



Iowa Department of Education

***Kindergarten Literacy Assessment
Preliminary Report***

Iowa Department of Education

Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319

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State of Iowa
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
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INTRODUCTION

Iowa Code 279.60: Kindergarten Literacy Assessment

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

- Administer a valid and reliable universal screening instrument as prescribed by the Department of Education(DE) to every kindergarten student enrolled in the district no later than October 1 (Iowa Code 257.6);
- 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 IAC 279.60 with the statutory requirements for ensuring that all students are proficient in reading by the end of third grade. The assessments districts select must meet minimum standards for reliability and validity.

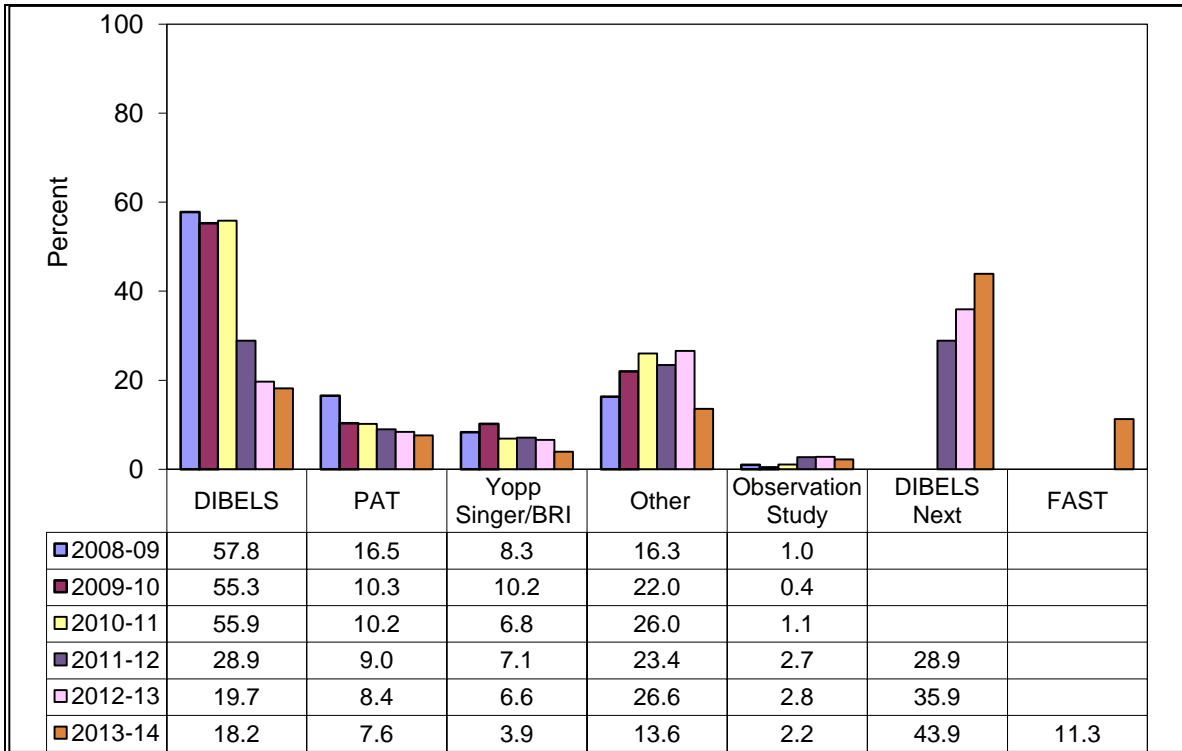
During the past two years the DE reviewed early literacy assessments for universal screening and progress monitoring to determine valid and reliable instruments. Based on this review the assessments selected include: Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST) for K – 6 grades and Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs) for four-year olds. The assessments are provided to Iowa schools at no cost. The DE began a scaling process to support the use of these instruments, beginning with approximately 10% of school buildings in the state in the 2013-2014 school year.

Assessment Results

In the 2013-2014 school year, preliminary data indicates all school districts reported data and 100 percent of the buildings with kindergarten classrooms submitted kindergarten assessment data. (This percentage does not reflect buildings with prekindergarten or transitional kindergarten.) A total of 40,573 students were enrolled in kindergarten.

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 reported data using the DIBELS Next, for the seven categories of assessment tools used.

Figure 1. Percent of Iowa School Buildings and Kindergarten Assessment Tool Administered.

