



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 13, 2020

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Venessa A. Keesler, Ph.D., Deputy Superintendent 
Division of Educator, Student, and School Supports

SUBJECT: Read by Grade Three – Communicating Retention to Guardians

In 2016, the Michigan state legislature passed Michigan's Read by Grade 3 Law ([MCL 380.1280f](#)). As outlined in this law, Michigan's Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) will be mailing certified letters to guardians of third grade students who score at or below 1252 on the Spring 2020 ELA M-STEP assessment. A certified letter means someone will need to receive the letter upon delivery. This letter will notify families that their third grade student is eligible for retention because of their score on that assessment. A copy of the certified letter to be sent by CEPI will be available on the MDE website. Districts may use the letter to inform families prior to the testing window about what they may receive, based on their child's scores. As shared previously, MDE strongly suggests that districts begin communication with families prior to CEPI letters being sent.

Guardians receiving a letter from CEPI may request a meeting with the local school in which they plan to enroll their child the following year, during which they may ask that their child not be retained, and/or for their child to receive a Good Cause Exemption. Appeals to the local superintendent must be filed within 30 days of the dated letter. **The local superintendent of the district or public school academy holds the final decision for retention.**

In preparation for possible inquiries and appeals from district families, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) strongly encourages districts to access the following link: [Read by Grade Three Parent and District Resources](#), and be prepared with an implementation plan that includes:

- reviewing local data;
- reviewing student Individual Reading Improvement Plan(s) (IRIP) and student portfolio(s);

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- planning for communication to families with staff available for consultation; and;
- planning supports that will be provided for students that are retained and/or promoted.

For general questions, please contact the Michigan Department of Education at MDE-EarlyLiteracy@michigan.gov.

To receive Read by Grade Three communications and updates by email, please sign up at: [Read by Grade Three Communications Sign Up](#).

cc: Michigan Education Alliance