



July 13, 2017

Dear Parents:

As you may be aware, the South Carolina Read to Succeed Act, which became law in 2014, aims to improve literacy and reading proficiency for all children in our state. The new law, which goes into effect in this school year, includes some significant changes regarding the promotion and retention of third grade students.

Beginning this school year, a student must be retained in the third grade if the student fails to demonstrate reading proficiency. A student's reading proficiency will be determined based on his or her score on the state summative reading assessment. The state will be identifying students scoring in the bottom 5% on the assessment across the entire state population for possible retention.

As stated above, these changes will take effect during the 2017-2018 school year. This school year's third-grade students will be the first group of students to be impacted by this portion of the Read to Succeed Law.

A student may be exempt for a good cause from the mandatory retention but shall continue to receive instructional support and services and reading intervention appropriate for his/her age and reading level. Some of the exemptions include students with limited English proficiency, students with disabilities, and students who have received two years of reading intervention and were previously retained. Also, students eligible for retention may enroll in a Summer Reading Camp provided by the district prior to being retained the following school year. Your child's teacher or school administration will be able to discuss exceptions with you.

Please be assured that our goals are that all students will be proficient readers in third grade and that no students will be retained for failing to demonstrate reading proficiency. Supports have been put in place in elementary schools to improve student success in literacy. These supports include additional literacy instructional time, small group and individualized instruction, and computer assisted instruction. Classroom teachers have also received specialized literacy training and support from school-based literacy coaches and content interventionists.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact your school's principal. You can also find information about Read to Succeed on the South Carolina Department of Education website <http://ed.sc.gov/instruction/read-to-succeed/>.

Sincerely,


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