

# Fast Facts

## The Nebraska Reading Improvement Act and NebraskaREADS



## Helping Nebraska students become strong readers to position them for future success.

NebraskaREADS provides tools and resources to support high-quality reading instruction for all Nebraska students. By working to improve the reading skills of students in kindergarten through third grade, NebraskaREADS works to position all students for success as they progress toward college and career readiness.

### What is the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act?

The Nebraska Reading Improvement Act was enacted in 2018 and goes into effect in the 2019-2020 school year. The heart of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act is early identification of students who need extra reading help, so they receive targeted intervention and supports in kindergarten through third grade.

### Why is third grade such an important year for reading?

Strong reading skills are the foundation for success in school and beyond. When students are reading on grade level by the end of third grade, they're better prepared for the important transition of learning how to read to learning from their reading.

Beginning in fourth grade, strong reading skills help students read independently and understand complex concepts in all subject areas. Research shows that reading on grade level by the end of third grade better positions students for high school graduation and readiness for college and careers.

### Identifying Struggling Readers Early

The heart of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act is high-quality literacy instruction and early identification of students who need extra reading help, so they receive targeted intervention and supports in kindergarten through third grade. To identify and support struggling readers, schools take the following steps:

- » **Assess students.** Within the first 30 days of the school year, schools assess students in kindergarten through third grade to identify those who may struggle with early reading skills.
- » **Notify parents.** Parents of students who are not reading on grade level are notified in writing within 15 days of identification and are given strategies and tools to support reading at home.
- » **Provide supports.** Any student who is identified as having a reading difficulty is immediately given intensive reading instruction and other specialized supports led by high-quality, effective teachers.

## Specialized reading supports include:

**Individual Reading Improvement Plans (IRIPs).** Students identified as having a reading difficulty receive an IRIP within 30 days of identification. The plan is created in collaboration with parents and describes the reading supports the student will receive through their supplemental reading intervention program.

- » **Supplemental Reading Intervention Programs.** These targeted supports are implemented during regular school hours, in addition to regularly scheduled reading instruction. A supplemental reading intervention program may include:
  - » Reading intervention techniques that are based on scientific research and best practices;
  - » Diagnostic assessments to frequently monitor student progress throughout the school year and adjust instruction accordingly;
  - » Intensive intervention using strategies selected from the following list to match the weaknesses identified in the diagnostic assessment:
    - » Development in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension;
    - » Explicit and systematic instruction with detailed explanations, extensive opportunities for guided practice, and opportunities for error corrections and feedback;
    - » Daily targeted individual or small-group reading intervention based on student needs as determined by diagnostic assessment data;
    - » Strategies and resources to assist with reading skills at home, including suggestions for parent-guided home reading; or
    - » Access to before-school or after-school supplemental reading intervention with a teacher or tutor who has specialized training in reading intervention.
- » **Summer Reading Program.** Summer reading programs are available for any student in grades 1-3 who has been identified as continuing to have a reading difficulty.
- » **Monitor progress.** Students take a total of three assessments throughout the year to keep teachers, schools, and parents up to date on reading progress.

## Who Has a Role in the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act?

- » **Teachers.** PK-3 teachers receive professional development and specialized training in early literacy, so they can be effective reading instructors.
- » **Parents.** All parents of K-3 students are regularly informed of their child's reading progress, and parents of students identified with a reading difficulty work with teachers and school staff to develop IRIPs.
- » **Schools and school boards.** School, district, and school board leaders work to ensure reading instruction is strong for all students. School boards may develop reading policies and support services to address the reading needs of all students.
- » **Nebraska Department of Education (NDE).** NDE will provide guidance and resources on NebraskaREADS, as well as a list of approved reading assessments for use by school districts.

Summer reading programs may be community-based or offered online.

