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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 based on section (s.) 1008.25, Florida Statutes (F.S.); s. 1002.411, F.S.; Rule 6A-6.053, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.); Rule 6A-1.094221, F.A.C.; and Rule 6A-1.094222, F.A.C. Updates can be found in **bold** print.

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**Status:**

Amends existing Technical Assistance Paper: DPS: 2022-65, Promotion to Grade 4.

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## **A. READING DEFICIENCY AND REQUIRED PARENTAL NOTIFICATIONS**

Any student in kindergarten through grade 3 who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading, **or the characteristics of dyslexia**, based upon screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring or assessment data; statewide assessments; or teacher observations must be provided intensive, explicit, systematic and multisensory reading interventions, **that are grounded in the science of reading**, immediately following the identification of the reading deficiency **or the characteristics of dyslexia to address his or her specific deficiency or dyslexia**. A school may not wait for a student to receive a failing grade at the end of a grading period **or wait until a plan is developed** to identify the student as having a substantial reading deficiency and initiate intensive reading interventions. In addition, a school may not wait until an evaluation conducted pursuant to s. 1003.57, F.S., is completed to provide appropriate, evidence-based interventions for a student whose parent submits documentation from a professional licensed under Chapter 490, F.S., which demonstrates that the student has been diagnosed with dyslexia. Such interventions must be initiated upon receipt of the documentation and based on the student's specific areas of difficulty as identified by the licensed professional. A student who has a substantial reading deficiency must be covered by a federally required student plan, such as an individual educational plan or an individualized progress monitoring plan, or both, as necessary pursuant to **s. 1008.25(4)(c), F.S.**

**For reading, the individualized progress monitoring plan shall include at a MINIMUM:**

- 1. The student's specific, identified reading deficiency.**
- 2. Goals and benchmarks for student growth in reading.**
- 3. A description of the specific measures that will be used to evaluate and monitor the student's reading progress.**
- 4. For a substantial reading deficiency, the specific evidence-based literacy instruction grounded in the science of reading which the student will receive.**
- 5. Strategies, resources and materials that will be provided to the student's parent to support the student to make reading progress.**
- 6. Any additional services the student's teacher deems available and appropriate to accelerate the student's reading development. (s. 1008.25(4)(c), F.S.)**

**Please note that if a student is covered by an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) ONLY, the above criteria should be documented in the IEP along with all other required documentation.**

**In accordance with Rule 6A-6.053(10), F.A.C., a kindergarten through grade 3 student is identified as having a substantial deficiency in reading if any of the following criteria are met:**

- A. For kindergarten, the student scores below the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) percentile or is unable to complete the practice items on the designated grade-level assessment at the beginning, middle or end of the year on the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system pursuant to s. 1008.25(9), F.S., and the student has demonstrated, through progress monitoring, formative assessments or teacher observation data,**

minimum skill levels for reading competency in one or more of the areas of phonological awareness; phonics; vocabulary, including oral language skills; fluency; and comprehension.

- B. For grades 1 and 2, the student scores below the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) percentile or is unable to complete the practice items on the designated grade-level assessment for the specified testing window of the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system pursuant to s. 1008.25(9), F.S., and the student has demonstrated, through progress monitoring, formative assessments or teacher observation data, minimum skill levels for reading competency in one or more of the areas of phonological awareness; phonics; vocabulary, including oral language skills; fluency; and comprehension; or
- C. For grade 3, the student scores:
  - 1. Below the twentieth (20<sup>th</sup>) percentile at the beginning or middle of the year on the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system pursuant to s. 1008.25(9), F.S., and the student has demonstrated, through progress monitoring, formative assessments or teacher observation data, minimum skill levels for reading competency in one or more of the areas of phonological awareness; phonics; vocabulary, including oral language skills; fluency; and comprehension; or
  - 2. Level 1 on the end of the year statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment pursuant to s. 1008.22(3)(a), F.S.

Pursuant to s. 1008.25, F.S., and s. 1002.411, F.S., the parent of any student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading **or the characteristics of dyslexia** 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 **and programming**, through a read-at-home plan the parent can use in helping his or her child succeed in reading. **The read-at-home plan must provide access to the resources compiled by the Department of Education.**
- 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 school must immediately begin collecting evidence for a portfolio when a student in grade 3 is identified as being at risk of retention or upon the request of the parent, whichever occurs first.
8. The district's specific criteria and policies for mid-year 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.
9. Information about the student's eligibility for the New Worlds Reading Initiative under s. 1003.485, F.S., and information on parent training modules and other reading engagement resources available through the initiative.
10. The process to request and receive a New Worlds Scholarship, subject to available funds (s. 1002.411, F.S.).

After initial notification, the school shall apprise the parent at least monthly of the student's progress in response to the intensive interventions and supports. Such communications must be in writing and must explain any additional interventions or supports that will be implemented to accelerate the student's progress if the interventions and supports already being implemented have not resulted in improvement.

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 achievement level required for promotion and the reasons the child is not eligible for good cause exemption. This notification must comply with the aforementioned notification for the parent 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.

