January 29, 2020

Dear Third Grade Families,

Walled Lake Schools has a long-standing commitment to ensuring our students can read. Much before the state legislature passed the Michigan Third Grade Reading Law in 2017-18, Walled Lake Schools has been implementing progressive reading goals. In accordance with the state law, this year’s third graders are subject to the retention portion of the law. The law requires a minimum score on the M-STEP English Language Arts test for retention in third grade the following year. This spring, your child will take the test during the testing window scheduled for April 24 to May 22, 2020. The purpose of this communication is to remind you of Walled Lake’s commitment to early literacy instruction and ensure that all students are successful.

Some children find learning to read difficult as they grow and develop. In Walled Lake, we understand that each child has unique needs and we have the following practices in place:

- A bold assessment system to catch struggling students early
- Caring and highly skilled staff who intervene and support student needs
- Individual Reading Improvement Plans (IRIP) for students who are not meeting grade level reading expectations
- A home component to the IRIP which involves family support and collaboration
- Close progress monitoring and adjusting of plans for each student with an IRIP

If your child has been identified as needing support with an IRIP plan, your child’s school has already been in contact with you.

After the Spring M-STEP is given, students who have not met minimum requirements on the English Language Arts test will receive a letter from the Michigan Department of Education. This letter, mailed to your home, will notify you that your child has not met the minimum requirements and is subject to retention in third-grade for the following year. Walled Lake is committed to working with families receiving this letter. We will discuss plans with you on how to best support your child moving forward. To access information about “good cause exemptions” to the retention letter, please follow this link: Facts for Families-3rd grade.

You will continue to receive updates on the Third Grade Reading Law from your school principal and your child’s third grade teacher. Thank you for your partnership with Walled Lake and for making reading a priority in your home!

Sincerely,

Catherine Kochanski, Assistant Superintendent of Learning Services