IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Early Literacy Technical Assistance Appendices

Updated August 31, 2016

This document contains technical assistance for §279.68. Information in this document will be updated continuously throughout the year. Updates will be posted on the Early Literacy Implementation website, and sections will be highlighted NEW with a date stamp.

Purpose

The following appendices are to be used as companion technical assistance to the Department's official guidance for §279.68. The technical assistance documents will be updated throughout the year, and revised versions will be highlighted for the user. The purpose of these documents is to aid Iowa's public school districts in implementing the requirements of Iowa Code §279.68 regarding early literacy progression. For specific requirements and permitted actions, please refer to published Early Literacy Guidance. Each appendix contains:

1. A brief description of the appendix contents.
2. Table of contents
3. All available example documents, protocols and/or other support materials

APPENDIX	TOPIC
A	Assessment: Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring
B	Continuous Improvement
C	Early Childhood
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A: Assessment: Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring

The following appendix is to be used as companion technical assistance to the Iowa Department of Education's (Department) official guidance for §279.68. The purpose of this appendix is to support schools in implementing the requirements of Iowa Code §279.68. The content is focused on assessments, specifically for universal screening and progress monitoring, and includes resources to help schools meet the letter and spirit of the law:

1. Universal Screening Window
2. Universal Screening Benchmarks
3. Approved Literacy Assessments
4. Changing from Non-FAST uploads to FAST Assessments
5. Changing the default progress monitoring measure

1. **Universal Screening Window.** The Department's general guidance regarding universal screening windows is that universal screening assessments are required 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. Specific universal screening window dates are published each year by the spring testing window of the previous year, and disseminated through the Iowa TIER listserv/email subscriptions as well as published on the Early Literacy Implementation (ELI) website.

Table A1 and A2. Below are example dates for the screening windows for regular school year schedules, as an illustration of what will be published each year on the ELI website. Year-round schools have specially designed windows tailored to their calendar. It is recommended that screening is planned within a two-week window, allowing some extra time the following week to catch any students missed.

Table A1.

Example Screening Windows for Regular School Year Schedules 2016-2017

Season	**Window Opens**	**Window Closes**
Fall	September 5	September 30
Winter	January 16	February 10
Spring	April 24	May 19

Table A2.

Example Screening Windows for Extended/Year Round School Year Schedules 2016-2017

Season	**Window Opens**	**Window Closes**
Fall	August 8th	September 2nd
Winter	January 16	February 10
Spring	May 22	June 16th

Certification is required. This means users are prevented from administering any assessment that has not been

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certified. Certification helps increase accuracy of obtained data.

Universal screening default measures[1] for the year need to be verified before the fall screening window in order to access the assessments. The previous year's default assessments by grade level will roll forward each year. The site profile feature of Iowa TIER provides a quick, at-a-glance of all measures available and default measures. There are two user roles that have the ability to verify or change assessments: internal coach and principal. At the beginning of each year, schools must verify the default assessments. A school may give multiple assessments even though only 1 can be selected as "default." (CompK and Comp1 are considered single measures for the purpose of default measures). If you believe you should have access to certain measures, and you receive an error please see **Appendix F:** *Iowa TIER and Data Reporting*, Item 4 for verifying the default measure or submit a ticket in the Iowa TIER system (internal coach or principal user role only).

2. **Universal Screening Benchmarks.** 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), benchmarks are programmed into the Iowa TIER data system. Below you will find benchmarks[2] for the following multiple levels and multiple measures.
    - **Table A3**: Comp K and Comp 1
    - **Table A4**: FAST CBM-R
    - **Table A5**: FAST aReading
    - **Table A6**: IGDIs

Table A3 contains benchmarks for Comp K and Comp 1. The best estimate of students' early literacy skills is the earlyReading composite. The composite consists of four selected subtests differently weighted to optimize the predictive relationship between the composite and broad reading achievement scores.

Table A3.

FAST K-1 earlyReading subtests and Composite 2016-2017

FAST K-1 earlyReading Subtests and Composite						
	Kindergarten			**1st Grade**		
Measure	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring
Concepts of Print	8					
Onset Sounds	12	16				
Letter Names	20					
Letter Sounds	5	29	41			
Word Segmenting		26	30	27	31	32
Nonsense Words		8	12	9	16	21
Sight Words-50			20			
Sight Words-150				17	50	67
Sentence Reading				14		
CBMreading					43	71
earlyReading Composite	34	52	65	34	55	68

[1] Universal Screening Default measures are those used to calculate literacy status: adequately progressing, at risk, persistently at risk.
[2] FAST Benchmarks for Comp K and Comp 1, FAST CBM-R, and FAST aReading are updated for 2016-2017 and included in Table 3. FastBridge Learning (FBL), the developer of FAST assessments, periodically updates risk indicator benchmarks.

Table A4 contains the benchmarks for CBM-R. The numbers in the table below reflect the median number of words read correctly across three passages. In order to achieve benchmark status, the student must read the number of words correct per minute at 95 percent accuracy. The standard for all grades levels and all seasons is 95 percent accuracy. CBM-R is a measure of accuracy, automaticity, and expression in connected text.

Table A4.

FAST CBM-R Benchmarks 2016-2017

FAST CBMreading			
Grade	**Fall**	**Winter**	**Spring**
Kdg			
1st		43	71
2nd	58	87	106
3rd	90	116	131
4th	116	136	150
5th	133	151	163
6th	142	159	172

Table A5 contains the benchmarks for aReading. aReading is a computer adaptive reading assessment that presents the student with 30 questions of varying difficulty. The difficulty varies by the student level of accuracy on the previous question. Generally speaking, an incorrect response generates a question of less difficulty, and a correct response generates a question of equivalent or greater difficulty. The scores in the table below are categorized as RIT scores and represent the level of student achievement from kindergarten to 12th grade.

Table A5.

FAST aReading Benchmarks 2016-2017

FAST aReading			
Grade	**Fall**	**Winter**	**Spring**
Kdg		417	435
1st	435	454	471
2nd	469	481	489
3rd	487	497	503
4th	500	507	513
5th	509	517	522
6th	516	523	527

Benchmarks represent the lowest score that "passes" the screening. Any score lower than this score is interpreted as at risk or needing additional attention.

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IGDIs as universal screener for 4 year olds.

Benchmarks were established to identify those preschool students who are, and are not, on track for literacy success. The benchmarks represent the lowest score that "passes" the screening. Any score lower than those listed is interpreted as at risk.

Individual subtest cut points are listed below. The Full Set Score is calculated and displayed within Iowa TIER. To meet the Full Set target, a student must be above benchmark in at least three of four domains. Each domain has one test, *except* for phonological analysis which has two tests during the winter and spring window. If a student is below benchmark on either of these tests they are considered below benchmark in that domain.

Table A6.

Individual Growth and Development Indicators: Benchmarks 2016-2017

IGDIs – 4-year-old			
Measure	**Fall**	**Winter**	**Spring**
Picture Naming	9	9	9
Rhyming	10	9	11
Sound Identification	10	9	13
Which One Doesn't Belong	9	9	9
First Sounds/Alliteration		9	9
Full Set Score	Note: IGDIs Full Set scores are computed and displayed within Iowa TIER		

3. **Approved Literacy Assessments.** Districts are required to assess all Kindergarten through third grade students three times a year [fall, winter, spring] using a Department-approved universal screening assessment. The current list of approved assessments can be found on the ELI page of the Department website educateiowa.gov or in the Additional Supports section at the end of ELI Guidance

   Schools that want to switch from Non-FAST uploads to FAST assessments within the Iowa TIER system should submit a ticket (request) in the Knowledge Base to make assessments visible and select a default assessment by grade level.

4. **Changing the default progress monitoring measure.** 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 FAST 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. Steps for changing the progress monitoring measure are located in the Iowa TIER Knowledge Base, Progress Monitoring.

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B: Continuous Improvement

The following appendix is to be used as companion technical assistance to the Department's official guidance for §279.68. The purpose of this appendix is to support schools in implementing the requirements of Iowa Code §279.68. The content includes general information on continuous improvement as it relates to early literacy, collaborative inquiry questions which serve as the foundation of Iowa's Continuous School Improvement Process, general guidance around chronic and early absenteeism, and information regarding protocols to support schools to identify barriers and address areas of concern within their Comprehensive School Improvement Plan:

1. General information on continuous improvement
2. Collaborative Inquiry Questions
3. Chronic and Early Absenteeism
4. Protocols to support schools to identify barriers and address areas of concern

1. **General Information on continuous improvement**. 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[New 2016] (1) each major racial and ethnic group, (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:
   - Percent of students assessed with a valid and reliable universal screening tool.
   - Percent of students not meeting benchmark assessed with a valid and reliable progress monitoring tool at least 90% of the weeks between screening periods.
   - Percent of students at benchmark on universal screening assessment.
   - Percent of students at or above benchmark in the fall and remaining at or above 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.

   Schools are required to identify barriers, and address any areas of concern based on these analyses within their Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (within the CASA application). Appendix B provides access to tools for systemic reflection to be used within a collaborative inquiry process[3] based on these analyses. Support for the use of these tools may be accessed through the Area Education Agencies (AEAs).

2. **Collaborative Inquiry Questions.** The Collaborative Inquiry Questions are used to drive the process of continuous improvement in Iowa and serve as the foundation of implementation of the Iowa Core and Iowa Early Learning Standards within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports. Table B1 contains the overall Collaborative Inquiry Questions. These questions were developed to be used within a collaborative inquiry process supported within

[3] The collaborative inquiry process serves as the foundation of implementation of the Iowa Core within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports within Iowa's Continuous School Improvement Process, and Differentiated Accountability Model. This appendix does not include (a) professional learning related to the use of these tools, (b) provision of information about how to complete a Comprehensive School Improvement Plan, or (c) description of Iowa's Continuous School Improvement Process or Differentiated Accountability Model. Please visit the Iowa Department of Education website for more information regarding the completion of a Comprehensive School Improvement Plan, Iowa's Continuous School Improvement Process or Differentiated Accountability Model.

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Iowa's Continuous School Improvement Process. Each question indicated in Table B1 has related steps that support schools to identify answers. For the building level steps related to each question, access the Differentiated Accountability page on the Department website.

Table B1.

