

RHODE ISLAND  
SCHOOL AND DISTRICT  
ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

K-1 TECHNICAL MANUAL  
2012

THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF  
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

*Office of Instruction,  
Assessment, and Curriculum*

Dr. Phyllis Lynch, Director

February, 2012



Deborah Gist  
Commissioner

## INTRODUCTION

---

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires that all schools be held accountable for teaching reading and mathematics to all students. In response, Rhode Island developed a comprehensive accountability and assessment system for grades 3-8 and 11 in reading and mathematics. Scores from these assessments are attributed to the previous grade for accountability purposes. For example, scores from the grade 3 NECAP reading assessment are attributed back to grade 2 because that test measures grade 2 Grade Level Expectations.

As the NECAP assessments became operational and scores were attributed back one grade, that left grades K and 1 without an accountability measure. Fortunately, NCLB allowed states to develop different but related systems for the early grades. As Rhode Island's system developed, beginning in the 2003-2004 school year, schools where the highest grade was K, 1, 2, or 3 were required to assess their students in reading using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) published by Pearson Learning Group.

In 2010, the program was upgraded to the "new" DRA2. Pearson Learning gathered sufficient data about reading skills in the early grades and reading instruction improved significantly across the country; requiring the updating of the DRA to the DRA2. Enough improvements have been made to no longer call these two assessments comparable. As such, teachers from all schools were trained on the new DRA2 and new cut points were established to reflect the new assessment. These changes are explained in the following pages. This year, 2012, marks the third year of administering the DRA2.

**Performance Levels**

Student scores on the DRA2 are converted into Rhode Island’s Proficiency Scale. The established Index Proficiency Scale and the corresponding Intermediate Goals and Annual Measurable Objectives for Elementary ELA (*Figures 1 and 2*) will be used for the DRA2. This allows us to assign the appropriate Index Proficiency Score as described in Table 1.

**Table 1: Rhode Island’s Index Proficiency Scale.**

<b>Performance Levels</b>	<b>Index Proficiency Score</b>
Proficient with Distinction	100
Proficient	100
Partially Proficient	75
Substantially Below Proficient	50 ( <i>upper level</i> )
	25 ( <i>lower level</i> )
No Evidence of Achievement	0

**Table 2: Chart of Elementary Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) for English Language Arts (ELA)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>AMO</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>96.1</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>92.1</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>88.1</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>84.1</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>84.1</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>84.1</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>80.1</b>
<b>2006</b>	<b>80.1</b>
<b>2005</b>	<b>80.1</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>76.1</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>76.1</b>
<b>2002 (<i>baseline</i>)</b>	<b>76.1</b>

**DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL READING ASSESSMENT (DRA)**

One of the reasons the DRA2 was chosen as our primary reading assessment was due to its ability to impact instructional methods in the classroom. The DRA2 is administered in a one-on-one conference between the teacher and the student. The teacher then records the student’s responses in the DRA2 Online Management System (OMS) and receives instant feedback on the reading strengths and weaknesses of the student in the areas of comprehension, reading fluency, oral reading, reading strategies, and the new component, word recognition. The resulting data combines these factors to calculate an independent reading level and an accuracy rate.

For accountability purposes, we used the independent reading level as the indicator of proficiency; the accuracy rate reflects how smoothly a student can read and is based on the number of mistakes a student makes when reading. The fluency rate subtest is not part of a school’s total score. This subtest provides separate instructional information that is not combined with the other data to yield a total score.

The appropriate reading levels for each grade were based on the information Pearson Learning Group provided in the DRA2 technical guidance and the *Inservice Guide (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)* regarding the grade-level appropriate texts used during the administration. This guidance, in combination with the time of administration and performance levels required to be a successful reader, were used to develop cut points. Because the program was updated to the DRA2, the charts below in Figure 1 show the cut points used for the 2005-2009 administrations and the new cut points that were established to create the index scores beginning in 2010. As you can see, they did not shift dramatically. However, they do reflect the new expectations for reading in the early grades.

