



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Early Literacy Guidance

Updated August 31, 2016

This document contains official guidance for §279.68. Guidance dated other than August 31, 2016 should not be used.

Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to aid Iowa's public school districts in interpreting and implementing Iowa Code § 279.68 regarding early literacy progression. The requirements of Iowa Code § 279.68 and IAC 281—62 apply to all public school districts in Iowa.

The general requirements of § 279.68 and IAC 281—62 are: provision of universal screening in reading for students in kindergarten through third grade; progress monitoring for students persistently at risk and at risk in reading; the provision of intensive instruction – including 90 minutes daily of scientific, research-based reading instruction - for students who are persistently at risk in reading; annual notice to parents/guardians of students persistently at risk in reading that includes services currently provided to the student, proposed supplemental instructional services and supports the district will provide to the student, and strategies the parents/guardians can use at home to help the child succeed; notice to parents/guardians of such a student's subsequent progress; provision of an evidence-based summer reading program for students persistently at risk in reading; consideration of retention of any student who is persistently at risk in reading by the end of the third grade and is not proficient in reading, did not attend the summer reading program, and does not qualify for a good cause exemption from the retention requirement. Some of these requirements were in effect August 1, 2014. Others, such as the requirements for retention and the summer reading program, do not go into effect until May 1, 2018. Please refer to Table 1 for the deadline for each specific requirement.

The specific requirements and permitted actions are listed in table form along with the Iowa Code and Iowa Administrative Rule citations that apply. Further information in this document includes: Additional guidance in Table 3, Frequently Asked Questions, Definitions and Additional Support. Procedures and/or support documents such as the Technical Assistance Appendices are referred to throughout this document, are provided as links within Additional Supports and can be accessed on the [Early Literacy Implementation](#) website.

Requirements

Table 1 lists actions by public school districts that are **required** per § 279.68 and IAC 281—62.

Table 1.

Code Citation, District Action Required, and Deadline

Item	Iowa Code citation	Iowa Administrative Code citation	Action required of district	Deadline
1	279.68(1)(a)	IAC 281—62.2(1) IAC 281—62.2(2)	Assess all kindergarten through third grade students at the beginning of the school year and intermittently throughout the year using a Department-approved universal screening assessment.	August 1, 2014.
2	279.68(1)(a)	IAC 281—62.2(3)	Provide periodic assessments of students who are persistently at risk in reading, and students who are at risk in reading, for the purpose of progress monitoring using a Department-approved progress monitoring assessment.	August 1, 2014.
3	279.68(1)(a)	IAC 281—62.2(6)	Use Department-determined benchmarks for basic levels of reading proficiency.	August 1, 2014.
4	256B	IAC 281—62.3(6)	Permit a student with a disability who has been determined to require an alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards in reading to take an alternate reading assessment that includes progress monitoring	August 1, 2014.
5	279.68(2)(a)	IAC 281—62.6(1)	Provide intensive reading instruction, including a minimum of 90 minutes a day of scientific, research-based reading instruction, to any student persistently at risk in reading. This instruction may also include but is not limited to the following strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group instruction. • Reduced teacher- student ratios. • More frequent progress monitoring. • Tutoring or mentoring. • Extended school day, week, or year. • Summer reading programs. 	August 1, 2014.
6	279.68(2)(d)	IAC 281—62.6(3)	Provide a reading curriculum for students persistently at risk in reading that meets the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists students in developing skills to read at grade level • Assistance to include but not be limited to strategies that formally address dyslexia when appropriate, • Provides skill development in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. • Is implemented by certified instructional staff with appropriate training and professional development, • Is implemented during regular school hours, • Provides a curriculum in core academic subjects to assist the students in maintaining or meeting proficiency in all subjects. 	August 1, 2014.
7	279.68(1)(a)	IAC 281—62.4(3)	Continue to provide a student who is persistently at risk in reading with intensive reading instruction until the student is reading at grade level.	August 1, 2014.
8	279.68(1)(a)	IAC 281—62.4(1)	A district shall determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A student is persistently at risk in reading if the student has not met the grade-level benchmarks on two consecutive screening assessments; • A student is at risk in reading if the student did not meet the grade-level benchmarks for one of the two most recent consecutive screening assessments. 	August 1, 2014.

Item	Iowa Code citation	Iowa Administrative Code citation	Action required of district	Deadline
9	279.68(1)(b)	IAC 281—62.4(4)	Notify the parent or guardian of any student determined to be persistently at risk in reading annually (1) a description of the services currently provided to the student, (2) what proposed supplemental instructional services and supports the district will provide to the student to remediate the areas in which the student is persistently at risk in reading, (3) strategies parents/guardians can use to help the child succeed, and (4) regular updates regarding the student's progress toward reaching or exceeding the targeted level of reading proficiency.	August 1, 2014.
10	279.68(2)(b)	IAC 281—62.6(4)	Apprise the parent or guardian of any student persistently at risk in reading of their student's academic progress and other useful information.	August 1, 2014.
11	279.68(2)(c)	IAC 281—62.6(4)	Provide the parent or guardian of any student persistently at risk in reading with a plan outlined in a parent/guardian contract.	August 1, 2014.
12	279.68(2)(f)	IAC 281—62.6(5) IAC 281—62.10(2)	Report the following to the Department: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific reading interventions and supports implemented by the district. • Data on universal screening and progress monitoring. 	August 1, 2014.
13	279.68(4)(a)	IAC 281—62.9(1)	Address reading proficiency as part of the district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) using data from universal screening and progress monitoring assessments at the classroom and school levels and analyzed by other student characteristics.	August 1, 2014.
14	279.68(4)(a)	IAC 281—62.9(2)	Review chronic early elementary absenteeism for its impact on literacy development as part of the CSIP.	August 1, 2014.
15	279.68(4)(a)	IAC 281—62.9(3)	If more than 15 percent of an attendance center's students are not reading proficiently and are persistently at risk in reading by the end of third grade, the CSIP is required to include strategies to increase the percent of students who are reading at grade level, including school and community strategies.	August 1, 2014.
16	279.68(1)(c)	IAC 281—62.5(1)	Notify the parent/guardian of a student who is persistently at risk in reading by the end of third grade that they may enroll their student in an intensive summer reading program.	May 1, 2018.
17	279.68(2)(e)	IAC 281—62.5(3) IAC 281—62.5(4)	Offer and provide an intensive summer reading program for any student who is persistently at risk in reading at the end of third grade and who is not proficient in reading. The summer reading program must meet the program criteria and implementation guidelines established by the Iowa Reading Research Center.	May 1, 2018. (If District submitted waiver is approved: May 1, 2019)
18	279.68(1)(c) 279.68(5)	IAC 281—62.5(2)	A student shall be considered for retention if a student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is persistently at risk in reading at the end of third grade and is not proficient in reading; • Does not qualify for good cause exemption, and • Does not attend and complete an intensive summer literacy program. <p>Retention decisions must be based on results of the Retention Decision-Making Process.</p>	May 1, 2018.

Item	Iowa Code citation	Iowa Administrative Code citation	Action required of district	Deadline
19	279.68(5)(b)	IAC 281—62.4(1) IAC 281—62.8(2) IAC 281—62.5(2)	Document requests for good cause exemption from retention with evidence presented by the student’s teacher to the school principal that the student’s promotion is appropriate and is based on the student’s academic record. Evidence may include the student’s IEP, report card, or portfolio. Good cause exemptions include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student is a Limited English proficient student with less than two years of instruction in an English as a second language (ESL) program. 2. The student has an individualized education program (IEP) and the student’s IEP indicates that participation in the assessments required by 279.68 is not appropriate. 3. The student has demonstrated an acceptable level of performance on an alternate assessment based on scientifically based research. 4. The student has demonstrated mastery through a portfolio review that meets Department required criteria 5. The student was previously retained and has received intensive remediation in reading for at least two years. 	May 1, 2018.
20	279.68(1)(c)	IAC 281—62.5(3)	Continue to provide intensive reading instruction to a student who is promoted to grade four but is not yet proficient in reading until the student is reading proficiently.	August 1, 2016.

Permitted Actions

Table 2 lists actions by public school districts that are permitted per §279.68 and IAC 281—62.

Table 2.
Code Citation, District Action Permitted, and Deadline

Item	Iowa Code citation	Iowa Administrative Code citation	Action permitted by district	Deadline
21	279.68(5)(a)(3)	IAC 281—62.3(2)	In addition to universal screening and progress monitoring using approved assessments, the district may use an alternative assessment to determine an individual student’s proficiency in reading. The alternative assessment must be based on scientifically-based research and reasonably calculated to provide information about the child’s reading.	May 1, 2018.
22	279.68(5)(a)(4)	IAC 281—62.3(3)	In addition to universal screening and progress monitoring using approved assessments, the district may use a portfolio review of student work to determine reading mastery. The portfolio review must use standard criteria based on scientifically-based research.	May 1, 2018.
23	279.68(1)(a)	IAC 281—62.3(4)	In addition to conducting universal screening and progress monitoring using approved assessments, the district may use teacher observation to determine that a student should be initially identified as persistently at risk in reading. Teacher observation may not be used to determine that a student continues to be persistently at risk in reading. Teacher observation must be based on Department-approved observation criteria.	August 1, 2014.

Table 3 provides updated guidance for public school districts on **required** and **permitted** actions per §279.68 and IAC 281—62.

Table 3.
Item Number, District Action Required or Permitted, and Updated Guidance

Item	Action required of district	Guidance [Updated August 31, 2016]
1	Assess all kindergarten through third grade students at the beginning of the school year and intermittently throughout the year using a Department-approved universal screening assessment.	<p>All students in grades kindergarten through third are required to be assessed fall, winter, and spring. Universal screening data are collected within the state supported data system for districts using the assessments directly programmed into the statewide data system. For districts using an approved assessment outside of the state supported data system, districts are required to upload student-level universal screening data to the Department within two to four weeks after the close of each assessment period.</p> <p>Technical Assistance regarding data reporting is included in Appendix F: Iowa TIER and Data Reporting Page. [Note that the Technical Assistance Appendices are to be used as companion technical assistance to the Department’s official guidance for §279.68. This document is located on the Early Literacy Implementation website].</p>
2	Provide periodic assessments of students who are persistently at risk in reading, and students who are at risk in reading, for the purpose of progress monitoring using a Department-approved progress monitoring assessment.	<p>A student who is persistently at risk in reading is a student whose reading performance is below an established standard on an approved assessment and whose progress on an approved assessment is minimal. Students are considered to be persistently at risk in reading when they meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Score below the vendor benchmark during a universal screening period directly after a screening period in which they were identified as at risk, now becoming persistently at risk; • Score below the vendor benchmark for two consecutive universal screening periods. <p>Further, students are considered be persistently at risk in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current identification of the student is persistently at risk and current screening results are below vendor benchmarks. • Current identification of the student is at risk, and current screening results are below vendor benchmarks. • Current identification of the student is persistently at risk and there are no current screening results available. • There is no current identification of a student or current screening results available, and teacher observation results indicate the student is persistently at risk in reading. • The student is designated to take Iowa’s ELI Alternate Assessment, meeting the requirements for universal screening and progress monitoring <p>Districts are required to monitor the progress of, and provide additional intervention for, students who struggle with reading. There are two levels of risk that require some action for individual students:</p> <p>1. Progress Monitoring and Intervention Requirements for Students Who Are Persistently At Risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students who are identified as persistently at risk are required to receive weekly progress monitoring. This will allow schools to monitor the improvement students are making toward end of year goals (i.e., spring benchmark) given the intervention they receive.

