

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The intent of the third-grade progression statute is to ensure that students have the necessary reading skills to be successful in grade 4 and beyond, where the rigors of reading in the content areas increase. According to section 1008.25(5), Florida Statutes (F.S.), to be promoted to fourth grade, a student must score a Level 2 or above on the FCAT 2.0 Reading. The following plan describes several ways for students who do not meet this standard initially to be promoted to fourth grade.

If a student does not demonstrate proficiency on FCAT 2.0 Reading, they are required to attend a Summer Reading Camp to ensure they receive additional instruction to catch up with their peers. There is also statutory language that prohibits FCAT 2.0 Reading from being the sole determiner of promotion and states that additional evaluations, portfolio reviews and assessments are available to the child to assist parents and the school district in knowing when a child is reading at or above grade level and ready for grade promotion. Some third graders who score Level 1 on FCAT 2.0 Reading can be exempted from the retention requirement and be promoted to fourth grade. This is called a “good cause exemption.” Good cause exemptions are only given to the following students:

- **Students who show an acceptable level of performance on an alternative standardized reading assessment;**
- **Students who demonstrate mastery of the state standards through a teacher-developed portfolio;**
- Limited English Proficient students who have had fewer than two years of instruction in an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program;
- Students with disabilities whose Individual Educational Plan (IEP) shows that it is not appropriate for them to take the FCAT 2.0 Reading;
- Students with disabilities who take the FCAT 2.0 Reading and whose IEP or 504 Plan states that they have received intensive remediation in reading for more than two years, but who still show a deficiency in reading and who were previously retained in kindergarten through grade 3; or
- Students who have received intensive remediation in reading for two or more years but who still have a deficiency in reading and who have already been retained in kindergarten through grade 3 for a total of two years.

The two good cause exemptions that most frequently apply are noted in **bold** print and are described in more detail below.

Alternative Standardized Reading Assessment: An alternative standardized reading assessment is another opportunity given to students to demonstrate mastery of the state standards. Under section 1008.25(6), F. S. (Eliminating Social Promotion), students who score a Level 1 on grade 3 FCAT 2.0 Reading may be promoted to fourth grade if the student demonstrates through an alternative standardized reading assessment that they are reading on grade level as evidenced by mastery of the state standards (45 percent or above on SAT10, 50 percent or above on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), or 50 percent or above on the Terranova). These assessments have been approved by the State

Board of Education as alternative standardized reading assessments which may be used for good cause exemption.

Student Portfolio - Under section 1008.25(6), F. S. (Eliminating Social Promotion), students who score a Level 1 on the grade 3 FCAT 2.0 Reading may be promoted to fourth grade if the student demonstrates through a student portfolio that he or she is reading on grade level as evidenced by mastery of the state standards. The portfolio is an alternative means for students to demonstrate proficiency of third-grade skills.

To be accepted as meeting the portfolio option for demonstrating mastery of the required reading skills, the student portfolio must

- Be selected by the student's teacher;
- Be an accurate picture of the student's ability and only include student work that has been independently produced in the classroom;
- **Include evidence that the benchmarks assessed by the grade 3 FCAT 2.0 Reading have been met. This includes multiple choice items and passages that are approximately 60 percent literary text and 40 percent information text that are between 100-700 words with an average of 500 words. Such evidence could include chapter or unit tests from the district's/school's adopted core reading curriculum that are aligned with the state standards or teacher-prepared assessments that are aligned with the state standards;**
- **Be an organized collection of evidence of the student's mastery of the state standards for Language Arts that are assessed by the grade 3 FCAT 2.0 Reading. For each benchmark, there must be at least three examples of mastery as demonstrated by a grade of 70 percent or above; and**
- Be signed by the teacher and the principal as an accurate assessment of the required reading skills.

We have included a Read to Learn brochure, which provides information for parents regarding third-grade progression as well as good cause exemptions, along with a Third-Grade Progression Technical Assistance Paper that is distributed to districts for guidance with implementation of the law.

Sincerely,