

# Exiting a READ Plan

## Determining Reading Competency in Grades K-3 and Beyond



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

The Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (READ Act) requires that a READ plan acquired in K-3 remains in place until the student demonstrates grade level reading competency. This guide is intended to support local education providers in determining when a child in grades K-3 has reached grade level reading competency and may be exited from a READ plan.

### What data are used to determine reading competency?

As defined in the Colorado READ Act, reading competency means a student meets the grade level expectations in reading adopted by the state board. The [Minimum Reading Competency Skill Levels](#) adopted for grades Kindergarten through third grade are based on the scores attained on the approved reading assessments and the [Colorado Academic Standards](#) and have a significant correlation to reading on grade level.

The list of State Board approved interim reading assessments can be found on the [READ interim assessments webpage](#). Each approved interim reading assessment provides grade level cut scores to determine if a student is achieving grade level reading competency. Students who meet or exceed the grade level cut scores have a strong chance of continuing to progress on grade level in reading with high quality, scientifically based and evidence-based Tier 1 literacy instruction. When considering exiting a student from a READ plan, the local education provider should ensure that the student consistently and reliably meets or exceeds the grade level cut scores on the approved interim assessment as one component of the body of evidence that demonstrates grade level reading competency.

The Colorado READ Act defines a [body of evidence](#) as a collection of information about a student's academic performance which, when considered in its entirety, documents the level of a student's academic performance. In addition to scores on the interim reading assessment, the body of evidence should also include, at a minimum, work that a student independently produces in a classroom, including but not limited to the adopted [school readiness assessments](#). A body of evidence may also include scores on additional formative assessments and/or summative assessments. Additional assessment data, such as ACCESS for ELLs<sup>®</sup>, native language interim reading assessment data, or other locally determined valid and reliable ELD data should be considered when compiling a body of evidence for English learners.

When removal from a READ plan is being considered, grade level reading competency is determined by the scores on the approved interim reading assessment and the body of evidence that demonstrates mastery of the Minimum Reading Competency Skill Levels for the student's grade level.

### When can a student be exited from a READ Plan?

Colorado's READ Act requires that a READ plan acquired in K-3 remains in place until the student demonstrates grade level reading competency. When the scores on the approved interim assessment and the body of evidence indicate that the student can demonstrate grade level competency in reading, the student may be exited from the READ plan.

When making the decision to remove a child from a READ plan, the local education provider should consider the context in which the student demonstrated reading competency and the likelihood the student will continue to progress in reading without the READ plan in place.

Considerations:

- Has the student demonstrated mastery of the minimum competencies consistently, over multiple measures?
- Does the student demonstrate reading competency in all subskills measured by the assessment?
- Do the assessment data align with the additional body of evidence?
- Is the student able to maintain grade level competency through Tier 1 instruction alone, or does the student require additional supports through Tier II or Tier III interventions in order to maintain grade level competency?
- If the student is an English Learner, are adequate language supports provided through Tier 1 programming, including English Language Development instruction, to ensure continued progress in reading?

Each local education provider is responsible for adopting procedures that comply with the requirements of the READ Act, which can include specific procedures for exiting a READ plan.

## What is the process for exiting a student from a READ Plan?

When the local education provider has determined that a student has demonstrated grade level reading competency, the process of exiting the student from the READ Plan may begin. In alignment with the requirements of the READ Act, the local education provider should:

- Document on the READ plan the assessment scores and the body of evidence that supports the student has demonstrated grade level reading competency.
- Ensure the READ plan, supporting documentation for the plan and the body of evidence that demonstrates the student has reached grade level reading competency is included in the permanent academic record.
- Communicate with the student's parent or guardian that the student has reached grade level competency in reading and will be removed from the READ plan.

Once a READ plan is discontinued, the student should continue to receive scientifically based and evidence-based reading instruction and be assessed using an approved interim reading assessment per the guidelines of the Colorado READ Act. If through subsequent assessments it is later determined that the student fails to maintain grade level reading competency in any grades kindergarten through third grade and is again determined to have a [significant reading deficiency](#), a new READ plan may be initiated.

## Exiting a READ plan beyond third grade

The Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (READ Act) requires that a READ plan acquired in K-3 remains in place until the student demonstrates grade level reading competency. This means that some students will remain on a READ plan beyond third grade.

When a student is determined to have a significant reading deficiency (SRD) in any grades K-3, the READ plan that is created is a living document that keeps record of the associated interim and diagnostic assessment data, specific skill deficits that will be addressed through intervention services, the intervention programming that will target the student's reading skill deficits, and goals and objectives for remediating the reading deficiency and helping the student achieve grade level reading competency. Progress monitoring data, any changes in intervention services, and updated goals and objectives are recorded on the READ plan over time.

Each local education provider is responsible for ensuring that a student's READ plan continues to be revised and implemented, regardless of grade level, until the student attains reading competency. This responsibility for implementing the READ plan applies regardless of whether the student was enrolled with the local education provider when the READ plan was originally created. For any student who remains on a READ plan beyond third grade, a data-driven process should be in place that includes periodic reading assessment using a valid and reliable assessment measure, including diagnostic assessments when needed, targeted intervention to address specific reading skill deficits and regular progress monitoring. The READ Act requires intensified efforts to assist the student in attaining reading competency for all students who remain on a READ plan for a second or subsequent consecutive school year (C.R.S 22-7-1206 (7)(a)(I-III)(b)). This includes:

- Revising the READ plan to include additional, more rigorous strategies and intervention instruction, including increased daily time for reading instruction.
- Ensuring the student receives reading instruction in conjunction with and supported through the other subjects in which the student receives instruction during the school day.
- Receiving reading instruction from a teacher with expertise in teaching reading and who is identified as effective or highly effective, when possible.
- The option to provide mental health support, with parent approval.