Item	Action required of district	Guidance [Updated August 31, 2016]
2	Provide periodic assessments of students who are persistently at risk in reading, and students who are at risk in reading, for the purpose of progress monitoring using a Department-approved progress monitoring assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students identified as persistently at risk are required to receive intervention to remediate their reading difficulties. This intervention is required to continue until the student is at or above benchmark during a universal screening period. <p>2. Progress Monitoring and Intervention Requirements for Students Who Are At Risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All kindergarten through third grade students who are identified as at risk in the area of reading are required to receive weekly progress monitoring. This will allow schools to monitor the student’s progress to ensure the student is on track to meet end of the year reading goals (i.e., spring benchmarks). • Intervention for students who are at risk is highly recommended. If multiple data points suggest a student is not on track to meet end of year goals (i.e., spring benchmarks), interventions should be implemented for the at risk student. <p>Examples Across Universal Screening Periods</p> <p>If a student’s current identification is adequately progressing, and the current universal screening assessment s/he scores...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At or above the benchmark, then s/he is considered adequately progressing and no action is required. • Below the benchmark, then s/he is at risk in reading and weekly progress monitoring is required but no intervention. • There are no current screening scores, then s/he continues to be identified as adequately progressing and no action is required. • There are no current screening scores, but teacher observation indicates the student is at risk, then s/he is identified as at risk in reading and weekly progress monitoring is required but no intervention. <p>If a student’s current identification is persistently at risk, and on the current universal screening assessment s/he scores...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At or above the benchmark, then s/he is at risk in reading and weekly progress monitoring is required but no intervention. • Below the benchmark, then s/he continues to be persistently at risk in reading and both weekly progress monitoring and intervention are required.’ • There are no current screening scores, then s/he continues to be identified as persistently at risk. • There are no current screening scores, then s/he continues to be identified as at risk, and weekly progress monitoring is required but not intervention. • There are no current screening scores, but teacher observation indicates the student is persistently at risk, then s/he is persistently at risk in reading and both weekly progress monitoring and intervention are required. <p>Technical Assistance regarding literacy status and current identification is located in Appendix H: Persistently At Risk.</p>

Item	Action required of district	Guidance [Updated August 31, 2016]																				
2	Provide periodic assessments of students who are persistently at risk in reading, and students who are at risk in reading, for the purpose of progress monitoring using a Department-approved progress monitoring assessment.	<p>Table 4 below provides guidance on universal screening, progress monitoring, instruction, and parent/guardian notice requirements.</p> <p>Table 4. <i>Assessment and support for students who are adequately progressing, at risk or who are persistently at risk in reading.</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="634 468 1539 1459"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="634 468 797 594"></th> <th data-bbox="797 468 1011 594">Students who are Adequately Progressing</th> <th data-bbox="1011 468 1252 594">Students who are At Risk in Reading</th> <th data-bbox="1252 468 1539 594">Students who are Persistently at Risk in Reading</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="634 594 797 688">Universal Screening</td> <td data-bbox="797 594 1011 688">All students 3 x's per year</td> <td data-bbox="1011 594 1252 688">All students 3 x's per year</td> <td data-bbox="1252 594 1539 688">All students 3 x's per year</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="634 688 797 783">Progress Monitoring</td> <td data-bbox="797 688 1011 783">Not Required</td> <td data-bbox="1011 688 1252 783">Required Weekly</td> <td data-bbox="1252 688 1539 783">Required Weekly</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="634 783 797 972">Instruction</td> <td data-bbox="797 783 1011 972">Universal Tier</td> <td data-bbox="1011 783 1252 972">Universal Tier with additional intensive instruction <u>recommended</u></td> <td data-bbox="1252 783 1539 972">Universal Tier with additional intensive instruction <u>required</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="634 972 797 1459">Parent/Guardian Notice</td> <td data-bbox="797 972 1011 1459">District adopted process for communicating student performance and progress</td> <td data-bbox="1011 972 1252 1459">District adopted process for communicating student performance and progress – Notice specific to performance on universal screening and any services to be provided is <u>recommended</u></td> <td data-bbox="1252 972 1539 1459">District adopted process for communicating student performance and progress – Notice to parent/guardians specific to performance on universal screening, services to be provided, recommended strategies, progress, and parent/guardian contract information is <u>required</u></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Progress monitoring data and reading interventions and supports are collected within Iowa TIER for districts using the assessments directly programmed into the statewide data system. For districts using an approved assessment outside of the state supported data system, districts are required to enter progress monitoring and intervention data when specified in Iowa's data system.</p> <p>Technical Assistance regarding data reporting are included in Appendix F: Iowa TIER and Data Reporting.</p>		Students who are Adequately Progressing	Students who are At Risk in Reading	Students who are Persistently at Risk in Reading	Universal Screening	All students 3 x's per year	All students 3 x's per year	All students 3 x's per year	Progress Monitoring	Not Required	Required Weekly	Required Weekly	Instruction	Universal Tier	Universal Tier with additional intensive instruction <u>recommended</u>	Universal Tier with additional intensive instruction <u>required</u>	Parent/Guardian Notice	District adopted process for communicating student performance and progress	District adopted process for communicating student performance and progress – Notice specific to performance on universal screening and any services to be provided is <u>recommended</u>	District adopted process for communicating student performance and progress – Notice to parent/guardians specific to performance on universal screening, services to be provided, recommended strategies, progress, and parent/guardian contract information is <u>required</u>
	Students who are Adequately Progressing	Students who are At Risk in Reading	Students who are Persistently at Risk in Reading																			
Universal Screening	All students 3 x's per year	All students 3 x's per year	All students 3 x's per year																			
Progress Monitoring	Not Required	Required Weekly	Required Weekly																			
Instruction	Universal Tier	Universal Tier with additional intensive instruction <u>recommended</u>	Universal Tier with additional intensive instruction <u>required</u>																			
Parent/Guardian Notice	District adopted process for communicating student performance and progress	District adopted process for communicating student performance and progress – Notice specific to performance on universal screening and any services to be provided is <u>recommended</u>	District adopted process for communicating student performance and progress – Notice to parent/guardians specific to performance on universal screening, services to be provided, recommended strategies, progress, and parent/guardian contract information is <u>required</u>																			

Item	Action required of district	Guidance [Updated August 31, 2016]
3	Use Department-determined benchmarks for basic levels of reading proficiency.	For schools using the universal screening assessments programmed into the state supported data system, the benchmarks are built into this data system. For schools using other department approved assessments, it is required that districts follow the benchmarks established by the test developers that are appropriate for that grade level and assessment.
4	Permit a student with a disability who has been determined to require an alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards in reading to take an alternate reading assessment that includes progress monitoring.	<p>For students whose IEP identifies an Alternate Assessment in reading, the state Early Literacy Alternate Assessment meets the universal screening and progress monitoring requirements.</p> <p>Technical Assistance for students whose IEPs identify an Alternate Assessment in reading may be found in Appendix J: Specific Student Populations.</p>
5	<p>Provide intensive reading instruction, including a minimum of 90 minutes a day of scientific, research-based reading instruction, to any student persistently at risk in reading. This instruction may also include but is not limited to the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group instruction. • Reduced teacher- student ratios. • More frequent progress monitoring. • Tutoring or mentoring. • Extended school day, week, or year. • Summer reading programs. 	<p>Districts are required to provide 90 minutes of research-based reading instruction for students persistently at risk in reading. A district’s core literacy block satisfies the requirement to provide this service. If a district’s core instruction is not at least 90 minutes and composed of scientific, research-based reading instruction, then it is required that the district implement such a program for students persistently at risk in reading.</p> <p>Districts must provide additional instruction or support to students identified as being persistently at risk in reading beyond the 90-minute requirement, which may include but is not limited to small group instruction; reduced teacher-student ratios; more frequent progress monitoring; tutoring or mentoring; extended school-day, week, or year; and summer reading programs.</p> <p>Technical Assistance for core literacy and intensive interventions are included in Appendix E: Intensive Intervention and Core Instruction.</p>
6	<p>Provide a reading curriculum for students persistently at risk in reading that meets the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists students in developing skills to read at grade level • Assistance to include but not be limited to strategies that formally address dyslexia when appropriate, • Provides skill development in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. • Is implemented by certified instructional staff with appropriate training and professional development, • Is implemented during regular school hours, • Provides a curriculum in core academic subjects to assist the students in maintaining or meeting proficiency in all subjects. 	<p>Districts are required to provide 90 minutes of research-based reading instruction for students who are persistently at risk in reading. A district’s core literacy block satisfies the requirement to provide this service if the core literacy block addresses all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists students in developing skills to read at grade level; • Assistance shall include but not be limited to strategies that formally address dyslexia • Provides skill development in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension; • Is implemented by certified instructional staff with appropriate training and professional development; • Is implemented during regular school hours; • Provides a curriculum in core academic subjects to assist the students in maintaining or meeting proficiency in all subjects. <p>Further, districts are required to provide additional instruction or support to students identified as persistently at risk in reading beyond the 90 minute requirement which may include but is not limited to small group instruction; reduced teacher-student ratios; more frequent progress monitoring; tutoring or mentoring; extended school-day, week or year; and summer reading programs. Technical Assistance for core literacy and intensive intervention is included in Appendix E. Intensive Intervention and Core Instruction.</p>

Item	Action required of district	Guidance [Updated August 31, 2016]
7	Continue to provide a student who is persistently at risk in reading with intensive reading instruction until the student is reading at grade level.	<p>Districts must continue to provide intensive reading instruction to any student who is persistently at risk. Students who are persistently at risk must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive intensive Interventions, and • Participate in benchmarking across the year [fall, winter, spring] <p>Students who begin the year as persistently at risk, but are no longer considered persistently at risk at any point throughout the year, must still participate in benchmarking across the year [fall, winter, spring].</p> <p>A student is no longer considered persistently at risk determined through one of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient on statewide assessment; • At or above benchmark on one screening period; • Portfolio review as defined in the Early Literacy Retention Guidance; or • Alternative assessment as defined in the Early Literacy Retention Guidance. <p>This includes all students, from kindergarten through twelfth grade in Iowa’s public schools, and any nonpublic student receiving services in public schools where the nonpublic is not implementing any DE approved universal screening or progress monitoring assessments. For at risk students, weekly progress monitoring and intensive intervention is strongly recommended. For persistently at risk students, weekly progress monitoring is strongly recommended, and intensive intervention is required.</p> <p>Technical Assistance regarding literacy status is located in Appendix H: Persistently at Risk.</p>
8	<p>A district shall determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A student is persistently at risk in reading if the student has not met the grade-level benchmarks on two consecutive screening assessments; • A student is at risk in reading if the student did not meet the grade-level benchmarks for one of the two most recent consecutive screening assessments. 	<p>A student who is persistently at risk in reading is a student whose reading performance is below an established standard on an approved assessment and whose progress on an approved assessment is minimal. Students are considered to be persistently at risk in reading when they meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Score below the vendor benchmark during a universal screening period directly after a screening period in which they were identified as at risk, now becoming persistently at risk • Score below the vendor benchmark for two consecutive universal screening periods. <p>Further, students are considered be persistently at risk in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current identification of the student is persistently at risk and current screening results are below vendor benchmarks. • Current identification of the student is at risk, and current screening results are below vendor benchmarks. • Current identification of the student is persistently at risk and there are no current screening results available. • There is no current identification of a student or current screening results available, and teacher observation results indicate the student is persistently at risk in reading.

