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Promotion to Grade 4 Technical Assistance Paper

Summary:

The purpose of this Technical Assistance Paper (TAP) is to provide school districts with updated requirements for student progression based on section (s.) **1002.20**, Florida Statutes (F.S.); s. 1008.25, F.S.; Rule 6A-6.053, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.); **Rule 6A-6.0530, F.A.C.**; Rule 6A-1.094221, F.A.C.; and Rule 6A-1.094222, F.A.C. Updates can be found in **bold** print.

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Amends existing Technical Assistance Paper: DPS: 2022-65, Promotion to Grade 4.

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A. IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH A SUBSTANTIAL DEFICIENCY IN EARLY LITERACY SKILLS OR A SUBSTANTIAL DEFICIENCY IN READING

A Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) student is identified as having a substantial deficiency in early literacy skills if the student scores below the tenth (10th) percentile or is unable to complete the practice items at the middle or end of the year test administration of the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system pursuant to s. 1008.25(9), F.S.

A kindergarten through grade 3 (K-3) student is identified as having a substantial deficiency in reading if any of the following criteria are met:

- 1. A student is identified as in need of Tier 3 interventions;**
2. A student demonstrates through progress monitoring, formative assessments or teacher observation data, minimum skill levels for reading competency in one or more of the six components of reading (oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension); and
 - a. For kindergarten, the student scores below the tenth (10th) percentile or is unable to complete the practice items on the designated grade-level assessment at the beginning, middle or end of the year test administration of the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system pursuant to s. 1008.25(9), F.S.;
 - b. For grades 1 and 2, the student scores below the tenth (10th) percentile or is unable to complete the practice items on the designated grade-level assessment for the specified test administration of the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system pursuant to s. 1008.25(9), F.S.; or
 - c. For grade 3, the student scores below the twentieth (20th) percentile at the beginning or middle of the year test administration of the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system pursuant to s. 1008.25(9), F.S.
3. A student in grade 3 scores Level 1 on the end of the year statewide, standardized English Language Arts (ELA) assessment pursuant to s. 1008.22(3)(a), F.S.

(Rule 6A-6.053, F.A.C.)

B. PARENTAL NOTIFICATIONS AND STUDENT PLANS

The parent of any K-3 student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading or the characteristics of dyslexia pursuant to s. 1008.25(5), F.S., must be immediately notified of the student's deficiency and consulted in the development of a plan to address the deficiency, as described in s. 1008.25(4)(b), F.S. The required plan must be one of the following:

- 1. A federally required student plan, such as an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan, if the IEP or 504 Plan addresses the student's reading deficiency;**
- 2. A schoolwide system of progress monitoring for all students, except a student who scores Level 4 or above on the ELA and Mathematics assessments may be exempted from participation by the principal; or**
- 3. An individualized progress monitoring plan (IPMP).**

K-3 students identified with a substantial deficiency in reading must have an IPMP that is designed to address the student's specific reading deficiency. The IPMP must be developed within 45 days after the results of the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system become available. For reading, the IPMP shall include at a minimum:

1. The student's specific, identified reading deficiency.
2. Goals and benchmarks for student growth in reading.
3. A description of the specific measures that will be used to evaluate and monitor the student's reading progress.
4. The specific evidence-based literacy instruction grounded in the science of reading which the student will receive.
5. Strategies, resources and materials that will be provided to the student's parent to support the student to make reading progress.
6. Any additional services the student's teacher deems available and appropriate to accelerate the student's reading development.

K-3 students with qualifying disabilities covered by an IEP or 504 Plan are exempt from the requirement to have an IPMP, if the IEP or 504 Plan addresses the student's reading deficiency. If a student with a qualifying disability is covered by an IEP or 504 Plan ONLY, the above criteria should be documented in the IEP or 504 Plan along with all other required documentation.

