



Reading Expectations for Grade 3 Students in Florida— Fact Sheet for School Districts

In the Background: The Florida Legislature's recent revision of the Florida School Code has changed the requirements for student progression. School districts must incorporate these changes into school district policy by revising the student progression plan (formerly the pupil progression plan) for the 2002-2003 school year. This fact sheet focuses on changes in student progression related to proficiency in reading.

In the Foreground—Reading: The goal of the Legislature is that every student read at or above grade level. As such, the following requirements have been maintained:

- ❑ Any student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading, based on teacher observations or local or state assessments conducted in grades K-3, *must* be given *intensive* reading instruction immediately following the identification of the reading deficiency.
- ❑ The student's reading proficiency must be reassessed by locally determined assessments or through teacher observations at the beginning of the grade following the intensive reading instruction.
- ❑ The student must continue to be provided with intensive reading instruction until the reading deficiency is remedied.

This Is New

- ❑ A new provision requires school districts to allocate remedial and supplemental instruction resources to students in the following priority:
 1. First, to students who are deficient in reading by the end of grade 3
 2. Next, to students who fail to meet performance levels required for promotion.
- ❑ Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year, if a student in any grade has been identified as having a reading deficiency, the student's academic improvement plan must identify the following:
 - ✓ the student's specific areas of deficiency in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary
 - ✓ the desired levels of performance in these areas
 - ✓ the instructional and support services to be provided to meet the desired levels of performance.
- ❑ Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year, if a student's reading deficiency is not remedied by the end of grade 3, as demonstrated by scoring at level 2 or higher on the grade 3 reading portion of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), the student *must* be retained, unless exempted from mandatory retention for good cause. (See reverse.)

School districts must assist schools and teachers to implement research-based activities that have been shown to be successful in teaching reading to low-performing students.

This change moves the reading promotion gateway from grade 4 to grade 3 and places in statute the FCAT level requiring retention.

Good Cause Exemptions from Mandatory Retention in Grade 3

Exemptions from mandatory retention of grade 3 students who demonstrate continuing deficiencies in reading are limited to the following:

- ❑ Limited English proficient students who have had less than two years of instruction in an English for Speakers of Other Languages program.
- ❑ Students with disabilities whose individual educational plan (IEP) indicates that participation in statewide assessment is not appropriate, consistent with the requirements of State Board of Education rule.
- ❑ Students who demonstrate an acceptable level of performance on an alternative standardized reading assessment approved by the State Board of Education.
- ❑ Students who demonstrate, through a student portfolio, that they are reading on grade level as evidenced by demonstration of mastery of the Sunshine State Standards in reading equal to at least a Level 2 performance on FCAT.
- ❑ Students with disabilities who participate in FCAT and who have an IEP or a 504 Plan that reflects that they have received intensive remediation in reading for more than two years but still demonstrate a deficiency in reading and were previously retained in grades K-2.
- ❑ Any third-grade student receiving intensive remediation in reading two or more years but still has deficiency in reading and previously retained K-2 for a total of two years. If promoted under this exemption, intensive reading instruction must include an altered instructional day based on an AIP that includes specialized diagnostic information and specific reading strategies.

Requests for good cause exemptions from the mandatory retention for students with continuing reading deficiencies in grade 3 must be consistent with the following:

- ❑ Documentation must be submitted by the student's teacher to the principal that indicates that the promotion of the student is appropriate and is based upon the student's academic record. Such documentation can consist only of the existing AIP, IEP, report card, student portfolio, or alternate test scores.
- ❑ The principal must review and discuss the recommendation with the teacher and determine promotion or retention. If the principal determines that the student should be promoted, the principal must make the recommendation in writing to the superintendent.
- ❑ The superintendent must accept or reject the principal's recommendation in writing.

Report to Parents of Students in Grades K-3 with Reading Deficiencies

Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year, the parent of any student in grades K-3 who exhibits a substantial reading deficiency must be notified in writing of the following:

- ✓ that the child has been identified as having a substantial reading deficiency
- ✓ a description of the current services that are provided to the child
- ✓ a description of the proposed supplemental instructional services and supports that will be provided to the child to remediate the reading deficiency
- ✓ that if the child's reading deficiency is not remediated by the end of grade 3, the child must be retained unless exempted from mandatory retention for good cause.

For more information on this or other new requirements for the school district student progression plan, contact the following Florida Department of Education personnel:

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