



## Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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## Introduction

Per the Connecticut General Statutes, all public school districts (e.g., local and regional boards of education, regional educational service centers, Approved Private Special Education Programs (APSEPs), and charter schools) serving students in Kindergarten to Grade 3, inclusive, must select and administer an assessment from the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#). Administering a set of screening measures in the primary grades helps identify students who are at risk for reading difficulties and require intervention, and assists in identifying, in whole or in part, students at risk for dyslexia, or other reading-related learning disabilities.

### A. General Questions

- A.1. Why has the CSDE approved K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments for use by districts?

**Answer:** Pursuant to [Section \(Sec.\) 10-14t\(a\) of the Connecticut General Statutes \(C.G.S.\)](#), the CSDE has approved the [Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#) for use by all districts (e.g., local and regional boards of education, regional educational service centers, Approved Private Special Education Programs (APSEPs), and charter schools) serving students in Kindergarten to Grade 3, inclusive, to identify students who are below proficiency in reading, and to assist in identifying, in whole or in part, students at risk for dyslexia, or other reading-related learning disabilities. The purpose of these assessments is not, in and of themselves, to make a formal *diagnosis* for reading disabilities, but to identify students *at-risk* for those reading disabilities. The students identified by these assessments as being *at-risk* may need additional assessments to pinpoint areas of targeted literacy development and reading instruction with frequent progress monitoring, and/or may need more *diagnostic* assessments to make a formal disability determination.

- A.2. What assessments are approved for K-3 literacy universal screening?

**Answer:** The CSDE [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#) contains a list of the approved assessments. This document is located on the [CSDE K-3 Literacy Assessment page](#).

- A.3. When must districts begin using an assessment from the Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments?

**Answer:** Beginning with the 2023-24 school year, **all** districts must assess all students in Grades K-3 three times per year (fall, winter, spring) with an approved Literacy Universal Screening Assessment on all grade appropriate subtests as indicated by the assessment publisher. Please refer to the current [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#) for a list of the approved assessment publishers.

A.4. What areas of essential literacy skills and knowledge must be assessed?

**Answer:** [Sec.10-14t of the C.G.S.](#) requires that the component skills of reading that must be assessed include oral language, phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and rapid automatic naming (RAN) or letter name fluency. Districts should refer to the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#) in collaboration with publisher guidelines to determine which skills will be assessed for each grade level within each assessment period.

A.5. What is rapid automatic naming (RAN)?

**Answer:** Rapid automatic naming (RAN), which is synonymous with rapid automatized naming, is defined as the ability to quickly identify and verbally name familiar objects (e.g., colors or common items) and/or letters and numbers. Many studies have shown that RAN has a strong association with reading and its predictive power to estimate potential reading ability years into the future ([Norton 2020](#)).

A.6. Must all Grade K-3 students be assessed in each of the essential reading skills and knowledge areas?

**Answer:** Yes. **All** Grade K-3 students inclusive must be assessed three times a year with an assessment from the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#). Districts should follow the publisher's protocols that outline the essential literacy measures that should be administered within each of the CSDE assessment windows.

A.7. Why must all students in Grades K-3, including students who are performing at or above expected levels of reading ability, be included in the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment process?

**Answer:** All students in Grades K-3 must be assessed with one of the approved K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments three times per school year (fall, winter, spring) as required by [Sec.10-14t of the C.G.S.](#) Conducting a universal screening of students' early reading skills and knowledge is essential for establishing where students are functioning at different points in the school year. These assessments measure different skills at different times based on the scientific evidence of reading development. Additionally, this development can be uneven. For example, a student may present above level at one point, however it is not a guarantee that the student will continue to demonstrate above level skills as literacy development progresses on the subsequent measures throughout the year. It is critical to ensure that students who demonstrate proficiency on one measure or during one assessment timeframe continue to remain proficient and if skills decline that they are addressed. Therefore, even students who present above grade level on one measure or during one assessment timeframe should be assessed three times a year on grade-specific literacy skills in accordance with the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#) within the CSDE assessment window. Additionally, for students who are above grade level, these assessments can provide educators with



information on their strengths that can then lead to instructional shifts that allow for appropriate challenging curriculum to further develop their abilities.

- A.8. In addition to measuring oral language, phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and RAN or letter name fluency, some of the approved K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments offer subtests in other early literacy areas. Can a district use those additional subtests?

