

Third Grade Promotion

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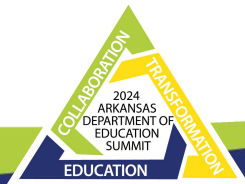
Office of Learning Services
Division of Elementary & Secondary Education



VISION & MISSION

The Arkansas Department of Education is transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education.

The Arkansas Department of Education provides leadership, support, and service to schools, districts, and communities so every student graduates prepared for college, career, and community engagement.



Overview:

Third-Grade Promotion

Today's Objectives

1

Examine the yearlong roadmap of support for Third Grade Promotion and identify key leadership actions across fall, winter, spring, and summer implementation windows.

2

Examine how multiple sources of evidence connect across the school year to support instructional planning, progress monitoring, documentation, and promotion or retention decisions.

3

Recognize and access state tools and resources that support implementation, academic response, progress monitoring, parent communication, and documentation.



In alignment with the **Arkansas LEARNS Act**, beginning at the end of the **2025-2026 school year**, third-grade students are expected to meet a minimum reading standard to be promoted to fourth grade.

This requirement aligns with the vision set forth in Arkansas' Right to Read Act, reinforcing the state's commitment to literacy as a foundation for lifelong learning, ensuring that every student receives the support needed to read by third grade.

Supporting Student Success

Ensuring that all students read proficiently by the end of third grade is a shared responsibility—and a critical milestone for long-term academic success.

The policies and supports outlined in this guidance are designed to promote early identification, timely intervention, and sustained progress for every learner.

By **working in partnership with families, implementing evidence-based practices with integrity and using data to drive decisions**, districts can create a strong foundation for student literacy and support successful transitions to fourth grade and beyond.



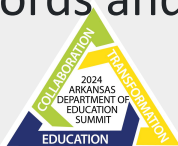
Supporting Every Student's Right to Read

The intent of the 3rd Grade Promotion Law is to identify and support struggling readers early and ensure every student receives the support they need to become a successful reader.

Students will...	Families will...	Teachers will...	Principals will...	Districts will...	Co-Ops will...	ADE will...
Achieve success as learners by improving their academic skills through dedicated intervention , better preparing them for future grades and beyond.	Be engaged partners on their child's progress, and feel confident their child is being supported to become a strong reader.	Use screeners to identify students who need support, implement effective, evidence-based reading instruction and interventions, develop and monitor IRPs , and communicate with families about student growth.	Assign students to well-equipped teachers, support intervention planning , and lead family communication efforts.	Support schools to provide interventions and staffing to meet the requirements of the law, offer professional development , and track screener data to ensure early, consistent intervention.	Train districts on policy details and best practices, and support implementation of high-quality literacy instruction within an MTSS system.	Set a statewide vision that prioritizes early reading success, provide technical assistance and implementation guidance , develop family- and educator-facing tools , and monitor progress toward full implementation of the promotion policy.

Third Grade Promotion

- At the end of the 2025–2026 school year, third graders who did not meet the state-defined minimum reading standard AND did not qualify for a good cause exemption will not be promoted to fourth grade.
- In August 2026, schools will indicate if each 2025-26 third grader is retained, promoted, or promoted with a good cause exemption
- **In Cycle 9, school districts will report the Good Cause Exemption for any 2025-2026 3rd Grader who scored level 1 on the spring summative and was promoted to 4th grade in 2026-2027.** Your eSchool staff will receive training on where this information is entered in eSchool. You still have some time to update those records and prepare for the Cycle 9 reporting.