Collaborative Inquiry Questions

CONSENSUS	
A. Is there initial and ongoing administrator consensus to develop and implement MTSS?	
B. Is there initial and ongoing staff consensus to develop and implement MTSS?	
CONSENSUS, INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPLEMENTATION	
C. Is there a leadership team willing to accept responsibility for development, implementation, and sustainability of MTSS?	
D. Do we have an established and ongoing collaborative inquiry process for implementation of MTSS?	
	1. Is the Universal Tier sufficient?
	2. If the Universal Tier is not sufficient, what are the needs that must be addressed?
	3. How will Universal Tier needs be addressed?
	4. How will the implementation of the Universal Tier actions be monitored over time?
	5. Have Universal Tier actions been effective?
	6. Which students need support in addition to the Universal Tier?
	7. Which of the Targeted and/or Intensive Tier resources are needed to meet the needs of identified students?
	8. How will the Targeted and/or Intensive Tier options be implemented?
	9. How will the implementation of the Targeted and Intensive Tiers be monitored over time?
	10. How will the effectiveness of the Targeted and Intensive Tiers be evaluated?
CONSENSUS, INFRASTRUCTURE, IMPLEMENTATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY	
E. Do you have an established structure to provide on-going professional learning and coaching to support all staff members?	
F. How do you ensure evaluation of MTSS implementation and impact on achievement?	
G. What structures does the leadership team have in place to support sustainability of MTSS over time?	

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3. **Chronic and Early Absenteeism.** The Department's guidance states that 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 percent 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 Comprehensive School Improvement Plan.

4. **Protocols to support schools to identify barriers and address areas of concern.** The Department's official guidance indicates that schools must address reading proficiency as part of the district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan using data from universal screening and progress monitoring assessments at the classroom and school levels and analyzed by other student characteristics. There are several protocols that facilitate such analyses at the systems and school level. The questions the analyses must address, as well as the protocols that facilitate such analyses, are listed below. Note that the protocols are on the state Differentiated Accountability website.
   - Percent of students assessed with a valid and reliable universal screening tool.
     - *Data-Based Decision-Making* Assessment System Protocol. This tool assists a district or building in mapping the collaborative inquiry questions to the data present in Iowa TIER for the purpose of discussing what percent of students were assessed with a valid and reliable screener.
   - Percent of students not at benchmark assessed with a valid and reliable progress monitoring tool at least 90% of the weeks between screening periods.
     - *Data-Based Decision-Making* Assessment System Protocol. This tool assists a district or building in mapping the collaborative inquiry questions to the data present in Iowa TIER for the purpose of discussing what percent of students not at benchmark were monitored using a valid and reliable progress monitoring measure.
   - Percent of students at benchmark on universal screening assessment
     - *Universal Instruction.* Universal Instruction Protocol. This tool assists a district or building in determining the percentage of the population that meets or exceeds the screening cut scores. Percent of students assessed is discussed by total, grade, and sub-group, and special education rate compared to AEA and state is examined.
   - Percent of students at or above benchmark in the fall and remaining at or above benchmark
     - *Universal Instruction*. Universal Instruction Protocol. This healthy indicator report takes a snapshot of the percent of students at benchmark who remained at benchmark for those students enrolled at the close of the window of assessment. The report generates based on the students enrolled across periods compared and based on the default assessment and benchmarks for the period being compared.
   - Percent of learners below benchmark two consecutive screening periods receiving intervention
     - *Intervention System.* Intervention System Protocol. This healthy indicator reports what percent of students below benchmark are assigned to intervention within the system. The report generates based on the students enrolled across periods compared and based on the default assessment and benchmarks for the period being compared.
   - Percent of learners below benchmark in the fall who then score at or above benchmark in a subsequent screening period.

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- *Intervention System.* Intervention System Protocol. The report generates based on the students enrolled across periods compared and based on the default assessment and benchmarks for the period being compared.

An additional protocol aides schools in creating an action plan to remove barriers: Identifying Barriers. This tool assists schools in summarizing their current state compared to the desired state, identifying the barriers to achieving the desired state, and beginning ideas for removal of those barriers.

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C: Early Childhood

The following appendix is to be used as companion technical assistance to the Department's official guidance for §279.68. The purpose of this appendix is to support schools in implementing the requirements of Iowa Code §279.68. The content includes more information about preschool and kindergarten, Teaching Strategies GOLD and IGDIs data, and alignment between the Iowa Core and the Iowa Early Learning Standards (IELS) specific to English language arts and mathematics:

1. Preschool and Kindergarten Guidance
2. Teaching Strategies GOLD and IGDIs data
3. Alignment between Iowa Core for English language arts and mathematics, and the IELS

1. **Preschool and Kindergarten Guidance**. The ELI Law has provided the state of Iowa with an opportunity to clarify expectations for early childhood programs. Original separate guidance provided on November 12, 2014, is included here, and any further information will be updated in this appendix. Information here is specific to the Department funded programs, and provides clarification for Iowa's public schools specific to the definition, condition for enrollment, required standards and assessments and funding for preschool and kindergarten programs. For preschool and kindergarten programs, the Department provides funds through Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs (SWVPP), state aid through certified enrollment for kindergarten programs, and special education weighting.

Table C1.
Preschool and Kindergarten

					State Funding		
Program	**Age**	**Conditions for Enrollment**	**Standards**	**Assessment**	**SWVPP**	**Special Education**	**Certified Enrollment**
Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children [SWVPP]	4	• Child is a resident of Iowa • Open Enrollment does not apply	Iowa Early Learning Standards (IELS)	GOLD online assessment [required] IGDIs online assessment for Universal Screening [optional]	Yes	No	.5
	4-IEP support services only				Yes	No	.5
	4 – IEP	• Child is a resident of Iowa • Open Enrollment applies			No	Yes	1.0 + special education through weighting
Kindergarten [Age on or before 9/15]	5	• Open Enrollment applies • Grade Level is District Determined	Iowa Core	District Determined Assessments [required] Department approved universal screening assessment. The Department supports administration of FAST. FAST may also be used as the district's KLA measure. [required]	No	No	1.0
	5 – IEP support services only				No	No	1.0
	5 – IEP				No	Yes	1.0 + special education through weighting

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The Department recognizes that one classroom may serve SWVPP and kindergarten-age eligible children as part of a multi-grade program. The table above illustrates the conditions regarding standards and assessment that must be met for each age group.

SWVPP dollars may not be used to support five year old attendance in SWVPP. The district may select to fund kindergarten-age eligible children as part of a multi-grade program [space permitting after all four year old enrollment has been accounted for], in the following ways:

- Certified enrollment or special education funds
- Parent/Guardian paid tuition
- Funding provided by other community resources

Once a child has completed any programming prior to kindergarten [e.g., transitional, alternative, beginning] and is age eligible for first grade, there are two options:

- **The child attends kindergarten**. If 1.0 funding was used to support a child to attend previous programming such as transitional, alternative or beginning programs, then the child would be considered as being retained in kindergarten.
- **The child attends first grade**. If 1.0 funding was used to support a child to attend previous programming such as transitional, alternative or beginning programs, then the child would be considered as being appropriately promoted to first grade.

2. **Teaching Strategies GOLD and IGDIs data**. Original separate guidance provided on April 28, 2015, is included here, and any further information will be updated in this appendix.

   Building awareness for how Teaching Strategies GOLD and IGDIs can be used *together* as part of a comprehensive assessment system has been challenging. To increase understanding how Teaching Strategies GOLD and IGDIs complement one another, one must understand the different purposes that each assessment can serve. Assessments are built to serve specific purposes. Because of this, they often work better for some things than they do for others. In reality, the same assessment might have some utility for more than one purpose. The key is that it is important to know what purpose you have when you look at the data – what decisions you are going to be making with the data. Table C1 provides a comparison of IGDIs and Teaching Strategies GOLD for the primary purposes of assessment.

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EC1.

Comparison of Teaching Strategies GOLD and IGDIs Primary Assessment Purposes

Purpose	GOLD	IGDIs
Screening	NO	YES
Diagnostic	Potentially[1]	NO
Formative Assessment	YES[2]	NO
Progress Monitoring	NO	NO
Summative	YES[3]	YES

[1] While not necessarily designed as a comprehensive diagnostic test, informal analysis of child documentation can lead to an understanding of strengths and weaknesses.

[2] This would be appropriate only if GOLD is used as an ongoing portfolio of child learning and development, including reflection on child progress and if changes in instruction were made based on interpretation of complete information in GOLD.

[3] GOLD may be used as an interim summative assessment for measuring growth from fall to winter, winter to spring, or fall to spring.

Teaching Strategies GOLD:

- **Screening**: The test was not designed for screening. In fact, the authors have explicitly stated that Teaching Strategies GOLD is not meant as a screening measure.
- **Diagnostic**: While not intended as diagnostic by the publisher, results can indicate areas of strength and weakness through careful interpretation processes.
- **Formative Assessment**: When Teaching Strategies GOLD is fully implemented, teachers can upload documentation of what children demonstrate on an ongoing basis and use that documentation to plan small groups and plan individualized scaffolding. Under full implementation, it is the primary intended purpose to use Teaching Strategies GOLD for formative decision making.
- **Progress Monitoring (PM):** Teaching Strategies GOLD can't work for progress monitoring. The Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment itself was not designed by the publisher for frequent monitoring of progress, nor has it been validated for this purpose.
- **Summative**: Teaching Strategies GOLD's progress checkpoints may also be used to summarize children's status compared to reasonable expectations for development and learning at three times during the year.

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IGDIs:

- **Screening**: Tests have been validated for use in screening. This means that specific research and development was done to make sure the tests do a good job of efficiently identifying children predicted to be on track for success vs. those who may be at risk.
- **Diagnostic**: Individual tests may indicate strengths and weaknesses, but were not designed as diagnostic inventories. Items on each test were selected to screen effectively, not to sample all relevant skills.
- **Formative Assessment**: The IGDIs tests are not administered frequently enough to inform ongoing instruction.
- **Progress Monitoring (PM):** Previous work to create progress monitoring measures for IGDIs has not been able to be validated nor added to the approved assessment list at this time.
- **Summative**: Screening results can answer summative questions about universal instruction (e.g., How effective was instruction and learning opportunities provided to all children? Did most children meet the target score/benchmark? Do we need to change instruction and learning opportunities provided to all children?)

In an *assessment system* for early childhood, Teaching Strategies GOLD plays the role of providing summative data about young children's growth on curriculum-based objectives across areas of development from fall to winter and from winter to spring. Teaching Strategies GOLD is meant to be used on a regular basis, *i.e.,* documentation frequently uploaded for each child on a variety of objectives, with reflection on progress or lack of progress. If Teaching Strategies GOLD is used as intended, it may be useful to help make decisions about changes to improve curriculum and instruction or supports for groups or individual children.

