

Call for K–2 Reading Instruments: Questions and Answers

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

This Questions and Answers document compiles inquiries submitted through the ECE Support Portal and the Notice of Intent to Apply form, collected through November 8, 2024. For further details about the call, including links to the informational packet and application, visit our [Call for K-2 Reading Instruments webpage](#).

1. IS THERE A TIMELINE FOR THIS PROCESS? AS IN, WHEN WOULD THESE NEW INSTRUMENTS BE AVAILABLE FOR US TO USE AS A DISTRICT?

Yes, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has provided a detailed timeline for the selection and implementation of new K-2 reading instruments. This timeline can be found on the [Call for K-2 Reading Instruments webpage](#), as well as the [Call for K-2 Reading Instruments Submissions Informational Packet](#).

Key dates are as follows:

- October 25, 2024: Call for submissions posted and application available.
- November 8, 2024: Notice of Intent to Apply due.
- December 12, 2024: Application due date.
- March 3, 2025: Applicants notified of decisions and authorization notices issued.
- March 14, 2025: Public announcement of selected instruments.
- July 1, 2025: Authorization begins.
- August 30, 2028: Authorization ends.

The new reading instruments will be available for district use, at the latest, starting July 1, 2025.

2. THE APPLICATION REQUIRES "ASSURANCE THAT THE INSTRUMENT WILL BE PROVIDED AT NO COST TO LEAS. THIS INCLUDES THE SCORING, REPORTING, AND INITIAL TRAINING FOR THE INSTRUMENT TO ENSURE LEAS ARE ABLE TO MEET STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS AT NO COST."

OUR QUESTION IS: DOES THIS MEAN THAT IF APPROVED, THE SCREENING INSTRUMENT/ASSESSMENT NEEDS TO BE OFFERED FOR FREE TO DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS IN TEXAS THAT WISH TO USE OUR SCREENER? DOES THIS APPLY BOTH TO THE "ALTERNATIVE KINDERGARTEN READING INSTRUMENT" AND THE "APPROVED PROVIDERS LIST OF READING INSTRUMENTS FOR GRADES 1 AND 2"?

IF YES, ARE THERE OTHER FUNDING AVENUES AVAILABLE TO HELP SCHOOLS PURCHASE THE SCREENING INSTRUMENT?

Yes. If an instrument is approved, an assessment provider may not charge Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) in Texas. This includes the scoring, reporting, and initial training necessary for LEAs to meet statutory requirements. This requirement applies to both the "Alternative Kindergarten Reading Instrument" and the "Approved Providers List of Reading Instruments for Grades 1 and 2."

The state does not provide funding to help schools purchase the screening instrument.

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3. COULD THE TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY PLEASE PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/ CLARITY REGARDING THE INSTRUMENT BEING PROVIDED AT NO COST TO LOCAL LEAS?

Texas Education Code (TEC) §28.006(f), states: "The agency shall ensure at least one reading instrument for each grade level for which a reading instrument is required to be administered under this section is available to school districts at no cost."

The requirement for the instrument to be provided at no cost to LEAs means that the vendor of an approved reading instruments may not charge school districts and open-enrollment charter schools in Texas for the duration of the approval. This includes all associated costs such as scoring, reporting, and initial training necessary for LEAs to meet statutory requirements. The intent is to ensure that there is no financial burden on LEAs in meeting this statutory requirement. This requirement applies to both the "Alternative Kindergarten Reading Instrument" and the "Approved Providers List of Reading Instruments for Grades 1 and 2."

4. IS THE AWARD FOR THE ALTERNATIVE KINDERGARTEN READING INSTRUMENT AND THE APPROVED PROVIDERS OF READING INSTRUMENTS FOR GRADES 1 AND 2 BASED ON THE SAME SUBMISSION (ONE FOR ENGLISH AND ONE FOR SPANISH)? ARE THE CRITERIA AND RUBRICS THE SAME?

Vendors have the option to submit one application for both the alternative kindergarten reading instrument and the list of approved reading instruments for grades 1 and 2. Approvals will be based on the criteria outlined in the informational packet, with consideration given separately for the kindergarten, grade 1 and grade 2 submissions. If a vendor prefers to submit two separate submissions, they may do so. Each submission must include both English and Spanish versions of the reading instruments.

All instruments will be evaluated for content alignment to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), psychometric properties, classification accuracy, test bias analysis, growth and improvement, generalizability, and feasibility.

