

## Florida's Reading First Assessment Plan: An Explanation and Guide

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### *Overview and Rationale*

Anyone who has worked as a teacher or principal in an elementary school understands the value of reliable and valid assessments of early reading progress. Timely and reliable assessments tell us which children are falling behind in critical reading skills so we can help them make better progress in learning to read. Reliable and valid assessments also help us monitor the effectiveness of our instruction for all children. Unless we regularly assess the progress of our children in learning to read, we cannot know which children need more help or whether our instructional plan is working for them. Because scientific studies have repeatedly demonstrated the value of regularly assessing reading progress, one of the critical goals of the *Reading First* initiative in Florida is to increase the quality and frequency of reading assessments for all children in the early elementary grades.

*What types of assessments are required by the Reading First initiative?*

Every school that receives *Reading First* funds must have a coordinated plan to use four types of reading assessments to guide instruction and program evaluation in the school. These types of assessments are:

- Screening** – Screening tests provide the teacher a beginning assessment of the child's preparation for grade level reading instruction. They are a "first alert" that a child will need extra help to make adequate progress in reading during the year.
- Progress monitoring** – Progress monitoring tests keep the teacher informed about the child's progress in learning to read during the school year. They are a quick sample of critical reading skills that will tell the teacher if the child is making adequate progress toward grade level reading ability at the end of the year.
- Diagnostic** – Diagnostic tests can be used to measure a variety of reading, language, or cognitive skills. Although they can be given as soon as a screening test indicates a child is behind in reading growth, they will usually be given only if a child fails to make adequate progress after being given extra help in learning to read. They are designed to provide a more precise and detailed picture of the full range of a child's knowledge and skill so that instruction can be more precisely planned.
- Outcome** – Outcome assessments are given at the end of the year for two purposes. First, they can help the principal and teachers in a school evaluate the overall effectiveness of their reading program for all children. Second, they are required in *Reading First* schools to help districts evaluate their progress toward meeting the goal of "every child reading on grade level" by third grade. Schools must show regular progress toward this goal to continue receiving *Reading First* funds.

*How are these assessment requirements different from what schools are currently doing?*

Most elementary school children in Florida already are being assessed using some of these types of assessments. Their teachers may periodically administer informal reading inventories to see how their children are progressing, or districts may already be requiring year-end outcome assessments in grades 1 and 2. All children in Florida now take the FCAT reading assessment at the end of the third grade.

For most schools, however, Florida's *Reading First* assessment plan will require them to increase the amount of reading assessment for children in kindergarten through third grade. For example, most schools do not administer formal progress monitoring tests four times a year as will be required in *Reading First* schools. Although Florida now has a requirement that every kindergarten child will be administered a screening instrument (the School Readiness Uniform Screening System or SRUSS) for general school readiness at the beginning of kindergarten, little formal assessment of reading progress or reading-related outcomes typically takes place in kindergarten classes. Another change is that all the tests of reading that are used in *Reading First* schools must meet high standards of reliability and validity. Typically, the informal inventories developed by teachers or contained in reading programs do not meet these standards. This means that schools and districts will need to make sure that the tests they use for screening, progress monitoring, diagnosis, and outcome assessments meet more rigorous standards for reliability and validity.

*What help will be provided to schools and districts to implement Florida's Reading First Assessment Plan?*

The Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR), which was created by Governor Bush last spring, has been given the responsibility of providing technical assistance to schools in the development and implementation of their *Reading First* assessment plans. Dr. Patricia Howard is the Director of Assessment Programs at the Center. She and her staff will be providing two kinds of assistance to districts and schools as they design and implement their plans. First, they are available to provide consultation about tests that are appropriate for inclusion in *Reading First* assessment plans. Second, they will be providing training to districts and schools in the administration of the progress monitoring and outcome assessments that will be used in *Reading First* schools. They will also provide all the materials necessary to accomplish the progress monitoring assessments. The phone number for the FCRR is 850-644-9352, and Dr. Howard's email address is phoward@fcrr.org. There will also be up-to-date information and answers to questions about the *Reading First* Assessment Plan posted to FCRR's website (www.fcrr.org). There is an additional valuable resource on the web that schools can use for advice about tests that meet *Reading First* standards. The National Institute for Literacy asked a committee of reading and assessment experts to review tests to determine if they had sufficient evidence of reliability and validity for specific assessment purposes. The report of this committee is available on the web, and we recommend that both district and school level personnel responsible for assessment read at least the executive summary of the report. It is available at: <http://idea.uoregon.edu/assessment/index.html>

*Are there common tests that will be required in all Reading First Schools?*

The answer to this question is yes. In order to facilitate the training process, and because of the need for high quality evaluations of school's progress toward achieving the goals of *Reading First*, Florida requires that all *Reading First* schools use a common set of progress monitoring and outcome assessments. The State of Florida will be also be providing a valuable new web-based resource to help schools manage assessment data and use it productively in planning instruction and conducting program evaluations.