(s. 1008.25(4), F.S., 1008.25(5), F.S., s. 1008.25(9), F.S., s. 1002.411, F.S., and Rule 6A-6.053, F.A.C.)

## **B. COMPREHENSIVE READING AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMS**

**The Department shall provide a list of state-examined and approved comprehensive reading and intervention programs. The intervention programs shall be provided in addition to the comprehensive core reading instruction that is provided to all students in the general education classroom. Dyslexia-specific interventions will be defined by rule of the State Board of Education and shall be provided to students who have the characteristics of dyslexia. The reading intervention programs must do all of the following:**

- 1. Provide explicit, direct instruction that is systematic, sequential and cumulative in language development, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, as applicable.**

2. Provide daily targeted small group reading interventions based on student need in phonological awareness, phonics including decoding and encoding, sight words, vocabulary or comprehension; and
3. Be implemented during regular school hours.

The primary instructional strategy for teaching word reading is phonics instruction for decoding and encoding. Instructional strategies may not employ the three-cueing system model of reading or visual memory as a basis for teaching word reading. Such instruction may include visual information and strategies which improve background knowledge and experiential knowledge, add context and increase oral language and vocabulary to support comprehension, but may not be used to teach word reading.

(s. 1008.25(5),F.S.)

### C. 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 s. 1008.22, F.S., for grade 3. If a student's reading deficiency is not remedied by the end of grade 3, as demonstrated by scoring Level 2 or higher on the grade 3 statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment required under s. 1008.22, F.S., the student must be retained.

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 educational plan indicates that participation in the statewide assessment program is not appropriate, consistent with the requirements of s. 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 educational plan or a Section 504 plan that reflects that the student has received intensive instruction in reading or English Language Arts for more than two years but still demonstrates a deficiency and was previously retained in **prekindergarten**, kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2 or grade 3.
6. Students who have received intensive reading intervention for two 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 two years. A student may not be retained more than once in grade 3.

(s. 1008.25(5), F.S., and 1008.25(7), F.S.)

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

A student who scores Level 1 on the grade 3 statewide, standardized English Language Arts 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 to ten years, with norming within five years being preferable; and
4. Serves as a measure of grade 3 achievement in reading comprehension.

Districts may submit requests for the approval of alternative standardized reading assessments to be used for 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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 **end of year** grade 3 statewide, standardized English Language Arts 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 alternative assessments and required percentiles at the publishing date of this TAP. It is the responsibility of the district to ensure use of the most current set of norms available for the respective alternative assessment. For the current list of approved assessments, please refer to the Third Grade Guidance webpage on the Just Read, Florida! website, <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/standards/just-read-fl/third-grade-guidance.stml>.

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 Reading	50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile
i-Ready	50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile
Istation	50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile
Achieve3000 LevelSet	50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile
<b>Amira</b>	<b>50<sup>th</sup> Percentile</b>
<b>Edmentum Exact Path</b>	<b>50<sup>th</sup> Percentile</b>

(Rule 6A-1.094221, F.A.C.)

**E. 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 B.E.S.T. English Language Arts Standards in reading is equal to at least a Level 2 performance on the grade 3 statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment. Such evidence shall be an organized collection of the student’s mastery of the B.E.S.T. English Language Arts Standards that are assessed by the grade 3 statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment. A school must immediately begin collecting evidence for a portfolio when a student in grade 3 is identified as being at risk of retention or upon the request of the parent, whichever occurs first. The 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 benchmarks assessed by the grade 3 statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment have been met. Evidence is to include grade-level passages that are approximately fifty (50) percent literary text and fifty (50) percent informational 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 or teacher-prepared assessments that are aligned with the B.E.S.T. English Language Arts Standards;
4. Be an organized collection of evidence of the student’s mastery of the B.E.S.T. English Language Arts Standards that are assessed by the grade 3 statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment. For each benchmark, there must be at least eight (8) items assessed and the student must demonstrate seventy (70) percent mastery for all items assessed per benchmark; and
5. Be signed by the teacher and the principal as an accurate assessment of the required reading skills.

To request a good cause exemption, documentation shall be submitted from the student’s teacher to the school principal that indicates that the promotion of the student is appropriate



and is based upon the student's academic record. In order to minimize paperwork requirements, such documentation shall consist only of the existing progress monitoring plan, individual educational plan, if applicable, report card or student portfolio. 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 school district superintendent. The school district superintendent shall accept or reject the school principal's recommendation in writing.

(s. 1008.25(7), F.S., and Rule 6A-1.094221, F.A.C.)

#### **F. SUMMER READING CAMPS**

Retained third grade 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 **grounded in the science of reading**, in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and other strategies prescribed by the school district.

Third grade 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 s. 1012.34, F.S., and the teacher must also be certified or endorsed in reading.

(s. 1008.25(8), F.S.)