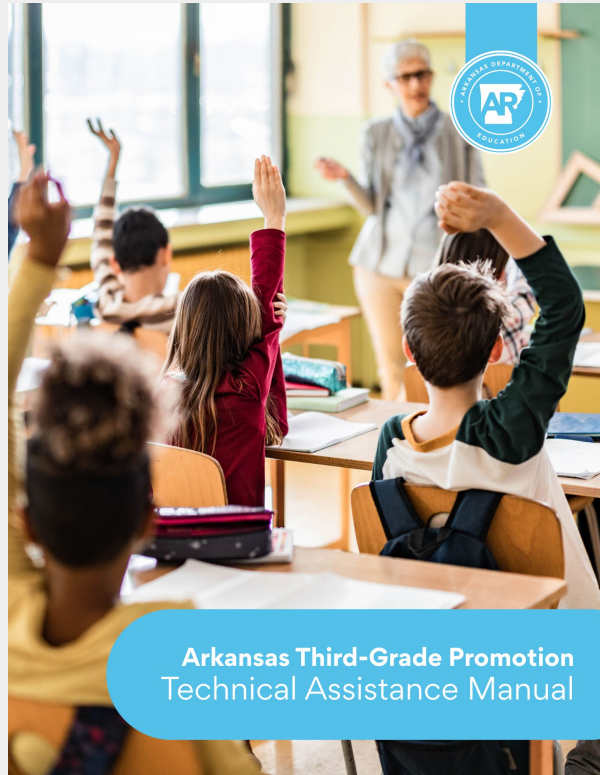


ATLAS Scores

Overview of ATLAS Assessment performance levels and the resulting recommendation for promotions:

Will be promoted to the next grade level	Level 4	Students demonstrate an advanced understanding of the knowledge and skills required of the grade-level standards. These students are on track for career and college, and demonstrate readiness for advanced content at the next grade/course
	Level 3	Students demonstrate a mastery understanding of knowledge and skills required of the grade-level standards. These students are on track for career and college.
	Level 2	Students demonstrate a basic understanding of knowledge and skills required of the grade-level standards and personalized support may be needed to access content taught in the next grade/course.
Reading Standard		
At risk of retention	Level 1	Students demonstrated limited understanding of knowledge and skills required of the grade-level standards and will require substantial support/scaffolding to access content taught at the next grade level.

Technical Assistance Manual (TAM)



The TAM provides districts with guidance for implementing student promotion requirements.





TAM - Page 6

The summative score at the

What processes are in place to ensure early intervention is happening across K-3?

screening and ongoing progress checks must guide intervention and support.



TAM - Page 6

District and school leaders should

How are leaders in your system engaging with parents to develop intervention plans at the BOY?

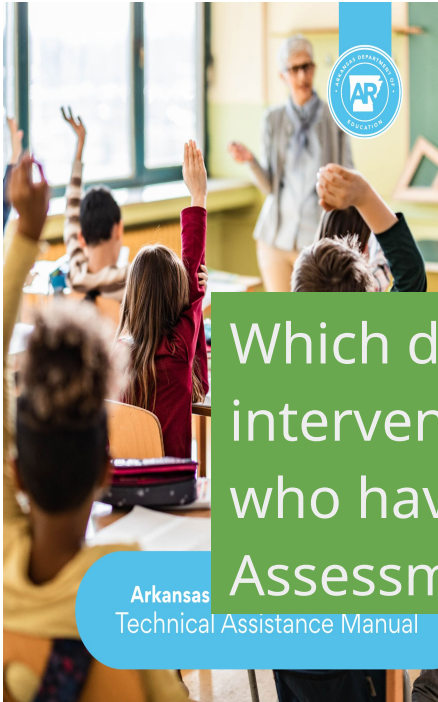
Are student IRPs reflecting intervention plans that support learning at grade level?



TAM - Page 10

At the **end of grade 3**, families of

What are the EOY conference expectations for families and district/school staff to meet and share intervention plans for 3rd grade students who are not promoted? Students promoted with a good-cause exemption?



TAM - Page 11 & 12

The ATLAS **Literacy Assessment** **retake** is administered solely for the purpose of determining

Which data points are used to design interventions that support 3rd grade students who have the opportunity to retake the ATLAS Assessment?

summative assessment score for accountability, reporting, or state-required purposes.



TAM - Page 12

In all cases, the school district has the final responsibility to

What is your process for parents to engage with the school and district when they still have questions about the collective decision about promotion and retention?

Arkansas Third
Grade Technical Assistance



Third Grade Promotion Timeline:

A Guide for K-3 Educators and Leaders

This resource outlines the **key dates for information about 3rd-grade promotion under the LEARNS Act, including testing windows, deadlines for resources like Individual Reading Plans (IRPs), and required communication to families** at each point in the year. Use this tool to plan ahead, align messaging across your school or district, and **ensure families receive timely, clear updates and supports** tied to their child's reading status.