In an *assessment system* for early childhood, IGDIs *complements* Teaching Strategies GOLD by serving the purpose of universal screening for emerging literacy for all children. Benchmarks identified based on research allow for decision making up to three times a year about a child's need for additional opportunities for learning beyond what is provided to all children. IGDIs data may also be used summatively, depending upon the question that applies to the current window, for example:

- Did the kids who were at risk get better by spring?
- Did all children improve? In all measured domains? As a group, in which domains are the strengths and weaknesses?
- How might I use this information to improve classroom instruction, routines, and opportunities?

Teaching Strategies GOLD is a developmental comprehensive classroom assessment; IGDIs specifically addresses emerging literacy. It is also important to recognize that Teaching Strategies GOLD serves assessment purposes that IGDIs cannot (i.e., formative assessment), and IGDIs serves assessment purposes that Teaching Strategies GOLD cannot (i.e., screening). In conclusion, while Teaching Strategies GOLD and IGDIs serve unique purposes, they are complementary of one another. Both contribute to a comprehensive early childhood assessment system.

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3. **Alignment between Iowa Core for English Language Arts and Mathematics, and the Iowa Early Learning Standards (IELS)**. The alignment of the IELS and the Iowa Core provide a comprehensive framework for curriculum, instruction and assessment practices for children from birth through kindergarten. The alignments link the age-appropriate expectations of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to knowledge that children should master by the end of kindergarten. Furthermore, they provide an illustration of how learning at the earliest ages cumulatively builds to support academic and social success for children as they enter the K-12 educational system. A full document describing the alignment of IELS to Iowa Core literacy and mathematics may be found on the Department website at [the description of alignment begins on page 160]:

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D: Finance

The following appendix is to be used as companion technical assistance to the Department's official guidance for §279.68. The purpose of this appendix is to support schools in implementing the requirements of Iowa Code §279.68. The content is focused on tools to access funding (when available) and guidelines for expenditures that meet the intent of the ELI Guidance.

1. ELI Budget Guidance
2. Application for Funds and Contacts

1. **ELI Budget Guidance**. Original separate guidance provided on December 12, 2014, is included here, and any further information will be updated in this appendix. The Department's general guidance regarding ELI expenditures is that 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:
   - Obtaining assessments for universal screening and/or progress monitoring
   - Professional development around assessments, reading instruction, summer school etc.

   Each year the Department receives notification of any allocation of funds for the implementation of Iowa Code §279.68. Annually, upon appropriation, half of the funds are distributed equally across Iowa's districts, while the other half are distributed based on each district's student enrollment as of October 1 of any given year.

   Districts are permitted to use their share of the allocated funds to implement any part of Iowa Code §279.68. Table D1 is provided to help districts determine how to spend this money. These questions are meant to be answered in order, as there is a hierarchy of system needs that must be addressed in order to put in place appropriate supports for early literacy. The Department recommends budgeting funds for the district needs that appear earliest in table D1.

   Table D1.

   Budget Guidance: Hierarchy of System Needs

Question	**Answer**	**Suggested Items for Budget**
Is there consensus in your district that reading instruction can improve and that using the combination of high standards in a multi-tiered system of supports is an evidence-based way of improving reading outcomes?	No or I'm not sure	Staff time to engage in understanding and building your level of consensus with the Department's consensus toolkit
Does your district wish to use the state-sponsored universal screening and progress monitoring assessments (FAST) in the Iowa TIER data system?	Yes	Pay for training on data system and assessments
Does your district currently use scientific, research-based reading instruction that would meet the standards of Iowa Code §279.68?	I'm not sure	Staff time to review current practices using the Department's implementation guide for reviewing your core instruction

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Question	Answer	Suggested Items for Budget
Does your district currently use scientific, research-based reading instruction that would meet the standards of Iowa Code §279.68?	No	Purchase of new curriculum and/or instructional materials; professional learning for staff on implementation
If you are using scientific, research-based reading instruction, are you implementing it with fidelity?	I'm not sure	Staff time to review current practices using the Department's implementation guide for reviewing your core instruction
If you are using scientific, research-based reading instruction, are you implementing it with fidelity?	No	Professional learning for staff on implementation of current materials
Does your district currently provide tutoring or mentoring programs or extended school day, week or year services?	No	Begin these services
Does your district currently provide tutoring or mentoring programs or extended school day, week or year services?	Yes	Fund these services
Does your district currently provide the parents/guardians of students persistently at risk in reading with parent/guardian contracts, regular updates on their student's progress, and guidance for things the parents/guardians can do to help their child at home?	No	Begin these services
Does your district currently provide the parents/guardians of students persistently at risk in reading with parent/guardian contracts, regular updates on their student's progress, and guidance for things the parents/guardians can do to help their child at home?	Yes	Fund these services
Does your district currently operate a summer program for reading at the K-3 level that employs scientific, research-based instructional practices?	No	Begin a summer reading program; Consider providing transportation for students are persistently at risk in reading
Does your district currently operate a summer program for reading at the K-3 level that employs scientific, research-based instructional practices?	Yes	Fund the program; Consider providing transportation for students who are persistently at risk in reading

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2. **Application for Funds and Contacts**. If funds are provided, districts are required to apply for the funds and submit a budget in order for the money to be distributed. Applications must be submitted at www.iowagrants.gov. The application process is brief and requires the following information: the name of the district you represent, the items on which your district used funds allocated under this law during the previous year, and a proposed budget.

   If you have additional questions about prioritizing the use of your grant funds, please contact Amy J. Williamson at amy.williamson@iowa.gov or Meredith MacQuigg at meredith.macquigg@iowa.gov. For questions about the allowable use of these and other categorical funds, please contact Su McCurdy at su.mccurdy@iowa.gov.

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E: Intensive Intervention and Core Instruction

The following appendix is to be used as companion technical assistance to the Department's official guidance for §279.68. The purpose of this appendix is to support schools in implementing the requirements of Iowa Code §279.68. The content is focused on the intensification of instruction, reviewed interventions, and links to the Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC) pertaining to core instruction.

1. General Information Regarding Instruction
2. Determining Intervention Success
3. Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC)
4. Reviewed list of Interventions

1. **General Information Regarding Instruction**. Districts are required to provide 90 minutes of research-based reading instruction for students persistently at risk in reading until the student is reading at grade level. A district's core literacy block satisfies the requirement to provide this service if the core literacy block addresses all of the following:
   - Assists students in developing skills to read at grade level;
   - 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.

   Further, districts are required to provide additional intensive 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.

   This means that students identified as being persistently at risk in reading must have at least 90 minutes of scientific, research-based reading instruction and be provided with intensive instruction in addition to the core instruction. Differentiation within core instruction cannot be considered intervention for students persistently at risk. The number of minutes required beyond core instruction is directly dependent 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 as shown through student progress monitoring data. For some schools, core instruction requires a classwide intervention. Students persistently at risk in reading may participate in a classwide

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intervention but are required to receive additional intervention in smaller student-teacher ratio to remediate persistently at risk status. 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.

Intensive instruction, or 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 s/he needs.

Tables E1 and E2 provide an overview of student supports required for the 2016-17 year. Note that the supports required will be revised each year to comply with any additional mandates within Iowa Code §279.68.

Table E1.

Required Student Supports for grades K, 1, 2 and 3, 2016-17.

Literacy Status	**Universal Screening**	**Progress Monitoring**	**Intensive Interventions**	**Intensive Summer School**
Adequately Progressing	Required			
At Risk	Required	Required	Recommended	
Persistently At Risk	Required	Required	Required	Required, summer after 3rd grade, [1]May 2018

[1]Required May 2018, unless the districts applies for and is granted a one-year waiver. If a waiver is granted, intensive summer school is required to be offered and provided, May 2019.

Table E2.

Required Student Supports for grades 4 and beyond, 2016-17.

Literacy Status	**[1]Benchmarking**	**Progress Monitoring**	**Intensive Interventions**
Adequately Progressing			
At Risk	Required	Recommended	Recommended
Persistently At Risk	Required	Recommended	Required

[1]Universal screening by definition is screening all students; benchmarking is the administration of universal screening to a subset of students. In this case, this means administration of the universal screening assessment three times a year to all students identified as persistently at-risk at the end of third grade in 4th grade and beyond.

2. **Determining Intervention Success.** The purpose of early intervention is to prevent skill deficits and to improve the learning trajectory for learners who are not meeting targets. Guiding questions for leadership teams include:
   - Which interventions are most successful for the learners in our building today?
   - Which interventions do not appear to be successful enough for the learners in our building today?
     - Are those interventions currently being implemented with fidelity?
   - Are there grade levels that do not currently have successful interventions?

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- Are there interventions that require significant resources (time, staff, money) that are less successful than other, less resource-intensive interventions?

Interventions need to provide a high success rate in order for buildings to meet their goal of having all learners being successful readers at the end of third grade. Schools monitor the effectiveness of their interventions for several reasons, including:

1. Identifying interventions that provide the highest Return on Investment (ROI).
    a. It is essential to know which interventions have the greatest effectiveness (i.e. result in more learners reaching targets) in a school.
2. Determining the interventions that are not successful.
    a. If an intervention does not result in the majority of students who participate in it hitting targets predicting later outcomes, then the intervention may need to be implemented with greater fidelity or discontinued.
    b. Interventions that are not effective are unfair to learners and teachers, as they tend to result in additional interventions being needed and sometimes result in students falling even further behind while they participate in that intervention prior to receiving a more effective intervention.
3. Identifying potential implementation fidelity concerns.
    a. If a school has had previous success with an intervention and suddenly notices a decrease in effectiveness, the fidelity of implementation should be examined and potentially increased.

In order to examine the effectiveness of interventions, schools need to ensure they have done the following:

1. Identified common interventions. What interventions are used across sections and/or grade levels?
2. Investigate if these interventions are implemented in the same manner in all instances. For example, if the school has the Fancy Reading Intervention do all implementers of this intervention follow the manual guidelines for implementing the intervention (e.g. same number of minutes, use of materials, instructional routines, etc.)?
    a. If more than 1 implementation routine occurs, note this.
3. "Banked" interventions in Iowa TIER that are common and implemented in the same way. If an intervention has more than one implementation type (e.g. twice a week vs daily) then identify them separately in the system.
4. As learners participate in the interventions, ensure the banked interventions are programmed for each learner and that progress is monitored regularly.
5. Use the protocol to determine which interventions have the highest ROI for your building. Remember, this may vary within districts as well as between districts, so this is important to evaluate at the building level.
    a. The first level of the protocol is to look at the percent of learners participating whose trajectory improved to the point of meeting targets.
    b. An optional level of the protocol is to identify the number of learners whose trajectories improved but who did not yet meet targets. This allows for the evaluation of interventions that are implemented in settings where learners have very large gaps. Although we expect all interventions to result in improved trajectories for learning, this allows for the situations in which more than a year's worth of intervention is expected for the learner to meet targets.
6. As a team, discuss results and identify next steps.

