



Utah Early Literacy Handbook

Supporting Implementation of SB 241
2026



Utah State Board of Education

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Purpose

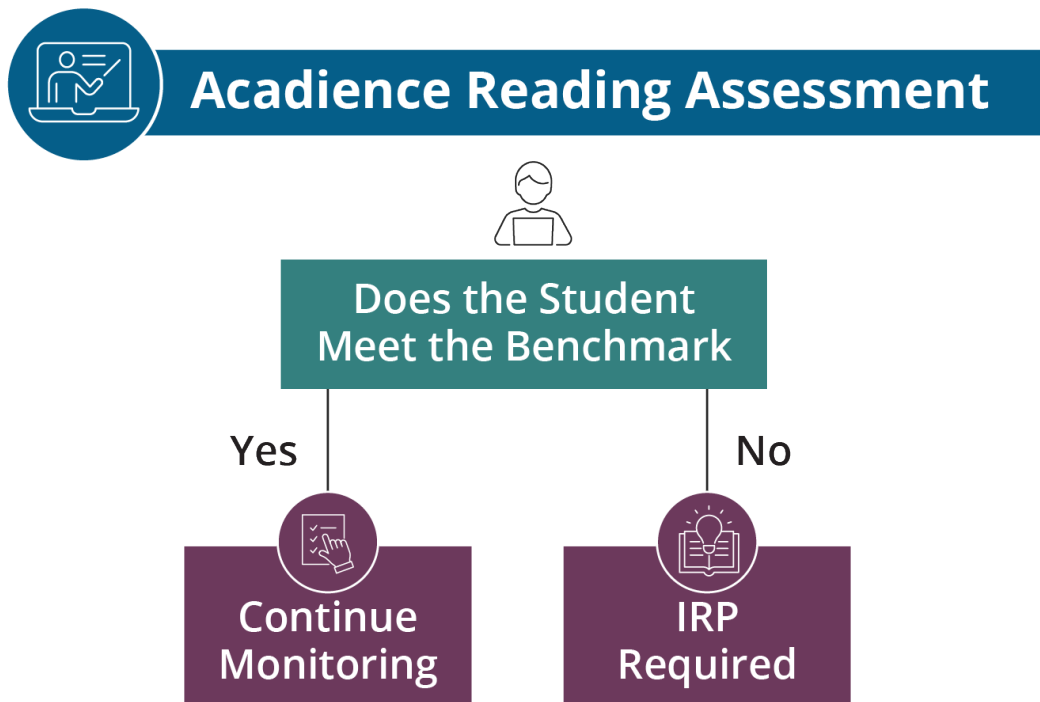
The primary purpose of **Utah Senate Bill 241** (2026) is to establish a comprehensive early literacy framework focused on the science of reading to ensure that 80% of students in grade three are reading on grade level by 2030.



This is a model handbook that Local Education Agencies (LEAs) may use or adapt to meet the legislated requirements of Utah Senate Bill 241 (SB 241), which states:

An LEA shall provide students with an individualized reading plan (IRP) that identifies specific reading interventions to remediate reading deficiencies, based on the student's performance on the statewide benchmark reading assessment.

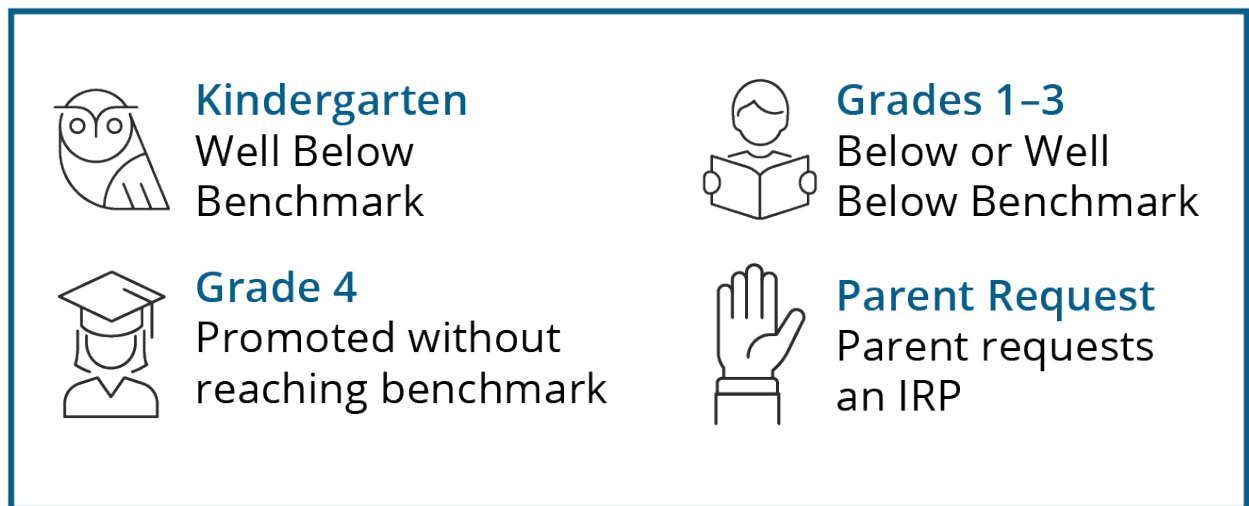
The requirement of an individualized reading plan may be met using this framework or adapted to local formats, provided that the school retains the student's individualized reading plan as part of the student's permanent school record. Users are encouraged to document the required parent communications including notifications regarding reading deficiencies, the IRP process, and early grade retention policies either in writing or through the LEA's standard parent-communication portal.



To determine if an individualized reading plan is required for a student, LEAs will use the state-approved benchmark reading assessment, **Acadience Reading**.

An individualized reading plan is required for any of the following:

- Students in kindergarten who scores well below benchmark on the middle-of-year or end-of-year benchmark reading assessment
- Students in grade 1, 2, or 3 who scores below or well below benchmark on a benchmark reading assessment
- A student whom an LEA promotes to grade 4 and has not scored at or above benchmark on a benchmark reading assessment during grade 4
- A student in kindergarten or grade 4 (who does not score at or above benchmark on a benchmark reading assessment)
- Students whose parent requests that the student receive an individualized reading plan



The student's literacy team will communicate to review and modify the reading plan after every benchmark assessment. Interventions must continue until the student scores at or above the benchmark on the reading assessment for their current grade level, or until the literacy team jointly modifies the plan.

SB 241 Brief Summary and Goals

Utah Senate Bill 241 (SB 241) establishes a comprehensive framework for early literacy interventions in kindergarten through grade three. The primary statewide goal of the legislation is to have 80% of students in grade three reading on grade level by July 1, 2030.

In SB 241, "reading on grade level" is defined as a student scoring at or above the benchmark for their relevant grade level on the statewide benchmark reading assessment.

Parent Notification Requirements

When a student scores below or well below grade level on a benchmark reading assessment, the Local Education Agency (LEA) must formally notify the parent either in writing or through the standard parent-communication portal. This notification must clearly state that the student has a substantial reading deficiency, describe the current services the student receives, and

explain the process for establishing an individualized reading plan. Furthermore, parents must be informed that retention can be beneficial in earlier grades and that scoring below benchmark at the end of grade three makes the student subject to retention. The notice must also clarify that the benchmark assessment is not the sole determinant for grade promotion, as other evaluations are available, and it must include a statement connecting the student's reading proficiency to long-term success.

Parents also maintain active participation and communication throughout the implementation of the individualized reading plan. The reading plan itself must explicitly include opportunities for the parent to be involved in the identified reading interventions. It must outline a concrete process for monitoring and communicating to the parent the exact extent to which their child is receiving these interventions. To ensure ongoing collaboration, the literacy team is required to meet at the parent's request to review the reading plan and the student's academic progress. Additionally, the student's teacher is mandated to review the reading plan and literacy progress with both the parent and the student during every parent-teacher conference.



