



COLORADO DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

# Improving Early Literacy: Annual Report on the Implementation of the Colorado READ Act

Submitted to:

**State Board of Education  
Governor of Colorado  
President of the Senate  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
House of Representatives Education Committee  
Senate Education Committee**

By:

**Pati Montgomery; Executive Director of the Office of Literacy  
Dian Prestwich, PhD; Assistant Director of the Office of Literacy**

Data analyzed by:

**Angela Roccograndi, Education Northwest**

April 2014

Teaching and Learning Unit/Office of Literacy  
201 E. Colfax Ave., Denver, CO 80203  
303-866-6189  
Montgomery\_p@cde.state.co.us

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<hr/>	
Overview of the Colorado READ Act	
Report Purpose	
<b>Implementation Highlights</b>	<b>3</b>
<hr/>	
Adoption of Rules to Support Quality Implementation	
Approval of Assessments, Instructional Programming, and Professional Development	
Implementation of the Early Literacy Grant Program	
Early Literacy Assessment Tool Project Distribution of	
Per-Pupil Intervention Funds Dissemination of Resources	
for Colorado School Districts Creation of the	
Commissioner’s Work Group	
<b>Summary of District Reporting on Students with a Significant Reading Deficiency</b>	<b>10</b>
<hr/>	
Determination of a Significant Reading Deficiency	
Summary of First Data Reporting	
Summary of Findings	
Data Trends for Demographic Groups	
Predictive Nature of READ Interim Assessments	
Limitations of the Data	
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>17</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>19</b>
<hr/>	
Appendix A: Early Literacy Grant (ELG) Districts, Schools, and Awards for 2013—2014	
Appendix B: Early Literacy Assessment Tool (ELAT) Participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs) 2013—2014	
Appendix C: READ Act Per-Pupil Intervention Funds	
Appendix D: Summary of READ Act Data Collected Spring 2013	

---

## Introduction

---

Achieving reading competency by the end of third grade is a critical milestone for every student and predicts ongoing educational success. If a student enters fourth grade without having achieved reading competency, he or she is significantly more likely to fall behind in all subject areas affecting their academic success going forward. Early literacy development is both a critical milestone in a child's path to success and one of Colorado's top education priorities.

### Overview of the Colorado READ Act

The Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (READ Act), passed by the Colorado Legislature in 2012, focuses on early literacy development for all students and especially for students at risk of not achieving third grade reading proficiency. The READ Act focuses on kindergarten through third grade (K-3) literacy development, literacy assessment, and individual intervention plans for students identified as significantly below grade level in reading.

The READ Act differs from the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA), a previous early literacy law, by focusing on students identified as reading significantly below grade level, describing requirements for parent communication, and providing funding to support intervention. The law also holds districts and schools accountable for student progress in the District/School Performance Frameworks and expects them to address requirements in Unified Improvement Plans (UIPs). Other components include support for school districts through a competitive Early Literacy Grant, regional literacy support, and a resource bank of assessments, instructional programming, and professional development providers.

“Two-thirds of U.S. fourth graders are not proficient readers, according to national assessment data. This disturbing statistic is made even worse by the fact that more than four out of every five low-income students miss this critical milestone” (The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading).

### Report Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of accomplishments since the law was passed in May 2012. The report also provides a summary and analysis of data collected through the spring 2013 READ Act data collection. Limitations of the data are also described.

## Implementation Highlights

---

### Adoption of Rules to Support Quality Implementation

The Colorado Department of Education engaged in a significant community outreach process in the summer and fall of 2012 to gather input from stakeholders across the state on the law and to inform the development of draft rules. After a series of public hearings, the State Board of Education voted to approve the Rules for the Administration of the Colorado READ Act on March 12, 2013. The rules articulate processes for implementing the READ Act for the state and local education providers. For the state, the rules define the processes for approving assessments, identifying programs for inclusion on the state instructional programming and professional development advisory lists, and appeals processes for publishers and providers. For districts, the rules support implementation of the READ Act by defining attributes of effective instruction and intervention. Furthermore, the

rules articulate the process for identifying a student who may have a significant reading deficiency and requirements to support further diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring for identified students.

### Approval of Assessments, Instructional Programming, and Professional Development

A key component of effective reading instruction is being able to accurately identify student needs through quality assessments and then provide strong instruction supported by quality instructional programming and professional development. The READ Act authorizes the Department of Education to create a resource bank that identifies quality assessments, instructional programs, and professional development to aid districts in implementation.

“Once reading instruction begins, the best predictor of future reading growth is current reading achievement, and the most critical indicators of good progress in learning to read during the early elementary period are measures of word reading skill. Children who end up as poor readers at the end of elementary school are almost invariably those who fail to make normal progress in these skills during the first years of elementary school” (*Catch Them Before They Fall* by Joseph K. Torgesen)

**Assessments.** The effective use of high quality assessments plays a critical role in building proficient readers. As outlined in the READ Act, approved interim assessments are used in kindergarten through third grade to gauge students’ progress over time in attaining reading proficiency. The interim assessments help pinpoint those students who are performing significantly below expectations and who may have a significant reading deficiency. For students identified as having a significant reading deficiency, teachers then use an approved diagnostic assessment to determine each student’s specific reading skill deficiencies. This information enables teachers to target the right areas of need for intervention for students struggling to read. Districts may also choose to use a summative assessment in grades K-2, in addition to the required state summative assessment in grade 3. Unlike the state summative assessment in grade 3, the READ Act summative assessments for grades K-2 are optional.

After an extensive review process including stakeholders from the field, in March 2013, the State Board voted to approve a list of 13 diagnostic assessments for kindergarten through third grade, in both English and Spanish. At the same time, the State Board approved three K-2 summative assessments.

For the 2013–2014 school year, the previously approved interim assessments for CBLA were used; Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), the Developmental Reading Assessment Second Edition (DRA2), and the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS). In the fall of 2013, the department released a Request for Information (RFI) to solicit interim assessment tools for inclusion on the State Board approved list. Similar to the process for reviewing and adopting diagnostic and summative assessments, the department engaged practitioners from the field with literacy and assessment expertise to review English and Spanish reading assessments. In December 2013, the department recommended a list of seven English and three Spanish interim reading assessments for the board’s consideration. On February 12, 2014, the State Board voted unanimously to adopt the recommended list of interim assessments.

**Instructional Programs and Professional Development.** Pursuant to the READ Act, the department regularly reviews instructional programming and professional development for inclusion on an advisory list posted on CDE’s website. In the spring of 2013, the department conducted a review process including stakeholders from the field, similar to the process for reviewing assessments. The review resulted in the selection of 14 professional development providers, 23 intervention programs, eight comprehensive core reading programs, five programs

which may serve as intervention and/or comprehensive reading programs, eight programs to supplement comprehensive core reading programs, and one tutoring program.

Approved lists of interim, diagnostic, and summative assessments as well as the advisory lists of instructional programs and professional development providers may be found on the READ Act Resource Bank and related webpages (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/index.asp>). The online resource bank is updated regularly.

### Implementation of the Early Literacy Grant Program

The READ Act initiated an Early Literacy Grant program designed to enable schools to better meet the literacy needs of their students. Implementing the Early Literacy Grant program involved adoption of rules to guide the program and initiating the first round of grants. On August 8, 2012, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) presented to the State Board proposed draft rules for the administration of the Early Literacy Grant, one component of the READ Act. After receiving written public comments and holding a rulemaking hearing on October 17, 2012, the State Board voted unanimously to adopt the Early Literacy Grant rules.

The Early Literacy Grant is designed to distribute funds to local education providers, including school districts, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), and district charter schools or Institute Charter Schools, to ensure the essential components of reading instruction are embedded into all elements of the primary, K-3 teaching structures in all participating schools, including universal and targeted and intensive instructional interventions, to assist all students in achieving reading competency. The Early Literacy Grant is funded every three years. The current cycle is from 2013–2016, with the first year of implementation taking place during the 2013–2014 school year.