The parent of any K-3 student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading must be **immediately** notified in writing of the following:

1. That his or her child has been identified as having a substantial deficiency in reading, including a description and explanation, in terms understandable to the parent, of the exact nature of the student's difficulty in learning and lack of achievement in reading.
2. A description of the current services that are provided to the child.
3. A description of the proposed intensive interventions and supports that will be provided to the child that are designed to remediate the identified area of reading deficiency.
4. That if the child's reading deficiency is not remediated by the end of grade 3, the child must be retained unless he or she is exempt from mandatory retention for good cause.
5. Strategies, including multisensory strategies and programming, through a read-at-home plan the parent can use in helping his or her child succeed in reading. The read-at-home plan must provide access to the resources compiled by the Department of Education (Department).
6. That the statewide, standardized ELA assessment is not the sole determiner of promotion and that additional evaluations, portfolio reviews and assessments are available to the child to assist parents and the school district in knowing when a child is reading at or above grade level and ready for grade promotion.
7. The district's specific criteria and policies for student portfolios and the evidence required for a student to demonstrate mastery of Florida's academic standards for ELA. A school must immediately begin collecting evidence for a portfolio when a student in

grade 3 is identified as being at risk of retention or upon the request of the parent, whichever occurs first.

8. The district's specific criteria and policies for mid-year promotion. Mid-year promotion means promotion of a retained student at any time during the year of retention once the student has demonstrated ability to read at grade level.
9. Information about the student's eligibility for the New Worlds Reading Initiative under s. 1003.485, F.S., and information on parent training modules and other reading engagement resources available through the initiative.
10. The process to request and receive a New Worlds Scholarship under s. 1002.411, F.S., subject to available funds.

After initial notification, the school shall apprise the parent at least monthly of the student's progress in response to the intensive interventions and supports. Such communications must be in writing and must explain any additional interventions or supports that will be implemented to accelerate the student's progress if the interventions and supports already being implemented have not resulted in improvement. **Upon the request of the parent, the teacher or school administrator shall meet to discuss the student's progress. The parent may request more frequent notification of the student's progress, more frequent interventions or support and earlier implementation of the additional interventions or supports described in the initial notification.**

Additionally, each school district shall provide written notification to the parent of a student who is retained in grade 3 that his or her child has not met the achievement level required for promotion and the reasons the child is not eligible for good cause exemption. This notification must comply with the aforementioned notification for the parent of a student with a substantial deficiency in reading and must include a description of proposed interventions and supports that will be provided to the child to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency.

(s. 1002.20(11), F.S., and s. 1008.25(4), (5), (8), F.S.)

C. INTERVENTIONS

Any VPK student in a public school who exhibits a substantial deficiency in early literacy skills and any K-3 student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading or the characteristics of dyslexia based upon screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring or assessment data; statewide assessments; or teacher observations must be provided intensive, explicit, systematic and multisensory reading interventions, that are grounded in the science of reading, immediately following the identification of the reading deficiency or the characteristics of dyslexia to address his or her specific deficiency or dyslexia.

A school may not wait for a student to receive a failing grade at the end of a grading period or wait until a plan is developed to identify the student as having a substantial deficiency in reading and initiate intensive reading interventions. In addition, a school may not wait until an evaluation conducted pursuant to s. 1003.57, F.S., is completed to provide appropriate,

evidence-based interventions for a student whose parent submits documentation from a professional licensed under Chapter 490, F.S., which demonstrates that the student has been diagnosed with dyslexia. Such interventions must be initiated upon receipt of the documentation and based on the student's specific areas of difficulty as identified by the licensed professional.

(s. 1008.25(5), F.S.)

