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MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Cheri Pierson Yecke, Ph.D

DATE: July 7, 2006

SUBJECT: THIRD GRADE STUDENT PROGRESSION

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K12: 2006-90

The Department of Education is pleased to provide this updated technical assistance document on third grade progression issues. As you make important promotion and retention decisions for the third grade students in your school district, we hope that this set of questions and answers will be a valuable resource. The previous memo on this topic, K-12 (2005-60), went out via the paperless system on May 26, 2005. Please refer to the memo that we are supplying today for the most accurate information.

Information on the following issues is provided: student portfolios, testing and assessment, tier three students and transitional classrooms, options for parents of struggling readers, summer reading camps, mid-year promotion, ESE promotion issues, curriculum, and professional development.

If we can be of further assistance or provide clarification on any of these topics, please contact Cari Miller at 850/245-0503 or Cari.Miller@fldoe.org or Samantha Love at 850/245-9947 or Samantha.Love@fldoe.org.

CPY/slf

Attachment

cc: Assistant Superintendents for Curriculum and Instruction
Directors of Elementary Education
Director of Student Services
Title I Coordinators
Director of Exceptional Student Education
District ESOL Coordinators

CHERI PIERSON YECKE, PH.D.
CHANCELLOR, K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Third Grade Progression Question and Answer

1. What FCAT score does a third grade student need to achieve to be promoted to fourth grade?

FCAT scores affect students in grade 3 Reading (for promotion and retention purposes). Students in Grade 3 must score a Level 2 or higher on FCAT Reading, on a scale of 1-5, to be promoted. Some districts may have additional requirements for promotion as part of their local *Student Progression Plan* adopted by their local school boards. There are also good cause exemptions that apply to grade 3 students.

2. What promotion options are available for Grade 3 students who have not achieved a Level 2 on Reading FCAT?

Some third graders who score Level 1 on FCAT in Reading can be exempted from the retention requirement and be promoted to fourth grade. This is called a “good cause exemption.” Good cause exemptions are only given to the following students:

- Students who show an acceptable level of performance on the alternate reading test (SAT) (see #12 and #35 for acceptable levels of performance)
- Students who demonstrate mastery of the Sunshine State Standards through a teacher-developed portfolio
- Limited English Proficient students who have had less than two years of instruction in an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program
- Students with disabilities whose Individual Educational Plan (IEP) shows that it is not appropriate for them to take the FCAT
- Students with disabilities who take the FCAT and whose IEP or 504 Plan states that they have received intensive remediation in reading for more than two years but who still show a deficiency in reading and who were previously retained in kindergarten through grade 3, or
- Students who have received intensive remediation in reading for two or more years but who still have a deficiency in reading and who have already been retained in kindergarten through grade 3 for a total of two years

Student Portfolio:

3. Why would a teacher use a student portfolio?

Under Section 1008.25(6), Florida Statutes, (Eliminating Social Promotion) students who score a Level 1 on the grade 3 Reading FCAT may be promoted to fourth grade if the student demonstrates through a student portfolio that

they are reading on grade level as evidenced by mastery of the Sunshine State Standards.

4. Are there guidelines provided by the state for the third grade student portfolio?

Yes. To be accepted as meeting the portfolio option for demonstrating mastery of the required reading skills, the student portfolio must:

- Be selected by the student's teacher;
- Be an accurate picture of the student's ability and only include student work that has been independently produced in the classroom;
- Include evidence that the benchmarks assessed by the grade 3 Reading FCAT have been met. This includes multiple choice items and passages that are approximately 60% literary text and 40% information text that are between 100-700 words with an average of 350 words; Such evidence could include chapter or unit tests from the district's/school's adopted core reading curriculum that are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards or teacher-prepared assessments that are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards;
- Be an organized collection of evidence of the student's mastery of the Sunshine State Standard Benchmarks for Language Arts that are assessed by the grade 3 Reading FCAT. For each benchmark, there must be at least five examples of mastery as demonstrated by a grade of "C" or above; and
- Be signed by the teacher and the principal as an accurate assessment of the required reading skills.

5. Is the student portfolio the only tool used for good cause exemption and/or promoting a student mid-year?

No. The student portfolio and an alternative assessment are the two state approved options for good cause exemption and mid-year promotion. The student must be offered both options. However, the student must only demonstrate proficiency on one of the options in order to receive a good cause exemption or, be promoted mid-year.

6. Will the state provide a student portfolio to districts as an option to use for good cause exemption and/or mid-year promotion?

