

A Landscape Analysis of Foundational Literacy Skills in Tennessee Pre-K to Grade 5

Executive Report

April 14, 2022

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Executive Summary

This landscape analysis was conducted in compliance with terms of the [Tennessee Literacy Success Act](#) (T.C.A. Title 49, Chapter 1, Part 9). The Tennessee Literacy Success Act requires Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and public charter schools to provide foundational literacy skills instruction, reading interventions and supports, and administer universal reading screeners to students in Grades K-3 to improve reading proficiency. The Tennessee Literacy Success Act requires a “landscape analysis of literacy in this state, including current practices, student achievement, instructional programming for students, and remediation services.” In order to fulfill this requirement, student performance data on the TNReady English Language Arts (ELA) assessment were analyzed to investigate trends in students’ ELA performance over time and to establish a baseline of performance, against which to make gauge future success. In addition, LEAs and public charter schools were required to submit Foundational Literacy Skills Plans (FLSPs) for students in Grades K-5 for approval by the Tennessee Department of Education. The FLSP is a legislatively required report that details how an LEA or public charter school provides foundational literacy skills instruction to students as well as reading interventions and supports for students not meeting grade expectations. The FLSPs were analyzed to determine Tennessee LEAs and public charter schools’ instructional programming, practices, and remediation services.

Findings for student achievement demonstrate that students’ TNReady ELA performance remained fairly stable from 2017-2019 but performance decreased between 2019 and 2021. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the percentage of students meeting grade-level benchmarks dropped. Similar trends were observed for students designated as economically disadvantaged, English learners, students with disabilities, and Black/Hispanic/Native American students. The percentages of students in most of these subgroups whose performance is considered *on track* is lower than that of the general student population. This downward shift is especially pronounced for students designated as economically disadvantaged and for Black/Hispanic/Native American students. While most LEAs and public charter schools display trends similar to overall state trends (i.e., stability from 2017-2019 with a decrease in performance in 2021), there is considerable variation among LEAs and public charter schools in students’ ELA performance. In fact, students in 10 LEAs or public charter schools from various regions across the state displayed improvement in the percentages of students at grade-level mastery between 2019-2021.

Approved FLSPs were analyzed to determine LEAs and public charter schools’ instructional programming, practices, and remediation. Findings for instructional programming and practices show that all LEAs and public charter schools spend at least 45 minutes in foundational skills instruction in Grades K-2 and at

least 30 minutes of instruction in Grades 3-5. Elements of instruction used by LEAs and public charter schools include phonics, phonemic awareness, and fluency instruction among others. Over three-fourths of LEAs and public charter schools embed foundational skills instruction in ELA instruction, and nearly all align foundational skills instruction with state literacy standards. LEAs and public charter schools use a variety of primary instructional materials. The two most widely used across Grades K-5 are Amplify – K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts and Benchmark – K-5 Advance; these two are used by nearly half of Tennessee LEAs and public charter schools. The most common supplementary material is the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum, used by almost one out of five LEAs and public charter schools across the state. Regarding remediation, all LEAs and public charter schools have a documented process of increasing intensive academic interventions to students whose academic performance falls below a specific level. A team of educational professionals determine best practices and resources to address skill specific needs for each individual student, and monitor student progress to determine whether these methods are resulting in increased student learning and achievement.

Definitions of terms are provided in Appendix A.

1. Tennessee Literacy: A Landscape Analysis

This landscape analysis addresses the following for the state of Tennessee:

1. Student ELA achievement across Grades 3- 5,
2. Current instructional practices in schools across Grades K- 5,
3. Current instructional programming across Grades K- 5, and
4. Remediation services across Grades K- 5.

Student ELA Achievement across Grades 3-5

Student achievement in ELA is presented for Grades 3-5. Data are not presented for Grades K-2 as no formal reporting structure for students in these lower grades was required prior to the 2021-2022 school year. The Tennessee Literacy Success Act now requires Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and public charter schools to submit universal screening data three times annually. These data will be reportable in the future.

Grade 3 reading proficiency is a predictor of future academic success (e.g., high school graduation, post-secondary education enrollment and completion), as well as lifelong socioeconomic (e.g., employment) and health outcomes. Students who meet Grade 3 reading proficiency expectations are more likely to continue to meet grade-level expectations in the future. Lack of reading proficiency by Grade 3 is associated with negative outcomes such as leaving school without a diploma and incarceration (Fiester, 2013; Hernandez, 2012).

Tennessee 2021 ELA student achievement data provide a baseline for assessing improvements in early literacy proficiency as a function of Reading 360. In addition, historical trends¹ from 2017-2021 provide a snapshot of Tennessee students' proficiency in foundational literacy skills. Foundational literacy skills, as defined by the Tennessee Literacy Success Act, means phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Section 1 of this Landscape Analyses addresses the following prompt and question:

Describe the performance of Tennessee children in Grades 3-5 on measures of ELA from the years 2017-2021. Is there a trend in performance across these years, and if so, what is the nature of the trend?

Bulleted Summary of Main Findings on Grades 3-5 ELA Achievement

- Generally, Grades 3-5 students' ELA performance remained stable from 2017 to 2019, with a decrease between 2019 and 2021.
- Trends using the TNReady four performance benchmarks show, between 2019 and 2021, an increase in the percentage of Grades 3-5 students at the *below* and *approaching* benchmarks and a decrease in the percentage of students at the *on track* and *mastered benchmarks*.

¹ Redesigned TNReady ELA assessments were first implemented in 2017

- Grade 3 trends show a 10.2 percentage point increase in the number of students at the *below* benchmark from 2019 to 2021 (21.8% in 2019 compared to 32.0% in 2021).
- Grade 3 students designated as economically disadvantaged and Black/Hispanic/Native American demonstrated the largest increases in the number of students in the *below* benchmark category (e.g., students designated as economically disadvantaged: 33.6% in 2019 compared to 47.9% in 2021, 14.3 percentage points increase; Black/Hispanic/Native American students: 32.8% in 2019 compared to 47.7% in 2021, 14.9 percentage points increase).

Methods

The basis for Section 1 of this report is student performance on the TNReady assessment in ELA in 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2021 in Grades 3-5. These data are reported at the state and district level, as well as for subgroups of students tracked by the state. Individual student data were not used.

Tennessee administered TNReady assessments in Grades 3-8 beginning in the 2016-2017 school year (i.e., 2017 assessment data), except in 2020 due to COVID-19 related school closures and state and federal action that authorized a waiver of statewide assessments. The Tennessee Department of Education makes [all performance data](#) publicly available.

The TNReady assessment measures students' performance related to:

- Writing conventions
- Writing language and style
- Writing focus and organization
- Reading literary texts
- Reading informational texts, and
- Vocabulary (First Steps Report, April 2018).

The ELA assessment includes various types of questions, including short responses and fill-in-the-blank, as well as a writing component. Students' TNReady performance data are reported by four assessment levels, or benchmarks,² that were created using public feedback

- *Mastered* (level 4)
- *On track* (level 3)
- *Approaching* (level 2)
- *Below* (level 1)

Information in this report came from student achievement data from the state of Tennessee and from Tennessee LEAs and public charter schools. Results are presented also for the eight [Centers for Regional Excellence](#) (CORE) regions. The state of Tennessee does not report student achievement results aggregated by CORE region. To provide results for each CORE region, a weighted average with district-level reported results was calculated because individual student data were not used in this report. Using individual student data would have yielded equivalent results. Using a weighted average

² More information about the TNReady ELA assessments can be found at:
https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/testing/overviews/3-5%20ELA%20Assessment%20Overview_noyear.pdf.

with district-level results accounts for districts with different numbers of students in districts. The weights used were the number of "valid tests" reported by the state. The state of Tennessee defines "valid tests" as "the number of students that completed enough of the test to receive a valid score."

Findings

1.1. State-Level ELA Performance

Sections 1.2 and 1.3 contain findings for Grades 3-5 students' overall performance in ELA by grade level. These data provide a baseline for gauging success of Reading 360 initiative. First, data from 2021 are presented and examined. Next, trends are explored. These sections address the prompt and question: Describe the overall performance of Tennessee students in Grades 3-5 on measures of ELA from the years 2017-2021; Is there a trend in performance across these years, and if so, what is the nature of the trend?

1.2. Baseline Student ELA Performance

Table 1.1 displays the percentage of tested students that scored *on track* or *mastered* on 2021 TNReady state ELA test for Grades 3-5. These data show a significant opportunity to develop stronger foundational literacy skills in early grades through Reading 360 initiatives.

Table 1.1.

State-Wide Student ELA Performance in 2021 for Grades 3-5

Grade	% On Track or Mastered
Grade 3	32.0%
Grade 4	33.2%
Grade 5	29.0%
Grades 3-5	31.4%

1.3. Student ELA Performance in Grades 3-5 over Time

Students' literacy skills in early grades, as assessed by TNReady ELA performance, remained stable from 2017 to 2019. TNReady assessments were not administered in 2020 due to COVID and learning was interrupted during spring 2020 and during the 2020-2021 school year due to COVID. Data indicate that lower rates of students met grade-level expectations in 2021. Figure 1.1 displays the trend in the proportion of tested students that scored *on track* or *mastered* for Grades 3-5, with percentages provided in Table 1.2. Across Grades 3-5, percentage of students *on track* or *mastered* remained relatively steady between 2017 and 2019 and decreased 4.1% from 2019 to 2021 with the largest decrease, 6.2%, evidenced for Grade 5 (35.2% in 2019 compared to 29.0% in 2021) followed by Grade 3 (4.9% decrease) followed by Grade 4 (1.1% decrease). A close examination indicates that, across Grades 3-5, ELA performance increased from 2017 to 2018 and increased or remained stable from 2018 to 2019 with the

exception of Grade 4 which showed a 3.6% decrease from 2018 to 2019. Data from 2021 show the lowest levels of students *on track* or *mastered* with 32% (Grade 3); 33.2% (Grade 4) and 29% (Grade 5).

Figure 1.1.

ELA Performance by Grade level from 2017-2021

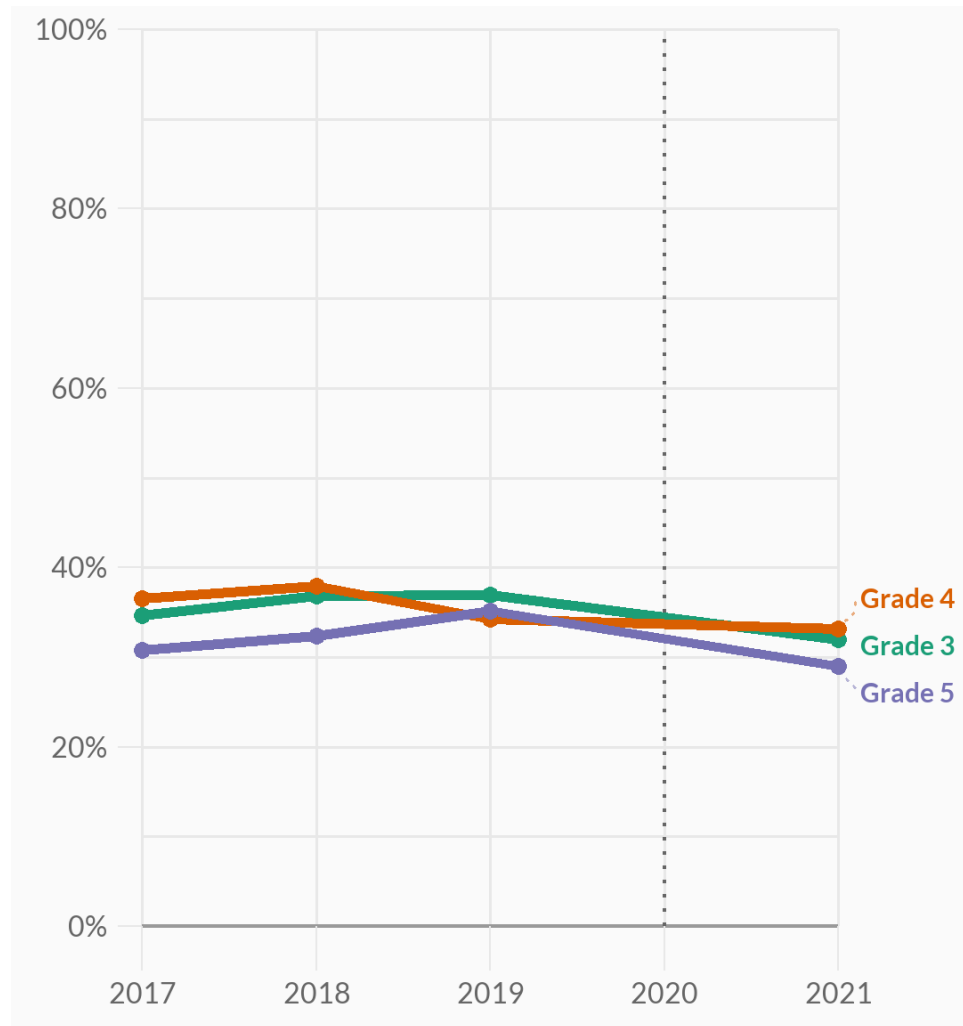


Table 1.2.

