

3rd and 4th Grade Promotion Retention

FAQs

UPDATED April 2024

Please tell me the best steps to take as a parent and how I can best help my child.

- If you have any questions or concerns about your child’s performance in class, please reach out to your child's teacher.
- Pay close attention to teacher and principal communication coming home regarding updates to the retention and promotion process.
- Consistently work closely with your child on any academic work sent home from your child’s teacher.

How will I know if my child is at risk for retention?

Letters will be sent home by February 1st with details related to your child’s Winter Screener—called aimswebPlus. While the Winter Screener does not directly correlate to success on TCAP, we believe it is currently our best predictor of potential student success on 3rd grade TCAP.

There will be three letters sent home by your school’s principal. Each letter will be specific to each child’s individual profile. There are students who are considered “at-risk” under our projections based on the aimswebPlus screener; students who are “on-track” based on those projections; and students who don’t currently have data with us through that screener.

The chart below explains the requirements for third-grade students who do or do not “meet expectations” on the ELA section of the TCAP.

TCAP Performance Levels	WCS Summer Bridge Camp	Tutoring Program in 4 th grade	Promotion to 4 th grade
Exceeded Expectations			✓
Met Expectations			✓
Approaching Expectations or Below Expectations with a Proficient retest between May 22-May 31			✓
Approaching Expectations with a Spring screener score in the 50 th percentile or above		*	✓
Approaching Expectations with a Spring screener score below the 50 th percentile	**	**	
Below Expectations	***	***	

* Students with a TCAP score of **Approaching Expectations** on the ELA portion of TCAP with a *Spring screener score in the 50th percentile or above*:

- must be informed in writing of the benefits of attending the WCS Summer Bridge Camp - a four-week summer program. (There is no cost associated with this requirement.)

AND

- must complete a yearlong WCS tutoring program the following year in fourth grade. (There is no cost associated with this requirement.) Students will not be required to demonstrate adequate growth on the 4th grade TCAP.

OR

- must have received an approved appeal through the Tennessee Department of Education.

** Students with a TCAP score of **Approaching Expectations** on the ELA portion of TCAP with a *Spring screener score below the 50th percentile*:

- must attend the WCS Summer Bridge Camp—a four-week summer program and show adequate growth by the end of Summer Bridge Camp. (There is no cost associated with this requirement.)

OR

- must complete a yearlong WCS tutoring program the following year in fourth grade and show adequate growth on the 4th grade TCAP. (There is no cost associated with this requirement.)

OR

- received an approved appeal through the Tennessee Department of Education.

*** Students with a TCAP score **Below Expectations** on the ELA portion of the TCAP

- must attend the WCS Summer Bridge Camp—a four-week summer program. (There is no cost associated with this requirement.)

AND

- must complete a yearlong WCS tutoring program the following year in 4th grade and show adequate growth on the 4th grade TCAP. (There is no cost associated with this requirement.)

What about students in 4th grade currently?

Any student who was promoted to the 4th grade last summer based on the commitment to engage in a full year of tutoring for the entirety of the 4th grade school year must **either meet expectations on the ELA TCAP or at least show adequate progress** on the spring 4th grade ELA TCAP to be promoted to 5th grade in the fall of 2024. Meeting or exceeding expectations on the ELA TCAP allows them to be promoted to 5th grade. *If they don't meet expectations or show adequate progress, they will be retained in 4th grade.* No student will be retained in 4th grade more than once. TDOE reports these scores should be provided to districts by July 1.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

This is stressful...When is the final decision deadline on retention?

The law states that the final decision must occur 10 days before school starts, however WCS plans to communicate as quickly as possible to support parents in their planning. This communication will occur as soon as possible after TCAP (Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program) scores are made available, typically in late May. It is important to note there is an appeal process to TDOE. Additional communication will be made once Summer Bridge Camp adequate growth scores are received.

I understand this is based on the testing my child will take during the WCS TCAP window (April 15-26). When will the scores come back?

