



Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act

2021 Annual Report

Tennessee Department of Education | November 2021



Executive Summary

This report was prepared pursuant to [Chapter 1 of the Public Acts of 2021](#), First Extraordinary Session, known as the **Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act**. The Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act created a framework to accelerate student learning in the wake of COVID-19 related disruptions to learning, including requiring school districts and participating charter schools to offer three types of learning loss remediation camps over the summer (Summer Camps). School districts and participating charter schools are also required to administer a pre- and post-test to measure the academic improvement of students who attended Summer Camps.

Additionally, the Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act requires the Tennessee Department of Education (department) to develop a report to provide information about the effectiveness of the state's learning loss remediation and student acceleration program, and to provide that report to the Governor, Speaker of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and chairs of the House and Senate education committees by November 1st of each year. Pursuant to the Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act, this report contains data on Summer Camp enrollment and attendance, student performance on pre- and post-tests, and an analysis of 2021 Summer Camp staffing trends.

Key Takeaways

- Tennessee witnessed widespread participation in Summer Camps in the first summer of implementation, with statewide attendance rates above 95 percent for students who enrolled in Summer Camps. This encouraging attendance data demonstrates the priority that districts placed on engaging families to communicate Summer Camp opportunities and bolster attendance for students who needed Summer Camp programming the most.
- Statewide, students improved in both English Language Arts (ELA) and math after attending Summer Camps, indicating the Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act is having a measurable impact on the acceleration of student learning.
- Over 95 percent of districts reported no issues adequately staffing Summer Camps.
- Statewide, teachers who staffed summer camps were above average in effectiveness, with an average Level of Overall Effectiveness (LOE) score of 4.1 on a scale of 5.
- In the first summer of implementation, the department [recorded valuable data](#) on Summer Camp attendance and performance. This data provides valuable insight into the effectiveness of Summer Camps and highlights the need for continued refinement and improvement in Summer Camp delivery and process.
- The department will continue to analyze pre- and post-test data, consider ways to improve test administration and the test instrument, and make needed adjustments to Summer Programs Enrollment & Attendance Reporting (SPEAR) and other data collection platforms to maximize data reliability.

Introduction

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 was announced in Tennessee on March 5, 2020. Soon after, on March 12, Governor Bill Lee issued Executive Order No. 14, declaring a State of Emergency related to the pandemic. On March 16, Governor Lee and Commissioner Schwinn encouraged LEAs and charter schools to implement their continuous learning plans and administer instruction remotely due to the spread of COVID-19 in the state.

For the remainder of the 2019-20 school year, school districts and public charter schools rapidly shifted to remote learning, and worked tirelessly to provide instruction and resources remotely, distribute devices and internet hot spots, and provide other crucial services like meals to students. The department supported the herculean efforts of school districts and public charter schools by providing a variety of [school closure toolkits](#), assistance with device access, and other tailored supports.

Although most school districts and public charter schools across the state returned to some form of in-person instruction during the 2020-21 school year, the effects of COVID-19 on student learning were inescapable. After nearly two years of school closures and different learning modalities, [Spring 2021 TCAP results](#) confirmed pandemic related disruptions to learning led to widespread but expected declines in academic proficiency across all subjects and grade bands in the state.

Recognizing and anticipating the immense disruptions to learning and academic achievement caused by COVID-19, Governor Bill Lee, in partnership with the 112th Tennessee General Assembly, took swift, bold action. In January of 2021, Governor Lee called a [special legislative session on education](#) to put in place proactive supports to mitigate COVID-19 related learning loss and accelerate academic recovery, including legislation on literacy, learning loss, school district, school, and teacher accountability, and teacher pay.

The Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act

[Chapter 1 of the Public Acts of 2021](#), First Extraordinary Session, known as the Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act (Act), outlined clear and actionable steps to accelerate student learning in the wake of the pandemic. Beginning in the summer of 2021, the Act established three types of summer learning loss remediation camps (Summer Camps) to be conducted locally over the course of two summers and beyond:

In January of 2021, Governor Lee called a special legislative session on education to put in place proactive supports to mitigate COVID-19 related learning loss and accelerate academic recovery.

