

Section: I: Instructional Programs

Policy Code: ICHI

Policy: Literacy Based Promotion

LITERACY BASED PROMOTION

In compliance with the “Literacy Based Promotion Act,” it is the intent of the Mississippi Achievement School District to improve the reading skills of Kindergarten - Third Grade students so that every student completing the Third Grade is able to read at or above grade level. Each Kindergarten through Third Grade student's progression is determined, in part, upon the

- student's proficiency in reading;
- the policies of local school boards facilitate this proficiency; and
- each student and the student's parent or legal guardian is informed of the student's academic progress.

Intensive Reading Instruction and Intervention

Each student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading at any time, as demonstrated through performance on a reading screener approved or developed by the State Department of Education or through locally determined assessments and teacher observations conducted in Kindergarten and Grades 1 through 3 or through statewide end-of-year assessments or approved alternate yearly assessments in Grade 3, shall be given intensive reading instruction and intervention immediately following the identification of the reading deficiency.

The universal reading screener or locally determined reading assessment may be given in the first thirty (30) days or a specified time provided by the MDE repeated if indicated at midyear and at the end of the school year to determine student progression in reading in Kindergarten through Third Grade. If it is determined that the student continues to have a reading deficiency, the student shall be provided with continued intensive reading instruction and intervention by the school district until the reading deficiency is remedied. A student exhibiting continued reading deficiency with continued intensive interventions should be considered for exceptional criteria evaluation.

A Kindergarten or First, Second or Third Grade student identified with a deficiency in reading shall be provided intensive interventions in reading to ameliorate the student's specific reading deficiency, as identified by a valid and reliable diagnostic assessment. The intensive intervention shall include effective instructional strategies, and appropriate teaching methodologies necessary to assist the student in becoming a successful reader, able to read at or above grade level, and ready for promotion to the next grade. A Kindergarten, First, Second or Third Grade student identified with a reading deficiency or not promoted may be placed in a transition class.

Parent Notification of Reading Deficiency

Immediately upon the determination of a reading deficiency, and subsequently with each quarterly progress report until the deficiency is remediated, the parent or legal guardian of a Kindergarten or First, Second or Third Grade student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading shall be notified in writing by the student's teacher of the following:

1. That the student has been identified as having a substantial deficiency in reading;
2. A description of the services that the school district currently is providing to the student;
3. A description of the proposed supplemental instructional services and supports that are designed to remediate the identified area of reading deficiency which the school district plans to provide the student;
4. That if the student's reading deficiency is not remediated before the end of the student's Third Grade year, the student will not be promoted to Fourth Grade unless a good cause exemption specified below is met;
5. Strategies for parents and guardians to use in helping the student to succeed in reading proficiency; and
6. That while the state annual accountability assessment for reading in Third Grade is the initial determinant, it is not the sole determiner of promotion and that approved alternative standardized assessments are available to assist the school district in knowing when a child is reading at or above grade level and ready for promotion to the next grade.

Social Promotion Prohibited

In compliance with the "Literacy-Based Promotion Act," social promotion is prohibited in the Mississippi Achievement School District. A student may not be assigned a grade level based solely on the student's age or any other factors that constitute social promotion.

Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, if a student's reading deficiency is not remedied by the end of the student's Third Grade year, as demonstrated by the student scoring at the 2 lowest achievement levels in reading on the state annual accountability assessment or on an approved alternative standardized assessment for Third Grade, the student shall not be promoted to Fourth Grade.

Good Cause Promotion

A Third Grade student who does not meet the academic requirements for promotion to the Fourth Grade may be promoted by the school district only for good cause. Good cause exemptions for promotion are limited to the following students:

1. Limited English proficient students who have had less than two (2) years of instruction in an English Language Learner program;
2. Students with disabilities whose individual education plan (IEP) indicates that participation in the statewide accountability assessment program is not appropriate, as authorized under state law;
3. Students with a disability who participate in the state annual accountability assessment and who have an IEP or a Section 504 plan that reflects that the individual student has received intensive remediation in reading for more than two (2) years but still

demonstrates a deficiency in reading and previously was retained in Kindergarten or First, Second or Third Grade;

4. Students who demonstrate an acceptable level of reading proficiency on an alternative standardized assessment approved by the State Board of Education; and
5. Students who have received intensive intervention in reading for two (2) or more years but still demonstrate a deficiency in reading and who previously were retained in Kindergarten or First, Second or Third Grade for a total of two (2) years and have not met exceptional education criteria. A student who is promoted to Fourth Grade with a good cause exemption shall be provided intensive reading instruction and intervention informed by specialized diagnostic information and delivered through specific reading strategies to meet the needs of each student promoted. The Mississippi Achievement School District shall assist schools and teachers in implementing reading strategies that research has shown to be successful in improving reading among students with persistent reading difficulties.

