



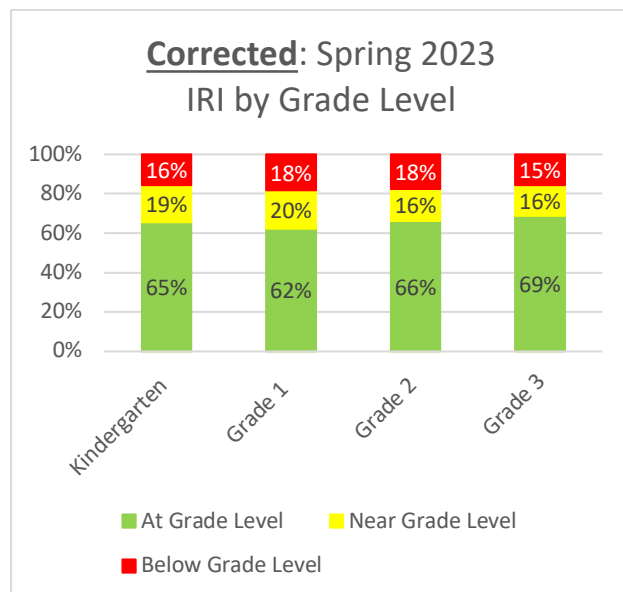
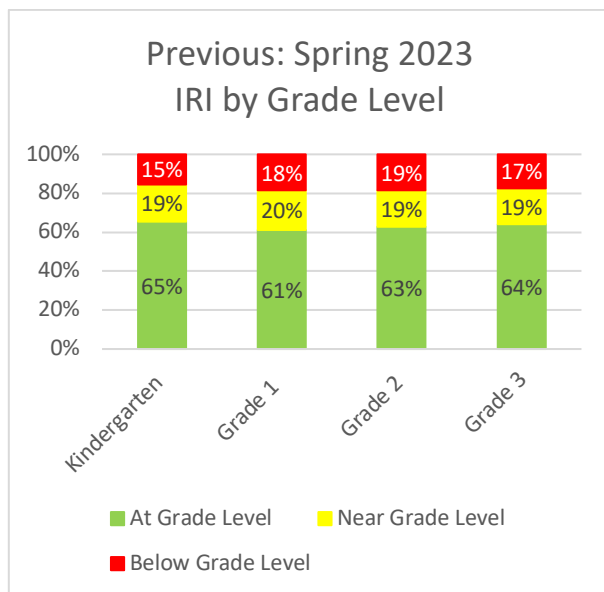
Date: Sept. 11, 2023
Subject: Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) data

Dear District and Charter School Leaders,

In late August, the State Department of Education (SDE) was made aware of an issue with the accuracy of the May 2023 data provided to you and to the SDE by Istation, the vendor that administers the IRI. Specifically, Istation found an error in the algorithm used to calculate their SY 2022 - 2023 data. This error required Istation to recalculate Spring 2023 IRI scores and proficiency tiers.

At the end of August, the SDE received the corrected datasets from Istation. The SDE is in the process of reviewing and validating the corrected datasets with districts and charter schools prior to the release of the SDE report card this fall. This will delay the public-facing report card data release until October.

Our preliminary analysis indicates that over 90% of Idaho districts and charter schools had one or more students who were affected by Istation’s corrections. The May 2023 IRI data, previously made available to Idaho districts and charter schools, is displayed on the left. The corrected May 2023 IRI data is displayed on the right. As you can see in the corrected datasets, many more Idaho students were identified as proficient.

