




STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**TO:** Superintendents of Schools

**FROM:** Dr. Melissa Wlodarczyk Hickey, Reading/Literacy Director 

**DATE:** January 14, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Annual Open Review Period for Universal Screening Reading Assessments

Universal screening measures are a critical component of a comprehensive, standards-aligned reading instructional program. Pursuant to Section 10-14t(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.), 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, and published the *Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K–3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments*. Commencing July 1, 2016, these reading assessments have been approved for use by districts to “assist in identifying, in whole or in part, students at risk for Dyslexia, as defined in Section 10-3d of the C.G.S., or other reading-related learning disabilities.” The intent of the legislation is for all districts to select and use an assessment from the *Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K–3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments*.

In order to remain current with the field of assessment, the CSDE has established an annual open review period each spring to add additional assessments to the menu. During the open review period, districts may submit assessment recommendations to the CSDE for consideration. Based on recommendations of the CSDE, the State Board of Education may approve any new K–3 reading assessments to include in the publication of the *Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K–3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments* for the 2020-21 school year. The current open review period begins January 21, 2020, and ends March 6, 2020.

The most appropriate assessments for use as screening tools in Grades K–3 for students at risk of Specific Learning Disability (SLD)/Dyslexia or other reading-related learning disabilities are General Outcome Measures (GOMs) because they are highly sensitive to early reading skills growth, track individual children’s growth and development in critical reading skills over time, and allow educators to reliably determine if a student is making progress toward long-term goals. Examples of Connecticut approved GOMs are aimswebPlus Early Literacy and Reading and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). Only GOMs may be submitted for consideration as a universal screening reading assessment.

The documents, *Guidelines for Annual Open Review Period for Universal Screening Reading Assessments: Grades K–3* and *Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K–3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments*, can be accessed on the [Connecticut State Department of Education’s Academic Office Web site](#). Any questions about the guidelines regarding the open review period may be directed to Joanne R. White, Education Consultant, at [Joanne.White@ct.gov](mailto:Joanne.White@ct.gov) or 860-713-6751.

MH:jw  
Enclosure

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*2020 Guidelines for Annual Open Review Period for  
Universal Screening Reading Assessments: Grades K–3*

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## **Background**

Pursuant to Section 10-14t(a) 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, and published the *Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K–3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments*. Additionally, for the school year commencing July 1, 2016, and each year thereafter, such assessments were approved for use by districts to “assist in identifying, in whole or in part, students at risk for Dyslexia or other reading-related learning disabilities.” The intent of the legislation is for all districts to select and use an assessment from the approved menu. The *Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K–3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments* can be accessed on the [Connecticut State Department of Education’s Academic Office Web site](#).

## **Annual Open Review Period for Universal Screening Reading Assessments**

An open review period has been established so that the CSDE may consider additional assessments for the *Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K–3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments*. This proactive process will continue to assist the CSDE in guiding districts in the use of reading assessments as research and assessment practices evolve over time. During the open review period, districts may submit assessments to the CSDE for review. Based on recommendations of the CSDE, the State Board of Education may approve any new K–3 reading assessments. Upon approval, the new assessments will be included in the publication of the *Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K–3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments* for the school year commencing July 1, 2020.

## **General Outcome Measurement**

The most appropriate assessments for use as screening tools in Grades K–3 for students at risk of Specific Learning Disability (SLD)/Dyslexia or other reading-related learning disabilities are General Outcome Measures (GOMs) because they are highly sensitive to early reading skills growth, track individual children’s growth and development in critical reading skills over time, and allow educators to reliably determine if a student is making progress toward long-term goals. The currently approved GOMs are listed in Section 1 of the *Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K–3 Universal Screening Reading Assessments*, and include aimswebPlus Early Literacy and Reading, and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). Only GOMs may be submitted for consideration as a universal screening reading assessment.

