

MEDIA RELEASE

KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS
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2020-21 Spring TCAP Scores Show Widespread COVID Learning Loss

KNOXVILLE, Tenn., Aug. 11, 2021 – In the wake of educational disruptions caused by COVID-19, Knox County Schools saw widespread learning loss during the 2020-21 school year, according to TCAP scores that were released today.

The district, which had a participation rate of 94.1%, saw declines in proficiency in each grade level and subject area with the exception of U.S. History when compared to the last testing cycle in the spring of 2019.

While Knox County Schools did outperform the state in combined proficiency rate, the data shows that 36.4% of Knox County Schools test takers were proficient across all grades and subjects, which is a 3% decrease compared to data from 2019.

“Despite the hard work of our teachers, administrators, and staff last year, the pandemic created enormous challenges that impacted students’ academic progress, and we must do everything we can to help them catch up,” said Superintendent Bob Thomas. “I cannot emphasize how important it will be this year to have our students in class and getting the instruction and supports they need from our dedicated teachers and staff.”

Students receive a performance score based on four categories: “Below Grade Level”, “Approaching Grade Level”, “On Track”, and “Mastered”. Students scoring in the top two performance categories – “On Track” and “Mastered” – are considered to be proficient for that content area.

Some key takeaways from the results include:

In 2021, for elementary school (grades 3-5) TCAP exams:

- 34.9% of students scored “On Track” or “Mastered” in ELA, down from 38.8% in 2019
- 35.5% of students scored “On Track” or “Mastered” in math, down from 45.6% in 2019
- 46.3% of students scored “On Track” or “Mastered” in science*

For middle school (grades 6-8) TCAP exams:

- 29.8% of students scored “On Track” or “Mastered” in English, down from 38.5% in 2019
- 26.1% of students scored “On Track” or “Mastered” in math, down from 35.5% in 2019
- 40.9% of students scored “On Track” or “Mastered” in science*

For high school end-of-course exams:

- 37.5% of students scored “On Track” or “Mastered” in English, down from 44.2% in 2019
- 24.4% of students scored “On Track” or “Mastered” in math, down from 31.7% in 2019
- 50.1% of students scored “On Track” or “Mastered” in science*
- 38.8% of students scored “On Track” or “Mastered” in U.S. history, up from 36% in 2019

(*Due to changes in the standards, this is a baseline year for science.)

“The pandemic’s effect on student progress was devastating, but we are committed to doing everything we can to close the gaps in academic performance and to accelerate learning,” said Assistant Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer Dr. Jon Rysewyk. “We must get our students back on track and moving forward.”

Knox County Schools has identified strategies using ESSER 3.0 funds to help mitigate the learning loss that has occurred. These include a comprehensive tutoring program for elementary, middle and high school focused on K-2 literacy and math, 6-8 grade math and high school career advising and academic supports. The district will also enhance its teacher training and mentoring program, extend its partnership with Helen Ross McNabb for additional mental health supports and develop a Newcomers Academy for English learner students who are new to the U.S.

To view the entire Knox County Schools ESSER 3.0 plan, please click here: [PowerPoint Presentation](#).

Knox County students may access their TCAP score reports via the Tennessee Department of Education’s TCAP Family Portal. This free, online resource includes TCAP scale scores and performance levels by subject; test history features allowing families to track progress over time; links to Parent Guides; and next-step recommendations, including links to practice tests.

In order to access this resource, families must utilize their student’s TN Student ID. For detailed directions about how to navigate the process, please visit our website, www.knoxschools.org/tcap. The TCAP Family Portal is optional and printed individual student reports will be available in the coming weeks.

Families of students that completed TCAP testing in the fall 2019, fall 2020 and spring 2021 windows will have data in the platform. Families of students who did not participate in any of the above testing windows will not have access to the TCAP Family Portal at this time.

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