

National Conference on Student Assessment

Connecting the Dots: Building Coherent Systems to Support Student Success



From Policy to Practice: A Multi-State Symposium on Early Literacy Screener Implementation

Monday, June 22, 2026 | 2:30–3:30 p.m.

SPEAKERS

Matt Brunetti, WestEd | Darian Foster, Indiana Department of Education

Bonnie Garcia, California Department of Education | Hope Worsham, Arkansas Department of Education

NCSA

National Conference on Student Assessment

Connecting the Dots: Building Coherent Systems to Support Student Success



Introduction & Overview

Matt Brunetti

Senior Program Associate / Project Director

WestEd



National Conference on Student Assessment

Connecting the Dots: Building Coherent Systems to Support Student Success



Session Context

- 42 states and D.C. have passed legislation or implemented policies related to evidence-based reading instruction
- At least 33 states require the administration of early literacy assessments that can be used to identify reading difficulties or measure reading progress
- Most states adopt a statewide early literacy assessment or create lists of approved early literacy assessments
- State literacy laws have various requirements, leading to varied interpretations of evidence-based practices and differing assessment mandates across states

Sources:

- Albert Shanker Institute: [*Reading Reform Across America*](#)
- Education Commission of the States: [*50-State Comparison: State K-3 Policies*](#)
- Education Week: [*Which States Have Passed 'Science of Reading' Laws? What's in Them?*](#)
- WestEd: [*The Importance of Early Literacy Assessments—and Why They Must Be Used Wisely*](#)



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Session Learning Objectives

- Compare and contrast implementation approaches across multiple state early literacy assessment systems to identify factors that influence successful translation of policy into classroom practice.
- Identify evidence-based strategies for connecting early literacy screening results to instructional decision-making, including specific supports for multilingual learners and students with disabilities.
- Analyze the relationship between legislative intent, assessment design, and classroom implementation to recognize potential areas of misalignment in early literacy assessment systems.

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How does policy translate to practice?

In this session, California, Indiana, and Arkansas will summarize its:

- Policy framework and legislative context
- Assessment design and selection
- Implementation approach and strategies
- Connecting assessment to instruction
- Outcomes and impact
- Successes, challenges, and next steps



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California

Bonnie Garcia

Statewide Literacy Co-Director

California Department of Education





California 2025–26 Demographics

Grade	Enrollment
TK	213,313
K	355,391
1	376,393
2	387,083
3	404,454
4	420,756
5	422,499

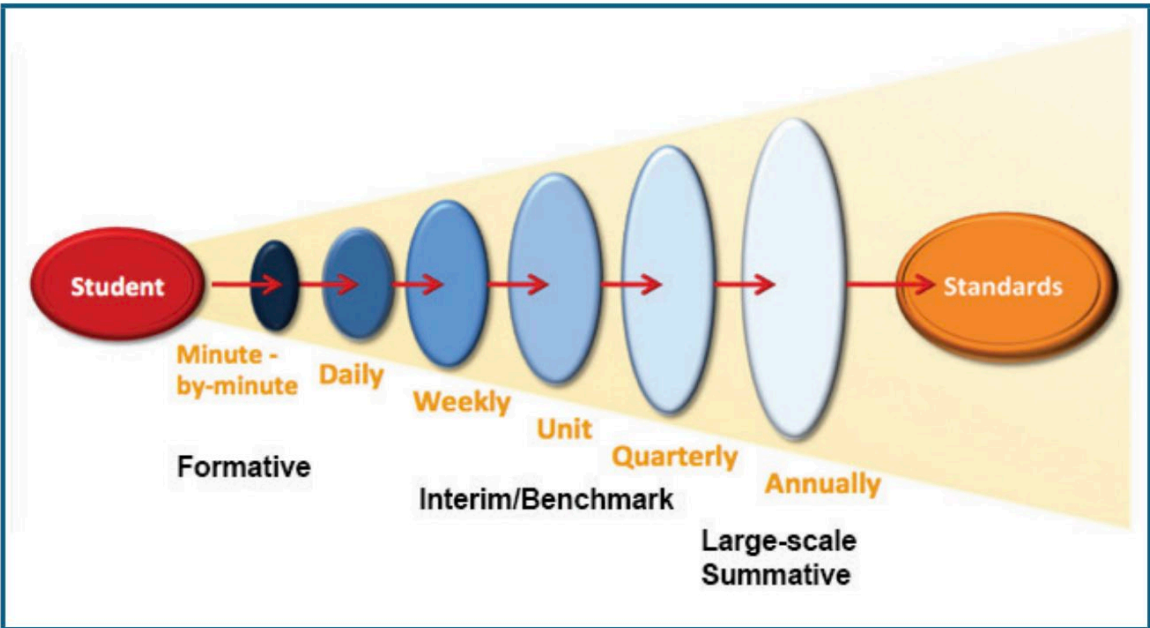
Ethnicity	Enrollment	%
African American	276,113	4.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	24,130	0.4%
Asian	588,419	10.3%
Filipino	126,911	2.2%
Hispanic or Latino	3,209,829	56.0%
Pacific Islander	22,692	0.4%
White	1,128,447	19.7%
Two or More Races	280,475	4.9%
Not Reported	74,244	1.3%
Total	5,731,260	100%

Subgroup	Total Enrollment
English Learners	925,907
Foster Youth	26,397
Homeless Youth	217,471
Migrant Education	48,031
Students with Disabilities	850,822
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	3,618,062
All Students	5,731,260



California Assessments

Figure 8.4. Assessment Cycles by Purpose



Source
Adapted from
Herman, Joan L., and Margaret Heritage. 2007. *Moving from Piecemeal to Effective Formative Assessment Practice: Moving Pictures on the Road to Student Learning*. Paper presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers Assessment Conference, Nashville, TN.

California Assessment Timeline

- CAA – California Alternate Assessments
- CAST – California Science Test
- CSA – California Spanish Assessment
- ELA – English Language Arts/Literacy
- ELPAC – English Language Proficiency Assessments for California
- PFT – Physical Fitness Test

Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Screening for Risk of Reading Difficulties – K-2 (proposed legislation: K no earlier than 91 st school day; 1 & 2 no earlier than 46 th school day)											



Requirement

- “Beginning in 2025–26, & annually thereafter, an LEA ... shall assess each pupil in kindergarten & grades one & two for risk of reading difficulties,” ... “including possible neurological disorders such as dyslexia ...” *Education Code (EC) Sec. 53008 (e) & (b)*
- LEAs shall use a “screening instrument ... adopted by their governing board” from “an approved list of evidence-based, culturally, linguistically, & developmentally appropriate screening instruments ...” “... in languages reflecting the primary language of pupils in the state, to the extent assessments in those languages are available.” *EC Sec. 53008 (d), (b), & (c) (2)*



Purpose

- “Screening results shall be used as a flag for potential risk for reading difficulties, not as a diagnosis of a disability.” *EC Sec. 53008 (l)*
- “Results ... shall be used as a part of a broader process that further evaluates pupil needs & progress, identifies supports for classroom instruction, enables targeted individual intervention as needed, & allows for further diagnosis if concerns do not resolve.” *EC Sec. 53008 (l)*



Selection of Screening Instruments (1)

- Screening instruments were selected by an expert panel, Reading Difficulties Risk Screener Selection Panel (RDRSSP), appointed by State Board of Education (SBE) in accordance with *EC* Sec. 53008 (b),(c), & (g).
- The evaluation process & criteria developed by the RDRSSP was approved by the SBE.
- RDRSSP held 10 Bagley-Keene-compliant public meetings, with opportunities for public comment at each meeting.

Activity	Action Date
Invitation to Submit Package is Released	June 2024
Informational Webinar (overview of process)	July 2024
July Panel Meeting	July 2024
Applicant Questions Submission Deadline	August 2024
All submissions due to the Panel	August 2024
Deliberations	Sept-Nov 2024
Final Review	December 2024



Selection of Screening Instruments (2)

Evaluation Criteria: State Board of Education considered the following to support the adoption of high-quality screening instruments that minimize the over- or under-identification of students' risk of reading difficulties:

- (A) Use of direct measurement, supplemented by other pupil data, to determine if a pupil is at risk of a reading difficulty, including dyslexia.
- (B) Measurement of domains that may predict dyslexia and other reading disorders, including, but not limited to, measures of oral language, phonological and phonemic awareness, decoding skills, letter-sound knowledge, knowledge of letter names, rapid automatized naming, visual attention, reading fluency, vocabulary, and language comprehension.



Selection of Screening Instruments (3)

Evaluation Criteria Continued...

(C) Evidence that the tool is normed and validated using a contemporary multicultural and multilanguage sample of pupils, with outcome data for pupils whose home language is a language other than English as well as those who are native English speakers.

(D) Integration of relevant pupil demographic information, such as home language, English language fluency, and access to prekindergarten education, to more fully understand a pupil's performance.

