

Spring 2013

Dear Parent of Rising Third Graders,

Congratulations on your child's successful year of second grade. Since the start of kindergarten, your child has been learning the basics of reading, mathematics, and other important subjects. Your son or daughter's teacher also has encouraged him or her to be curious and to enjoy learning new things. All of this will help boost learning in third grade and beyond.

In the fall, as your child begins third grade, you will notice a big focus on reading and on learning math skills and facts that your child will need in fourth grade and even in middle school and high school. For the first time in the fall of third grade, your child will be given a beginning-of-grade standardized test to see how they are reading. At the end of third grade, your child will take end-of-grade tests in reading and in mathematics. These tests tell you and your child's teacher and principal if your child has learned the basic skills that he or she needs in order to do well in fourth grade.

North Carolina state law now requires that third graders who are not reading at a proficient level on the end-of-grade test be given extra attention. If your child does not score proficient on the end-of-grade test in reading at the end of third grade, here is what will happen:

- First, your child will be re-tested to make sure that they didn't just have a bad day on the first test day.
- Second, if your child is not proficient on the re-test, your son or daughter will be invited to a summer reading camp to help them improve their reading skills. This camp is at no charge to you. Your local school district will organize the camp and give you more information about when and where it will be held.
- If you do not agree to send your child to summer reading camp, your child will repeat third grade the following school year in order to give him or her more time to build strong reading skills.
- At the end of summer reading camp, your child's reading will be retested. If he or she tests proficient, your child will be eligible to be promoted to fourth grade. If your child does not score proficient at the end of summer reading camp, he or she will be placed in fourth grade classes the following year with a third-grade retention label. Ninety minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction will be provided daily in these classes. Your child will be eligible to retake the reading test in late October to achieve a mid-year promotion and have the third-grade retention label removed. Your child will remain in the same fourth grade class for the entire school year and continue to receive the uninterrupted reading instruction throughout fourth grade to support ongoing improvement in reading skills.

This new reading requirement will begin for the first time with the children who begin third grade in the fall of 2013. More details will be provided to you this fall about this requirement and how your district will help children become better readers by the end of third grade. In the meantime, here is how you can help your child over the summer:

- Set aside time for your child to read every day and/or for you to read to your child.
- Visit the local public library and check out books. This is a free service in most counties.
- Some local school districts open school libraries on special days in the summer. If you can, take your child to library day at your school to check out books.
- Talk to your child and encourage your child to talk and write about the things that interest him or her.
- If your child enjoys writing or drawing, encourage them to write and draw.
- Help your child get restful sleep.
- Talk to your child about all the fun and exciting things he or she will be learning in third grade.

Sincerely,



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