

DESE + Ignite Reading

Partner Guide

Massachusetts Quick Guide & Program Overview
SY 2026–2027

Why This Partnership

Ignite Reading exists to accelerate the end of the literacy crisis in the United States by ensuring every student becomes a confident, fluent reader. We focus on the lower strands of Scarborough's Reading Rope — phonemic awareness, phonics, and word recognition — because research shows that if a student doesn't leave first grade with these foundational skills, the trajectory for their literacy development is compromised. Students who do reach proficiency by first grade are far more likely to stay on track and thrive academically, with the gap between proficient and struggling readers widening over time.

In Massachusetts, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) funds high-dosage early literacy tutoring through the No Cost Early Literacy Tutoring initiative, with Johns Hopkins University serving as an independent evaluator of program efficacy. Because demand for these seats consistently outpaces supply, DESE and Ignite Reading prioritize first-grade students first — where early intervention has the greatest long-term impact — before opening seats to other grades.

Why the Timeline and Attendance Matter

Every deadline in this guide — filling seats quickly, testing on time, keeping rosters stable — exists because it directly moves the needle for kids. Our SY26 end-of-year DIBELS analysis makes the case plainly:

17 FEWER SESSIONS the average student received in SY 25-26 vs. SY 24-25 — nearly 5 fewer instructional hours per completed unit	+8 pts BENCHMARK LIFT projected composite-benchmark improvement (45% → 53%) if those 17 sessions are restored	1,700+ STUDENTS would have completed at least one additional unit with those 17 sessions back
---	---	---

Source: Ignite Reading SY26 EOY DESE DIBELS Analysis — n = 2,968 students

DESE + Ignite Reading Quick Guide

Your at-a-glance reference for SY 2026–2027 — keep this page handy.

1. Eligibility

- ☐ This is a 1st-grade intervention — all 1st grade need is met before rostering any students in grades K, 2, or 3.
- ☐ Students are below or well below on DIBELS composite in grades K, 1, 2, or 3.

2. DIBELS

- ☐ Every student has a DIBELS score before entering Ignite Reading.
- ☐ Every student has a DIBELS score upon exiting Ignite Reading.
- ☐ If the school doesn't administer DIBELS, a virtual DIBELS administration is coordinated together through mCLASS for any roster changes.
- ☐ Grade 1 students are prioritized for DIBELS administration at the start of the year, to keep rostering on schedule.
- ☐ Schools who do not administer DIBELS must maintain a 20% student waitlist.
- ☐ Use discontinue rules, not gating. One discontinue rule override: regardless of WRF score, always administer ORF.

3. Rostering

- ☐ To protect data integrity and support the purpose of this early literacy tutoring, roster changes should be limited to: student graduated, student moved out of district, student is on benchmark at MOY, poor attendance with all interventions exhausted, or not the right fit due to behavior or the virtual nature.
- ☐ State IDs must be shared with Ignite Reading for all students.
- ☐ Additional data is required for districts who do not administer DIBELS.

4. Seat Utilization

- ☐ Seats are filled by November 14, 2026; unfilled seats after this date may be reallocated.
- ☐ Seats vacated throughout the school year are filled within 1 week of seat opening.

5. Graduation

- ☐ Grade 1: complete Vowel Teams and an average of 39 words per minute (students may continue in MSD to solidify the code, assuming there is no outstanding unmet 1st grade need).
- ☐ Grades 2 and 3: complete Multisyllabic Decoding.

6. Funding Clarity

- ☐ If the school has multiple funding streams, it's clear which students are funded through which stream.
- ☐ Funding source is selected at rostering for each student throughout the implementation.

Contact Information

Literacy Success Partner (LSP)

- Ongoing questions during onboarding and throughout the year
 - Rostering
 - Student progress
-

Knowledge Base Support Form

<https://knowledge.ignite-reading.com/home/contact-us>

- Resources
- Cancellations
- Troubleshooting
- Policies
- Ignite Reading Platform

Jenn Zani

Manager of Partner Success

- DIBELS coordination
-

Alexandra Gottlieb

Director of Partnerships

Ignite Reading PBC

6 Presidio Terrace, San Francisco, CA 94118