Early Literacy Assessment Tool: 2014 Report

Submitted to:
The Honorable John Hickenlooper, Governor of Colorado
Joint Budget Committee
House of Representatives Education Committee
Senate Education Committee

By:
Alisa Dorman, Executive Director, Office of Literacy
Donna Bright, Principal Consultant, Office of Literacy

April 2014

Purpose

Pursuant to C.R.S. 22-2-141, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has authored this report to the Governor's office, the joint budget committee, and the education committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The purpose of the report is to provide information concerning the implementation of the Early Literacy Assessment Tool Project in 2014.

Introduction

The 2012 School Finance Act required the CDE to issue a competitive request for proposals (RFP) for state purchase of an early literacy assessment tool that teachers may use to obtain real-time assessments of the reading skill levels of students in kindergarten through third grade. The intent was to support state purchase of software that provides individualized assessments with immediate results, stores and analyzes those results, and recommends activities based on those results. In January 2013, the contract was awarded to Amplify (formerly Wireless Generation) for its DIBELS Next system and Burst diagnostic reading assessments.

The early literacy assessment tool is one of the tools that Colorado teachers can use to meet the assessment requirements of the Colorado READ Act. The READ Act requires teachers in grades kindergarten through 3 to administer an interim assessment to all children in order to determine whether children are making sufficient progress to grade level reading proficiency. When students are identified as significantly below grade level, teachers must administer a diagnostic assessment to determine specific areas of need for reading improvement. Teachers use this assessment data to collaboratively develop an intervention plan (called a READ plan) with the child's family, to bring the child up to grade level reading proficiency. The early literacy assessment tool supports this process, and it also provides teachers a tool to monitor the reading progress of their students on an on-going basis.

By participating in the Early Literacy Assessment Tool (ELAT) project, local education agencies (LEAs) are supplied with the online assessment of DIBELS Next and the Burst diagnostic reading assessments, both State Board approved assessments for the READ Act. Participating LEAs receive assessment kits and licenses to use the online assessments as well as ongoing professional development opportunities associated with using the online tool effectively. LEAs are responsible for providing the hardware.

Participation in the Early Literacy Assessment Tool Project

During the 2013-14 school year, the first year of implementation of the ELAT project, 121 districts and 415 schools have participated, representing approximately 34% of all kindergarten through third grade students in the state. The percentage of students participating by grade level is included in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Participation in the ELAT Project by Grade Level

Grade Level	Number of Students	Percent of Students
Kindergarten	23,232	35%
First Grade	22,930	33%
Second Grade	22,490	33%
Third Grade	21,824	33%

A complete list of participating LEAs and number of students tested by district is provided in the Appendix.

Reading Skill Levels of Participating Students

End of year data for the first year of implementation is not available in time for the first reporting period to the Governor and Colorado legislature. This report includes student reading skill levels for participating students from the beginning of the 2013-14 school year to the middle of the year.

