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**DPS: 2014-128**

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## Promotion to Grade 4 Technical Assistance Paper

**Summary:** The purpose of this Technical Assistance Paper (TAP) is to provide districts with updated requirements for student progression due to changes in section 1008.25, Florida Statutes (F.S.), Rule 6A-1094221, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) and Rule 6A-1.094222, F.A.C.

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HERSHEL LYONS  
CHANCELLOR OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## **A. REQUIREMENTS FOR PROMOTION TO GRADE 4**

To be promoted to grade 4, a student must score a Level 2 or higher on the statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment required under section 1008.22, Florida Statutes (F.S.), for grade 3.

(Section 1008.25(5)(b), F.S.)

The district school board may only exempt students from mandatory retention for good cause. Good cause exemptions are limited to the following:

1. Limited English proficient students who have had less than 2 years of instruction in an English for Speakers of Other Languages program based on the initial date of entry into a school in the United States.
2. Students with disabilities whose individual education plan indicates that participation in the statewide assessment program is not appropriate, consistent with the requirements of section 1008.212, F.S.
3. Students who demonstrate an acceptable level of performance on an alternative standardized reading or English Language Arts assessment approved by the State Board of Education.
4. A student who demonstrates through a student portfolio that he or she is performing at least at Level 2 on the statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment.
5. Students with disabilities who take the statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment and who have an individual education plan or a Section 504 plan that reflects that the student has received intensive instruction in reading or English Language Arts for more than 2 years but still demonstrates a deficiency and was previously retained in kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2, or grade 3.
6. Students who have received intensive reading intervention for 2 or more years but still demonstrate a deficiency in reading and who were previously retained in kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2, or grade 3 for a total of 2 years. A student may not be retained more than once in grade 3.

(Section 1008.25(6)(b), F.S.)

## **B. ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS FOR PROMOTION TO GRADE 4**

Students who score at Level 1 on the grade 3 statewide English Language Arts Florida Standards Assessment may be promoted to grade 4 if the student demonstrates an acceptable level of performance on an approved alternative standardized reading assessment. The Department of Education shall review and approve the use of alternative standardized reading assessments to be used as a good cause exemption for promotion to grade 4 and will provide a list of approved alternative assessments to districts. The approval of an alternative standardized reading assessment must be based on whether the assessment meets the following criteria:

1. Internal consistency reliability coefficients of at least 0.80;
2. High validity evidenced by the alignment of the test with nationally recognized content standards, as well as specific evidence of content, concurrent, or criterion validity;
3. Norming studies within the last five (5) to ten (10) years, with norming within five (5) years being preferable; and,
4. Serves as a measure of grade three achievement in reading comprehension.

Districts may submit requests for the approval of alternative standardized reading assessments to be used as a good cause exemption for promotion to grade 4. Once an assessment has been

approved by the Department of Education, the assessment is approved for statewide use. The Department of Education shall approve the required percentile passing score for each approved alternative standardized reading assessment based on an analysis of Florida student achievement results. If an analysis is not feasible, students must score at or above the 50th percentile on the approved alternative standardized reading assessment. The earliest the alternative assessment may be administered for student promotion purposes is following administration of the grade 3 statewide English Language Arts Florida Standards Assessment. An approved standardized reading assessment may be administered two (2) times if there are at least thirty (30) days between administrations and different test forms are administered.

The table below lists approved alternate assessments and required percentiles at the publishing date of this TAP. For the current list of approved assessments, please refer to the Just Read, Florida! website, [www.fl DOE.org/academics/standards/just-read-fl](http://www.fl DOE.org/academics/standards/just-read-fl).

SAT-10	45 <sup>th</sup> Percentile
Terranova	50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile
ITBS	50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile
NWEA MAP	50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile
STAR Enterprise	50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (must use Enterprise version)
I-Ready	50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (must use Table 6 from 2016-2017 Norms to determine percentile)
I-Station	50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile

(Rule 6A-1.094221, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.))

### **C. STUDENT PORTFOLIOS FOR PROMOTION TO GRADE 4**

To promote a student using a student portfolio as a good cause exemption, there must be evidence that demonstrates the student’s mastery of the Language Arts Florida Standards in reading is equal to at least a Level 2 performance on the grade 3 statewide English Language Arts Florida Standards Assessment. Such evidence shall be an organized collection of the student’s mastery of the Language Arts Florida Standards that are assessed by the grade 3 statewide English Language Arts Florida Standards Assessment. The student portfolio must meet the following criteria:

1. Be selected by the student’s teacher,
2. Be an accurate picture of the student’s ability and only include student work that has been independently produced in the classroom,
3. Include evidence that the standards assessed by the grade 3 statewide English Language Arts Florida Standards Assessment have been met. Evidence is to include multiple choice items and passages that are approximately sixty (60) percent literary text and forty (40) percent information text, and 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 Language Arts Florida Standards or teacher-prepared assessments.