In the spring of 2013, a Request for Proposal (RFP) was released by the department to solicit applications for the Early Literacy Grant. Twenty-seven applications were received representing 28 school districts and 98 schools. One BOCES applied on behalf of 8 school districts. A total of 16 grant awards were made representing 30 schools in 15 school districts in 7 regions of the state. Grant awards total \$4 million, as required by statute. A list of participating districts, schools, and awards is provided in Appendix A.

Participating schools are implementing instructional programming selected from CDE's Advisory List. Schools selected a core program for universal instruction in addition to one or more intervention programs to provide targeted and intensive interventions to students determined to be reading below grade level. Participating schools also use Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next (DIBELS Next) or the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) to screen students at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to determine which students may need additional literacy support. DIBELS Next or PALS is also used to progress monitor students at least every two weeks to ensure students are making adequate progress for reaching reading proficiency. In addition to ongoing monitoring from CDE, each school receives on-site support from an early literacy expert 1-3 days a month through an approved professional development provider from the Advisory List of Professional Development.

“We have been provided invaluable support for our teachers and principals in implementing the READ Act and understanding the important shifts needed from CBLA to support students with a significant reading deficiency”  
(Executive Director of Student Achievement, Durango).

**Spotlight on an Early Literacy Grant Awardee.** Mesa County Valley School District 51 is one district participating in the Early Literacy Grant. The district has one participating elementary school, Rocky Mountain

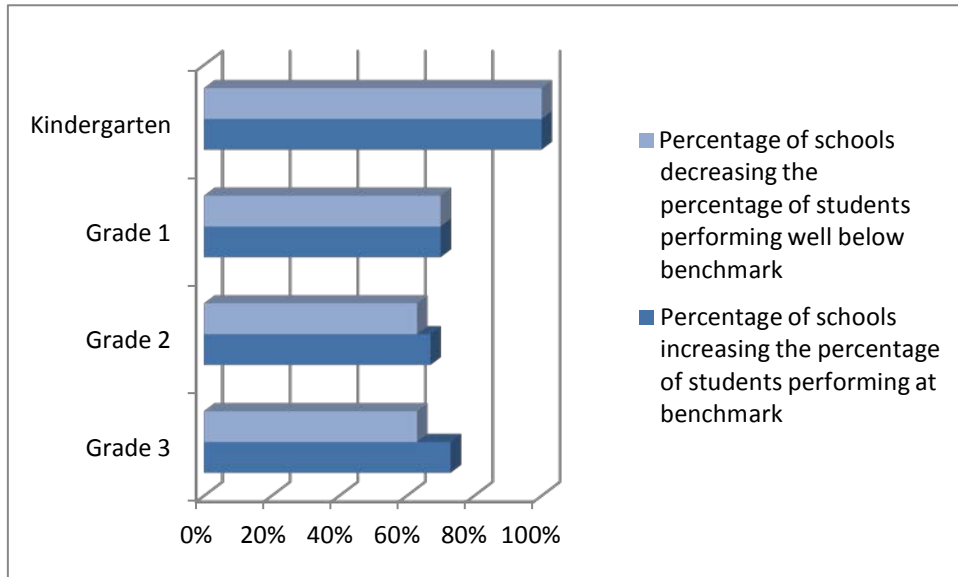
Elementary School. Teachers are using a comprehensive core reading curriculum to teach all students in grades K-3. The program is scientifically-based and follows an instructional design that includes daily systematic and

“It is with great pleasure that I provide feedback to you with regard to the staff development my staff and I received from our regional technical assistant. She was phenomenal and a wealth of information with regard to improving our delivery of services to our ELD and literacy students K-12. We are in the process of re-evaluating our service model and the information that she has given us provided much food for thought. We are anxious to get her back as we formalize our process in the next couple of months” (Director of Support Services, Pinnacle Charter School).

explicit instruction in the five components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension) and oral language development. Students who need additional support, such as English Language Learners, receive supplemental instruction through instructional programs designed to intensify instruction. Teachers use data from DIBELS Next to form instructional groups to meet the specific needs of every student in their classrooms. When additional data is needed, teachers use a diagnostic assessment to gather specific information about a student’s reading skills. Teachers meet regularly to review data and make instructional adjustments when necessary. Professional development funds from the grant have been used to provide on-site support through an approved provider. The provider observes regularly in classrooms, models lessons, and supports instruction through co-teaching opportunities. Additionally, the provider meets with the principal and teachers during each monthly visit to review current data and facilitate problem solving conversations. This story is just one example of how the Early Literacy Grant is providing professional development and supporting the implementation of effective assessment practices and scientifically-based reading instruction in 30 schools across the state.

**Early Results from Grant Participants.** Mid-year DIBELS Next and PALS data reflective of the first five months of implementing the Early Literacy Grant shows all 30 schools have increased the percentage of kindergarten students performing at benchmark and decreased the percentage of kindergarten students performing significantly below benchmark. Twenty-one schools (70%) have increased the percentage of first grade students performing at benchmark and decreased the percentage of first grade students performing significantly below benchmark. Twenty schools (67%) have increased the percentage of second grade students performing at benchmark, and 19 schools (63%) have decreased the percentage of second grade students performing significantly below benchmark. Twenty-two schools (73%) have increased the percentage of third grade students performing at benchmark, and 19 schools (63%) have decreased the percentage of third grade students performing significantly below benchmark. Figure 1 shows the percentage of schools increasing the percentage of students performing at benchmark and decreasing the percentage of students performing well below benchmark at mid-year by grade level.

Figure 1: Percentage of Schools Increasing the Percentage of Students at Benchmark and Decreasing the Percentage of Students Well Below Benchmark by Grade Level



The data for the 30 Early Literacy Grant schools underscores the importance of early screening and diagnosis of reading difficulties. As national research suggests, intervention and remediation of reading problems becomes more difficult as children progress through the grade levels. As these 30 schools continue implementing the grant and teachers are trained in the science of how children learn to read, it will be expected that the percentage of students requiring intervention at the beginning of the school year will decrease and the number of students identified as having a significant reading deficiency will dwindle.

### Early Literacy Assessment Tool Project

The 2012 School Finance Act authorized CDE to select an assessment vendor to supply an early literacy assessment tool that teachers may use to obtain real-time assessment of the reading skill levels of students in kindergarten through third grade. The intent was to support state purchase of reading assessment software that provides immediate results, stores and analyzes the results, and recommends activities based on students’ needs for continued literacy development. Through a competitive bidding process, the contract was awarded to Amplify for its DIBELS Next system and Burst diagnostic reading assessments in January, 2013.

