Information for Educators

What is PALS?
The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) is a research-based screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring tool. Wisconsin teachers use PALS to identify students at risk of developing reading difficulties, diagnose students' knowledge of literacy fundamentals, monitor progress, and plan instruction that targets students' needs. Student data collected from PALS provides a direct means of matching literacy instruction to specific literacy needs. PALS has been the required screener for Wisconsin students since 2012-13.

Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening tasks are as follows:

PALS-PreK (for 4K) - comprised of six un-timed tasks administered individually.

- **Name Writing –** Student asked to draw a self-portrait and write own name. Scored on a developmental continuum ranging from scribbles to the use of mixed symbols to writing entire name correctly.
- **Alphabet Knowledge –** Student asked to name the 26 upper-case letters of the alphabet. Students who know 16 or more proceed with lower-case alphabet recognition task. Students who know 9 or more lower-case letters are asked to produce the sounds associated with 23 letters and three consonant digraphs (ch, sh, th).
- **Beginning Sound Awareness –** Student says name of picture and is asked to produce the beginning sound for each target word.
- **Print and Word Awareness –** Student is asked to point to various text components in a familiar rhyme printed in book format. There are ten items for this task.
- **Rhyme Awareness –** From three pictures, students are asked to identify the picture that rhymes with the target picture. There are ten items for this task.
- **Nursery Rhyme Awareness (optional for Wisconsin) –** The teacher recites lines from nursery rhymes and stops before the end, prompting the student to supply the final rhyming word.

PALS-K - comprised of six required tasks and one optional task. The majority of tasks are administered individually; a few tasks can be given in small groups (five or fewer students).

- **Rhyme Awareness –** Same as PALS-PreK
- **Beginning Sound Awareness -** From three pictures, students are asked to identify pictures that have the same beginning sound as the target picture. There are a total of ten items for this task.
- **Alphabet Knowledge -** Students are asked to name the 26 lower-case letters of the alphabet.
- **Letter Sounds -** Students are asked to produce the letter sounds of 23 upper-case letters of the alphabet, and three consonant digraphs (ch, sh, th).

- **Spelling -** Students spell five consonant-vowel-consonant words, credit given for phonetically acceptable substitutions.
- **Concept of Word -** Students are taught a rhyme in advance of assessing their concept of word. A students' concept of word is assessed using a picture sheet of the rhyme, as well as pointing and word identification in the context of a small book format and then in a word list.
- **Word Recognition in Isolation (Optional)-** Students identify a list of words at the Preprimer, Primer, and First-Grade level.

PALS 1-3 - comprised of three tasks required for all students taking the assessment (plus one task required Fall of 1st grade only) and additional tasks for students who score below the summed score benchmark.

- **Spelling** (Entry level-required for all students) – Students spell words that represent phonics features necessary to be successful at each grade level.
- **Word Recognition in Isolation** (Entry level-required for all students) – Students read words in leveled word lists.
- **Oral Reading in Context** (Level A, required for all students) – Students are asked to read a leveled passage (determined by Word Recognition task) to determine student's instructional reading level.
- **Letter Sounds** (required Fall of 1st grade only. Also part of Level B tasks, below.) – Same as PALS-K
- **Level B** (administered if the Entry Level summed score benchmark is not met)
    - **Alphabet Recognition, Letter Sounds**, and **Concept of Word** – Same as PALS-K
- **Level C** (administered if Level B benchmarks are not met)
    - **Blending** – students are asked to blend individual phonemes together to come up with a word.
    - **Sound to Letter** – teacher says a word (e.g. map). The student segments a specific phoneme within that word and tells the teacher the letter that represents the phoneme.

> **Where can I find sample or practice test questions?**
> Video demonstrations highlighting each PALS task can be found at http://pals.virginia.edu/.

How are the test results used?
PALS data provide teachers with information about how students perform in fundamental reading skill areas that are predictive of a student's achievement in reading. Teachers use PALS to gather information about each student's strengths and needs in reading so instruction can be planned to best meet those needs and thus help each student make progress in his/her reading. Teachers use PALS to prevent reading problems before they occur, and to plan appropriate instruction for both grade-level readers and struggling readers. In addition, schools are statutorily required to provide interventions or remedial reading services to each student that is identified as being at risk of reading difficulty.

PALS is aligned to which Standards?
Expectations for curriculum as outlined in the Reading Foundational Common Core State Standards available at http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/K/ align with the subtests for PALS, as well as the Early Literacy Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards available at http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmels-documents.php.

More Information
More information about PALS is available at http://www.palswisconsin.info.