- Summer Learning Camps for students in grades 1-5
- After School STREAM Camps for students in grades 1-5
- Learning Loss Bridge Camps for students in grades 6-8

Programming was designed for a full school day of instruction, including a focus on ELA and mathematics, with devoted time for STREAM (Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts, and Math) support, physical education, and response to intervention (RTI). Tennessee led the nation to enact early legislation to combat learning loss, providing the department and school districts a longer runway to design, build, and implement meaningful summer opportunities to accelerate student learning. All school districts were required to provide opportunity for their eligible students to attend Summer Camps. Charter schools had the option to offer Summer Camps, or students enrolled in charter schools could enroll in the Summer Camps offered by a school district in their geographic area. For more information on the implementation of Summer Camps, including district spotlights, unique approaches, and best practices, please see the Accelerating TN Tour 2021: [Bright Spots Guide](#).

In addition to requiring Summer Camps, the Act required school districts and participating charter schools to administer a department provided pre-test and post-test to measure academic growth in ELA and math over the course of the Summer Camps. Finally, the Act required the department to annually report on a variety of information about Summer Camps, including:

- A summary and interpretation of data generated from pre-tests and post-tests administered to students who participated in Summer Camps;
- An analysis and summary of the how a teacher's overall level of effectiveness (LOE) score affected the academic performance of the students they instructed in Summer Camps. This data must be disaggregated by subject, grade level, and by the type of Summer Camp in which the teacher's services were provided; and
- Information identifying schools unable to adequately staff or conduct Summer Camps, including the reason for why the school district or public charter school was unable to achieve adequate staffing. This data must be disaggregated by subject, grade level, and by the type of Summer Camp that the school district or public charter school was unable to adequately staff or conduct.

The Summer Camps created through the Act serve as vital supports for students in need of academic acceleration. Starting in the 2022-23 school year, the Act establishes new guidelines for retention of third grade students scoring "approaching" or "below" grade level on the ELA portion of the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP). Summer Camps, in addition to tutoring services, serve as an opportunity for students identified for retention to advance to the fourth grade and ensure they are prepared for long-term success.

Summer Camp Attendance

Across Tennessee, elected officials, community partners, families, school district leaders, and educators came together to provide summer learning opportunities for students. Following extensive planning with support from the department, every school district offered Summer Camps during the Summer of 2021. Students gained additional academic hours fueled by targeted instruction, small group work, and engaging activities, which mitigated further learning loss and prepared students for reentry to classrooms come fall. The importance of these summer learning opportunities was emphasized by attendance data from the Summer of 2021. As Figure 1 shows, in the first summer of implementation, Tennessee witnessed widespread participation in Summer Camps, with over 120,000 students participating, and statewide attendance rates above 95% for students who enrolled in Summer Camps.

Figure 1: Summer Camp Enrollment and Attendance, Summer 2021

Enrollment	ED	Non-ED	Total
Summer Learning & STREAM camps ¹	38,535	52,302	90,837
Learning Loss Bridge Camps	13,375	16,131	29,506
ALL	51,910	68,433	120,343

Attendance	ED	Non-ED	Total
Summer Learning & STREAM Camps	95.49%	96.96%	96.34%
Learning Loss Bridge Camps	94.39%	95.85%	95.19%
ALL	95.21%	96.70%	96.06%

¹ STREAM camps are 1 hour after school learning mini camps designed to remediate student learning loss and support student academic needs using an educational approach to learning that uses science, technology, reading, engineering, the arts, and mathematics (STREAM). Districts conducted these camps concurrent to Summer Learning Camps, so attendance and performance data for both is combined in this report.

