



Read by Grade **3**

A Communication Guide for Michigan's Public School Leaders

- **Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law**
- **Notification of Possible Retention**
- **Good Cause Exemption**

Helping schools communicate with families, staff, media and the community.

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A resource created collaboratively by





Supporting Your District in its Read by Grade Three Journey

This document is designed to be used in conjunction with Michigan Department of Education (MDE) materials to help schools communicate with staff, families, media and community about the Read by Grade Three Law, the notification of possible retention, and the Good Cause Exemption process.

This resource highlights some of the ways school districts may choose to communicate about this important issue. Always consider your school's policies, codes of conduct, local community needs, and your local climate as you address the information needs of your stakeholders.

All communication samples included in this document have been reproduced with permission. Schools are strongly encouraged to follow MDE guidance when interpreting and implementing the Read by Grade Three Law. Please direct specific questions or inquiries about the law to mde-earlyliteracy@michigan.gov.

Prepared by:



Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA)
1001 Centennial Way, Suite 300
Lansing, MI 48917
Phone: (517) 327-5910
www.mspra.org



Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA)
and its Public Relations Network
1001 Centennial Way, Suite 300
Lansing, MI 48917
Phone: (517) 327-9263
www.gomaisa.org



Michigan Department of Education
Offices of Public and Governmental Affairs and Early Literacy - Read
by Grade Three Law
608 W. Allegan Street
P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, MI 48909
Phone: (517) 241-4395
www.michigan.gov/mde

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Introduction

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE), the Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA), and the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) Public Relations Network have worked together to develop parent and staff communication around the Read by Grade Three Law and the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) retention letter that will be sent to affected families this spring.

To help us understand what has been, is being, and still needs to be communicated about Read by Grade Three (RBG3), we surveyed school leaders including school communicators. We thank all those who participated in the anonymous survey. We have used the results to aid in the production of this communication guide.

This document contains resources to help school districts communicate around receipt of the CEPI letter/release of scores and Good Cause Exemption to staff, parents, media and community. Use this guide as part of your annual communication plan for this requirement.

MDE's goals for communication with schools:

- Provide awareness that the law exists and what it means.
- Aid in the accurate implementation of the law.
- Facilitate completion of activities according to the law timelines.
- Support accurate district retention reporting.
- Note improved literacy outcomes.

Your goals for communication with parents (as well as school staff, the community and media):

- Provide accurate, consistent information and messages based on the RBG3 law and MDE resources.
- Preview the spring CEPI retention letter with parents to minimize surprises.
- Emphasize that schools are working for their child's life-long success.
- Tell about Good Cause Exemptions and the deadline by which to contact the school, if interested.
- Reinforce that schools are working every day, using a variety of strategies and resources, to support/boost literacy for all children.



Section 1: Background

In 2016, the Michigan Legislature passed a law that requires schools to identify learners who are struggling with reading and writing and to provide them with additional help. The law states that third graders may repeat third grade if they are more than one grade level behind beginning with the 2019-2020 school year.

As prescribed in the law, this year's Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) must be used to flag students who are eligible for retention. There are actions that districts need to take to prepare for this requirement and to communicate with families. The law describes specific timelines and dates that districts and families must know and follow.

MDE Resource:

[Michigan Department of Education District Checklist](#)

Points to Remember:

- Reading is a learned skill.
- Reading is essential for life-long success.
- Everyone learns to read at a different pace.
- Parents, teachers and schools are partners in helping students learn to read.
- Schools are working every day, using a variety of strategies and resources, to support literacy for ALL children.
- The Read by Grade Three Law requires schools to identify and support students in grades kindergarten through third grade who are struggling with reading and writing.*
- The law states that third graders may be retained if they are more than one grade level behind at the end of the 2019-20 school year.*
- The Read By Grade Three Law includes Good Cause Exemption (a specific reason within the law for a child to be promoted to 4th grade) and a deadline by which to contact the school.*
- MDE's Facts for Families says: Contact the school where your child will be attending 4th grade and ask about their Good Cause Exemption Process.*

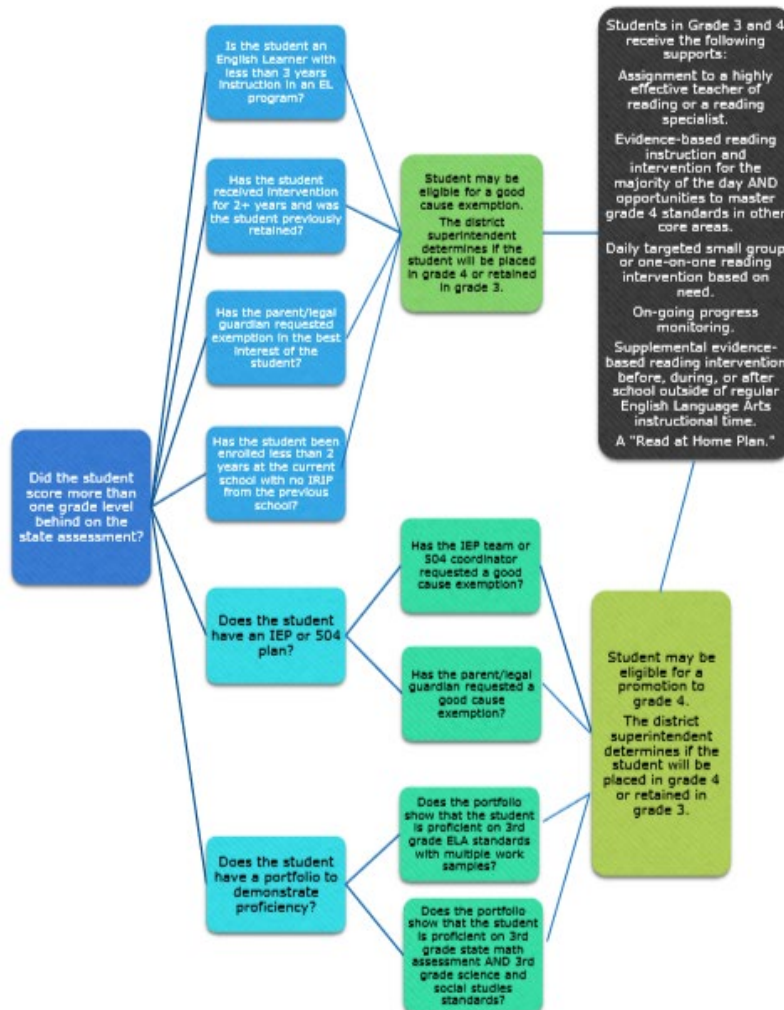
* MDE Facts for Families: What is a Good Cause Exemption Process?



Section 2: Your School’s Process/Plan for Good Cause Exemption (Retention or Promotion)

Before you know the test results, you need to know your school’s process/plan. Here’s what you need to do or who to contact if you need help. The chart below is from page 11 of MDE’s [Read by Grade Three Guide October 2019](#).

Is a Student Eligible for a Good Cause Exemption and/or Promotion to Grade 4?





- If a third grade student is flagged for retention based on the spring 2020 ELA M-STEP assessment, CEPI will mail a notification to the parents of the student within 14 days of receiving the student assessment results.*
- For information purposes, MDE and CEPI will provide an example of the letter to districts.*
- Only students scoring at or below 1252 on the Grade 3 ELA M-STEP will receive a letter.*
- Notification that letters have been mailed will be sent from MDE to ISD and district superintendents, and building/Public School Academy (PSA) principals through the State Superintendent's Thursday communication, as well as through GovDelivery to the MDE ELA list serve. *
- The MDE will provide districts with a list of students who should expect to receive a letter. Districts are encouraged to send their own communication to parents as well.*
- A parent may request a meeting within 30 days of receiving the letter and be notified of student placement at least 30 days prior to the start of the school year.*
- Beginning with the 2019-2020 school year, CEPI is required to send a letter, via certified mail, to parents whose child scored more than one grade level behind on the State Summative Assessment. This letter is sent to all identified students, regardless of disability status. The parent, teacher, or other school personnel will need to initiate the process for a good cause exemption.*
- It is important to note, schools do not have to wait for parents to receive a CEPI letter to start the Good Cause Exemption process. Districts are welcome to start the process before testing - as soon as they have preliminary data or based upon local data, instruction and intervention efforts.

*Taken from Questions 15-21 of MDE's Read by Grade Three Guide October 2019

Does your district have a process/plan for Good Cause Exemption?

If not, what steps do you need to take to produce a plan?

- Who is responsible for the overall plan?
- Who is your facilitator?
- Who is responsible for communication?

If you have questions, contact MDE at mde-earlyliteracy@michigan.gov.



Facts for Families: What is a Good Cause Exemption Process?

What is a Good Cause Exemption?

A specific reason within the law for a child to be promoted to 4th grade.

In 2016, the Michigan Legislature passed the Read by Grade Three Law that requires schools to identify and support students in grades Kindergarten through third grade who are struggling with reading and writing. The law states that third graders may be retained if they are more than one grade level behind at the end of the 2019-20 school year. This document explains what the law calls a **Good Cause Exemption**.

Who can ask for a Good Cause Exemption?

- A parent or guardian of a third grader.
- The third grade teacher.
- The Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Coordinator.



When do I apply for a Good Cause Exemption?

Within 30 days of being notified that your child may be retained.

What does the law offer as a Good Cause Exemption?

If a child has:

- An Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- A Section 504 Plan
- Limited English with less than three years of instruction in an English Language Learner (EL) Program.
- Received intensive reading intervention for 2 or more years, and was retained in kindergarten, 1st, or 2nd grade.
- Been enrolled in their current school for less than two years and there is evidence that your child was not provided with an appropriate individual reading improvement plan (IRIP).

Or the child's parent or legal guardian has requested, in the appropriate timeframe:

- The child not be retained, and the superintendent, chief administrator, or his or her designee has determined that promotion is in the best interest of the child.

How do I request a Good Cause Exemption?

Contact the school where your child will be attending 4th grade and ask about their Good Cause Exemption Process.

What happens when I request a Good Cause Exemption?

The superintendent, or their designee, will review the request and make the final decision **at least 30 days** before the first day of school. This decision is final.



What support will my child get if they are retained in 3rd grade? AND What support will my child get if they are promoted to the 4th grade?

- Your child will receive appropriate reading support at school.
- You and your child may be provided with a "Read at Home" plan with activities to help your child at home.

From MDE's Facts for Families: What is a Good Cause Exemption Process?



Section 3: The RPIE (Research, Plan, Implement, Evaluate) Communication Process

The following communication plan is organized according to the RPIE (Research, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation) process used by school communicators across the nation. This process enables the schools to design and maintain a comprehensive, planned, two-way communication program that helps build mutual understanding and support between the schools and its publics. The RPIE process involves four steps:

- 1) **Research:** Identify the issue and gather relevant information—through your own investigation/first-hand experience and/or that which is reported by others.
- 2) **Planning:** Use your research to develop a communication plan and messages; use identified tools to communicate with your target publics/audiences.
- 3) **Implementation:** Follow the steps in your communication plan to manage the information/seek input.
- 4) **Evaluation:** Examine your communication efforts to determine if communication goals were met. Use evaluation results to modify your communication plan, if needed.

If you have questions about the RPIE process or school public relations please contact your district’s school communicator or the Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA) www.mspra.org.



Items/Questions to Consider in your Research (Step 1)

Items you may want to obtain and consider, as well as questions you may want to ask:

- Consult MDE's Read by Grade Three resources, available on [MDE's website](#). Draw your facts directly from the Department.
- Consult with your school's team (and include your school communication professional as part of the leadership group handling this issue):
 - With whom have you communicated about the Read by Grade Three Law? Good Cause Exemption?
 - What information has been communicated?
 - What communication vehicles are being used to share messages?
 - Based on the information your district has provided and the feedback you have received, how informed are your target audiences (parents, staff media and community) about the: RBG3 Law? Good Cause Exemption?
 - What information still needs to be communicated? To whom?



Planning (Step 2)

Use your research to develop a communication plan and messages; use identified tools to communicate with your target publics/audiences.

Here are suggested target audiences, key messages (for those audiences), and communication vehicles/platforms (to reach those audiences), based on our research. Consider these as you plan for your communication.

Target Audiences

Who are the primary groups that need to know this information?

- School Staff (including School Board Members)
- Parents (and Community Members)
- Media

Key Messages for Staff

Whether answering a school district phone or a question in the grocery store, it's important for all school staff members to have the same information. Provide them with a few talking points, so they can be "in the know" and share facts. You may want to consider messages like these.

Be sure to include contact information for those in your district who are leading this effort.

- Our school's priority is the education of our students.
- We work together with families and the community to provide a quality education for students.
- We support literacy for ALL children. For information about how we support literacy, contact _____ .
- We have resources available to help families with literacy. Here's where you can access them: _____ .
- For questions about the Read by Grade Three Law, please contact _____ .
- We have a plan for Good Cause Exemption under the Read by Grade Three Law. Please direct all inquiries to: _____ .
- Please direct media calls to: _____ . (Identify one person to take all media calls.)



Key Messages for Parents

We want parents to know: how much we value their child(ren), their trust in our ability to provide a quality education for their child(ren), how seriously we take literacy as part of that mission, and how to get information about our Good Cause Exemption process, if they are interested.

- Our priority is the education of your child(ren).
- Together, parents, teachers and schools are partners in helping students learn to read.
- Reading is a learned skill.
- Reading is essential for life-long success.
- Everyone learns to read at a different pace.
- Schools are working every day, using a variety of strategies and resources, to support literacy for ALL children.
- If you are interested in learning more about our Good Cause Exemption process under the Read by Grade Three Law, please contact the school at _____.

Key Messages for Media

When working with the media, it's critical to provide background information and context for the issue. The more information and resources you can provide, the better equipped reporters will be to do their job—which can help you do yours.

Consider sharing links to [MDE's Read by Grade Three Guide October 2019](#) and other related links posted on your website. Below are some key messages that you may want to highlight. Note: For a sample news release, see *Samples/Templates/Tools under the Media Section of this guide*.

- The Read by Grade Three Law requires schools to identify and support students in grades kindergarten through third grade who are struggling with reading and writing.*
- The law states that third graders may be retained if they are more than one grade level behind at the end of the 2019-20 school year. *
- The Read By Grade Three Law includes Good Cause Exemption (a specific reason within the law for a child to be promoted to 4th grade) and a deadline by which to contact the school.*
- If interested, parents should contact the school where their child will be attending 4th grade and ask about their Good Cause Exemption Process.*
- For more information about our district's Good Cause Exemption process, please contact _____.

*From MDE's Facts for Families: What is a Good Cause Exemption?

RPIE Communication Process



Communication Vehicles/Platforms

How do you regularly communicate with your target audiences? Use these identified communication vehicles/platforms to send your planned messages/information. Note: Not every vehicle/platform will be used with every audience. Below is a sample list. In your experience, which works best with which group? Remember to include communication methods that are not listed or are unique to your district.

- Letters
- Memos
- Meetings
- Notification Systems
- Email Messages
- Town Hall Meetings/Public Forums
- Website/Social Media Posts
- News Releases
- Fact Sheets
- Texts



Implementation (Step 3)

Follow the steps in your communication plan to manage the information/seek input.

When it's time to communicate with your audiences:

- Follow MDE guidance.
- Consult/work with your Intermediate School District/Regional Education Service Agency/Education Service Agency/Regional Education Service District, your literacy coach and your district literacy staff/team.
- Use this guide to communicate with your:
 - Board and Staff
 - Parents and Community
 - Media

Post the following on your website (if not already in place):

- Link to MDE's:
 - [RBG3 FAQs](#)
 - [RBG3 Resources](#)
- Sample CEPI parent notification letter with information on how and when it will be delivered
- A list of the type of RBG3 information/communication and when it was sent to your parents this school year
- News release about your district's literacy support and a link to access that literacy support
- Your district's key literacy messages (also post on social platforms)
- Your district's Good Cause Exemption Process/Contact Person



Evaluation (Step 4)

Examine your communication efforts to determine if communication goals were met. Use evaluation results to modify your communication plan, if needed.