**Answer:** Yes. Districts may assess any additional early literacy areas, so long as they have completed the assessments in the required areas per the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#). Please refer to [A.4.](#) for information on the required areas that need to be assessed.

- A.9. Can districts use a locally selected literacy universal screening assessment that has not been approved in lieu of an approved assessment?

**Answer: No.** [Public Act \(P.A.\) No. 21-2, Sec. 10-14t of the C.G.S. \(effective July 1, 2022\)](#), states that the CSDE “shall compile a list of reading assessments...for use by local and regional boards of education commencing July 1, 2023, and each school year thereafter.” Districts **may not** use a locally selected reading assessment in lieu of an approved K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment.

- A.10. Many districts use other online assessments (e.g., iReady Diagnostic, NWEA MAP Growth, IXL, etc.). Can districts continue using such assessments?

**Answer:** Yes. Districts may use other assessments but only in addition to using an assessment from the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#).

- A.11. What is the difference between the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments on the approved menu and benchmark/screening assessments within the approved ELA curriculum?

**Answer:** The table below highlights the key differences between the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments and ELA Benchmark/Formative Assessments within the [Connecticut Approved K-3 Reading Curriculum Models or Programs](#).

K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment	ELA Benchmark/Formative Assessment
Assessment is not tied to curriculum.	Assessment is tied to curriculum.
Assessment is brief in nature.	Assessment is a detailed evaluation.
Administered at designated intervals three times per year (fall, winter, spring) to collect valid and reliable data.	Administered in relation to the curriculum progression and development of skills throughout the school year.
Measures student progress towards nationally normed skills-based benchmarks.	Measures student progress and gauges how they are performing against grade-level and curriculum standards.
Assessment assists with identifying students who may need additional instruction or may be at risk of having reading difficulties.	Assessment is used to track student progress towards specific learning goals within the grade level curriculum. Additionally, these assessments can inform and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and the curriculum.

#### A.12. Should districts be concerned about a *floor effect* phenomenon?

**Answer:** No. Districts do not need to be concerned about a floor effect phenomenon as each publisher has taken into consideration the floor effect and with additional research studies, has improved test sensitivity in subsequent editions of their assessment(s) to reduce the impact of the floor effect. The floor effect limits the usefulness of an assessment and occurs when scores are so low that they fall near or at the bottom of the scale (lowest possible score). When students score at the bottom of the scale, this makes it difficult to discern if these are true scores, or if the low scores are due to measurement limitations. Therefore, it becomes difficult to detect variations in performance or improvements. The floor effect can limit the ability to effectively assess a student's range of performance and may lead to inaccurate conclusions about the effectiveness of an intervention. The approved menu consists of assessments deemed reliable in identifying students who are at risk for reading challenges. An example of how a publisher has addressed this is in the [DIBELS 8 Administration and Scoring Guide, 2023 Edition](#); the floor effect is discussed in relation to the Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) subtest that was revised to reflect students' true abilities more accurately.

A.13. Are districts responsible for administering the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments to students who are new to the district?

**Answer:** Yes. Districts should administer the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments to students who are new to the state or country within the applicable testing window. Students who transfer within Connecticut school districts who have already been tested during the assessment window may be excused from retaking the K-3 Universal Literacy Screening Assessment again in the current window, providing the receiving district verifies that the assessment was already administered. If a student arrives in the district from another district, state, or country within five days before the close of the CSDE window, the district is not required to administer the assessment to the student for that assessment period. Districts must administer the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments for all subsequent administration time frames.

A.14. Are the approved K-3 Universal Literacy Screening Assessments considered statewide summative assessments?

**Answer:** No, the approved K-3 Universal Literacy Screening Assessments are formative district-wide assessments given to comply with [Section 10-14t\(a\)](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes.

## B. Assessment Window

B.1. When must students be assessed?

**Answer:** Universal screening of all K-3 students must occur three times a year [i.e., fall (BOY), winter (MOY), and spring (EOY)], as outlined in [Sec. 10-14t\(a\) of the C.G.S.](#) using an approved screening measure from the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#) to assist in identifying, in whole or in part, students at risk for dyslexia, as defined in section [10-3d](#), or other reading-related learning disabilities. Pursuant to this requirement, the CSDE has [established test administration windows for each of the time periods](#).

