

279.68 Student progression — remedial instruction — reporting requirements — promotion.

1. *Reading deficiency and parental notification.*

a. A school district shall assess all students enrolled in kindergarten through grade three at the beginning of each school year for their level of reading or reading readiness on locally determined or statewide assessments, as provided in section 256.7, subsection 31. A school district shall provide intensive reading instruction to any student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading, based upon the assessment or through teacher observations. The student's reading proficiency shall be reassessed by locally determined or statewide assessments. The student shall continue to be provided with intensive reading instruction until the reading deficiency is remedied.

b. The parent or guardian of any student in kindergarten through grade three who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading, as described in paragraph "a", shall be notified at least annually in writing of the following:

(1) That the child has been identified as having a substantial deficiency in reading.

(2) A description of the services currently provided to the child.

(3) A description of the proposed supplemental instructional services and supports that the school district will provide to the child that are designed to remediate the identified area of reading deficiency.

(4) Strategies for parents and guardians to use in helping the child succeed in reading proficiency, including but not limited to the promotion of parent-guided home reading.

c. Beginning May 1, 2017, unless the school district is granted a waiver pursuant to subsection 2, paragraph "e", if the student's reading deficiency is not remedied by the end of grade three, as demonstrated by scoring on a locally determined or statewide assessment as provided in section 256.7, subsection 31, the school district shall notify the student's parent or guardian that the parent or guardian may enroll the student in an intensive summer reading program offered in accordance with subsection 2, paragraph "e". If the parent or guardian does not enroll the student in the intensive summer reading program and the student is ineligible for the good cause exemption under subsection 5, the student shall be retained in grade three pursuant to subsection 3. If the student is exempt from participating in an intensive summer reading program for good cause, pursuant to subsection 5, or completes the intensive summer reading program but is not reading proficient upon completion of the program, the student may be promoted to grade four, but the school district shall continue to provide the student with intensive reading instruction until the student is proficient in reading as demonstrated by scoring on locally determined or statewide assessments.

2. *Successful progression for early readers.* If funds are appropriated by the general assembly for purposes of implementing this subsection, a school district shall do all of the following:

a. Provide students who are identified as having a substantial deficiency in reading under subsection 1, paragraph "a", with intensive instructional services and supports, free of charge, to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency, including a minimum of ninety minutes daily of scientific, research-based reading instruction and other strategies prescribed by the school district which may include but are not limited to the following:

(1) Small group instruction.

(2) Reduced teacher-student ratios.

(3) More frequent progress monitoring.

(4) Tutoring or mentoring.

(5) Extended school day, week, or year.

(6) Summer reading programs.

b. At regular intervals, apprise the parent or guardian of academic and other progress being made by the student and give the parent or guardian other useful information.

c. In addition to required reading enhancement and acceleration strategies, provide parents of students who are identified as having a substantial deficiency in reading under subsection 1, paragraph "a", with a plan outlined in a parental contract, including participation in regular parent-guided home reading.

d. Establish a reading enhancement and acceleration development initiative designed

to offer intensive accelerated reading instruction to each kindergarten through grade three student who is assessed as exhibiting a substantial deficiency in reading. The initiative shall comply with all of the following criteria:

(1) Be provided to all kindergarten through grade three students who exhibit a substantial deficiency in reading under this section. The assessment initiative shall measure phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

(2) Be provided during regular school hours in addition to the regular reading instruction.

(3) Provide a reading curriculum that meets guidelines adopted pursuant to section 256.7, subsection 31, and at a minimum has the following specifications:

(a) Assists students assessed as exhibiting a substantial deficiency in reading to develop the skills to read at grade level.

(b) Provides skill development in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

(c) Includes a scientifically based and reliable assessment.

(d) Provides initial and ongoing analysis of each student's reading progress.

(e) Is implemented during regular school hours.

(f) Provides a curriculum in core academic subjects to assist the student in maintaining or meeting proficiency levels for the appropriate grade in all academic subjects.

e. Offer each summer, beginning in the summer of 2017, unless the school district receives a waiver from this requirement from the department of education for the summer of 2017, an intensive summer literacy program for students assessed as exhibiting a substantial deficiency in reading. The program shall meet the criteria and follow the guidelines established pursuant to section 256.9, subsection 53, paragraph "c", subparagraph (1), subparagraph division (g).

f. Report to the department of education the specific intensive reading interventions and supports implemented by the school district pursuant to this section. The department shall annually prescribe the components of required or requested reports.

3. *Promotion to grade four.* In determining whether to promote a student in grade three to grade four, a school district shall place significant weight on any reading deficiency identified pursuant to subsection 1, paragraph "a", that is not yet remediated. The school district shall also weigh the student's progress in other subject areas, as well as the student's overall intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development. A decision to retain a student in grade three shall be made only after direct personal consultation with the student's parent or guardian and after the formulation of a specific plan of action to remedy the student's reading deficiency.

4. *Ensuring continuous improvement in reading proficiency.*

a. To ensure all children are reading proficiently by the end of third grade, each school district shall address reading proficiency as part of its comprehensive school improvement plan, drawing upon information about children from assessments conducted pursuant to subsection 1 and the prevalence of deficiencies identified by classroom, elementary school, and other student characteristics. As part of its comprehensive school improvement plan, each school district shall review chronic early elementary absenteeism for its impact on literacy development. If more than fifteen percent of an attendance center's students are not proficient in reading by the end of third grade, the comprehensive school improvement plan shall include strategies to reduce that percentage, including school and community strategies to raise the percentage of students who are proficient in reading.

b. Each school district, subject to an appropriation of funds by the general assembly, shall provide professional development services to enhance the skills of elementary teachers in responding to children's unique reading issues and needs and to increase the use of evidence-based strategies.

5. *Good cause exemption.*

a. The school district shall exempt students from the retention and intensive summer reading program requirements of subsection 1, paragraph "c", for good cause. Good cause exemptions shall be limited to the following:

(1) Limited English proficient students who have had less than two years of instruction in an English as a second language program.

(2) Students requiring special education whose individualized education program indicates that participation in a locally determined or statewide assessment as provided in section 256.7, subsection 31, is not appropriate, consistent with the requirements of rules adopted by the state board of education for the administration of chapter 256B.

(3) Students who demonstrate an acceptable level of performance on an alternative performance measure approved pursuant to section 256.7, subsection 31.

(4) Students who demonstrate mastery through a student portfolio under alternative performance measures approved pursuant to section 256.7, subsection 31.

(5) Students who have received intensive remediation in reading for two or more years but still demonstrate a deficiency in reading and who were previously retained in kindergarten, grade one, grade two, or grade three. Intensive reading instruction for students so promoted must include an altered instructional day that includes specialized diagnostic information and specific reading strategies for each student. The school district shall assist attendance centers and teachers to implement reading strategies that research has shown to be successful in improving reading among low-performing readers.

b. Requests for good cause exemptions from the retention requirement of subsection 1, paragraph “c”, for students described in paragraph “a”, subparagraphs (3) and (4), shall include documentation from the student’s teacher to the school principal that indicates that the promotion of the student is appropriate and is based upon the student’s academic record. Such documentation shall include but not be limited to the individualized education program, if applicable, report card, or student portfolio.

2012 Acts, ch 1119, §34

Referred to in §256.7, 279.60