There are also differentiated requirements for each grade level that are clearly outlined in the rubrics to ensure that the instruments meet the developmental and educational needs of students in each grade.

5. CAN YOU PLEASE CLARIFY IF VENDORS SHOULD DO ONE SUBMISSION THAT INCLUDES BOTH LANGUAGES; OR SUBMIT TWO SEPARATE SUBMISSIONS - ONE FOR ENGLISH AND ONE FOR SPANISH?

Vendors are required to submit two [Requests for Information \(RFI\) applications](#)—one for the English version and one for the Spanish version—in a single submission using the [Submission of Application for K–2 Reading Instruments form](#). Each language version must be equivalent in skills assessment, administration methods, and reporting features. The submission should provide comprehensive information for each language version, including full test content, psychometric data, administration procedures, and reporting capabilities.

6. WHEN I GO TO THE APPLICATION FORM, IT STATES "UPLOAD THE K-2 READING INSTRUMENT REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FORM (RFI) BELOW FOR THE ENGLISH VERSION OF THE INSTRUMENT." I AM NOT FINDING THIS DOCUMENT ON THE SITE OR IN THE DOCUMENTATION. CAN YOU PLEASE PROVIDE A LINK TO THIS?

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The [RFI form](#) can be found on the [Call for K-2 Reading Instruments webpage](#). Completed applications must be submitted using the [Submission of Application for K–2 Reading Instruments form](#).

7. WILL ENGLISH AND SPANISH ASSESSMENTS BE APPROVED SEPARATELY OR WILL THEY BE SCORED IN COMBINATION?

The English and Spanish reading instruments will be evaluated and scored separately. Each language version must be equivalent in skills assessment, administration methods, and reporting features. The rubrics used for evaluation will assess each language version independently to ensure that both meet the required standards and criteria.

8. IS THERE A SPECIFIC SET OF CRITERIA FOR ESTABLISHING ALIGNMENT WITH TEKS?

This is the only specified set of criteria for establishing alignment with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The skills listed in Table 1 are scored based on the degree to which the instrument addresses the student expectations of the TEKS for phonological awareness, phonetic knowledge, spelling knowledge, print awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The skills assessed in English assessments should align with the TEKS for English Language Arts and Reading, and Spanish assessments should align with the TEKS for Spanish Language Arts and Reading.

TEA does not expect the assessments to be completely aligned to all of the student expectations in the TEKS. Instead, the assessment items should align with one or more student expectations that are listed for phonological awareness, phonetic knowledge, spelling knowledge, print awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, as appropriate depending on the grade level. To view all of the TEKS for English language arts and reading please see <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/laws-and-rules/sboe-rules-tac/sboe-tac-currently-in-effect/ch110a.pdf>. To view all of the TEKS for Spanish language arts and reading please see <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/laws-and-rules/sboe-rules-tac/sboe-tac-currently-in-effect/ch128a.pdf>.

Table 1. Required skill sets based on TEKS

Strand	Skill Set	K	1	2
Developing and sustaining foundational language	Phonological awareness	✓	✓	✓
	Phonetic knowledge	✓	✓	✓
	Spelling knowledge	✓	✓	✓
	Print awareness	✓	✓	X
Vocabulary	Vocabulary	✓	✓	✓
Fluency	Accuracy, rate and prosody	X	✓	✓
Comprehension	Listening	✓	✓	X
	Reading	X	✓	✓

9. TO ENSURE WE DESIGN AN ANALYSIS THAT MEETS THE INTENDED CRITERIA, COULD YOU CLARIFY WHAT IS MEANT BY "RELATED" IN THE CONTEXT OF THE STAAR SPANISH PREDICTIVE VALIDITY EXPECTATIONS? SPECIFICALLY, SHOULD WE INTERPRET "RELATED" AS ESTABLISHING A CONCORDANCE OR LINKING

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR PROGRAM'S K-2 SPANISH ASSESSMENT SCORES AND 3RD-GRADE STAAR SPANISH PERFORMANCE?

Yes. "Related" refers to establishing a concordance or linking relationship between your program's K-2 Spanish reading instrument scores and 3rd-grade STAAR Spanish performance.

10. CAN TEA CLARIFY IF THEY REQUIRE A SINGLE SUBMISSION BY THE ASSESSMENT DEVELOPER (COMPANY) WHO ENGAGES MULTIPLE DISTRIBUTION PARTNERS OR IF EACH DISTRIBUTION PARTNER IS REQUIRED TO SUBMIT A SEPARATE PROPOSAL?