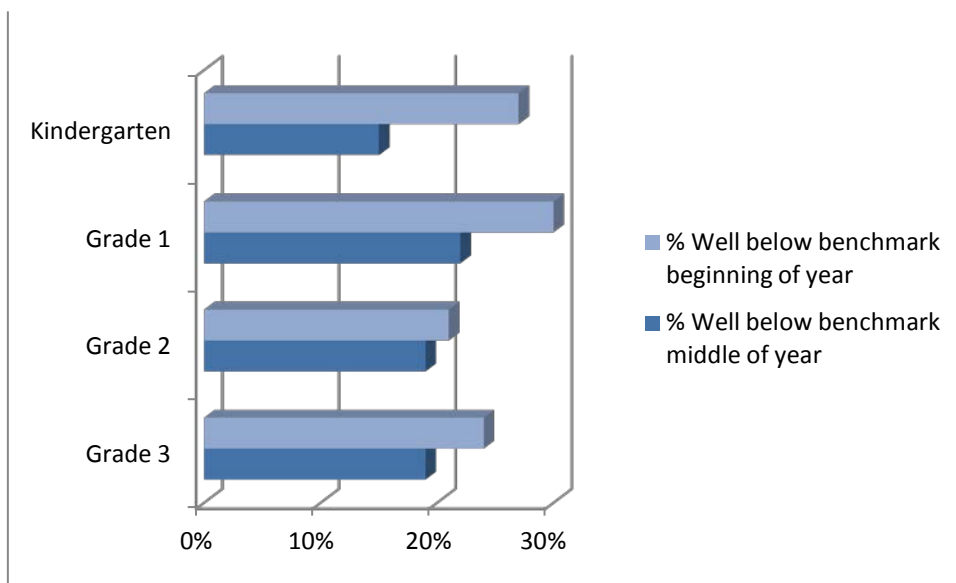
By participating in the Early Literacy Assessment Tool (ELAT) project, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are supplied with the online assessment of DIBELS Next and the Burst diagnostic reading assessments, both State Board approved assessments for the READ Act. Participating LEAs receive assessment kits and licenses to use the online assessments as well as ongoing professional development opportunities associated with using the online tool effectively. LEAs are responsible for providing the hardware. There are 121 districts and 415 schools participating in

“Screening all students’ reading skills at the beginning of the school year, especially in the early grades, can be a valid and efficient way to identify students who are at risk for poor reading outcomes” (Institute of Education Sciences).

the ELAT project during the 2013–2014 school year, representing approximately 34% of all kindergarten through third grade students in the state. A list of participating LEAs and number of students tested by district is provided in Appendix B. The 2013–2014 school year is the first year of implementation.

Data for the first year of implementation of the ELAT project demonstrates that 23,134 students were performing well below benchmark at the beginning of the year, meaning these students were at risk for reading difficulties. At the middle of the year, 16,517 students were performing at well below benchmark, indicating a reduction of students at the highest risk level of 29%. Figure 2 illustrates the reduction of students performing well below benchmark from the beginning to middle of the year by grade level.

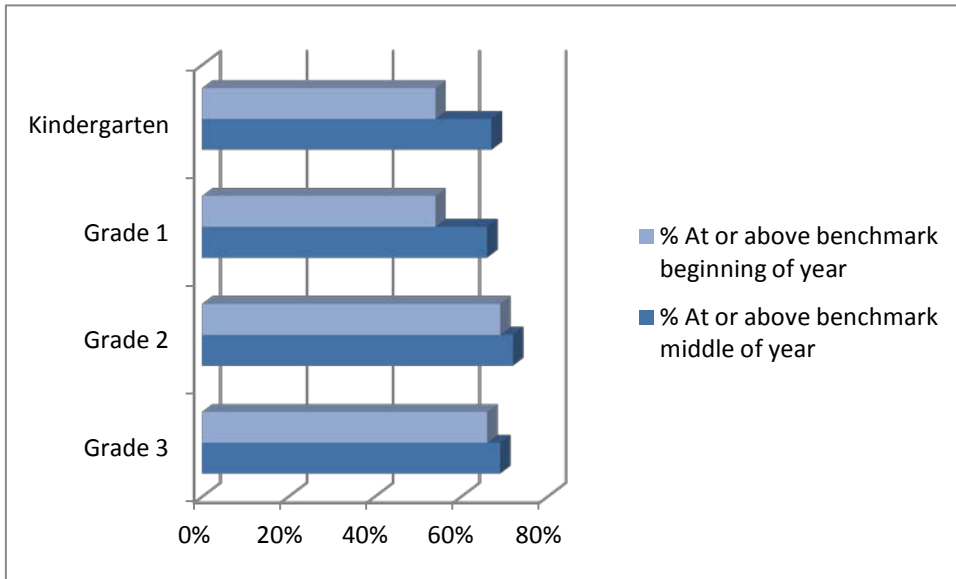
Figure 2: ELAT Percentage of Students Well Below Benchmark Beginning to Middle of Year, 2013-14



In addition, at the beginning of the year, there were 53,860 students performing at or above benchmark, meaning these students were on track for reaching future benchmark goals and reaching grade level proficiency. At the middle of the year, 61,579 students were performing at or above benchmark, indicating an increase of 14% of students on track to meet grade level proficiency. Figure 3 shows the increases in percentages of students performing at or above benchmark by grade level from the beginning to middle of the year.



Figure 3: ELAT Percentage of Students At or Above Benchmark Beginning to Middle of Year, 2013-14



### Distribution of Per-Pupil Intervention Funds

The READ Act provides per-pupil intervention funds to assist districts with interventions for students identified with a significant reading deficiency. The department allocates the per-pupil intervention funds to LEAs by dividing the amount of moneys available by the total number of students enrolled in kindergarten through third grades in public schools identified as having a significant reading deficiency. LEAs may use the per-pupil intervention funds to provide full-day kindergarten, operate a summer school literacy program, purchase tutoring services, and/or provide other targeted, scientifically-based or evidence-based intervention services. Each LEA must ensure that at least one of the four types of interventions is available to each student who is identified as having a significant reading deficiency. In the spring of 2013, districts reported 42,479 students as having a significant reading deficiency. Slightly more than \$15.4 million (approximately \$363 per-pupil) was distributed to 174 reporting LEAs. A list of districts and distribution amounts is included in Appendix C.

### Dissemination of Resources for Colorado School Districts

In order to support effective implementation of the READ Act in its first year, the Office of Literacy created a number of resources that are easily accessible through the READ Act website managed by the Colorado Department of Education (see <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/ReadAct/index.asp>). For example, guidance documents are provided to answer frequently asked questions, and fact sheets provide timelines for implementing key components of the law. Similarly, a series of recorded webinars provides information for school level personnel related to the process for identifying students with a significant reading deficiency, how to write a READ plan to include the required components, and how to implement an effective cycle of instruction through multi-tiered systems of support. Recordings may be accessed through the department website or iTunes U on handheld devices. All online resources are updated regularly.

In addition to web-based resources, the Office of Literacy employs 8 FTE regional support staff who service specific regions across the state and are available to provide on-site technical assistance in schools and districts. For example, teachers in Federal Heights participated in training on improving the delivery of services for English Language Development (ELD) students, in an effort to support teachers school-wide in evaluating their service model. Technical assistants provide support upon request, and support is tailored to meet the particular needs of the requesting school or district. Furthermore, the Office of Literacy reviews reading achievement data by school in order to identify schools where additional support may be needed.

Additional examples of support that have been provided are classroom observations and feedback; data analysis meetings; interim assessment trainings; direction for writing READ plan objectives to support English Language Learners; modeling exemplary instructional techniques in all tiers of instruction; training on the READ Act minimum skill competencies and alignment to school and/or district curriculum; and conducting coaching conversations at multiple levels of leadership including with superintendents, district literacy leaders, and building leaders. To date, regional technical assistants have provided on-site support in over 30 school districts. This on-site support is in addition to the regular support the office provides through regional presentations and trainings.

“I wanted to thank you for all the assistance our regional technical assistant has given to Calhan Elementary School. She has spent so many hours with teachers, role modeling and discussing reading instruction. She has also met with the entire elementary staff to provide training on 100% engagement and data analysis. I’m observing many exciting changes in how teachers are planning and conducting instruction. Teachers are extremely motivated to implement suggestions and are thrilled with the successes they are witnessing” (Principal, Calhan Elementary School).

### Creation of the Commissioner’s Literacy Work Group

In an effort to create a shared vision for literacy in Colorado and to advise the Colorado Department of Education on coordinated literacy supports to students throughout their educational continuum, the Commissioner of Education established a Literacy Work Group. The Work Group serves in an advisory capacity to the Commissioner of Education and is charged with developing a shared vision for literacy in Colorado, building on the Colorado Blueprint and the department’s Strategic Literacy Plan. The Work Group is also charged with identifying and sharing promising local practices in improving literacy achievement for all students; supporting the implementation of the state’s literacy initiatives, including the READ Act, school readiness, and secondary literacy efforts; and advising the Commissioner on literacy related matters. The Work Group meets quarterly.