The historical and current body of evidence are critical factors in determining whether a student demonstrates reading competency and may exit a READ plan beyond third grade.

## **What assessments can be used to determine reading competency beyond third grade?**

The Colorado READ Act requires the state board to adopt a list of approved evidence-based or scientifically based reading assessments for use in grades K-3, and to review and update the list every four years. The assessments undergo a rigorous review process to determine validity and reliability before being recommended by the department of education to the state board for adoption. While the purpose of the [READ Act approved list of interim assessments](#) is to ensure kindergarten through third grade students receive appropriate evidence-based or scientifically based reading assessment to determine which students may be at risk for reading failure early on, some of these approved assessments provide options for assessing students beyond third grade. Other curriculum-based measurement (CBM) reading assessments can be used beyond third grade to track student progress and inform the body of evidence with measures such as oral reading fluency measures and maze measures. Typically, these measures correlate to grade level through the eighth grade for basic measures of fluency and comprehension, though this is dependent on the particular assessment selected. In addition, state-aligned benchmark assessments can be used as periodic benchmarks to determine if a student on a READ plan is reaching grade level reading competency.

A variety of CBM reading assessments and state-aligned benchmark assessments are commercially available, and some assessments are available online at no cost. It is the responsibility of each local education provider to select assessments for use in measuring student's reading development and monitoring student progress in reading beyond third grade. The National Center on Intensive Intervention at the American Institutes for Research provides an online [Academic](#)

[Screening Tools Chart](#) that can assist districts in identifying appropriate screening assessments for use with older students.

[State Board approved Diagnostic assessment](#) data can be a helpful part of building a body of evidence since individual foundational skill competencies can be identified through use of these tools. Finally, summative assessment data can also be included in the body of evidence as support for grade level reading competency in addition to other evidence-based assessment data.

## **What should be considered before exiting a student from a READ plan beyond third grade?**

When a student remains on a READ plan beyond third grade, it is important that the body of evidence documents the student's progress in achieving expected reading outcomes in each of the key areas of reading to ensure continued achievement once the READ plan is no longer in place. The following questions should be considered when examining the body of evidence to determine whether a student beyond third grade may be exited from a READ plan:

- Does the body of evidence demonstrate mastery of the K-3 Minimum Competencies in each of the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, including oral language, and comprehension?
- Has the student demonstrated grade level competency on a valid and reliable universal screening assessment appropriate for the student's current grade level?
- Does diagnostic assessment data confirm that skill deficits related to the student's reading deficiency have been successfully remediated?
- Have progress monitoring assessments demonstrated consistent results demonstrating grade level reading competency over multiple measures?
- Do informal classroom assessments and formative assessments support that the student is able to maintain grade level reading competency and meet grade level reading standards?
- Do scores on summative assessments support that the student is adequately accessing grade level content and instruction?
- Does the body of evidence support that the student can maintain grade level reading competency without additional reading interventions in place?
- If the student is an English learner, are adequate language supports provided through Tier 1 programming, including English Language Development instruction, to ensure continued progress in reading?

Once it has been determined that a student has reached grade level reading competency in reading and may be exited from a READ plan, the process for exiting the READ plan is the same as for students in grades K-3, including notifying the parents that the student will be removed from the READ plan. It is important that the local education provider has well-established procedures in place for continuing to monitor student progress and provide support as needed through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to ensure continued academic growth.

## Definitions

**Interim Assessment:** A universal screening assessment administered to all students to identify who may experience lower than expected reading outcomes and who may be at risk for reading challenges.

**Body of Evidence:** A collection of information about a student’s academic performance which, when considered in its entirety, documents the level of a student’s academic performance.

**Evidence-Based:** The instruction or item described is based on reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence and has demonstrated a record of success in adequately increasing students’ reading competency in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, including oral skills, and reading comprehension.

**Scientifically Based:** The instruction or item described is based on research that applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge that is relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties.

**Reading Competency:** A student meets the grade level expectations in reading adopted by the state board.

**Minimum Reading Competency Skill Levels:** Adopted by the state board for grades Kindergarten through third grade, skill levels are based on the scores attained on the approved reading assessments and the [Colorado Academic Standards](#) and have a significant correlation to reading on grade level.

**Mastery:** A student can successfully perform, apply, and transfer their knowledge of the task at least 85% of the time.

**Significant Reading Deficiency:** a student does not meet the minimum skill levels for reading competency in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, including oral skills, and reading comprehension established by the state board for the student's grade level.

**Tier I Instruction:** High quality, *universal* instruction provided to all students, often referred to as core instruction.

**Tier II and Tier III Interventions:** Evidence-based interventions provided to students who do not make adequate progress with Tier I instruction alone. Interventions are provided in addition to Tier I instruction and *target* specific skill deficits. Group size, frequency and duration, and intensity of instruction are considered. Tier III instruction is more *intensive* and is utilized when a student does not make adequate progress with Tier II interventions.

**Diagnostic Assessment:** A state board approved assessment which schools are required to use for students [in grades K-3] identified through screening as possibly having a significant reading deficiency so as to pinpoint a student’s specific area(s) of weakness and provide in-depth information about students’ skills and instructional needs. These assessments can also be utilized beyond third grade as part of the body of evidence for determining grade level reading competency and support instruction.

## WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

[Read Act Statute and State Board Rules](#)

[Read Act Approved Assessments](#)

[Minimum Reading Competency Skills Matrix](#)

[Colorado Academic Standards](#)

[Body of Evidence](#)

[Significant Reading Deficiency – Determination Process and Definition](#)