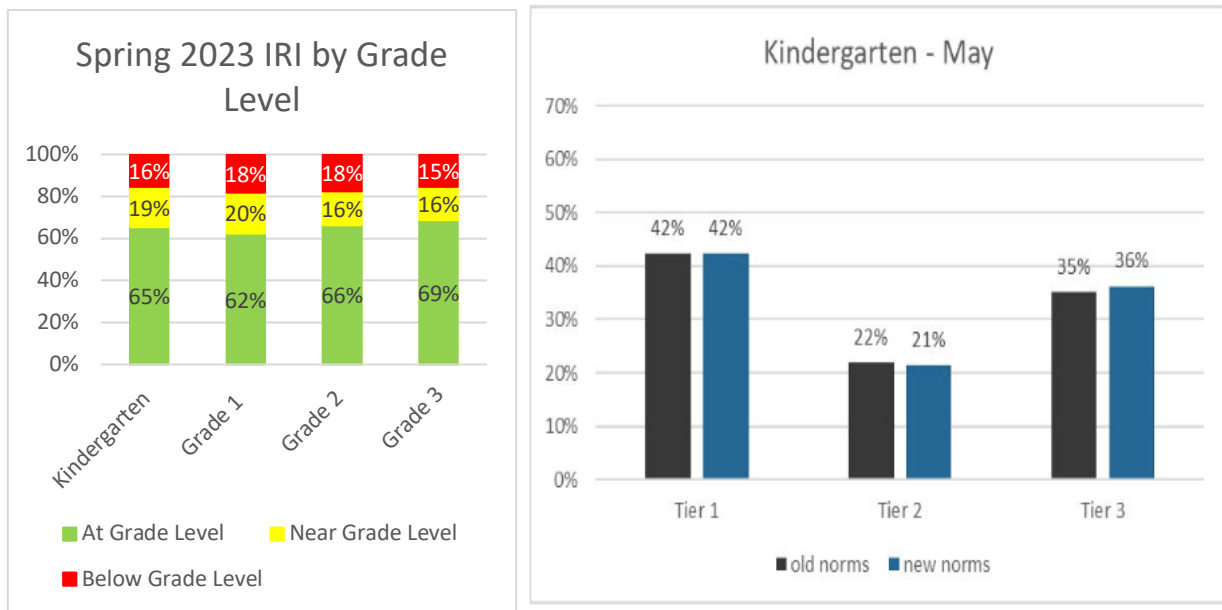


Idaho students also performed better than the national average on the Istation assessment in 2023. Although Idaho’s proficiency scores saw a dip given the new norms, Idaho continues to outperform the national average according to Spring 2023 Istation data, and our students continue to recover from the pandemic at rates on par with, or faster than, the rest of the nation.

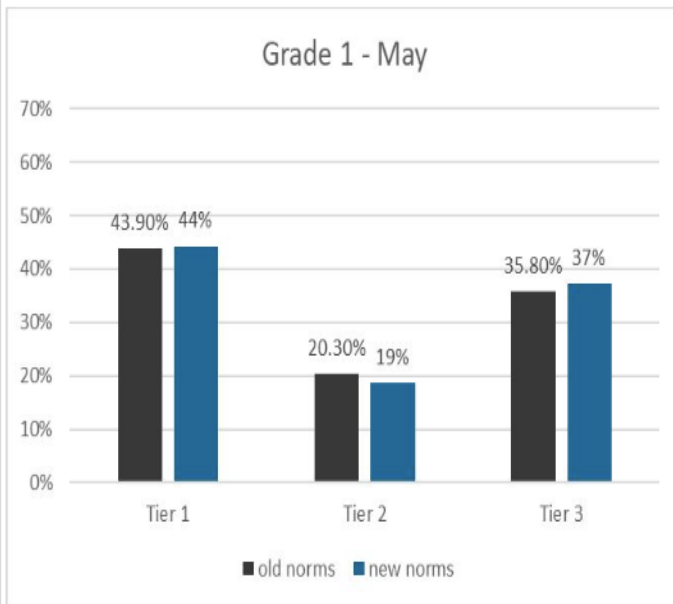
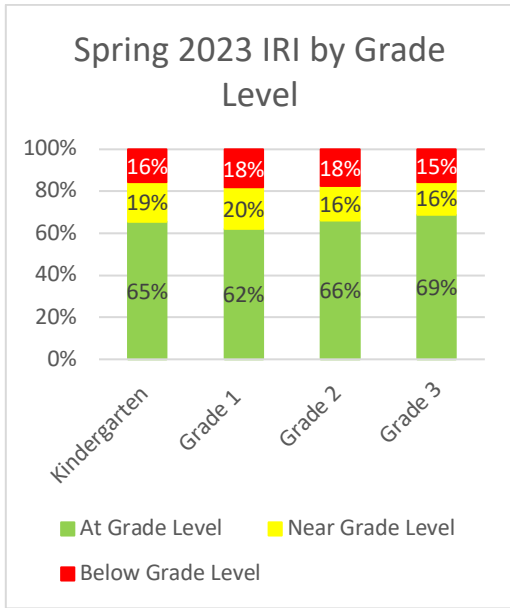
What do “new norms” mean on this year’s IRI? This means that Istation re-normed the data used to score the IRI in 2023. It also means the normed datasets that Idaho students were scored against prior to 2023 are different from those used to score the May 2023 assessment. Because the IRI is a “norm-referenced assessment,” the data sets are re-normed approximately every five years. Typically, Istation would perform this adjustment using the most recent data available. However, since the nation experienced COVID learning lags during the 2021-2022 school year, Istation made the decision to norm with *pre-pandemic* data from 2018-2019.

