

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Kindergarten Literacy Assessment Report

**Annual Report  
2009-2010**

**Iowa Code Section 279.60**

Iowa Department of Education  
Grimes State Office Building  
Des Moines, IA 50319

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State of Iowa  
**Department of Education**  
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# KINDERGARTEN LITERACY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## **House File (HF) 761: Kindergarten Assessment**

The 2005 General Assembly passed legislation requiring local school districts to complete the following:

- Administer Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) or a kindergarten benchmark assessment adopted by the Department of Education (DE) to every kindergarten student enrolled in the district no later than October 1 [Iowa Code 279.60(16)];
- Collect from each parent guardian or legal custodian of a kindergarten student enrolled in the district, information including, but not limited to, preschool attendance and demographic factors; and
- Report the results of the assessment and preschool information to the DE no later than January 1 of that school year.

## **Assessment Tools Used**

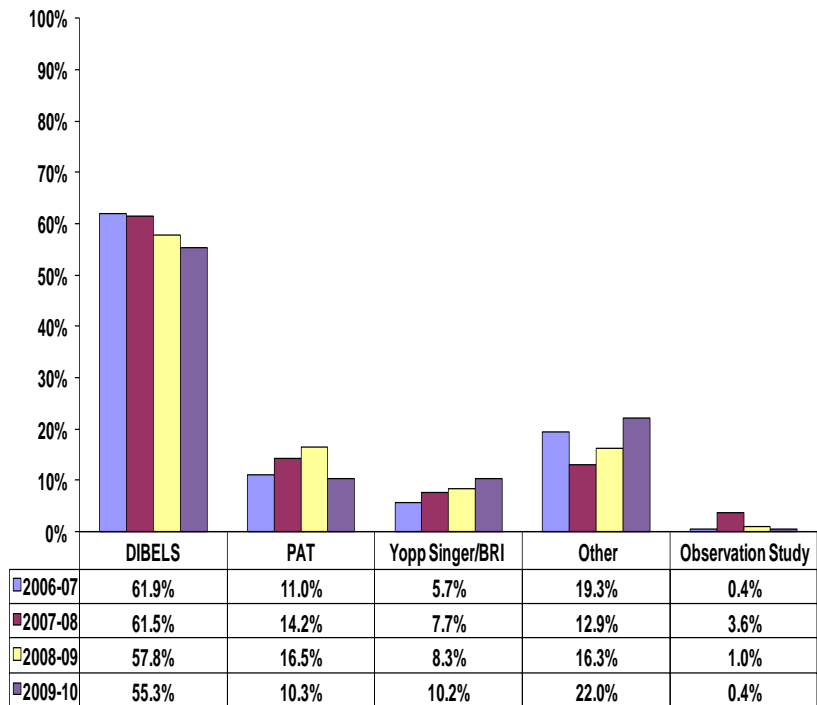
The DE aligned kindergarten assessment requirements of HF 761 with the statutory requirements for comprehensive school improvement and early intervention/class size reduction. The assessments the districts select must be technically adequate.

## Assessment Results

In the 2009-2010 school year, 99 percent of the school districts and buildings with kindergarten classrooms submitted kindergarten assessment data. (This percentage does not reflect buildings with prekindergarten or transitional kindergarten.) A total of 35,960 students were enrolled in kindergarten. Assessment scores were reported for all kindergarten students.

Figure 1 depicts the various types of kindergarten literacy assessment instruments used in school buildings. Each of these assessment tools measures a different aspect of sound (phonemic) awareness in young children. As shown in Figure 1, the majority of schools report data using the DIBELS measure, for the five categories of assessment tools used.