Beginning of Year (BOY) – August–Early October

- **Assessments:** K–3 ATLAS Beginning-of-Year (BOY) Literacy Screener (first 30 days of school)
- **Family Communication:**
 - Families of all 3rd graders receive a **BOY Promotion Letter** sharing:
 - BOY screener status (Potential Risk/Ready)
 - An overview of available student supports
 - **Promotion status** (On Track vs. At Risk).
 1. Promotion status is At Risk if child scores a 1 on the EOY ELA 2nd grade summative **OR** At Risk on BOY Screener.
 2. If At Risk: attach or reference the student's **Individual Reading Plan (IRP)** within the first 60 days of school.
- **Supporting Resources:** BOY Family Letter Template, IRP Template, Family FAQ, Explainer Video, 4 Things Families Should Know About ATLAS, ATLAS Parent-Teacher Planning Tool, ATLAS FAQ.

Middle of Year (MOY) – Late October–March

- **Assessments:** ATLAS Interims 1 & 2 (3rd grade optional, K-2 required)
- **Family Communication:**
 - If your third grader takes an MOY Screener or the Fall or Spring Interim, they will receive a **MOY Promotion Letter** with the results that:
 - Explains progress since BOY and shares updated promotion status (still At Risk vs. making progress).
 - Overviews additional supports (tutoring, small group, extra reading time) and how families can reinforce learning at home.
- **Supporting Resources:** MOY Family Letter Template, Family FAQ, ATLAS Interim Assessment FAQ, ATLAS Parent-Teacher Planning Tool, ATLAS FAQ.

End of Year (EOY) – April–June

- **Assessments:** ATLAS Summative (required for K–3)
- **Family Communication:**
 - **Grade 2:** Families receive an **EOY Promotion Letter** with EOY summative results + promotion status heading into 3rd grade.
 - **Grade 3:** Families receive final ATLAS results, a **Read at Home Plan** (if needed), + **Final Promotion Letter** that:
 - Clearly states if child meets reading standard for promotion. If not, explains retention vs. Good Cause Exemptions.
 - These letters should be preceded by **in-person meetings or phone calls**.
- **Supporting Resources:** EOY Family Letter Template, ATI AS Parent-Teacher Planning Tool, ATI AS 3-10 Score Report Guide, ATI AS FAQ.

SY 26-27 Timeline

Testing Dates

Required Communication Dates
(Suggested Windows)

July

August

September

October

November

December

January

February

March

April

May

June

K-3 ATLAS BOY Screener Testing Window
(July 21-December 18; Schools administer screener during the first 30 days)

Complete IRPs for all students identified as At Risk on BOY Screener
(K-3, First 60 Days)

ATLAS 3-8 Interim 1 (Aug. 31- Oct. 9)

BOY Promotion Letter (Grade 3)

K-2 ATLAS Interim 1
(Oct. 19- Nov. 6)

ATLAS 3-8 Interim 2
(Jan. 11 – Feb. 12)

K-2 ATLAS Interim 2
(Jan. 25 – Feb. 12)

Notify projected promotion status (Grade 3)

ATLAS K-2, 3-8, & EOC Summative
(Apr. 26-May 28)

ATLAS Grade 3 Summative
ELA Retake
(May 31-July 2)

Projected promotion status
(Grade 2) +Final promotion status + RAH Plan(Grade 3)

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BOY Screener Data- Next Steps For Teachers/Districts



BOY Guidance for Fall 2026-2027

Steps For Teachers:

- For grades 1-3, use IRP's from the previous year to start school with intervention groups in place.
- K-3 - Give screener in first 30 days.
- For any area of potential risk, give additional diagnostic assessments.
- If risk is determined, create an IRP for the student.
- Write specific, short term goals that address the deficit.
- Communicate and partner with parents.
- Begin interventions immediately.
- Progress monitor regularly and create new goals when needed.

Who Needs an Individual Reading Plan?



Compliance Vs. Diagnostic

- Arkansas law requires an IRP for struggling students.
- Any student may have an IRP.
- Is our focus only on bottom quarter of our class?
- Should a student who is at/near but not above have an IRP?

Reminders About Individual Reading Plans



Required for any struggling student

- IRPs are communication tools with parents.
- An IRP can be added at any time during the year.
- Begin with BOY screener - below level skills, perhaps foundational goals
- At first interim, if any area is below mastery, add comprehension goals.
- IRPs should be updated regularly, especially for third grade students.
- Any teacher (or para) who has students rostered to them, may add to the IRP.
- IRP goals need to be based on data.
- IRP goals need to be specific.

