

# **Literacy and Language Development**

**School Board Work Session  
October 1, 2025**





# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

“We begin by acknowledging that we are on the ancestral land stewarded since time immemorial by the Salish people of the Duwamish, Green, White, Cedar, and Upper Puyallup Rivers, many of these giving birth to the contemporary citizens of the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe. We honor and give thanks that we are able to collectively engage in this conversation on their sacred homelands about the future of teaching and caring for our sacred children and youth.”



# OUR PROMISE

Every student in Highline Public Schools is known by **name**, **strength** and **need**, and graduates prepared for the **future** they choose.





## **CULTURE OF BELONGING**

A culture where all are welcome, valued, and safe.



## **INNOVATIVE LEARNING**

Academic experiences that engage, empower, and challenge every student.



## **BILINGUAL & BILITERATE**

Multicultural skills that enable students to live, work, and communicate across cultures.



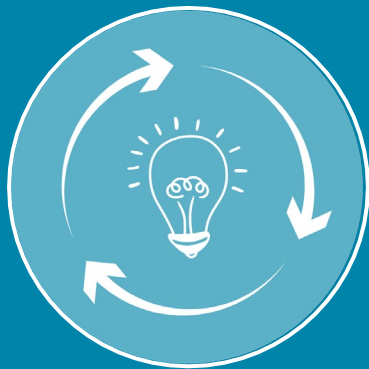
## **FUTURE READY**

Students explore possibilities and develop mindsets that prepare them for a changing future.

*Our Promise: Every student is known by name, strength and need, and graduates prepared for the future they choose.*

**The Big Four**

# Areas of Focus



**Secondary  
Redesign**



**Literacy &  
Language  
Development**



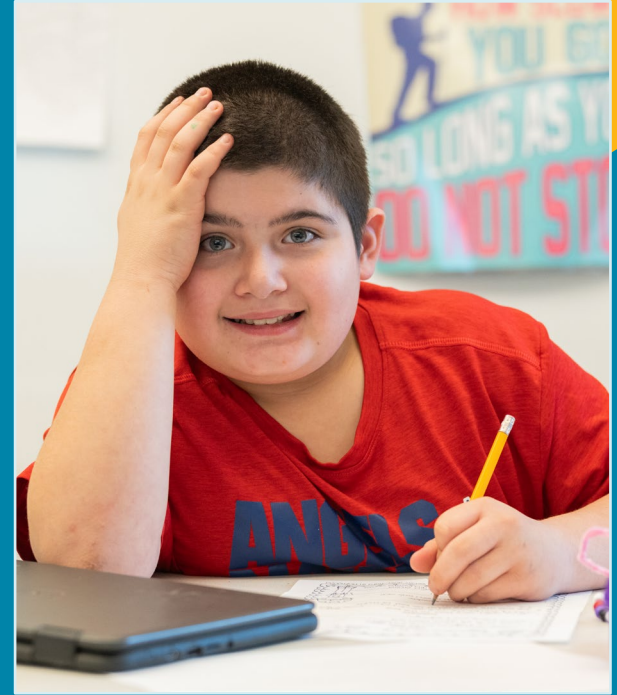
**Inclusionary  
Practices**



**MTSS**

# Objectives

- Provide an overview of research related to literacy development and language acquisition
- Connect this research to current data, efforts, and resources in Highline
- Equip directors with examples of what this work may look and sound like in schools and classrooms