B.2. Where can I find K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment administration windows?

**Answer:** The K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment administration window is posted on the [CSDE K-3 Literacy Assessment page](#). The assessment window outlines the required Beginning of the Year (BOY), Middle of the Year (MOY), and End of the Year (EOY) assessment timeframes.

B.3. Why does the testing window consist of multiple weeks?

**Answer:** The CSDE testing windows were developed to align with the administration timeframes outlined by the assessment publishers. The length of the assessment window is

intended to permit maximum flexibility for districts to meet their unique needs while adhering to the CSDE guidelines for administration.

B.4. Is it permissible for a district to test outside of the CSDE established assessment windows?

**Answer:** No. Effective in the 2025-26 school year, districts must adhere to the established testing windows for the administration of the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments. Please refer to the [Connecticut Summative Assessment Calendar for 2025-26](#) for the 2025-26 testing window.

B.5. Why does the CSDE recommend that the Beginning of the Year (BOY) window start approximately two weeks after the start of the school year?

**Answer:** The CSDE recommends that districts screen students approximately two weeks after the start of school, as it will allow time for teachers to establish routines and relationships, address regressed skills through lessons, and ensure that students in need of additional instructional supports are identified and provided with interventions at the start of the school year.

B.6. When will the CSDE publish the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment window to assist districts in planning?

**Answer:** The assessment calendar for each school year will be released by the CSDE Performance Office in the school year prior to the upcoming calendar year to allow for planning purposes. Please refer to the [Connecticut Summative Assessment Calendar for 2025-26](#) for the 2025-26 assessment window.

B.7. Which K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment subtests must be administered for each of the assessment windows (e.g., fall (BOY), winter (MOY), spring (EOY))?

**Answer:** Districts should refer to the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#) and each publishers' administration schedule (BOY, MOY, EOY) for specific grade level subtests.

B.8. Do kindergarten students need to take the Beginning of the Year (BOY) K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments?

**Answer:** Yes. All kindergarten students need to take the Beginning of the Year (BOY) K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment. Please see question [B.5.](#) for additional information on the BOY window.

## C. Assessment Administration

### C.1. Are all districts required to administer K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments?

**Answer:** Yes. All districts (e.g., local and regional boards of education, regional educational service centers, Approved Private Special Education Programs (APSEPs), and charter schools) serving students in Grades K-3, inclusive, must select and administer an assessment from the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#) for screening and progress monitoring per [Sec. 10-14t\(a\) of the C.G.S.](#). Administration of these assessments must be in accordance with the publishers' administration guidelines unless otherwise specified by the CSDE.

### C.2. Who can administer an approved Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment?

**Answer:** Although typically administered by classroom teachers, any district staff who have been formally trained by their district or assessment publisher in the administration of a K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment may administer the assessment. This includes, but is not limited to, district staff such as reading specialists, literacy coaches, or other staff members formally trained in the administration of the specific assessment to ensure administration fidelity. Ideally, the classroom teacher should administer the assessment and interpret and use the results gained to inform instructional outcomes for students.

### C.3. If multiple RAN measures are listed on the Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment Menu which measure should be administered?

**Answer:** If multiple RAN measures are listed for an assessment on the approved menu, follow the administration guidance as specified by the publisher.

### C.4. Can districts use “gating” or discontinuation rules that are suggested by the approved publisher’s manuals?

**Answer:** The CSDE does not recommend the use of discontinuation and gating rules, however, they are allowed as permitted by the publisher.

## D. Assessment Results and Data Collection

### D.1. Why does the Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments include General Outcome Measurement measures (GOM measures)?

**Answer:** GOM measures are most appropriate for use as universal screening and progress monitoring tools in Grades K-3 for identifying students experiencing reading difficulties and students at risk of specific learning disability (SLD)/dyslexia or other reading-related learning disabilities. GOM measures are brief reading assessments that are highly sensitive to early

reading skills growth, have a demonstrated utility in predicting reading acquisition, track individual students' growth and development in critical reading skills over time, and allow educators to reliably determine the extent to which a student is making progress toward long-term goals.

