The Colorado READ Act Overview

The Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (READ Act), passed by the Colorado legislature in 2012, focuses on early literacy development for all students and especially for students at risk of not reading at grade level by the end of the third grade. The READ Act focuses on literacy development for students in kindergarten through third grade. Students are tested for reading competency, and an individual plan of intervention, called a READ plan, is developed for those who are determined to be at significant risk.

In 2019, the legislature strengthened the READ Act, adding new emphasis on the importance of instruction that is scientifically proven to be effective in teaching students to read.

For successful implementation of the READ Act, it is important to understand and consider the following about early literacy:

ELEMENTAL BUILDING BLOCKS

Reading is an elemental building block to receive a quality education, and every child should read at grade level by the end of third grade.

PREVENTION IS KEY

The Colorado READ Act is a legislative priority that focuses on early literacy development for all students, especially for students at risk of not reading at grade level by the end of third grade. Specific funding is allocated to help students who are struggling the most.

TEACHER KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE ARE CRITICAL

Teacher knowledge and practice are critical. Educators must have a deep understanding of the science of reading to help every child become a lifelong reader. In 2019, the legislature amended the READ Act to require all K-3 teachers to receive training in evidence-based reading instruction. An additional amendment included a requirement for similar training for K-3 administrators and 4^{th}-12^{th} grade reading interventionists.

IT TAKES A COMMUNITY

It takes collaborative partnerships between schools, educators, communities and families to improve literacy for all students

READ ACT REQUIREMENTS

ASSESSMENTS

The READ Act requires teachers to assess the literacy development of K-3 students in the areas of phonemic awareness; phonics; vocabulary development; reading fluency, which includes mastery of oral skills and reading comprehension. The State Board of Education reviews and approves interim assessments for use in measuring reading competency skill levels for children in K-3 every four years.

DEVELOPMENT OF READ PLANS

The READ Act requires the creation and implementation of an individual intervention plan, called a READ plan, for students identified with a significant reading deficiency. The law outlines specific components that must be included in a READ plan to ensure the effectiveness of the intervention strategies, but each READ plan must be tailored to meet the individual needs of each student.

UNIFIED IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

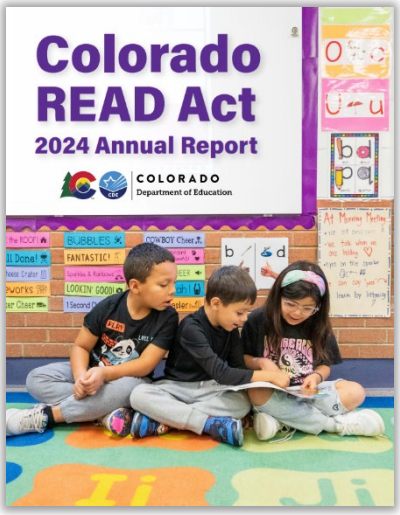
Unified improvement plans submitted by districts to the Department of Education must include information about the district's reading assessments, curriculum and instructional programs, as well as their intervention services.

READ PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Throughout the READ plan implementation process, decisions should be made collaboratively between school personnel and parents. Parents should receive regular, ongoing updates from the student's teacher concerning results of the intervention instruction and the student's progress toward achieving reading competency. The student's teacher must review the READ plan at least annually and update or revise the plan as appropriate to facilitate the student's progress in demonstrating reading competency. Although READ plans are established in grades K-3, a READ plan remains in place until the student achieves grade level competency.

ADVANCEMENT OF STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT READING DEFICIENCIES

The READ Act provides guidance for advancing students with significant reading deficiencies. It gives parents the option to choose retention as an intervention strategy for students who are significantly below grade level. For students completing third grade, the superintendent can work in partnership with families to determine whether students who continue to have significant reading deficiencies will advance to the next grade.



Please see latest annual READ Act Legislative Report for data and funding information.

READ ACT REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED

ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Districts and schools will be held accountable for student progress in the District/School Performance Frameworks and are expected to use this data to inform the development and implementation of their Unified Improvement Plans.

STATE SUPPORTS FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

The Early Literacy Fund provides districts with per-pupil funding to help meet the needs of students with significant reading deficiencies. Per-pupil funds may be used to provide scientifically or evidence-based core, supplemental and intervention programming, summer school, or tutoring service; to retain the services of a reading interventionist; or to provide professional development to educators in teaching reading. Districts must comply with the READ Act requirements, including providing scientifically based and evidence-based reading instruction to students, to receive READ Act funds.

TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR TRAINING

Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, each district that receives per-pupil funding or early literacy grant funding must ensure that all K- 3 teachers have completed evidence-based training in teaching reading. Teachers have several options for completing the training, including no-cost options provided by CDE. Districts must ensure their teachers complete the training requirements when teaching in grades K-3. In addition, K-3 school administrators and interventionists hired to support grades 4-12 must also receive training in scientifically based and evidence-based reading instruction.

SB 25-200

Senate Bill 25-200 was passed by the Colorado Legislature in May of 2025, and it expands upon the READ Act by including screening requirements for characteristics of dyslexia, additional measures that may be included in the body of evidence used to determine if a child has a significant reading deficiency (SRD) and required talking points relating to dyslexia in parent communication. Full implementation of SB 25-200 is expected at the beginning of the 2027-28 School Year and more guidance is forthcoming.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

- Colorado READ Act website
- Colorado READ Act Assessments
- READ Act Guidance and READ Plans
- SB 25-200 Implementation Updates