

MDE announces 73.9% of 3rd graders pass reading assessment on first try

NEWS RELEASE

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JACKSON, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) is announcing that 73.9% of 31,068 Mississippi 3rd graders received a passing score last month on the initial administration of the 3rd-grade reading assessment for the 2021-22 school year.

The passing rate presents a preliminary snapshot of 3rd-graders' literacy proficiency as schools emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic. The last time Mississippi 3rd graders took the assessment in a normal school year was April 2019 when 74.5% of 34,998 students passed the initial test.

“The hard work of teachers, students and parents to overcome academic setbacks caused by the pandemic is paying off. The initial pass rate on this year’s 3rd-grade reading assessment is nearly the same as the pre-pandemic pass rate,” said Dr. Carey Wright, state superintendent of education. “I celebrate this accomplishment and acknowledge there’s more work to be done.”

In accordance with the Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), 3rd graders who do not pass the initial administration of the reading test are given up to two attempts to retest. After the final retest in 2019, 85.6% of 3rd graders passed the test. Students did not test in 2020 due to the pandemic. The test was given in 2021, but the passing requirement was waived so no retests were administered.

The LBPA became law in 2013 to improve reading skills of kindergarten through 3rd-grade students in public schools so every student completing the 3rd grade is able to read at or above grade level. The LBPA requires Mississippi 3rd graders to pass a reading assessment to qualify for promotion to 4th grade. An amendment to the law in 2016 raised reading-level expectations starting in the 2018-19 school year, requiring 3rd graders to score at level 3 or higher on the reading portion of the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) English Language Arts (ELA) assessment.

Students who did not pass the reading assessment on their first attempt last month were retested May 9-13. The second retest window is June 20 – July 8. Some students may qualify for good cause exemptions to be promoted to 4th grade.

To see the district- and school-level initial pass rate report for 2021-22, go to mdek12.org/OPR/Reporting/Assessment/2021-22.

Final district-level pass rates will be published this fall in the Literacy-Based Promotion Act Annual Report of Performance and Student Retention for the 2021-22 school year.

Find all MDE news releases at mdek12.org/news.

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