**D.2. Will the CSDE collect data on the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments?**

**Answer:** Yes. The CSDE will begin collecting student-level assessment data on the approved K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments for all students in Grades K-3 starting in the 2025-2026 school year from all districts (e.g., local and regional boards of education, regional educational service centers, and charter schools). Data collection is anticipated to begin following the close of the winter assessment window. Once this collection starts, the CSDE will be collecting data for all three assessment windows moving forward. Districts should continue to maintain all student assessment data. The CSDE is exploring the most efficient and least burdensome way to procure this data from districts and will provide additional information as it becomes available.

**D.3. Will the CSDE publish cut scores that classify students in a risk category?**

**Answer:** Cut scores used for at risk determination are currently defined by each publisher. Please refer to your specific approved publishers scoring guides.

**D.4. Who is responsible for analyzing universal screening reading assessment data?**

**Answer:** Teachers, intervention teams, literacy and multilingual learner specialists, special education teachers, administrators, and other literacy data team members should participate in the analysis of K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment outcomes and decision-making. It is recommended that school districts convene district and school-based data teams for this analysis across and within schools. These analyses can guide district leaders and staff in making data-driven determinations and aid in the identification of students that may be at risk for dyslexia or other reading-related learning disabilities. Additionally, these analyses can help to assess the overall efficacy of the Tier I core curriculums or programs as well as offer instructional implications to ensure that core instruction adequately supports reading development among all Grade K-3 students.

**D.5. What must be considered when analyzing K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment data?**

**Answer:** Educator teams analyzing data from the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments should be considering the identification, in whole or in part, of students at risk for dyslexia or other reading-related learning disabilities, as well as students who have failed to reach important reading skills and knowledge developmental milestones as indicated by the publisher's established cut scores. Using these data, educators should be determining considerations for reading intervention and to inform instructional

programming. In addition to analyzing data to determine students at risk, data teams can use this information to make observations about the overall efficacy of the Tier I instruction.

D.6. How does K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment data inform Tier I instruction?

**Answer:** Analyzing universal screening data guides collective decisions about Tier I enhancements and specific adjustments (e.g., allotted time blocks for learning, grouping for instruction, coordination of instruction, and concentration of instruction). This analysis should also include reviewing data to ensure students acquire important literacy skills and reach grade level developmental milestones during the Tier I core instruction, as well as through prevention and early intervention methods.

D.7. What additional information is available to help guide the data team process?

**Answer:** Well-established district and school-based data teams are essential for implementing and sustaining data-driven decision-making processes. This includes the use of decision rules, maintaining a focus on the prevention of reading failure, and ensuring early intervention for students who may be experiencing reading difficulties. For more information on data teams, the data team process, and decision rules for determining which students should receive Tier II and/or Tier III instruction, please visit the CSDE webpage [SRBI – Scientific Research Based Interventions](#).

D.8. How should teachers be supported in using data to guide their instructional decisions?

**Answer:** It is expected that teachers will continue to serve as school and grade-level data team members to monitor students' progress during an intervention period and make collective decisions about adjusting and intensifying instruction as indicated by progress monitoring results. Classroom teachers should also collaborate with the individuals (e.g., literacy specialists, literacy coaches, interventionists, special education teachers, and multilingual teachers) providing Tier II, Tier III, and specialized instruction to their students to ensure alignment and coherence to Tier I instruction, estimate rates of improvement during intervention cycles, and decide about next steps for students who are not demonstrating adequate progress. For additional information on Tier II and Tier III, please visit the CSDE webpage [SRBI – Scientific Research Based Interventions](#).

D.9. What should be done for students determined to be substantially deficient in reading based on the fall or winter assessment results?

**Answer:** Students determined to be substantially deficient in reading, and not making sufficient progress toward learning to read, should have access to supplemental and/or intensive instruction. Districts may administer additional diagnostic assessments to determine specific reading difficulties to identify the appropriate supplemental or intensive instruction. Districts should refer to guidance outlined in the [SRBI – Scientific Research](#)

[Based Interventions: Related Resources](#). Additionally, pursuant to [Sec. 10-265g of the C.G.S.](#), local and regional boards of education designated as a [priority school district](#) must follow the specific guidelines within the statute. If the student is identified as substantially deficient in reading based on the beginning, middle or end of the school year assessment, the school shall notify the parents or guardian of the student of such result and the school shall develop and implement an individual reading plan for such student. Additionally, the priority school district shall provide instruction for such students that incorporates the competencies required for early reading success and effective reading instruction as delineated in section [10-221l](#).