These encouraging enrollment data demonstrate the priority that school districts and charter schools placed on engaging families to communicate Summer Camp opportunities and bolster attendance for students who needed summer programming the most. Strong enrollment and sustained attendance were also made possible with the transportation funding school districts received from the Tennessee General Assembly. Many school districts statewide recognized their ability to increase enrollment was only possible with this transportation funding. Further, several school districts shared they were able to double the numbers served, capturing those most in need of extra instruction and a safe classroom environment. Although school districts saw high attendance rates across the board, anecdotally school districts reported that attendance for elementary grades was higher than for middle grades, highlighting a focus area for future improvement.

Summary and Interpretation of Pre-Test and Post-Test Data

The Act requires school districts and participating charter schools to administer a pre- and post-test to students as part of the Summer Camps. School Districts and participating charter schools are then required to submit the results of all pre- and post-tests to the department by September 1st each year.

To assist in fulfilling this requirement, the department developed a pre- and post-test in ELA and math and provided those tests to school districts and participating charter schools during the Summer of 2021². Tests were designed to be administered quickly, in 20 minutes or less, and meant to capture academic progress made by students after attending Summer Camps. In grades K-2, tests were either administered on paper, or via a read aloud option for younger students who may be struggling readers. In grades 3-8, tests could be administered in a paper format or a computer-based format via the department's online formative assessment platform, Schoolnet. Data was then collected by the department either directly from Schoolnet, or when schools uploaded results into the Summer Programming Enrollment and Attendance Reporting (SPEAR) platform, a platform developed by the department to collect student enrollment data, student attendance data, teacher data, and pre- and post-test results for Summer Camp.

The Act also requires the department to report a statewide summary and interpretation of data generated from pre- and post-tests administered to students who participated in Summer Camps. After collecting pre- and post- test data by the September 1st deadline, the department analyzed students' academic improvement in ELA and math across different grade bands and Summer Camp types. Figure 2 shows student academic improvement in ELA and math for the Summer of 2021. As Figure 2 demonstrates, statewide, students who attended Summer Camps and participated in the pre- and post-tests showed academic improvements in both ELA and math after attending Summer Camps.

² To learn more about the pre- and post-test, please see the 2021 Summer Programming Pre- and Post-Test Overview [here](#).

In both subjects and grade bands examined, improvements were greater for elementary grades than middle grades.

Figure 2: Pre-test and Post-test growth in ELA and Math, Summer 2021

ELA	Math
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall, data showed an improvement of 5.97 percentage points• Elementary grades saw a 7.34 percentage point improvement• Middle school grades saw a 0.66 percentage point improvement• No discernable difference in improvements between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students• Improving ELA, compared to math, typically takes longer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall, data showed an improvement of 10.49 percentage points• Elementary grades saw an improvement of 11.66 percentage points• Middle school grades saw an improvement of 6 percentage points• Compared to elementary school students, economically disadvantaged students in middle school improved more than their non-economically disadvantaged peers

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Taken as a whole, high attendance rates and academic growth across both ELA and math during the first summer of implementation are encouraging and suggest the summer programming required in the Act is accelerating student learning. Camp enrollment, attendance, and teacher data, as well as pre- and post-test results were self-reported by districts into the data collection platforms. Potential gaps in reporting fidelity will be identified by the department and highlighted as areas for improvement in advance of the Summer of 2023.

Teacher Effectiveness and Student Academic Performance

The Act also requires the department to report on various aspects of Summer Camp staffing. Specifically, the department is required to report the following each year:

- An analysis and summary of the how a teacher’s overall level of effectiveness (LOE) score affected the academic performance of the students they instructed in Summer Camps. This data must be disaggregated by subject, grade level, and by the type of Summer Camp in which the teacher's services were provided.

To evaluate how a teacher’s LOE score affected student academic performance during Summer Camp, the department compared the LOE scores of teachers who staffed Summer Camps to their student’s performance on the pre- and post-tests administered in each type of Summer Camp. Statewide, the average LOE score exhibited by teachers staffing Summer Camps was a 4.1 on a scale of 5, indicating that Summer Camp teachers were above average in terms of effectiveness.

