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September 18, 2017

Dear RCS Parent or Guardian:

The Michigan Legislature passed the "Third-Grade Retention Law" (PA 306) in October 2016 to ensure that students exiting 3rd grade are reading at or above grade level beginning in the school year 2019-20. This will affect students who are entering first grade in the 2017-18 school year. In accordance with PA 306, and as a means of better informing classroom instruction, districts will be required to administer state approved reading assessments to K-3 students beginning in the current school year (2017-18). These assessments will identify students who need intensive reading instruction and intervention and will also provide useful information to help teachers tailor instruction to meet individual student needs.

In 2017-18, all K-3 students will be assessed at the beginning, middle and end of the school year using designated assessments. Rochester Community Schools has chosen two assessments that it has been using for the last several years (i-Ready Reading Diagnostic and Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment). Districts must identify students with early literacy delays. The law requires the development of Individual Reading Plans for K-3 students with reading deficiencies. Regular communication with parents/guardians must include information about current services being provided, additional reading supports, and strategies to support literacy at home (Read-At-Home plan).

Beginning in 2019-20, the standardized state reading assessment that all 3rd grade students take at the end of the year in reading will be used to determine promotion to 4th grade. If a student is reading below grade level at the end of 3rd grade, the parent will be informed in writing that his/her child will not be promoted to 4th grade. In certain circumstances, a student may be eligible for an exemption.

Literacy instruction remains a major focus in grades K-3 for RCS. Students need strong reading skills in order to learn in all other school subjects, such as science, social studies, writing and math. Rochester Community Schools will continue to update parents as we implement the "Third-Grade Retention Law". The Curriculum Department will be hosting parent information sessions on Wednesday, September 27 at 9:30 AM and 7:00 PM at the Administration Center in the Harrison Room. Please also watch for dates in which your school's principal will be holding a parent information session. [Click here to view the law in its entirety.](#)

Sincerely,
Michael Behrmann
Executive Director of Elementary Education