

Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

September 17, 2026

Agenda Item: 2025-26 Foundations of Reading Test Results and Program Support Plan

State Board Goal: Goal 3

State Board Role/Authority: The State Board sets standards and approves practitioner preparation programs based on those standards. Iowa Code sections 256.7 and 256.16 and Iowa Administrative Code chapter 281-79.

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Division of Teacher Quality and Innovation

Lindsay Harrison, Education Program Consultant
Office of Educator Quality

Attachment(s): One

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board hear and discuss this information.

Background: Per Iowa Code section 256.16, teacher candidates earning certain endorsements are required to take the Foundations of Reading Test (FoRT). In its oversight capacity, the State Board shall review the results and support plan for teacher preparation programs.

Iowa Foundations of Reading Test (FoRT) 2025-26 Results and Program Support Plan

Presented to the Iowa State Board of Education
September 17, 2026



Department of Education



Purpose of Today's Presentation

- Highlight TPP improvement support provided to programs in SY 2025-26
- Understand data from the second year of FoRT (SY 2025-26 results finalized at the end of summer 2026)
- Review SY 2026-27 TPP improvement support plan, building upon SY 25-26 TPP improvement supports
- Present long-term support plans
- Receive State Board feedback

2026 Foundations of Reading Test Results

- Candidates tested between August 1, 2025 - July 31, 2026
- The recommended national passing score, affirmed by the Iowa Department of Education, is 240

Report includes:

- Percentage of candidates at each institution with passing scores
- Number of test takers and services or opportunities for students to retake the test for each institution
- The overall Iowa passage rate across the 2025-26 testing period was 52%
 - The January 1, 2025 - July 31, 2025, passage rate was 46%, representing a statewide increase of 6 percentage points from 2025 to 2026



- Reading is foundational to student success
- Teachers need strong preparation in evidence-based reading instruction, and FoRT provides critical insight into TPP effectiveness
- Iowa must ensure all students benefit from well-prepared teachers

How We Are Using the Data

- Inform TPP continuous improvement supports and requirements
- Ensure TPP candidates receive the supports they need in their program so that schools are not charged with new teacher remediation

Support Provided to Programs in SY 2025-26



- LETRS training provided to faculty
- Department High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) training
- Six Department-facilitated peer collaboration sessions
- Department Literacy Workbook Tool and peer reviews
- In-depth data reviews with individual programs facilitated by the Department
- Department-provided workshop in partnership with IACTE to support use of data to drive high-fidelity curriculum and targeted remediation
- FoRT office hours



Iowa Higher Education Literacy Summit

Five-Year Plan					
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Theme	Getting Started Curricular Revision 1. Foundations of Literacy Development	5. Assessment	3. The How - Structured Literacy	2. The Who - Knowledge of Diverse Reading Profiles	Celebrating
Deep Dive Structured Literacy: "The What"	4.1 & 4.2 Phonemic Awareness & Phonics	4.3 Fluency/ Word Rec	4.4 Vocab	4.5 Listening and Reading Comp	4.6 Written Expression
Competency Based Focus	1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1 & 4.2, 5.1	1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 4.3, 5.2	1.3, 2.4, 3.3, 4.4, 5.3	1.4, 2.5, 3.4, 4.5, 5.4	2.6, 3.5, 4.6





Ready-to-use Resources

- In addition to FoRT, the novice teacher survey identified a need for stronger assessment preparation.
- The Department provided resources intended to be integrated directly into coursework.

 Class #1: Foundations of Literacy Assessment

 Class #2: First Steps of Data Interpretation

 Class #3: Assessing Accuracy Weaknesses

 Class #4: Assessing Fluency Weaknesses

 Class #5: Neither Accurate Nor Fluent

 Class #6: Formative Data to Drive Instruction

 Data Sort Files

 PPT Video Files

 Class2_First_Steps__1_.pptx

 Class2_Instructor_Guide.pdf

 Class2_Quiz_AnswerKey.pdf

 Class2_Quiz.pdf



Exemplary Practices Overview

- **Strengthened literacy course sequences** by adding or redesigning with intentional progression across courses
- **Strengthened candidate checkpoints and remediation** using assessment data to target individual needs
- **Expanded clinically based literacy experiences** to assess students, analyze data, plan instruction, teach literacy lessons
- **Used candidate data to drive continuous improvement**
- **Improved consistency and faculty capacity** with coordination across course sections and modalities and enhanced expectations for faculty credentials and professional learning
- **Changed policies** to increase engagement



Overview of State Report



Foundations of Reading Test Pass Rates 2026

Teacher preparation programs were required to administer the Foundations of Reading test (FoRT) and report the results. This report shows candidates who were tested between August 1, 2025 to July 31, 2026.

The passing score, set by the Iowa Department of Education (Department), is 240, which is the national benchmark. The report includes the percentage of candidates at each institution in relation to the passing score, number of test takers and learning support services or opportunities for students to retake the test. **As of August 1, 2026, the Iowa overall passage rate was 52%.**

For questions about this report email idoedprep@iowa.gov.

Institution of Higher Education (IHE)	Percent At or Above Passing Score (240)	Percent Below Passing Score (239 and under)	Number of Candidates Tested	Services or Opportunities to Retake the Assessment
Briar Cliff University	above 50%	-	< 10*	• Require remediation with an additional course
Buena Vista University	40%	60%	58	• Require individual tutoring
Central College	89%	11%	18	• Require online remediation (externally developed)
Clarke University	36%	64%	11	• Require online remediation (externally developed)
Coe College	above 50%	-	< 10*	• Require remediation with an additional course
Cornell College	above 50%	-	< 10*	• Require online remediation (externally developed)
Dordt University	86%	14%	36	• Require online remediation (externally developed)

Table Includes:

- % at or above 240
- % at 239 or below
- # unique test takers
- Services to retake the assessment

Other Components:

- Report and score details
- Data considerations
- Resources

Program Passage Rates

Experienced significant gains
ITALICS - Targeted Support Level
BOLD - Intensive Support Level

* For programs with fewer than 10 test takers, only above or below the state average listed to protect PII.

Institution	2025	2026	Institution	2025	2026	Institution	2025	2026
Briar Cliff	above average	above average	<i>Graceland</i>	<i>above average</i>	27%	Simpson	75%	above average
Buena Vista	21%	40%	Grand View	above average	63%	St. Ambrose/ Mount Mercy	75%	68%
Central College	73%	89%	Grinnell**	Not required	Not required	University of Dubuque	55%	70%
Clarke	30%	36%	Iowa State University	40%	65%	University of Iowa	53%	55%
Coe	above average	above average	Loras	27%	above average	UNI	35%	37%
Cornell	46%	above average	Luther	56%	80%	Upper Iowa	39%	27%
Dordt	76%	86%	Morningside	65%	67%	<i>Waldorf</i>	<i>above average</i>	<i>below average</i>
Drake	above average	69%	Mount Mercy	above average	NA	Wartburg	above average	63%
Emmaus	above average	above average	Northwestern	50%	62%	William Penn	30%	39%
Faith Baptist Bible College	100%	above average						

Program Results by Support Level



Intensive

**Programs that were
at the intensive or
targeted level in
2025 and continue
below 50%**

Buena Vista
Clarke
UNI
Upper Iowa
William Penn

Targeted

**Below 50% for the
first time**

Graceland
Waldorf

Standard

**Programs at or
above 50%**

19 Programs



Required Activities and Supports

Institutions will be supported according to ongoing data.

The Department has contracted with *The Reading League* to evaluate programs receiving Intensive support.**



Intensive: Below benchmark for two years

1. Participate in external review of literacy curriculum **
2. Review of Data Analysis and Action Steps
3. Review of [faculty qualifications](#) and the unit's investment in faculty development (LETRS required)
4. Literacy faculty required to attend Peer Collaborative Workshops
5. May be excluded from providing related professional learning related to literacy for licensure renewal credit (in addition to conditionally accredited programs)

Targeted: Below benchmark - first year

1. Review of Data Analysis and Action Steps
2. Review of [faculty qualifications](#) and the unit's investment in faculty development (LETRS required)
3. Literacy faculty required to attend Peer Collaborative Workshops

Standard: Above benchmark

1. Optional: Attend Peer Collaborative Workshops

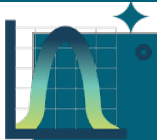
Data Trends



	2025 (Jan. 1, 2025 - July 31, 2025)	2025-26 (Aug. 1, 2025 - July 31, 2026)
Number of Test Takers	633	1,043
Passage Rate	46%	52%
Average Scale Score	236	239
Number of Second Attempts	14	41
Number of Programs Below	Below 46% 8 EPPs	Below 50% 7 EPPs
Content Sub Areas		
Foundations of Reading Development	63%	65%
Development of Reading Comprehension	67%	68%
Reading Assessment and Instruction	69%	70%



Data Trends



	2025 (Jan. 1, 2025 - July 31, 2025)	2025-26 (Aug. 1, 2025 - July 31, 2026)
Foundations of Reading Development		
0001 Language and emergent literacy skills	59%	63%
0002 Developing beginning reading skills	64%	67%
0003 Word analysis skills and strategies	67%	69%
0004 Reading fluency	61%	62%
Development of Reading Comprehension		
0005 Promoting academic language development	62%	64%
0006 Analysis of literary texts	70%	71%
0007 Analysis of informational texts	70%	71%
Reading Assessment and Instruction		
0008 Assessing reading development	64%	65%
0009 Best practices of reading instruction	74%	76%



Analysis and Reflection Tool

2025-2026 FORT Data Analysis and Reflection Tool

Name of Program						
2025-2026 Program Passage Rate	# of Test Takers	# Passed	# Failed	# 2nd Attempts	# Failed Within SEM	
Content Sub Area	24-25 Average IIE Score	25-26 Average IIE Score	25-26 State Average	Objective	24-25 Average IIE Score	25-26 Average IIE Score
Foundations of Reading Development			XX			
				0001 - Language and emergent literacy skills		XX
				0002 - Developing beginning reading skills		XX
				0003 - Word analysis skills and strategies		XX
				0004 - Reading fluency		XX
Development of Reading Comprehension			XX			
				0005 - Promoting academic language development		XX
				0006 - Analysis of literacy texts		XX
				0007 - Analysis of informational texts		XX
Reading Assessment and Instruction			XX			
				0008 - Assessing reading development		XX
				0009 - Best practices of reading instruction		XX

1. What does the 2025-26 FoRT data tell you about candidates' literacy knowledge and skills?
2. What does the comparison of 2024-25 and 2025-26 data indicate for candidate literacy preparation?
3. How does the program ensure candidates demonstrate required literacy competencies before recommendation for licensure?
4. What is the current status of faculty LETRS training progress?



Support Level: Multi-Year Plan

Purpose:

To support program goals and Department resources, planning for the future is beneficial.



Proposed for 2026 Report — **Benchmark 50%**

- **Intensive:** Programs on intensive or targeted support in 2025, and below 50% in 2026
- **Targeted:** Programs that were below 50% for the first time
- **Standard:** Programs at or above 50%

Proposed for 2027 Report — **Benchmark 55%**

- **Intensive:** Programs on intensive or targeted support in 2026, and below 55% in 2027
- **Targeted:** Programs that were below 55% for the first time
- **Standard:** Programs at or above 55%

Proposed for 2028 Report — **Benchmark 60%**

- **Intensive:** Programs on intensive or targeted support in 2027, and below 60% in 2028
- **Targeted:** Programs that were below 60% for the first time
- **Standard:** Programs at or above 60%





Next Steps

- Collaborate with *The Reading League* to support programs in Intensive category
- Educator Quality Team provides feedback on Action Steps submitted by Intensive and Targeted institutions
- Peer Collaborative Workshops for Literacy Faculty
- A proposal for changes to the Iowa Administrative Code is being drafted
- Iowa Higher Education Literacy Summit planned for June 2027

Questions?

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