The progress monitoring tests that must be administered by all *Reading First* schools are taken from the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills*, commonly referred to as DIBELS. These tests are very brief, individually administered tests of critical early pre-reading and reading skills. The instruments will be administered four times a year. Although schools are required to give these instruments four times a year, districts or schools may certainly administer progress monitoring measures more frequently than this if they desire. More frequent monitoring of progress may be particularly helpful for children who are assigned to receive more intensive reading instruction because they are experiencing special difficulties learning to read.

One advantage of these particular progress monitoring instruments is that they also meet the criteria for a screening instrument to be given at the beginning of each year. Districts are free to select any additional screening instrument to supplement the DIBELS tests, but this is not necessary in order to meet *Reading First* assessment requirements. It is particularly important for districts to adopt an efficient approach to screening at the kindergarten level because the legislature has recently required that every kindergarten child in Florida be screened using the SRUSS. Although the SRUSS was not designed as a specific screening measure for reading, *Reading First* schools will not have to give an additional reading screening measure in kindergarten because the first assessment with the DIBELS progress monitoring tests can provide screening information.

The progress monitoring tests that will be given in all *Reading First* schools are:

#### **Kindergarten**

Letter Naming Fluency (Assessment 1, 2, 3, 4)

Initial Sounds Fluency (Assessment 1, 2, 3)

Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (Assessment 3, 4)

Nonsense Word Fluency (Assessment 3, 4)

#### **First Grade**

Letter Naming Fluency (Assessment 1)

Phoneme Segmentation (Assessment 1, 2, 3, 4)

Nonsense Word Fluency (Assessment 1, 2, 3, 4)

Oral Reading Fluency (Assessment 1, 2, 3, 4)

#### **Second Grade**

Nonsense Word Fluency (Assessment 1, 2, 3, 4)

Oral Reading Fluency (Assessment 1, 2, 3, 4)

#### **Third Grade**

Oral Reading Fluency (Assessment 1, 2, 3, 4)

Brief descriptions of these progress-monitoring tests are given below:

Letter Naming Fluency – this test assesses how fluently children can give the names of letters on a page. Students are shown upper- and lower-case letters that are arranged in random order, and they are asked to name as many letters as they can in one minute.

Initial Sounds Fluency – this is a measure of early phonemic awareness. Children are presented with pictures and asked to say the first sound of a word depicted by one of the pictures and indicate pictures that begin with a particular phoneme or sound.

Phoneme Segmentation Fluency – this is a slightly more advanced measure of phonemic awareness. It tests children’s ability to pronounce the individual phonemes (sounds) in words that have three and four phonemes (e.g., cat, man, rest).

Nonsense Word Fluency – this is a measure of children’s knowledge and skill in applying the alphabetic principle. Children can earn points either by giving the individual sounds represented by the letters in simple non-words or by blending the sounds together and pronouncing the non-word as a whole word (i.e. bim, ral, stob).

Oral Reading Fluency – this is a measure of children’s ability to read grade level text fluently and accurately. Children receive a score based on the number of words in a passage they can read accurately in one minute.

The federal *Reading First* program requires that end-of-year outcomes be measured in each of the five critical areas of reading growth that are appropriate at each grade level (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). Florida’s *Reading First* assessment plan requires all *Reading First* schools to give a common set of outcome measures each year from kindergarten through third grade. The measures we will use are as follows:

### **Kindergarten**

Phonics—Letter Naming Fluency, Nonsense Word Fluency

Phonemic Awareness – Phoneme Segmentation Fluency, Initial Sounds Fluency

Vocabulary – an individually administered oral language vocabulary test

### **First Grade**

Phonemic Awareness – Phoneme Segmentation Fluency

Phonics – Nonsense Word Fluency

Fluency – Oral Reading Fluency

Vocabulary – an individually administered oral language vocabulary test

Comprehension – a group administered reading comprehension test

### **Second Grade**

Phonics – Nonsense Word Fluency

Fluency – Oral Reading Fluency

Vocabulary – an individually administered oral language vocabulary test

Comprehension – a group administered reading comprehension test  
 Reading Vocabulary – a group administered reading vocabulary test

