Acadience Learning's Recommended Procedures for Establishing "Grade-Level Reading Competency" on Acadience® Reading K–6

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Purpose of Interim Reading Assessment

An important purpose of interim reading assessment is to provide progress monitoring and formative evaluation information to inform instruction. The interim assessments determine whether the student is making adequate progress toward grade-level standards and provide ongoing feedback to teachers on whether instruction needs to be adjusted. Interim assessments are a critical component of effective instruction. Indeed, progress monitoring and formative evaluation with goals and feedback informing instruction are among the most powerful influences on student achievement (Hattie, 2009).

Colorado HB 15–1323

"If, based on a student's scores on the approved reading assessments in a specific school year, a teacher finds that a student demonstrates reading competency appropriate for his or her grade level, the local education provider is not required to administer the approved interim reading assessments to the student for the remainder of the specific school year."

Interpretations

1. "Demonstrates reading competency appropriate for his or her grade level" means that the student, at the time of assessment, meets or exceeds grade-level end-of-year expectations.

2. In first through third grade, reading competency includes reading for meaning, at an adequate rate, with a high degree of accuracy. In kindergarten and first grade, evidence for reading competency includes phonemic awareness and phonics proficiency.

3. Meeting or exceeding grade-level end-of-year expectations entails solid reading skills at or above the 50th or 60th percentile compared to other students at the end of the year. This is a higher standard than just meeting the benchmark goal, which is the lowest level of skill at which the odds are in the student's favor of achieving subsequent goals.

Procedures

We recommend a multiple gating approach to establishing "grade-level reading competency" for the purpose of opting out of the interim reading assessments. The recommended criteria for Gate 1, Gate 2, and Gate 3 at each grade level are provided in Table 1. Students who meet the Gate 1 criteria, the Gate 2 criteria, and for kindergarten and first grade the Gate 3 criteria would be eligible to opt out of the interim reading assessments for the remainder of the school year. We recommend that all students, even those eligible for opting out, continue to participate in the interim reading assessments so that even these high-performing students would benefit from the instructional value of progress monitoring, formative evaluation, goal setting, and feedback on progress, and are included in system-level evaluation.

Table 1

Proposed Criteria for Identifying Students Who Display "Reading Competency Appropriate for His or Her Grade Level" for the Purpose of Opting Out of Interim Reading Assessment

Grade Level	Gate 1: Composite Score General criteria: The student meets or exceeds the 90th percentile rank on the beginning-of-year interim reading assessment.	Gate 2: Critical skills analysis General criteria: The student meets or exceeds grade-level goals in critical skill areas on the beginning-of-year interim reading assessment.	Gate 3: End-of-year skills assessment General criteria: The student meets or exceeds the 90th percentile rank on the beginning-of-year interim reading assessment.
Kindergarten	Beginning-of-year Reading Composite Score ≥ 72	First Sound Fluency ≥ 32	Phoneme Segmentation Fluency ≥ 40 NWF Correct Letter Sounds ≥ 40 NWF Whole Words Read ≥ 4
First Grade	Beginning-of-year Reading Composite Score ≥ 176	Phoneme Segmentation Fluency ≥ 40 NWF Whole Words Read ≥ 20	Level 1 ORF Words Correct ≥ 58 Level 1 ORF Accuracy ≥ 95 Level 1 ORF Retell ≥ 14
Second Grade	Beginning-of-year Reading Composite Score ≥ 282	NWF Whole Words Read ≥ 37 Level 2 ORF Words Correct ≥ 104 Level 2 ORF Accuracy ≥ 98 Level 2 ORF Retell ≥ 34	Not applicable.
Third Grade	Beginning-of-year Reading Composite Score ≥ 393	Level 3 ORF Words Correct ≥ 118 Level 3 ORF Accuracy ≥ 98 Level 3 ORF Retell ≥ 45	Not applicable.

Note. NWF is Nonsense Word Fluency and ORF is Oral Reading Fluency.

Gate 1 requires performance at or above the 90th percentile on the beginning-of-year Reading Composite Score using national norms (that is, compared to other students at the beginning of the year). Students above the *beginning-of-year* 90th percentile are more likely to have reading competency that would be at or above the *end-of-year* 50th or 60 percentile.

- If students do not meet the Gate 1 criteria, they would not proceed to Gate 2. These students have not demonstrated reading competency appropriate for their grade level at this time.
- If students meet the Gate 1 criteria, they would proceed to Gate 2 with an analysis of component measure scores.

The purpose of Gate 2 is to ensure that a student has not scored high on the Reading Composite Score due to a high score on a single component measure, but rather has met grade-level expectations in each of the critical areas tested. Gate 2 requires meeting both the Gate 1 criteria and meeting the criteria for all critical grade-level skills. For each skill area, the criteria are at or above the 50th or 60th percentile compared to other students at the end of the year.

Students in kindergarten and first grade

- If kindergarten or first-grade students do not meet the Gate 2 criteria, they would not proceed to Gate 3. These students have not demonstrated reading competency appropriate for their grade level at this time.
- If kindergarten or first-grade students meet the Gate 1 and Gate 2 criteria, they would proceed to Gate 3.

Students in second and third grade

- If second- or third-grade students do not meet the Gate 2 criteria, they have not demonstrated reading competency appropriate for their grade level at this time.
- If second- or third-grade students meet the Gate 1 and Gate 2 criteria, then they have demonstrated reading competency appropriate for their grade level and would be eligible to opt out of the interim reading assessments for the remainder of the year.

In kindergarten and first grade, Gate 3 is needed because students are expected to master critical skills over the course of the school year that are not assessed at the beginning of the year. Gate 3 entails meeting the Gate 1 and Gate 2 criteria and an additional assessment (that is, in addition to the standard beginning-of-year kindergarten benchmark assessment). In kindergarten, additional assessment of students' phonemic awareness and phonics skills is necessary. We recommend using the last form (Form 20) of the Phoneme Segmentation Fluency progress monitoring materials and the last form (Form 20) of the Nonsense Word Fluency progress monitoring materials to test the end-of-year skills. In first grade, additional assessment of students' accurate and fluent reading of connected text is necessary. We recommend using the last 3 consecutive passages (Forms 18, 19, and 20) from the Oral Reading Fluency Level 1 progress monitoring materials.

Students in kindergarten and first grade

- If kindergarten or first-grade students do not meet the Gate 3 criteria, they have not demonstrated reading competency appropriate for their grade level at this time.
- If kindergarten or first-grade students meet the Gate 1, Gate 2, and Gate 3 criteria, they have demonstrated reading competency appropriate for their grade level and would be eligible to opt out of the interim reading assessments for the remainder of the year.

Acadience Learning's Recommendation

Students who meet the criteria for Gate 1, Gate 2, and, when appropriate, Gate 3 would be eligible to opt out of the interim reading assessments for the remainder of the year. However, we recommend continued monitoring with the interim reading assessments even when students are eligible to opt out so that they also continue to benefit from the progress monitoring, formative evaluation, goals, and feedback informing instruction, and so that they can be included in system-level evaluation.

Reference

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement.* Routledge.