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Spring testing with new IRI shows marked improvements from fall testing

(BOISE) – Results of the first statewide administration of the new Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) under Idaho’s new early reading test for students in kindergarten through third grade show significant growth from fall to spring in the 2018-19 school year.

“The preliminary results from this first year of the new, comprehensive Idaho Reading Indicator are promising,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra said. “Having this baseline data for reading proficiency is critically important to ensure that Idaho students are making progress toward the goal of reading at grade level by the end of third grade.”

The new online test, which debuted statewide this past fall after a successful pilot program in 50 Idaho schools in the 2017-18 school year, measures five foundational reading skills – Alphabetic Knowledge, Phonemic Awareness, Vocabulary, Comprehension and Fluency – to ensure students are learning to read so they can read to learn.

Results from this assessment cannot be compared to the K-3 test used in previous years, which measured how quickly and fluently students could read, but not whether they understood what they were reading.

The new IRI is an important resource for teachers and parents to measure a student’s reading ability and identify areas where intervention or additional instruction are needed.

“Among those students who tested in both the fall and spring, we improved from just over half of students reading at grade level (52.88%) to nearly three-quarters (69.93%) reading at grade level,” said Karlynn Laraway, director of Assessment and Accountability. “And we see a dramatic reduction in the number of students reading substantially below grade level – the lowest of the three performance levels. For students who tested in both fall and spring, the percentage at this lowest level fell by almost half (23.02% to 12.8%).”

Overall, the mean (average) scale score increased by more than 20 points from fall to spring for students testing in both periods, with consistent scale score gains across all four grade levels.

These preliminary results include more than 85,000 K-3 students who participated in both the fall and spring administration of the new IRI. Final statewide results, along with school and district-level analysis, will be published Aug. 15.

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Attachment: Excel file showing preliminary statewide results of the 2018-19 IRI.