Figure 1: Percent of Iowa School Buildings And Each Type of Kindergarten Assessment Tool Administered

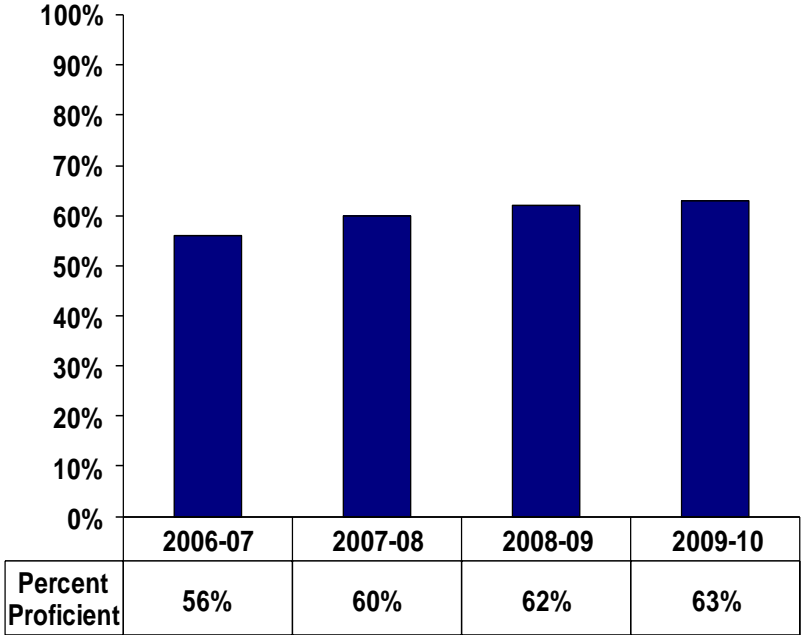


Data Source: Project Easier, Iowa Department of Education, 2009-2010

**DIBELS Data**

The DIBELS assessment measures children’s literacy skills for identifying beginning sounds of words by pointing to the picture matching the sound. Districts submitted data to the DE using Easier. Figure 2 represents DIBELS data for a four-year trend, from 2006-2007 to 2009-2010. As indicated in Figure 2, the percent of children proficient in beginning sounds as measured by DIBELS increased by 7 percent from 2006-2007 to 2009-2010.

**Figure 2. Percent of Children Entering Kindergarten Proficient in Identifying Beginning Sounds Using DIBELS Assessment Measure (N=18,124)**



Data Source. Project Easier, Iowa Department of Education, 2007-2008  
 Note: Data regarding other approved assessment instruments will be reported in the Annual Condition of Education Report, 2008.

**General Findings**

The results of the other kindergarten literacy assessments indicate positive trends in proficiency. Since 2007-2008 the percentage of children considered proficient on the Rhyming subtest of the Phonological Awareness Test (PAT) has increased from 57 percent to 70 percent proficient. In addition, the percent of children proficient in blending sounds increased from by 6 percent during the same time period.

## **Report of Preschool Participation**

Districts reported the number of children that had attended preschool at any time 12 months prior to registering for kindergarten. Districts gather the information through parent report or district records. The term “preschool” was not specifically defined in legislation and thus could have resulted in very different meanings for parents ranging from a childcare setting in a home to a private enterprise. The amount of time devoted to instruction may have been interpreted very differently by parents. The data collected and analyzed should be interpreted with extreme caution. In 2009, 35,960 children entered kindergarten. Districts indicated that based on parent report, 26,673 children attended preschool. Since the term “preschool” was a local definition, this data provides a broad interpretation of preschool based on parent perceptions.

## **Recommendations**

Results are supportive of statewide efforts to increase proficiency of literacy skills. Supporting statewide efforts include implementation of the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, the National Association for the Education of Young Children Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria, the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the ongoing Every Child Reads: ages 3 to 5 training. Although the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Olds was established in 2007-2008, the true impact of this program will be realized with each consecutive year of implementation.

Current data indicate the following recommendations:

- Continue state funding supporting the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of quality preschool programming;
- Support quality preschool programs through maintaining program standards and achieving Iowa Core Curriculum for preschoolers;
- Support quality professional development that addresses the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, Iowa Early Learning Standards and early literacy skills; and
- Provide funding to support the delivery of technical assistance through the area education agency early childhood staff.