



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 6, 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 ELA M-STEP Read by Grade Three Retention

Michigan's Read by Grade Three (RBG3) law (MCL 380.1280f) continues to require that the results of this year's Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) be used to identify students who are eligible for retention. However, the State Board of Education, State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice, and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) continue to urge the legislature to set aside the student retention component of the RBG3 law. **Local school district leaders who agree that retentions are poor public policy, particularly during a pandemic, should make their thoughts known immediately to their elected officials in the state legislature.**

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 will be able to see the preliminary scores in the dynamic score reporting site accessed through MDE's Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) secure site within 24-48 hours after the student has completed 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 families of eligible students and communicate to them their options as early as possible. Checking student test scores regularly will maximize time for district communication to families about next steps to support the student. MDE has created a [user guide](#) to access these scores in the dynamic score reporting site.

Beginning May 26 and weekly thereafter, as test results are processed, official certified letters from Michigan's Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) will be sent to the families of students eligible for retention. As an exception, letters for students experiencing homelessness will be mailed directly to districts so that homeless liaisons can distribute them to families.

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608 WEST ALLEGAN STREET • P.O. BOX 30008 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909
www.michigan.gov/mde • 833-633-5788

Due to processing time, the letters mailed on May 26 will include students tested through May 17. 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.

Districts should also review carefully the communication 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 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