EC 53008 (g)(1)



Selection of Screening Instruments (4)

Evaluation Criteria Continued...

(E) Guidance and resources for educators regarding how to administer screening instruments, interpret results, explain results to families, including in pupils' primary languages, and determine further educational strategies, assessments, diagnostics, and interventions that should be considered and that are specific to each type of pupil result. Guidance and resources provided pursuant to this subparagraph shall be informed by the English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework and the California Dyslexia Guidelines, as well as knowledge of effective interventions for the specific needs of individual pupils, and shall reflect a tiered interventions model aligned with the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support.



The RDRSSP identified appropriate instruments for screening on December 16, 2024.

	Organization	Title	Grade Levels	Languages
	Distributed by Amira Learning or HMH (formerly Amira Learning, with HMH as distribution partners)	Amira	Kindergarten, Grade One, and Grade Two	English and Spanish
	Amplify Education	mCLASS with DIBELS Edition 8 and mCLASS Lectura	Kindergarten, Grade One, and Grade Two	English and Spanish
*	University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Dyslexia Center	Multitudes	Kindergarten, Grade One, and Grade Two	English and Spanish
*	Stanford University, Brain Development and Education Lab	Rapid Online Assessment of Reading (ROAR)	Grade One and Grade Two	English only

*Free



Information Overviews

- General information
 - Organization, contact, & webpage
 - Grades, populations, & languages available
 - Skills measured (required and optional/additional)
 - Establishing language proficiency, supports for students not yet proficient with English, & accommodations for students with disabilities
- Administration
- Training
- Scoring
- Cost
- Communication & resources



Requirements and Considerations

- Conducted annually
- Sufficient instruction in foundational skills
- Frequency within year
- Tasks administered
- Notifications for testing and of results
- Multilingual learners
 - English, Spanish, alternative process, and/or combination
- Students with Individualized Education Plans
 - IEP team considerations, documentation, and/or accommodations
- Opt-Outs and Exemptions
- Unacceptable Uses of Results
 - Not to be used for any high-stakes purposes



Supports & Services for Students Identified as Being at Risk

If a student is identified as being at risk, LEAs “shall provide ... supports & services, appropriate to the specific challenges identified ..., which may include, among other[s], any of the following:

1. Evidence-based literacy instruction focused on specific needs.
2. Progress monitoring.
3. Early intervention in the regular general education program.
4. One-on-one or small group tutoring.
5. Further evaluation or diagnostic assessment.”

EC Sec. 53008 (l)



Unacceptable Uses of Screening Results (1)

- Screenings shall not be “considered an evaluation or diagnostic tool to establish eligibility for special education ... services ... or ... a plan pursuant to Section 504.” *EC Sec. 53008 (g) (2)*
- However, screenings “shall not be used to delay the child find process” ... [&] “may be used ... to recommend that a student receive further assessment & evaluation to establish eligibility...”
EC Sec. 53008 (g) (2)



Unacceptable Uses of Screening Results (2)

- Screening results “shall not to be used for any high-stakes purpose, including but not limited to,
 - Teacher evaluation
 - Accountability
 - Grade promotion or retention
 - Identification for gifted or talented education
 - Reclassification of English learners
 - Identification as an individual with exceptional needs.”

EC Sec. 53008 (m)



Implementation

Website (Screening Tab):
California Literacy – Teaching & Learning

Frequently Asked Questions
(FAQ)

Dissemination: Webinars,
conferences, and statewide
convenings

Technical Assistance: Meetings
and phone support to respond to
questions and provide
information as needed

Funding:

\$25 million in one-time funds (2024–
25)

\$40 million in one-time funds (2025–
26)



Year 1 Implementation Challenges (1)

Key questions raised by the field:

Screening Expectations (Policy vs. Practice Clarity)

- When should screening occur?
- How often should screening occur?
- Can more than one screener be adopted?
- Will additional screeners be adopted?

Purpose and Appropriate Use of the Screener (Assessment Design vs. Use)

- How does the screener fit within existing assessment systems?
- Can the screener be used for:
 - Progress monitoring
 - Benchmarking
 - Reclassification



Year 1 Implementation Challenges (2)

Key questions raised by the field:

Student Access and Equity Considerations (Design vs. Student Needs)

- How is “sufficient English proficiency” determined?
- How should screening be conducted for students
 - With IEPs or 504s needing additional accommodations
 - Who are deaf/hard of hearing and/or visually impaired students
 - Who are EL for whom there is no instrument in their language

Data Use, Reporting, and System Alignment (Policy vs. Implementation Systems)

- Do results need to be reported to the state and/or stored by the LEA?

Instructional Response (Screening to Action Steps)

- What are appropriate instructional responses and interventions based on results?



Next Steps (1)

Proposed Policy Updates (2026-27 Budget Trailer Bill)

- Clarifies screening timelines for consistency and quality of results:
 - LEAs shall not administer a screening instrument to:
 - Kindergarten students before the 91st school day
 - Grade 1-2 students before the 46th school day
 - Does not prohibit administering more than once
- **Implementation Support**
 - \$40 million (Prop 98, one-time) for continued implementation



Next Steps (2)

Capacity Building

- 2026-27 Webinar Series: Assessment Literacy (in development)
- High-impact tutoring web page (in development)
- **Literacy Professional Development (AB 121, Sec. 15)**
 - \$200 million investment
 - State-approved list of PD providers meeting legislative criteria

Instructional Materials & Guidance

- ELA/ELD instructional materials follow-up adoption (AB 121, Sec. 89)
- Completed Literacy Roadmap (SB 114, Sec. 117)
 - Grounded in the ELA/ELD Framework
 - TK-12, English-medium and multilingual settings

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Indiana

Darian Foster

Literacy Assessment Specialist

Indiana Department of Education





TODAY'S AGENDA

Policy Framework

Assessment Selection & Design

Implementation

Connecting Assessment to Instruction

Outcomes & Impact

Success, Challenges, & Next Steps

Policy Framework

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Early Learning Assessment System

Assessment Framework: Required by statute

(ISPROUT) The Indiana Student Performance Readiness and Observation of Understanding Tool	(IKRA) Indiana Kindergarten Readiness Assessment	Universal Reading Screeners	(IREAD) The Indiana Reading Evaluation and Determination	(ILEARN) Indiana's Learning Evaluation and Assessment Readiness Network
Required for: • Pre-K with IEPs (2019) • On My Way Pre-K (2025) • Whole-child readiness profile • Observation-based Birth – age 2 (Coming 2026)	Opt-in (2024) • Kindergarten • Both observation and assessment items	• 2018 • K–2 • Identify risk of reading difficulty	• 2010 • Grades 2–3 • State Foundational Reading Assessment Students who do not pass: • Spring and Summer retest through grade 6 • Summer school required • Individual Reading Plans (Grades 2 and 3)	• 2019 • Grades 3–8 • Grade-level proficiency in ELA and other core subjects • Schools monitor progress on Checkpoints (TYA) • Lexile monitoring

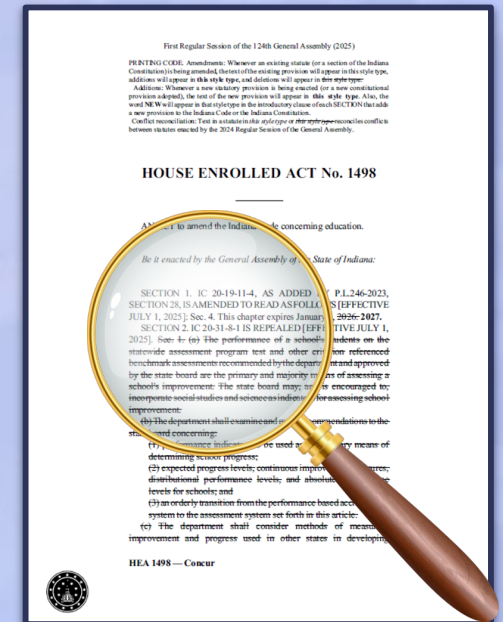
IC 20-35.5-1-7: UNIVERSAL SCREENER

- **Legislative requirements:**

- Began in 2018; initially focused on screening for the learning characteristics of dyslexia → language was clarified to focus on screening for risk of reading difficulty.
- Screening is required all students in K–2.
 - (Recent) Preferred screener required for schools that have an average IREAD proficiency rate below 75% for three straight years
- Measures required to be “developmentally appropriate” (undefined).
- Family notifications of screening and follow-up diagnostic assessment.

- **Areas that needed clarification:**

- Purpose of screening versus diagnostic.
- Frequency and timing.
- Defining “developmentally appropriate.”

