



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 26, 2021

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

FROM: William A. Pearson, Ed.D., Interim Deputy Superintendent
Division of Educator, Student, and School Supports *WAP*

SUBJECT: 2020-21 Read by Grade Three Retention and Notification – MEMO#
COVID-19-194

Michigan's Read by Grade Three (RBG3) law (MCL 380.1280f) continues to require that this year's Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) be used to identify students who are eligible for retention, despite protests from the State Board of Education, State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice, and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE).

The M-STEP testing window opened on April 26 and closes on June 4. A student's preliminary scores will be used to determine possible retention. Districts are able to see the preliminary scores in the Dynamic Score Reporting Site accessed through the OEAA Secure Site 24-48 hours after the student has completed online testing. Third-grade students that score 1252 or below on the English language arts (ELA) M-STEP will be identified as eligible for retention. Districts should reach out to the families of these students to communicate about options as early as possible. Checking the test scores regularly will maximize time for district communication to families about the next steps to support the student. MDE has created a [user guide](#) to access these scores in the Dynamic Score Reporting Site.

Official certified letters will be sent through the U.S. Postal Service (USPS). Approximately 80 percent of certified letters will be mailed this week to families of students eligible for retention. The following week an additional 10 percent of the certified letters will be mailed. In total, an estimated 90 percent of these letters will be mailed on or before June 1. The remainder of the letters will be sent as the results come in from students still testing in the extended window. USPS will attempt delivery of each certified letter three times. After the third delivery attempt, USPS will return the undeliverable letters to MDE. The department will then forward

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undelivered mail to the responsible school districts. The districts will be responsible for delivering the letters to the families to ensure delivery. Documentation of letter delivery is recommended to districts.

For students who experience homelessness, if there is an address in the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS), the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) will work to send a certified letter to the reported address. Attempts will be made three times, and then letters will be returned to CEPI and forwarded to the responsible school districts. For students with no address associated in MSDS, CEPI will directly send a notification to the district for distribution to the student. Districts are encouraged to work with their homeless liaisons and community organizations to assist with informing parents of their rights as outlined in this law.

Families receiving a letter will have 30 days from the date they receive the letter to contact the school district's superintendent and request that their child not be retained through [Good Cause Exemption criteria](#).

Districts should also review carefully the communication sent May 6 entitled "[2020-21 ELA M-STEP Read by Grade Three Retention](#)" and the one sent April 15 entitled "[District-Level Plans for Assessment Windows, Read by Grade Three Implementation, and Communicating Retention to Parents - MEMO #COVID-19-177](#)" for more details on the actions that districts will need to take for any students flagged for potential retention and make their decisions accordingly.

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

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors