

## MEMORANDUM

**to:** Members of the CSRC, Jarett Fields  
**from:** Susan Gramling, Janice Ereth  
**subject:** 2016–17 First and Second Grade Reading Assessment  
**date:** January 20, 2016

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has discontinued the requirement that all schools assess K4 – second graders with the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS). While DPI continues to require an assessment of reading readiness for the 2016–17 school year for all students in K4 through second grade, schools now have a choice of assessments, including the PALS. DPI stated its expectation that most districts and independent charter schools will continue using the PALS; however, if an alternative assessment is chosen, the assessment must:

- Be administered at least annually;
- Evaluate whether a child possesses phonemic awareness and letter sound knowledge;
- Be an appropriate, valid, and reliable assessment of literacy fundamentals; and
- Include students enrolled in special education programs.<sup>1</sup>

The table on the following pages is a brief summary of the assessments mentioned by schools and local educational experts as possibilities for the first/second grade reading/literacy measure required by the CSRC.

The NCCD Children's Research Center recommends that the CSRC continue requiring administration of the PALS to first and second grade students in the fall and spring. The benefits of continuing the use of PALS in the 2016–17 school year follow.

- The teachers have used the PALS and are familiar with the administration and use of the resulting data.
- The PALS is a research-based tool with high validity and reliability.
- Continued use of the PALS will provide the CSRC with longitudinal student data from previous implementation years, i.e., CSRC already includes expectations related to this assessment in the scorecard for first and second grades.
- There is a possibility that schools using the PALS will be reimbursed fully or proportionally for the cost.

---

<sup>1</sup> This information is taken from a DPI document titled *Assessment of Reading Readiness, 2016–17 School Year*, which was last revised October 27, 2015.

Possible 1st and 2nd Grade Reading/Literacy Assessments					
Assessment Name	Publisher/ Developer	Age/Grade Level	Areas Covered	Cost	Notes
Clay: Observation Survey of Early Literacy	Author: Marie M. Clay: Third Edition; Heinemann	K – 3rd or so, or struggling students (Response to Intervention approach)	Early literacy awareness	Book including the tasks, recording, and scoring pages: \$29.50, with a 30% volume discount if buying 15 or more	Systematic observation system that assesses students in the act of responding to instruction; ongoing and meant to inform instruction in real time; includes topics such as early literacy behaviors, writing vocabulary, and hearing and recording sounds in words; requires significant professional development/training
DIBELS: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy	University of Oregon	K – 6th (does not specify K4 or PreK)	Early literacy development, including: letter naming fluency, phonologic awareness, alphabetic principle and phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, and oral language	\$1.00 per student per year	Provides benchmark data at beginning, middle, and end of year; Cyber used it and switched to the PALS before DPI began requiring PALS
Yopp-Singer Test of Phonemic Segmentation	Hallie Kay Hopp, California State University, Fullerton	K – 3rd	Phonemic segmentation	Free; instrument can be printed from Internet	Test consists of 22 items; must be administered individually; only one test so items remain the same regardless of grade; scoring is not objective; no research available on the reliability or validity of the test
FAST or FASTBRIDGE	Staff at the University of Minnesota, with funds from the Department of Education	Universal screening for K – 6th and progress monitoring for 1st – 12th  Early reading covers PreK – 1st, but can	Reading/literacy, early reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concepts of print</li> <li>• Onset sounds</li> <li>• Letter names</li> <li>• Letter sounds</li> </ul>	\$6.00 per student/year, which includes training, support, online scoring, and automated reporting for all of	One simple assessment system with both curriculum-based monitoring and computer adaptive test; administered individually; screening takes about one minute; extensive research available on the reliability and validity for this process; currently

Possible 1st and 2nd Grade Reading/Literacy Assessments					
Assessment Name	Publisher/ Developer	Age/Grade Level	Areas Covered	Cost	Notes
		be used for screening up to 3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word rhyming</li> <li>• Word blending</li> <li>• Word segmenting</li> <li>• Sight word reading</li> <li>• Decodable word reading</li> <li>• Nonsense word reading - sentence reading</li> <li>• Oral language (sentence repetition)</li> </ul> <p>The upward extension of early reading is curriculum-based reading, an index of word reading efficiency, which is an important ability that facilitates reading comprehension</p>	the assessments beyond reading	used by approximately 30 school systems across the country
PALS: Phonemic Awareness Literacy Screening	University of Virginia Department of Education	PALS-PreK, PALS-K, and PALS 1–3	Literacy fundamentals measures name writing ability, uppercase and lowercase alphabet recognition, letter sound and beginning sound production, print and word awareness, rhyme awareness, and	Base package: \$5.50 per student  DPI is offering the possibility of reimbursement if schools choose the PALS.	Base package includes PALS online account, assessment materials, teacher sets, electronic lesson plans, instructional resources, and email support

Possible 1st and 2nd Grade Reading/Literacy Assessments					
Assessment Name	Publisher/ Developer	Age/Grade Level	Areas Covered	Cost	Notes
			nursery rhyme awareness  PALS-K: phonological awareness, alphabet recognition, concept of word, knowledge of letter sounds, and spelling  PALS 1–3: Literacy skills such as site word recognition, spelling, and oral reading (fluency, comprehension, speed). Provides skill leveling for struggling students.		