

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

## **UPDATE: K–4 Reading Levels**

**November 2016**

**Authorizing legislation: RCW: 28A.320.203**

[\(<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.320.203>\)](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.320.203)

**Kathe Taylor, Ph.D.**

Assistant Superintendent of Learning and Teaching

**Deb Came, Ph.D.**

Assistant Superintendent of Assessment and Student Information

**Prepared by:**

- **Aira Jackson**, English Language Arts Director  
[Aira.Jackson@k12.wa.us](mailto:Aira.Jackson@k12.wa.us) | 360-725-6228
- **Jordyn Green**, Data Analyst  
[Jordyn.Green@k12.wa.us](mailto:Jordyn.Green@k12.wa.us) | 360-725-6317

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary..... 3

Background ..... 4

Update Status ..... 5

Conclusion and Next Steps ..... 8

## List of Tables

**Table 1:** K–4 Students Identified as Reading Below Grade Level by Grade Level in 2015–16 ..... 5

**Table 2:** K–4 Students Identified as Reading Below Grade Level by Student Subgroup in 2015–16 ..... 6

**Table 3:** K–4 Students Identified as Reading Below Grade Level by Student Subgroup & Grade Level in 2015–16 ..... 7

## Executive Summary

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) received data on 86% of elementary students. Over 36% of students in reporting districts are reading below grade level. One third of kindergartners are reading below grade level. There is a discrepancy between schools' assessment of 3–4 reading levels and state test data. This difference will need further review.

The major partners in the work to measure K–4 reading levels are:

- English Language Art Office (ELA) at OSPI.
- Learning Assistance Program (LAP) at OSPI.
- Regional Literacy Coordinators (RLC) who represent the Association of Educational Service Districts (AESD).

Over the past year, these partners have presented at state and regional education conferences. Presentations focus on:

- The importance of using the English Language Arts Menu of Best Practices and Strategies (ELA Menu).
- Using practices that show results for every student.

The appendices detail the methods used to support student literacy development. The data shows the popularity of strategy usage. This year the lead partners will continue working with educators to shift and add to their best practices.

## Background

Washington's 2013 Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5946 ([ESSB 5946](#)) in the 2nd Special Legislative Session in June 2013. The overall bill set forth a vision for improving educational support systems for every student in grades K–12.

School districts, schools, and educators were informed of the legislative requirements through professional development opportunities at regional educational service districts (ESDs), state conferences, personal phone calls, emails to district offices, and formal correspondence from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction including the following:

- [B014-16, April 2016](#)
- [B068-15, December 2015](#)
- [B003-15, February 2015](#)
- [B065-14, December 2014](#)
- [B040-13, August 2013](#)

### **2013 ESSB 5946—Strengthening Student Educational Outcomes**

Part I of [ESSB 5946](#)—Learning to Read, Reading to Learn—was implemented during the 2014–15 school year across the state through the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Association of Educational Service Districts (AESD). The 2013 law focuses on the importance of collaborative partnerships essential to supporting students: using research and evidence-based programs for all students, especially in grades K–4, and providing statewide models to support school districts in implementing a multi-tiered system of support. The law requires school districts to be responsible for providing a comprehensive system of instruction and services in reading and early literacy ([RCW 28A.320.202](#)) that must include annual use of screening assessments to identify at-risk readers in grades K–4. It highlights the importance of research-based family involvement and engagement strategies.

In addition to supporting students, Part 1 also identifies how essential professional learning ([RCW 28A.415.400](#)) is for educators to enhance and expand their instructional strategies in early literacy. During March of 2016, the Washington State Legislature expanded on this belief and passed [House Bill 1345](#) providing Washington with a shared, statewide definition of professional learning in order to advance student outcomes.

### **Identification of Students Reading Below Grade Level**

For the purpose of this requirement, [RCW 28A.320.203](#), each school shall report to the school district the number of students in K–4 who are reading below grade level and the intensive reading strategies and/or interventions that are being provided to improve the reading skills of the students, with the information disaggregated by subgroups of students. Districts and schools were required to identify students' reading levels according to the evidence-based state and district assessments that were employed in their

classrooms and schools. Districts and schools were encouraged to make data-based decisions from multiple measures and to incorporate professional understanding of individual students' learning trajectories.

### Reporting of Students Reading Below Grade Level

The K–4 Literacy Report, accessible through the Education Data System (EDS) portal, was developed to collect the required data. Users identified students reading below grade level from a comprehensive list of all K–4 students who were continuously enrolled in the same school during the 2015–16 school year. Students who were identified as continuously enrolled have been enrolled from October 1, 2015, through the end of the school year in June 2016, with no more than a 30-day consecutive calendar break in enrollment.

By September 30, 2016, Washington school districts were expected to report to OSPI ([RCW 28A.320.203](#)):

- 1) The number of students in grades K–4 who are reading below grade level.
- 2) The intensive reading strategies and/or interventions being provided to improve the reading skills of these students.

At the conclusion of the 2015–16 school year and in compliance with [RCW 28A.320.203](#), 1,033 schools in 230 of the 295 Washington school districts (78% of Washington's districts) reported the reading levels of their K–4 students (See Table 1, Table 2, Table 3).

