



JOY HOFMEISTER

STATE SUPERINTENDENT *of* PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Joy Hofmeister

DATE: May 23, 2019

SUBJECT: Discussion and possible action to approve **Acadience and mCLASS: DIBELS 8th Edition** as Reading Sufficiency Act Screeners for Students in Kindergarten through Third Grade

Oklahoma law, at 70 O.S. §1210.508C, requires the State Board of Education to approve Reading Sufficiency Act (RSA) screening instruments. More specifically, the law provides:

C. The State Board of Education shall approve screening instruments for use at the beginning and end of the school year, for monitoring of progress, and for measurement of reading skills at the end of the school year as required in subsections A and B of this section; provided, at least one of the screening instruments shall meet the following criteria:

- 1. Assess for phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, and comprehension;*
- 2. Document the validity and reliability of each assessment;*
- 3. Can be used for diagnosis and progress monitoring;*
- 4. Can be used to assess special education and limited-English-proficient students; and*
- 5. Accompanied by a data management system that provides profiles for students, class, grade level and school building. The profiles shall identify each student's instructional point of need and reading achievement level. The State Board shall also determine periodic and post assessments to be used for students at risk of reading failure. The State Board shall ensure that any assessments approved are in alignment with the subject matter standards adopted by the State Board of Education. 70 O.S. §1210.508C(C)(1-5)*

In 2018, the Oklahoma State Board of Education (the “Board”) reviewed screening instruments in order to create a list of approved screening instruments districts could use to meet the requirements of the Reading Sufficiency Act (Title 70 O.S. § 1210.508C). In order to be



Review of Screening Assessments for the Reading Sufficiency Act (RSA)

Date: May 23, 2019

Summary of Findings

In 2018, the Oklahoma State Board of Education (the “Board”) reviewed screening instruments in order to create a list of approved screening instruments districts could use to meet the requirements of the Reading Sufficiency Act (Title 70 O.S. § 1210.508C). Since this approval process, a lawsuit (unbeknownst to the Board or the State Department of Education) between the University of Oregon and Dynamic Measurement Group, Inc. has been settled. According to the settlement, Amplify Education, Inc. will shift to the new mCLASS: DIBELS 8th edition assessment after July 1, 2019. Dynamic Measurement Group, Inc., will utilize the same DIBELS Next assessment under a new name, Acadience.

In order to best serve Oklahoma districts, Amplify Education, Inc. and Dynamic Measurement Group, Inc. were invited to submit materials for review. After reviewing those submissions, both assessments were found to **meet all criteria** to be submitted to the Oklahoma State Board of Education for consideration of approval.

Process

Based on Title 70 O.S. § 1210.508C(B), “*each student in kindergarten, first, second, and third grade of the public schools in this state shall be assessed at the beginning and end of each school year using a screening instrument approved by the State Board of Education for the acquisition of reading skills including, but not limited to, phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.*”

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) worked with the Regional Educational Laboratory-Southwest (REL-SW) during the initial review to establish five criteria for screening instruments during the initial review process. The criteria include: (1) identified as a **screening instrument** based on criteria defined by the OSDE and the National Center for Intensive Intervention (NCII), (2) demonstration of **convincing evidence for reliability and validity**, (3) assessment of all **five reading skill** areas defined in statute (phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension), (4) **reporting scores** provided in all ways defined by statute, and (5) **accommodations** for subgroups provided as required by statute. The same criteria was used for this review.

The results of the review can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Reading Assessment Instruments Reviewed by OSDE

Screening Instrument Vendor	Type of Assessment	Reliability & Validity	Assesses All 5 Reading Skill Areas	Reports Scores in All Required Forms	Provides Required Accommodations
Acadience <i>Dynamic Measurement Group, Inc.</i>	Screener*	Convincing	Yes	Yes	Yes
mCLASS: DIBELS 8th edition <i>Amplify Education, Inc.</i>	Screener*	Convincing	Yes	Yes	Yes

Consideration 1: Type of Assessment

The OSDE used NCII evidence standards to define the criteria for each of the assessment types under the Reading Sufficiency Act. NCII is housed at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and the work is led by nationally recognized experts in assessment, who conduct comprehensive reviews of measures and set standards for assessment quality.

- **Screener** - A screener is a **brief assessment** that is **valid, reliable, and evidence-based**. It is conducted with **all students** to identify those who are at-risk or not at-risk of academic failure and need additional or alternative instruction.
- **Diagnostic** - A diagnostic assessment provides a deeper dive into a student's **specific skill deficits and strengths** in order to make individualized instructional decisions. These assessments usually are administered after a screening instrument. Because of the **time intensive** and specific nature of these assessments, they are only used for the **subset of students** identified as not making sufficient progress.
- **Progress Monitor** - With progress monitoring, assessment is used to **measure growth** for students **already at-risk** for reading difficulties. Guidance provided by a progress monitoring tool informs teachers when they should make an intervention change.

