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**Iowa Department of Education**

***Kindergarten Literacy Assessment Report***

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House File 761

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

January 2008

State of Iowa  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
Grimes State Office Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

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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

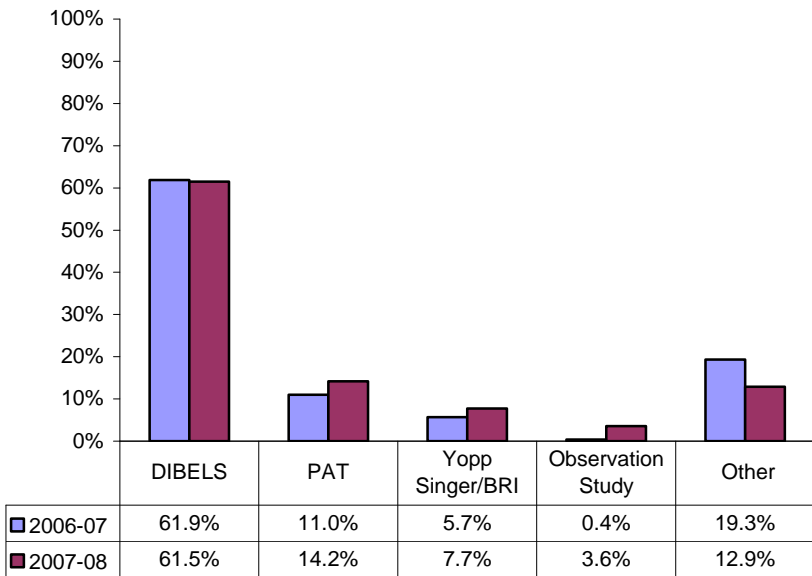
The DE aligned kindergarten assessment requirements of HF 761 with the statutory requirements for comprehensive school improvement and early intervention/class size reduction. The assessments the districts select must be technically adequate.

## Assessment Results

In the 2007-2008 school year, 98 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 35,189 students were enrolled in kindergarten. Assessment scores were reported for 35,185 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.



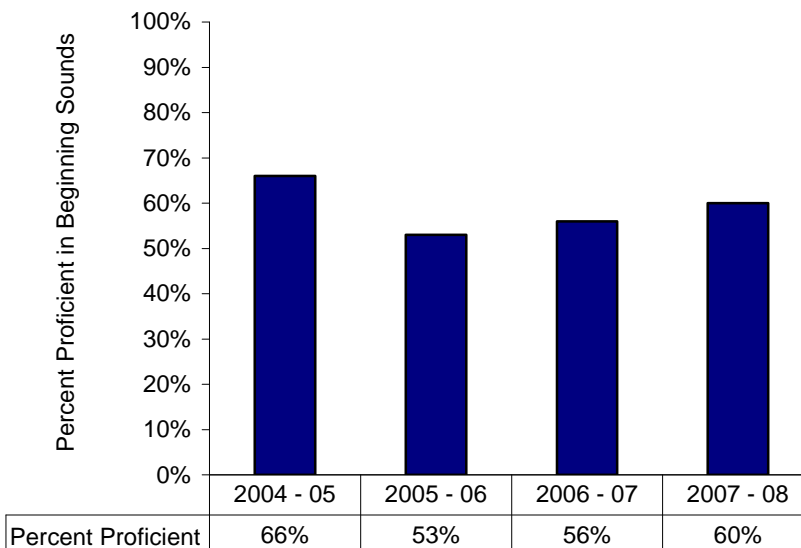
Data Source. Project Easier, Iowa Department of Education, 2007-2008.

Note: Kindergarten assessment tools: Phonological Awareness Test (PAT); Basic Reading Inventory, (BRI).

## 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 Project Easier. Figure 2 represents DIBELS data for a four-year trend, from 2004-2005 to 2007-2008. As indicated in Figure 2, the percent of children proficient in beginning sounds as measured by DIBELS increased by 4 percent from 2006-2007 to 2007-2008.

**Figure 2.** Percent of Children Entering Kindergarten Proficient in Identifying Beginning Sounds Using DIBELS Assessment Measure (N=20,868).



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.

**Parent Report of  
Preschool**

Districts reported the number of children that had attended preschool at any time during the 12 months prior to registering for kindergarten. The term preschool could have very different meanings for parents from a childcare setting in a home to a private enterprise. The amount of time and curriculum could have been interpreted very differently by respondents. Thus, the data should be interpreted with extreme caution. In 2007, 35,189 children entered kindergarten. Districts indicated that based on parent report, 23,600 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. Data indicate proficiency is being impacted by the 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. In addition, the DE, with funding appropriated to the Iowa Empowerment Office, is developing an accountability system to verify Iowa's Quality Preschool Program Standards. 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.