Are your IRPs moving students to grade level?



What diagnostic assessments would you give?

ATLAS BOY Screener and Testlet Results

Date	Test Name	Overall Results	1. Encoding	2. Oral Reading Fluency	3. Reading Comprehension
08/19/2025	ATLAS Grade 3 BOY Literacy Screener	Ready	Potential Risk	Ready	Ready

ATLAS BOY Screener and Testlet Results

Date	Test Name	Overall Results	1. Encoding	2. Oral Reading Fluency	3. Reading Comprehension
08/21/2025	ATLAS Grade 3 BOY Literacy Screener	Ready	Ready	Potential Risk	Potential Risk

ATLAS BOY Screener and Testlet Results

Date	Test Name	Overall Results	1. Encoding	2. Oral Reading Fluency	3. Reading Comprehension
08/20/2025	ATLAS Grade 3 BOY Literacy Screener	Potential Risk	Potential Risk	Potential Risk	Potential Risk

ATLAS BOY Screener and Testlet Results

Date	Test Name	Overall Results	1. Encoding	2. Oral Reading Fluency	3. Reading Comprehension
08/22/2025	ATLAS Grade 3 BOY Literacy Screener	Ready	Ready	Ready	Ready

ATLAS Interim Results

Date	Test Name	Overall Results	Reading Fundamentals & Vocabulary	Reading Informational Text	Reading Literary Text	Writing and Language
11/19/2025	ATLAS Grade 3 ELA Interim	1038 ± 5	Below Mastery	At/Near Mastery	Below Mastery	Below Mastery
03/20/2026	ATLAS Grade 3 ELA Interim	1055 ± 4	At/Near Mastery	At/Near Mastery	At/Near Mastery	Below Mastery

Are these IRP goals specific?



Can you tell what skill is being taught in intervention?

In two weeks, Sandy will be able to read words with consonant -le syllables 80% of the time

In two weeks, Sandy will be able to read words with 2 syllables and VCe 80% of the time

Sandy will be progressed monitored every three weeks

In 2 weeks, Sandy will increase her rate of oral reading of a grade-level passage (words correct) from 85 to 95.

In three weeks, Sandy will compare and contrast two texts on the same topic in 4 of 5 attempts.

Are these IRP goals specific?



Can you tell what skill is being taught in intervention?

Learn skill set in three weeks Sandy will be able to recall Consonant blends correctly 80% of the time

Sandy will demonstrate grade-level reading comprehension by accurately answering questions about key details, main ideas, and character actions in a text, achieving a score of 8/10 or higher on testlet assessments. Review in 2 weeks

In 3 weeks, Sandy will be able to answer questions about key details at a variety of DOK levels in a grade-level text with 90% accuracy.

In one month, Sandy will read single syllable words with vowel teams with 12/15 correct with 2 attempts.

Are these IRP goals specific?



Can you tell what skill is being taught in intervention?

In three weeks Sandy will be able to apply herself to Decode CVC & VC correctly 80% of the time

Sandy will accurately read and determine the meaning of vocabulary words based on morphology and context clues. The student will score 8/10 questions correctly in two weeks.

In two weeks, Sandy will demonstrate grade-level reading comprehension by accurately answering questions about text features, author's purpose, and comparing and contrasting two texts.

Sandy will increase her fluency skills by 80% every three weeks.

Good Cause Exemptions



Students may qualify for a good cause exemption and be promoted to 4th grade if they fall into one of the following categories:

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities	Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are eligible for the Dynamic Learning Map (DLM) assessment.
Students with disabilities (Non-DLM)	Students with a disability who have a current IEP or 504 Plan <i>and</i> have more than 2 years of well-documented Science of Reading (SoR)-aligned interventions delivered with fidelity.
English Learner	Students who have had less than 3 years of formal English Learner instruction. • For students who attended 3 to 4 years of instruction, the LPAC Committee will need to convene and look at all data points to determine if EL students have received meaningful access to core (Tier 1 with appropriate linguistic accommodations) to make an individual decision concerning promotion. • For newcomers with fewer than 3 years of instruction, the LPAC team will need to convene and look at all data points to make individual student decisions.
Students Previously retained	Students who have already been retained.
Students receiving intensive support	Students who were previously evaluated for special education services and did not qualify, who have had intensive and evidence-based intervention for 2 or more years, and continue to demonstrate a reading need.
Assessment portfolio	Students who have consistently performed at grade level in current and prior school years but score a Level 1 on the Grade 3 ATLAS assessment may demonstrate proficiency if the school provides substantial evidence through a student portfolio showing that the results do not accurately reflect the student's reading ability. This may include students who scored a Level 2 in Reading on ATLAS.
Other students with necessary, justifiable good-cause exemptions	Students who experienced an isolated traumatic event that directly impacted performance on the assessment.