Item	Action required of district	Guidance [Updated August 31, 2016]
8	A district shall determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A student is persistently at risk in reading if the student has not met the grade-level benchmarks on two consecutive screening assessments; • A student is at risk in reading if the student did not meet the grade-level benchmarks for one of the two most recent consecutive screening assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student is designated to take Iowa’s ELI Alternate Assessment, meeting the requirements for universal screening and progress monitoring. <p>Teacher observation may be used to initially identify that student is persistently at risk in reading. Teacher observation may not be used to determine a student is not persistently at risk in reading.</p> <p>Technical Assistance regarding literacy status and teacher observation is located in Appendix H: Persistently at Risk.</p>
9	Notify the parent or guardian of any student determined to be persistently at risk in reading annually (1) a description of the services currently provided to the student, (2) what proposed supplemental instructional services and supports the district will provide to the student to remediate areas in which the student is persistently at risk in reading, (3) strategies parents/guardians can use to help the child succeed, and (4) regular updates regarding the student’s progress toward reaching or exceeding the targeted level of reading proficiency.	<p>Parents or guardians must be notified annually if their child(ren) is/are determined to be persistently at risk in reading.</p> <p>Notification letters need to include universal screening data that indicates their child(ren) is/are below benchmark, a description of current services and proposed supplemental instructional services that will be provided to the student to remediate persistently at risk status, strategies parents/guardians may implement at home, and regular updates regarding student progress.</p> <p>It is strongly recommended that districts schedule Early Literacy Progression meetings with parents/guardians in order to discuss the identification of their child(ren) as persistently at risk in reading and use this time to review the information in the letter as well as begin the process of establishing a parent/guardian contract.</p> <p>Technical assistance for literacy status is in Appendix H: Persistently at Risk. Technical Assistance for parent/guardian notification is available in Appendix G: Parent/Guardian Notification.</p>
10	Apprise the parent or guardian of any student persistently at risk in reading of their student’s academic progress and other useful information.	<p>It is recommended districts provide quarterly progress reports to parents/guardians of a child(ren) identified as persistently at risk in reading. The quarterly report should include student performance data from universal screening and progress monitoring as well as any other relevant information which may include other progress data or supports/resources for parents/guardians.</p> <p>Technical Assistance regarding parent/guardian notification, example letters and contracts are located in Appendix G: Parent/Guardian Notification.</p>
11	Provide the parent or guardian of any student persistently at risk in reading with a plan outlined in a parent/guardian contract.	<p>It is strongly recommended that districts schedule Early Literacy Progression meetings with parents/guardians to discuss the district process to establish a parent/guardian contract.</p> <p>Technical Assistance regarding parent/guardian notification, example letters and contracts are located in Appendix G: Parent/Guardian Notification.</p>

Item	Action required of district	Guidance [Updated August 31, 2016]
12	<p>Report the following to the Department:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific reading interventions and supports implemented by the district. • Data on universal screening and progress monitoring. 	<p>Specific reading intervention data, as well as universal screening and progress monitoring data, are collected within the state supported data system for districts using the assessments directly programmed into the statewide data system. For these districts, required data are already documented within the system. The Universal Screening tab contains all student universal screening data. The progress monitoring tab contains all progress monitoring data and the Interventions tab allows you to save (referred to as banked within the system) interventions used and assign students to them.</p> <p>For districts using an approved assessment outside of the state supported data system, districts are required to enter progress monitoring and intervention data when specified in Iowa’s data system. Districts are required to upload student-level universal screening data to the Department after the close of each assessment period.</p> <p>Technical Assistance and timelines regarding data reporting are included in Appendix F: Iowa TIER and Data Reporting.</p>
13	<p>Address reading proficiency as part of the district’s Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) using data from universal screening and progress monitoring assessments at the classroom and school levels and analyzed by other student characteristics.</p>	<p>Schools must analyze universal screening and progress monitoring data at the systems and school level, including across specific student characteristics including but not limited to federal categories regarding (1) major racial and ethnic groups, (2) economically disadvantaged compared to students who are not economically disadvantaged, (3) children with disabilities compared to children without disabilities, (4) English proficiency status, (5) gender, (6) migrant status, (7) military status, (8) children in foster care, as well as attendance. Analyses must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of students assessed with a valid and reliable universal screener • Percent of students not meeting benchmark assessed with a valid and reliable progress monitoring assessment • Percent of students at benchmark on universal screening assessment • Percent of students beginning the year at benchmark who remain at benchmark • Percent of learners below benchmark two consecutive screening periods receiving intervention • Percent of learners below benchmark in the fall who then score at or above benchmark in a subsequent screening period • Other healthy indicators as indicated in Iowa’s Differentiated Accountability model. <p>Schools are required to identify barriers, and address any areas of concern based on these analyses within their Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. Technical Assistance regarding continuous improvement and Iowa’s Comprehensive School Improvement Plan [CSIP] is located in Appendix B: Continuous Improvement.</p>

Item	Action required of district	Guidance [Updated August 31, 2016]
14	Review chronic early elementary absenteeism for its impact on literacy development as part of the CSIP.	<p>Chronic early absenteeism is the extent to which a student in kindergarten through third grade is frequently absent from school. Chronic Early Absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or more of school days for any reason. Schools must include analyses of chronic early elementary absenteeism at the system and school level, and its impact on literacy. Schools are required to identify barriers, and address any areas of concern based on these analyses within their CSIP.</p> <p>Technical Assistance regarding continuous improvement and Iowa's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan [CSIP] is located in Appendix B: Continuous Improvement.</p>
15	If more than 15 percent of an attendance center's students are not reading proficiently and are persistently at risk in reading by the end of third grade, the CSIP is required to include strategies to increase the percent of students who are reading at grade level, including school and community strategies.	<p>Schools must review the percent of students at benchmark on universal screening assessment annually. If more than 15% of an attendance center's third grade students are persistently at risk in reading at the conclusion of the Winter assessment window of a given year, schools are required to identify barriers, and address areas of concern based on these analyses within their Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. The plan must include strategies to increase the percent of students who are reading at grade level, including school and community strategies.</p> <p>Technical Assistance regarding continuous improvement and Iowa's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan [CSIP] is located in Appendix B: Continuous Improvement.</p>
16	Notify the parent/guardian of a student who is persistently at risk in reading by the end of third grade that they may enroll their student in an intensive summer reading program.	<p>The one year waiver for providing intensive summer reading programs precludes districts from enacting retention decisions for that year. If a district applies for and is granted a waiver from the Department, retention and attendance at an intensive summer reading program for students identified as persistently at risk in reading at the Winter benchmark of their third grade year does not apply. Therefore if a waiver is granted, parent/guardian notification regarding intensive summer reading program enrollment is not required. This applies to the 2018 summer only.</p> <p>For all districts who do not apply for, or are not granted a waiver in 2018, and for all districts after 2018, it is strongly recommended that districts schedule Early Literacy Progression meetings with parents/guardians to discuss summer school options, and possible retention of their child(ren) in the 3rd grade.</p> <p>Technical Assistance regarding retention is located in Early Literacy Retention Guidance. Technical Assistance regarding summer school is located in Appendix K: Summer School.</p>
17	Offer and provide an intensive summer reading program for any student who is persistently at risk in reading at the end of third grade and who is not proficient in reading. The summer reading program must meet the program criteria and implementation guidelines established by the Iowa Reading Research Center.	<p>It is required to offer and provide an intensive summer reading program for any student who has been identified as persistently at risk by the end of third grade <i>and</i> who is not proficient in reading</p> <p>Although this is not required until the third grade, it is recommended that districts have summer reading program options available for all students who are persistently at risk in reading, regardless of grade beginning the summer between preschool and kindergarten. The summer reading program must meet the program criteria and implementation guidelines established by the Iowa Reading Research Center.</p> <p>Technical Assistance regarding summer school is located in Appendix K: Summer School.</p>

Item	Action required of district	Guidance [Updated August 31, 2016]
18	<p>A student shall be considered for retention if a student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is persistently at risk in reading at the end of third grade and is not proficient in reading; • Does not qualify for good cause exemption, and • Does not attend and complete an intensive summer literacy program. <p>Retention decisions must be based on results of the Retention Decision-Making Process.</p>	<p>Retention and good cause exemption will be required May 1, 2018.</p> <p>If the district receives a one-time, one-year waiver for providing intensive summer reading programs, the district will not be required to make retention decisions for that year. If a district applies for and is granted a waiver from the Department, retention, and attendance at an intensive summer reading program for students identified as persistently at risk in reading at the Winter benchmark of their third grade year, and not proficient in reading as indicated on statewide assessments, universal screening, portfolio review or alternative assessments, does not apply. This applies to the 2018 summer only.</p> <p>Early Literacy Retention Guidance provides specific guidance related to retention, good cause exemption, portfolio review and alternative assessment.</p>
19	<p>Document requests for good cause exemption from retention with evidence presented by the student's teacher to the school principal that the student's promotion is appropriate and is based on the student's academic record. Evidence may include the student's IEP, report card, or portfolio. Good cause exemptions include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student is a Limited English proficient student with less than two years of instruction in an English as a second language (ESL) program. 2. The student has an individualized education program (IEP) and the student's IEP indicates that participation in the assessments required by 279.68 is not appropriate. 3. The student has demonstrated an acceptable level of performance on an alternate assessment based on scientifically based research. 4. The student has demonstrated mastery through a portfolio review that meets Department required criteria 5. The student was previously retained and has received intensive remediation in reading for at least two years 	<p>Retention and good cause exemption will be required May 1, 2018. Guidance will be provided to districts by Summer 2016.</p> <p>If the district receives a one-time, one-year waiver for providing intensive summer reading programs, the district will not be required to make retention decisions for that year. If a district applies for and is granted a waiver from the Department, retention and attendance at an intensive summer reading program for students identified as persistently at risk in reading at the Winter benchmark of their third grade year, and not proficient in reading, does not apply. This applies to the 2018 summer only.</p> <p>Early Literacy Retention Guidance provides specific guidance related to retention, good cause exemption, portfolio review and alternative assessment.</p>

Item	Action required of district	Guidance [Updated August 31, 2016]
20	Continue to provide intensive reading instruction to a student who is promoted to grade four but is not yet proficient in reading until the student is reading proficiently.	<p>Districts must continue to provide intensive reading instruction to any student who is persistently at risk. Students who are persistently at risk must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive intensive interventions, and • Participate in benchmarking across the year (fall, winter, spring) <p>Students who begin the year as persistently at risk, but are no longer considered persistently at risk at any point throughout the year, must still participate in benchmarking across the year [fall, winter, spring].</p> <p>A student is no longer considered persistently at risk determined through one of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient on statewide assessment; • At or above benchmark on one screening period; • Portfolio review as defined in the Early Literacy Retention Guidance; or • Alternative assessment as defined in the Early Literacy Retention Guidance. <p>This includes <u>all</u> students, from kindergarten through twelfth grade in Iowa’s public schools, and any nonpublic student receiving services in public schools where the nonpublic is not implementing any DE approved universal screening or progress monitoring assessments. For at risk students, weekly progress monitoring and intensive intervention is strongly recommended. For persistently at risk students, weekly progress monitoring is strongly recommended, and intensive intervention is required.</p> <p>Early Literacy Retention Guidance provides specific guidance related to retention, good cause exemption, portfolio review and alternative assessment.</p>
21	In addition to universal screening and progress monitoring using approved assessments, the district may use an alternative assessment to determine an individual student’s proficiency in reading. The alternative assessment must be based on scientifically-based research and reasonably calculated to provide information about the child’s reading.	Early Literacy Retention Guidance provides specific guidance related to retention, good cause exemption, portfolio review and alternative assessment.
22	In addition to universal screening and progress monitoring using approved assessments, the district may use a portfolio review of student work to determine reading mastery. The portfolio review must use standard criteria based on scientifically-based research.	Early Literacy Retention Guidance provides specific guidance related to retention, good cause exemption, portfolio review and alternative assessment.