## **Guidelines for Submitting Assessment Recommendations for Review by the CSDE**

1. With the Superintendent’s approval, districts may submit an assessment proposal for review by the CSDE.
2. Only GOMs will be accepted for review.
3. Proposals from assessment developers, vendors, or individuals otherwise representing or affiliated with an assessment publisher will not be accepted.
4. Districts shall use the following assessment guidelines for selecting and reviewing screening and progress monitoring measures. Assessments must:
  - a. have a high degree of technical adequacy and be constructed to be administered three times per year (fall, winter, spring);

- b. provide norm-referenced scores and/or benchmarks, and when available, norm-referenced scores and/or benchmarks for students who speak Spanish;
- c. be proven to accurately and effectively measure students' reading skills in the areas of 1) phonemic awareness; 2) decoding/phonics; 3) reading fluency; 4) vocabulary, and 5) reading comprehension (assessments may address one or multiple skill areas);
- d. be constructed to monitor the development of early reading skills to support a comprehensive evaluation of these component skills;
- e. meet standards for technical rigor as indicated below in Table 1;
- f. meet efficiency standards as indicated below in Table 2; and
- g. confirm that the prospective provider of educational technology (assessment vendor) that captures or has access to personal student information, records, or data, will comply with [Connecticut's student data privacy law](#).

District and school leaders should review and understand their obligations under Connecticut's student data privacy law (Connecticut General Statutes §§ 10-234aa through 10-234dd). As a key element of compliance, districts must enter into contracts with providers of educational technology whenever such providers capture or have access to personal student information, records, or data.

- 5. The completed Assessment Proposal Template must be submitted electronically at the e-mail address provided below by Friday, March 6, 2020. With the exception of the signature page, the Assessment Proposal Template must be received in a Microsoft Word document (not PDF or Excel). The completed signature page may be submitted as a PDF along with the Assessment Proposal Template.
- 6. Please ensure a timely submission.
- 7. The delivery e-mail address is [Joanne.White@ct.gov](mailto:Joanne.White@ct.gov).

**Table 1**

<b>TECHNICAL STANDARDS</b>	
<b>Reliability in Scoring:</b>	
Standard	Description
Evidence of test reliability and internal consistency reliability	<p>Results of reliability studies are reported for each grade assessment. Evidence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• studies that are appropriate given the purpose of the measure; and</li> <li>• for each grade-level, studies that provide evidence of:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ split-half reliability, coefficient alpha, test-retest reliability, and classification consistency.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p>Standard error of measurement (SEM) or standard estimate of error is reported. Evidence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEM estimates reported for score ranges and cut-scores; and</li> <li>• SEM estimates reported for score ranges and cut-scores for each assessment (grade-level, form, subtest).</li> </ul>
	<p>Inter-rater reliability studies have been conducted. The group of raters used to establish inter-rater reliability is representative of test administrators. Evidence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inter-rater reliability studies conducted for each grade level and are based on a representative sample of educators who will administer and score the assessment; and</li> <li>• inter-rater reliability coefficients that exceed .7.</li> </ul>
	<p>Studies have been conducted to establish reliability with all subcategories of students who will take the assessment. Evidence includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reliability established from scoring samples of students, i.e., non-English learners with and without reading deficiencies and English learners (ELs) with and without reading deficiencies (gender, English learner status, special needs status, socioeconomic status, and race).</li> </ul>
Alternative forms available for multiple assessments with demonstrated	<p>If alternative forms are provided, all forms have demonstrated evidence of equivalence or comparability. Technical reviews indicate all forms for each grade level have demonstrated evidence of comparability and content specifications. Evidence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sufficient forms are provided to allow for progress monitoring between interim assessments; and</li> </ul>

equivalence or comparability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>split-half reliability and alpha coefficient of reliability.</li> </ul>
<b>Content and Construct Validity:</b>	
Standard	Description
Evidence of content and construct validity	<p>Evidence reported to demonstrate the assessment helps correctly identify students with “significant reading deficiencies” so that successful remediation and intervention can be provided. Studies have been conducted with similar assessments to show that the assessment measures reading ability, not other irrelevant criteria.</p> <p>Evidence includes the provision of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a clear description that demonstrates the purpose of the assessment is to screen students for reading concerns; and</li> <li>content specifications for each grade-level, including a complete description of the test content, purpose(s), and intended use(s), and assessment blueprint as appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>There are studies of construct validity, such as convergent and discriminant analysis, demonstrating significant indicators of relationship (i.e. correlations of .7 or above).</p>
Evidence of criterion/predictive validity accurately identifying students with “ <i>significant reading deficiency</i> ”	<p>Evidence reported to demonstrate that the assessment has established criterion and/or predictive validity to correctly identify students with and without a “significant reading deficiency.”</p> <p>Evidence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a clear definition of the criterion or measure that was used to establish concurrent validity; and</li> <li>studies with similar assessments that demonstrate the assessment measures reading ability, not other irrelevant criteria; and</li> <li>predictive validity correlations above .7.</li> </ul>
Determination of cut-scores based upon well-designed pilot study and standard-setting process	<p>The assessment has established cut-scores for decision making about students’ “<i>significant reading deficiency</i>” using adequate demographics (e.g., ELs, free and reduced-price meals), appropriate criterion assessment, adequate sample size, and appropriate statistics.</p> <p>Evidence indicate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a description of the process used to establish the cut points;</li> <li>a full description of the norming sample; and</li> <li>the norming sample is a large representative national sample of students at the same grade level and is representative of the testing population according to gender, EL status, special needs status, socioeconomic</li> </ul>

