



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Catherine Truitt, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

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TO: Directors, Exceptional Children Programs
Lead Administrators, Charter Schools
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FROM: Sherry H. Thomas *SH7*

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Standard and Non-standard Administration of the mClass DIBELS-8 Assessment for Students with Disabilities

The Exceptional Children Division has received questions about students with disabilities being exempt from the mClass DIBELS-8 assessment. Students with disabilities on the standard course of study are not exempt from the statewide mClass DIBELS-8 assessment. Students should be given a standard administration whenever possible or a standard administration with approved accommodations when necessary to provide an accurate assessment of student skills. There are situations when a non-standard administration may be necessary based on an IEP Team decision. Data from non-standard administrations can and should be used to inform instruction. The following are examples of when a non-standard administration may be necessary for a subtest.

Scenario 1: A first grade student is identified as Deaf, does not wear amplification, has no access to sound, uses American Sign Language as the primary mode of communication, and Visual Phonics is consistently used for literacy instruction. The Letter Naming Fluency subtest requires an oral response to name the capital and lowercase letters of the alphabet. Because the child uses ASL to communicate, a non-standard administration, meaning the child responds by naming the letters using ASL, may be used and recorded for this student. Additionally, this same student is unable to repeat the first sound heard in a stimulus word in the First Sound Fluency subtest. Because Visual Phonics is consistently used as a tool for literacy instruction per the IEP, and Visual Phonics is not an approved accommodation for the mClass DIBELS-8 assessment, this subtest would be administered and recorded as a non-standard administration.

Scenario 2: A third grade student is identified as having a visual impairment, with only light perception. There are no secondary disabilities and braille is used as the primary medium for accessing printed materials across all educational settings per the IEP. The student is proficient in reading uncontracted braille and is in the process of learning to read contracted braille. Because braille is needed as a testing accommodation, and neither uncontracted nor contracted braille is an approved accommodation for the mClass DIBELS-8 assessment, all subtests given would be administered and recorded as a non-standard administration. Please note, research demonstrates there is a reduction in reading fluency rates when using braille, large print, or magnification; however, the information gained, even from a non-standard administration is valuable for guiding instruction and progress monitoring.

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

In rare situations, an IEP team may determine that a student with a significant disability is unable to access the mClass DIBELS-8 assessment. In this case, a Public School Unit (PSU) may use an [alternative assessment](#), at local expense, that has been approved by the State Board of Education (SBE). If a student is unable to access one of the approved alternative assessments, the student's literacy skills shall be assessed with a validated measure of early reading that is accessible to the student. Selection of these assessments should be determined by the PSU in consultation with local Exceptional Children Staff.

Questions regarding non-standard administrations on the mClass DIBELS-8 assessment may be directed to Dr. Amy Rhyne, Director, Office of Early Learning, amy.rhyne@dpi.nc.gov.

Cc: Dr. Amy Rhyne
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