



MISSISSIPPI **OPTOMETRIC** ASSOC.

MS Statewide Third Grade Reading Assessment **2024 Talking Points**

CORE MESSAGE: In 2022 and 2023, nearly 25% of the state's third graders who took the statewide reading test did not pass the first assessment. By the final assessment 15% of the state's third graders did not pass. Many issues can affect a child's inability to read and comprehend and one of those issues again be visual acuity. The Mississippi Optometric Association and the Mississippi Vision Foundation are partnering to provide no-cost eye exams to Mississippi 3rd grade students who did not pass the reading test and do not have vision coverage.

For students who are covered through insurance or CHIPS, doctors will file on that coverage and parents will be asked to cover the co-pay for the visit, due to laws which require the doctor to collect this amount. Parents who are unable to pay the out-of-pocket expenses should discuss this with the doctor.

Supporting Message 1: If a child must struggle to see, he will struggle to learn.

- Statistically, 25% of all school age children have vision problems and more than 80% do not get the help they need.
- Previous years' statistics show that 88% of the students who were tested through the eye exam program were found to need some form of visual intervention.
- In some instances, a pair of glasses can solve the problem.

Supporting Message 2: Since 2015, the Mississippi Optometric Association and the Mississippi Vision Foundation have partnered to provide no-cost eye exams to Mississippi 3rd grade students who did not pass the reading test and do not have insurance coverage.

- Optometrists across the state are offering their services to identify those third graders with vision problems.
- A list of participating optometrists is available at: www.msvisionfoundation.org
- MOA is working with the Mississippi Department of Education and the Mississippi Professional Educators to inform schools, principals, and parents of the available vision exam.
- The eye exams will be offered through July 31.
- The goal is to provide eye exams and any necessary corrective lenses to students prior to retesting.

Supporting Message 3: Additionally, MOA's industry partners will provide any frames or lenses that students may need which are not covered by insurance.

- All students who need glasses will receive them.
- We all want to see these students reading on grade level.