D.10. How is the CSDE planning to collect data on K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments?

**Answer:** To minimize the data reporting burden on school districts, the CSDE is in the process of working directly with the four assessment vendors (Amplify–DIBELS 8, Pearson–aimswebPlus, Acadience – Acadience Learning Online, easyCBM) to receive student-level data files in a specified format directly from them after the end of each assessment window.

D.11. Does the CSDE receive other assessment data directly from vendors?

**Answer:** Yes. As districts are already aware, CSDE receives all state assessment data directly from assessment vendors. This includes results for the Smarter Balanced (summative and interim), NGSS, the CT SAT School Day, Connecticut Alternate Assessments, and LAS Links.

In addition, the CSDE also receives assessment data for all Connecticut test takers for SAT, Advanced Placement, ACT, and International Baccalaureate assessments from the respective vendors (i.e., the College Board, ACT, and the International Baccalaureate Organization). The CSDE receives these data to incorporate their results toward Indicator 6 in the Next Generation Accountability System.

D.12. Why are the K-3 assessment vendors asking districts to sign data access agreements?

**Answer:** The vendors have independently determined that they need each district to sign a data access agreement for the vendor to release their district's data to the CSDE.

D.13. Do the vendor data access agreements comply with federal and state data privacy statutes?

**Answer:** The CSDE believes that they do. If the districts have any questions or concerns, they can consult with their own attorneys.



D.14. Does the CSDE have the authority to collect student-level data on these universal screening assessments?

**Answer:** Yes. Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-10a gives the CSDE broad authority to collect student, staff, and organizational data that is not limited to the explicit data domains listed in the statute. Despite this broad authority, the CSDE remains extremely judicious in what data it chooses to collect because it understands the burden that any data collection places on districts.

D.15. Does the CSDE have to collect these K-3 literacy universal screening benchmark assessment data?

**Answer:** Yes. In its May 7, 2025, resolution approving the revised menu of Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments, the State Board of Education directed the CSDE to collect student benchmark performance data on the assessments for all students in Grades K-3 from all districts and report meaningful aggregate results publicly on EdSight.

D.16. How does the CSDE plan to use the data from these assessments?

**Answer:** The CSDE's primary goal for collecting these data is to support districts in improving the development of foundational reading skills among students in those early grades. The following specific activities are under consideration:

- The Independent Researcher Review of Commercial Reading Screening Assessment Suites that was the basis for the May 7, 2025 State Board resolution recommends that the CSDE improve the classification accuracy of the approved assessments by utilizing longitudinal data of the same students across grade levels K through 5 to evaluate the effectiveness of different reading screening suites in the early grade levels for predicting future reading comprehension on the state standards and assessments. Such information can help educators in districts across the state to ensure that the appropriate students are being identified as at risk for literacy skill development in those critical developmental years and are receiving necessary instruction in those early grades.
- The CSDE will integrate K-3 literacy assessment results into the Early Indication Tool (EIT) to strengthen its early warning models for Grades 1-3. Currently, the only early academic indicator in these models is the teacher-reported Kindergarten Entrance Inventory (KEI). Incorporating standardized K-3 reading data will substantially improve the accuracy of predictions regarding students' likelihood of attaining proficiency on the Grade 3 Smarter Balanced English Language Arts (ELA) assessment. Because the EIT is a central component of Connecticut's ESSA plan and is designed to identify students who may need timely, targeted supports, enhanced literacy data will allow districts to intervene earlier and more effectively. Strengthening the models with reliable K-3 reading indicators helps ensure that

Connecticut recognizes early literacy as foundational for long-term academic success and mitigates the risk of perpetuating inequities that have lasting societal impact. By improving predictive precision, the EIT can better fulfill its core purpose: getting the right intervention to the right student at the right time.

- The K-3 literacy assessment results will be included in EdSight Secure. When students move from one school to another, either as part of normal grade progression or unplanned mobility, the results from the prior district(s) will be available immediately to the new district in which the student is enrolled.

**D.17. Do districts need to report student-level data to the CSDE?**

**Answer:** Yes. The above-listed purposes as stated in D.16. can only be completed with identifiable student-level data.

