

# Early Literacy Survey of Iowa Elementary Schools: Statewide Results

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Iowa Reading Research Center  
University of Iowa College of Education



**Student Reading Success Through Research and Collaboration**

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# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Responses</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Table 1. Public School Survey Responses by Area Education Agency .....	2
Table 2 Grade Configurations in Responding Schools .....	3
Table 3. K-5 Class Size Ranges .....	4
<b>Core Instruction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Table 4. Minutes of Core Literacy Instruction Provided Each Day .....	5
Table 5. Minutes of the Literacy Block Devoted to Reading and Writing Instruction .....	5
Table 6. Commercial Programs and Resources Used During Core Literacy Instruction .....	6
Table 7. Non-Commercial Approaches Implemented During Core Literacy Instruction .....	7
Table 8. Percentage of Classrooms Consistently Applying Literacy Instruction .....	7
<b>Literacy Intervention</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Table 9. Minutes of Literacy Intervention Provided Each Day .....	8
Table 10. Person Responsible for Delivering Literacy Intervention .....	8
Table 11. Commercial Programs and Resources Used During Literacy Intervention .....	9
Table 12. Non-Commercial Approaches Implemented During Literacy Intervention .....	10
<b>Instructional Technology</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Table 13. Technology Used During Literacy Instruction .....	11
<b>Instructional Support</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Table 14. How Often Teachers Meet to Discuss Literacy Data .....	12
Table 15. Number of Literacy Professional Development Days in the Past Year .....	12
<b>Intensive Summer Reading Programs</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Table 16. Number of Years the School Has Offered an ISRP .....	13
Table 17. Reasons the School Does Not Offer an ISRP .....	14
Table 18. Students for Whom the ISRP is Intended .....	14
Table 19. Grade Levels Included in the ISRP .....	15
Table 20. Number of Students Attending the ISRP by Grade .....	15
<b>Summer Reading Instruction</b> .....	<b>16</b>
Table 21. Total Instructional and Enrichment Hours Per ISRP Day .....	16
Table 22. Minutes of Core Reading Instruction Per ISRP Day .....	16
Table 23. Length of ISRP in Weeks .....	17

Table 24. ISRP Class Size .....	17
Table 25. Commercial Programs and Resources Used During ISRP Core Instruction.....	18
Table 26. Non-Commercial Approaches Implemented During ISRP Core Instruction .....	19
<b>Summer Literacy Intervention.....</b>	<b>20</b>
Table 27. Commercial Programs and Resources Used During ISRP Intervention .....	20
Table 28. Non-Commercial Approaches Implemented During ISRP Intervention.....	21
<b>Measuring Students' Progress in the Summer .....</b>	<b>22</b>
Table 29. Assessments Used to Measure ISRP Students' Reading Progress .....	22
<b>Planning Intensive Summer Reading Programs.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Table 30. Food Offered to Summer Participants .....	23
Table 31. How Long Before the ISRP Planning Begins .....	23
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>24</b>

# Executive Summary

Iowa Code section 279.68 Early Literacy Implementation was passed during the 2012 legislative session. Over the last 6 years, elementary schools across the state have made considerable changes to their literacy programs. To better define current practices and inform next steps, the Iowa Reading Research Center surveyed all elementary schools in November of 2018 on information related to their universal core instruction, interventions, and summer reading programs. Approximately 67% of all public and private elementary schools in the state responded to the survey.

Highlights of the survey findings indicate:

- The majority (65%) of schools responding to the survey indicated they are offering more than 90 minutes of daily core literacy instruction, and 46% to 53% reported offering more than 30 minutes of intervention each day.
- Respondents reported using a wide diversity of commercial literacy programs and resources as well as non-commercial approaches and strategies for both core instruction and literacy intervention. However, schools most commonly reported implementing guided reading groups (core = 51% of respondents; intervention = 44% of respondents).
- Approximately 64% of respondents indicated there is a high degree of consistency in the literacy instruction delivered by teachers within their buildings.
- About 55% of schools reported using digital books or other reading materials to support students' literacy learning, and 40% use digital literacy skill practice programs.
- Most commonly, respondents reported teachers meet with their colleagues weekly (37%) or monthly (25%) to discuss students' literacy data, and participate in 4-5 days (27%) or 2-3 days (24%) of literacy professional development.
- Approximately 65% of schools reported offering their students summer learning opportunities, with 30% of such programs supported by community partners and 95% intended for students not reading proficiently.
- Summer programs commonly (74%) offered between 46 minutes and 2 hours of daily reading instruction, and are held for four weeks or longer (73%).

## Responses

Only one response to the survey was accepted per school. Either the principal or the principal’s designee who knew the most about the school literacy program was asked to complete the survey on behalf of the school. About 87% of all responses were submitted by principals. This suggests that school administrators largely are serving as instructional leaders in their buildings and are well informed about the literacy programs.

Of the 698 public elementary schools invited to participate in the survey, 526 responded (75%). Of the 170 private schools invited, 54 responded (32%). Hence, the information in this report can be considered highly representative of public school instruction in the state, and somewhat less indicative of the literacy programs in private elementary schools.

