

**PLANNING, POLICY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**  
**AUGUST 13, 2015**

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**SUBJECT**

Literacy Implementation Subcommittee Recommendations

**REFERENCE**

September 2013	Board approves Taskforce for Improving Education recommendations.
February 2014	Board established committees to develop plans to implement the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force for Improving Education.
March 2015	Board staff convened the Literacy Committee to develop specific recommendations and legislative ideas for the Board. The membership was primarily drawn from members from the previous Literacy Task Force.
June 2015	Board approved legislative ideas to expand support for reading interventions, including funding for full-day kindergarten for students struggling to develop early reading skills.

**APPLICABLE STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY**

Idaho Code 33-1614, 33-1615, 33-1616, and 33-1207A

**BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION**

The Literacy Implementation Subcommittee includes fourteen (14) individuals from across Idaho, including representatives from the State Board of Education (Debbie Critchfield), a legislator (Rep. VanOrden), State Department of Education, K-12 education, higher education, libraries (Commission and Association), and non-profits (Idaho AEYC, Idaho Business for Education, and Idaho Voices for Children). The committee has met six (6) times to review the Literacy Task Force's report and develop and present actionable recommendations to the State Board of Education and the Governor. Attached is the committee's July 2015 report. A summary of recommendations by topic area follows:

**State Guidance**

- We recommend the Comprehensive Literacy Plan be reviewed and revised every five (5) years, beginning with a revision in 2015. The Literacy Committee is currently in the process of editing the plan and intends to present a new Comprehensive Literacy Plan to the Board of Education at the December 2015 Board meeting.
- We recommend the state provide guidance to ensure that teachers are well-trained to provide high-quality literacy instruction. Specifically, we recommend that the Idaho Comprehensive Literacy Course requirements be reviewed and revised every five (5) years. Additionally, we recommend the state support job-embedded literacy professional development for currently practicing teachers.

**Reading Interventions**

- We recommend the state expand reading interventions for students who, based on their Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) scores, are struggling to develop literacy skills.
- We recommend a substantial increase in funding for kindergarten interventions, including full-day kindergarten for those who score in the lowest performance category and substantial funding for districts to support full-day kindergarten or other significant interventions for students who score in the middle performance category (currently referred to as 2), but have not yet reached proficiency.
- We recommend that interventions be expanded to students in first through third grade who score in the middle performance category, but who have not yet reached proficiency.

**Assessment**

- We recommend that statutory language related to the Idaho Reading Indicator be revised to clarify purpose of the assessment and eliminate unnecessary and confusing details.
- We recommend the State Board of Education consider adopting a new early literacy assessment package to replace the assessment currently used for the Idaho Reading Indicator.

**Other**

- We recommend the state support renewal and expansion of school libraries by providing funding for districts to purchase books for their elementary schools.

**IMPACT**

Adoption of the recommendation will allow staff to continue work on bringing forward legislative proposals, as applicable, to move forward the recommendations and to work with the Governor and the legislature in implanting the recommendations as resources allow. Following adoption by the Board the recommendations will be forwarded to the Governor for consideration. If fully implemented in the timeframe outlined the estimated fiscal impact for FY17 would be \$11.9M and nearly \$8.6M for FY18. The total estimated fiscal impact at full implementation (over five (5) years) would be \$21.5M.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Literacy Committee Report and Recommendations Page 5

**STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In recognition of the limited resources available and committee has ordered their recommendations in priority order and have outlined a five (5) year implementation plan. As outlined in the recommendations full implementation will take several years of additional work that include not only bringing forward an

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updated Idaho Comprehensive Literacy Plan pursuant to Section 33-1614, Idaho Code, but also include the multi-year processes of developing, testing, and implementing a new Idaho Reading Indicator that better meets the needs of the school districts and students.

Given the resources available and the projected fiscal impact, it is understood that all recommendations may not be able to be implemented in the timeframe outlined in the recommendations. Board staff recommends adoption and support of the Literacy Implementation Subcommittee's report and recommendations in priority order as presented in Attachment 1.

**BOARD ACTION**

I move to adopt the Literacy Implementation Subcommittee recommendations in priority order as submitted in Attachment 1.