- Check with staff.
 - Were communications clear? Additional concerns?
 - Ask what they are hearing from parents in general?
 - Ask what they are hearing from parents of students who are struggling with literacy?
 - Ask how many phone calls are being received? What are their nature?
- Determine tone and type of media coverage.
- Monitor social media chatter.
- Track website clicks.
- Note email contacts.



Section 4: Communication Plan (Retention/Good Cause Exemption)

You can use this plan to communicate to staff, parents, media and the community around the receipt of the CEPI letter/release of scores and Good Cause Exemption.

The plan focuses on these audiences: Internal staff, parents and the community, and the media. Feel free to add additional target audiences based on your specific community's needs. Consider members of the clergy, community action groups, service agencies, senior citizens and the business community, among others.



Target Audience 1: Internal Staff/Board of Education

Develop/use a communication plan to reach your staff.

Research

- Determine who your target audiences are within your school building—front office staff, teachers (and in which buildings), counselors, school communicators, administrators, board members and union leaders. Determine how they like to receive information and what vehicles your district should use to share information of this nature.
- What do audiences need to know?
- Determine what you expect each internal audience to do with the information you provide to them. Are they responsible for answering questions or should they refer concerns to a specific person in the district?
- Where is the best place to warehouse district messages/information about RBG3? Would it be beneficial to dedicate a section of your website to the law and your district's plan?
- Would your staff appreciate a weekly email or update from the curriculum team about the topic? Perhaps dedicate time during each staff meeting to discuss questions and progress relative to RBG3 implementation.
- If individual students are identified to be exempt or held back, what resources will your staff need to support those students? Additionally, what social/emotional (and academic) supports will those students need should your district opt to retain them? **(Remember—students' retention plans are confidential.)**
- Think about how you wish to measure the success of your communication with your internal staff. Do you need to offer a pre- and post-survey (or discussion) about how informed they feel?
- Don't forget about your board of education! Board members are part of your internal team. They need to be included as a target audience.

Outreach Opportunity!

Develop a Key Contact List that includes members of your district staff, the PTO/PTA, union leadership, key community leaders, public officials and anyone else who supports your district. Share your literacy journey with these key contacts so that they may support the district's message while they are interacting with their neighbors. Often, your key contacts will correct misinformation or help reinforce the district's messaging when faced with opposing views.

Internal Staff



Planning

- Based on your district's plan relative to Good Cause Exemption, create a reference sheet describing the process for staff referral. (Be sure the process is shared for public consumption as well so that everyone is on the same page.)
- Create (and update as necessary) a timeline that helps inform staff what to expect. Include what you wish to communicate with your staff and when. Consider pre-populating messages, articles, and reference documents using resources found in this communication guide.
- Develop Talking Points/Key Messages that help staff communicate the district's process for supporting students.
- Identify Communication Vehicles/Platforms.

Implementation

- Following the timeline in your plan and using the guidance provided by MDE, begin to check off your steps.

Evaluation

- Monitor your communication and make adjustments when necessary.

Internal Staff



Samples/Template Language/Tools

Sample letter for board and staff members

Dear <insert school district> Board and Staff,

Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) testing is about to begin across the state. This test has increased implications for our third graders with the Read by Grade Three Law passed by the Michigan Legislature in 2016. This law was meant to ensure that students are reading at or above grade level when they exit third grade; if they do not reach a specific score on the M-STEP, they could be at risk for retention.

Throughout the year, starting with fall assessments, our kindergarten through third grade teachers and administrators have been diligently working on these new requirements in support of our students' academic success, but we feel it's important for all of us to understand more about the law, our responsibilities as a district, rights for our families and students, and the timeline of the Read by Grade Three Law.

Here are a few key points to know:

- Students in grades K-3, who were identified as needing reading intervention, based on fall assessments, were put on an Individualized Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP) this fall. Their teachers, parents and school have been working through the plan throughout the year to help them improve their reading proficiency.
- This is an in-depth, goal-oriented plan, to support these students at school and at home.
- Per the law, a third-grade student's success on the reading portions of the M-STEP English Language Arts (ELA) test will be the determining factor for a retention letter. Students scoring at or below 1252 on the ELA M-STEP will receive a letter. A panel of Michigan educators and testing experts have determined this score to be considered one grade level or more behind.
- By law, parents will be notified of their child's score being at the level of retention by the State of Michigan / Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI), not the school district.
- They will receive this letter in the mail within 14 days of CEPI receiving the student assessment results, estimated to be in May.
- Families who receive a letter about their child's score at the retention level will have 30 days to file a Good Cause Exemption with their district.
- A Good Cause Exemption could be:
 - an IEP or a 504 plan
 - limited English
 - previous retention with reading intervention
 - Young 5's student
 - in the district less than two years without an appropriate IRIP
 - is proficient in math on the M-STEP and demonstrated proficiency in science and social studies as shown in a classroom portfolio

Internal Staff



- Once received, the district has 10 days to respond to their request for an exemption.
- Our district will work with families to make them aware of the Good Cause Exemption and help them in any way possible.

Here's is the timeline from now until the start of next school year:

1. M-STEP is administered to 3rd grade students.
2. Districts will see early results in May and could possibly identify students at risk of a retention letter.
3. The State of Michigan / CEPI will send affected families a letter to indicate that their student was flagged for retention, but can file a Good Cause Exemption.
4. Families have 30 days to file a Good Cause exemption with the district.

Again, as this law goes into effect and receives more coverage and attention, we wanted to let you know what we are doing as a district and what to expect next so you can help communicate with families who might come to you with questions. For additional information and resources, here are a few helpful links:

- [Good Cause Exemption explanation created for parents](#)
- [3rd Grade Retention and Promotion Process](#)
- [MDE's Read by Grade Three Law webpage](#)

Our responsibilities as a district also include strong communication with families. We have provided early and regular communication with parents of students in grades K-3 with reading difficulties and will continue to help families through this process to make sure we do what's best for each student. We want to ease concerns and ensure that families know how their child is supported within our district.

Sincerely,

<NAME>

<District> Superintendent <or whoever would be sending out this communication>

Internal Staff



Target Audience 2: Parents (and the Community)

Develop/use a communication plan to reach your parents (and your community).

Research

- What do audiences need to know?
- Determine if your district has solid contact information for families likely to be identified/sent a letter. What is the best way to reach these parents?
- Identify likely recipients based on Individual Reading Improvement Plans.
- Determine the best way to reach families during the summer.
- Create a timeline. When are the CEPI letters being sent? (See the [MDE District Checklist](#).)

Planning

- Develop talking points/key messages.
- Create a step-by-step timeline outlining what to do for a Good Cause Exemption.
- Identify communication vehicles/platforms.
- Find out what platform(s) impacted parents prefer. Use all that apply.
- Draft targeted messaging for newsletters, website, blog posts, social media, etc.
- Think about timing. If communication is needed over the summer, how will families be contacted? In addition to traditional communication methods, home visits may be necessary. Additionally, identify who will be working in the district over the summer months who can support families if they have questions.

Implementation

- Follow the timeline. Consider sending out information to parents of third-grade students right before test-taking, with report cards, and prior to when the CEPI letter is scheduled to be sent. Remember, districts can begin the Good Cause Exemption process prior to parents receiving the CEPI letter.

Evaluation

- Did families get the message?
- Was your district able to reach the families and help them through the process?
- Was your district able to anticipate/identify potential recipients of the letters?
- Survey recipients: Were they surprised to get the letter? Did they understand the process? Did the district help them understand it? Was it easy to navigate through the Good Cause Exemption process?
- After evaluating all communication steps throughout the year, design a one-pager that can be shared with next year's parents of third-grade students at orientation in August/September. Include the necessary information, timeline and process.