## Summary of District Reporting on Students with a Significant Reading Deficiency

### Determination of a Significant Reading Deficiency

“The success of early intervening service models such as Response to Intervention hinge on an accurate determination of which students are at risk for reading disabilities. Correct identification of students at risk for reading disability in preschool through first grade can trigger early reading intervention prior to the onset of significant problems, which in turn can place students on the path of adequate reading development” (Institute of Education Sciences, 2014).

The READ Act focuses on effective practices, including assessment and instruction, for ensuring all students can demonstrate a level of competency in reading skills necessary to support them in achieving the academic standards and expectations. Pursuant to the READ Act, teachers assess the literacy development of students in kindergarten through third grade in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, including oral skills, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. If a student is determined to have a significant reading deficiency, the teacher then administers one or more of the state board approved diagnostic assessments to determine the student’s specific reading skill deficiencies and to inform appropriate intervention for the student.

In kindergarten through third grade, the determination that a child has a significant reading deficiency is based on a child scoring at least twice at or below the cut-off score category established by the interim assessment within a school year. All children must be tested within 30 days of enrollment, and any child scoring at or below the cut-off score is retested within another 30 days using a progress monitoring probe from the same State Board approved interim assessment.

Determination of a significant reading deficiency indicates a child is performing significantly below grade level in reading. For example, in order for a kindergarten student to be identified with a deficiency at the beginning of the school year, the student would be able to identify fewer than eight letter names and fewer than 4 first sounds in words. Similarly, a third grade student identified at the beginning of the year would read fewer than 54 words in a minute and read with an accuracy rate of less than 88% in comparison to a student performing at expected rates with an accuracy of 95% and reading rate of 140 words per minute.

Information gained from the interim and diagnostic assessments is then used to create a READ plan in collaboration with the parent, outlining specific instructional interventions that will take place in order to accelerate the progress of the student to grade level. Upon determination of a significant reading deficiency, teachers must also collect a body of evidence documented through the READ plan to demonstrate that the child is making progress toward meeting the minimum competency skill levels outlined in the State Board rules. The minimum skill levels are based on the Colorado Academic Standards and are significantly correlated to later literacy achievement. A body of evidence demonstrating grade level proficiency is required for a student to be removed from a READ plan.

### Summary of First Data Reporting

The first reporting of students with a significant reading deficiency occurred in the spring of 2013. That spring, teachers administered the first READ Act-required tests. The vast majority of kindergarten through third grade students was tested (96%). The half-day kindergarten population had the smallest proportion of tested students (89%). One in seven students who were not tested were exempted (representing 1% of the total K–3 enrollment). Three categories of students are designated as allowable exemptions as defined in reporting guidelines:

- English Language Learners—students designated non-English proficient and in a school in the United States less than one year (66% of exemptions);
- Part-time students who did not receive reading instruction during their time at school (25% of exemptions); and
- Students who qualify for special education services and have a severe disability that prevents testing, even with an accommodation (9% of exemptions).

A small percentage of READ Act-tested students were provided accommodations (1%), with equal proportions of students across all grade levels represented.

Schools utilized one of four state-approved reading assessments:

- Developmental Reading Assessment® 2nd Edition (DRA2)
- Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)
- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills 6th Edition (DIBELS 6)
- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next (DIBELS Next)

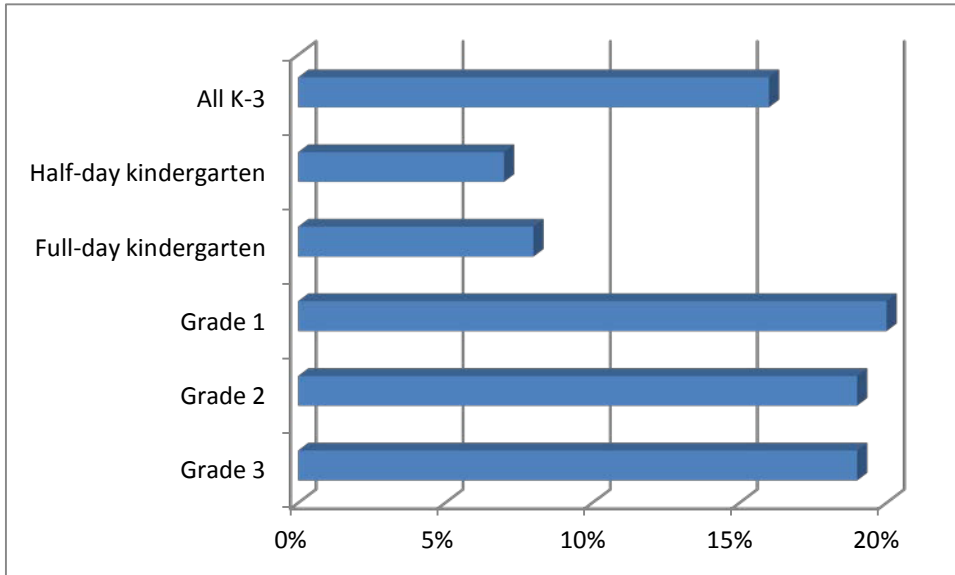
Usually schools within a district chose the same test; in some districts multiple tests were used. Overall, most districts administered DIBELS Next (66%), followed by DIBELS 6 (29%), DRA2 (18%), and PALS (2%). Based on enrollment; however, more students were assessed with the DRA2 than any other assessment (46%), followed by DIBELS Next (36%), DIBELS 6 (9%), and PALS (8%). Table 1 includes the number and percentage of students tested with each assessment overall and by grade level.

Table 1: Percentage of K-3 Students Tested by READ Act Test and Grade Level

	DRA2		DIBELS Next		DIBELS 6 <sup>th</sup>		PALS	
All Students	46%	119,466	36%	92,643	9%	24,184	8%	21,716
Half-Day Kindergarten	56%	10,398	25%	4,651	8%	1,534	10%	1,913
Full-Day Kindergarten	41%	18,697	42%	19,044	10%	4,760	7%	3,347
Grade 1	47%	30,569	36%	23,322	9%	6,143	9%	5,649
Grade 2	47%	30,083	36%	23,127	9%	5,814	9%	5,496
Grade 3	47%	29,719	36%	22,499	9%	5,933	8%	5,311

**Prevalence of Significant Reading Deficiencies.** Of all tested students, 16% (42,479) were identified with a significant reading deficiency. Kindergarten students were less likely to be identified than students in grades 1–3. Less than 10% (4,774) of kindergarten students were identified (7% attending half-day kindergarten and 8% attending full-day kindergarten). One-fifth of first, second, and third grade students were identified as having a SRD, including 20% (13,145) of first grade, 19% (12,310) of second grade, and 19% (12,250) of third grade students. Figure 4 shows the percentage of students identified as having a significant reading deficiency by grade level.

