

## **S.B. 21 - Third Grade Reading Guarantee**

As passed by the Ohio House of Representatives

Below is an outline of the significant changes made to Senate Bill 21, the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, in the House of Representatives. SB 21 was approved May 22 and will become law as soon as it is signed by the governor. The Ohio Federation of Teachers intends this summary to be a guide for local leaders and members in the classroom. Note that these SB 21 requirements apply only to third grade teachers and not those who teach K-2.

### **Teacher qualifications**

Any child who enters third grade on or after July 1, 2013, and is on a reading improvement monitoring plan will be assigned a teacher who has at least one year of teaching experience and who satisfies one or more of the following criteria:

- Holds a reading endorsement and has attained a passing score on the corresponding assessment for that endorsement. (OFT believes this should be a path pursued only by teachers who want to earn the endorsement. No superintendent or principal can require the endorsement of any teacher.)
- Has completed a master's degree program with a major in reading. (See note for Reading Endorsement.)
- Was rated "most effective" for reading instruction consecutively for the most recent two years based on assessments of student growth measures developed by a vendor and that is on a list of student assessments approved by the state board. (ODE has yet to finalize the list of approved vendors for this requirement. Your district may or may not currently use one of these vendor assessments. OFT recommends that the union work with the district to determine if this is a viable and useful option to adopt any of the listed vendor assessments.)
- Was rated "above expected value added" in reading instruction as determined by criteria established by the department for the most recent consecutive two years.
- Has earned a passing score on a rigorous test of principles of scientifically research-based reading instruction. (The assessment has not yet been chosen or developed.)
- Holds an educator license for teaching grades pre-kindergarten through grade 3, or grades 4-9 issued on or after July 1, 2017. (Beginning in 2017, the state mandates that all graduates entering the field of education be qualified to teach students on a reading improvement plan.)

## Unique situations

- A teacher may have less than one year of teaching experience provided that the teacher meets one or more of the above criteria and is assigned a mentor who meets one or more of the above criteria. (OFT suggests your local works with the district to determine the qualifications for selecting and filling the mentor role. It is extremely important to ensure a high quality choice to work with a teacher who has limited teaching experience.)
- A teacher other than the student's "teacher of record" may provide required services as long as that teacher meets the above requirements, and the "teacher of record" and principal agree to the assignment. This arrangement must be documented in the student's reading improvement and monitoring plan. (This provision is particularly useful where there are smaller numbers of students needing help and on a plan. OFT sees this as a benefit since it allows an interventionist, tutor, reading specialist, etc. to work with students to enhance their reading progress even if the classroom teacher does not meet the criteria.)
- Between July 1, 2013 and July 1, 2016, a teacher may hold an alternative credential approved by the department or may have successfully completed training that is based on principles of scientifically research-based reading instruction that has been approved by the department. (This alternative is the one OFT recommends above others provided the option exists beyond 2016. We are seeking clarity on this. It has the potential for job embedded training that can be extremely valuable. Hopefully, all districts are using reading programs that are research based and to be trained in delivering the program will fit into the natural flow of a teacher's work.)
- Students may receive services from a speech-language pathologist.
- Teachers of English Language Learners and students on IEPs ---- Teachers who hold an alternative credential approved by the department or who have successfully completed training that is based on scientifically research-based reading instruction approved by the department may teach reading to English language learners who have been in the US for three years or less or students with disabilities who have IEPs.

## Staffing plans

OFT considers this a valuable section since it allows the union to work with the district to develop a thoughtful, viable plan to ensure that staff members have the proper qualifications to teach reading to students on improvement plans. There is no need to rush to implement anything for the 2013-2014 school year. OFT suggests you take the time to work with the district to get it right.

- Requires a school district or community school that is unable to furnish the number of teachers needed to satisfy the reading guarantee teacher requirements for the 2013-

2014 school year to develop and submit a plan indicating the criteria that will be used to determine teachers who will teach during that school year and how the requirements of the law will be met in subsequent years. Such a plan must be submitted by June 20, 2013.

- Requires that a staffing plan be posted on the district or school's website.
- Requires that a district that has submitted a staffing plan file a detailed progress report toward meeting the requirements by March 1, 2014.
- Allows schools to request an extension for the staffing plan beyond the 2013-2014 school year. The department may grant extensions through the 2015-2016 school year. The department must annually review all plans and report the progress of schools toward meeting the requirements of the law.

### **Assessments for determining retention**

- Retention is triggered by failure to attain at least the "equivalent level of achievement as determined by the Department (the phrase "failure to attain a score in the designated range" was removed). (The "equivalent level of achievement" has yet to be set by ODE.)
- Exempts from the guarantee limited English proficient students who have been enrolled in US schools for less than three years and who have had less than three years of instruction in English as a second language (current law says two years).
- Exempts from the requirement to take annual diagnostic assessment students with "significant cognitive disabilities" or other disabilities authorized by the department on a case- by- case basis.

### **Reading Achievement Improvement Plans**

1. IF for two consecutive years a district or school received a grade of "D" or "F" on the K-3 literacy progress measure, AND less than 60 percent of the district's students who took the reading assessment attained at least a proficient score, THEN that district must submit a reading achievement improvement plan to the department. Districts that are persistently perceived to be underperforming must submit a plan to improve. The union should be involved with the development of that plan. Teachers know what it will take to get the resources necessary to work with students needing added help in reading. Their voices need to be heard and reflected in the plan.
2. IF a district or school received a "C" or higher on the K-3 literacy progress measure, AND at least 60 percent of the district's students who took the reading assessment attained a proficient or better, THEN that district is not required to submit a reading achievement improvement plan.