

Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act

Key Messages



The following messages were developed to help school leaders and educators communicate about the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act and how reading-level expectations are being raised in 2018-19. **Starting the 2018-19 school year, 3rd graders need to score at level 3 or higher on the reading portion of the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) English Language Arts (ELA) assessment.**

These general messages convey the purpose of the legislation, how it is being implemented in schools, and how it will be a positive change for Mississippi students. Although listed as talking points below, the messages may be used for any type of communication about the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act, including presentations, newsletters to parents, web sites, social media or other communications channels.

Key Messages

1. **The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act** helps ensure that every student meets grade-level reading standards by the end of 3rd grade. The act is part of a statewide effort called **Strong Readers = Strong Leaders** to improve literacy among all school children.
2. **Prevention is key.** Reading instruction must be a major focus of Kindergarten through 3rd grade, as 3rd grade is the year that students transition from *learning to read* to *reading to learn*. Students need strong reading skills in order to learn in all other school subjects, such as science, history, writing, and even math.
3. **Intervention is for students having reading difficulties.** Struggling readers will be identified early. Students identified as having a reading difficulty will be provided immediate intensive reading intervention that meets their specific reading needs.
4. **Retention is a last option.** 3rd grade students must meet grade-level reading standards by the end of the year in order to be promoted to the 4th grade. Students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate sufficient reading skills for promotion.
5. **Families are the backbone of student learning.** Family involvement and understanding will be critical to students' success.

Background

- In 2013, Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant signed the Literacy-Based Promotion Act into law.
- In 2013, Mississippi 4th graders were reading over one full grade level behind the national average on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) assessment.
- Since 2014, Mississippi students in kindergarten through the 3rd grade have shown annual improvement in reading skills.
- Mississippi is now 2nd in the nation for gains in 4th grade reading on NAEP (from 2007-2017).