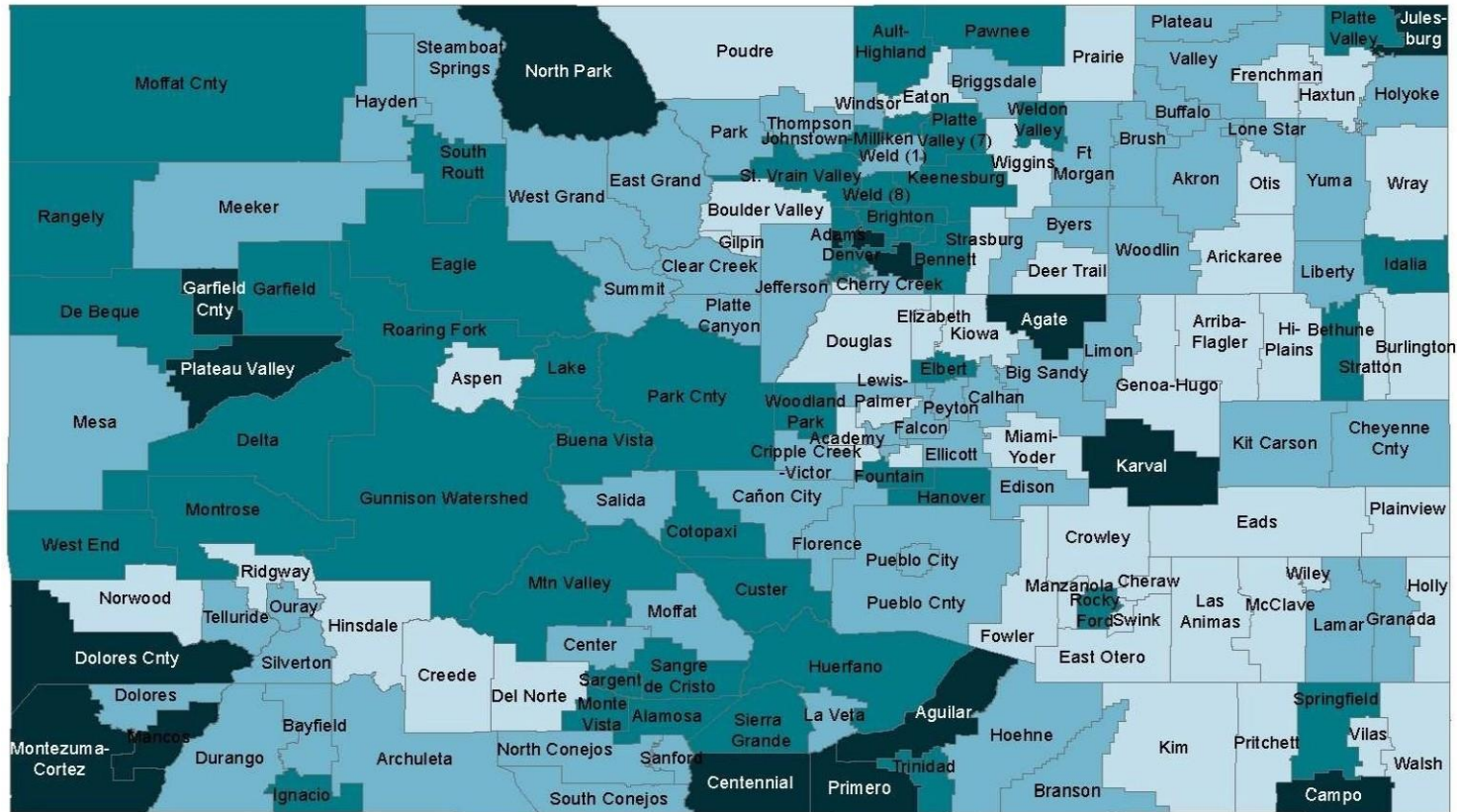
Figure 4: Percentage of Students Identified as Having a Significant Reading Deficiency by Grade Level



A close look at the percentage of students identified with a significant reading deficiency reveals fewer students were identified in kindergarten. One possible explanation is that the gap in achievement of literacy skills (phonemic awareness and early decoding) is not yet developed, but as students progress through the grade levels, expectations increase. In the later elementary grades, students are expected to be able to read text accurately and fluently while demonstrating reading comprehension. Text difficulty also increases. This data underscores the importance of early identification and prevention of reading difficulties through a systematic approach to teaching reading.

Figure 5 shows the percentage of students with a significant reading deficiency by district and includes all districts in the state. The darker the shading, the higher the prevalence of students identified with a significant reading deficiency.

Figure 5: Prevalence of Students Identified as Having a Significant Reading Deficiency by District

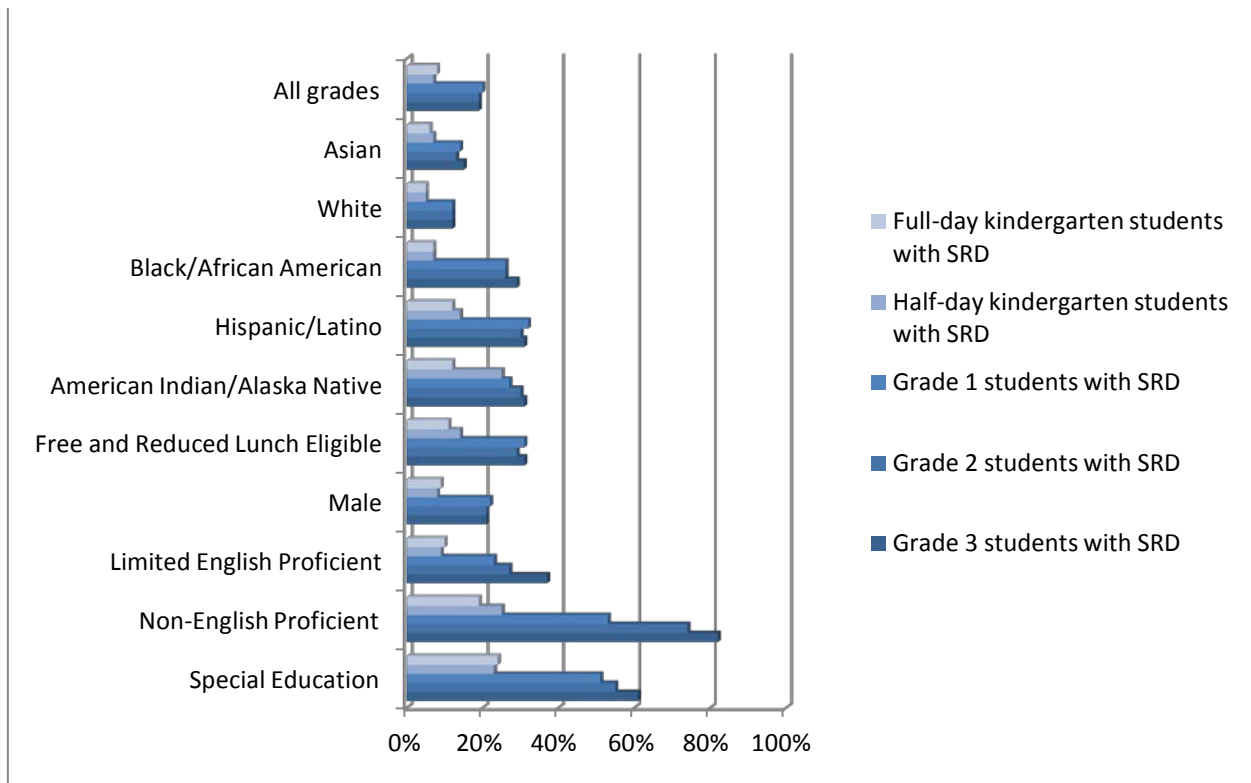


Percentage of Students with Significant Reading Deficiency

- 0%-10%
- 11% - 16%
- 17%- 26%
- 26% - 56%

**Trends Across Demographic Groups.** Analyses of 2013 READ Act data reveal a number of trends related to demographic groups. Figure 6 depicts the trends, and further explanation is included in the paragraphs that follow. Appendix D also provides a summary of the trends represented in table format.

Figure 6: Prevalence of Significant Reading Deficiencies by Grade Level and Demographic Group



American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American, and Hispanic/Latino students were more likely to be identified with a significant reading deficiency than their Asian, White, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and multi-racial peers (26%, 22%, and 26% compared to 12%, 10%, 12%, and 13%). These performance gaps are similar to trends in state assessment data and are often highly correlated with students living in poverty, thus further underscoring the importance of early learning, strong initial literacy instruction for all students, and immediate interventions when challenges are uncovered.