Iowa’s nine Area Education Agencies (AEAs) provide regional educational services to all public and accredited private schools in the state. When grouped by AEA region, public school responses were somewhat reflective of the population concentration in and around Des Moines (the capital and most populous metropolitan area in Iowa), with the highest number of responses received from schools served by Heartland AEA. However, Table 1 reveals that Prairie Lakes AEA had the greatest proportion of schools participating in the survey (92%). The lowest response rate was in Keystone AEA (59%). Overall, the data in this report can be considered fairly representative of the literacy instruction occurring within and across the state.

**Table 1.** Public School Survey Responses by Area Education Agency

Area Education Agency (AEA)	Public Schools Contacted	Responses	% Public School Responses
Keystone	46	27	59%
Prairie Lakes	51	47	92%
Central Rivers	103	75	73%
Mississippi Bend	63	48	76%
Grant Wood	96	71	74%
Heartland	163	125	77%
Northwest	57	47	82%
Green Hills	65	49	75%
Great Prairie	54	37	69%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>75%</b>



## Elementary School Characteristics

Respondents were asked to indicate each grade level taught in their buildings. Most schools indicated the buildings house pre-kindergarten (preK) through Grade 5/6 (49%) or kindergarten (K) through Grade 5 (18%). Although funding for preK predates the state’s Early Literacy Initiative passed in 2012 (ELI; Iowa Code section 279.68), it remains voluntary. Therefore, it should be noted that 390 of the 580 schools participating in the survey (67%) reported hosting preK.

**Table 2.** Grade Configurations in Responding Schools

Grade Levels in School	# of Responses	% of Total
preK-6	145	25%
preK-5	139	24%
K-5	102	18%
preK-4	58	10%
K-6	23	4%
preK-2	18	3%
preK-3	16	3%
K-4	14	2%
3-5	13	2%
preK-1	7	1%
3-4	5	<1%
4-5	5	<1%
2-5	4	<1%
4-6	4	<1%
preK-K	4	<1%
1-5	3	0.5%
5-6	3	0.5%
K-2	3	0.5%
1-2	2	<0.5%
2-4	2	<0.5%
<b>Other configurations with 1 response each</b>	10	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Note.* preK = pre-kindergarten; K = kindergarten.

For each grade K-6, schools were asked to report the approximate class size. The average class sizes gradually increase from K to Grade 5. In Grades K-1, the majority (52% to 56%) of classes are composed of 20 or fewer students. In Grades 2-3, the majority (53% to 60%) of classes increase to 21 or more students. In Grades 4-5, more classes (65% to 66%) are composed of 21 or more students. Class sizes in Grade 6 tend to be somewhat smaller, with only about half (51%) reportedly composed of 21 or more students. In every grade, classes of 30 or more students were rarely reported (<1% to 3%).

**Table 3. K-5 Class Size Ranges**

**Kindergarten**

Class Size Range	Count	Percent
1-10	16	3%
11-15	57	11%
16-20	222	42%
21-25	210	39%
26-30	24	5%
30-35	4	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Grade 1**

Class Size Range	Count	Percent
1-10	16	3%
11-15	58	11%
16-20	204	38%
21-25	214	40%
26-30	37	7%
30-35	4	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Grade 2**

Class Size Range	Count	Percent
1-10	22	4%
11-15	43	8%
16-20	182	34%
21-25	247	46%
26-30	37	7%
30-35	2	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Grade 3**

Class Size Range	Count	Percent
1-10	19	4%
11-15	32	6%
16-20	164	31%
21-25	231	44%
26-30	79	15%
30-35	5	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Grade 4**

Class Size Range	Count	Percent
1-10	19	4%
11-15	32	6%
16-20	133	25%
21-25	250	48%
26-30	81	16%
30-35	7	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Grade 5**

Class Size Range	Count	Percent
1-10	22	5%
11-15	28	6%
16-20	99	22%
21-25	193	43%
26-30	97	22%
30-35	5	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Grade 6**

Class Size Range	Count	Percent
1-10	17	10%
11-15	13	7%
16-20	56	32%
21-25	56	32%
26-30	29	16%
30-35	6	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>100%</b>



## Core Instruction

Under ELI, schools have been required to have a literacy block of at least 90 minutes for core literacy instruction each day in Grades K-3, and a 60-minute daily literacy block in the upper elementary grades. The majority (65%) of schools responding to the survey indicated they offer more than 90 minutes of core literacy instruction. Although few in quantity (less than 1%), some schools reported offering only 30 or fewer minutes of core literacy instruction.

**Table 4.** Minutes of Core Literacy Instruction Provided Each Day

Minutes	Count	Percent
<b>1-30</b>	4	<1%
<b>31-60</b>	5	<1%
<b>61-90</b>	194	33%
<b>91-120</b>	224	39%
<b>121-150</b>	107	18%
<b>151-180</b>	46	8%

Approximately 59% of schools reported separating reading from writing instruction. Among those 344 schools, reading instruction commonly accounts for more of the literacy block time than writing instruction.

