

Strengthening Student Educational Outcomes - [ESSB 5946 \(2013\)](#)

A. Provide a Comprehensive System of Reading Instruction (Sec. 102)

Requirement	Actions	Resources, support, and guidance
<p>District-wide comprehensive reading system must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Screening assessments/tools to identify at-risk readers in grades K-4 2) Research-based family involvement and engagement strategies to help students practice and build literacy skills at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and administer a research-based screening assessment at the beginning of the school year for students grades K-4 • Identify research-based family involvement/engagement strategies and ways information will be shared with parents 	<p>Washington Comprehensive Literacy Plan</p> <p>Washington Early Literacy Pathways</p> <p>National Center for Response to Intervention: chart of screening tools</p> <p>2nd grade Reading Assessment law</p> <p>SSEO: K-4 Literacy Website</p>

A1. Where is information about providing a comprehensive system of reading instruction located in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW)?

[RCW 28A.320.202](#)

Provisions applicable to all districts: Comprehensive system of instruction and services in reading and early literacy

A2. Where can I learn more about comprehensive reading systems?

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) [Comprehensive Literacy Plan](#)¹ provides information on integrating literacy instruction with the Washington State Learning Standards and the latest information about literacy development. It offers ideas and links to resources to help teachers, parents and caregivers play an active role in promoting literacy.

The Comprehensive Literacy Plan also supports teachers and administrators with information and resources to guide instruction, coordination of efforts and alignment of goals. The Plan provides clear guidance on the components of a comprehensive literacy system and provides resources to build, implement, and strengthen systems in Washington. Together, leaders across the state can continue to learn and incorporate best practices necessary to achieve long-term success for our students.

A3. What screening assessment should we use?

Districts determine the assessments that best align with their comprehensive literacy plans and the needs of their students.

Districts can review the [Universal Screening Tools Chart](#) from the National Center for Response to Intervention (NCRTI) as a reference for selecting assessments. The chart reflects results from four years of reviews and provides up-to-date information on assessments that are sent to the center for the quality of rating, in addition to being valid, reliable and normed. The quality of rating varies among those reviewed. In addition to the technical ratings, the chart provides information on implementation requirements for each assessment.

*Washington state school districts have used this resource to make decisions about assessments that meet the requirements and technical rigor of [RCW 28A.300.320](#) (also referred to as the Second Grade Reading Assessment Law).

Teachers should administer the assessment with fidelity to the chosen instrument. The administration process and results will ensure that teachers, parents/guardians, and students will receive highly focused and useful information for increasing student achievement in reading.

A4. Where can I find research-based family involvement and engagement strategies for parents/guardians?

The Title IA webpage for OSPI contains several helpful links to family involvement resources.

<http://www.k12.wa.us/TitleI/FamilyInvolvement/default.aspx>

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B. Report Cards Showing Reading— All K-4 Students (Sec. 104)

Requirement	Actions	Resources, support, and guidance
<p>K-4 report cards are to include:</p> <p>1) How the student is progressing on acquiring reading skills; and</p> <p>2) Whether the student is at grade level in reading</p> <p>If a student is <u>not</u> reading at or above grade level, the teacher must explain to the parent/guardian: 1) Which interventions and strategies will be used</p> <p>2) Which strategies for improving the student’s reading skills can be used at home</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the report card includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ how the student is progressing in reading skills ➤ whether or not the student is reading at grade level 	<p>Washington Comprehensive Literacy Plan¹</p> <p>Your Child’s Progress</p> <p>Educational Service Districts-Regional Literacy Coordinators</p>

B1. Where is information regarding K-4 report cards located in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW)?

[RCW 28A.320.203](#)

Provisions applicable to all districts: Reading skills — Report cards

B2. How should we define ‘reading at grade level’?

