

January 1, 2023



# **Legislative Report**

## **Iowa Reading Research Center**

## IOWA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

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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 for all students that includes reading, reading comprehension, and writing
- 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 University of Iowa***

The University of Iowa is the host for the IRRC because it is one of the nation's top public research universities, thus providing an academic base for the center director 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](#) as well as through study-specific reports (e.g., evaluation studies). 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 (Department)
- professional organizations
- educators
- families

In addition, the IRRC is required to have an advisory council that meets three times per year. The director of the Department or the director's designee appoints the members. The IRRC Advisory Council met on the following dates during the 2022 calendar year: May 4, 2022, and December 7, 2022. There was not a third meeting in the 2022 calendar year as the center was transitioning leadership.

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 2022 are:

Category	First Name	Last Name	Organization
Institutes of Higher Education	Sherry	Petty	Upper Iowa University
Institutes of Higher Education	Deanna	Stoube	St. Ambrose University
Department of Education	Ann	Lebo	Iowa Department of Education
Department of Education	Kathy	Bertsch	Iowa Department of Education
AEAs	Shane	Williams	Mississippi Bend AEA
AEAs	John	Speer	Grant Wood AEA
LEAs (public and nonpublic)	Autumn	Den Boer	Sioux Center Christian School
LEAs (public and nonpublic)	Kathleen	Konrardy	Holy Family Catholic Schools
LEAs (public and nonpublic) Teachers	Beth	Happe	Martensdale-St. Marys Community School District
LEAs (public and nonpublic) Teachers	Erin	Sale	Waterloo Community School District
Educational Organizations	Beth	Ades-Hanson	Iowa State Education Association
Community Based Nonprofit	Mindy	VanZuiden	Decoding Dyslexia Iowa
Community Based Nonprofit	Michael	Scott	State Library of Iowa
Parent	Cori	Stanley	Indianola Community School District

## 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 Department, and its priorities are guided by legislative action and the recommendations of the IRRC Advisory Council. The following table provides a description of the 2022 activities of the IRRC listed by Iowa Administrative Code citations.

IA Code Citations	In the Last Calendar Year, the IRRC Has...
<p>Evidence-based Interventions and Strategies IAC § 284.32 1(b)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated the following eLearning modules featuring evidence-based reading instructional strategies, which are available on the IRRC website (<a href="https://iowareadingresearch.org/elearning">https://iowareadingresearch.org/elearning</a>) at no cost to Iowa teachers:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Effective Literacy Instruction</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Completed accessibility audits of all eLearning modules to ensure that all met acceptable web accessibility guidelines.</li> <li>• Completed a digital version of Varied Practice Reading, a new web application for delivering Varied Practice Reading to classes.</li> <li>• Enrolled 48 elementary school classes (over 400 students) into a digital Varied Practice Reading intervention course.</li> <li>• Developed and posted 5 blog posts on reading instruction.</li> <li>• Launched a new online learning community for teachers to share resources, knowledge, and receive professional development about the science of reading.</li> </ul>

IA Code Citations	In the Last Calendar Year, the IRRC Has...
<p>School and Community Partnerships IAC § 284.32</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared with caregivers via our Facebook and Twitter accounts a variety of literacy learning resources from the IRRC and around the web.</li> <li>• Created new video content for educators and caregivers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Two new Literacy Explainer videos that defines and provides examples of a literacy term or concept.</li> <li>○ Developed summer, fall, and winter writing prompts (120 total prompts) by grade-level for both caregivers implementing reading and writing activities at home with their children as well as for use by educators in classrooms. Prompts encourage responders to draw from Common Core ELA Writing Standards skills.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Partnered on a blog post with the University of Iowa’s Scanlan Center for School Mental Health that focuses on the social and emotional effects on students with dyslexia and other students who struggle with reading.</li> <li>• Partnered with Pleasant Valley Community School District to evaluate writing standards for elementary school children.</li> <li>• Completed Year 1 of the “Varied Practice Reading for Middle School Students With or At Risk for Reading Disabilities” study with Iowa City, Marshalltown, Sioux City, and Ottumwa Community School Districts.</li> <li>• Continued offering free assistive technology (AT) consultation appointments for families of children with dyslexia and other reading disabilities. Families can meet one-on-one with our assistive technology coordinators (in-person in Iowa City or virtually). In addition, families can rent equipment for a brief period of time to try out AT in the home. In 2022, we met with over 50 students and families. In fall 2022, we hired an additional AT coordinator to increase our capacity for appointments.</li> </ul>
<p>Reading Assessments IAC § 284.32 1(d) IAC § 279.68 1(a)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed the first offering of <i>Advanced Reading Clinic Techniques</i> which trained 18 educators in Iowa to deliver and interpret the results of three standardized and formal assessments for reading disabilities.</li> </ul>

