
Individual Reading Plan (IRP)

Frequently Asked Questions

Guidance for Districts



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Introduction

During the 2016 legislative session, the *Literacy-Based Promotion Act* was amended to include the requirement of an Individual Reading Plan (IRP) for any student (K-3) who, at any time, exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading, as well as students who were promoted to 4th grade with a good cause exemption. According to Senate Bill 2157, Section 37-177-1:

Each public school student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading at any time, as demonstrated through performance on a reading screener approved or developed by the State Department of Education or through locally determined assessments and teacher observations conducted in Kindergarten and Grades 1 through 3 or through statewide end-of-year assessments or approved alternate yearly assessments in Grade 3, must be given intensive reading instruction and intervention immediately following the identification of the reading deficiency. The intensive reading instruction and intervention must be documented for each student in an individual reading plan (25-35).

The IRP serves as a tool for documenting intensive reading instruction and interventions for students with identified reading deficiencies. Each component of the IRP is crucial to the efficacy of the plan and student's success. The IRP has seven (7) components:

- (a) The student's specific, diagnosed reading skill deficiencies as determined (or identified) by diagnostic assessment data;
- (b) The goals and benchmarks for growth;
- (c) How progress will be monitored and evaluated;
- (d) The type of additional instructional services and interventions the student will receive;
- (e) The research-based reading instructional programming the teacher will use to provide reading instruction, addressing the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension;
- (f) The strategies the student's parent is encouraged to use in assisting the student to achieve reading competency; and
- (g) Any additional services the teacher deems available and appropriate to accelerate the student's reading skill development.

It is important to note that multiple data points in addition to the effectiveness of Tier I instruction, which focuses on **all** students and involves implementation of evidence-based curriculum and instructional practices that align with state standards and **include** differentiated instruction, must be considered when identifying students who need Tier II and Tier III supports.

Audience

- 1. Is the IRP required for all students?** No. The IRP is required for **any** public school student (K-3) who, at any time, exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading, as well as any student who was promoted to 4th grade with a good cause exemption. An IRP is **not** required for students with disabilities who are classified as having a Significant Cognitive Disability (SCD).

English Learners

- 2. Is an IRP required for EL students who have been identified as having a “substantial reading deficiency”?** Yes. All students (K-3) who, at any time, exhibit a substantial reading deficiency, as well as students who were promoted to 4th grade with a good cause exemption are required to have an IRP.

Formatting Requirements

- 3. Is each school district mandated to use the IRP template developed by the MDE?** No. The law does not mandate a specific format, only that the format include **all** required components of the IRP as provided within the MDE template and required by law (SB 2157). All services must be appropriately documented in writing. *Note: Your district may adapt/customize the MTSS documentation for Tier III to include the IRP components.*

Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the IRP

- 4. Is the IRP now a requirement in addition to the IEP?** Yes. In accordance with Section 37-177-1, the IRP is required for students (K-3) who, at any time, exhibit a substantial deficiency in reading, as well as students who were promoted to 4th grade with a good cause exemption. The IRP is **not** a part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- 5. Who is responsible for implementing the IRP for students with disabilities?** The teacher providing reading instruction to the student is responsible for implementing the IRP. A student with a disability may receive reading instruction from the general education teacher and the special education teacher, including Inclusion and/or Resource. In this case, the student’s general education teacher and special education teacher should work together to implement the IRP.
- 6. If a student has a 504 Plan and receives intensive therapy in the dyslexia program, does he/she still need the IRP?** Yes. All public school students (K-3) who, at any time, exhibit a substantial deficiency in reading, as well as students who were promoted to 4th grade with a good cause exemption are required to have an IRP.