### **Third Grade**

Fluency – Oral Reading Fluency  
 Vocabulary – an individually administered oral language vocabulary test  
 Comprehension – a group administered reading comprehension test  
 Reading Vocabulary – a group administered reading vocabulary test

The most unusual aspect of this plan is that we are requiring a measure of oral language vocabulary at the end of each year through third grade. In second and third grade, we will have a measure of both oral language and reading vocabulary. Since vocabulary development is such an important issue for the majority of children in *Reading First* schools, and since vocabulary growth is so important to the development of reading comprehension, we anticipate that it will be very useful to schools and districts to have a measure of vocabulary development that is not confounded with word reading ability. This will allow schools to determine whether their methods of support for vocabulary growth are sufficient to accelerate vocabulary growth in the children they serve.

Another aspect of this assessment schedule that requires explanation is the administration of the reading comprehension test at the end of third grade since the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is also given in third grade. The FCAT (a highly developed and valid measure of reading comprehension) is administered to third graders in March in order to provide timely information for school grading purposes. We will continue to give another measure of reading comprehension at the end of third grade in order to adequately assess gains in reading achievement from end of second to end of third grade and to allow us to examine growth in reading comprehension using a common format in first through third grade.

*What specific help will districts and schools receive in the implementation of their Reading First assessment plans?*

Materials and training for use of all the progress-monitoring assessments will be provided by and funded through the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR). The FCRR will train district level assessment teams to assist with the assessments while school based teams are being developed and trained. One five-member district level assessment team will be able to accomplish the assessments for up to two *Reading First* Schools. The reading coach assigned to the schools will coordinate the assessments at each school. The FCRR will train selected members of the district level team to become training facilitators, and these facilitators will then train school based assessment teams. The reading coach will be part of the school based team. After the first year of implementation of *Reading First* grants, the school based assessment team should be conducting all four progress monitoring assessments. The principal will designate one or two people at each school to enter the data from the progress monitoring tests into a new, secure web-based data management and reporting system developed and supported by the FCRR. This system will provide immediate, informative reports back to teachers about the progress of students in their classes. The system also provides attractive reports to parents about the individual progress of their children. It enables principals to easily monitor the progress of

all the children in the school, and it enables district level support staff to identify schools or classes where additional support or technical assistance may be needed.

Below is an outline of the personnel required to accomplish the progress monitoring assessments for *Reading First* schools.

### **Personnel required to accomplish the progress monitoring assessments**

- 1) During the initial year of a school's *Reading First* grant, district level assessment teams will accomplish the first progress monitoring assessment unless school level teams have already been trained.
- 2) One five-person district level team can serve up to two *Reading First* schools. Reading coaches should be part of these teams.
- 3) Selected members of the district level teams will be trained to become training facilitators for school level assessment teams.
- 4) Each *Reading First* school will identify five individuals, including the school's reading coach, to form a school level assessment team.
- 5) The school based team will conduct all progress monitoring assessments after the first year of implementation of the *Reading First* grant.
- 6) Designated individuals at each school will enter the progress monitoring data on the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN).

District level assessment teams can be composed of personnel already on the district staff who have knowledge and skills in assessment or reading (e.g. school psychologists), or the district can hire personnel to serve on these teams (i.e. retired teachers, substitute teachers). For more information on methods for making up these assessment teams, please see FCRR's website ([www.fcrr.org/assess](http://www.fcrr.org/assess)). *Reading First* grants can be used to pay the salaries of additional assessment personnel required to accomplish the assessments. Similarly, school level assessment teams can be composed of individuals already on staff, or schools can hire additional part-time personnel to accomplish the assessments. Reading coaches at each *Reading First* school should coordinate the overall assessment plan for the school and be a part of the assessment team.

In the early spring of the first year of *Reading First* implementations, personnel from the FCRR will train the district-based training facilitators in administration procedures for the end-of-year outcome measures in grades K-3. This training will most likely take place as a teleconference.

The district based training facilitators will then train the assessment team for each *Reading First* school in procedures for administering the oral language vocabulary test, and they will also train classroom teachers to conduct the group administered tests of reading comprehension and reading vocabulary.