Item	Action required of district	Guidance [Updated August 31, 2016]
23	<p>In addition to conducting universal screening and progress monitoring using approved assessments, the district may use teacher observation to determine that a student should be initially identified as persistently at risk in reading. Teacher observation may not be used to determine that a student continues to be persistently at risk in reading. Teacher observation must be based on Department-approved observation criteria.</p>	<p>Identification of students as persistently at risk in reading occurs when that student’s reading performance is below an established standard on an approved assessment and whose progress on an approved assessment is minimal. Students are considered to be persistently at risk in reading when they meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Score below the vendor benchmark during a universal screening period directly after a screening period in which they were identified as at risk. • Score below the vendor benchmark for two consecutive universal screening periods. <p>Further, students are considered to be persistently at risk in reading in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current identification of the student is persistently at risk, and current screening results are below vendor benchmarks. • Current identification of the student is at risk, and current screening results are below vendor benchmarks. • Current identification of the student is persistently at risk, and there are no current screening results available. • There is no current identification of a student or current screening results available, and teacher observation results indicate the student is persistently at risk in reading. • The student is designated to take Iowa’s ELI Alternate Assessment, meeting the requirements for universal screening and progress monitoring <p>Teacher observation may be used to initially identify that a student is persistently at risk in reading. Teacher observation may not be used to determine a student is not persistently at risk in reading.</p> <p>Technical Assistance regarding literacy status and teacher observation are located in Appendix H: Persistently at Risk.</p>

Frequently Asked Questions

The Frequently Asked Questions are organized in table format by major category as indicated below:

- A. Assessment: Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring
- B. Continuous Improvement
- C. Early Childhood
- D. Finance
- E. Intensive Intervention and Core Instruction
- F. Iowa TIER and Data Reporting
- G. Parent/Guardian Notification
- H. Persistently At Risk
- I. Retention- Please see Early Literacy Retention Guidance.
- J. Specific Student Populations
- K. Summer School

Table 5
Question and Answer by Category

ASSESSMENT: UNIVERSAL SCREENING AND PROGRESS MONITORING		
No	QUESTION	ANSWER
A1	Are districts required to use the state-purchased universal screening assessments and progress monitoring assessments?	No. Districts are required to use assessments that meet Department-adopted minimum standards. A list of assessments that meet Department-adopted standards is published annually on the Department's website along with the criteria used to establish the standards. The state-purchased universal screening and progress monitoring assessments meet these criteria and are available to districts at no cost.
A2	What are the benchmarks for basic levels of reading proficiency for each grade?	Districts must follow the benchmarks established by the test developers that are appropriate for that assessment. For schools using the Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST) and Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs), the benchmarks are programmed into the Iowa TIER data system.
A3	What are the acceptable administration windows for universal screening assessments?	Rule 62.2 allows the Department to require universal screening assessments to be administered three times a year. The fall administration window is between the third and sixth week of the start of the school year. The winter administration window is during the first six weeks students are back after winter break. The spring administration window is generally the last four weeks of the school year.
A4	How often do districts need to monitor the progress of students who are at risk and persistently at risk in reading?	It is required that students are monitored weekly if the universal screening assessment results indicate s/he is persistently at risk or at risk in reading. The rules allow the Department to set the standard of weekly progress monitoring for students who are at risk or persistently at risk in reading.
A5	Can districts continue to use the assessments they already have in place in order to implement these rules?	Maybe. For the purposes of universal screening and progress monitoring, districts must use assessments that meet Department-adopted minimum standards. A list of acceptable assessments are published annually on the Department's website. This does not necessarily prevent districts from continuing to use assessments they already have in place. If the district's current assessment meets the minimum standards, it may be used for the purposes of universal screening and/or progress monitoring. If it does not, the district may still wish to use the assessment if the results answer other instructionally relevant questions.
A6	Can districts continue to use assessments they already have in place that do not meet universal screening and progress monitoring standards?	Yes, but not for the purposes of universal screening or progress monitoring.

ASSESSMENT: UNIVERSAL SCREENING AND PROGRESS MONITORING

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
A7	What if a district uses an assessment for universal screening and progress monitoring that is not on the published list? Can the district continue to use the assessment if it meets the minimum standards outlined by the Department?	The district needs to establish that the assessment meets the minimum standards outlined by the Department. Assessments may be submitted to the Department for review within a review cycle to determine whether or not this is the case. Documentation of selected assessments meeting minimum standards must be maintained and made available to the Department upon request.
A8	What alternative assessment would be appropriate to determine proficiency in reading?	A district-wide assessment that is designed to measure Iowa Core ELA standards that is administered to all children may be used to determine that a student is a proficient reader. This includes, but is not limited to, the evidence-based universal screening assessment used in the district.
A9	Can districts use portfolio reviews to determine reading proficiency instead of using universal screening assessments to determine whether a student is persistently at risk in reading?	No. Portfolio reviews may be used along with universal screening assessments but not instead of or in place of universal screening assessments to determine whether a student is persistently at risk in reading. Portfolio assessments may also be used in determining whether a student should or should not be retained at the end of third grade as part of a good cause exemption.
A10	Can districts use teacher observations to determine reading proficiency instead of using universal screening assessments?	No. Teacher observation may be used for a one-time initial identification of an individual student as persistently at risk in reading, but may not be used to determine if a student continues to be persistently at risk in reading.
A11	Can we implement Department approved universal screening and progress monitoring assessments to students beyond grade three?	Yes. It is recommended that districts use appropriate assessment practices above the third grade.
A12	Can districts use other means besides universal screening assessments to determine a student is persistently at risk in reading?	No, with the exception of teacher observation. Universal screening assessment should be used to determine if a student is persistently at risk in reading; however teacher observation may be used for a one-time initial identification.
A13	Is the sole act of progress monitoring considered an intervention for at risk students?	No. The purpose of progress monitoring is to evaluate the improvement students are making toward end of year goals given the instruction and/or intervention they are receiving. Progress monitoring is not an intervention as it is not designed to teach skills. It only measures the impact of instruction and the extent to which a student's skills are increasing.
A14	How does a parent or guardian refuse to have their child tested?	The procedures followed regarding parent/guardian refusal for district-wide assessments are local decisions.
A15	If special education teachers use a different progress monitoring (PM) tool (e.g., Aimsweb or DIBELS) do they need to put the scores in somewhere to prove to the state that they are progress monitoring weekly like they are supposed to be according to the legislation?	Not at this time. Department-approved progress monitoring tools that are not programmed into the state-supported data system are currently handled with an assurance that they are occurring weekly for every student who meets the requirement to be progress monitored. The percent of students requiring progress monitoring who actually receive progress monitoring is a reviewed Healthy Indicator for Differentiated Accountability within Continuous Improvement. Therefore, the requirement to enter progress monitoring and intervention data within the state-supported data system may occur in the future.

ASSESSMENT: UNIVERSAL SCREENING AND PROGRESS MONITORING

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
A16	If a universal screening measure is on the approved list, can it be used at any grade level?	Universal screening measures were reviewed and approved per grade level. Districts must select the approved measure by grade level and designate what measure will be used per grade level in the state supported data system.
A17	How many screening measures do I have to give?	Districts are required to implement one universal screening measure for grades kindergarten through third, three times a year.
A18	How often do districts need to monitor the progress of students who are at risk in reading?	All students, kindergarten through third grade, who are identified as at risk in reading are required to receive weekly progress monitoring.
A19	What if progress monitoring at grade level is too frustrating for the student or is otherwise not appropriate?	<p>In certain circumstances, a below grade level measure may be used for weekly progress monitoring. Each approved measure for progress monitoring will have guidance for the use of off-level monitoring. The state purchased progress monitoring tools indicate that if the student is reading less than 10 wcpm on grade level passages, an off- grade level measure may be used. When administering an off-grade level measure, a grade level measure should be given (less frequently; typically once per month) to evaluate whether the student’s progress is sufficient to accelerate learning and close the gap. The measures are designed with discontinue rules to minimize student frustration.</p> <p>The state-supported data system will default to weekly progress monitoring of the recommended measures by grade level (Letter Sounds for kindergarten, CBM-R for first-third grade). The directions for adding a weekly measure and changing the schedule for the default progress monitoring measure may be found in the state supported data system Knowledge Base.</p>
A24	This year’s screening window opens before the third week of school. That is different than the original guidance above.	The guidance above provides general guidelines. The specific dates for screening are annually posted in the state supported data system.
A25	What assessments must be given for students above third grade who continue to be persistently at risk in reading?	It is required for benchmark (universal screening) measures to be administered beyond third grade to students identified as persistently at risk in reading. It is strongly recommended that more frequent progress monitoring continue in order to assess the student’s rate of progress and to assist instructional decision-making. Students who enter the fall of fourth grade and beyond persistently at risk and not proficient in reading must participate in benchmark measures the full year (fall, winter, spring).
A26	If the student moves from persistently at risk to at risk on the benchmark (screening) measures in fourth grade, can we discontinue screening? How about weekly progress monitoring?	Students who enter the year persistently at risk must be assessed fall, winter, and spring with screening measures, and provided intensive interventions. If the student performs above benchmark at any time and therefore is designated as at risk, the student must continue to participate in benchmarking. Weekly progress monitoring is not required past third grade, but strongly recommended for students who are persistently at risk and at risk.
A27	How do we make local decisions about procedures for parent/guardian refusal?	Parent or guardian refusal is not permitted by current legal guidance with the exception of parents/guardians of students who are homeschooled [see <i>J. Specific Student Populations</i> for more details regarding homeschool]. Next steps regarding parent/guardian refusal is a local decision. It is recommended that districts follow the same local steps as for any other parent/guardian refusal for any other required assessment.

