

Guidance for Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments

Pursuant to Section 10-14t of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has approved reading assessments for use by local and regional boards of education, to identify students in kindergarten to grade three, inclusive, who are below proficiency in reading. Additionally, for the school year commencing July 1, 2016, and each year thereafter, such assessments shall also “assist in identifying, in whole or in part, students at risk for Dyslexia or other reading-related learning disabilities.” Students with scores below the cut points, as established by publishers for each assessment, should be considered below proficiency in reading.

Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)/Dyslexia

The General Outcome Measures (GOMs) listed in Section 1 of the *Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments* are most appropriate for use as screening tools in Grades K-3 for students at risk of SLD/Dyslexia or other reading-related learning disabilities because they are sensitive to early reading growth, describe individual children’s growth and development over time (i.e., current status and rate of development), and allow educators to readily and reliably determine if a student is learning and making progress toward long-term goals. As such, only the assessments listed in Section 1 are appropriate for use as screening tools in Grades K-3 for students at risk of SLD/ Dyslexia or other reading-related learning disabilities. The *Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments* is posted at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=320866>.

Districts using an assessment listed in Section 2 of the *Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments* must also select an assessment listed in Section 1 for use as a screening tool in Grades K-3 for students at risk of SLD/Dyslexia or other reading-related learning disabilities. As such, consider using a free or low-cost option such as DIBELS. For information about DIBELS, visit <https://dibels.uoregon.edu/assessment/index/material/>.

Support Programs

Exit Criteria for English Learners (ELs) in Grades K-3

The LAS Links, Form C, will serve as the sole exit criteria for ELs in Grades K-2, and the exit criteria for ELs in Grades 3-12 will mirror that of ELs in Grades K-2. LAS Links, Form C assessment results, should be communicated to parents in a timely manner and should be maintained in the student’s cumulative file.

Students in Grades K-3 Bilingual Education/Dual Language Programs

Students who are being instructed in literacy in their native language with the ultimate goal of bi-literacy should be administered reading assessments from the approved menu in both English and the native language, if available. The rationale is to identify at-risk readers, regardless of language of instruction. Students in bilingual or dual-language education programs may appear to be below proficiency in reading on a reading assessment in English. These students should still be referred for summer programming. Ideally, a summer bilingual program would provide the most benefit for students in these regular school year programs. Assessment results should be communicated to parents in a timely manner and should be maintained in the student’s cumulative file.

Special Education

All students, including those students receiving special education service, should be assessed with all other students. If they are not making sufficient progress toward learning to read, they should have access to supplemental and/or intensive instruction. As such, only students with a significant cognitive impairment who are participating in the standards-based general education curriculum that requires

extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports should not participate in the universal screening process. The individualized education programs (IEPs) of students in this latter group should reflect how they would be assessed on appropriate developmental skills as determined on the student's IEP.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that public agencies “...ensure that its children with disabilities have available to them the variety of educational programs and services available to nondisabled children in the area served by the agency...” As such, special education students, whose reading level has been identified as below proficiency in reading on an assessment from the *Approved Menu of Research-based Universal Screening Reading Assessments for Grades K-3*, must have the same access to interventions designed to improve literacy skills as regular education students whose reading performance was also scored as below proficiency.

If you have any questions regarding reading assessments and literacy/reading instruction, contact Joanne R. White, Education Consultant at joanne.white@ct.gov or 860-713-6751; and if you have any questions regarding special education and SLD/Dyslexia, please contact Dr. Patricia Anderson, Education Consultant at patricia.anderson@ct.gov or 860-713-6923.