Between school days 155-165 the school based assessment team will administer the fourth progress monitoring test plus a test of oral language vocabulary to all K-3 students. These individually-administered measures will be scored and entered into the PMRN by identified school staff. At a time to be determined (based on the selection of the reading comprehension and reading vocabulary measures), classroom teachers will administer reading comprehension in

grades 1-3 and reading vocabulary in grades 2-3. The group administered, machine scored tests will be sent to the publisher for scoring. Test publishers will report scores from the machine scored tests back to the school and directly to the FCRR for entry into the PMRN.

*What is the time frame for all these assessment activities?*

The following outline is provided as a schematic to help explain the time frame for all the activities that will occur in the implementation of the *Reading First* assessment plan in Florida.

Time Frame	Activity
During the spring/summer after districts/schools receive their <i>Reading First</i> grants	FCRR trains the district level assessment teams in the progress monitoring tests for grades K-3. All materials required for the tests will be provided by the FCRR
Between 20-30 school days into the school year	Initial progress monitoring tests administered by district level team or school based teams if they have been trained
As testing is completed in each class/school	Data from the progress monitoring tests is entered into the PMRN
After assessment data is entered	Reports for individual children and classes will be available immediately to teachers, parents, principals, and district staff
October	As needed, FCRR trains members of district level teams to be training facilitators in the progress monitoring tests
November	District training facilitators train school level assessment teams for school progress monitoring
Between 65-75 school days into the school year	School based assessment teams administer second progress monitoring tests in their school with assistance from district level teams where necessary
As testing is completed in each class/school.	Data from the progress monitoring tests is entered into the PMRN
After assessment data is entered	Reports for individual children and classes will be available immediately to teachers, parents, principals, and district staff
January	Districts will order the required assessment materials for end-of-year outcome assessments in oral and reading vocabulary and reading comprehension that have been identified by the Department of Education
Between 110-120 school days into the school year	School based assessment teams administer third progress monitoring tests in their school with assistance from district level teams where necessary
As testing is completed in each class/school.	Data from the progress monitoring tests is entered into the PMRN
After assessment data is entered	Reports for individual children and classes will be available immediately to teachers, parents, principals, and district staff.
March	FCRR trains district training facilitators in administration procedures for the end-of-year outcome assessments

April	District facilitators train school level teams and classroom teachers on the outcome assessments
To Be Determined	Teachers administer reading vocabulary and reading comprehension measures
To Be Determined	Schools/districts submit reading comprehension and reading vocabulary test forms to designated publisher(s)
Between 155-165 school days into the school year	School level teams administer the fourth and final progress monitoring assessment and oral vocabulary outcome assessment
As testing is completed in each class/school.	Data from the progress monitoring tests is entered into PMRN
After assessment data is entered and scores on outcome tests are received from the publisher	Reports containing progress monitoring and outcome assessment data will be available immediately to teachers, parents, principals, and district staff.

The reports that will be available to teachers and principals from the PMRN will provide summary information about whole classes as well as charting of individual student's performance on each of the measures they have been given. Teachers will be able to sort these data in various ways to assist them in monitoring the progress of all their students and identifying children who are falling behind in reading development. The system will also print out an attractive and informative report for parents.

Teachers will receive training in how to use the PMRN reports during the Reading Academies to be held during the summer for all teachers in schools who receive a *Reading First* grant in the spring. At the same time, teachers will be trained in how to interpret the data from the progress monitoring tests and how to use them to help plan instruction.

*How are diagnostic tests to be integrated within the overall Reading First assessment plan?*

Diagnostic assessments are defined as those that provide more in-depth information on student's skills and instructional needs to help plan instruction. These assessments usually take considerably longer, and are more comprehensive than screening or progress monitoring assessments. Diagnostic assessments should be given whenever teachers or other school personnel require additional information to help plan more effective, or targeted instruction, for a given child. Diagnostic assessments should not be given routinely when screening or progress-monitoring tests indicate a child is failing to make adequate progress in learning to read. The screening or progress monitoring tests themselves are the first step in the diagnostic process and will provide, in most cases, a clear indication that a child is struggling with phonemic awareness, phonics, or fluency. Year end outcome tests will also tell us whether children are struggling in the development of vocabulary and reading comprehension. Comprehensive diagnostic tests would most frequently be administered when immediate, intensive interventions fail to produce accelerated growth in reading, and more intensive or more targeted instruction needs to be planned.