For the purpose of this requirement, “below grade level” means a student is not yet demonstrating independent reading of grade level texts. Teachers of K-4 students should identify students’ reading level according to the research- and evidencebased assessments they employ in their classrooms, incorporating professional understanding of individual students’ learning trajectories. Making data-based decisions from multiple measures is recommended.

B3. What format must we use for the report cards?

There is no mandated format for report cards. Schools may use existing structures (e.g., comments section on report cards) to communicate reading level and progression on acquiring reading level. Some districts have worked with their existing report card systems to create new standard templates that capture the information requested in the legislation.

Regional Literacy Coordinators are also a great source of local information and resources.

<http://www.k12.wa.us/ELA/ESDcontacts.aspx>

¹ Washington’s Comprehensive Literacy Plan has a DRAFT watermark at this time as we revise the document to accurately reflect the standards, assessments, and resources for our English Language Learners. Teams are encouraged to use the CLP recognizing that components around the ELPs, WELPA will be updated later this spring.

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C. All K-4 Students Literacy Data Collection (Sec. 104)

Requirement	Actions	Resources, support and guidance
<p>Schools/districts are required to report to OSPI at the end of the school year:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The number of K-4 students reading below grade level 2) The interventions provided to improve the reading skills of the students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools/districts will submit data through the Education Data System (EDS) portal each year by July 31. • Please refer to the K-4 Literacy Collection webpage for more information: http://www.k12.wa.us/SSEO/K4LiteracyData.aspx 	<p>Bulletin 003-15: 2014–15 Required Actions for the K–4 Literacy Collection</p> <p>Education Data System (EDS)</p>

C1. Where is information regarding the K-4 literacy data collection located in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW)?

[RCW 28A.320.203](#). Provisions applicable to all districts: Reading skills — Report cards

C2. For reporting purposes, how do we identify and report students reading below grade level?

Identification and reporting of K-4 students reading below grade level applies to all K-4 students continuously enrolled during the 2014-15 school year. Continuously enrolled means the student was enrolled from Oct 1 until the test administration with no more than a consecutive 30 day calendar break in that enrollment. This will be the same continuously enrolled flag that determines whether a student’s assessment data is included in a district’s AYP results.

As indicated in B2, “below grade level” means a student is not yet demonstrating independent reading of grade level texts. Teachers of K-4 students should identify students’ reading level according to the research- and evidence-based assessments they employ in their classrooms, incorporating professional understanding of individual students’ learning trajectories. Making data-based decisions from multiple measures is recommended.

C3. For reporting purposes, how should schools/districts describe the interventions?

In the K-4 Literacy data collection application, users will be asked to select all interventions used to help students identified as reading below grade level. For descriptions of the interventions, refer to the [Best Practices and Strategies](#) and the [Promising Practices](#) (also known as the ELA Menu of Best Practices) sections of the *Strengthening Student Educational Outcomes Technical Report on Best Practices and Strategies for English Language Arts*.

C4. How is the K-4 collection data being used?

OSPI is required to submit an aggregated statewide report annually to the education committees of the legislature and the educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee. [RCW 28A.320.203](#)

C5. Why is OSPI collecting student-level data rather than aggregate for the K-4 Literacy collection?

All OSPI data is collected and maintained according to FERPA standards. Additionally, the individual student data will only be used internally for validation and is not communicated externally.

Four factors influenced OSPI’s decision to collect student-level data:

- Identifying students individually allows OSPI to validate school and district enrollment and prevents duplication of records.
- All districts start with a base group that is pre-populated into the K-4 Literacy application. That list is built using the same business rules used to create the continuously enrolled flag used in assessment reporting. This creates consistency across districts in establishing the lists.
- By collecting demographic and program enrollment consistently across districts in CEDARS, OSPI can accurately aggregate data, including by subgroup.

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- There could be additional analyses that would require greater detail, and having student level data allows for more flexibility. For example, if districts report aggregate information about K-4 reading for Special Education students and low-income status separately, there is no way to look at, for example, K-4 Reading for students who are low-income AND Special Education.