Students eligible for free or reduced lunch were more likely to be identified with a significant reading deficiency than their non-eligible peers (26% compared to 9%). This trend is consistent with national data demonstrating that students from low-income families are more likely to have had less exposure to early reading experiences and thus may experience reading difficulties upon entering school. State data combined with national trends reinforces the importance of high-quality early prevention programs, including high-quality preschool and full-day kindergarten, for at-risk populations of students such as children of poverty.

“Overall, 22% of children who lived in poverty do not graduate from high school, compared to six percent of children who have never been poor. The figure rises to 32% for students spending more than half of their childhood in poverty” (The Annie E. Casey Foundation).

Male students were more likely than female students to be identified with a significant reading deficiency (18% compared to 14%).

Non-English Proficient (NEP) students were more likely to be identified with a significant reading deficiency than their English speaking peers (47% compared to 14%). In addition, the proportion of NEP students identified as having a significant reading deficiency increases as the grade levels increase (19% of full day kindergarten NEP students were identified, and this increases to 82% of third grade NEP students identified). Limited English Proficient (LEP) students were also more likely to be identified with a significant reading deficiency than their English speaking peers (27% compared to 15%), and this trend remained consistent across all grade levels. Similar to the trend for NEPs, as grade level increased, so too did the proportion of LEPs identified with a significant reading deficiency (10% of full-day kindergarten students and 37% of grade 3 students). The trends related to English Language Learners are consistent with expectations given that English learners must acquire a new language while also transferring known concepts and skills from the first language to English. Additionally, READ data for English learners is consistent with data from the third grade state summative in 2013 which demonstrated 66% of NEP students and 16% of LEP students scored in the unsatisfactory range. If students are unable to demonstrate mastery of the basic early literacy skills assessed through the READ assessments, they are not likely to score in the proficient range on the more comprehensive state summative assessment. The Literacy Office has developed guidance and resources to support districts in using the READ Act to help support the literacy and language needs of English learners.

Students receiving special education services were more likely to be identified with a significant reading deficiency than their non-eligible peers (49% compared to 14%). This trend was expected as the cut-scores for a significant reading deficiency are low and tend to represent the lower quartile of students across all four interim assessments.

Gifted students were unlikely to be identified with a significant reading deficiency (1%), across the state and at all grade levels. It should be noted that it is possible for students to be identified for gifted education services for subject areas other than reading, yet these students may demonstrate a need for additional supports in reading.

### Predictive Nature of READ Interim Assessments

Students in third grade in the 2012–2013 school year were assessed with both the Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP) test and one of the State Board approved READ Act interim assessments in the spring of 2013. The READ Act interim assessments identified a higher proportion of struggling readers than the TCAP (19% and 10%, respectively). While this may seem incongruous, it is important to remember that the

“Seventy-four percent of students who fail to read proficiently by the end of third grade falter in the later grades and often drop out before earning a high school diploma” (The Campaign for Grade Level Reading).

interim assessments measure only the critical early literacy indicators that are most predictive of future reading success and therefore are not comprehensive in nature. In contrast, the state summative assessment is a comprehensive assessment designed to determine students’ mastery of grade level standards. Differences in the identification rates of struggling readers between the two tests may also be explained by the differences in how the tests are administered (time limits, accommodations) which may impact student performance. Furthermore, research demonstrates a 0.80 correlation between tests of oral reading fluency and state summative tests such as TCAP. Given this correlation, it would be expected that a



population of students identified as at-risk for reading difficulties by the READ assessments may subsequently score in the proficient range on the state test.

### Limitations of the Data

As this was the first collection of data for the READ Act, there are some limitations to the data. The department has worked to resolve some of the complications with the collection to ensure more valid and reliable data is collected in the future.

The department found that some districts did not report all of their students. Some of this may be due to confusion with regard to this being the first data collection for the READ Act. Student mobility may play a contributing factor as well. As a result, it is important not to make direct comparisons of percentages of students with/without a significant reading deficiency across districts without first taking into consideration the fact that some districts may have reported all students and others may not have done so. The department is working to increase communication to the field regarding reporting requirements and to provide support for an accurate count. Beginning with the spring 2014 collection of READ data, districts are encouraged to include all students who are enrolled at the time of reporting data regardless of whether or not the student was tested and/or changing enrollment status at the year's end.

In addition, some technical issues that occurred during the reporting and verification period made the collection less clean than we expect in future years. The department has addressed the technical issues to avoid similar issues in the future.

Also, it is important to note that longitudinal data is not yet available, as this was the first collection of data for the READ Act. Therefore, conclusions from the data are limited to one point in time. As data is collected each spring, longitudinal data will allow for generalizations to be made across time.

Finally, schools and districts establish procedures at the local level for training teachers on the assessments and for testing students. Therefore, it can be expected that there is variation in the amount of training teachers receive in addition to differences in the protocols used for testing students. It can only be assumed that schools and districts have established procedures to ensure the data collected is valid and reliable.

### Conclusion

Reading proficiently by the end of third grade is a critical skill for future educational success. The Colorado READ Act was signed into law in May 2012 to focus on early literacy development for all students and especially for students at risk of not achieving third grade reading proficiency. Data reported in the spring of 2013, prior to the first year of implementing the READ Act, revealed 16% of students in kindergarten through third grades were identified as having a significant reading deficiency.

“Getting more young children to read proficiently is no mission impossible. Much is already known about the science of how people learn to read and how to impart reading skills. The National Institute for Child Health and Human Development has produced extensive research on the topic for nearly five decades, and the National Reading Panel identified five essential components of reading instruction” (The Annie E. Casey Foundation).

Our regional CDE technical assistant “has the background, expertise in the field of reading, and understanding of data to find those key nuggets of truth, plus the communication skills and gravitas to speak this truth in a way our teachers can and need to hear. This is the type of partnership with the department of education that I have wished for since becoming an administrator 24 years ago”  
(Elementary school principal)

Since the law was passed, implementation efforts have included the adoption of state board rules; approval of interim, diagnostic, and summative assessments; implementation of the Early Literacy Grant in 30 schools; use of the early literacy assessment tool in 415 schools in 121 districts; distribution of over \$15 million in per-pupil intervention funds to support students with a significant reading deficiency; and coordination of the Commissioner’s Literacy Work Group. Additionally, the Office of Literacy was created within the Department of Education to provide guidance and on-site technical support to schools and districts in an effort to support use of screening and progress monitoring assessments and implementation of scientifically-based instructional practices statewide.

During the summer of 2014 and during the 2014–2015 school year, the Office of Literacy will offer regional professional development opportunities to provide teachers with the deep foundational knowledge necessary to understand how children learn to read and

why some children struggle. Participating teachers will learn strategies and activities that may be implemented immediately and will develop the knowledge necessary to increase the effectiveness of any core or supplemental program currently being used in their schools and districts. Research has demonstrated that when teachers’ knowledge of the content they are teaching increases, so does the achievement of their students.

