Approved Early Literacy Assessments 2025-26

Introduction

This summary contains assessments reviewed for use as universal screening and progress monitoring tools to meet the requirements of 279.68 Early Literacy Implementation (ELI) and House File 2618. For screening these requirements include the ability to accurately and reliably predict high and low risk students and for monitoring, the ability to frequently, efficiently and reliably measure change over time. A district's assessment selection(s) must have approved assessments at each grade, for both universal screening and progress monitoring. Districts may not use assessments to meet ELI requirements that do not meet approval criteria, but may choose to use them for other purposes in addition to an approved measure. Presented alphabetically and indicated by ✔ in the following tables are the reviewed and approved assessments.

Universal Screening

Acadience Reading (Lexia Voyager Sopris)

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Composite		✔	✔				
Oral Reading Fluency			✔				

Composite (5-8 min.) and Oral Reading Fluency (6 min.) individually administered. In K and Grades 3-6 the Composite did not demonstrate sufficient statistical sensitivity or reliability.

Benchmark ISIP Assess (Amira Learning)

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Benchmark Assessment	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	

Benchmark Assessment (20 min.) is computer administered.

Classworks Universal Screener Reading (Touch Math)

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Classworks Universal Screener Reading				✔	✔	✔	

Classworks in Grades 3-4 (25-35 min.), Grade 5 (30-40 min.), computer and individually administered. Classworks was submitted for Grades K-2 yet did not have sufficient statistical sensitivity and specificity at the lower grades.

EPS Reading Assistant (EPS Learning)

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
EPS Reading Assistant	✔	✔	✔	✔			

EPS Reading Assistant (10-15 min.), computer-administered. The submission included complete data for Grades K-3.

Exact Path (Edmentum)

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Exact Path		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

Grades 1-3 (17-40 min.), Grades 4-6 (45-50 min.), computer administered.

FastBridge (Renaissance Learning)

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
earlyReading Composite	✔	✔					
aReading		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
CBMR			✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
AUTOreading Composite			✔	✔		✔	

aReading (10-15 min.) and AUTOreading (4-6 min.) computer administered. CBMR (3-5 min.) and earlyReading Composite (5-7 min.) individually administered. The AUTOreading Composite did not demonstrate adequate statistical sensitivity and specificity across all grades.

i-Ready: Diagnostic, Early Literacy, Progress Monitoring Literacy Tasks (Curriculum Associates)

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Diagnostic	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Early Literacy				✔			

i-Ready Diagnostic (25-35 min lower grades, 40-60 min upper grades), i-Ready Early Literacy (60 min), computer administered. Early Literacy did not have adequate statistical sensitivity in Grades K-2.

Literably Screener (Literably)

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
The Literably Screener	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	

Literably Screener (25-40 min), computer administered

MAP: Reading Fluency, Growth (NWEA, division of HMH Education)

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
MAP Reading Fluency	✔	✔	✔	✔			
MAP Growth		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

MAP Reading Fluency (20 min.), MAP Growth Grades K-2 (32-44 min.), MAP Growth Grades 3-6 (53-68 min.); Computer administered. MAP Growth did not have adequate statistical sensitivity or reliability estimates for kindergarten approval. MAP Reading Fluency requires district manual export of data for integration with Panorama Student Success at each screening window.

mCLASS DIBELS 8th Edition (Amplify Education)

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Composite	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	

Composite (4-7 min.), individual administration. The Composite for universal screening did not have adequate statistical sensitivity in all grades and lacked additional reliability estimates.

Star: CBM Reading, Early Literacy, Reading (Renaissance Learning)

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
CBM Reading - Letter Sounds	✔						
CBM Reading - Oral Reading Fluency		✔	✔	✔			
Early Literacy				✔			
Reading				✔	✔	✔	✔

CBM Reading subtests (1-2 min), individually administered; Early Literacy (9 min.) and Reading (19-20 min.) computer administration. Early Literacy did not report sufficient statistical specificity and reliability across all grades. Reading does not meet universal screening criteria due to missing classification accuracy and sensitivity/specificity statistics.

Progress Monitoring

Acadience Reading (Lexia Voyager Sopris)

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
First Sound	✔						
Phoneme Segmentation	✔	✔					
Nonsense Word - CLS	✔	✔	✔				
Nonsense Word – WWR	✔	✔	✔				
Oral Reading Fluency			✔				
Maze				✔	✔		

All progress monitoring assessments (1-2 min.), individual administration, Maze (5 min.) group or individual administration.