Yes. Just Read, Florida! developed a Third Grade Uniform Portfolio in partnership with Bay County School District. There are three phases of the uniform portfolio which include the following:

- Phase I:** Seven (7) assessments per benchmark at the 3.6-3.9 reading level
Phase II: Two (2) additional assessments per benchmark at the 3.6-3.9 level and Four (4) assessments per benchmark at the 4.0-4.5 level
Phase III: One (1) additional assessment at the 3.6-3.9 level per benchmark [total of Ten (10) assessments per benchmark at the 3.6-3.9 level]

A Third Grade Portfolio CD and binder were provided to each district for dissemination. It is a district's decision how to disseminate the portfolio to individual schools within the district. Contact your district for more information pertaining to dissemination of the Third Grade Portfolio.

7. If a teacher is monitoring the progress of a student, is a portfolio needed?

A portfolio provides on going information on how a student is performing on tested benchmarks. There are specific requirements of necessary elements that must be included in a portfolio used for promotion (see #4 of this document for the requirements). If a teacher chooses to follow the rigor of the state portfolio requirements, a portfolio can be used for progress monitoring as well as promotion.

Testing and Assessment:

8. Can districts choose a diagnostic assessment to be administered?

Yes. Districts decide which diagnostic assessment is administered. The Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment K-3 (ERDA) and the Diagnostic Assessments of Reading K-12 (DAR) are available through the Department's Office of Assessment and School Performance free of charge for 15% of the district's lowest performing students. For more information, contact Daphne Csonka via telephone at (850)245-0513 or via email at daphne.csonka@fldoe.org.

For a list of reviewed assessments that are appropriate for grades K-12 that meet psychometric standards, visit www.fcrr.org.

9. Can parts of the FCAT assessment be used as part of the portfolio?

No. Content areas do not provide enough information to allow for judgment as to whether a student has mastered that particular area of the Sunshine State Standards.

10. What are the FCAT developmental levels for the 2005-2006 school year?

Third Grade Reading FCAT Levels				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
100-258	259-283	284-331	332-393	394-500

11. Can FCAT be used to monitor the benchmark skills?

No. The FCAT does not report at the benchmark level, but rather, reports in content clusters.

12. What alternative assessment may be administered at the end of the year OR at the end of Summer Reading Camp to determine if a child qualifies for good cause exemption and promotion to fourth grade?

The SAT9 or SAT10 may be administered at the end of the year or at the end of Summer Reading Camp to determine if a child qualifies for good cause exemption and promotion to fourth grade. The child has to demonstrate mastery of the Sunshine State Standards by scoring 45% or above on the SAT10 or 51% or above on the SAT9. The Department of Education strongly suggests that districts administer the alternative assessment (SAT9 or SAT10) at the end of Summer Reading Camp. This gives the student an opportunity for intensive intervention designed to improve their reading skills before taking another assessment. The alternative assessment administered (SAT9 or SAT10) can only be administered **one time** annually for good cause exemption.

13. Can SAT9 or SAT10 be given at the end of the Summer Reading Camp and again for mid-year promotion?

Yes. The SAT9 can be administered at the end of Summer Reading Camp and again for mid-year promotion as long as there are 30 days between administrations. The SAT10 can also be administered at the end of Summer Reading Camp and again for mid-year promotion as long as there are 30 days between administrations AND 150 days prior to the FCAT NRT in the spring.

14. Do all K-3 students have to be given the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment?

No. All *Reading First* schools must administer DIBELS to K-3 students, all Tier 3 students must be administered the DIBELS, and the state also requires all kindergarten students be administered two DIBELS measures, Letter Naming Fluency and Initial Sound Fluency, as part of the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Test (FLKRS). If the district's K-12 Comprehensive Research-Based Reading Plan states they will use DIBELS to monitor the progress of their students, then the district would be required to administer the DIBELS to the appropriate students (determined in the K-12 Reading Plan).

15. Can a district use a Comprehensive Core Reading Program (CCRP) for a locally-selected standardized assessment?

No. The CCRP assessments are not standardized and do not meet psychometric standards required by the state.

16. What are some other options to monitor progress besides DIBELS?

Other options for informal progress monitoring include teacher observation, Comprehensive Core Reading Program (CCRP) weekly assessments, Supplemental Reading Program (SRP) assessments, and fluency probes using grade level text.