#### **G. 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 s. 1012.34, F.S., and the teacher must also be certified or endorsed in reading. These students must also be provided intensive reading interventions **that are grounded in the science of 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 **grounded in the science of reading**, in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, 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 **that place rigor and grade-level learning at the forefront**; and
3. A minimum of 90 minutes of daily, uninterrupted reading instruction incorporating the instructional and intervention strategies above. This instruction may include:

- a. Coordinated integration of content-rich texts in science and civic literacy within the 90-minute block;
- b. **Targeted** small group instruction;
- c. **Explicit and systematic instruction with more detailed explanations, more extensive opportunities for guided practice and more opportunities for error correction and feedback;**
- d. Reduced teacher-student ratios;
- e. More frequent progress monitoring **of the reading skills of each student throughout the school year and the adjustment of instruction according to student need;**
- f. Tutoring or mentoring;
- g. Transition classes containing 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students;
- h. Extended school day, week or year; and
- i. **Before school or after school, or both, supplemental evidence-based reading interventions grounded in the science of reading delivered by a teacher who is certified or endorsed in reading and is rated highly effective as determined by the teacher's performance evaluation under s. 1012.34, F.S.**

**The primary instructional strategy for teaching word reading is phonics instruction for decoding and encoding. Instructional strategies may not employ the three-cueing system model of reading or visual memory as a basis for teaching word reading. Such instruction may include visual information and strategies which improve background knowledge and experiential knowledge, add context and increase oral language and vocabulary to support comprehension, but may not be used to teach word reading.**

(s. 1008.25(8), F.S.)

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

A student who is promoted to grade 4 with a good cause exemption shall be provided intensive reading instruction and intervention **grounded in the science of reading** that includes 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.

**The primary instructional strategy for teaching word reading is phonics instruction for decoding and encoding. Instructional strategies may not employ the three-cueing system model of reading or visual memory as a basis for teaching word reading. Such instruction may include visual information and strategies which improve background knowledge and experiential knowledge, add context and increase oral language and vocabulary to support comprehension, but may not be used to teach word reading.**

(s. 1008.25(7), F.S., and s. 1008.25(8), F.S.)

### **I. INTENSIVE READING ACCELERATION COURSE**

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 **grounded in the science of reading** for the majority of student contact time each day and opportunities to master the grade 4 state academic standards in other core subject areas through content-rich texts.
2. **Explicit and systematic instruction with more detailed explanations, more extensive opportunities for guided practice and more opportunities for error correction and feedback.**
3. **Targeted** small group instruction.
4. Reduced teacher-student ratios.
5. The use of explicit, systematic and multisensory reading interventions **grounded in the science of reading**, 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.
6. A read-at-home plan.

**The primary instructional strategy for teaching word reading is phonics instruction for decoding and encoding. Instructional strategies may not employ the three-cueing system model of reading or visual memory as a basis for teaching word reading. Such instruction may include visual information and strategies which improve background knowledge and experiential knowledge, add context and increase oral language and vocabulary to support comprehension, but may not be used to teach word reading.**

(s. 1008.25(8), F.S.)

### **J. 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 and performing at or above grade level in reading. Tools that school districts may use in reevaluating a student retained may include subsequent assessments, alternative assessments and portfolio reviews, in accordance with State Board of Education Rules. 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 **state academic standards in English Language Arts**. Evidence is as follows:

1. **Satisfactory performance as demonstrated by scoring Level 2 or above on beginning of the year administration of the statewide, standardized coordinated screening and progress monitoring system in Grade 3 English Language Arts pursuant to s. 1008.25(9)(b)2., F.S.;**
2. Satisfactory performance on locally selected standardized assessment(s) measuring **state academic standards in English Language Arts pursuant to s. 1003.41, F.S.;**
3. Satisfactory performance on a state approved alternative assessment as delineated in **paragraph (1)(b) of Rule 6A-1.094221, F.A.C.**, and described in Section **D** of this TAP; or
4. Successful completion of portfolio elements that meet all of 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 that the benchmarks assessed by the grade 3 statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment under s. 1008.22, F.S., have been met. Evidence is to include grade level passages that are approximately fifty (50) percent literary text and fifty (50) percent informational 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 or teacher-prepared assessments that are aligned with the B.E.S.T. ELA standards.**
  - d. **Be an organized collection of evidence of the student's mastery of the B.E.S.T. ELA standards that are assessed by the grade 3 statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment under s. 1008.22, F.S. For each benchmark, there must be at least eight (8) items assessed and the student must demonstrate seventy (70) percent mastery for all items assessed per benchmark and;**
  - e. **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 has met the requirements outlined in Rule 6A-1.094222, F.A.C., and that the student's progress is sufficient to master appropriate grade 4 level reading skills equivalent to the level necessary for the month in which the transition to grade 4 occurs.**

A retained third grade student is eligible for mid-year promotion if the student scores Level 2 or above on PM1 of the Grade 3 FAST ELA Reading and there is evidence the student is progressing sufficiently to master appropriate fourth grade reading skills.

The Progress Monitoring Plan for any retained third grade student who has been promoted mid-year to grade 4 must continue to be implemented for the entire academic year and, if necessary, for additional school years.

(s. 1008.25(8), F.S., **Rule 6A-1.094221, F.A.C.**, and Rule 6A-1.094222, F.A.C.)