Washington Office of Superintendent of PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

UPDATE: K–4 Reading Levels

2022

Authorizing Legislation: RCW 28A.320.203

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) received data on 92% of elementary students in grades K–4 for the 2020–21 school year. Over 42.3% of students in reporting districts are reading below grade level.

The partners involved with the K–4 reading levels are:

- English Language Arts (ELA) office at OSPI

- Learning Assistance Program (LAP) at OSPI

- Assessment and Student Information division at OSPI

- Regional Literacy Coordinators (RLCs) who represent the Association of Educational Service Districts (AESD)

Over the past year, some partners have presented virtually at school, district, and regional learning experiences. These virtual professional learning opportunities focused on:

- Understanding the formative assessment process associated with implementation of literacy screening and interventions for all students K–2 as part of a Tier 1 (regular classroom) focus

- Elevating ELA Fellows K–4 knowledge in virtual learning

- Deepening the understanding of the science of reading

- Enhancing educators' understanding of the foundational skills for literacy development

- Using evidence-based instructional practices and strategies to improve student outcomes

- Building culturally responsive teaching practices and focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion

BACKGROUND

In 2013, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 5946, which set up a system for using educational support systems for every student in grades K–12.

Educators, schools, and school districts were informed of the legislative requirements through professional development opportunities at regional educational service districts (ESDs), state conferences, personal communications, communications to district offices, and correspondence from OSPI.

Strengthening Student Educational Outcomes

OSPI and the Association of Educational Service Districts (AESD) implemented Part 1 of Senate Bill 5946 (2013)—Learning to Read, Reading to Learn—during the 2014–15 school year. This legislation focused on the importance of collaborative partnerships essential to supporting students. The legislation called for using evidence- and research-based programs for all students, especially in grades K–4, and providing statewide models to support school districts in implementing a multi-tiered system of supports.

Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.320.202 now requires school districts to be responsible for providing a comprehensive system of instruction and services in reading and early literacy that must include annual use of screening assessments to determine the reading levels and areas that need interventions for student in grades K–4.

In addition to supporting students, Part 1 of Senate Bill 5946 (2013) identified how essential professional learning is necessary for educators to enhance and expand their instructional practices and understanding of early literacy development (RCW 28A.415.400).

In 2016, the Legislature passed House Bill 1345. This legislation provided a statewide definition of 'professional learning' to improve student outcomes.

For the last four years, including 2020–21, schools have chosen from 45 interventions based on best practices. There were 10 in the category of Student-centered Practices; 6 in Extended Time Beyond the School Day; 9 in Educator Practices; 12 for Consultant Teachers; 6 in Outreach and Support for Families; and 3 in Community Engagement.

Identification and Reporting of Students Reading Below Grade Level

Washington State schools and school districts are required to identify students' reading levels according to the evidence-based state and district selected assessments.

School districts must annually report to OSPI (RCW 28A.320.203):

- The number of students in grades K–4 who are reading below grade level, and

- The intensive reading strategies and/or interventions being provided to improve the reading skills of these students.

The information must be disaggregated by subgroups of continuously enrolled students.

To collect the required data, OSPI developed the K–4 Literacy Report, accessible through the Education Data System (EDS) portal. Users identified students reading below grade level from a comprehensive list of disaggregated student groups who were continuously enrolled in the same school during the 2020–21 school year.

Of Washington's school districts, 92.2% of students' scores were reported by their districts. This representation is lower than in previous years. In 2018, 96% of students were represented in the district data submitted to OSPI. OSPI recognizes the disruption of the pandemic impacted data collection. To minimize the effect on data and reporting, OSPI extended data submission opportunities. However, 28 districts did not report.

The pandemic disrupted students' reading on grade level. The 2021 total increase in the number of students who are reading below grade level is 7.5% compared to pre-COVID years. The largest increase was recorded for students in first and second grades, at 11.7% and 10.2% respectively.

UPDATE STATUS

Table 1: 2020–21 K–4 Students Identified as Reading Below Grade Level by Grade Band

Grade Band	Total K–4 Continuous State Enrollment*	K–4 Enrollment for Reported Districts	Number of Students Identified as Reading Below Grade Level	Percent of Students Reading Below Grade Level	Percent Not Meeting Standard on Smarter Balanced Assessments ELA Statewide (Level 3 or 4)
Kindergarten	64,186	59,182	21,377	36.1%	--
1st	71,719	65,828	30,018	45.6%	--
2nd	73,521	67,707	29,338	43.3%	--
3rd	73,847	68,230	26,740	39.2%	N/A*
4th	75,531	69,728	29,544	42.4%	N/A*
Total	**358,804**	**330,675**	**137,017**	**41.4%**	

Source: The Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) pulled on 11/17/21 and the 2020–21 K–4 Literacy Report in the Education Data System.

*Twenty-eight school districts did not report data.

*Smarter Balanced Assessments were not administered in spring 2021; the testing window was deferred until fall 2021.

Table 2: K–4 Students Identified as Reading Below Grade Level

Student Group	K–4 Enrollment for Reported Districts	Number of Students identified as Reading Below Grade Level	Percent of Students Identified as Reading Below Grade Level
All Students	**330,675**	**137,017**	**41.4%**
Male	170,152	72,406	42.6%
Female	160,387	64,573	40.3%
Gender X	136	38	27.9%
American Indian/Alaska Native	3,834	2,444	63.7%
Asian	30,292	6,778	22.4%
Black/African American	13,181	6,351	48.2%
Hispanic/Latino	83,999	48,674	57.9%
White	164,031	59,042	36.0%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	4,413	2,350	53.3%

Student Group	K–4 Enrollment for Reported Districts	Number of Students identified as Reading Below Grade Level	Percent of Students Identified as Reading Below Grade Level
Two or More Races	30,882	11,374	36.8%
Low Income	152,245	82,439	54.1%
LAP – Learning Assistance Program	76,464	51,929	67.9%
Title I – Targeted Assistance Program	4,402	3,054	69.4%
Students with Disabilities	48,416	27,836	57.5%
Multilingual/ English Learners	59,972	37,352	62.3%
504 Plan	7,805	2,991	38.3%
Title VI	1,833	988	53.9%
Unaccompanied Youth	418	194	46.4%

Source: The Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) pulled on 11/17/21 and the 2020–21 K–4 Literacy Report in the Education Data System. *Twenty-eight school districts did not report.

