







Tennessee

School Management	C	
Finance	B	
Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation	A	
Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers	D	
Data	B	
Pipeline to Postsecondary	B	
Technology	D	
State Reform Environment	?	
Gold Stars		

School Management. Tennessee does an average job managing its schools in a way that encourages thoughtful innovation. While the state sanctions low-performing schools, 91% of teachers report that routine duties and paperwork interfere with teaching. The state’s academic standards also receive a middling mark.

Finance. Overall, Tennessee earns a solid grade in this category. The state gets above-average marks for the simplicity of its state funding mechanism and for the online accessibility of its financial data. Tennessee also has a performance pay program for teachers.

Staffing: Hiring & Evaluation. Tennessee receives a high mark for its teacher hiring and evaluation system. Thirteen percent of teachers enter the profession through an alternative certification program, the same as the national average. But Tennessee requires teachers to pass basic skills and subject-knowledge tests. The state’s interstate portability requirements also get a solid mark.

Staffing: Removing Ineffective Teachers. Tennessee receives a low score on the ability to remove poor-performing teachers from the classroom. Seventy-one percent of principals say that teacher unions or associations are a barrier to the removal of ineffective teachers, which is 10 percentage points above the national average of 61%. In addition, 91% of principals report that tenure is a barrier to removing poor-performing teachers.

Data. Tennessee gets a solid mark for its state data system. While the state does not publicly report college remediation data, it provides educators with access to a school-level database for analysis. The state also has the ability to match individual students’ test records from year to year.

Pipeline to Postsecondary. Tennessee receives an above-average mark for its efforts to improve college and career readiness. Seventy-two percent of its schools report offering dual-enrollment programs, which allow students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously. That is 7 percentage points above the national average of 65%. In addition, Tennessee requires a college- and career-ready diploma, and its high school exams gauge college and career readiness.

Technology. Tennessee receives a poor grade in this category. The state has not established a virtual school and does not offer a computer-based assessment. Tennessee also needs to significantly improve how it evaluates its return on investments in technology.

State Reform Environment. There are few reliable state-by-state data on local education advocacy and research efforts—a reflection of the lack of overall commitment to this issue. As a result, we are unable to issue a meaningful grade. However, the reform group Tennessee Score is a member of the forward-thinking Policy Innovators in Education Network. Tennessee also supports common academic standards.
