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**Iowa Department of Education**

***Kindergarten Literacy Assessment  
Preliminary Report***

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***Iowa Department of Education***

Grimes State Office Building  
Des Moines, IA 50319

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State of Iowa  
**Department of Education**  
Grimes State Office Building  
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## INTRODUCTION

### **Iowa Code 279.60: Kindergarten Literacy Assessment**

The 2005 General Assembly passed legislation requiring local school districts to complete the following:

- Administer Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) or a kindergarten benchmark assessment adopted by the Department of Education (DE) to every kindergarten student enrolled in the district no later than October 1 [Iowa Code 279.60(16)];
- Collect from each parent guardian or legal custodian of a kindergarten student enrolled in the district, information including, but not limited to, preschool attendance and demographic factors; and
- Report the results of the assessment and preschool information to the DE no later than January 1 of that school year.

### **Assessment Tools Used**

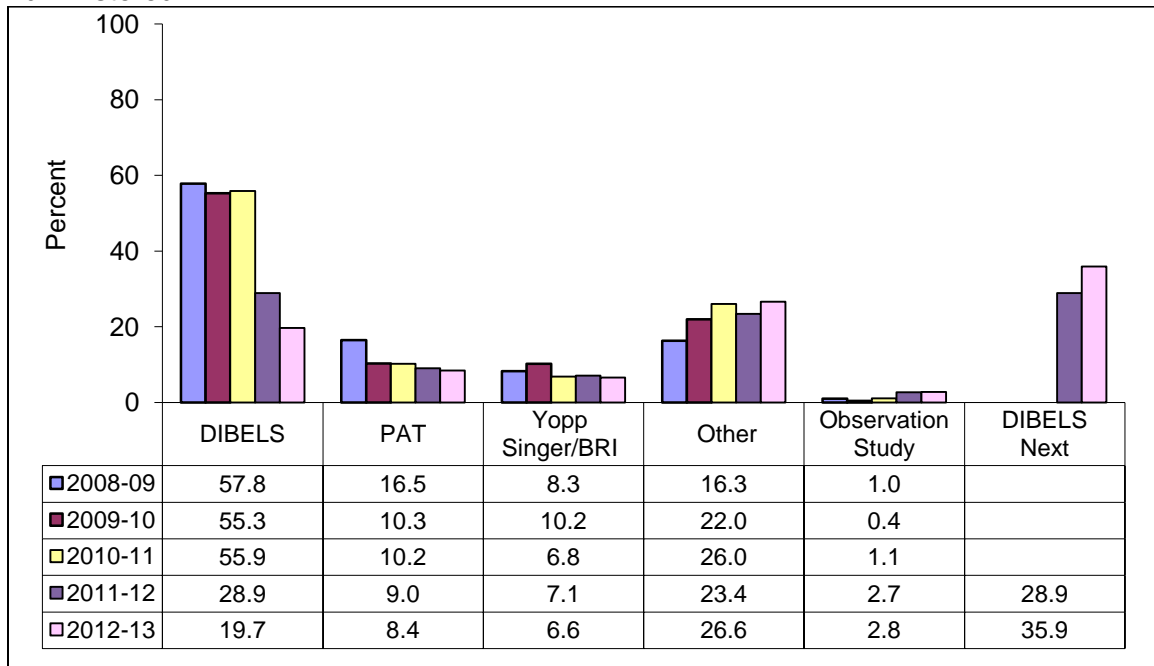
The DE aligned kindergarten assessment requirements of IAC 279.60 with the statutory requirements for comprehensive school improvement and early intervention/class size reduction. The assessments the districts select must be technically adequate.

### **Assessment Results**

In the 2012-2013 school year, preliminary data indicates all school districts reported data and 97 percent of the buildings with kindergarten classrooms submitted kindergarten assessment data. (This percentage does not reflect buildings with prekindergarten or transitional kindergarten.) A total of 38,143 students were enrolled in kindergarten.

Figure 1 depicts the various types of kindergarten literacy assessment instruments used in school buildings. Each of these assessment tools measures a different aspect of sound (phonemic) awareness in young children. As shown in Figure 1, the majority of schools reported data using the DIBELS Next, for the six categories of assessment tools used.

