

### Assessment of Reading Readiness, 2016 – 17 School Year

Wisconsin's requirement for assessing the reading readiness of all children enrolled in four-year-old kindergarten to second grade has been in place since the 2012-13 school year. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction selected PALS (Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening) as an appropriate, valid, and reliable assessment of literacy fundamentals (including phonemic awareness and letter sound knowledge).

Beginning in the 2016-17 school year, districts can continue to use PALS *or* select a different assessment of reading readiness for use with each child enrolled in four-year-old kindergarten to second grade. The assessment of reading readiness, which could be computer adaptive, still 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
- Include students enrolled in special education programs

The results of the assessment will be communicated to each child's parent or guardian.

For children whose assessment performance indicates a risk of reading difficulty, the school/district will provide interventions or remedial reading services. (Consult [Wis. Stats. 121.02](#) for further information.)

While the requirement that school districts continue to assess reading readiness of all children enrolled in four-year-old kindergarten to second grade continues, 2015 Act 55 (the 2015-17 state budget) changed the funding mechanism that provides state financial support for this required assessment. For the 2015-16 school year, DPI will continue to contract for PALS for use by all school districts and independent charter schools (ICS's). Beginning with the 2016-17 school year, school districts and ICS's will be responsible for the cost of administering the assessment of reading readiness chosen by the district or ICS (whether it is PALS or a different assessment). However, school districts and ICS's will be eligible to seek reimbursement from DPI for the costs of the assessment, provided the assessment meets the criteria established in state law (described above). These state aid payments will be prorated if the total reimbursement claims submitted by school districts and ICS's exceed the amount appropriated for this purpose.

Consult [Wis. Stats. 118.016](#) for further information.

### **Considerations when selecting an assessment of reading readiness:**

Decisions about reading readiness assessment may be best made through a collaborative process including district reading specialist, director of instruction, director of pupil services, and educators (including general and special educators). The team might consider:

- How closely the assessment reflects the school/district's vision for literacy
- What elements of reading readiness the assessment measures (including phonemic awareness and letter sound knowledge)
- How information gathered from the assessment can inform instruction
- Where and how an assessment fits within the school/district's larger strategic assessment system
- Developmental needs of children in four-year-old kindergarten to second grade
- To what extent the assessment meets the needs of a varied student population, including English language learners and students enrolled in special education programs
- Ease of reporting results to parents or guardians
- Administration protocols
- Technical qualities of the assessment, such as reliability and validity
- Cost of the assessment (including technology, administration costs, and related professional development/training)

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Why was the statute changed?**

The legislature changed the statute in order to support districts' ability and right to make decisions that closely match the strengths and needs of their communities. The change was in no way related to DPI's satisfaction with PALS. DPI continues to hear positive feedback from educators and districts about the ease of using data collected from PALS to make immediate instructional decisions.

**How does my district continue using PALS?** We anticipate many districts will continue using PALS. Schools/districts already have much of what they need to continue administering PALS, including assessment kits and administration training. At a minimum, each teacher will require an online account for the 2016-17 school year. Consumables are only needed for educators wishing to enter scores using the traditional method. Contact PALS ([www.palsmarketplace.com](http://www.palsmarketplace.com) or 1-888-728-7257) to inquire about pricing or placing an order for 2016-17.

#### **What are the reporting requirements? Will data be sent to DPI?**

Wis. Stats. 118.016 does not require districts to report data from the assessment of reading readiness to the DPI. The statute does require that the results of the assessment be shared with parents or guardians.

#### **If my district continues using PALS, will the data be available in WISEdash for districts? What about data from other reading readiness assessments?**

Data from PALS, through the 2015-16 school year, will remain in WISEdash for districts. In order for DPI to display data from a locally selected assessment in WISEdash, a data sharing

agreement (between the district and the vendor) must be in place. A data sharing agreement is already in place for MAPs. If there is enough interest, DPI would support the data sharing process for PALS and could support agreements for other assessments, as well.

**When will reimbursement be made? What is the procedure?**

DPI staff are currently developing the processes around this new reimbursement model and will provide additional information as it becomes available.

**Is there a list of approved assessments?**

There is not and will not be a list of approved assessments.

**Can we select more than one assessment? (different grade-levels, languages, special education)**

Wis. Stats. 118.016 requires that the assessment of reading readiness be an appropriate, valid, and reliable assessment of literacy fundamentals (including phonemic awareness and letter sound knowledge). There is nothing in the statute that precludes a district from selecting multiple assessments to comply with this statute (such as a one assessment for 4K and 5K and a different assessment for grades 1 and 2 or a Spanish-language assessment for students engaged in literacy instruction in Spanish).

**Can a district create a reading readiness assessment?**

Districts are allowed to create and use their own reading readiness assessments to fulfill the requirements of Wis. Stats. 118.016. District created assessments are required to be appropriate, valid and reliable indicators of literacy fundamentals which evaluate whether pupils possess phonemic awareness and letter sound knowledge.

**Will there be a required screening window or specific timeframe in which students must be assessed?**

Districts will be able to choose their own administration window. There will be no state mandated window for administration.