D. COMPREHENSIVE READING AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

The Department shall provide a list of state-examined and approved comprehensive reading and intervention programs, **which shall be determined through the instructional materials adoption process in the 2024-2025 school year**. The intervention programs shall be provided in addition to the comprehensive core reading instruction that is provided to all students in the general education classroom. Dyslexia-specific interventions are defined in **Rule 6A-6.053, F.A.C.**, and shall be provided to students who have the characteristics of dyslexia. The reading intervention programs must do all of the following:

1. Provide explicit, direct instruction that is systematic, sequential and cumulative in language development, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, as applicable.
2. Provide daily targeted small group reading interventions based on student need in phonological awareness, phonics including decoding and encoding, sight words, vocabulary or comprehension; and
3. Be implemented during regular school hours.

The primary instructional strategy for teaching word reading is phonics instruction for decoding and encoding. Instructional strategies may not employ the three-cueing system model of reading or visual memory as a basis for teaching word reading. Such instruction may include visual information and strategies which improve background knowledge and experiential knowledge, add context and increase oral language and vocabulary to support comprehension, but may not be used to teach word reading.

(s. 1008.25(5), (8), F.S.)

E. REQUIREMENTS FOR PROMOTION TO GRADE 4

To be promoted to grade 4, a student must score Level 2 or higher on the grade 3 statewide, standardized ELA assessment required under s. 1008.22, F.S. If a student's reading deficiency is not remedied by the end of grade 3, as demonstrated by scoring Level 2 or higher on the grade 3 statewide, standardized ELA assessment required under s. 1008.22, F.S., the student must be retained. **Students who score Level 1 on the grade 3 statewide, standardized ELA assessment during Progress Monitoring (PM) 3 will be provided an additional opportunity to test in the summer (refer to the current [Statewide Assessment Schedule](#) for testing window dates).** A score of Level 2 or above on the summer administration of the grade 3

statewide, standardized ELA assessment can also be used for promotion purposes.

The district school board may only exempt students from mandatory retention for good cause. Good cause exemptions are limited to the following:

1. Limited English proficient students who have had less than 2 years of instruction in an English for Speakers of Other Languages program based on the initial date of entry into a school in the United States.
2. Students with disabilities whose IEP indicates that participation in the statewide assessment program is not appropriate, consistent with the requirements of s. 1008.212, F.S.
3. Students who demonstrate an acceptable level of performance on an alternative standardized reading or ELA assessment approved by the State Board of Education.
4. A student who demonstrates through a student portfolio that he or she is performing at least at Level 2 on the statewide, standardized ELA assessment.
5. Students with disabilities who take the statewide, standardized ELA assessment and have an IEP or 504 Plan that reflects that the student has received intensive instruction in reading for more than two years but still demonstrates a deficiency and was previously retained in prekindergarten, kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2 or grade 3.
6. Students who have received intensive reading intervention for two or more years but still demonstrate a deficiency in reading and were previously retained in kindergarten, grade 1, grade 2 or grade 3 for a total of two years. A student may not be retained more than once in grade 3.

(s. 1008.25(5), (7), F.S.)

F. ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS FOR PROMOTION TO GRADE 4

A student who scores Level 1 on the grade 3 statewide, standardized ELA assessment may be promoted to grade 4 if the student demonstrates an acceptable level of performance on an approved alternative standardized reading assessment. The Department shall review and approve the use of alternative standardized reading assessments to be used as a good cause exemption for promotion to grade 4 and provide a list of approved alternative assessments to districts. The approval of an alternative standardized reading assessment must be based on whether the assessment meets the following criteria:

1. Internal consistency reliability coefficients of at least 0.80;
2. High validity evidenced by the alignment of the test with nationally recognized content standards, as well as specific evidence of content, concurrent or criterion validity;
3. Norming studies within the last five to ten years, with norming within five years being preferable; and
4. Serves as a measure of grade 3 achievement in reading comprehension.

