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Training underway as Idaho schools prepare to roll out new reading test

(BOISE) – When school starts anew at the end of summer, young students throughout Idaho will take a new evaluation designed to identify how best to help them maximize their reading readiness and skills.

And with the previous school year just ended, teams of key educators from school districts and charter schools across the state are now training on the new reading test so they can prepare elementary schools to administer the new online test to all students in kindergarten through third grade.

“It’s exciting to be so close to the rollout of our statewide reading test, a crucial way to assess our youngest students’ skills and needs to set the stage for lifelong reading and academic success,” Idaho Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra said. “These June sessions will train the trainers, who will help ensure smooth implementation of this new reading indicator when school starts.”

The new test, provided by Istation, was piloted by more than 50 schools across the state last year, drawing rave reviews from teachers for its more complete view of students’ skills, Ybarra said. This past legislative session, Idaho lawmakers approved a statewide rollout of the test, which replaces the legacy Idaho Reading Indicator.

For the new IRI, each district identified a team to attend a regional training session in June, then lead the implementation process in their district or charter school. The training sessions, conducted by Istation and hosted by the State Department of Education, began in Lewiston June 11 and continue through June 22 in Coeur d’Alene, Nampa, Meridian, Twin Falls, Fort Hall and Idaho Falls. Idaho K-3 students will take the new test in late August and September, at the start of the school year, and the system will monitor students’ progress through the academic year.

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Reporters, editors: Half-day sessions are set from 8 a.m. to noon and 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. If you want to check out the training and talk to participants, the best time may be toward the end of the afternoon session. Upcoming sessions: June 13 -- Coeur d’Alene Resort; June 15 -- College of Western Idaho, Nampa; June 18 -- Victory Middle School, Meridian; June 19 -- College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls; June 21 -- Shoshone-Bannock Event Center, Fort Hall; June 22 -- Hilton Garden Inn & Suites, Idaho Falls.