At this time, it is our understanding that initial raw score to scale score tables will be released to districts. This will allow districts to determine student proficiency. This will occur from TDOE by May 20th.

Will my child's principal have discretion related to my child being retained?

Principals have no discretion with respect to the TCAP related aspect of retention and promotion.

Are there any exceptions to this law?

The law provides exceptions to the retention requirements for some English Learners; some students with identified disabilities that impact the area of reading; and any student who has been previously retained. There will be additional conversations with your child's teacher or your child's principal if these exceptions impact your child.

Is there an appeal procedure available for a 3rd grade student who has been determined to not be proficient in ELA?

Yes. The TDOE has established the following guidelines for the appeal if a child is in the *approaching* category. Only a parent, legal guardian, or school personnel authorized to file an appeal on behalf of a parent/legal guardian may do so. The appeal must meet one of the options below:

1. The student has a documented score at or above the 40th percentile on the Spring Universal Reading Screener (aimswebPlus) AND an academic remediation plan AND unanimous recommendation for promotion from ELA teacher and principal, AND tutoring during all of 4th grade
2. A documented catastrophic event that impacts the student's ability to perform on the TCAP

Appeals window: May 28-June 28

All appeals must be submitted during the appeals window and through the appropriate form. WCS will communicate this procedure directly with those families impacted when it is received from TDOE.

PARENTS and COMMUNICATION

I know there are many lingering questions and WCS is continuing to work to get those answers. How will WCS continue to communicate this to parents?

WCS will continue to work diligently to ensure that parents are aware of any updates regarding this retention law. WCS is in constant communication with TDOE related to additional information and updates related to this law. We will use our district level communication through InFocus. Additionally, please pay close attention to information coming directly from your child's principal.

TESTING

What does the TCAP retake entail and when will it be available?

The TCAP retake assessment will be multiple choice/multiple select to allow for immediate scoring of the assessment. It will be administered on a computer and pre-equated, to allow for a scale score to be produced for WCS within two (2) business days. Schools will schedule retakes with individual families on May 22, 23, and 24. The retake window extends until May 31, but WCS will provide students the opportunity to retest before the start of summer programming.

What information is available regarding the pre-test and post-tests for summer programming?

The TCAP will serve as the "pre-test" for summer programming. The "post-test" will be comprised of TCAP-aligned items and is designed to take less than one hour to complete. The assessment will be administered online and will allow for accommodations as appropriate to individual students. The Summer Camp post-test will take place on June 26 and 27.

What does "adequate" growth mean for students who must attend the summer learning loss bridge camp and show "adequate" growth?

The Adequate Growth Measure will be determined based on growth between the "pre-test" and the "post-test." The calculation of what constitutes adequate growth will be determined annually using a standard psychometric process. The calculations will be reviewed by the department's Technical Advisory Committee (a group of national assessment experts and psychometricians who also provide feedback and consultation on the state assessment). Last year the expectation provided by the State Board of Education was to improve by at least 5 percentage points on the test provided.

Can students opt out from taking TCAP?

Tennessee requires student participation in state assessments by virtue of both state and federal laws. The General Counsel for the Tennessee Department of Education has clarified that parents may not refuse or opt a child out of participating in state mandated assessments. There are also no provisions authorizing students to opt out of mandated assessments. Based on the language of T.C.A. § 49-6-3115 (a), if a 3rd grade student does not take the TCAP or generate a score on the ELA portion of the TCAP and does not qualify for an exemption, the student should be treated as if the student is not proficient in ELA. The law states, "Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, a student in the 3rd grade shall not be promoted to the next grade level unless the student is determined to be proficient in English Language Arts (ELA) based on the student's achieving a performance level rating of "on track" or "mastered" (otherwise known as "meeting expectations" or "exceeding expectations") on the ELA portion of the student's most recent Tennessee comprehensive assessment program (TCAP) test."

SUMMER LEARNING LOSS CAMP

Do all 3rd grade students have to attend WCS learning loss bridge summer camp?