When reviewing re-normed data, it’s especially important to consider national trends to ensure Idaho students are performing on par with, or better than, national averages. In this case, our data indicates that Idaho students are outperforming their national peers in early literacy.

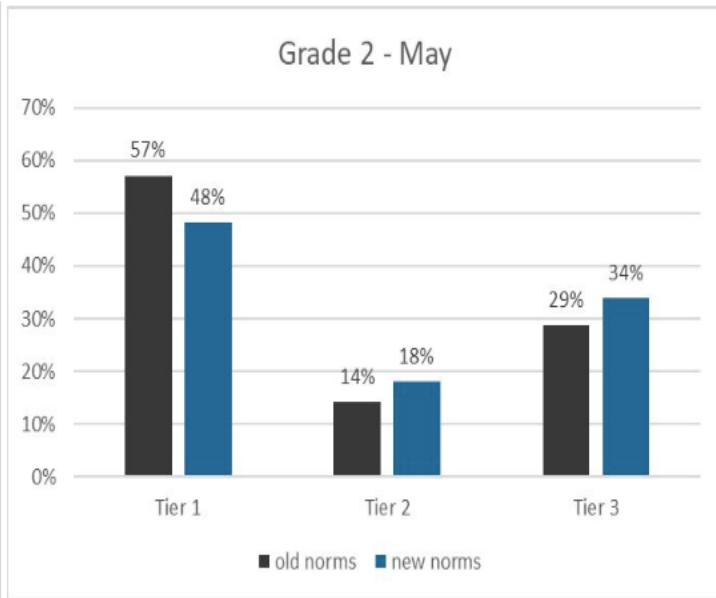
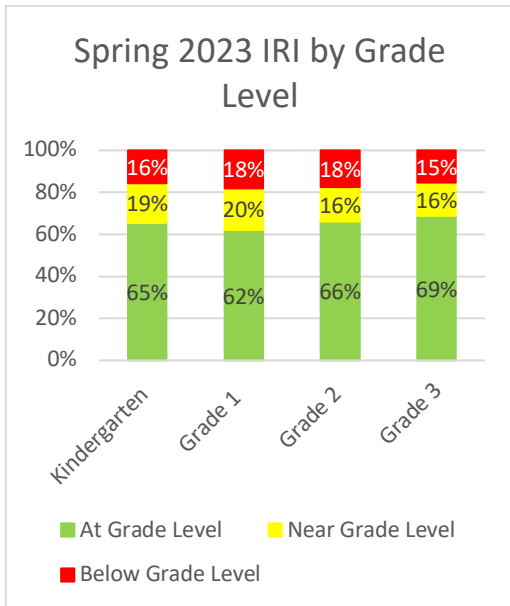
65% of Idaho Kindergarten students scored proficient compared to the national average of 42%



