
15(c) _____	Summer institute (may or may not have included follow-up)	_____
15(d) _____	District or school-based long-term, on-going professional development program	_____
15(e) _____	Other (Please Describe)	_____

16. To what extent have the following sources of information or assistance been helpful to you in teaching reading? Circle one for each source.

Source	Extent
_____	_____

16(a) Other teachers	Not at all	Small Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent
16(b) School administrators	Not at all	Small Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent
16(c) District administrators	Not at all	Small Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent
16(d) Graduate Courses	Not at all	Small Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent
16(e) Institutes or workshops	Not at all	Small Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent
16(f) Professional journals	Not at all	Small Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent
16(g) In-service training	Not at all	Small Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent
16(h) Teacher organizations or networks	Not at all	Small Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent
16(i) State developed reading content standards	Not at all	Small Extent	Moderate Extent	Great Extent

Thank you for your time and cooperation in completing this survey.



DON SUNDQUIST
GOVERNOR

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
6TH FLOOR, ANDREW JOHNSON TOWER
710 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY
NASHVILLE, TN 37243-0375

E. VERNON COFFEY, ED.D
COMMISSIONER

January 8, 2001

Dear Principal:

Your school is one of 400 schools selected to participate in a survey of reading instruction in grades PK, K, 1, 2 and 3 being conducted by the State Department of Education. The purpose of the survey is to gather information about reading programs in Tennessee and to determine the need and range of professional development activities required to implement Tennessee's Reading and Literacy Initiative 2001 in grades PK-3.

I am enclosing 12 copies of the survey. Your surveys have been numbered in order for our research staff to track response rates. School and teacher anonymity is absolutely guaranteed, and any reports produced by our office will not identify individual schools. Schools were selected based on demographics and geography so that we could receive responses from the widest possible range of schools.

Please distribute the 12 copies to teachers in Grades PK, K, 1, 2 and 3 in a manner that we have responses for each grade level available in your building. Their responses will be critical in enabling us to provide for the professional development that will take Tennessee to its reading goal: every child a reader by the end of Grade 3.

Thank you and your teachers for your willingness to respond to our survey and for your time. If you have any questions, contact Sue Goodwin, 615 532-1232 (sgoodwin2@mail.state.tn.us).

Please mail the surveys in the enclosed self-addressed envelope by Friday, January 26, 2001.

Sincerely,

E. Vernon Coffey

Appendix H

K-2 Reading Accomplishments Tennessee Department of Education

KINDERGARTEN READING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The kindergarten student should be able to ...

- Show evidence of expanding oral language.
- Demonstrate appropriate gross motor skills such as skipping, hopping, marching to a beat, and balancing on one foot.
- Demonstrate appropriate fine motor skills such as buttoning, cutting, zipping, tracing, lacing, and grasping/gripping a pencil or crayon.
- Demonstrate hand dominance through such activities as stringing beads and manipulating puzzles and pegboards.
- Exhibit skills involving visual modality:
 - Visual forms - from basic shapes to letters
 - Visual memory and sequencing - from pattern reproduction to recognition of similarities and differences
- Participate in creative response to text such as choral reading, discussions, dramatization, and oral presentations.
- Show interest in storybooks, expository texts, poems, newspapers, and environmental print.
- Explore a wide variety of literature through read alouds, tapes, library centers, etc.
- Recognize a purpose for listening and listen to a passage attentively.
- Explore literature which includes multicultural, gender, and ethnic diversity.
- "Pretend read" from left to right, top to bottom, and front to back as well as hold a book upright and turn pages.
- Begin to track print when listening to a familiar text being read or when rereading own writing.
- Know that groups of letters represent spoken and written words and that groups of words make sentences.
- Recognize and name the letters of the alphabet.

- Point out letters of the alphabet in words.
- Match upper and lower case letters.
- Independently write many upper case and lower case letters.
- Demonstrate concepts of print and directionality in own writing.
- Read familiar text emergently (not necessarily verbatim from the print alone).
- Recognize own name and familiar names from the environment.
- Produce a word that rhymes with a spoken word.
- Recognize words that have the same beginning and ending sounds such as kite, cat, and cake.
- Use phonemic awareness and letter knowledge to spell independently, using temporary spelling.
- Begin to explore letter sound correspondences.
- Recognize some words by sight such as the, a, has, can, run, and color and number words.
- Begin to explore picture sorts, word families, and word walls.
- Begin to understand that the sequence of letters in a written word represents the sequence of sounds in a spoken word.
- Use context clues and structural analysis to predict words.
- Retell and/or illustrate a story or a part of a story.
- Use picture clues and background knowledge to get meaning from text.
- Make predictions about different aspects of text such as ending, characters, setting, and whether the text is real or make-believe.
- Explore differences between fact and fantasy through a variety of genres.
- Recall a 3-step sequence of events.
- Follow simple 2 and 3-step oral directions.
- Use new vocabulary and grammatical constructions in own speech.
- Use the language and voice of stories when narrating a personal story.
- Dramatize, retell, and dictate simple stories.
- Be aware of ending punctuation.

