

April 8, 2013

Colleagues,

This week, I would like to devote the newsletter to one of the most important tools we have to give our boys and girls a bright future: the Third Grade Reading Guarantee.

Reading is critical for student success. Yet, more than 27,000 Ohio third graders are not reading at grade level today. These struggling readers must receive the best intervention from the best reading teachers our state has to offer.

**The Third Grade Reading Guarantee law outlines a few ways teachers can verify that they are qualified reading instructors.** For 2013-2014, a teacher must be actively engaged in the reading instruction of students for the previous three years and fulfill at least one of the following options:

1. Have a reading endorsement;
2. Have a master's in reading or literacy;
3. Be rated above value-added in reading for the previous two years; or
4. Have a credential from an approved research-based reading instruction program. A list of approved programs can be found [here](#).

For 2013-2014, the qualifications are required only for teachers of third grade students affected by the Third Grade Reading Guarantee. In 2014-2015, they apply to teachers of kindergarten through third grade students.

In 2014-2015, a new option will replace the reading instruction program (option 4 in the list above). There will be a new reading instruction test that, if passed, will qualify the teacher to instruct struggling readers. This test is currently under review and it should be available this fall.

What if a district doesn't currently have enough teachers that have these qualifications?

For 2013-2014 only, districts **can submit a plan to the Ohio Department of Education** if they don't have enough qualified teachers for their struggling readers. The plan should outline how districts will evaluate teachers and match the best reading teachers to the students who need them the most. If approved, the teachers will follow this district's plan for one year.

In addition, a **bill under is consideration in the Ohio General Assembly that would give teachers more ways to demonstrate their ability to teach reading.**

Senate Bill 21 would eliminate the requirement that a teacher must be actively engaged in the reading instruction of students for the previous three years . The version of the bill pending in the House would give teachers the option to demonstrate their competency by:

- Having a reading endorsement;
- Having a master's degree in reading;
- Completing an approved reading instruction program;
- Passing the reading instruction test; or
- Being an effective reading instructor as determined by ODE.

We will keep you updated about this legislation as information becomes available.

What does all this mean? **Districts have time and different options to ensure that qualified reading teachers are helping our most at-risk students.** Before making any staffing decisions, consider whether filing a plan with ODE would give you additional time to make better choices for your schools. And if you are not absolutely certain about an element of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, please email [ODEthirdgradegarantee@education.ohio.gov](mailto:ODEthirdgradegarantee@education.ohio.gov).

I truly appreciate your dedication to Ohio's boys and girls.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard A. Ross

***Approaching deadlines or important dates mentioned in previous editions of EdConnection***

- 4/12** TELL Ohio educator [survey](#) comment ends
- 4/19** Advanced Placement Network [applications](#) are due
- 4/26** [Concussion awareness training for coaches](#) law goes into effect
- 5/1** Deadline for Ohio Teacher of the Year [nominations](#)
- 5/19** Recommendations for [Ohio's Talent Pool](#) teachers due

***For school superintendents, principals and treasurers***

***Possible reading interventions for students - Project MORE***

While there is no approved list of reading intervention programs, one such intervention program districts and schools may consider is Project MORE. Project MORE is a volunteer mentoring program that specializes in helping students with disabilities learn to read. This program uses community resources to offer low-cost help for schools and districts. For more information on Project MORE, visit their website at: <http://www.ohioprojectmore.org/>.

***Upcoming regional meetings to provide updates on high profile state education initiatives***

Six opportunities remain for school districts, community schools and teacher leaders to get updates on important Ohio education initiatives during upcoming regional meetings hosted by the Ohio Department of Education's Division of Learning.

The gatherings are scheduled for April 12, Cincinnati; April 16, Cleveland; April 19, Youngstown; May 8, Toledo; May 10, Zanesville (changed from Athens); and May 16, Findlay. A meeting scheduled for April 10 in Dayton has been cancelled.

A 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. session for district leaders will cover OTES, OPES, eTPES, student growth measures, Ohio's new online educator licensure system, Resident Educator years 3 and 4, the Third Grade Reading Guarantee and the assessment development work being done by PARCC.

A 4-6:30 p.m. session for teachers will include updates on the new standards and assessments. Also, they will work on lesson/unit development and evaluation using content-specific rubrics aligned to Ohio's New Learning Standards.

All sessions are free. Register now in [STARS](#).

***Five days left to gain insights from your educators through TELL Ohio***

The Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning ([TELL](#)) Ohio survey, open through April 12, will give teachers and administrators the chance to anonymously describe what conditions they need to do their jobs better, and thus boost student achievement. The TELL Ohio survey is free for all Ohio schools.

All Ohio principals received a packet of TELL Ohio letters for their educators. Each letter has a different, anonymous, access code for a one-time use. For questions about or assistance with the survey, please submit a query [here](#).

Each school with a response rate of at least 50 percent will receive customized supports, data tools, professional development and an online resource library of best practices as a result of their participation.

***For curriculum directors, teachers and school counselors***

***ODE provides new help with Student Learning Objectives***

Writing Student Learning Objectives as a local student growth measure under the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System is a new experience for many districts and schools. ODE now has launched a new, online [SLO Help Desk](#) where teachers, principals and district staff to get answers to common questions about developing and implementing SLOs. Help Desk staff will not evaluate SLOs or assessments for quality and rigor, but can answer a wide range of general questions.

Districts should continue sending questions about other types of student growth measures to [SGM@education.ohio.gov](mailto:SGM@education.ohio.gov).

*ODE is interested in your thoughts about how EdConnection fulfills your information needs. Please send any comments or suggestions to [Superintendent@education.ohio.gov](mailto:Superintendent@education.ohio.gov).*

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