Although the base of all diagnostic assessments should involve tests with established empirical evidence of reliability and validity, these tests can be supplemented with a variety of teacher-made or specialized assessments designed to produce information that is directly helpful in guiding daily instruction. For example, if students are having difficulty in phonemic awareness, can they identify initial sounds? Final sounds? At what level of complexity can they perform blending tasks? This type of information is useful in identifying a good starting point for intervention and may also be useful in grouping children for instruction. Frequently, however, informal reading inventories that produce this kind of information do not meet *Reading First* standards for empirically established reliability and validity. The point here is that formal diagnostic assessments must meet rigorous standards for reliability and validity, but this does not preclude the use of informal inventories to generate information that teachers find directly helpful in planning or targeting their interventions.

The State of Florida has designated three “diagnostic” tests that it will purchase for districts if they wish to use them. These tests are the *Diagnostic Assessment of Reading (DAR)*, the *Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA)*, and *Fox in a Box*. All three of these tests can provide useful information about children’s progress in learning to read. The *Fox in a Box* is designed for teacher administration. The ERDA and DAR may be more appropriate for administration by a reading coach, diagnostician, or school psychologist. Individuals with advanced experience and training in reading or assessment should be selected for administering and interpreting diagnostic instruments. Preparation to administer diagnostic instruments is more comprehensive than is required to administer screening or progress monitoring measures. Training in the administration, scoring, and interpretation of these tests should be included as part of the district’s professional development plan.

#### *Frequently asked questions and reactions to Florida’s Reading First Assessment Plan*

#### **Won’t all the new testing requirements take too much time away from teaching?**

There are two sides to this issue. On the one hand, some teachers are worried about the actual teaching/learning time lost to each child as the result of these new assessments; and on the other hand, some teachers are concerned that these assessments will be just “one more thing they don’t have time to do.” Our response to these concerns is that we have worked hard to minimize the total time required to accomplish the assessments for each child, and we have devised a plan that will not place the new assessment load on the shoulders of teachers.

The actual amount of time required to accomplish the *Reading First* assessments (screening, progress monitoring, and outcome) that are required for every child at each grade level is generously estimated at:

- Kindergarten – 40 minutes per year
- First Grade – 60 minutes per year
- Second Grade – 80 minutes per year
- Third Grade – 70 minutes per year

Thus, in no case will the assessments that are required for all children by our assessment plan require more than an hour and 20 minutes of the child’s time during the entire school year. We

anticipate that the increase of efficiency and focus of instruction that will be enabled by the data obtained from these assessments will more than make up for this investment of time.

Florida's assessment plan will not require teachers to administer the screening or progress monitoring assessments required by *Reading First*. These assessments will be accomplished for the most part by school level assessment teams that will not be composed of full time classroom teachers. Classroom teachers will be asked to administer the reading comprehension and reading vocabulary measures that are administered in grades 1-3; but in many schools, teachers are already administering these instruments at the end of the year, and they will be administered to the class as a group. Some teacher time will also be involved in mastering the use of the PMRN. However, this system is very easy to use and provides exactly the type of data and reports that teachers will find useful in guiding and planning their instruction for individual children. It also helps teachers communicate with parents by providing attractive and informative reports for parents that the teacher can print automatically.

### **Won't these new assessment requirements require significant new resources to implement?**

The additional assessment activities required by Florida's *Reading First* Assessment Plan will require resources beyond those that are currently devoted to assessment in grades K-3. However, one of the designated uses of *Reading First* funds is to provide the additional resources to accomplish the required assessments. *Reading First* funds can be used to hire additional personnel to accomplish the testing, pay for the training and professional development involved, and pay for testing materials themselves. In addition, *Reading First* funds could be used to hire part- or full-time individuals to enter the assessment data into the PMRN mentioned earlier. However, this latter activity will only occur four times a year and should not take more than a 5-10 hours to accomplish for a whole school. Another new activity that will be required to support a district's participation in Florida's *Reading First* assessment plan will be done by district level staff in the MIS department. Student survey data for every child in K-3 classrooms of *Reading First* schools will need to be sent to the FCRR four times a year in order to update class rosters. However, this will involve only standard format reports already in use with the Department of Education, so the extra work involved will be minimal.