Outreach Opportunity!

Some school districts have hosted town hall meetings to inform parents and community members about the Read by Grade Three Law and to explain how its district will be handling Good Cause Exemptions. You may wish to consider hosting a similar event. Be sure to showcase all of the positive steps your district is taking to support literacy in your school buildings!

Parents/Community



Samples/Template Language/Tools

Sample letter to be sent in March prior to M-STEP testing

March 2020

Dear 3rd Grade Parents/Guardians:

Your child will soon take the M-STEP (Michigan State Test for Educational Progress). State law requires all 3rd grade students to score above 1252 in Reading/ELA in order to advance to 4th grade. We have been working with all of our students throughout elementary on their reading growth; your engagement also plays a vital role in their success.

What can I do?

To help prepare your child for this upcoming test:

1. Have your child go through the M-STEP practice tests online for both ELA and math. You can find those practice tests at <https://wbte.drcedirect.com/MI/#login>.
2. Be sure your child is reading 20-40 minutes each night.
3. Have students keep a journal to practice their writing skills.
4. Stay in close contact with your child's teacher on their reading progress.

What if my child's Reading/ELA score is not proficient on the state assessment?

The State of Michigan will send parents a letter stating that their child is at risk of being retained in 3rd grade. If you receive this letter from the State of Michigan, you have the right as their legal guardian to request that your child is not retained.

How do I make a request?

If you do not believe that your child should be retained in 3rd grade, you will need to make a request in writing to the Superintendent. Be sure to explain if one or more of the following Good Cause Exemptions qualifies:

- My child has an IEP.
- My child has a 504 plan.
- My child is limited in English.
- My child received intensive reading intervention for two or more years but still demonstrates a reading deficiency and was previously retained in kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or third grade.
- My child attended a Young 5's program.
- My child has been enrolled in the district for less than two years and there is evidence that my child was not provided with an appropriate Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP).
- My child has demonstrated proficiency in math on the state assessment and has demonstrated proficiency in science and social studies as shown through a pupil portfolio as determined by their third grade teacher.

All requests should be sent to: (provide address) Or emailed to: (provide address)

Your request must be sent to the school within 30 days of the notification from the State of Michigan.

The school will respond with next steps for you and your child within 10 days of receiving your request.

If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact...

Sincerely,

Superintendent

Parents/Community



Sample letter to be sent to families who MIGHT receive a letter from CEPI based on the scores received

June 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians of STUDENT:

STUDENT recently completed 3rd grade M-STEP (Michigan State Test for Educational Progress) and based on receiving their score at or below 1252 is at risk of being retained in 3rd grade. While we take this test seriously, we do not believe that any one test can accurately determine a child's ability and are looking at how your child has been performing throughout their journey as a student.

As a parent or guardian, if you do not feel that your child should be retained in 3rd grade, you will need to make a request in writing to the Superintendent by DATE. Be sure to explain if one or more of the following Good Cause Exemptions qualifies:

- My child has an IEP.
- My child has a 504 plan.
- My child is limited in English.
- My child received intensive reading intervention for two or more years but still demonstrates a reading deficiency and was previously retained in kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or third grade.
- My child attended a Young 5's program.
- My child has been enrolled in the district for less than two years and there is evidence that my child was not provided with an appropriate Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP).
- My child has demonstrated proficiency in math on the state assessment and has demonstrated proficiency in science and social studies as shown through a pupil portfolio as determined by their third grade teacher.

Your request must be sent to the school within 30 days of the notification from the State of Michigan.

- The school will respond with next steps for you and your child.
- If you have any questions regarding the process or about your child's placement, please don't hesitate to reach out to the school.

Sincerely,

(Superintendent)

Parents/Community



Retention Letter Template from MDE

Greetings,

Based on [CHILD'S NAME] preliminary English Language Arts Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (ELA M-STEP) score, your student has been identified for retention in third grade.

Michigan's state legislature passed the Read by Grade Three Law in October 2016 which requires students to repeat third grade if they are reading one grade or more below grade level based on the ELA M-STEP. If a student is identified as reading one grade or more below grade level, the student's parent or guardian will receive a letter sent by certified mail from the state saying the student may need to be retained in third grade.

Because of the test score, you will be receiving a letter from the state notifying you of the law and urging you to contact the school. There are steps that need to be taken to continue supporting your child and we would like to discuss a plan with you. Some of the supports your child has received to-date include:

[List the specific supports provided to this student such as those included on their Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP).]

The law does allow parents and guardians to ask that their student be promoted to fourth grade in some cases. To continue supporting your child, please contact [student's school] immediately for more information.

For more on the state's Read By Grade Three Law, go to the Michigan Department of Education's webpage on early literacy (www.michigan.gov/earlyliteracy), where you can find helpful information and resources.

Signed,

District Personnel

Parents/Community



Dearborn Schools Letter to Families - January 27, 2020 - Used with Permission



January 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians:

It is vitally important for children to gain strong literacy skills at an early age, and therefore, beginning in kindergarten, we embed literacy in all subject areas. Reading proficiency is a strong predictor of future career and college readiness.

Although there is an emphasis on literacy throughout the school day, we also need your support. Helping your child have multiple opportunities to read at home for additional practice plays a vital role in their success as a reader. As a partner in your child's education, we encourage you to communicate with your child's teacher regarding their progress. We are committed to ensuring that your child receives the foundational literacy skills needed to help thrive in our diverse and global world.

In 2016, the [Michigan Legislature passed Public Act 306](#) to ensure that children who exit third grade are reading at or close to grade level. To find out more about the Read by Third Grade Law and the extensive work the district has been engaged in to inform parents about this new process and our early literacy learning please review the [Read by Third Grade Task Force blog](#).

Based on this 2016 law, third grade students must achieve a minimum of 1252 in reading on the state M-STEP assessment in order to be promoted to the fourth grade. Students who do not score proficient on the M-Step will receive a letter by May 23rd or 14 days after the state receives the assessment results.

If you receive a letter from the state of Michigan stating that your child is being retained in third grade based on their performance on the M-STEP assessment, **you have the right as their legal guardian to request a good cause exemption**. Dearborn Public Schools has a process in place to conduct parent meetings at the school immediately after the state sends out their notification. School staff will explain the good cause exemption process and will support parents in filing an exemption within the required 30 days after parent receipt of the notification. Parents filing an exemption will receive a written notification from the State within 10 business days of receiving the request.

The Dearborn Public Schools does not believe retention is an effective method to help students master a subject area or help them to be successful in the classroom. Our philosophy is to provide your child with quality instruction starting in kindergarten, Young Fives, and for many students, pre-school. When a student is struggling in any subject area we will support instruction with additional programs and early interventions in order to help the student be successful. The District is exploring the possibility of offering additional support during the summer for students whose scores fall below a certain level on the spring M-STEP.

As your partners in education, we are here to support you. If you need assistance or have questions about this process, please contact the administrator at your child's school.