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D. All Students Scoring Below Basic (Level 1) on the 3rd Grade ELA Smarter Balanced Assessment (Sec. 105)

Requirement	Actions
<p>Parent/guardian meetings and intensive improvement strategies are required for any students who are reading below grade-level and/or are likely to receive a score of below basic (Level 1) on the 3rd- grade ELA assessment</p> <p>For students to be placed in the 4th grade, the district must provide an intensive improvement strategy that includes a summer program or other options developed to meet the needs of students preparing for 4th grade.</p> <p>Regardless of whether there is a meeting between teacher and parent/guardian, or whether the information is communicated via the principal or his or her designee, the school district must still receive parent/guardian consent regarding appropriate grade placement and the intensive improvement strategy to be implemented.</p> <p><i>If the school district does not receive a response from a parent by the deadline, or a reasonable time thereafter, the principal or his or her designee shall make a decision on the student's grade placement for the following year and the intensive improvement strategies that will be implemented during the following school year.</i></p> <p><i>If the school principal and parent cannot agree on the appropriate grade placement and improvement strategies from the list of available options, the parent's request will be honored.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Prior to the return of the results</u> of the 3rd grade statewide ELA assessment, elementary schools shall require meetings between teachers and parents or guardians of students in 3rd grade who are reading below grade-level or who, based on formative or diagnostic assessment, and other indicators, are likely to score in the below basic level on the 3rd grade statewide ELA assessment. <p>At the meeting, the teacher must inform the parents/guardians of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reading improvement strategies that will be available to students before 4th grade; and <input type="checkbox"/> the district's grade placement policy. 2. In the event that a student scores below basic on the 3rd grade statewide ELA assessment, and no prior meeting has occurred, the principal or his or her designee must notify the student's parents or guardians of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the below basic score; • an explanation regarding the requirements of the law with respect to the meeting, provision of improvement strategies, and grade placement; • the intensive improvement strategy options that are available; • the school district's grade placement policy; • contact information for a school district employee who can respond to questions and provide additional information; and • a reasonable deadline for obtaining the parent's consent regarding the student's intensive improvement strategies that will be implemented and the student's grade placement.

D1. Where is information regarding what is required for students scoring below basic located in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW)?

RCW 28A.655.230 (as revised during the 2015 legislative session through [ESSB 5803](#))

Academic achievement and accountability: Reading skills – Meeting for grade placement and strategies for student improvement – Exemptions

D2. May these meetings take place as part of regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences?

Yes.

D3. May the classroom teacher serve as the principal's designee when communicating with the parent/guardian about planned interventions and grade placement?

Yes.

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D4. Why might a 3rd grade student be reported as reading at grade level, but then receive a score of below basic on the ELA Smarter Balanced summative assessment?

There are a number of factors that might lead to an apparent discrepancy in the results of the assessments. The Smarter Balanced ELA assessment measures more than just reading – it includes reading, writing, listening and research – so in some situations, a student who is strong in reading may struggle in the other areas assessed by the Smarter Balanced ELA assessment. Also, teacher determinations of reading on grade level are likely based on a variety of research- and evidence-based assessments they employ in their classrooms, incorporating professional understanding of individual students' learning trajectories. They are frequently making data-based decisions from multiple measures that may have a more narrow focus (e.g., fluency) than the Smarter Balanced assessments.

With the implementation of the new ELA standards and the administration of the new Smarter Balanced assessments, Washington is in a period of transition in its understanding of being “on grade level.” As OSPI begins collecting the data specified in the law, teachers, leaders, and policymakers will gain useful information that over time will help achieve greater congruence in these two areas.

D5. In what situations should a 3rd grade student scoring below basic on the ELA assessment be retained in 3rd grade?

The law does not require or recommend a specific course of action, and schools should refer to their own district policy on retention.