**D.18. What exactly will be reported publicly?**

**Answer:** The precise nature of the public report has not been finalized. The CSDE understands that the subtests of the approved assessment batteries are short screeners that are administered by teachers throughout the school system. One approach to the public report that is under consideration is to use the data from all the subtests to identify [latent reading profiles](#) of students in these early grades. Such profiles can help educators to differentiate instruction and meet the individual needs of students in the word recognition and/or language comprehension domains. Such profiles can also assist staff in the CSDE's Academic (including the Center for Literacy) and Talent (including the Center for Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities) Offices to better support professional learning, technical assistance, and educator preparation activities.

The CSDE will be consulting with national experts in K-3 literacy assessment on how best to analyze and report Connecticut's data both on EdSight Public and Secure that enables the most valid and meaningful inferences from those reports. The CSDE also plans to share previews of such reports with district and school representatives for their input before they are released widely.

**D.19. How does the CSDE protect the confidentiality and privacy of student-level data?**

**Answer:** The CSDE collects, stores, and processes a wide array of confidential data about students and educators. All confidential data are stored on secure servers behind stringent multi-level firewall protections and monitored by sophisticated intrusion detection software. Only authorized users are provided access to the data. The CSDE does not report individual student data to the public. When publicly reporting aggregate data, the CSDE further minimizes the risk of identification of individual students by applying data suppression protocols. On a limited basis, the CSDE enters into FERPA-compliant data

sharing agreements with external organizations to perform audits and evaluations of federal and state-funded programs.

D.20. Will the data from K-3 literacy assessments contribute to the existing district or school performance indices?

**Answer:** No. The district/school performance indices (DPI/SPI) are calculated using the state summative academic assessments only. The K-3 assessments are neither intended nor are being considered for use in the Next Generation Accountability System.

D.21. Do districts have to sign the vendor data access agreements to provide data to the CSDE?

**Answer:** No, but it is strongly recommended. However, if districts choose not to sign the agreement, then those districts will be required to submit these data to the CSDE in a manner that conforms with the CSDE's data specifications. This will require district staff to extract data from their systems after each assessment window, prepare them to meet CSDE specifications, and then submit them through the systems established by the CSDE. In the long run, if many districts fail to sign the data access agreement and the CSDE cannot receive data directly from vendors for all districts, then the CSDE may need to reevaluate its approach to this data collection. Instead of having some data come from vendors and some data from individual districts, the CSDE may need to require ALL districts to submit data directly to the CSDE, which ultimately could prove more burdensome for districts. A single consistent process – whether from vendors or from districts – ensures that data for all districts are processed in a similar manner.

## E. Special Education and Section 504

E.1. Must districts include special education students in the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment process?

**Answer:** Yes, all students in Grades K-3 in Connecticut, including students identified as special education or Section 504, must be assessed three times a year on grade-specific literacy skills in accordance with the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#) during the CSDE assessment window. Additionally, if a student is not making sufficient progress toward learning to read, they should have access to the supplemental and/or intensive instruction that is afforded to all general education students. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that districts “...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 levels have been identified as below proficiency in reading on an assessment from the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#) must have the same access to

interventions designed to improve literacy skills as nondisabled students whose reading performance was also below proficiency.

E.2. How do we include special education students, with the most significant cognitive disabilities, in the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment process?

**Answer:** Per [Public Act \(P.A.\) No. 21-2, Sec. 10-14t of the C.G.S. \(effective July 1, 2022\)](#), **all** students in Grades K-3, including students identified as special education must be assessed with one of the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#). For students whose disability indicates a significant cognitive impairment that is not temporary or transient in nature (typically less than one percent of the student population) the Planning and Placement Teams (PPTs) will review and determine the student's level of participation on district level K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments. PPTs may use the [Annotated Connecticut Alternate Assessment Eligibility Form](#) to aid in determining if a student meets the threshold for having a significant cognitive disability. Only a small percentage of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who cannot access the standard screener even with accommodations may be eligible for alternate district assessments. The PPT may determine that based on the student's current learning profile and evidence of a significant cognitive disability from current evaluations, that they are eligible to participate in alternate district assessments. Students who qualify for the alternate district assessments must also be assessed with alternate measures that align to the students learning profile on K-3 literacy assessments as determined by the PPT to assess their early literacy skill development. These determinations will be reflected in the District and State Testing section of the [Individualized Education Program \(IEP\)](#).