Districts may submit requests for the approval of alternative standardized reading assessments to be used for good cause exemption for promotion to grade 4. Once an assessment has been approved by the Department, the assessment is approved for statewide use. The Department

shall approve the required percentile passing score for each approved alternative standardized reading assessment based on an analysis of Florida student achievement results. If an analysis is not feasible, students must score at or above the fiftieth (50th) percentile on the approved alternative standardized reading assessment. The earliest the alternative assessment may be administered for promotion purposes is following the administration of the grade 3 statewide, standardized ELA assessment. An approved standardized reading assessment may be administered two (2) times if there are at least thirty (30) days between administrations and different test forms are administered.

The table below lists approved alternative assessments and required percentiles at the publishing date of this TAP. It is the responsibility of the district to ensure use of the most current set of norms available for the respective alternative assessment. The current approved assessments are listed on the Third Grade Guidance webpage of the Just Read, Florida! website, <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/standards/just-read-fl/third-grade-guidance.stml>.

SAT-10	45 th Percentile
Terranova	50 th Percentile
ITBS	50 th Percentile
NWEA MAP	50 th Percentile
Star Reading	50 th Percentile
i-Ready	50 th Percentile
Istation	50 th Percentile
Achieve3000 LevelSet	50 th Percentile
Amira	50 th Percentile
Edmentum Exact Path	50 th Percentile

(Rule 6A-1.094221, F.A.C.)

G. STUDENT PORTFOLIOS FOR PROMOTION TO GRADE 4

To promote a student using a student portfolio as a good cause exemption, there must be evidence that demonstrates the student's mastery of the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) ELA Standards is equal to at least Level 2 performance on the grade 3 statewide, standardized ELA assessment. Such evidence shall be an organized collection of the student's mastery of the B.E.S.T. ELA Standards that are assessed by the grade 3 statewide, standardized ELA assessment. A school must immediately begin collecting evidence for a portfolio when a student in grade 3 is identified as being at risk of retention or upon the request of the parent, whichever occurs first. The portfolio must meet the following criteria:

1. Be selected by the student's teacher;
2. Be an accurate picture of the student's ability and only include student work that has been independently produced in the classroom;
3. Include evidence that the benchmarks assessed by the grade 3 statewide, standardized ELA assessment have been met. Evidence is to include grade-level passages that are approximately fifty (50) percent literary text and fifty (50) percent informational text,

and that are between 100-700 words with an average of 500 words. Such evidence could include chapter or unit tests from the district's/school's adopted core reading curriculum or teacher-prepared assessments that are aligned with the B.E.S.T. ELA Standards;

4. Be an organized collection of evidence of the student's mastery of the B.E.S.T. ELA Standards that are assessed by the grade 3 statewide, standardized ELA assessment. For each benchmark, there must be at least eight (8) items assessed and the student must demonstrate seventy (70) percent mastery for all items assessed per benchmark; and
5. Be signed by the teacher and the principal as an accurate assessment of the required reading skills.

To request a good cause exemption, documentation shall be submitted 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. In order to minimize paperwork requirements, such documentation shall consist only of the existing progress monitoring plan, individual educational plan, if applicable, report card or student portfolio. The school principal shall review and discuss such recommendation with the teacher and make the determination as to whether the student should be promoted or retained. If the school principal determines that the student should be promoted, the school principal shall make such recommendation in writing to the school district superintendent. The school district superintendent shall accept or reject the school principal's recommendation in writing.

(s. 1008.25(7), F.S., and Rule 6A-1.094221, F.A.C.)

H. SUMMER BRIDGE PROGRAM

In the summer before entering kindergarten, VPK students who score below the tenth (10th) percentile or have a nonparticipation status of "assessment inappropriate," "failed practice" or "non-English speaker" on PM3 of the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system are eligible to participate in the Summer Bridge Program. The Summer Bridge Program consists of 4 hours of instruction per day for a minimum of 100 total hours, with an emphasis on emergent literacy instruction grounded in the science of reading.

(s. 1008.25(5), F.S., and Rule 6A-6.0530, F.A.C.)