D6. Does the composite ELA assessment score determine which 3rd graders need parent/guardian meetings and intensive improvement strategies, or should the reading claim be used?

Schools should use the ELA Smarter Balanced composite score – reported as levels 1-4. Per [RCW 28A.655.230](#), "below basic" means a score on the statewide student assessment at a level one in a four-level scoring system. Students who receive a level one composite score need a meeting under this requirement. The reading claim provides only a descriptive label that does not equate directly with a score level as defined in the requirement.

D7. Must the intensive improvement strategy include a summer program if the student is to advance to 4th grade?

For students to be placed in 4th grade, the strategies provided by the school district must include an intensive improvement strategy provided, supported, or contracted by the school district that includes a summer program or other option developed to meet the needs of students to prepare for 4th grade.

The intent of the law is to jointly develop a plan that will appropriately meet the needs of the student to prepare for 4th grade. Summer programs are an option to provide additional, structured time to accelerate student learning. The summer program can be provided by the school district, but the district may also choose to support or contract through other partners in the community (e.g., nonprofit organizations, public libraries, or other area school districts or local agencies offering programming). Where no such options are available, or summer interventions are not in the best interest of the student and his/her family, other intensive improvement strategies must be planned.

D8. Can a district/school use LAP funding to pay for a summer program for the students scoring Level 1? Can the funds be used for transportation to the summer program?

Yes. LAP funds may be used for summer programs and transportation to those programs. The program must be academic in nature and targeting those students most in need of help in reading or reading readiness skills to improve reading literacy. Students scoring below basic on the 3rd grade ELA assessment would be eligible for such programming.

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D9. What happens to the plan if the student changes schools within a district or moves to another school?

Ideally, the plan should follow the student to the new school, provided that it still meets the needs of the student. In addition, the new teacher, in consultation with the parent/guardian, may choose to revise the plan to reflect the activities and resources available at the new school.

E10. Does this requirement apply to students participating in ELL and Special Education programs?

Students participating in a [transitional bilingual instruction program](#) (TBIP) are exempt from the requirement unless the student has participated in the transitional bilingual instruction program for three school years (or a cumulative of 30 months of school) **AND** receives a score of below basic on the 3rd grade statewide student assessment in English language arts. For the purposes of [RCW 28A.655.230](#), participation in TBIP refers to students at a language proficiency level of 1 (beginning/advanced beginning), 2 (intermediate), or 3 (advanced).

Students eligible for [special education](#) who are receiving specially designed instruction in reading consistent with their [Individualized Education Programs](#) (IEPs) are exempt from this requirement. Schools are discouraged from exempting students whose IEPs do not directly address reading (e.g., students reading below grade level should receive support even if their IEPs only address writing or communication/speech).

E11. Why is the exemption for students in the TBIP program only for three years?

[RCW 28A.180.020](#) requires OSPI to review annually the transitional bilingual instruction program and submit a report to the state Legislature on or before January 1 of each year. The [2012-13](#) report stated, "The median time-in-program for students who exited on the annual WELPA has remained fairly consistent over time, at approximately 2.8 years." According to the [2013-14 report](#), "The median time-in-program for English Language Learners upon transition has increased from 2.78 years in 2012-13 to 3.05 years in 2013-14."

E12. For the purpose of this requirement, when does the three-year participation in TBIP begin?

Three years from the date the student's language proficiency level was established for the first time.

E13. Can LAP funds be used to pay for costs associated with holding the parent/guardian meetings required for 3rd graders scoring below basic on the ELA assessment?

Discussions about grade placement and the development of a plan for an intensive improvement strategy are part of the basic education requirements and cannot be paid for with LAP funds. The exception would be for participation of specialists who are already funded through LAP.

Meetings held for students scoring below basic on the Smarter Balanced ELA assessment are intended to establish a plan to provide the services needed for the student and should not be funded through LAP. Funding these meetings through basic education mirrors the same process for identifying students for other intervention programs. The exception would be for the updating of a plan and discussion of ongoing interventions for students that are already served through LAP programs.

