



# North Carolina Read to Achieve

## Introduction

This information is designed to help all parents and guardians of North Carolina public school students in kindergarten through third grades understand the North Carolina Read to Achieve law. The goal of this legislation is for all students to become proficient readers by the end of third grade. Read to Achieve outlines reading requirements for elementary students and describes what schools will be doing to assist children in reaching the proficiency goal.

## Background

Reading is at the core of all instruction in kindergarten through third grade. In the early grades, students learn foundational reading skills that build deeper comprehension skills as they progress through the grades. Students must have strong reading skills to be able to succeed in all other subject areas.

In every North Carolina kindergarten through third grade class, a student's reading progress is measured regularly using the mclass Reading 3D assessment system. This system allows teachers to understand the reading levels and skill development of all students and identifies struggling students as well as students who need reading enrichment. These assessments are NOT tests. These assessments help teachers understand what instruction your child needs. The teacher listens to a child read from a book and from one-minute foundational skill tasks. By state law, if your child is reading below grade level or struggling with reading, the school must inform you of exactly what type of reading difficulty your child is having and what instructions or interventions are being used to help advance his/her skills. All parents and guardians should receive a Home Connect letter three times a year that shows your child's progress on the benchmarking assessments along with activities that you can use at home to help him/her.

## Personal Education Plan

If the Reading 3D assessments along with class work, teacher observations and student grades indicate that your child is below proficiency, then a Personal Education Plan (PEP) must be developed. The PEP must include focused interventions and goals to help your child develop stronger reading skills. You should receive a copy of the PEP and should also be included when the plan is being reviewed. Teachers will monitor your child's progress frequently using mclass Reading 3D as a part of a comprehensive balanced assessment system. Your child should



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receive intensive reading instruction during regular school hours in addition to his/her regular classroom reading instruction.

## Goal

“The goal of the state is to ensure that every student read at or above grade level by the end of third grade and continue to progress in reading proficiency so that he or she can read, comprehend, integrate, and apply complex texts needed for secondary education and career success.” By the end of third grade, students are expected to be an independent reader, which means that they can read and understand words, sentences, and paragraphs and answer comprehension questions about their reading.

## Beginning-of-Grade (BOG) and End-of-Grade Tests (EOG)

The North Carolina Beginning-of-Grade (BOG) and End-of-Grade (EOG) tests measure students’ progress on the standards in the North Carolina “Standard Course of Study”. At the beginning of third grade, all students will take the BOG for reading. Parents will receive the results of these tests. The results will give parents another indication (along with mClass Reading 3D) as to whether students are on track for achieving proficiency in reading by the end of third grade. If students receive a proficiency level on the BOG, they have met the requirements for the Read to Achieve law. All students must still take the EOGs each spring. Third grade students are tested in reading and math. Their scores fall into one of five proficiency levels ranging from Level 1 (the lowest) to Level 5 (the highest).

The third grade BOG and EOG tests are multiple-choice tests. On the reading portion of the tests, students are asked to read selections and answer questions about the selections.

## The North Carolina Read to Achieve Law

The Read to Achieve law requires third graders who score at Level 1 or 2 in **reading** on the third grade EOG to be retained and not promoted to the fourth grade. However, students can receive a good cause exemption by showing proficiency on a Read to Achieve test (given after the EOG), a retest of the EOG, a local alternative assessment approved by the State Board of Education, or through a completed reading portfolio. If your child scores a Level 1 or 2 on the EOG and does not qualify for a good cause exemption, then the school will notify you in writing that your child must achieve proficiency before being promoted to the fourth grade.

In addition, **some** students with an IEP, some limited English proficient students, and students who have been retained more than once before third grade can also receive a good cause exemption. Please refer to the Read to Achieve law to review the exact requirements for these Good Cause Exemptions.

## Reading Camp

Students who do not show proficiency after third grade and who do not qualify for a good cause exemption, are encouraged to attend reading camp. This camp will be provided by the local school district and will be of no cost to you. The reading camps will offer at least 72 hours of instruction and will be at least three weeks in length. Students can show proficiency after the camps by passing the Read to

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Achieve test or local alternative test or producing a completed reading portfolio. Those students showing proficiency will be promoted to the fourth grade.

Note: Students are encouraged to attend reading camps for extra support toward reaching proficiency. A parent/guardian can decide that the student will not attend reading camp. In this case the student will be given an opportunity to take the Read to Achieve test or the local alternative test on an LEA designated day at the end of the summer.

## Retention

If a student is still not proficient at the end of the summer, a decision is made by the principal and teachers most familiar with the student about the placement for the following year. The student could be retained in a third grade class and receive accelerated reading services **OR** be moved to the next year with a “retained reading” label on his or her record. A child who is identified as retained under this law will be afforded many extra intensive interventions and opportunities to develop skills and gain proficiency. Retention gives the child the extra time that is needed to catch up in reading and build stronger skills for other content areas. Reading deficiencies must be addressed before students move into more difficult work and assignments in fourth grade and beyond. Students who are not competent in reading skills can become frustrated with more complex texts and tasks in the higher grades. It is necessary to make sure that all students are reading with proficiency before this occurs.

## Successful Reading Development for Retained Students

Retained students will be placed in one of three situations during the next school year: a third-grade accelerated class, a three/four transitional class or a fourth-grade accelerated class. Students will be placed in a class that best suits their needs. Students in the third-grade accelerated class will be taught third grade standards and curriculum and will get 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction daily outside of the classroom setting. These students will receive these services all year and will take the third grade EOG at the end of the year.

Students in the three/four transitional class or the fourth grade accelerated class will be in fourth grade classes that use fourth grade standards and curriculum.

Both of these classes will include:

- Research-based effective teaching strategies
- A highly qualified teacher
- At least 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction each day to include:
  - one-on-one and small group instruction
  - frequent progress monitoring
  - intensive intervention strategies
  - a heterogeneous mix of students
- Intensive remediation for students with the “retained reading” label

Students in the transitional classes will receive these interventions within the regular class setting and students in the accelerated classes will receive the interventions in a pull-out class for the entire 90 minutes of instruction. These students will take the 4<sup>th</sup> grade EOG at the end of the year.

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Parents of retained students in any of the three classes can expect monthly written reports on their child's reading progress.

### **Mid-year Promotion**

Students with the retained reading label in the three/four transition class or fourth-grade accelerated class will be given a chance to show proficiency of third-grade standards by passing the Read to Achieve test, the local alternative assessment or by completing a reading portfolio. This mid-year promotion will be determined by November 1. If a student shows proficiency, he or she will have the retained reading label removed. If a student does not show proficiency at mid-year, he or she will continue work on a portfolio to hopefully be completed by the end of the fourth grade to have the retention label removed from his or her records. If the student does not complete a fourth-grade portfolio by the end of the year, the retained label remains on his or her record and a decision will be made about the placement of the student for the following year. All students will remain in the same classes for the entire year and will continue to receive the 90-minute block of uninterrupted reading instruction and take the fourth-grade EOG in the spring.

### **Why the Law Is Being Implemented**

This law focuses on early identification and early intervention for students who are struggling with reading skill development and comprehension. In order to reduce the need for high remedial classes in middle and high schools, to increase the graduation rate, and to have all students college and career ready at graduation, the state needs to be proactive in its approach to offer multiple and intensive opportunities for struggling readers at an early age.

### **More Information**

For more information on how this program will be implemented in your child's school and district, please contact your school.