Student ELA Performance in 2017-2021 for Grades 3-5

Grade	2017	% On Track or Mastered			
		2018	2019	2020	2021
Grade 3	34.7%	36.8%	36.9%	n/a	32.0%
Grade 4	36.5%	37.9%	34.3%	n/a	33.2%
Grade 5	30.8%	32.4%	35.2%	n/a	29.0%

Grades 3-5	34.0%	35.7%	35.5%	n/a	31.4%
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Note: Data not available for 2020 due to COVID-19 related school closures and state and federal action that authorized a waiver of statewide assessments

1.4. State-Level ELA Performance Disaggregated by Performance Level

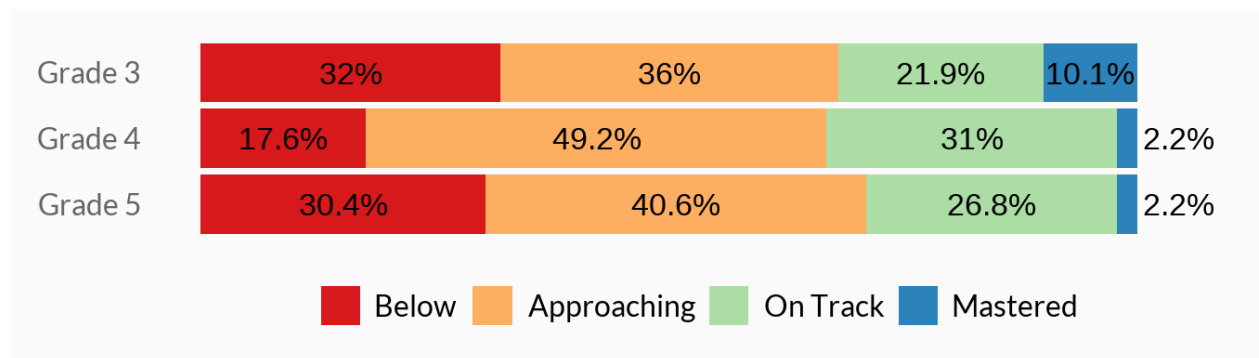
Sections 1.5 and 1.6 present Grades 3-5 students' performance in ELA disaggregated by performance level. First, baseline performance for Reading 360 from 2021 by level is examined; then trends in the proportion of students at each performance level are explored. These sections address the question: What is percentage of Tennessee students who performed at the following levels on Grades 3-5 ELA assessments: *below*, *approaching*, *on track*, and *mastered* in 2021 and what trends occurred from 2017-2021?

1.5. Baseline Student ELA Performance by Level

Figure 1.2 shows student ELA performance in 2021 disaggregated by performance level. These data show relatively few students at the *mastered* performance level, with more students at the *on track*, *approaching*, and *below* performance level. The percentage of students at the *mastered* performance level is higher (about 10%) for students in Grade 3 than for those in Grades 4 and 5 (about 2%).

Figure 1.2.

ELA Performance of Grades 3-5 Students in 2021



1.6. Student ELA Performance by Benchmark in Grades 3-5 Over Time

The proportions of students at different benchmark levels remained steady between 2017 to 2019, with changes between 2019 and 2021, similar to the trend in overall student performance. TNReady assessments were not administered in 2020 due to COVID and learning was interrupted during spring 2020 and during the 2020-2021 school year due to COVID. Disaggregation by benchmark shows that student performance from 2019 to 2021 at Grade 3 widened, with more students than previous years at both the *mastered* and *below* benchmarks. Table 1.3 provides TNReady ELA student performance from 2017-2021 for Grades 3-5 across benchmark levels. There was approximately a 10.2 percentage point increase in the

number of Grade 3 students whose performance was at *below* (21.8% in 2019 compared to 32.0% in 2021). This increase coincides with a 5 percentage point decrease in the proportion of Grade 3 students *on track* from 2019 to 2021. In other words, the percentage of students who were *below* increased and the percentage who were *on track* decreased from 2019 to 2021.

Table 1.3.

ELA Performance of Grades 3-5 Students in 2017 - 2021

Grade	↓ Year	Mastered	On Track	Approaching	Below
▼ Grade 3 (4)					
	2021	10.1%	21.9%	36.0%	32.0%
	2019	9.5%	27.5%	41.2%	21.8%
	2018	9.7%	27.0%	40.9%	22.4%
	2017	7.3%	27.4%	38.8%	26.5%
▼ Grade 4 (4)					
	2021	2.2%	31.0%	49.2%	17.6%
	2019	5.5%	28.8%	45.8%	19.9%
	2018	6.2%	31.7%	43.4%	18.7%
	2017	4.9%	31.6%	43.9%	19.6%
▼ Grade 5 (4)					
	2021	2.2%	26.8%	40.6%	30.4%
	2019	5.5%	29.7%	38.0%	26.8%
	2018	3.8%	28.5%	43.2%	24.5%
	2017	5.0%	25.8%	44.2%	25.0%
▼ Grades 3-5 (4)					
	2021	4.8%	26.6%	41.9%	26.7%
	2019	6.8%	28.7%	41.6%	22.9%
	2018	6.5%	29.1%	42.5%	21.9%
	2017	5.7%	28.3%	42.3%	23.7%

1.7. State-Level ELA Performance Disaggregated by Subgroup

Tennessee tracks students' academic performance by subgroups of interest. These subgroups include students designated as economically disadvantaged, English learners, students with disabilities, and Black/Hispanic/Native American students. The state also tracks academic performance by racial and/or ethnic groups of American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White. In Sections 1.8 through 1.10, overall ELA performance in Grades 3-5 as well as benchmarks, for specific student subgroups, are described. These sections address the questions: What is the ELA performance of Grades 3-5 Tennessee students by subgroup, including specific racial and/or ethnic groups? How do subgroup trends compare to trends found in the overall student population?

The percentages of students in most subgroups whose performance is *on track* on Grades 3-5 ELA assessments is lower than that of the general student population. Trends by student subgroup generally reflect trends similar to the overall student population, especially for students designated as economically disadvantaged and Black/Hispanic/Native American.

1.8. Baseline Student ELA Performance by Subgroup

Table 1.4 displays the percentage of tested students who scored on track or mastered on 2021 TNReady state ELA test for Grades 3-5 for subgroups tracked by Tennessee and Table 1.5 displays these results by racial and/or ethnic groups.

Table 1.4.

ELA Performance of Grades 3-5 Students by Subgroup in 2021



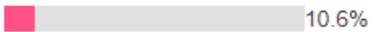


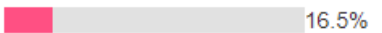




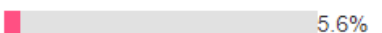
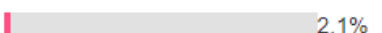
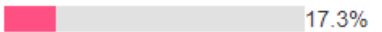

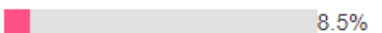



















Grade	Subgroup	On Track or Mastered
▼ Grade 3		
	Black/Hispanic/Native American	 17.7%
	Economically Disadvantaged	 16.4%
	Students with Disabilities	 10.6%
	English Learners	 7.7%
▼ Grade 4		
	Black/Hispanic/Native American	 18.5%
	Economically Disadvantaged	 16.5%
	Students with Disabilities	 8.9%
	English Learners	 5.4%
▼ Grade 5		
	Black/Hispanic/Native American	 15.6%
	Economically Disadvantaged	 13.9%
	Students with Disabilities	 5.6%
	English Learners	 2.1%
▼ Grades 3-5		
	Black/Hispanic/Native American	 17.3%
	Economically Disadvantaged	 15.6%
	Students with Disabilities	 8.5%
	English Learners	 5.5%

Table 1.5.

ELA Performance of Grades 3-5 Students by Racial and Ethnic Subgroups in 2021

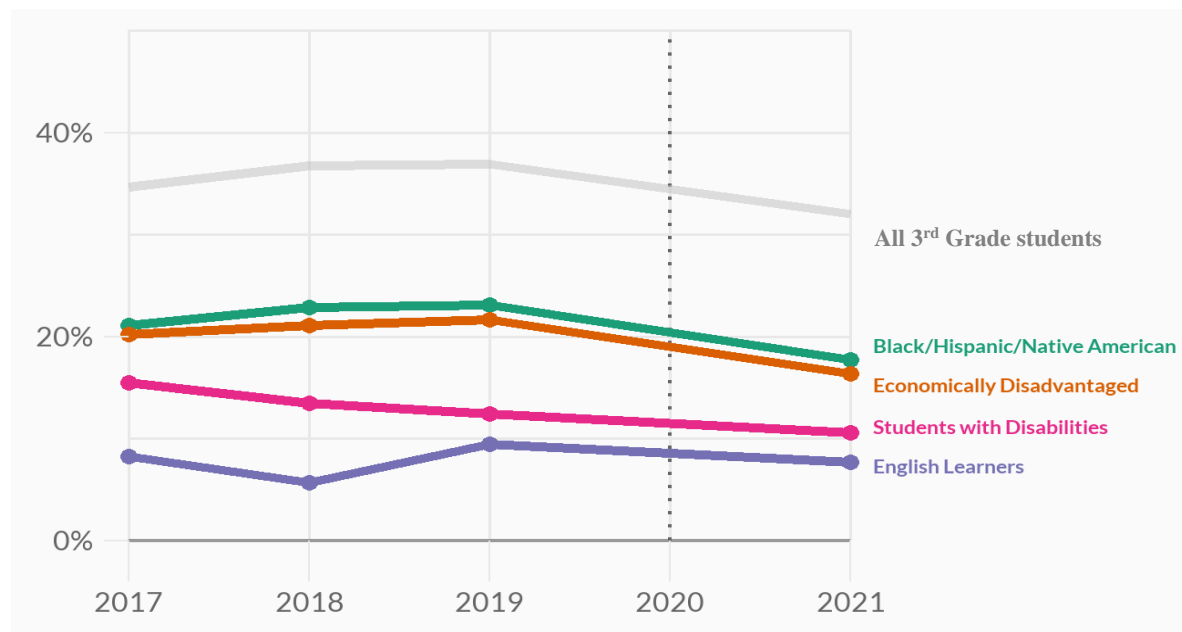
Grade ↑	Race and/or Ethnicity	↑ On Track or Mastered
▼ Grade 3 (6)		
	Black or African American	 15.4%
	Hispanic	 21.3%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	 36.9%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	 37.1%
	White	 39.8%
	Asian	 55.7%
▼ Grade 4 (6)		
	Black or African American	 16.1%
	Hispanic	 22.3%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	 36.9%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	 39.5%
	White	 41.4%
	Asian	 57.6%
▼ Grade 5 (6)		
	Black or African American	 13.1%
	Hispanic	 19.9%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	 31.2%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	 35.0%
	White	 36.1%
	Asian	 54.7%

1.9. Student ELA Performance in Grades 3-5 by Subgroup

Literacy in early grades, measured by Grades 3-5 ELA performance, remained stable from 2017-2019 for students designated as economically disadvantaged, English learners, students with disabilities, and Black/Hispanic/Native American students. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the percentage of students meeting grade-level benchmarks dropped. This shift is especially pronounced for students designated as economically disadvantaged and Black/Hispanic/Native American students. Figure 1.3 displays the trend in the proportion of tested students who scored *on track* or *mastered* for Grades 3-5, with percentages provided in Table 1.6. Percentages by racial and/or ethnic subgroups are in Table 1.7.

Figure 1.3.





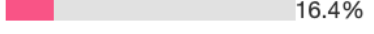
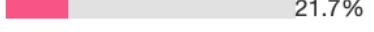
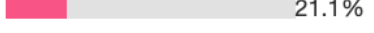
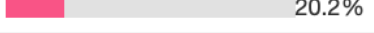






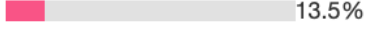
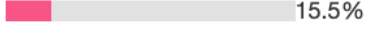
Grade 3 Subgroup ELA Performance Trends over Time Compared to State Average



Note: The percentages are provided for students either at the *on track* or *mastered* benchmarks. The state average for all 3rd Grade students is shown in the gray line for comparison.

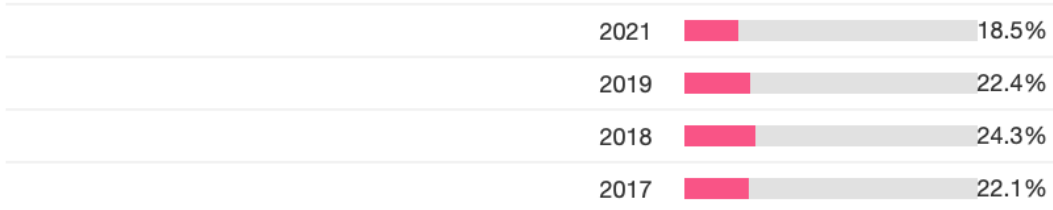
Table 1.6.

