

## Article - Education

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§4–136.

- (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.
- (2) “Fluency” means reading accuracy and rate.
- (3) “Phonemic awareness” means the ability to distinguish, segment, blend, and manipulate phonemes in words.
- (4) “Phonics” means the study of letters and letter combinations and the relationship between the sounds that they represent.
- (5) “Phonological awareness” means a child’s ability to recognize and manipulate parts of oral language including syllables, onset–rime, and phonemes.
- (6) “Screening” means a brief, valid, and reliable measurement procedure used to identify or predict whether a student may be at risk for poor learning outcomes.
- (7) “Student” means a student who does not have a current individualized education program or an individualized family service plan with reading goals and:
- (i) Is in kindergarten;
- (ii) Is in first grade and was not screened by the school in kindergarten or demonstrated difficulty mastering grade–level reading in kindergarten; or
- (iii) Enters or transfers to a public elementary school from an elementary school, unless a determination is made by the county board that the student has already been screened and does not demonstrate difficulty mastering grade–level reading.
- (8) “Supplemental Reading Instruction” means evidence–based, sequential, systematic, explicit, and cumulative instruction or intervention to mastery of foundational reading skills including phonological or phonemic awareness and processing, phonics, and vocabulary to support development of decoding, spelling, fluency, and reading comprehension skills to meet grade level curriculum.

(b) (1) (i) Beginning in the 2020–2021 school year, each county board shall ensure that a student is screened to identify if the student is at risk for reading difficulties.

(ii) The screening required under this section may not be included in the time limitation for assessments set forth in § 7–203(h) of this article.

(2) A screening may be conducted by:

(i) A classroom teacher;

(ii) A school psychologist;

(iii) A special education teacher;

(iv) A speech–language pathologist;

(v) A reading interventionist;

(vi) A designated reading specialist; or

(vii) Any other educator trained in screening instruments and protocols.

(3) On registration of a student at a public school, the county board shall provide to the parent or guardian of the student:

(i) A description of the screening and supplemental instruction process in the county; and

(ii) Any checklists or forms needed to support the screening protocol.

(c) (1) A county board shall select one or more appropriate screening instruments that:

(i) Accurately and reliably identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes;

(ii) Are developmentally appropriate;

(iii) Are economical to administer in time and cost; and

(iv) Use norm–referenced or criterion–based scores.

(2) The screening instrument shall be based on foundational reading skills that include phonological and phonemic awareness and processing.

(d) (1) Students shall be screened according to the schedule established by the county board.

(2) If the screening results indicate that a student is at risk of reading difficulties, the county board shall:

(i) Provide supplemental reading instruction to address the student's identified areas of need; and

(ii) Provide a notification letter to the parent or guardian of the student that includes:

1. The screening results; and

2. A description of the supplemental reading instruction that will be provided to the student.

(e) Each county board shall provide resources on the county board's website that include:

(1) Reading screening instruments used in the county; and

(2) A checklist of early warning signs of reading difficulty and dyslexia by age.

(f) (1) On or before October 1 each year, beginning with the 2020–2021 school year, each county board shall report to the Department the following information:

(i) The number of students in the county in each grade level;

(ii) The number of students screened at each grade level;

(iii) The number of students identified through a screening instrument as at risk for reading difficulties in each grade level; and

(iv) The number of students identified as at risk for reading difficulties at each grade level who received supplemental reading instruction.

(2) Data reported under paragraph (1) of this subsection shall be:

and (i) Disaggregated and searchable at the county board level;

(ii) Updated annually and available on the Department's website.

(g) (1) On or before June 1, 2020, and once every 4 years thereafter, the Department, in consultation with parents, teachers, and other interested stakeholders, shall develop and update resources for use by a county board.

(2) Resources developed under this subsection shall be available on the Department's website.

(h) (1) The Department shall provide technical support for the county boards to provide training opportunities annually for individuals who conduct screenings under this section and for school administrators.

(2) Training opportunities may include training on:

(i) The administration and interpretation of screenings, informal diagnostic assessments, progress monitoring instruments, and student data;

(ii) Interpreting screenings and assessments for parents;

(iii) Best practices for designing and implementing supplemental reading instruction; and

(iv) The elements, principles, and best practices of supplemental reading instruction.

(i) The Department shall adopt regulations to implement the requirements of this section.

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