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Early reading test shows statewide gains from previous spring and fall

(BOISE) – Statewide results from the spring Idaho Reading Indicator show that more than two-thirds of all Idaho students in kindergarten through third grade were reading at grade level by the end of the school year, Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra said.

“That means these students’ reading skills improved by more than 17 percentage points since the school year started, showing that their teachers effectively used the fall IRI results to work with individual students to increase proficiency,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “That’s a higher fall-to-spring improvement than in 2021, and the same level of improvement shown in 2019, the last year before the pandemic hit.”

“Another important measure – based on new legislation that ties a portion of a district’s early literacy funding to their students’ performance on the IRI – compares students’ proficiency and growth to the previous year,” the superintendent said. “Spring results at each grade level were higher than in 2021, although not yet back to pre-pandemic levels for grades 1 through 3.”

Spring-to-spring IRI results:

- Kindergarten – 64.8 percent proficient, up from 61.3 percent in 2021 and 63.1 percent in 2019
- First grade – 63.8 percent proficient, up from 59.5 percent in 2021; 66.7 percent were proficient in 2019
- Second grade – 72.4 percent proficient, up from 69.2 percent in 2021; 75.3 percent were proficient in 2019
- Third grade – 71.7 percent proficient, up from 70.1 percent in 2021; 73.2 percent were proficient in 2019

Across Idaho, 90,682 K-3 students took the IRI this past May. Overall, statewide results from the spring 2022 IRI showed 68.2 percent of Idaho K-3 students were reading at grade level (proficient), up more than 3 percentage points from spring 2021 and only 1.5 percentage points below 2019 – the last spring testing before COVID 19 disrupted learning. The spring 2020 test results were incomplete, due to the onset of the pandemic and widespread school closures.

“We expect to see continued improvement in the coming years, closing in on our goal of making sure all Idaho students learn to read by third grade so they can read to learn for the rest of their lives,”

Superintendent Ybarra said. “This year the Legislature dramatically increased early literacy funding from \$26 million to \$72.8 million, opening up options and opportunities for districts to develop literacy intervention programs – including optional full-day kindergarten – that best support their students. I particularly appreciate that the new law prioritizes support for economically disadvantaged students.”

Special populations also showed improvement, but with scores that still lag behind their classmates and underscore the need for continued intensive effort. English Learners’ proficiency was 38.8 percent, up from 36.8 percent last year but down from 45.1 percent in 2019. Students with disabilities tested as 33.6 percent proficient this year, up from 30.6 percent last year and 31.9 percent in 2019.

The online Idaho Reading Indicator debuted statewide in fall 2018 after a successful pilot program in more than 50 Idaho schools. It measures five foundational reading skills – Alphabetic Knowledge, Phonemic Awareness, Vocabulary, Comprehension and Fluency – to help teachers target their instruction to students’ individual needs.

Statewide, district and school Idaho Reading Indicator results are available on [the State Department of Education website](#).

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Attached: Spring 2022 IRI results by state, district and school; graphics showing fall-to-spring IRI results, spring-to-spring IRI results and results by demographic groups.