Universal Screener for Reading Difficulties
Adoption Companion Documents

Prepared for
Board of Education Meeting
June 3, 2025

Education Code Section 53008

○ This mandates all LEAs in California must screen kindergarten through second-grade students for reading difficulties, including dyslexia, beginning in the 2025-2026 school year.
○ LEAs must adopt a screening instrument from a list approved by the Reading Difficulties Risk Screener Selection Panel (RDRSSP) by June 30, 2025.

● Education Code Section 53008

Universal Screener

<u>Statute specifies that screening instruments identified by the panel are:</u>
(1) not considered an evaluation or diagnostic tool to establish eligibility for special education and related services,

and

(2) must be appropriate for students in multiple languages.

Alternative protocols are established for students for whom a screening instrument does not exist in a language in which the student is fluent.

As outlined in Senate Bill 114, the screeners selected by the Reading Difficulties Risk Screener Selection Panel must meet two key criteria:

1. They are not to be used as evaluations or diagnostic tools to determine special education eligibility. Currently, we are collaborating with our Special Education Department to ensure our MTSS process is fully in place and functioning as intended before any referrals for special education testing are considered.
2. They must be appropriate for use in multiple languages, including Spanish. When a student speaks a language for which no approved screener is available, alternative protocols are required to ensure equitable screening.We are worked closely with Joe Serna Elementary to pilot potential screeners, with a particular focus on finding an instrument that effectively supports our Native Spanish-speaking students.

Universal Screener

The law requires that the results of the screenings be used by local educational agencies as part of a broader process that further evaluates:

- pupil needs and progress   (SIPPS Placement and SIPPS Mastery)

- identifies supports for classroom instruction (TIER 2 - TIER 3)

- enables targeted individual intervention as needed (TOSA or RSP)

- allows for further diagnosis (Academic Conference Process)

- Dyslexia Guidance

- Important to note that Lodi USD has several systems in place that the law is mandating
- Additionally Dynamic Inventory of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) which is our Universal Screener teachers use to determine reading readiness
- DIBELS - has 2 additional measures available to as a "Reading Difficulties Screener"- therefore making the learning curve easier for teachers
- Dyslexia Guidance - provided by the California Department of Education which help guide our programing

Reading Difficulties Screener Committee

Teachers	5 General Education (Pilot) 2 Serna (Biliteracy/Dual Language Expert) (1 Pilot) 6 Pilot
Teachers on Special Assignment	4 (Pilot)
Professional Development/ELA/ELD Expert	2
Assessment Expert	1
Special Education Expert	3
Administrators	2
Director of Education	1

To ensure a comprehensive and collaborative approach to adopting a universal reading screener, we intentionally formed a diverse committee representing multiple roles and areas of expertise across the district.

- An open invitation was extended to all K–2 classroom teachers and Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs).
- Interested individuals were asked to complete an application indicating their background, interest, and experience.
- District leadership then selected committee members, ensuring diverse representation across school areas, roles, and expertise.

The final Universal Screener Adoption Committee included:

- Classroom Teachers (K–2) from both Area 1 and Area 2
    - 6 teachers from Area 1
    - 5 teachers from Area 2
    - 2 K–1 teachers from Joe Serna Elementary

- Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs)
    - 2 from Area
    - 2 from Area 2

Reading Difficulties Screener Committee

Kindergarten Teachers	Jennifer Mueller - Mosher Silvia Villalobos- Serna
First Grade Teachers	Melisa Crone - Lakewood Danielle Cochrane - Wagner Holt Carla Robledo - Serna Jacquie Rust - Pilot Only Tammy Hudson- Pilot Only Juanita Luke - Pilot Only Jennifer Milton- Pilot Only
Second Grade Teachers	Amanda Diaz - Needham Matia Alfiche - Oakwood Melissa Shepard - Pilot Only Christina Dunn - Pilot Only
Teachers on Special Assignment	Colleen Guidi - TOSA Jenna Pal - Freeman - TOSA Sheri Uniack - TOSA Brandi Hartman - TOSA

- Professional Development/ELA/ELD expert
- Assessment expert
- Special Education expert
- Site Administrators
- The Director of Education

This cross-functional team has worked collaboratively to review state-approved screeners, ensure alignment with MTSS and legal requirements, and pilot tools to support a broad range of learners—including English learners and students with potential learning difficulties.

The result is a well-rounded and informed recommendation that reflects the needs of our students, staff, and schools.

Reading Difficulties Screener Committee

Professional Development	Jennifer Tillett - Professional Development Coordinator
ELA/ELD Expert	Eba Martinez - Program Coordinator - English Learner Chantelle Sloan - LUSD Literacy Coach
Biliteracy/Dual Language Expert	Silvia Villalobos - Joe Serna Charter Dual Immersion Karla Robledo - Joe Serna Charter Dual Immersion
Assessment Expert	Jessica Kempker - Assessment Research and Evaluation
Special Education Expert	Jennifer Freitas, Program Specialist Crystal Williams, Psychologist Mitzi Grace, Special Education Coordinator
Administrators	Marina Berry, Vice Principal Cassandra Sotelo, Principal
Director of Education	Susan Petersen - Area 1 Director of Education

Adoption Committee Process

Meeting	Topic
January 17	Review of the Tool Kit
February 6	Develop a District Lens
February 7	Started to Pilot mClass -DIBELS
March 13	Alignment and Review Instruments
March 14	Started to Pilot Amira
April 10	Decision Day

Reading Difficulties Risk Screener Adoption Toolkit

Committee's Decision to Pilot

Amplify.