Figure 3: ELA and Math growth by Teacher LOE Score, Summer 2021³

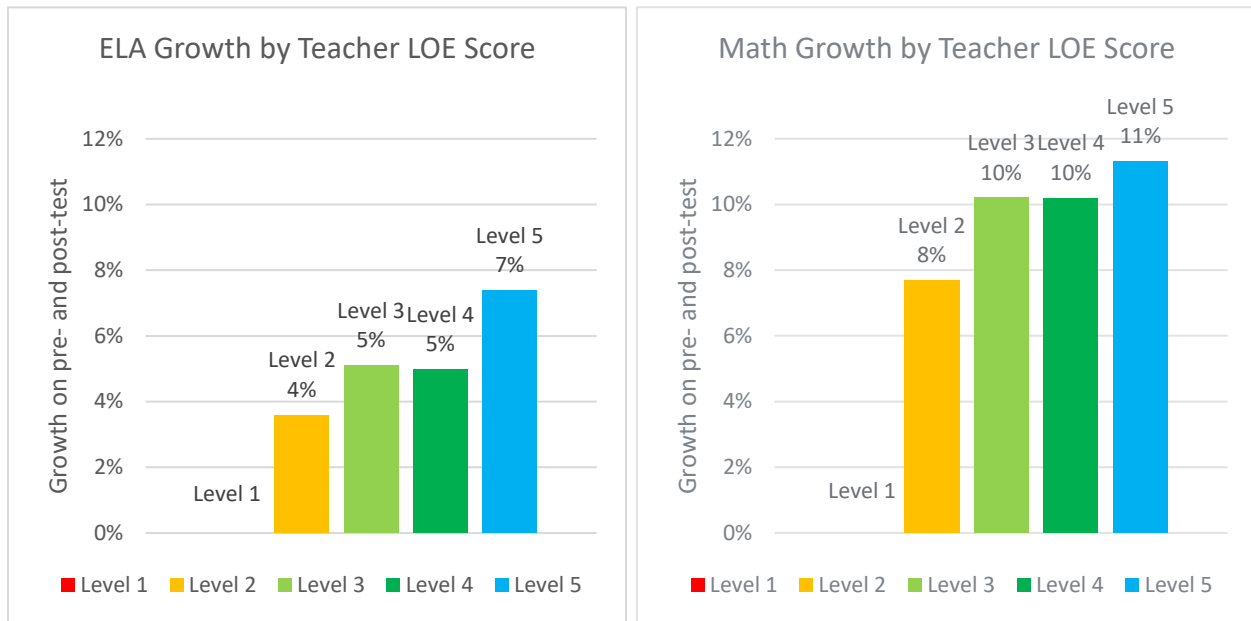
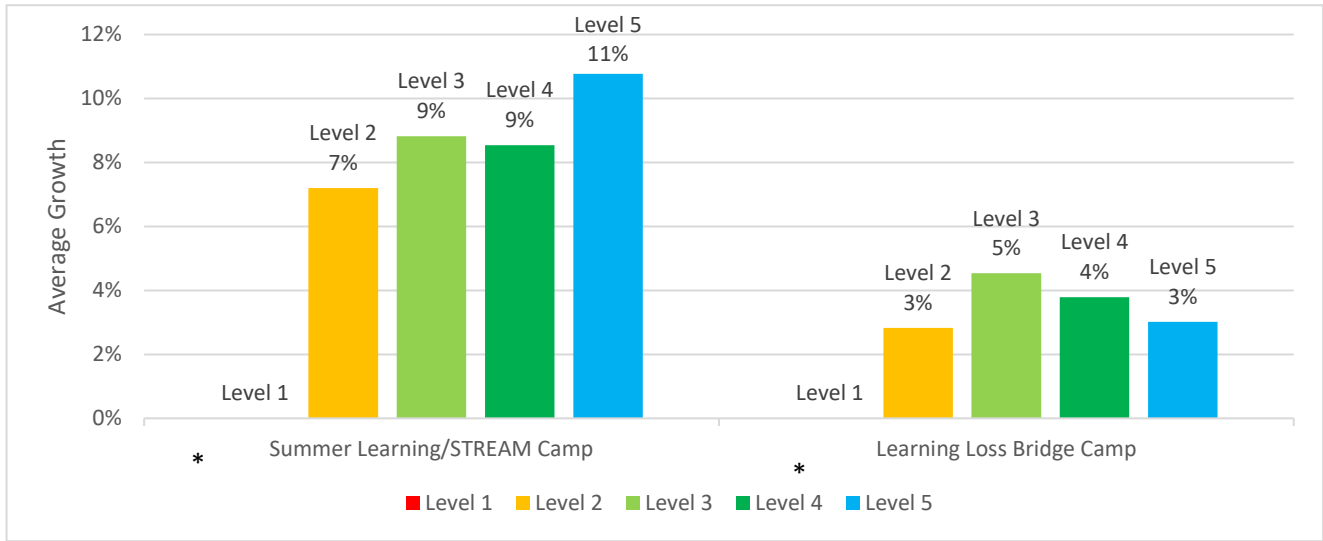