Students with a TCAP score of **Approaching Expectations** on the ELA portion of TCAP with a *Spring screener score in the 50th percentile or above* must be informed in writing of the benefits of attending the WCS Summer Bridge Camp—a four-week summer program. Additionally, they must complete a yearlong WCS tutoring program the following year in fourth grade. Students will not be required to demonstrate adequate growth on the 4th grade TCAP.

Students with a TCAP score of **Approaching Expectations** on the ELA portion of TCAP with a *Spring screener score below the 50th percentile* must be informed in writing of the benefits of attending the WCS Summer Bridge Camp—a four-week summer program. Additionally, they must complete a yearlong WCS tutoring program the following year in fourth grade. Students must demonstrate adequate growth on the 4th grade TCAP.

Students with a TCAP score of **Below Expectations** on the ELA portion of TCAP must attend the WCS Summer Bridge Camp—a four-week summer program. Additionally, they must complete a yearlong tutoring program the following year in fourth grade and must demonstrate adequate growth on the 4th grade TCAP.

For “below expectations” status on TCAP, do 3rd grade students need to show growth in summer school?

No, this is not stated as a requirement for students who achieved a performance level rating of “*below expectations*”. Students in this pathway must show adequate growth in ELA when they take the 4th grade TCAP.

How will summer school be planned if TCAP does not happen until the middle of April?

WCS has been planning summer programming since the Fall of this school year. WCS will work to have all the structures and systems prepared to place the appropriate students into the appropriate summer programming.

TUTORING

Is there a minimum number of tutoring hours? The minimum tutoring required is 2 times weekly for 30 minutes each with a 1:3 teacher to student ratio.

When will tutoring occur?

Tutoring will occur before or after the school day. The schedule is specific to your child’s school.

Do we know who can do the tutoring? Can you tell me more about the training?

Licensed educators can do the tutoring as well as others who complete the State training that is offered.

Is there a cost to the tutoring provided by WCS?

There is no cost to tutoring.

Will WCS provide transportation to students if the tutoring occurs before or after school?

Transportation is not provided.

If my child is required to attend tutoring, can I choose a private tutor?

Providers must be TALLC trained. Currently, we do not know any other parameters for providers. Tutors may need to use state-provided assessments for progress monitoring.

Are there attendance requirements for tutoring?

The purpose of tutoring is to support the adequate growth of the student on the 4th grade TCAP. Consistent attendance and intervention are essential parts of accomplishing that goal.

What materials will be used for tutoring?

The TALLC training emphasizes the use of adopted high quality instructional materials. WCS will use WCS created instructional materials.

SSS IMPLICATIONS

I see there is language related to “disability”. What qualifies as a disability?

This includes students with an IEP (Individualized Education Program), 504 plan, or who have a suspected disability that impacts reading. Students cannot be retained based solely on their disability.

What if my child is in the process of being identified for an IEP or 504 plan?

It is possible your child may qualify as having a suspected disability that impacts reading.

We have not had an IEP meeting for my child this year. Is there anything the team should discuss to add to the IEP, so it is evident there is a reading disability and/or implication?

There is nothing the team needs to add. The present levels, goals, and services that are currently included in the IEP should provide all relevant information.

What will an IEP team document after the meeting in which the team discusses possible retention?

The IEP team will draft a prior written notice (PWN), and the 504 team will provide a discussion summary in the 504 notes. It is important to note that the IEP and 504 teams are not making the retention decision, but they are making recommendations for consideration.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDENTS

What if my child is receiving English Language services and will need more than 2 years for English language proficiency?

According to the guidelines, ELL students with more than 2 years of ELA instruction would be subject to all the same guidelines as a typical 3rd grade student. In order to be exempt, ELL students must be enrolled fewer than 150 days in 2nd grade or fewer than 150 days in 3rd grade. Students with intermittent enrollment in grades K-3 will be discussed on an individual basis. If a parent has specific questions about their child, they should communicate directly with their principal.

What happens to students receiving English Language services and have had 2 or more years, but are still in Level 1?

The guidelines do not speak to this.