**Table 5.** Minutes of the Literacy Block Devoted to Reading and Writing Instruction

	1-30 minutes	31-60 minutes	61-90 minutes	91-120 minutes	121-150 minutes	151-180 minutes
<b>Reading</b>	5	50	184	79	17	9
<b>Writing</b>	206	125	10	1	0	1

The survey specifically asked schools which commercial programs and resources they were using during the core literacy block. Respondents were allowed to enter as many programs or resources as they were using, and 54% of respondents indicated they were using between 2 and 6 different commercial programs and resources. Hence, the counts by program/resource listed in Table 6 reflect overlapping responses. Given the number of materials reported, only those with 10 or more responses are included in the table.

**Table 6.** Commercial Programs and Resources Used During Core Literacy Instruction

<b>Commercial Program or Resource: Core Literacy Block</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>Journeys - Houghton Mifflin</b>	168
<b>Fountas &amp; Pinnell</b>	138
<b>Wonders - McGraw-Hill</b>	119
<b>Lexia Reading Core5 - Lexia Learning</b>	118
<b>Jolly Phonics - Jolly Learning Ltd.</b>	92
<b>Center for the Collaborative Classroom (CCC): Being a Reader/Writer, Making Meaning</b>	55
<b>Lucy Calkins Units of Study</b>	44
<b>Treasures - Macmillan/McGraw-Hill</b>	34
<b>Benchmark Literacy</b>	29
<b>Superkids Reading Program - Zaner-Bloser, Inc.</b>	26
<b>Reading Street - Scott Foresman/Pearson</b>	23
<b>Really Great Reading (Countdown, Blast, HD Word, Phonics Boost)</b>	23
<b>Reading Mastery Plus - SRA/McGraw-Hill</b>	16
<b>Rigby Literacy - Pearson</b>	16
<b>Orton Gillingham - Institute for Multi-Sensory Education (IMSE)</b>	15
<b>95% Group</b>	13
<b>Nation's Choice - Houghton Mifflin</b>	12
<b>Ready Gen Literacy Program - Pearson</b>	12
<b>Foundations - Wilson</b>	10
<b>Jan Richardson's Next Steps Guided Reading</b>	10

In addition to the programs and resources listed in the table, there were 10 other core materials identified by 3 to 7 respondents each, and 52 identified by 2 or 3 respondents each.

The survey also asked schools what non-commercial reading approaches they were implementing during the literacy block in addition to or as a complement to the commercial programs and resources they were implementing. Again, respondents were allowed to enter as many approaches as they were using, and 80% of respondents indicated they were implementing between 2 and 6 different approaches or strategies. Hence, the counts by approach listed in Table 7 reflect overlapping responses.

**Table 7.** Non-Commercial Approaches Implemented During Core Literacy Instruction

<b>Non-Commercial Approach: Core Literacy Block</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>Guided reading groups</b>	447
<b>Daily 5/Sisters' Café</b>	294
<b>Balanced literacy</b>	261
<b>Writers workshop</b>	229
<b>Readers workshop</b>	179
<b>Comprehensive Intervention Model (CIM)</b>	52
<b>Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC): Small-group, skills-based instruction</b>	14
<b>Word recognition/word work/word study lessons</b>	5
<b>District-designed</b>	3
<b>Language/phonics workshop</b>	3
<b>Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)/Response to Intervention (RTI)</b>	3
<b>Teacher-designed</b>	3
<b>Themed units</b>	3
<b>Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) Student Center Activities</b>	2
<b>Teachers Pay Teachers</b>	2

In addition to the approaches listed in the table, there were 7 others identified by a single respondent each.

This survey limited responses to one per school, which might fail to capture the variability across teachers. Therefore, the survey sought to assess the consistency of literacy instruction within a school in two ways. One survey item asked generally whether literacy instruction from classroom-to-classroom was consistent or varied. The majority of respondents (69%) indicated there is consistency, but approximately one-third of the schools (31%) reported variability. The other survey item asked more specifically about the percentage of classrooms in the school that were consistently applying the same strategies, program, or approach to literacy instruction. Results were similar to the general survey item, but indicated slightly more variability across teachers. About 64% of respondents reported that 76% to 100% of the teachers were implementing the same literacy instruction, and 12% of the respondents reported that half or fewer of the teachers in the school were implementing the same literacy instruction.

**Table 8.** Percentage of Classrooms Consistently Applying Literacy Instruction

<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>0-25%</b>	13	2%
<b>26-50%</b>	60	10%
<b>51-75%</b>	134	23%
<b>76-100%</b>	373	64%

## Literacy Intervention

Supplemental intervention must be provided to students who do not perform at the proficient level on the state’s universal screening measure administered three times per year. A combination of school-wide, class-wide, small-group, and individual interventions occur in schools and in a range of formats based on the classification of the students. Therefore, the survey asked about non-core literacy instruction time in two ways. One survey item asked generally for schools to report the time each day devoted to literacy intervention. The other item asked more specifically about the time each day devoted to targeted or intensive interventions, including those for Title I, special education, and supplemental tiered instruction. Table 9 reveals that responses were similar, but there were more reports of durations above 30 minutes per day when schools were asked specifically about targeted or intensive interventions.