Figure 3 shows statewide average ELA and math growth on pre- and post-tests by teacher’s LOE scores. As Figure 3 demonstrates, at the state level, students who were instructed by teachers with higher LOE scores tended to exhibit greater academic improvement on the on the pre- and post-tests in both ELA and math.

The department also examined the correlation between LOE scores and student performance by type of Summer Camp. Despite the positive correlation between teacher’s LOE scores and performance at the state level, when examining the correlation by Summer Camp type, there was not a clear positive correlation between LOE scores and student performance in all cases. Figure 4 shows average growth by Summer Camp type and LOE score. As Figure 4 demonstrates, there was a positive correlation between LOE score and student academic performance for Summer Learning and STREAM camps, but for Learning Loss Bridge Camps, there was an inconsistent correlation between academic performance and LOE scores for teachers with a Level 4 or 5 LOE score.

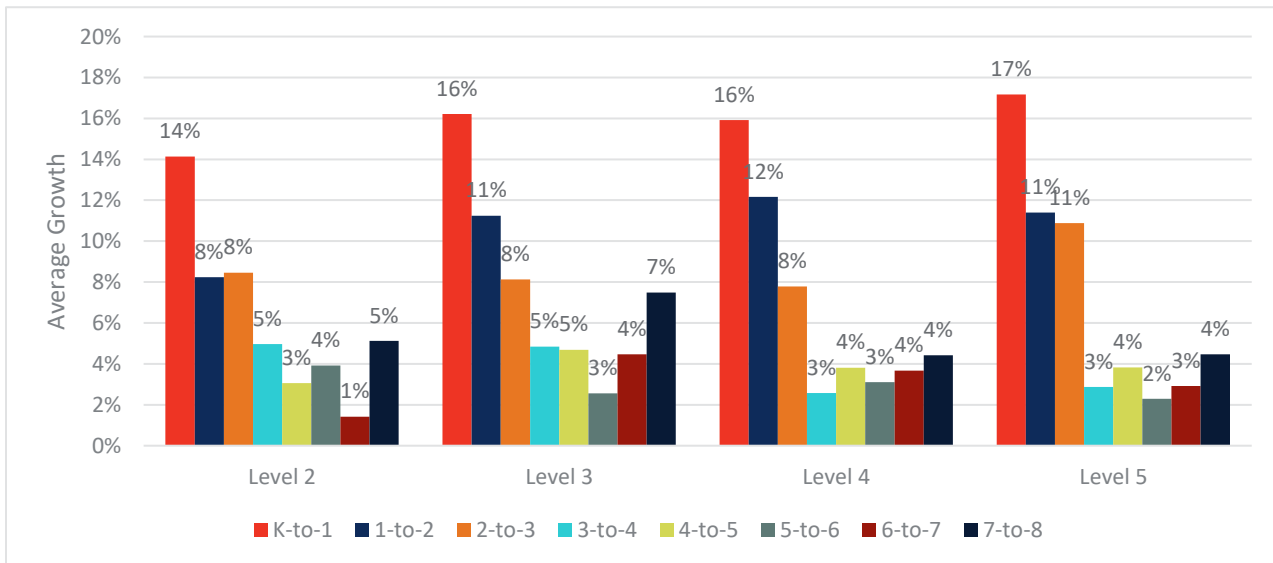
³ There was insufficient Level 1 teacher data to provide an estimate of the effect on student academic growth.