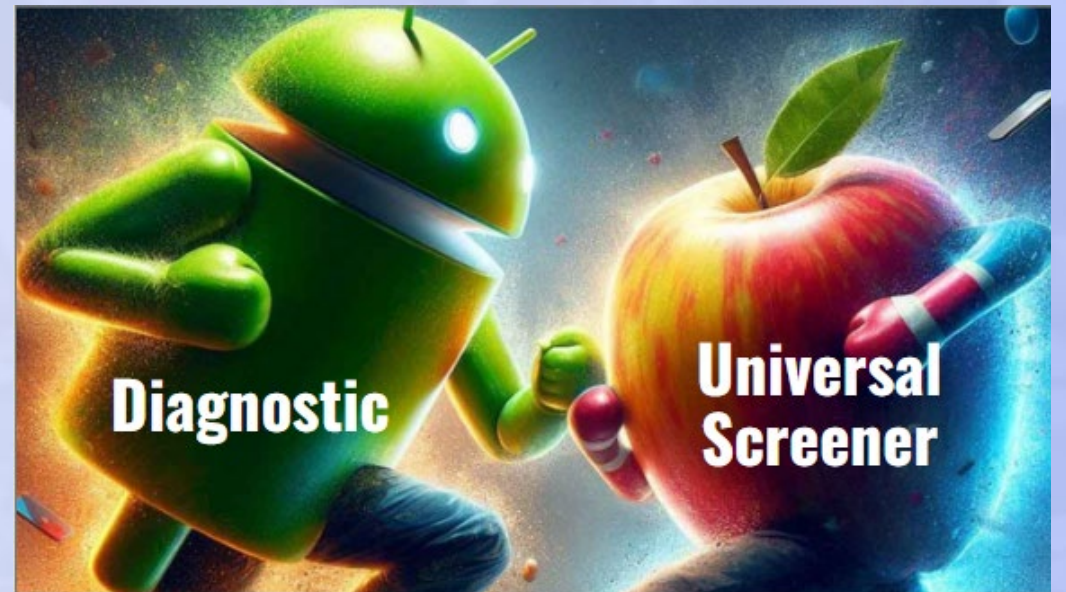


IC 20-35.5-1-7: **UNIVERSAL SCREENER** CONTINUED

Clarifying Assessments

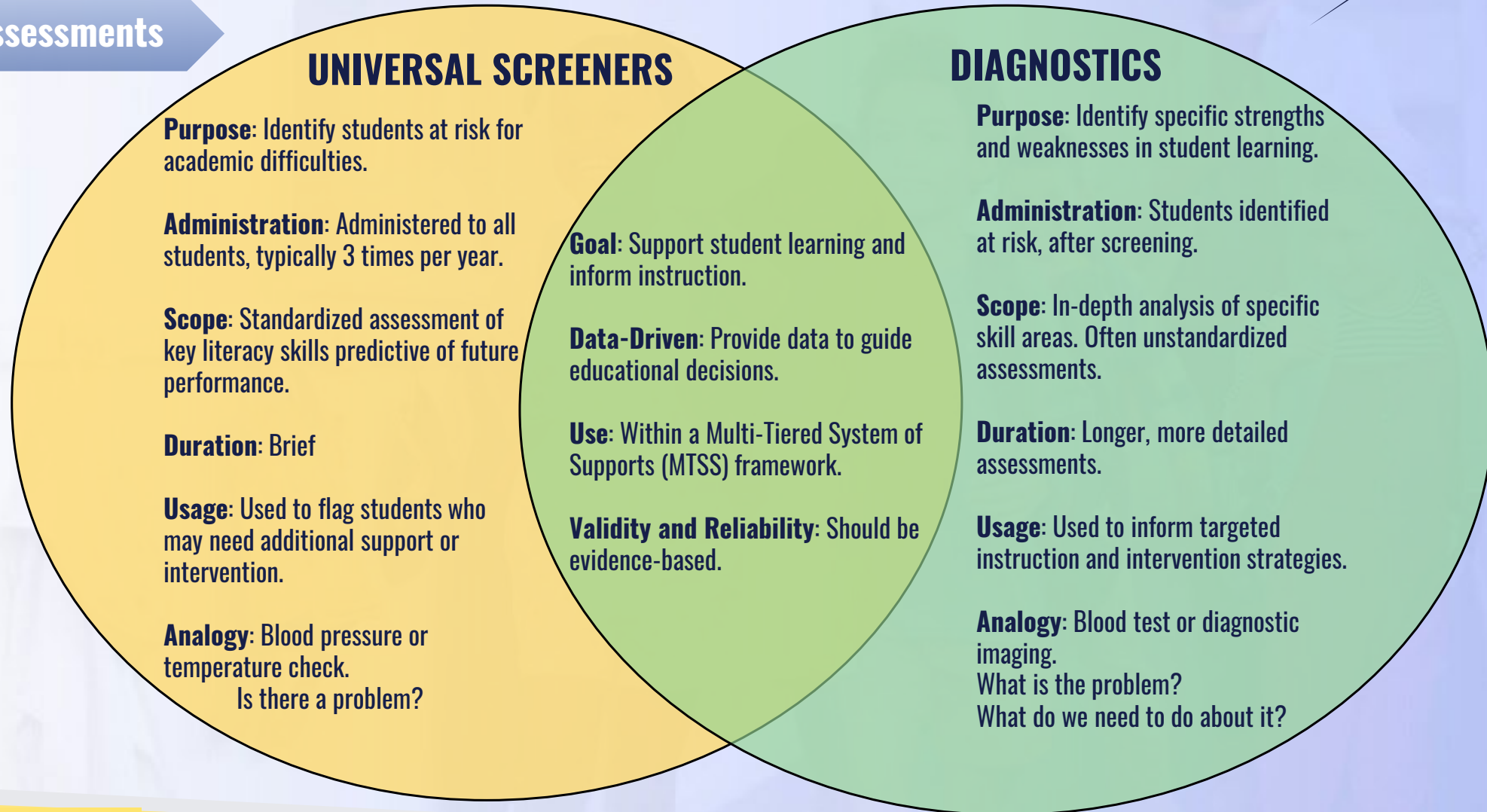
“Universal screeners do a great job at what they are designed to do. But if a student isn’t at benchmark on the universal screener, the work is not done. It’s critical to pick apart the skills one at a time, and that can’t be done with a universal screener. **That’s why diagnostic assessments are necessary.**”

Hall, 2018



IC 20-35.5-1-7: UNIVERSAL SCREENER CONTINUED

Clarifying Assessments



IC 20-35.5-1-7: **UNIVERSAL SCREENER** CONTINUED

Clarifying Frequency and Timing

IC 20-32-8.5-2 defined schools in which, over the course of three consecutive years, fewer than 75% of students achieved a valid passing score on IREAD are required to utilize the preferred universal screener.

- Included in this requirement is the guidance for frequency and timing for the administration of this universal screener. The **preferred screener will be given three times a year**—beginning of year, middle of year, and end of year—for all kindergarten through second grade students. This ensures schools implement the screener as designed. See more information [here](#).

IC 20-35.5-1-7: UNIVERSAL SCREENER CONTINUED

All steps from initial screening to parent notifications must be completed within **90 calendar days** of the start of the school year.

	Public Schools	Charter schools	State Accredited Non-public and Other Eligible Schools (IC 20-35.5-1-4.7)
Step 1: Notify parents of planned Universal Screener administration.	X	X	X
Step 2: Administer Universal Screener to all Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade students.	X	X	X
Step 3: Notify ALL parents of screener results.	X	X	X
Step 4: Identify students who may be "at some risk" or "at risk" of not reaching reading proficiency.	X	X	X
1) Provide parents with information about intervention services and begin the response to intervention process to address the needs of the student immediately.			
Step 5: Provide parents of students who are identified "at some risk" or "at risk" of not reaching reading proficiency information and resource material that includes the following: (A) Resources that explain or describe reading proficiency in grade level reading skills. (B) Appropriate classroom interventions. (C) A statement that the parent may elect to have the student receive an educational evaluation by the school.	X	X	Highly Encouraged
Step 6: If student is "at some risk" or "at risk" of not reaching reading proficiency: 1) Obtain consent to administer Level I diagnostic assessment for learning characteristics of dyslexia. If parent provides consent, go to step 7. If parent does not provide consent, skip to Step 9.	X	X	Highly Encouraged
Step 7: Administer Level I diagnostic assessment for learning characteristics of dyslexia.	X	X	Highly Encouraged
Step 8: 1) If Level I diagnostic assessment indicates the need for learning characteristics of dyslexia interventions, provide intervention services outlined in IC 20-35.5-2. OR 2) If Level I diagnostic assessment does not indicate the need for learning characteristics of dyslexia interventions, continue with response to intervention process to address the needs of the student. Provide the student's parent with information and resource material that includes the following: (A) Learning characteristics of dyslexia. (B) Appropriate classroom interventions and accommodations for students with dyslexia. (C) A statement that the parent may elect to have the student receive an educational evaluation by the school.	X	X	Highly Encouraged
Step 9: If parent does not provide consent, continue with response to intervention process to address the needs of the student and do not administer Level I diagnostic assessment.	X	X	Highly Encouraged
OPTIONAL: If the school believes more information is needed to support interventions, provide the parent with a consent form for Level II diagnostic assessment including learning characteristics of dyslexia. Administer the Level II diagnostic assessment as needed.			