What is not a good cause exemption?



- Remediation for two or more years.
- Attending summer school.
- Attending HIT tutoring.
- Having an IEP alone.
- Having a 504 plan alone.

Diagnostic Teaching Informed by Data

Decision Making Around Third Grade Promotion



What evidence do you have that a student should move on?

Which data do you use? When should you collect the data?

- Portfolio Requirements
- Screener Data (shows mastery of previous year's skills)
- Classroom Data (shows progress toward mastery of grade level skills)
- CFA/Exit Tickets (grade level standards strengths)
- Interim 1 (progress toward grade-level mastery)
- Interim 2 (further progress toward grade-level mastery)
- Summative (ELA, Reading, Math, Science - how close to mastery?)

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What Should the ELA Block Include?



For any student who did not meet the reading requirement (2 on ELA)

A minimum of ninety minutes per day of evidence-based literacy instruction aligned to the science of reading.

This instruction should include:

- Core instruction that is explicit and systematic with more detailed explanations, more extensive opportunities for guided practice and more opportunities for error correction and feedback.
- Targeted small group instruction
- More frequent progress monitoring of the reading skills of each student throughout the school year and the adjustment of instruction according to student need

NOTE: Dyslexia interventions are not a part of the 90 minutes of literacy instruction, but will be in addition to the 90 minutes.

Discuss: How do you address each part of literacy in the time you have.



Bottom of the rope

Word study, Morphology, Fluency, Handwriting (cursive)

- Teacher Direct Instruction

- Student Practice

Top of the rope

Comprehension, vocabulary, collaborative communication, and writing about content

- Teacher Direct Instruction

- Student Practice

- Small Group tier 2

Process Writing

Small Group tier 3

K-5 Standards

180 Minute Schedule



Bottom of the rope (30 minutes):

Word study, Morphology, Fluency, Handwriting (cursive)

- Teacher Direct Instruction

- Student Practice

Top of the rope (90 minutes):

Comprehension, vocabulary, collaborative communication, and writing about content

- Teacher Direct Instruction

- Student Practice

- Small Group tier 2

Process Writing (30 minutes): Composition writing through the Writing Process

Small Group tier 3 (30 minutes): IRP goals grouped together

120 Minute Schedule



Bottom of the rope (20 minutes):

Word study, Morphology, Handwriting (cursive)

- Teacher Direct Instruction

- Student Practice

Top of the rope (80 minutes):

Comprehension, vocabulary, collaborative communication, and writing about content

- Teacher Direct Instruction

- Student Practice

- Small Group tier 2

Process Writing (20 minutes): Composition writing through the Writing Process

Small Group tier 3: During separate intervention time (example: WIN Time)

90 Minute Schedule



Bottom of the rope (20 minutes):

Word study, Morphology, Handwriting (cursive)

- Teacher Direct Instruction
- Student Practice

Top of the rope: (70 minutes)

Comprehension, vocabulary, collaborative communication, and writing about content

- Teacher Direct Instruction
- Student Practice
- Small Group tier 2

Process Writing: End of Module Task; Teach process during on demand writing

Small Group tier 3: During separate intervention time (WIN Time)

Maximize ELA Instructional Time



If you do not have enough ELA minutes in your schedule, what could you do?

- Internalization to focus on grade level standards (BoR especially) for efficiency. This reduces the word study time element.
- Look for morphology connections in your HQIM. This allows for your ToR curriculum to help drive your word study.
- Pull small groups during ToR Core independent practice time.
 - Struggling students do guided practice with you first, which provides a double dose

- [Third Grade Promotion Website](#)
- [Technical Assistance Manual](#)
- [District Toolkit](#)
- [Read-at-Home Plan](#)
 - [Spanish Version - Read-at-Home Plan](#)
- [Third-Grade Summer Reading Family Guide](#)

Questions Around Third Grade Promotion?



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Q & A

Thank you for attending.

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