



**Columbus Education Association**

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**An open letter to the Columbus City Schools Board of Education:**

We, the third-grade educators of Columbus City Schools and members of the Columbus Education Association write you with serious concerns regarding a recent change to requirements for the placement of third grade students on Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plans (RIMPS).

Pursuant to the Ohio Department of Education *Third Grade Reading Guarantee Guidance Manual*, A school must create a RIMP “for a student who is not on-track (reading below grade level) within 60 days of receiving the reading diagnostic results”. The purpose of a RIMP, as defined by ODE, is to “allow teachers and parents to work together to understand the student’s reading deficiency and outline reading instruction and support”. To determine whether a student is “on-track” for the purposes of a RIMP, the district annually administers a beginning-of-year (BOY) assessment to third graders using the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA)- Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP). As a state standard, a student who meets or exceeds the ODE NWEA/MAP cut score of 181 for the 2019-2020 school year is considered “on-track” and does not require a RIMP, a student whose score is below 181 requires a RIMP to provide instructional support, designed to ensure the student will pass the end-of-year assessment required to meet the third grade reading guarantee.

Within recent weeks, Columbus City Schools administration made a unilateral decision to drastically raise the BOY cut score on the NWEA/MAP to 212 for the purpose of third grade students being placed on a RIMP. By law, the district has the right to make this change (although we do believe that the district violated the CEA Master Agreement by failing to consult with the Joint Labor Management Committee prior to making the change and have filed a grievance regarding this procedural issue). The larger issue at hand is the effect of this 18-point change on our students: each third grader who scores below the 92nd percentile in reading will be placed on a RIMP, resulting in a massive increase in the total number of students on RIMPs. Administrators have confirmed to our Union that the cut score change is not about improving educational outcomes, but rather is “just a compliance measure” in order to avoid deductions on the District’s “K-3 Literacy” component of the flawed state report card.

As professional educators we do not believe that labeling our students who are at or above proficiency according to ODE as “off track” and having “reading deficiencies” is the proper way to address a flawed state mandate. Nor is adding paperwork and progress monitoring to teacher workloads which will take away valuable instructional time. Further, a mountain of unnecessary RIMPs without additional reading supports will decrease the availability of interventions for students who truly do need a RIMP.

We ask that as elected members of the Columbus City Schools Board of Education, you stand up for our students and communities by immediately rescinding this ill-informed directive and working with your educators through our union, rather than unilaterally making a change that may help in the short term with avoiding deductions on a flawed state mandate, but will cause long term negative consequences for our students.

We believe in the mission of Columbus City Schools and are committed to creating “a world-class model of public education that prepares members of our communities to reach their full potential.” To reach our goal of a world-class model of public education, let’s not begin by labeling the vast majority of our third graders “off-track” and “deficient” and instead work together to instill in them the confidence they need to reach their full potential.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_ Name

\_\_\_\_\_ School