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Fall Idaho Reading Indicator Results Show Steady Improvement in Early Literacy

(BOISE) – Recent three-year cohort data from Idaho’s early literacy test, the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI), shows Idaho students making steady progress and that they are arriving to school in the fall with greater proficiency rates and less learning loss during the summer months.

The IRI helps educators better understand the needs of early learners in the areas of phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension. Educators use fall results to identify students who may need additional instruction and interventions.

This year’s overall fall results show that students who entered first grade in the fall of 2022 – now in third grade – have improved their fall proficiency by 8.1 percentage points over the last two years.

Kindergarten	Fall 2021*	40.8% proficient
First Grade	Fall 2022	55.4% proficient
Second Grade	Fall 2023	58.4% proficient
Third Grade	Fall 2024	63.5% proficient

**Previous norms. Data note: Scores are re-normed every four to five years. This occurred prior to the fall 2022 assessment, which does not allow for a direct comparison to fall 2021 data.*

Idaho’s K-3 students have also shown improvement in their overall proficiency at the start of this school year compared to last year. In the fall 2023, 57.8 percent of students who began the school year tested as proficient. In the fall of 2024, that number grew to 59.5 percent.

Fall 2023	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	K-3 Overall
Below Grade Level	23.9%	23.2%	22.4%	19.6%	22.2%
Near Grade Level	22.9%	19.8%	19.2%	18.3%	20.0%
At Grade Level	53.2%	57.0%	58.4%	62.1%	57.8%

Fall 2024	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	K-3 Overall
Below Grade Level	23.2%	21.0%	21.1%	19.4%	21.1%
Near Grade Level	23.7%	19.7%	17.8%	17.1%	19.4%
At Grade Level	53.1%	59.3%	61.1%	63.5%	59.5%

Though kindergarten proficiency rates held steady at 53 percent since 2023, first, second and third-graders all improved proficiency rates over 2023 by two percentage points. The number of students testing below grade level decreased by one percentage point across all tested grades.

“The gains students are making in early literacy are steady and improving and our priorities around early literacy show our commitment as a state towards meeting reading goals by third grade,” said Critchfield. “The work that districts and charters are doing with phonics and the science of reading will lead to continued progress for our students.”

Each spring and fall, Idaho students in kindergarten through third grade take the IRI as required by Idaho Code 33-1806.

“Idaho is a leader when it comes to prioritizing the assessment of all students in kindergarten through third grade,” Critchfield said. “This rigorous, twice-a-year testing model allows us to know exactly where our students stand so our educators can support them accordingly.”

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Attached: 2024 fall IRI results and accompanying graph comparing fall 2023 and 2024 IRI results by grade.