

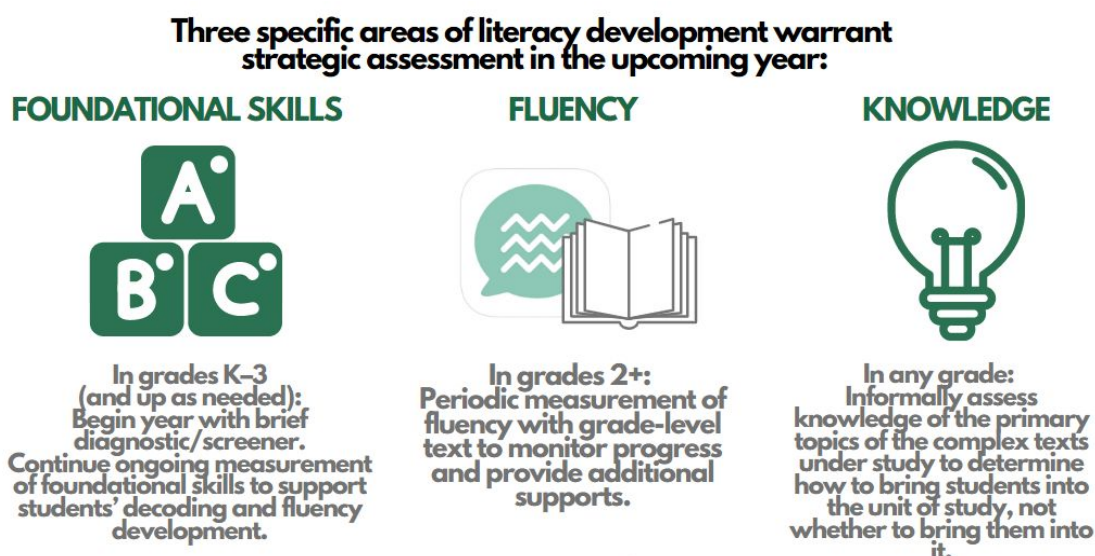
## Early Reading Assessment Guidance for 2020–21

### What data should I gather to support my early readers?

The 2020–21 school year presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges. Time is a scarce commodity in classrooms, and strategic instructional choices about which content to prioritize, and what and how to assess, must be made.

The point of assessment isn't to generate data about what students get right and wrong; it's to understand how to support students as they engage in meaningful work. A single multiple choice item will not provide that, nor will a single generalized "reading comprehension" test or "reading skills" test. To make the data-driven decisions that best support students, **center formative practices**<sup>1</sup> (leveraging sources of information such as exit tickets, student work, and student discussions), and use these sources of information to inform instructional choices.

Further, target three specific areas of literacy development for **strategic assessment** in the upcoming year:



### Foundational Skills<sup>2</sup>:

- **Administer brief diagnostic/screener at beginning of the year and at periodic checkpoints:**
  - **In grades K and 1**, prioritize letter inventory, phonological awareness, and grade-level-appropriate sound and spelling patterns for each student.
  - **In grades 2 and 3**, prioritize assessing grade-level-appropriate sound and spelling patterns and reading fluency with grade-level text. *Note: For students demonstrating unfinished learning/teaching in either of these two areas, also prioritize phonological awareness and letter inventories as needed.*

<sup>1</sup> Formative assessment is a planned, ongoing process used by all students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become self-directed learners. [Council of Chief State School Officers](#)

<sup>2</sup> A settled body of research points to the fact that systematic, explicit foundational skills instruction is critical to early childhood instruction because most students depend on it to learn to read and write in English. This translates into teaching students beginning with phonological awareness, following a clear sequence of phonics patterns, providing direct instruction with adequate student practice, and making use of weekly assessment and targeted supports (Adams, 2011; Castles et al., 2018; Lesnick et al., 2010; Liben & Paige, 2017; National Reading Panel, 2000; No Child Left Behind, 2002).

- Leverage other periodic, cumulative assessments from your instructional materials or based on your scope & sequence of taught foundational skills.

