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## Statewide results for fall 2021 Idaho Reading Indicator show improvement

(BOISE) – Statewide results of Idaho’s early reading test, the Idaho Reading Indicator, show 51 percent of the state’s students in kindergarten through third grade are reading at grade level, up from 49.6 percent last fall, Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra said Monday.

“The final results are encouraging, especially in grades 1 through 3, where children are continuing their education,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “The percentage of students at grade level this fall increased from each grade (K, 1, 2,3) to the next, and the percentage below grade level declined.”

“Incoming kindergartners were the only students for whom reading-readiness was lower than for the previous year’s cohort,” the superintendent said. “It is essential to give children a strong educational foundation when they enter school, and that’s why my top priority for the upcoming legislative session is to provide the option of full-day kindergarten for all at-risk students – a category that covers about two-thirds of all incoming kindergartners.”

Students’ IRI results are reported in three categories: at, near or below grade level.

- 40.8 percent of kindergartners were assessed at grade level this fall, down 2.6 percentage points from 43.4 percent in fall 2020. Another 29.5 percent tested as near grade level, with 29.7 percent below grade level.
- In first grade, 46 percent of this fall’s students were at grade level, up 4.3 percentage points from 41.7 percent last fall. Another 28.2 percent tested as near grade level, with 25.8 percent below grade level.
- 57.3 of second-graders were reading at grade level, up 3 percentage points from 54.3 in fall 2020. Another 20.4 percent tested as near grade level, with 22.3 percent below grade level.
- 59.3 percent of third-graders were reading at grade level, up 1 percentage point from 58.3 last fall. Another 21.4 percent tested as near grade level, with 19.3 percent below grade level.

“Scores for first- through third-graders still fall short of pre-pandemic levels, and that is not a surprise considering the learning loss caused by pandemic disruptions,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “But these latest results indicate we are making headway.”

In fall 2019, the last IRI testing before COVID-19 hit, the percentage of students at grade level was 42.3 in kindergarten, 48.9 in first grade, 62.9 in second grade and 64 percent in third grade. Each year's testing involves a separate cohort of students

Now in its fifth year of administration, the Idaho Reading Indicator is given to all K-3 public school students each fall and spring. The test measures five foundational reading skills – Alphabetic Knowledge, Phonemic Awareness, Vocabulary, Comprehension and Fluency – to ensure young Idaho students are learning to read so they can read to learn.

“The detailed data from fall IRI testing will help our K-3 teachers identify where individual students need help, tailor instruction to strengthen students’ skills, and monitor their progress throughout the school year,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “We look forward to the spring IRI, when we can track students’ growth in proficiency from fall to spring.”

The final fall 2021 IRI results include district- and school-level results and a breakdown by student demographic groups. Members of the public can access local district and school results, along with the statewide results, on the [State Department of Education website](#).

More than 90,000 students across the state – a nearly 5 percent increase from last year's total – took the fall 2021 IRI between Aug. 1 and Sept. 30. The IRI was administered in person to most students, but a remote option was available on request.

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**Attached:** Graphics showing final fall 2021 IRI results overall and by grade level, and comparison of 2021 and 2020 results.