Response Rate

- For the 2020–21 school year, 90.5% of the school districts submitted data and of 92.2% of Washington state K–4 students are represented in the data collected. Twenty-eight districts (containing a total of 28,129 students) did not submit data.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Over 40% of K–4 students were not reading on grade level.

The data reported by schools is over 90% complete, and OSPI will contact districts earlier next year about mandatory reporting.

Student Groups With Over 10% Increases in Reading Below Grade Level

Group	2020–21 Number of Students	2020–21 Percent of Students	2017–18 Percent of Students
Low-Income/Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Priced Meals	152,245	54.1%	44.6%
Special Education	161,813	57.5%	57%
Migrant	6,350	68.5%	59%
Homeless	7,522	61.9%	50.1%
504 Plan	7,805	38.3%	23.1%
Unaccompanied Youth	418	46.4%	33.2%

Next steps will include increased focus on professional opportunities to train K–5 teachers in the science of reading, establishing a K–5 integrated literacy plan for Washington state and, as an equity measure, offering funding to improve literacy in schools. OSPI's focus will be on core programs to improve literacy through Science of Reading and integration.

A continuation of the Glean Education program that was offered (in 2020–21) to all WA educators and administrators will continue. Drafts for the implementation for Parts II (interpreting reading data) and Part III (effective interventions) will come soon.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

2020–2021 Intervention Data

Table 1: Number of Schools Offering Tutoring Services in 2020–21

Tutoring Services	Number of Reported Schools Offering Service	Percent of Reported Schools Offering Service
Adult Tutoring (Intervention Specialist)	882	73.5%
Adult Tutoring (Classroom Teacher)	911	75.9%
Adult Tutoring (Paraeducator)	968	80.7%
Adult Tutoring (Volunteer)	281	23.4%
Group tutoring (Intervention Specialist)	921	76.8%
Group tutoring (Classroom Teacher)	979	81.6%
Group tutoring (Paraeducator)	969	80.8%
Group tutoring (Volunteer)	167	13.9%
Peer tutoring (Same age)	184	15.3%
Peer tutoring (Cross age)	155	12.9%

Source: The Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) pulled on 11/12/21 and the 2020–21 K–4 Literacy Report in the Education Data System with 1,200 Participating Schools.

Table 2: Number of Schools Offering Extended Learning Time Services in 2020–21

Extended Learning Time Service	Number of Reported Schools Offering Service	Percent of Reported Schools Offering Service
Before/after school instruction	592	49.3%
Homework Club	218	18.2%
Book programs	372	31.0%
Computer-based or online instruction	901	75.1%
Weekend programs	26	2.2%
Structured summer programs	825	68.8%

Source: The Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) pulled on 11/12/21 and the 2020–21 K–4 Literacy Report in the Education Data System with 1,200 Participating Schools.

Table 3: Number of Schools Offering Professional Development in 2020–21

Professional Development Type	Number of Reported Schools Offering Service	Percent of Reported Schools Offering Service
Co-Teaching	422	35.2%
Professional learning community	1020	85.0%
Regional/state conference	390	32.5%
National conference	239	19.9%
School/district training/workshop	1039	86.6%
Regional/state training/workshop	619	51.6%
National training workshop	309	25.8%
New teacher induction program	890	74.2%
Teacher mentor program	851	70.9%

Source: The Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) pulled on 11/12/21 and the 2020–21 K–4 Literacy Report in the Education Data System with 1,200 Participating Schools.

Table 4: Number of Schools Utilizing Consultant Teachers in 2020–21

Consultant Teacher Type	Number of Reported Schools Offering Service	Percent of Reported Schools Offering Service
Instructional coach for districts	451	37.6%
Instructional coach for schools	531	44.3%
Instructional coach for teachers	641	53.4%
Content coach for districts	380	31.7%
Content coach for schools	292	24.3%
Content coach for teachers	337	28.1%
Literacy coach for districts	412	34.3%
Literacy coach for schools	351	29.3%
Literacy coach for teachers	382	31.8%
English Language Development (ELD) coach for districts	410	34.2%
English Language Development (ELD) coach for schools	469	39.1%
English Language Development (ELD) coach for teachers	426	35.5%

Source: The Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) pulled on 11/12/21 and the 2020–21 K–4 Literacy Report in the Education Data System with 1,200 Participating Schools.

Table 5: Number of Schools Providing Outreach/Support for Families in 2020–21

Outreach/Support for Families Type	Number of Reported Schools Offering Service	Percent of Reported Schools Offering Service
Employment of parent and family engagement coordinators	522	43.5%
Family Literacy events	853	71.1%
Classes/coaching to families on working on reading skills at home	513	42.8%
Literacy activities for families to do together at home	956	79.7%
Home visits	529	44.1%
School associations (PTA, PTSA, PTSO)	875	72.9%

Source: The Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) pulled on 11/12/21 and the 2020–21 K–4 Literacy Report in the Education Data System with 1,200 Participating Schools.

LEGAL NOTICE

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