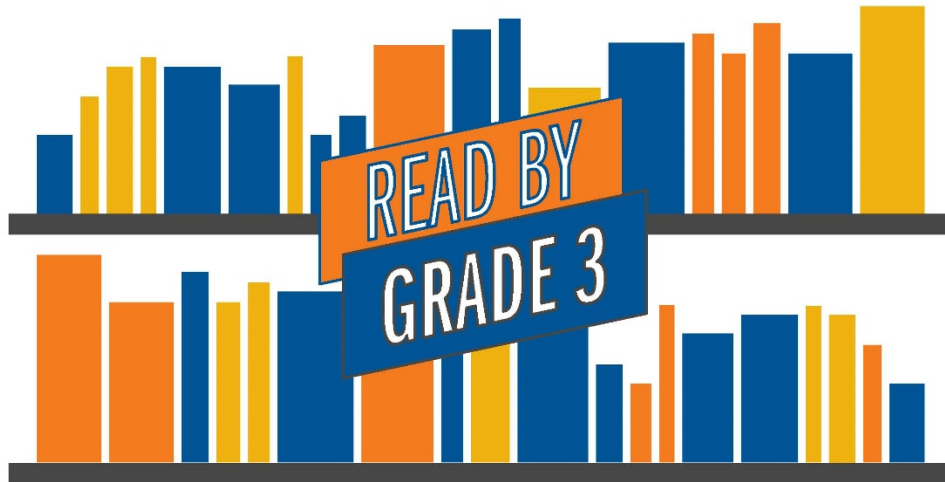
Sincerely,

Glenn Maleyko, Ph.D.
Superintendent, Dearborn Public Schools

Parents/Community



Grand Rapids Public Schools Town Hall Poster - Used with Permission



INFORMATIONAL PARENT MEETINGS

The Read by Grade 3 Law, also known as Public Act 306, is now in effect. In order for students, parents, and families to be ready, we have scheduled seven meetings throughout the district during the school year. Each meeting will cover the same information, including resources to help better understand the law, how to support early reading and literacy with resources, and answer your questions: as a parent, what do you need to know about Read by Grade 3? How will this affect your child? What is the district doing to support your student in school and what can you do to support at home?

REUNIONES INFORMATIVAS PARA PADRES

La Ley de Lectura de Tercer Grado, también conocida como Ley Pública 306, ha entrado en vigencia. Para lograr que los estudiantes, padres y familias estén preparados, hemos programado siete reuniones a través del distrito, durante el año escolar. En cada reunión se brindará la misma información, que incluye recursos para ayudar a entender mejor la ley, recursos sobre cómo promover la lectura y la alfabetización tempranas, y responderemos sus preguntas: como padre, ¿Qué necesita saber sobre la Ley de Lectura de Tercer Grado? ¿Cómo afectará a su hijo? ¿Qué está haciendo el distrito para apoyar a sus estudiantes y qué puede hacer usted para ayudar en su hogar?

DECEMBER 3, 9:00 AM BURTON ELEMENTARY 2133 BUCHANAN AVE SW	FEBRUARY 11, 6:00 PM ABERDEEN SCHOOL 928 ABERDEEN ST NE	3 DE DICIEMBRE, 9:00 AM PRIMARIA BURTON 2133 BUCHANAN AVE SW	11 DE FEBRERO, 6:00 PM ESCUELA ABERDEEN 928 ABERDEEN ST NE
DECEMBER 3, 6:00 PM BURTON ELEMENTARY 2133 BUCHANAN AVE SW	MARCH 10, 6:00 PM HARRISON PARK SCHOOL 1440 DAVIS AVE NW	3 DE DICIEMBRE, 6:00 PM PRIMARIA BURTON 2133 BUCHANAN AVE SW	10 DE MARZO, 6:00 PM ESCUELA HARRISON PARK 1440 DAVIS AVE NW
JANUARY 14, 6:00 PM CA FROST ELEMENTARY 1460 LAUGHLIN DR NW	MARCH 10, 6:00 PM DICKINSON SCHOOL 448 DICKINSON ST SE	14 DE ENERO, 6:00 PM PRIMARIA C.A. FROST 1460 LAUGHLIN DR NW	10 DE MARZO, 6:00 PM ESCUELA DICKINSON 448 DICKINSON ST SE
CHILDCARE, INTERPRETERS, & FOOD PROVIDED		CUIDADO DE NIÑOS INTERPRETES Y SNACKS	

We've created a guide and resources for you to ensure that your child is ready to read by grade 3!

grps.org/read-by-grade-3



Parents/Community



[Grand Rapids Public Schools Facebook Event for Parent Meetings - Used with Permission](#)

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
READ BY GRADE 3
PARENT MEETINGS

SEE HOW WE'RE WORKING WITH MICHIGAN'S NEW THIRD GRADE READING REQUIREMENTS!
MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT GRPS.ORG/READ-BY-GRADE-3

DEC 3 Read By Grade 3 Parent Meeting
Public · Hosted by Grand Rapids Public Schools

★ Interested

🕒 Tuesday, December 3, 2019 at 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM EST
about 2 months ago

📍 Burton Elementary
2133 Buchanan Ave SW, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507 [Show Map](#)

0 Went · 4 Interested
Share this event with your friends

Details

The Read by Grade 3 Law, also known as Public Act 306, is now in effect. In order for students, parents, and families to be ready, we have scheduled seven meetings throughout the district during the school year. Each meeting will cover the same information, including resources to help better understand the law, how to support early reading and literacy with resources, and answer your questions: as a parent, what do you need to know about Read by Grade 3? How will this affect your child? What is the district doing to support your student in school and what can you do to support at home?

December 3, 9:00 AM

[Grand Rapids Public Schools Parent Newsletter Article- Used with Permission](#)

[Read more about the workshops on MLive.](#)

Announcements

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
READ BY GRADE 3
PARENT MEETINGS

SEE HOW WE'RE WORKING WITH MICHIGAN'S NEW THIRD GRADE READING REQUIREMENTS!
MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT GRPS.ORG/READ-BY-GRADE-3

Read By Grade 3 Informational Parent Meetings

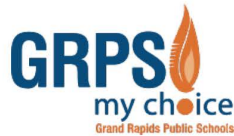
Heard about the new Read By Grade 3 law and want to know more? We've got you covered! Join us at any one of our **parent meetings** to find out what you need to know, how it will affect your child, what the district is doing to support your child, and how you can help at home. Childcare, interpreters, and food will be provided.

Our first meeting is Wednesday, November 6 at 6:00 PM at Campus Elementary (710 Benjamin Ave). In the meantime, you can find out more about these changes at grps.org/read-by-grade-3.

Parents/Community



Grand Rapids Public Schools Parent Meeting Letter - Used with Permission



Thursday, October 31, 2019

Dear GRPS Family:

The **Read by Grade 3 Law**, also known as Public Act 306, is now in effect. In 2015, Michigan ranked 41 in the nation for grade 4 reading achievement. Michigan lawmakers passed Public Act 306 in 2016 to boost reading achievement. This law requires that a child be retained in grade 3 if they are not reading at grade level by the end of the school year. The law also requires extra support for K-3 students who are not reading at their grade level.

In order for students, parents, and families to be ready, we have scheduled meetings throughout the district during the school year. Each meeting will cover the same information, including resources to help better understand the law, how to support early reading and literacy with resources, and answer your questions: *as a parent, what do you need to know about Read by Grade 3? How will this affect your child? What is the district doing to support your student in school and what can you do to support at home?* Each meeting includes free snacks/refreshments, childcare, and interpreters.

November 6, 6:00 PM Campus Elementary 710 Benjamin Ave SE	January 14, 6:00 PM C.A. Frost Elementary 1460 Laughlin Dr NW	March 10, 6:00 PM Harrison Park School 1440 Davis Ave NW or Dickinson School 448 Dickinson St SE
December 3, 9:00 AM or 6:00 PM Burton Elementary 2133 Buchanan Ave SW	February 11, 6:00 PM Aberdeen School 928 Aberdeen St NE	

If you cannot attend one of the meetings, it will be available in December as a video. Moreover, we have a dedicated webpage, grps.org/read-by-grade-3, that includes additional information and resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ronald Gorman".

Ron Gorman, Ph.D.
Interim Superintendent of Schools

1331 Franklin SE · P.O. Box 117 · Grand Rapids, MI 49501-0117
Phone (616) 819-2000 · Fax 616-819-3480 · www.grps.org · www.wearegr.com
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Parents/Community



Otsego Public Schools Parent Letter- Fall 2019 - Used with Permission

Fall 2019



Dear 3rd grade Parents/Guardians:

In order for students to be college and career ready, it is important that they have strong literacy skills. The ability to read is necessary for success in all subject areas and has a direct impact on a student's educational success. In 2016, the Michigan legislature passed House Bill No. 4822 focused on reading skills in the 3rd grade. The bill ensures that children are reading at grade level at the end of their 3rd grade year. Students must be proficient on the state assessment, currently the M-Step, in order to move on to the 4th grade. Students in grades 3-8 take the state assessment in the spring of each year.

