



2019-2020 General Assembly

# SENATE BILL 704: COVID-19 Recovery Act, Sec. 2.7: Third Grade Retention, Reading Camps, and Fourth Grade Reading Assessment

**Committee:**  
**Introduced by:**  
**Analysis of:** Sec. 2.7 of S.L. 2020-3

**Date:** November 3, 2020  
**Prepared by:** Samantha Yarborough  
Staff Attorney

**OVERVIEW:** Section 2.7 of S.L. 2020-3 makes the following changes to requirements related to third grade reading:

**Third Grade Retention Determination** – For grade level determination for the 2020-2021 school year, principals and charter schools have the authority to determine the appropriate 2020-2021 school year grade level for students who were in the third grade during the 2019-2020 school year in the same manner as for students in all other grade levels. Principals must designate whether a third grade student is retained due to reading deficiencies. Principals are encouraged to consult with a student's 2019-2020 third grade teacher in determining grade classification.

**Parental Notice and Interventions** – If a first, second, or third grade student demonstrated difficulty with reading development or was not reading at grade level during the 2019-2020 school year based on assessments completed on or before March 13, 2020, the parent or guardian must receive notice. Teachers and principals must provide opportunities, including, but not limited to information sessions, to discuss this notification with parents and guardians.

For third grade students retained for the 2019-2020 school year, no written reports on student progress are required after March 16, 2020.

For third grade students retained for the 2020-2021 school year, all requirements regarding successful reading development and notification of parents and guardians apply, except (i) encouraged enrollment in reading camps and (ii) notification of good cause exemptions from mandatory retention based on failing to demonstrate reading proficiency on a standardized test of reading comprehension.

**Reading Camps** – Local school administrative units are not required to provide reading camps corresponding to the 2019-2020 school year.

**Fourth Grade Reading Assessment** – No later than the tenth day that school buildings are open to students for the 2020-2021 school year, public school units must administer to all fourth grade students the third grade end-of-year diagnostic reading assessment. The results of the assessment will be used to identify reading deficiencies and inform instruction and remediation needs in order to ensure that all students achieve proficiency at the earliest date possible.

**Reporting Requirements** – For the 2020-2021 school year, accountability reporting published and reported by local boards of education based on data from the 2019-2020 school year is not required, except that by September 1, 2020, local boards of education must report to the State Board of Education (SBE) the following information:

- The number and percentage of first, second, and third grade students on track and not on track to meet year-end expectations based on assessments completed on or before March 13, 2020.

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# Senate Bill 704

Page 2

- *The number and percentage of third grade students retained due to reading deficiencies.*

*For the 2020-2021 school year, accountability reporting published and reported by charter schools based on data from the 2019-2020 school year is not required, except that by September 1, 2020, charter schools and other public school units subject to charter school statutory requirements must report to the SBE the following information:*

- *The number and percentage of third grade students on track and not on track to meet year-end expectations based on assessments completed on or before March 13, 2020.*
- *The number and percentage of third grade students retained due to reading deficiencies.*

*The SBE must compile the information reported and submit a State-level summary of each component by local school administrative unit and charter school to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by October 15, 2020.*

*This section became effective May 4, 2020.*