IC 20-35.5-1-7: UNIVERSAL SCREENER CONTINUED

Clarifying “Developmentally Appropriate”

Determined
by
committee
assembled by
IDOE.

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE

Kindergarten	• Phonological/Phonemic Awareness • Sound-Symbol Recognition	• Alphabetic Knowledge • RAN
Grade 1	• Phonological/Phonemic Awareness • Sound-Symbol Recognition • Alphabetic Knowledge	• RAN • Decoding Skills (Accuracy + Rate) • Encoding Skills
Grade 2	• Phonological/Phonemic Awareness • Sound-Symbol Recognition • Alphabetic Knowledge	• RAN • Decoding Skills (Accuracy + Rate) • Encoding Skills

Assessment Selection & Design

ASSESSMENT SELECTION

Step	Action Item
Step 1: Letter of Intent	• Vendors submit intent via online form.
Step 2: Full Submission	• Vendors submit complete request + required documentation.
Step 3: Committee Review	• Committee reviews submissions.
Step 4: Feedback & Appeals	• Vendor receives initial feedback. • Appeals/Additional Documentation comes back to IDOE. • Final feedback issued.
Step 5: Final Approval	• IDOE announces approved universal screeners to vendors & schools.
Step 6: Requirements for Previously Approved Vendors	• Must submit assurance memo confirming no significant design or validity changes. • Any updated product must undergo the 'full approval process' again.

Screeners are reviewed every three years.

ASSESSMENT DESIGN

Acadience Reading K–6: Indiana’s Preferred Universal Reading Screener

Schedule	• Benchmark Windows — 3* per year 1. Beginning of Year (BOY) – Must be screened in the first 90 days of school 2. Middle of Year (MOY) 3. End of Year (EOY) • All students in Grades K–2 (and often up through Grade 6 depending on district use) • Schools have unique testing windows. Each school enters its first and last day of school, and the system uses those dates to set the appropriate benchmark windows.
Administration	• Digitally via touchscreen devices, with results available in Acadience Learning Online (ALO). • Manually (paper/pencil)
Measures	• Acadience adjusts which measures students take depending on: ◦ Grade level ◦ Benchmark window (BOY, MOY, EOY) • Outlined in IDOE guidance: Acadience Reading Crosswalk ◦ Examples: ■ Kindergarten – BOY includes LNF, FSF; MOY adds NWF; EOY – PSF + NWF ■ Grades 1-6: Increasing emphasis on NWF, ORF, Maze, and Retell as students advance



ASSESSMENT DESIGN – IDOE GUIDANCE

IDOE Guidance indicates when each measure is given.

Indiana Preferred Universal Screener									
Acadience® Reading Measures By Grade and Time of Year Based on IN DOE Guidance									
	Kindergarten			First Grade			Second Grade		
	BOY	MOY	EOY	BOY	MOY	EOY	BOY	MOY	EOY
First Sound Fluency (FSF): Phonological and Phonemic Awareness									
Letter Naming Fluency (LNF): Alphabet Knowledge/Indicator of Risk									
Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF): Phonological and Phonemic Awareness									
Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF): Alphabetic Principle and Early Phonics Sound Symbol Recognition									
Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) with Retell: Advanced Phonics/Word Attack Skills/Decoding Accurate and Fluent Reading of Connected Text Reading Comprehension									
Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN)*: Risk Indicator		x		x			x		
Spelling: Encoding									

ASSESSMENT DESIGN CONTINUED

IDOE guidance includes additional Approved Assessments, including universal screeners and Level II diagnostics.

Although each screener differs in design, delivery mode, and data outputs, Indiana law (IC 20-35.5) requires that *all approved universal reading screeners* include the same developmentally appropriate measures.

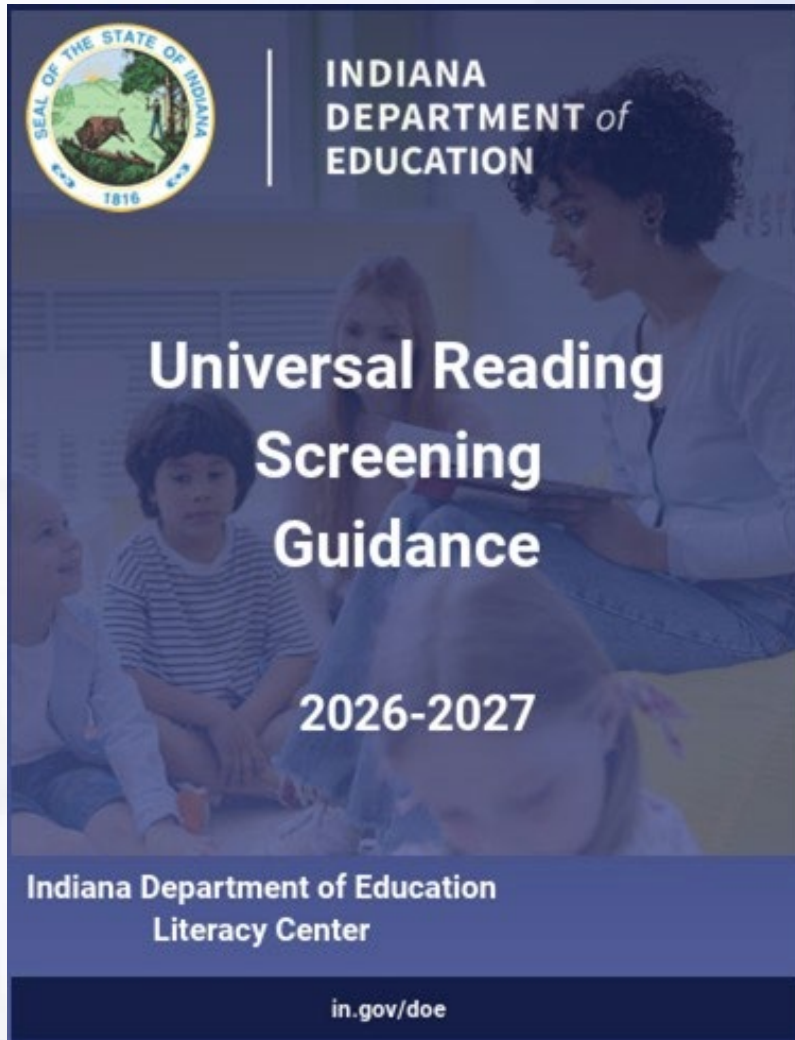
**Managed collaboratively between IDOE Literacy Center and Office of Student Assessment*

Additional Approved Assessments Beginning School Year 2026-2027

Vendor Name	Approved Product	Purpose of Assessment	Formative Assessment Grant Eligible	Contact Information
Amira Learning	Amira Learning Assess ISIP	Universal Screener	Yes	Natasha Bullock (270) 485-3999
Amplify	mCLASS platform with DIBELS, 8th Edition	Universal Screener	Yes	John Lash 260-318-57220
Curriculum Associates	i-Ready Literacy Task	Universal Screener	No	Cory Howard 574-721-5306
Imagine Learning LLC	Imagine+ Early Literacy/Dyslexia Screener	Universal Screener	Yes	Bob Furlin (847) 542-9766
MindPlay Educational, LLC	MindPlay Dyslexia Screener	Universal Screener	No	Laura Close 317-409-4430
NWEA	MAP Reading Fluency Dyslexia Screener	Universal Screener	Yes	Jami Breslin 317-371-7358
Pearson	Aimsweb Plus	Universal Screener	No	Mallory Milara 941-3745-2303
Renaissance Learning, Inc	Star CBM	Universal Screener	No	Sarah Terry 715-315-3881
EPS Learning	SPIRE SPIRE Initial Placement Assessments	Diagnostic Level II	No	Sandy Duerr 240-610-6189

Implementation

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH AND STRATEGIES

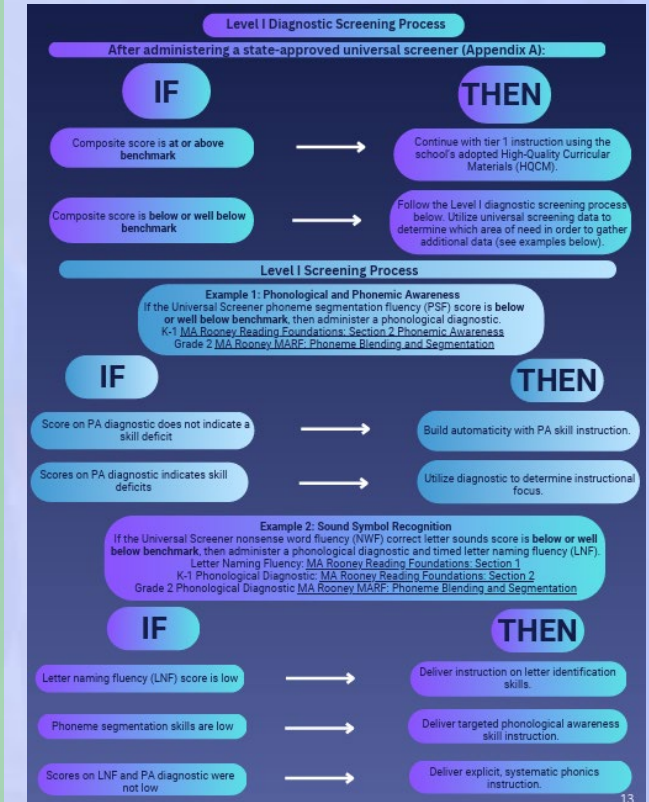


Purpose:

- Provides required guidance for Indiana schools to conduct K–2 universal reading screening and follow-up aligned with Indiana Code 20-35.5.

