

Supporting K-3 Literacy Development

Overview of the READ Act and Implementation Requirements

Achieving reading competency by the end of third grade is a critical milestone for every student and predicts ongoing educational success. If a student enters fourth grade without achieving reading competency, he or she is significantly more likely to fall behind in all subject areas beginning in fourth grade and later grades. Early literacy development is not only a critical milestone in a child's path to success, but it is also one of Colorado's top education priorities.

Colorado READ Act (H.B. 12-1238) Overview

The Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (the READ Act), passed by the Colorado Legislature in 2012, focuses on early literacy development for all students and especially for students at risk for not achieving third grade reading proficiency. The READ Act focuses on kindergarten through third grade (K-3) literacy development, literacy assessment and individual READ plans for students identified with a Significant Reading Deficiency.

READ Act vs. the Colorado Basic Literacy Act

The READ Act differs from the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA), a previous law, by focusing on students identified as having a Significant Reading Deficiency, describing requirements for parent communication and providing funding to support intervention. The law also holds districts and schools accountable for student progress in the District/School Performance Frameworks and expects them to address requirements in their Unified Improvement Plans (UIPs). Other components include a competitive Early Literacy Grant and a resource bank of assessments, instructional programming, and professional development programs.

READ Act Requirements

Assessments

The READ Act requires teachers to assess the literacy development of students in K-3 in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, including oral skills, reading fluency and reading comprehension. In March 2013, the State Board of Education approved interim assessments for use in measuring reading competency skill levels for children in K-3.

Development of READ Plans

The READ Act requires the creation and implementation of an individual intervention plan (called a READ plan) for students identified with a Significant Reading Deficiency (SRD). The Act outlines specific components that must be included in a READ plan to ensure the effectiveness of the intervention strategies.

2014-2015 School Year

- Distribution of \$33 million in per-pupil intervention funds for students with a significant reading deficiency
- Second year of implementation of the first cycle of the Early Literacy Grant (ELG)
- Second year of implementation of the Early Literacy Assessment Tool (ELAT) project
- For K-3 students completing the year with a significant reading deficiency, retention conversation is required, and the parent makes the final decision
- Identify in UIPs the strategies that will be used to address the needs of students identified with a Significant Reading Deficiency

READ Plan Implementation

Throughout the READ plan implementation process, decisions should be made collaboratively between school personnel and parents. Parents must receive regular, on-going updates from the student's teacher concerning the results of the intervention instruction and the student's progress in achieving reading competency. The student's teacher must review the READ plan at least annually and update or revise the plan as appropriate to facilitate the student's progress in demonstrating reading competency.

Advancement of Students with Significant Reading Deficiencies

The READ Act provides guidance for deciding to advance students with Significant Reading Deficiencies. It also requires that parents can choose retention as an intervention strategy for students who are significantly below grade level. Parents have the decision making authority for advancement decisions for grades K-3 until 2016-17. Beginning in 2016-2017, for students completing third grade, the superintendent can make the final decision for advancement.

District Reporting Requirements

The READ Act requires districts to report specific student, school, and district level data to the Colorado Department of Education in order for the department to determine the number of students identified with Significant Reading Deficiencies and their progress. Districts are also encouraged to report strategies and instructional techniques used to help share best practices with other districts.

Accountability and Improvement Planning

Districts and schools will be held accountable for student progress in the District/School Performance Frameworks and are expected to use this data to inform the development and implementation of their Unified Improvement Plans (UIPs).

State Supports for Effective Implementation

The Early Literacy Fund provides districts with per-pupil funding to help fund programs to meet the needs of students with a Significant Reading Deficiency. During the 2012—2013 fiscal year, per-pupil fund allocations totaled \$15 million. In 2014—2015, the total allocation is \$33 million. Per-pupil funds may be used to provide full-day Kindergarten, scientifically or evidence based interventions, summer school, and/or tutoring services.

Where can I learn more?

- READ Act Website: www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/index.asp
- READ Act Assessments: www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/resourcebank.asp
- Colorado Literacy Website: www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/index.asp
- To view all CDE fact sheets, visit: www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/factsheetsandfaqs