AMIRA
LEARNING

As part of our thorough review process, the committee examined all four screening instruments approved by the Reading Difficulties Risk Screener Selection Panel. After careful analysis and discussion—guided by the Reading Difficulties Risk Screener Adoption Toolkit—the committee decided to pilot two screeners that best aligned with our district's needs and student population: Amira and mCLASS DIBELS.

This decision was based on several factors, including:

- Alignment with early literacy research and dyslexia risk indicators
- Support for multilingual learners, especially our Native Spanish-speaking students
- Ease of use and implementation for K–2 educators
- Compatibility with our existing systems and instructional frameworks
- Capacity for providing actionable data to inform instruction and support within MTSS

By piloting both Amira and mCLASS DIBELS, we were able to:

- Compare the tools side-by-side in real classroom settings
- Gather feedback from teachers and specialists
- Evaluate how well each tool identifies students at risk for reading difficulties
- Assess the level of support and training needed for successful district wide implementation

The pilot was conducted at Title One, Non-Title One and Joe Serna Charter schools, schools with a significant population of English learners, students with disabilities, and students living in poverty providing valuable insights into how each tool performs in diverse settings.The data and feedback collected from this pilot will directly inform the committee's final recommendation, ensuring that the selected screener is both effective and equitable for all of our students.

Committee's Vote - Consensus

- **Vote 1** - Where are you at now?
  - Share the why
  - Comfortable with consensus vote

- **Vote 2** -
  - Amira voters
    - Comfortable with the majority Amplify decision
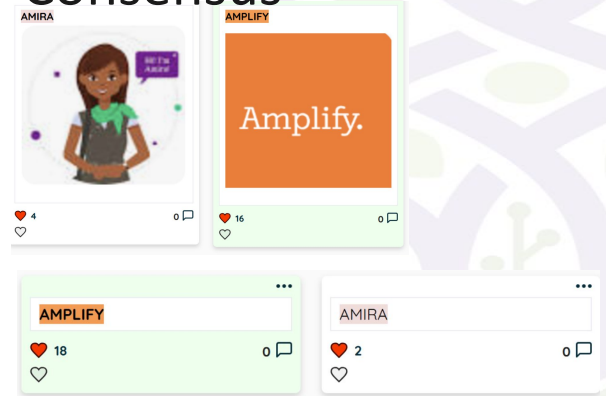
To ensure that all voices on the committee were heard and that our final recommendation reflected genuine consensus, we used a structured, two-step process—including an anonymous voting tool—to support open, honest participation.

Step 1: Initial Check-In (Vote 1 – "Where Are You at Now?")

We began with a non-binding, anonymous vote to gauge where committee members stood after the pilot and review process. This first vote was not about choosing a final screener, but rather a way to reflect on individual readiness and perspective.

Committee members were then invited to share the "why" behind their vote, giving space for thoughtful dialogue, clarification, and collective learning. This created a foundation of mutual understanding and trust.

Before moving forward, we asked if everyone felt comfortable with the idea of moving toward consensus—not unanimity, but a shared agreement that we could stand behind as a group. The committee agreed to proceed.

Step 2: Final Vote Toward Consensus

After additional discussion and reflection, we held a second anonymous vote focused on a final recommendation.

- A group of members expressed a preference for Amira based on features such as its automated interface and support for multilingual learners.

Committee's Decision

Amplify.

The majority, however, **voted for mCLASS DIBELS by Amplify,** citing stronger alignment with teacher-led instruction, actionable data, and better integration into MTSS.

When asked if those who preferred Amira could support the majority's selection of mCLASS DIBELS as the district's recommended screener, they responded yes—expressing comfort with the decision and confidence in the process that led us there.

This consensus-based approach—grounded in anonymity, dialogue, and respect—allowed us to move forward with a recommendation that reflects both broad support and professional integrity.

Developing a District Lens -Purpose

The purpose of the additional screening measures is to:

- Ensure early identification and intervention with evidence-based early literacy instructional strategies and materials which improves literacy outcomes for students

- Evaluate specific student needs and progress as a portion of a broader process

- Inform individualized instruction, measure a student's progress, identify learning needs, and enable parents and educators to discuss needs in an informed way

As we move forward with the adoption of a universal reading screener, it's important to note that the committee has committed to defining a clear and shared purpose for how this tool will be used within Lodi Unified School District.