FastBridge (Renaissance Learning)

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Onset Sounds	✔						
Letter Names	✔						
Sight Words-50	✔						
Letter Sounds	✔	✔					
Word Segmenting	✔	✔					
Decodable Words	✔	✔					
Nonsense Words	✔	✔					
Word Blending		✔					
Sight Words-150		✔					
CBMR		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

All progress monitoring measures (1-2 min.) individually administered.

i-Ready: Diagnostic, Early Literacy, Progress Monitoring Literacy Tasks (Curriculum Associates)

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Letter Sound Fluency	✔	✔					
Word Recognition Fluency		✔					
Passage Reading Fluency		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

Monitoring Literacy Tasks (1-3 min), additional monitoring measures were submitted but did not demonstrate sufficient reliability; Individually administered assessments

mCLASS DIBELS 8th Edition (Amplify Education)

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Nonsense Word Fluency - CLS	✔	✔	✔	✔			
Nonsense Word Fluency - WRC	✔	✔	✔	✔			
Word Reading Fluency	✔	✔	✔	✔			
Oral Reading Fluency		✔	✔		✔		✔

Progress monitoring measures (1-2 min.), individual administration Oral Reading Fluency's Reliability of Slope estimates fell below the required minimum in some grades.

Additional Assessments Reviewed

Three additional assessments were received by the Iowa Department of Education review team. These did not have evidence of the necessary characteristics to be included for universal screening or progress monitoring.

- The *Rapid Online Assessment of Reading* (ROAR) submitted by Stanford University. At this time the ROAR assessment has a smaller research sample and lacks specific seasonal (i.e., fall, winter, spring) risks threshold to identify risk.
- The *aimswebPlus* assessments were submitted by NCS Pearson. The submission had one, yet not the two estimates of reliability needed for review and approval.
- The easyCBM assessments were submitted by Riverside. The submission did not include necessary specific fall, winter and spring risk benchmark thresholds.

Review Criteria

Universal screening is administered three times per year to identify students who are at risk. For this, the measure needs to accurately identify students who are likely to be below proficiency in future reading while also minimizing incorrect identifications. For universal screening, Area Under the Curve, and related Specificity/Sensitivity statistics, needed to be provided by the vendor and at least meet a minimum standard of 0.7 in prediction to a broad indicator of reading. The review team needed to find developer established criteria for success/risk (i.e., benchmarks) with a reasonable, documented process for establishing the benchmarks.

Requirements for progress monitoring state are that assessments be able to be administered weekly, be time efficient, reliable, sensitive to change, and able to show improvement with as much consistency as possible. More consistent (reliable) assessments means less score “bounce” across monitoring probes, making the child’s growth easier to discern. The review process considered a reliability of slope score of 0.60 to be the minimum acceptable score, with higher scores being more desirable. The review process also required a description of how the developer worked to make the forms similar as well as the number of available forms.

The review process considered test administration time. For screening and progress monitoring measures there is a give and take between using a longer test that might produce more accurate or more detailed results, versus a shorter test that minimizes the amount of instructional time lost to testing. In addition to minimum technical characteristics (e.g., accuracy, reliability) it is important that assessment duration minimizes lost instructional time.

Selecting an Assessment System

When considering options for an assessment system to be used for screening and monitoring progress, a system that contains individual and group administered measures is valuable because it offers options for implementation, as well as accommodating students who may not be a good fit for one or the other mode of administration. Teams may want to look for a coherent system - one where there are no gaps at any grade or season.

Consider the content measured by the screening measures. A screening system should measure phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension as appropriate to the grade of the student. Curriculum based measures typically require students to produce a response in a literacy area such as phonemic awareness, phonics, or oral reading fluency, while most computer administered tests rely on auditory presentation of items, silent reading and a multiple choice response format. Both oral reading fluency and computer adaptive measures are usually general outcome indicators for overall reading and comprehension.

Other CBM measures are typically single prerequisite skills that contribute to predicting whether or not the student is on track for becoming an independent reader of connected text. Tests using a battery of different measures with a composite may provide feedback on multiple skills, as could oral reading fluency when accuracy and rate are considered. However, adaptive tests typically provide a global ability level with limited or no skill-specific feedback. Some students benefit from the individually administered tests for focus and attention, compared to the more independent computer adaptive measures. An assessment system with a variety of types of screening is helpful because there are often unique situations that require decision-making

for individual learner characteristics. Individually administered tests provide more opportunity for monitoring and redirecting poor student attention to the tasks as compared to computer administered tests.

There is value in an assessment system that includes opportunities to evaluate student production of various reading processes including reading out loud and demonstrating decoding skills. ELI requirements and best practice both rely on selection of a set of assessments that support the universal screening and progress monitoring of students at risk for reading difficulties, including students who may have dyslexia. Keep the focus on a quality assessment system to support literacy, not simply on compliance.