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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.; s. 1008.34, 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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Amends existing Technical Assistance Paper: DPS: 2022-65, Promotion to Grade 4.

Table of Contents

A. READING DEFICIENCY AND REQUIRED PARENTAL NOTIFICATIONS.....1

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR PROMOTION TO GRADE 43

C. ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS FOR PROMOTION TO GRADE 44

D. STUDENT PORTFOLIOS FOR PROMOTION TO GRADE 45

E. SUMMER READING CAMPS6

F. SERVICES FOR STUDENTS RETAINED IN GRADE 3.....6

**G. SERVICES FOR STUDENTS PROMOTED TO GRADE 4 WITH A GOOD CAUSE
EXEMPTION7**

H. INTENSIVE READING ACCELERATION COURSE.....7

I. MID-YEAR PROMOTION OF RETAINED GRADE 3 STUDENTS8

A. READING DEFICIENCY AND REQUIRED PARENTAL NOTIFICATIONS

Any student in kindergarten through grade 3 who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading based upon screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring or assessment data; statewide assessments; or teacher observations must be provided intensive, explicit, systematic and multisensory reading interventions immediately following the identification of the reading deficiency. A school may not wait for a student to receive a failing grade at the end of a grading period to identify the student was 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 education plan or an individualized progress monitoring plan, or both, as necessary pursuant to s. 1008.25(4)(c), F.S.

In accordance with Rule 6A-6.053(12), 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. The student scores at the lowest achievement level/benchmark as identified by the publisher during a universal screening period, on an assessment listed in the district's approved District K-12 Comprehensive Evidence-Based Reading Plan, and beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, students scoring at the lowest achievement level/benchmark on the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system pursuant to s. 1008.25(8), F.S.;**
- B. The student scores at the lowest achievement level/benchmark as identified by the publisher during progress monitoring administration at any time during the school year, on an assessment listed in the district's approved District K-12 Comprehensive Evidence-Based Reading Plan, and beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, students scoring at the lowest achievement level/benchmark on the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system pursuant to s. 1008.25(8), F.S.; or**
- C. The student has demonstrated through consecutive 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; reading fluency; and reading comprehension.**

The coordinated screening and progress monitoring system, Grades 3-10 FAST ELA Reading, assesses end of the year grade-level expectations during each progress monitoring period. Therefore, for PM1 and PM2, it is highly likely there will be an increase in students scoring at the lowest achievement level (Level 1). Because the Grades 3-10 FAST ELA Reading assesses end of the year grade level expectations, a grade 3 student who scores at the lowest

achievement level may not actually have a substantial reading deficiency. Therefore, for PM1 and PM2, it is recommended that districts use percentile scores to more accurately identify grade 3 students with a substantial reading deficiency. The percentile scores will be calculated by the Department and provided to districts at the close of each window. For the 2022-2023 school year, it is recommended that any grade 3 student scoring below the 20th percentile during PM1 or PM2 administration be identified as a student with a substantial reading deficiency. Rule 6A-6.053, F.A.C., will be revised in the near future to redefine a substantial deficiency in reading when using data from the FAST coordinated screening and progress monitoring system.

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 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 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 Reading 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 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(7), F.S., s. 1002.411, F.S., and Rule 6A-6.053, F.A.C.)

B. 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 education 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 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 two 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 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.

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 the student. 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. **For the 2022-23 school year only, in addition to existing good cause exemptions, a student may be promoted to grade 4 if the student demonstrates an acceptable level of performance through means reasonably calculated by the school district to provide reliable evidence of the student's performance.**

(s. 1008.25(5), F.S., 1008.25(6), F.S., and s. 1008.34(7), F.S.)

C. 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 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, 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 th Percentile
Terranova	50 th Percentile
ITBS	50 th Percentile
NWEA MAP	50 th Percentile
Star Reading	50 th Percentile
i-Ready	50 th Percentile
Istation	50 th Percentile
Achieve3000 LevelSet	50 th Percentile

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

D. 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(6), F.S., and Rule 6A-1.094221, F.A.C.)

E. 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 in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and 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(7), 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 s. 1012.34, F.S., and 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; 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. 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.

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

G. 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 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.

(s. 1008.25(4), F.S., and s. 1008.25(6), F.S.)

H. 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 for the majority of student contact time each day and opportunities to master the grade 4 Next Generation state academic standards in other core subject areas through content-rich texts.
2. Small group instruction.
3. Reduced teacher-student ratio.
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.

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

I. 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 Language Arts Florida Standards. Evidence is as follows:

1. Satisfactory performance on locally selected standardized assessment(s) measuring Language Arts Florida Standards;
2. Satisfactory performance on a state-approved alternative assessment as delineated in Rule 6A-1.094221, F.A.C., and described in Section C of this TAP; or
3. 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 of mastery of the standards assessed by the grade 3 statewide, standardized English Language Arts assessment. Evidence can include successful completion of multiple-choice items and text-based responses, chapter or unit tests from the district adopted core reading curriculum or the state-provided third grade student portfolio. Portfolios should contain fifty (50%) percent literary and fifty (50%) percent informational texts; and
 - 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 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 beginning of grade 4.

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