*Figure 1: Reading Levels and Cut Points for the DRA2 Prior to 2005-2009 and 2010 Forward (+)*

<b>Kindergarten</b>		
<b>Reading Level</b>	<b>Proficiency Level</b>	
	<b>2010+</b>	<b>2005-2009</b>
<b>A</b>	<i>Substantially Below Proficient</i>	<i>Substantially Below Proficient</i>
<b>1</b>	<i>Partially Proficient</i>	<i>Partially Proficient</i>
<b>2</b>		<i>Proficient</i>
<b>3</b> <b>4</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<i>Proficient with Distinction</i>
<b>≥ 6</b>		

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Grade</b>			
<b>Reading Level</b>	<b>Proficiency Level</b>		
	<b>2010+</b>	<b>2005-2009</b>	
<b>A</b> <b>1</b> <b>2</b> <b>3</b> <b>4</b>	<i>Substantially Below Proficient</i>	<i>Substantially Below Proficient</i>	
<b>6</b> <b>8</b> <b>10</b> <b>12</b>			<i>Partially Proficient</i>
<b>14</b> <b>16</b>			
<b>≥ 18</b>			<i>Proficient with Distinction</i>

## ALLOWABLE EXEMPTIONS

Below are descriptions of the allowable exemptions for the DRA2 administration.

***LEP Students in the U.S. for Less Than One Year:*** These students are exempt from participating in the DRA2 if they have entered the U.S. after June 30<sup>th</sup> of the prior year.

***Medically Exempt Students:*** These students have medical issues that prevent them from taking any of the assessments that make up the Rhode Island State Assessment Program. The superintendent, on behalf of the student, submits a letter outlining the student's medical condition and sends it to Dr. Phyllis Lynch, Director of the Office of Assessment, Instruction, and Curriculum. Once approved, that student is then removed from the enrollment roster of that school for purposes of accountability calculations.

***Home-schooled Students:*** Home-schooled students may have an arrangement with the district administration to be tested. However, these students, and their scores, are removed from all accountability calculations for the school and the district.

***Students Enrolled after December 31<sup>st</sup>:*** These students are removed from enrollment rosters and their scores are not used in accountability calculations of the school. However, these students are counted for the basic participation rate calculations.

## CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOLS

---

The decision rules around classifying schools as *High, Middle, or In Need of Improvement* were also retained for the K-1 system. This means that we used the established 4<sup>th</sup> grade AMOs for the classifications of the K-1 schools. The Elementary AMOs are more appropriate because the small number of students tested would result in inappropriately inflated AMOs for the K-1 schools. Also, to rank-order these schools in order to establish new AMOs would create an artificial division between schools and would mislabel some as *In Need of Improvement* when in fact they were *Moderately Performing*. In short, it would create false inequities among a very small group of schools.

By using the established system, we will keep the new information to a minimum as well as provide an "apples-to-apples" approach for districts wishing to compare the performance of their K-1 schools to their upper elementary schools and to identify opportunities for improvement in reading programs.

NCLB legislation gives greater latitude to states for making accountability decisions regarding K-1 schools. As of the 2011-2012 school year, the following data elements will be used to classify K-1 schools:

1. School-level Index Scores
2. Participation Rates for the DRA2
3. Attendance Rates
4. If a school meets the minimum requirement of 45 students in any subgroup of students, that school will be evaluated based on this year's AMOs as well.

Data from the 2011 December 31<sup>st</sup> enrollment will be used for those schools administering the DRA2 and using the Online Management System. As in previous years, schools are responsible for informing RIDE if students moved before or during the testing window **and** do not have a score or qualify for the Alternate Assessment in the second grade. For more information on the Alternate Assessment, go to the RIDE website:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment/Altassessment.aspx>.

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT CARDS**

---

Report cards for schools and districts are posted at the following website:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/ride/reportCards.aspx>