What if my child's Reading/ELA score is not proficient on the state assessment?

The State of Michigan will send parents a letter stating that their child is at risk of being retained in 3rd grade if their score does not meet grade-level expectations. You have the right as their legal guardian to request that your child is not retained. It is important to know that the initial letter will come from the state, but any request must be made to Otsego Public Schools. That request must be sent to Otsego Public Schools within 30 days of the notification from the State of Michigan. Otsego Public Schools will respond with the next steps for you and your child within 10 days of receiving your request.

Literacy is one of the top priorities for Otsego Public Schools. Your child is tested throughout the year to monitor their reading levels and growth. Any students with reading challenges receive additional instruction. Although the school focuses on early literacy throughout the school day, we still need your support. Family engagement plays a vital role in a child's success as a reader. As a partner in your child's education, we encourage you to communicate with your child's teacher regarding their progress. We are committed to ensure that your child receives the foundational literacy skills they need.

For more information, please contact Heather Kortlandt, Director of Instruction at 269-694-7900, or hkortlandt@otsegops.org.

Sincerely,

Jeffery S. Haase
Otsego Public Schools Superintendent

Parents/Community



Howell Public Schools Parent Letter- October 2019 - Used with Permission

October 2019

Dear Parents,

Being a good reader is critical for a student to be successful in school. In 2016, the Michigan Legislature passed the Read by Grade Three Law to ensure that students are reading at or above grade level when they exit third grade. In accordance with this law, and as a means of better informing classroom instruction, districts across the state will be providing K-3 assessments to their students. The assessments will help identify students who need additional reading instruction and intervention. It will also provide useful information to help teachers tailor their instruction to better meet the individual needs of each student.



Students in grades K-3 will be assessed at the beginning, middle and end of the school year. The law also requires districts to provide early and regular written communication with parents of students in grades K-3 with reading difficulties. This communication will be in the form of an Individualized Reading Improvement Plan which will include information about current support provided, additional support planned for your child, and strategies for you to help your child at home (Read-At-Home plan). For the past few years, Howell Public Schools has assessed K-3 students three times per year and has provided support for students who are below grade level in reading.

All third-grade students will be required to take the state assessment at the end of the year. This year, third-grade students who are one or more years below grade level in reading on the state assessment will require additional procedures in order to continue to fourth grade. At that time, affected families will receive written notice from the State of Michigan about possible retention and the process for a good cause exemption. We estimate that less than a dozen of our nearly 500 third grade students would have been impacted if these requirements were implemented last year.

Reading is embedded in all academic areas such as history, math, science, and writing. Although our schools focus on early literacy throughout the school day, we still need your support as family involvement plays a vital role in a child's academic success.

For more information, please contact your child's principal.

Sincerely,

Elson Liu
Executive Director of Instructional Services.
Howell Public Schools

Parents/Community



Walled Lake Consolidated Schools Parent Letter- January 29, 2020 - Used with Permission

January 29, 2020

Dear Third Grade Families,

Walled Lake Schools has a long-standing commitment to ensuring our students can read. Much before the state legislature passed the [Michigan Third Grade Reading Law](#) in 2017-18, Walled Lake Schools has been implementing progressive reading goals. In accordance with the state law, this year's third graders are subject to the retention portion of the law. The law requires a minimum score on the M-STEP English Language Arts test or retention in third grade the following year. This spring, your child will take the test during the testing window scheduled for April 24 to May 22, 2020. The purpose of this communication is to remind you of Walled Lake's commitment to early literacy instruction and ensure that all students are successful.



Some children find learning to read difficult as they grow and develop. In Walled Lake, we understand that each child has unique needs and we have the following practices in place:

- A bold assessment system to catch struggling students early
- Caring and highly skilled staff who intervene and support student needs
- Individual Reading Improvement Plans (IRIP) for students who are not meeting grade level reading expectations
- A home component to the IRIP which involves family support and collaboration
- Close progress monitoring and adjusting of plans for each student with an IRIP
- If your child has been identified as needing support with an IRIP plan, your child's school has already been in contact with you.

After the Spring M-STEP is given, students who have not met minimum requirements on the English Language Arts test will receive a letter from the State of Michigan. This letter, mailed to your home, will notify you that your child has not met the minimum requirements and is subject to retention in third grade for the following year. Walled Lake is committed to working with families receiving this letter. We will discuss plans with you on how to best support your child moving forward. To access information about "[good cause exemptions](#)" to the retention letter, please follow this link: [Facts for Families-3rd grade](#).

You will continue to receive updates on the Third Grade Reading Law from your school principal and your child's third-grade teacher. Thank you for your partnership with Walled Lake and for making reading a priority in your home!

Sincerely,

Catherine Kochanski, Assistant Superintendent of Learning Services

Parents/Community



[Walled Lake Consolidated Schools Website - Used with Permission](#)

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The Read by Grade Three Law

Being a good reader is critical for children to be successful in school. In 2016, the Michigan Legislature passed the Third Grade Reading Law to ensure that students exit third-grade reading at or above grade level.

The impact of this law began with the kindergarten class of 2017-2018. Walled Lake Schools educators immediately began a documented plan to assist these students and all of our early learners. This plan ensures that our current 2019-20 third-grade students are prepared for the state literacy assessment in the 2020 April/May timeframe.

In accordance with this law, and as a means of better informing classroom instruction, Walled Lake Schools has been providing K-3 reading assessments. These assessments identify students who need intensive reading instruction and intervention, and will also provide useful information to help teachers tailor instruction to meet individual student needs. (See summary of Curriculum and Instruction Implementation Plan below.)

Timeline for parent and community communication:

- [Letter to third grade parents from Asst. Superintendent English \(Jan. 2020\)](#)
- [Letter to third grade parents from Asst. Superintendent Spanish \(Jan. 2020\)](#)
- [Letter to third grade parents from Asst. Superintendent Arabic \(Jan. 2020\)](#)
- [Letter to third grade parents from Asst. Superintendent Japanese \(Jan. 2020\)](#)
- [Third Grade Reading Law Board of Education Presentation \(Jan. 9, 2020\)](#)
- [Third Grade Reading Law Video for Curriculum Nights \(Sept. 2019\)](#)
- [Letter from Walled Lake Schools on Reading Retention Law. \(Sent 2018-19 school year\).](#)
- The law also requires districts to provide early and regular written communication with parents of K-3 students with reading difficulties. Communication will include information about current services being provided, additional reading supports planned for your child, and a read-at-home plan for you to help your child at home.
- [Reading Retention Michigan House Bill No. 4822](#)
- [I-Ready Reading Assessment](#) that Walled Lake has been utilizing the past three years.
- [K-3 literacy instruction in Walled Lake](#), includes this the Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy booklet.

WLCSD Proactive Curriculum and Instruction Implementation Plan summary:

- The District purchased new reading, writing and phonics units curriculum last year (for

Parents/Community



Walled Lake Consolidated Schools - Additional Resources - Used with Permission

[Walled Lake Consolidated Schools Board of Education Presentation](#)



[Walled Lake Consolidated Schools Video for Families](#)



Parents/Community



[Berkley Schools Website - Used with Permission](#)

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BERKLEY SCHOOLS **BERKLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT**
Serving the communities of Berkley, Huntington Woods and north Oak Park, MI

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- Athletics
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- Curriculum and Assessment**
 - Atlas Rubicon
- Performing Arts
- Visual Arts
- Testing - EDirect
- ▶ **Read by Grade Three**
- Facilities & Operations
- Human Resources
- Special Education/Student Services
- Superintendent's Office
- Technology

Read by Grade 3 Law - What you need to know

[BEARS Read at Home Plan for Student Success](#)

Dear Parents and Guardians,

In 2016, the Michigan Legislature passed the Read by Grade Three Law in an effort to ensure that students exit 3rd grade reading at or above grade level. The law will impactall current and future third grade students. In accordance with this law, we will continue to conduct reading assessments with TK – 3rd grade students. These assessments will identify students who need intensive reading instruction and intervention and will also provide useful information to help teachers tailor instruction to meet individual student needs.