Includes:

- Universal Screening Requirements
- Indiana Literacy Assessment Framework
- Step-by-Step Screening Process (First 90 Days)
- Determining Students Who Are At Risk
- Screening Considerations for Sub-populations
- Grade 3+ Screening Process
- Family Communication
- Providing Appropriate Interventions
- Level I Diagnostic Screening Process
- Level II Diagnostic Assessments
- School Staff & Training Requirements
- Data Reporting Requirements
- Appendices A, B, and C



Flow chart example

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH AND STRATEGIES CONTINUED

State Preferred Screener

Year 1 – lessons learned

Requirements: IDOE notifies schools who are required to use state preferred screener (based previous Spring IREAD data).

- Schools monitor passing percentage (Grades 2 and 3) using IDOE IREAD Cohort Performance Dashboard .

Funding: Schools apply for Formative Assessment Grant funds to pay for screener.

Vendor: Acadience provided IDOE with roster of schools – confirmed contract + data sharing agreement.

Accountability: Follow-up with schools who are non-compliant (letter, call, school visit).

Reporting: Schools are required to submit an Annual School Reading Plan to IDOE (curriculum selection, interventions, and literacy assessments).

Training: Acadience assisted in monitoring completion of required training.

Support: Office Hours (bi-weekly to start, monthly thereafter)

Year 2 – revisions

New legislation: Schools with a three-year average IREAD passing percentage below 75% are required to implement Acadience Reading K-6, including RAN. This requirement is based on the Spring IREAD results from 2023, 2024, and 2025.

- A new dashboard is set to release for school's to monitor their average.

Four implementation “buckets” for Year 2:

- Compliance
- Communication
- Data
- Professional Development
 - **Target revision for Compliance:**
 - Establish escalation protocol for non-compliance.
 - **Target revision for Communication:**
 - Increase communication during benchmark windows.
 - Leverage our literacy coaches – Indiana Literacy Cadre.
 - **Target revision for Data:**
 - Establish internal data dashboard conversations.
 - **Target revision for Professional Development:**
 - Reformat Office Hours to target new versus returning schools.
 - Target data interpretation and guidance for instruction.

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH AND STRATEGIES CONTINUED

Training	• State-Preferred Screener ○ Course modules (Asynchronous): ■ Essential workshop ■ Data interpretation workshop ○ Mentor Training (Synchronous): ■ IDOE-funded; Train-the-trainer model • Other approved universal screeners offer vendor-specific support
Data systems	• Acadience Learning Online (ALO) – Digital data dashboard ○ Data Share Agreements accompany school contracts to establish IDOE access to dashboard
Support	• Monthly Office Hours with IDOE and vendor (Y2 changes to enhance) • Literacy coaches through Indiana Literacy Cadre (Statewide)

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH AND STRATEGIES CONTINUED

Additional Supports

IDOE webpage

- Acadience K–6 Reading Crosswalk
- Acadience IN Webpage
- Guidance for Use of Acadience Spelling in IN
- Spelling Training Video
- Unlocking Acadience Data



IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH AND STRATEGIES CONTINUED



School Staffing and Training
Indiana Learning Lab: State-funded, personalized microlearning platform filled with readily accessible resources and collections grounded in solid instructional pedagogy.

- Universal Screening and Next Steps collection
- Science of Reading and Dyslexia Toolkit
- Science of Reading Modules 1 and 2 (included for Early Literacy Endorsement for Indiana teaching licensure)

Users: Educators - 115,216, Families - 3,281

Connecting Assessment to Instruction

CONNECTING ASSESSMENT TO INSTRUCTION

Launch & Partnership

Began in 2021, initiated by the Indiana Department of Education in collaboration with:

- Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning (CELL) at the University of Indianapolis
- Center for Vibrant Schools at Marian University

A woman with blonde hair and glasses, wearing a black shirt, is reading a large book to a group of children. The children are looking at the book with interest. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in the room.

INDIANA
Literacy
Cadre

CONNECTING ASSESSMENT TO INSTRUCTION CONTINUED

Reinforcing universal screeners as a tool for measuring overall effectiveness and strength of Tier 1 core instruction.

Prompting data-informed decision-making by aligning requirements to the State Reading Assessment (IREAD) through:

- Using an approved, HQCM-aligned core reading program to ensure data-driven, evidence-based instruction.
- Establishing a preferred screener supported by a unified hub offering vendor access, office hours, and professional learning.



Outcomes & Impact

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT



Coaching Activities

- ✦ Analyzing student data to co-plan instruction
- ✦ Observing instruction
- ✦ Co-Teaching and modeling
- ✦ Data-based coaching cycles
- ✦ MTSS and data-driven decision making
- ✦ Planning and providing professional development

These activities helped provide the critical support educators need in schools to effectively implement science of reading aligned practices.

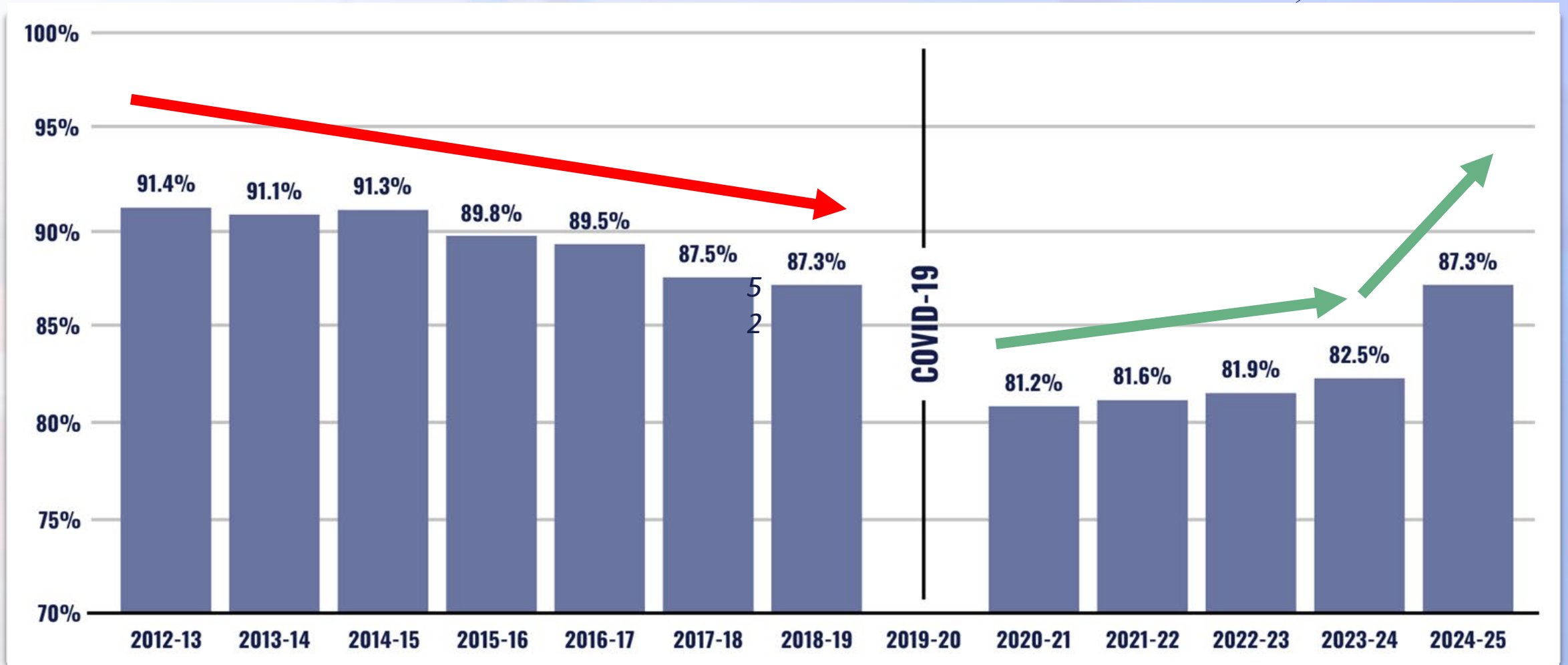
Strategic alignment: SB 199 (2026) recently updated early literacy requirements. They now apply to schools where fewer than 75% of students passed the IREAD exam over three consecutive years. Using verified, public data presented to the State Board of Education (SBOE), this evaluation is based on scores from 2023 through 2025.