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ Carried Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

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**Literacy Committee  
Report and Recommendations**

**Members:**

Stephanie Bailey-White	Projects Coordinator, Idaho Commission for Libraries
Lisa Boyd	Principal, Desert Springs Elementary School, Vallivue School District
Hollis Brookover	Vice President of Development, Idaho Business for Education
Mary Ann Cahill	Associate Professor, Boise State University
Michele Capps	Superintendent, Murtaugh School District
Alejandra Cerna Rios	Outreach Specialist, Idaho Voices for Children
Debbie Critchfield	Member, State Board of Education
Meghan Graham	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade Teacher, Sage International School of Boise
Alison Henken	K-12 Accountability and Projects Manager, Idaho Office of the State Board of Education
Stephanie Lee	Assessment Specialist, Idaho State Department of Education
Natalie Nation	Representative, Idaho Library Association
Beth Oppenheimer	Executive Director, Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children
Diann Roberts	English Language Arts/Literacy Coordinator, Idaho State Department of Education
Julie VanOrden	House of Representatives, District 31, House Education Committee

**Subcommittee Charge: to further refine the following recommendations of the Governor's Task Force:**

**#3 Literacy Proficiency**

**Subcommittee Deliverables:**

- **Recommendations on changes to Idaho Code to expand state-supported literacy interventions for struggling early readers.**
- **Recommendations on identifying and implementing a new early literacy assessment package.**
- **Recommendations on changes to Idaho Code to refine the language related to the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI).**
- **Recommendations on literacy training through teacher preparation and professional development.**
- **Presentation of a substantially revised Idaho Comprehensive Literacy Plan to replace the one approved by the State Board of Education in 1998.**

## Objectives and Components:

The objective is to support the State's goal to have 60% or more of its students prepared for career or college by ensuring students have the literacy skills needed to succeed in primary and secondary schooling and the postsecondary path of their choice.

To achieve this goal, Idaho must develop a system to support K-12 literacy that includes the following components:

- **Strong leadership and collaboration** are needed at all levels, from statewide agencies to local schools, to ensure that schools, teachers, students, and parents have the support and resources they need to guide students to high levels of literacy. Funding and resources are critical and must be provided by the state. Additionally, we must also ensure that district and school leaders are well-trained and supported in developing schools that have a strong, positive culture that supports teachers in guiding all students to develop strong literacy skills.
- **Effective instruction** is crucial to ensuring that struggling students receive the support they need while on-level and advanced students are pushed to high levels of excellence. Effective instruction happens when teachers are well-prepared to implement rigorous content standards in ways that engage students.
- **Assessment and data** should be used responsibly and effectively to inform state policy, and more importantly, to guide educational practice. Districts and schools should use data to ensure programs and strategies are effective. Teachers should review student data and adjust their daily instruction. Finally, student-level data should be used by teachers, students, and parents to develop educational plans and goals that address each student's challenges and harness their unique strengths and interests.

## Recommendations:

1. **We recommend that the State expand support for reading interventions for struggling early readers.**
  - a. Research demonstrates the importance of screening kindergartner's reading skills and providing early interventions to address literacy skills gaps early and put students on a path to literacy proficiency and academic success.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, full-day kindergarten has been found to be beneficial, particularly for low-income students, English language learners, and those who have demonstrated a need for

<sup>1</sup> Bianco, et al, 2012; Cavanaugh et al, 2004; Conner et al, 2014; Lennon & Slesinski, 1999; Vellutino et al, 2006

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additional support.<sup>2</sup> Thus, we recommend providing expanded funding for reading interventions for kindergarten students who are struggling to develop reading skills.

We recommend the state fund full-day kindergarten for students who score in the lowest performing category (below basic) on the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI).

Additionally, we recommend providing substantial funding that could be used by district for either full-day kindergarten or substantial interventions for students who score in the middle (basic) category on the IRI.

To prevent any delay in provision of services, the funding for kindergarten students should be calculated based on the average number of students who performed in each category over the past three years, thus allowing funding to be provided at the beginning of the school year (with the August payment). Funding can then be adjusted after students have taken the fall IRI.

- b. We recommend the state provide expanded support for reading interventions for students in grades 1 through 3 who have not yet reached reading proficiency.