Parent Involvement Throughout the IRP Process

- Participate in the literacy team
- Request a literacy team meeting
- Receive regular updates on interventions
- Review reading progress during conferences
- Participate in at-home literacy activities
- Receive information regarding retention requirements

Sample Letters | Sample 1

Dear [Parent/Guardian Name],

We are writing to share an update on [Student Name]'s reading journey and to talk about how we can best work together to support their growth.

On a recent benchmark assessment, [Student Name] scored below or well below grade level. Because of these results, state guidelines require us to notify you that your child is demonstrating a substantial deficiency in reading. We know that terms like "deficiency" can sound alarming, but please be reassured that this simply gives us a clear roadmap of where they need a little extra care, time, and focused instruction to thrive.

What we are doing right now to help [Student Name] right away, they are currently receiving the following support at school:

- [Insert a description of the current services the student receives]
- The specific areas where [Student Name] needs the most reading support.
- The exact reading interventions and classroom settings we will provide.
- A clear process for monitoring their weekly and monthly progress.
- Meaningful opportunities for you to be involved in these reading interventions at home.

Understanding State Guidelines & Future Growth:

We also want to keep you fully informed about school policies regarding student progress. Sometimes, giving a student the gift of an extra year in a grade (retention) can provide them with the foundational reading proficiency they need for the rest of their school years. Please note that under state policy, if a student scores below the benchmark on their reading assessment at the end of grade three, they are subject to retention.

However, we want to emphasize that this benchmark assessment is not the sole determinant of promotion. We look at the whole child. Additional evaluations and assessments are always available to both you and the school to determine [Student Name]'s true reading proficiency and overall readiness for the next grade level.

Our Commitment to You:

Learning to read is one of the most important milestones in a child's life, and it is deeply connected to their long-term happiness and success. We are completely committed to partnering with you to ensure [Student Name] reaches their full potential.

To keep you fully informed on how they are responding to these interventions, we will establish a regular communication process:

- Our literacy team will meet at least once annually to review the plan, and we will gladly meet at your request at any point during the year.
- Additionally, [Student Name]'s teacher looks forward to reviewing their reading plan and literacy progress with both you and your child during each scheduled parent-teacher conference.

Thank you for trusting us with your child's education. Please reach out to us at any time if you have immediate questions or just want to chat about the process.

Warmly,

Sample Letters | Sample 2

Dear [Parent/Guardian Name],

This letter is to formally notify you that your child, [Student Name], has scored below or well below grade level on a recent benchmark reading assessment. As a result, your child has demonstrated a substantial deficiency in reading.

At this time, your child is receiving the following services:

[Insert a description of the current services the student receives].

To better support your child's academic growth, our school will coordinate with your child's literacy team to establish an individualized reading plan. Within 45 days of this notice, the literacy team will meet to jointly establish this plan, which will explicitly identify your child's reading deficiencies and outline the specific reading interventions and settings the school will provide. The plan will also include a process for monitoring progress and clear opportunities for you to be involved in the reading interventions.

We want to inform you that retention, especially in earlier grades, can benefit a student's reading proficiency. Please note that if a student scores below the benchmark on the reading assessment at the end of grade three, the student is subject to retention.

However, the benchmark reading assessment is not the sole determinant of promotion. Additional evaluations and assessments are available to parents and the school to determine a student's true reading proficiency and readiness to be promoted to the next grade level.

It is important to emphasize that your child's proficiency in reading is deeply connected to their long-term outcomes of success. We are committed to partnering with you to ensure they achieve this proficiency.

To keep you fully informed on the extent to which your child receives these interventions, we will establish a regular communication process. The literacy team will meet at least once annually, and we will gladly meet at your request to review the reading plan and your child's progress.

Furthermore, your child's teacher will review the reading plan and literacy progress with both you and your child during each parent-teacher conference.

Please contact us if you have any immediate questions regarding this process.

Sincerely,

Purpose of the Individualized Reading Plan

The primary purpose of an individualized reading plan is to formally identify and remediate a student's specific reading deficiencies in grades K-3 when they score below or well below grade level on a benchmark reading assessment.

Specifically, the plan is designed to achieve the following goals:

- **Outline Targeted Interventions:** To detail the specific reading interventions and the settings in which the school (LEA) will provide them to help the student overcome their reading challenges.
- **Foster Parent Involvement:** To create clear opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's reading interventions.
- **Monitor and Communicate Progress:** To establish a structured process for monitoring the student's progress and communicating with parents about the extent of the interventions being provided.
- **Achieve Reading Proficiency:** To ensure these interventions continue consistently until the student successfully scores at or above the benchmark reading assessment for their current grade level.

IRP Resources

The following resources are intended to support implementation of the IRP requirements established in SB 241. The materials include a compliance checklist, a model IRP template, and a completed sample plan. Use of these resources is voluntary; however, they are aligned with the literacy intervention requirements outlined in SB 241 and may be adapted to meet local needs.

Compliance Checklist

This checklist may be used to verify that an Individualized Reading Plan (IRP) addresses the key requirements of Utah Senate Bill 241 (SB 241). It is intended as a practical reference for literacy teams when developing, reviewing, and maintaining IRPs and related documentation.

Student Identification & Timeline

Student scored below or well below benchmark	<i>Notes</i>
Parent notified of reading deficiency	
IRP created within 45 days	
Literacy team convened	

Literacy Team

Parent/guardian included	<i>Notes</i>
Teacher included	
Additional staff included as needed	
LEA representative included if well below benchmark	

Plan Components

Reading deficiencies identified	<i>Notes</i>
Evidence-based interventions listed	
Intervention settings defined	
Parent involvement opportunities included	
Progress monitoring method and frequency defined	
Retention statement included	

Ongoing Requirements

Plan reviewed after each benchmark assessment	<i>Notes</i>
Plan updated based on progress	
Literacy team meets at least annually	
Plan reviewed with parent	

Documentation

IRP stored in student record	<i>Notes</i>
Interventions documented	
Progress monitoring data recorded	
Parent communication documented	

Intervention Quality

Aligned to science of reading	<i>Notes</i>
Explicit and systematic instruction	
No three-cueing practices used	
Intervention intensity adjusted as needed	

Retention

Parent informed of retention possibility	<i>Notes</i>
Grade 3 retention requirement communicated	
Interventions and progress documented	

State of Utah Model Individualized Reading Plan Template

This Individualized Reading Plan (IRP) is developed in accordance with Utah Senate Bill 241 and guidance from the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) to provide targeted literacy supports for students identified as reading below grade level; the IRP shall be created within 45 calendar days of parent/guardian notification, reviewed with the parent/guardian, and revised as necessary following each benchmark assessment to reflect current student performance and instructional needs; the plan shall be implemented using evidence-based interventions, monitored regularly for progress, and may be updated at any time based on new data or team input; the IRP shall be maintained as part of the student’s permanent educational record in accordance with applicable retention policies and shall remain in effect until the student demonstrates grade-level reading proficiency as determined by approved state assessment measures; this plan is intended solely as an instructional support and does not constitute identification for special education services or a formal evaluation under state or federal law.

Student Name

School/LEA

Grade	Academic Year	Today’s Date	
Consideration:	Good Cause Exception	Previous Retention	
Is this a continuation of a plan from a previous school Year?	Yes	No	
Other identified plans:	IEP	Section 504 Plan	

Literacy Team Members

Teachers:	Parents/Guardian:	Support Personnel:
1	1	1
2	2	2
3		3

LEA Representative
For students who score well-below benchmark

Others:		
1	2	3
4	5	6

The teacher of record (homeroom teacher) has completed or is currently participating in formal Science of Reading professional learning.