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An organizer for the building leadership team discussion of Intervention Success is included below in Table E3: Intervention Effectiveness Protocol. Leadership determines the percent of learners who meet or exceed the screening cut scores for each intervention used.

Table E3.

Intervention Effectiveness Protocol

Intervention Name	Grade Level(s) Used	# Students Participating	% Students Meeting Benchmark	Target % Students Meeting Benchmark	# Students Closing the Gap But Not Meeting Target (Optional)

3. **The Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC).** The IRRC provides districts and parents/guardians resources to use specific to scientific, research-based core instruction, including guides for foundational skills, comprehension, and multi-age populations. The IRRC website is: http://www.iowareadingresearch.org/

4. **Reviewed List of Interventions.** The intervention list is intended to provide general information to help inform decisions about selecting interventions to support student progress toward proficiency in the area of reading. This list is not intended to be an exhaustive list. See the Additional Support link at the end of Early Literacy Guidance.

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F: Assessment: Iowa TIER and Data-Reporting

The following appendix is to be used as companion technical assistance to the Department's official guidance for §279.68. The purpose of this appendix is to support schools in implementing the requirements of Iowa Code §279.68. The content is focused on technical assistance links to the data-reporting requirements of ELI and navigating the state supported data system (Iowa TIER).

1. General data reporting information
2. Logging in to Iowa TIER
3. Trouble-shooting TIER Access
4. Confirming the default assessment for literacy status
5. Literacy Status Report for districts using FAST/Fast Bridge Learning
6. Literacy Status Report for districts using a non-FAST tool
7. Accessing the Ticket System **[New 2016]**
8. Using Another Approved Assessment to Override Literacy Status Determination (Individual Student). **[New 2016]**
9. Making a building visible (non-public or grades 4 and above) **[New 2016]**

1. **General Data Reporting Information.** Tables F1 and F2 provide an overview of the data reporting required for the 2016-17 year. Note that data reporting requirements will be revised each year to comply with additional mandates within Iowa Code §279.68.

Table F1.

Required Data Reporting for grades K, 1, 2 and 3, 2016-17.

Literacy Status	Universal Screening	Progress Monitoring	Intensive Interventions	Intensive Summer School, [1]May 2018
Adequately Progressing	Yes			
At Risk	Yes	Yes	No	
Persistently At Risk	Yes	Yes	Yes	[2]Assurance [3]Attendance

[1]Required May 2018, unless the districts applies for and is granted a one-year waiver. If a waiver is granted, intensive summer school is required to be offered and provided, May 2019.

[2]Assurance that the district offered and provided summer school for students identified as persistently at risk AND not proficient on Iowa's state accountability assessment in reading at the end of third grade. Guidance on data reporting will be provided in 2017-18.

[3]Attendance at the district summer school for each student identified as persistently at risk AND not proficient on Iowa's state accountability assessment in reading at the end of third grade. Guidance on data reporting will be provided in 2017-18.

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Table F2.

Required Data Reporting for grades 4 and beyond, 2016-17.

Literacy Status	[1]Benchmarking	Progress Monitoring	Intensive Interventions
Adequately Progressing			
At Risk	Yes	[2]No	[3]No
Persistently At Risk	Yes	[4]No	Yes

[1]Universal screening by definition is screening all students; benchmarking is the administration of universal screening to a subset of students. In this case, this means administration of the universal screening assessment three times a year to all students identified as persistently at-risk at the end of third grade in 4th grade and beyond.

[2-4]Although progress monitoring data are not required to be reported, it is highly recommended that students identified as at risk, or persistently at risk, are monitored more frequently to ensure instruction is meeting their needs.

[3]Although intensive intervention data are not required to be reported, it is highly recommended that students identified as at risk receive intensive instruction that meets their needs.

2. **Logging in to Iowa TIER.** Access to the TIER Data System is through the Iowa Portal which can be found at www.bit.ly/iowaportal. Under A & A Account, choose sign-in.
   A. Please use the most current version of Google Chrome as your browser. Chrome may be downloaded for free at: https://www.google.com/chrome/.
   B. Firefox may also be used but tends to encounter a few more performance problems with Iowa TIER. Firefox can be downloaded for free from this website: http://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/new/
   C. Internet Explorer and Safari are not supported.
   D. For questions related to setting up an A&A account please contact ed.portal@iowa.gov or call 515-725-2040.
   E. Enter your account ID (this is a username that should end in @IOWAID) and password.
   F. The account ID and password are case sensitive.
   G. If you have forgotten your account ID or password use the link on the login page for retrieval.
   H. From the Iowa Education Portal page click on Iowa TIER.
   I. The first time you login you will be asked to verify the email address used in your student information system. Please enter your work email in the field that appears after clicking the verification link and click the "Verify Email" button.
   J. Upon verifying your email you will be sent an email from no-reply@edspring.org which has an address you can click on to enter the TIER data system.
   K. More detailed steps for setting up new users (LEA) in Iowa TIER may be found on the ELI webpage in the article New LEA Setup.

3. **Troubleshooting TIER Access**. There are common troubleshooting items regarding TIER access addressed below: -
   A. "I tried to set up an account, but it says an account already exists."
      - Maybe the person already set up an account for another purpose. If so, they may just need to make sure the email attached to the account is the school email. It may also have been connected to a private email or an old work email that is no longer used.
      - Maybe someone else with the same name has set up an account. If so, use a variation on the name (include middle initial or some appropriate variation).
   B. "It says I already have an account, but I don't remember my password."

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- Use the reminder questions to retrieve your password.
- If you don't recognize the questions and don't remember making an account, someone else with the same name already has an account. Use a variation on your name.

C. "I got locked out."
- If your typing skills are marginal or if you have a hard time remembering your user name or password, you may get locked out. This feature is intended to prevent hackers. Please contact A&A support or ed.portal@iowa.gov to unlock your account. Be very careful when typing your login information.
- If you fail to complete the setup process for your portal account during the same session you begin you will be locked out. You need to complete the full process the same day, including setting up your questions and actually logging into the portal after the setup is complete.

D. "I don't see Iowa TIER in my portal account."
- This step is now handled via entries in the local school's student information system and a process called auto-provisioning. Please refer to the knowledge base posting for more information about the process.
- The process only runs after the school's data transfer process (SIF) between the SIS and Iowa TIER is fully operational. The auto-provisioning process attempts to match A&A information with the relevant information from the local SIS. In order for this to work, the staff person must use the same email address in both the SIS and the A&A account. The actual match may take up to 24 hours to occur after the data elements are all present.

E. "When I click on the Iowa TIER link, the Iowa TIER page says my email can't be found." (This question lives on the border between the Portal and Iowa TIER.)
- The email used to set up your A&A account must match the email used in Iowa TIER (which should be your district email). Double-check with a coach in your building to make sure your email is correct in Iowa TIER, then go into your A&A setup area and check to make sure you have the same email address.

4. **Confirming the default assessment for literacy status (persistently at risk, at risk, and adequately progressing). [Revised 2016]** Universal screening default measures for literacy status designation need to be selected in order to access the assessments. While Iowa TIER will roll forward the measures used the previous year, schools are required to check the designated default assessments and verify the rollover at the beginning of the school year. The site profile page in Iowa TIER will provide at-a-glance default measures by grade level for a building. The principal and internal coach user roles may send a ticket in the Iowa TIER system if any changes need to be made. Schools that want to switch from Non-FAST uploads to FAST assessments within the Iowa TIER system should submit a ticket (request) in the Knowledge Base to make assessments visible and select a default assessment by grade level.

   You may administer more than one measure at each grade level but only a single measure may be used per grade level, per building to determine literacy status. In kindergarten and first grade, CompK and Comp1 are each considered a single measure within default assessments. The default measure for an individual student may be changed based on specific circumstances (e.g. the student is nonverbal or has a significant dysfluency issue, therefore aReading is a more accurate measure of literacy status than CBM-R). In order to change the measure, please see item 7 below.

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The status itself cannot be changed; only the measure used to calculate literacy status. The default assessment may not be changed during the school year. If you are experiencing difficulty with any part of the Iowa TIER system including access or the ability to view default measures, please use the ticket system to submit the question or problem.

5. **Literacy Status Report for districts using FAST/Fast Bridge Learning.** The literacy report may be reviewed before final certification is completed. The principal role alone may certify the report. The report must be certified by the posted date each screening window, or the report will be auto-certified. Once the literacy report is certified, no changes may be made, even if errors are discovered. The certified report serves as the official record for the student's literacy status, and the student's literacy status is used to designate any future literacy status.

   To access the literacy status report:

   - Click on the *One-Click* report icon on the left hand side of the home screen.
   - Use the filter at the top of the *One-Clicks* page to filter for the words "Literacy Status" to easily find available literacy status reports.
   - Click on the blue box to launch the desired report.
   - Complete separate grade-level reports.

   The one-click literacy status report will display a series of columns of data to summarize the assessments taken by each student throughout the school year. The designation will default to the appropriate status using the formula described **Appendix H:** *Persistently at Risk.*

6. **Literacy Status Report for districts using a non-FAST tool.** Schools not using FAST assessments in Iowa TIER must:
   A. Upload screening results for all K-3 students from approved assessments, as well as students identified as persistently at risk at the end of third grade.
      - Use the upload functions built into Iowa TIER
      - There will be one report for each of the non-FAST assessments for all applicable grades kindergarten through third as well as subsequent grades for those students identified as persistently at risk. If a grade is not available, it is because the assessment is not validated for that grade. The appropriate report(s) will need to be completed for all students in grades kindergarten through third, as well as students beyond third grade where benchmarking data are required.
      - Certify (confirm) the determination of each student's status as described in this document for fall, winter and spring.
      - You may upload additional data across grades fourth through sixth, beyond the required benchmarking and intensive intervention data for students identified as persistently at risk.

   B. In the future, intervention scheduling and entry of progress monitoring data may be required for Non-FAST schools. Please check this appendix for further updates.

