

Report No. 3: Third Grade Literacy

Alt Text

A bar chart shows that 25.4% of Salem-Keizer third graders met or exceeded English Language Arts proficiency in 2024–25, the district's highest rate since 2021–22. Although performance improved, the district remains 2.9 percentage points below the annual goal.

Long Description

This report summarizes Salem-Keizer Public Schools' third grade literacy outcomes for the 2024–25 school year based on state assessment and district benchmark data.

Overview

The report was presented at the October 28, 2025 Board Work Session. Data come from the Oregon Department of Education's Consolidated Reporting summary. It includes all third grade students who participated in the English Language Arts assessment and were counted in the district's state accountability report. A total of 2,698 students—representing 97.9% of third graders—completed the assessment, which measures both reading and writing.

Performance Summary (2024–25)

- 25.4% of third grade students met or exceeded grade-level proficiency standards.
- This represents the highest proficiency rate since 2021–22.
- 17 schools met or exceeded the district's performance target of 28.3%, showing improvement from the previous year.
- Female students continued to outperform males, achieving the highest female proficiency rate yet recorded.
- Despite improvement, the overall district rate remains 2.9 percentage points below the annual goal.

Year-to-Year Context

Performance trends show steady improvement since 2021–22, when proficiency was lowest following the pandemic. The district's current proficiency rate continues to close the gap toward pre-pandemic benchmarks but has not yet met the district's target of 28.3%.

STAR Assessment Results

- Early Literacy (Spanish): Significant improvement from last year.
- Reading (Spanish): Performance held steady.
- Early Literacy (English): Decline in scores from last year.
- Reading (English): Decline in scores from last year.

Cohort Comparison

A fall-to-fall comparison tracked the same students from third grade in Fall 2024 to fourth grade in Fall 2025 using STAR Reading benchmarks. Many students improved (shown as green lines in the original chart). Some maintained their prior performance (gray lines). A smaller group scored lower (red lines). This visualization indicates overall growth with some areas of decline that will continue to be monitored.

Strategy 3: Progress and Next Steps

Salem-Keizer's literacy improvement plan is guided by three ongoing initiatives.

Initiative 1 – High-Quality Instructional Materials and Frameworks

Current Progress

- Piloting two new curriculum programs: HMH and McGraw Hill (September 2025–February 2026).
- 70 classrooms are participating in walkthroughs and pilot testing.

Next Steps

- Design curriculum maps aligned with science-of-reading research and new materials.
- Conduct professional learning sessions in May, June, and August 2026.
- Continue classroom support with instructional walkthroughs emphasizing: curriculum use as designed, grade-level instruction fidelity, and student ownership and engagement.

Initiative 2 – Comprehensive and Useful Classroom Assessments

Current Progress

- Using Early Literacy Star and Star Reading assessments.
- Expanding interim assessments for reading, writing, and math in grades 3–5.
- Teacher collaboration time focuses on instructional practices and analysis of student data.

Next Steps

- Continue using STAR benchmark and progress-monitoring tools.
- Integrate new curriculum-based and interim assessments.
- Strengthen communication systems to help families track student academic progress.

Initiative 3 – Meaningful Professional Development

Current Progress

- Conducted Foundational Skills training (January 28–30) for 4th- and 5th-grade teachers.
- Ongoing professional learning for principals and foundational skills specialists.

Next Steps

- Continue classroom walkthroughs to calibrate literacy instruction.
- Expand professional development in writing instruction.
- Strengthen PreK–12 alignment through clear learning progressions across grade levels.