ASSESSMENT: UNIVERSAL SCREENING AND PROGRESS MONITORING

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
A28	How were these measures selected (FAST, fluency, etc.)?	The criteria for specific measures/vendor selection is included in the document for approved measures. Fluency measures are the best indicators for overall reading growth, regardless of the focus of instruction. CBMR is highly predictive of outcomes on general reading tests, including comprehension assessments. Automaticity is a prerequisite to reading comprehension by freeing up cognitive resources to focus on comprehension. Oral Reading Fluency is an indicator of overall reading skill and is very sensitive to growth. It is not intended to be the only skill taught, though, and is simply an indicator that the instruction is or is not meeting the needs of the learner.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
CI1	How shall we review “chronic early elementary absenteeism for its impact on literacy development”?	The district should review attendance data for all students in grades kindergarten through third to determine if a pattern of frequent absences is associated with students persistently at risk in reading at the individual student level. Chronic Early Absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent or more of school days for any reason.
CI2	Do we have to provide professional development to enhance the skills of elementary teachers in responding to children’s unique reading issues and needs and to increase the use of evidence-based strategies?	No. This is not required by code or rule since there have not been funds appropriated specifically for this section of the law. However, the district <u>may</u> use part or all of their portion of the Early Literacy Progression monies allocated to provide professional learning opportunities for teachers if they choose.
CI3	How does this law relate to what we do in continuous improvement?	Continuous improvement in Iowa is based on Multi-Tiered System of Supports [MTSS], and supported within our Differentiated Accountability model. Universal screening and progress monitoring data are part of our healthy indicators in Differentiated Accountability. Please see the Technical Assistance companion to guidance for further information, or the Iowa Department of Education’s Differentiated Accountability web page.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
EC1	How does IAC 279.68 apply to prekindergarten/preschool or transitional kindergarten programs?	Iowa Code 279.68 does not apply to preschool programs. However, if a kindergarten age eligible child is participating in Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs [SWVPP], the child would need to be assessed using an approved kindergarten age assessment if the district receives kindergarten funding for the child. Transitional kindergarten and kindergarten are considered kindergarten programs and must comply with expectations of IAC 279.68. If a kindergarten age eligible child is participating in SWVPP and a transitional kindergarten program, the child would be assessed using a Department approved kindergarten age assessment. Children participating in transitional kindergarten who will attend kindergarten the following year would take a Department approved kindergarten age assessment both years. Please see Appendix C: Early Childhood for further information.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
EC2	Should IGDIs be used to assess three year old children?	No, the Department did not find IGDIs to be technically adequate for use with three year old children as a universal screening measure. IGDIs should be used as a universal screening tool for students the year prior to kindergarten. If a student is kindergarten funded, then that student must be assessed using FAST. If the student is funded and taught as a preschool student, then that student may be assessed using IGDIs the year prior to kindergarten.
EC3	How does IGDIs relate to Teaching Strategies GOLD?	Teaching Strategies GOLD and IGDIs are both components of a balanced comprehensive assessment system. One assessment does not replace the other. Teaching Strategies GOLD is required under IAC 279.60 to be administered to all preschool children enrolled in a district program. While IGDIs is a Department approved assessment, it is not mandated by state law.
EC4	We have a few transitional kindergarten classrooms in our district. If the students that attended transitional kindergarten, by third grade, are determined to be significantly behind in reading, would they be exempt from the retention rule because they had spent two years in kindergarten?	One of the good cause exemptions indicates that if a student was previously retained and has received intensive remediation in reading for at least two years, then the student is exempt from retention. If a district's defined transitional kindergarten mirrors the same structure, content and delivery of the district's defined kindergarten ¹ , a student who has attended kindergarten for two years would meet one part of this exemption. The other requirement is that the student would need to have received two years of intensive remediation. If these two requirements are met, then the student would be exempt from retention. It is important to note (1) if a district's defined transitional kindergarten is anything less or otherwise different than their defined kindergarten, then this would not meet the good cause exemption requirement of being retained for at least two years, and (2) 279.68 requires the district to continue to provide intensive instruction until the student is no longer persistently at risk in reading which includes fourth through twelfth grades.
EC5	Should IGDIs be used to assess five year old children?	IGDIs assessments are identified for use with four year olds. IGDIs should be used as a universal screening tool for students the year prior to kindergarten. If a student is kindergarten funded, then that student must be assessed using FAST. If the student does not receive kindergarten funding and is in the Student Information System as a preschool student, then that student may be assessed using IGDIs the year prior to kindergarten.
EC6	How should schools set up students in PowerSchool if they are in a multi-age program? Do they need to set them up as kindergarten in order to test them in Iowa TIER?	Students will receive a grade designation in the student information system. Specific student information system support is provided in the state-supported data system (Iowa TIER) Knowledge Base. Grade designation should be based upon the funding received for the student, birthdate rules by September 15, and local team exceptions if not contradicted by funding expectations.

¹ Transitional kindergarten and kindergarten are considered kindergarten and must comply with the expectations of IAC 279.68. Kindergarten includes programming for children who are kindergarten age eligible and enrolled in any program design including those commonly referred to as "transitional kindergarten" or "junior kindergarten." These children receive K-12 student aid.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
EC7	<p>Is Teaching Strategies GOLD considered to be a viable district developed assessment for five year olds in a transitional kindergarten program?</p> <p>If the transitional kindergarten program uses FAST as a screener as well as a weekly progress monitoring assessment, can Teaching Strategies GOLD be used as the assessment 4x/year? The district has determined Teaching Strategies GOLD as their assessment for reporting progress to parents/guardians.</p> <p>We meet your chart for five year old requirements. However, we use the Iowa Early Learning Standards and use the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment.</p> <p>We are also completing the kindergarten FAST assessments with Progress Monitoring... however, we cannot use the Teaching Strategies GOLD curriculum through six year olds now?</p>	<p>Yes, districts determine the assessment used in Kindergarten to 12th grade programming and the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment is appropriate from birth through kindergarten for specified purposes. If a district has determined Teaching Strategies GOLD is to serve as the classroom assessment in kindergarten for purposes of recording and reporting child development and progress in learning, it is important to note that an alignment study has not been completed between Teaching Strategies GOLD and the Iowa Core. Since instruction must be aligned to the Iowa Core, the chosen assessment should be aligned as well.</p> <p>Teaching Strategies GOLD may not be used to meet the requirements for screening and progress monitoring of Early Literacy Implementation (ELI).</p>
EC8	<p>I thought there was an alignment document between the Iowa Early Learning Standards, Teaching Strategies GOLD and Iowa Core?</p>	<p>The Iowa Early Learning Standards (IELS) provide an alignment between the Iowa Core for English language arts and mathematics, and the IELS. Teaching Strategies GOLD has provided an alignment between the IELS and the Teaching Strategies GOLD Objectives for Learning and Development. An alignment study has not been completed between Teaching Strategies GOLD and the Iowa Core.</p>
EC9	<p>Are transitional kindergarten students who are required to be tested also required to have progress monitoring and intervention as well?</p>	<p>Yes. Transitional kindergarten is considered to be kindergarten so the requirements of 279.68 apply.</p>
EC10	<p>How would this affect a four year old program that also serves five year olds in that same classroom and is a nonpublic school? Do they have the option to opt out of this?</p>	<p>The Early Literacy Implementation requirements apply to all school-age children kindergarten through third grade, including any nonpublic student receiving services in public schools. For specific guidance for nonpublic student populations, please see Appendix J: Specific Student Populations.</p> <p>If the nonpublic school is a SWVPP partner with a district, the requirement for reporting four year old children would include the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System.</p>

EARLY CHILDHOOD

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
EC11	May a five year old attend the SWVPP?	<p>The SWVPP programs are intended for four year old children. A five year old child may participate if other funding sources are used, space is available, and there is not a waitlist for four year olds to enroll. IAC Chapter 16 (SWVPP) does not permit class size to be greater than 20 children under any circumstances. If the district receives Kindergarten funding for enrolled five year old children, this would be viewed as a multi-age classroom and would need to meet expectations regarding standards and assessments applicable for both four year old and five year old children.</p> <p>This means five year old students in the multi-age classroom will need to be instructed to the Iowa Core and the Early Literacy Implementation requirements apply.</p>
EC12	What advice would you give a school district regarding how to get up to speed with their transitional kindergarten students? Regarding time and standards? Do they need to change for 2nd semester?	<p>We encourage you to share this information with your districts so they may plan appropriately. Districts will need time to have conversations about this clarification. We assume district plans will examine strategies that will impact learning and change the learning trajectory for children while working toward full implementation of 279.68.</p> <p>Please see Appendix C: Early Childhood for an informative webinar and further guidance on this topic.</p>
EC13	When we established our transitional kindergarten two years ago we sought the guidance of the Department and we were told that the program had to be differentiated from preschool and kindergarten, that our curriculum had to be research-based and aligned to state standards. Now we are getting different guidance as a result of the new ELI law.	The department recognizes SWVPP and kindergarten programs. Specific guidance and technical assistance in this area is provided in Appendix C: Early Childhood .
EC14	For a five year old that spends much of their day in an all-day preschool setting, did I hear a .5 weighting may be used?	A five year old child may not generate the .5 funding for the SWVPP. The child may generate the 1.0 or student aid for K-12, however, expectations for kindergarten programs would apply, including curriculum and assessments aligned to Iowa Core and the implementation of ELI requirements. Specific guidance and technical assistance in this area is provided in Appendix C: Early Childhood .

FINANCE

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
F1	In what ways can we spend the funds provided under these rules?	<p>The funds received pursuant to this section of code can be used to implement any part of Iowa Code 279.68. Examples include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining assessments for universal screening and/or progress monitoring. • Professional development around assessments, reading instruction, summer school etc. <p>To access funds, districts must submit a brief application at www.iowagrants.gov. For guidance on how you might use your funds, please see the additional information provided in Appendix D: Finance.</p>
F2	When are the state funds available for the academic year?	Funds are available as applications are received.
F3	Will the monies be there for summer school for the school year?	As long as the budget guidance is followed, monies can be used per local decision. See the guidance in Appendix D: Finance .
F4	Will the funding process for this year be the same as last year? How about budgetary guidance?	Yes. Please refer to Appendix D: Finance for the brief application link and guidance on using funds.

INTENSIVE INTERVENTION AND CORE INSTRUCTION

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
I1	Is the required minimum of 90 minutes daily of scientific research-based reading instruction in addition to my current literacy block for core instruction?	No. If your core literacy block for all students is at least 90 minutes and composed of scientific, research-based reading instruction, it satisfies the requirement to provide this service for all students who are persistently at risk in reading. If your core instruction is not at least 90 minutes and composed of scientific, research-based reading instruction, then you will need to implement such a program for students who are persistently at risk in reading. You must still provide additional instruction or support to these students beyond the 90 minute requirement, which may include but is not limited to small group instruction; reduced teacher-student ratios; more frequent progress monitoring; tutoring or mentoring; extended school-day, week, or year; and summer reading programs.
I2	Where can I find a list of scientific, evidence-based reading curricula and instructional materials?	There is no IDE approved intervention or strategies list. A Reviewed Intervention List, and criteria used to indicate evidence, is available in Appendix E. Intensive Intervention and Core Instruction .
I3	Are schools required to provide 90 minutes of research-based core reading instruction to all students?	The number of minutes specific to core reading instruction is a district decision. However, it is strongly recommended that districts devote at least 90 minutes to core reading instruction for all students.
I4	How much more time beyond the 90 minutes do I need to provide to a student?	It depends on the intervention being used and what the guidelines for implementation regarding the specific intervention entail. It is important to implement the evidence-based intervention with fidelity, or in the manner the designer intended. The intensity and duration of intervention should be adjusted as needed to ensure participating students are gaining the desired improvement.
I5	Who can I count as certified instructional staff with appropriate training and professional development?	All licensed staff that have received training and professional development on the specific reading curriculum qualify.