Colorado students participating in the ELAT project are showing reading gains through the initial data from the assessment tool. Progress toward grade level reading proficiency is measured in relation to important reading skill benchmarks throughout the school year. Students who are on track for reading proficiency are considered to be "meeting benchmark". Students at risk of not meeting grade level reading proficiency are considered to be "below benchmark" or "well below benchmark". Mid-year data for the first year of implementation of the ELAT project demonstrate that 23,134 students were performing well below benchmark at the beginning of the year, meaning these students were at risk for reading difficulties. At the middle of the year, 16,517 students were performing at well below benchmark, indicating a reduction of students at the highest risk level of 29%. Figure 1 illustrates the reduction of students performing well below benchmark from the beginning to middle of the year by grade level.
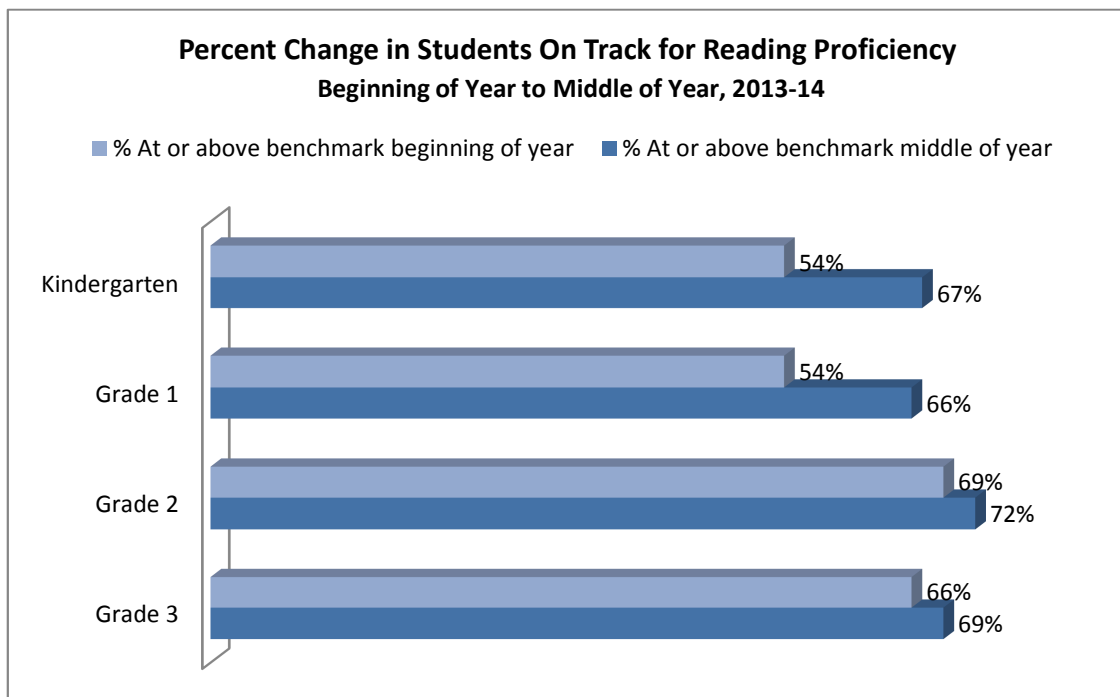
FIGURE 1: Percentage of Students Scoring Well Below Benchmark from Beginning to Middle of Year, 2013-14
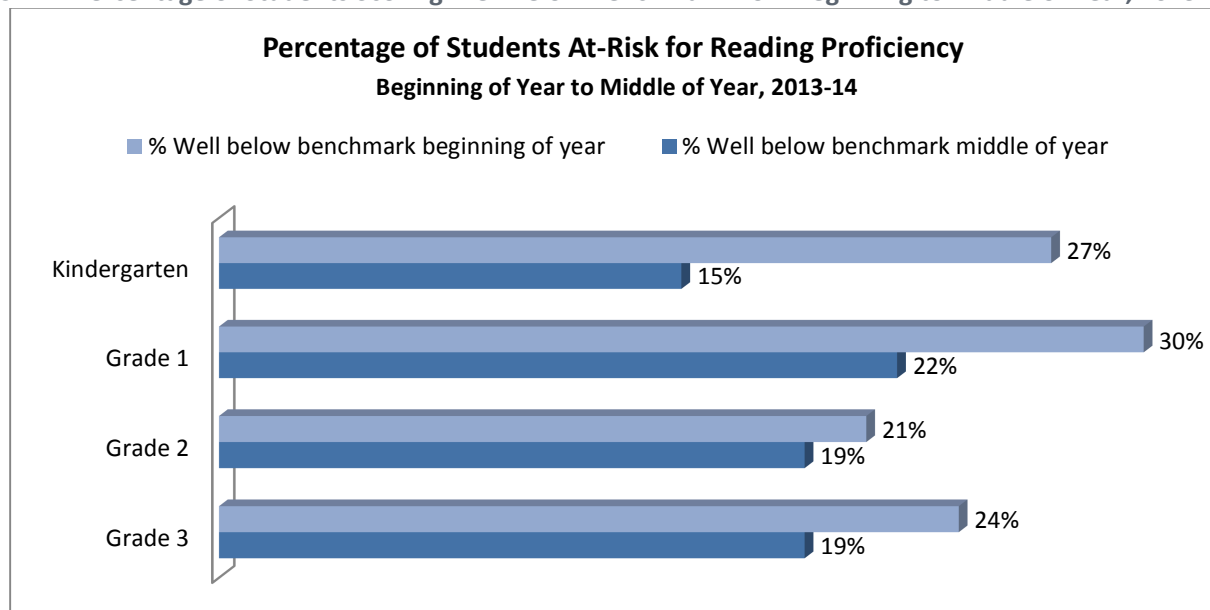
In addition, at the beginning of the year, there were 53,860 students performing at or above benchmark, meaning these students were on track for reaching future benchmark goals and reaching grade level proficiency. At the middle of the year, 61,579 students were performing at or above benchmark, indicating an increase of 14% of students on track to meet grade level proficiency. Figure 2 shows the increases in percentages of students performing at or above benchmark by grade level from the beginning to middle of the year.

