

Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act Frequently Asked Questions for K-3 Parents



The **Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act** will help ensure that every student reads at or above grade level by the end of 3rd grade. The act is part of a statewide effort called **Strong Readers = Strong Leaders** to improve literacy among all school children.

Why focus on literacy?

In 3rd grade, students begin to make the transition from *learning to read* to *reading to learn*. If they are unsuccessful, they will have difficulty understanding grade-level reading material. As a result, students begin to fall further behind each year. Students also need strong reading skills in order to learn other school subjects, such as science, social studies, writing and even math.

How will parents be informed about their child's progress?

Each student in Kindergarten through 3rd grade will have his/her reading assessed at the beginning and end of the school year. Parents should receive the results of the first assessment within the first 30 days of school. These assessments will identify students who need intensive reading instruction and intervention. These assessments also provide useful information to the teacher to help him/her tailor instruction to meet individual student needs. Students in grades 1-3 will be assessed again in the middle of the school year. Parents should receive these results by February. Student progress will also be documented in quarterly report cards.

What happens if my child is not reading on grade level?

If your child is reading below grade level or has a substantial deficiency in reading, his/her teacher will immediately inform you of the reading difficulty that has been identified. The school will provide your child with additional reading instruction and support. You will also be given strategies to help your child at home. If your child is not reading on grade level by the end of 3rd grade, you will be informed that your child will not be promoted to 4th grade unless a "good cause exemption" is granted. All of this information will be communicated to you in writing.

What are "good cause exemptions"?

Good cause exemptions "exempt" some students from being retained in 3rd grade. The good cause exemptions apply to:

- Students with limited English proficiency with less than two years instruction in English Language Learner program
- Students with disabilities whose individual education plan (IEP) indicates that participation in statewide accountability assessment program is not appropriate
- Students with a disability whose IEP or Section 504 plan indicates the student has received intensive remediation for two years but still demonstrates deficiency in reading and was previously retained
- Students who demonstrate acceptable level of reading proficiency on an MDE approved alternative standardized assessment
- Students who have received intensive intervention in reading for two or more years but have been previously retained for a total of two years and have not met exceptional education criteria

What is the end-of-the-year test required for promotion to the 4th grade?

The end-of-the-year test is the 3rd Grade Reading Summative Assessment, which is part of the Mississippi K-3 Assessment Support System (MKAS²). Students scoring at the lowest achievement level on the 3rd Grade Reading Summative Assessment will have the opportunity to be reassessed before the school year ends and over the summer. Interventions to address a child's reading deficiency must be provided between the first and second retest. Students who do not demonstrate sufficient reading skills on any of these assessment options and who are not eligible for a "good cause exemption" will not be promoted to 4th grade.

How will schools help students who are retained in 3rd grade?

Students retained in 3rd grade will receive more intensive reading intervention services including:

- Reading instruction provided by a high-performing teacher
- 90 minutes of dedicated time each day for intensive reading instruction
- Research-based reading instruction that addresses the five components of reading
- Frequent progress monitoring to help ensure students are on track to meet grade-level reading standards
- A **Parent Read-At-Home Plan** provided to parents

At the district's discretion, students retained could also be provided small group instruction; tutoring in reading; an extended school day, week, or year, Summer Reading Camps; or other appropriate instructional support provided by the district.

How can parents and guardians help?

Families are the backbone of student learning. Parents should talk regularly with teachers and ask questions about their child's progress. For specific tips about how to help children at home, visit www.mde.k12.ms.us/literacy.

Other resources to help your child read at home:

- Language arts skills by grade: msccc.net/core/?page_id=2
- Parents' Guides to Student Success: www.pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2910
- Helping Your Child Learn to Read:
www.centeroninstruction.org/files/PutReadingFirst_ParentGuide.pdf
- Attendance Works: www.attendanceworks.org/mississippi-flyers/