   Schools that want to switch from Non-FAST uploads to FAST assessments within the Iowa TIER system should submit a ticket (request) in the Knowledge Base to make assessments visible and select a default assessment by grade level.

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7. **Accessing the Ticket System. [New 2016]** Once logged in to Iowa TIER, wait for the page to fully load. To access the ticket system, click on the question mark in the upper right hand corner, which will take you to the Knowledge Base in a new tab. If your user role allows you to submit tickets (internal coach, principal, external coach), this option will appear in the bar at the top.

   Any issue requiring specific descriptions including student or teacher names should be in a ticket within the Iowa TIER system, not in community posts or the knowledge base. When submitting tickets, the system will find possible support documents already written and stored in the knowledge base using the keywords in the ticket subject. These will "pop-up" and appear as links to related topics below the subject just a few seconds after you finishing typing and click out of the subject line. Please review these as the answer may be within those documents.

   Use the tickets to report issues. Use the fields in the ticket to provide the specific information needed to assist in resolving your problem. Screen shots may help specify the exact problem. Do not include user names or passwords in the ticket system.

8. **Using Another Approved Assessment to Override Literacy Status Determination (Individual Student). [New 2016]** The default measure for an individual student may be changed in specific circumstances. For example, if a student is nonverbal or has a significant dysfluency issue, aReading may be a more accurate measure of literacy status than CBM-R. As another example, if a student lacks the behavioral or focus skills for the longer aReading assessment, he or she may require the time-limited, 1:1 delivery of the CBM-R measure. The default assessment/status may be changed within the **literacy status report** (item 4 above) by selecting the other approved measure the student was given, for example aReading instead of CBM-R. Enter the reason the other approved measure was used, and the status will auto-calculate based on the scores assigned to that measure, combined with the student's previous status. In order to override the measure, multiple measures must be available at the building and grade level(s) to be administered.

   The status itself cannot be changed; only the measure used to calculate literacy status. An educationally sound and documented (IEP, 504, student record) reason should exist for using another approved assessment to determine literacy status.

9. **Making Another Building Visible in Iowa TIER. [New 2016]** Districts and Non-public schools interested in making a building visible in Iowa TIER should submit a request, via a ticket in Iowa TIER. For non-publics without access to Iowa TIER, submit an email to tiersupport@iowa.gov.

   Add a building in a district with other sites active in Iowa TIER

   A. The internal coach or principal (in a district building that's already active in Iowa TIER) should submit a ticket to Iowa TIER support with the request to add the building.
      Note: If an internal coach or principal is not available (e.g., summer break) email tiersupport@iowa.gov for assistance.
   B. Complete data entry in the district's SIS for the following:

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- Iowa TIER security role assignments in the new building for staff.
- Course schedules and enrollment for staff and students.

C. If a staff member has not accessed Iowa TIER previously, see the document titled: ***New LEA Staff*** Access Instructions in the Iowa TIER knowledge base for instructions on setup.

Setup of a new district or nonpublic building in Iowa TIER

1. Contact the district's SIS vendor to setup Schools Inter-Operability Framework (SIF) agent. The SIF agent is the program that acts as a pipeline sending the data from the district's SIS into Iowa TIER. Powerschool, JMC, or Infinite Campus are the student information systems compatible for access to TIER.
2. Review Iowa TIER/FAST technical requirements to ensure district/building equipment, settings and network support functional use of the system.
   Suggested reference documents on the ELI web page:
   a. Technology Requirements for Iowa TIER Systems.
3. Complete data entry in SIS for all students, staff and courses. The instructions vary depending on the SIS; please use the instructions specific for your vendor.
   Suggested reference documents on the ELI web page:
   a. Adding TIER Roles – Infinite Campus, JMC, PowerSchool
   b. Iowa TIER User Roles: Adding, Removing And Types Of Roles

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G: Parent/Guardian Notification

The following appendix is to be used as companion technical assistance to the Department's official guidance for §279.68. The purpose of this appendix is to support schools in implementing the requirements of Iowa Code §279.68. The content includes example parent/guardian letters, contracts, progress reports to parents and guardians as well as notification of enrollment in an intensive summer reading program for parents and guardians of students identified as persistently at risk at the end of third grade:

1. Initial Parent/Guardian Notification
2. Contract between the Home and School
3. Progress Reports
4. Enrollment Notification in Intensive Summer Reading Program; *to be developed*

1. **Initial Parent/Guardian Notification.** It is required that the school notify parents/guardians of any student identified as being persistently at risk in the area of reading and include (1) universal screening data that indicates their child(ren) is/are below benchmark, (2) a description of the services currently provided to the student, (3) what proposed supplemental instructional services and supports the district will provide to the student to remediate persistently at risk status (4) strategies parents/guardians can implement at home, and (5) regular updates regarding their student's progress within the notice. This notification must happen within two [2] weeks of the close of a given universal screening window.

   Establishing a team to support students is critical to reading success, and school-family partnerships. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that schools schedule a meeting with parents and guardians of students identified as at risk and/or as persistently at risk in the area of reading prior to sending out initial notification in order to discuss the law, how their child was identified and the collaborative/team nature of the supports for their child. If this is not possible, it is recommended that parents and guardians are contacted via phone prior to sending out initial notification.

   The parent/guardian notification example provided in **Table G1** contains the required information. This is an example that may be adapted by schools. This initial letter to parents/guardians notifies them that their child has been identified as being persistently at risk in the area of reading and was developed by the IRRC.

   Table G2 is a School/Family Partnership handout to include with the parent/guardian notification letter. This handout includes information about the IRRC, and provides space for schools to add their local community resources.

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Table G1.

Initial Parent/Guardian Notification Letter

<Date>

Dear Parent/Guardian of <insert student name>,

This letter contains important information regarding your child's school progress and how new laws impact our school's plan to improve his/her reading skills.

New Laws

In 2014 Iowa law was changed to support statewide literacy efforts for students in Iowa. This law requires that Iowa's school children read at grade level by third grade. As a result, the rules below were put into effect in order to improve reading within the state.

Your Child's Progress

We know you want your child to be successful in his/her education. We also want your child to be successful with learning in the classroom. The ability to read is critical to your child's success in school.

We recently completed universal screening assessments in reading at our school. Your child, <enter student name>, has been identified as persistently at risk in reading; that term is in state law and is used in this letter. This means your child has shown difficulty in the area of reading over the following two universal screening periods <insert dates of universal screening periods>.

School Implications

Students are identified as being persistently at risk when

1. Their reading skills are below grade level on screening tests, and
2. They are making minimal progress.

At our school, we are doing the following, as required by Iowa law, to support students who have been identified as having difficulties reading at grade level:

Progress Monitoring:

All students who are identified as persistently at risk or at risk are required to receive weekly progress monitoring. This allows schools to monitor the improvement students are making toward end-of-year goals (i.e., spring benchmark) given the intervention they receive.

Intensive Interventions:

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 meets grade level expectations at the next screening period.

To learn more about the new laws and how they impact students, visit the link below.
https://www.educateiowa.gov/early-literacy-implementation

School/Family Partnership:

We would like to partner with you in order to improve your child's reading skills. Part of this partnership will include regular communication.

Connecting:

We will provide updates on your child's progress throughout the school year. We encourage you to talk with your child's teacher about any questions or concerns you may have.

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Parent/Guardian-School Contract:
We will follow up with a contract that will outline the school's responsibilities and how we will partner with you to improve your child's reading skills. More information regarding a contract will be forthcoming.

We look forward to partnering with you in order to improve your child's reading skills. Please contact <insert contact person> with any questions or comments you may have.

Sincerely,

Table G2. SCHOOL/FAMILY PARTNERSHIP HANDOUT. This handout, developed by the IRRC, is to be used with the Initial Parent/Guardian Notification letter to support the connection between home and school and provide families with resources to use at home. This is an example handout the school may adapt to fit their local context.

School/Family Partnership

Research shows that reading proficiency by third grade is an important predictor of school success. Early identification and support of a child who is a struggling reader is essential and increases their chances of success. We look forward to partnering with you in order to improve your child's reading skills.

As part of this partnership, we would like to work with you to ensure you have access to resources for your child. At-home support is critical to improving students reading skills. You may already have some resources, but, if you are interested, we are willing to share the following ways that can help families support students at home.

IRRC Family Resources:
The IRRC has an online collection of literacy resources. The IRRC worked with parents/guardians, and educators across Iowa to evaluate online literacy tools that will effectively support students at home. The link below is where the online collection will be located:
www.iowareadingresearch.org/literacy-resources/teacher-family-resources/

Community Resources:
<list community options available in the district that could support the child in reading outside of school—eg. local libraries, etc.>

Additional Resources provided by school:
<eg. a curriculum night, any online tools provided by the school>

If you have any questions about using these resources, please contact your child's teacher. We will work with you to provide you with tools to ensure that your child receives support at school as well as at home.

2. **Contract between Home and School.** It is required that the school establish a parent/guardian contract. The contract must specify collective responsibilities across the principal, teacher, parent/guardian and child. The goal of the reading contract is to identify each person's responsibility and commitment to a given student's reading progress. It is not required that parents/guardians or the child must sign the contract. It is strongly recommended

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that districts schedule Early Literacy Progression meetings with parents/guardians in order to discuss the identification of their child(ren) as persistently at risk and use this time to review the information in the initial parent/guardian notification letter as well as begin the process of establishing such a parent/guardian contract.

Table G3. LETTER BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL. The example letter is to be used with a draft parent/guardian contract that the school may adapt as shown in Table G4.

<Date>

Dear Parent/Guardian of <insert student name>,

This letter is in follow-up to the letter dated <insert date of first letter> where we indicated we would outline a contract to detail the school's responsibilities and how we will partner with you to improve your child's reading skills. The reading contract is a requirement of the 2014 legislation aimed at supporting statewide literacy efforts. The contract itself must specify collective responsibilities across the principal, teacher, parent/guardian and child. We would like to meet with you to best develop this shared contract.

We have an example of what a final contract might look like below – this is only a draft. We believe that we each have an important role and responsibility in helping your child be successful. The goal of the reading contract is to identify each person's responsibility and commitment to your child's reading progress. Therefore the example contract below identifies recommended actions that each person can do.

We know that your input and your child's input into this contract agreement is important. We would like to meet with you and your child to develop the contract so that it is tailored to best meet the needs of your child.

We would like to schedule a time to meet with you and your child on <insert date and time> at <location and address> to develop and finalize the contract. If this time is not convenient for you, please contact your child's teacher at <insert contact information>.