ELA Performance of Grades 3-5 Students by Subgroup across Years

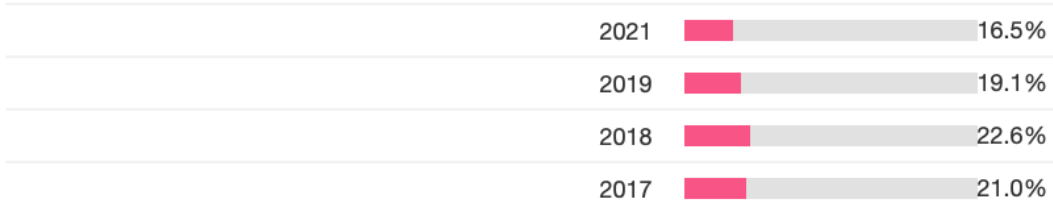
Grade ↑	Subgroup ↑	↓ Year	On Track or Mastered
▼ Grade 3 (4)			
	▼ Black/Hispanic/Native American (4)		
		2021	 17.7%
		2019	 23.1%
		2018	 22.9%
		2017	 21.1%
	▼ Economically Disadvantaged (4)		
		2021	 16.4%
		2019	 21.7%
		2018	 21.1%
		2017	 20.2%
	▼ English Learners (4)		
		2021	 7.7%
		2019	 9.5%
		2018	 5.7%
		2017	 8.3%
	▼ Students with Disabilities (4)		
		2021	 10.6%
		2019	 12.4%
		2018	 13.5%
		2017	 15.5%

▼ Grade 4
(4)

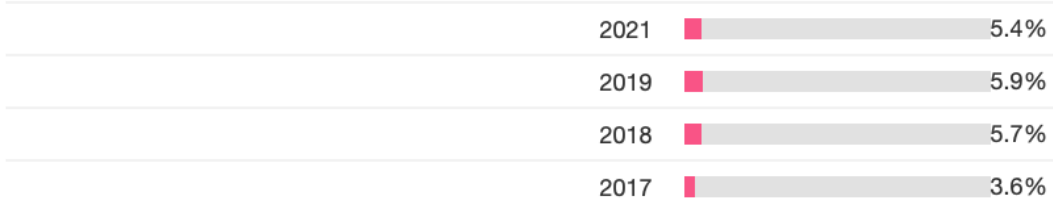
▼ Black/Hispanic/Native American (4)



▼ Economically Disadvantaged (4)



▼ English Learners (4)

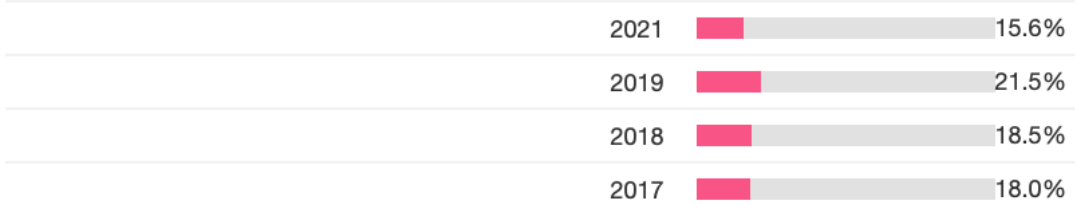


▼ Students with Disabilities (4)

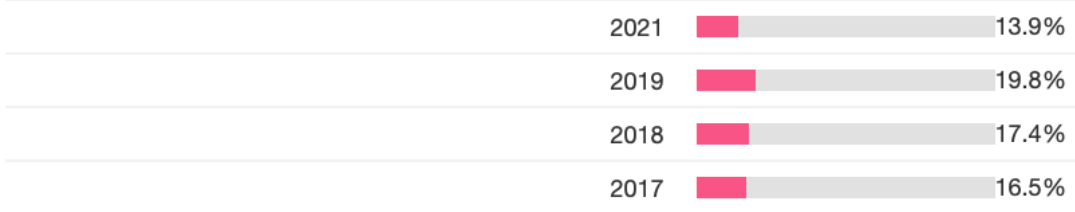


▼ Grade 5
(4)

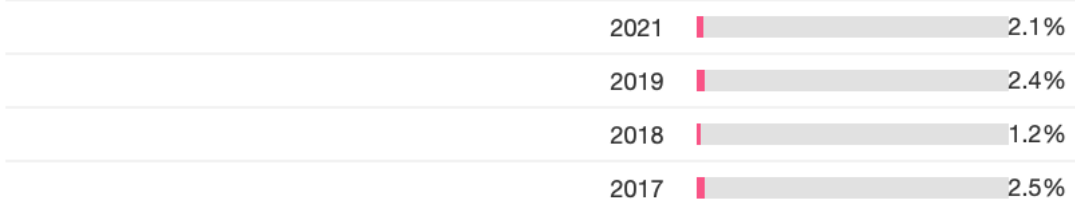
▼ Black/Hispanic/Native
American (4)



▼ Economically
Disadvantaged (4)



▼ English Learners (4)



▼ Students with Disabilities (4)

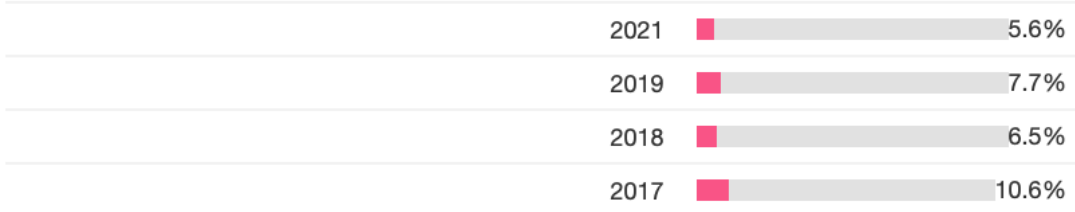


























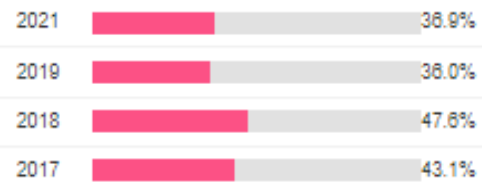
Table 1.7.

ELA Performance of Grades 3-5 Students by Racial and Ethnic Subgroups across Years

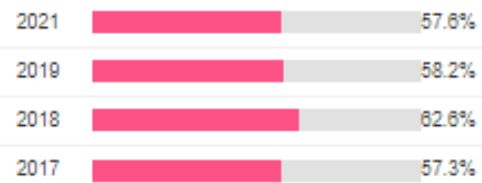
Grade †	Race and/or Ethnicity †	‡ Year	On Track or Mastered
▼ Grade 3 (8)			
▼ American Indian or Alaska Native (4)			
		2021	 36.9%
		2019	 40.0%
		2018	 34.8%
		2017	 35.6%
▼ Asian (4)			
		2021	 55.7%
		2019	 60.5%
		2018	 57.9%
		2017	 57.0%
▼ Black or African American (4)			
		2021	 15.4%
		2019	 21.0%
		2018	 22.8%
		2017	 20.9%
▼ Hispanic (4)			
		2021	 21.3%
		2019	 27.2%
		2018	 22.8%
		2017	 21.1%
▼ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (4)			
		2021	 37.1%
		2019	 47.7%
		2018	 42.2%
		2017	 45.8%
▼ White (4)			
		2021	 39.8%
		2019	 44.2%
		2018	 44.3%
		2017	 41.8%

▼ Grade 4 (6)

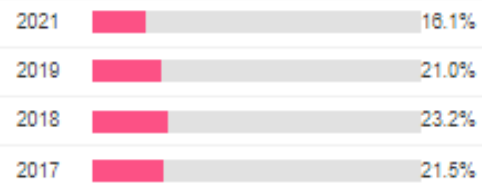
▼ American Indian or Alaska Native (4)



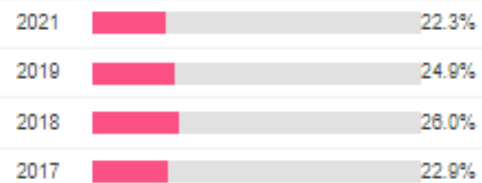
▼ Asian (4)



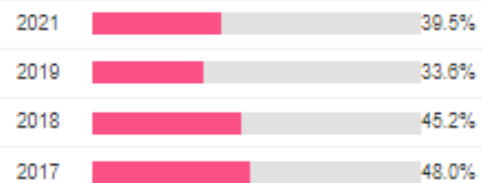
▼ Black or African American (4)



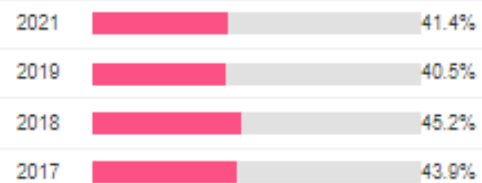
▼ Hispanic (4)



▼ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (4)

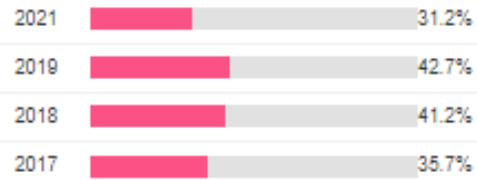


▼ White (4)

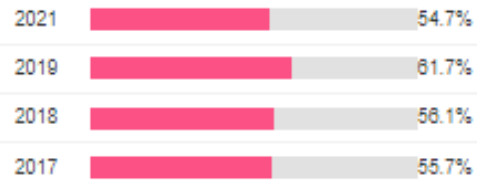


▼ Grade 5 (6)

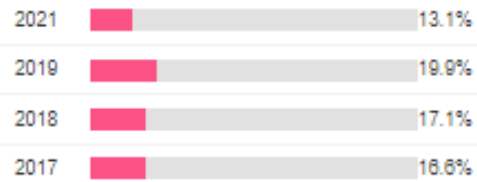
▼ American Indian or Alaska Native (4)



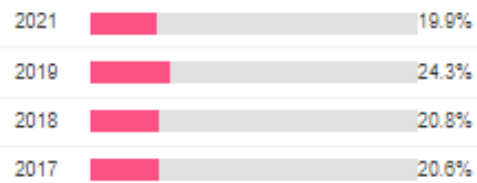
▼ Asian (4)



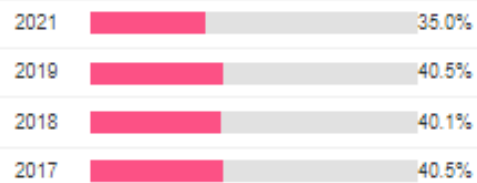
▼ Black or African American (4)



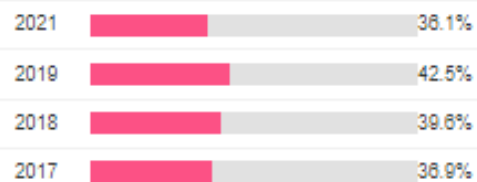
▼ Hispanic (4)