4. Be an organized collection of evidence of the student's mastery of the Language Arts Florida Standards that are assessed by the grade 3 statewide English Language Arts Florida Standards Assessment. For each standard, there must be at least three (3) examples of mastery as demonstrated by a grade of seventy (70) percent or above on each example, and,
5. Be signed by the teacher and the principal as an accurate assessment of the required reading skills.

The school principal shall review and discuss such recommendation with the teacher and make the determination as to whether the student should be promoted or retained. If the school principal determines that the student should be promoted, the school principal shall make such recommendation in writing to the district school superintendent. The district school superintendent shall accept or reject the school principal's recommendation in writing.

(Rule 6A-1.094221, F.A.C., and Section 1008.25(6)(c)2, F.S.)

#### **D. SUMMER READING CAMPS**

Retained students must be provided intensive interventions in reading to ameliorate the student's specific reading deficiency and prepare the student for promotion to the next grade. These interventions must include participation in the school district's summer reading camp, which must incorporate evidence-based, explicit, systematic, and multisensory reading instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension and other strategies prescribed by the school district. Students participating in the school district's summer reading camp must be provided with a highly effective teacher as determined by the teacher's performance evaluation under section 1012.34, F.S., and, beginning July 1, 2020, the teacher must also be certified or endorsed in reading.

(Section 1008.25(7), F.S.)

#### **E. SERVICES FOR STUDENTS PROMOTED TO GRADE 4 WITH A GOOD CAUSE EXEMPTION**

Each student who does not achieve a Level 3 or above on the statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment, or the statewide, standardized Mathematics assessment must be evaluated to determine the nature of the student's difficulty, the areas of academic need, and strategies for providing academic supports to improve the student's performance. A student who is not meeting the school district or state requirements for satisfactory performance in English Language Arts and mathematics must be covered by one of the following:

1. A federally required student plan such as an individual education plan;
2. A schoolwide system of progress monitoring for all students, except a student who scores Level 4 or above on the English Language Arts and mathematics assessments may be exempted from participation by the principal; or
3. An individualized progress monitoring plan.

A student who is promoted to grade 4 with a good cause exemption shall be provided intensive reading instruction and intervention that include specialized diagnostic information and specific reading strategies to meet the needs of each student so promoted. The school district shall assist schools and teachers with the implementation of explicit, systematic, and multisensory reading instruction and intervention strategies for students promoted with a good cause exemption which

research has shown to be successful in improving reading among students who have reading difficulties.

(Section 1008.25(4), F.S., and Section 1008.25(6)(b), F.S.)

## **F. SERVICES FOR STUDENTS RETAINED IN GRADE 3**

Students retained in grade 3 must be provided with a highly effective teacher as determined by the teacher's performance evaluation under section 1012.34, F.S., and, beginning July 1, 2020, the teacher must also be certified or endorsed in reading. These students must also be provided intensive interventions in reading to ameliorate the student's specific reading deficiency and prepare the student for promotion to the next grade. These interventions must include:

1. Evidence-based, explicit, systematic, and multisensory reading instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension and other strategies prescribed by the school district.
2. Participation in the school district's summer reading camp, which must incorporate the instructional and intervention strategies above.
3. A minimum of 90 minutes of daily, uninterrupted reading instruction incorporating the instructional and intervention strategies. This instruction may include:
  - a. Integration of content-rich texts in science and social studies within the 90-minute block.
  - b. Small group instruction.
  - c. Reduced teacher-student ratios.
  - d. More frequent progress monitoring.
  - e. Tutoring or mentoring.
  - f. Transition classes containing 3rd and 4th grade students.
  - g. Extended school day, week, or year.

Each student who does not achieve a Level 3 or above on the statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment, or the statewide, standardized Mathematics assessment must be evaluated to determine the nature of the student's difficulty, the areas of academic need, and strategies for providing academic supports to improve the student's performance. A student who is not meeting the school district or state requirements for satisfactory performance in English Language Arts and mathematics must be covered by one of the following:

1. A federally required student plan such as an individual education plan;
2. A schoolwide system of progress monitoring for all students, except a student who scores Level 4 or above on the English Language Arts and mathematics assessments may be exempted from participation by the principal; or
3. An individualized progress monitoring plan.

Each school district shall establish at each school, when applicable, an intensive reading acceleration course for any student retained in grade 3 who was previously retained in kindergarten, grade 1, or grade 2. The intensive reading acceleration course must provide the following:

1. Uninterrupted reading instruction for the majority of student contact time each day and opportunities to master the grade 4 Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in other core subject areas through content-rich texts.
2. Small group instruction.
3. Reduced teacher-student ratios.

