



# COMAR 13A.03.08 Students at Risk for Reading Difficulties

## .01 Scope

These regulations establish the screening for all kindergarten students and identified first grade, second grade, and third grade students who may be at risk for reading difficulties; provision of supplemental reading instruction for identified students; annual reporting requirements; and evaluation of the screening program.

## .02 Definitions

- A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated.
- B. Terms Defined
  - (1) "Fluency" means reading accuracy and rate and includes oral accuracy, prosody, intonation, and automaticity.
  - (2) "Phonemic Awareness" means the ability to distinguish, segment, blend, and manipulate phonemes in words.
  - (3) "Phonics" means the study of letters and letter combinations and the relationship between the sounds that they represent.
  - (4) "Phonological Awareness" means a child's ability to recognize and manipulate parts of oral language including syllables, onset-rime, and phonemes.
  - (5) "Progress Monitoring" means a measurement procedure used at specified time intervals to measure a student's response to instruction or intervention.
  - (6) "Rapid Automatic Naming" means how quickly individual students can name letters, or digits, or symbols.
  - (7) "Screening Instrument" means a brief, valid, and reliable measurement used to identify or predict whether a student may be at risk for poor learning outcomes.
  - (8) "Student" means a student who does not have a current individualized education program or an individualized family service plan with reading goals.
  - (9) "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.

## 03. General

- A. All local school systems will ensure that all students enrolled in a public kindergarten will be screened to identify if the student is at risk for reading difficulties and provided supplemental reading instruction aligned to the results of the screener.
- B. Beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, §§C and D of this Regulation apply to students in the second and third grade

- C. Students in first, second, and third grade shall be included in the screening and the supplemental reading instruction program established by the local school system if they meet the following criteria:
  - (1) were not previously screened;
  - (2) demonstrated difficulty mastering grade-level reading in the previous; or
  - (3) entered or transferred to a public elementary school.
- D. Screening is not required for students in first, second, or third grade if the local school system can demonstrate that the student who entered or transferred to a public elementary school has already been screened and demonstrates mastery of grade-level reading.
- E. The students shall be screened in accordance with the guidance of the selected screener.
- F. The screening schedule shall be established by the local school system, with initial screening taking place within the first 2 months of the beginning of the school year.

#### **.04 Screening Process**

- A. Upon registration of a student or identification of a student at risk for reading difficulties, the local school system shall provide to the parent or guardian of the student the following:
  - (1) a written description of the screening and supplemental instruction process in the school system; and
  - (2) any checklists or screener-specific forms needed to support the screening protocol and supplemental instruction process.
- B. The Department will provide a sample of a checklist on their website.
- C. The screening required under this regulation shall be conducted by any of the following school personnel:
  - (1) classroom teacher,
  - (2) school psychologist,
  - (3) reading specialist,
  - (4) special education teacher,
  - (5) speech-language pathologist,
  - (6) reading interventionist, or
  - (7) any other educator trained to use appropriate screening instruments.
- D. A local school system shall select one or more appropriate screening instruments that meet the following criteria:
  - (1) accurately and reliably identifies students at risk for poor learning outcomes;
  - (2) are developmentally appropriate;
  - (3) are economical to administer in time and cost; and
  - (4) use norm-referenced or criterion-based scores.
- E. The appropriate grade-level screening instrument shall be based on foundational reading skills that include phonological and phonemic awareness and processing, including rapid automatic naming.
- F. Local school systems shall provide school staff with professional learning on age-appropriate, evidence-based, sequential, systematic, explicit, and cumulative instruction or intervention for student mastery of foundational reading skills, including phonological and phonemic awareness and

processing, phonics, and vocabulary to support development of decoding, spelling, fluency, and reading comprehension skills to meet grade level curriculum.

## **.05 Screening Results and Supplemental Reading Instruction**

- A. If the screening results indicate that a student is at risk of reading difficulties:
  - (1) Within 30 calendar days of the screening, the local school system shall notify the parent or guardian of the student in writing of the screening results and a description of the supplemental reading instruction that shall be provided to the student.
  - (2) The local school system shall develop a supplemental reading instructional plan to address the student's identified areas of need.
- B. The supplemental instruction shall take place within the school day.
- C. Evidence-based supplemental instruction shall be based on data and aligned with the specific areas of deficit for students identified at risk.
- D. The local school system may revise supplemental instruction based upon progress monitoring and the student's placement in an appropriate multi-tiered system of support.

## **.06 Progress Monitoring**

- A. Local school systems shall set an individualized review schedule of the supplemental reading instruction for each student at intervals of not more than 30 days for progress monitoring.
- B. The student's parent or guardian will receive written progress reports quarterly or upon revisions to supplemental instruction.
- C. The local school system may determine the supplemental reading instruction plan is completed when the student has achieved grade level reading standards based upon age-appropriate re-screening.

## **.07 Reporting Requirements**

- A. Each local school system shall provide resources on the school system website that includes:
  - (1) reading screening instruments used in the local school system; and
  - (2) a checklist of early warning signs of reading difficulties and dyslexia by age.
- B. Beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, §C of this Regulation shall apply to students in the second and third grades.
- C. On or before July 1, each year, all local school systems shall provide a report to the Maryland State Department of Education with the following information for the previous school year:
  - (1) the total number of students in kindergarten through third grade, by grade level;
  - (2) the number of students in kindergarten through third grade, by grade level, who were screened at each level;
  - (3) the number of students in kindergarten through third grade, by grade level, identified through a screening instrument as at risk for reading difficulties; and
  - (4) the number of students in kindergarten through third grade, by grade level, identified as at risk for reading difficulties who received supplemental reading instruction.

**.08 Evaluation of Reading Screeners and Reading Interventions**

- A. Local school systems shall evaluate the effectiveness of the screeners and the reading interventions annually.
- B. The Department will provide professional learning to local school systems on effective evaluation procedures.