

Update on Read to Achieve!

by Ellis Hankins, Board of Education Advisory Committee, District 6: Wake County Public School System

The General Assembly is currently in the final days, or more likely weeks, of their short session. They have passed one bill, [HB 230](#), which makes some beneficial changes to *Read to Achieve*. Specifically, it allows school districts to shorten the number of weeks of the reading camp¹, and expands the special education exemption (as the EXTEND 2 classification is phased out by the State²).

Section 8.29 of the House version of the budget bill ([SB744 v7](#)), entitled Read to Achieve Student Portfolios, DOES contain significant changes to Read to Achieve that would alleviate some of the burdensome testing of our children. Specifically:

- Changes the requirements for demonstrating 3rd grade reading mastery from 36 reading passages (3 x 12 standards) to 24 reading passages (2 x 12 standards), and the requirements may be further reduced if a student demonstrates 80% proficiency on the first administration of a reading passage for that reading standard.
- The portfolio may be used only if the administration of a standardized test would not yield a positive finding.
- The principal, in consultation with the teacher and parents, will decide if the portfolio should be used for an individual student. Many school districts required that all students who had otherwise not demonstrated 3rd grade reading proficiency go through the portfolio process, even if the teacher/principal knew the child was not reading at a 3rd grade level.
- Requires the NC State Board of Education to adopt any alternative assessments by September 15 of each year. This is so school districts and parents know what the options will be used to demonstrate that students can read at a 3rd grade level at the beginning of school.
- Requires that principals hold a parent information meeting on the requirements of *Read to Achieve* within the first 30 days of the school year.

How can you join this discussion and share your views on Read to Achieve?

1. You can contact your legislators and share your view about adopting the language contained in Section 8.29 Read to Achieve Student Portfolios in the House version of SB 744.
2. If you are the parent of a 3rd grade student this past school year, please share some of your personal perspective of what it was like this year and how you feel the program can be improved.

¹ Per the NC Department of Public Instruction, “Under this state law, third-grade students who are not reading at grade level by the end of third grade will receive special help, including summer reading camp and other interventions to make sure that they can read well enough to be able to do fourth-grade work.”

² The READY NCEXTEND2 EOG is designed to assess students with disabilities who are working toward subject area achievement but are having difficulty making progress in the same time frame as students without disabilities.

3. Talk with legislators overseeing the education budget negotiations. The Senators are Jerry Tillman, jerry.tillman@ncleg.net; Dan Soucek, dan.soucek@ncleg.net; and Tom Apodaca, tom.apodaca@ncleg.net. The Representatives are Craig Horn, craig.horn@ncleg.net; Chuck McGrady, chuck.mcgrady@ncleg.net and hugh.blackwell@ncleg.net.
 - a. You can find out who represents you in the General Assembly by clicking [here](#). To find out who your Senator is, enter your information on the **second** map. If you also want to contact your Representative, enter your information on the first map. **DO NOT** use the US House of Representatives Map (the last one). If you want to send an e-mail message to every legislator who represents your county, scroll down just a bit further and you can look up your county delegation.
4. **Please pass this information on to any K-4 parent you know who might have an interest in this topic. You can contact me at ellis.hankins@gmail.com with any questions or suggestions.**