7. **Is an IRP required for K-3 students receiving special education services who are classified as having a Significant Cognitive Disability (SCD) and who take the alternate assessment?** No. Students classified as having a Significant Cognitive Disability qualify for Good Cause Exemption (GCE) B for “students with disabilities whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) indicates that participation in the statewide accountability assessment program is not appropriate, as authorized under state law”. Therefore, a student who meets the criteria for GCE “B” would not be required to have an IRP.
8. **What is the role of the Speech Language Pathologist and/or the special education teacher in the IRP team, when the student also has an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?** It is **recommended** that the development of an IRP be a team approach. In addition, it is **recommended** that the Speech Language Pathologist and/or the special education teacher be an integral part of the team that writes the IRP for a student with an Individualized Education Program.

Intensive Interventions

9. **Are students who did not pass the 3rd grade assessment required to have a minimum of 90 minutes for interventions in addition to their core reading block?** No. The 90-minute core reading instruction requirement is included in the instructional day; however, it is included as one of the **minimum** requirements. Retained students, students promoted for Good Cause, and any K-3 student for which a reading deficiency has been identified through a screener and other diagnostic measures must also have an Individual Reading Plan. Interventions addressing the deficiencies must also be documented.
10. **If a student requires an IRP, can we skip Tier II and move the student straight to Tier III.** Yes. Students with a significant reading deficiency requiring an IRP should be considered Tier III students.
11. **If a student moves out of the "red and yellow" as determined by Star Progress Monitoring, should the intensive interventions cease immediately?** No. Star Progress Monitoring is a tool to help identify potential students who need support. Once a student has been identified, it is **recommended** that additional diagnostic information be gathered to make the determination for intervention. Follow the MTSS model for providing tiered support to each student. In addition, progress monitoring for Tier II and III should be completed as **recommended** by the MTSS model to determine if students are progressing or regressing between levels based on the effectiveness of the intervention(s). Multiple measures should be used to determine which students need intervention or when to remove a student from intensive intervention services (Tier III).

Kindergarten Students and the IRP

- 12. When should an IRP be completed for a kindergarten student?** It is recommended that an IRP be completed for a kindergarten student after results from both the beginning-of-year screener and the first progress monitoring assessment, which typically occurs in September, have been administered. Once a student has been identified, it is **recommended** that additional diagnostic information be gathered to make the determination for intervention. Therefore, multiple data points should be used to determine substantial reading deficiencies.

Maintaining Documentation

- 13. Who is responsible for developing the IRP?** This will be a district decision. Typically, the Teacher Support Team (TST) will be responsible for developing the IRP. If the student has an IEP, it is recommended that the student's special education teacher and/or Speech Language Pathologist be a part of the team developing the IRP.
- 14. When should the IRP be completed?** The law requires that students identified with a substantial reading deficiency be given intensive reading instruction and intervention immediately following the identification of the deficiency. The current requirements for Part 3, Chapter 41: Intervention state, "After a referral is made, the TST must develop and begin implementation of an intervention(s) within 2 weeks." Follow the MTSS model and your local district tier process for determining placement in Tier II or Tier III interventions.
- 15. Does IRP documentation remain at the district level or should it be submitted to the MDE?** IRP documentation should be housed at the school/classroom in which the student receives reading instruction. If a student with an IEP is receiving reading instruction in the general education classroom and the special education classroom, both teachers should have a copy of the IRP. *Note: In the event of an audit, documentation may be requested for review.*
- 16. Should a new IRP be completed at the beginning of each school year?** Yes. Each year, student data should be used to determine whether a student will need an IRP.
- 17. Where should the IRP be archived at the end of the year?** In accordance with State Board Policy Chapter 3, Rule 41.1, Intervention, the IRP is a component of the MTSS documentation and should be stored with those documents.
- 18. Are the IRP and Good Cause Exemption documentation packets available for digital input and storage?** Yes. Both are available in digital PDF.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and the IRP

19. **Can the IRP forms replace the MTSS forms for students in grades K-3?** No. The Tier III component of the MTSS documentation does not include all of the requirements for the IRP; however, the MTSS documentation packet includes the IRP template (Appendix E).

