

# FAQ: IDOE Plan to Ensure Student Literacy by the End of 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

#### Instruction

What is included in the 90-minute reading block?

In order to achieve Indiana's goal of having every child reading at or above grade level by the year 2012, the reading block should include all elements identified by the National Reading Panel. These elements should be taught during an uninterrupted block of time that is at least 90 minutes in length:

- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

Research shows that reading and writing have a reciprocal relationship. Writing should be explicitly taught. It is expected that spelling, writing, and handwriting will be taught, but if the lesson does not pertain to one of the five components of reading, the lesson should be outside of the 90-minute block.

<u>Are all previously adopted, IDOE-approved textbooks considered research-based core reading programs?</u>

Curricular materials adopted by the Indiana State Board of Education on September 7, 2006, for the adoption period July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2013, meet the research-based core program guidelines.

<u>Does the core program need to be part of the Indiana State Board of Education 2006 adoption list, or can it be a collection of resources as long as the students receive the five elements of reading?</u>

A school must adopt a core program consisting of a carefully planned sequence for instruction unless both of the following criteria are met:

- Ninety (90) percent of students pass the reading portion of ISTEP+, and
- A current school designation under P.L. 221 in one of the top two performance categories

### Will Kindergarten classes be required to have 90 minutes per day of uninterrupted reading?

Schools with half day kindergarten programs must ensure 90 minutes of reading instruction are provided daily, but the 90 minutes do not have to be uninterrupted. Safeguarding reading instructional time should still be a priority, however. Full day kindergarten classes need to provide 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction each day.

#### Assessment

What happens if my child does not pass the Reading portion of ISTEP+ in 3rd grade?

The child must be retained, unless the child meets the exemption requirements outlined in IDOE's Reading Plan.

### Will one test determine if a child advances or not?

The need has been established for a 3rd grade reading test, which would help schools identify students requiring extra assistance in reading prior to entering grade 4. IDOE is working with our test vendor to create that exam. A list of exemptions from retention is included in the state's reading plan.

How will the "reading" score from the ISTEP+ be provided?

The reading score will be part of the grade 3 ISTEP+ English/language arts results.

Why is mCLASS the only diagnostic tool provided to schools free of charge?

The State Board of Education designed an Assessment Plan, released an RFP, and accepted one proposal for a K-2 diagnostic tool (Wireless Generation's mCLASS) and one proposal for a diagnostic tool to use with students in grades 3-8 (CTB/McGraw-Hill's Acuity).

For those students failing 3rd grade ISTEP+ and required to attend summer school, is the ISTEP+ test administered at the end of summer school going to be a different test?

Yes, the additional assessment would be a different form of the reading portion of ISTEP+.

Who is responsible for administering a mid-year reading assessment to determine whether a student is ready to move on to 4<sup>th</sup> grade?

The Indiana Department of Education would provide the assessment, and schools would be responsible for its administration.

#### Retention

Why is third grade the first year retention is mandated?

A substantial reading deficiency must be addressed before students can move on to the more difficult schoolwork of fourth grade and beyond. It will remain the choice of a student's teachers and parents to determine if a student needs to be retained prior to third grade. If teachers see serious deficiencies in reading skills, IDOE believes those deficiencies should be addressed as soon as possible through whatever means the educators and parents think are best, up to and including retention. However, IDOE has no data prior to third grade on every student. Once ISTEP+ is administered in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, there is a valid, reliable and consistent measure across the state to determine reading proficiency.

What happens when a child who has been previously retained in third grade does not pass the reading portion of the ISTEP+?

A student may be retained a total of two times prior to fourth grade, based on the discretion of a student's teachers and parents. If a student is held back twice and still cannot read proficiently, the teachers may want to consider whether special education placement is appropriate.

Will a child who has been retained receive the same third grade instruction or will the child move on with their peers and just be "retained" in reading?

This decision is at the discretion of each school, based on unique circumstances and what is best for local students.