# History of Reading Instruction



**1950's-1980's**

Whole language vs phonics

**2000**

National Reading Panel Report

**1990's**

Debate continues, national decline  
in reading scores

# National Reading Panel

- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension
- Oral Language



# History of Reading Instruction

*continued*



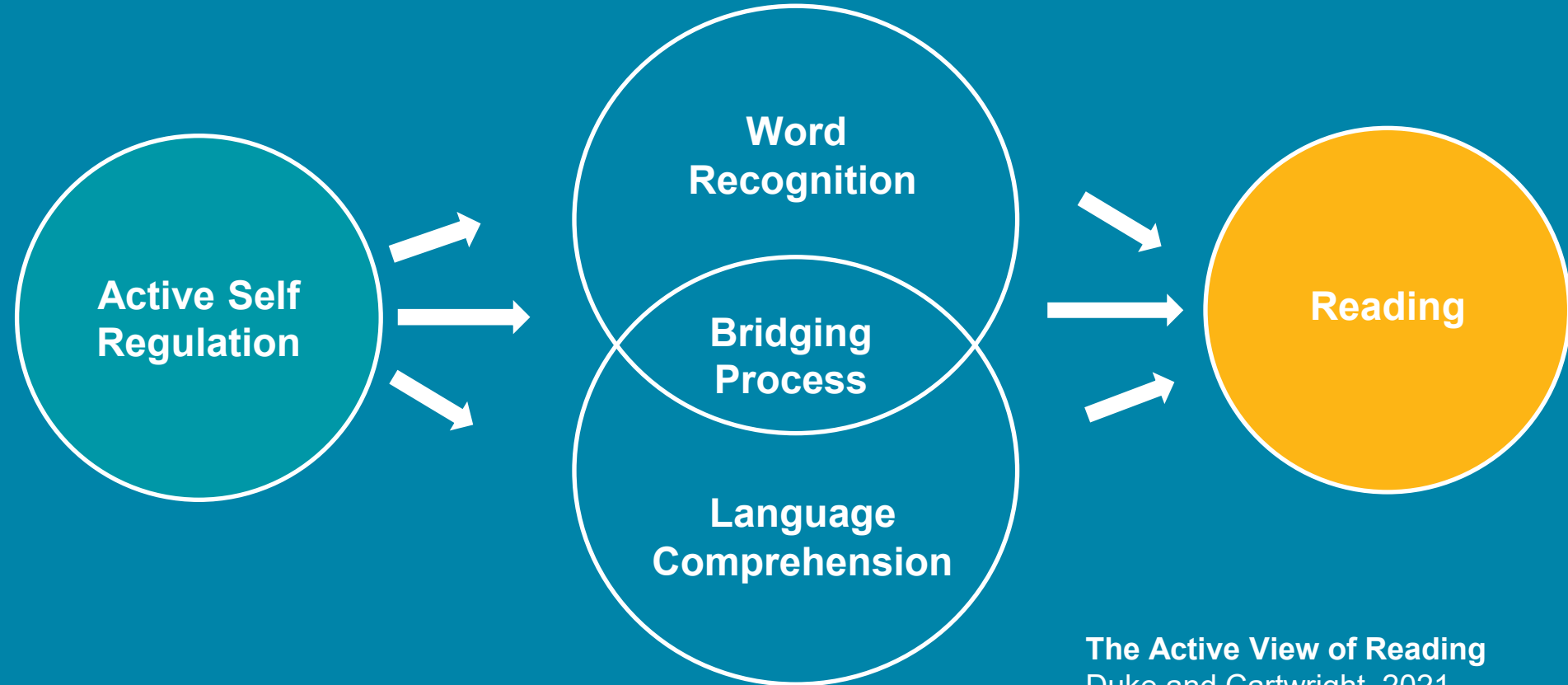
# Science of Reading

"The science of reading is a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing. This research has been conducted over the last five decades across the world, and it is derived from thousands of studies conducted in multiple languages. The science of reading has culminated in a preponderance of evidence to inform how proficient reading and writing develop; why some have difficulty; and how we can most effectively assess and teach and, therefore, improve student outcomes through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties"

- The Reading League, 2021



# The Intersection of Language and Literacy



**The Active View of Reading**  
Duke and Cartwright, 2021

# Literacy Development for Multilingual Learners



WIDA\* outlines five guideposts for literacy instruction to help educators support the literacy development of multilingual learners:

- Building on students' cultural and linguistic assets,
- Developing oral language skills through classroom interactions and discussions
- Expanding and strengthening vocabulary, word knowledge and word recognition
- Developing reading comprehension and academic literacies
- Fostering meaningful access to literacy learning practices

*\*WIDA is World-class Instructional Design and Assessment, which guides Washington state's English Language Development standards*