**Table 9.** Minutes of Literacy Intervention Provided Each Day

	1-30 minutes	31-60 minutes	61-90 minutes	91-120 minutes	121-150 minutes	151-180 minutes
<b>Intervention</b>	473	75	7	11	4	4
<b>Targeted/intensive, Title I, special education, or Tier 2 or 3</b>	405	123	11	11	5	17

To better understand the context in which the reported interventions were being delivered, the survey also queried who was primarily responsible for providing literacy intervention. Schools most frequently indicated that multiple people (39%) are responsible for delivering interventions, followed by classroom teachers (37%). Rarely were special education teachers (1%) or specialists (less than 1%) reported to be singularly responsible for providing students reading intervention. However, they often were included in the “multiple people” involved.

**Table 10.** Person Responsible for Delivering Literacy Intervention

Instructor	Count	Percent
<b>Multiple people</b>	229	39%
<b>Classroom teacher</b>	216	37%
<b>Title I teacher</b>	74	13%
<b>Reading interventionist</b>	50	9%
<b>Special education teacher</b>	6	1%
<b>Specialist or coach</b>	5	<1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>100%</b>

The greatest diversity in curricula is present among the intervention programs reported by schools. A total of 105 different commercial interventions were identified, compared to 83 different commercial core programs or resources. As with core materials, respondents were allowed to enter as many intervention programs or resources as they were using, and 84% of

respondents indicated they were using between 2 and 6 different intervention materials. Hence, the counts by program/resource listed in Table 11 reflect overlapping responses. Given the number of interventions reported, only those with 10 or more responses are included in the table.

**Table 11.** Commercial Programs and Resources Used During Literacy Intervention

<b>Commercial Program or Resource: Intervention</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>Path to Reading Excellence in School Sites (PRESS)</b>	297
<b>Read Naturally - Read Naturally, Inc.</b>	233
<b>Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) - Fountas and Pinnell</b>	177
<b>95% Group</b>	150
<b>Lexia Reading Core5- Lexia Learning</b>	149
<b>Six-Minute Solution - Voyager Sopris Learning, Inc.</b>	148
<b>Words Their Way - Pearson</b>	139
<b>Reading Recovery</b>	114
<b>Imagine Learning - Imagine Learning, Inc.</b>	84
<b>Reading Mastery - SRA/McGraw-Hill</b>	78
<b>REWARDS - Voyager Sopris Learning, Inc.</b>	76
<b>Wilson Reading System - Wilson Language Training Corporation</b>	76
<b>Visual Phonics - International Communication Learning Institute</b>	62
<b>Really Great Reading (Countdown, Blast, HD Word, Phonics Boost)</b>	56
<b>Corrective Reading - SRA/McGraw-Hill</b>	52
<b>WonderWorks - McGraw-Hill</b>	47
<b>Great Leaps</b>	31
<b>Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words (SIPPS)</b>	25
<b>Starfall Education - Starfall Education Foundation</b>	24
<b>Soar to Success - Houghton Mifflin Harcourt</b>	18
<b>Accelerated Reader - Renaissance Learning, Inc.</b>	17
<b>Orton Gillingham - Institute for Multi-Sensory Education (IMSE)</b>	17
<b>READ 180 Universal and System 44 - Houghton Mifflin Harcourt</b>	16
<b>Walpole Daily Doses</b>	15
<b>Minnesota Reading Corps</b>	13
<b>Phonics for Reading - Anita Archer</b>	12
<b>West Virginia Phonics</b>	12

In addition to the programs/resources listed in the table, there were 23 other intervention materials identified by 3 to 9 respondents each, and 55 identified by 1 or 2 respondents each.

The survey also queried what non-commercial approaches were being implemented in addition to or as a complement to commercial programs and resources. A total of 462 schools (80%) indicated some non-commercial approach or strategy was being used during their schools’

intervention. Again, respondents were allowed to enter as many approaches as they were using, and 25% of respondents indicated they were implementing between 2 and 3 different approaches. Hence, Table 12 reflects overlapping data.

**Table 12.** Non-Commercial Approaches Implemented During Literacy Intervention

<b>Non-Commercial Approach: Intervention</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>Guided reading groups</b>	383
<b>Comprehensive Intervention Model (CIM)</b>	103
<b>Differentiated/targeted reading intervention in small groups/What I Need (WIN) time</b>	20
<b>Word recognition/word work/word study lessons</b>	9
<b>Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) Student Center Activities</b>	5
<b>Fluency routines (e.g., partner practice, RAAC, repeated reading)</b>	5
<b>Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)</b>	5
<b>Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC): Small-group, skills-based instruction</b>	4
<b>Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)/Response to Intervention (RTI)</b>	4
<b>Title I/Special education</b>	4
<b>District-designed</b>	3
<b>Direct/explicit instruction</b>	2
<b>Multi-sensory instruction</b>	2
<b>Teacher-designed</b>	2

In addition to the intervention approaches and strategies listed in the table, there were 8 others identified by a single respondent each.

## Instructional Technology

In addition to curricular programs, schools increasingly use technology to support students’ literacy learning. Therefore, schools were asked to report the kinds of tools, programs, and devices they use during literacy instruction. Thirty respondents (3%) indicated no technology is used during literacy instruction. As shown in Table 13, digital books or other reading materials were the most commonly reported types of instructional technology (55% of respondents). Digital literacy skill practice programs (40%), text-to-speech devices (31%), and digital reading instructional programs (29%) also are common.