## Update Status

**Table 1: 2015–16 K–4 Students Identified as Reading Below Grade Level by Grade Band**

Grade Band	Total K–4 State Enrollment	K–4 Enrollment for Reported Districts	# of Students Identified as Reading Below Grade Level	% of Students Identified as Reading Below Grade Level	% Not Meeting Standard on SBA ELA (Level 3 or 4)
Full-Day K	69,965	56,286	18,423	32.7	--
Half-Day K	9,742	13,448	4,202	31.2	--
1st	83,834	72,490	25,971	35.8	--
2nd	85,487	73,740	26,056	35.3	--
3rd	85,141	73,328	28,620	39.0	45.7
4th	82,546	71,065	28,240	39.7	43.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>416,715</b>	<b>360,357</b>	<b>131,512</b>	<b>36.5</b>	<b>--</b>

Sources: CEDARS and 2015–16 K–4 Literacy Report in EDS

**Table 2: K–4 Students Identified as Reading Below Grade Level by Student Subgroup**

	<b># of Students Identified as Reading Below Grade Level</b>	<b>K–4 Enrollment for Reported Districts</b>	<b>% of Students Identified as Reading Below Grade Level</b>
<b>All Students</b>	131,512	360,357	36.5
<b>Male</b>	70,497	185,158	38.1
<b>Female</b>	61,015	175,199	34.8
<b>American Indian/Alaska Native</b>	2,198	4,786	45.9
<b>Asian</b>	6,296	23,754	26.5
<b>Black/African American</b>	4,940	12,622	39.1
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	42,246	89,051	47.4
<b>White</b>	64,525	196,615	32.8
<b>Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander</b>	1,482	3,846	38.5
<b>2 or more</b>	9,821	29,683	33.1
<b>Special Education</b>	26,370	48,560	54.3
<b>Limited English</b>	33,400	65,859	50.7
<b>Low Income</b>	82,354	188,503	43.7
<b>LAP</b>	55,986	94,351	59.3
<b>LAP K–4 Focus<sup>A</sup></b>	51,985	91,461	56.8
<b>Title I</b>	31,505	57,776	54.5
<b>Title VII</b>	700	1,615	43.3
<b>Homeless</b>	4,102	12,062	34.0
<b>Migrant</b>	2,980	4,496	66.3
<b>504 Plan</b>	2,738	7,905	34.6

<sup>A</sup> LAP K–4 Focus includes students receiving services in LAP English Language Arts, LAP Readiness, or LAP Behavior.  
Sources: CEDARS and 2015–16 K–4 Literacy Report in EDS

**Table 3: K–4 Students Identified as Reading Below Grade Level by Student Subgroup and Grade Band**

Student Subgroup	Full					
	Day K	Half Day K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
<b>Statewide<sup>A</sup></b>	56,286	13,448	72,490	73,740	73,328	71,065
<b>Below Grade Level</b>	18,423	4,202	25,971	26,056	28,620	28,240
<b>Male</b>	9,910	2,259	13,827	13,708	15,557	15,236
<b>Female</b>	8,513	1,943	12,144	12,348	13,063	13,004
<b>American Indian/ Alaska Native</b>	286	61	437	464	458	492
<b>Asian</b>	972	159	1,246	1,234	1,359	1,326
<b>Black/African American</b>	781	72	924	940	1,129	1,094
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	6,138	825	8,329	8,494	9,369	9,091
<b>White</b>	8,642	2,773	12,929	12,689	13,798	13,694
<b>Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander</b>	214	28	274	293	331	342
<b>2 or more</b>	1,390	284	1,831	1,940	2,175	2,201
<b>Special Education</b>	3,197	639	4,748	5,387	6,079	6,320
<b>Limited English</b>	5,194	781	6,988	6,946	7,078	6,413
<b>Low Income</b>	11,426	1,799	16,351	16,630	18,289	17,859
<b>LAP</b>	7,984	1,045	9,857	12,476	13,457	11,167
<b>LAP K–4 Focus<sup>B</sup></b>	7,308	1,026	9,030	11,638	12,944	10,039
<b>Title I</b>	3,886	545	6,355	6,577	7,183	6,959
<b>Title VII</b>	122	--	--	146	158	163
<b>Homeless</b>	584	85	795	835	920	883
<b>Migrant</b>	350	66	601	566	680	717
<b>504 Plan</b>	148	34	377	541	795	843

<sup>A</sup>. Statewide count only includes districts that reported; n = 230.

<sup>B</sup>. LAP K–4 Focus includes students receiving services in LAP English Language Arts, LAP Readiness, or LAP Behavior.

Sources: CEDARS and 2015–16 K–4 Literacy Report in EDS

<sup>C</sup>. Cells left blank had an n<10

## Conclusion and Next Steps

The data reported by schools is a peek at student literacy development in Washington. The results will affect the literacy plans of the state and districts.

For the 2016–17 school year, OSPI and AESD will support districts by doing the following:

- Use embedded learning geared towards adult learners during professional learning events.
- Continue to focus on and distribute the ELA Menu.
- Help school and district leaders keep current with best practices in teaching.
- Ensure state expectations are on par with district and federal expectations.
- Assist in the review of curriculum to make sure materials align with standards.
- Continue to present on proven practices that show results for every student.



*OSPI provides equal access to all programs and services without discrimination based on sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. Questions and complaints of alleged discrimination should be directed to the Equity and Civil Rights Director at 360-725-6162 or P.O. Box 47200 Olympia, WA 98504-7200.*

*Download this material in PDF at <http://k12.wa.us/LegisGov/Reports.aspx>. This material is available in alternative format upon request. Contact the Resource Center at 888-595-3276, TTY 360-664-3631. Please refer to this document number for quicker service: 16-0070.*



**Randy I. Dorn** • State Superintendent  
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Old Capitol Building • P.O. Box 47200  
Olympia, WA 98504-7200