



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 31, 2020

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

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

SUBJECT: 2020-21 Early Literacy Assessment Guidance for Learning at a Distance
MEMO #COVID-19-100

For the 2020-2021 academic year, districts have created COVID-19 preparedness and response plans which will identify modes of instruction as learning at a distance, in-person, or a hybrid of the two. Regardless of the mode of instruction, districts are required to meet the two assessment-related requirements of the Read by Grade Three (RBG3) law:

1. [The Read by Grade Three law \(MCL 380.1280f\)](#) requires that K-3 students be assessed within the first 30 school days and if an early reading deficiency is identified based on assessment results, the student must be given an Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP).
2. Districts are required to use their assessment system to screen and diagnose students throughout the year and use this data, and other information as needed, to inform the development of an IRIP.

Although the RBG3 assessment requirements were waived by executive order 2020-65 for the 2019-20 school year, currently they remain in place for the 2020-21 school year.

Michigan's Return to Learn legislation, signed into law by Governor Gretchen Whitmer on August 20, 2020 (Public Acts 147, 148, and 149 of 2020), does not modify the assessment-related requirements of the RBG3 law. The benchmark assessments required under the Return to Learn law are used to measure learning that will take place during the school year as identified in a district's extended COVID-19 learning plan. Screening assessments required during the first 30 days of the school year under the RBG3 law are used to determine literacy learning needs for K-3 students.

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Benchmark assessments required under the Return to Learn law can meet the requirements of the RBG3 screening requirement and districts are allowed and encouraged to use them for both purposes if appropriate, given local contexts. The Michigan Department of Education is releasing guidance for administering assessments when districts are implementing hybrid or learning at a distance instructional models. This guidance, entitled [2020-21 Early Literacy Assessment Guidance for Learning at a Distance](#), supports the [MI Safe Schools: Michigan's 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap](#).

The department will host webinars to provide districts with more information on the assessment requirements of the RBG3 law and will publish a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document following the webinars. The webinar schedule is as follows:

Tues, 9/1/2020
9:00 – 9:30 AM
[Webinar Link](#)

Wed, 9/9/2020
12:00 – 12:30 PM
[Webinar Link](#)

Thurs, 9/17/2020
2:00 – 2:30 PM
[Webinar Link](#)

For additional questions and support regarding assessments and the Read by Grade Three law, please send an email to MDE-EarlyLiteracy@michigan.gov.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors