



ENSURING A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION FROM THIRD TO FOURTH GRADE

Third grade is a milestone year because it solidifies the foundational reading skills that children will use to be successful in fourth grade and beyond. The Oklahoma Reading Sufficiency Act (RSA) helps ensure that each third-grader develops the reading skills he or she needs by the end of the school year.

Although third grade is a critical year for independent reading, early literacy skills should begin in the home prior to Pre-K and kindergarten. Literacy assessments begin in kindergarten to help teachers identify reading deficiencies and close learning gaps along the way.

2016-2017 IS A TRANSITION YEAR

Because new academic standards were adopted in 2016-2017, additional steps are needed to determine Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP) cut scores. As a result, final scores will not be available before the start of the 2017-2018 school year. Schools are encouraged to take proactive steps this year to determine the appropriate placement for a student. Please observe the following guidelines to determine student placement before receipt of his or her OSTP test results.

MEET EARLY

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) recommends schools' Student Reading Proficiency Teams meet before the end of the school year to discuss all options, pathways and Good Cause Exemptions for third-grade students who may not meet RSA criteria. Having an early meeting does not necessarily equate to an assumption a student will fail. Meetings are an opportunity for proactive parent communication and to discuss the student's strengths and additional skills that he or she could work on during the summer.

PREPARE PORTFOLIO

If possible, it is important to collect work samples that could be included in a student portfolio, which may allow a student to meet a Good Cause Exemption. OSDE recommends keeping sample documents on all students throughout the school year in the event a portfolio is needed.

RECOMMEND SUMMER ACADEMY

A school's Student Reading Proficiency Team should make decisions based on all data points available and can recommend that a child attend the third-grade summer reading academy without OSTP scores, particularly if the child would benefit from additional instruction and opportunities to achieve a passing score on an approved alternative reading or screener test, or demonstrate mastery of third-grade reading skills through a student portfolio.

MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROMOTION

Under RSA, multiple pathways exist for children to advance from third grade to fourth grade through reading placement.

• BY TEST SCORES

Students who score proficient or higher on the (OSTP) assessment meet RSA criteria for promotion. They may also advance by scoring end-of-third-grade proficiency or higher on a state-approved screener test, which is taken earlier in the school year. Even if a student meets RSA criteria through the screener test, he or she must still take the OSTP as required by the U.S. Department of Education. A lower score on the OSTP does not negate the screener test score.

- **BY SUMMER ACADEMY**

Students may advance by successfully completing a Summer Academy Reading Program (SARP). In order to complete the program successfully, a student must achieve one of the following: a passing score on an approved alternative reading test or screener test, or demonstration of mastery of third-grade reading skills through a student portfolio.

- **BY GOOD CAUSE EXEMPTION**

Every child is different, and there can be special circumstances in which it would be in the best interest of the child to advance to fourth grade even without the necessary test score. If one of the following seven Good Cause Exemptions apply, the student may be promoted and receive additional help through intensive reading instruction in fourth grade as outlined through an Academic Progress Plan.

- 1 English learners who have had less than two years of instruction in English and are identified as Limited English Proficient /English learner on an approved screening tool may advance to fourth grade.
- 2 Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) assessed with the Oklahoma Alternate Assessment Program may advance to fourth grade.
- 3 Students who demonstrate an acceptable level of performance on an approved alternative standardized reading test may advance to fourth grade.
- 4 Students who demonstrate through a teacher-developed portfolio that they can read on grade level may advance to fourth grade.
- 5 Students with disabilities who take the OSTP and have an IEP that states they have received intensive remediation in reading for more than two years and were previously retained one year or were in a transitional grade may advance to fourth grade.
- 6 Students who have received intensive remediation in reading for two or more years and who already have been retained for a total of two years may advance to fourth grade. Transitional grades count.

- 7 Students facing exceptional emergency circumstances that prevented the student from being assessed during the testing window may advance to fourth grade. This exemption must be approved by OSDE.

- **BY PARENT/TEACHER TEAM**

When a student does not meet the above criteria for advancement to fourth grade, the student may receive a probationary promotion through a unanimous decision of the school's Student Reading Proficiency Team (SRPT). As of April 2017, the team is made up of a parent or guardian, the child's current reading teacher, future reading teacher and a certified reading specialist. The principal and superintendent must approve the promotion. Any student promoted on probationary basis will receive intensive reading instruction in fourth grade as outlined through an Academic Progress Plan to remedy any reading deficiencies.

WHAT IF IT IS DETERMINED REPEATING THIRD GRADE IS BEST FOR THE STUDENT?

Students who are retained must receive individualized instructional services and supports in reading outside the regular 90-minute reading block. Additional help may include small-group instruction, reduced teacher-student ratios, more frequent progress monitoring, tutoring, transitional classes, extended school day, week or year and summer reading academies. Services will be outlined in an Academic Progress Plan.

For more information and resources, visit the Oklahoma State Department of Education's RSA web page at <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/reading-sufficiency>.

ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL PORTFOLIO

A complete student portfolio will include the following items: standardized tests, unit or chapter tests and an Academic Progress Plan. For more information, visit <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/reading-sufficiency>

To see the full third-grade Oklahoma Academic Standards for English language arts, visit <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/3rd%20grade%20ELA.pdf>