



Screener for Students with Reading Difficulties

In accordance with Maryland's Ready to Read Act (2019), all Howard County Public School System kindergarten students¹ will participate in a screener for potential reading difficulties to determine foundational pre-reading performance.

Using the DIBELS 8th Edition Screener for Reading Difficulties, the following four subtests will be administered:

Measure ²	Measurement Area
Letter Naming Fluency Subtest	Letter Naming Fluency
Nonsense Word Fluency Subtest	Phonics
Phoneme Segmentation Fluency Subtest	Phonemic Awareness
Word Reading Fluency	Phonics and Reading Fluency

- **Letter naming fluency** assesses the ability to say the “names” of upper and lowercase letters in the English alphabet. This skill is a strong predictor of future reading success in young children.
- **Phonics** refers to the ability to learn the individual sounds in spoken language and map those sounds to specific written letters in the English language. Students who have strong phonics skills are able to connect individual sounds with letters and use those sounds to read words.
- **Phonemic awareness** refers to the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in spoken words. This skill is a powerful predictor of future reading success.
- **Reading fluency** refers to the ability to read text accurately and automatically to support reading comprehension.

How will the results be used?

Performance is an indicator of overall reading status and is not intended to be an in-depth or comprehensive measure of reading. Just like using a thermometer to take a temperature, which provides a quick indicator of general health, these quick assessments provide information about reading health on particular early reading skills.

A student's scores on the screener give school staff information about whether or not a student is on track for grade-level reading success. School staff can quickly identify students who may require extra help. Parents and guardians will be notified if their child is at risk of reading difficulties as indicated by the composite score of the four measured areas, of the subsequent support that will be provided, and with regular updates on reading process.

¹ This includes kindergarten students who do not have a current Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) with reading foundational skills goals.

² Each measure takes about one minute to complete.

Some information on this handout is taken directly from the following parent guide, while other content was summarized to reflect HCPSS procedures in compliance with the Ready to Read Act (2019):

University of Oregon. (2018). Parent Guide to DIBELS Assessment.

Retrieved from <https://dibels.uoregon.edu/assessment/dibels/dibels-eighth-edition#resources>