

## STATE KICKS OFF TRAINING PROGRAM AHEAD OF READING TEST ROLLOUT

Clark Corbin • 06/14/2018

Educators across the state are starting a training program this week as state officials ramp up their preparation to launch a new reading test this fall.

Officials from each school district and charter school worked with the State Department of Education to send a leadership team to one of several half-day regional training seminars devoted to the new reading test.



The training program is designed to prepare members of a school's leadership team to help their colleagues administer the test online in each of the state's elementary schools.

Earlier this year, the Legislature approved plans and funding to roll out a revamped Idaho Reading Indicator test in each of the state's public and charter schools. The test will be given to all students in grades K-3.

Developed by the vendor Imagination Station, the new Idaho Reading Indicator replaces the state's old reading test and is billed as a more modern way to evaluate young students' reading skills and identify how to help improve literacy.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra supports the statewide rollout of the new test.

"It's exciting to be so close to the rollout of our statewide reading test, a crucial way to assess our youngest students' skills and needs to set the stage for lifelong reading and academic success," Ybarra said in a written statement. "These June sessions will train the trainers, who will help ensure smooth implementation of this new reading indicator when school starts."



State superintendent Sherri Ybarra

But the decision to launch a new test wasn't unanimous. During the final days of the 2018 legislative session, lawmakers briefly gridlocked and killed a State Department of Education office budget over disagreement on how to move forward with the reading test. Some lawmakers favored a proposal to allow each school district to select and administer its own test. After a couple days of uncertainty, the statewide test won out and lawmakers approved the budget to pay for Istation's new test.

During the 2017-18 school year, educators and students from more than 50 elementary schools piloted a version of the new test ahead of its statewide rollout.

About 450 educators are expected to participate in training programs, which are offered in Lewiston, Coeur d'Alene, Nampa, Meridian, Twin Falls, Fort Hall and Idaho Falls, SDE spokeswoman Kristin Rodine said. Officials from Istation are conducting the training, which is included in the vendor's contract with the state and offered to educators at no charge.

Earlier this spring, Ybarra and Istation officials announced they had extended their contract to facilitate the statewide rollout of the test during the upcoming school year.

#### TRAINING SCHEDULE, AT A GLANCE

Friday: College of Western Idaho, Nampa.

Monday: Victory Middle School, Meridian.

Tuesday: College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls.

June 21: Shoshone-Bannock Event Center, Fort Hall.

June 22: Hilton Garden Inn & Suites, Idaho Falls.

Half-day sessions are available from 8 a.m. to noon and 12:30-4:30 p.m. at each location.