We look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

<Insert Name>

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Table G4. CONTRACT BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL. This example contract may be adapted to fit local context. G5 provides schools with a Title 1/Early Literacy Implementation example contract to meet the needs of both Title 1 and 279.68 requirements.

****Please note this is an example contract we will individualize and tailor to your child's needs at our meeting.**

This contract recognizes the important role and responsibility of the student, parent/guardian, teacher and principal in working together to support a student's progress and success in reading. As such, we commit to:

- Respect school staff, students, parents/guardians, administrators and community.
- Be excited about literacy, reading and learning to read.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

To support my child in learning to read, I will:

- Invite my child to read with me every day.
- Stop and ask about the picture and about what is happening in the story.
- Read from a variety of children's books.
- Talk with my child's teacher about my child's reading progress.
- Discuss stories we have read together
- Ask my child questions about what was read.

Student

In my job learning to read I will:

- Go to the library and check out books
- Read aloud to my parents/guardians/family
- Read aloud to my pets
- Learn new words

Teacher

Working with students, I will:

- Clearly state the goals for reading achievement.
- Share the high expectations for reading with all participants.
- Articulate instructional means for attaining for goals
- Share assessments used to monitor children's progress.
- Focus on reading and writing.
- Work toward Parent/Guardian involvement as supporting their children's reading and homework.

Principal

In my work leading the school, I will:

- State clearly the goals for reading achievement.
- Share the high expectations for reading with all participants.
- Articulate instructional means for attaining for goals
- Share assessments used to monitor children's progress.
- Focus on reading and writing
- Work toward Parent/Guardian involvement as supporting their children's reading and homework

_____ _____

Principal Teacher

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian Student

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Table G5. CONTRACT BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL: Joint Title 1 Compact/ELI Reading Contract. This example contract meets the needs of both Title one and 279.68 requirements.

****Please note this is an example contract. We will individualize and tailor to your child's needs at our meeting.**

Responsibilities bolded are required for any Title I program.
This contract recognizes the important role and responsibility of the student, parent/guardian, teacher and principal in working together to support a student's progress and success in reading. As such, we commit to:

- Respect school staff, students, parents/guardians, administrators and community.
- Be excited about literacy, reading and learning to read.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
To support my child in learning to read and succeed in school, I will:

- Invite my child to read with me every day.
- Read from a variety of children's books.
- Talk with my child's teacher about my child's reading progress and progress in other subjects.
- Ask my child questions about what was read.
- **See that my child is punctual and attends school regularly**
- **Set time for homework and review it**
- Talk to my child about his/her school day
- **Attend parent/family-teacher conferences**
- Volunteer in my child's classroom

Student
As a student, I will:

- Go to the library and check out books
- Read aloud to my parents/guardians, family or pets
- Learn new words
- Attend school daily ready to learn
- Always try to do my best in my work and behavior
- Come to school with my supplies and completed homework

Teacher
As a teacher, I will:

- Clearly state the goals for reading achievement.
- Share the high expectations for reading with all participants.
- Articulate instructional means for attaining for goals
- Share assessments used to monitor children's progress.
- Focus on reading and writing.
- Work toward Parent/Guardian involvement as supporting their children's reading and homework.
- Encourage each child to do his/her personal best
- **Share information regarding each child's needs and progress**
- Provide instruction utilizing research-based strategies that will meet all students' instructional needs
- **Maintain open line of communication with each student and his/her parents/guardians**
- **Parent/family-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact will be discussed as it relates to the individual child's achievement;**

Principal
As a leader, I will:

- State clearly the goals for reading achievement.
- Share the high expectations for reading with all participants.
- Articulate instructional means for attaining for goals
- Share assessments used to monitor children's progress.

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- Focus on reading and writing
- Work toward Parent/Guardian involvement as supporting their children's reading and homework
- Provide the students with highly professional, qualified staff
- Provide an environment that allows for positive communication between the students, parents/guardians and staff
- **Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment**

_____	_____
Principal	Teacher
_____	_____
Parent/Guardian	Student

3. **Progress Reports.** It is required that schools apprise the parent or guardian of their student's academic progress in the area of reading, as well as provide them with other useful information. It is recommended this is provided as a quarterly progress report - or trimester progress report - to parents/guardians of a child(ren) identified as persistently at risk, using the district adopted format for communicating student performance and progress. The quarterly/trimester 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. It is strongly recommended that districts schedule Early Literacy Progression meetings with parents/guardians in order to discuss student progress, supports provided to students, and jointly plan, review and continue to monitor the success of the contract between home and school.

There are four examples schools may use/adapt, based on the type of screening obtained across grades using the state-supported assessments. These examples are easily adapted to reflect other department-approved assessments.

Table G6.1. PROGRESS REPORT: Individual Growth and Development Indicators [IGDIs]. This progress report example, developed by IRRC, provides an example of how to inform parents/guardians of their child's progress in the area of reading specific to PRE-KINDERGARTEN students.

Date: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian of _____:

This letter shares information about a new statewide preK reading test we are using at our school. IGDIs is the test which stands for Individual Growth and Development Indicators. IGDIs is given to every preK child three times a year to identify children who are reading on grade level and those children who need additional help in reading.

Throughout the school year, preK children are assessed on a variety of skills that are essential to reading. The IGDIs assessment screens on the following skills:

- Reading letter names and identifying letter sounds

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- Oral language (eg. Correctly labeling pictures)
- Identifying first sounds they hear in a word (eg. “cat” begins with /c/)
- Comprehension (eg. Finding a picture in a group that doesn’t relate)
- Rhyming

Your child’s total score in the IGDIs screening process is listed below:

Time period (circle one):	Child’s Actual Score	Benchmark score (Grade level expected score)
Fall		
Winter		
Spring		

Please take some time to review the information above. We are working hard to make sure that our regular classroom instruction meets the needs of all children so they have the potential to read on grade level. Children who are not at benchmark may receive support within their classroom.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child’s reading development, please contact me at (insert email address).

Sincerely,

Teacher name

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Table G6.2. PROGRESS REPORT: Formative Assessment System for Teachers [FAST] - KINDERGARTEN. This progress report example, developed by IRRC, provides an example of how to inform parents/guardians of their child's progress in the area of reading specific to KINDERGARTEN students.

Date: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian of _____:

This letter shares information about a new statewide reading test we are using at our school. FAST is the test which stands for Formative Assessment System for Teachers. FAST is given to every student three times a year to identify students who are reading on grade level and those students who need additional help in reading.

Throughout the school year, Kindergarten students are assessed on a variety of skills that are essential to reading. The FAST assessment screens on the following skills:

- Reading letter names and identifying letter sounds
- Understanding concepts of print (eg. We read from left to right on a page.)
- Identifying individual sounds they hear in a word (eg. "at" has two sounds: /a/ and /t/)
- Reading commonly used words by sight (eg. "the")
- Blending sounds together to read simple words

Your child's total score in the Kindergarten screening process is listed below:

Time period (circle one):	Student's Actual Score	Benchmark score (Grade level expected score)
Fall		
Winter		
Spring		

Please take some time to review the information above. We are working hard to make sure that our regular classroom instruction meets the needs of all students so they have the potential to read on grade level. Students who score below benchmark may receive support within their classroom.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's reading development, please contact me at (insert email address).

Sincerely,

Teacher name

Table G6.3. PROGRESS REPORT: Formative Assessment System for Teachers [FAST] - FIRST GRADE. This progress report example, developed by IRRC, provides an example of how to inform parents/guardians of their child's progress in the area of reading specific to FIRST GRADE students.

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Date: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian of _____:

This letter shares information about a new statewide reading test we are using at our school. FAST is the test which stands for Formative Assessment System for Teachers. FAST is given to every student three times a year to identify students who are reading on grade level and those students who need additional help in reading.

Throughout the school year, first grade students are assessed on a variety of skills that are essential to reading. The FAST assessment screens on the following skills:

- Reading simple sentences
- Number of words read correctly in one minute—related to decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension
- Identifying individual sounds they hear in a word (eg. “at” has two sounds: /a/ and /t/)
- Reading commonly used words by sight (eg. "the”)
- Blending sounds together to read simple words

Your child’s total score in the screening process is listed below:

Time period (circle one):	Student’s Actual Score	Benchmark score (Grade level expected score)
Fall		
Winter		
Spring		

Please take some time to review the information above. We are working hard to make sure that our regular classroom instruction meets the needs of all students so they have the potential to read on grade level. Students who score below benchmark may receive support within their classroom.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child’s reading development, please contact me at (insert email address).

Sincerely, Teacher name

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Table G6.4. PROGRESS REPORT: Formative Assessment System for Teachers [FAST] - SECOND to SIXTH GRADE. This progress report example, developed by IRRC, provides an example of how to inform parents/guardians of their child's progress in the area of reading specific to SECOND to SIXTH GRADE students

Date: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian of _____:

This letter shares information about a new statewide reading test we are using at our school. FAST is a test which stands for Formative Assessment System for Teachers. FAST is given to every student three times a year to identify students who are reading on grade level and those students who need additional help in reading.

Throughout the school year, students in grades 2-6 are given the CBMReading test. This is an overall measure of reading skills where the student reads aloud a story for one minute. The teacher records the number of words the student reads correctly along with reading accuracy. CBMReading provides an overall indication of how well the student is reading and is related to other reading skills like decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Your child's total score in the screening process is listed below:

Time period (circle one):	Student's Actual Score	Benchmark score (Grade level expected score)
Fall		
Winter		
Spring		

Please take some time to review the information above. We are working hard to make sure that our regular classroom instruction meets the needs of all students so they have the potential to read on grade level. Students who score below benchmark may receive support within their classroom.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's reading development, please contact me at (insert email address).

Sincerely,

Teacher name

4. **Enrollment in Intensive Summer Reading Program.** By May 2018, it is required that schools notify the parent/guardian of a student persistently at risk at the end of third grade that they may enroll their student in an intensive summer reading program. Further technical assistance is being developed for this area, including an example notification letter. This technical assistance will be provided on the Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC) http://www.iowareadingresearch.org/.

