

EARLY INTERVENTION READING INITIATIVE

Proposal Requirements for Use of an Alternative Diagnostic Screening Instrument

The purpose of the Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI) is to provide early reading intervention services to students in kindergarten through the third grade who demonstrate substantial deficiencies based on their individual performance on an literacy screener provided or approved by the Virginia Department of Education. The provided early literacy screener in Virginia is the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screener ([PALS](#)). Attachment A outlines the proposal requirements for use of an alternative diagnostic screening instrument.

The purpose of PALS or an approved alternative diagnostic screening instrument is to gather reliable and valid data for students in Kindergarten through Grade 3 to determine eligibility for additional funding available to divisions for early reading intervention services. Divisions that elect to use an alternative diagnostic screening instrument for EIRI purposes must submit a proposal to be approved by the VDOE. The selected assessment may not consist of components pieced together from multiple sources. A pilot must be completed over the course of one school year to compare PALS data with the proposed alternative assessment data. If a school division proposes to use an assessment other than the PALS, the following information must be submitted for approval prior to conducting the pilot:

- the locally selected instrument with a cover sheet including the school division's name, superintendent's signature, and appropriate EIRI contact information;
- documentation that the request for use of a local diagnostic screening instrument has been approved by the local school board;
- documentation of alignment with the Virginia Standards of Learning;
- documentation of alignment with the PALS;
- evidence that the assessment is free of linguistic and cultural bias;
- documentation that the assessment adheres to psychometric guidelines for reliability and validity recommended by the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME); and
- a written plan of how the division will report assessment results to the PALS office according to the same data submission timelines as those using PALS. Student Testing Identifiers must be included for each student screened with PALS.

If a school division receives approval to conduct the pilot, the following would then be submitted upon completion of fall and spring assessments:

- evidence that the diagnostic criteria are similar to the criteria used in the PALS to diagnose reading difficulties;
- evidence that the student outcomes from the diagnostic screening assessment are comparable to the student outcomes of the PALS; and
- a written plan of how the division will provide professional development for teachers in the administration of the assessment.

Divisions who select supplemental assessments in addition to PALS do not need VDOE approval. School divisions that wish to pilot an EIRI alternative assessment for consideration for use in 2023-2024 must submit the required documentation by the last Friday in April to:

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