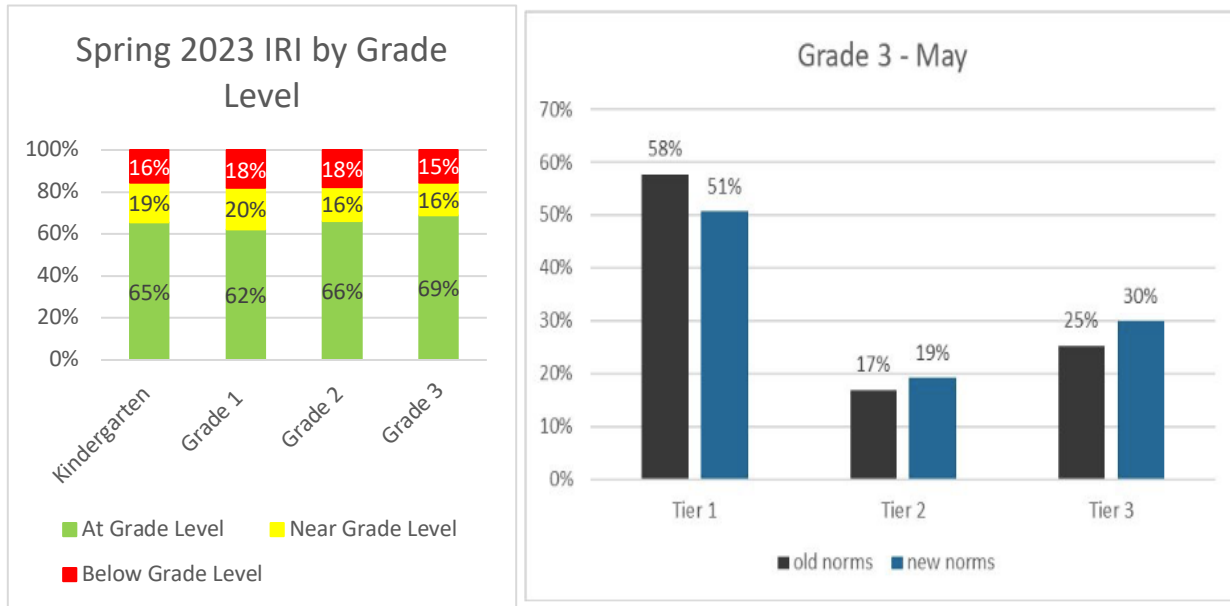
62% of Idaho 1st grade students scored proficient compared to the national average of 44%



66% of Idaho 2nd grade students scored proficient compared to the national average of 48%



69% of Idaho 3rd grade students scored proficient compared to the national average of 51%



While the re-normed data show positive trends overall, the change in norms between the 2022 and 2023 data presents some challenges. First, it makes it difficult to provide data showing longitudinal growth. It also makes it challenging to comply with the provisions in Idaho Code 33-1002, which provides additional funding for early literacy interventions, with a large portion distributed to LEAs who maintain student proficiency on the IRI.

The SDE continues to work with Istation to develop fair and accurate longitudinal data for the IRI. This “apples to apples” longitudinal data is a top priority of our SDE Assessment team, and we expect to have this data available later this month. The SDE’s Public School Finance Team will then use this “apples to apples” longitudinal data to calculate funding for LEAs per Idaho Code 33-1002. We expect to complete this calculation later this month.

A key takeaway from this deep dive into the IRI data is that Idaho’s students continue to outpace their national peers in early literacy. These national comparisons demonstrate that Idaho’s investments in early literacy are paying dividends for our young readers. With continued support from our Idaho teachers and educators, and with ongoing commitment from state leaders, our students can expect to grow and excel during their formative years of reading and literacy.

Superintendent Critchfield would like to thank all local education agencies for their patience as these corrections are implemented across the state, and to congratulate each of you on the considerable success that we’re seeing in early literacy. Your hard work is truly paying off.

Ryan Cantrell | Chief Deputy Supt.
Idaho State Department of Education
Superintendent Debbie Critchfield
(208) 332-6954 | sde.idaho.gov