**Table 13.** Technology Used During Literacy Instruction

Technology	Count
<b>Digital books or other reading materials</b>	475
<b>Digital literacy skill practice programs</b>	345
<b>Text-to-speech devices</b>	273
<b>Digital reading instructional programs</b>	254
<b>Digital writing programs</b>	91
<b>Chromebooks</b>	6
<b>Digital resources for reading series</b>	2
<b>iPad apps</b>	2

In addition to the intervention approaches and strategies listed in the table, there were 4 others identified by a single respondent each.



## Instructional Support

To support planning appropriate literacy instruction and intervention, it is recommended that teachers spend time collaboratively analyzing students' literacy data. Schools were asked to report the frequency with which teachers meet to discuss students' literacy performance. Most often, survey respondents reported meeting weekly (37%) or monthly (25%). These were followed by responses indicating teachers meet every two weeks (17%) or more than once per week (12%). Other rates of analyzing data displayed in Table 14 were less common.

**Table 14.** How Often Teachers Meet to Discuss Literacy Data

Frequency of Collaborative Data Analysis	Count	Percent
Daily	9	1.5%
More than once per week	72	12%
Weekly	215	37%
Every two weeks	100	17%
Every 3 weeks	5	<1%
Monthly	144	25%
Every 6 weeks	5	<1%
2+ times per quarter	1	<0.5%
Once per quarter	22	4%
Once per trimester	5	<1%
Once per year	1	<0.5%
No regular schedule	1	<0.5%

An additional means of supporting teachers' literacy instruction is through ongoing professional development. Survey respondents were asked to indicate the number of days teachers spent in literacy professional development in the past year. Most often, schools reported that teachers spent 4-5 days (27%), 2-3 days (24%), or 10 or more days (20%) learning about literacy instruction. Although rare, 3% of schools indicated teachers had less than 1 day of professional development devoted to literacy in the past year.

**Table 15.** Number of Literacy Professional Development Days in the Past Year

Days of Literacy Professional Development	Count	Percent
Less than 1	18	3%
1 day	47	8%
2-3 days	138	24%
4-5 days	154	27%
6-7 days	69	12%
8-9 days	40	7%
10 or more	114	20%

## Intensive Summer Reading Programs

The original ELI code included a provision for offering intensive summer reading programs (ISRPs) for students not meeting proficiency standards. This was changed from a requirement for schools to a recommendation through an amendment passed by the 2016 Iowa Legislature. The results of the present survey suggest the number of schools offering summer learning opportunities to their students is high ( $n = 379$  respondents or 65%), despite ISRPs no longer being mandatory.

About one-third (30%) of the school programs are supported by community partners. In addition, 61% of survey respondents indicated that community organizations offer summer programs not affiliated with the school. Collectively, there seem to be numerous opportunities for children in Iowa to continue receiving reading support during the break.

The 379 schools with ISRPs were asked to identify for how many years the summer program has been offered. Nearly half (48%) had started ISRPs within the last 5 years or since the inception of ELI. However, many programs have existed for a number of years, as shown in Table 16.

**Table 16.** Number of Years the School Has Offered an ISRP

Years Offered	Count	Percent
<b>0-2</b>	35	9%
<b>3-5</b>	147	39%
<b>6-10</b>	95	25%
<b>11-15</b>	40	11%
<b>16-20</b>	36	10%
<b>Over 20</b>	26	7%

Among the schools not offering ISRPs, the primary reason was reported as a lack of funding. However, many of the other reasons identified in Table 17 are known challenges to summer programming such as lack of interest among teachers and students. Although 77 schools reported that a lack of transportation prevented them from offering summer programs, only about half (57%) of the schools that do hold ISRPs indicated they offer transportation to participating students.

**Table 17.** Reasons the School Does Not Offer an ISRP

Reason Summer Reading Programs Not Offered	Count
Lack of funding	139
Lack of teachers to instruct in the summer	81
Lack of transportation for students	77
Low student attendance	29
Low student enrollment	26
Students receive services through other programs or agencies	15
Lack of need (i.e., do not have students who are in need of remediation)	13
Don't know	7
Did not improve student performance	4
Board decision	1
Lack of someone to plan or facilitate a summer program	1

Schools offering ISRPs were asked to report which students are targeted for participation. The information reported in Table 18 reflects overlapping responses because respondents were asked to indicate all possible reasons for students being eligible for the summer program. The most common group of students targeted were those who are not reading proficiently (95%). The other common population was eligible for Extended School Year Services within special education services (41%). Students in special education also may be among the group not reading proficiently.

**Table 18.** Students for Whom the ISRP Is Intended

Target Population	Count	Percent
Students who are not reading at grade level	360	95%
Students who qualify for special education services	160	42%
Students for whom English is not a first language	88	23%
Students from low-income families	74	20%
Students who would benefit from a program for accelerating learning	60	16%
All students	14	4%
Migrant families	3	<1%
Students in the talented and gifted program	1	<0.5%
Students new to Montessori Education	1	<0.5%

The ISRP recommendation in ELI was specific to students in between their third- and fourth-grade years in school. Schools responding to the present survey reported offering summer learning opportunities to students across the elementary grades, but it was most common for schools to include students in Grades 1-2 (95% to 96% of respondents), with Grades K and 3

(83% to 89% of respondents) also common. The majority of programs (60%) also included Grade 4, and just under half (46%) also offered the summer program to fifth graders.

**Table 19.** Grade Levels Included in the ISRP

Grade	Count	Percent
preK	42	11%
K	313	83%
1	362	96%
2	360	95%
3	337	89%
4	227	60%
5	176	46%
6	68	18%

Regardless of the grade level, most summer programs served fewer than 25 students (78% to 90% of schools).

**Table 20.** Number of Students Attending the ISRP by Grade

pre-Kindergarten - Kindergarten

Participants	Count	Percent
Fewer than 25	282	90%
26-50	24	8%
51-75	5	2%
76-100	1	<0.5%
101-125	1	<0.5%
Total	313	100%

Grade 3

Participants	Count	Percent
Fewer than 25	290	86%
26-50	32	9%
51-75	6	2%
76-100	5	1%
101-125	2	<0.5%
More than 125	3	<1%
Total	338	100%

Grades 1-2

Participants	Count	Percent
Fewer than 25	291	78%
26-50	59	16%
51-75	9	2%
76-100	4	1%
101-125	1	<0.5%
More than 125	7	2%
Total	371	100%

Grades 4-6

Participants	Count	Percent
Fewer than 25	183	80%
26-50	30	13%
51-75	6	3%
76-100	3	1%
101-125	2	1%
More than 125	4	2%
Total	228	100%

## Summer Reading Instruction

Although the survey was primarily concerned with summer reading instruction, the survey asked schools to report whether they offer other academic instruction or enrichment activities. Approximately 61% of respondents indicated they do.

ISRPs may be held for different amounts of time per day and a different number of weeks in the summer. Most commonly, schools reported offering reading and any other instruction or enrichment activities for 2.5 to 3 hours (34%) or 3.5 to 4 hours (30%) per day. Days of shorter length (1.5 or fewer hours) were more common than days of 4.5 or more hours.

**Table 21.** Total Instructional and Enrichment Hours Per ISRP Day

Hours per Day	Count	Percent
<b>0-1.0</b>	26	7%
<b>1.5-2.0</b>	69	18%
<b>2.5-3.0</b>	128	34%
<b>3.5-4.0</b>	113	30%
<b>4.5-5.0</b>	14	4%
<b>5.5-6.5</b>	14	4%
<b>7.0-8.0</b>	15	4%

When specifically asked about the amount of reading instruction provided per day, responses varied widely. Most responses (74%) fell between 46 minutes and 2 hours of daily reading instruction.

**Table 22.** Minutes of Core Reading Instruction Per ISRP Day

Minutes of Reading Instruction per Day	Count	Percent
<b>30 minutes or less</b>	8	2%
<b>31-45 minutes</b>	33	9%
<b>46-60 minutes</b>	101	27%
<b>61-75 minutes</b>	51	13%
<b>76-100 minutes</b>	69	18%
<b>101-120 minutes</b>	60	16%
<b>121-150 minutes</b>	25	7%
<b>151-180 minutes</b>	25	7%
<b>180-210 minutes</b>	6	2%
<b>211-240 minutes</b>	1	<0.5%

Respondents indicated that most programs are held for 4 weeks or longer, but about a quarter (27%) of the ISRPs are held for 2 to 3 weeks. Only 2 schools reported hosting a program of 1 week or less.

**Table 23.** Length of ISRP in Weeks

Weeks in Duration	Count	Percent
<b>Less than a week</b>	1	<0.5%
<b>1</b>	1	<0.5%
<b>2</b>	41	11%
<b>3</b>	59	16%
<b>4</b>	108	29%
<b>5</b>	25	7%
<b>6</b>	82	22%
<b>7</b>	25	7%
<b>8</b>	37	10%

Class sizes during the summer tend to be small, with 65% of schools reporting 10 or fewer students per class. The Iowa Department of Education’s recommendation is to limit ISRP classes to 15 or fewer students and provide small-group instruction to 5 or fewer students. Only 5% of survey respondents indicated class sizes exceed these recommendations, but none reported more than 20 students per class.

**Table 24.** ISRP Class Size

Students per Class	Count	Percent
<b>0-4</b>	23	6%
<b>5</b>	58	15%
<b>6-9</b>	79	21%
<b>10</b>	87	23%
<b>11-14</b>	43	11%
<b>15</b>	71	19%
<b>16-20</b>	18	5%

About half (47%) of schools reported using a specific reading curriculum during the ISRP, with the remainder indicating that teachers can choose their own instructional materials. Slightly more (61%) of the schools with ISRPs reported the curricula used in the summer are the same as that used during the regular school year.

The survey specifically asked about the commercial programs schools were using during the core literacy block in the summer. Eight of the respondents (2%) indicated they were not privy to the design of the ISRP, and 7 (2%) reported that the summer program only offered intensive intervention—not core literacy instruction. Respondents were allowed to enter as many programs or resources as they were using, and 31% of respondents indicated they were using

between 2 and 5 different commercial materials. Hence, the counts by program listed in Table 25 reflect overlapping responses. A total of 68 different commercial programs/resources were listed, so only those with 5 or more response are included in the table.

