



## MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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### NEWS RELEASE

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### **3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading assessment will be administered from April 4-22**

JACKSON, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) is announcing that the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading assessment, which helps determine promotion to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, will be administered from April 4-22 across the state.

The Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) enacted in 2013 was created to help ensure kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade students develop good reading skills. The law was amended in 2016 and requires all Mississippi 3<sup>rd</sup> grade public school students to score at level 3 or higher on the reading portion of the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program English Language Arts (MAAP-ELA) test to qualify to be promoted to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Exemptions apply to certain students with disabilities, students learning English or students who have been previously retained.

Third-graders will be given up to three attempts to pass the assessment. If a student fails the first test, a retest will be given May 9-13. If a student fails the retest, a second retest will be given June 20-July 8. Schools and districts will offer intervention to students who fail the tests.

The MDE has shared various resources with school districts and teachers to better ensure students are prepared for the assessment. In fall 2021, MDE held eight regional family literacy meetings. Additional MDE resources available to parents and guardians include:

- [StrongReaders.com/thirdgrade](https://www.strongreaders.com/thirdgrade) – The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade section of MDE’s Strong Readers, Strong Leaders website is full of fun activities families and students can use to improve reading. Topics cover vocabulary, comprehension, working with sounds, working with letters and sounds and reading accurately to understand.
- [3rd Grade Reading Assessment Flyer](#), which contains information about testing dates, format, results, the importance of passing the assessment and how families can support reading development at home.
- [www.mdek12.org/literacy](http://www.mdek12.org/literacy) - Additional guidance, resources and information about the LBPA may be found online by visiting the Literacy section of MDE’s website.
- Social media – MDE will share tips on its Facebook and Twitter platforms in the coming weeks.

In 2019, 74.5% of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders passed the assessment on the first attempt. By the third attempt, a total of 85.6% passed. The Mississippi State Board of Education (SBE) suspended administering the assessment for the 2019-20 school year due to the state of emergency Gov. Tate Reeves declared in March 2020 to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading assessment was administered once in the 2020-21 school year, however; due to the state of emergency, the SBE waived the passing requirement. The state of emergency expired Nov. 20, 2021.

The LBPA takes a comprehensive approach to helping teachers and school leaders effectively teach reading and implement an ongoing system to monitor student progress. The law enables MDE to deploy literacy coaches to schools where data show students struggle the most with reading. Coaches work directly with teachers and administrators to help them become more effective teachers of reading. Currently, 56 literacy coaches serve 95 schools and 51 districts.

Mississippi’s K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade students are screened three times annually to determine their reading levels. Based on those results, teachers can focus on a student’s needed improvement skills. Parents are also made aware of their child’s results and can check with their child’s teachers for helpful strategies specific to their child’s needs.

“Mississippi’s K-3 teachers, administrators and school leaders have worked hard to assess and prepare 3<sup>rd</sup> graders to meet reading standards even during the pandemic,” said Dr. Carey Wright, state superintendent of education. “MDE encourages parents to utilize resources from MDE and from their child’s teacher and school to equip students to succeed.”

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