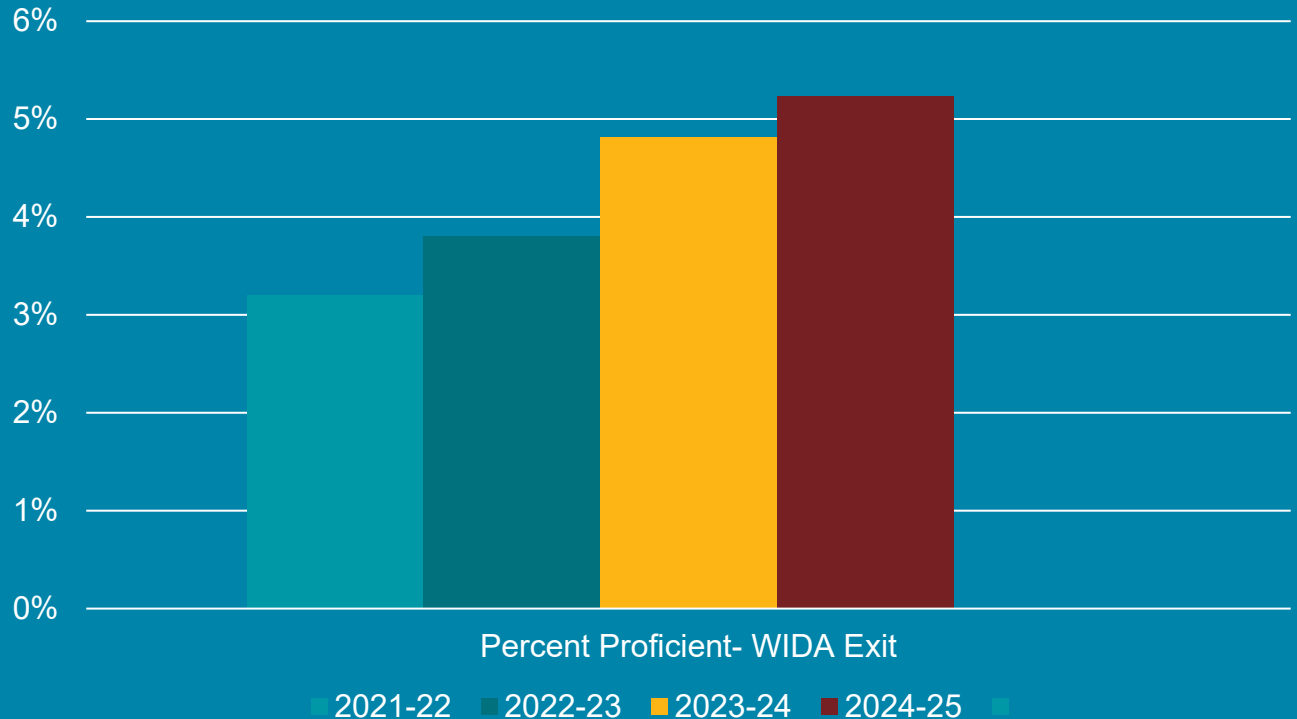
# The Value of Dual Language

National data continues to demonstrate that English Language Learners demonstrate the greatest long-term achievement in the Two-Way Dual Language model.

Steele et al., RAND Corporation, *Dual-Language Immersion Programs Raise Student Achievement in English* (2017)  
Williams et al., *The Century Foundation* (2023)

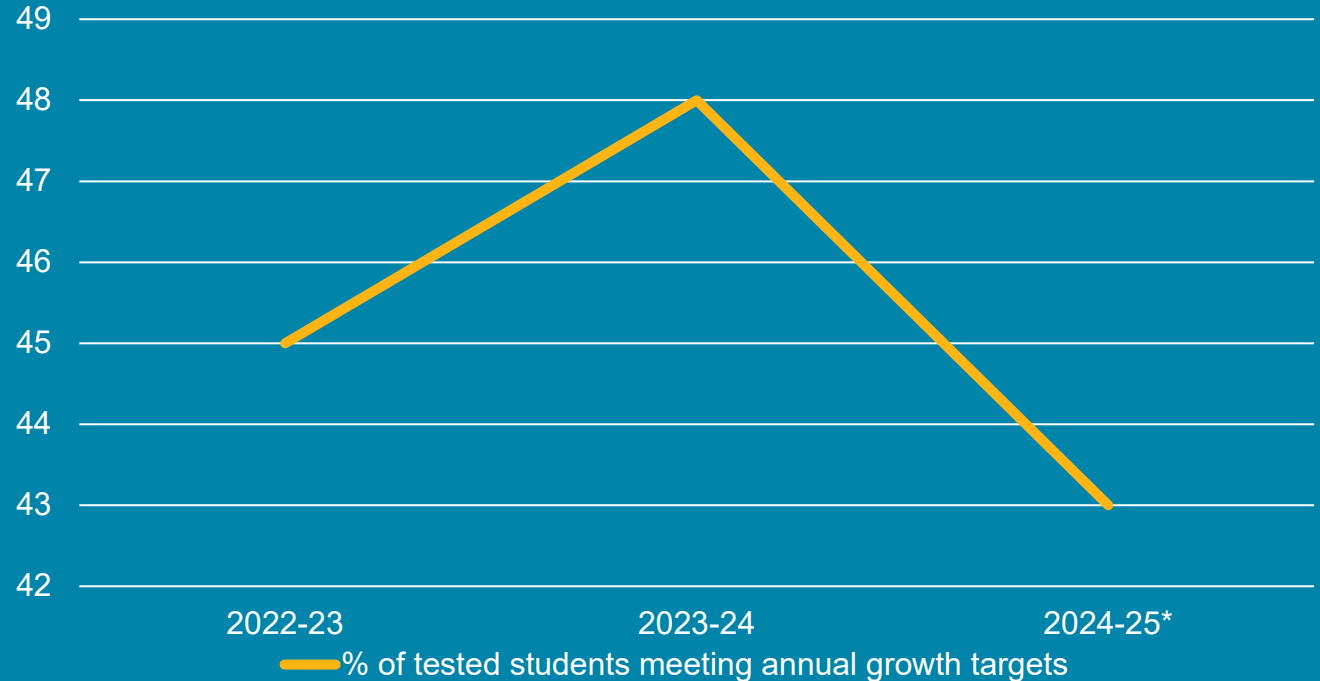
# English Language Learning Program Exit Rate