Figure 4: Average Growth by Summer Camp Type and Teacher LOE Score, Summer 2021



This finding can potentially be explained by several factors. One such factor is the Act allows districts to staff Summer Camps with new teachers, teacher candidates attending educator preparation programs, or, if all other options have been exhausted, a non-licensed staff member who has gone through Summer Camp training. It is possible the inconsistent correlation between LOE scores and academic growth observed for the Learning Loss Bridge Camps is the result of differences in staffing trends for Learning Loss Bridge Camps across the state.

Figure 5: Average Growth by Grade Level and Teacher LOE Score, Summer 2021



Finally, the department examined overall growth on ELA and math by grade level and LOE scores (Figure 5). Like the analysis of LOE scores by Summer Camp type shown in Figure 4, this analysis produced instances of positive and neutral or inconsistent correlations for Summer Camps conducted in older grades. For example, in early grades (K-to-1, 1-to-2, and 2-to-3), there was a general positive correlation, with students instructed by teachers with higher LOE scores tending to exhibit greater academic growth on the on the pre- and post-tests. However, again, in the middle grades (4-5, 5-6, 6-7, 7-8), for students attending Learning Loss Bridge Camps, the correlation becomes neutral or inconsistent.

Summer Camp Staffing

The Act also requires the department to report on school district's ability to adequately staff Summer Camps. Specifically, the Act requires the department to report the following:

- Information identifying schools unable to adequately staff or conduct Summer Camps, including the reason why the school district or public charter school was unable to achieve adequate staffing. This data must be disaggregated by subject, grade level, and by the type of Summer Camp that the school district or public charter school was unable to adequately staff or conduct.

Districts and participating charter schools were required in the law to prioritize staffing Summer Camps with teachers properly licensed and endorsed to teach the subjects and grades served. If schools could not find a properly licensed and endorsed teacher, they could staff a teacher who was licensed but did not hold the proper endorsement, or staff the Summer Camp with a candidate enrolled in an educator preparation provider. Finally, if none of the above were available, schools could staff Summer Camps with a person with a college degree who successfully completed a Summer Camp preparation course developed and offered by the department.

To identify staffing challenges, the department developed and administered a survey to all school districts.⁴ In the survey, respondents were asked to report on the extent to which they were able to adequately staff Summer Camps in each grade band. If school districts indicated they were not able to staff a Summer Camp, they were asked to explain why. Out of 147 districts, 146 districts with Summer Learning/STREAM camps responded, while 139 districts with Learning Loss Bridge Camps responded.

⁴The Department only surveyed school districts in the first year of reporting because Summer Camps are optional for charter schools according to the law. Students who attended charter schools could attend either a Summer Camp offered by their charter school or could attend Summer Camps offered by school districts in their geographic area.

Survey results indicated that districts were overwhelmingly able to adequately staff both Summer Learning/STREAM Camps and Learning Loss Bridge Camps. Figure 6 shows how many school districts reported challenges staffing either type of Summer Camp.