Parental Notification

20. **How often should parents be notified in writing that their child has a substantial reading deficiency?** Parents should be notified in writing immediately upon the determination of a reading deficiency, and subsequently with each quarterly progress report until the deficiency is remediated.
21. **Does the IRP serve a dual purpose as the notification form to parents as required by law?** No. The parent notification letter is a different document. The IRP is not intended to serve as parental notification; however, it is recommended that the IRP be shared with parents.
22. **Should the IRP documentation be discussed with the parent at a meeting or sent home with the student?** It is **recommended** that the designated individual or team meet with the parent to discuss the IRP.
23. **Is parental participation required in the development of an IRP for students with disabilities?** No. The IRP does not require the participation of a parent as the IRP is not a requirement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Office of Special Education (OSE) recommends that the district send a cover letter along with the required IRP parent notification letter explaining what an IRP is and is not.
24. **What should be included in the written Parent Notification Letter when a substantial reading deficiency has been determined?** If a K-3 student is identified with a substantial reading deficiency, parents must be notified by the student's teacher in writing of the following:
- a) That the student has been identified as having a substantial deficiency in reading;
 - b) A description of the services that the school district currently is providing to the student;
 - c) A description of the proposed supplemental instructional services and supports that are designed to remediate the identified area of reading deficiency which the school district plans to provide the student, as outlined in the student's **Individual Reading Plan**;
 - d) That if the student's reading deficiency is not remediated before the end of the student's Third-Grade year, the student will not be promoted to Fourth Grade unless a good cause exemption specified under Section 37-177-11 is met.

Progress Monitoring

25. **How should progress monitoring be conducted?** Progress monitoring should be done with specific probes that monitor students' progress on the exact skill or deficiency that is being addressed through interventions. If the probe is too broad, growth may not be clearly evident (See FAQ #27 for a recommended timeline).
26. **How often should progress monitoring be performed?** According to the law, teachers must collect baseline data in August via a state-approved screener and monitor the progress of each student at the middle and end of the year. In accordance with MTSS guidelines, it is recommended that progress monitoring occur according to the following timeline:
- Tier I** – Formal monthly progress monitoring;
 - Tier II** – Bi-weekly progress monitoring; and,
 - Tier III** – Weekly progress monitoring.
27. **Can teachers use STAR Early Literacy as progress monitoring twice a month, or should they be using another progress monitoring instrument?** Yes. Star Early Literacy is available for use as a progress monitoring tool. The state has procured the Renaissance Suite of assessments for Kindergarten – 3rd grade students. However, the progress monitoring instrument selected should be specific to the student's identified deficit and subsequent intervention. *Note: Subscriptions for STAR Early Literacy are limited. Please see your administrator for availability.*

Substantial Reading Deficiency

28. **How is a substantial reading deficiency identified?** A substantial deficiency in reading **may** be defined through performance on a reading screener approved or developed by the State Department of Education **or** through locally determined assessments and teacher observations conducted in grades K-3, through statewide end of the year assessments or approved alternate yearly assessments in grade 3.
29. **What is a substantial reading deficiency?** A substantial reading deficiency is for example, a score in the *Intervention* or *Urgent Intervention* category, as set by Renaissance Learning, **MAY** represent a “substantial deficiency” in reading. Schools/Districts using other assessments should review the **recommended** guidelines for that assessment to determine what constitutes a “substantial deficiency”. Additional diagnostic assessments and/or other indicators should also be used to determine specific deficit areas so that interventions are tailored to address those needs.
30. **If more than one component of reading is identified as deficient or multiple skills are indicated as deficiencies, which deficiency should be addressed and documented?** Each deficiency should be addressed; however, immediate attention and interventions should be given to the most basic foundational area(s) with which the student is struggling and progress accordingly.

31. **May the identification of a “substantial reading deficiency” occur at any point during the school year?** Yes. A substantial reading deficiency may be identified during progress monitoring or any subsequent screening windows. If a student scores below the designated benchmark on formal or informal reading assessments, then he/she may need an IRP. Please consult with the Teacher Support Team (TST) for further guidance.