

House File 2618: Section 2: Early Literacy Implementation FAQs

[House File 2618](#) passed in May 2024 amends existing Early Literacy Implementation requirements. The following are Department-provided recommendations, clarifications and responses to questions from the field.

General

1. How are existing Early Literacy Implementation requirements from 279.68 amended by Section 2 from House File 2618?

Section 2 of HF2618 amends 279.68 by adding the following requirements:

*A school district shall provide to students in kindergarten through the end of grade six who are not reading proficiently with **personalized reading plans** until the student is reading at grade level, as determined by the student's consistently proficient performance on valid and reliable measures of reading ability. (emphasis added)*

*Each school district shall provide **written notice** to the parent or guardian of any student in kindergarten through grade six who is not reading proficiently of the student's level of reading or reading readiness. The written notice shall contain a description of the parent's or guardian's ability to request that the student be retained in the student's current grade level for the subsequent school year. (emphasis added)*

*A school district **shall not promote a student** who is not reading proficiently to the next grade level, and shall retain the student in the student's current grade level for the subsequent school year, **if the student's parent or guardian submits to the school district a request** that the student be retained in the student's current grade level pursuant to subparagraph (1). (emphasis added)*

Reading Proficiently Determination

2. HF2618 refers to “any student in kindergarten through grade six who is not reading proficiently.” What data should be used in K-6 for students to be designated as not reading proficiently?

Prior to ISASP administration at the end of grade 3, K-3 students who have an existing Early Literacy Implementation (ELI) “Persistently At-Risk” literacy status following two consecutive below-benchmark scores on an approved screener (i.e. FastBridge or other [ELI Approved literacy screener](#)) are “not reading proficiently.” Student screening results are available in [Panorama Student Success](#).

Grade 4-6 students who are “not yet proficient” in English Language Arts on the ISASP assessment are “not reading proficiently.” Student ISASP assessment results are available on [Pearson Access Next](#). In addition to ISASP, schools may also choose to utilize approved screener data for grade 4-6 students to inform determinations of “not reading proficiently” should they desire to utilize additional measures of student proficiency in grade 4-6. See question #5 for additional ELI details.

3. Are there different definitions of “not reading proficiently” when considering a personalized reading plan, written notice, or retention?

No. Question 2 articulates the determination of “not reading proficiently” when considering a personalized reading plan, written notice, and retention.

4. Can other data sources (e.g., ELPA, grades, classroom observations, etc.) be used to determine reading proficiency?

While educators are informed by all data sources, ISASP ELA achievement levels, when available, and early literacy screening data are used to determine reading proficiency.

5. Can a universal screener that is not an approved screener (i.e. FastBridge or other [ELI Approved literacy screener](#)) be used to determine reading proficiency?

No. An assessment that is not on the approved list has either not been reviewed or has been reviewed and did not meet minimum technical standards for use to meet ELI screening requirements. All K-3 students must be screened three times a year using an approved screener. All 4-6 students who are Persistently at-Risk (two consecutive below-benchmark scores on an approved screener) must also be screened three times a year using an approved screener.

Schools may choose to use additional measures that do not meet these requirements, but these additional measures may not replace an approved required screener.

6. Will Panorama Student Success calculate literacy status for grade 4-6 students?

Panorama Student Success literacy status is calculated based on fall, winter and spring ELI approved screener data. If grades 4-6 are screened, literacy status is calculated just as it is for K-3.

Grade 4-6 students who are “not yet proficient” in English Language Arts on the ISASP assessment are “not reading proficiently.” In addition to ISASP, schools may also choose to utilize approved screener data for grade 4-6 students to inform determinations of “not reading proficiently” should they desire to utilize additional measures of student proficiency.

Personalized Reading Plan

7. Is use of this specific provided Personalized Reading Plan document required?

No. This is a model plan provided by the Iowa Department of Education at the request of educators that districts may use or adapt to meet their statutory requirements in House File 2618.

8. For students not reading proficiently in grades K-6 how often is progress monitoring required (weekly, every other week, etc)?

According to 279.68, “The student’s reading proficiency shall be periodically reassessed by locally determined or statewide assessments including periodic universal screening and annual standard-based assessments.”

According to Chapter 62.3(3), “A school district will provide intensive reading instruction to any student who is persistently at risk in reading. A school district will continue to provide the student with intensive reading instruction until the student is reading at grade level, at grade levels beyond grade three if necessary, as determined by the student’s consistently proficient performance on valid and reliable measures of reading ability that meet the provisions of rule 281—62.1”

The purpose of progress monitoring is to provide frequent feedback on student progress in order to make adjustments to interventions. Weekly monitoring is standard practice, and monitoring less frequently may result in less reliable and accurate information about student progress and slower response to student needs.

9. Will we be required to maintain documentation of all personalized reading plans for students in grades K-6?

Yes. This is to preserve a history of intervention success and students needs, provide ongoing parent/guardian communication, and to enable continuity of support.

10. Must schools provide students' personalized reading plans to parents/guardians?

Yes. Schools should develop personalized reading plans in partnership with parents/guardians, who must receive regular progress updates aligned to the goals of the plan.

11. Should schools submit students' personalized reading plans to the Iowa Department of Education?

No. The Iowa Department of Education requires every district to upload a sample personalized reading plan to be uploaded in CASA as part of a district's annual 2024 Desk Audit to ensure compliance with this statutory requirement.

Written Notice and Retention

12. What must be included in the written notice to parents that meets the requirements of HF 2618?

The written notice to parents or guardians of any student in kindergarten through grade six who is not reading proficiently must transparently describe the student's level of reading or reading readiness, including all relevant approved screener and ISASP data and easily understood descriptions of those results. The written notice must also explain the parent's or guardian's ability to request and retain their child in the student's current grade level for the subsequent school year, which should include a description of how to submit such a request through multiple, accessible formats.

Descriptions of the student's level of reading or reading readiness may include student achievement comparisons to peers across the school, district, or the state, student growth, and projected long-term student outcomes based on current reading levels, which is provided statewide through [EVAAS student performance reports](#) with ISASP.

13. Do we need to send separate written notices to parents for ELI and the required written notice as part of HF2618 that notifies parents of the right to retain the student?

No. A school district may choose to meet multiple statutory requirements in a single written notice.

14. May a parent/guardian retain a student who was previously retained and is still not reading proficiently after the year of retention?

Yes. A parent/guardian's ability to retain a student is not limited to one time, and educators should support parents/guardians in making informed educational decisions for their child.

A student not reading proficiently in a grade for 2 years or more may raise significant concerns regarding the current or prior instructional program's quality and ability to meet the student's needs.

15. When should written notices and corresponding educator and parent/guardian conversations occur?

Written notices to parents or guardians of any student in kindergarten through grade six who is not reading proficiently should be sent as soon as possible following the assessment/screener to provide adequate time for educators and parents/guardians to partner in identifying and implementing needed supports and interventions in the Personalized Reading Plan.

16. When should conversations regarding a parent/guardian's retention request occur?

Schools should always be responsive to parent requests for discussions related to retention. Depending on the time of the school year in which such a request is made, educators may focus on the following to support the parent/guardian in making informed educational decisions for their child:

- Reviewing recent student assessment and progress data.
- Ensuring the Personalized Reading Plan, including the interventions and supports articulated, are meeting the child's needs.
- Ensuring that, if a child is retained, the instructional program will meet the child's needs.

Generally, retention conversations are most effective in the spring before the upcoming school year. Parents/guardians may also revisit retention decisions before the start of the school year based on their child's progress during the summer months, including through summer reading programs.