| <b>Resources for Foundational Skills Screeners/Diagnostics</b>  |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Note: When possible, assessments that clearly connect to the scope and sequence of your instructional materials are best. If those are not available, you may consider some of the options below.</i>  |  |
| <b>Phonological Awareness</b>   | <b>Phonics</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Phonological Awareness Screening Test</a> (Dr. David Kilpatrick)</li> <li>● <a href="#">CORE Phonological Segmentation Test</a> &amp; <a href="#">CORE Phoneme Deletion Test</a> (Consortium on Reaching Excellence in Education, Inc.)</li> <li>● <a href="#">Phonological Awareness Screener</a> (Cox Campus)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">CORE Phonics Survey</a> (Consortium on Reaching Excellence in Education, Inc.)</li> <li>● <a href="#">Instructional Phonics Inventory - Level 1*</a> &amp; <a href="#">Instructional Phonics Inventory -Level 2*</a> (Cox Campus)</li> <li>● <a href="#">Spelling Inventory</a> (Words Their Way)</li> </ul> <p>*Note that these student-facing resources are easily administered in a remote setting</p> |
| <b>Foundational Skills</b><br><a href="#">Assessing Reading: Multiple Measures (includes assessments in Spanish)</a>  | <b>Fluency</b><br><a href="#">Fluency Chart</a><br>to be used with grade-level text in Grades 2+ (Jan Hasbrouck , Gerald Tindal)   |

○ **Complete ongoing measurement of foundational skills to support students’ decoding and fluency development:**

- Collect **formative data** during daily foundational skills lessons (e.g., checklists, sampling dictation responses, monitoring of student work); respond to data and adjust instruction accordingly. Ensure frequent opportunities to formatively assess:
  - students’ phonological awareness, connecting to phonics as appropriate.
  - students’ ability to decode and encode new words based on grade-level-appropriate phonics instruction (real and nonsense words)
  - fluency with decodable texts based on your scope & sequence (K-2 and up as needed) and with grade-level texts (grades 2+)
- Complete a **brief weekly dictation** activity to identify students who need additional support in mastering taught sound/spelling patterns. For example, at the end of each week administer a 10-word dictation activity where students encode words with taught sound/spelling patterns.

**Resources:**

- [Sample checklist template](#)
- Sample “[Decoding Skills Quick Check](#)” based on taught sound and spelling patterns

**Fluency<sup>3</sup>:**

- **In grades 2+: periodic measurement of fluency with grade-level text to monitor progress and provide additional supports.** Administering fluency checks at the beginning of the year with [grade-level text](#), (and readministering checks as needed throughout the year), allows you to identify students who need specific, targeted support to fluently read grade-level text. Such checks should attend to students’ use of appropriate accuracy, rate, and expression

<sup>3</sup> Research shows that reading fluency has a direct correlation with reading comprehension. Research shows dysfluency causes as much as 40% of the variance in student performance (Pinnell et al., 1995).

using nationally verified norms. Additional regular fluency checks can be administered in lots of low-stress ways (e.g., choral reading, buddy reading).

- For students demonstrating a need for more support to read with grade-level text, ensure monitoring of other foundational skills as needed: phonological awareness, phonics, and print concepts.

#### Resources:

- [Achieve the Core Fluency Packs for Grades 2+](#) (free fluency resources containing texts/comprehension questions and text reading recordings)
- [Fluency Chart](#) by Jan Hasbrouck , Gerald Tindal
- Core Knowledge Language Arts fluency resources for [Grade 2](#), [Grade 3](#), [Grade 4](#) and [Grade 5](#)
- [Fluency Matters](#), Reading Rockets

#### Knowledge<sup>4</sup>:

- **In any grade: informally pre-assess knowledge of the primary topics of the complex texts (for read aloud in K–2) to determine how to bring students into the unit of study, not whether to bring them into it.** The very purpose of such targeted checks is to identify students who may need additional opportunities to build their knowledge (and associated vocabulary) about topics under study. For example, at the beginning of each unit, ask students to share what they know about the topic. This should be informal and brief (e.g., “talk to your neighbor about everything you already know about sea mammals” or “write and draw everything you already know about sea mammals in your notebook, then you’ll bring it to the carpet to talk to a friend”). Such pre-checks should not take more than 20 minutes of instructional time or be graded.

#### Resources:

- [Text sets](#): Consider how to use text sets (collection of texts and multimedia resources on a topic) that are included in your instructional materials or that you curate to build vocabulary and knowledge on a topic before engaging with an upcoming anchor text.

Though these three areas - foundational skills, fluency, and knowledge - do not represent the entirety of students’ literacy development, time is a precious resource and is especially so in the upcoming year. Periodically monitoring and tracking student progress in these three areas will give teachers concrete information that can inform vital instructional decisions.

#### What about leveled reading assessments?



Traditional leveled reading assessments are not only time consuming, but do not readily provide actionable information about how students are progressing with foundational skills based on taught skills or help us understand the role that knowledge (and related vocabulary) plays in our ability to understand the texts we read. In addition, the impact of leveled reading assessments is almost always to restrict students’ access to grade-appropriate or grade-level texts - texts that often contain richer knowledge and vocabulary.

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<sup>4</sup> Research is clear that students’ knowledge of the topic has been shown to have a greater impact on reading comprehension than generalized reading ability (Recht & Leslie, 1988).