



**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Molly Spearman, State Superintendent

DATE: June 26, 2015

RE: Readiness Assessments for 4K and 5K for 2015-16

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) is preparing for the administration of the 4K and 5K readiness assessments in the fall of 2015 in anticipation of Proviso 1A.77 as included in the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2015-16.

Provided the proviso is adopted in the final version of the Fiscal Year 2015-16 budget, all students in prekindergarten (4K) must be assessed by one of the three SCDE-selected formative assessments during the first 45 days of the 2015-16 school year, and again during the last 45 days of school at a minimum (the pending proviso is below). We have selected three formative assessments for 4K students after soliciting input from stakeholders, including districts, First Steps, the Education Oversight Committee (EOC), private child care, and institutions of higher education. The selected formative assessments should be used to analyze the early literacy competencies of children in publicly-funded prekindergarten. The three formative assessments selected and approved by the State Board of Education on June 10, 2015, pending the proviso is adopted, are the following: PALS-PreK, myIGDIS, and Teaching Strategies GOLD (more information on each is provided below).

The 5K students must be assessed by the DRA2 PLUS (Developmental Reading Assessment 2nd Edition PLUS) during the first 45 days of the 2015-16 school year and again during the last 45 days at a minimum, according to the pending proviso. We selected this assessment based on input from districts, the EOC, and institutions of higher education.

Proviso 1A.77 directs that the department use available funds to cover the cost of the 4K and 5K assessments. The SCDE will be working with districts to order these materials. Although formal orders may not be placed until the budget bill that includes the proviso has passed, we are making preliminary plans.

In response to inquiries from the field and in anticipation of Proviso 1A.77 being signed by Governor Nikki R. Haley, we are offering a webinar as an overview of each of the 4K formative assessment choices and the 5K assessment, DRA2 PLUS. The webinar is scheduled for June 29 at 2:00 p.m. You can join the webinar [here](#).

Additionally, in anticipation of Proviso 1A.77 and to support districts in making informed selections, we are providing an opportunity to preview the 4K assessments on July 7, 8, and 9. These meetings will be held in Columbia as an option for district and school administrators to attend. Assessment vendors will be available to showcase materials and to answer questions. Districts may select from the three dates scheduled. Times and the specific location will be announced soon, so please save these dates.

An *SCDE Readiness Assessment Survey* link will be posted on the website and sent out by email by July 2 and must be completed by July 13, with the following information: your district's choice of one of the 4K assessments, the number of 4K classrooms, as well as the total number of 5K classrooms. Additionally, by July 2, a link to register for available training on the assessments will be available and sent to districts to register for assessment options.

4K Assessment Training: The following training sessions have been scheduled for the 4K assessments, with additional dates to be scheduled as needed:

- GOLD – (two sessions, 2 days each – training for teachers and administrators)
 - July 27 – 28 in Columbia
 - July 29 – 30 in Spartanburg
 - Additional sessions to be added as needed
- myIGDIS – one day of training for teachers, 2 days of training for Train-the-Trainers
 - July 30 – in Columbia – one day training for teachers
 - August 14 – TBD – one day training for teachers
 - July 22 in Spartanburg for Day 1 of Train-the-Trainers
 - July 23 in Columbia for Day 1 of Train-the-Trainers
 - July 30 in Columbia for Day 2 of two day Train-the-Trainers session
 - August 13 – TBD for Day 2 of two day Train-the-Trainers session
- PALS-Pre-K – one-day training sessions for teachers and administrators
 - July 13 in Columbia
 - July 15 in Spartanburg
 - July 16 in Florence
 - Additional sessions to be added as needed

5K assessment: DRA2 training is scheduled on the following dates for one day train-the-trainers sessions with both administrators and teachers allowed to attend:

- July 14 – Columbia
- July 15 – Florence

- July 20 – Columbia
- July 21 – Spartanburg
- July 22 – Florence
- July 23 – Colleton
- Aug. 6 – Columbia
- Aug 7 – TBD
- Additional regional sessions added as needed

If you have questions regarding the Readiness Assessments for 4K or 5K, please contact Penny Danielson in the SCDE Office of Instructional Practices at pdanielson@ed.sc.gov, (803) 734-8251 or Susan Creighton in the SCDE Office of Assessment at screight@ed.sc.gov, (803) 734-8534.

