

Early Literacy Screening Webinar

Summer 2026



Ministry of
Education and
Child Care



About This Update

- ✓ Purpose of early literacy screening
- ✓ Steps to support early literacy screening
- ✓ B.C. Screening Tool rollout plan for the next school years
- ✓ Misconceptions about early literacy screening
- ✓ Next steps

Purpose of Early Literacy Screening

Early literacy screening is a classroom assessment that provides data for teachers. Screening can inform timely instruction and interventions that help all students develop foundational reading skills.

Screening can help classroom teachers:

- identify student needs early
- use screening data to guide classroom instruction and planning
- support continuous improvement in outcomes across schools and systems



Key Steps to Support Learners

Mandatory Screening	B.C. Screening Tool	Teacher Capacity Building
All K-3 public school students will be screened: ✓ 2025-26: Mandatory screening in K (at a minimum) ■ 2026-27: Mandatory screening in K-3 ■ 2027-28: Mandatory screening in K-3 using the B.C. Screening Tool	B.C. Screening Tool: • Available in both English and French for French immersion • Provides a consistent, provincewide reading screener at K-3 • Uses norms derived from B.C. students and be reflective of B.C.'s curriculum and cultures The B.C. Screening Tool will be ready and mandated for use in public schools at the start of the 2027-28 school year	Supports for current teachers working in the K-12 system and those in teacher education programs: • B.C. Screening Tool professional learning module • Curriculum-aligned guides for literacy instruction and intervention • Piloting a Centre of Excellence and developing a literacy micro-credential with B.C. post-secondary institutions • Open access, online series of literacy professional learning modules

Expanding Mandatory Screening

Screening expansion to K-3 for the 2026-27 school year:

- Guidance communicated in June 19 Deputy Minister's Bulletin
 - Updated FAQs to support school district implementation and scaling up of literacy screening to K-3 this fall
 - Considerations for French immersion
- Districts to continue using commercially available or locally developed screening tools that meet ministry criteria
- Exploring possibilities for independent schools

School Year	Screening
2025-2026	• K
2026-2027	• K-3
2027-2028	• K-3 (B.C. Tool)

B.C. Screening Tool

- The Province is developing a B.C. Screening Tool to provide a quick check on students' reading development from kindergarten to grade 3 (English and French Immersion)
- The B.C. Tool will include measures reflective of B.C.'s culture and curriculum with benchmarks representative of the full complement of B.C. students
- Tool development is underway, with piloting of K-1 English and French immersion measures started in May and June 2026
- Development team has engaged key partners to understand and reflect B.C.'s context and met with teacher focus groups for K-3 to gather teacher feedback and considerations for the tool development
- To assist with the rollout of the B.C. Screening Tool, a professional learning module is being developed to provide training and to support implementation of the tool in the 2027-28 school year

PILOTING & FIELD TESTING TIMELINE



Piloting and Field Testing

- **April 2026:** EOI released for school districts interested in piloting and field testing the B.C. Tool
 - Ministry has engaged with the First Nations School Association and the Federation of Independent Schools Association of BC to invite First Nations schools and independent schools to pilot and field test
- **May – June 2026:** Pilot of K-1 measures
 - **11** school districts and **1** First Nations school piloted the English measures
 - **9** school districts piloted the French immersion measures
 - Schools and districts provided anonymized student-level screening data and teacher feedback to the development team in late June, which will be used to refine all measures
- **2026-27 School Year:** Pilot of grades 2-3 measures and field testing of K-3 measures

K-1 Measures Piloted

English Measures	French Immersion Measures
✓ Letter naming fluency ✓ Letter sound fluency ✓ Initial sound fluency ✓ Phoneme segmentation fluency ✓ Pseudo-word / Nonsense word fluency ✓ Word reading fluency	✓ Letter naming fluency ✓ Phoneme segmentation fluency ✓ Pseudo-word / Nonsense word fluency ✓ Word reading fluency

- **Oral Reading Fluency** measures are being developed this summer and will be piloted this fall

The B.C. Tool is being designed using evidence-based early literacy screening approaches, making many of these measures, as well as the structure and administration and scoring procedures, familiar to teachers.

B.C. Screening Tool Development Team

- Supporting tool development in English and French immersion
- B.C. Indigenous researcher and member of the Samahquam First Nation
- Assistant Professor in the School and Applied Child Psychology Program
- Extensive expertise in literacy screening for Indigenous students and insights into the unique needs of B.C.'s Indigenous & multilingual communities

Dr. Melanie Nelson
University of British Columbia



- French immersion tool development lead
- Canada Research Chair of Literacy Development and Bilingual and Multilingual Children
- Professor in the Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development, and Associate Dean, Research, Partnership and Innovation at OISE
- Extensive expertise in literacy screening and identifying reading difficulties among French immersion students

Dr. Becky Chen
University of Toronto



- English tool development lead
- Canada Excellence Research Chair in Developmental Science
- Professor in the Department of Psychology
- Extensive expertise in literacy skills development, predictors of reading achievement, screener efficacy and response to literacy interventions

Dr. Sara Hart
University of Waterloo



Expectations for School Districts

2026-27

- School districts are expected to expand their screening practices to include all K-3 students
- School districts may continue to use a commercially available or locally developed screening tool that meets ministry criteria

2027-28

- School districts are expected to fully transition to using the B.C. Tool to screen all K-3 students

Supporting Teacher Capacity Building

- On top of screening supports, the ministry is investing in teacher resources and training to support both current teachers working in the K-12 system and those in teacher education programs.
- This includes:
 - Creating curriculum-aligned guides for literacy instruction and intervention (K-4)
 - Partnering with post-secondary institutions to pilot a Centre of Excellence and developing a literacy micro-credential
 - Developing an open-access, online series of literacy professional learning modules



