

Dear Clarenceville Parents,

I am writing you today concerning 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Mandatory Retention based on state test reading scores.

Reading is the single most important skill a student needs to be successful in our society. It's time for Michigan to get serious about helping kids learn to read. Our schools need to have a proactive approach to properly address student literacy issues that does not punish them by holding them back.

**Let Parents Have a Say...**

The Senate version of the third grade reading bill sets high standards for reading performance while giving parents a say in deciding their child's future. Holding students back can have negative psychological consequences that seriously hinder development. Therefore, a student should be held back only as a last resort and at the parent's final discretion.

Instead of simply testing and punishing those at risk of falling behind, we should support literacy coaches, intensive intervention programs and other research-based interventions. Holding students back is the wrong way to go.

Including the parent's input on holding a student back—which can increase likelihood of dropout and cause psychological harm—only makes sense. The Senate version of the bill allows parents to have a role in decisions to hold their children back.

Reading can break the cycle of poverty. With an emphasis on research-based interventions to help low-income students learn to read, our schools can give them a better chance at success. Holding a student back simply because he or she doesn't have the resources needed to succeed is wrong.

I support the Senate version of the third grade reading bill because it will provide support for all students to learn to read and give parents a say in their children's futures at key moments during their development.

I hope you will support the effort to get the Michigan Legislature to pass the current Senate version of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading bill. Please contact your state senator and representative and let them know you want parents to have a say.

Respectfully,

Paul K. Shepich

Superintendent

Clarenceville School District

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