INTENSIVE INTERVENTION & CORE INSTRUCTION

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
16	How would I determine if the reading curriculum was implemented with fidelity?	Fidelity is determined by the curriculum selected, therefore, it depends on the curriculum being used and what the guidelines for implementation entail.
17	What subjects are covered under “core academic subjects”?	At a minimum, this includes subjects required to meet the offer and teach requirements for an elementary school [see IAC 281—12.5(3)]. The focus is providing assistance in the area of reading so that students can access all other subjects that require reading.
18	What is the mechanism for reporting which intensive reading interventions and supports we are using?	The Department gathers information through the state data system [Iowa TIER] for all districts choosing to use that system. This information may also be reported in the district’s CSIP. Districts choosing to use other approved measures for progress monitoring outside the state data system will need to enter intervention and progress monitoring data into Iowa TIER as specified. Reporting mechanisms and requirements will be proved on the Iowa TIER Knowledge Base.
19	What is meant by an altered instructional day?	“Altered instructional day” means that the student will be provided with a minimum of 90 minutes of reading instruction in the core literacy block each day. In addition, more intensive reading intervention will be provided using time beyond the 90 minute core literacy block to successfully address the student’s specific reading needs.
110	What is meant by specialized diagnostic information?	“Specialized diagnostic information” does not imply a diagnostic test but rather the collection of additional information (e.g., through teacher observation, diagnostic teaching, classroom formative assessment, examination of student error patterns in work samples, etc.) in order to determine what specific skill(s) the student may need assistance with in order to be proficient in reading.
111	How will I identify “reading strategies that research has shown to be successful”?	There is no IDE approved intervention or strategies list. A Reviewed Intervention List, and criteria used to indicate evidence, is available in Appendix E. <i>Intensive Intervention and Core Instruction</i> .
112	Why aren’t interventions required immediately when a child is below vendor benchmarks on an approved assessment?	It is recommended that interventions are provided immediately for students who are at risk in reading. Additionally, progress monitoring data will inform schools when a child who is at risk is not making adequate progress with current instruction to meet end of year goals.
113	When should we intervene with a student who is performing within the at risk range?	Although not required, it is recommended that supplemental interventions, be provided to students who are determined to be at risk in reading. However, it is required that these students’ progress is monitored using state approved tools. This will allow the school to monitor each student’s progress toward end of year goals.
114	Can I discontinue an intervention for a student identified as persistently at risk in reading in between benchmark periods?	No. Intervention may be discontinued when a student is no longer persistently at risk in reading. Universal screening data is required to assign a literacy status; adequately progressing, at risk, or persistently at risk. Screening measures and amount of time between screening periods are the most reliable and efficient means of determining literacy status.
115	What about students who are a little bit above or a little bit below the benchmark target?	Decision making will always be least reliable at the margins (i.e., slightly above or slightly below a target). Additional caution, thought, and monitoring of student performance will be critical at these scores. These students are still identified as at risk or persistently at risk in reading if they score below the benchmark target.

INTENSIVE INTERVENTION & CORE INSTRUCTION

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
I16	Does a classwide intervention count as an intensive intervention for students who are persistently at risk in reading?	No. Students who are persistently at risk in reading may participate in a classwide intervention but are required to receive additional intervention in smaller student-teacher ratio to remediate areas in which the student is persistently at risk in reading. While a classwide intervention will be useful for buildings with many students at risk in reading, these interventions are not intensive enough for students persistently at risk in reading.
I17	If a school has 60 minutes of research-based reading instruction for all students and provides students persistently at risk in reading 30 minutes of research-based intervention that meets code requirements, have the requirement of 90 minutes of approved reading instruction been met?	It depends. Students should be provided with interventions that meet the requirements of the rule and are designed to remediate areas in which the student is persistently at risk in reading. Research-based intervention programs provide guidance regarding implementation requirements and those should be followed. Refer to the definition of Intensive Instructional Services for more information.
I18	Can interventions for students persistently at risk in reading be provided within an already-existing 90 minute literacy block?	Students persistently at risk in reading should be provided with intervention in addition to the core reading instruction. When differentiation is included as part of a core program, this differentiation cannot be considered intervention for students persistently at risk in reading.
I19	Can the 90 minutes include 60 minutes of classroom core and 30 minutes of intervention?	For students persistently at risk in reading, at least 90 minutes of scientific, research-based reading instruction is required. These students should have access to core instruction and be provided with intensive instruction in addition to the core instruction. The specific breakdown of these minutes is a local decision. Refer to the definition of Intensive Instructional Services for more information.

IOWA TIER AND DATA REPORTING

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
IT1	What if we want to do more than the minimum single measure required by ELI?	<p>If using the state-supported data system, all state purchased measures are available. For the purpose of ELI, you need only designate one default measure per grade level for calculating literacy status (persistently at risk, at risk, or adequately progressing).</p> <p>A district may choose to give more than one complementary measure when recommended by the test developer, such as aReading and CBM-R in the Fast Bridge Learning suite of assessments, or multiple measures for any number of best practice reasons. For additional guidance on the FAST/Fast Bridge Learning measures, please see Appendix A: Assessment: Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring.</p>
IT2	How can I change the screening measure for a grade level?	At the beginning of the school year, a school must verify the screening measure it will use per grade level, per building in the state supported data system. This may not be changed until the following year. If changes in the default screening measure are needed, the principal or internal coach role may submit a ticket in the Iowa TIER system. Non-FAST schools must also submit a ticket in Iowa TIER when switching to FAST assessments to make them visible, and specify the default measures by grade level.

IOWA TIER AND DATA REPORTING

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
IT3	Do year-round schools follow the same screening administration windows as August to June schools?	No. Year-round and extended year schools have tailored screening windows established and coordinated with the Department.
IT4	What are the reporting requirements for 4th grade and above, for students who continue to be persistently at risk?	<p>Students who begin the year as persistently at risk are required to participate in benchmarking across the year [fall, winter, spring]. Districts are required to report benchmarking, as well as intensive interventions provided upon request, for students identified as persistently at risk.</p> <p>The Department gathers benchmarking data through the state data system [Iowa TIER] for all districts choosing to use that system. For districts not using the state data system, Intensive intervention information may also be reported in the district's CSIP. Districts using another approved measure for progress monitoring may be required to enter progress monitoring and intervention data into Iowa TIER when specified.</p> <p>The mechanisms for reporting data are located in Appendix F: Iowa TIER and Data Reporting</p>
IT5	How long does it take to give aReading? How do we set up for administration?	The amount of time for set up and administration depends upon the number of students and technical capacity of the local environment. The technical assistance for setting up an aReading lab is located in Appendix F: Iowa TIER and Data Reporting .
IT6	How do we make a building visible in TIER (to assess grades 4 and above or as a non-public)?	If any building in your district uses Iowa TIER, please have the internal coach or principal role submit a ticket in Iowa TIER. For non-publics outside of Iowa TIER and when the internal coach or principal may be unavailable (for example, summer), please email tiersupport@iowa.gov .

PARENT/GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
PN1	How often do schools need to apprise the parent or guardian of the student's academic progress?	Information showing the student's progress on a valid and reliable progress monitoring assessment should be provided to parents/guardians at least quarterly.
PN2	Will the Department provide an example of what needs to be in the "parent/guardian contract"?	Yes. An example parent/guardian contract is provided in Appendix G: Parent/Guardian Notification .
PN3	What is meant by "participation in regular parent-guided home reading"?	Guidance for parents/guardians to assist their children at home are provided by the Iowa Reading Research Center along with activities parents/guardians can implement with their children to assist them in reading.
PN4	At what point in the year are parents/guardians notified of their student(s) persistently at risk status?	Parent/guardian notification is required within a reasonable period (e.g. within two weeks) of the universal screening window in which persistently at risk status is initially determined. Additionally, schools are encouraged to notify parents/guardians of students who are determined to be at risk.
PN5	How are universal screening and progress monitoring data, as well as parent/guardian notices and related information, documented? Does this information go into the student's cumulative file?	Universal screening and progress monitoring data, as well as parent/guardian notices and related information, are required to be kept by districts. How districts store these data is a local decision, as long as they are maintained in a reasonable manner.

PARENT/GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
PN6	When will sample parent/guardian forms be available?	Sample parent/guardian forms are available in Appendix G: Parent/Guardian Notification .
PN7	The law indicates we are to report progress to parents/guardians quarterly, however our school is on a trimester schedule. Do we report progress quarterly or on a trimester schedule?	Districts on a trimester schedule may report progress to parents/guardians on a trimester schedule.
PN8	The parent/guardian letter and contract looks like the Title 1 parent compact - do we need to do both of these?	There is a combined version that meets both sets of requirements within Appendix G: Parent/Guardian Notification .
PN9	Do parents or guardians have to sign the contract?	No. It is recommended that all parties sign the contract to ensure the principal, educators, and parents/guardians are working collaboratively to support the student in the area of reading.
PN10	Do we have to use the sample forms or are other options OK? What must be on the parent/guardian communication if the district creates their own?	The sample forms are not required. The elements of communication must include universal screening data that indicates their child(ren) is/are below benchmark, a description of current services and proposed supplemental instructional services that will be provided to the student to remediate persistently at risk status, strategies parents/guardians may implement at home, and regular updates regarding student progress. It is strongly recommended that districts schedule Early Literacy Progression meetings with parents/guardians of students persistently at risk and at risk in reading. Sample agendas of meetings will be included in Appendix G: Parent/Guardian Notification when available.

PERSISTENTLY AT RISK

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
PatR1	Does a district have to provide intensive reading instruction to students who are at risk in reading?	Intervention for students who are at risk is highly recommended. If multiple data points suggest a student is not on track to meet end of year goals (i.e., spring benchmarks), interventions should be implemented for the at risk student.
PatR2	How should we use progress monitoring information? It seems like decisions are all based only on the universal screening data.	For the purposes of literacy status designation (Persistently at Risk, At Risk, and Adequately Progressing), universal screening data is the primary indicator. For students identified as at risk, progress monitoring data can be used to help identify the student as needing intervention if they are not already receiving intervention. Additionally, for all students receiving intervention, progress monitoring should be used to monitor the student's improvement toward end of year goals (i.e., spring benchmark) given the intervention they receive.
PatR3	Do we only consider the universal screening periods within the current school year to determine at risk or persistently at risk?	No. Decisions related to at risk and persistently at risk are made by examining scores at adjacent universal screening periods. This applies both within and across school years. For example, a student who was identified as being at risk in the spring may be identified as persistently at risk once fall universal screening occurs if the student scores below benchmark in the fall.

PERSISTENTLY AT RISK

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
PatR4	Can the labels of at risk and persistently at risk be applied to grades above third grade?	Schools are encouraged to use the same, good instructional practices above third grade. The legislation applies to only grades kindergarten through third. However, students who are persistently at risk at the end of grade three are required to continue receiving intervention and benchmarking until they are proficient readers.
PatR5	If we use two of the approved universal screening assessments and a student scores above benchmark target on one and below on the other, which should we use?	Districts must identify which one of the approved measures at each grade level are used for literacy status purposes before the first day of the screening period. A school may still use both, but one will be used consistently across the three screening windows. Default measures are designated by grade and by building. The default measures roll forward each year, and if changes are needed, the principal or internal coach role can submit a ticket in the Iowa TIER system with the request. Directions for selecting the default measures are in Appendix F: Iowa TIER and Data Reporting .
PatR6	If I can retest a student during the universal screening period, can I retest all students whose scores are below the benchmark?	No. Retesting students is only appropriate in rare and unusual circumstances where the validity of the results are suspect. Unless these types of circumstances exist, students should only be assessed once during a screening period.
PatR7	How does persistently at risk, as defined by performance on universal screening measures, relate to proficiency?	Persistently at risk status is determined by results of universal screening assessments over time. Universal screening is intended to predict performance on a general outcome measure. The purpose of universal screening is to determine which students are on track for proficiency and which need additional, perhaps more intensive, instruction.
PatR8	What is required when students move on to 4th grade persistently at risk in reading?	Districts must continue to provide intensive reading instruction to any student who is persistently at risk. Students who are persistently at risk must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive intensive interventions, and • Participate in benchmarking across the year (fall, winter, spring) Students who begin the year as persistently at risk, but are no longer considered persistently at risk at any point throughout the year, must still participate in benchmarking across the year [fall, winter, spring]. A student is no longer considered persistently at risk determined through one of the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficient on statewide assessment; • At or above benchmark on one screening period; • Portfolio review as defined in the Early Literacy Retention Guidance; or • Alternative assessment as defined in the Early Literacy Retention Guidance.