E.3. Can students who are identified as special education or Section 504 have accommodations on the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment process?

**Answer:** Students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan may be allowed accessibility supports that align to the specific guidance provided by the assessment publisher within their manuals. Planning and Placement Teams (PPTs) and Section 504 Teams should familiarize themselves with the allowable accessibility features for their approved literacy universal screener prior to making determinations regarding student needs. Allowable accessibility features on K-3 assessments may vary from what is provided during instruction or other assessments. Accessibility features determined by the PPT or Section 504 Teams should not change the construct of the assessment. Accessibility supports for these specific assessments should be documented within the student's plan within the Connecticut Special Education Data System (CT-SEDS) in the District and State Testing section as well as within the Present Levels, Annual Goals, and Supplementary Aids and Services sections of the finalized and implemented plans for students who have an IEP and in the Section 504 Plan Details for students with a Section 504 Plan.

E.4. What are the requirements for assessment administration for students who are nonverbal/nonspeaking, deaf, have fluency-based speech disabilities, and/or oral apraxia that impacts their access to the approved K-3 Universal Literacy Screening Assessments?

**Answer:** In rare cases, some students with specific learning profiles, other than students identified with the most significant cognitive disabilities, may require alternate early literacy screening assessments. Based on current vendor guidance reviewed by the CSDE, access to these assessments may be limited even with the use of allowable accessibility supports for students with an IEP or Section 504 Plan, with the following documented learning profiles:

- deaf (no access through amplification);
- nonverbal/nonspeaking;
- fluency-based speech disabilities, and/or:
- oral apraxia.

For students with any of the above-mentioned learning profiles, where access is not available for the student based on the allowable features, the Planning and Placement Team and/or Section 504 Team must make determinations on whether or not a student's disability impacts their ability to access the standard approved K-3 Universal Literacy Screening Assessment. A PPT or Section 504 Team may determine that the student requires an alternate early literacy screening assessment. This determination for an alternate screening assessment should only be recommended in rare cases where a student is identified with the most significant cognitive disability, or their specific learning profile precludes their participation even with allowable accommodation features. Teams should ensure the following:

- Students who are deaf or hard of hearing who have an IEP or Section 504 Plan require a Language and Communication Plan. If the student requires an alternative assessment, it should also be documented within the Language and Communication Plan.
- A student's Present Levels of Performance in an IEP or Summary of Meeting in a Section 504 Plan should outline the student's current performance in relation to their specific learning profile or disability and substantiate the determination of an alternate screening assessment.
- If, based on the student's specific learning profile or disability and current access needs, the team determines that the student requires an alternate district assessment for the K-3 Universal Literacy Screening Assessments, the team should document this within the plan. For students with an IEP, this should be documented in the District and State Testing tile within the district assessments section, along with which assessment tools/measures they will administer to assess the student for early literacy skills acquisition, growth, and risk.

Please note, the CSDE reserves the right to verify student information in CT-SEDS to comply with [Section 10-14t\(a\)](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes, ensuring that all students in Grades K-3, receive a literacy assessment to assist in the identification, in whole or part, students at risk for reading-related learning difficulties or dyslexia.

E.5. How should the K-3 Universal Literacy Screening Assessment be documented in CT-SEDS for students with an IEP?

**Answer:** Once the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) has discussed and made determinations for the formative district K-3 Universal Literacy Screening Assessments, the PPT will document this determination in the District and State Testing tile in the IEP Module. PPT determinations for district-wide assessments, as well as any allowable accessibility features, should be entered in the district testing section for the chosen K-3 Universal Literacy Screening Assessment.

## F. English Learners/Multilingual Learners (EL/ML)

F.1. Are districts required to administer the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments to English learners/multilingual learners?

**Answer:** Yes, all students in Grades K-3 must be administered the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments. Students who receive literacy instruction in their native language with the goal of biliteracy should be administered the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments from the approved menu three times a year in English, and their native language, if available. The rationale is to identify students who are below proficiency in reading and to assist in identifying, in whole or in part, students at risk for dyslexia, or other reading-related learning disabilities, regardless of the language of instruction.

F.2. Are the assessments available in languages other than English?

**Answer:** Yes, approved assessments that are available for use for students whose native language is Spanish are located in the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#).

F.3. Are districts required to administer K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments to students, including students enrolled in dual language programming?

