



Due to recent adjustments to the READ Act, Colorado Department of Education requested information from companies on the approved interim assessment list regarding two categories of students:

- students who may have scored above the fall Summed Score benchmark but may still be in need of additional literacy instruction; and
- students who would be identified as grade-level competent in the fall, and thereby exempt from further testing at mid-year and in the spring.

To maintain the integrity and validity of the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), PALS Marketplace is unable to provide distinct scores for the above-mentioned situations at this time but will be engaging in data analysis to provide information regarding grade-level competency in the future.

This document contains information about changes to the assessment that will reduce the amount of time it takes to administer the assessment for all students. Future developments that will support the decision-making process surrounding assessment in Colorado will also be shared.

How to plan for students who may have scored above the fall Summed Score benchmark but may still be in need of additional literacy instruction.

One concern brought up by CDE was for students who may have scored above the PALS Summed Score benchmark in the fall or spring, but may still be in need of additional literacy instruction. Often, decisions are based on resources available in schools. If there is a concern about students who scored above the benchmark, and there are resources available to support them, by all means, do so. Decisions regarding children and their instruction should be based on multiple data points, as opposed to one. So, look at the PALS Summed Score next to additional data points and make instructional decisions on a case-by-case basis.

Are there any criteria that may exempt students from spring testing based on fall performance?

Currently, PALS has a High Benchmark designation. The purpose of the high benchmark designation is to exempt from future screening those students who scores



are so high that it is unlikely that future PALS screenings will identify them for additional instruction. Whether to use the High Benchmark designation to exempt students from PALS is a local decision.

The high benchmark icon will appear for certain students beginning in the spring of first grade, assuming that enough data has been entered to demonstrate eligibility. The high benchmark icon appears when scores entered reflect an independent reading level that is above the student's current grade level. Note that the PALS Online System, for diagnosis, usually only requires enough data to establish an instructional oral reading level; scores from additional tasks may need to be entered to demonstrate the high independent level, making the high benchmark icon appear.

For instance, in the fall, second grade students must demonstrate all three of the following criteria, in addition to meeting or exceeding the Entry Level Summed Score benchmark:

Fall Second Grade High Benchmark Criteria
✓ Read 18 or more words from the third grade word list or higher
✓ Read the third grade passage (or higher) with 98% or greater accuracy
✓ Read that same passage with a fluency rating of 3

(Criteria for making the high benchmark icon appear in the spring of first grade can be found on page 18 of the PALS 1-3 Administration & Scoring Guide.)

How can I reduce time required for testing for ALL students?

Changes have been made to reduce assessment administration time overall for students who are giving PALS in grades 1 and up. In the past, the PALS Online System prompted teachers to obtain an instructional oral reading level for all students. Beginning the 2015-2016 school year, the PALS Online Assessment Wizard will allow users to stop assessing after obtaining a Summed Score, for grades 1-8, and make decisions about the continuation of assessing on a case-by-case basis.