

LOWELL AREA SCHOOLS

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

Literacy is a priority in Lowell Area Schools. We recognize that a strong foundation in literacy is important for students as they prepare for college or careers. In 2016, the Michigan Legislature passed House Bill 4822 to ensure that children are reading at grade level by the time they leave third grade. Currently, all third graders take the M-STEP state assessment. **Beginning with the 2019-20 school year, Michigan third graders will need to demonstrate proficiency on the state assessment in order to be promoted to the fourth grade.** This portion of the law affects this year's kindergarten and first grade students.

In this week's Friday folders, K-3 students will bring home a document published by Kent ISD titled "3rd Grade Reading Law: A Parent Guide to Public Act 306." This handout details important information about the law and how it affects schools, families, and most importantly, our students.

Lowell Area Schools already has in place many of the law's recommendations. Teachers are learning best practices for literacy instruction. We are in the process of completing our DIBELS screening assessments and MAP testing to gauge where students are at and where they may need extra support. Students who are proficient readers will be challenged to read at their level, and other students who are below benchmark may receive additional interventions in the classroom, pull out reading support, or an invitation to attend after school reading support. Supports for students reading below benchmark will be detailed in an Individual Reading Plan. This plan will be developed by the school, with input from parents.

Parents play an important role in the reading acquisition process. The handout contains strategies for parents and caregivers to create a literacy rich environment at home. If you read daily with your child—thank you! Please continue this important practice. If you don't, the handout gives some excellent strategies to help engage our kids with what they are reading.

We look forward to continuing to work with families as we strive to provide students with the best possible education. As the spring of 2020 approaches, we will keep families informed about how the law will be implemented and how it may affect struggling readers and their families. If you have any questions, please contact your school's office.

Sincerely,

Greg Pratt

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