As was mentioned earlier in this document, the FCRR will provide, free of charge to districts and schools, all the training and materials required to accomplish the progress monitoring assessments. Each district, through the development of training facilitators within the district, will develop the permanent capacity to train new individuals to serve on school based assessment teams each year. The districts will need to build into their *Reading First* assessment budget the following items:

1. Cost of testing materials for the year end outcome assessments in vocabulary, reading comprehension and reading vocabulary – we estimate these costs to be \$3 per child for children in kindergarten, \$6 per child for first graders, and \$8 per child for children in second and third grades.
2. Salaries of personnel to accomplish the assessments. Districts and schools can designate some existing personnel to work on the assessment task, and they can also hire part-time retired teachers or substitute teachers to accomplish the assessments.

3. Cost of part-time help to enter data from the assessments to the PMRN: This expense may not be necessary as it should involve only 5-10 hours of work four times per school year.
4. Cost of materials for diagnostic assessments and the professional development to support their administration and interpretation: Each district has identified the diagnostic test(s) that have been selected for in-depth study of student reading skills.

**Is it developmentally appropriate to test reading and pre-reading skills in kindergarten children?**

At each of the grades from K-3, tests were selected for the Florida Assessment Plan because they assess the skills children typically develop at that age. In this way, at each grade including kindergarten, testing is developmentally appropriate. Typically, developing children are capable of doing the tasks on these tests. Moreover, when evaluators are friendly and sensitive, children enjoy the testing experience. There is absolutely no evidence available that using these brief assessments to examine the development of phonemic awareness, knowledge about letters, and vocabulary is not appropriate for children in kindergarten.

**Is it a problem that many of the tests in the Florida Assessment Plan do not assess what is referred to as “authentic reading?”**

It is true that some teachers or other personnel may object that many of the tests in our plan do not measure “real” reading (i.e. deriving or constructing meaning from text). Our answer is that the earlier schools identify children likely to experience difficulty learning to read, the earlier schools can intervene and thereby prevent serious, lifelong problems. Unfortunately, we can’t assess children’s ability to derive meaning from text for the purpose of early identification. Most kindergarten and first-grade children, whether or not they will eventually develop reading problems, can’t read “authentic” stories to answer questions about meaning. Furthermore, when a child performs poorly on a measure of reading comprehension, we often don’t know what specific aspects of the task the child is struggling with. Fortunately, we can assess performance on precursor skills in the early grades to identify children who will experience difficulty deriving meaning from text in the later grades. The best early indicators that children will later experience difficulty with “real” reading are: a) kindergartners’ difficulty with phonemic awareness or letter sound fluency, b) early difficulties acquiring grade level oral language skills (vocabulary); and c) first through third graders’ difficulty in fluently translating text into spoken language. When we identify children who are struggling to develop these precursor skills, then we can make sure they receive extra help to learn those skills. This substantially increases the chances that these children will become competent readers, capable of deriving meaning from the text.

**How can districts be sure that the assessments they propose for diagnostic or screening assessments will meet *Reading First* standards for reliability and validity?**

If districts and schools want to use a diagnostic or screening instrument that is not one of those judged to have “sufficient evidence” of reliability and validity by the *Reading First* Assessment Committee and other competent authorities (see <http://www.firn.edu/doe/doehome.htm>), they

need to provide empirical evidence that the test has sufficient reliability and validity for the purposes it will be used. Districts can consult with personnel at the Florida Center for Reading Research for assistance in identifying the specific types of information that will be required to justify use of a particular test in their *Reading First* assessment plan.

**Can teachers continue to use classroom based assessments they have found useful in planning instruction even if they don't have evidence of their reliability and validity?**

Teachers in *Reading First* schools should be encouraged to use informal or curriculum based assessments they find useful, even though these assessments do not meet rigorous standards for reliability and validity. However, these informal assessments cannot substitute for the reliable and valid assessments that are required by *Reading First*. Thus, teachers may certainly use informal tests to measure their children's movement through the reading curriculum, but the children will still be required to take the progress monitoring tests that are administered four times a year by the school based assessment team. For example, a teacher may find a beginning of the year placement test useful in identifying children who may need to begin at different places in the curriculum being used. However, this "placement" test cannot substitute for the reliable and valid screening test required by *Reading First*.

**Can teachers administer supplementary progress monitoring measures if they want to have more frequent data on the effects of immediate, intensive interventions (iii)?**

Yes, school coaches can train teachers in administering more supplementary DIBELS measures of phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency. Additional forms of the progress monitoring measures can be downloaded from the University of Oregon website. The results of these more frequent measures can be entered into the PMRN to yield graphs depicting skill development between the *Reading First* required progress monitoring dates.