	status, and race.
	Studies of classification accuracy analysis provide evidence that the measure appropriately identifies students as indicated in the description of purpose of the assessment, demonstrating values that exceed .8 or higher.
	Acceptable, recognized procedures are followed for setting cut-scores.
	There is guidance for cut-score interpretation.

**Table 2**

<b>EFFICIENCY STANDARDS</b>	
<b>Administration and Scoring:</b>	
Standard	Description
Standardization of materials and procedures for administration	Administration protocol is scripted and provides precise guidelines; administration windows are clearly identified; materials are provided, or clear guidelines are provided if materials are to be created; includes both electronic and hard copy administration manual that are clear and concise.
Efficiency of administration	The amount of time needed to administer the assessment is reasonable and balanced to the information provided.
Efficiency of scoring	The amount of time needed to score the assessment is reasonable and balanced to the information provided; computer-assisted scoring is available; procedures for calculating scores are clear; scores can be stored and reported electronically.
Accommodations clearly stated and described for ELs	<p>The accommodations directly address the linguistic needs of the student.</p> <p>Evidence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approved accommodations that do not compromise the interpretation or purpose of the test;</li> <li>• specific administration guidelines provided for implementing any accommodations;</li> <li>• how to address accommodations, and is specifically addressed in the training; and</li> <li>• suggested accommodations that are research or evidence-based.</li> </ul>
Accommodations clearly stated and described for students with disabilities and students with special needs.	<p>The differing needs of students with disabilities are specifically addressed.</p> <p>Evidence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approved accommodations that do not compromise the interpretation or purpose of the test;</li> <li>• the provision of specific administration guidelines for implementing any accommodations;</li> <li>• information about how to address accommodations specifically addressed in the training materials or program; and</li> <li>• suggested accommodations that are research or evidence-based.</li> </ul>



**Assessment Proposal Template**

District Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Contact Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Contact Phone & E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Assessment / Publisher: \_\_\_\_\_

Provide detailed evidence within the tables below for each of the required standards. Expand tables as necessary.

<b>TECHNICAL STANDARDS</b>	
<b>VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND CONSISTENCY IN SCORING:</b>	
➤ Evidence of test reliability and internal consistency reliability	
➤ Alternative forms available for multiple assessments with demonstrated equivalence or comparability	
<b>CONTENT AND CONSTRUCT VALIDITY:</b>	
➤ Evidence of content and construct validity	
➤ Evidence of criterion/predictive validity accurately identifying students with “ <i>significant reading deficiency</i> ”	
➤ Determination of cut-scores based upon well-designed pilot study and standards-setting process	

**EFFICIENCY STANDARDS**

**ADMINISTRATION & SCORING**

Standardization of materials and procedures for administration

Efficiency of administration

Efficiency of scoring

Accommodations clearly stated and described for ELs

Accommodations clearly stated and described for students with disabilities and students with special needs

**STUDENT DATA PRIVACY COMPLIANCE**

**Connecticut General Statutes §§ 10-234aa through 10-234dd**

Educators and school leaders should review and understand their obligations under Connecticut’s student data privacy law (Connecticut General Statutes §§ 10-234aa through 10-234dd). As a key element of compliance, districts must enter into contracts with providers of educational technology whenever such providers capture or have access to personal student information, records, or data. For purposes of this assessment review, districts will need to communicate with such companies in advance of submitting the assessment proposal to ensure adherence to the privacy and security assurances outlined in the law. Subsequent non-compliance with Connecticut’s student data privacy law may void any previous CSDE approval decisions.

**Provide any additional information/justification for assessment proposal.**

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**2020 Annual Open Review Period  
for Universal Screening Reading Assessments, Grades K-3**

**Signature Page**

I, the undersigned authorized official, hereby submit an assessment proposal for review by the Connecticut State Department of Education.

**Signature of Superintendent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Superintendent: (typed)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_