E14. Are schools/districts with students who are enrolled on a part-time basis responsible for 3rd grade parent/guardian meetings, intervention plans, and grade placement decisions outline in the law?

Yes. Many part-time public school students will not have a score on the state ELA assessment. Students that do not take the state ELA assessment must still be assessed using district or classroom-based diagnostic assessments or another standardized assessment, and the law's requirement applies if a student's performance is determined to be equivalent to below basic in ELA by the district.

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E. BEGINNING 2015-16: For All Students Scoring [Basic \(Level 2\)](#) OR [Below Basic \(Level 1\)](#) on the 3rd Grade 2014-15 ELA Smarter Balanced Assessment (Sec. 106)

<i>Requirement</i>
For any student scoring Below Basic OR Basic (Level 1 or Level 2) on the 3rd grade ELA assessment the prior year: the district must implement an intensive reading and literacy improvement strategy from the state ELA Menu of Best Practices or an <i>alternative practice or strategy as described below</i> .
For any school where more than 40% of tested students score Below Basic OR Basic (Level 1 or Level 2) on the 3rd grade ELA assessment the prior year: the district must implement an intensive reading and literacy improvement strategy from the state ELA Menu of Best Practices, or an <i>alternative practice or strategy as described below</i> , for all K-4 students in the school(s) during the following year.
Please Note: A school district may use an <i>alternative practice or strategy</i> that is not on the Menu of Best Practices and Strategies for two school years initially. If the district is able to demonstrate improved outcomes for participating students over those two school years at a level commensurate with the best practices and strategies on the state menu, OSPI must approve use of the alternative practice or strategy by the district for one additional school year. Subsequent annual approval by OSPI to use the alternative practice or strategy is dependent on the district continuing to demonstrate an increase in improved outcomes for participating students.

E1. Where is information regarding required services located in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW)?

[RCW 28A.655.235](#)

Academic achievement and accountability: Reading skills – Intensive reading and literacy improvement strategy – Calculation of tested students at or below basic on third grade student assessment – State menu of best practices

E2. Are any students excluded when calculating each school's percentage of tested students receiving a score of [Basic](#) or [Below Basic](#) on the 3rd grade ELA assessment?

1. Students participating in a transitional bilingual instruction program are excluded from the calculation, unless the student has participated in the transitional bilingual instruction program for three school years.
2. Students with disabilities whose individualized education programs specify a different standard to measure reading performance than is required for the statewide assessment are excluded from the calculation.
3. Schools with fewer than ten students in third grade are excluded from the calculation.

Students will be excluded from the calculation as specified above, but they are still eligible to receive services as needed.

E3. Where can I find more information about the state ELA Menu of Best Practices?

A cross-disciplinary panel reflecting a wide range of experience and professional expertise within the K-20 environment developed a menu of best practices and strategies that support districts as they work to impact student ELA academic achievement. The menu is updated each year in July and posted to the [SSEO website](#), or you can download the full report – [Strengthening Student Educational Outcomes: Technical Report on Best Practices and Strategies for English Language Arts](#).

E4. How can I have our Alternative Strategy approved by OSPI?

As noted above, schools/districts may use a practice or strategy that is not on the state ELA Menu of Best Practices for two school years initially. If the district is able to demonstrate improved outcomes for participating students over those two school years commensurate with the best practices and strategies on the state ELA Menu, OSPI will approve use of the

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alternative practice or strategy by the district for one additional school year. Subsequent annual approval by OSPI to use the alternative practice or strategy is dependent on the district continuing to demonstrate increased improved outcomes for participating students. Approval will be granted through the iGrants system as needed. More information for informing OSPI about the use of an alternative practice or strategy and the process for requesting approval will be available on the OSPI SSEO website in November 2015. <http://www.k12.wa.us/sseo>.