17. Can students other than Tier 3 students be entered on the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN)?

Yes. All students K-8 can be entered on the PMRN if schools are administering the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) for grades K-5 and the Florida Oral Reading Fluency (FORF) for grades 6-8. This registration and subsequent reporting services are free of charge.

18. Can a district accept SAT10 scores from another state for retention/promotion determination?

Yes. The child must demonstrate mastery by scoring 45% or above on the SAT10. District established policies for placement and promotion should also be considered.

Tier 3 students and Transitional Classrooms:

19. What constitutes a Tier 3 student?

A Tier 3 student is a student who has been retained twice in third grade.

20. Can all Tier 3 students in one district be placed in one school in order to form a Tier 3 classroom?

Yes. The district's Student Progression Plan should provide guidance to determine how to serve Tier 3 students. Transportation would need to be provided by the district.

21. What happens to a Tier 3 student that comes to another school that does not have Tier 3 students or the instructional opportunities for that student?

Regardless of when a student enters a school, he or she must be provided grade level work for the subject areas that are not at risk. Districts must provide all Tier 3 students, including transfer students, with intervention instruction and the option of being placed in a transitional instructional setting.

22. Does the Department of Education offer suggestions in developing a transitional classroom?

Yes. The following are possible examples of a transitional classroom setting:

- A transitional class may include Tier 2, Tier 3, and fourth grade students who may be struggling with the fourth grade reading curriculum and benchmarks.
- A transitional class may include only Tier 3 students who receive intensive reading instruction on their level and fourth grade curriculum in other subject areas.
- A transitional class may also be a fourth grade class that includes Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. The retained students can be pulled for their intensive reading instruction, which must be provided for the majority of the day.

23. Will the Department of Education provide guidance with selection of a Comprehensive Intervention Reading Program (CIRP) for Tier 3 students?

Yes. There is a link on the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) Web site www.fcrr.org for Tier 3 students. This is an excellent resource for guidance when selecting a reading program for Tier 3 students that is researched based and has proven results in increasing student reading achievement for fragile learners. **Remember, these are programs that have been reviewed and do not constitute an approved list from the Florida Department of Education or FCRR.**

24. Will the student preparing for mid-year promotion be given fourth grade instruction while in the Tier 3 class?

Yes. Reading benchmarks are the same for third and fourth grade, therefore the students can be taught fourth grade benchmarks on their reading level. All other curriculum will be instructed on a fourth grade level. All students should be supported in making continuous academic progress. This means teaching and learning for mastery and moving forward through the curriculum and the Sunshine State Standards as appropriate for the individual.

25. Do Tier 3 students need to be progress monitored?

Yes. All Tier 3 students are required to be registered on the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN) and progress monitored using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). Access to the PMRN and DIBELS is provided free of charge to the districts by the state.

26. Is there a website that provides additional information related to Tier 3 students?

Yes. There is a Web site that provides access to an Academic Support Plan for K-3 readers, which includes Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 guidelines. The Web site is <http://info.fldoe.org/dscgi/ds.py/Get/File-2157/DPS04-14Att.pdf>.

Options for Parents of Struggling Readers:

27. Is there parent information about third grade progression?

Yes. At the following Web site there is a booklet for parents of Florida's third-grade students: <http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/pdf/r21-eng.pdf>. It is designed to help parents understand what Florida law says about reading requirements for third-grade students and promotion to fourth grade. It also describes what the school is required to do to help students reading below grade level.

28. What options are available for parents of retained third graders to ensure their child is given every chance for improvement?

The law requires the provision of one of the following:

- Supplemental tutoring in scientifically research-based reading services including tutoring before and/or after school
- A "Read at Home" plan outlined in a parental contract including participation in "Families Building Better Readers" parent workshops and regular parent-guided home instruction, or
- A mentor or tutor with specialized reading training

29. What is Families Building Better Readers?

Families Building Better Readers (FBBR) workshops are offered free by DOE. FBBR is designed for parents of kindergarten through third grade students. Parents who participate in these workshops will learn simple activities they can do with their children to improve reading performance. For more information on FBBR visit the following Web site: <http://www.justreadflorida.com/fbbr.asp>.

30. Are there letters and notices available to the teacher to be used in communicating with the parents?

Yes. Flyers are available for Families Building Better Readers (FBBR) workshops that are customized for each workshop that the Department of Education organizes.

31. How can families and communities get more involved in reading programs?

Families and communities can get more involved in reading programs by having their own FBBR parent workshop, by visiting their local library, and by visiting the Just Read, Families! page on the Just Read, Florida! Web site: www.justreadflorida.com.