Currently, the state provides some support for interventions for students who score in the lowest performance category (below basic) on the IRI; per statute, schools must provide these students with 40 hours of supplemental instruction. However, there is currently no similar requirement or funding for students who score in the middle performance category (basic), though they have not yet demonstrated proficiency at grade level. We believe that it is important to ensure these students receive the support they need to reach grade level proficiency by the end of the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) grade. Thus, we recommend that schools be required to provide these students with at least 20 hours of supplemental instruction and that the state provide funding to support this work.

- c. We recommend that statute be adjusted to clarify that funding for reading interventions will be provided to students who take the Idaho Reading Indicator-Alternative (IRI-Alt) assessment. Funding for interventions is currently only provided for students who complete the IRI test designed for the general population. Approximately 1% of Idaho's students who have significant cognitive impairments qualify to take the IRI-Alt assessment; however, interventions are not funded for these students, despite the fact that these students usually need substantial reading support. As a result, in practice, some schools have been administering the general IRI to students who qualify for the IRI-Alt in order to qualify them for intervention funding. The student is subjected to an unnecessary test and the resulting data is not useful for the school. We recommend eliminating this issue by specifying in Idaho Code that students may qualify for reading intervention funding based on their score on the IRI or IRI-Alt.

<sup>2</sup> Ackerman, Barnett, & Robin, 2015; Gibbs, 2014; Hahn et al, 2014; UNLV, 2015

**2. We recommend the state adopt a new literacy assessment package.**

- a. The assessment currently used as the Idaho Reading Indicator is outdated and does not meet the state's needs. We recognize the following issues with the current assessment:
- It does not test a student's reading comprehension skills, and thus, is not well-aligned to Idaho Core Standards.
  - The test currently being used for the IRI is designed to be a screening assessment. However, because it is the only statewide literacy assessment for early grades, the state is currently relying on data from this assessment to inform us of our students' literacy skills and the performance of our schools. Because the test is short and does not measure reading comprehension, this practice is far from ideal.
  - Because the state has not provided guidance and support for diagnostic assessments, some schools rely on IRI data to make important decisions about the types of interventions and supports that students need. Schools need separate, high-quality diagnostic assessments that will provide them with detailed information about students' specific areas of strength and challenge so they can create individualized interventions.
- b. We believe it is critical for the state to identify and adopt one or more high-quality assessments that meet the needs of schools and the state. We recommend the following process for identification and implementation of a new assessment or assessment package:
- We have created a Literacy Committee sub-group- the Assessment Working Group, which is tasked with reviewing available literacy assessments and providing the Literacy Committee with recommendations regarding the best assessment options for Idaho. The Assessment Working Group will provide its recommendations to the Literacy Committee by April 2016, and if adopted by the Literacy Committee, these recommendations will be provided to the State Board of Education in June 2016.
  - We have recommended that the Assessment Working Group be highly cognizant of the need to balance using assessments appropriately and receiving high-quality data with the logistical and time challenges faced by Idaho's schools.
  - We recommend the new assessment be implemented over the process of three years beginning with validity testing of the new assessment in the 2017-2018 school year and field testing and full implementation in the two following years.



**3. We recommend revising statutory language related to the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) to clarify the purpose of the assessment and eliminate unnecessary and confusing details.**

- a. We recommend revising I.C. Section 33-1614 to improve or delete outdated language and eliminate unnecessary details about the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI), thus allowing the state to implement the appropriate assessment with State Board of Education approval without needing to adjust statute to align to assessment changes in future years. We further recommend adding a sentence from Section 33-1616 regarding district reporting of IRI scores, as it is appropriate to have the reporting instructions for districts be in the same location as the reporting instructions for the State Department of Education (SDE).
- b. We recommend aligning the IRI performance category names to align to the categories currently used for the ISAT. Specifically, we recommend adjusting the performance category names as outlined below. The scoring categories will be clearly outlined in the new Idaho Comprehensive Literacy Plan. Additionally, we recommend aligning references in Section 33-1615 to these updated performance categories.

Old Name	Recommended Name
One (1)	Below Basic
Two (2)	Basic
Three (3)	Proficient

- c. We recommend eliminating Idaho Code Section 33-1616, as the outlined IRI goals are outdated and unnecessary and the reporting process outlined requires additional work by the SDE to identify schools that do not meet these targets. Section 33-1614 already requires the SDE to report the reading assessment scores of all schools; the additional step of identifying schools who do not meet state targets is unnecessary and perceived to be punitive in nature.

