



To the Families of 3rd Grade Students of Vicksburg Community Schools,

Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, all 3rd grade students are required to take the M-STEP standardized state assessment to determine promotion to 4th grade. If your child achieves a reading score that is more than one grade level behind as defined by the Michigan Department of Education, you will be informed in writing by the state that your child will not be promoted to 4th grade unless he/she demonstrates proficiency on alternative measures or qualifies for a Good Cause Exemption.

Criteria to qualify for the Good Cause Exemptions allowed by state law:

- The student has an individualized education program or Section 504 plan (based on federal law), whose team has decided to exempt the student from specified retention requirements based on the team's knowledge of the student.
- The student is a limited English proficient student who has had fewer than three years of instruction in an English language learner program.
- The student has received intensive reading intervention for two or more years, but still demonstrates a deficiency in reading and was previously retained in Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2, or Grade 3.
- The student has been continuously enrolled in the current school district or charter school for less than two years and there is evidence that the student was not provided with an appropriate Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP) by the previous school.
- The student has demonstrated proficiency in all subject areas assessed on the Grade 3 state assessment other than ELA as evidenced by his or her scores on those assessments. In addition, the student has also demonstrated proficiency in science and social studies as shown through a pupil portfolio as determined by the teacher who provided the Grade 3 instruction to the pupil in science and social studies. (see page 2)
- The student's Grade 3 teacher submits a request with supporting documentation.
- The student's parent or guardian has requested a Good Cause Exemption within 30 days after notification by CEPI and the superintendent determines that the exemption is in the best interest of the student. (Form available from the district)

Reading instruction is a major focus in grades K-3, as 3rd grade is the year that students transition from *learning to read* to *reading to learn*. Students need strong reading skills to learn in all other school subjects, such as science, history, writing, and mathematics. Much work is being done to ensure the success of our K-3 students.

Vicksburg Community Schools believes that all students have a right to be successful in literacy and that schools and families should partner together to help develop children's early literacy skills through communication and outreach. Our district is committed to implementing evidence-based literacy strategies in the classroom, and decisions related to retention should be in the best interest of the individual child.

Thank you very much for your support!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keevin O'Neill', written over a horizontal line.

Keevin O'Neill, Superintendent