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H: Persistently At Risk

The following appendix is to be used as companion technical assistance to the Department's official guidance for §279.68. The purpose of this appendix is to support schools in implementing the requirements of Iowa Code §279.68. Contained within are technical assistance documents to support teacher observation and make literacy status decisions for student skills, including multiple graphic displays of how-to-think-about missing or incomplete data**.**

1. Teacher Observation
2. Literacy Status Determination
    a. Matrix
    b. Stair Step

1. **Teacher Observation.** The Department's guidance indicates that Teacher observation may be used for a one-time initial identification of an individual student persistently at risk in reading, but may not be used to determine if a student continues to be persistently at risk in reading or to determine a student is not persistently at risk in reading. Additionally, the district should review attendance data for all students in grades K-3 to determine if a pattern of frequent absences is associated with students persistently at risk in reading at the individual student level. In order to make this determination **Table H1** provides a **Teacher Observation Tool**. Typical instances in which teacher observation may be used are: students new to the state of Iowa, students new to the public school setting, and kindergarten students with no previous history of assessment.

Table H1.

Teacher Observation Tool

Early Literacy Implementation Teacher Observation Data Collection	
Student Name:	Student's Date of Birth:
Classroom Teacher Name:	Grade Level:
Summarize current information on the student's area(s) of concern in reading. The data need to be gathered over an appropriate span of instructional time and need to be valid and reliable. Additional data may not be necessary unless it is determined that it is needed to identify the area of concern. Provide the following information, if applicable: • Specific and measurable data pertaining to scores in grade books or from formative assessments. • Specific and measurable data from teacher observations. • Specific and measurable data from classroom assessments. • Specific and measurable data from interventions that may have been tried with the student.	

A. Concerns about Student's Learning:
1. What are the concerns about the student's reading skills that the Department approved Universal Screening, such as FAST, did not identify?

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2. What are other concerns, if any, about the student's learning such as health concerns, social-emotional or behavioral concerns?

3. Upon reviewing attendance data, has the student had a pattern of frequent absences that may have an impact on the student's reading at the individual student level? Check yes or no.

☐ **No.** The student has not had frequent absences that have impacted the student's reading.

☐ **Yes.** Explain and provide data.

Note: The district must review attendance data for all students in grades K-3 to determine if a pattern of frequent absences is associated with students being persistently at risk in reading at the individual student level.

B. Define the Reading Problem:

Define the student's reading skills in specific, observable and measurable terms. The Iowa Core Literacy Standards for the student's grade level are to be used as the standard of comparison.

displays the following reading skills, . The Iowa Core Literacy Grade Level Standard expects .

C. Summarize Reading Information:

Grade Level Iowa Core Literacy Standards Not Being Met or At Risk of Not Being Met	Data Documenting Student's Current Reading Skills/Behavior	Comparison to Iowa Core Literacy Standards	Level of Concern	
			Moderate	High

Describe any additional reading instruction, interventions or supports provided to address the student's reading concerns.	Share information that indicates rate of progress and progress monitoring data that document the student's level of concern in reading.

D. Confirm Concerns:

Based on the student's data, determine the following:

- Is there a moderate or a high concern with the student's reading skills in comparison to the Iowa Core Literacy Standards for the student's grade level?
- Based on the comparison to the Iowa Core Literacy Standards, does the student demonstrate persistently at risk indicators in reading?

Using these teacher observation data documented above, does the student demonstrate persistently at risk indicators in reading? Check yes or no, and give a justification for the decision.

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☐ **No.**

☐ **Yes.**

Justification:

Form Completed By and Date:

Note: Teacher observation may be used for a one-time initial identification of an individual student persistently at risk in reading, but may not be used to determine if a student continues to be persistently at risk in reading. Additionally, the district should review attendance data for all students in grades K-3 to determine if a pattern of frequent absences is associated with students being determined to be persistently at risk in reading at the individual student level.

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2. **Literacy Status Determination**. [**Revised 2016**] Literacy Status Determination is addressed in the Department's guidance as follows: Identification of students as being persistently at risk 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:

   - 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.

   Further, students are considered to be persistently at risk in the following circumstances:

   - 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.
   - An IEP team has determined the student must take an alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards.

   In certain circumstances the educator may need to override the measure used to determine literacy status. For example, a student with speech dysfluency may be better assessed by a measure without oral reading fluency such as aReading. In these cases, the educator will not override the designation, but the measure used, and the designation will be auto-applied.

   Two graphics are presented below to assist in understanding the literacy status designation. **Table H2** illustrates the decision formula using current identification, including when current identification is unavailable. In **Table H2**, no determination may be available for current identification due to a missed assessment window or movement from districts outside of Iowa. In the current US (universal screening) column, additional information in Iowa could include the Teacher Observation form, in the case of an initial determination of persistently at risk.

   Table H3 illustrates *the same decision formulas* in a slightly different way. The 'stair step' illustration assists educators in thinking about how a student can become persistently at risk or become at risk, or even adequately progressing, but cannot jump from persistently at risk to adequately progressing in one testing window. The student's current universal screening will allow them to go up a level, down a level, or stay the same.

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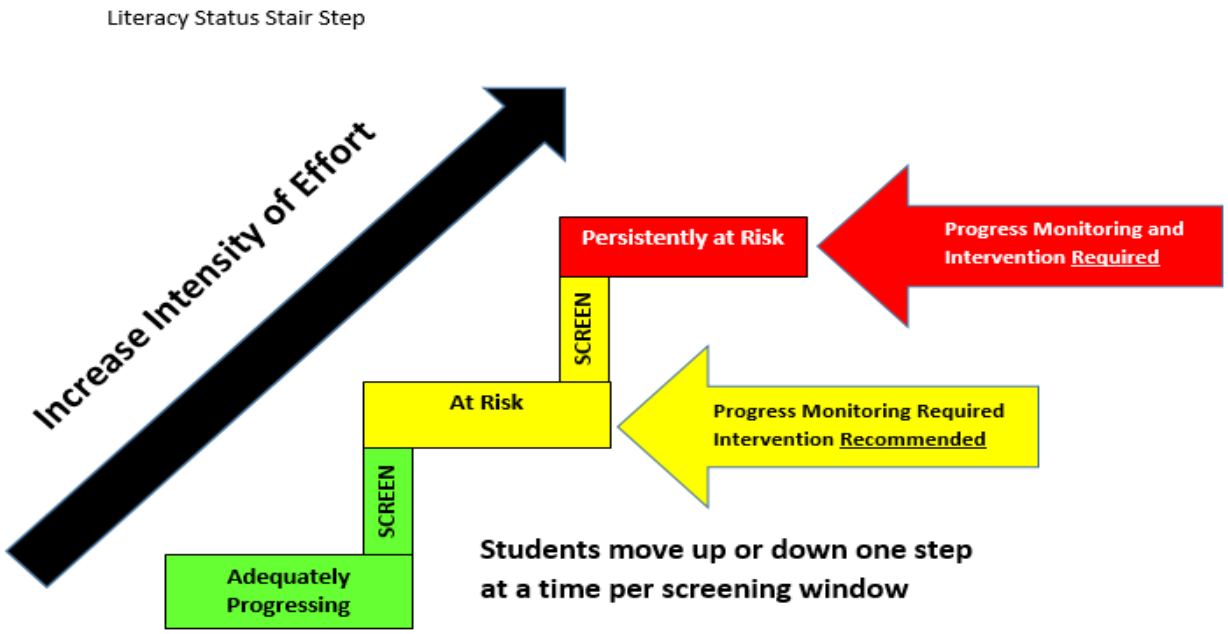
Table H2.
Literacy Status Matrix

Student's Literacy Status Designation on Most Recent Previous Screening Window	Student's Score for the Current Screening Window	STUDENT'S CURRENT LITERACY STATUS DESIGNATION CALCULATED BY THE SYSTEM
Adequately Progressing	At/Above Benchmark	Adequately Progressing
Adequately Progressing	Below Benchmark	At Risk
Adequately Progressing	No Score	Adequately Progressing
At Risk	At/Above Benchmark	Adequately Progressing
At Risk	Below Benchmark	Persistently at Risk
At Risk	No Score	At Risk
Persistently at Risk	At/Above Benchmark	At Risk
Persistently at Risk	Below Benchmark	Persistently at Risk
Persistently at Risk	No Score	Persistently at Risk
Cannot Determine	At/Above Benchmark	Adequately Progressing
Cannot Determine	Below Benchmark	At Risk
Cannot Determine	No Score	Cannot Determine

Please note:

- If a student does not have a score for the current screening window, the student's designation from the most recent previous screening window is carried forward.
- Scores for students in the current screening window are only used in making designations if the score was captured within the screening window.
- Preschool students (PreK- Age 4, Age 5) do not have calculated Literacy Status designations.
- The designations that were made by your school during the most recent previous screening window are final and archived. They are not editable.

Table H3.
Literacy Status Stair Step



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I: Retention

See Early Literacy Retention Guidance for additional technical support. Early Literacy Retention Guidance is focused on implementing the requirements of Iowa Code §279.68 and technical assistance support for retention decision-making and good cause exemptions required May 1, 2018.

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J: Specific Student Populations

The following appendix is to be used as companion technical assistance to the Department's official guidance for §279.68. The purpose of this appendix is to support schools in implementing the requirements of Iowa Code §279.68. The content is focused on technical assistance to support specific student populations including special education students, students with disabilities, English learners, nonpublic students, homeschool (CPI, IPI) students, and students whose parents/guardians wish to refuse assessment and/or intervention:

1. Nonpublic
2. Homeschool and Homeschool assisted
3. English Learners
4. Individualized Education Program/Students with Special Needs;
5. Students with significant cognitive disabilities
6. Parents/Guardians who wish to refuse assessment and/or intervention
7. Blind, visual impairment; Deaf, hard of hearing **[New 2016]**
8. Disabled, other assess **[New 2016]**
9. Out of State Placement **[New 2016]**
10. Dyslexia **[New 2016]**

1. **Nonpublic.** §279.68 applies to nonpublic students who receive any type of services from the public school. This includes all aspects of the law, including continued intensive interventions for students identified as persistently at risk beyond grade three, as well as continued benchmarking to ensure the student is reading at grade level. This is true regardless of the type of service received from the public school; the student does not need to be receiving literacy services from the public school to be entitled to all aspects of the early literacy law.

2. **Homeschool.** §279.68 applies to dual-enrollment students, and/or families who participate in your district's home school assistance program (HSAP), in that the district is required to offer the same services to this population as provided to any other student within the district. This includes all aspects of the law, including continued intensive interventions for students identified as persistently at risk beyond grade three, as well as continued benchmarking to ensure the identified areas in which the student is persistently at risk in reading have been remediated. Specifically, districts may not compel any dual-enrolled or HSAP student or parent/guardian to take part in the below, however districts are required to offer:
   - Universal screening three times a year;
   - Progress monitoring weekly;
   - For students identified as persistently at risk in reading,
     - Progress monitoring,
     - Parent/guardian contract with the district,
     - Intensive reading instruction,
     - 90 minutes of evidence-based instruction per day,
     - Retention; and
     - Attendance at a summer literacy program.