RETENTION

Please refer to the Early Literacy Retention Guidance

SPECIFIC STUDENT POPULATIONS

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
SSP1	Are students with IEPs exempt from universal screening and progress monitoring?	<p>No. Students with IEPs must also be given universal screening and progress monitoring assessments. This includes the requirement of weekly progress monitoring, if the student is identified by screening as at risk or persistently at risk in reading. The methods to progress monitor IEP goals and ELI-required progress monitoring may, or may not, be the same.</p> <p>A student with an IEP that designates that he or she is to take an alternate assessment instead of the universal screening and progress monitoring of reading required by these rules is to take the Dynamic Learning Maps Aligned Literacy Alternate Assessment- Iowa (kindergarten through third grade) which meets the requirements of universal screening and progress monitoring. This assessment is broader than reading but inclusive of the requirements of ELI.</p>
SSP2	Are students with IEPs exempt from the retention requirements?	<p>Not necessarily. A student who has an IEP that specifies participation in the assessments required by these rules is not appropriate (i.e. that student should take an alternate assessment) is exempt from the retention requirement. Any other student with an IEP is not exempt unless they meet one of the other good cause exemption criteria. The retention decision-making guide will be used to make retention determinations. Note that even if the student's IEP specifies that participation in the assessments required under this section of code is not appropriate, that student must still be assessed using an alternate assessment. Students with IEPs are not exempt from being assessed. Please refer to the Early Literacy Retention Guidance for further information.</p>
SSP3	What does this mean for students who currently receive IEP services in the area of reading? Do these rules apply to them?	<p>Yes. When a student receives special education services in the area of reading, they are already receiving both intervention and progress monitoring services. Additionally, all students are general education students. Some also receive services through special education because of a disability and related needs. Students with reading IEP services already receive both intervention and progress monitoring services. These students should be able to take advantage of all appropriate services available to readers in the building, including those implemented as a result of the Early Literacy Progression law. Additionally, weekly progress monitoring is required of all students who are identified as at risk or persistently at risk in reading on the universal screening assessments, regardless of special education eligibility. Therefore, a student with an IEP may need to be more frequently monitored on his reading IEP goal than is required per the IEP in order to meet the requirements of the Early Literacy Progression rule.</p>
SSP4	Should we suspect a disability for a child who is at risk in reading?	<p>A disability can be suspected at any time. A public agency may suspect a child might have a disability when the child's performance is below the universal screening benchmark and the child is unique in the setting in their performance level. Universal screening data of all students are needed to make this judgement.</p>
SSP5	After providing intervention and progress monitoring, at what point do we decide that we suspect a student may have a disability?	<p>A disability can be suspected at any time. Commonly a disability may be suspected if a student has been provided with general instruction plus research-based supplemental instruction with sufficient frequency and duration and progress monitoring data indicate that progress is not sufficient to meet end of the year goals.</p>

SPECIFIC STUDENT POPULATIONS

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
SSP6	Can the specially designed instruction of an IEP be considered the intensive intervention and count towards the 90 minutes?	For students with IEPs and reading goals, IEP teams determine the specially designed instruction needs related to reading, including intervention needed in addition to core reading instruction. This includes both supports needed to access core instruction within the 90 minutes, as well as interventions needed to remediate skill deficiencies.
SSP7	How does a student's progress monitoring data help determine if the student is persistently at risk in reading?	<p>Only scores on the universal screening assessment are used to determine status as at risk or persistently at risk in reading. Universal screening assessment meets the legal requirement to consider both performance <i>and</i> progress to establish literacy status, because it considers the student's previous designated status in relation to current universal screening results. See Appendix H: Persistently at Risk.</p> <p>Progress monitoring data inform the need for intervention for students who are at risk and may inform decisions regarding intervention effectiveness for students receiving interventions.</p>
SSP8	Can accommodations be made when testing IEP students?	Accommodations related to a student's disability are decided by the IEP team. Accommodations are provided that allow students to access the assessment while holding the purpose of the assessment constant. For example, on the Iowa Assessments, it is inappropriate to read the reading portion of the test to students as an accommodation because it changes the test from an assessment of reading skills to a listening comprehension assessment. Similarly, with a reading fluency assessment, it is inappropriate to either read the assessment to the student or change the nature of the timing of the assessment, as those modifications alter the ability to assess the student's reading fluency.
SSP9	May a nonpublic school that chooses to collect information and provide the services in Iowa Code 279.68 and IAC 281-62, though not required, send students to the public school's summer reading program?	Yes.

SPECIFIC STUDENT POPULATIONS

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
SSP10	What are the requirements for students who are English learners (EL)?	<p>EL students are required to participate in universal screening and progress monitoring, as well as at risk and persistently at risk supports. Discontinue rules are present for some measures when the assessment is too difficult due to language issues. In individually determined circumstances the use of another approved assessment to determine literacy status may be appropriate.</p> <p>In certain circumstances, a below grade level measure may be used for weekly progress monitoring. Each approved measure for progress monitoring will have guidance for the use of off-level monitoring. The state purchased progress monitoring tools indicate that if the student is reading less than 10 wcpm on grade level passages, an off- grade level measure may be used. When administering an off-grade level measure, a grade level measure should be given (less frequently; typically once per month) to evaluate whether the student’s progress is sufficient to accelerate learning and close the gap. The measures are designed with discontinue rules to minimize student frustration.</p> <p>EL students may be considered for good cause exemption as indicated by the Early Literacy Retention Guidance.</p> <p>Please consult Appendix A: Assessment: Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring for directions for altering the progress monitoring measures, if needed.</p>
SP11	Does 279.68 apply to homeschool and/or dual-enrolled students?	<p>Iowa Code section 279.68 applies to homeschool and/or dual-enrollment students in that the district is required to offer the same services to this population as provided to any other student within the district. Specifically, districts are required to offer - but may not compel - any dual enrolled or HSAP student or parent or guardian to take part in any of the following: universal screening progress monitoring, parent/guardian contract, additional intensive reading instruction, 90 minutes of evidence-based instruction per day, retention, or attendance at a summer literacy program.</p> <p>Please see Appendix J: Specific Student Populations for a sample letter of notice to support this requirement.</p>
SP12	Can the parents/guardians of students who are homeschooled opt out of screening, progress monitoring, or additional reading services requirements?	<p>Yes. Students who are homeschooled may, but are not required to, participate in screening, progress monitoring or additional reading services. Districts should not compel students to be universally screened, have their progress monitored, or to accept additional reading instruction.</p> <p>Please consult Appendix J: Specific Student Populations for more specific technical assistance.</p>
SP13	Do these requirements apply to dual-enrolled students?	<p>It is required that districts offer universal screening, progress monitoring and additional reading services to dual-enrolled students, and students who participate in the district’s home school assistance program.</p> <p>Please see Appendix J: Specific Student Populations for further information</p>

SPECIFIC STUDENT POPULATIONS

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
SP14	Can a parent or guardian refuse to have their child tested?	Parent/guardian refusal is not permitted by current legal guidance with the exception of parents/guardians of students who are homeschooled. Next steps regarding parent/guardian refusal is a local decision. It is recommended that districts follow the same local steps as for any other parent/guardian refusal for any other required assessment.
SP15	How does persistently at risk status in reading relate to suspicion of disability?	<p>A disability can be suspected at any time, with or without progress monitoring or intervention; however some criteria for suspicion of disability are difficult to establish without this type of data (student response to instruction and intensification of instruction). A disability <i>may</i> be suspected if a student has been provided with quality general instruction plus research-based supplemental instruction with sufficient frequency and duration, and progress monitoring data indicate growth is less than desired. The local team will consider many factors, including access, and exclusionary factors, when making this determination. Ultimately, suspicion of educational disability is a local educational team decision, guided by data and child find procedures.</p> <p>Difficulty with reading and the need for intervention alone do not warrant automatic suspicion of disability.</p>
SSP16	If a student's IEP designates that he or she is to take an alternate assessment, is parent/guardian notification, and summer school required?	Parent/Guardian Notification is required in adherence to special education guidance requirements. Summer school is required, and the parent/guardian notification regarding this component is required. Extended School Year Services may meet the requirement of summer school if the ESY meets the criteria specified in the guidance provided for summer school.

SUMMER SCHOOL

SS1	Do students who are identified as at risk in the spring need summer school?	Although not required, summer school would be an excellent intervention opportunity for students who are identified of being at risk in reading.
SS2	During summer school sessions, which grade level of progress monitoring materials should be used?	Use the grade level material for the grade just completed.
SS3	Do retention requirements apply to students who attend summer school at the end of third grade?	Please see Early Literacy Retention Guidance.
SS4	Can parents or guardians indicate they do not want their child to participate in the summer program?	The procedures followed regarding parent/guardian refusal are local decisions; however the child must be retained if the child is determined to be persistently at risk in reading and not proficient in reading, and the child fails to attend and complete the intensive summer literacy program.
SS5	If there is a summer school program for special education students, can the non-proficient students be blended into this program? Can funds be blended?	Extended School Year services are designed to meet specially designed instruction needs of a student based on his or her disability. These interventions may or may not include interventions that meet the requirements of summer school for students persistently at risk in reading. Funds for both special education and the early literacy progression rule are required to be used for their purposes.

SUMMER SCHOOL

No	QUESTION	ANSWER
SS6	Is the Intensive Summer Reading requirement only for third grade students that are persistently at risk or all students that are persistently at risk?	The requirement for summer school is only related to third grade students. Other summer school offerings are a local decision.
SS7	What are the requirements for transportation of students to the summer reading program (for public and nonpublic students)?	The legislation does not address transportation for summer reading programs. As a general rule, transportation is required whenever attendance is required of a student and the time and distance guidelines that apply during the school year would apply to transportation to required summer programs.
SS8	Previous guidance indicates that a nonpublic school that is doing the progress monitoring and following the ELI law can attend summer school in a public school. Who pays for that?	Yes, nonpublic school students may attend the intensive summer reading program(s) offered by public schools. The public school district is responsible for funding nonpublic and public school students in district who attend the intensive summer reading program(s) required by 279.68.
SS9	How do I qualify for a waiver of the summer reading program requirement in 2018?	Waiver applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and must demonstrate a good faith effort in implementing a summer reading program along with plans for future implementation of a program within a year.
SS10	Can I get a waiver for more than one year?	No.
SS11	If I didn't apply for a waiver in 2018, may I apply for a waiver in a future year?	No.
SS12	If a district is granted a waiver of the intensive summer reading program, what happens to the kids who were not yet proficient and needed the program?	The one-year waiver for providing intensive summer reading programs precludes districts from enacting retention decisions for that year. If a district applies for and is granted a waiver from the Department, retention and attendance at an intensive summer reading program for students identified as persistently at risk in reading at the winter benchmark of their third grade year does not apply. This applies to the 2018 summer only.
SS13	If the district chooses a program not listed as one of the recommended interventions, how is the department defining empirical evidence? What will accountability look like in terms of ensuring the program is based on empirical evidence?	Schools need to document the evidence used to make the determination about empirical evidence used to select the program, and be prepared to share it with the department if requested. Evidence-based studies such as those in peer reviewed journals, and data from your own population of students resulting in positive results (showing impact for the majority of students receiving it) might be examples of empirical evidence for the selection of the program.