Pending Proviso for Readiness Assessments:

IA.77. (SDE-EIA: 4K Early Literacy Competencies Assessments) *Of the funds carried forward from the full-day 4K program from the previous fiscal year, the Department of Education is authorized to expend up to \$800,000 on assessments and professional development to analyze the early literacy competencies of children in publicly funded prekindergarten. The department, in consultation with the Office of First Steps, will select up to three formative assessments that analyze the early literacy and language development of children in publicly funded prekindergarten. Each school district and private provider participating in a publicly funded prekindergarten program will administer one of the formative assessments selected by the department to each child eligible for and enrolled in a publicly funded prekindergarten program during the first forty-five days of the school year and during the last forty-five days of the school year. School districts and private providers will be allocated \$15 per child assessed to cover the cost of the formative assessment. School districts and private providers are required to report electronically the results of each individual assessment to the department using a form that must include the unique student identifier and any other information prescribed by the department. In turn, the department will provide the assessment data to the Education Oversight Committee. The results of the assessment and the developmental intervention strategies recommended or services needed to address the child's identified needs must also be provided, in writing, to the parent or guardian. The assessment may not be used to deny a student to admission to prekindergarten.*

Furthermore, \$2,000,000 of the funds appropriated for half-day programs for four-year-olds and funds carried forward from assessment must be expended by the Department of Education to administer the Developmental Reading Assessment(r) 2nd Edition PLUS to implement the progress monitoring system required by the Read to Succeed Act of 2014 and to evaluate the early literacy and language competencies of each child entering kindergarten in the public schools. The assessment of kindergarten students must be administered at a minimum of once during the first forty-five days of the school year and once during the last forty-five days of the school year with the results collected by the department. The results of the assessments and the developmental intervention strategies recommended or services needed to address each child's identified needs must also be provided, in writing, to the parent or guardian. The assessment may not be used to deny a student admission to kindergarten. Districts are given the option of designating up to two days of the 180-day school calendar to administer the assessment to kindergarten students. The department will also provide the results of the assessment of kindergarten students to the Education Oversight Committee. With available funds, the department will also provide or secure training for appropriate educators in how to administer the assessment. In addition the department may pilot in kindergarten classes one or more comprehensive readiness assessments that address the other

domains in numeracy, approaches to learning, social and emotional development, and physical well-being in the current school year.

Summary of Each 4K Formative Assessment on the SCDE Approved List for 2014-15:

1. **PALS-PreK** (Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening) was developed by a team at the University of Virginia and is a formative assessment which is individually administered by the teacher that measures preschoolers' developing knowledge of important fundamentals in literacy skills. The assessment reflects skills that are predictive of future reading success and measures name writing ability, upper-case and lower-case alphabet recognition, letter sound and beginning sound production, print and word awareness, rhyme awareness, and nursery rhyme awareness. It also offers guidance to teachers for tailoring instruction to children's specific needs. For more information, click [here](#).
2. **myIGDIS Literacy** (Individual Growth and Development Indicators) was developed by a team at the University of Minnesota and is a formative assessment individually administered by the teacher to support the identification of preschool children requiring additional diagnostic assessment or levels of intervention in oral language, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, and comprehension. This assessment can be used to measure developmental gains and inform instructional needs of individual children. This assessment also includes math as an option. For more information, click [here](#).
3. **Teaching Strategies GOLD** was developed by Teaching Strategies and is a formative assessment based on teacher observations. The first set of objectives focus on key predictors of school success in the areas of social-emotional, physical, cognitive, oral language, literacy, and math (the requirement for 2015-16 is only for language and literacy). GOLD is aligned to the Creative Curriculum, but can be used with other early childhood curricula as well. For more information, click [here](#).