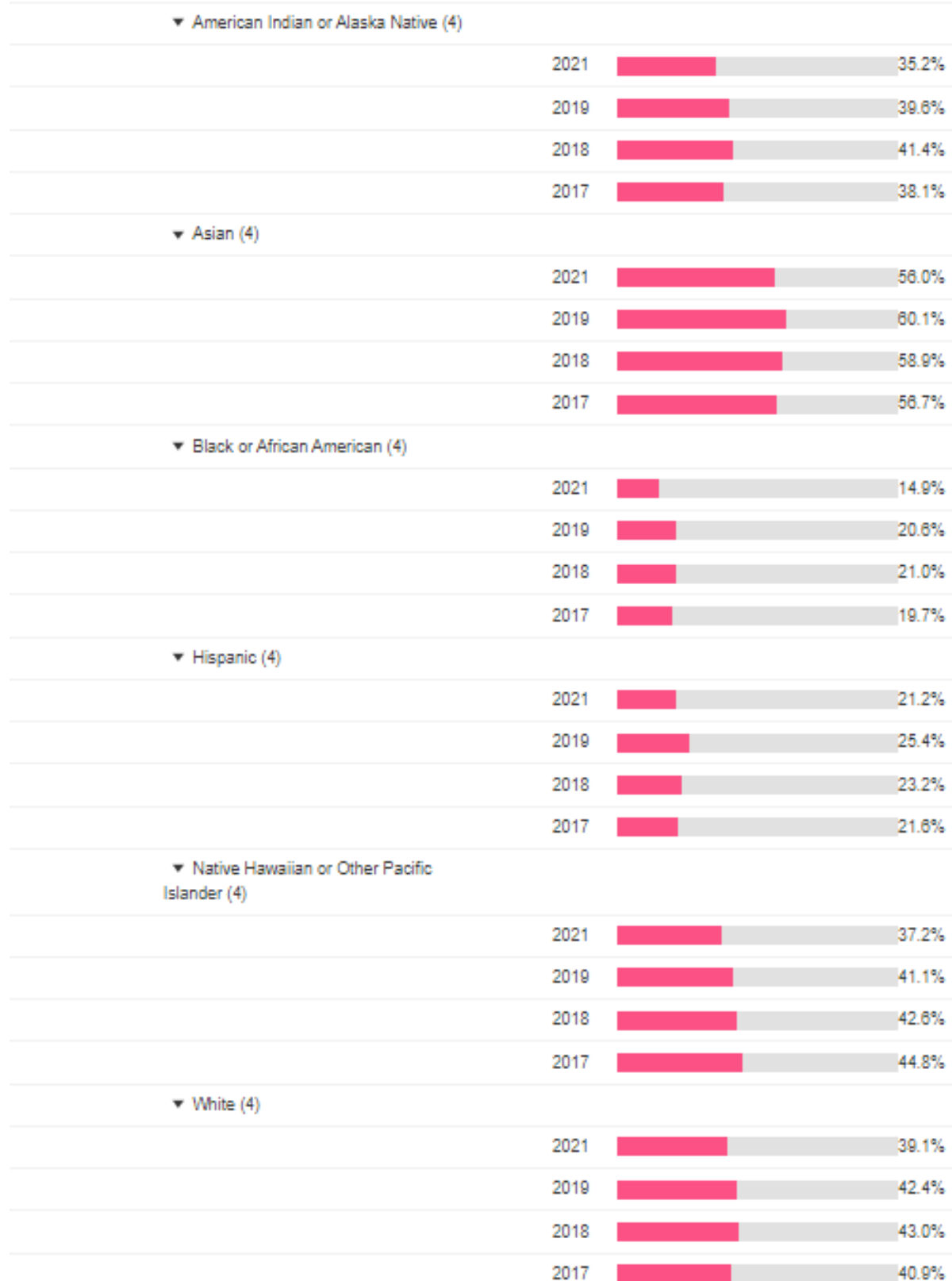
▼ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (4)



▼ White (4)



▼ Grades 3-5
(8)



1.10. Student ELA Performance by Level in Grades 3-5 by Subgroup

Proportions of students at the different performance levels remained fairly steady between 2017 and 2019, with larger changes between 2019 and 2021, similar to trends in overall student performance by benchmark (see Tables 1.8 and 1.9). However, some data are not reported by subgroup due to either a low number of valid tests or extreme percentages (e.g., less than 1% or greater than 99%).

See Tennessee Department of Education State Report Card Suppression Rules for details on non-reported data: <https://www.tn.gov/education/data/report-card.html>

Table 1.8 provides TNReady ELA student performance from 2017-2021 for Grades 3-5 across benchmark levels by subgroup, and Table 1.9 provides these data by racial and/or ethnic subgroups. The largest shift in the proportion of students by benchmark is in Grade 3 students at the *below* benchmark for students designated as economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and Black/Hispanic/Native American students.

Data show approximately a 14.3 percentage point increase in the number of Grade 3 students designated as economically disadvantaged whose performance was at the *below* benchmark: 33.6% in 2019 compared to 47.9% in 2021. Similarly, data show a 14.9 percentage point increase in the number of Grade 3 students identified as Black/Hispanic/Native American whose performance was at the *below* benchmark: 32.8% in 2019 compared to 47.7% in 2021, a 14.9 percentage points increase.

Table 1.8.

ELA Performance by Benchmark of Grades 3-5 Students by Subgroups across Years

Grade	Subgroup	Year	Mastered	On Track	Approaching	Below
▼ Grade 3 (4)						
▼ Black/Hispanic/Native American (4)						
		2021	4.1%	13.6%	34.6%	47.7%
		2019	4.4%	18.7%	44.1%	32.8%
		2018	4.4%	18.5%	43.6%	33.5%
		2017	3.0%	18.1%	39.9%	39.0%
▼ Economically Disadvantaged (4)						
		2021	3.2%	13.2%	35.7%	47.9%
		2019	3.6%	18.1%	44.7%	33.6%
		2018	3.4%	17.7%	45.6%	33.3%
		2017	2.6%	17.6%	41.0%	38.8%
▼ English Learners (4)						
		2021				
		2019				
		2018				
		2017				
▼ Students with Disabilities (4)						
		2021	2.1%	8.4%	29.5%	60.0%
		2019	2.1%	10.3%	36.2%	51.4%
		2018	2.6%	10.8%	36.9%	49.7%
		2017	4.2%	11.3%	30.0%	54.5%

▼ Grade 4
(4)

▼ Black/Hispanic/Native American (4)

	2021				
	2019	2.2%	20.2%	48.2%	29.4%
	2018	2.5%	21.8%	47.1%	28.6%
	2017	1.9%	20.2%	47.1%	30.8%

▼ Economically Disadvantaged (4)

	2021				
	2019	1.4%	17.7%	50.5%	30.4%
	2018	1.8%	20.8%	48.6%	28.8%
	2017	1.4%	19.6%	49.1%	29.9%

▼ English Learners (4)

	2021				
	2019				
	2018				
	2017				

▼ Students with Disabilities (4)

	2021				
	2019				
	2018				
	2017	2.0%	11.2%	37.8%	49.0%

▼ Grade 5
(4)

▼ Black/Hispanic/Native American (4)					
	2021				
	2019	2.1%	19.4%	39.1%	39.4%
	2018	1.4%	17.1%	44.9%	36.6%
	2017	1.7%	16.3%	44.9%	37.1%
▼ Economically Disadvantaged (4)					
	2021				
	2019	1.5%	18.3%	40.3%	39.9%
	2018	1.1%	16.3%	45.8%	36.8%
	2017	1.4%	15.1%	46.0%	37.5%
▼ English Learners (4)					
	2021				
	2019				
	2018				
	2017				
▼ Students with Disabilities (4)					
	2021				
	2019				
	2018				
	2017	2.1%	8.5%	29.0%	60.4%

Note: Student achievement data by benchmark was not reported for the blank rows of data. See Tennessee Department of Education State Report Card Suppression Rules for details on non-reported data: <https://www.tn.gov/education/data/report-card.html>

Table 1.9.

ELA Performance by Benchmark of Grades 3-5 Students by Racial and Ethnic Subgroups across Years

Grade	Race and/or Ethnicity	Year	Mastered	On Track	Approaching	Below
▼ Grade 3 (6)						
▼ American Indian or Alaska Native (4)						
		2021	11.0%	25.1%	38.3%	24.7%
		2019	11.4%	28.6%	39.2%	20.8%
		2018	13.9%	20.9%	43.4%	21.8%
		2017	8.0%	27.6%	40.6%	23.8%
▼ Asian (4)						
		2021	25.0%	30.8%	30.8%	13.4%
		2019	23.0%	37.5%	31.3%	8.2%
		2018	25.7%	32.2%	32.4%	9.7%
		2017	19.7%	37.3%	28.6%	14.4%
▼ Black or African American (4)						
		2021	3.4%	12.0%	32.7%	51.9%
		2019	3.8%	17.2%	42.9%	36.1%
		2018	4.3%	18.5%	43.4%	33.8%
		2017	2.9%	18.0%	39.7%	39.4%
▼ Hispanic (4)						
		2021	5.0%	16.3%	38.0%	40.7%
		2019	5.6%	21.6%	47.0%	25.8%
		2018	4.3%	18.5%	44.1%	33.1%
		2017	3.1%	17.9%	40.4%	38.6%
▼ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (4)						
		2021	12.6%	24.6%	43.7%	19.1%
		2019	16.3%	31.4%	38.6%	13.7%
		2018	7.8%	34.5%	36.2%	21.5%
		2017	9.2%	36.6%	33.8%	20.4%
▼ White (4)						
		2021	13.1%	26.7%	37.1%	23.1%
		2019	11.9%	32.3%	39.9%	15.9%
		2018	12.3%	31.9%	39.8%	16.0%
		2017	9.3%	32.5%	38.5%	19.7%

▼ Grade 4 (8)

▼ American Indian or Alaska Native (4)

2021	2.7%	34.2%	50.7%	12.4%
2019	4.9%	31.1%	46.5%	17.5%
2018	6.7%	40.8%	36.3%	16.2%
2017	6.7%	36.5%	43.0%	12.9%

▼ Asian (4)

2021	8.1%	49.5%	36.5%	5.9%
2019	15.9%	42.3%	34.7%	7.1%
2018	21.2%	41.5%	29.1%	8.2%
2017	14.2%	43.1%	31.7%	11.0%

▼ Black or African American (4)

2021				
2019	2.0%	19.0%	46.7%	32.3%
2018	2.2%	21.0%	46.6%	30.2%
2017	1.8%	19.7%	46.6%	31.9%

▼ Hispanic (4)

2021	1.1%	21.3%	54.8%	22.8%
2019	2.5%	22.4%	51.5%	23.6%
2018	2.9%	23.1%	48.5%	25.5%
2017	2.0%	20.9%	48.3%	28.8%

▼ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (4)

2021	2.0%	37.5%	50.0%	10.5%
2019	6.6%	27.0%	47.5%	18.9%
2018	8.2%	37.0%	43.8%	11.0%
2017	8.7%	39.4%	41.7%	10.2%

▼ White (4)

2021	2.9%	38.5%	47.3%	11.3%
2019	7.0%	33.5%	44.9%	14.6%
2018	7.9%	37.3%	41.9%	12.9%
2017	6.2%	37.6%	42.6%	13.6%

▼ Grade 5 (6)

▼ American Indian or Alaska Native (4)					
	2021	1.6%	29.6%	49.4%	19.4%
	2019	6.1%	36.5%	34.5%	22.9%
	2018	4.3%	37.0%	39.7%	19.0%
	2017	5.2%	30.5%	40.9%	23.4%
▼ Asian (4)					
	2021	6.7%	47.9%	32.9%	12.5%
	2019	18.0%	43.7%	26.8%	11.5%
	2018	12.0%	44.1%	32.5%	11.4%
	2017	17.1%	38.6%	32.1%	12.2%
▼ Black or African American (4)					
	2021				
	2019	2.0%	17.8%	38.4%	41.8%
	2018	1.2%	15.9%	44.8%	38.1%
	2017	1.5%	15.1%	45.0%	38.4%
▼ Hispanic (4)					
	2021	1.0%	18.9%	41.6%	38.5%
	2019	2.3%	22.0%	40.8%	34.9%
	2018	1.7%	19.1%	45.1%	34.1%
	2017	2.1%	18.5%	44.8%	34.6%
▼ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (4)					
	2021	3.2%	31.8%	42.7%	22.3%
	2019	5.4%	35.1%	38.5%	21.0%
	2018	5.1%	35.0%	40.9%	19.0%
	2017	6.9%	33.6%	47.3%	12.2%
▼ White (4)					
	2021	2.9%	33.2%	42.2%	21.7%
	2019	7.1%	35.4%	37.9%	19.6%
	2018	5.0%	34.6%	42.7%	17.7%
	2017	6.4%	30.5%	44.3%	18.8%

Note: Student achievement data by benchmark was not reported for Black or African American students in Grades 4-5 in 2021.

1.11. Variation in ELA Performance across Regions

Sections 1.12 and 1.13 transition from examining state-wide Grade 3-5 ELA results to examining variation across LEAs and public charter schools and regions within Tennessee. Given that in Tennessee, Grade 3 ELA TNReady performance is considered an important measure of literacy proficiency, baseline performance for Reading 360 from 2021 in Grade 3 is addressed; then trends in performance are explored. This section addresses the question: Are there trends in Grade 3 ELA performance across LEAs and public charters and over time?

1.12. Variation in Students' ELA Performance across LEAs and Public Charter Schools

There is considerable variation in students' ELA academic performance in LEAs and public charter schools across the state. The percentage of Grades 3-5 students who performed at the *on track* or *mastered* levels across LEAs and public charter schools ranged from 10.6% to 76.2% in 2017; from 9.7% to 77.1% in 2018; from 5.6% to 73.9% in 2019; and from 4.5% to 72.5% in 2021. Most LEAs and public charters display trends similar to overall state trends, showing stability from 2017-2019 with a drop in performance in 2021. However, students in 10 LEAs and public charter schools from various regions across the state displayed improvement in percentages of *on track* and *mastered* from 2019-2021.

1.13. Variation in Students' ELA Performance across Regions

There is some regional variation in students' ELA academic performance, but much less than the variation across LEAs and public charter schools. Table 1.10 shows the percentage of students at the on track or mastered benchmark levels, as well as the difference between each region and overall state levels. Table 1.10 provides TNReady ELA academic performance by region from 2017-2021 for Grades 3-5 across benchmark levels. The Southwest and Mid Cumberland regions show the greatest difference compared with the overall state performance.

Table 1.10.