If there are differences in the instruments, reporting, scoring, and training for the distribution partners, each distribution partner is required to submit a separate proposal to ensure that all variations are adequately reviewed and evaluated. However, if there are no differences, a single submission by the assessment developer (company) can be submitted.

11. IF TEA HAS A PREFERENCE FOR SINGLE SUBMISSIONS, ARE THERE SPECIFIC SECTIONS THAT SHOULD DISTINCTLY COVER ELEMENTS SUCH AS PRICING, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERINGS, OR SYSTEM INTEGRATIONS ACROSS THE DIFFERENT PROVIDERS?

TEA does not have a preference for single submissions. If there are differences in what the different providers offer, such as the instruments, reporting, scoring, and training, each provider must submit a separate proposal. This ensures that all variations are adequately reviewed and evaluated.

If this is the case, there are no specific sections that need to distinctly cover elements such as pricing, professional development offerings, or system integrations across different providers within a single submission. Each partner should address these elements in their individual proposals.

However, if there are no differences in the instruments, reporting, scoring, and/or training across the different providers, a single submission may be made by the assessment developer (company). In this case, the submission should distinctly cover elements such as pricing, professional development offerings, and system integrations to ensure comprehensive evaluation. Each of these elements should be clearly addressed within the single submission to provide a thorough understanding of the proposal.

12. DOES THE NO-CHARGE REQUIREMENT APPLY SOLELY TO THE BEGINNING-OF-YEAR ASSESSMENT, OR DOES IT ENCOMPASS ALL ASSESSMENTS THROUGHOUT THE ACADEMIC YEAR?

The no-charge requirement applies to all three assessments, Beginning of Year (BOY), Middle of Year (MOY), and End of Year (EOY) assessments.

13. IF THE NO-CHARGE REQUIREMENT APPLIES TO THE ENTIRE ASSESSMENT PERIOD, WOULD TEA ACCEPT A MODEL WHERE ASSESSMENTS ARE FREE BUT SERVICES LIKE PRACTICE TOOLS OR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INCUR A CHARGE?

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The vendor of an approved reading instrument may not charge school districts and open-enrollment charter schools in Texas for the duration of the approval. This includes all associated costs such as scoring, reporting, and initial training necessary for LEAs to meet statutory requirements.

TEA may accept a model where additional services beyond what is listed in the informational packet, such as professional development beyond the initial training, upgrades for additional assessment waves, and practice tools, incur a charge. These additional services cannot be part of what is necessary for the core requirements that LEAs must meet.

14. HAS TEA IDENTIFIED ANY SPECIFIC GUIDELINES OR INCENTIVES FOR PROVIDERS TO OFFER FREE ASSESSMENTS WHILE POTENTIALLY CHARGING FOR COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES?

No. TEA has not identified specific guidelines or incentives for providers to offer free assessments while charging for complementary services.

15. IS THERE A POSSIBILITY FOR PROVIDERS TO MAKE AMENDMENTS TO SUBMISSIONS IN THE EVENT THAT THE MARKET BECOMES MORE COMPETITIVE DUE TO ADDITIONAL FREE OFFERINGS?

Providers are encouraged to ensure their initial submissions are as competitive and comprehensive as possible.

If market conditions change significantly, providers may contact TEA staff listed in the packet for guidance on any potential amendments or updates to their submissions. Any amendments should not alter the alignment of the assessments to the TEKS, the skills being assessed, or the psychometric properties of the instruments.

THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE VENDOR OF AN APPROVED READING INSTRUMENT MAY NOT CHARGE SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND OPEN-ENROLLMENT CHARTER SCHOOLS IN TEXAS FOR THE DURATION OF THE APPROVAL MAY NOT BE AMENDED. THIS INCLUDES ALL ASSOCIATED COSTS SUCH AS SCORING, REPORTING, AND INITIAL TRAINING NECESSARY FOR LEAS TO MEET STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS. 16. WILL TEA APPROVE A SEPARATE LIST FOR DYSLLEXIA SCREENERS?

TEA will not approve a separate list for dyslexia screeners at this time. All K-2 instruments must include components used for dyslexia screening at no cost. However, LEAs are not required to use these instruments for dyslexia screening purposes.