Summer Reading Camps:

32. How can teachers use assessments for the portfolio in Summer Reading Camps when the program used provides intensive reading but is not on grade level?

If the program is not on grade level, the assessments cannot be used to document mastery of third grade benchmarks. However, districts have the option of administering the Third Grade Uniform Portfolio developed by Just Read, Florida! In partnership with Bay County School District, which provides assessments ranging from the 3.6-3.9 level. A Third Grade Portfolio CD and binder were provided to each district for dissemination. It is a district's decision how to disseminate the portfolio to individual schools within the district. Contact your district for more information pertaining to dissemination of the Third Grade Portfolio.

33. Are Summer Reading Camps available for students in grades other than third?

Summer Reading Camps must be offered to Level 1 third graders specified in Section 1008.25(7) (a) (b), Florida Statutes. If a district chooses to open the camp to other grade levels, they may do so at their own discretion.

34. What alternative assessment may be administered at the end of the year or at the end of Summer Reading Camp to determine if a child qualifies for good cause exemption and promotion to fourth grade?

The SAT9 or SAT10 may be administered at the end of the year OR at the end of Summer Reading Camp to determine if a child qualifies for good cause exemption and promotion to fourth grade. The child has to demonstrate mastery of the Sunshine State Standards by scoring 45% or above on the SAT10 or 51% or above on the SAT9. The Department of Education strongly suggests that districts administer the alternative assessment (SAT9 or SAT10) at the end of Summer Reading Camp. This gives the student an opportunity for intensive intervention designed to improve their reading skills before taking another assessment. The alternative assessment administered (SAT9 or SAT10) can only be administered one time annually for good cause exemption.

Mid-year Promotion:

35. What are the guidelines/requirements for mid-year promotion?

Specified in Rule 6A-1.094222, FAC, to be eligible for mid-year promotion after November 1, a student must demonstrate mastery of reading skills consistent with the month of promotion to fourth grade as presented in the scope and sequence of the school district's core reading program. Evidence of demonstrated mastery is as follows:

- Successful completion of portfolio elements that meet state criteria, or
- Satisfactory performance on a locally-selected standardized assessment.

To promote a student mid-year using a student portfolio, there must be evidence of the student's mastery of third grade Sunshine State Standard Benchmarks for Language Arts and beginning mastery of the benchmarks for fourth grade. The student portfolio must meet the following requirements:

- Be selected by the student's teacher;
- Be an accurate picture of the student's ability and include only student work that has been independently produced in the classroom;
- Include evidence of mastery of the benchmarks assessed by the grade 3 Reading FCAT;
- Include evidence of beginning mastery of grade 4 benchmarks that are assessed by the grade 4 Reading FCAT. This includes multiple choice, short response, and extended response items and passages that are approximately 50% literary text and 50% information text and that are between 100-900 words with an average of 375 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 Sunshine State Standards. For each benchmark, there must be two examples of mastery as demonstrated by a grade of "C" or better; and
- Be signed by the teacher and the principal as an accurate assessment of the required reading skills.

To promote a student mid-year using a locally-selected standardized assessment, there must be evidence that the student scored at or above grade level in reading comprehension, as demonstrated by standard scores or percentiles, consistent with the month of promotion to fourth grade.

Additional district requirements for any mid-year promotion criteria must be specified in the district's Student Progression Plan.

36. When do the provisions of the mid-year promotion rule apply?

Prior to November 1, the district's Student Progression Plan should provide guidance on determining what is necessary for mid-year promotion. After November 1 all districts will follow the mid-year promotion rule.

37. Can a third grade student potentially eligible for mid-year promotion be placed in a fourth grade classroom and then promoted after demonstrating proficiency on the portfolio or an alternative assessment?

Yes. Districts need to meet the individual needs of students. This can be achieved through implementing creative multi-age grouping or a transitional classroom setting.

38. Why would a decision be made about a student's placement before November 1?

The intent of the rule is to ensure that students are promoted mid-year as soon as possible so they receive essential fourth grade instruction. For example: If a student has attended a Summer Reading Camp and demonstrated mastery of a grade of "C" or above on all benchmarks but one, the student could show proficiency in the deficit benchmark and then be promoted to fourth grade before November 1.

39. Are all third grade retained students eligible for the mid-year promotion?

Yes. Prior to November 1, any student meeting the mid-year promotion requirements stated in the district's Student Progression Plan can be promoted mid-year. After November 1, any student meeting state requirements specified in Rule 6A-1.094222, FAC, can be promoted mid-year.

