

## STATE OF IOWA

TERRY BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION JASON E. GLASS, DIRECTOR

DATE: February 21, 2013

TO: Education Stakeholders

FROM: David Tilly, Deputy Director, Iowa Department of Education

SUBJECT: Statewide Data System and Assessments

## Dear Colleagues:

Iowa is making a renewed commitment to promote early literacy results across the state. This issue has generated much support and interest from a cross-section of education stakeholders, including the Governor's office, the Legislature, the Iowa Department of Education, community groups and businesses, higher education, Area Education Agencies (AEAs), and schools.

Over the next few years, stakeholders from across the system will work together to support implementation of the most effective early literacy practices in all Iowa schools. To this end, the Department, AEAs, and schools have formed a collaborative to support and scale up the implementation of evidence-based early literacy practices across the state. As part of this collaboration, high-quality tools, resources, and supports will be identified and made available to Iowa schools and teachers.

We know that the best way to solve reading problems is to prevent them. To accomplish this, all schools must have a valid and reliable early warning system to identify students who are on track, as well as students who are not progressing adequately toward literacy. Some Iowa schools already have these universal screening systems in place, while others do not. As a first installment in our state's renewed commitment to literacy results, the Department is pleased to announce that contracts have been awarded for a statewide electronic data management system and for the statewide purchases of universal screening and progress monitoring assessments in literacy for pre-kindergarten through sixth grades. Together, these systems will form a research-based foundation for improving early literacy results across Iowa:

- The contract for the statewide electronic data system to support Response to Intervention (RtI) implementation, the Individualized Education Program (IEP), and the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) has been awarded to Technology and Information Educational Services (TIES) of St. Paul, Minnesota.
- The contract for valid and reliable universal screening tools and progress monitoring tools in kindergarten through sixth grades has been awarded to FAST Labs at the

University of Minnesota. The vendor is providing a suite of assessments known as the Formative Assessment System for Teachers (<u>FAST</u>).

The contract for universal screening and progress monitoring in 4-year-old pre-kindergarten programs has been awarded to the Center for Early Education and
Development at the University of Minnesota in cooperation with Early Learning Labs,
Inc. The vendor is providing a suite of assessments known as the Individual Growth and
Development Indicators (IGDIS).

All of these assessments will be provided at no charge to Iowa schools and school districts beginning this fall. Schools and pre-kindergarten programs will not be required to use the state-purchased assessments, but these will be available for use in all Iowa schools.

The Department and AEA system will continue to work with these vendors and will share details about training, system use, and specific timelines as they become available through the Department website at <a href="www.educateiowa.gov">www.educateiowa.gov</a> and through School Leader Update. We are excited about the opportunity that a new data system and assessments present for all learners in Iowa. We understand the urgency to know more about these tools and sincerely appreciate your patience as we finalize the details.