**Table 25.** Commercial Programs and Resources Used During ISRP Core Instruction

<b>Commercial Program or Resource: Summer Core</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>Lexia Reading Core5 - Lexia Learning</b>	76
<b>Fountas &amp; Pinnell</b>	75
<b>Journeys - Houghton Mifflin</b>	60
<b>Wonders (and/or WonderWorks) - McGraw-Hill</b>	57
<b>Jolly Phonics - Jolly Learning Ltd.</b>	37
<b>Benchmark Literacy</b>	13
<b>CCC - Center for the Collaborative Classroom (Being a Reader, Being a Writer, Making Meaning)</b>	13
<b>Really Great Reading (Countdown, Blast, HD Word, Phonics Boost)</b>	12
<b>95% Group</b>	10
<b>Treasures - Macmillan/McGraw-Hill</b>	10
<b>Reading A-Z/Raz Kids</b>	5
<b>Reading Mastery Plus - SRA/McGraw-Hill</b>	5
<b>Reading Street - Scott Foresman/Pearson</b>	5
<b>Summer Success - Houghton Mifflin Harcourt</b>	5
<b>Waterford Early Reading Program - Waterford Institute</b>	5

In addition to the programs/resources listed in the table, there were 9 other core materials identified by 3 to 4 respondents each, and 42 identified by 1 or 2 respondents each.

The survey also queried what non-commercial reading approaches are implemented during the summer literacy block in addition to or as a complement to the commercial programs and resources being used. Six of the respondents (2%) indicated they were not privy to the design of the ISRP. Again, respondents were allowed to enter as many approaches as they were using, and 55% of respondents indicated they were implementing between 2 and 6 different approaches or strategies during the summer core literacy block. Hence, the counts by approach listed in Table 26 reflect overlapping responses.



**Table 26.** Non-Commercial Approaches Implemented During ISRP Core Instruction

<b>Non-Commercial Approach: Summer Core</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>Guided reading groups</b>	237
<b>Balanced literacy</b>	133
<b>Readers workshop</b>	98
<b>Daily 5/Sisters' Café</b>	89
<b>Writers workshop</b>	69
<b>Comprehensive Intervention Model (CIM)</b>	43
<b>Teacher-designed</b>	13
<b>Word recognition/word work/word study lessons</b>	10
<b>District-designed</b>	9
<b>Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC): Small-group, skills-based instruction</b>	9
<b>Ability grouping for skills</b>	5
<b>Decodable readers</b>	2
<b>Leveled readers</b>	2
<b>One-on-one instruction</b>	2
<b>Shared reading</b>	2

In addition to the approaches listed in the table, there were 6 others identified by a single respondent each.

## Summer Literacy Intervention

Survey respondents also were asked to report on the materials and approaches used for intensive intervention during their ISRPs. Ten of the respondents (3%) indicated they were not privy to the design of the ISRP, and 8 (2%) reported that the summer program only offers core literacy instruction—not intensive intervention. A total of 76 different commercial interventions were identified. As with core materials, respondents were allowed to enter as many intervention programs or resources as they were using, and 51% of respondents indicated they were using between 2 and 13 different intervention materials. Hence, the counts by program/resource listed in Table 27 reflect overlapping responses. Given the number of interventions reported, only those with 10 or more responses are included in the table.

**Table 27.** Commercial Programs and Resources Used During ISRP Intervention

<b>Commercial Program or Resource: Summer Intervention</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>Path to Reading Excellence in School Sites (PRESS)</b>	107
<b>Read Naturally - Read Naturally, Inc.</b>	89
<b>Lexia Reading Core5 - Lexia Learning</b>	79
<b>Leveled Literacy Intervention - Fountas and Pinnell</b>	62
<b>95% Group</b>	49
<b>Six-Minute Solution - Voyager Sopris Learning, Inc.</b>	36
<b>Words Their Way - Pearson</b>	25
<b>Wilson Reading System - Wilson Language Training Corporation</b>	24
<b>WonderWorks - McGraw-Hill</b>	24
<b>Reading Mastery - SRA/McGraw-Hill</b>	23
<b>Imagine Learning - Imagine Learning, Inc.</b>	21
<b>Really Great Reading (Countdown, Blast, HD Word, Phonics Boost)</b>	19
<b>REWARDS - Voyager Sopris Learning, Inc.</b>	17
<b>Corrective Reading - SRA/McGraw-Hill</b>	14
<b>Reading Recovery - Reading Recovery</b>	11
<b>Unknown</b>	10
<b>Visual Phonics - International Communication Learning Institute</b>	10

In addition to the programs/resources listed in the table, there were 18 other intervention materials identified by 3 to 8 respondents each, and 26 identified by 1 or 2 respondents each.

The survey also queried what non-commercial approaches are implemented in addition to or as a complement to commercial programs and resources for summer literacy intervention. Eight of the respondents (2%) indicated they were not privy to the design of the ISRP. Again, respondents were allowed to enter as many approaches as they were using, and 11% of respondents indicated they were implementing at least 2 different approaches. Hence, Table 28 reflects overlapping data.