**Figure 1.** Percent of Iowa School Buildings and Kindergarten Assessment Tool Administered.

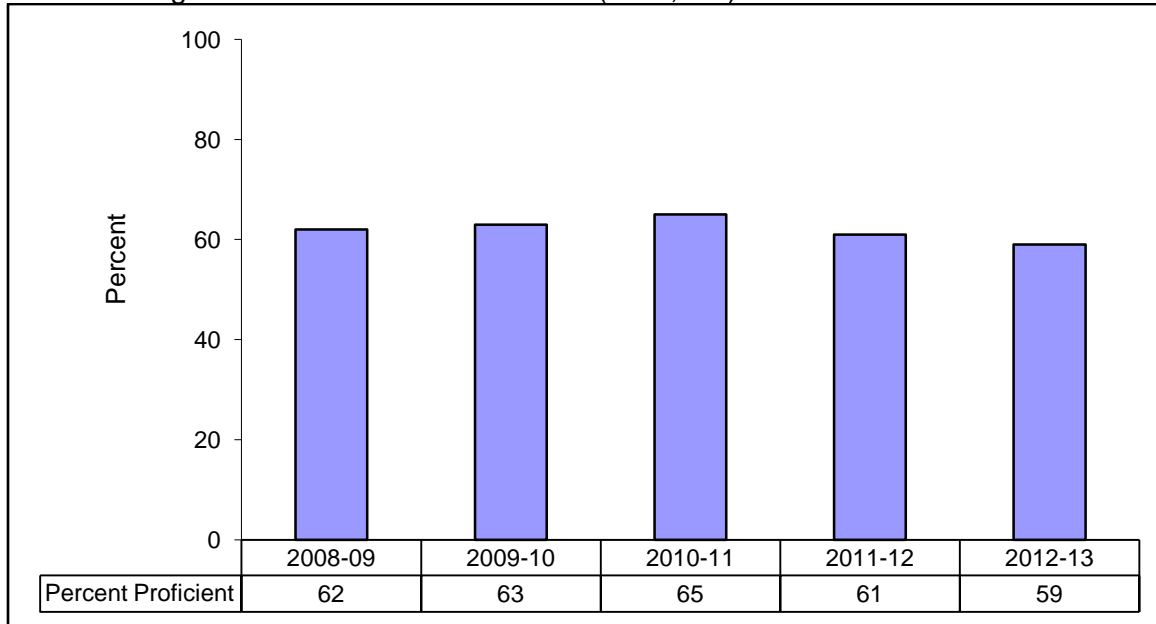


Data Source: Preliminary Student Reporting in Iowa Fall Files, Iowa Department of Education, 2012-2013

**DIBELS Data**

The DIBELS assessment measures student literacy skills for identifying beginning sounds of words by pointing to the picture matching the sound. Districts submitted data to the DE using the Student Reporting in Iowa data system. Figure 2 represents DIBELS data for a five-year trend, from 2008-2009 to 2012-2013. As indicated in Figure 2, the percent of students proficient in beginning sounds as measured by DIBELS decreased by 2 percent from 2011-2012 to 2012-2013. The number of students assessed using DIBELS has decreased from 18,923 in 2010-11 to 7,341 this fall.

**Figure 2.** Percent of Students Entering Kindergarten Proficient in Identifying Beginning Sounds Using DIBELS Assessment Measure (N= 7,341)



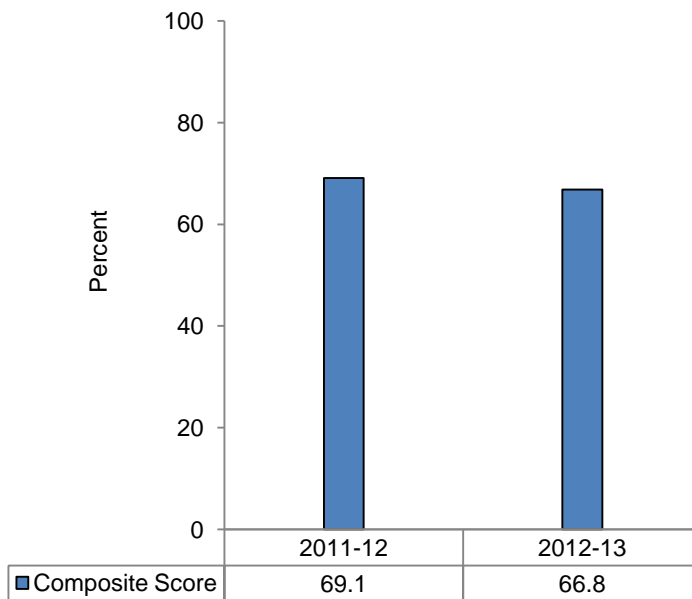
Data Source: Preliminary Student Reporting in Iowa Fall Files, Iowa Department of Education, 2012-2013

## DIBELS Next Data

The DIBELS Next assessment measures important early reading skills. The DIBELS Next First Sound Fluency subtest measures kindergarten student literacy skills for identifying beginning sounds of words by saying or producing the sound. The DIBELS Composite Score is a combination of the DIBELS kindergarten fall subtests (Letter Naming Fluency and First Sound Fluency) and provides the best overall estimate of the student's reading proficiency. The Letter Naming Fluency and First Sound Fluency measures were used to calculate the Composite Score for fall 2011. In 2011-2012, 13,362 students were assessed and 67 percent were proficient (See Figure 3).

While the percentage of students taking DIBELS Next has increased from 2011-2012 to the present the percentage of student falling in the at-risk category has declined from 19% to 17% in the past year. More students assessed fell into the "some risk" and "no risk" categories indicating given quality instruction these students are on track for reading success.

**Figure 3.** Percent of Students Entering Kindergarten Proficient in Beginning Reading Skills Using DIBELS Next Assessment Measure (N=13,362)



Data Source: Preliminary Student Reporting in Iowa Fall Files, Iowa Department of Education, 2012-2013

### **Report of Preschool Participation**

Districts reported the number of Students that had attended preschool at any time 12 months prior to registering for kindergarten. Districts gather the information through parent report or district records. The term “preschool” was not specifically defined in legislation and thus could have resulted in very different meanings for parents ranging from a childcare setting in a home to a private enterprise. The amount of time devoted to instruction may have been interpreted very differently by parents. The data collected and analyzed should be interpreted with extreme caution. In 2012, 38,143 students entered kindergarten. Districts indicated that based on parent report, 24,857 students attended preschool. Since the term “preschool” was a local definition, this data provides a broad interpretation of preschool based on parent perceptions.

### **Recommendations**

Results are supportive of statewide efforts to increase proficiency of literacy skills. Supporting statewide efforts include implementation of the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, the National Association for the Education of Young Children Program Standards, and Accreditation Criteria, the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the ongoing Every Child Reads: 3 to 5 Training. Ongoing efforts to support the alignment of assessment, curriculum, and instruction will assist in closing the achievement gap.

Current data indicate the following recommendations:

- Continue state funding supporting the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of quality preschool programming;
- Support quality preschool programs through maintaining program standards and achieving Iowa Core Curriculum for preschoolers;
- Support quality professional development that addresses the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, Iowa Early Learning Standards, and early literacy skills; and
- Provide technical assistance through the area education agency early childhood staff.