**4. We recommend the state provide guidance and support to ensure that teachers are well-trained to provide high-quality literacy instruction.**

- a. We believe it is critical that the Idaho Comprehensive Literacy Course be reviewed and revised on a regular basis to ensure that Idaho's colleges and universities are as effective as possible in preparing new teachers to address students' literacy learning needs. Therefore, we have asked the Idaho Higher

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Education Literacy Partnership (IHELP), in partnership with the Education Deans from the colleges and universities, to review Administrative Rule and practice related to the Idaho Comprehensive Literacy Course and make recommendations to the Literacy Committee for updates / change.

To ensure that similar reviews are done on a regular basis, we recommend that the State Board of Education amend Administrative Rule to designate that the State Board of Education will convene a committee every five (5) years to review and revise, as necessary, the Idaho Comprehensive Literacy Course.

- b. In alignment with the Governor’s Task Force for Improving Education’s recommendations related to professional development, we recommend that the state commit to providing ongoing, effective literacy professional development for teachers. We recommend that Idaho Code be amended to give the State Department of Education clear responsibility for providing professional development, and that the types of appropriate, effective literacy professional development (such as job-embedded) be clearly outlined in the Idaho Comprehensive Literacy Plan.

**5. We recommend that the state’s Comprehensive Literacy Plan be revised and refined to provide a clear, updated guide to improving the literacy outcomes of the Idaho’s students.**

- a. We recommend substantially rewriting the Idaho Comprehensive Literacy Plan using a draft created by the State Department of Education (but not formally adopted by the Board) in 2012. We intend to reorganize the plan to clarify the roles various entities (state government, districts, schools, community, and parents) have in ensuring students develop strong literacy skills. Additionally, we will update the plan to ensure that it represents recent research and best practices.
- b. We believe it is critical that the Idaho Comprehensive Literacy Plan be reviewed and revised on a regular basis to ensure that it remains relevant and is put into action. Therefore, we recommend that the State Board of Education amend Administrative Rule to designate that the State Board of Education will convene a committee every five (5) years to review and revise, as necessary, the Idaho Comprehensive Literacy Plan.

**6. We recommend the state support expansion and renewal of school libraries.**

- a. We recommend the state provide funds to ensure that school libraries are well-stocked with current books to support access to print for all Idaho children. The International Reading Association and the American Library Association recommend that “Libraries must purchase a sufficient number of new books per

student, and they must make a concentrated effort to replace older materials for each classroom and school library on an annual basis.”<sup>3</sup> School libraries should possess a minimum of twenty (20) books for each student to allow for access to print and independent reading. Schools should purchase new, quality books at the rate of two (2) books per student per year for a classroom library.<sup>4</sup> While Idaho’s secondary schools typically have some funding for library renewal, the state’s elementary schools often struggle to identify funds for this purpose. Thus, we recommend the state provide funding to allow the state’s elementary schools to purchase two (2) books per student per year for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Recent research shows that a child’s ability to independently select reading material results in statistically significantly higher improvements in reading scores than the scores of children who are assigned a reading list or who do not have sufficient access to print materials.<sup>5</sup>

### ***Definitions of Key Terms***

**“60%” or “60% Goal”** refers to the Idaho State Board of Education’s goal to have 60% or more of its citizens entering the workforce with some form of postsecondary degree or certificate (1, 2, 4, or more) by 2020. The supporting goal is that Idahoans age 25-34 will have achieved the 60% goal. The Literacy Committee’s has focused on developing strategies to ensure that students in the K-12 system develop the literacy skills needed to successfully pursue postsecondary degrees or certificates.

**“Screening assessment”** refers to an assessment given “to determine whether students may need specialized assistance or services, or whether they are ready to begin a course, grade level, or academic program.”<sup>6</sup> These simple, time-efficient, and objective measures produce data, including reading levels, to inform judicious real-time instructional decisions, thus enabling true individualization of instruction at the student’s point of learning.

**“Diagnostic assessment”** refers to an assessment given to identify a student’s specific learning challenges and needs and, as appropriate, diagnose learning disabilities to determine eligibility for special education services. These assessments are typically administered after a student’s results on a screening assessment have identified the student as in need of support; they provide more detailed information related to the student’s abilities and knowledge and are typically related to a specific content area.

