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## Tennessee

Academic Achievement	D	
Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students	F	
Return on Investment	C	
Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency	F	
Rigor of Standards	C	
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	F	
21st Century Teaching Force	B	
Flexibility in Management and Policy	C	
Data Quality	B	

### Academic Achievement

Student performance in Tennessee is lower than average. Fourth and eighth graders stand 7 percentage points below the national average in the percentage at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam.

### Academic Achievement of Low-Income and Minority Students

Tennessee posts failing marks in this category. Only 14% of low-income 4th graders score at or above the proficient level on the NAEP math exam. The national average for low-income 4th graders is 19%. Because NAEP sampling requirements for Hispanic students were not met, Tennessee's grade is based solely on low-income and African-American student achievement.

### Return on Investment

Student achievement in Tennessee is middling relative to state education spending (after controlling for student poverty, the percentage of students with special needs, and cost of living). This mediocre return on investment earns the state a C in our ranking.

### Truth in Advertising About Student Proficiency

Tennessee gets very poor marks on the credibility of its student proficiency scores. While the state identified large percentages of its students as proficient on 2005 state math and reading exams, smaller percentages posted proficient scores on the NAEP in 2005.

### Rigor of Standards

Tennessee receives a modest grade for the rigor of its standards. While the state's science curriculum standards receive solid marks, Tennessee has yet to align its high school graduation requirements with college and workplace expectations.

### Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Tennessee earns a very poor grade in this category. Only 62% of its 9th graders receive a diploma within four years compared with the national average of 70%. And only 30% of 9th graders who finish high school in four years go on to college.

### 21st Century Teaching Force

Tennessee earns solid marks for its teacher workforce policies. The state tests incoming teachers on their basic skills and requires high school teachers to pass subject knowledge tests. The state has also opened up alternative routes into the profession.

### Flexibility in Management and Policy

The state receives a middling grade on how much freedom and flexibility it gives its schools and principals. While 74% of principals report a major degree of influence over how their school budgets are spent, the state has not established a virtual school.

### Data Quality

Tennessee gets higher than average marks for its efforts to collect and report high-quality education data. Unlike most other states, Tennessee has a teacher-identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students to gauge teacher effectiveness.