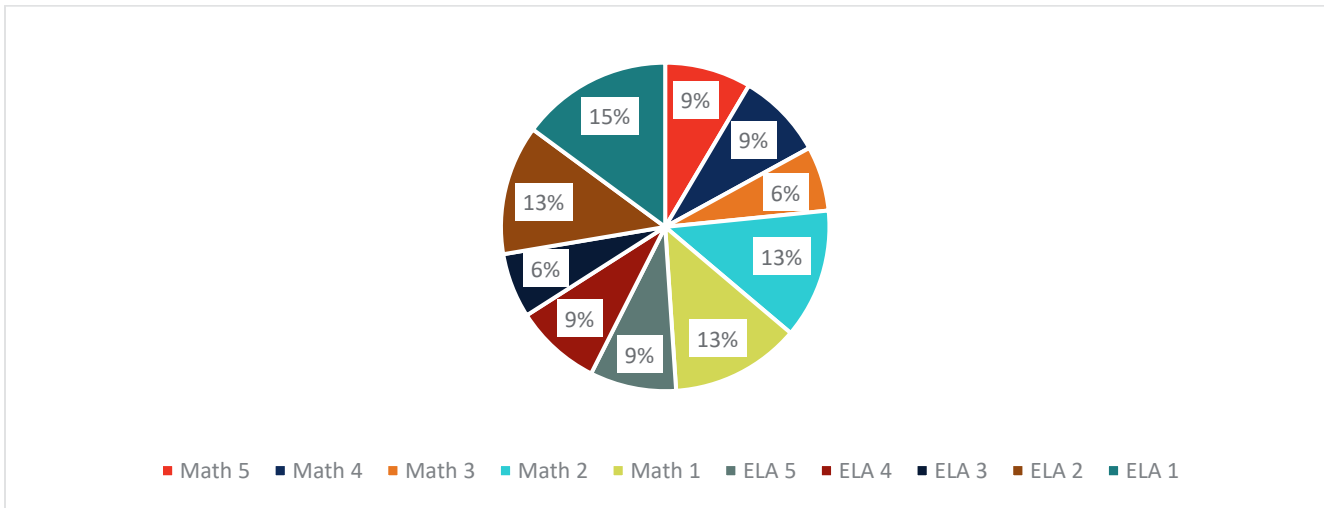
Figure 6: Was your district able to adequately staff its summer camps?

Camp Type	Yes	No
Summer Learning & STREAM camps	95%	5%
Learning Loss Bridge Camps	96%	4%

Few school district staffing challenges means that in the vast majority of school districts, all students who wanted to participate in Summer Camps were able to do so. In open-ended responses, even school districts that were able to adequately staff Summer Camps indicated challenges, and highlighted the flexibilities granted by the Commissioner’s waiver of the number of required days and weeks as the reason why they were able to adequately staff Summer Camps. School districts reported this flexibility will continue to be a crucial component to ensure adequate staffing in future years. Additionally, in open-ended responses, numerous school districts indicated that staffing would have been impossible if they had not been able to recruit and staff educator preparation candidates as allowed in the law.

In total, eight school districts indicated they could not adequately staff Summer Learning/STREAM Camps, representing about 5 percent of respondents. Among those eight districts, Figure 7 shows the breakdown of grade levels and subjects in which staffing challenges were encountered.

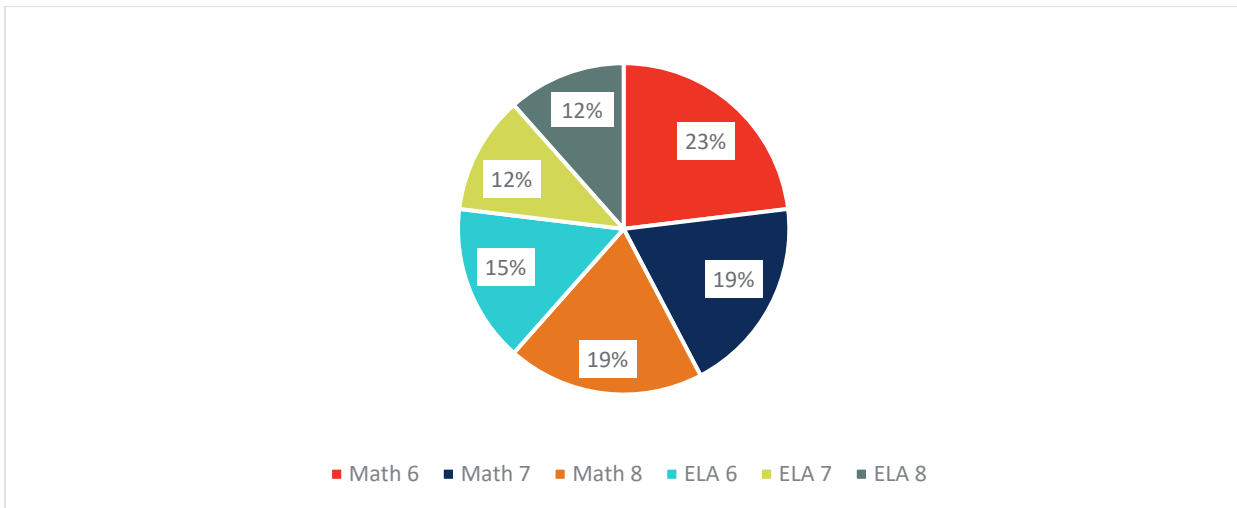
Figure 7: Statewide Breakdown of Summer Learning/STREAM Camp Grades and Subjects That Could Not Be Staffed



