

PRESS RELEASE: 89.1% of LCSD third-graders passed third-grade reading assessment

COLUMBUS -- The Mississippi Department of Education announced Thursday that 89.1% of third-graders in the Lowndes County School District (LCSD) passed the initial administration of the third-grade reading assessment given this spring for the 2023-24 school year.

Caledonia Elementary School (CES) had 97.4% of its students pass the assessment, West Lowndes Elementary School (WLES) had 83.8% of its students pass and New Hope Elementary School (NHES) had 82.4% of its students pass.

All of the percentages are higher than the state-wide average of 75.7% for 31,787 third-graders.

“We are immensely proud of the hard work of our students and teachers,” LCSD Superintendent Dr. Sam Allison said. “The results of this assessment reflect efforts that began before kindergarten and involved both school and home environments. Developing good readers requires consistent reading, and we are fortunate many of our families support the schools’ efforts by reading with their children at home. This, combined with the excellent leadership and instruction from our teachers, leads to positive outcomes.

“Reading is a crucial skill for success in academics and life. While we are proud of our results, we recognize there is still work to be done for those who did not meet the assessment requirements. Our hope is that over the next couple of weeks, all of our third-grade students will fulfill these requirements.”

CES and NHES showed improvements from the 2022-23 school year, when Caledonia had 92.7% of its third-graders pass and New Hope had 80.4% of its third-graders pass.

The state-wide percentage is nearly the same as the initial pass rate in 2022-23 of 76.3% when 31,623 third-graders took the assessment, and higher than the pre-pandemic initial pass rate of 74.5%.

“When it comes to literacy, the collective efforts of teachers, administrators, literacy coaches and families are essential to students’ success,” said Dr. Ray Morgigno, interim state superintendent of education. “The MDE is committed to supporting instruction and resources aligned to the Science of Reading that will foster more achievement.”

In accordance with the Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), third-graders who do not pass the initial administration of the reading test are given up to two attempts to retest. After the final retest in 2022-23, 84.9% of third-graders passed the test, and 85% passed the test in 2021-22.

The LBPA became law in 2013 to improve reading skills of kindergarten through third-grade students in public schools so every student completing the third grade is able to read at or above grade level. The LBPA requires Mississippi third-graders to pass a reading assessment to qualify for promotion to fourth grade. An amendment to the law in 2016 raised reading-level expectations starting in the 2018-19 school year, requiring third-graders to score at level three or higher on the reading portion of the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) English Language Arts (ELA) assessment.

Students who did not pass the reading assessment on their first attempt last month were retested May 6-10. The second retest window is June 17-28. Some students may qualify for good-cause exemptions to be promoted to fourth grade.

To see the district- and school-level initial pass rate report for 2023-24, go to mdek12.org/OPR/Reporting/Assessment/2023-24.

Final district-level pass rates will be published this fall in the Literacy-Based Promotion Act Annual Report of Performance and Student Retention for the 2023-24 school year.

For more information, contact LCSD Public Information Officer Adam Minichino at 662-244-5002 or 662-251-0459 or email him at: Adam.Minichino@lowndes.k12.ms.us