Yes

No

Student Background

Provide a brief summary of the student's educational history. Include relevant details such as school transitions, prior interventions or supports, and any other background information that may help contextualize the student's current reading development.

Historical Achievement Data

Summarize the student's reading performance using multiple sources of data. Include benchmark assessment results, classroom and diagnostic assessment findings, and any additional information that helps explain the student's literacy development. Supporting documentation may be attached as needed.

For each reporting period, provide:

- Academic grade level and testing period
- Acadience Reading benchmark results and status
- Relevant formative or diagnostic assessment findings
- Other information that may impact literacy performance (e.g., attendance, intervention history, teacher observations, or progress-monitoring data)

Entry 1

Academic Grade / Testing Period

Acadience Reading Benchmark Results

Formative / Diagnostic Assessment Findings

Other Relevant Data

Entry 2

Academic Grade / Testing Period

Acadience Reading Benchmark Results

Formative / Diagnostic Assessment Findings

Other Relevant Data

Entry 3

Academic Grade / Testing Period

Acadience Reading Benchmark Results

Formative / Diagnostic Assessment Findings

Other Relevant Data

Specific Area(s) of Needs

Determine the student's specific area(s) of need based on their data. Information on using individualized assessments to identify learning challenges, enabling targeted interventions tailored to each student can be found on [page 41](#).

Student's Academic Strength(s):

Check all areas identified for intervention and describe the student’s specific skill deficits for each selected area. Responses should be based on assessment and progress-monitoring data.

Oral Language Skills

Details

Phonemic Awareness

Details

Phonics

Details

Reading Fluency

Details

Accuracy

Details

Vocabulary

Details

Reading Comprehension

Details

Area(s) of Greatest Need/Targeted Instructional Focus:

Interventions

Document the evidence-based interventions that will be provided to address the student’s identified reading deficiencies. Interventions should align with the science of reading and be selected based on the student’s specific area(s) of need.

Directions: Document each intervention that will be provided to address the student’s identified reading deficiencies. For each intervention, identify the instructional setting, targeted skills, frequency and duration, and any adjustments made in response to progress-monitoring data. List each intervention separately; students may receive multiple interventions to address different areas of need. Interventions should not rely on visual memory or contextual guessing (Three-Cueing).

[Glossary of Key Terms is available on page 55.](#)

Intervention Plan

What intervention will be provided to support the student for the upcoming/remainder of the school year?

Intervention 1

Start Date	End Date
Instructional Setting	Frequency and Duration
Program and Skills	
Adjustments based on Progress Monitoring	

Intervention 2

Start Date	End Date
Instructional Setting	Frequency and Duration
Program and Skills	
Adjustments based on Progress Monitoring	

Intervention 3

Start Date	End Date	
Instructional Setting		Frequency and Duration
Program and Skills		
Adjustments based on Progress Monitoring		

Intervention 4

Start Date	End Date	
Instructional Setting		Frequency and Duration
Program and Skills		
Adjustments based on Progress Monitoring		

Intervention History

What has been done previously to support the student?

Intervention 1

Start Date	End Date	
Instructional Setting		Frequency and Duration
Program and Skills		
Adjustments based on Progress Monitoring		

Intervention 2

Start Date

End Date

Instructional
Setting

Frequency and
Duration

Program and
Skills

Adjustments
based on Progress
Monitoring

Intervention 3

Start Date

End Date

Instructional
Setting

Frequency and
Duration

Program and
Skills

Adjustments
based on Progress
Monitoring

Intervention 4

Start Date

End Date

Instructional
Setting

Frequency and
Duration

Program and
Skills

Adjustments
based on Progress
Monitoring

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring provides ongoing data about a student's response to intervention and helps the literacy team evaluate growth and adjust supports as needed.

Directions: Document each progress-monitoring measure that will be used to evaluate student growth. For each entry, identify the assessment or monitoring tool, the specific skill(s) being monitored, and the frequency of data collection. Attach supporting documentation as appropriate.

Entry 1

Tools

Skills
Monitored

Frequency

Weekly

Biweekly

Monthly

Other

Details

Entry 2

Tools

Skills
Monitored

Frequency

Weekly

Biweekly

Monthly

Other

Details

Entry 3

Tools

Skills
Monitored

Frequency

Weekly

Biweekly

Monthly

Other

Details

Parent Communication Log

The Parent Communication Log documents communication between the school and parent/guardian regarding the student's reading progress, intervention plan, and literacy supports.

Directions: Record communications related to assessment results, retention requirements, intervention plans, progress monitoring, and student growth. Include any at-home literacy strategies or resources provided to support reading development. Refer to the [Early Literacy Parent Resources](#) for additional family engagement materials.

Was the parent/guardian notified of the individualized reading plan?	Yes	No	Date
--	-----	----	------

Was the parent/guardian notified of the retention requirement?	Yes	No	Date
--	-----	----	------

Communication 1

Date/Time	Contacted
-----------	-----------

Notes

Communication 2

Date/Time	Contacted
-----------	-----------

Notes

Communication 3

Date/Time	Contacted
-----------	-----------

Notes

Communication 4

Date/Time	Contacted
-----------	-----------

Notes

Benchmark and Retention Statement

This section documents retention considerations, good cause exemptions, and final placement decisions for Grade 3 students who score below benchmark on the end-of-year benchmark reading assessment.

Important: Beginning with the 2029–2030 school year, Grade 3 students who score below benchmark on the end-of-year benchmark reading assessment are subject to mandatory retention unless a qualifying good cause exemption applies.

Directions: Review each potential good cause exemption and indicate all that apply. Document the final placement determination, complete the required record-keeping actions, and obtain the appropriate authorization and signatures.

Initial Determination

Student scored below benchmark. Result: Mandatory Retention required unless an exemption applies.

Good Cause Exemptions

Check all that apply

Exemption A: Scored “below” (not well below) and made typical progress.

Exemption B: Met benchmark after intensive Summer Intervention.

Exemption C: English Learner with less than 3 years of instruction.

Exemption D: IEP/504 student with previous retention OR 2+ years of intensive help.

Exemption E: Demonstrated proficiency via alternative approved assessment.

Exemption F: Student Portfolio demonstrates grade-level proficiency.

Documentation & Recordkeeping

Check all that apply

Literacy Team consensus reached

Parent informed of determination

Parent informed of appeal rights

Required documentation added to student record

If consensus cannot be reached, refer the determination to the superintendent's designee for final review.

Final Placement

Promoted

Retained

Good Cause Exemption (*Promoted*)

Name of Authorizer

Signature

Date

Signatures

Literacy Team Members

Name

Title

Signature

Date

Name

Title

Signature

Date

Name

Title

Signature

Date

Name

Title

Signature

Date

Name

Title

Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian

Name

Signature

Date

Name

Signature

Date

Completed Model Plan Template

The following pages show a completed example of the Model Plan Template. They are provided as a reference to demonstrate how the template may be completed and are intended for illustrative purposes only.

State of Utah Model Individualized Reading Plan Template

This Individualized Reading Plan (IRP) is developed in accordance with Utah Senate Bill 241 and guidance from the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) to provide targeted literacy supports for students identified as reading below grade level; the IRP shall be created within 45 calendar days of parent/guardian notification, reviewed with the parent/guardian, and revised as necessary following each benchmark assessment to reflect current student performance and instructional needs; the plan shall be implemented using evidence-based interventions, monitored regularly for progress, and may be updated at any time based on new data or team input; the IRP shall be maintained as part of the student's permanent educational record in accordance with applicable retention policies and shall remain in effect until the student demonstrates grade-level reading proficiency as determined by approved state assessment measures; this plan is intended solely as an instructional support and does not constitute identification for special education services or a formal evaluation under state or federal law.