TK-3rd grade students will at a minimum be assessed at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. All TK – 3rd grade parents will be informed of the results of our assessments and included in planning the next steps. The law also requires districts to provide an individual reading plan to parents of TK-3rd grade students with reading difficulties. This plan will include information about current services being provided, additional reading supports planned for your child, and strategies for you to help your child at home (“Read-at-Home plan”). Assessment results will be available in time for you to discuss at Parent/Teacher Conferences.

Beginning in the 2019/2020 school year, all 3rd grade students will be required to take a standardized state assessment at the end of the year to determine promotion to 4th grade. If your child is reading below grade level at the end of 3rd grade, the law compels us to inform you in writing that your child will not be promoted to 4th grade unless he/she qualifies for an exemption (exemption examples included in the link below).

In the Berkley School District, we rarely retain elementary students. We know students who may be struggling with reading in 3rd grade often blossom in 4th or 5th grade. Not all students mature intellectually at the same rate. Just as children have physical growth spurts, they also have intellectual growth spurts.

Parents/Community



[Saginaw ISD Website - Used with Permission](#)

SAGINAW ISD
Serve • Innovate • Empower

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Instructional Services » PA 306 3rd Grade Promotion Law Resources

[PA 306: 3RD GRADE PROMOTION LAW](#)

[SISD PA 306 TIMELINE WITH SUPPORT LINKS](#)

Parent Documents

[PARENT PRESENTATION 306](#)

[PARENT GUIDE \(1 PAGE\)](#)

[PARENT GUIDE \(2 PAGES\)](#)

[SPRING 2017 LETTER TO KINDERGARTEN PARENTS \(TRANSLATED VERSIONS TO COME SOON\)](#)

Supporting Documents

[READ AT HOME PLAN](#)

[INDIVIDUAL READING IMPROVEMENT PLAN](#)

INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

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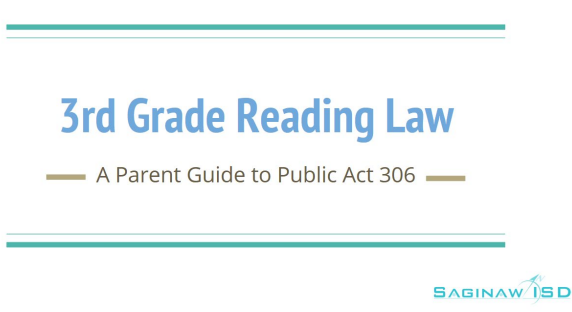
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Parents/Community



Saginaw ISD- Additional Resources - Used with Permission

[Saginaw ISD - Presentation for Parents](#)



[Saginaw ISD Reading Law Parent Guide](#)

Created by Rebekah Hornak, Saginaw ISD Executive Director of Instructional Services and Heather Phelps, Saginaw ISD Assistant Director of Instructional Services

3RD GRADER READING LAW **A Parent Guide to Public Act 306**

1 What Is The Law All About ?

- In an effort to boost reading achievement, Michigan lawmakers passed Public Act 306 in October 2016.
- To help more students be proficient by the end of 3rd grade, the law requires extra support for K-3 students who are not reading at grade level.
- The law also states that a child may be retained in 3rd grade if they are one or more grade levels behind in reading at the end of 3rd grade.

Watch this reading activity and try it at home with your child:
Echo Reading:
<http://bit.ly/2AUEdPI>

2 What Do I Need To Know As Parent?

- Your child's reading progress will be closely monitored beginning in kindergarten.
- If your child is not reading where expected, a plan to improve reading will be created. This means your child's teacher and school will work with your child to find where your child needs support in his/her reading development and create a plan to support him or her. This plan includes:
 - Extra instruction or support in areas of need.
 - Ongoing checks on reading progress
 - A read at home plan that encourages you and your child to read and write outside of the school day.
 - Your child may be encouraged to participate in summer reading programs.
- The extra supports in your child's reading improvement plan will occur in small groups during the school day. Your child will not miss regular reading instruction.
- Starting in 2019-2020 school year, in order to be promoted from 3rd to 4th grade, your child must score less than one year behind on the state reading assessment, or demonstrate a 3rd grade reading level through an alternate test or portfolio of student work.
- If you are notified your child may be retained, you have the right to meet with school officials and to request, within 30 days, an exemption if in the best interest of your child. The district superintendent will make the final decision.

3 What Can I Do To Support My Child?

Read at home with your child daily with books they enjoy- even in the summer. Some ways to do this:

- Read out loud to your child.
- Listen to your child read.
- Echo read (You read a line, then they repeat).
- Read together at the same time.
- Reread or retell favorite stories.
- Talk to your child about the reading.

As you read:

- Ask your child to share what they remember.
- Ask questions about the reading.
- Talk about your favorite parts, what you've learned, or who is in the book and what they do.
- Talk about the pictures in the book how they connect to the words on the page.
- Help connect the stories to your child's life or other books you've read.

- Talk to and with your kids a lot- knowing more words helps kids to understand the words they read better.
- Encourage writing- Let children write the sounds they hear, spelling is developmental and a work in progress.
- Be involved in your child's education and support the reading plan if your child has one.

Contact your building principal for further information and support for your child.

ISD Contacts:
 Heather Phelps: Early Literacy Coach hphelps@sisd.cc
 Rebekah Hornak: Director of Instructional Services rhornak@sisd.cc

Parents/Community



Social Media Samples

Timing	Platform	Sample Post
Late Winter	Facebook	<p>Do you have questions about the Read by Grade Three Law and/or your student's literacy journey? We are glad to help! As your partner in education, we are always available to answer your questions. Contact us at <insert phone number> for more information.</p> <p>(Reference the MDE Facts for Families document)</p>
Late Winter	Twitter	<p>Do you have questions about the Read by Grade Three Law and/or your student's literacy journey? We're glad to help! Contact us at <insert phone number> #<District tag></p> <p>(Reference the MDE Facts for Families document)</p>
Testing Window	Facebook	<p>Calling all <insert mascot name> - M-STEP Testing starts next week! Parents-help your students do their best by getting plenty of rest and having a good breakfast each morning. Not sure what to expect on the exams? Contact us at <insert phone number> to learn more!</p> <p>(Reference the MDE Online M-STEP Practice Sets)</p>
Testing Window	Twitter	<p>M-STEP Testing starts next week. Check out <insert school website> for tips to help students do their best! #ReadytoLearn #<district tag></p> <p>(Reference the MDE Online M-STEP Practice Sets)</p>
Anticipating Results	Facebook	<p>M-STEP Test scores are anticipated to be released next week. We are proud of our students and applaud their hard work.</p> <p>Remember, your child's educational growth is measured numerous ways (with the M-STEP being just one measurement tool). Do you have questions about your child's progress? Contact us at <district phone number>.</p>
Anticipating Results	Twitter	<p>M-STEP Test scores are anticipated to be released next week. We are proud of our students and applaud their hard work.</p> <p>Remember, your child's educational growth is measured in numerous ways. Do you have questions about your child's progress? Contact us at <district phone number>. #<district tag></p>