## **Appendices**

### **A. Fiscal Impact of Literacy Committee Recommendations**

<sup>3</sup> International Reading Association, 2000

<sup>4</sup> International Reading Association, 2000

<sup>5</sup> State Library of North Carolina, n.d.

<sup>6</sup> Glossary of Education Reform, n.d.

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**Appendix A: Fiscal Impact of Literacy Committee Recommendations**

	Recommendation / Activity	Cost Breakdown	Fiscal Impact					TOTAL	
			FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21		
1.b.	Review & revision of ID Comprehensive Literacy Plan, every 5 yrs	Costs based on Literacy Committee costs for travel and food / meeting expenses						6,000.00	6,000.00
3.a.	Kindergarten reading interventions								0.00
	Full day K for students who score below basic on IRI	4,251 students x \$2,310 (see below for more details)	9,819,232.50						9,819,232.50
	Full day K or substantial intervention for students who score basic on IRI	5,475 students x \$1,155 (see below for more details)		6,323,336.25					6,323,336.25
3.b.	20 hour interventions for students in grades 1-3 who score basic on IRI	15,487 students x \$53.27 (see below for more details)	824,902.90						824,902.90
3.c.	Interventions for students who score basic or below basic on the IRI-Alt	691 students x \$106.53 (see below for more details)	73,579.31						73,579.31
4	New early literacy assessment / assessment package	Cost is currently unknown- X marks the years when funding will be needed		X	X	X			0.00
5.a.	Review & revision of ID Comprehensive Literacy Course, every 5 years	Costs based on Literacy Committee costs for travel and food / meeting expenses							6,000.00
5.b.	Job-embedded literacy professional development	Expansion of funding for literacy coaches							1,300,000.00
6.a.	Books for school libraries	Total is 2 books per student per yr, grades K-5: 135,974 students x \$23.46 per student, with funding split over 3 years. (see below for more details)	1,189,950.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00				3,189,950.00
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>11,907,664.71</b>	<b>8,623,336.25</b>	<b>1,000,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>12,000.00</b>	<b>21,543,000.96</b>	

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### Cost Breakdown Details

- 3.a. The number of students included in the calculations for 3.a. and 3.b. are the average number of students who performed in each category- below basic / 1 and basic / 2 on the fall IRI for the past four school years (2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15)
- 3.a. The cost per student for full-day kindergarten for students who score below basic on the IRI is the 2014-2015 kindergarten ADA x 2. The new cost (fiscal impact), therefore, is the same as the current ADA (\$2,310), since it is a doubling of funding for these students.
- 3.b. The cost per student for full-day kindergarten or substantial intervention for students who score basic on the IRI is the 2014-2015 kindergarten ADA x 1.5. The new cost (fiscal impact), therefore, is the same as half current ADA (\$2,310), or \$1,155.
- 3.b. The cost per student for 20-hour interventions for students in grades 1-3 who score a basic on the IRI was calculated based on the average amount spent per student for 40-hours of intervention (including transportation) for three years (2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14) divided by 2, since these interventions will be funded at half the rate of the 40-hour interventions.
- 3.c. The cost for interventions for students who take the IRI-Alt was difficult to calculate for two reasons: 1) this information is not currently tracked at a statewide level; 2) some students who qualify for and should take the IRI-Alt have been given the regular IRI in order for their school to qualify for intervention funding. Thus, the fiscal impact was estimated at the maximum total number of students who may take the IRI-Alt test (federal law limits it to no more than 1% of the full student population) at the 40-hour intervention cost. However, it is worth noting that because some of these students may have been receiving funding in the past (because they were guided to take the regular IRI), this estimate is likely to be higher than the actual new cost will be.
- 6.a. The student number used for this calculation is the total K-5 fall enrollment for 2014-2015, as reported by the Idaho State Department of Education. The book cost reflects 2 books per student at an average cost of \$11.73 per book. This average cost is based on data from the School Library Journal (<http://www.slj.com/2015/03/research/sljs-average-book-prices-2015/#>) assuming 65% of books will be hardback at \$14.49 per book (because renewals efforts should include as many new releases as possible) and 35% will be paperback at \$6.61 per book. These per book costs assume a 25% discount from vendors for buying in bulk; this discount rate is based on a committee member's communication with vendors.