

# Significant Reading Deficiency

## Determination Process & Definitions

### What is a Significant Reading Deficiency (SRD)?

The Colorado READ Act states that a significant reading deficiency is determined when a student does not meet the minimum skill levels for reading competency in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, including oral skills, and reading comprehension established by the state board for the student's grade level (C.R.S. 22-7-1203).

Upon determination of an SRD, information from the interim and diagnostic assessments and a body of evidence is used to inform the development of a student's READ Plan.

### SRD Determination Process

Determination of an SRD is based on a body of evidence that includes the state board approved interim assessment score, results from a state board approved diagnostic assessment, and additional information that provides evidence of a student's literacy and language skills. The interim assessment, or universal screener, is a first alert that a student may need extra help to make adequate progress in reading during the year. Diagnostic assessments are administered to identify specific skill deficits noted in the interim assessment. Results from the interim assessment, diagnostic assessment, and other data are compiled to form a complete body of evidence in determining a significant reading deficiency. If a student is determined to have an SRD, a READ Plan is developed and implemented.

#### Body of Evidence

Considered in its entirety, a body of evidence must be used to determine a significant reading deficiency.

##### Interim Assessment

The interim assessment is a universal screener used to identify students who may experience lower than expected reading outcomes and who may be at risk for reading challenges.

State board approved interim reading assessments need to be administered within the first 90 calendar days of the year for students in kindergarten and within the first 30 calendar days of the student's first day of attendance in grades one through three.

*If a school administers the state board approved interim reading assessment to kindergartners within the first 60 days of the school year, it is not required to administer the literacy component.*

##### Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessments are administered to students who score below the cut-score for a significant reading deficiency on the interim assessment. Diagnostic assessments need to assess and provide in-depth information on the skill deficits identified from the interim assessments.

State board approved diagnostic assessments are administered within 60 calendar days of the initial administration of the interim assessment.

##### Additional Literacy and Language Data

Additional literacy and language information may include classroom work, school readiness assessments, summative assessments and additional assessments that measure the students' literacy skills, as well as language assessment data. This information is used to support in identifying specific literacy skill needs as well as highlight areas of strength to provide a complete picture of a student's literacy profile.



The READ Act requires that all students receive scientifically and evidence-based core instruction throughout the SRD determination process (C.R.S. 22-7-1204). Between interim and diagnostic assessments, students shall continue receiving scientifically and evidence-based core instruction and may also begin receiving interventions that align with identified skills deficits from the interim assessment. Regardless of SRD determination, the body of evidence and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process are used to inform implementation of scientifically based and evidence-based core and intervention programming for all students.

### **What happens if the results of the interim assessment and the diagnostic assessment do not align?**

Very rarely, a student may score well-below benchmark on the READ Act approved interim assessment, yet the diagnostic assessment does not corroborate that the student has skill deficits to remediate. This can occur when a student is not feeling well, is distracted or confused during the administration of the assessment or is simply having an “off” day. In this event, it is recommended that a follow up assessment is administered to the student using the interim assessment measures. If both the follow up assessment results and the additional body of evidence supports that the student does not have foundational skill deficits requiring the implementation of a READ plan, then the teacher may use this evidence to withhold SRD designation. However, it is important to progress monitor the student carefully between benchmark assessment windows to ensure that the student continues to progress at or above grade level in reading.

### **Can the body of evidence be used to override the findings of the interim and diagnostic assessments?**

The use of multiple data points is important when determining a significant reading deficiency because it allows the teacher to identify students at risk for reading failure, pinpoint specific skill deficits that require remediation, and provide additional evidence that informs the selection of the most effective intervention programming to get the student back on track quickly. The interim and diagnostic assessments are key components of the body of evidence, not separate from it. Therefore, if both the interim and diagnostic assessments indicate that skill deficits are present that require attention, additional BoE data does not override this evidence, and a READ plan for intervention should be put in place.

## **English Language Learners**

The READ Act provides special considerations for English language learners. For more information, refer to the [READ Act and English Learners guidance document](#).

## **Definitions**

**Interim Assessment:** A universal screening assessment administered to all students to identify who may experience lower than expected reading outcomes and who may be at risk for reading challenges.

**Diagnostic Assessment:** A state board approved assessment which schools are required to use for students identified through screening as possibly having a significant reading deficiency to pinpoint a student’s specific area(s) of weakness and provide in-depth information about students’ skills and instructional needs.

**Body of Evidence:** A collection of information about a student’s academic performance which, when considered in its entirety, documents the level of a student’s academic performance.

**Evidence-Based:** The instruction or item described is based on reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence and has demonstrated a record of success in adequately increasing students’ reading competency in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, including oral skills, and reading comprehension.

**Scientifically Based:** The instruction or item described is based on research that applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge that is relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties.