

# K-3 Reading Improvement Program

Report of FY13



Prepared by the

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Teaching and Learning

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# K-3 Reading Improvement Program

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## Background and Summary

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Reading is a language-based skill, and while some children seem to simply develop reading abilities as they read books with a parent or guardian, most children need instruction in reading to become proficient. Some studies reveal that as many as 20%—1 in 5—of readers are poor readers and remain that way through their lifetime. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) recognized that poor reading is not only an educational problem but also a public health issue. NICHD launched a large-scale program to review research on the causes of reading failure and methods of teaching. This research (*The Report of the National Reading Panel*) provided educators with new information about the best ways to help students learn to read. Teachers in a classroom need to have data about students' needs in phonemic awareness, phonics, guided oral reading, vocabulary, and comprehension. However, all students are different, and the way they learn to read and the support they need is as varied as they are. This puts a tremendous responsibility on the teacher to know a great deal about reading assessments and data, reading instruction, and reading interventions.

Utah's K-3 Reading Improvement program is a tremendous support and commitment to the development of our young readers. By providing matching funds to districts and funding to charter schools, this program helps schools work toward the common goal of creating students who read at grade level (Rule R277-406). The K-3 Reading Improvement program helps schools increase reading proficiency through (1) the implementation of reading assessments, (2) focused reading interventions for students that may include extra time with reading specialists, tutoring, before or after school programs, tiered literacy instruction, or the use of reading software and appropriate hardware, and (3) support for teachers to develop current, highly-effective instructional plans for working with students to improve reading at all levels.

To receive program monies from the state, participating local education agencies (LEAs) create a plan that is approved at the local level. Districts use program monies with other funds to target literacy improvement and support a comprehensive K-3 reading program. Charter schools also participate in the program but are not required to match the state funds. The USOE reviews the LEAs plan when it is submitted through the Utah Consolidated Application (UCA) for the K-3 Reading Improvement program.

This report provides an update on:

- Program developments for the 2013-2014 school year and beyond
- A summary of LEAs' K-3 Reading Improvement data
- A summary of expenditures

Students must learn to read. It is a smooth and easy process for some; it is more complicated for others. The K-3 Reading Improvement program allows Utah to support all students in developing the literacy skills they need to be successful throughout their lives.

## Program Developments

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**Previous status:** Prior to 2011-2012, the assessment used to monitor progress for the K-3 program was a local decision. Several valid and reliable assessments were used (DIBLES, DIBELS Next, Aimsweb, DWA, etc.). The data provided information to the LEAs, but it was not comparable across the state.

**Current implementation:** Beginning in 2011-2012, all LEAs were required to test students using *DIBELS Next* in grades 1-3 at the middle and end of the year. In 2012-2013 and beyond, all students in grades 1-3 will be tested at the beginning, middle, and end of year. Districts with an approved waiver can administer a different assessment as long as it produces comparable data. Comparable state data can now be the basis for all conversations about the K-3 Reading Improvement program.

**Previous status:** Goals for schools and districts are made and approved by Boards at the local level. This allows for local control but creates variance in comparability.

**Current implementation:** A standard growth goal that will be consistent for all schools has undergone psychometric analysis to determine validity and been presented to all LEAs. A local goal will be set by the Board for each school, and a uniform growth goal for the LEA will be set for all students in grade 3. This Uniform Growth Goal (UGG) will set a trajectory for all districts to reach 90% reading proficiency in grade 3 by 2020. It is based on the EOY DIBELS assessment for 2013-14 and 2014-15 as the SAGE test is implemented; it will then be based on SAGE performance.

Additionally, USOE is holding regional meetings with all LEAs to review the Uniform Growth Goal requirements and provide professional development for LEA leaders as they work to revise their programs and plans to meet the needs reflected in their data. This will contribute to changes in practice and policy at the local level to support ongoing literacy development.

**Previous status:** K-3 Reading Improvement funding has remained constant while the number of students and schools has increased. Additionally, increasing numbers of students in Utah are entering school from homes in poverty, acquiring English as their non-heritage language, or coming to school less prepared for more rigorous standards. These factors increase the amount of support needed to ensure the development of literacy skills.

**Current implementation:** There continues to be a need to support growth of the program, including provision for each school to have a reading coach to support teachers and work specifically with identified students.

**Previous status:** Principals and instructional leaders can attend Principals Literacy Academy to continue their professional development in the effective use of *DIBELS Next* and other assessment data to inform instruction requires skill and expertise (up to 30 participants per year, or fewer than 5% of elementary principals).

**Current implementation:** Continue to support growth of professional development opportunities for principals and other instructional leaders in the effective administration and use of *DIBELS Next* data to inform instruction and support student achievement.

## K-3 Reading Improvement Program Plans

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Districts and charter schools (LEAs) are required to submit an annual plan with reading goals to their local boards and then to USOE for approval. These plans are submitted as a part of the Utah Consolidated Application. Reporting measures include the following:

1. Local Education Agencies report the distribution of funds as part of the Annual Program Report submitted to USOE. The figures are also audited as part of an LEA's external annual financial audit.
2. Beginning in 2012-2013, LEAs use the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) Next* as the set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills in grades one through three and kindergarten assessments for the first year of schooling. Students who are reading on grade level are monitored at least three times a year (beginning, middle, and end of year). Students who are reading below grade level or very close to grade level are monitored more frequently so that instruction can be adjusted to support their reading development.
3. LEAs report on the research-based instructional strategies they are using on the annual Utah Consolidated Application report submitted to USOE.
4. LEAs report on the goals for student performance to indicate progress in improving student reading performance on the annual Utah Consolidated Application report submitted to USOE.
5. LEAs are required to report reading levels and progress to parents of students in grades 1, 2, and 3 three times a year and provide the following information: notice of student's lack of proficiency; information regarding appropriate interventions available to the student outside regular instructional time that may include tutoring, before and after school programs, or summer school; focused intervention occurring to develop the reading skill; and activities that the parent or guardian may engage in with the student to assist the student in improving reading proficiency. LEAs may also provide parent nights, newsletters, or other methods of communicating about literacy development.
6. LEAs report on the software they purchase to support students' literacy development. This software supports teachers' instruction by reinforcing or enhancing literacy instruction. LEAs report the software titles they have purchased through the Utah Consolidated Application annual report; funding is reviewed through the Annual Program Report submitted to USOE. The figures are also audited as part of an LEA's external annual financial audit.

During the 2012-2013 school year, 125 LEAs submitted applications for K-3 Reading funding (41 districts and 84 charter schools). For 2013-2014, 116 LEAs are applying for funding (41 districts and 75 charter schools).

All LEAs worked to improve their performance and bring all students, regardless of previous reading level, school preparedness, English language proficiency, or cognitive or academic delay, to an improved level of performance. LEAs also worked to achieve the goals determined to be appropriate for their student populations.

## Assessments in the K-3 Reading Program

LEAs are using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) as the set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills in grades one through three and kindergarten assessments for the first year of schooling. DIBELS are short (approximately one minute per student per test) measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills. DIBELS are comprised of seven measures that function as indicators of phonemic awareness, alphabetic principles, accuracy and fluency with connected text, reading comprehension, and vocabulary. DIBELS were designed for use in identifying children experiencing difficulty in acquisition of basic early literacy skills in order to provide support early and prevent the occurrence of later reading difficulties.

Students who are reading on grade level are monitored at least three times a year (beginning, middle, and end of year). Students who are reading below grade level or very close to grade level are monitored more frequently so that instruction can be adjusted to support their reading development.

Through a separate initiative, many LEAs are conducting their DIBELS testing and intervention work using mCLASS software through Amplify (previously known as Wireless Generation). At this time, there are 27 districts and 41 charter schools enrolled for the 2013-14 school year in grades K-3.

## Interventions Strategies

In 2011-12, mandatory middle and end of year testing and reporting of students in grades 1-3 using *DIBELS Next* was initiated. In 2012-2013, testing at the beginning, middle, and end of year was implemented. Data reporting to the USOE includes: 1) whether students were reading on grade level and 2) whether the students received reading interventions. An intervention is intended to prevent struggling students from falling farther behind their peers. Targeted instruction provided *in addition* to the regular (Tier 1) classroom instruction should be focused on specific literacy needs. Effective interventions will accelerate a student's literacy skills attainment to grade level and improve a student's future educational trajectory.

Interventions include additional time with the teacher, reading specialist, or aide to work on specific reading issues; time before or after school with the teacher or reading specialist; the use of additional curriculum support, including software designed to support reading instruction; and parent reading nights to help build support at home.

## Professional Development

LEAs provided professional development to K-3 classroom teachers focused on reading interventions, new Utah Core reading standards, small group strategies, and using data about student performance to guide instruction, especially the *DIBELS Next* data that provides teachers with a significant data point to determine specific areas of reading for intervention. Specific professional development for K-3 teachers included systems such as Spalding, Response to Intervention for reading, reading endorsement classes, and *DIBELS Next* administration and interpretation.

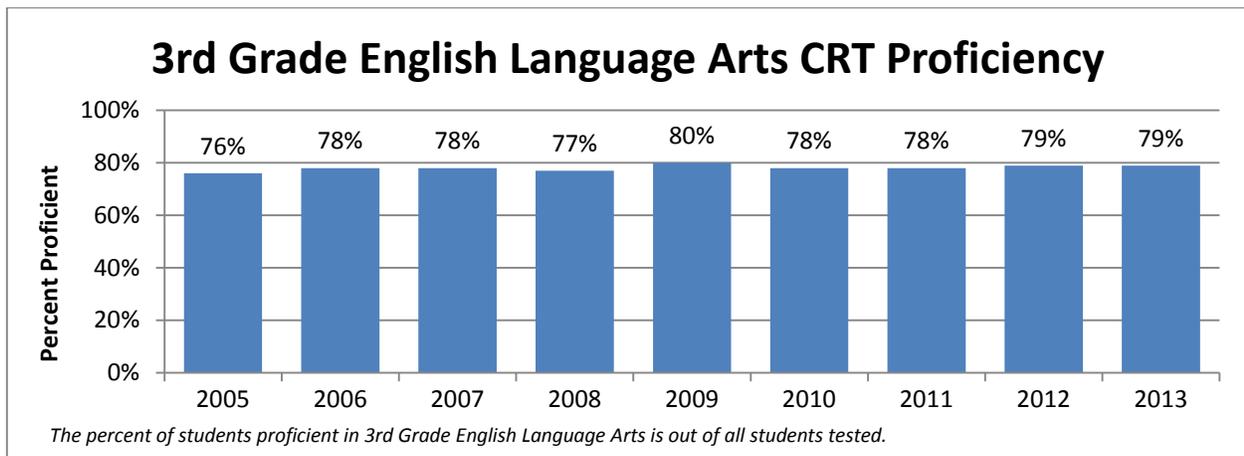
In districts with the technology (hardware) available to support reading software, LEAs also provided or arranged for professional development on reading support software programs purchased for use in their districts. Teachers monitored students' learning and performance in classroom instruction and used software to reinforce and enhance their large- and small-group instruction.

## Standards, Goals, and Student Achievement

The K-3 Reading Improvement program focuses on the development of literacy skills in all students. We know that building literacy skills takes time and effective instruction. Utah has successfully implemented a variety of endeavors to ensure literacy for all students. Proficiency rates in language arts in Utah have improved in all grade levels since 2005. Emphasis has been placed on grades K-3 and early intervention for students at risk. Resources available to these students include Early Intervention Kindergarten support, K-3 Reading Improvement program, adoption of standards and assessments for testing multiple times in grades 1-3, ongoing professional development, and the use of data to inform instruction.

### 2012 Third Grade Language Arts Overall Percent Proficient: 79%

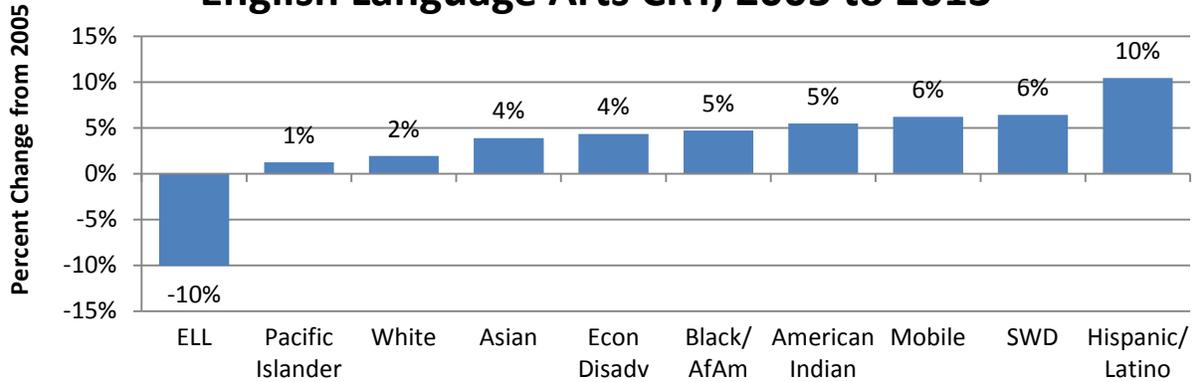
Since the implementation of the K-3 Reading program, there has been an increase in the 3rd grade proficiency rate on the English Language Arts (ELA) Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT). The difference from 2005 to 2012 is statistically significant.



### Improvements in Reading with At-Risk Students

Utah is becoming more diverse with increased percentages of students in minority, low income, and other subgroups. The chart below demonstrates the growth made by subgroups of students on the CRT test from 2005 to 2013.

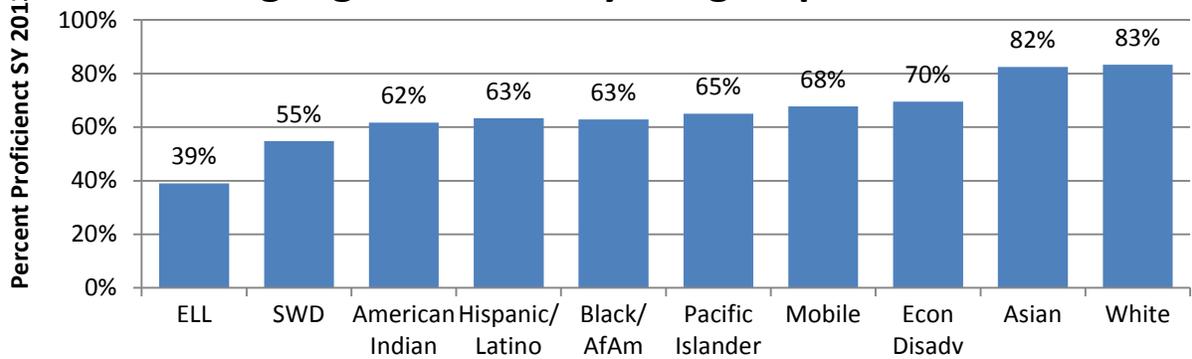
### Change in Percent Proficient on the 3rd Grade English Language Arts CRT, 2005 to 2013



The change in percent of students proficient in 3rd grade English Language Arts is out of all students from each subgroup who were tested.

The following chart shows the proficiency rates by subgroup. While white, English-speaking students are still scoring the highest, at 83% proficient, other subgroups have made significant progress.

### Percent Proficient on the 3rd Grade English Language Arts CRT, by Subgroup, SY 2013

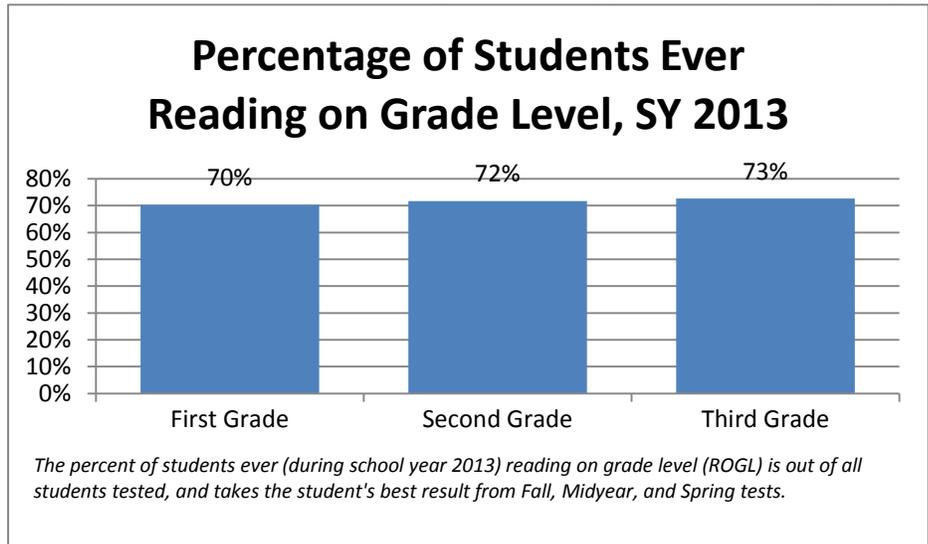


The percent of students proficient in 3rd grade English Language Arts is out of all students from each subgroup who were tested.

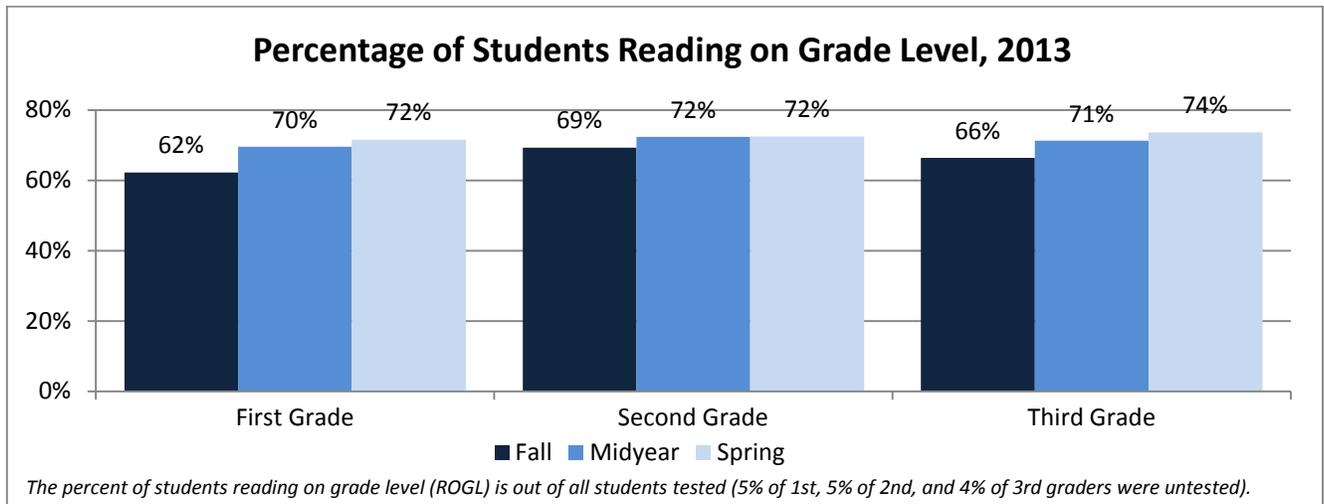
Beginning in 2013-2014, the CRT test will no longer be administered and students will take the Student Assessment of Growth and Excellence (SAGE) assessment. This data will not be comparable to the CRT test.

### Students Reading on Grade Level (End-of-year 2013)

Beginning in 2012-2013, LEAs were required to assess students' reading level three (3) times a year: beginning of the year, middle of the year, and end of the year using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment. LEAs administered DIBELS and reported: 1) whether students were reading on grade level and 2) whether the students received reading interventions. For the end-of-year assessment in 2013, the percentage of first grade students reading on grade level was 68%, second grade was 70%, and third grade was 71%.



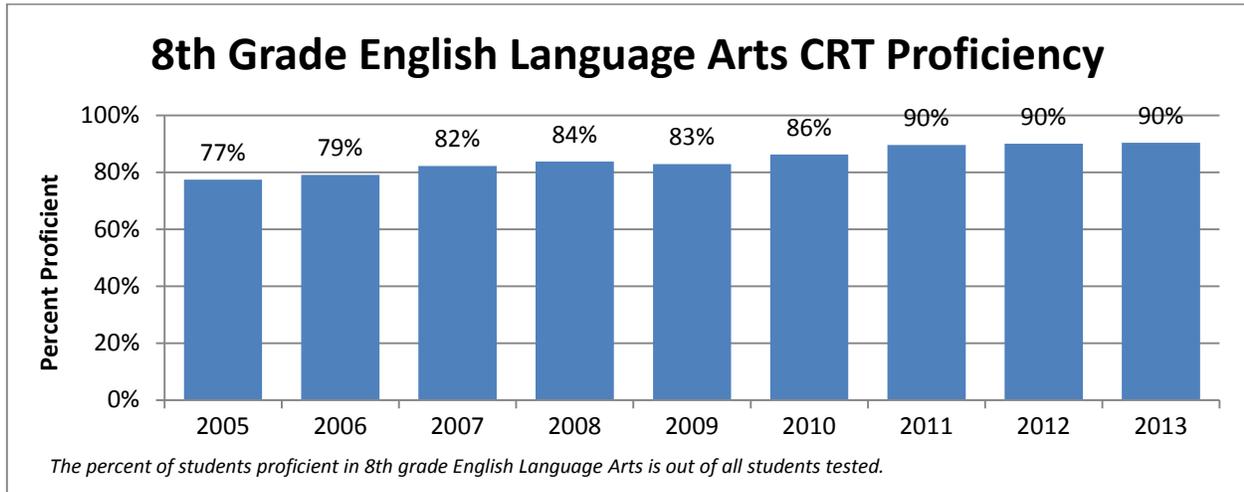
As the first year the DIBELS test was given three times, it is the first time we have data on student growth through the year. DIBELS data show that students grew in proficiency through the school year, with the biggest gains being demonstrated in grade one, where students entered at 62% proficient at Grade 1 reading standards and gained 10% as 72% of students left proficient on the end-of-year assessment.



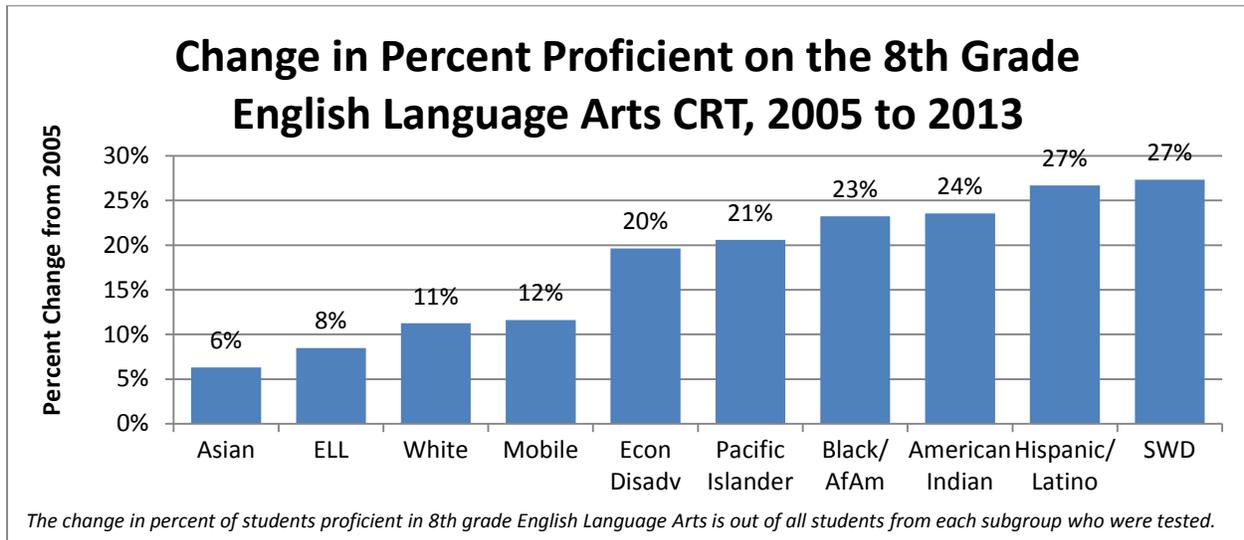
## Improvements in State Literacy with Exposure to K-3 Literacy

In 2013, 90% of students in grade 8 were reading on grade level as measured by the CRT. This finding echoes the research about *the development of literacy: it takes both time and explicit, informed instruction*.

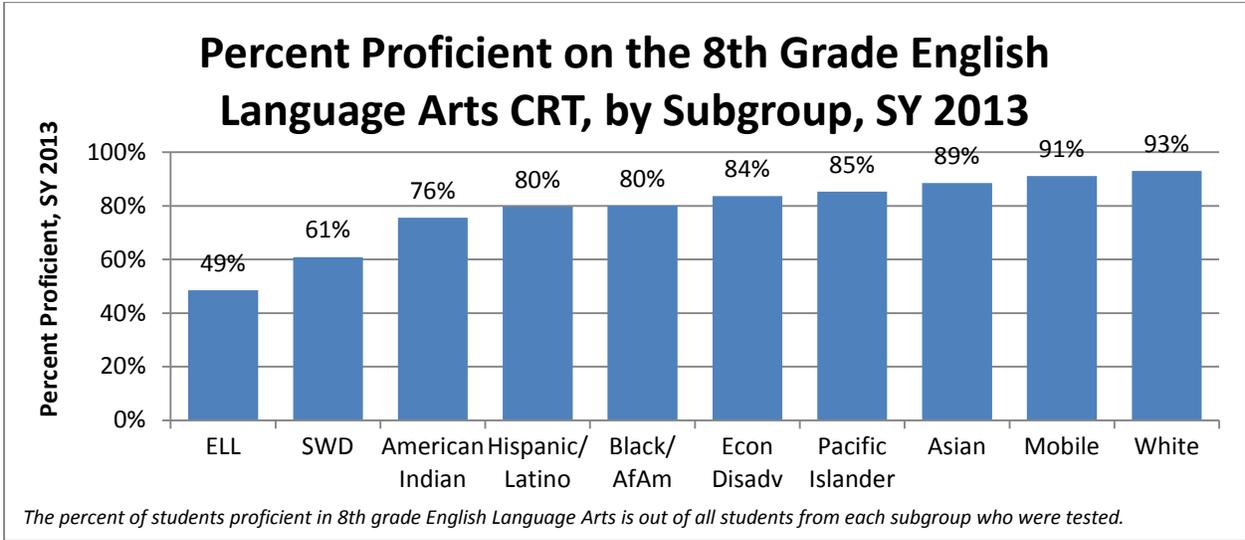
Despite a rapidly growing and increasingly diverse population, the percentage of proficient students has increased. Eighth grade language arts proficiency has increased from 77% in 2005 to 90% in 2013.



Most subgroups have seen similar increases in 8th grade language art proficiencies. Pacific Islanders, American Indians and Hispanics have increased their percent proficient by more twenty five percent, decreasing the gap. Enormous gains in proficiency were also seen in low income students (20%), students with disabilities (SWD) (27%), and Hispanic/Latino students (27%).



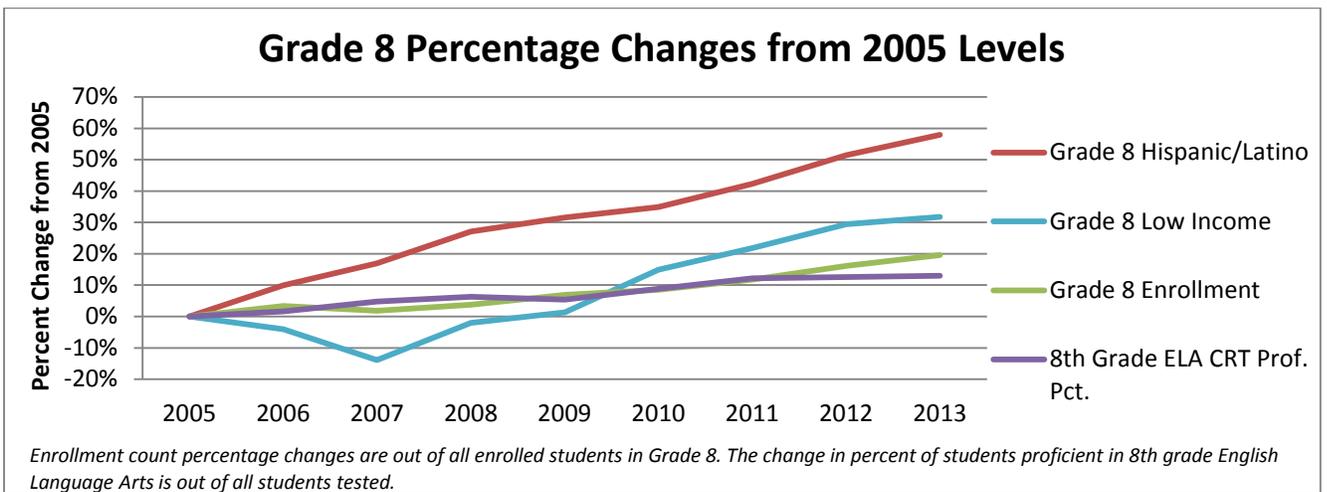
The results of developing a strong reading program in grades K-3 have demonstrated ongoing results. By grade 8, subgroups have developed proficiency as shown below:



### Exposure to K-3 Literacy Over Time

In the school year 2005, the legislature funded a statewide K-3 reading program across all schools. This program continues to reshape our school’s literacy development as teachers have ongoing access to high-quality professional development about new research-based techniques in reading instruction. Students who have been exposed to the K-3 program from the beginning have noticeably higher CRT proficiency rates than un-exposed similar cohorts, especially in grades 7 and higher. The more exposure both teachers and students have to this program, they better they perform on the CRT.

The following chart shows the improvement since 2005, when the K-3 Reading Improvement program began. The lines indicate where students in grade 8 students averaged in 2005 and how those percentages have increased over the last 8 years. Hispanic/Latino students have recognized the most growth, but growth has increased overall.



# Expenditure Summary for K-3 Reading Improvement Funding

## Funding

Funding for K-3 Literacy has been consistent at \$15,000,000. This has allowed LEAs to build comprehensive and stable programs of support for their teachers and students. However, taking into account inflation, the increase in enrollment counts, and the increasing number of district and charter elementary schools, the amount of literacy dollars per student has **decreased** by over fifty real dollars per student.

K-3 Reading Improvement funds are targeted to interventions in the early elementary grades. Districts and charter schools receiving these funds identified the need for highly qualified, well-prepared adults to work with students developing reading skills as a paramount concern. To support reading instruction, LEAs spent K-3 funds on licensed personnel. These expenditures included: (1) instructional coaches/reading specialists who work with K-3 teachers to develop specific skills in (a) teaching reading instruction to small and large groups of students, (b) using assessments to determine students' needs and adjust instruction, and (c) providing targeted intervention during or outside of school to students most behind; (2) classroom teachers to reduce the size of classrooms with highly at-risk K-3 students (especially Kindergarten and grade 1); and (3) paraprofessionals who provided additional support to teachers, either working with at-risk K-3 students or providing opportunities for the teacher to spend additional time with the at-risk students. Overall, about 94% of K-3 Reading Improvement funds were spent on personnel working with students and teachers to improve reading instruction.

"The majority of our K-3 funds provided focused, small-group reading intervention. Locally-generated funds contributed to this intervention and supported greatly the achievement of district instructional goals."

LEAs also used K-3 funding for professional development and resource development for professional learning experiences and parent outreach. These included providing opportunities for teachers to participate in state and national reading research conferences to ensure that all teachers have appropriate and research-based instructional methods for K-3 students. Teachers also learned to work effectively with student assessment data to provide quality

"Year-long professional development was provided for teachers and para-professionals in either the use of core reading intervention materials, Early Steps or Next Steps curriculum and procedures.

"Students received 90 minutes of reading and writing instruction aligned to the core program and 45 minutes of reading intervention..."

information to teachers and parents. Much of this was supported with district match.

*"We spent the majority of our K-3 and matching money on our reading specialist...This allows our students individual and small group instruction in the areas in which they need additional help."*

## Match

Districts are required to match K-3 Reading Improvement funds with locally raised. This match is based on a percentage of the assessed valuation. Charter schools are not required to match the funds. The following chart shows a distribution of K-3 Reading Funds as reported by districts and charter schools for FY2013 that reflects approximately 94% of funding supporting personnel (reading specialists, reading

aides, assessment teams). This funding does not support general teacher salaries.

The following budget summary indicates how LEAs reported their spending for K-3 Reading Improvement funding:

Category	Detail Percentages	Category Percentages
Salaries: Licensed Personnel	57%	71%
Salaries: Non-licensed Personnel	14%	
Employee Benefits: Licensed Personnel	24%	26%
Employee Benefits: Non-licensed Personnel	2%	
Professional and Technical Services	1%	3%
Property Services	0	
Other Purchased Services	1%	
Supplies and Materials	2%	
Equipment	<1%	
Other	<1%	
Total	100%	

### Software/Technology Purchases

Legislation enacted in 2011 made the following changes to K-3 Reading:

- HB2 2<sup>nd</sup> Sub lines 413-420 requires USOE to issue an RFP “for computer–assisted instructional learning and assessments for the K-3 Reading Improvement Program”
- No more than \$7,500,000 (of the \$15,000,000 funded) can be used for this purpose (computer-assisted instructional learning and assessments).

LEAs indicate that most districts and charter schools in Utah are using K-3 Reading Improvement funds for personnel (teachers, aides, specialists/instructional coaches) to provide direct support to students. Districts are also using reading software and reading programs to support their struggling readers. LEAs indicated that they are using multiple software programs funded with funds from other sources, including the HB 513 program. **In funding year 2013, approximately \$246,500 was spent on equipment and approximately \$794,000 was spent on software and reading materials to support K-3 reading program instruction. Approximately \$332,140 of that funding was from the K-3 Reading Improvement allocation.**

Reading intervention software is used to offer additional time practicing and is overseen by the classroom teacher. It is a valuable support to a reading program and provides students with additional time to practice what they are learning about reading on an individual level. During the 2011-2012 school year, 47% of districts and charter schools used K-3 Reading Improvement money to purchase *some of the hardware* (tablets, headphones, computers, etc.), *used to support* reading instruction in the classroom.

If an LEA decides that adaptive learning technology will be a part of its reading plan, USOE encourages the purchase of adaptive learning technology selected through the state RFP process. The software on the state RFP includes:

Vendor	Product
Pearson	SuccessMaker
Waterford	UPSTART

Curriculum Associates	i-Ready
Imagine Learning	Imagine Reading
Southwest Education	Orchard

In 2012-2013, LEAs used K-3 Reading Improvement funds and match to purchase the following types of technology to support reading instruction:

- ABCYA
- *DIBELS Next* (extended reporting)
- iPads
- iPods
- i-Ready software
- Laptops
- Raz-Kids
- Read Naturally
- Reading Eggs
- Reading Street
- Study Island
- Yearly Progress Pro (CTB McGraw-Hill, LLC)

LEAs used **additional funding from other sources** to purchase the following types of technology to support their K-3 Reading Improvement programs:

- Subscriptions to e-books (A-Z)
- Accelerated Reader
- Aimsweb
- Big Brainz by Cambium
- Brain Pop
- Computers/laptops
- *DIBELS Next*
- Earobics
- Enchanted Learning
- HeadSprout
- Inspiration
- iPads
- iPods
- Leap Frog
- NWEA Map Assessment
- PLATO
- Read Naturally
- Reading Eggs
- Reading Street
- Raz-Kids
- Spalding materials
- ThinkCentral
- Ticket to Read
- Utah Writes

Substantial amounts of other software were purchased using other district funds and used to provide support and enrichment for students. LEAs also support professional development in the effective use of these technology tools to support and enhance instruction.

## Conclusion

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Children do not all march to the same drummer or to the same beat; we know that not every child will be reading at grade level at the end of grade three. Some students may never reach that goal. But a goal is there to remind us of what we want: we all want every student to be in a classroom with a teacher who is equipped with every possible tool to help each child achieve. The K-3 Reading Improvement funding is helping teachers have access to new methods of assessment, new understandings of ways to design reading instruction, and new tools and methods to use in supporting students. This funding plays a pivotal role in maintaining Utah's overall reading scores in the face of a variety of changes in student readiness and language development.