

Third Grade Reading Guarantee

Mid-Year Promotion of Retained Third Grade Students

August 2017

Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee is a program to identify students from kindergarten through grade 3 who are behind in reading. Schools provide help and support to make sure students are on track for reading success by the end of third grade. Research clearly shows that children who are not reading proficiently by grade three are four times less likely to graduate on time.

General Guidance

Districts and schools must establish a policy for retained third grade students to be promoted mid-year to grade 4 if they demonstrate that they are reading at or above grade level. Retained students are students enrolled as third-graders after having been third-graders in a prior year, even if they are receiving higher-level instruction in specific subject areas in which they have demonstrated proficiency, until they are promoted through this policy to fourth grade.

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE MID-YEAR PROMOTION POLICY?

The purpose of the mid-year promotion policy is to enable retained third grade students who have progressed to the point of reading at or above grade level the ability to move on to fourth grade during the retained school year. This policy allows students who have benefited from high-quality, evidence-based services provided by the district to be promoted to fourth grade as soon as they have demonstrated reading at or above grade level.

MAY STUDENTS BE PROMOTED UNDER A DISTRICT'S MID-YEAR PROMOTION POLICY PRIOR TO THE MIDDLE OF THE YEAR?

Yes, if this is specified in the district's mid-year promotion policy. Districts are encouraged to develop a mid-year promotion policy that allows for individualization based on student progress and readiness. If a retained third grade student demonstrates that he or she is reading at or above grade level, as defined by the district's local policy, and the district's policy allows it, the student should be given this opportunity. Promoting students to fourth grade as soon as they demonstrate readiness maximizes the students' opportunity to benefit from fourth grade instruction.

IF A DISTRICT'S POLICY IS BASED ON INDIVIDUAL STUDENT READINESS TO DEMONSTRATE READING AT OR ABOVE GRADE LEVEL, MAY THE DISTRICT USE ADJUSTED CUT SCORES THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR (I.E., THE CUT SCORE INCREASES AS THE YEAR PROGRESSES)?

Yes, if this is specified in the district's mid-year promotion policy. The goal of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee is to ensure that students are reading at least at a third grade level prior to moving on to fourth grade. However, it also is important to ensure that a retained third grade student is set up for success upon promotion to fourth grade. A district's local policy may consider the rigor of the fourth grade curriculum and other factors when determining how to define "reading at or above grade level" at different points throughout the school year.

FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE MID-YEAR PROMOTION POLICY, ARE DISTRICTS REQUIRED TO USE THE STATE TEST, OR AN APPROVED ALTERNATIVE READING ASSESSMENT, TO DETERMINE IF A RETAINED THIRD GRADE STUDENT IS READING AT OR ABOVE GRADE LEVEL?

No. A district's policy determines how to measure whether a retained third grade student is demonstrating that he or she is "reading at or above grade level." The Ohio Department of Education does not maintain an approved list of assessments for the purpose of the mid-year promotion policy, and districts are *not* required to use one of the approved alternative reading assessments for this purpose. However, the Department encourages utilization of valid and reliable assessment tools including, but not limited to, the state-developed Full Measure for Third Grade or one of the approved diagnostic tools to determine mid-year promotion. In addition, districts may establish local policies that use other types of evidence, along with standardized reading assessments, when determining if a retained third grade student is demonstrating that he or she is reading at or above grade level. Other types of evidence that could be used with valid and reliable assessment tools may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Evidence-collected and progress made during summer school; and/or
- Recommendation(s) of the student's teacher(s) or outside service provider based on evidence collected documenting student performance in reading, including as part of a documented reading portfolio.

SHOULD THE DISTRICT KEEP A RECORD OF HOW THE STUDENT MET THE DISTRICT'S MID-YEAR PROMOTION POLICY?

Yes. The district should keep a record of how the student met the district's mid-year promotion policy and the effective date of the mid-year promotion in the same location in which the district keeps other student records (i.e., a cumulative folder).

HOW DOES THE DISTRICT REPORT A RETAINED THIRD GRADE STUDENT'S MID-YEAR PROMOTION IN EMIS?

Retained third grade students who are promoted to fourth grade during the retained year are reported in EMIS with Grade Level "04" and the effective date of the mid-year promotion. For example, if a retained third grade student meets the requirements of the district's mid-year promotion policy and is promoted to grade 4 on Nov. 1, 2017, the student will be reported as Grade Level "04," effective date of Nov. 1, 2017.

SHOULD DISTRICTS CONTINUE PROVIDING SERVICES TO STUDENTS AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN PROMOTED?

Since the state's established promotion score is currently lower than the "proficient" score level, districts and schools should be offering student intervention services to students promoted to fourth grade but not yet proficient commensurate with their performance as required under ORC 3301.0711(D)(1).