Student Name

School/LEA

Grade

Academic Year

Today's Date

Consideration: ☒ Good Cause Exception ☐ Previous Retention

Is this a continuation of a plan from a previous school Year? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Other identified plans: ☐ IEP ☒ Section 504 Plan

Literacy Team Members

Teachers:

1

2

3

Parents/Guardian:

1

2

Support Personnel:

1

2

3

LEA Representative

For students who score well-below benchmark

Others:

1

4

2

5

3

6

The teacher of record (homeroom teacher) has completed or is currently participating in formal Science of Reading professional learning.

☒

Yes

☐

No

Student Background

Provide a brief summary of the student's educational history. Include relevant details such as school transitions, prior interventions or supports, and any other background information that may help contextualize the student's current reading development.

Student A is a second-grade student who attended Happy Elementary beginning in kindergarten. She began receiving Tier 2 reading intervention services during first grade after scoring below benchmark on Acadience Reading assessments in phonics and oral reading fluency. Student A demonstrates strong classroom behavior, positive peer relationships, and strong listening comprehension skills. Attendance has been consistent with only three absences during the previous school year.

Student A's parents report that she enjoys being read to at home and participates willingly in nightly reading practice. Although Student A has shown steady growth in foundational literacy skills, she continues to demonstrate difficulty with decoding multisyllabic words, reading accuracy, and reading fluency. A Section 504 plan is in place to support attention and processing needs that impact sustained independent reading tasks.

Historical Achievement Data

Summarize the student's reading performance using multiple sources of data. Include benchmark assessment results, classroom and diagnostic assessment findings, and any additional information that helps explain the student's literacy development. Supporting documentation may be attached as needed.

For each reporting period, provide:

- Academic grade level and testing period
- Acadience Reading benchmark results and status
- Relevant formative or diagnostic assessment findings
- Other information that may impact literacy performance (e.g., attendance, intervention history, teacher observations, or progress-monitoring data)

Entry 1**Academic Grade / Testing Period**

Grade 1 Mid-Year

Acadience Reading Benchmark Results

Well Below Benchmark

Formative / Diagnostic Assessment Findings

CORE phonics survey- Mastery of consonant blends, digraphs, and short vowel patterns. Areas of difficulty vowel teams, r-controlled vowels, multisyllabic word decoding.

Other Relevant Data

Grade 1 ORF BOY: 28 wpm

Relies on guessing when reading unfamiliar words and lack of consistency

Entry 2**Academic Grade / Testing Period**

Grade 1 End-of-Year

Acadience Reading Benchmark Results

Below Benchmark

Formative / Diagnostic Assessment Findings

CORE phonics survey- growth and accuracy in long vowel patterns. Still struggling with vowel teams, r-controlled vowels, and multisyllabic word decoding.

Other Relevant Data

Grade 1 ORF EOY: 28 wpm

No growth on rate and performing low in accuracy

Entry 3**Academic Grade / Testing Period**

Grade 2 Beginning-of-Year

Acadience Reading Benchmark Results

Well Below Benchmark

Formative / Diagnostic Assessment Findings

CORE phonics survey-mastered common vowel patterns in single-syllable words. Difficulties persisting with vowel teas, r-controlled vowels, and multisyllabic word decoding.

Other Relevant Data

Grade 2 ORF BOY: 46 wpm
Showing growth in reading rate. Comprehension is stronger when text is read aloud

Specific Area(s) of Needs

Determine the student's specific area(s) of need based on their data. Information on using individualized assessments to identify learning challenges, enabling targeted interventions tailored to each student can be found on [page 30](#).

Student's Academic Strength(s):

Student A demonstrates strong oral language skills and actively participates in classroom discussions and learning activities. She has strong listening comprehension abilities and is able to understand grade-level content when information is presented orally. Student A is motivated to improve, responds positively to teacher feedback, and consistently demonstrates a positive attitude toward learning and reading growth

Check all areas identified for intervention and describe the student's specific skill deficits for each selected area. Responses should be based on assessment and progress-monitoring data.

☐ Oral Language Skills

Details

☒ Phonics

Details

Difficulty decoding vowel teams, multisyllabic words, and irregular high-frequency words

☒ Accuracy

Details

Frequent decoding substitutions and omissions

☒ Reading Comprehension

Details

Comprehension decreases during independent reading due to decoding challenges

☒ Phonemic Awareness

Details

Difficulty segmenting and manipulating phonemes

☒ Reading Fluency

Details

Slow automatic word recognition and rate

☐ Vocabulary

Details

Area(s) of Greatest Need/Targeted Instructional Focus:

Student A's greatest instructional needs are in the areas of phonics, decoding accuracy, and reading fluency. Assessment data indicates that the student experiences difficulty applying advanced phonics patterns consistently, particularly with vowel teams, r-controlled vowels, multisyllabic words, and syllable division strategies. These challenges impact the student's reading accuracy, automatic word recognition, and overall fluency, which in turn affects independent reading comprehension and confidence when engaging with grade-level text.

Targeted instruction will provide systematic and explicit phonics instruction focused on strengthening foundational decoding skills through direct teaching, guided practice, and cumulative review. Instructional emphasis will include vowel teams, r-controlled vowels, syllable types, blending and segmenting strategies, and multisyllabic word decoding. The student will also participate in repeated oral reading practice, and fluency-building activities designed to improve reading rate, accuracy, and prosody. Additionally, phonemic manipulation activities will be incorporated to strengthen phonological processing skills and support automaticity in word reading. These interventions are intended to increase the student's overall reading proficiency and improve comprehension of grade-level text.

Interventions

Document the evidence-based interventions that will be provided to address the student's identified reading deficiencies. Interventions should align with the science of reading and be selected based on the student's specific area(s) of need.

Directions: Document each intervention that will be provided to address the student's identified reading deficiencies. For each intervention, identify the instructional setting, targeted skills, frequency and duration, and any adjustments made in response to progress-monitoring data. List each intervention separately; students may receive multiple interventions to address different areas of need. Interventions should not rely on visual memory or contextual guessing (Three-Cueing).

[Glossary of Key Terms is available on page 45.](#)

Intervention Plan

What intervention will be provided to support the student for the upcoming/remainder of the school year?

Intervention 1

Start Date	9/30/2025	End Date	Ongoing
Instructional Setting	Reading Interventionist Led Small Group	Frequency and Duration	30 min daily 4X week
Program and Skills	UFLI - phonics skills in deficit areas indicated on diagnostic		
Adjustments based on Progress Monitoring	Increase repeated reading practice after November PM data		

Intervention 2

Start Date	10/15/2025	End Date	Ongoing
Instructional Setting	Classroom	Frequency and Duration	Daily classroom support
Program and Skills	Decodable text practice		
Adjustments based on Progress Monitoring	Adjust text complexity as accuracy improves		

Intervention 3

Start Date 10/20/2025

End Date Ongoing

Instructional Setting One-on-one

Frequency and Duration 15 min 3x week

Program and Skills Repeated Reading Practice

Adjustments based on Progress Monitoring Adjust text complexity as accuracy improves

Intervention 4

Start Date 12/2/2025

End Date Ongoing

Instructional Setting Teacher Led Small Group

Frequency and Duration 15 min 3x week

Program and Skills Morphology instruction on the 6 syllable types

Adjustments based on Progress Monitoring Increase practice with multisyllabic words

Intervention History

What has been done previously to support the student?