40. Does the law limit the year in which a student can be promoted mid-year, or is this available in any grade?

The law states that any student retained for a reading deficiency can be considered for mid-year promotion in accordance with the district's Student Progression Plan.

41. How many samples of proficiency are required for each benchmark in order for a student to be mid-year promoted?

Prior to November 1, in any given school year, a student must have five examples of each benchmark successfully completed on the third grade level ("C" or above) in order to be mid-year promoted. After November 1, in any given school year, the student must have successfully mastered the third grade portfolio as well as mastered at least two examples of each tested benchmark consistent with the year and month of promotion for fourth grade.

Exceptional Student Education:

42. If a student is in Speech and has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP), is the district required to provide intensive remediation for more than two years in order for the student to qualify for the good cause exemption?

Yes. The relevant good cause exemption in statute states, “Students with disabilities who participate in the FCAT and have an individual educational plan or Section 504 plan that reflects that the student has received the intensive remediation in reading as required...for more than two years but still demonstrates a deficiency in reading and was previously retained in [K-3].” Therefore, a student eligible for speech services, with an IEP, who has been previously retained, and has received intensive remediation for more than two years, may be considered for a good cause promotion.

43. What are the portfolio guidelines for ESE students?

The state portfolio guidelines apply to all students, including ESE students.

44. Are assessment scores below grade level for an ESE student allowed to be entered on the PMRN?

There are two situations where scores can be entered into the PMRN. The first is when the student is administered the quarterly assessments as defined in the school calendar posted on the PMRN. The second time is when the teacher wants to do more frequent monitoring of progress of specific skills.

First, the quarterly assessments are conducted with the measures selected for the student's grade placement. For example, any second grade student, including those who are identified as exceptional, would be administered the second grade Oral Reading Fluency passages and the Nonsense Word Fluency measures at the prescribed four assessment intervals; and these are the scores that are entered into the PMRN.

Second, the PMRN also has the capability of monitoring the progress of any students on a more frequent schedule (e.g. biweekly, weekly, monthly) with measures that may or may not be at the student's grade level. We refer to this as Ongoing Progress Monitoring (OPM). For example, this second grade student may be administered first-grade level passages with these scores entered into the PMRN on the OPM reporting site. In fact, any of the DIBELS measures may be administered on the OPM site, both those at grade level and those below grade level. In this way, the teacher can more closely monitor the student's progress in basic skills which are the target of intensive or strategic interventions.

45. Is it allowable for an ESE student who has never been retained to produce a portfolio using below grade level work?

No. The student must show proficiency at grade level by demonstrating mastery of the Sunshine State Standards.

46. Are students with disabilities given any alternate means in which to achieve the goals needed in order to be promoted mid-year?

All students who are assessed using the FCAT, including students with disabilities, are to follow the same guidelines disseminated by the Department of Education.

Curriculum:

47. Can a teacher or school make changes in the Comprehensive Core Reading Program (CCRP) if a student is not performing adequately or better?

No. All students should participate in initial instruction (ii) using the Comprehensive Core Reading Program (CCRP). The CCRP curriculum needs to be scaffolded to meet the needs of every student. During differentiated instruction, initial instruction is reinforced through remediation, acceleration, or enhancement.

48. What are Targeted Supplemental/Intervention Reading Programs (TSRP/TIRP)?

These programs and materials provide instruction in one or more areas of reading skill. They are intended for flexible use as part of differentiated instruction or in more intensive interventions to meet student learning needs in specific areas (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension). When they are used with almost all students in the class because the Comprehensive Core Reading Program does not provide enough instruction and practice in a given area for the majority of students in the class, they are usually referred to as supplemental materials. When they are used to provide targeted, intensive interventions for smaller groups of struggling readers, they are often referred to as intervention materials. Whether referred to as supplemental or intervention materials, these programs provide targeted instruction designed to fill in gaps in student knowledge or skill. These materials can be used to provide either additional instruction or additional practice, or both.

49. What is a Comprehensive Intervention Reading Program (CIRP)?

These programs are intended for students who are reading one or more years below grade level, and who are struggling with a broad range of reading skills.

Comprehensive Intervention Reading Programs include instructional content based on the five essential components of reading instruction integrated into a coherent instructional design. A coherent design includes explicit instructional strategies, coordinated instructional sequences, ample practice opportunities and aligned student materials. Comprehensive Intervention Reading Programs provide instruction that is more intensive, explicit, systematic, and more motivating than instruction students have previously received. These programs also provide more frequent assessments of student progress and more systematic review in order to insure proper pacing of instruction and mastery of all instructional components.