I. SUMMER READING CAMPS

Retained third grade students must be provided intensive interventions in reading to ameliorate the student's specific reading deficiency and prepare the student for promotion to the next grade. These interventions must include participation in the school district's Summer Reading Camp, which must incorporate evidence-based, explicit, systematic and multisensory reading instruction grounded in the science of reading, in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and other strategies prescribed by the school district.

School districts must provide intensive interventions through Summer Reading Camps to students in grade 3 who score Level 1 on the statewide, standardized ELA assessment. These students must be provided with a highly effective teacher as determined by the teacher's performance evaluation under s. 1012.34, F.S., and the teacher must also be certified or endorsed in reading.

(s. 1008.25(8), F.S., and Rule 6A-6.053, F.A.C.)

J. SERVICES FOR STUDENTS RETAINED IN GRADE 3

Students retained in grade 3 must be provided with a highly effective teacher as determined by the teacher's performance evaluation under s. 1012.34, F.S., and the teacher must also be certified or endorsed in reading. These students must also be provided intensive reading interventions that are grounded in the science of reading to ameliorate the student's specific reading deficiency and prepare the student for promotion to the next grade. These interventions must include:

1. Evidence-based, explicit, systematic and multisensory reading instruction grounded in the science of reading, in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and other strategies prescribed by the school district;
2. Participation in the school district's summer reading camp, which must incorporate the instructional and intervention strategies above that place rigor and grade-level learning at the forefront; and
3. A minimum of 90 minutes of daily, uninterrupted reading instruction incorporating the instructional and intervention strategies above. This instruction may include:
 - a. Coordinated integration of content-rich texts in science and civic literacy within the 90-minute block;
 - b. Targeted small group instruction;
 - c. Explicit and systematic instruction with more detailed explanations, more extensive opportunities for guided practice and more opportunities for error correction and feedback;
 - d. Reduced teacher-student ratios;
 - e. More frequent progress monitoring of the reading skills of each student throughout the school year and the adjustment of instruction according to student need;
 - f. Tutoring or mentoring;
 - g. Transition classes containing 3rd and 4th grade students;
 - h. Extended school day, week or year; and
 - i. Before school or after school, or both, supplemental evidence-based reading interventions grounded in the science of reading delivered by a teacher who is certified or endorsed in reading and is rated highly effective as determined by the teacher's performance evaluation under s. 1012.34, F.S.

The primary instructional strategy for teaching word reading is phonics instruction for decoding and encoding. Instructional strategies may not employ the three-cueing system model of

reading or visual memory as a basis for teaching word reading. Such instruction may include visual information and strategies which improve background knowledge and experiential knowledge, add context and increase oral language and vocabulary to support comprehension, but may not be used to teach word reading.

(s. 1008.25(8), F.S.)

K. SERVICES FOR STUDENTS PROMOTED TO GRADE 4 WITH A GOOD CAUSE EXEMPTION

A student who is promoted to grade 4 with a good cause exemption shall be provided intensive reading instruction and intervention grounded in the science of reading that includes specialized diagnostic information and specific reading strategies to meet the needs of each student so promoted. The school district shall assist schools and teachers with the implementation of explicit, systematic and multisensory reading instruction and intervention strategies for students promoted with a good cause exemption which research has shown to be successful in improving reading among students who have reading difficulties. **It is best practice for the school to update the parent at least monthly of the student's progress in response to the intensive reading instruction and intervention. Upon the request of the parent, the teacher or school administrator shall meet to discuss the student's progress. The parent may request more frequent notification of the student's progress, more frequent interventions and earlier implementation of the additional interventions or support described in the initial notification.**

(s. 1008.25(7), F.S.)