While the state provides the legal framework and approved instruments, our local implementation must reflect our district's values, student needs, and instructional priorities. The committee unanimously agreed that:

The purpose of the additional screening measures is to:

- Ensure early identification and intervention with evidence-based early literacy instructional strategies and materials, which improves literacy outcomes for students.
- Evaluate specific student needs and progress as part of a broader process that supports ongoing learning.
- Inform individualized instruction, measure a student's progress, identify learning needs, and enable parents and educators to have informed conversations about how best to support each child.

Additionally, the screener will be used to identify students at risk for reading difficulties early, so they can receive timely support through our Multi-Tiered System of Supports. It will not serve as a diagnostic or eligibility tool for special education, consistent with Senate Bill 114.

Defining this purpose clearly helps ensure a consistent, equitable, and effective rollout that supports all students and fosters shared understanding among educators, families, and the community.

Connecting the Universal Screener to Lodi USD Strong Early Literacy Program and Organizational Consistencies

- Anchored in Lodi USD English Language Arts <u>Organizational Consistencies</u>
    - Amplify DIBELS Benchmark Assessments- consistent practice
    - Kindergarten - Second Grade
    - 3 Times a year
    - Amplify DIBELS - Additional Measures - Screeners have been available
    - Professional Development Scheduled for 25-26 school year
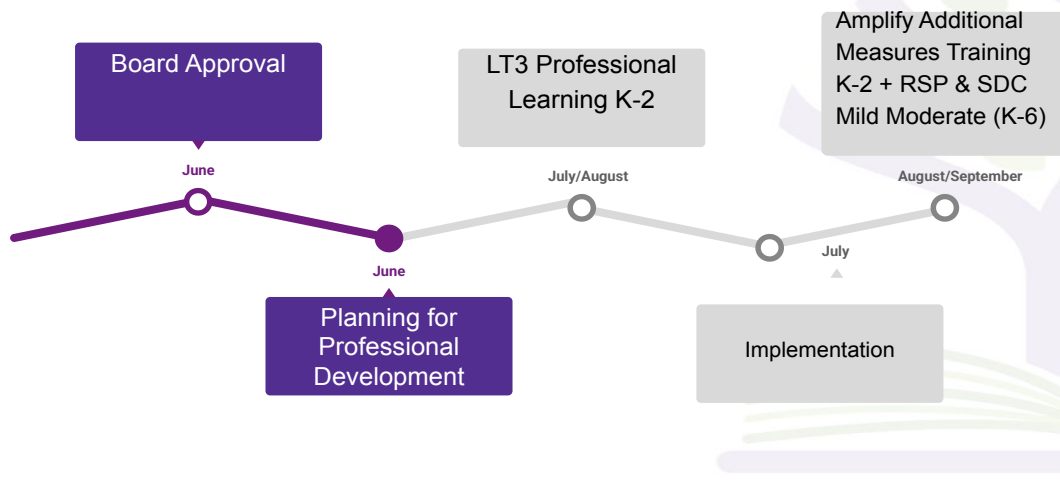   - "Guidance" document being developed

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Lodi Unified School District has long demonstrated a strong commitment to early literacy through research-based programs and consistent practices. Our universal screener adoption aligns seamlessly with these efforts and will be supported by well-established organizational structures to ensure effective implementation.

Key organizational consistencies that will support this initiative include:

- DIBELS Benchmark Assessments:
 These are currently administered to all kindergarten through second-grade students three times per year—at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. This routine establishes a solid foundation for monitoring student progress and informing instruction.

- Amplify Additional Measures Screeners:
 Many of our trained staff are already familiar with these tools, which facilitates smooth integration of the recommended screener into existing practices.
 Additionally, professional development is scheduled for the 2025–26 school year to ensure all K–2 teachers, RSP teachers, and Mild/Moderate Special Education staff (K–6) are fully prepared to utilize these tools effectively.

- Development of a Guidance Document:
 To support educators in making data-driven decisions, we will create a clear, user-friendly guidance document outlining recommended steps to support students identified as at risk. This resource will help maintain consistency and clarity across classrooms and schools.

By leveraging these strong, district-wide literacy practices and organizational supports, Lodi USD is well positioned to implement the universal screener in a way that enhances early identification and intervention, reinforces high-quality instruction, and ultimately improves literacy outcomes for all students.

Reading Difficulties Screener Timelines

Board Approval

June

Planning for Professional Development

June

LT3 Professional Learning K-2

July/August

Implementation

July

Amplify Additional Measures Training K-2 + RSP & SDC Mild Moderate (K-6)

August/September

July–August 2025

- Targeted Professional Development Sessions for:

  - All Kindergarten through 2nd Grade Teachers
  - RSP Teachers and Mild/Moderate Special Education Teachers (Grades K–6)

- Focus of PD:

  - Purpose and expectations of the universal screener
  - How to administer and interpret results
  - Using data to inform Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 instruction
  - Introduction to the district's Guidance Document for supporting students

- Hands-on practice with the selected screener tool (mCLASS DIBELS by Amplify)

Middle of Year 2025: Screener Implementation Begins

- During the Second benchmark window (Middle of Year) for all K–2 students
- Teachers supported by TOSAs, site leaders, and ELA literacy coaches
- Ongoing support provided throughout the year

thank you