



Process & Considerations for Issuing a Good Cause Exemption (Updated February 2025)

Indiana is committed to supporting long-term success for all students by ensuring that by 2027, **95% of grade three students attain reading proficiency**. Goals delineated in [Indiana's Priorities for Early Literacy](#) outline the importance of student proficiency in reading by the end of grade three in order to advance and excel in other curricular areas.

[Indiana Code \(IC\) 20-32-8.5-2](#) now defines specific GCEs to exempt students from being **retained** as a result of not passing IREAD. GCEs **no longer** exempt an eligible student from future IREAD testing. Exceptions to this new retention policy are outlined below. This guidance is intended to support school staff in verifying GCEs for eligible students and defining instructional next steps beginning with the 2024-2025 IREAD test administrations.

Instructions for Schools

1. Schools must review IREAD student results after each administration. Instructional next steps should be considered for all students with an emphasis on grade two students who achieve “At Risk” or “On Track” and grade three students who achieve “Do No Pass.”
2. Identify grade three students who “Did Not Pass” and may qualify for a GCE. **This occurs after the grade three summer retest administration.**
3. Notify parents that their child did not pass IREAD and is not exhibiting foundational reading skills.
 - a. The parent letter template ([English](#) | [Spanish](#)) may be modified to support conversations with families about IREAD results, retest opportunities, planned interventions and supports, and possible exemptions from retention.
 - b. Communication must occur in a language parents understand.
 - c. Communication should occur in a timely manner.
 - d. Schools should maintain local documentation and monitor progress of students who are receiving interventions to ensure they are receiving the support required under IC 20-32-8.5-2.
4. Use the guidance below to determine GCE eligibility and next steps based on student data (e.g., academic performance, special education or EL status, enrollment history).

GCE Consideration	Next Steps
GCE Criteria 1: The student was subject to retention and has been retained in grade three for one school year.	Review and verify retention data of the student's enrollment history. The student may be promoted to grade four. The student

	<p>should continue to receive intensive interventions and progress monitoring aligned with the science of reading. The student will continue to participate in the IREAD retest until they pass or are promoted to grade seven.</p>
<p>GCE Criteria 2: The student has an intellectual disability or the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) specifies that retention is not appropriate, and the student's case conference committee (CCC) has determined that promotion to another grade is appropriate.</p>	<p>Convene a CCC with staff and parents. Review student's IEP for disability and any previous notes regarding interventions and retention.</p> <p>If the student has an intellectual disability, the CCC may determine that promotion to grade four is appropriate.</p> <p>If the student's IEP contains previous notes regarding retention and states that retention is not appropriate, the student may be promoted to grade four if determined appropriate by the CCC.</p> <p>Whether the student is retained or promoted, the student must continue to receive intensive interventions and progress monitoring for reading aligned with science of reading. The student will continue to participate in the IREAD retest until they pass or are promoted to grade seven.</p>
<p>GCE Criteria 3: The student is an EL who has received services for fewer than two years and a committee consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the student's parent; ● a building level administrator or designee; ● a classroom teacher of service; ● an EL teacher of record, if one exists; and ● an EL district administrator, if one exists; <p>determines that promotion is appropriate based on the implementation of research-based instructional practices outlined in the student's ILP.</p>	<p>Convene the ILP committee with required attendees.</p> <p>Verify the student has received services in Indiana for fewer than two years.¹</p> <p>Review the supports, accommodations, and services in the student's ILP and their impact on literacy growth (e.g., WIDA ACCESS, local formative assessments).</p> <p>If the ILP committee verifies services (length and instructional practices), the student may be promoted to grade four if the committee determines this is most appropriate.</p> <p>The student must continue to receive intensive interventions and progress monitoring aligned with the science of reading. The student will continue to participate in the IREAD retest until they pass or are promoted to grade seven.</p>
<p>GCE Criteria 4: The student received a score of "At Proficiency" or "Above Proficiency" on the</p>	<p>Review and verify ILEARN assessment data.</p> <p>The student may be promoted to grade four. The student</p>

¹ Two-year calculation is defined in the *IREAD Frequently Asked Questions*, available on IDOE's [IREAD webpage](#).