Intervention 1

Start Date 10/1/2024

End Date 2/2/2025

Instructional Setting Small Group

Frequency and Duration 15 min daily 5x week

Program and Skills Heggerty-rhyming, blending, segmenting

Adjustments based on Progress Monitoring Increased phoneme segmentation practice after MOY data review

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring provides ongoing data about a student's response to intervention and helps the literacy team evaluate growth and adjust supports as needed.

Directions: Document each progress-monitoring measure that will be used to evaluate student growth. For each entry, identify the assessment or monitoring tool, the specific skill(s) being monitored, and the frequency of data collection. Attach supporting documentation as appropriate.

Entry 1

Tools	Acadience Reading
Skills Monitored	ORF, Accuracy, Retell
Frequency	☐ Weekly ☒ Biweekly ☐ Monthly
	☐ Other
	<i>Details</i>

Entry 2

Tools	UFLI Progress Monitoring
Skills Monitored	Phonics/Decoding
Frequency	☒ Weekly ☐ Biweekly ☐ Monthly
	☐ Other 3/20/2025
	<i>Details</i>

Entry 3

Tools	CORE Phonics Survey Subtests
Skills Monitored	Advanced phonics and decoding skills
Frequency	☐ Weekly ☐ Biweekly ☒ Monthly
	☐ Other
	<i>Details</i>

Parent Communication Log

The Parent Communication Log documents communication between the school and parent/guardian regarding the student's reading progress, intervention plan, and literacy supports.

Directions: Record communications related to assessment results, retention requirements, intervention plans, progress monitoring, and student growth. Include any at-home literacy strategies or resources provided to support reading development. Refer to the [Early Literacy Parent Resources](#) for additional family engagement materials.

Was the parent/guardian notified of the individualized reading plan?



Yes



No

3/20/2025

Date

Was the parent/guardian notified of the retention requirement?



Yes



No

Date

Communication 1

Date/Time 9/22/2025 8:30 am

Contacted Jane Doe

Notes

Parent notification letter sent out via LEA system

Communication 2

Date/Time 10/10/2025 3:30 pm

Contacted Jane Doe

Notes

Parent meeting held to review benchmark data and IRP process

Communication 3

Date/Time 10/17/2025 3:00 pm

Contacted Jane Doe

Notes

Shared at-home decoding and fluency practice activities

Communication 4

Date/Time 11/15/2025 3:45 pm

Contacted Jon Doe

Notes

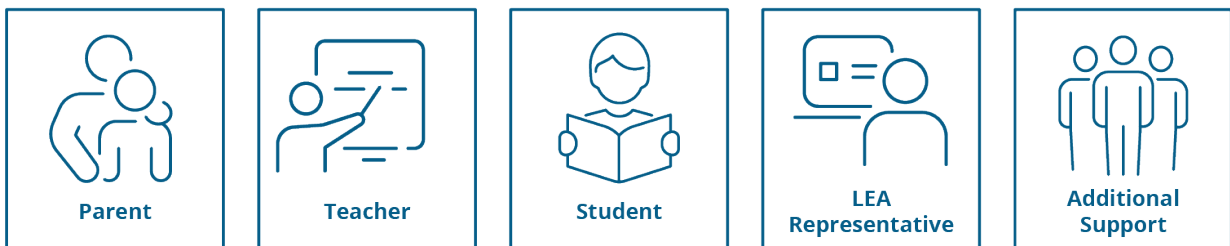
Reviewed progress monitoring data and intervention adjustments

Literacy Team

Under Utah Senate Bill 241 (2026, SB 241), the development and monitoring of a student's Individualized Reading Plan is a collaborative effort led by a dedicated literacy team. This team unites the individuals most closely involved in the student's education to jointly establish, review, and oversee the targeted reading interventions necessary to remediate reading deficiencies.

By law, the core of the literacy team must include:

- Student's parents
- Student's teacher(s)
 - » General education teacher
 - » Special education teacher (if applicable)
- Student (at the parents' discretion)
- Local Education Agency (LEA) representative
 - » Required for students who score well below on benchmark assessment
 - Is knowledgeable about literacy resources
 - Has authority to commit literacy resources
- Additional support personnel, as needed
 - » Counselor
 - » Social worker
 - » Therapist
 - » Translator
 - » Parent advocate



Retention

Under Utah Senate Bill 241, retention is utilized as an intensive reading intervention. When a student does not meet specific reading benchmarks, repeating a grade provides them with additional time and targeted support to remediate learning deficiencies before they advance to a grade for which they are not academically prepared. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must actively evaluate students for retention based on their performance on statewide benchmark reading assessments.

Please refer to the chart below for the specific criteria detailing when a literacy team must discuss early retention with parents in kindergarten through grade 2, as well as the mandatory retention requirements and good cause exemptions for students in grade three.

Retention Decision Guide

If the Student is in...	Then Consider...
Kindergarten Middle of Year or End of Year Well Below Benchmark	Discretionary Retention LEA shall consider and discuss value with guardian.
First Grade End of Year - Well Below Benchmark - Lacks Above Typical Progress - Has an Individualized Reading Plan	Discretionary Retention LEA shall consider and discuss value with guardian if student has an existing IRP and lacks above typical progress.
Second Grade End of Year - Well Below Benchmark - Lacks Above Typical Progress - Has an Individualized Reading Plan	Discretionary Retention LEA shall consider and discuss value with guardian if student has an existing IRP and lacks above typical progress and began grade 2 below benchmark.
Third Grade End of Year Prior to 2029 - Below Benchmark OR - Well Below Benchmark Starting 2029-2030 School Year - Below Benchmark AND - Well Below Benchmark	Prior to 2029 Discretionary Retention LEA shall consider and discuss value with guardian. Starting 2029-2030 School Year Mandatory LEA shall retain the student unless a good cause exemption applies.

Beginning with the 2029–2030 school year, Grade 3 students subject to mandatory retention may qualify for a Good Cause exemption. See the Good Cause Exemptions section below.

Data-Based Decision Making

Use the student's universal screening results to move through the decision tree and identify the instructional area that will have the greatest impact on reading development.

Identify the Student's Instructional Needs

Reading Comprehension

Does the student comprehend grade-level text?

Assessment Measure: ORF Retell

Yes

Teach grade-level complex text with scaffolding as needed for reading and writing.

No

Conduct a Diagnostic Comprehension Assessment

Reading Fluency

Does the student read grade-level text fluently?

Assessment Measure: ORF WPM

Yes

Teach reading comprehension with appropriate supports.

No

Review student's ORF Accuracy measure.

Reading Accuracy

Does the student read grade-level text accurately?

Assessment Measure: ORF Accuracy

Yes

Teach fluency using grade-level connected text.

No

Conduct a Diagnostic Decoding Assessment

Phonics

Does the student have basic phonics skills?

Assessment Measure: NWF

Yes

Teach advanced decoding skills.

No

Teach letter-sound relationships and basic decoding skills.

Phonemic Awareness

Does the student have phonemic awareness?

Assessment Measure: PSF and/or FSF

Yes

Teach basic decoding skills.

No

Teach phonemic awareness, letter sound relationships, and basic decoding skills.

Acronym	Assessment
ORF Retell	Oral Reading Fluency Retell
ORF Accuracy	Oral Reading Fluency Accuracy
ORF WPM	Oral Reading Fluency Words Per Minute
NWF	Nonsense Word Fluency
PSF	Phoneme Segmentation Fluency
FSP	First Sound Fluency

Model Retention Appeal Process

Permissible Grounds for Appeal

A parent/guardian has the right to formally appeal an LEA's retention or promotion determination under only two specific circumstances:

1. **New Material Evidence:** New, relevant data or evidence has emerged that is vital to the determination. (e.g., the parent provides newly available data regarding the student's reading proficiency that was not considered during the initial determination)
2. **Procedural/Substantive Error:** The determination process executed by the literacy team or LEA was erroneous. (e.g., The school did not follow the proper legal steps, failed to involve parents in the process, no formal notification was provided)

LEA Appeals Infrastructure

Each LEA must establish a structured internal appeals workflow matching these parameters:

- **Designated Reviewer:** The LEA must designate an individual or team to evaluate the appeals.
- **Qualifications:** The individual or at least one member of the appeals team must have completed formal training in the science of reading.

