

Ohio's New Third Grade Reading Guarantee *What Educators Should Know*

The third grade is an important reading milestone because students who are not reading at grade level by that point are ill-equipped to handle the increasing difficulty of classroom subjects beginning in the fourth grade.

Ohio Senate Bill 316, signed into law in June 2012, includes a new Third Grade Reading Guarantee that says students who enter the third grade in 2013-2014 or after must score at a certain level on Ohio's third-grade reading achievement assessment to be advanced to the fourth grade. The State Board of Education will determine that level at its September 2012 meeting. The law allows for certain exceptions to the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, such as for students with disabilities and some English language learners. Certain provisions of the law take effect almost immediately:

Beginning this school year

By Sept. 30, 2012, each district, each school year, must administer Ohio's English language arts diagnostic assessments to Kindergarten – Grade 3 students to identify those who are reading below grade level. The district must immediately provide each of these students with intensive reading instruction and develop a longer-range reading improvement/monitoring plan for the student.

The district must notify the parent or guardian of each student that the child is reading below grade level. The district must describe the specific improvement and monitoring plan and the current intensified instruction and make clear that the child may be retained in the third grade if he or she does not demonstrate competency on the third-grade reading achievement assessment.

The district must provide a teacher specially trained in reading instruction for each student entering the third grade with a reading-improvement plan. For each student who is retained in the third grade, the district must provide a high-performing teacher, intensive reading remediation and at least 90 minutes of reading per day. The district also must establish a policy for mid-year promotion in the repeated year if the student is reading at grade level by that time.

Each district must report to the Ohio Department of Education annually on its implementation and compliance with the Third-Grade Reading Guarantee. Districts also must submit to ODE results of their Kindergarten – Grade 3 reading diagnostic assessments.

Starting Today

Districts and schools immediately should begin to:

- Identify a Kindergarten – Grade 3 reading diagnostic tool and improvement plan to identify and remedy reading deficiencies before the end of the third grade; and
- Develop a parental notification process to inform families of students reading below grade level of the services being provided and the requirements to be promoted to fourth grade.

Click [here](#) to visit ODE's Third Grade Reading Guarantee Web page, which includes links to important resources and further guidance on this new law.