Focus & Delivery

- Provides ongoing, collaborative professional development for K–3 educators, rooted in science of reading.
- Includes embedded support:
 - Literacy Coaches: Hired at cadre sites to support co-planning, screener implementation, data analysis, and instructional modeling.
 - Ongoing Training: Coaches participate in vendor-led Collaboration Networks (communities of practice).

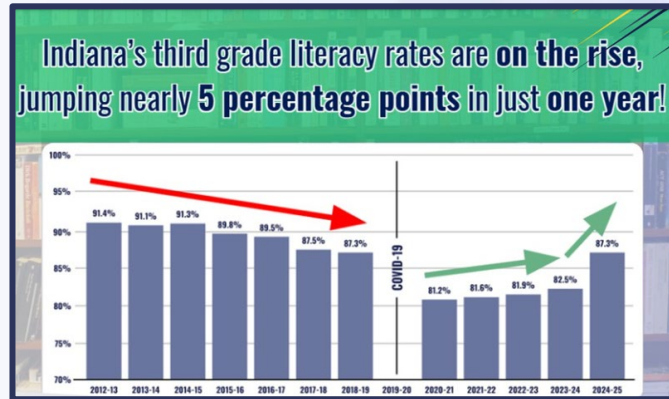
OUTCOMES AND IMPACT CONTINUED

Statewide: Nearly
5 percentage point
increase in *one year!*



Success, Challenges, & Next Steps

SUCCESSSES, CHALLENGES, & NEXT STEPS



Boosted Literacy Outcomes:
Increase in overall performance
on our State Reading
Assessment.

Established Assessment Systems & Guidance

- **Launched Preferred Screener:** Deployed a single universal screening tool to consistently measure early literacy skills and evaluate Tier 1 instruction.
- **Centralized Data:** Secured the data collection process to enable rapid analysis and progress monitoring.
- **Clarified Processes:** Standardized the step-by-step path from initial screening to Level I/II diagnostics and follow-up actions.

Centralized Support & Training

- **Launched Support Hub:** Opened a single point of access for vendor help, office hours, and peer collaboration.
- **Accessible Training:** Offered robust, no-cost professional development through the Indiana Learning Lab, including targeted collections on universal screening.
 - “Universal Screening and Next Steps” collection with Jamie Peavler to reinforce clarity and purpose of universal screening.

SUCCESSSES, CHALLENGES, & NEXT STEPS CONTINUED

Assessment Confusion & Fatigue

- **Perceived Testing Burden:** Schools feel overloaded by testing due to a lack of clarity on the purpose of each specific assessment.
- **Misunderstood Purpose:** Educators frequently mistake screeners for metrics of grade-level proficiency or in-depth diagnostics.
- **Isolated Data Use:** Districts often isolate screener scores rather than consulting broader student data.

Guidance & Training Gaps

- **Underutilized Resources:** Staff often bypass official manuals and data reports in favor of unverified, secondary sources.
- **Inconsistent Practices:** Fragmented information and a lack of fully internalized guidance impact classroom implementation.

SUCCESSSES, CHALLENGES, & NEXT STEPS CONTINUED

Reinforce Guidance & Alignment

Redirect to Official Resources: Anchor districts back to the updated state guidance and professional development.

Optimize Classroom Instruction

Strengthen Tier 1: Re-emphasize that strong core instruction must support at least 80% of students to meet or exceed universal screening benchmarks.

Comprehensive Assessment System

- **Clarify Assessment Purpose:** Define the specific objective of each assessment to build an integrated, comprehensive profile of student literacy skills.
- **Determine screener for adolescent students.**

Drive Statewide Accountability (Year 2)

- **Prepare for Statutory Deadlines:** Address the July 1 statutory threshold for schools below 75% proficiency, escalating urgency for accurate screening.
- **Standardize Year 2 Execution:** Focus Year 2 of the preferred universal reading screener on compliance, clear communication, data interpretation, and targeted professional development.



THANK YOU!

National Conference on Student Assessment

Connecting the Dots: Building Coherent Systems to Support Student Success



Arkansas

Hope Worsham

Assistant Commissioner

Arkansas Department of Education



Coherence Over Choice: Building the ATLAS Ecosystem

Transitioning Arkansas from fragmented early literacy screening to a unified, standards-aligned assessment architecture.



The Problem Was the System, Not the Screener



A Decade of Fragmentation (Before ATLAS)

Approach: Decentralized, district-level decision making. Allowed 4+ different approved screeners.

Data Quality: Inconsistent data languages; neighboring districts could not be compared.

Alignment: Heavily predictive, proxy-based tools lacking direct connection to the depth of state standards.



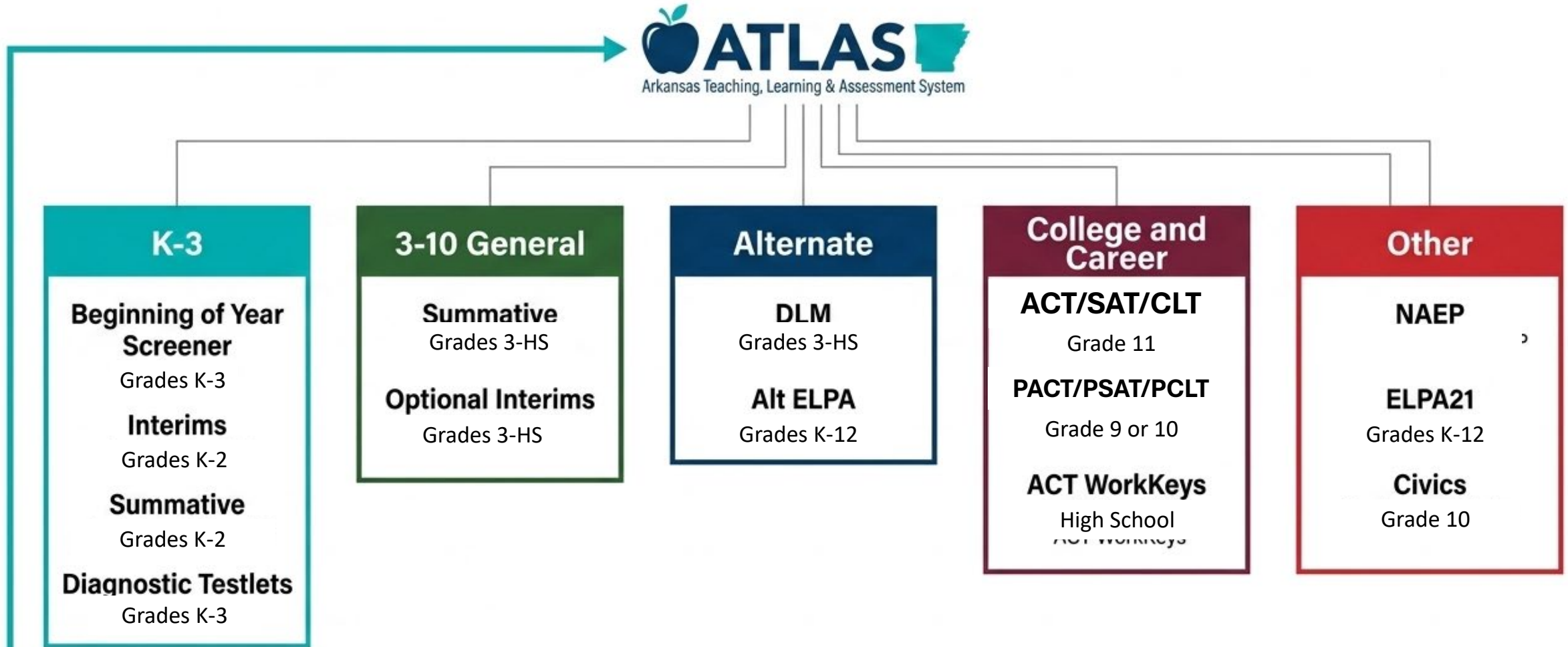
The Inflection Point (With ATLAS)

Approach: The LEARNS Act mandated uncompromising consistency. “Coherence matters more than choice.”

Data Quality: A continuous data thread from Kindergarten through 10th grade.

Alignment: Deep, uncompromising alignment directly to the rigor of Arkansas Academic Standards.

One Platform. A Continuous Data Thread.



Moving from "collecting isolated data" to operating a shared portal with a single, unified login and reporting environment.

The K-2 Assessment Lifecycle

1 BOY Universal Screener

(First 30 Days)

- Required for all K-3.
- Fixed-form.
- Measures early progression skills (phonological awareness, phonics, fluency).

Reports: Potential Risk or Ready

3 MOY Screener

(Jan - Mar)

- Fixed-form.
- Administered to new students only or at teacher discretion based on need.