**Measure 7b: Increase the percentage of multilingual students demonstrating proficiency in English on the WIDA assessment within five years by 5% annually.**



# Literacy Growth

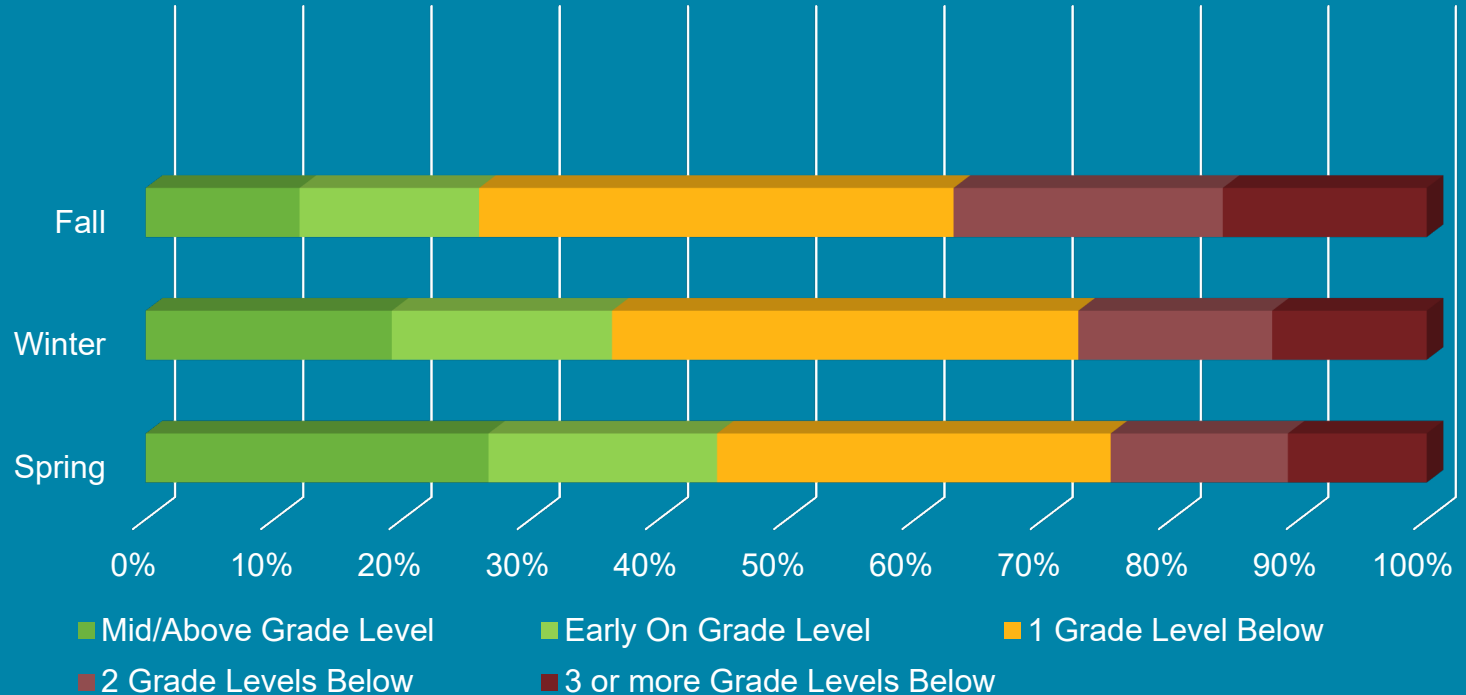
**Measure 5b: Increase the percentage of students in grades K-8 who show at least one year of growth on i-Ready English Language Arts by 5% annually.**