ELA Performance of Regions in Grades 3-5 in 2021

Region	% On Track or Mastered	Percentage Points Difference from State Average
<i>Grade 3</i>		
Southwest	24.1%	-7.9%
South Central	30.0%	-2.0%
East TN	32.6%	+0.6%
First TN	32.9%	+0.9%
Upper Cumberland	33.0%	+1.0%
Southeast	34.7%	+2.7%
Northwest	34.8%	+2.8%

Mid Cumberland	36.6%	+4.6%
----------------	-------	-------

Grade 4

Southwest	24.5%	-8.7%
-----------	-------	-------

South Central	29.8%	-3.4%
---------------	-------	-------

East TN	32.7%	-0.5%
---------	-------	-------

First TN	33.9%	+0.7%
----------	-------	-------

Upper Cumberland	34.8%	+1.6%
------------------	-------	-------

Southeast	35.7%	+2.5%
-----------	-------	-------

Northwest	36.3%	+3.1%
-----------	-------	-------

Mid Cumberland	38.6%	+5.4%
----------------	-------	-------

Grade 5

Southwest	21.8%	-7.2%
-----------	-------	-------

South Central	23.8%	-5.2%
---------------	-------	-------

East TN	26.8%	-2.2%
---------	-------	-------

First TN	29.6%	+0.6%
----------	-------	-------

Upper Cumberland	30.5%	+1.5%
------------------	-------	-------

Southeast	31.4%	+2.4%
-----------	-------	-------

Northwest	31.7%	+2.7%
-----------	-------	-------

Mid Cumberland	34.3%	+5.3%
----------------	-------	-------

Table 1.11.

ELA Performance of Regions in Grades 3-5 by Performance Level across Years

Region ↑	Grade ↑	↓ Year	Mastered	On Track	Approaching	Below
▼ East TN (3)						
▼ Grade 3 (4)						
		2021	9.6%	23.1%	37.1%	30.3%
		2019	8.4%	27.8%	42.6%	21.2%
		2018	8.2%	28.0%	42.4%	21.4%
		2017	7.3%	27.7%	39.4%	25.6%
▼ Grade 4 (4)						
		2021	2.4%	34.6%	48.1%	15.0%
		2019	4.9%	28.9%	47.0%	19.1%
		2018	6.1%	32.0%	43.4%	18.5%
		2017	5.2%	32.3%	43.7%	18.8%
▼ Grade 5 (4)						
		2021	3.1%	28.9%	42.4%	25.6%
		2019	5.6%	30.1%	39.5%	24.8%
		2018	4.7%	30.0%	42.4%	22.9%
		2017	5.6%	26.6%	44.0%	23.8%
▼ First TN (3)						
▼ Grade 3 (4)						
		2021	9.6%	23.3%	39.6%	27.5%
		2019	9.8%	29.4%	42.5%	18.3%
		2018	8.8%	27.7%	43.2%	20.2%
		2017	6.6%	28.3%	40.8%	24.3%
▼ Grade 4 (4)						
		2021	3.1%	35.8%	47.7%	13.5%
		2019	5.1%	29.5%	48.2%	17.2%
		2018	5.8%	33.0%	45.6%	15.7%
		2017	4.1%	32.6%	45.8%	17.5%
▼ Grade 5 (4)						
		2021	3.0%	30.2%	41.6%	25.3%
		2019	5.5%	32.3%	39.9%	22.4%
		2018	3.5%	29.2%	45.8%	21.5%
		2017	4.6%	27.2%	46.3%	21.9%

▼ Mid
Cumberland (3)

▼ Grade 3 (4)

2021	12.8%	23.8%	35.9%	27.5%
2019	11.9%	30.7%	39.5%	18.0%
2018	12.6%	29.7%	38.1%	19.5%
2017	9.5%	30.9%	36.8%	22.8%

▼ Grade 4 (4)

2021	3.4%	35.7%	46.5%	14.4%
2019	7.9%	32.7%	43.1%	16.4%
2018	8.7%	35.6%	40.0%	15.7%
2017	6.4%	35.8%	41.0%	16.9%

▼ Grade 5 (4)

2021	2.9%	31.5%	39.5%	26.1%
2019	7.1%	33.7%	35.9%	23.2%
2018	5.1%	32.5%	41.3%	21.1%
2017	6.8%	28.6%	42.3%	22.3%

▼ Northwest (3)

▼ Grade 3 (4)

2021	10.9%	24.3%	38.8%	26.0%
2019	8.8%	29.1%	43.8%	18.3%
2018	8.4%	27.6%	45.8%	18.2%
2017	6.9%	27.2%	43.1%	22.8%

▼ Grade 4 (4)

2021	3.0%	35.7%	49.8%	11.5%
2019	3.8%	28.5%	48.8%	18.9%
2018	4.9%	32.1%	47.7%	15.2%
2017	4.7%	33.0%	46.3%	16.0%

▼ Grade 5 (4)

2021	2.3%	31.2%	44.7%	21.8%
2019	4.7%	30.3%	41.0%	24.0%
2018	3.6%	30.8%	44.3%	21.3%
2017	5.0%	27.7%	46.1%	21.2%

▼ South Central
(3)

▼ Grade 3 (4)					
2021	8.4%	21.8%	39.0%	30.8%	
2019	6.9%	25.1%	44.1%	24.0%	
2018	7.2%	25.5%	44.7%	22.6%	
2017	4.8%	27.0%	41.7%	26.6%	

▼ Grade 4 (4)					
2021	1.5%	28.5%	52.1%	17.8%	
2019	3.4%	25.2%	48.8%	22.6%	
2018	3.8%	29.2%	46.9%	20.2%	
2017	3.3%	30.0%	48.4%	18.2%	

▼ Grade 5 (4)					
2021	1.8%	25.7%	42.4%	30.1%	
2019	4.3%	26.3%	39.4%	30.0%	
2018	2.1%	26.4%	45.1%	26.3%	
2017	2.9%	23.7%	48.2%	25.2%	

▼ Southeast (3)

▼ Grade 3 (4)					
2021	10.6%	24.3%	36.1%	29.0%	
2019	8.9%	27.4%	41.7%	22.0%	
2018	8.7%	26.0%	41.1%	24.2%	
2017	7.0%	26.0%	39.9%	27.2%	

▼ Grade 4 (4)					
2021	2.8%	33.6%	48.0%	15.5%	
2019	5.3%	29.7%	45.3%	19.8%	
2018	5.8%	30.7%	44.6%	19.0%	
2017	4.0%	30.4%	45.6%	20.0%	

▼ Grade 5 (4)					
2021	2.2%	30.7%	39.7%	27.4%	
2019	4.6%	29.1%	39.3%	27.0%	
2018	4.0%	28.9%	42.0%	25.1%	
2017	4.4%	25.4%	45.5%	24.7%	

▼ Southwest (3)

▼ Grade 3 (4)					
2021	7.6%	16.5%	32.4%	43.5%	
2019	8.5%	23.3%	40.4%	27.8%	
2018	9.5%	24.3%	40.7%	25.5%	
2017	5.7%	23.1%	38.8%	32.4%	
▼ Grade 4 (4)					
2021	4.6%	48.1%	40.0%	7.3%	
2019	4.7%	26.1%	45.5%	23.7%	
2018	4.8%	27.5%	44.3%	23.3%	
2017	4.2%	26.8%	43.8%	25.1%	
▼ Grade 5 (4)					
2021	3.9%	36.4%	39.4%	20.3%	
2019	4.8%	25.4%	37.3%	32.5%	
2018	3.3%	24.0%	43.5%	29.1%	
2017	4.2%	23.0%	43.7%	29.0%	

▼ Upper
Cumberland (3)

▼ Grade 3 (4)					
2021	8.8%	24.4%	38.1%	28.7%	
2019	8.4%	27.1%	43.9%	20.6%	
2018	8.1%	26.4%	43.8%	21.7%	
2017	6.9%	28.0%	38.3%	26.8%	
▼ Grade 4 (4)					
2021	2.5%	31.6%	52.2%	13.7%	
2019	3.5%	25.9%	51.8%	18.9%	
2018	4.2%	31.6%	47.4%	16.8%	
2017	4.3%	30.9%	46.7%	18.1%	
▼ Grade 5 (4)					
2021	1.8%	25.7%	43.9%	28.6%	
2019	4.0%	28.0%	41.9%	26.1%	
2018	2.8%	27.6%	46.9%	22.6%	
2017	3.6%	24.6%	48.7%	23.1%	

1.14. Conclusion

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, just over a third of Tennessee children at Grade 3 showed *mastery* or were *on track* in attaining Tennessee ELA standards. In 2019, 37% of Grade 3 children showed *mastery* or were *on track*; in 2021, the percentage dropped to 32%. Across Grades 3-5 the percentage dropped from 36% in 2019 mastered or on track to 31% in 2021. Students in vulnerable subgroups show similar declines but also show consistently lower percentages of *mastery* and *on track* than the overall student population. The percentage of students attaining *mastery* or who are *on track* varies significantly by district but less so by regions within the state. Despite overall decreases in percentages of students showing mastery or who are on track from 2019 to 2021, ten LEAs and public charters in Tennessee show increases. The practices and contexts of these LEAs and public charters are worthy of future study. Collectively, these student achievement data provide a baseline against which to study the impact of various initiatives of Reading 360.

2. Current Instructional Practices in Schools across Grades K- 5

Sections 2 - 4 of this Landscape Analysis address the following: Allocation of time reported by Tennessee LEAs and public charter schools devoted to teaching foundational literacy skills in Grades K-2 and in Grades 3-5; types of remediation practices reported by Tennessee LEAs and public charters, and types of programs and materials used in Tennessee LEAs and public charters. Findings of this analysis show that all LEAs and public charter schools submitted narratives and supplemental artifacts addressing the points of interest for this landscape analysis. Regarding time allocation to foundational literacy in Grades K to 2, all LEAs and public charter schools indicated a minimum of 45 minutes and Grades 3 to 5 included at least 30 minutes. LEAs and public charter schools across Grades K -5 utilized instructional programs that are classified as high-quality instructional materials (see link with High-Quality instructional materials for the state of Tennessee: [High-Quality Instructional Materials](#)).

Section 2 addresses the following prompt:

Describe the programmatic planning and time allocation reported for Tennessee LEAs and public charters devoted to foundational literacy skills Grades K- 2 and Grades 3-5.

Bulleted Summary of Main Findings of Tennessee Grades K-5 Instructional Practices, Programming and Remediation

Time Allocation to Foundational Skills:

- All LEAs and public charter schools reported spending a minimum of 45 minutes in foundational skill instruction in Grades K- 2 and a minimum of 30 minutes in Grades 3-5.
- The majority of LEAs and public charter schools serving K – 2 reported spending more than the minimum required time (i.e., 45 minutes): 45 - 60 minutes (n = 92); 60 - 90 minutes (n = 19), 90 - 120 minutes (n = 9), and more than 120 minutes (n = 2).

- Many LEAs and public charter schools serving Grades 3 – 5 reported spending more than 30 minutes on foundational skills instruction: 18 reported 30-45 minutes, 13 reported 45-60 minutes, 9 reported 60-90 minutes, and three reported spending 90-120 minutes.

Instructional Programming

- The six most common programs used in Grades K-2 were:
 - (1) Amplify – K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts;
 - (2) Benchmark – K-5 Advance;
 - (3) McGraw Hill – K-5 Wonders;
 - (4) Houghton Mifflin Harcourt – Into Reading;
 - (5) LearnZillion – K-5 Expeditionary Learning; and
 - (6) Open Up – K-5 Expeditionary Learning.
- The six most common primary instructional materials used in LEAs and public charter schools serving Grades 3-5 were:
 - (1) Amplify – K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts;
 - (2) Benchmark – K-5 Advance;
 - (3) Great Minds, Wit & Wisdom;
 - (4) McGraw Hill – K-5 Wonders;
 - (5) LearnZillion – K-5 Expeditionary Learning; and
 - (6) Open Up – K-5 Expeditionary Learning.

Remediation

Tennessee uses a process of increasingly intensive academic interventions to students whose academic performance falls below a specified level, Response to Intervention² (or RTI²).

RTI² provides supports to students who do not meet grade-level expectations through Tier II and Tier II intervention. Educational professionals determine skill specific needs of students (determined by ongoing data), determine best practices and resources to address skill specific needs, and monitor student progress to determine whether these methods are resulting in increased student learning and achievement.

- For Tier III instruction (the most intensive level of intervention), LEAs and public charters reported using materials during small group reading targeted to a specific skill in area of deficit for 30 minutes ($n = 18$, 10%), for 45 minutes ($n = 109$, 60%), for 60 minutes ($n = 3$, 2%), or an unspecified amount of time ($n = 27$, 15%).
- Over two-fifths of LEAs and public charters ($n = 80$, 43%) provided a basic description of the personnel involved in RTI² data teams. Frequency of data team meetings varied as follows: weekly ($n = 5$, 3%), bi- or tri-weekly ($n = 4$, 2%), monthly ($n = 27$, 15%), every 4.5 weeks ($n = 122$, 66%), and six (3%) reported they reviewed RTI² data in a time frame that exceeded 4.5 weeks.