2. MOY Interim

(Dec – Feb)

- Required all K-2.
- Adaptive format.
- Assesses entire blueprint for progress toward grade-level expectations.

Reports: Scale score & performance levels

4. EOY Summative

(Apr - May)

- Required all K-2.
- Adaptive format.
- Determines final progress toward expectations.

Reports: Scale score, performance level, reporting category mastery

Directly Measuring the Blueprint

[Published Blueprint](#)

		K-3 ELA Assessment Blueprint				
		Reporting Category/Component	BOY Screener	MOY Screener	Interim	Summative
Foundational Pillars	{	Alphabet Knowledge	1	1		1
		Phonemic Awareness	1	10	2	2
		Sound/Symbol	1	10	2	2
		Decoding	1	10	2	2
		Encoding	1	10		2
Language Comprehension	{	Vocabulary		10	4	3
		Reading Fundamentals	1	8	1	1
		Literature	1	6	1	2
		Information	1	2	1	1

Every checkpoint is **an instructional signal**. The blueprint ensures core learning, screening, interims, and summative feedback all share the same standard-aligned expectations.

Translating Results: From Risk Identification to Mastery

K-3 Screener Logic

Ready

Ready to access grade-level content.

Potential Risk

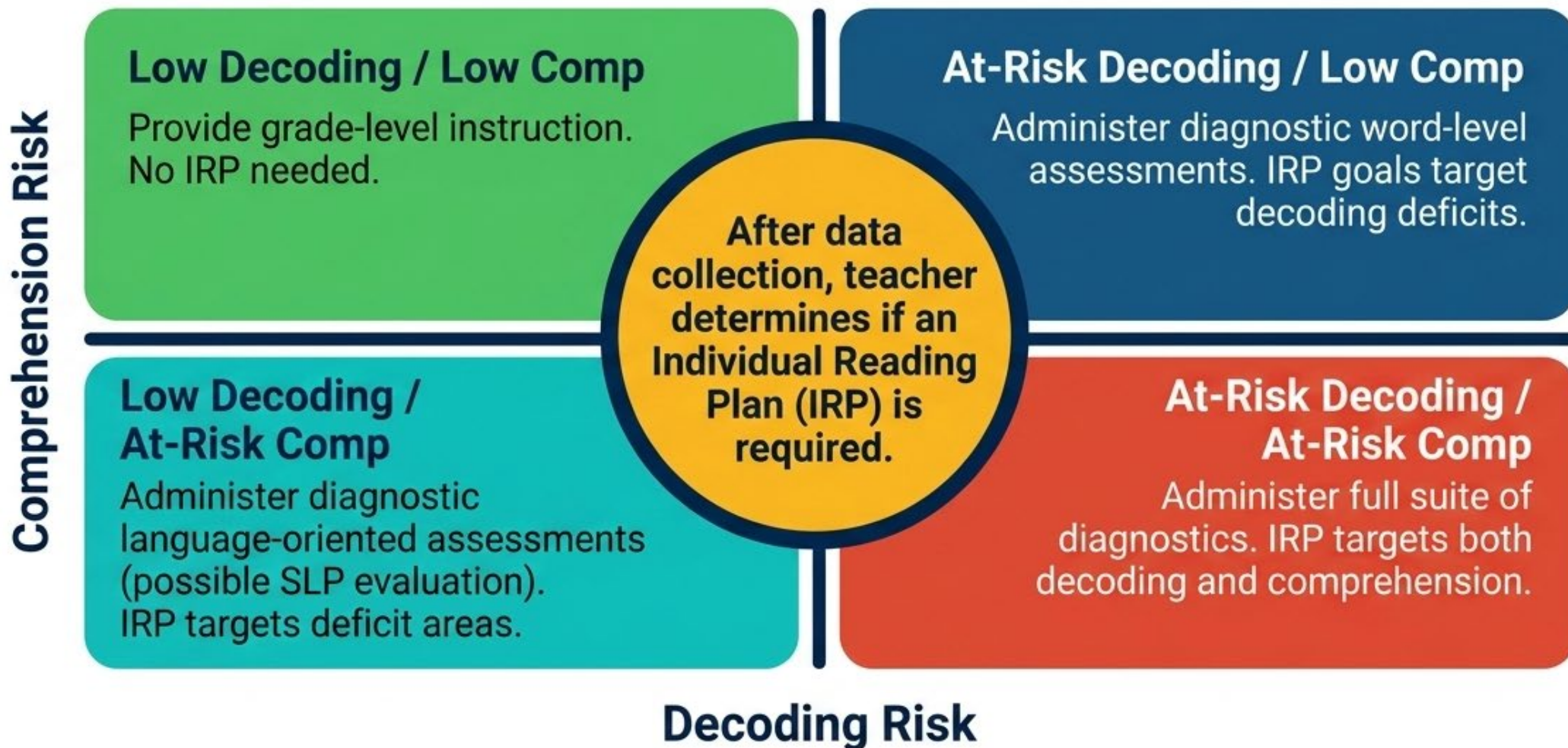
Will require substantial support/scaffolding.
Triggers need for additional testing/differentiation.

K-2 Summative Logic (Performance Level Descriptors)

Level 4	Advanced understanding / On track for career/college.
Level 3	Proficient / Mastery of standards.
Level 2	Basic understanding / Personalized support needed.
Level 1	Limited understanding / Significant support required.

Sample Cut Score Reference:
Grade 1 ELA Level 3 Mastery = 1060-1071

Translating 'Risk' into Action: The 4 Basic Student Profiles



The Instructional Loop: From Screener to Action Plan

New!
Batch
Printing
Available.

Step 1: Automated Population

Jane's IRP - ATLAS Screener Results

Skill	Score	
1. Phonics - Decoding	Risk	▼
2. Phonics - Encoding	34	▼
3. Reading Comprehension	26	▼
4. Oral Reading Fluency	28	▼

Step 2: Profile Matching

Does Jane need an Individual Reading Plan?

☒ [Yes] ☐ [No]

☒ At risk for decoding and low risk for comprehension

☐ Low risk for decoding and at risk for comprehension

☐ At risk for decoding and at risk for comprehension

☐ Low risk for decoding and low risk for comprehension

Step 3: Intervention & Publishing

Complete at least one goal*

Complete at least one goal*

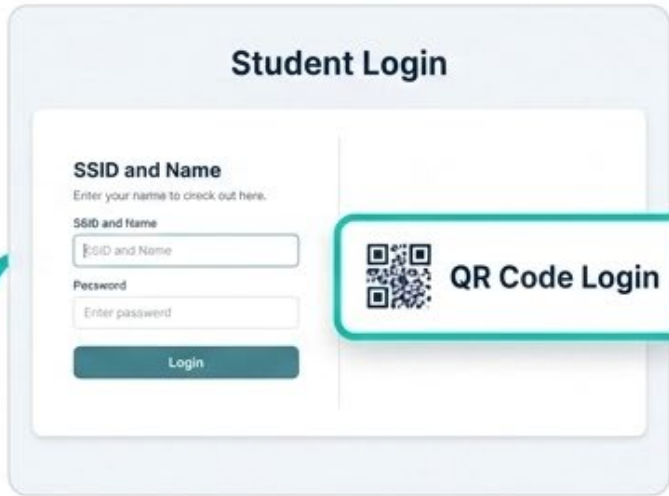
List Tier 1 curriculum*

List Tier 1 curriculum*

Set an intervention program*

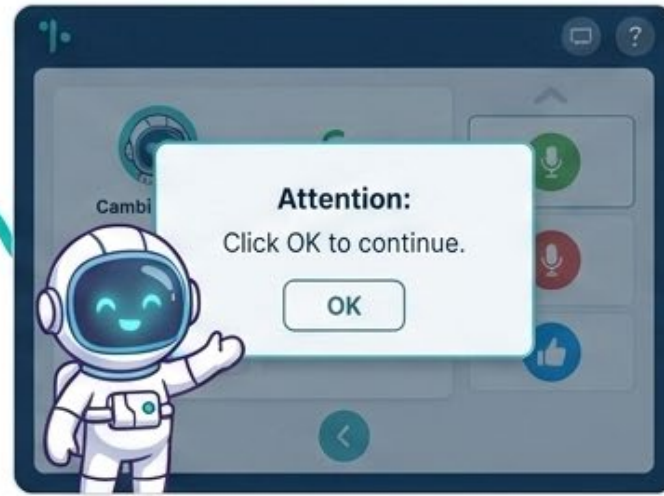
 Publish to Family Portal

An Interface Built for Early Learners



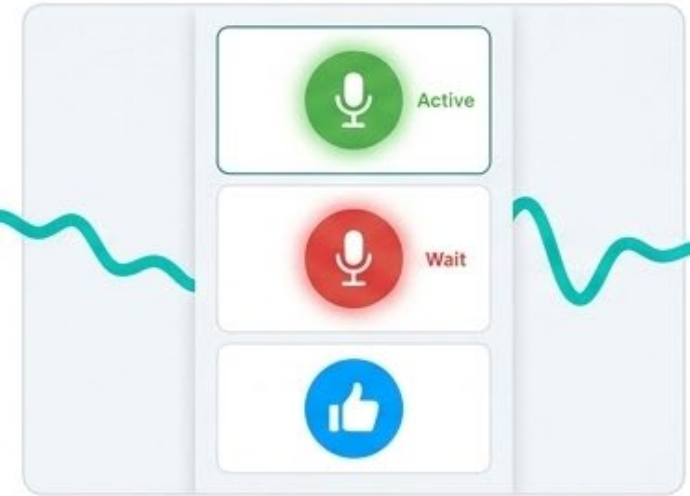
Frictionless Access

Reduces login friction for young learners by offering a streamlined QR code scanning process alongside traditional SSID entry.