#### How will transient students be held accountable?

Transient students take ISTEP+ in third grade (presuming they do not have an IEP stating that ISTEP+ is not appropriate), regardless of which school in Indiana they are enrolled. Every student and his or her teachers and family deserve to know a student's reading proficiency, no matter how many times a student has moved. If the student does not pass the reading portion of ISTEP+, he or she must be retained so they have the opportunity to catch-up, just like any other student.

How will individualized tutoring, special instructional groups, and other support be provided for retained students?

Corporations and schools determine specific remediation activities, schedules, and school sites for students. The law requires the provision of one of the following:

• Supplemental scientifically research-based reading instruction, or

A mentor or tutor with specialized reading training.

### **Exemptions**

### What provisions will be made for English Language Learners?

The English Language Learners (ELLs) exemption is based on LAS Links English Proficiency Assessment data in order to ensure that retention is not based solely on English proficiency, in accordance with U.S. Supreme Court rulings in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974). ELLs with a score of Level 3 or less in the Reading domain on the LAS Links English Proficiency Assessment are exempted from the retention requirement even if they do not pass the reading portion of ISTEP+ since their academic performance is based on the second language acquisition process.

### What provisions will be made for students with special needs?

All students who participate in the ISTEP+, including students with disabilities, will follow the same guidelines disseminated by the Indiana Department of Education. This requirement reflects high expectations and equality for students with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). However, students with disabilities whose case conference committee has determined that promotion is appropriate, regardless of whether or not they have passed the reading portion of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade ISTEP+, will not be retained.

#### **Summer School**

### What if a parent refuses to have his/her child attend summer school?

If a student does not attend summer school after failing to pass the reading portion of the ISTEP+, and does not improve his or her reading skills to reach proficiency, he or she will be retained in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

### How will summer school or remediation be funded?

For summer school, schools should use current state funding along with any other source(s) that each corporation chooses, including Title I, for summer school. Remediation funds are also included in the state budget, and should be utilized first for remediation activities.

#### **Mid-Year Promotion**

#### How is mid-year promotion determined?

If a child achieves the required reading level during the next school year, the child may be promoted to fourth grade at that time. To be promoted to fourth grade mid-year, the child must demonstrate mastery of the third grade reading skills and beginning fourth grade reading skills. An assessment will be administered to help make that determination. In other words, the student must have made enough progress to be successful in fourth grade. Students should be provided on-grade level work for subject areas that are not at risk.

### **Reading Plan**

Will schools be evaluated annually as to whether or not they must implement the Reading Framework? Elementary schools meeting the following criteria are not required to implement a core research-based reading program:

- 90% of students pass the reading portion of the ISTEP+, and
- A current school designation under P.L. 221 in one of the top two performance categories However, schools taking advantage of this flexibility must describe their plan for reading instruction, including interventions for those students reading below grade level in elementary grades. The IDOE seeks this information in order to publicize programs that appear to provide, based on student achievement results, the greatest effect for Hoosier students.

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# Is a school that meets AYP exempt from writing a plan?

No, schools meeting AYP status and maintaining 90% of students passing the reading portion of the ISTEP+ must describe their plan for reading instruction, including the intervention for those students reading below grade level in elementary grades.

## **Higher Education**

What is being done to address new teacher training at the university level?

IDOE and the Advisory Board to the Division of Professional Standards recently revised teacher preparation regulations. Please find information regarding the Rule Revisions for Education Preparation and Accountability (REPA) at: <a href="http://www.doe.in.gov/news/2009/07-July/REPA.html">http://www.doe.in.gov/news/2009/07-July/REPA.html</a>

# **Teacher Expectations**

How is teacher effectiveness measured?

Teacher effectiveness is determined by student growth, which is measured through Indiana's new student growth model. Please find complete information about Indiana's growth model at: https://learningconnection.doe.in.gov/ArticleViewer.aspx?art=8.

### **Transportation**

How will students be transported for extended day, extended year or Saturday school programs? Issues such as transportation which are currently solely a local decision will remain so under the new reading plan. Most programs contained within the plan that might require extra transportation are options and should only be chosen if it makes sense in the local context.

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