*\*Fall 2024 cyber event resulted in a delay of baseline testing by approximately 6 weeks*

# K-5 Reading Overall Proficiency by Quarter, 2024-25

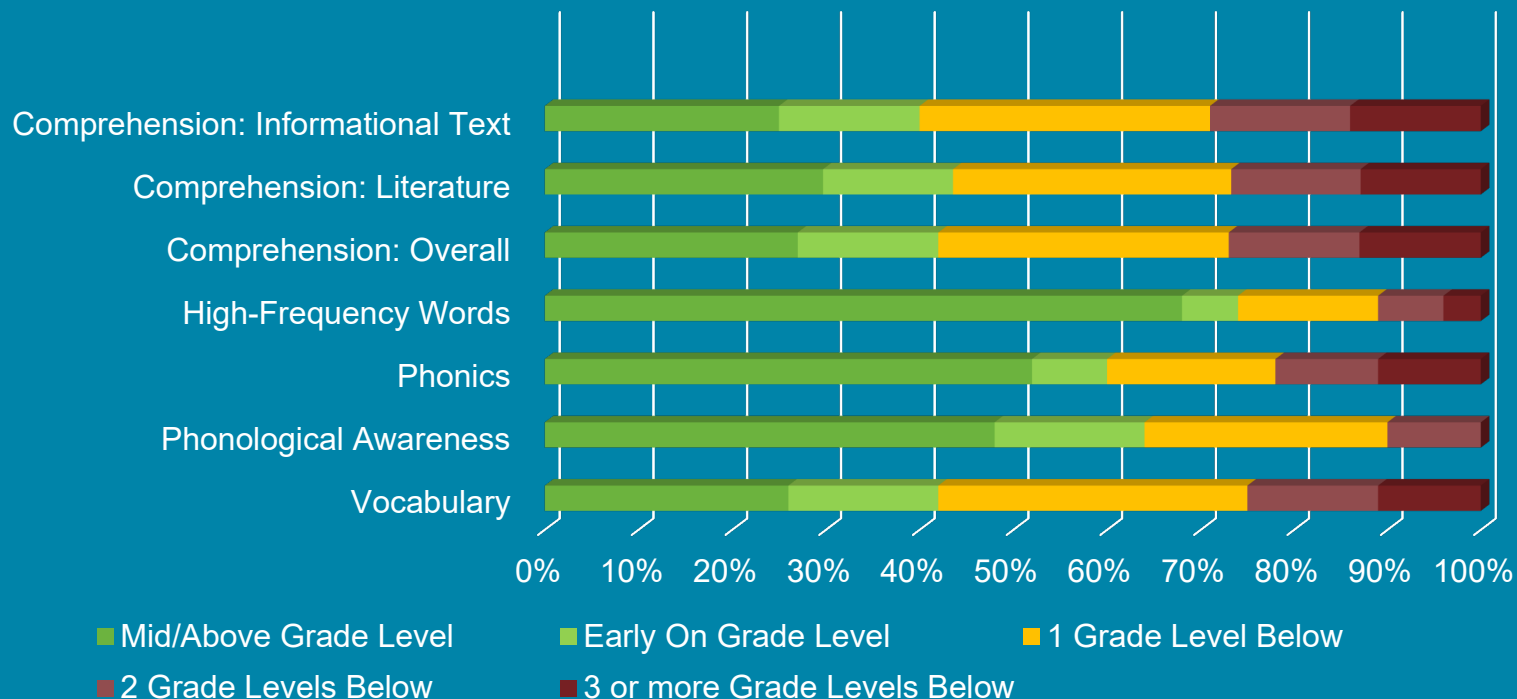
*i-Ready*



# K-5 Reading Domain Proficiency

## Spring 2025

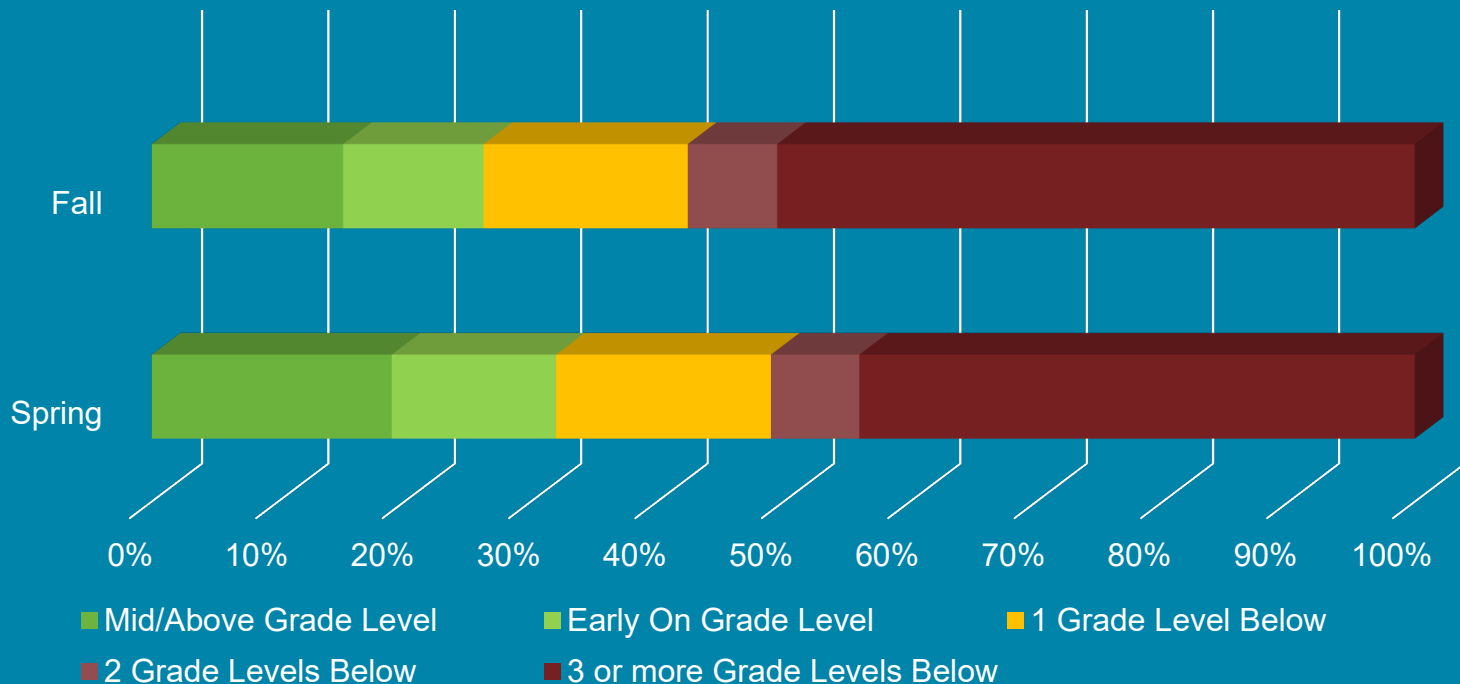
*i-Ready*



# Middle School Reading Proficiency

## Fall 2024 to Spring 2025

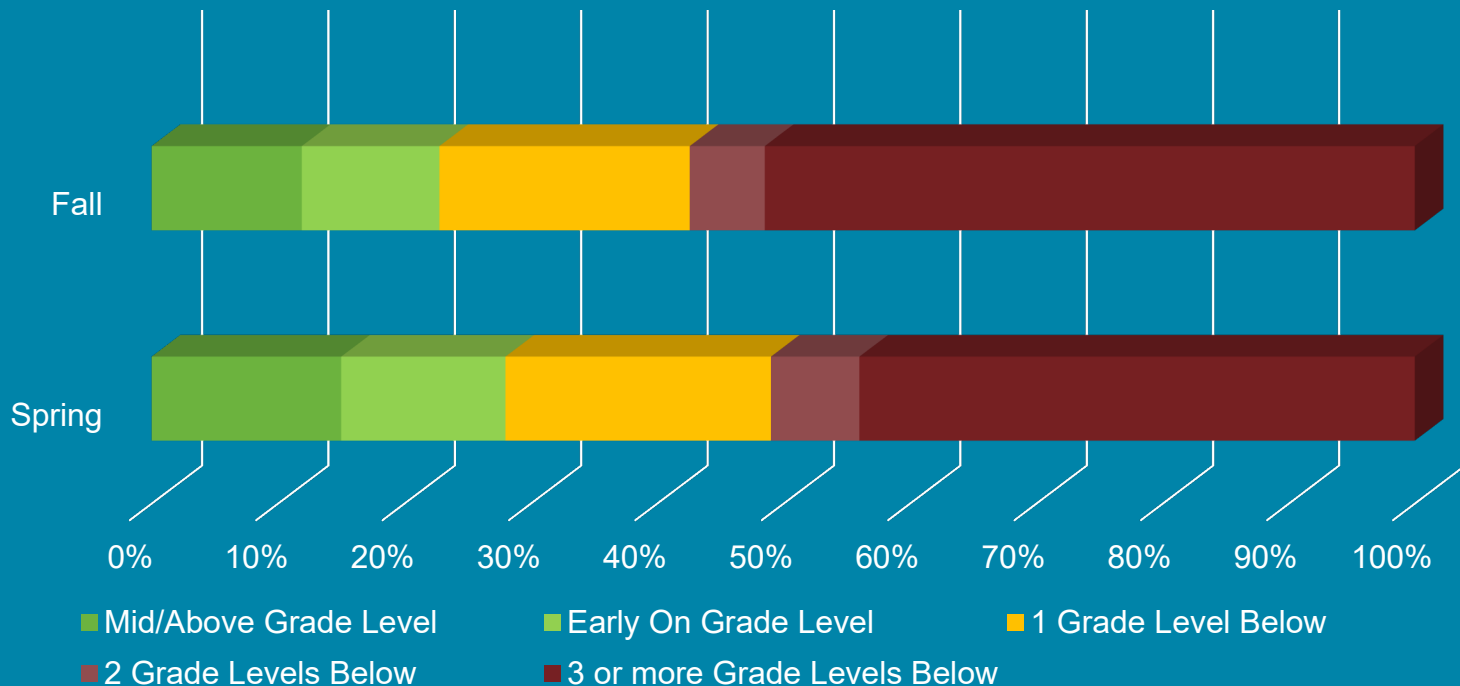
*i-Ready*



# 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Proficiency

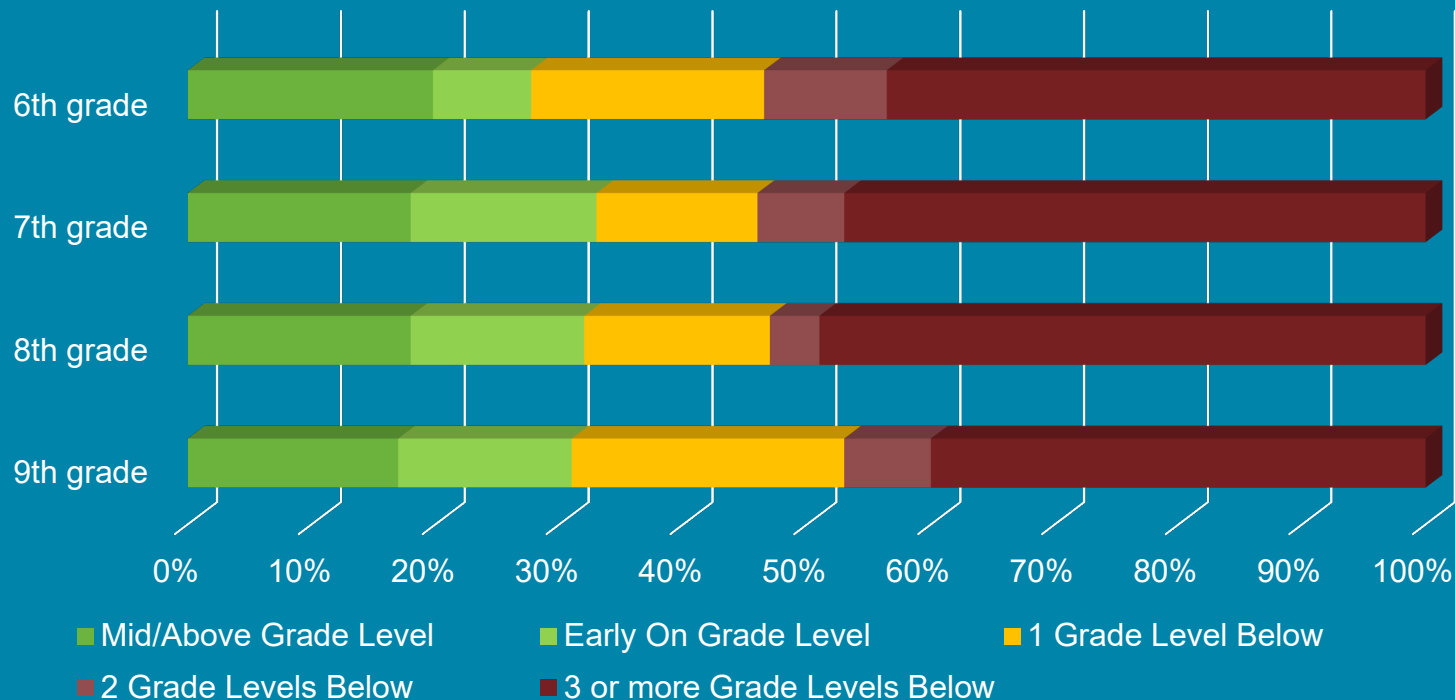
## Fall 2024 to Spring 2025

*i-Ready*



# Secondary Reading Proficiency Spring 2025

*i-Ready*



# Effective Reading Instruction Across Grades

## Instructional Materials

- ARC (American Reading Company)
- IBD (Inquiry by Design)
- Supplemental resources
  - University of Florida Literacy Institute (UFLI)
  - Holistic Biliteracy Framework
  - Galeria
  - El Camino al Éxito
  - Newsela
  - Formative

## Instructional Practice

- Systematic instruction
- Time in text
- Accountable talk/student discourse
- Explicit reading and vocabulary instruction
- Analysis of student work/data