Engaging Functionality

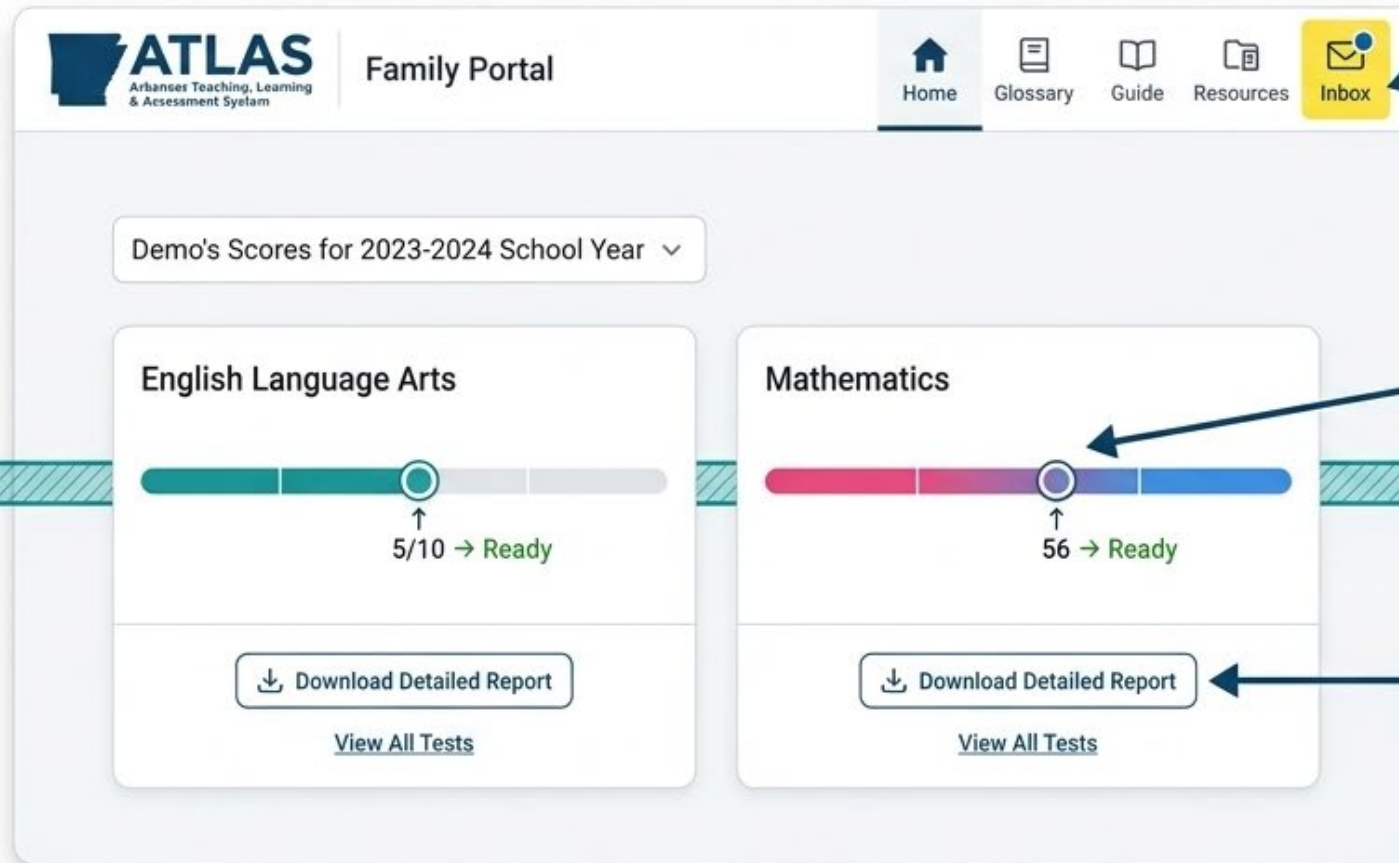
Provides interactive 'Cambi' tutorials before each new skill type. Interface requires minimal scrolling and utilizes large, engaging graphics.



Verbal Response Technology

Verbal responses are captured for Oral Reading Fluency (ORF), Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN), and decoding. Visual button states (**Green = Active, Red = Wait, Thumbs Up = Complete**) guide the student effortlessly.

The Family Portal: Total Transparency



The Inbox Alert

Automated alerts when a new Individual Reading Plan (IRP) report is available for download.

Visual Score Tracking

Simple, visual progress indicators demonstrating readiness or potential risk.

Detailed Reports

Instant access to comprehensive, printable student performance metrics.

The ATLAS Horizon: Evolving the Ecosystem

What We're Learning



Implementation > Selection: Choosing the right standards matters, but executing assessments with fidelity is paramount.



Timeliness: Delayed data is autopsy data. Educators require immediate insights to pivot instruction.



Instructional Connection: Screening scores must dictate the very next pedagogical step. No tool is an "end-all" solution without the system surrounding it.

Next Phase: Where We're Going

Refining Alignment

Continuously tightening item alignment to state standards.

Strengthening the Blueprint

Enhancing K-2 progression metrics to capture nuanced growth.

Supporting Educators

Shifting focus from "collecting data" to empowering teachers to confidently use it.

National Conference on Student Assessment

Connecting the Dots: Building Coherent Systems to Support Student Success



Synthesis

Matt Brunetti

Senior Program Associate / Project Director

WestEd



Legislation Creates the Mandate . . . SEAs Make It Work

Implementation is challenging and requires significant support from SEAs.

- Establishing a system of support requires strong guidance, funding, capacity-building, and iteration
- SEAs are often relied on to:
 - Review and select instruments, and maintain communication with assessment providers
 - Establish detailed guidance covering everything from administration details to how results should be communicated
 - Define key (or vague) terms used in legislation and establish FAQ documents
 - Support LEAs with implementation issues
 - Establish data systems, including data sharing agreements and dashboards
- Successful implementation relies on iteration and strong communication among all stakeholders, including well-designed websites, office hours, coaches, instructional guidance

Screeners Are Not Diagnostic

The screener v. diagnostic misconception is universal (pun intended), persistent, and a main source of tension.

- Screening is the beginning of an assessment process, followed by diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring
- Screening is meant to understand which students are more likely to have reading difficulties
 - Analogous to an eye chart or blood pressure check
- All stakeholders, including legislators, educators, advocacy groups, and assessment providers, play a role in this misconception.
 - Ostensibly, the desire to minimize assessment burden plays a role in this issue
 - Need clear understanding across all stakeholders about appropriate and inappropriate uses of screener results (and different types of assessments, in general)

Serving Every Learner Requires Intentionality

Serving multilingual students and children with disabilities well requires explicit decisions and guidance, from instrument design and selection to interpretation of results.

- Explicit guidance and support for multilingual learners and children with disabilities is paramount
 - Some states explicitly require screeners in other languages (predominantly Spanish [for now])
- Even with a valid screener, interpreting results for multilingual students requires professional judgment
 - Is a student flagged because of a reading difficulty, or because they're still acquiring English?
Or both?
- Screeners are not special education eligibility tools



Informing Instruction is the Hardest Step

Screeners results are only useful if teachers know what to do with them.

- Investing in connecting results to classroom action is of utmost importance
 - Bridge from screener data to classroom action is where most systems fall short
 - Ongoing professional development, aligned curriculum, and coaching are wise investments
- Most states have screener/assessment mandates; however, most states are still catching up to build the systems and capacity to respond appropriately and adequately.



Shared Goals, Different Roles

- **Policymakers:** Legislation is only the start. Invest in implementation and ongoing improvement.
- **Educators:** Screener results are a signal to act. They are not a label or a verdict.
- **Assessment providers:** Provide well-designed assessments and clear guidance on how to use assessments appropriately.
- **Researchers:** Provide evidence to support best practices for linking screener results to instructional practices, including for multilingual learners and children with disabilities.
- **All:** Continue to learn from each other. Cross-state learning accelerates progress.

National Conference on Student Assessment

Connecting the Dots: Building Coherent Systems to Support Student Success



Audience Q & A