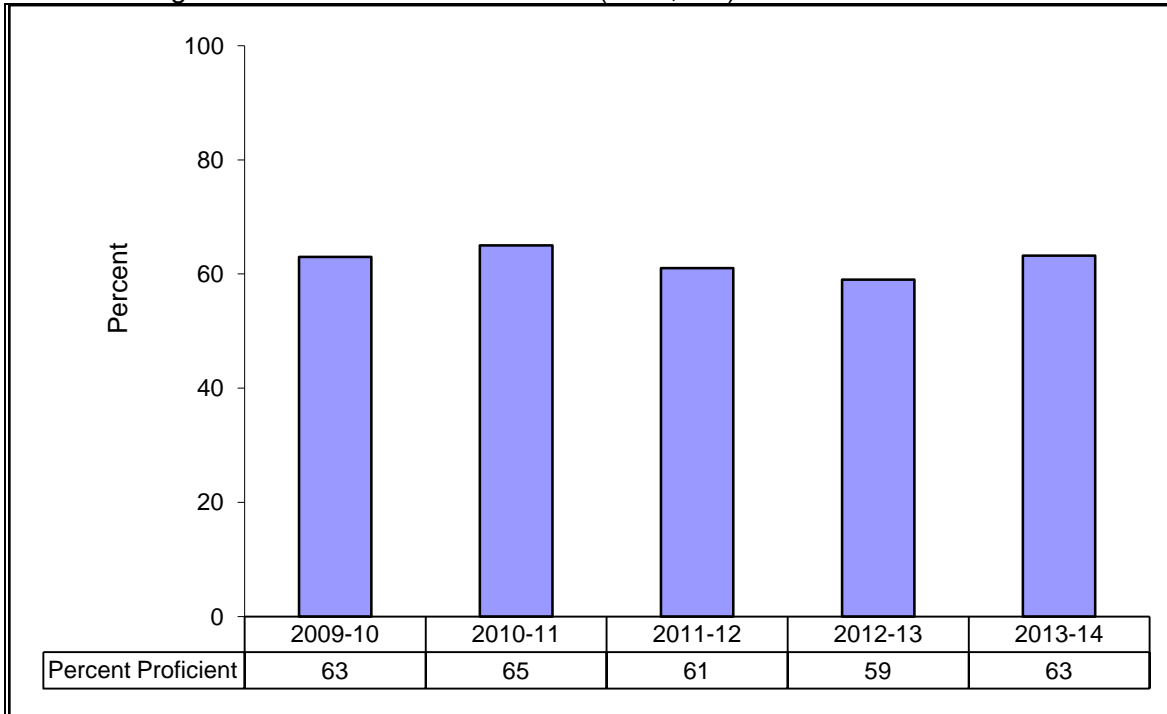


Data Source: Preliminary Student Reporting in Iowa Fall Files, Iowa Department of Education, 2013-2014

DIBELS Data

The DIBELS assessment measures student literacy skills for identifying beginning sounds of words by pointing to the picture matching the sound. Districts submitted data to the DE using the Student Reporting in Iowa data system. Figure 2 represents DIBELS data for a five-year trend, from 2009-2010 to 2013-2014. As indicated in Figure 2, the percent of students proficient in beginning sounds as measured by DIBELS increased by 4 percent from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014. The number of students assessed using DIBELS has decreased from 18,923 in 2010-11 to 5,532 this fall.

Figure 2. Percent of Students Entering Kindergarten Proficient in Identifying Beginning Sounds Using DIBELS Assessment Measure (N= 5,532)



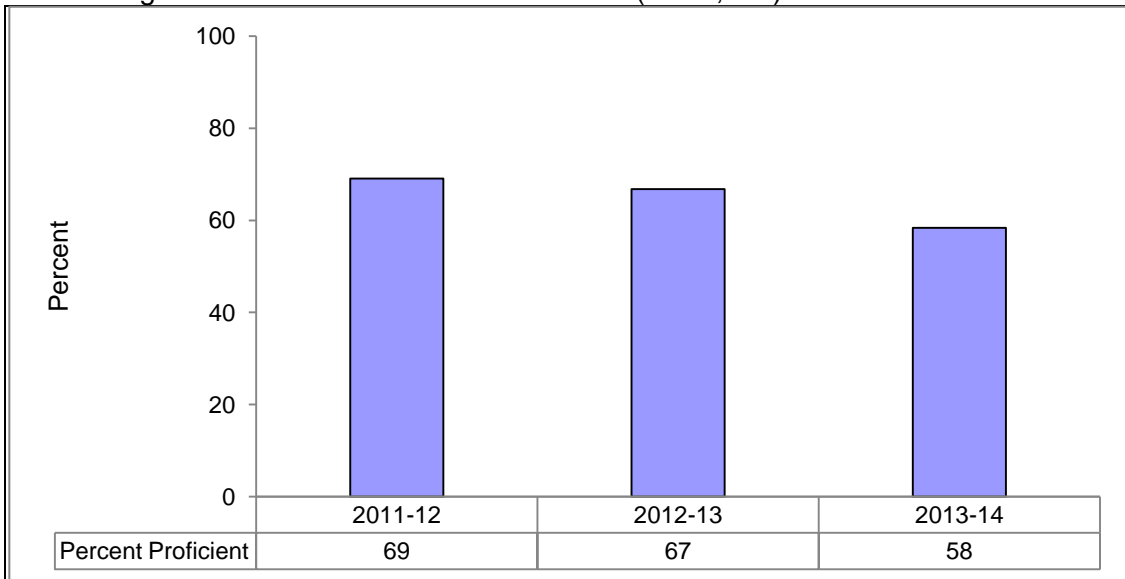
Data Source: Preliminary Student Reporting in Iowa Fall Files, Iowa Department of Education, 2013-2014

DIBELS Next Data

The DIBELS Next assessment measures important early reading skills. The DIBELS Next First Sound Fluency subtest measures kindergarten student literacy skills for identifying beginning sounds of words by saying or producing the sound. The DIBELS Composite Score is a combination of the DIBELS kindergarten fall subtests (Letter Naming Fluency and First Sound Fluency) and provides the best overall estimate of a student's reading proficiency. In 2013, 13,956 students were assessed and 58 percent were proficient (See Figure 3).

