



Indiana Department of Education

SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

Fall 2011

Dear Third Grade Parent/Guardian:

As you may know, in March of 2010 the Indiana General Assembly passed Public Law 109 requiring the evaluation of reading skills for all third grade students. This legislation was developed to ensure students can read at grade level prior to fourth grade. As many researchers and educators have noted, from Kindergarten through grade three, students are primarily “learning to read.” But beginning in fourth grade, students must be able to “read to learn.” Standards and materials only get more complex from fourth grade forward, and students who cannot read proficiently will struggle to keep up with their peers. In response to this legislation, your child will take the *Indiana Reading Evaluation And Determination (IREAD-3)* Assessment during the Spring 2012 test window, which is March 19-21, 2012.

Based on the Indiana Academic Standards, IREAD-3 specifically tests foundational reading standards through grade three. The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) created an item sampler with examples of the types of test questions that may appear on IREAD-3. You can download the *IREAD-3 Item Sampler* by visiting the IDOE website: www.doe.in.gov/assessment/iread_resources.html.

You are encouraged to contact your child’s teacher to learn more about his/her reading progress and to gain a better understanding of your child’s reading program, including assessment practices, instructional approaches and expected student performance. Questions to consider when talking to your child’s teacher might include the following:

- What are specific ways I can assist my child at home?
- How do I know if my child is on track?
- How do I know if my child is reading an appropriately leveled book?

Please refer to the *IREAD-3 Parent Guidance* for further information about Public Law 109, good cause exemptions, and the IREAD-3 assessment. You can download the *IREAD-3 Parent Guidance* by visiting the IDOE website: www.doe.in.gov/assessment/iread_resources.html. You may also request a copy of this document from your child’s school.

Best wishes to you and your child for a successful school year!

Sincerely,

Michele A. Walker

Dr. Michele A. Walker, Director
Office of Student Assessment



IREAD-3 Parent Guidance

Note: The Spring 2012 IREAD-3 test window is March 19-21, 2012.

As the parent of a student in Indiana, the following information is designed to outline for you what Indiana law states about **reading requirements** for third graders. It also details the responsibilities of your child's school to best meet the needs of your child if he/she is reading below grade level.

Reading is the core of the school day for young students. Visit any elementary classroom, and you will find children learning to read. They may be talking about the sounds letters make, listening to the teacher read a story, reading aloud together, working on a computer reading program, or talking and writing about what they have read. Students are engaged in these activities because **reading and comprehension are the foundations** for all academic learning.

Schools should regularly assess the reading proficiency of all students in kindergarten through grade three and may monitor student progress with the use of IREAD K-2 assessments or other measures to identify students who are struggling with reading. If your child is reading below grade level, the school is responsible for communicating the exact type of reading difficulty your child is experiencing and for working to develop a plan to ensure reading proficiency.

Public Law 109 requires the evaluation of reading skills for students who are in third grade beginning in the spring of 2012. This legislation was created to **ensure that all students can read proficiently** at the end of grade three. In response to Public Law 109, educators from across the state worked with the Indiana Department of Education to develop a test blueprint and to review test questions that have now become the *Indiana Reading Evaluation And Determination (IREAD-3) Assessment*.

The intent of Public Law 109 is to **ensure every student has the opportunity for future success** through literacy. The results will have a positive effect on our entire state as the need for remedial education in middle and high school is reduced and dropout rates and juvenile delinquency are lowered. In addition, Public Law 109 will help Indiana develop the highly skilled workforce needed for a strong economy.

Some third graders who do not pass IREAD-3 can be exempted from the consequences outlined in State Board Rule. Students eligible for a Good Cause exemption include:

1. Students who have **previously been retained two times** prior to promotion to fourth grade.
2. **Students with disabilities** whose case conference committee has determined that promotion is appropriate.
3. **English Learners (ELs)** whose Individual Learning Plan (ILP) committee has determined that promotion is appropriate.

Research has shown that prior to third grade, students are primarily **"learning to read."** However, beginning in fourth grade, students must be able to **"read to learn."** Standards and materials are more complex from fourth grade forward, and students who cannot read proficiently will struggle to attain reading skills while trying to master more advanced content.

By the end of third grade, students are expected to be able to **read independently**. This means that they can read and understand grade level materials, words, sentences, and paragraphs without help.

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IREAD-3

The purpose of the IREAD-3 assessment is to measure foundational reading standards through grade three. Based on the Indiana Academic Standards, IREAD-3 is a summative assessment that was developed in accordance with Public Law 109. Performance on IREAD-3 is demonstrated by the following:

Pass students demonstrate proficient understanding when reading and responding to grade-level literary and informational texts.

Examples of specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for Grade 3 students scoring at the Pass level may include:

- Identify main idea and supporting details in text
- Use information from the text to comprehend basic story plots
- Connect prior knowledge with literal information from nonfiction text
- Recall major points and make predictions about what is read
- Determine what characters are like by what they say or do in the story
- Determine theme or author's message in fiction and nonfiction text
- Distinguish among basic text elements (e.g., problem and solution, fact and opinion, cause and effect)
- Distinguish beginning, middle and ending sounds made by different letter patterns
- Identify simple multiple-meaning words
- Use sentence clues to find meaning of unknown words
- Determine the meanings of words using knowledge of synonyms and antonyms
- Recognize common genres
- Read words with several syllables

Did Not Pass students demonstrate limited understanding when reading and responding to grade-level literary and informational text.

Examples of specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for Grade 3 students scoring at the Did Not Pass level may include:

- Find answers in text
- Recall major points
- Comprehend at the literal level what is read including basic plots
- Identify basic text elements (e.g., problem and solution, setting, and main character)
- Recognize beginning, middle, and ending sounds
- Know and use common word families
- Know the meaning of simple prefixes and suffixes
- Use knowledge of individual words to predict the meaning of unknown compound words

To preview the IREAD-3 Item Sampler: http://www.doe.in.gov/assessment/docs/IREAD-3_Item_Sampler.pdf

How do schools help students who do not pass IREAD-3?

Schools should provide reading support to students who do not pass IREAD-3, including the following:

- Using proven, effective teaching strategies and methods based on student need
- Requiring at least 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction each day, which may include:
 - small group instruction
 - more frequent progress monitoring
- Providing daily targeted interventions, in addition to 90 minutes of reading instruction