- Recognize a variety of authors and illustrators.
- Self select books.
- Recognize books and technological tools as sources of information.
- Recognize a variety of print sources such as books, magazines, maps, charts, and graphs.
- Recognize the community and family as resources for information.
- Visit libraries and regularly check out materials.

FIRST GRADE READING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The first grade reader should be able to...

- Show evidence of expanding oral language.
- Participate in creative response to text such as choral reading, discussions, dramatization, and oral presentations.
- Show awareness of syllables by clapping counting, or moving objects.
- Use temporary spelling/phonics-based knowledge to spell independently in original compositions.
- Spell correctly three- and four-letter short vowel words following instruction.
- Use new vocabulary and grammatical constructions in speech and writing.
- Show interest in storybooks, expository texts, poems, newspapers, and environmental print.
- Explore a wide variety of literature through read alouds, tapes, library centers, and independent reading.
- Recognize a purpose for listening and listen to a passage attentively.
- Explore literature which includes multicultural, gender, and ethnic diversity.
- Transition from emergent to independent reader.
- Understand concepts of print including title, author, illustrator, left-to-right, and directionality.
- Blend and segment the phonemes of one-syllable words.
- Know one-to-one letter-sound correspondences.
- Decode phonetically regular, one-syllable words in text.
- Monitor own reading and self correct.

- Recognize common, irregularly spelled words by sight such as have, said, where, and two.
- Read both fiction and nonfiction that is appropriately leveled.
- Explore and manipulate word families, word wall, and word sorts.
- Use context clues and structural analysis to predict unknown words in text.
- Discuss features of text including main idea, characters, and setting.
- Use prior knowledge of topics to make meaning from text.
- Predict, justify, and draw conclusions.
- Discuss how, why, and what if questions for informational text.
- Initiate questions or conversation about reading selections.
- Respond orally to questions about reading selections using graphic organizers, story maps, and webs.
- Recall a 3 to 4-step sequence of events.
- Follow and give 2 to 3-step simple oral directions.
- Recognize basic cause and effect relationships.
- Recognize similarities and differences in events and characters across text.
- Understand usage of period, question mark, and exclamation point when reading.
- Read text and personal compositions orally with fluency, expression, accuracy, and confidence.
- Identify favorite stories, informational text, authors, and illustrators.
- Read independently for pleasure and information.
- Self select books.
- Recognize books and technological tools as sources of information.
- Recognize a variety of print sources such as books, magazines, maps, charts, and graphs.
- Recognize the community and family as resources for information.
- Visit libraries and regularly check out materials.

SECOND GRADE READING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The second grade reader should be able to...

- Show evidence of expanding oral language.
- Participate in creative response to text such as choral reading, discussions, dramatization, and oral presentations.
- Participate in creative response to text segments/portions such as challenging words and character analysis.
- Use formal language patterns in speech and writing.
- Verbally express thoughts and be able to record thoughts in personal writing.
- Explore a wide variety of literature through read alouds, tapes, library centers, and independent reading.
- Recognize a purpose for listening and listen to a passage attentively.
- Explore literature which includes multicultural, gender, and ethnic diversity.
- Read both in school and out of school at an independent level.
- Identify and understand paragraphing and conversation (dialogue) conventions.
- Identify and use the parts of a book including author, illustrator, title page, table of contents, chapters, and glossary.
- Decode one-syllable words not yet known automatically.
- Decode unknown multisyllabic words through phonetic and structural analysis.
- Exercise a variety of word choice options in reading and writing such as synonyms, antonyms, common expressions, multiple meanings, and content relationships.
- Read many irregularly spelled words using such spelling patterns as diphthongs, special vowel spellings, and common word beginnings and endings.
- Decode nonsense words which are comparable in difficulty and structure to actual words.
- Use word families, word walls, and word sorts across content areas. Automatically reread sentences when meaning is not clear.
- Interpret information from diagrams, graphs, and charts,
- Recall facts and details of text and use details to reach conclusions.
- Discuss similarities and differences in events and characters across text.

- Connect and compare information across informational text.
- Ask how, why, and what-if questions about informational text.
- Follow, create, and retell 2 and 3-step directions using text, pictures, diagrams, and personal experiences.
- Recognize the stated main idea in a passage.
- Infer basic cause and effect relationships that are not explicitly stated.
- Make predictions that extend beyond the text.
- Make meaning from idioms and figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, and personification.
- Recall 3 to 5-step sequence of events.
- Have an appropriately developed reading vocabulary for rapid recognition of words commonly encountered.
- Read orally with fluency, expression, accuracy, and confidence.
- Reflect punctuation within written text while reading orally.
- Read a variety of text such as poetry, drama, magazine articles, news features, and web pages.
- Read for a specific purpose.
- Self select books.
- Recognize books and technological tools as sources of information.
- Recognize a variety of print sources such as books, magazines, maps, charts, and graphs.
- Recognize the community and family as resources for information.
- Visit libraries and regularly check out materials.

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