

The Third Grade Reading Guarantee Guidance Document

July 27, 2012

Starting with the 2013-2014 school year, all students entering the third grade must demonstrate a certain level of competency in reading before advancing to the fourth grade. This level will start between “limited” and “proficient”, and rise over time. For more resources on this new law, visit ODE’s website at www.education.ohio.gov and search “Third Grade Reading Guarantee.”

Diagnostic Assessments

Legislative Requirements

- An English language arts (ELA) diagnostic assessment must be given by September 30 of each year for students in kindergarten through grade three starting in the 2012-13 school year.
- If the diagnostic assessment shows that the student is “not on track” to be reading at grade level by the end of the year, schools must provide the parents, in writing:
 - Notice that the school has identified a reading deficiency in their child;
 - A description of current services provided to the student;
 - A description of proposed supplemental instruction services;
 - Notice that the Ohio Achievement Assessment for third grade reading is not the only measure of reading competency; and
 - Notice that unless the student attains the appropriate level of reading competency by the end of grade three, the student will be retained.
- For each student shown to be “not on track”, schools must:
 - Begin reading intervention immediately using research-based reading strategies targeted at the students identified reading deficiencies;
 - Provide a teacher who has either passed a reading instruction test or has a reading endorsement on their teacher's license; and
 - Develop a reading improvement and monitoring plan within sixty days of learning of the reading deficiency.

- District boards of education must adopt board policies and procedures for assessing the reading skills of each student in grades K-3 by September 30 beginning in the 2012-13 school year.

Guidance for Districts

- The law says that districts must use an “English language arts” diagnostic assessment, which for the state is the reading and writing diagnostic assessments combined. However, ODE will allow districts to only administer the reading portion of the state ELA diagnostic assessment for the requirements of the third grade reading guarantee.
- Boards can use as a starting point their districts’ policies that are currently in place that address assessing all students in kindergarten through the second grade.
- The policy should be revised to include diagnostic assessment in the third grade, specificity on the procedures for assessing students at K-3, and language that states the ELA K-3 diagnostic will now be given by September 30 of each year. Again, ODE will allow districts to only administer the reading portion of the state ELA diagnostic assessment for the requirements of the third grade reading guarantee.
- Because the changes in law were made during this summer, after many districts had already ordered their reading diagnostic assessments, districts may use the state’s reading diagnostic assessment or any diagnostic they already planned to use for 2012-2013.
- All districts will report the diagnostic assessment used to assess reading in grades K-3 through a survey developed and distributed by ODE.
- The survey districts will use to report the diagnostic will be sent to districts by mid-August 2012.
- For the 2013-2014 school year and thereafter, ODE will release an Approved Comparable Diagnostic tools list, which districts will use to find out if the diagnostic tool they would like to use is approved by ODE.
- Parents of students identified as not on track should be notified beginning the 2012-2013 school year, and should be informed immediately after the diagnosis is made.
- Districts shall develop a reading improvement and monitoring plan for students identified as "not on track" based on the diagnostic, beginning the 2012-2013 school year.
- ODE is developing guidance on what reading test is required for teachers who have a student on a reading improvement and monitoring plan in their classroom. The State Board of Education will pass final rules regarding this assessment in the coming year.

Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans

Legislative Requirements

All reading improvement and monitoring plans shall include:

1. Identification of the student's specific reading deficiency;
2. A description of proposed supplemental instruction services that will target the student's identified reading deficiencies;
3. Opportunities for the student's parents or guardians to be involved in the instructional services;
4. A process to monitor the implementation of the student's instructional services;
5. A reading curriculum during regular school hours that assists students to read at grade level, provides for reliable assessments, and provides ongoing analysis of each student's reading progress; and
6. A statement that unless the student attains the appropriate level of reading competency by the end of grade three, the student will be retained.

Guidance for Districts

- Reading improvement and monitoring plans allow the teachers and parents to work together to understand the reading deficiency and to outline reading intervention plans.
- Districts shall develop a reading improvement and monitoring plan for students identified with a reading deficiency within sixty days after receiving that student's diagnostic results, beginning the 2012-2013 school year.
- Districts should develop reading improvement and monitoring plans that addresses all requirements in legislation (see above).
- In 2013-2014, ODE will release a reading improvement and monitoring plan template as an option for districts to use.
- Districts will be required to report the number of students on a reading improvement and monitoring plan and the type of interventions used by the end of the 2012-2013 school year. ODE will release the process for all reporting by spring 2013.

Intensive remediation services

Legislative requirement

Intensive remediation services should be targeted to the student's identified reading deficiencies. If a student has already been retained by the third grade guarantee, beginning in 2012-2013, the interventions must include at least ninety minutes of reading. Interventions for students on a plan may include:

- Small group instruction;
- Reduced teacher-student ratios;
- More frequent progress monitoring;
- Tutoring or mentoring;
- Transition classes containing third and fourth grade students;
- Summer reading camp;
- Extended school day, week or year; or
- Services from outside providers that are approved by the district or the department of education.

Guidance for Districts

- ODE will provide guidance on how 90 minutes of daily reading may be obtained.
- ODE will develop a guidance document for districts to use to evaluate service providers.

Retention in the Third Grade

Legislative Requirements

- Any student who does not reach the appropriate level of reading competency by the end of the third grade will not advance to the fourth grade.
- However, there are some exceptions. The retention requirement does not apply to:
 - *Limited English proficient students* who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for less than two full school years and have had less than two years of instruction in an English as a second language program;
 - *Special education students* whose IEPs exempt them from retention under the third grade guarantee;
 - *Students who demonstrate reading competency on an alternative reading assessment* approved by the Ohio Department of Education; and
 - Any student who has received *intensive remediation for two years and was previously retained* in kindergarten through grade three.
 - A student that advances because of this exception must continue to receive intensive reading instruction in the fourth grade, which requires an altered instructional day to accommodate reading interventions, or whatever reading interventions are required by the student's IEP.

- Students who are retained must have a high-performing teacher as determined by the teacher's student performance data or performance reviews.
- It will be possible for students to move on to the fourth grade anytime they demonstrate proficiency in reading, including the summer before the fourth grade and midyear.
- If students demonstrate proficiency in a subject area, they can still receive fourth grade instruction in that subject area.

Guidance for Districts

- The cut score that students must achieve to avoid retention under the third grade reading guarantee will be determined by the State Board of Education by spring 2013.
- ODE will provide guidance on the alternative reading assessment by spring 2013.
- ODE will provide guidance on how to use student performance data or performance reviews to determine if a teacher is "high performing".
- ODE will provide guidance on the intervention and intensive reading instruction by spring 2013.