While the percentage of students taking DIBELS Next has increased from 2011-2012 to the present, an increased number of students scored in the "some risk" and "no risk" categories. These results indicated that given quality literacy instruction, these students are on track for reading success.

Figure 3. Percent of Students Entering Kindergarten Proficient in Beginning Reading Skills Using DIBELS Next Assessment Measure (N=13,956)

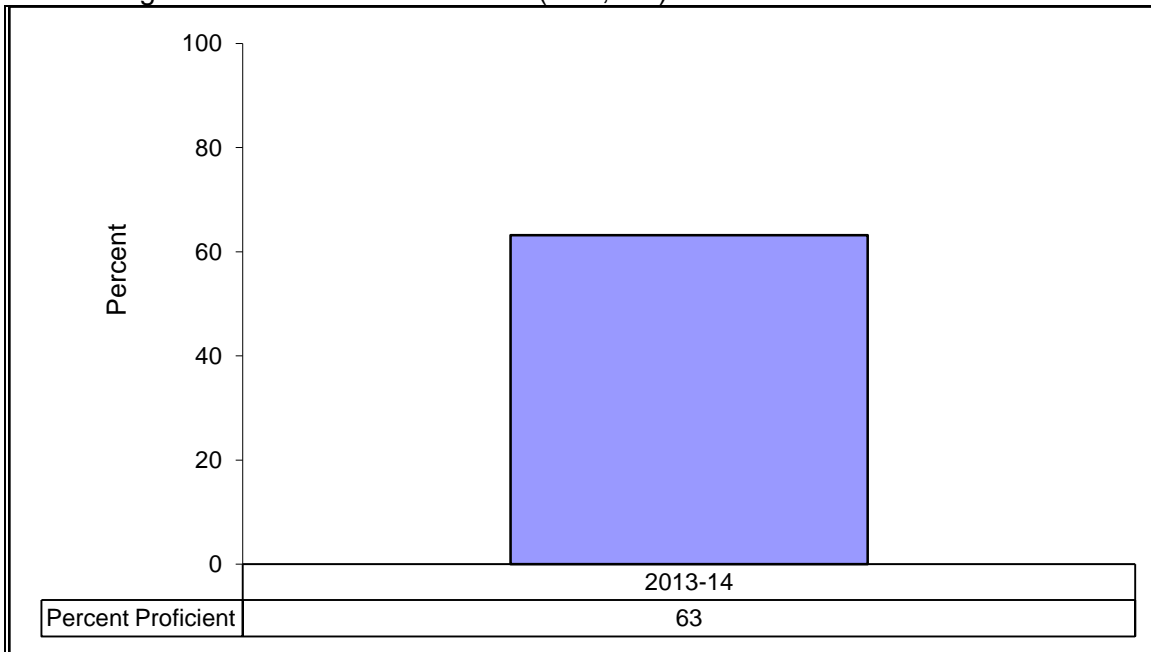


Data Source: Preliminary Student Reporting in Iowa Fall Files, Iowa Department of Education, 2013-2014

FAST Data

The FAST Early Reading assesses important skills in beginning reading development. In the fall of kindergarten, subtests administered include concepts about print, letter names, and beginning sounds. Students are compared based on a criterion or benchmark aligned with relevant outcomes. A composite score is calculated based on the five subtests.

Figure 3. Percent of Students Entering Kindergarten Proficient in Beginning Reading Skills Using FAST Assessment Measure (N=5,119)



Data Source: Preliminary Student Reporting in Iowa Fall Files, Iowa Department of Education, 2013-2014

Report of Preschool Participation

Districts reported the number of students who had attended preschool at any time 12 months prior to registering for kindergarten. Districts gathered the information through parent report or district records. The term “preschool” was not specifically defined in legislation and thus could have resulted in 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 differently by parents. The data collected and analyzed should be interpreted with caution. In 2013-2014 40,573 students entered kindergarten. Districts indicated that based on parent report, 24,907 or 61.2 percent of students entering kindergarten 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: 3 to 5 Training. Ongoing efforts to support the alignment of assessment, curriculum, and instruction will assist in closing the achievement gap.

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 implementation of Iowa Early Learning Standards in order to prepare children to achieve the Iowa Core as kindergartners.
- Support quality professional development that addresses the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards and Iowa Early Learning Standards.
- Provide technical assistance through area education agency early childhood staff.
- Continue work with Collaborating for Iowa's Kids (C4K), a partnership between the DE and the area education agencies. The intent of the C4K collaborative is to effectively and efficiently work as a comprehensive educational system to accomplish agreed-upon high-impact priorities. The initial work for the group's collaborative efforts is preschool to - 6th grade reading with a focus on early literacy.