

OFFICE OF CHIEF ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
November 7, 2024

OFFICE OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT

03. Action: Approval of the recommended cut scores on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment for minimum readiness for kindergarten effective 2024-2025 school year [Goals 1 and 3 – MBE Strategic Plan]

Background Information: On July 29, 2014, a kindergarten readiness score validation took place, to establish a scale score indicating a minimum level of readiness for students who are entering kindergarten. The validation committee was made up of a diverse group of Mississippi educators, which included district superintendents, curriculum coordinators, principals, pre-kindergarten teachers, federal program directors, and early childhood program directors. The committee recommended a scale score of 530 at the beginning of kindergarten or a score of 498 at the end of pre-kindergarten on the Renaissance STAR Early Literacy Assessment as an indicator of kindergarten readiness. This score is indicative of mastery of knowledge and skills in the area of early literacy and early numeracy at or above 70% and used as a predictor of Grade 3 proficiency. The recommended scale score is not a required score for students to enroll in kindergarten.

In the 2018-2019 school year, the expectations for the Grade 3 assessment were increased. As a result, students must score a level 3 or above or meet a Good Cause Exemption to be promoted to Grade 4.

On July 18, 2024, the SBE approved a contract with Imagination Station to provide the Kindergarten Readiness for FY25. The vendor consulted the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for the appropriate processes to align the new assessments with past expectations. The TAC advised Imagination Station to conduct a linking study using the previous score expectations and performance level descriptors for Reading. For Math, the MDE worked with the TAC chair, and the vendor to establish performance level descriptors and a recommended cut score. During the TAC meeting on November 11-12, the TAC including psychometricians from the Center for Assessment will review the processes used to set the scores.

Mississippi's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will provide parents, teachers, and early childhood providers with a common understanding of what children know and are able to do upon entering school. The assessment results will help educators identify and support those students who may need additional intervention as quickly as possible.

The MDE is recommending SBE approval contingent upon TAC approval during its November 11-12, 2024, meeting.

This item references Goals 1 and 3 of the *Mississippi Board of Education Strategic Plan*.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

What is the recommendation?

- The MDE recommends establishing the readiness threshold for kindergarten and pre-k reading and numeracy at Level 4, termed “Ready,” on Amira Learning’s Istation Indicators of Progress (ISIP).
- Level 4 is at the 61st national percentile for the administration period: Beginning of Year (BOY) or End of Year (EOY) for reading and numeracy.

Table 1: Beginning of Year (BOY) Reading and Numeracy Readiness Cuts

Screening Window	Grade	Readiness Cut	Subject
BOY	Pre-K	213	ELA
BOY	Pre-K	229	Math
BOY	Kindergarten	277	ELA
BOY	Kindergarten	321	Math

Table 2: End of Year (EOY) Reading and Numeracy Readiness Cuts

Screening Window	Grade	Readiness Cut	Subject
EOY	Pre-K	284	ELA
EOY	Pre-K	285	Math
EOY	Kindergarten	347	ELA
EOY	Kindergarten	391	Math

How did the MDE and their partners arrive at this recommendation?

- The MDE worked closely with the team at Amira Istation and the state Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).
- The proposed readiness cuts were influenced by the following factors:
 - Level 4 aligns with ISIPs national research on the knowledge and skills required to demonstrate readiness
 - Level 4 is similar in rigor to the previous definition of readiness based on the STAR Early Literacy from Renaissance Learning. This claim is supported by the following:
 - Amira Istation conducted a linking study to review the relationship between ISIP and STAR Early Literacy from Renaissance Learning. Using data from Florida to conduct the study, the results showed that the STAR Early Literacy from Renaissance Learning cut score for BOY kindergarten readiness was very similar to Level 4 on ISIP.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

- Amira Istation also created descriptions of the knowledge and skills associated with readiness on ISIP that correspond to levels on the STAR Early Literacy from Renaissance Learning.
- Impact data, or the percent of students classified as “Ready” based on Level 4 BOY kindergarten were similar to results from the STAR Early Literacy from Renaissance Learning in 2023.
- Using Level 4 BOY as the ‘anchor’ to inform decisions about the readiness threshold, the MDE, with guidance from the TAC, decided to apply this level to kindergarten EOY, pre-k, and numeracy. Doing so creates coherent and consistent expectations for students in Mississippi.