Definitions

Alternate assessment – An assessment provided to a student with a significant cognitive disability pursuant to his or her IEP in addition to universal screening and progress monitoring assessments. In most states, less than one percent of the student body take such assessments. The alternate assessment in this case is aligned to alternate academic achievement standards in reading.

Alternative assessment – A district-wide assessment that is designed to measure Iowa Core ELA standards that is administered to all children may be used to determine that a student is a proficient reader. This includes, but is not limited to, the evidence-based universal screening assessment used in the district.

Approved assessment – An assessment that appears on the Iowa Department of Education’s annually updated list of assessments determined to meet the standards appropriate for the purposes of universal screening and progress monitoring; OR an assessment that meets Department-adopted minimum standards for validity and reliability at the appropriate grade level and for the appropriate skills assessed. In addition, universal screening measures must meet minimum standards for area under the curve, sensitivity, and specificity; progress monitoring measures must meet minimum standards for number of available forms of demonstrated equivalence and reliability of slope.

Area under the curve – A statistical measure used to gauge how accurately an assessment identifies students in need of assistance. It is derived from Receiver Operating Characteristic curves (ROC) and is presented as a number to 2 decimal places.

Assessment – A process to determine how a child functions by having him or her perform a selected sample of actions that are representative of the desired content.

At Risk Reader - Students are considered at risk in reading when they meet either of the following criteria:

- Score below the vendor benchmark during a universal screening period for the first time.
- Have been previously identified as persistently at risk and then meet the vendor benchmark during the next universal screening period.

Benchmark – Performance on an assessment that is compared to a criterion of acceptable performance.

Chronic early absenteeism – The extent to which a student in Kindergarten through third grade is frequently absent from school.

Classwide intervention - An intervention/program that includes one or more foundational literacy skills (print concepts, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, phonics/decoding, irregular/sight words, fluency, oral language, vocabulary, comprehension, spelling and writing). Classwide intervention is implemented with an entire class of students. This would be implemented in addition to core literacy instruction when a large number of students are not at benchmark.

Comprehension – Constructing meaning from text by accessing prior knowledge, understanding vocabulary and concepts, making inferences, and forming connections between critical ideas.

Dyslexia [New 2016] – Dyslexia means a specific and significant impairment in the development of reading, including but not limited to phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension that is not solely accounted for by intellectual disability, sensory disability or impairment, or lack of appropriate instruction.

Evidence-based practice – A practice that has been established as being effective through scientific research that conforms to a set of explicit criteria as defined by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

Fluency – Reading text at an appropriate rate, with appropriate accuracy and expression.

Forms of demonstrated equivalence – Alternate forms need to be of equivalent difficulty to be useful as a progress monitoring tool. Having many forms of equivalent difficulty allows a teacher to determine how the student is responding to instruction because the change in score can be attributed to student skill versus a change in the measure. Approaches typically used to determine this are:

- Readability formulae (e.g., Fleish-Kincaid, Spache, Lexile, FORCAST)
- Equipercetiles
- Euclidian Distance
- Item Response Theory
- Stratified Item Sampling

Intensive instructional services – Intensive instructional services typically include some combination of increased time, more explicit instruction, enhanced instructional routines, more opportunities for students to respond and practice, enhanced feedback techniques, focus on a smaller number of teaching objectives at a time and smaller student to teacher ratios. Intensive instruction is aligned with each individual student's educational needs. Students with similar needs can receive group instruction, but each student receives what he or she needs. Instruction is provided in addition to the universal instruction that all students receive.

Iowa's ELI Alternate Assessment [New 2016] - An assessment provided to a student with a significant cognitive disability pursuant to his or her IEP that meets the requirements of universal screening and progress monitoring. This assessment is broader than reading but inclusive of the requirements of ELI. In most states, less than one percent of the student body take such assessments. The ELI alternate assessment is aligned to alternate academic achievement standards, Iowa Core Essential Elements. Therefore, students with IEPs that indicate the need for the ELI Alternate Assessment are considered *persistently at risk*.

Kindergarten—includes programming for children who are kindergarten age eligible. These children receive K-12 student aid. [281-12.5(2); 282.3]

Parent/Guardian-guided home-reading – Parents or guardians working directly with their child at home, on specific reading skills that have a high likelihood of leading to improved outcomes.

Persistently at Risk in reading – A student whose reading performance is below a standard set on an approved assessment and whose progress on a measure that meets the requirements of this chapter is minimal. Learners are considered to be persistently at risk in reading when they meet either of the following criteria:

- A. Score below the vendor benchmark during a universal screening period directly after a screening period in which they were considered At Risk.
- B. Score below the vendor benchmark for two consecutive universal screening periods.

Phonemic awareness – The ability to identify, produce, and manipulate individual sounds in words.

Phonics – The ability to apply knowledge of letter-sounds correspondences and spelling patterns to read words.

Portfolio review – Assessment of performance conducted by reviewing a sample of a student's work.

Prekindergarten/Preschool—includes programming for children who are not kindergarten age eligible. These children may or may not receive state funding based on the program and the services they receive. This includes Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs and Early Childhood Special Education instructional services as specified on the Individualized Education Program (IEP). [281-12.5(1)]

Progress monitoring – Routine checks of the learning growth (i.e., rate of progress) a student demonstrates. In order to assess students' learning frequently, progress monitoring is typically conducted once a week.

Reading or reading readiness – Having the necessary reading skills as measured by proficiency on the statewide test and/or meeting benchmark on the universal screening assessments.

Reading Proficiency – Minimum level of acceptable student performance on an assessment.

Reliability – The stability of a score across different forms, items, time or observers.

Reliability of slope – A statistical measure that tells us how accurately the slope represents a student’s rate of improvement. Two criteria are used:

- Number of observations, or student data points, needed to calculate slope.
- Coefficients for reliability for slope. This should be reported via HLM (also called LMM or MLM) results. If calculated via OLS, the coefficients are likely to be lower. *

* HLM=Hierarchical Linear Modeling; LMM=Linear Mixed Modeling; MLM=Multilevel Modeling; OLS=Ordinary Least Squares

Research-based practices – Strategies or programs which rely on evidence-based studies that have yet to compile specific evidence for that particular practice, as defined by the ESEA.

Scientific, research-based reading instruction – Instruction carried out with fidelity that is based on scientifically- based reading research as defined in the ESEA as reauthorized in 2002. Per that definition, 'scientifically-based reading research' means research that:

- applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties; and
- includes research that-
 - employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
 - involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
 - relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and
 - has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

Sensitivity/Specificity – A statistical measure that gauges how accurately a tool identifies students in need of assistance.

Teacher observation – An assessment procedure in which information is collected by watching and recording characteristics of individuals or environments.

Universal screening – A brief assessment that is done with all students in a grade or school to determine which students are on track for proficiency and which need additional, perhaps more intensive, instruction. A healthy system would show that 80 -90% of the students are projected to be successful on an outcome measure and therefore are responding positively to the instruction they are receiving.

Validity – The extent to which a test measures what it purports to measure.

Vocabulary – Oral vocabulary includes words that are understood through listening and speaking, while reading vocabulary includes words that are understood when reading text.

Additional Support

[Application for Funds](#). Link goes to iowagrants.gov for schools to apply for Early Literacy grant funds.

[Approved Literacy Assessments](#). This document contains the results of the annual universal screening and progress monitoring assessment reviews.

[Early Literacy Guidance](#). This document contains the full Early Literacy Implementation Guidance with the exception of the separate Early Literacy Retention Guidance.

[Early Literacy Implementation webpage](#). This contains access to all documents and information related to § 279.68 and IAC 281—62

[Early Literacy Retention Guidance](#). This document contains the full Early Literacy Retention Guidance.

[Early Literacy Technical Assistance Appendices](#). This document is to be used as a companion to the official guidance document, and contains all the appendices referred to throughout this document.

[Iowa Early Learning Standards](#). This document contains Iowa’s Early Learning Standards.

[Iowa Early Literacy Alternate Assessment](#). This link goes to information and resources on Iowa’s Early Literacy Alternate Assessment.

[Reviewed Interventions Brief](#). This document contains summary information regarding the Iowa Department of Education’s review of PK-12 literacy interventions.

[Teacher Observation Tool](#). This document is the Early Literacy Teacher Observation Tool.

[Universal Screening Windows](#). This document provides information about the current year’s universal screening windows.

Technical Assistance

The technical assistance appendices document contains the following appendices:

- **Appendix A: *Assessment: Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring*** - Appendix A lists the approved tools for universal screening and progress monitoring and includes resources to help meet the letter and spirit of the law.
- **Appendix B: *Continuous Improvement*** - Appendix B contains tools for systemic reflection to be used within a collaborative inquiry process. These tools initially focus on the analysis of universal screening and progress monitoring data within early literacy.
- **Appendix C: *Early Childhood*** - Appendix C will contain resources to help districts be thoughtful about programming decisions impacted by funding decisions, age by September 15, and past practices including transitional kindergarten.
- **Appendix D: *Finance*** - Appendix D contains tools to access funding (when available) and guidelines for expenditures that meet the intent of the Early Literacy Implementation Guidance.
- **Appendix E: *Intensive Intervention and Core Instruction*** - Appendix E includes resources on the intensification of instruction, reviewed interventions, and links to the Iowa Reading Research Center pertaining to core instruction.
- **Appendix F: *Iowa TIER and Data-Reporting*** - Appendix F provides technical assistance links to the data-reporting requirements of ELI and navigating the state supported data system (Iowa TIER).
- **Appendix G: *Parent/Guardian Notification*** - Appendix G contains links to example parent/guardian letters, contracts, and meeting guidance, as well as the Parent (Guardian) Resources tab within the Iowa Reading Research Center website.
- **Appendix H: *Persistently at Risk*** – Appendix H contains the technical assistance documents to support teacher observation and to make literacy status (Adequately Progressing, At Risk, and Persistently at Risk) decisions for student skills, including multiple graphic displays of “how-to-think-about” missing or incomplete data.
- **Appendix I: *Retention*** – See separate Early Literacy Retention Guidance.
- **Appendix J: *Specific Student Populations***- Appendix J will provide technical assistance regarding specific student populations, including special education students, students with disabilities, students who are

blind/visually impaired and deaf/hard of hearing, English learners, non-public students, homeschool (CPI, IPI) students, students with dyslexia, and students whose parents/guardians wish to refuse assessment and/or intervention.

- **Appendix K: *Summer School*** - Appendix K will include the location of program criteria and implementation guidelines for summer reading programs, provided by the Iowa Reading Research Center to districts on the IRRC website. Summer school is required May 1, 2018.

Contacts

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