

2020-21 Early Literacy Assessment Guidance for Learning at a Distance

Introduction

For the 2020-2021 academic year, districts have created COVID-19 preparedness and response plans which will identify modes of instruction as learning at a distance, in-person, or a hybrid of the two. Regardless of the mode of instruction, districts are required to meet the two assessment-related requirements of the Read by Grade Three (RBG3) law:

1. [The Read by Grade Three law \(MCL 380.1280f\)](#) requires that K-3 students be assessed within the first 30 school days and, if an early reading deficiency is identified based on assessment results, the student must be given an Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP).
2. Districts are required to use their assessment system to screen and diagnose students throughout the year and use this data, and other information as needed, to inform the development of an IRIP.

Assessment Considerations if Remote Administration is Required

It is possible there will be times during the 2020-21 school year when at least some students will be in a learning at a distance environment and districts will need to determine how to best administer assessments. Consider the following:

1. **Choice of Assessment and Technology Considerations** - Consider the usefulness of the results of an assessment that is typically administered in-person and is now being administered at a distance. Determine connectivity and device needs as well as vendor requirements.
2. **Administration Procedures** – The assessment administration procedures are likely to change when an assessment is administered in a remote environment. These assessment opportunities must show what the student can do independently to inform appropriate instructional decisions for the student. Unique consideration for families of English learners may be necessary. This [guidance](#) from MDE is available to support meeting the needs of English learners.
3. **Assessment Validity** - Screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring assessments may not have been thoroughly field-tested for remote administration. Due to changes in the experiences of both students and teachers, as well as the presentation of materials, remote administration may influence the validity of the assessment results. Remote administration is typically considered a non-standard administration. Districts are cautioned against making high stakes decisions without additional reliable and valid data.
4. **Training** - It may be most efficient and effective to train a small cadre of staff to be “experts” in remote assessment administration. Give clear and explicit directions to those providing support from home about their role and purpose in assessment administration. Support to the learner should be limited to technical issues.

5. **Recommendations for Screening within the First 30 School Days** - Before administering an assessment, provide clear instructions, modeling, and practice on the device and platform that students will use for learning and testing.
6. **Create a Screening Plan** - If screening is done remotely, prioritize the order of administration. A sample plan is as follows:
 - a. students in kindergarten, students who are English learners, and students who are new to the school
 - b. students in grades 1-3
 - c. students in grades 4-6 who were persistently at-risk of not being successful readers
7. **Incorporate Other Data** - Consider using multiple data points to inform decisions about student instruction. For example, student perception data (such as a student survey) is important for matching instruction methods and student learning needs and interests.
8. **Individual Reading Improvement Plans (IRIPs) for Students Learning at a Distance** - Districts have the autonomy to decide how to track progress on an IRIP for students learning at a distance, including, but not limited to, teacher documentation of contact made with families, resources provided, and monitoring student assignments submissions. The mode of contact may include virtual meetings, phone calls, emails, and other outreach. The RBG3 law states that parents/guardians must receive a copy of the IRIP.

Additional RBG3 assessment and IRIP resources:

- a) [Formative Assessments](#)
- b) [Read by Grade Three Assessments](#)
- c) [Read by Grade Three Guide](#)
- d) [Individual Reading Improvement Plan \(IRIP\) FAQ](#)
- e) [Early Literacy Assessment System \(ELAS\)](#)