

January 1, 2018



Legislative Report

Iowa Reading Research Center

IOWA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

State of Iowa
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
400 E. 14th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

Iowa State Board of Education

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INTRODUCTION

Legislative Authority

The Iowa Administrative Code 281, Chapter 61, established the Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC) in 2013. The legislative purposes of the IRRC include developing and disseminating:

- Instructional strategies for prekindergarten through Grade 12 to achieve literacy proficiency that include reading, reading comprehension, and writing for all students.
- Strategies for identifying and providing evidence-based interventions for students, beginning in kindergarten, who are at risk of not achieving literacy proficiency.
- Models for effective school, parent, and community partnerships to improve student literacy.
- Reading assessments.
- Professional development strategies and materials to support teacher effectiveness in student literacy development.
- Data reports on attendance center, school district, and statewide progress toward literacy proficiency in the context of student, attendance center, and school district demographic characteristics.
- An intensive summer literacy program.

The legislation also identified that the IRRC's first focus should be on improving reading performance and instruction in kindergarten through Grade 3.

The University of Iowa

The University of Iowa is the host for the IRRC because of its strength as one of the nation's top public research universities, with a great deal of faculty expertise in literacy as well as resources to support the continued growth of the center. The University of Iowa is the fiscal agent and provides office space for the center's staff.

Communication Methods

The IRRC disseminates research findings and research-based resources via the IRRC website (<https://iowareadingresearch.org/>) as well as through study-specific reports (e.g., evaluation of Council Bluffs' 2017 summer reading program). Additionally, communication occurs through social media such as [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and the [IRRC's blog](#).

READING RESEARCH STAKEHOLDERS

The IRRC conducts research in support of literacy education efforts across Iowa. Activities address the needs and concerns of the major stakeholders in the state such as:

- Local education agencies (LEAs)
- Nonpublic schools
- Iowa Area Education Agencies (AEAs)
- Iowa's institutes of higher education (IHEs), both private and public

- Community organizations
- Iowa Department of Education (DE)
- Professional organizations
- Educators
- Families

In addition, the IRRRC is required to have an advisory council that meets three times per year. The director of the DE or the director's designee appoints the members. The IRRRC Advisory Council met on the following dates during the 2017 calendar year: May 23, September 8, and December 7.

Members serve 4-year terms. Current members represent a cross section of organizations and institutions involved in supporting reading practices in the state. Members for fiscal year 2018 are:

Category	First Name	Last Name	Organization
Institutes of Higher Education	Sarah	Vander Zanden	University of Northern Iowa
	Emily	Hayden	Iowa State University
	Lindsay	Woodward	Drake University
	Renita	Schmidt	University of Iowa
Department of Education	Ryan	Wise	Iowa Department of Education
	W. David	Tilly	Iowa Department of Education
AEAs	Lonna	Anderson	Great Prairie AEA
	Joe	Crozier	Grant Wood AEA
	Jaci	Jarmes	Great Prairie AEA
LEAs (public and nonpublic)	Kimberly	Buryanek	Sioux City Community School District
	Kate	Connealy	Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools
Teachers	Kara	Dietrich	Ballard Community School District
Educational Associations and Organizations	Gabriel	Twedt	Iowa State Education Association
	Claudia	Reyes-Fry	International Dyslexia Association, Iowa Branch
Community Partners	Michael	Bunde	Early Childhood Iowa
	Angélica	Cárdenas-Chaisson	Child & Family Policy Center
	Becky	Miles-Polka	Campaign for Grade Level Reading
Parents	Shelly	Hanson	Parent Representative

IRRC IMPLEMENTATION OF READING PRACTICES

The IRRC conducts the following types of applied research in collaboration with stakeholders:

1. Research to guide the development of literacy policy and practice
2. Research to inform the effective implementation of literacy policy and practice
3. Research to evaluate the impact of literacy policy and practice

The IRRC works in partnership with the DE, and its priorities are guided by legislative action and the recommendations of the IRRC Advisory Council. The following table provides a description of the 2017 activities of the IRRC listed by Iowa Administrative Code citations.

2017 Progress	
IA Code Citations	In the Last Calendar Year, the IRRC Has...
<p>Evidence-based Interventions and Strategies IAC § 284.32 1(b)</p>	<p>Posted research publications on the IRRC website by Dr. Deborah K. Reed, IRRC director, and Dr. Jessica Folsom, IRRC assistant research scientist. Developed and posted 19 blog posts on reading instruction. Staff presented at 24 state and regional conferences to share evidence-based literacy strategies with teachers.</p> <p>Completed 1 module on effective literacy instruction and 4 modules on evidence-based literacy strategies (grapheme-phoneme correspondences, morphology, vocabulary Frayer Models, and text structure) that each include videos made in Iowa classrooms.</p> <p>Supported the Ames Community School District with a study of word study materials for core reading instruction in kindergarten through Grade 2.</p>
<p>School and Community Partnerships IAC § 284.32</p>	<p>Created family and educator resources for posting on the IRRC website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five blog posts, including three book inserts and bookmarks, related to families supporting their children’s literacy development. • Translated a blog post and related resources into 14 languages to support families in using the following literacy strategies when reading with their children: CROWD (completion, recall, open-ended, “wh” questions, distancing) and PEER (prompt, evaluate, expand, repeat). <p>Participated in 2 community meetings to explain the IRRC’s involvement in and findings from the Ames Community School District’s pilot of word study materials.</p> <p>Launched the Practitioners and Researchers Overcoming Problems of Literacy (PROPeL) initiative.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first cohort included alternative schools, juvenile justice facilities, and shelters in four locations. • A second cohort of four Cedar Rapids Community School District elementary schools was subsequently added.
Reading Assessments IAC § 284.32 1(d) IAC § 279.68 1(a)	Financially supported the data system parallel to Iowa TIER that allowed IHEs to train future educators on FAST (Formative Assessment System for Teachers), IGDIs (Individual Growth & Development), and Iowa TIER in practicum and pre-service settings. That platform was replaced with training hosted by FastBridge in fall of 2017. The IRRC continues to manage the registrations of IHEs in the FastBridge system, but training on IGDIs is no longer available.
Data Reports IAC § 284.32 1(f)	<p>The presentation reporting the final results of the Ames Community School District Word Study Team evaluation study and the report of the materials review are posted on the IRRC website.</p> <p>The final report of the evaluation of Council Bluffs Community School Districts' 2017 summer reading program is posted on the IRRC website.</p>
Intensive Summer Reading Program IAC § 279.68 4(c)	<p>Given the change in Iowa Code, intensive summer reading programs are no longer required. However, the IRRC continues to engage in research and support of summer reading programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published 2 blog posts on summer reading and contributed to the May 2, 2017 DE article on summer learning. • Conducted an evaluation of Council Bluffs' 2017 summer reading program. • Presented results of IRRC research on summer reading programs at University of Northern Iowa Elementary Literacy Conference.
Professional Development IAC § 284.32 1(e)	<p>Conducted two training-of-trainers sessions (1.5 days each) that prepared approximately 200 literacy leaders from Area Education Agencies and school districts around the state to train teachers on the 5 modules we created.</p> <p>Continued to provide professional development to the Sioux City Community School District on implementing small-group, skills-based instruction in 12 elementary schools.</p> <p>Delivered 12 presentations and direct technical assistance to teachers in the Ames, Cedar Rapids, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Fort Dodge, Midland Park, Pleasant Valley, Sidney, Waterloo, and Waverly Shell Rock school districts.</p>
Dyslexia Senate File 2319 Chapter 1077	Hosted a 2-hour, web-based, on-demand dyslexia training to support undergraduate and graduate students in teacher certification, reading endorsement, or reading specialist certification programs.

FUTURE

The IRRC is proud to have addressed all of its mandates as described by the Iowa Administrative Code. We look forward to continuing our research and technical assistance to Iowa schools in 2018. In the next year, we plan to work closely with the DE on creating a literacy blueprint to guide school districts in implementing evidence-based literacy instruction. This will include additional professional development modules and a plan for scaling up the dissemination, pending appropriate funding for the center.