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Fall 2022 Idaho Reading Indicator results reach pre-pandemic levels

BOISE – The latest results from Idaho’s early reading test, the Idaho Reading Indicator, show overall proficiency exceeding pre-pandemic levels, with especially strong improvement in kindergarten and first grade.

Statewide results in the fall IRI indicate 56.7 percent of students in kindergarten through third grade are reading at grade level, up from 51 percent last fall and eclipsing 2019’s proficiency level of 54.7 percent.

“Our educational communities’ hard work toward recovering from the enormous disruptions of the pandemic is producing success, with a 2.0 percentage point increase in proficiency over 2019’s pre-pandemic fall results and a 5.7 percentage point increase from fall 2021,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra said. “I’m especially excited to see that results for students in kindergarten and first grade have already exceeded 2019’s pre-pandemic numbers.”

- This fall, 51.7 percent of kindergartners scored at grade level, up 10.9 percentage points from 40.8 percent in fall 2021 and 9.4 percentage points higher than 2019’s 42.3 percent.
- In first grade, 55.4 percent of this fall’s students were assessed at grade level, up 9.4 percentage points from 46 percent last fall and up 6.5 percentage points from 48.9 percent in 2019.
- For second-graders, 58.9 percent were reading at grade level, up 1.6 percentage points from 57.3 percent in fall 2021. Pre-pandemic results in fall 2019 showed 62.9 percent at grade level.
- 60.4 percent of third-graders were reading at grade level, up from 59.3 percent last fall. In 2019, 64 percent were at grade level.

“That we’re seeing marked improvement in our first graders’ scores as well as more proficiency in our incoming cohort of kindergartners is encouraging, especially as we begin to assess the effectiveness of our early learning programs like Striving to Meet Achievement in Reading Together (SMART), which offers K-3 educators focused training on the science of teaching reading,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “That we’re seeing such progress is a testament to the dedication of our students, teachers, parents and everyone with a stake in the quality of Idaho’s education.”

“Our second- and third-graders have yet to reach pre-pandemic levels of proficiency, but that’s understandable since they were already in school working on crucial reading skills when COVID-19 hit

and disrupted their learning,” the superintendent said. “Some pandemic learning loss is reflected in their scores, but these students, too, are gaining ground and will continue to progress as our early literacy efforts continue.”

All K-3 Idaho public school students take the IRI, now in its sixth year of administration, each fall and spring. The test measures five foundational reading skills – Alphabetic Knowledge, Phonemic Awareness, Vocabulary, Comprehension and Fluency – to help teachers address each student’s needs and ensure that they are learning to read so they can read to learn in later grades.

Nearly 90,000 students across the state – a slight decrease from last year’s total – took the IRI between Aug. 1 and Sept. 30. The IRI was administered in-person to most students, but a remote option was available on request.

Members of the public can access local district and school results, along with the statewide results, on the [State Department of Education website](#). Students’ IRI results are reported in three categories: at, near and below grade level.

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Attached: Graphic showing final fall 2022 IRI results overall, by grade level and compared with 2021 results.