Methods

The Tennessee Literacy Success Act required each district and public charter school to create a local [Foundational Literacy Skills Plan](#) (FLSP) for students in Grades K-5 and to submit these plans for approval to the Tennessee Department of Education by June 1, 2021. Per the Literacy Success Act, the FLSP is a report that details how an LEA or public charter school plans to provide foundational literacy skills instruction to students as well as reading interventions and supports to students. Approved FLSPs were coded and analyzed to determine Tennessee LEAs and public charters' instructional programming, practices, and remediation.

Three members of a university-based faculty research team developed descriptive codes across categories of interest to address information required by the Tennessee Literacy Success Act regarding instructional programming and remediation services. Then, the faculty research team applied codes to a sample of participating systems' plans ($n = 3$) to examine whether the codes needed revisions and to assess inter-rater reliability. Codes were collapsed and the team applied the new codes to another set of submissions ($n = 5$). Next, the team trained two research faculty to apply the codes to all 186 LEAs and public charters' submissions. To establish reliability, the two members independently read the submissions and applied the codes. For efficiency purposes, both members scored 66 FLSPs together and achieved an interrater reliability of .82 (Graham et al., 2012; McHugh, 2012). The remainder were then divided and each member completed the code application process for 60 FLSPs each.

Analysis

The research team determined inter-rater reliability and presented summary information in the form of proportions. This included information such as instructional programs LEAs and public charter schools have selected and are using, time allocated to foundational skills instruction, and remediation procedures.

Findings

Within Sections 2.1 and 2.2 information on instructional and supplemental materials is shared. Findings are provided first for Grades K-2 and then for Grades 3-5.

2.1. What are the general characteristics of instruction in Grades K- 2 classrooms?

Grades K-2: Characteristics of Instruction

A total of 147 LEAs and 39 public charter schools completed a FLSP for a total of 186 FLSPs. The FLSP contains narrative sections and supplemental artifacts. Overall, 178 of the LEAs and public charter schools (95%) served Grades K-2. All LEAs and public charter schools reported spending at least 45 minutes in foundational skill instruction in Grades K-2 in either their narrative or their supplemental artifacts. In addition, the majority of LEAs and public charter schools reported spending more than the minimum required time (i.e., 45 minutes): 45 - 60 minutes ($n = 92$); 60 - 90 minutes ($n = 19$), 90 - 120 minutes ($n =$

9), and more than 120 minutes ($n = 2$). Some LEAs and public charter schools also provided the total time allocated for ELA instruction in Grades K-2. Time ranged from 60-90 minutes for 14 LEAs and public charter schools, 90-120 minutes for 41 LEAs and public charter schools, and 120-160 minutes for 41 LEAs and public charter schools. Twelve allocated more than 160 minutes. Elements of instruction are presented in Table 2.1. Examples are explicit instruction, modeling, systematic instruction, scaffolded, gradual release, repeated practice, spiral review, intensive practice, independent practice, comprehensive, sounds-first approach and instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Examples also include visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile methods as well as support provided such as using code charts or computer programs.

Table 2.1.

Elements of Instruction for Grades K-2. Tennessee Schools (From 2021 Foundational Literacy Skills Plans)

Element of Instruction	#	Percent
Explicit Teaching Approach	145	81%
Fluency Instruction	165	93%
Vocabulary Instruction	157	88%
Phonemic Awareness Instruction	169	95%
Phonics Instruction	175	98%
Comprehension Instruction	161	90%

2.2. What are the general characteristics of instruction in Grades 3-5 classrooms?

Grades 3-5: Characteristics of Instruction

All LEAs and public charter schools serving Grades 3 -5 reported spending a minimum of 30 minutes on foundational skills instruction in either their narrative or their supplemental artifacts. In addition, many LEAs and public charter schools reported spending more than 30 minutes on foundational skills instruction: 18 reported 30-45 minutes, 13 reported 45-60 minutes, 9 reported 60-90 minutes, and three reported spending 90-120 minutes. For ELA instruction in Grades 3-5, five LEAs and public charter schools reported allocating 30-60 minutes, 85 LEAs and public charter schools spent between 60-90 minutes, 52 spent 90-120 minutes, 10 spent 120-160 minutes, and five reported allocating more than 160 minutes for ELA instruction. Over three-fourths of LEAs and public charter schools ($n = 145$, 78%) reported that foundational skills instruction was embedded in ELA instruction, one (0.5%) reported isolated foundational skills instruction, seven (4%) reported they both embed and isolate foundational skills instruction in ELA, and 33 (18%) did not specify whether they embedded or isolated foundational skills instruction. Overall, 180 LEAs and public charter schools (97%) reported they align foundational skills instruction with state literacy standards. Table 2.2 highlights elements of instruction provided in Grades 3-5.

Table 2.2.

Elements of Instruction for Grades 3-5 Tennessee Schools From 2021 Foundational Literacy Skills Plans

Element of Instruction	Number	Percent
Explicit	100	54%
Instruction on Morphology	169	91%
Instruction on Grammar	175	94%
Instruction on Spelling	161	87%
Instruction on Writing	179	96%
Instruction on Fluency	180	97%
Practice Fluency	176	95%
Practice Vocabulary	173	93%
Practice Comprehension	171	92%

3. Current Instructional Programming Across Grades K-5

Section 3 addresses the following question:

What programs and instructional resources have Tennessee LEAs and public charter schools identified for elementary grade students?

3.1. What programs and instructional resources have Tennessee LEAs and public charters identified for their Grades K-2 learners?

Instructional Materials used in Grades K-2

Primary Materials

LEAs and public charter schools listed a total of 16 primary instructional materials used with Grades K-2 students. The six most common programs used in schools serving Grades K-2 were:

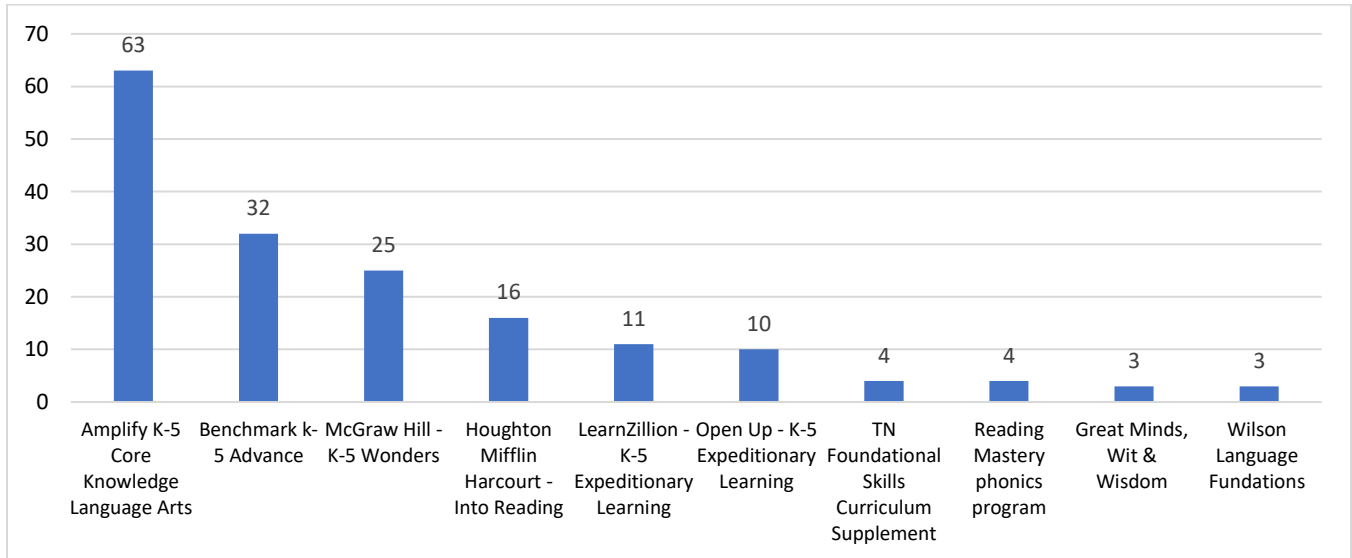
- (1) Amplify – K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts ($n = 63, 36\%$);
- (2) Benchmark – K-5 Advance ($n = 32, 17\%$);
- (3) McGraw Hill – K-5 Wonders ($n = 25, 14\%$);
- (4) Houghton Mifflin Harcourt – Into Reading ($n = 16, 9\%$);
- (5) LearnZillion – K-5 Expeditionary Learning ($n = 11, 6\%$); and
- (6) Open Up – K-5 Expeditionary Learning ($n = 10, 6\%$).

Less common primary instructional materials included the Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement and Reading Mastery ($n = 4\%, 2\%$, respectively); and Great Minds, Wit and Wisdom and Wilson Language Foundations ($n = 3\%, 2\%$, respectively). The following primary instructional materials were

listed only once: Journeys, Units of Study, Internally Designed Curriculum, Reading 360, Scholastic, and Saxon. Figure 3.1 visually displays the data for K-2 primary instructional materials.

Figure 3.1.

Number of Grades K-2 Primary Instructional Materials Reported in Tennessee Foundational Literacy Skills Plans (2021)



3.2. Supplementary Materials for Grades K-2 Learners

Not all LEAs and public charter schools listed supplemental materials. Thirty-four different supplemental instructional materials were listed out of 91 total listings by schools serving Grades K-2. The four most common supplemental instructional materials used in schools serving Grades K-2 were:

- (1) Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement ($n = 14$; 17%);
- (1) Heggerty Phonemic Awareness ($n = 14$; 17%);
- (3) Great Minds, Wit & Wisdom ($n = 7$; 9%); and
- (4) Saxon Phonics ($n = 7$; 7%).

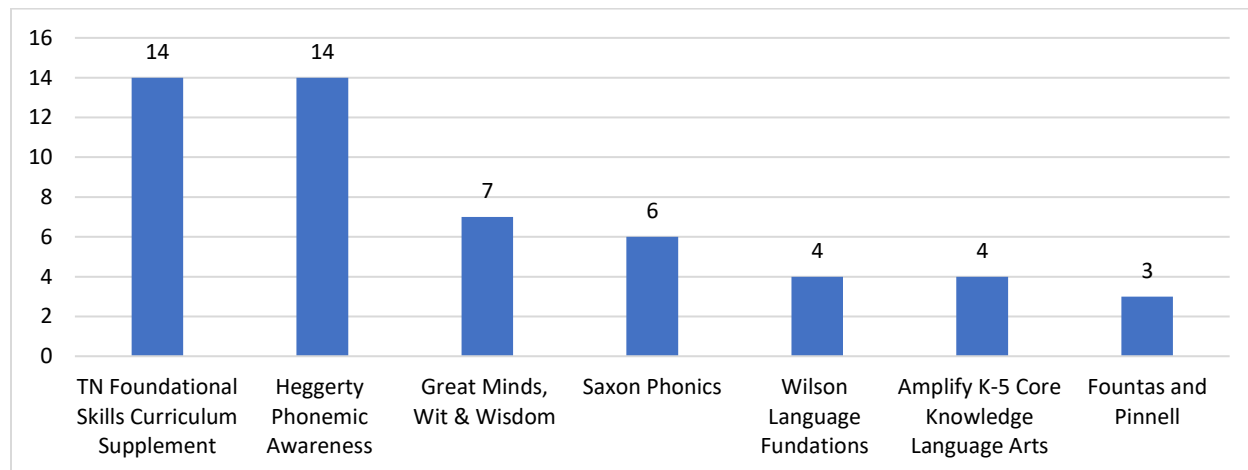
Less common supplemental instructional materials included: Wilson Language Foundations ($n = 5$, 5%), Amplify K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts ($n = 4$, 4%); Fountas and Pinnell ($n = 3$, 3%); Expeditionary Learning Education, Letterland, Reading Horizon, Phonics Plus and Flyleaf, Soday System, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Scholastic, and Geodes ($n = 2$, 2%, respectively).

The following supplemental instructional materials were listed only once: Uncommon Schools Curriculum, LiPs Phonics, Literacy PRO, 95% group, Amira, Benchmark K-5 Advance, Montessori Reading Remediation Pathway / Freckl, McGraw Hill - K-5 Wonders, Really Great Reading, Read to be Ready, Mountain Language (online), West Virginia Phonics, ReadWorks, CommonLit, LexiaCore5, Lucy Calkins Units of Study, Institute for Multi-Sensory Education, Reading WonderWorks Foundational Skills Kit, Phonics First Foundations for

Reading and Spelling, Reading 360, and Reading Reconsidered. Figure 3.2 visually displays the data for K-2 supplementary instructional materials.

Figure 3.2.

