

**Conecuh County Schools**  
**Parents' and Teachers' Guide to the Alabama Literacy Act #2019-523**  
**At-a-Glance**  
**October 2019**

Dear Parents and Teachers,

The Alabama legislature has passed the Alabama Literacy Act #2019-523, a law which requires all public schools to make changes to the way we teach reading foundations in K-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade. One component of this Alabama law requires 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade students to read on grade level beginning in 2021-2022. We understand that this law may cause concern for many people who are invested in our children's education. Our first step is to ensure that our parents and teachers understand the basics of the Alabama Literacy Act. Please take a few moments to review the relevant information pertaining to this new Alabama law.

**Important Notes for Parents:**

- The students who are **currently in 1<sup>st</sup> Grade** will be the first students who will have to score proficient (on grade level) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade reading assessment in 2021-2022 in order to be promoted to 4<sup>th</sup> Grade.
- The required reading test score for 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade students has **NOT** been determined by the state at this time. When the required scores are determined, we will provide the information to parents.

**Overview of the Act:**

- Beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, the Act requires students in 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade to read on 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade level in order to be promoted to 4<sup>th</sup> Grade
- Requires schools to take steps to improve the reading ability of public school Kindergarten-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade students by monitoring their progress to make sure students read at or above grade level as they go from one grade level to the next
- Requires school districts to offer a comprehensive core reading program which develops reading foundations to all students
- Requires districts and schools to administer reading assessments, reading intervention, comprehensive reading instruction, and dyslexia-specific intervention
- Requires districts to assist schools in providing written communication to the parent of any child who is retained in third grade for not achieving the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade reading level required for promotion
- Requires the schools to provide dyslexia-specific intervention to students who have characteristics of dyslexia and to **ALL** struggling readers. **NOTE:** Schools and school officials are only allowed to screen students for dyslexia characteristics. We **CANNOT** diagnose dyslexia.
- Requires annually by September 30, reports in writing to the State Superintendent for all reading and assessment data required by the Act
- Requires districts to provide summer reading camp to **ALL** K-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade students identified with reading deficiencies, staffed with highly effective teachers, including a minimum of 70 hours in scientifically based reading instruction and intervention
- Requires districts and schools to review student reading improvement plans for all incoming 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade students identified with reading deficiency and provide intensive interventions, frequent progress monitoring, and before and/or after-school using a supplemental evidence-based reading intervention delivered by a teacher or tutor with specialized reading training.
- Requires schools to provide a read-at-home plan for students and parents
- Requires schools to provide intense acceleration for all retained students

**Reading Intervention Program Guidelines:**

- Requires reading intervention programs that provide explicit, direct instruction that is organized, sequential, and comprehensive in the following areas:
  - **Alphabetic Principle**- understanding that letters represent sounds that form words.
  - **Comprehension**- understanding what was read.
  - **Decoding**- sounding out words and blending the sounds together to make words.
  - **Dyslexia**- inability, partial inability, or profound inability to decode words which affects the part of the brain that processes language.
  - **Fluency**- reading smoothly, accurately, at an appropriate pace, and with expression.
  - **Language Development**- understanding of communication.
  - **Phonological Awareness**- awareness that words are made with sounds.
  - **Phonics**- the sounds made by letters and letter combinations.
  - **Vocabulary**- the meaning of words.