

MS 3rd Grade Literacy Retention Gate

In 2013 the Mississippi Legislature passed and the Governor signed **Senate Bill 2347, Mississippi's 3rd Grade Literacy Promotion Act**. Here are some of the key provisions of that new law, which becomes effective for the **2014-2015 school year**:

1. The Literacy-Based Promotion Act is intended to improve student reading skills beginning in Kindergarten and extending through 3rd grade so that students can grow from “learning to read” to “reading to learn”.
2. “Reading to learn” is essential to develop critical thinking skills and to master other subjects, such as math, science, English and history. Failure to progress to reading to learn is a major cause of student failure and dropout, significantly diminishes the future educational and employment opportunities of such students, and ultimately undermines the health and economic security of themselves and the families they will create in the future.
3. The goal of the Act is to ensure that *every* student can “read to learn” by the 3rd grade.
4. The Act requires every school district to provide intensive, research-based reading instruction and intervention for students who exhibit a substantial deficiency in reading beginning in Kindergarten and each grade thereafter through the 3rd Grade.
5. The Act mandates that the school district deny promotion from the 3rd grade to the 4th grade for any student whose reading deficiency is not remedied before the end of the 3rd Grade.
6. The Act prohibits the promotion of public school students based solely on a student’s age or other social promotion factors.
7. At the same time, the Act establishes “good cause exemptions” that permit the promotion of 3rd Grade students who fail to meet academic requirements for promotion:
 - a. including students with a disability for which the reading exam is not appropriate;
 - b. a student with disability whose Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan indicates the student has had two or more years of intensive supports;
 - c. a student who demonstrates an acceptable level of reading on an alternative assessment process; and
 - d. a student who has had two or more years of intensive supports but is still deficient in reading.
 - e. Students promoted to 4th grade based on an exemption will continue to receive intensive support in the 4th grade.



SOUTHERN ECHO, INC.
1350 Livingston Lane
Jackson, MS 39213
Website: www.southernecho.org
Email: info@southernecho.org
Phone: 601-982-6400

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8. The Act requires that *immediately* after a teacher determines a student has a reading deficiency that the parents of such student be given written notice that includes:
 - a. the student has been identified as exhibiting a reading deficiency;
 - b. a description of the services which the student is currently receiving from the district;
 - c. a description of the supplemental instructional services and supports which the district is planning to provide the student to overcome the reading deficiency;
 - d. notification that the student will not be promoted from 3rd grade if the reading deficiency is not corrected, unless the student qualifies for an exemption provided by law;
 - e. that the state reading test is the initial determining factor as to reading capacity, but not the sole determinant.
9. Students who are retained in the 3rd grade are mandated to receive a package of intensive reading instruction and supports when the students repeat the 3rd grade, including special, smaller classes and a “high performing teacher” with a demonstrated record of student improvement in reading.
10. The Act requires the MS Dept. of Education to establish the MS Reading Panel to collaborate with the Dept. on adoption of appropriate alternative standardized assessments and appropriate screening assessments.
11. The Act requires school boards to submit *annual reports* to parents on their respective children’s progress in reading.



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