



#149-22

Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #149-22

DATE: July 8, 2022
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: Jillian Balow, Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: Early Intervention Reading Initiative for the 2022-2023 School Year

The purpose of the Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI) is to provide early reading intervention services to students in kindergarten through the third grade who demonstrate substantial deficiencies based on their individual performance on a literacy screener provided or approved by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). The provided early literacy screener in Virginia is the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screener ([PALS](#)). PALS data should be utilized to inform instruction and identify students needing additional support through evidence-based practices.

As referenced in [Superintendent's Memo #162-21](#), the 2021 Virginia General Assembly passed HB 1865 (Delaney) which amends and reenacts § 22.1-253.13:1 of the *Code of Virginia*, that requires intervention services for certain students in kindergarten through third grade who demonstrate deficiencies on individual performance on the Standards of Learning reading test or any reading diagnostic test that meets criteria established by the VDOE. This legislation directs local school boards to ensure that such reading intervention services shall be evidence-based, including services that are grounded in the science of reading, and include (i) the components of effective reading instruction and (ii) explicit, systematic, sequential, and cumulative instruction, to include phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and text comprehension as appropriate based on the student's demonstrated reading deficiencies.

While the full implementation date for the [Virginia Literacy Act](#) is not until the 2024-2025 academic school year, school divisions should use scientifically-based reading research and instruction in their core, supplemental, and intervention programs. Additional information regarding the Virginia Literacy Act will be addressed in a forthcoming memo.

Funding for the EIRI is based on the state's share of the cost to provide two and one-half hours of additional instruction each week for an estimated number of students in each school division at a student-to-teacher ratio of five-to-one. The estimated number of students in each school division is based on the most recent spring test data available from the early literacy screener, currently Spring 2021. Funding is based on 100 percent of the estimated number of eligible students for Kindergarten through Grade 3.

Divisions using PALS as the assessment for EIRI must use the complete battery of PALS K-3 components as provided free of charge by the state. A chart outlining the PALS screening requirements for EIRI participants is on the following [EIRI website](#). For the 2022-2023 school year, all students in grade Kindergarten through Grade 2 will be screened in the fall and spring. Third-grade students who are new to Virginia public schools, or who received summer intervention, will be screened in the fall. Third-grade students do not take PALS in the spring.

All PALS screening results must be entered into the [PALS website](#). VDOE works with the PALS office at the University of Virginia to ensure that all students screened with PALS will have their Student Testing Identifier (STI) included in the data collection process. Student PALS accounts will need to be created only for students who do not have a PALS score history.

School divisions seeking another early literacy screening tool can review **Attachment A** which outlines the proposal requirements for use of an alternative diagnostic screening instrument.

The Standards of Quality (SOQ) compliance and other miscellaneous reporting data collection requires school divisions to certify whether they will participate in the EIRI for 2022-2023. This information is to be provided through the Single Sign-on for Web Systems (SSWS) "SOQ Compliance" application, during the data collection period, which occurs during the summer of each year. School division staff member(s) responsible for EIRI should contact the SSWS contact for their division for further directions on how to provide the data.

For more information

If you have questions regarding EIRI funding, please contact the Budget Office by email at doebudgetoffice@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-2025. Questions regarding EIRI programmatic issues should be addressed to Carmen Kurek, Elementary English/Reading Specialist, by email at Carmen.Kurek@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-3203. Questions regarding the PALS online services should be addressed to PALS@virginia.edu or by telephone at (888) 882-7257.

JB/CEK/pk

- A. Attachment: [Proposal Requirements for Use of a Local Diagnostic Screening Instrument](#) (PDF)
- B. Attachment: [EIRI Assessment Schedule](#) (PDF)