Prioritizing Literacy K-12

- B.C. is prioritizing literacy education in K-12 to continue to improve student outcomes
- The ministry is assembling development teams of educators and specialists to work on the creation of K-4 guides to support classroom instruction and intervention
- Guides will include a suite of supporting materials:
 - instructional videos
 - webinars
 - quick references to foundational literacy skills
- The work will start this summer, and materials expected for release beginning spring 2027

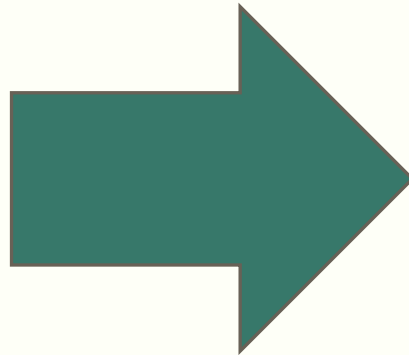


Addressing Misconceptions About Screening

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MISCONCEPTION

Early literacy screening
is a high-stakes
assessment of student
performance

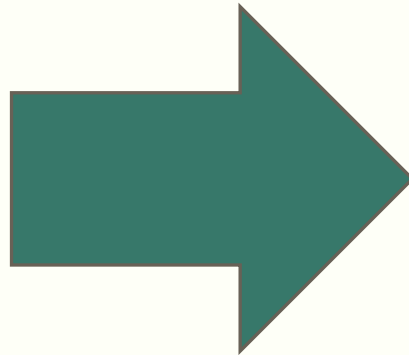


CLARIFICATION

Early literacy screening
is a classroom
assessment to check in
on the development of a
student's reading skills
across a school year

MISCONCEPTION

An early literacy screening tool can provide a diagnostic assessment of dyslexia or other reading difficulties

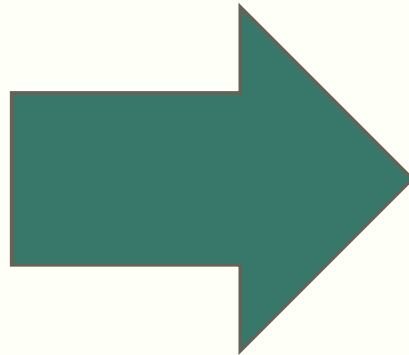


CLARIFICATION

An early literacy screening tool is a quick assessment of reading skills and is NOT the same as a formal, diagnostic assessment

MISCONCEPTION

Early literacy screening
requires specialist
training to administer

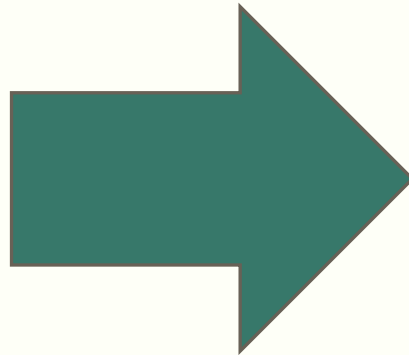


CLARIFICATION

As screening data
provides valuable
information about the
instructional needs of
students, early literacy
screening is most
beneficial when done by
a classroom teacher

MISCONCEPTION

Early literacy screening
is used to label students

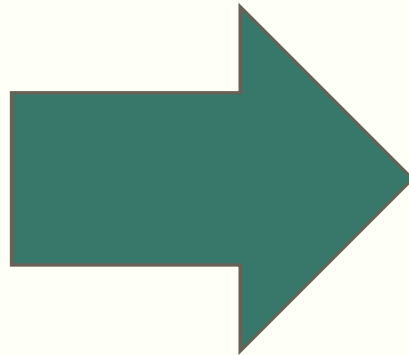


CLARIFICATION

Screening doesn't
diagnose a learning
disability, or label
students, but it does help
keep students on track

MISCONCEPTION

Early literacy screening
is used to evaluate
teachers and schools



CLARIFICATION

Screening is not used to
evaluate teachers or
schools, but screening
data can help make
workload and resource
needs better understood

Next Steps

- Timelines for B.C. Screening Tool piloting and field testing (July)
- Ministry literacy screening web page update (August)
 - [Literacy Screening web page](#) (on B.C. Curriculum site)
- Back-to-school information (September)
 - Letter to families regarding literacy and screening
 - Parent/caregiver brochure on the purpose of early literacy screening
 - K-3 resources for families and available to teachers
- Phased releases of supports and resources for teachers (2026-27 SY)

B.C. Screening Tool

B.C. Screening Tool: Development and Implementation Schedule	
2026-2027 School Year	
Screening expands to K-3, using a commercially available or locally developed screening tool that meets ministry criteria	September 2026
K-12 Literacy Supports Community of Practice meeting	October 2026
Oral Reading Fluency measure for grade 1 piloted (English and French immersion)	October to November 2026
K-Gr.1 norms established (via field testing)	October 2026 to May 2027
K-12 Literacy Supports Implementation Committee meeting	November 2026
K-12 Literacy Supports Implementation Committee meeting	January 2027
Gr. 2-3 measures piloted (English and French immersion)	January to February 2027
K-12 Literacy Supports Community of Practice meeting	February 2027
K-12 Literacy Supports Implementation Committee meeting	March 2027
Gr. 2-3 norms established (via field testing)	April 2027 to June 2027
K-12 Literacy Supports Community of Practice meeting	May 2027
K-12 Literacy Supports Implementation Committee meeting	May 2027



Thank you.

Contact us at
Literacy.Supports@gov.bc.ca

For more information, please
visit our web page at
<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/literacy-screening>



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