As Figure 7 demonstrates, 1st and 2nd grade were the most challenging grades to staff in summer 2021. Across all grades, ELA and math were equally as difficult to staff (51 percent ELA and 49 percent math).

In total, six districts indicated they could not adequately staff Learning Loss Bridge Camps, representing about 4 percent of respondents. Among those six districts, Figure 8 shows a breakdown of grade levels and subjects in which staffing challenges were encountered.

Figure 8: Statewide Breakdown of Learning Loss Bridge Camp Grades and Subjects That Could Not Be Staffed



As Figure 8 demonstrates, 6th grade was slightly more challenging to staff than 7th and 8th grade in summer 2021, and math (62 percent of classes that were not adequately staffed) was more difficult to staff than ELA (38 percent of classes that were not adequately staffed).

Finally, school districts who indicated they could not adequately staff Summer Camps were asked to indicate the challenges that prevented adequate staffing. Figure 9 shows the reasons districts were not able to adequately Summer Camps, and the number of times each challenge was indicated by districts.

Figure 9: Reasons School Districts Could Not Adequately Staff Summer Camps

Reason Districts Could Not Adequately Staff Summer Camps	Total Number of Times Noted by Districts (Districts could select multiple reasons)	
	Summer Learning/STREAM Camps	Learning Loss Bridge Camps
School districts indicating shortage of certified teachers	7	5
School districts indicating shortage of administrators or other instructional support staff	3	2
School districts indicating shortage of alternative educators (e.g. community members, EPP candidates, etc.)	3	1
School districts indicating shortage of operational staff (e.g. bus drivers, cafeteria workers, etc.)	2	1

Conclusion & Next Steps

Tennessee has led the nation in putting strategic measures in motion to combat predicted, negative impacts to student learning resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Summer Camps prescribed in the Act will continue to play a crucial role in accelerating student learning. Leading up to and during the summer of 2021, educators and other stakeholders rallied to engage families and communicate Summer Camp opportunities to bolster attendance for students who needed summer programming the most. These efforts culminated in high Summer Camp attendance rates and statewide growth in both ELA and math across grade bands and Summer Camp types.

Beginning in the Summer of 2023, certain students identified for retention after third grade who attend Summer Camp and demonstrate improvement on the pre- and post-test may forego retention. Given the future high stakes implications of Summer Camp attendance and performance in Summer Camps, it is crucial to analyze best practices and use lessons learned from the first summer of implementation to inform continuous improvement. The department will continue to analyze pre- and post-test data, consider ways to improve test administration and the test instrument, and make needed adjustments to SPEAR and other data collection platforms to maximize data reliability. At the same time, school districts should continue to creatively leverage [the historic influx of federal education funds](#) to improve summer programming and other academic supports for students within their local contexts.

While it will take time to see the full payoff of these efforts, Tennesseans have demonstrated their commitment to accelerating student achievement. Now is the time for all Tennesseans to keep focused on doing what it takes to support our students and set them on a path to success.