17. THE APPLICATION NOTES, "ASSURANCE THAT THE INSTRUMENT WILL BE PROVIDED AT NO COST TO LEAS. THIS INCLUDES THE SCORING, REPORTING, AND INITIAL TRAINING FOR THE INSTRUMENT TO ENSURE LEAS ARE ABLE TO MEET STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS AT NO COST." ADDITIONALLY, THE APPLICATION ALSO SAYS, "THERE IS NO FUNDING AWARDED TO SELECTED APPLICANTS." BASED ON THESE STATEMENTS, IS TEA SAYING THERE IS NO COMPENSATION PROVIDED TO SELECTED VENDORS ON THIS LIST?

Yes. See questions 2 and 3 for additional information.

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18. WILL THE K-2 INSTRUMENT LIST EXTEND TO DYSLEXIA SCREENING INSTRUMENTS AS WELL? IS THIS ALSO A DYSLEXIA SCREENER LIST?

This is not a dyslexia screener list. All K-2 reading instruments must include components required for dyslexia screening at no cost. However, LEAs are not required to use these instruments for dyslexia screening purposes.

19. WILL LEAS CONTINUE TO BE ABLE TO SELECT AN INSTRUMENT FOR MOY/EOK KINDER, AND GRADES 1-2, BY DISTRICT COMMITTEE?

LEAs will continue to be able to select an alternate reading instrument for grades 1 and/or 2 by district committee. TEC §28.006(b) permits a district-level committee to adopt a list of reading instruments for use in the district for grade levels other than kindergarten, in addition to those on authorized on the commissioner's list.

20. MUST THE INSTRUMENT BE AVAILABLE IN BOTH ENGLISH AND SPANISH? OR CAN WE SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ONLY ASSESSMENT SYSTEM?

WE NOTE THE LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS SAY, "THE INSTRUMENT MUST PROVIDE BOTH AN ENGLISH AND SPANISH VERSION OF ALL COMPONENTS," AND WE WANT TO CONFIRM THAT THE INSTRUMENT IS REQUIRED TO BE AVAILABLE IN BOTH LANGUAGES.

The instrument must be available in both English and Spanish. Applications submitted for English-only assessment systems will not be considered.

21. IN RESPONSE TO THE REQUIREMENT, "ALL COMPONENTS OF THE INSTRUMENT MUST BE INDIVIDUALLY ADMINISTERED," WOULD THE STATE BE OPEN TO A SOLUTION THAT INCLUDES A COMBINATION OF INDIVIDUAL- AND GROUP-ADMINISTERED ASSESSMENT THAT CAPITALIZES ON THE STRENGTHS OF EACH ADMINISTRATION APPROACH WHILE SUBSTANTIALLY DECREASING TESTING TIME?

The requirement specifies that all components of the instrument must be individually administered. This ensures consistency and accuracy in measuring each student's skills. While TEA recognizes the potential benefits of combining individual and group administration to reduce testing time, the current guidelines mandate individual administration for all components to maintain the integrity and reliability of the assessments.

22. IS THE DUE DATE FOR SUBMISSION DECEMBER 12, 2024 OR NOVEMBER 22, 2024?

The due date for the submission is December 12, 2024.

23. THE RFI INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING LANGUAGE: "NO FUNDING IS AWARDED TO SELECTED APPLICANTS." AND "ASSURANCE THAT THE INSTRUMENT WILL BE PROVIDED AT NO COST TO LEAS. THIS INCLUDES THE

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SCORING, REPORTING, AND INITIAL TRAINING FOR THE INSTRUMENT TO ENSURE LEAS ARE ABLE TO MEET STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS AT NO COST."

WE INTERPRET THIS LANGUAGE TO MEAN THAT WHILE THE TEA WILL NOT ISSUE A SOLE AWARD, APPROVED ASSESSMENTS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE BY INDIVIDUAL LEAS. IS THIS CORRECT? PLEASE CLARIFY.

TEA will not provide funding to selected applicants, and the approved reading instruments must be provided at no cost to LEAs rather than being made available for purchase by individual LEAs.

For additional information on services that vendors may charge an LEA for, please refer to questions 13 and 14.

24. ALTERNATIVE KINDERGARTEN READING INSTRUMENT: IS THIS AN ALTERNATIVE TO TEA'S TX-KEA? IS THIS CURRENTLY THE M-CLASS TEXAS INSTRUMENT?

Yes. The primary kindergarten reading instrument is TX-KEA. Currently, the alternative kindergarten reading instrument is mCLASS Texas.