Appeals Process Outline

1. Parent files a formal appeal form (see sample)
2. LEA formally documents and validates the grounds for the appeal. (error or new evidence)
3. Review Individual or team meets to audit the student's profile, reviews IRP, and reviews documentation from appeal submission.
4. Final written determination is provided to parents, LEA administration, and school administrators.

Parent Appeal Form

How to Use This Form

Use this form if you wish to appeal your child's grade retention determination under Utah's early literacy law (SB 241). Complete the applicable sections and attach any supporting documentation that may assist in the review of your appeal. Once submitted, your Local Education Agency (LEA) will review your request in accordance with its established appeals process and provide you with a written determination.

Student Name

Today's Date

School

Grade

Reason for Appeal (Check all that apply)

I disagree with the decision to have my child retained because:

My child qualifies for a "Good Cause Exemption". (Complete the "Good Cause Exemption" section.)

We have new information (e.g., new medical diagnosis, private tutor reports, or recent test scores). (Skip the "Good Cause Exemption" section.)

The IRP process was not followed correctly (e.g., I wasn't invited to meetings or the rules weren't followed). (Skip the "Good Cause Exemption" section.)

Good Cause Exemptions (Check all that apply)

Utah law allows my child to move to 4th grade because they:

Have an IEP or 504 plan AND have already repeated a grade before.

Have an IEP or 504 plan AND have received intensive reading interventions for 2+ years.

Are an English Learner with less than 3 years of English instruction.

Will attend a summer reading program to reach the required grade level proficiency goals.

Can show grade-level work through a portfolio or a different test.

Can demonstrate acceptable level of reading proficiency on an alternate standardized assessment approved by the district or charter superintendent.

Can demonstrate making above typical academic progress for multiple years.

Attach or submit any supporting documentation.

Grounds for Appeal and Supporting Documentation

Please select the reason(s) that apply to your appeal and provide the supporting information and/or documentation.

New Information

- Select this option if you have new data or clinical diagnosis regarding your child's academic development that the school did not have when the retention decision was made.
 - » Examples: New medical diagnosis, progress reports, letters from private tutor or specialist, or recent outside test scores.

The Individualized Reading Plan process was erroneous.

- Select this option if the required IRP process was not followed correctly by the school.
 - » Examples: parents/guardians were not notified of or invited to mandatory IRP meetings or required interventions were not provided.

Provide a brief description of the new information and attach supporting documentation:

Assurances

I understand that if my child is promoted to 4th grade, the school must continue to provide an Individualized Reading Plan (IRP) and intensive tutoring until my child is reading at grade level.

Parent Name

Phone

Email

Parent Signature

Understanding Grade-Level Retention:

A Parent's Guide



Utah State
Board of
Education

Learning to read is one of the most important milestones in a child's education. Utah's early literacy law is designed to identify reading difficulties as early as possible and provide students with the support they need to become successful readers.

This guide explains how schools identify students who may need additional reading support, what an Individualized Reading Plan (IRP) is, when grade retention may be considered, and what rights parents have throughout the process. Our goal is to help you understand each step and encourage a collaborative partnership between families and schools.



What is an Individualized Reading Plan (IRP)?

If your child is reading below grade level, a Literacy Team (which includes the parent/guardian) will create a customized learning plan to support them in getting to grade level.

- **Kindergarten:** Starting in the 2026–2027 school year, an IRP will be created after the middle of the year or at the end of the year if a student is well below benchmark on the Acadience Reading benchmark assessment.
- **Grades 1–3:** Starting in Fall 2026, an IRP will be created after the beginning, middle, or end of year if a student is below or well below benchmark on the Acadience Reading benchmark assessment.



What About Retention?

The goal of an IRP is to give your child the tools they need to succeed. However, if a student is still struggling after receiving extra help, retention may be considered so they do not fall further behind.

- **For Kindergarten–3rd Grade:** The Literacy Team (including the parent/guardian) will discuss and decide together if repeating a grade is the best option for your child's success.
- **For 3rd Grade:** Beginning in the 2029–2030 school year, Utah law will require 3rd grade students to be retained if they are not reading at grade level by the end of the year (at or above benchmark on the Acadience Reading assessment) if they do not meet a good cause exemption.



When and How to Appeal a 3rd-Grade Retention Decision

If retention is recommended for your 3rd grade student under Utah's literacy law, you have the right to request an appeal.



Good Cause Exemptions

If your child does not qualify for an exemption above, but you still disagree with the school's decision to retain them, you can file a formal appeal based on:

- **Process Errors:** The school did not follow the IRP process established by the district or charter or failed to involve you in the process.
- **New Information:** You have new evidence that shows your child is reading at grade level (such as private tutoring results, medical insights, or updated test scores).

Steps to Take

If you wish to move forward with an appeal, follow these steps:

1. **Meet with the Literacy Team:** Discuss the decision face-to-face with your child's teacher and a school administrator.
 - Tip: You have the right to bring a parent advocate, translator, or trusted friend with you for support.
2. **Gather Your Evidence:** Collect independent work samples, documentation of private testing, or proof of your child making "above typical" growth this year.
3. **Submit a Formal Appeal:** Follow your school district or charter school's specific submission process. Your request will be reviewed by an expert trained in the science of reading.



Your Rights & Next Steps

If your appeal is successful: Your child will move on to 4th grade, but the school must continue providing an Individualized Reading Plan (IRP). This guarantees they will receive interventions until they are reading at grade level.

If your appeal is unsuccessful: Your child's retention determination will be upheld and will remain in the current grade level.

Key Terms to Know

- **Benchmark Assessment:** State-approved reading tests given three times a year (Beginning, Middle, and End of Year) to track your child's progress. The approved state assessment is the Acadience Reading assessment.

- **Science of Reading:** A collection of scientific research from multiple fields that explains how students successfully learn to read and write and why some students face difficulties. This approach proves that all students benefit from direct, step-by-step instruction in foundational literacy skills (like phonics and comprehension), rather than methods that teach students to guess words using pictures, sentence structure, or context clues.
- **Individualized Reading Plan (IRP):** A personalized, written plan outlining the specific help, tools, and interventions your child will receive at school.

Frequently Asked Questions

Funding - Coaches, Training, Paraprofessionals, Teacher and Student Success Act Program (TSSA)

Literacy Coaches and Training:

Q1: Are LEAs required to have a dedicated K-3 Literacy Coach?

A: If the coach is paid for using SB 241 funding, they are dedicated K-3 literacy coaches. (Lines 293-305, 727-732)

Q2: Is the designated early literacy personnel expected to be in place for the 26/27 school year?

A: Yes, the bill took effect on July 1, 2026, therefore each LEA and Regional Education Service Area (RESA) must have a designated literacy person for the 2026-2027 school year. (Lines 775-777)

Q3: Can our instructional coaches that support multiple content areas meet the literacy coach role?

A: If the coach is paid for using SB 241 funding, they are dedicated K-3 literacy coaches. (Lines 293-305, 727-732)

Q4: Can SB 241 coaching funding be used to pay for existing coaches?