FIGURE 2: Percentage of Students Scoring At or Above Benchmark Beginning to Middle of Year, 2013-14

Percent Change in Students On Track for Reading Proficiency
Beginning of Year to Middle of Year, 2013-14

■ % At or above benchmark beginning of year   ■ % At or above benchmark middle of year

Grade	Beginning of year	Middle of year
Kindergarten	54%	67%
Grade 1	54%	66%
Grade 2	69%	72%
Grade 3	66%	69%

Conclusion

School district participation in the ELAT project is expected to increase over time. Participating school districts are providing very positive feedback on the utility of the tool and the value of the training they have received. Furthermore, a number of districts who did not participate in the 2013-14 school year have expressed in interest in participating in the 2014-15 school year. CDE has submitted a budget change request to the Joint Budget Committee to accommodate up to 98,000 students in the ELAT project.

Appendix

Early Literacy Assessment Tool (ELAT) Participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs) 2013—2014

Participating LEA	Number of Participating Students K-3
Adams 12 Five Star Schools	1,571
Adams-Arapahoe 28J	668
Alamosa RE-11J	705
Archuleta County 50 JT	432
Arickaree R-2	34
Aspen 1	470
Ault-Highland RE-9	223
Bayfield 10 JT-R	424
Bennett 29J	241
Branson Reorganized 82	103
Brighton 27J	5,531
Burlington RE-6J	235
Byers 32J	117
Calhan RJ-1	115
Campo RE-6	19
Canon City RE-1	1,124
Centennial R-1	53
Center 26 JT	188
Charter School Institute	1,543
Cheraw 31	64
Cheyenne Mountain 12	474
Clear Creek RE-1	318
Colorado Springs 11	9,217
Cotopaxi RE-3	64
Crowley County RE-1-J	141
Custer County School District	91
De Beque 49JT	52
Deer Trail 26J	52
Del Norte C-7	125
Delta County 50(J)	1,445
Denver County	180
Dolores County RE NO. 2	91
Dolores RE-4A	207

Participating LEA	Number of Participating Students K-3
Douglas County RE-1	1,1124
Durango 9-R	1,561
Eads RE-1	42
East Grand 2	368
Eaton RE-2	601
Edison 54 JT	28
Elbert 200	47
Ellicott 22	319
Estes Park R-3	318
Falcon 49	4,072
Fort Morgan RE-3	893
Fowler R-4J	123
Fremont RE-2	444
Granada RE-1	63
Greeley 6	624
Hanover 28	59
Haxtun RE-2J	93
Hayden RE-1	117
Hoehne Reorganized 3	112
Holly RE-3	80
Holyoke RE-1J	207
Huerfano RE-1	148
Idalia RJ-3	61
Ignacio 11 JT	207
Jefferson County R-1	24,778
Johnstown-Milliken RE-5J	1,016
Julesburg RE-1	89
Karval RE-23	23
Keenesburg RE-3(J)	641
Kim Reorganized 88	10
Kiowa C-2	105
Kit Carson R-1	35
La Veta RE-2	60
Lake County R-1	350
Lamar RE-2	508
Las Animas RE-1	160

Participating LEA	Number of Participating Students K-3
Lewis-Palmer 38	1,536
Limon RE-4J	153
Lone Star 101	39
Mancos RE-6	130
Manitou Springs 14	378
McClave RE-2	67
Meeker RE1	205
Miami/Yoder 60 JT	71
Moffat 2	57
Moffat County RE:NO 1	722
Monte Vista C-8	339
Montezuma-Cortez RE-1	825
Mountain Valley RE 1	37
North Conejos RE-1J	300
North Park R-1	57
Otis R-3	60
Ouray R-1	39
Park County RE-2	122
Pawnee RE-12	21
Peyton 23 JT	137
Plainview RE-2	20
Plateau Valley 50	118
Platte Valley RE-3	32
Platte Valley RE-7	284
Prairie RE-11	49
Pritchett RE-3	10
Pueblo City 60	5,384
Pueblo County 70	2,464
Rangely RE-4	180
Ridgway R-2	89
Roaring Fork RE-1	1,640
Salida R-32	330
Sanford 6J	116
Sangre De Cristo RE-22J	102
Sargent RE-33J	134
Sierra Grande R-30	71

Participating LEA	Number of Participating Students K-3
South Conejos RE-10	61
South Routt RE 3	129
Springfield RE-4	74
Steamboat Springs RE-2	724
Stratton R-4	61
Thompson R2-J	296
Trinidad 1	195
Vilas RE-5	13
Walsh RE-1	33
Weld County RE-1	563
Weldon Valley RE-20(J)	58
West Grand 1-JT	135
Westminster 50	3,122
Wiggins RE-50(J)	159
Wiley RE-13 JT	56
Windsor RE-4	1,503
Woodland Park RE-2	694
Wray RD-2	231
Yuma 1	248
Total Participating Students	**90,476**