



AK Reads Literacy Screener

Frequently Asked Questions

March 23, 2026

1. What is a literacy screener?

A literacy screener is a quick assessment used to check a student's development of early reading skills. It measures specific literacy skills to determine a student's proficiency level, whether the student is making adequate progress, or whether the student needs additional support. A screener helps identify students who may be at risk for reading difficulties so instruction and intervention can be provided early.

Literacy screeners are typically:

- Brief and targeted
- Focused on specific literacy skills or subtests
- Given three times a year
- Valid and reliable
- Easy to administer

2. What is the purpose of a literacy screener?

A literacy screener offers a quick, reliable, and standardized way to identify students who may need additional reading support.

Universal screening helps educators:

- Monitor the effectiveness of Tier 1 reading instruction
- Identify students who may be at risk for reading difficulties
- Provide early support and intervention
- Use data to adjust instruction to meet student needs

3. Who administers the literacy screener?

Literacy screeners must be administered by district personnel who have completed the minimum training required by the state and the vendor. Districts must maintain training records and provide documentation to DEED if requested. All assessors should follow vendor guidelines to ensure valid administration.

mCLASS DIBELS 8 may be administered by educators who complete both the 6-hour Initial Training and the mCLASS Calibration Course. Annual calibration ensures all educators maintain accuracy and consistency in scoring, just as professionals in other fields—like doctors maintaining certifications or flight attendants completing yearly safety training—refresh their skills to meet high standards and provide reliable results.

4. How is a literacy screener administered?

Literacy screeners are administered one-to-one or as a whole group, depending on whether they are computer-based assessments.

5. How much does mCLASS DIBELS 8 cost?

DEED has provided mCLASS DIBELS at no cost to all Alaska public schools for use in Kindergarten through 5th grade.

6. How is mCLASS DIBELS 8 administered?

mCLASS DIBELS 8 measures are administered one-on-one to each student, and results are recorded directly in the mCLASS system. Most measures take about one minute per skill, and each student assessment usually lasts 5–7 minutes in total. The Vocabulary and MAZE measures can be administered to an entire class using individual devices.

7. Will there be an option to use mCLASS DIBELS 8 in grades other than K-3?

DEED provides mCLASS DIBELS 8 Edition for grades K–5 at no cost. Districts may choose to use it in other grades, but they are responsible for any additional costs associated with that use.

8. Can a school adopt mCLASS DIBELS 8th Edition individually?

Under the Alaska Reads Act, the selection of a state-approved literacy screener is made at the district level, not by individual schools.

9. Are charter schools and homeschools required to use a literacy screener?

If a charter school or homeschool program receives state funding, it must comply with the Alaska Reads Act, including the use of a state-approved literacy screener. DEED will support program administrators in selecting and implementing the screener to meet the Act's requirements.

10. Where can I find support information for mCLASS DIBELS 8?

Information and resources for mCLASS DIBELS 8 can be found on the [Amplify Alaska website](#), including:

- Product information and overview
- Support and troubleshooting resources
- Training and technical onboarding
- Benchmark checklists and schedules
- Professional learning opportunities
- Science of Reading guidance and resources

11. Why is there a two-week assessment window within the state's larger benchmark window?

The two-week assessment window ensures that all students have consistent and equal instructional time before being tested, supporting fair and accurate results.

12. Who can administer benchmark and progress monitoring measures?

Benchmark and progress monitoring measures must be administered by district personnel who have:

- Successfully completed the Initial mCLASS DIBELS 8th Edition training
- Annually complete mCLASS Calibration training

13. What measures are used for the dyslexia screener?

- For mCLASS users:

- Administer the dyslexia screener to students with a Composite score of Well Below Benchmark.
- Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) is used in Kindergarten.
- Spelling is used in grades 1–3.
- For other state-approved literacy screeners:
 - Follow the vendor’s guidance for administering dyslexia measures.

14. When is the dyslexia screener given?

The dyslexia screener is administered to students scoring well below the benchmark composite score during the three designated state benchmark testing windows.

15. Will the dyslexia screener diagnose dyslexia or indicate risk?

The dyslexia screener indicates a student’s risk level for dyslexia-related characteristics. A dyslexia risk indicator shows that a child may have difficulty learning to read and may require intensive interventions to prevent future reading challenges.

16. Is Progress Monitoring available for students with skills below grade-level proficiency?

Yes, information about off-grade progress monitoring can be found at the following link: [Off-Grade Progress Monitoring](#)

17. Where can I find information about mCLASS reports?

Information about reports can be found in the [mCLASS Reporting Guide](#).

18. How many progress monitoring probes are available?

There are 20 forms available for each measure, except MAZE, which has 10. MAZE is not recommended to be given as frequently.

19. What kind of device is needed for mCLASS DIBELS 8?

mCLASS can be administered on tablets, computers, or paper/pencil. More information on device and network requirements is available on the [Amplify Customer Requirements](#) webpage.

20. Is the data exportable to a CSV, Excel file, or Google sheet?

Yes, all data can be exported as CSV or PDF and uploaded to Google.

21. What training is available for mCLASS with DIBELS 8?

All staff who administer assessments or review student data should complete training on mCLASS DIBELS 8.

- **Initial Training (6 hours):** Required for new staff or those new to mCLASS DIBELS 8; provided by Amplify or approved Trainers of Trainers (ToT)
- **Annual [mCLASS Calibration Course](#):** Required for all staff; available in the **Training tab** within the mCLASS account
- **Additional Professional Learning:** Available through the [Amplify/DEED partner website](#) under the Professional Learning section

22. Can student accounts be integrated with Clever, ClassLink, or similar products?

Yes, Amplify will work with your district during the enrollment process.

23. How do you enroll in mCLASS DIBELS 8?

The [Technical Onboarding Hub](#) contains instructions for navigating the mCLASS Administrator Portal. If you need further assistance, reach out to

Amplify Technical Support:

- Email: help@amplify.com
- Call: 1-877-810-4919
- [Support ticket form](#)
- Chat within the Amplify platform

Literacy Screener Waiver

24. Are districts required to use mCLASS DIBELS 8?

Under the Alaska Reads Act, districts must submit a waiver to request approval to use a different state-approved, evidence-based reading screening tool.

- Districts must apply for a literacy screener waiver on or before April 15 for the following school year.
- Districts will be notified of approval on or before May 15.
- Submission of a waiver application does not guarantee approval.
- A **dyslexia screener** must be included in the waiver approval requirements.

The [literacy screener waiver application](#), along with the requested evidence, is available on the AK Reads Act webpage.

25. Will DEED cover the cost of a literacy screener other than mCLASS DIBELS 8?

If a district has an approved waiver to use a literacy screener other than the state-provided mCLASS DIBELS 8, the district is responsible for all associated costs.

26. How will data be reported to DEED?

Districts using mCLASS DIBELS 8 will automatically have their data reported to DEED at the end of each benchmark window.

Districts operating under a state-approved literacy screener waiver will be responsible for reporting the required data to DEED. Waiver districts must provide their data to DEED within seven calendar days after the end of each benchmark window.