



ALCOA CITY SCHOOLS

GRADUATING COMPETITIVE STUDENTS

- BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS
- RIGOROUS EXPECTATIONS
- RELEVANT INSTRUCTION

524 FARADAY STREET
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REBECCA STONE, ED.S
DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS

3rd Grade Retention Law FAQ

Recently, we sent home the mid-year benchmarks to parents. Some parents were informed that based on the most current data, their child might be at risk for falling under the TN 3rd Grade Retention Law that goes into effect this year. We have received several questions regarding this law, so we have put together the following questions and answers to help provide clarification.

What does the 3rd Grade Retention Law state? Beginning this school year, any 3rd grade student who scores in the “approaching” category on English Language Arts (ELA) portion of the TCAP will be required to attend summer school **OR** after-school tutoring for the entire 4th grade year to be promoted. Any student who scores in the “below” category on the ELA portion of the TCAP will be required to attend summer school **AND** participate in tutoring for the entire 4th grade year to be promoted.

Will there be an opportunity for my child to retake the test? Yes. There will be an English/Language Arts (ELA) retake opportunity for students. The window to take this retake is May 30th-June 5th. ACS will schedule our retakes on May 30th at the high school during summer school hours. The Department of Education has stated that they will have the results of this retake to districts within two days. Alcoa City Schools will notify parents of the results as soon as we receive them from the Department of Education.

When will summer school occur? Summer school will be held from May 30-June 23 at Alcoa High School. The law requires that students have a 90% attendance rate to be promoted. This means that a student cannot miss more than 2 days during the four-week session.

Will there be an appeal process? Yes. There will be an appeal process to the Tennessee Department of Education for students who score in the “approaching” category. They will approve appeals for any student that scores above the 40th percentile on the spring iReady reading assessment, which is our universal screener. We will be able to tell parents prior to school ending if their child meets this threshold, since students take that assessment in April and get immediate results. Parents may also appeal this decision based on a catastrophic event: death in the family, medical illness, etc. Appeals cannot be completed by the school district. Only parents are allowed to appeal. However, we will assist any parent in submitting the appeal. At this point, Alcoa City Schools does not have the authority to grant an appeal. If your child scores in the “below” category, there will not be an appeal process available.

Is any student exempt from this law? Yes. Students who have a disability, or suspected disability related to reading, have been retained before, or have been in ELL classes for less than two years are exempt from this law.



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If my child is currently receiving intervention, are they exempt from this law? No, not necessarily. We provide intervention/enrichment to all K-3 Alcoa City Schools students each day. There are many students who receive intervention in reading that do not qualify for the federal definition of having a suspected disability. A student doesn't qualify for having a reading disability simply by reading below grade level or exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia. There are federal guidelines in place for meeting the disability criteria.

What if I refuse for my child to take the TCAP? There is not an "opt out" for student participation on the TCAP assessment if they attend a public/charter school. All students are required to take the assessment. The Tennessee Department of Education clarified that if a student does not take the assessment for any reason, we don't have a data point. Therefore, they are considered "below," will be required to attend summer school, and after-school tutoring in the fourth grade to be promoted.

What if I unenroll my 3rd grade child prior to TCAP for homeschool and return next year for 4th grade? Alcoa City Schools would have to administer an assessment to measure on-grade level reading proficiency before being placed in a 4th grade classroom.

Who do I contact for student specific questions regarding this law? If you have student specific questions, please reach out to your child's school administrators, Mr. Tony Spears, tspears@alcoaschools.net, OR Mrs. Amber Harper, aharper@alcoaschools.net. They are your first point of contact for this law. We will be more than happy to pull your child's data and help walk you through any questions.

What role does Alcoa City Schools play in this law? This law was created and passed by the General Assembly. Alcoa City Schools had no role in creating this law. However, we are required to implement it as written. We have been very involved in speaking to General Assembly to urge legislators to revise the law to include the use of multiple sources of data vs. a single data point on a standardized assessment. This request was denied. We will continue to advocate for this law to be revisited to allow us to use multiple data sources to make instructional decisions. There is some discussion that the specifics of this law might be re-visited during this General Assembly session. Alcoa City Schools will implement any changes that are made in the law moving forward; but for now, we must implement the law as currently written.



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What right do I have as a parent to advocate for this law to be revised? At this point, the law is out of Alcoa City Schools' hands. Our elected state officials will be the only ones that can revise. Our elected officials are listed below. If you have feelings about this law, either positive or negative, we encourage you to reach out to your elected official to share your thoughts. The General Assembly is now in session, and the deadline for submitting a revision bill is February 1, 2023.

Representative Jerome Moon
rep.jerome.moon@capitol.tn.gov
615-741-5481

Senator Art Swann
sen.art.swann@capitol.tn.gov
(615) 741-0981

Representative Bryan Richey
rep.bryan.richey@capitol.tn.gov
(615) 741-3560

What is the goal of ACS? Our goal is to continue providing quality instruction to all students. We do not want to see students retained and will work diligently to provide the additional supports that allow for promotion. Reading on grade level by third grade is extremely important for future academic success. It will be important for us all to work together to meet the requirements of this law and make informed decisions regarding your child. It is our intent to focus on the supportive measures provided through this law vs. retention conversations.