<p>grade three ILEARN Mathematics assessment.</p>	<p>should continue to receive intensive interventions and progress monitoring for reading aligned with science of reading. The student will continue to participate in the IREAD retest until they pass or are promoted to grade seven.</p>
<p>GCE Criteria 5: The student has received intensive intervention² in reading for two or more years; and was retained more than once throughout kindergarten, grade one, or grade two.</p>	<p>Review and verify intervention documentation (e.g., multi-tiered systems of support records, Title I plans, progress monitoring data).</p> <p>Review retention records for the student.</p> <p>If data records verify the student has received intensive interventions for two or more years and the student was retained for two or more years in kindergarten through grade two, the student may be promoted to grade four.</p> <p>The student should continue to receive intensive interventions and progress monitoring aligned with science of reading. The student will continue to participate in the IREAD retest until they pass or are promoted to grade seven.</p>

5. Complete GCE documentation in Data Exchange (DEX) for any eligible student(s). Specific DEX guidance and accommodation codes will be provided spring 2025.
6. Review guidance and collectively determine appropriate reading interventions for continued support of GCE and other students who have not achieved reading proficiency. **NOTE:** A student who is not subject to the retention requirement as provided under [IC 20-32-8.5-2](#) (c) must be provided with additional reading instruction aligned with science of reading practices until they achieve a passing score on the IREAD assessment. See the [IREAD Remediation Support document](#) for help with remediation support.
7. [IC 20-32-8.5-2](#) requires schools to document interventions and monitor student progress for all students who did not pass IREAD, which includes:
 - a. The use of curricular materials and supplemental materials aligned to science of reading that are designed to address deficiencies in reading;
 - b. A requirement that schools notify a student's parent of the following: (A) The student's assessment results regarding skill level in: (i) phonemic awareness; (ii) phonics; (iii) fluency; (iv) vocabulary; and (v) comprehension;
 - c. Reading instruction that includes a core reading program aligned with science of reading to all students in kindergarten through grade eight; and
 - d. A requirement to administer ILEARN Checkpoints and other local formative assessments to monitor student progress and growth.

² Intervention is defined in the *IREAD Frequently Asked Questions*, available on IDOE's [IREAD webpage](#).

- e. School staff meet regularly throughout the school year to review student data and adjust interventions as needed to meet grade-level and reading proficiency expectations.

Average End-of-Year Lexile Scores for Indiana Students				
Grade Level	2024 Average	50th Percentile	90th Percentile	Estimated Growth by End of Grade 12
3	630L	645L	985L	1215L
4	811L	850L	1160L	1250L
5	882L	950L	1260L	1210L
6	994L	1030L	1340L	1225L
7	1033L	1095L	1410L	1200L
8	1110L	1155L	1470L	1200L

This figure illustrates the average Lexile levels for grades three through eight following the spring 2024 ILEARN assessment, as well as the projected growth by grade 12, as measured by the [MetaMetrics Lexile Growth Planner](#). Each projected average growth is shown in comparison to the Lexile measurements on [MetaMetrics Post Secondary Text Continuum](#), which aims to quantify the reading ability needed for college and career readiness.

- 8. Prepare students and staff for the next IREAD administration.
 - a. [IREAD Remediation Guidance](#)
 - b. [After the Good Cause Exemption: Students with Disabilities](#)
 - c. [After the Good Cause Exemption: English Learners](#)

For more information on IREAD, visit the Indiana Department of Education’s (IDOE’s) [IREAD webpage](#). Learn more about literacy and resources at IDOE’s [Literacy Development webpage](#).

Questions:

- Assessment: [IDOE’s Office of Student Assessment](#)
- Literacy: [IDOE’s Literacy Center](#)
- Special Education: [IDOE’s Office of Special Education](#)
- English Learners: [IDOE’s Office of English Learners and Migrant Education](#)