Number of Grades K-2 Supplemental Instructional Materials Reported in Tennessee Foundational Literacy Skills Plans (2021)



3.3. Instructional Materials used in Grades 3-5

Primary Materials

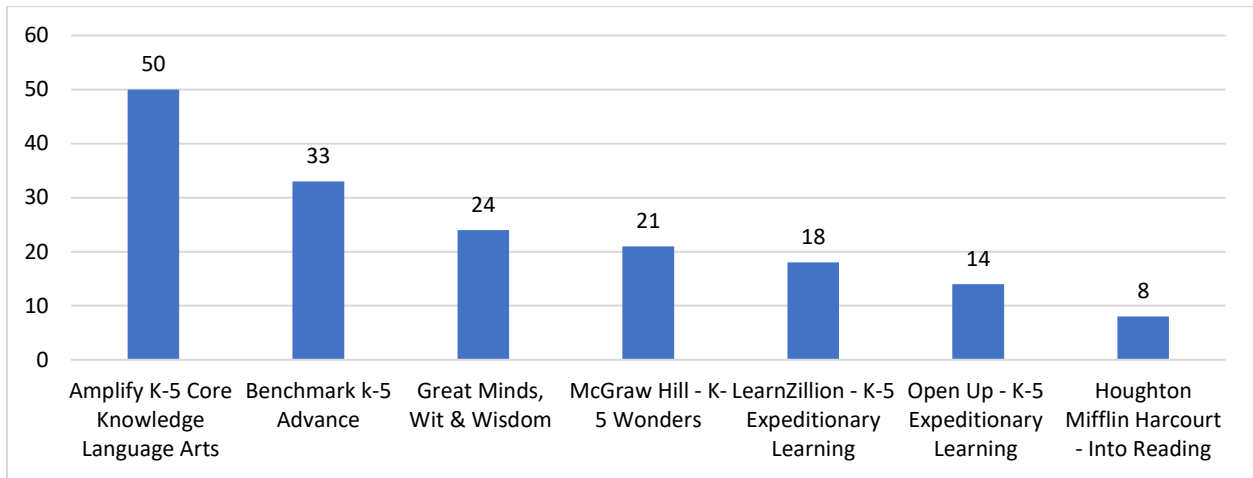
LEAs and public charter schools serving Grades 3-5 listed 16 primary instructional materials. The six most common primary instructional materials used in LEAs and public charters serving Grades 3-5 were:

- (1) Amplify – K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts ($n = 50, 27\%$);
- (2) Benchmark – K-5 Advance ($n = 33, 18\%$);
- (3) Great Minds, Wit & Wisdom ($n = 24, 13\%$);
- (4) McGraw Hill – K-5 Wonders ($n = 21, 12\%$);
- (5) LearnZillion – K-5 Expeditionary Learning ($n = 18, 10\%$); and
- (6) Open Up – K-5 Expeditionary Learning ($n = 14, 8\%$).

Less common primary instructional materials for Grades 3-5 included: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt – Into Reading ($n = 8, 4\%$), Achievement First ($n = 4, 2\%$), Reading Reconsidered, Internally Designed Curriculum, and Reading Mastery ($n = 2, 1\%$) The following primary instructional materials were listed only once: Journeys, Reading Horizon, Scholastic, and TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement. Figure 3.3. visually displays the data for Grades 3-5 primary instructional materials.

Figure 3.3.

Number of Grades 3-5 Primary Instructional Materials Reported in Tennessee Foundational Literacy Skills Plans (2021)



3.4. Supplementary Materials for Grades 3-5 Learners

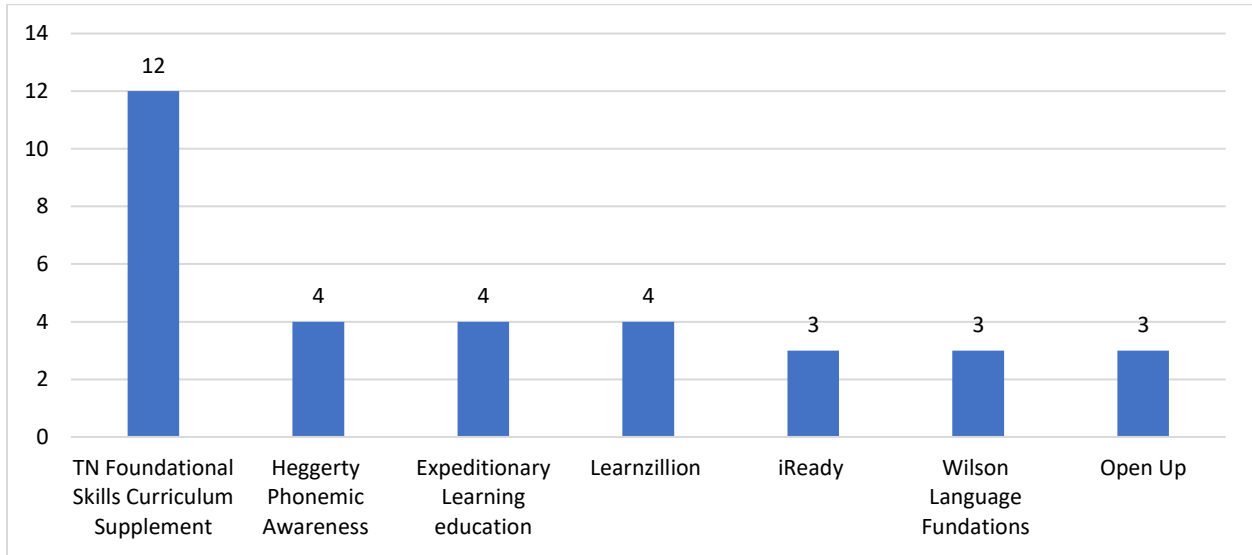
The most common supplemental instructional material used in schools serving Grades 3-5 was TN Foundational Skills Curriculum ($n = 12$, 20%).

Less common supplemental instructional materials included: Wilson Language Foundations, Read to be Ready, Expeditionary Learning, and Learnzillion ($n = 4$; 7%, respectively); Open Up and iReady ($n = 3$; 5%, respectively); McGraw Hill - K-5, Wonders, Amplify K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts, Scholastic, LexiaCore5, and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt ($n = 2$; 3%, respectively).

The following supplementary instructional materials were listed only once: Open Court Reading, Online Resource, Bridge the Gap from Literacy Resources, West Virginia Phonics, ReadWorks, CommonLit, Letterland, Literacy PRO, Phonics Plus and Flyleaf publish texts, Uncommon Schools Curriculum, Grammar Flip, Montessori Reading Remediation Pathway / Freckl, No Red Ink, Institute for Multi-Sensory Education, Reading WonderWorks Foundational Skills Kit, Visual Impairment Supplements, Hearing Impairment Supplements, Lucy Calkins Units of Study, and Lifelong Readers Curriculum. Figure 3.4 displays the data for Grades 3-5 supplementary instructional materials.

Figure 3.4.

Number of Grades 3-5 Supplemental Instructional Materials Reported in Tennessee Foundational Literacy Plans (2021)



4. Remediation Services Across Grades K-5

Section 4 addresses the following prompt:

Describe the literacy remediation services reported by Tennessee LEAs and public charters for Grades K-5

4.1. Screening and Remediation Determination Process

Screening and remediation data reported in the FLSPs were not disaggregated across grade bands. FLSPs were submitted by LEAs and public charters by June 2021,

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/2020-21-leg-session/TURS%20Admin%20Considerations%20Final.pdf>

In July 2021, TDOE announced aimswebPlus as the free approved Tennessee Universal Screener (TURS for students in Grades K-3; however, LEAs and public charter schools may use other, State Board of Education approved screeners.

https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/2020-21-leg-session/TURS_FAQ.pdf).

In their FLSPs, LEAs and public charter schools were asked to indicate what instrument they use as their primary universal screener used to identify students whose reading skills are below expectations. Nineteen universal screeners were listed across all 147 districts and 39 public charters. The most common screeners included aimswebPlus ($n = 57, 31\%$), EasyCBM ($n = 33, 18\%$), NWEA-MAP 3 ($n = 27, 15\%$), iReady

($n = 22$, 12%), and STAR ($n = 20$, 11%). The primary universal screeners are listed in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1.

Table 4.1.

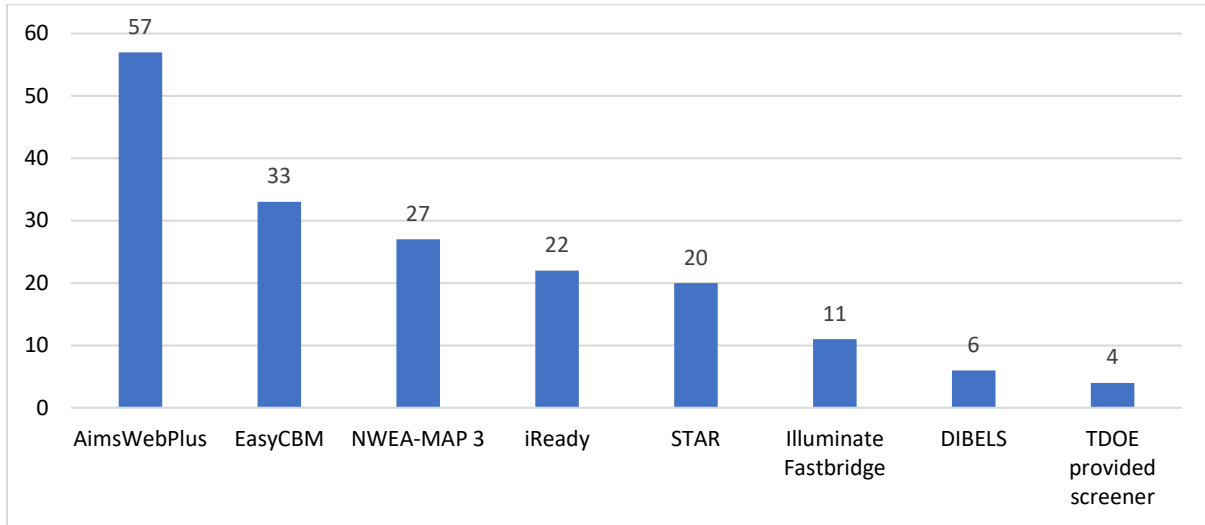
Primary Universal Screeners Reported in Tennessee Foundational Literacy Skills Plans (2021)

Primary Screener	#	Percent
aimswebPlus	57	31%
EasyCBM	33	18%
NWEA-MAP 3	27	15%
iReady	22	12%
STAR	20	11%
Illuminate Fastbridge	11	6%
DIBELS	6	3%
TDOE provided screener	4	2%
CASE Benchmark	2	1%
Amplify mClass	2	1%
Edmentum's Exact Path	1	0.5%
IRLA	1	0.5%

The figure below illustrates this information graphically.

Figure 4.1.

Primary Universal Screeners Reported in Tennessee Foundational Literacy Skills Plans (2021)



LEAs and public charter schools had the option to list additional (secondary) screeners they use in their schools. The most common secondary screeners included STAR ($n = 17$, 22%), EasyCBM ($n = 16$, 21%), and PASS & PWRS ($n = 8$, 10%). Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2 list the most common secondary universal screeners.

Table 4.2.

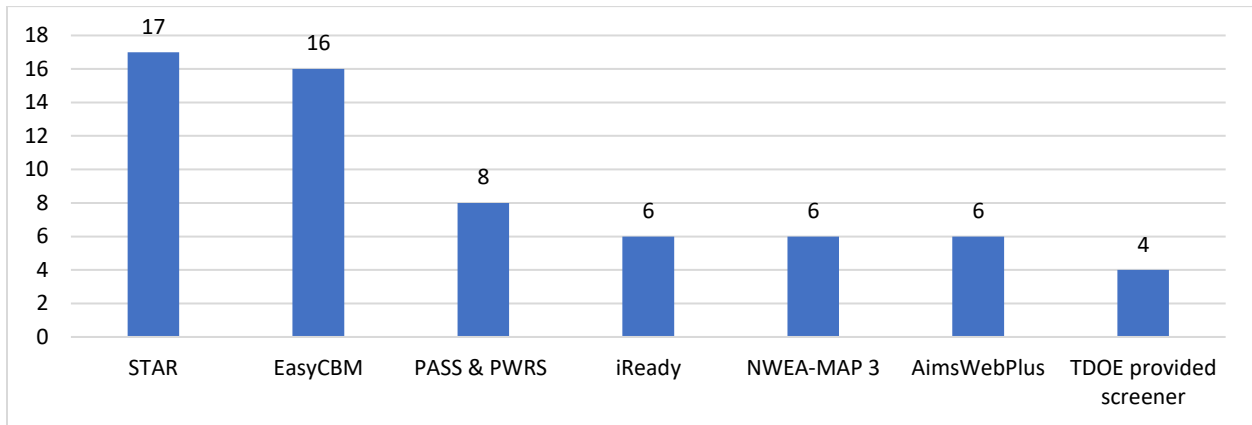
Secondary Universal Screeners Reported in Tennessee Foundational Literacy Skills Plans (2021)

Secondary Screener	#	Percent
STAR	17	22%
EasyCBM	16	21%
PASS & PWRS	8	10%
iReady	6	8%
NWEA-MAP 3	6	8%
aimswebPlus	6	8%
TDOE provided screener	4	5%
CASE Benchmark	2	3%
Shaywitz Dyslexia Screener	2	3%
Study Island	2	3%
Illuminate Fastbridge	2	3%
Teacher observation questionnaire for dyslexia	1	3%
Edmentum's Exact Path	1	3%

Written Expression		
Universal Screener	1	1%
Pearson Dyslexia Screening		
Test	1	1%
Wilson Reading Screeners	1	1%
DIBELS	1	1%

Figure 4.2.