Parents/Community



Social Media Samples

Timing	Platform	Sample Post
Anticipating CEPI Letter	Facebook	<p>Students recently completed their M-STEP tests. Congratulations to everyone for working so hard!</p> <p>This year, the new Read by Grade Three Law takes effect. Any third-grade student who received an M-STEP test score indicating that they are one or more years below grade level in reading will require additional procedures in order to continue on to fourth grade. Affected families will receive a certified letter from the Center for Education Performance and Information (CEPI).</p> <p>What should you do if you receive a CEPI letter? Please contact the district right away to discuss next steps, including applying for a Good Cause Exemption.</p> <p>Remember, learning to read is an individual journey. No matter the pace of your child's progress, we are committed to working together to ensure your child's success. (Reference MDE's Facts for Families document.)</p>
Anticipating CEPI Letter	Twitter	<p>This year, the new Read by Grade Three Law takes effect. Any third-grade student who received an M-STEP test score below grade level in reading will require additional procedures in order to continue on to fourth grade. Affected families will receive a certified letter from CEPI.</p> <p>What should you do if you receive a letter? Please contact the district right away to discuss next steps, including applying for a Good Cause Exemption. #LearnTogether</p>
Reminder of Good Cause Exemption Opportunity	Facebook	<p>Reminder - parents who received a letter from CEPI regarding their third grader's reading scores - you have the ability to apply for Good Cause Exemption. Please contact the district at <insert phone number> within 30 days of receiving your letter to learn more.</p> <p>Do you know who can ask for a Good Cause Exemption?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent or guardian of a third grader. • The student's third grade teacher. • The district's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Coordinator. <p>(Reference MDE's Facts for Families document.)</p>
Reminder of Good Cause Exemption Opportunity	Twitter	<p>Reminder - parents who received a letter from CEPI regarding their third grader's reading scores - you have the ability to apply for Good Cause Exemption. Please contact the district at <insert phone number> within 30 days of receiving your letter to learn more. #<district tag></p> <p>(Reference MDE's Facts for Families document.)</p>

Parents/Community



Target Audience 3: Media

Develop/use a communication plan to reach the media.

Research

- What do audiences need to know?
- Determine who your audiences are (community at large, local media, regional media, online outlets).
- Determine the best method to reach each audience (press release, media pitch/letter, personal phone call, news conference).
- Determine what you plan to share with each audience, who will deliver the message (number or percent of students tested, number or percent of students retained, quotes from superintendent, curriculum director, building principal).
- How will you measure if your efforts were successful (outcome of media stories, media impressions)?

Planning

- Develop Talking Points/Key Messages - Reinforce MDE key points: e.g. we are working every day to improve literacy.
- Identify communication vehicles.
- Gather quotes that will be included in messaging (from local and state sources) for press release, letters, web postings, etc.
- Develop media list to receive your press release/media pitch (local reporters who cover your district, regional education reporters, online news outlets).
- Determine timing to distribute your press release/media pitch - sending the letter release, when asked.
- Consider when MDE will be sharing information with statewide media outlets. Issue your messages at the same time to strengthen your efforts.

Implementation

- Draft your press release/media pitch and include all quotes and information.
- Send press release/media pitch to media list.
- Follow up with media to make sure they received it and answer any questions.
- Share what you are sending to the media with your staff so they are aware in case they are contacted or questioned by community members. Staff should be reminded to follow the district's media contact guidelines.

Outreach Opportunity!

Host a media round-table before any data is released. Understanding the RBG3 Law and its impact on students, knowing what the CEPI letter means and having the ability to accurately interpret test scores can be a daunting task for any journalist. Help reporters out by working with them in anticipation of the test scores (due out in May.) By crafting the story with the media, journalists will have a better understanding of the proactive steps your district has been taking over the past few years in order to support students in their literacy development.

Media



Evaluation

- How was your message received (positive, negative, neutral)?
- How many outlets covered the story?
- Was the story covered accurately?
- What were the number of media hits/impressions?

Media



Samples/Template Language/Tools

Dearborn Schools News Release - January 27, 2020 - Used with Permission

Press Release #32/2019-20

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Jan.27, 2020

Contact: Jill Chochoj, Executive Director of Student Achievement - Edsel Ford Feeder Track
(313) 827-3026

chochoj@dearbornschools.org

David Mustonen, Communications Director
(313) 827-3006

MustonD@dearbornschools.org



Dearborn explaining Read by 3 process to parents

Dearborn Public Schools this week mailed letters to the families of all 1,500 third grade students in the District, providing them with information about the Read by Third Grade Law.

The Michigan Legislature passed Public Act 306 in 2016, but the law does not take full effect until this year. Current third graders will be the first ones forced to repeat that grade if their state M-STEP scores show they are a year or more behind in reading. Third graders will not start taking the test until late April.

"Dearborn Public Schools does not believe retention is an effective way to help students master a subject or to help them succeed at school," Superintendent Glenn Maleyko wrote in the letter to parents of third graders. "Our philosophy is to provide your child with quality instruction from the time they become our students."

The District letter explains that if a student scores below 1253 on the M-STEP, the state will send that child's family a letter saying that the student should repeat third grade. State letters are expected to arrive by May 23 or 14 days after the Michigan Department of Education receives the assessment results. Parents should be aware the state plans to send the notifications via certified mail, so someone in the household will need to sign for the letter.

Parents who receive a state letter have 30 days to request an exemption that would allow their student to go on to fourth grade. The District's letter stressed that parents have a right as a student's legal guardian to request a good cause exemption. In the days after the state notifications arrive, all Dearborn Public elementary schools will hold a meeting to explain the exemption process to parents or guardians and to assist parents who want to request an exemption for their child. The law provides several reasons why a child would be allowed to continue to fourth grade.

Using last year's scores as a benchmark, the vast majority of Dearborn Public Schools third graders would have met the reading requirement. Of the few dozen Dearborn third graders who fell short of required score, all would have qualified for an exemption for other reasons, such as still learning English. How this year's third grade class will do now that the law is in effect is yet to be seen.

Dearborn Public School's letter is part of ongoing District efforts to help parents understand the Read by Third Grade Law and its potential impact on students. Last school year, Dearborn formed a Read by Third Grade Community Task Force, inviting parents and others from the community to participate. Internally, the District has worked since the law's passage in 2016 to strengthen its already strong focus on helping struggling students learn to read. That work included additional professional development for teachers, more intervention and assistance for struggling students, closer monitoring of student reading levels, and increased communications with parents.

"When a student is struggling in any subject area, we will support them with additional programs and early interventions to help that student be successful," Maleyko wrote.

-###-

Media



Sample Media Release - CEPI Letter

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: <Name>

<Date>

<District Name> Prepares For Final Part of Michigan's Read By Grade Three Law to Take Effect

<City>, Mich.- Beginning this year, Michigan's Read By Grade Three Law will be fully implemented across the state. Passed by the Michigan Legislature in 2016, the Read By Grade Three Law requires schools to identify and support students in grades kindergarten through third grade who are struggling with reading and writing. Part of the law states that third graders may be retained if they are more than one grade level behind in reading at the end of the 2019-20 school year. The law includes a Good Cause Exemption (a specific reason within the law for a child to be promoted to 4th grade) and a deadline by which to contact the school.

Families with a student who is identified as being more than one grade level behind in reading will receive a letter from the State of Michigan. If a family receives a letter and they wish to apply for the Good Cause Exemption, they should contact their child's school to learn how to apply.

"Reading is a learned skill that is essential for life-long success. Each day, educators at <District Name> work to support students in all content areas including reading," said <Superintendent Name>, <District Name>, superintendent. "Since each student is unique and learns at their own pace our teachers work to differentiate learning to meet the needs of each student. Some of our supports include <Insert Ways the District has worked to support student reading growth>."

The Michigan Department of Education has established a score for the reading portion of the third grade Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) that translates to a student being more than one grade level behind in reading. Students whose results are below that score may be retained and their families will receive a letter from the State of Michigan. That specific score is different than the score to determine if students are proficient on the state's overall English Language Arts (ELA) test in third grade.

To learn more about Michigan's Read By Grade Three Law, please visit <http://bit.ly/2Sd7S27>.

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Media



Section 5: Additional Resources

- [Michigan Department of Education](#) Memos (searchable database)
- [Michigan Department of Education Read by Grade Three Guide](#)
- [GELN Literacy Essentials](#)
- Check with your **intermediate school district/regional educational service agency and literacy coaches** for additional support.
- [Michigan Achieves](#) Resource Guide
- [Subscribe](#) to the Michigan Department of Education's **RBG3 mailing list** for updates and additional information.



Read by Grade **3**