- Thematic learning centers
- Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) strategies

# 2025-26 Priorities: Elementary

## Foundational Skills

Word recognition and language comprehension in service of reading fluency and reading comprehension

## Writing

Engage in the “writing process” as well as writing in response to text across all genres to support comprehension

## Learning Centers

Routines and procedures to strengthen student engagement



# Literacy/Biliteracy Rich Learning Environment: PreK - Elementary

- The Containers: literacy environment
- The Attributes: literacy strategies
- The Components: literacy skills



# Elementary Priorities in Action: Inquiry and Observation



## **We might see/hear:**

- Students working on writing and sharing writing piece in class
- Students applying foundational skills to reading complex text engaged in content learning

## **We might ask/wonder:**

- Are students applying the foundational skills they have learned to independent reading and writing tasks?
- Are students authentically engaged in reading and writing to promote lifelong reading and writing skills?

# 2025-26 Priorities: Secondary

## **Engaged Reading**

Increase opportunities for reading and student time on text across the school day, across content areas

## **Explicit Vocabulary Instruction**

Improve language development to strengthen reading and comprehension

## **Accountable Talk for Reading**

Integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening to accelerate meaning making and language development



# Secondary Priorities in Action: Inquiry and Observation



## **We might see/hear:**

- Artifacts of vocabulary instruction on walls across content areas
- Students actively reading, with text in hand, during classroom instruction
- Students actively engaging in discussion about text and using academic vocabulary

## **We might ask/wonder:**

- How is each lesson engaging students in reading as part of their learning?
- How are students engaging in Accountable Talk with text?

# Next Steps: Elementary

- Specific training for all Dual Language teachers on teaching foundational skills through the Holistic Biliteracy model
- Implementation of GLAD language learning strategies and small group support in all schools
- Balanced data analysis protocols- reading and foundational skills in PLC's
- SBI cadre work: mini modules focused on foundational skills
- LETRS Academy opportunity for elementary teachers (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading)



# Next Steps: Secondary

- District and school-led professional development in accountable talk for reading and use of Formative for classroom-based reading assessment
- Development of data literacy and data use in PLCs to support reading instruction, including:
  - use of iReady
  - development of common content area reading assessments in Formative
- Continued focus on school learning walk data collection to assess and support implementation of engaged reading, explicit vocabulary instruction, and accountable talk for reading
- Development of Tier 2 and 3 reading supports and universally-designed reading instruction



# Objectives

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- Connect this research to current data, efforts, and resources in Highline
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# Questions and Discussion