**Table 28.** Non-Commercial Approaches Implemented During ISRP Intervention

<b>Non-Commercial Approach: Summer Intervention</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>Guided reading groups</b>	240
<b>Comprehensive Intervention Model (CIM)</b>	52
<b>Teacher-designed</b>	11
<b>Unknown</b>	8
<b>District-designed</b>	7
<b>None</b>	6
<b>Word recognition/word work/word study lessons</b>	5
<b>Core instruction only during summer; no intervention</b>	4
<b>Iowa Reading Research (IRRC): Small-group, skills-based instruction</b>	4
<b>One-on-one instruction</b>	3
<b>Ability grouping for skills</b>	2
<b>Fluency routines (e.g., partner practice, RAAC, repeated reading)</b>	2
<b>Multi-sensory instruction</b>	2
<b>Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS)/Response to Intervention (RTI)</b>	2

In addition to the approaches listed in the table, there were 4 others identified by a single respondent each.

## Measuring Students' Progress in the Summer

Given that ISRPs are most often intended to support students who are not reading proficiently, the survey asked respondents to identify how reading progress is measured to determine the program's effectiveness. About 85% of the schools offering ISRPs reported they do assess students' reading performance with one or more measures. Two of the respondents indicated they were unsure whether assessments were administered, and 38 (10%) did not name the measure(s) administered but indicated they are the same as those used during the regular school year. Because respondents were allowed to enter multiple measures, Table 29 reflects overlapping data.

**Table 29.** Assessments Used to Measure ISRP Students' Reading Progress

<b>Assessment of Summer Literacy Learning</b>	<b>Count</b>
<b>Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST)</b>	231
<b>Running records</b>	133
<b>Teacher-designed assessment</b>	104
<b>Assessment supplied with the commercial reading program used</b>	28
<b>Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading (STAR)</b>	23
<b>RAPID</b>	17
<b>Easy Computer Based Monitoring (easyCBM)</b>	15
<b>iReady - Curriculum Associates</b>	14
<b>Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)</b>	13
<b>Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs)</b>	10
<b>Academic Improvement Measurement System (AIMSweb)</b>	6
<b>District-designed assessments</b>	5
<b>Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) - Fountas and Pinnell</b>	4
<b>Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)</b>	3
<b>Gates MacGinitie Reading Tests</b>	2
<b>Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) - NWEA</b>	2

In addition to the assessments listed in the table, there were 10 others identified by a single respondent each.

## Planning Intensive Summer Reading Programs

Survey respondents were asked several items about their planning of ISRPs. With many programs intended for students with reading difficulties, schools were asked to report whether teachers are required to have a reading endorsement. The majority of respondents (80%) indicated reading endorsements were not required, and just under half of teachers (47%) receive training on reading instructional strategies prior to teaching in the summer.

Because some ISRPs are held for several hours per day, schools were asked whether they provide food to participating students. All reported providing breakfast, lunch, and/or snacks. The highest proportion of respondents (45%) offer only snacks to students. About 20% of schools reported offering all three (breakfast, lunch, and snacks), and another 20% offer breakfast and lunch.

**Table 30.** Food Offered to Summer Participants

Food	Count	Percent
<b>Breakfast</b>	165	44%
<b>Lunch</b>	190	50%
<b>Snacks</b>	277	73%

Finally, respondents were asked how long before the start of their ISRP they began planning for it. The majority (59%) started planning 2-3 months in advance.

**Table 31.** How Long Before the ISRP Planning Begins

Months Before Summer	Count	Percent
<b>Less than 1 month</b>	27	7%
<b>1 month</b>	56	15%
<b>2 months</b>	127	34%
<b>3 months</b>	95	25%
<b>4 months</b>	24	6%
<b>5 months</b>	14	4%
<b>6 months</b>	23	6%
<b>7 months</b>	1	<0.5%
<b>8 months</b>	3	1%
<b>9 months</b>	1	<0.5%
<b>10 months</b>	8	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Conclusion

It is not possible to determine from available data whether the literacy instruction provided in elementary schools has changed since ELI was passed in 2012. However, some of its provisions are reflected in the survey responses. For example, the majority (65%) of schools indicated offering more than the required 90 minutes of core literacy instruction each day, and 46% to 53% reported offering more than the required 30 minutes of intervention each day. In addition, approximately 65% of schools offer summer programs, and 95% are intended for students not reading proficiently—as is consistent with state recommendations.

The requirements and recommendations associated with ELI still have allowed schools freedom in how they design and implement their literacy instruction. Across Iowa, there is a wide variety of commercial literacy materials and non-commercial approaches provided for both core instruction and literacy intervention. Nevertheless, a majority of respondents (64%) indicated there is a high degree of consistency in the literacy instruction delivered by teachers within their buildings.

According to survey respondents, the majority of elementary teachers are participating in 4-5 days (27%) or 2-3 days (24%) of literacy professional development and meeting with their colleagues weekly (37%) or monthly (25%) to discuss students' literacy data. Given the number of commercial products in which schools are investing, possible next steps for the state's efforts include offering (a) additional guidance in the selection of appropriate resources for particular contexts and (b) professional learning opportunities that are not tied to a commercial product.