

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### 1. What are the requirements of the Ready to Read Act?

Beginning in 2020-2021 school year, each LEA shall ensure that a student is screened to identify if the student is at risk. Students to be screened:

- are in kindergarten,
- are in first grade and were not screened by the school in kindergarten or demonstrated difficulty mastering grade level reading in kindergarten,
- enter or transfer to a public elementary school, unless the county board makes a determination that student has already been screened and does not demonstrate difficulty mastering grade-level reading.

If a student has an IFSP or IEP, they do not need to be screened as they have already completed diagnostic evaluations and have supplemental instruction planned.

#### 2. What are the requirements for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders to be screened?

COMAR 13A.03.08 requires students in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades to be included in the screening and supplemental instruction program established by the LEA if the students:

- were not previously screened;
- demonstrate difficulty mastering grade-level reading; or
- entered or transferred to a public elementary school.

Screening is not required for students in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade if the LEA can demonstrate that the student who entered or transferred to a public elementary school has already been screened and demonstrates mastery of grade-level reading.

#### 3. What additional requirements were added by COMAR 13A.03.08, Students at Risk for Reading Difficulties?

COMAR 13A.03.08 includes all requirements of the Ready to Read Act and adds additional requirements. The COMAR:

- extends the 1<sup>st</sup> grade screening requirements to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade;
- establishes timeframes and procedures for screening;
- adds additional requirements for parent notifications;
- adds progress monitoring, a monitoring schedule, and exit criteria;
- allows for revision of supplemental instruction based upon data, monitoring, and appropriate student placement in a multi-tiered system of support;
- requires LEAs to annually evaluate the effectiveness of the screeners and reading interventions; and
- requires LEAs to provide professional learning to school staff on age-appropriate, evidence-based, sequential, systematic, explicit, and cumulative instruction or intervention for student mastery of foundational reading skills.

#### 4. Should LEAs screen English Learners?

Yes. MSDE has provided additional guidance for screening English Learners. [Download the Guidelines for Implementing Reading Instruction for English Learners](#)

#### 5. What needs to be considered when selecting a screening assessment?

The chosen screener must be developmentally appropriate and norm-referenced or criterion-based. It also must assess foundational reading skills that include phonological and phonemic awareness and processing, as well as rapid automatic naming in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade. There are several **core considerations** when selecting a screener(s) for your students. These are:

- Has the assessment been proven to be **accurate** and **reliable**? This means that it will yield consistent scores across administrations and that there is inter-rater reliability. Inter-reliability means that the results will be the same no matter who administers the assessment.
- Has the assessment been proven to be **valid**? This means that it will measure what it intends to measure. There should be a positive correlation between the assessment and other measures.
- Does the screener have proven success with a population of students similar to yours?
- Do the activities provide insight into the skill areas that you would like to assess?
- Is the time required to administer and score the assessment three times a year manageable for your staff?
- Is the assessment delivered to individual students one on one, or can it be administered to larger groups of students at a time?
- Are there technology requirements for the assessment such as computers and headsets?
- Is the screener economical to administer in time and cost?

#### 6. Which screening measures are appropriate for which grade levels?

Screening should be based on the developmental level of the students. For PK-2, these are the skills that are predictive of reading success and these skills typically develop incrementally over time. The appropriate measures for screening for reading difficulties will change across grade levels. Below is a general list of the skills that would be beneficial to assess at each grade level.

- **Kindergarten and Grade One**- alphabet knowledge (letter name identification such as a rapid automatic naming [RAN] assessment); phonological and phonemic awareness; grapheme-phoneme correspondence (matching letters to sounds)
- **Grades Two and Three**- phonological and phonemic awareness; word identification fluency; oral reading fluency.

#### 7. Can LEAs use a digital screener?

If the screener has a digital option that has research to prove validity and reliability, screeners can be administered, with assurance that there will be one-on-one adult supervision/assistance.

**8. Can LEAs create their own screener?**

No. Developing an assessment that is valid and reliable requires extensive psychometric testing. At the very least, it requires a year of pilot and/or field test data and then a year or more of post-screener data. The way the law is worded, it requires the screener predict poor learning outcomes which means the system would have to field test its students using the screener, wait a year or more, test again for learning outcomes, compare the screener score to the later score, and verify that the screener predicts the later score. So, determining predictive validity for a new test will take more than one year.

**9. Where can I find additional information on screeners?**

- Dyslexiaida.org. (2019). Universal Screening: K–2 Reading – International Dyslexia Association. [online] Available at: <https://dyslexiaida.org/universal-screening-k-2-reading/>
- Gorski, D. (2019). Screening for Reading Problems in Preschool and Kindergarten | RTI Action Network. [online] Rtinetwork.org. Available at: <http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/assessment/screening/screening-for-reading-problems-in-preschool-and-kindergarten>
- National Center on Intensive Intervention <https://intensiveintervention.org/intensive-intervention/multi-tiered-systems-support>

**10. At what point in the school year should a student be screened?**

The Ready to Read Act states the LEAs shall ensure that a student is screened to identify if the student is at risk for reading difficulties. COMAR 13A.03.08 requires the screening schedule to be established by the local education agency, with initial screening taking place within the first two months of the beginning of the school year. It further requires that students shall receive additional screening in accordance with the guidance of the selected screener. In general, this is a minimum of three times a year.

**11. Who should conduct the screening?**

It is recommended that the classroom teacher conduct the screening, however, a classroom teacher, school psychologist, special education teacher, speech language pathologist, reading interventionist, reading specialist or any other educator trained in screening instruments and protocols may conduct screenings.

**12. How should the results be used?**

If screening results indicate that the student is at risk of reading difficulties, the LEA shall provide supplemental reading instruction in identified areas of need. Supplemental reading instruction means evidence-based, sequential, systematic, explicit, and cumulative instruction or intervention to mastery of foundational reading skills including phonological or phonemic awareness and processing phonics and vocabulary to support development of decoding, spelling, fluency, and reading comprehension skills to meet grade level curriculum.

**13. What happens if a student enters a school after the initial screening window of two months?**

LEAs should establish an ongoing system to screen students as they arrive throughout the year.

**14. When is the LEA report due to the state?**

LEAs report data annually to MSDE on or before July 1st of each year to allow time for MSDE to compile data and publish to the website by October 1<sup>st</sup>, as required by the Ready to Read Act. The annual data report shall include student screening data from the beginning, middle, and end of the year.