A: Yes, however they would only be allowed to coach educators in grades K-3 literacy instruction. (Lines 293-305, 727-732)

Paraprofessionals:

Q5: Can paraprofessional funding be used to cover the cost of their training?

A: No, funding is to provide paraprofessionals. (Lines 306-308)

Q6: Can SB 241 paraprofessional funding be used to pay for existing paraprofessionals?

A: Yes, however they would only be allowed to support literacy instruction in the grades K-3. (Lines 306-308)

Charter Schools:

Q7: What can charters use the portion of their money for?

A: Literacy coaching, training, and interventions (Lines 309-312)

Teacher and Student Success Act Program (TSSA):

Q8: Do you have examples of appropriate expenditures for the 50% of TSSA funds?

A: The approved TSSA amendments from SB 241 have not been added to the codes on the Legislative site yet; these took effect on July 1, 2026. We are still referring to SB 241 (53G-7-1304 is lines 342-444 and 53G-7-1305 is lines 445-487) for the amendments.

The TSSA Codes are as follows [53G-7-1301](#), [53G-7-1302](#), [53G-7-1303](#), [53G-7-1304](#), [53G-7-1305](#), [53G-7-1306](#).

Assessments

Acadience Reading:

Q1: Is Acadience Reading required so we will have to do this regardless?

A: Yes, Acadience Reading is the benchmark reading assessment selected by the board that is required to be given to students in grades K-3. (Lines 165-172)

Q2: Will the state still pay for Acadience Reading for 4-6 students?

A: Yes, if there is sufficient funding, Acadience Reading will be provided for all students in grades K-6. (Lines 198-204)

Q3: How are we addressing the encoding section of the new literacy benchmark assessment?

A: The Utah State Board of Education Superintendency, Assessment, and English Language Arts teams have determined that an additional encoding assessment is not required. Data confirms that existing Acadience Reading scores correlate strongly enough with spelling performance to satisfy the encoding requirement on their own. For details on these predictive correlations, please reference the [Acadience Spelling Administration Scoring Manual](#). While Acadience Learning offers a free [Acadience Spelling Survey](#) on their website, it is entirely optional and will not factor into a student's composite score. (Lines 142-146)

Q4: If a student above 3rd grade has an IRP, what assessment can we use?

A: Acadience Reading or equivalent screening assessment.

Q5: What if parents opt out their student from Acadience?

A: A school would not be required to complete an IRP for a student who does not participate in the benchmark reading assessment (Acadience Reading). However, a parent can request an IRP for the student. (Lines 562-563, 594) It is also a best practice to use an assessment to determine how to best support the student in learning how to read.

Kindergarten Pre Assessment (Given before the first day of school according to your LEA calendar):

Q6: Are schools required to give an assessment to future kindergarten students prior to the first day of school (e.g. kindergarten round-up)?

A: No, it is not required for schools to assess students prior to the first day of school. (Lines 333-335)

Science of Reading (SOR) Professional Learning and Requirements

Professional Learning/Requirements for Teachers:

Q1: Does a 4th-grade teacher have to get SOR training now, or just by 2030?

A: If they have a student on an IRP they need to be trained or be completing training. For fourth grade teachers, this would begin the 2027-2028 school year. It is not likely they would receive students on an IRP during the 2026-2027 school year. However, there would be students on an IRP the following year. (Lines 581-594)

Q2: Are special education teachers for Level 2 students (severe behaviors/academics) required to be SOR-trained?

A: Science of reading (LETRS) professional learning (PL) was required for all special education teachers while the State LETRS PL requirement was in place. Yes, if they have students on an IRP and they are the “assigned” teacher, they would need to be trained or in the process of completing. (Lines 624-626)

Q3: For 4th grade teachers, other upper grade teachers, or veteran teachers who have students on IRP that have not been trained, can they take Utah Foundations of Reading Assessment (UFORA)?

A: Yes, the UFORA is available for anyone to take. They would be responsible for the cost of the assessment and would need to report their scores to their LEA for record keeping purposes. Information regarding the UFORA can be found here: <https://www.ut.nesinc.com/>.

Professional Learning/Requirements for Paraprofessionals:

Q4: Do paraprofessionals for summer school interventions or after school interventions have to be trained in SOR?

A: If you are using funding from SB 241, they will need to be trained in the SOR. It would also be best practice to have all educators working with students during interventions to be trained in the SOR.

Resources and Training Options:

Q5: What is considered “SOR trained”?

A: Formal professional learning in the science of reading could include, but not limited to, LETRS and passing the UFORA. Other formal professional learning opportunities are available and can be provided by your LEA. (Line 625)

Q6: What other SOR training can they receive? Is the training specific to the training provided by the hired coaches or can the SB 241 training funding pay for outside training like LETRs, Lindamood-Bell etc?

A: Yes, you can use funding to pay for outside professional learning in the science of reading.

- [AIM Pathways](#)
- [Cox Campus](#)
- [95% Top Ten Tools and Paraeducator](#)

- [Keys to Beginning Reading](#)
- [Reading Universe](#)
- [IMSE Paraeducator Training](#)
- [RISE Institute](#)
- [TeachSOR](#)

Individualized Reading Plans (IRP)

Implementation and Timing:

Q1: Do all of our K-3 students next year need to have IRPs set up when they don't meet benchmark?

A: Yes, the bill took effect on July 1, 2026. Therefore, any students who meet the criteria for an IRP listed in SB 241 will need an IRP established based on BOY, MOY, and/or EOY 2026-2027 data. (Lines 561-594)

Q2: Does the requirement for IRPs end at 3rd grade, or keep going up through higher grades?

A: A fourth grade student can also have an IRP. The IRP will be part of the students permanent record. (Lines 581-594, 627-628)

Q3: If a parent requests an IRP, up to what grade can they request?

A: A parent has the right to request an IRP up through fourth grade. (line 585-589)

Q4: Will students need to continue taking the Acadience assessment in 4th grade?

A: Yes, if students are well below or below benchmark and they are on an IRP, they will need to continue to be assessed with the benchmark reading assessment (Acadience Reading). (Lines 588-592)

Individualized Education Program (IEP):

Q5: Can students with disabilities be retained?

A: Yes. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), grade promotion and grade retention can be considered by the IEP team, including the parents or the adult student when applicable, however an administrator may make the final decision. Blanket retention or no-retention policies for students with disabilities may limit access to age- and grade-level content alongside nondisabled peers.

Q6: Does a student with a disability with an IEP also need to have an IRP?

A: If a student with a disability has been identified as having a reading disability and is receiving specially designed instruction (SDI) in reading outlined in the student's IEP, an additional reading plan is not necessary.

A student with a disability with an IEP who does not receive SDI in reading and meets the

criteria for remediation identified through benchmark reading assessment may be required to have an IRP. The IRP should be documented in the student's IEP in the supplementary aids and services section. Progress toward the IRP goal should be monitored to ensure the student does not require a referral for a special education evaluation.

Q7: How does grade-level retention impact a student with a disability receiving a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE)?

A: Retention can remove a student from access to grade-level curriculum and instruction with age-appropriate, nondisabled peers. This is a right that is afforded to students with disabilities under the IDEA.

LRE – Requires that students with disabilities be educated with peers without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate. Grade-level retention places students in a different age- and grade-level cohort, reducing opportunities for interactions with peers of the same age.

FAPE – Grade-level retention may be considered as a violation of FAPE because it limits the students' access to the SDI, related services, and accommodations outlined in their IEPs.

Q8: Can a parent challenge an LEA's decision to retain their student with a disability on an IEP?

A: Yes, the IDEA provides procedural safeguards to parents. If the parent does not agree with the IEP Team decision, believes their child is not receiving a FAPE, or believes that their child is not being offered an education in the LRE, the parent can request an IEP review, file a state complaint, request mediation, or request a due process hearing.

