September 23, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians of KPS Third Grade Students:

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year. We hope that your child is off to a great start at their school this year!

It is more important than ever that our students learn to read in the early grades. In addition to reading being the gateway to success in much of children’s learning, it is also required by Michigan law (Public Act 306 known as the Read by Grade 3 Law) that this school year’s third grade students (and future 3rd grade students) be no lower than one grade level below grade level on the M-STEP (state) reading testing this spring.

If students are below the Michigan requirement, they are to be retained for another year in grade 3 unless they are exempted from retention for specific reasons (e.g., some English Language Learners and children with certain challenges identified in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans would be automatically exempted). We will share more about the exemption process with you later. There will be a way for parents/guardians to request consideration for a good cause exemption too.

It is important that all children learn to read well. This starts in the pre-kindergarten years and continues in the early elementary grades. Reading at home is very, very important! Please be sure that your third grade child reads 25-30 minutes every day at home. The reading material should be chosen by the child. It is always good to encourage your child to read both fiction and non-fiction books. The daily reading is in addition to the homework that teachers assign, 30 minutes a day in grade 3.

There are many ways that you can support your child’s reading skills at home on a regular basis. We encourage you to start early and provide ongoing supports. Here are some of the ways you can help:

- Read out loud to your child.
- Listen to your child read.
- Echo read (You read a line, then your child reads a line).
- Read together at the same time.
- Reread or retell favorite stories.
- Talk to your child about the reading.
- Write a new ending or part to the story with your child.
- Encourage journal writing.
- Talk about the headings, illustrations, charts, graphs in the book if there.
- Talk about your child’s favorite parts.
- Take your child to the library on a weekly basis all year long. Use their Kalamazoo Public Library OneCard to check out books.
- Be involved with your child’s education.

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See the enclosed suggestion list from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) for more ideas about helping your child develop strong reading and learning skills. Also enclosed is an MDE summary of the process that will be used to implement the retention part of Public Act 306.

After our NWEA-MAP reading assessments are finished by the end of this month, students who are below grade level will have a Reading Improvement Plan written in consultation with parents and guardians. Some at-home resources will also be provided for these students’ families to use at home. In the winter NWEA-MAP assessments, additional students may be identified for increased support.

Third grade families, we will keep you posted about how your child is doing with their reading. Thank you for your help in supporting your child to become a confident reader. Another good way to do this is to show them that you love and use reading to learn too!

Best wishes for a wonderful school year! We look forward to partnering with you to maximize your child’s success in school this year!

Sincerely,

Judy D’Arcangelis
Principal

Angela Justice
Coordinator, English Language Arts

Encl: 2