



Ypsilanti Community Schools
1885 Packard Rd., Ypsilanti, MI 48197
734-221-1221
Dr. Carlos Lopez, Assistant Superintendent

March 2, 2020

Dear Parents and/or Guardians,

Ypsilanti Community Schools is committed to providing a high quality education for all of our students. Being a good reader by grade 3 is critical for a student to be successful in both school and in life. At YCS we understand the importance of helping our students to learn to read and write proficiently. As a result the School Board has adopted a comprehensive English Language Arts (ELA) K-12 curriculum in June 2019 that exposes our students to the rigorous standards measured by the third grade M-STEP assessment. Our teachers continue to participate in comprehensive ongoing development aimed at developing their practice as they deliver critical standards of excellence to our students.

In 2016, the State of Michigan passed legislation that has impacted reading expectations for all students in kindergarten through third grade. This legislation, Public Act 306 and is referred to as the Third Grade Reading Law. This Third Grade Reading Law provides standards for student achievement and guidelines to ensure students achieve grade level proficiency by the end of third grade. In accordance with the law, districts must assess the reading skills of students in kindergarten through third grade at the beginning of every school year. The intent is to have a mechanism to identify students who may need additional support in learning to read as early as possible. The results of these assessments yield useful information to help teachers to better meet the individual needs of our linguistic and culturally diverse student population.

The Third Grade Reading legislation also requires each district to implement an on-going norm-referenced assessment (like the NWEA MAP Test) to identify each child's reading progress. The NWEA / MAP assessments are administered in our district three times per year. YCS has determined that if a third grader performed below the 188 RIT score by the Fall 2019 as measured by the NWEA / MAP assessment, he/she will receive an Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP) to address and support student areas of weaknesses and provide resources for parent and guardians to use to help their child improve. If your child's score fell in that range, your child's teacher has been directed to review the IRIP Plan with you at parent teacher conferences throughout the year.

Beginning with the 2019-20 school year, all third graders in Michigan are required to meet the state's reading proficiency criteria on the M-STEP and/or qualify for a good cause exemption as defined in PA 306, in order to be promoted to fourth grade. Any student enrolled in grade 3 that receives a score of 1252 or below on the Spring 2020 ELA M-STEP assessment and is determined to be one or more years behind based on the Spring 2020 ELA M-STEP assessment may be eligible to be retained. According to the law, all third grade students must ensure **ONE** of the following before students move onto the next grade.

- Has a reading score that is less than one grade level behind on the Grade 3 M-STEP ELA test.
- Demonstrates Grade 3 reading level through performance on an alternative standardized reading test approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.



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- Demonstrate a grade 3 reading level through a portfolio demonstrating competence in all Grade state ELA standards.

Please note that the **Ypsilanti Community Schools does not support mandatory retention** and as a result, we have put in place intense student support systems to support your child so that he/she meets the requirements of the Third Grade Reading Law. The law does allow parents and guardians to ask that their student be promoted to fourth grade in some cases. To continue supporting your child in reading, please contact your child's teacher. For more on the state's Read By Grade Three Law, go to the Michigan Department of Education's webpage on early literacy (www.michigan.gov/earlyliteracy), where you can find helpful information and resources.

Any Parent/Guardian that does not want their child retained must request a Good Cause Exemption from the district within 30 days of notification from the Michigan Department of Education.

Your child may qualify for a ***Good Cause Exemption*** if he/she:

- Has an IEP or 504 Plan
- Is an English Learners with less than 3 years instruction in an EL Program
- Has been previously retained
- Has received intensive reading intervention for 2 years or more and still exhibit a reading deficiency (Title 1 Support Interventions)
- Has been enrolled in their current school for less than 2 years and did not have an Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP) in their previous school
- Demonstrated proficiency on the M-STEP Math portion
- Demonstrated proficiency in Science and Social Studies as demonstrated through pupil portfolio, as determined by the teacher that provided instruction in grade 3 Social Studies and Science standards
- The student's parent or legal guardian has requested, in the appropriate window time frame, that the student not be retained
- If the Superintendent (or designee) determines that promotion is in the best interest for the student

We will send you another letter after the 2020 Spring M-STEP assessment to inform you if your child is more than a grade level behind and if he/she will receive a letter from the Department of Education. We will at that time also notify you if your child meets one or more of the Good Cause Exemption that will allow them to transition into Fourth Grade. If you have any additional questions, please contact your building principal.

Educationally,

Dr. Carlos Lopez
Assistant Superintendent
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