Alternative Representation of Secondary Universal Screeners



FSLP gathered additional data related to universal screeners. Table 4.3 lists the number and percent of LEAs and public charter schools that provided information indicating the affirmative to the following questions:

- Was the universal screener offered to Pre-K?,
- Did it meet Dyslexia requirements?,
- Was it offered three times per year?,
- Was there a plan to inform parents in Grades K-3, of child “at risk” in Grades K-3, and annually in Grades 4-5, and general information regarding assessments, interventions for parents to use, a website with resources or assessments, reading interventions the school uses, or encouraging parents ask teachers about screener/assessment results?

Table 4.3.

Information Regarding the Provision of Universal Screeners Based on Tennessee Foundational Literacy Skills Plans (2021)

Screener Question	#	Percent
Offered to Pre K	13	7%
Meets Dyslexia requirements	161	87%
Offered three times per year	161	87%
Inform parent after the screener in K to 3	173	93%

Inform parent of child “at risk” in K to 3	186	100%
Inform parent annually in 4 to 5	174	94%
Inform parent about general information regarding assessments	124	67%
Inform parent interventions for parents to use	165	89%
Inform parent about a website with resources or assessments	6	3%
Inform parent about reading interventions the school uses	163	88%
Encourage parents ask teachers about screener/assessment results	14	8%

4.2. Progress Monitoring Process

Over a third of LEAs and public charter schools ($n = 66$, 35%) provided a detailed description of the personnel involved in Response to Intervention (RTI) data teams (e.g., teachers, administrators, instructional coaches, interventionists, other support areas including SPED, counseling, school psychologist).

Over two-fifths of participants ($n = 80$, 43%) provided a basic description of the personnel involved in RTI² data teams (e.g., simply stated RTI² data teams with no additional descriptive information). Frequency of data team meetings ranged from weekly ($n = 5$, 3%), bi- or tri-weekly ($n = 4$, 2%), monthly ($n = 27$, 15%), every 4.5 weeks ($n = 122$, 66%), and six (3%) reported they reviewed RTI² data in a time frame that exceeded 4.5 weeks.

4.3. Programs used for Remediation Purposes

Overall, more than 70 different RTI² interventions were listed for Grades K-5.

4.3.1. Programs Used for Whole Group Instruction, Small Group Instruction, And Remediation

Tennessee LEAs and public charter schools listed 75 different materials used for RTI² purposes. The most common instructional materials for RTI² purposes involved the curriculum-based supplements to address assessment, remediation, and scaffolds/supports. The most common curriculum-based instructional materials included: (1) CKLA ($n = 46$; 11%); (2) Wilson - Foundations and Benchmark ($n = 21$; 5%, respectively); (3) Wonders ($n = 12$; 3%); (4) Houghton Mifflin Harcourt ($n = 11$; 3%); (5) LearnZillion ($n = 10$; 2%); (6) Wit and Wisdom ($n = 6$; 1%); and (7) Open Up ($n = 5$; 1%).

Table 4.4 details other common instructional material including specific intervention materials, packages, or strategies in schools for RTI² purposes. Instructional materials in schools for RTI² purposes listed only once include: 6-Minute Solutions, Achievement First, Great Leaps, and teacher-made materials.

Table 4.4.**Common Instructional Intervention Materials**

Program(s)	Number	Percentage
SPIRE	48	11%
Small group reading targeted to a specific skill in area of deficit and iReady	19	4%
Fountas and Pinnell – Leveled Literacy Instruction	18	4%
Orton Gillingham and 95% Group	17	4%
Sound Sensible	16	4%
Lexia	11	3%
Heggerty	10	2%
Reading Mastery	9	2%
Book studies (e.g., 100 Book Challenge, Read Naturally, etc.) and computer-based intervention programs (e.g., IXL, Moby)	8	2%
Barton, ALLMemphis, and My Sidewalks	6	1%
Florida Center for Reading Research and TN Foundational Curriculum	5	1%
Exact Path, Road to the Code, and Phonics First	4	1%
Wonder Works, Word Study, Voyager – Rewards, Sondag System, and mClass	3	1%
WV Phonics, Recipe for Reading, Reading Horizon, EasyCBM, Edgenuity, Read Well, Study Island, Reading A-Z, and Pathway	2	1%

4.5. Response to Intervention (RTI²) Time Allocation

The most common framework for Tier I instruction was the use of curriculum-based supplements to address assessment, remediation, and scaffolds/supports ($n = 182$, 98%). Tier I instructional materials was described as common primary instructional material. Frameworks for Tier II and Tier III instruction involved small group reading targeted to a specific skill. The most reported framework in Tier II instruction involved small group reading targeted to a specific skill deficiency for 30 minutes using specified materials. The most reported framework in Tier III involved small group reading targeted to a specific skill deficiency for 45 minutes using specified materials.

For Tier II instruction, LEAs and public charter schools reported using materials during small group reading targeted to a specific skill deficiency for 30 minutes ($n = 67$, 37%), for 45 minutes ($n = 58$, 32%), for 60 minutes ($n = 3$, 2%), or an unspecified amount of time ($n = 28$, 15%). LEAs and public charter schools reported using unspecified materials during small group reading targeted to a specific skill deficiency for 30 minutes ($n = 13$, 7%), for 45 minutes ($n = 5$, 3%), for 60 minutes ($n = 2$, 1%), or for an unspecified amount of time ($n = 3$, 2%).

For Tier III instruction, LEAs and public charter schools reported using specified materials during small group reading targeted to a specific skill deficiency for 30 minutes ($n = 18$, 10%), for 45 minutes ($n = 109$, 60%), for 60 minutes ($n = 3$, 2%), or an unspecified amount of time ($n = 27$, 15%). LEAs and public charter schools reported using unspecified materials during small group reading targeted to a specific skill for 30 minutes ($n = 6$, 3%), for 45 minutes ($n = 12$, 7%), for 60 minutes ($n = 2$, 1%), or for an unspecified amount of time ($n = 3$, 2%).

4.6 Conclusion: Sections 2-4

One-hundred eighty-six LEAs and public charters have a state-approved Foundational Literacy Skills Plan. Data from these plans indicate that all Tennessee LEAs and public charter schools spend at least 45 minutes in foundational skills instruction in Grades K-2 and at least 30 minutes of such instruction in Grades 3-5. Elements of instruction used by LEAs and public charter schools include phonics, phonemic awareness, and fluency instruction among others. Most (over three-fourths of LEAs and public charters) embed foundational skills instruction in ELA instruction, and nearly all align foundational skills instruction with state literacy standards. Though a variety of primary instructional materials are used across LEAs and public charter schools serving Grades K-5, the two most widely used (almost half) are Amplify – K-5 Core Knowledge Language Arts and Benchmark – K-5 Advance. About one in five Tennessee LEAs and public charter schools use the TN Foundational Skills Curriculum as a supplement. All LEAs and public charter schools have a documented process of increasing intensive academic interventions to students whose academic performance falls below a specific level. Nonetheless, there is significant variability in the amount of time devoted to foundational literacy skills as well as materials used for instruction and remediation.

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Appendix A

Definition of Terms

Core Reading Instruction: Grade level (Tier I) instruction provided to all students in the regular education classroom. Core instruction often includes various instructional orientations to include whole class, small groups, collaborative, and individual opportunities for learning. Core instruction is targeted to meet the diverse needs of all learners. Materials and lesson used are based on the use of high-quality instructional materials, current data, and are designed to meet the needs of all students. The Tennessee Academic Standards for ELA will be used for Tier I instruction.

Fluency: Refers to learners' ability to read text accurately, quickly, and with prosody.

Foundational Literacy Skills: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension as defined in TCA 49-1-903(3).

Foundational Literacy Skills Plan (FLSP):A proposal that details how an LEA or public charter school plans to provide foundational literacy skills instruction to students and reading interventions and supports, which may include interventions provided pursuant to Tennessee's response to instruction and intervention framework manual, to students identified as having a significant reading deficiency

Literacy: "The ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context. Over time, literacy has been applied to a wide range of activities and appears as computer literacy, math literacy, or dietary literacy; in such contexts, it refers to basic knowledge of rather than to anything specific to reading and writing." A definition from <https://www.literacyworldwide.org/get-resources/literacy-glossary> International Literacy Association

Phonological awareness: "Awareness of sounds of words in learning to read and spell. (Note: The constituents of words can be distinguished in three ways: (1) by syllables, as /boʊk/, (2) by onsets and rimes, as /b/ and /oʊk/, or (3) by phonemes, as /b/ and /oʊ/ and /k/. (cf. **phonemic awareness**)." A definition from <https://www.literacyworldwide.org/get-resources/literacy-glossary> International Literacy Association

Phonemic awareness: "The ability to detect and manipulate the smallest units (i.e., phonemes) of spoken language. For example, recognition that the word cat includes three distinct sounds or phonemes represents phonemic awareness. Individuals with phonemic awareness can blend phonemes to form spoken words, segment spoken words into their constituent phonemes, delete phonemes from spoken words, add phonemes, and substitute phonemes." A definition from <https://www.literacyworldwide.org/get-resources/literacy-glossary> International Literacy Association

Phonology: "The study of speech sounds and their functions in a language or languages." A definition from <https://www.literacyworldwide.org/get-resources/literacy-glossary> International Literacy Association

Phonics: “An approach to teaching reading that emphasizes the systematic relationship between the sounds of language and the graphemes (i.e., letters or letter combinations) that represent those sounds. Learners apply this knowledge to decode printed words.” A definition from <https://www.literacyworldwide.org/get-resources/literacy-glossary> International Literacy Association

Reading: The process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. We use the words *extracting* and *constructing* to emphasize both the importance and the insufficiency of the text as a determinant of reading comprehension. A definition from <https://www.literacyworldwide.org/get-resources/literacy-glossary> International Literacy Association

Reading/literacy specialist: A reading/literacy specialist is a teacher who has specialized preparation in literacy and is highly qualified to teach struggling readers. A definition from <https://www.literacyworldwide.org/get-resources/literacy-glossary> International Literacy Association

RTI²: Response to Instruction and Intervention, a research-based instructional practice or intervention is one found to be reliable, trustworthy, and valid based on evidence to suggest that when the program is used with a particular group of students, the student can be expected to make adequate gains in achievement. Ongoing documentation and analysis of student outcomes helps to define effective practice. Information from: <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/2020-21-leg-session/TURS%20Admin%20Considerations%20Final.pdf>

Significant reading deficiency as defined in TCA 49-1-903(8): For students in kindergarten through grade three (K-3), this means that a student's score on a universal reading screener is within the range of scores determined by the department to demonstrate a lack of proficiency in foundational literacy skills. For students in grades four (4) or five (5), this means that a student scored below proficient in ELA on the TCAP test most recently administered to the student.

Systematic instruction: “Systematic instruction in reading is a plan of instruction (e.g., scope and sequence) that takes students through an explicit sequence of learning activities.” A definition from <https://www.literacyworldwide.org/get-resources/literacy-glossary> International Literacy Association

Tennessee Literacy Success Act: The Tennessee Literacy Success Act requires LEAs and public charter schools to use foundational literacy skills instruction as the basis of K-3 ELA instructional programming and submit a foundational literacy skills plan to the department for approval. The Act’s framework includes students and families, current classroom teachers, schools, districts, and institutions of higher education to improve literacy rates in Tennessee. Information from: <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/2020-21-leg-session/TURS%20Admin%20Considerations%20Final.pdf>

Tennessee Universal Reading Screener (TN-URS): The universal reading screener provided by the department (aimswebPlus). Information from: <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/2020-21-leg-session/TURS%20Admin%20Considerations%20Final.pdf>

Tier I: Core instruction will be provided to ALL students using grade-level standards in ELA and Mathematics. Information from: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/special-education/rti/rti2_implementation_guide.pdf

Tier II and Tier III: Tiered interventions will be provided in addition to the core instruction provided at Tier I. Interventions will be research-based and will address a student's area of deficit. Information from: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/special-education/rti/rti2_implementation_guide.pdf

Universal Reading Screener: A uniform tool that screens and monitors a student's progress in foundational literacy skills. Information from: <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/2020-21-leg-session/TURS%20Admin%20Considerations%20Final.pdf>