L. INTENSIVE READING ACCELERATION COURSE

Each school district shall establish at each school, when applicable, an intensive reading acceleration course for any student retained in grade 3 who was previously retained in kindergarten, grade 1 or grade 2. The intensive reading acceleration course must provide the following:

1. Uninterrupted reading instruction grounded in the science of reading for the majority of student contact time each day and opportunities to master the grade 4 state academic standards in other core subject areas through content-rich texts.
2. Explicit and systematic instruction with more detailed explanations, more extensive opportunities for guided practice and more opportunities for error correction and feedback.
3. Targeted small group instruction.
4. Reduced teacher-student ratios.
5. The use of explicit, systematic and multisensory reading interventions grounded in the science of reading, including intensive language, phonics and vocabulary instruction, and use of a speech-language therapist, if necessary, that have proven results in accelerating student reading achievement within the same school year.
6. A read-at-home plan.

(s. 1008.25(8), F.S.)

M. MID-YEAR PROMOTION OF RETAINED GRADE 3 STUDENTS

Each school district shall implement a policy for the mid-year promotion of a student retained in grade 3 who can demonstrate that he or she is a successful and independent reader and performing at or above grade level in reading. Tools that school districts may use in reevaluating a student retained may include subsequent assessments, alternative assessments and portfolio reviews, in accordance with State Board of Education rules. Such mid-year promotions of retained grade 3 students should occur during the first semester of the academic year. To be eligible for mid-year promotion, a student must demonstrate that he or she:

1. Is a successful and independent reader as demonstrated by reading at or above grade level;
2. Has progressed sufficiently to master appropriate fourth grade reading skills; and
3. Has met any additional requirements, such as satisfactory achievement in other curriculum areas, as determined by the policies of the district school board.

The criteria for students promoted on or before November 1 must provide reasonable expectation that the student has mastery of grade 3 reading skills as presented in the state academic standards in ELA. Evidence is as follows:

1. Satisfactory performance as demonstrated by scoring Level 2 or above on the beginning of the year test administration of the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system in grade 3 ELA pursuant to s. 1008.25(9)(b)3., F.S.;
2. Satisfactory performance on locally selected standardized assessment(s) measuring state academic standards in ELA pursuant to s. 1003.41, F.S.;
3. Satisfactory performance on a state approved alternative assessment as delineated in paragraph (1)(b) of Rule 6A-1.094221, F.A.C., and described in Section F of this TAP; or
4. Successful completion of portfolio elements that meet all of the following requirements:
 - a. Be selected by the school district;
 - b. Be an accurate picture of the student's ability and only include student work that has been independently produced in the classroom;
 - c. Include evidence that the benchmarks assessed by the grade 3 statewide, standardized ELA assessment under s. 1008.22, F.S., have been met. Evidence is to include grade level passages that are approximately fifty (50) percent literary text and fifty (50) percent informational text, and that are between 100-700 words with an average of 500 words. Such evidence could include chapter or unit tests from the district's/school's adopted core reading curriculum or teacher-prepared assessments that are aligned with the B.E.S.T. ELA standards;
 - d. Be an organized collection of evidence of the student's mastery of the B.E.S.T. ELA standards that are assessed by the grade 3 statewide, standardized ELA assessment under s. 1008.22, F.S. For each benchmark, there must be at least eight (8) items assessed and the student must demonstrate seventy (70) percent mastery for all items assessed per benchmark; and

- e. Be signed by the teacher and the principal as an accurate assessment of the required reading skills.

A retained third grade student is eligible for mid-year promotion if the student scores Level 2 or above on PM1 of the Grade 3 FAST ELA Reading Assessment and there is evidence the student is progressing sufficiently to master appropriate grade 4 reading skills.

The criteria for students promoted after November 1 must provide reasonable expectation that the student has met the requirements outlined in Rule 6A-1.094222, F.A.C., and that the student's progress is sufficient to master appropriate grade 4 reading skills equivalent to the level necessary for the month in which the transition to grade 4 occurs.

The IPMP for any retained grade 3 student who has been promoted mid-year to grade 4 must continue to be implemented for the entire academic year and, if necessary, for additional school years.

(s. 1008.25(8), F.S., Rule 6A-1.094221, F.A.C., and Rule 6A-1.094222, F.A.C.)