

Most Frequently Asked Questions About DIBELS

Q1: *Will my student be tested and how often?*

A1: Louisville Elementary tests students typically three times a year. This typically is in the Fall, Winter, and Spring.

Q2: *What does DIBELS measure?*

A2: The DIBELS measures were specifically designed to assess the Big Ideas of early literacy: Phonological Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, Fluency with Connected Text, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. The measures are linked to one another, both psychometrically and theoretically, and have been found to be predictive of later reading proficiency. The measures are also consistent with many of the Common Core State Standards in Reading, especially the Foundational Skills. Combined, the measures form an assessment system of early literacy development that allows educators to readily and reliably determine student progress.

Q3: *Why use DIBELS?*

A3: The purpose of the DIBELS Benchmark goals is to provide educators with standards for gauging the progress of all students. The Benchmark goals represent a level of performance for all students to reach in order to be considered on track for becoming a successful reader. The DIBELS goals and cut scores are research-based, criterion-referenced scores. They indicate the probability of achieving subsequent early literacy goals. Benchmark goals for each measure and time period were established using a minimum cut point at which the odds were in favor of a student achieving a future reading goal. So, for a child with a score at or above the benchmark goal at a given point, the probability is high for achieving future goals; the probability of need for additional support to achieve future goals is low. In addition to these goals, DIBELS also include cutoff scores where the odds against achieving subsequent literacy goals are indicated. Students with scores at or below these cutoff points are unlikely to meet subsequent early literacy goals unless additional instructional support is provided. Unique feature of the DIBELS benchmark decision rules is the inclusion of a zone where a clear prediction is not possible. Students with scores in this category require strategic planning on the part of educators to determine appropriate strategies to support the students to meet subsequent early literacy goals. Teachers can use students' performance to identify students who will most likely require more intensive instruction at the beginning of the school year to prevent the likelihood of the student being a struggling reader at a later time point.