4. The use of explicit, systematic, and multisensory reading interventions, including intensive language, phonics, and vocabulary instruction, and use of a speech-language therapist if necessary, that have proven results in accelerating student reading achievement within the same school year.
5. A read-at-home plan.

(Section 1008.25(7), F.S.)

### **G. MID-YEAR PROMOTION OF RETAINED GRADE 3 STUDENTS**

Each school district shall implement a policy for the mid-year promotion of a student retained in grade 3 who can demonstrate that he or she is a successful and independent reader. Such mid-year promotions of retained grade 3 students should occur during the first semester of the academic year. To be eligible for mid-year promotion, a student must demonstrate that he or she:

1. Is a successful and independent reader as demonstrated by reading at or above grade level;
2. Has progressed sufficiently to master appropriate fourth grade reading skills; and,
3. Has met any additional requirements, such as satisfactory achievement in other curriculum areas, as determined by the policies of the district school board.

The criteria for students promoted on or before November 1 must provide a reasonable expectation that the student has mastery of grade 3 reading skills as presented in the English Language Arts Florida Standards. Evidence is as follows:

1. Satisfactory performance on locally selected standardized assessment(s) measuring English Language Arts Florida Standards;
2. Satisfactory performance on a state approved alternative assessment as delineated in State Board Rule 6A-1.094221, F.A.C., and described in Section B of this TAP; or
3. Successful completion of portfolio elements that meet the following requirements:
  - a. Be selected by the school district;
  - b. Be an accurate picture of the student's ability and only include student work that has been independently produced in the classroom;
  - c. Include evidence of mastery of the standards assessed by the grade 3 English Language Arts Florida Standards assessment. Evidence can include successful completion of multiple choice items and text-based responses, chapter or unit tests from the district or school adopted core reading curriculum, or the state-provided third grade student portfolio. Portfolios should contain 50 percent literary and 50 percent informational texts.
  - d. Be signed by the teacher and the principal as an accurate assessment of the required reading skills.

The criteria for students promoted after November 1 must provide a reasonable expectation that the student's progress is sufficient to master appropriate grade 4 level reading skills. These students must demonstrate proficiency levels in reading equivalent to the level necessary for the beginning of grade 4.

The Progress Monitoring Plan for any retained third grade student who has been promoted mid-year to fourth grade must continue to be implemented for the entire academic year and if necessary for additional school years.

(Section 1008.25(7), F.S., and Rule 6A-1.094222, F.A.C.)

## **H. REQUIRED PARENTAL NOTIFICATIONS**

For all students in kindergarten through grade 3, schools may not wait for a student to receive a failing grade at the end of a grading period to identify the student as having a substantial reading deficiency and initiate intensive reading interventions. A student who has a substantial reading deficiency must be covered by a federally required student plan, such as an individual education plan or an individualized progress monitoring plan, or both, as necessary.

The parent of any student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading based upon screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, assessment data, statewide assessments, or teacher observations must be notified in writing of the following:

1. That his or her child has been identified as having a substantial deficiency in reading, including a description and explanation, in terms understandable to the parent, of the exact nature of the student's difficulty in learning and lack of achievement in reading.
2. A description of the current services that are provided to the child.
3. A description of the proposed intensive interventions and supports that will be provided to the child that are designed to remediate the identified area of reading deficiency.
4. That if the child's reading deficiency is not remediated by the end of grade 3, the child must be retained unless he or she is exempt from mandatory retention for good cause.
5. Strategies, including multisensory strategies, through a read-at-home plan the parent can use in helping his or her child succeed in reading.
6. That the statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment is not the sole determiner of promotion and 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.
7. The district's specific criteria and policies for student portfolios and the evidence required for a student to demonstrate mastery of Florida's academic standards for English Language Arts. A parent of a student in grade 3 who is identified anytime during the year as being at risk of retention may request that the school immediately begin collecting evidence for a portfolio.
8. The district's specific criteria and policies for midyear promotion. Mid-year promotion means promotion of a retained student at any time during the year of retention once the student has demonstrated ability to read at grade level.

Additionally, each school district shall provide written notification to the parent of a student who is retained in grade 3 that his or her child has not met the proficiency level required for promotion and the reasons the child is not eligible for a good cause exemption. This notification must comply with the aforementioned notification for parents of a student with a substantial deficiency in reading and must include a description of proposed interventions and supports that will be provided to the child to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency.

(Section 1008.25(5)(a), F.S., Section 1008.25(5)(c), F.S., and Section 1008.25(7)(b)(1), F.S.)