Good Cause Request

A request for good cause exemptions for a Third Grade student from the academic requirements established for promotion to Fourth Grade shall be made consistent with the following:

1. Documentation shall be submitted from the student's teacher to the school principal which indicates that the promotion of the student is appropriate and is based upon the student's record. The documentation shall consist of the good cause exemption being requested and shall clearly prove that the student is covered by one (1) of the good cause exemptions listed above.
2. The principal shall review and discuss the recommendations with the teacher and parents and make a determination as to whether or not the student should be promoted based on requirements set forth by law. If the principal determines that the student should be promoted, based on the documentation provided, the principal shall make the recommendation in writing to the school district superintendent, who, in writing, may accept or reject the principal's recommendation.

The parents of any student promoted may request that the student be retained for one (1) year, even if the principal and district superintendent determines otherwise.

Retained Third Grade Students

Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, the Mississippi Achievement School District shall take the following actions for retained Third Grade students:

1. Provide Third Grade students who are not promoted with intensive instructional services, progress monitoring measures, and supports to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency, including a minimum of ninety (90) minutes during regular school hours of daily, scientifically research-based reading instruction that includes phonemic awareness,

phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, and other strategies prescribed by the school district, which may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Small group instruction;
 - b. Reduced teacher - student ratios;
 - c. Tutoring in scientifically research-based reading services in addition to the regular school day;
 - d. The option of transition classes;
 - e. Extended school day, week or year; and
 - f. Summer reading camps.
2. Third Grade students who are retained shall be provided with a high-performing teacher, as determined by student performance data, particularly related to student growth in reading, above-satisfactory performance appraisals, and/or specific training relevant to literacy.

Parent Notification of Third Grade Retention

Written notification shall be provided the parent or legal guardian of any Third Grade student who is retained that the student has not met the proficiency level required for promotion and the reasons the student is not eligible for a good cause exemption.

The notification shall include a description of proposed interventions and supports that will be provided to the child to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency. This notification shall be provided to the parent or legal guardian in writing, in a format adopted by the State Board of Education in addition to report cards given by the teacher.

Parents and legal guardians of Third Grade students shall be provided with a "Read at Home" plan outlined in a parental contract, including participation in regular parent-guided home reading.

Intensive Acceleration

The Mississippi Achievement School District may provide, where applicable, an intensive acceleration class for any student retained in Grade 3 who was previously retained in Kindergarten or Grades 1 through 3. The focus of the intensive acceleration class should be to increase a student's reading level at least two (2) grade levels in one (1) school year. The intensive acceleration class will provide reading instruction and intervention for the majority of student contact each day and incorporate opportunities to master the Grade 4 state standards in other core academic areas.

Annual Report

Within thirty (30) days of final State Board of Education approval of state accountability results, the Mississippi Achievement School District shall publish, in a newspaper having a general circulation within the school district, and report to the State Board of Education and the Mississippi Reading Panel the following information relating to the preceding school year:

1. Student progression and the school district's policies and procedures on student retention and promotion;

2. By grade, the number and percentage of all students performing at each level of competency on the reading and math portion of the annual state accountability system and the number and percentage of students given an approved alternative standardized reading assessment and the percentage of these students performing at each competency level on said alternative standardized assessment;
3. By grade, the number and percentage of all students retained in Kindergarten through Grade 8;
4. Information on the total number and percentage of students who were promoted for good cause, by each category of good cause described by law; and
5. Any revisions to the district's policy on student retention and promotion from the prior school year.

Student Handbook

Provisions required by the Literacy Promotion Act shall be provided as an addition to the district's published handbook of policy for employees and students beginning in school year 2013-2014.

The superintendent or designee shall establish procedures to support this policy.

LEGAL REF.: MS CODE – Literacy Based Promotion Act, 2013

Last Review Date: 09/11/2020