**Appendix A: Early Literacy Grant (ELG) Districts, Schools, and Awards for 2013 – 2014**

District	School(s)	Award
Academy 20	Frontier Elementary, High Plains Elementary, & Pioneer Elementary	\$233,636
Adams County District 50	Skyline Vista Elementary, Sherrelwood Elementary, & Harris Park Elementary	\$393,534
Bennett School District 29J	Bennett Elementary	\$95,000
Bethune School District	Bethune Elementary	\$123,600
Burlington School District Re-6J	Burlington Elementary	\$239,950
Delta County School District	Lincoln Elementary	\$228,315
Denver Public Schools	Cole Arts and Sciences Academy	\$159,349
Denver Public Schools	Cesar Chavez Academy	\$64,442
Harrison School District 2	Bricker Elementary, Giberson Elementary, & Stratmoor Hills Elementary	\$380,463
Jefferson County Public School District	Westgate Elementary	\$252,777
Lamar School District Re-2	Washington Elementary, Parkview Elementary, & Alta Vista Elementary	\$543,411
Mesa County Valley School District	Rocky Mountain Elementary	\$222,190
Morgan County School District Re-3	Sherman Early Childhood Center & Columbine Elementary	\$308,253
Park County School District Re-2	Edith Teter Elementary	\$155,791
Re-1 Valley School District	Campbell Elementary, Ayres Elementary, & Caliche Elementary	\$228,316
Roaring Fork School District	Basalt Elementary, Crystal River Elementary, Sopris Elementary, & Glenwood Springs Elementary	\$370,973

**Appendix B: Early Literacy Assessment Tool (ELAT) Participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs) 2013—2014**

<b>Participating LEA</b>	<b>Number of Participating Students K-3</b>
Adams 12 Five Star Schools	1,571
Adams-Arapahoe 28J	668
Alamosa RE-11J	705
Archuleta County 50 JT	432
Arickaree R-2	34
Aspen 1	470
Ault-Highland RE-9	223
Bayfield 10 JT-R	424
Bennett 29J	241
Branson Reorganized 82	103
Brighton 27J	5,531
Burlington RE-6J	235
Byers 32J	117
Calhan RJ-1	115
Campo RE-6	19
Canon City RE-1	1,124
Centennial R-1	53
Center 26 JT	188
Charter School Institute	1,543
Cheraw 31	64
Cheyenne Mountain 12	474
Clear Creek RE-1	318
Colorado Springs 11	9,217
Cotopaxi RE-3	64
Crowley County RE-1-J	141
Custer County School District	91
De Beque 49JT	52
Deer Trail 26J	52
Del Norte C-7	125
Delta County 50(J)	1,445
Denver County	180
Dolores County RE NO. 2	91
Dolores RE-4A	207

Participating LEA	Number of Participating Students K-3
Douglas County RE-1	1,1124
Durango 9-R	1,561
Eads RE-1	42
East Grand 2	368
Eaton RE-2	601
Edison 54 JT	28
Elbert 200	47
Ellicott 22	319
Estes Park R-3	318
Falcon 49	4,072
Fort Morgan RE-3	893
Fowler R-4J	123
Fremont RE-2	444
Granada RE-1	63
Greeley 6	624
Hanover 28	59
Haxtun RE-2J	93
Hayden RE-1	117
Hoehne Reorganized 3	112
Holly RE-3	80
Holyoke RE-1J	207
Huerfano RE-1	148
Idalia RJ-3	61
Ignacio 11 JT	207
Jefferson County R-1	24,778
Johnstown-Milliken RE-5J	1,016
Julesburg RE-1	89
Karval RE-23	23
Keenesburg RE-3(J)	641
Kim Reorganized 88	10
Kiowa C-2	105
Kit Carson R-1	35
La Veta RE-2	60
Lake County R-1	350
Lamar RE-2	508

<b>Participating LEA</b>	<b>Number of Participating Students K-3</b>
Las Animas RE-1	160
Lewis-Palmer 38	1,536
Limon RE-4J	153
Lone Star 101	39
Mancos RE-6	130
Manitou Springs 14	378
McClave RE-2	67
Meeker RE1	205
Miami/Yoder 60 JT	71
Moffat 2	57
Moffat County RE:NO 1	722
Monte Vista C-8	339
Montezuma-Cortez RE-1	825
Mountain Valley RE 1	37
North Conejos RE-1J	300
North Park R-1	57
Otis R-3	60
Ouray R-1	39
Park County RE-2	122
Pawnee RE-12	21
Peyton 23 JT	137
Plainview RE-2	20
Plateau Valley 50	118
Platte Valley RE-3	32
Platte Valley RE-7	284
Prairie RE-11	49
Pritchett RE-3	10
Pueblo City 60	5,384
Pueblo County 70	2,464
Rangely RE-4	180
Ridgway R-2	89
Roaring Fork RE-1	1,640
Salida R-32	330
Sanford 6J	116
Sangre De Cristo RE-22J	102

<b>Participating LEA</b>	<b>Number of Participating Students K-3</b>
Sargent RE-33J	134
Sierra Grande R-30	71
South Conejos RE-10	61
South Routt RE 3	129
Springfield RE-4	74
Steamboat Springs RE-2	724
Stratton R-4	61
Thompson R2-J	296
Trinidad 1	195
Vilas RE-5	13
Walsh RE-1	33
Weld County RE-1	563
Weldon Valley RE-20(J)	58
West Grand 1-JT	135
Westminster 50	3,122
Wiggins RE-50(J)	159
Wiley RE-13 JT	56
Windsor RE-4	1,503
Woodland Park RE-2	694
Wray RD-2	231
Yuma 1	248
<b>Total Participating Students</b>	<b>90,476</b>

**Appendix C: READ Act Per-Pupil Intervention Funds**

District	Number of Eligible Students	Per-Pupil Intervention Funds
ACADEMY 20	430	\$156,232.33
ADAMS 12 FIVE STAR SCHOOLS	2,530	\$919,227.46
ADAMS COUNTY 14	685	\$248,881.74
ADAMS-ARAPAHOE 28J	3,867	\$1,405,001.02
AGATE 300	N<16	N<16
AGUILAR REORGANIZED 6	N<16	N<16
AKRON R-1	N<16	N<16
ALAMOSA RE-11J	140	\$50,866.34
ARCHULETA COUNTY 50 JT	50	\$18,166.55
ARICKAREE R-2	N<16	N<16
ARRIBA-FLAGLER C-20	N<16	N<16
ASPEN 1	25	\$9,083.28
AULT-HIGHLAND RE-9	48	\$17,439.89
BAYFIELD 10 JT-R	48	\$17,439.89
BENNETT 29J	46	\$16,713.23
BETHUNE R-5	N<16	N<16
BIG SANDY 100J	N<16	N<16
BOULDER VALLEY RE 2	903	\$328,087.90
BRANSON REORGANIZED 82	N<16	N<16
BRIGGSDALE RE-10	N<16	N<16
BRIGHTON 27J	997	\$362,241.02
BRUSH RE-2(J)	49	\$17,803.22
BUENA VISTA R-31	66	\$23,979.85
BUFFALO RE-4J	N<16	N<16
BURLINGTON RE-6J	26	\$9,446.61
BYERS 32J	20	\$7,266.62
CALHAN RJ-1	17	\$6,176.63
CAMPO RE-6	N<16	N<16
CANON CITY RE-1	158	\$57,406.30
CENTENNIAL R-1	N<16	N<16
CENTER 26 JT	26	\$9,446.61
CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE	478	\$173,672.22
CHERAW 31	N<16	N<16
CHERRY CREEK 5	1,914	\$695,415.55
CHEYENNE COUNTY RE-5	N<16	N<16



