

Baltimore County Public Schools

Ready to Read

Senate Bill 734, *Students with Reading Difficulties – Screenings and Interventions*, legislation went into effect for the 2020 – 2021 school year. This Bill states that all incoming Kindergarten students need to be screened at the beginning of the school year to determine if they are at risk for reading difficulties.

Universal Screening and Assessment of Reading

Baltimore County Public Schools screens every kindergarten and first grade student to identify if the student is at risk for reading difficulties. The screening occurs three times during the year: the beginning of the year (BOY) in October; the middle of the year (MOY) in January; and the end of the year screener (EOY) in May. The screener used is the eighth edition of the [Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills](#) (DIBELS). DIBELS measures skills that are necessary for learning to read:

- Phonemic Awareness: *Hearing and using sounds in spoken words*
- Phonics: *Knowing the sounds of the letters and sounding out written words*
- Accurate and Fluent Reading: *Reading texts easily and quickly with few mistakes*

DIBELS is made of short individual sub-tests which each take approximately 1 minute. These sub-tests are used only as indicators. Much like a thermometer is used to take a child's temperature as an indicator of overall health, each test is an indicator of how well a child is doing in learning early reading skills. The scores tell us whether a child is likely to be “on track” for learning to read or whether a child may need some additional support. DIBELS is not used to grade a child. The information is used to help us make sure every child is on target for reading success.

First Instruction – Meeting the Needs of All Students

Beginning in the 2019 – 2020 school year, BCPS implemented [Open Court Foundational Skills](#) program in grades K and 1. Open Court is a research-based, comprehensive, foundational skills reading program that uses systematic and explicit instruction to help students master the skills needed for reading and writing fluency. Open Court Foundational Skills was expanded to grades 2 and 3 for the 2020 – 2021 school year. Professional learning to support appropriate instructional practices has been provided to all teachers in grades K – 3.

Additional Resources

[Checklist of Early Warning Signs for Reading Difficulty and Dyslexia by Age](#)

[Tips for Supporting Reading Skills at Home](#)