

OFFICE OF CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
August 14-15, 2014

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (K-5)

05. Approval of parent notification format for retained third grade students, as required by the Literacy-Based Promotion Act of 2013

The Office of Elementary Education (K-5) requests approval of the format that will be used by school districts to provide written notification to parents or legal guardians who have a child being retained in the third grade. The written notification must address components specified in the legislation, which include instruction and interventions that will be provided, the amount of time for literacy instruction and intervention, and information about the teacher who will provide literacy instruction.

While the Act requires that immediate and quarterly notification be sent to parents regarding their child's reading deficiency, only the notification of third grade retention requires approval by the State Board of Education.

This requirement is in effect for third grade students beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. The notification will be provided to parents of retained students at the end of the academic year.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

Parent Notification for Students Retained in 3rd Grade

Date:

Dear Parent / Guardian:

Being a good reader is critical if a student is going to have a successful school experience. In accordance with the Literacy-Based Promotion Act, a student scoring at the lowest achievement level in reading on the established state assessment for 3rd grade will not be promoted to 4th grade unless the student meets a good cause exemption for promotion.

The purpose of this letter is to notify you that your child scored at the lowest achievement level in reading on the established state assessment and did not qualify for a good cause exemption as provided by Mississippi law. Each decision about a child's promotion or retention is based on the student's performance on the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) 3rd grade statewide assessment or the established 3rd grade alternative assessment. Your child will be retained to give him/her more time to master 3rd grade reading skills so that he/she is well prepared to meet the reading demands of 4th grade where the coursework becomes much more difficult.

The school will work with you on determining the best intervention services for your child in the retained year and will implement them relentlessly to help ensure your child becomes a successful reader. The following actions are required of schools for 3rd grade students not promoted to 4th grade:

1. The school will provide a high-performing teacher.
2. The school will provide a parental contract that includes a parent-guided "Read at Home" plan.
3. The school will provide a minimum of 90-minutes during the regular hours of daily scientifically-based reading instruction that includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
4. The school will provide the following proposed interventions and supports to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency:
(districts must provide this information)

Sincerely,

Draft: Pending approval by the State Board of Education.

TITLE 37. EDUCATION
CHAPTER 177. LITERACY-BASED PROMOTION ACT

Miss. Code Ann. § 37-177-13 (2013)

§ 37-177-13. Actions required of school districts for grade 3 students not promoted to grade 4

Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, each school district shall take the following actions for retained Third Grade students:

(a) Provide Third Grade students who are not promoted with intensive instructional services, progress monitoring measures, and supports to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency, including a minimum of ninety (90) minutes during regular school hours of daily, scientifically research-based reading instruction that includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, and other strategies prescribed by the school district, which may include, but are not limited to:

(i) Small group instruction;

(ii) Reduced teacher-student ratios;

(iii) Tutoring in scientifically research-based reading services in addition to the regular school day;

(iv) The option of transition classes;

(v) Extended school day, week or year; and

(vi) Summer reading camps.

(b) Provide written notification to the parent or legal guardian of any Third Grade student who is retained that the student has not met the proficiency level required for promotion and the reasons the student is not eligible for a good cause exemption. The notification must include a description of proposed interventions and supports that will be provided to the child to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency. This notification must be provided to the parent or legal guardian in writing, in a format adopted by the State Board of Education in addition to report cards given by the teacher.

(c) Provide Third Grade students who are retained with a high-performing teacher, as determined by student performance data, particularly related to student growth in reading, above-satisfactory performance appraisals, and/or specific training relevant to implementation of this chapter.

(d) Provide parents and legal guardians of Third Grade students with a "Read at Home" plan outlined in a parental contract, including participation in regular parent-guided home reading.