Table I1 provides districts with an example letter to use when communicating with parents/guardians of students who are dual-enrolled and/or homeschooled.

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Table I1.

Homeschool Parent/Guardian Letter

District Letterhead

TO: Parents/Guardians of _____
FROM: District Contact Person
DATE: INSERT DATE
SUBJECT: Notice Regarding Universal Screening of Reading or Reading Readiness for Students Who are Dual Enrolled or Participate in HSAP Programming

Iowa Code section 279.68 requires all children who are students of [INSERT DISTRICT NAME] in kindergarten through grade three to be periodically screened for reading or reading readiness. This law also requires the District to provide additional supports for children who are identified as being "persistently at risk" in reading.

Your child is dual enrolled in the District, is enrolled in and participates in the District's home school assistance program, or both. The law requires that your child be offered the same services as provided to any other student within the District. You are not required to accept any assessment or services offered to you by the District described in this letter – however all assessments and services are available to you and your child.

One of the requirements of this law is to provide all students access to universal screening three times a year. The first screening period starts on _____. If you would like your child to participate in screening, or if you have any questions, please contact the District.

If your child takes part in universal screening and is then identified as "at risk" (below benchmark during one screening period), the District will offer your child additional weekly monitoring of your child's progress. Further, the District may discuss with you the ways you and the District may improve your child's reading performance.

If your child takes part in universal screening and is then identified as being persistently at risk in reading (below benchmark during two or more consecutive screening periods), the District will provide you with the following information:

- That your child has been identified as being persistently at risk in reading.
- A description of any services currently provided to your child from the District, if applicable.
- A description of proposed supplemental instructional services and supports that the District may offer to provide to your child that are designed to remediate areas in which your child is persistently at risk in reading.
- Suggested strategies you may use if you so choose, in helping your child succeed in reading proficiency, including but not limited to the promotion of parent/family-guided home reading.

The purpose of screening is to get you and your child the information and help as soon as possible if your child is not meeting reading benchmarks. This early information will help you make the best decisions for your child.

There is no charge for this screening or any additional weekly monitoring of your child's progress. Your child's screening results are private and protected.

If you want more information about this law, please contact <insert District contact> or visit the Iowa Department of Education's website.

3. **English Learners**. §279.68 applies to English Learners. This includes all aspects of the law, including universal screening, continued intensive interventions for students identified as being persistently at risk beyond grade three, as well as continued benchmarking to ensure the identified areas in which the student is persistently at risk in reading have been remediated. English Learners may be considered for good cause exemption [i.e., the student is a Limited English Proficient student with less than two years of instruction in an ESL program] in regard to retention decision-making. See Early Literacy Retention Guidance.

   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. Some measures (both screening and progress monitoring) are designed with discontinue rules to minimize student frustration.

4. **Individualized Education Program [IEP]/Students with Special Needs.** §279.68 applies to students on IEPs, 504 plans, deaf and hard of hearing and/or students with visual impairments. This includes all aspects of the law, including universal screening, continued intensive interventions for students identified as being persistently at risk beyond grade three, as well as continued benchmarking to ensure the identified areas in which the student is persistently at risk in reading have been remediated. Individuals served on IEPs and/or students with special needs may be considered for good cause exemption [e.g., The student has an IEP that indicates that participation in the assessments required by 279.68 is not appropriate; The student has demonstrated an acceptable level of performance on an alternative assessment based on scientifically-based research; The student has demonstrated mastery through a portfolio review that meets Department-required criteria] in retention decision making. For more information about good cause exemptions and retention, see Early Literacy Retention Guidance.

   Even if the student's IEP specifies that participation in the required assessments is not appropriate, that student must still be assessed using other assessments. Accommodations related to a student's disability are allowed, and 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, 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.

   In regards to intensive instruction 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 areas in which the student is persistently at risk in reading.

5. **Students with significant cognitive disabilities.** Students with significant cognitive disabilities need to have their assessment needs reviewed using the technical assistance documents on the Department Alternate Assessment webpage. Eligible students will participate in the Iowa's ELI Alternate Assessment to meet the requirements of screening and progress monitoring. Decision-making and technical resources for students with significant

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cognitive disabilities including those taking the Iowa ELI Alternate may be found at: ELI Alternate Resources and Links. IEP teams should make the determination for ELI alternate assessment as soon as the law applies, grades kindergarten through third and document the decision-making, as well as specifying accommodations specific to screening if appropriate. It is reasonable that a student being served on an IEP, qualifying for alternate assessment, with a status of persistently at risk would have an appropriate goal in the area of literacy on the IEP. 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 ESYS meets the criteria specified in the guidance provided for summer school.

Students who qualify for Iowa's ELI Alternate Assessment are automatically considered persistently at risk, even if they meet the benchmarks for ELI Alternate. The ELI Alternate outcomes are significantly (and appropriately) modified for this population. Persistently at risk students, including those on ELI Alternate must be offered summer school. However, because retention is not being considered for Alternate Assessment students (good cause exemption), the hours and requirements for attendance established by the Iowa Reading Research Center do not apply. The district must offer summer school, yet can't require summer school if the family declines, nor prescribe how the summer school is provided without the family's input through the IEP.

6. **Parents/Guardians who wish to refuse assessment**. 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.

7. **Blind, visual impairment, Deaf, Hard of Hearing** - **BVI_DHH**. **[New 2016]** FAST has provided a list of general accommodations if needed. It does not have a specific statement in regard to deaf, hard-of-hearing , or visually impaired students but generally speaking they do allow for the following accommodations:
   - FAST's CBM measures are available via paper-pencil as needed for any reason.
   - Text Magnification
   - Sound Amplification
   - Extended Time in the following measures: aReading, aMath and untimed portions of CBM Math, earlyReading and earlyMath
   - Extra Breaks
   - Preferential seating and use of quiet space
   - Proxy responses
   - Use of scratch paper (note that the CBM Math Automaticity Assessment does not allow for scratch paper as it specifically is designed to assess the automaticity skill)
   - Students with differing needs or disabilities may take the computer-based assessments such as aReading, aMath or CBM Math Automaticity via a tablet-type device (e.g., Chromebook, iPad, etc.), facilitating screen optimization

   Administration and scoring accommodations beyond these *will invalidate* obtained scores for universal screening purposes in relation to the provided benchmarks. It is possible that a deaf/hard of hearing or blind/visually impaired student could be meaningfully monitored with a modified administration or scoring procedure. This type

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of interpretation would be a student's skill demonstration in relation to that student's skills at an earlier time and evaluating that change (or not) over time. It is also important to note that decision-making about the assessments and accommodations must be made on an individual student basis; not on the basis of a category or classification.

It is important to keep in mind that the tools approved to meet ELI requirements were designed for the sensory-typical student population and those important foundational early literacy skills. These skills will likely, but may not always be, foundational literacy skills for all students (e.g., phonological awareness for a deaf student). Staff will need to be attentive to individual students' skills and needs.

Obtained data are one piece of information that can be combined with additional information known about a student or groups of students to make good instructional decisions. It will be up to individuals knowledgeable of literacy progression of deaf/hard of hearing and blind/visually impaired students as well as a particular learner's unique skills and needs to identify what data sources (i.e., specific tests) are helpful.

8. **"Disabled, other assess" [formerly "Disabled, but not on Alternate Assessment"]. [New 2016]** This is a drop down selection in the Iowa TIER Universal Screening tab to indicate why a student was not assessed using the default measure selected by the school for the student's grade level. While 'not assessing' a student is not a permitted selection K-3, there may be instances where the default universal screening measure is not appropriate for an individual student. The student's early literacy skills must still be assessed, however, accommodations and modifications beyond those permitted by the test developer may be applied by an IEP or 504 team and thus the benchmarks may not be applied to the student's assessment. This drop down option **may** be used for blind/visually impaired or deaf/hard of hearing students without a cognitive disability (not on alternate assessment) who are still participating in the screening and monitoring measures with accommodations or modifications beyond those permitted by the test developer. This drop down option **may not** be used for whole categories of students ("students on IEPs") or students who may participate in the screening but application of the discontinue rules of administration apply, such as students with difficulty focusing or social/emotional behaviors disabilities. To apply this drop down option, a reason must be entered for the selection in Iowa TIER. The IEP or 504 team discussion must also be recorded on the student's plan and specify the student's unique needs in regard to universal screening and progress monitoring.

Note: Please remember you can use another approved measure to override the default assessment, such as aReading for CBM-R. *See item 7, in* **Appendix F**.

Factors to consider:

- The student has a documented disability condition and a local student support team that includes the parent(s)/guardian(s)
- The student's early literacy skills will be assessed during the screening windows and they will be provided progress monitoring and intervention when this assessment indicates a need.
- The student does not have a significant cognitive disability and does not qualify to take the ELI Alternate Assessment.
- The student support team has documented the reason the student will not participate in the default universal screening and what accommodations/modifications the student will receive for early literacy assessment.
- The student cannot be tested using Another Approved Measure or with the default measure using the

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discontinue rules.

9. **Out of State Placement [New 2016]** ELI requirements apply to students served in out of state placement, including screening, progress monitoring, and intervention supports. The sending school is responsible for ensuring the screening is completed. The screening may be completed in several ways: the out of state placement can administer any screening measure on Iowa's approved list, the out of state placement can administer the sending district default measure on paper, and share the scores with the sending district, or the sending district can complete the screening on site at the out of state facility. The sending district and out of state placement facility will coordinate subsequent progress monitoring and intervention if there is an indicated need from the screening. Please remember screening administered on paper cannot be entered into the TIER system after the fact, but the focus is on identifying and meeting all student needs.

10. **Dyslexia. [New 2016]** ELI requirements apply to students identified as having dyslexia, with consideration for students needs identified in a 504 plan or IEP (see item 4 above), when applicable. 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. Students identified as having dyslexia may also be students assessed as persistently at risk in reading. Assistance shall include but not be limited to strategies that formally address dyslexia, when appropriate, and strategies to develop the skills to read at grade level.

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K: Summer School

The Iowa Reading Research Center (IRRC) will develop the program criteria and implementation guidelines for summer school. They will be posted on the IRRC website at http//www.iowareadingresearch.org

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