IA Code Citations	In the Last Calendar Year, the IRRC Has...
<p>Data Reports IAC § 284.32 1(f)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepared the following reports for partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A report on the attempts and completions of eLearning content for the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium.</li> <li>○ Results of a summer literacy research project studying the effects of a science vocabulary instructional intervention with pre-kindergarten students.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Intensive Summer Reading Program IAC § 279.68 4(c)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed a summer reading research study with pre- kindergarten students on effective literacy instruction in a preschool setting. The intervention focused on age-appropriate science content delivered through a scaffolded reading intervention.</li> <li>• Consultation with Council Bluffs Community School District focused on summer reading program planning.</li> </ul>
<p>Professional Development IAC § 284.32 1(e)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offered professional development to in-state school districts</li> <li>• IRRC staff delivered the keynote presentation on the social and emotional effects of an undiagnosed reading disorder at the annual Decoding Dyslexia Iowa conference.</li> <li>• Updated our eLearning modules. The IRRC's online professional development, or eLearning, is available to all Iowa educators at no cost from any laptop or desktop device (no travel required for attendees). eLearning modules feature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fully accessible content.</li> <li>○ Engaging animated representations of real-life scenarios.</li> <li>○ Videos showing the featured instructional method being used in real Iowa classrooms. Other videos include discussion from experts in literacy education, developmental pediatrics, and other specialty areas, as well as families.</li> <li>○ Interactive text, visual, and audio content featuring quizzes.</li> <li>○ A posttest to assess for knowledge gained.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

IA Code Citations	In the Last Calendar Year, the IRRC Has...
Dyslexia Senate File 2319 Chapter 1077 and Senate File 2356	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first cohort of 18 educators throughout Iowa completed the required coursework to earn the Dyslexia Specialist Endorsement.</li> <li>• The second cohort of Iowa educators began the 18-month Dyslexia Specialist Endorsement program coordinated by the Iowa Reading Research Center.</li> <li>• Over 11,000 pre-service and in-service educators in the State of Iowa have completed the required Dyslexia Overview eLearning module offered by the Iowa Reading Research Center.</li> <li>• The IRRC, in conjunction with the Iowa Department of Education and Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, developed the process for institutes of higher education to apply to establish Dyslexia Specialist Endorsement programs.</li> <li>• As of December 15, 2022, two additional institutes of higher education have begun the approval process to offer the endorsement.</li> <li>• Participated on the Iowa Dyslexia Board, which was established by Senate File 2356.</li> </ul>

## FUTURE

The upcoming year has the opportunity to be an important year for the center. With anticipated new leadership in the form of a soon-to-be hired director bringing a fresh perspective on literacy education, the role of the center in the state can evolve. Additionally, this year will see more collaboration with the Iowa Department of Education to ensure a coordinated effort across the state to create and disseminate professional development and educational material to schools and Area Education Agencies.

Additionally, this year will also see the expansion of the science of reading/structured literacy education in formal undergraduate and graduate education for preservice teachers. The IRRC will work with the Iowa Department of Education and the University of Iowa to offer undergraduate workshops focused on the science of reading. We will also offer asynchronous versions of our Dyslexia Specialist endorsement coursework to graduate students in the Department of Teaching and Learning at the University of Iowa.

This year we will also complete a new web application to deliver our digital Varied Practice Reading intervention for Grades 1–5 in an interactive and engaging format. Once in use, we will offer districts the opportunity to purchase seats for individual classrooms or licenses for schools or districts. Our team will offer on-site training for teachers on how to best deliver the intervention.

This year we look to increase the amount of professional development and informational content about literacy instruction in the state. Through our partnership with the Iowa Department of Education, we will offer new eLearning modules for teachers: 1) developing universal structured literacy lessons; and 2) understanding your universal screener diagnostics and developing plans



for students' needs. We will also develop eLearning modules for parents and families: 1) understanding literacy education and support in Iowa; and 2) assistive technology. We are also launching two online learning communities for educators in the state focused on the science of reading, resource sharing, and expanding the knowledge base of teachers.

Finally, pending legislative support and funding, we will continue coordinating the Dyslexia Specialist Endorsement programs in the state, including collaborating with the Board of Educational Examiners and Department of Education on approval of Dyslexia Specialist Endorsement programs at other institutes of higher education. Additionally, we are working to develop the process for approving out-of-state coursework and identifying avenues for applicants that do not meet all of the requirements to complete the requirements and earn endorsement.