Consideration 2: Reliability and Validity

Based on Title 70 O.S. § 1210.508C(C)(2), “*the State Board of Education shall approve screening instruments for use at the beginning and end of the school year, for monitoring of progress, and for measurement of reading skills at the end of the school year as required in subsections A and B of this section; provided, at least one of the screening instruments shall meet the following criteria:*

2. Document the **validity** and **reliability** of each assessment.”
- **Reliability** - Reliability is the consistency with which a tool classifies students from one administration to the next. For a tool to be considered reliable, it must have the same results under different conditions, at different times, and using different forms. For a tool to have convincing evidence of reliability, there must be at least two studies that are reported at 0.80 or higher.
 - **Validity** - Validity is the extent to which a tool accurately measures the underlying construct that it is intended to measure. If the construct is sufficient mastery of reading, then the tool should accurately measure those skills that lead to reading sufficiency. For a tool to have convincing evidence of validity, all three types of validity (predictive, construct, and content) must be reported to be above 0.70.

Consideration 3: Assesses all Five Reading Skill Areas

Title 70 O.S. § 1210.508C(B) states “*each student in kindergarten, first, second, and third grade of the public schools in this state shall be assessed at the beginning and end of each school year using a screening instrument approved by the State Board of Education for the acquisition of reading skills including, but not limited to, phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.*”

According to Title 70 O.S. § 1210.508C(C)(1), “*the State Board of Education shall approve screening instruments for use at the beginning and end of the school year, for monitoring of progress, and for measurement of reading skills at the end of the school year as required in subsections A and B of this section; provided, at least one of the screening instruments shall meet the following criteria:*

1. Assess for **phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, and comprehension.**”
- **Phonemic Awareness**
Phonemic awareness is the ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds in words. A student’s skill in phonemic awareness is a good predictor of later reading success or difficulty.
 - **Phonics** - Phonics is the understanding that there is a predictable relationship between the sounds of spoken language, and the letters and spelling that represent those sounds in written language. Successful decoding occurs when a student uses his or her knowledge of letter-sound relationships to accurately read a word.
 - **Fluency** - Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with expression. Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. When fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically. They group words quickly to help them gain meaning from what they read. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression. Their reading sounds natural, as if they are speaking. Readers who have not yet developed fluency read slowly, word by word. Their oral reading is choppy.
 - **Vocabulary** - Vocabulary refers to the words we must understand to communicate effectively. Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in the reading process and contributes greatly to a reader’s comprehension.

- **Comprehension** - Comprehension is the understanding and interpretation of what is read. To be able to accurately understand written material, children need to be able to (1) decode what they read; (2) make connections between what they read and what they already know; and (3) think deeply about what they have read.

Consideration 4: Reports Scores in All Required Forms

Title 70 O.S. § 1210.508C(C)(5) states, “*the State Board of Education shall approve screening instruments for use at the beginning and end of the school year, for monitoring of progress, and for measurement of reading skills at the end of the school year as required in subsections A and B of this section; provided, at least one of the screening instruments shall meet the following criteria:*

5. *Accompanied by a data management system that provides profiles for **students**, **class**, **grade level** and **school** building. The profiles shall identify each student's instructional point of need and **reading achievement level**.*

In order to address the instructional needs of students efficiently, data must be available at all levels defined in statute. These reporting levels will guide instructional decisions at the student, class and school level as well as facilitate communication with families.

Consideration 5: Provides Accommodations for Subgroups

According to Title 70 O.S. § 1210.508C(C)(4), “*the State Board of Education shall approve screening instruments for use at the beginning and end of the school year, for monitoring of progress, and for measurement of reading skills at the end of the school year as required in subsections A and B of this section; provided, at least one of the screening instruments shall meet the following criteria:*

4. *Can be used to assess **special education** and **limited-English-proficient** students.*

The Reading Sufficiency Act requires that all students be assessed through a screening instrument. In order for data to be accurate, appropriate accommodations must be made for students who receive special education services or are identified as limited-English-proficient. The accommodations ensure the data for students in those sub-groups is reliable.

considered for approval, the materials submitted for review through the Request for Information had to demonstrate that the assessment met **all** of the following required criteria:

1. Identified as a **screening instrument** based on criteria defined by the OSDE and the National Center for Intensive Intervention (NCII),
2. Demonstration of **convincing evidence for reliability and validity**,
3. Assessment of all **five reading skill** areas defined in statute (phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension),
4. **Reporting scores** provided in all ways defined by statute, and
5. **Accommodations** for subgroups provided as required by statute.

Since this approval process, a lawsuit between the University of Oregon and Dynamic Measurement Group, Inc. has been settled that impacts mCLASS: DIBELS Next. According to the settlement, Dynamic Measurement Group, Inc., has the authority to utilize the assessment tool under a new name, Acadience. The University of Oregon, in partnership with Amplify Education Inc., has the authority to retain the name “DIBELS” for a new assessment they have created. Amplify Education Inc., may contract with new customers for mCLASS: DIBELS Next until July 1, 2019. At this time, they must switch to the new assessment, mCLASS: DIBELS 8th edition.

With these changes, the Oklahoma State Department of Education requested information from both Amplify Education, Inc., and Dynamic Measurement Group, Inc., to determine the ability of the potential screening instruments to meet the criteria referenced above. Upon receipt of the information requested from the suppliers, the OSDE conducted an extensive review of Acadience and mCLASS: DIBELS 8th edition and found that both screening instruments meet all five criteria for screening instruments outlined in the Reading Sufficiency Act. The screeners are presented to the Oklahoma State Board of Education for consideration of approval.