**Answer:** Yes. Districts are required to administer the standard English K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment to all students. Per [Public Act \(P.A.\) No. 21-2, Sec. 10-14t of the C.G.S. \(effective July 1, 2022\)](#), districts, including those with dual language programs, should administer the approved reading assessments three times a year in both English and a student's native language, if available, for any student being instructed in literacy in their native language. Districts should refer to page 6 of the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#) document when selecting assessments

to administer to students who are enrolled in dual language programs, as indicated in [Sec. 10-14t](#).

- F.4. Are districts required to administer K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments in both English and Spanish if the student is not in a dual language program?

**Answer:** No, districts are not required to administer the Spanish language version if the student is not enrolled in a dual language program or is not receiving literacy instruction in their native language. Districts are required to administer the standard English K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessment to all students. Students who are enrolled in a dual language program or are receiving literacy instruction in their native language should be assessed in both English and their native language if the assessment is available.

## G. Communication with Parents/Guardians

- G.1. What are “best practices” for communicating student results on the Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments with parents/guardians?

**Answer:** Research shows that the more families are involved in student learning, the higher the student achievement (Mapp, et al., 2022, [Henderson and Mapp, 2002](#), [Jacques and Villegas, 2018](#)). Therefore, the CSDE expects that districts will notify parents/guardians of reading skill acquisition and any potential deficiencies by sharing results from the K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments. The CSDE also expects that districts will inform and update parents/guardians on student progress as measured by these assessments and progress monitoring if applicable. Additionally, pursuant to [Sec. 10-265g of the C.G.S.](#), local and regional boards of education designated as a [Priority School District](#) must (1) notify parents/guardians of reading deficiencies, (2) establish and/or maintain an [Individual Reading Plan \(IRP\)](#), and (3) based on the end-of- the-year assessment, provide summer school.

## H. Publisher Specific Questions

- H.1. If a district is using DIBELS paper, would the district have to administer Vocabulary and RAN?

**Answer:** Districts must administer the required measures for their selected approved K-3 Assessment from the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#). Districts will administer Letter Naming Fluency in Grades K and 1 to fulfill the RAN requirements outlined in the menu. [Sec. 10-14t](#) also mandates a vocabulary measure; therefore, districts using DIBELS paper must transition to mCLASS or another approved assessment that includes a vocabulary measure, ideally in 2026-27, but no later than July 1, 2027, for the 2027-28 school year.



H.2. Do mCLASS users have to administer Vocabulary and RAN three times per year?

**Answer:** Yes, mCLASS users must administer Vocabulary and RAN three times per school year per the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#).

H.3. Is it permissible for mCLASS users to substitute the Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) reading measure for RAN?

**Answer:** It is permissible for mCLASS districts to use LNF instead of RAN as indicated in [Sec. 10-14t](#).

H.4. Do mCLASS users have to include Vocabulary during the fall test administration window?

**Answer:** Yes, mCLASS users must administer the Vocabulary reading measure.

H.5. Do districts using easyCBM have to give the Letter Names subtest listed as the RAN measure in the approved menu or can they use the easyCBM RAN subtests?

**Answer:** Yes, easyCBM users must administer the Letter Names measure per the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#). Districts may administer any additional measures after they have met the requirements of the approved menu.

H.6. Do districts using aimswebPlus have to give all of the subtests listed in the approved menu?

**Answer:** Yes, aimswebPlus districts must administer the subtests as indicated on the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#).

H.7. Does RAN have to be administered for all three assessment windows for aimswebPlus users?

**Answer:** Yes, one of the three RAN measures listed on the [Approved Menu of Research-based Grades K-3 Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](#) must be administered three times per year.

H.8. Is it permissible for aimswebPlus users to substitute the Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) reading measure for RAN?

**Answer:** As indicated in [Sec. 10-14t](#), it is permissible for aimswebPlus districts to use LNF instead of RAN.



## I. References

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## J. Change Log

- 09/08/2025 Section C. Question C.4. amended.
- 09/08/2025 Section H Replaced with section I.
- 09/08/2025 Section H Questions H.1. through H. 8 added.
- 10/27/2025 Section A Questions A.13 and A.14 added.
- 10/27/2025 Section E Questions E.4 and E.5 added.
- 11/24/2025 Section D Questions D.10 through D.21 added.