District	Number of Eligible Students	Per-Pupil Intervention Funds
CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN 12	104	\$37,786.43
CLEAR CREEK RE-1	39	\$14,169.91
COLORADO SPRINGS 11	1,301	\$472,693.64
COTOPAXI RE-3	N<16	N<16
CRIPPLE CREEK-VICTOR RE-1	N<16	N<16
CROWLEY COUNTY RE-1-J	N<16	N<16
CUSTER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT C-1	19	\$6,903.29
DE BEQUE 49JT	N<16	N<16
DEER TRAIL 26J	N<16	N<16
DEL NORTE C-7	N<16	N<16
DELTA COUNTY 50(J)	265	\$96,282.72
DENVER COUNTY 1	6,940	\$2,521,517.21
DOLORES COUNTY RE NO.2	23	\$8,356.61
DOLORES RE-4A	30	\$10,899.93
DOUGLAS COUNTY RE 1	1,651	\$599,859.50
DURANGO 9-R	198	\$71,939.54
EADS RE-1	N<16	N<16
EAGLE COUNTY RE 50	411	\$149,329.05
EAST GRAND 2	50	\$18,166.55
EAST OTERO R-1	38	\$13,806.58
EATON RE-2	61	\$22,163.19
EDISON 54 JT	N<16	N<16
ELBERT 200	N<16	N<16
ELIZABETH C-1	70	\$25,433.17
ELLICOTT 22	52	\$18,893.21
ENGLEWOOD 1	181	\$65,762.91
ESTES PARK R-3	39	\$14,169.91
EXPEDITIONARY BOCES	N<16	N<16
FALCON 49	714	\$259,418.34
FORT MORGAN RE-3	149	\$54,136.32
FOUNTAIN 8	487	\$176,942.20
FOWLER R-4J	N<16	N<16
FREMONT RE-2	46	\$16,713.23
FRENCHMAN RE-3	N<16	N<16
GARFIELD 16	90	\$32,699.79
GARFIELD RE-2	277	\$100,642.69
GENOA-HUGO C113	N<16	N<16
GILPIN COUNTY RE-1	N<16	N<16

District	Number of Eligible Students	Per-Pupil Intervention Funds
GRANADA RE-1	N<16	N<16
GREELEY 6	1,074	\$390,217.51
GUNNISON WATERSHED RE1J	93	\$33,789.78
HANOVER 28	N<16	N<16
HARRISON 2	531	\$192,928.77
HAXTUN RE-2J	N<16	N<16
HAYDEN RE-1	N<16	N<16
HINSDALE COUNTY RE 1	N<16	N<16
HI-PLAINS R-23	N<16	N<16
HOEHNE REORGANIZED 3	N<16	N<16
HOLLY RE-3	N<16	N<16
HOLYOKE RE-1J	25	\$9,083.28
HUERFANO RE-1	30	\$10,899.93
IDALIA RJ-3	N<16	N<16
IGNACIO 11 JT	48	\$17,439.89
JEFFERSON COUNTY R-1	3,267	\$1,187,002.41
JOHNSTOWN-MILLIKEN RE-5J	238	\$86,472.78
JULESBURG RE-1	25	\$9,083.28
KARVAL RE-23	N<16	N<16
KEENESBURG RE-3(J)	164	\$59,586.29
KIOWA C-2	N<16	N<16
KIT CARSON R-1	N<16	N<16
LA VETA RE-2	N<16	N<16
LAKE COUNTY R-1	90	\$32,699.79
LAMAR RE-2	73	\$26,523.16
LAS ANIMAS RE-1	N<16	N<16
LEWIS-PALMER 38	175	\$63,582.93
LIBERTY J-4	N<16	N<16
LIMON RE-4J	18	\$6,539.96
LITTLETON 6	358	\$130,072.50
LONE STAR 101	N<16	N<16
MANCOS RE-6	43	\$15,623.23
MANITOU SPRINGS 14	40	\$14,533.24
MANZANOLA 3J	N<16	N<16
MAPLETON 1	490	\$178,032.20
MC CLAVE RE-2	N<16	N<16
MEEKER RE1	32	\$11,626.59
MESA COUNTY VALLEY 51	852	\$309,558.02
MIAMI/YODER 60 JT	N<16	N<16

District	Number of Eligible Students	Per-Pupil Intervention Funds
MOFFAT 2	N<16	N<16
MOFFAT COUNTY RE:NO 1	132	\$47,959.69
MONTE VISTA C-8	84	\$30,519.80
MONTEZUMA-CORTEZ RE-1	228	\$82,839.47
MONTROSE COUNTY RE-1J	333	\$120,989.23
MOUNTAIN VALLEY RE 1	N<16	N<16
NORTH CONEJOS RE-1J	42	\$15,259.90
NORTH PARK R-1	16	\$5,813.30
NORWOOD R-2J	N<16	N<16
OTIS R-3	N<16	N<16
OURAY R-1	N<16	N<16
PARK COUNTY RE-2	49	\$17,803.22
PAWNEE RE-12	N<16	N<16
PEYTON 23 JT	N<16	N<16
PLATEAU RE-5	N<16	N<16
PLATEAU VALLEY 50	47	\$17,076.56
PLATTE CANYON 1	38	\$13,806.58
PLATTE VALLEY RE-3	N<16	N<16
PLATTE VALLEY RE-7	56	\$20,346.54
POUDRE R-1	781	\$283,761.52
PRIMERO REORGANIZED 2	17	\$6,176.63
PUEBLO CITY 60	839	\$304,834.72
PUEBLO COUNTY 70	342	\$124,259.21
RANGELY RE-4	42	\$15,259.90
RIDGWAY R-2	N<16	N<16
ROARING FORK RE-1	404	\$146,785.73
ROCKY FORD R-2	52	\$18,893.21
SALIDA R-32	46	\$16,713.23
SANFORD 6J	N<16	N<16
SANGRE DE CRISTO RE-22J	22	\$7,993.28
SARGENT RE-33J	27	\$9,809.94
SHERIDAN 2	93	\$33,789.78
SIERRA GRANDE R-30	N<16	N<16
SILVERTON 1	N<16	N<16
SOUTH CONEJOS RE-10	N<16	N<16
SOUTH ROUTT RE 3	27	\$9,809.94
SPRINGFIELD RE-4	N<16	N<16
ST VRAIN VALLEY RE 1J	1,635	\$594,046.20
STEAMBOAT SPRINGS RE-2	91	\$33,063.12

District	Number of Eligible Students	Per-Pupil Intervention Funds
STRASBURG 31J	26	\$9,446.61
STRATTON R-4	N<16	N<16
SUMMIT RE-1	164	\$59,586.29
SWINK 33	N<16	N<16
TELLURIDE R-1	47	\$17,076.56
THOMPSON R2-J	674	\$244,885.10
TRINIDAD 1	68	\$24,706.51
VALLEY RE-1	110	\$39,966.41
WALSH RE-1	N<16	N<16
WELD COUNTY RE-1	68	\$24,706.51
WELD COUNTY S/D RE-8	157	\$57,042.97
WELDON VALLEY RE-20(J)	N<16	N<16
WEST END RE-2	N<16	N<16
WEST GRAND 1-JT.	22	\$7,993.28
WESTMINSTER 50	1,139	\$413,834.02
WIDEFIELD 3	218	\$79,206.16
WIGGINS RE-50(J)	N<16	N<16
WILEY RE-13 JT	N<16	N<16
WINDSOR RE-4	173	\$62,856.26
WOODLAND PARK RE-2	146	\$53,046.33
WOODLIN R-104	N<16	N<16
WRAY RD-2	23	\$8,356.61
YUMA 1	40	\$14,533.24

**Appendix D: Summary of READ Act Data Collected Spring 2013**

	<b>Grades K-3</b>	<b>Half-day K</b>	<b>Full-day K</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Grade</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Grade</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade</b>
<b>All K-3 Students</b>	16%	7%	8%	20%	19%	19%
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	49%	23%	24%	51%	55%	61%
<b>Students with No English Proficiency</b>	47%	25%	19%	53%	74%	82%
<b>Students with Limited English Proficiency</b>	27%	9%	10%	23%	27%	37%
<b>Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch</b>	26%	14%	11%	31%	29%	31%
<b>American Indian/Alaska Native</b>	26%	25%	12%	27%	30%	31%
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	25%	14%	12%	32%	30%	31%
<b>Black/African American</b>	22%	7%	7%	26%	26%	29%
<b>White</b>	10%	5%	5%	12%	12%	12%
<b>Male</b>	18%	8%	9%	22%	21%	21%
<b>Female</b>	14%	6%	6%	18%	17%	17%