50. What researched-based reading programs are available to accelerate reading achievement by two years in one school year?

There is a link on the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) Web site www.fcrr.org for Tier 3 students. This is an excellent resource for guidance when selecting a reading program for Tier 3 students that is researched based and has proven results in increasing student reading achievement for fragile learners. **Remember, these programs are only suggestions and do not constitute an approved list from the Florida Department of Education.**

Professional Development:

51. When is the Just Read, Florida! Leadership Conference?

The Just Read, Florida! Leadership Conference is scheduled for July 10-12, 2006. The state is inviting 3,600 K-12 principals, district administrators, Reading or Literacy coaches to participate in the conference being held at the Swan and Dolphin Hotel in Orlando, Florida. For more information visit: <http://www.justreadflorida.com/conference/>.

52. Who can participate in the *Reading First* Summer Academies?

The upcoming *Reading First* Summer Academies will be held for all K-3 teachers and all K-12 ESE teachers (*Reading First* and non-*Reading First*). We also welcome and encourage grades 4-5 teachers interested in participating.

53. What is Literacy Essentials and Reading Network (LEaRN)?

LEaRN is a Web site for principals, reading coaches, and classroom teachers to access scientifically- based reading instruction being implemented in a classroom through video clippings. Educators will also have the opportunity to view actual live commentary by reading experts. LEaRN focuses on the practice of teaching reading and using visible teaching examples that are directly applicable to classroom activities. The objective of LEaRN is to provide users with a comprehensive, applied tool that provides scientifically research-based information and best practices on reading instruction.

Other:

54. What level of instruction should be provided to students with a reading deficiency, but who may be proficient in other content areas?

Differentiation and intervention should be provided to help students acquire appropriate grade-level skills. For students reading below grade-level, instruction must begin on that student's reading level. Instruction must be accelerated and students must be provided intervention in order to support the achievement of grade-level skills. While reading instruction may target below grade-level skills, the expectation is that students will be challenged and will make reading progress to ultimately be on grade level. Instruction in other content areas needs to be on grade-level if applicable.

55. Can Accelerated Reader (AR) count toward the 90 minute Reading block?

No. The purpose of Accelerated Reader is not to provide reading instruction. The purpose is to help motivate students to read more books at an appropriate level of difficulty by using a point system tied to individual goals. AR seeks to motivate students to read advanced leveled books and to increase their personal reading time. Accelerated Reader is not a program for reading instruction; however, AR books may be read at a reading station during the 90 minute block, but assessments need to be taken outside the block. For more information on Accelerated Reader, visit http://www.fcrr.org/FCRRReports/PDF/Accelerated_Reader.pdf.

56. Will students scoring Level 1 be retained in other grades or only in third grade?

Third grade retention is the only grade at which there is mandatory retention specified in Section 1008.25(6) (b), Florida Statutes. However, many districts recognize that retention is necessary for students in other grades to best serve the students' needs. The promotion/retention policy for all grade levels must be specified in the district's Student Progression Plan.

57. Does the law apply to a student who scored Level 3 on the FCAT but is retained in the third grade for excessive tardiness or absences?

Retention is intended to provide more time and support for students to master the knowledge and skills specified in the Sunshine State Standards. A third grade student may not be able to control the life circumstances that lead to excessive tardiness. The Department of Education encourages districts to work closely with families and student services personnel to provide the support for students to arrive at school in a timely manner. Every student who meets the state and district requirements for promotion should be promoted

accordingly. However, it is the district's decision on how they choose to address retention due to excessive tardiness or absences.

58. Is there a deadline for good cause promotion? For example, a third grade Tier 3 student who is LEP and SWD (ESE) was eligible for a good cause promotion at the end of last year. The parent thought the child would benefit from another year of third grade. The school kept the child in third grade. In October, the parent requested the child be promoted. The child does not meet the criteria for a mid-year promotion as he has not mastered third-grade SSS and is performing at a 2.5 reading level. Can the district institute a good cause promotion?

If the new school year has begun, then the district's Student Progression Plan should provide guidance on determining what is necessary for a student to be promoted to the next grade. The district determines promotion prior to November 1. If there is consideration of promotion after November 1, then the requirements of the State Board of Education's mid-year promotion rule must be met.