Literacy Team and Responsibilities:

Q9: Who is responsible for writing the IRPs?

A: This will likely be the responsibility of the classroom teacher in collaboration with additional school and LEA staff.

Q10: Are we expected to report them to the State as we do for an IEP?

A: There are no reporting requirements to the State for IRPs. However, it would be in the best interest of the school and/or LEA to have a record for auditing purposes.

Q11: Can the LEA representative on the IRP team be the Literacy Director or a person we determine is qualified, like a coach?

A: The LEA representative needs to be someone who is knowledgeable about available literacy resources and who has the authority to commit literacy resources. That determination will be made at the LEA level. (Lines 514-516)

Q12: Does the principal need to sit in on all the IRP meetings?

A: Principals are not specifically listed as part of the literacy team. However, if the LEA determines that the LEA representative is the principal, they would be required to be at all IRP

meetings for students who are well below benchmark. (Lines 59-519)

Documentation and Compliance:

Q13: What will be monitored for the interventions?

A: Monitoring of the provision of interventions will likely include who is receiving interventions, how they are identified, what high quality instructional materials are used, and the frequency and duration of their use. (Lines 801-802)

Q14: How many in-person times are IRP Literacy Teams required to meet?

A: The IRP Literacy Teams are required to meet annually, at parent teacher conferences, and at parent's request. (Lines 595-615)

Q15: Once the IRP is put into place, are there any legal ramifications if it is not implemented as written, like there are for an IEP?

A: There are not any legal ramifications listed in SB 241 if an IRP is not implemented as written. However, LEAs (districts, charters, and schools) would be held accountable for any audit findings.

Q16: Can we use the Core Phonics info in the IRP?

A: Yes, screening and diagnostic assessment results will help to identify specific skills and targets for intervention and progress monitoring needed for IRP evidence. (Lines 599-609)

Retention and Parental Rights

Code Details:

Q1: Can a student only be retained once?

A: Yes, a student can only be retained once. (Lines 697-699)

Q2: If they are retained in 1st grade and still not reading on grade level by 3rd, will they be retained again?

A: No, this would be considered a good cause exemption and the student would be promoted to fourth grade. (Lines 679-699)

Q3: Are there any exemptions for Charter schools for the retention policy?

A: No, all LEAs are held to this requirement. (Lines 652-722)

Q4: Does the "good cause" exemption supersede the appeal process for retention?

A: The good cause exemptions would be applied to promotion to fourth grade. If a student is not considered to meet any of the good cause exemptions and is set to be retained, the appeal process would then be required to overturn the determination of retention. (713-720)

Q5: Do LEAs have to follow the good cause exemptions?

A: LEAs and/or Literacy teams may promote the student to grade 4 if one of the good cause

exemptions applies. It would be the determination of the LEA to decide promotion based on a good cause exemption. (Lines 670-675, 706-712)

Q6: What counts as “intensive intervention” for a good cause exemption?

A: According to the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework, “intensive intervention” refers to the highest level of academic support provided to students (Tier 3).

Parental Appeals:

Q7: Do parents have a say in retention?

A: Yes, they can appeal the retention determination following the LEAs process. (Lines 713-720)

Q8: Do parents have the option of opting out/rejecting having their child on an IRP?

A: If parents opt not to participate in the IRP meeting, this information should be documented and retained at the school.

Glossary of Terms

Above Typical Progress

A score on the benchmark reading assessment that demonstrates a rate of progress toward grade-level benchmarks that exceeds typical academic progress.

Accuracy

The ability to recognize and decode words correctly. Accuracy is one of the key components of fluent reading.

Benchmark

An empirically derived, criterion-referenced target score representing adequate reading performance for a specific grade level and time of year.

Benchmark performance levels include:

- Above Benchmark: Indicates a 90–99% likelihood of meeting future early literacy and reading benchmarks.
- At Benchmark: Indicates a 70–85% likelihood of meeting future early literacy and reading benchmarks.
- Below Benchmark: Indicates approximately a 40–60% likelihood of meeting future early literacy and reading benchmarks.
- Well Below Benchmark: Indicates approximately a 10–20% likelihood of meeting future early literacy and reading benchmarks without additional intervention.

Benchmark Reading Assessment

A state-approved assessment administered to students in kindergarten through grade 3 at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. The assessment measures key literacy skills, including phonemic awareness, sound-symbol recognition, alphabet knowledge, decoding, encoding, and comprehension, to identify a student's strengths and areas of need.

Center

The Center for the School of the Future at Utah State University, established in Section 53H-4-304 of Utah Code.

Competency

A demonstrable acquisition of a specified knowledge, skill, or ability organized in a progression leading to increasingly advanced levels of learning and performance.

Dyslexia

A neurological learning disorder characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition, spelling, and decoding. Dyslexia typically results from a deficit in the phonological component of language and is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction.

Fluency

The ability to read text accurately, automatically, and with appropriate expression (prosody) to support comprehension.

Good Cause Exemption

A statutory exemption that allows an eligible student to be promoted despite not meeting the required reading benchmark.

Individualized Reading Plan (IRP)

A plan described in Section 53G-10-802 that defines the reading interventions and intervention settings a student will receive to address a reading deficiency identified through the benchmark reading assessment.

Intervention Setting

The setting in which a student receives a reading intervention.

Literacy Team

The group responsible for establishing and monitoring a student's Individualized Reading Plan (IRP). The literacy team includes:

- The student's parent(s);
- At the discretion of the parent(s), the student;
- The student's teacher(s), including general and special education teachers;
- For students scoring well below benchmark, an LEA representative knowledgeable about available literacy resources and authorized to commit those resources; and
- Other educators or support personnel, as appropriate, including therapists, counselors, social workers, translators, friends, or parent advocates.

Local Education Agency (LEA)

A public school district, charter school, or the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind that serves as the local governing body responsible for administering public education.

Panel

The Science of Reading Panel established by the Utah State Board of Education in accordance with state law.

Phonemic Awareness

The conscious awareness of the individual speech sounds in spoken language and the ability to identify and manipulate those sounds.

Phonics

Instruction focused on the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent to support accurate reading and spelling.

Progress Monitoring

The practice of assessing students regularly on targeted literacy skills to determine whether they are making adequate progress and to inform instructional decisions.

Reading Intervention

An evidence-based instructional strategy, resource, or activity aligned with the Science of Reading and designed to improve a student's literacy skills. Examples include:

- Dyad reading;
- Phonics-based decoding practice;
- Targeted literacy intervention resources;
- Word lists;
- Phoneme-grapheme mapping;
- Handwriting practice;
- Reading protocols;
- Retelling;
- Vocabulary practice;
- Retention in the student's current grade level; and
- Other evidence-based strategies aligned with the Science of Reading that address identified student needs.

Reading on Grade Level

A student scores at or above the benchmark for the relevant grade level on the benchmark reading assessment.

Retention

A reading intervention through which a student who does not meet a specific reading benchmark or qualify for a good cause exemption repeats a grade level to receive additional time and intensive, targeted literacy instruction before advancing to the next grade.

Science of Reading

An interdisciplinary body of scientific evidence that:

- Informs how students learn to read and write proficiently;
- Explains why some students experience difficulty with reading and writing;
- Demonstrates that all students benefit from explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing; and
- Does not rely on instructional models based on meaning, structure and syntax, or visual cues, including three-cueing approaches.

Three Cueing

An approach to reading instruction that relies primarily on visual memory, meaning, structure and syntax, or contextual clues for word recognition rather than explicit phonics and decoding strategies.

Vocabulary

Knowledge of, and memory for, word meanings.