Teaching & Learning

Progress Monitoring Best Practices

Progress Monitoring Overview

Progress monitoring is the ongoing, frequent collection and use of formal data to:
- assess a student's performance
- compare performance against goals
- identify students who are not demonstrating adequate progress
- quantify a student's rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction or intervention
- evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and intervention using valid and reliable measures
- determine if students qualify for more support

Frequent retesting of targeted skills is essential to determine whether students are adequately progressing in response to interventions. Valid and reliable assessments should be used for all progress monitoring measures. Progress monitoring data should be graphed to display trends across multiple data points and guide decisions about each student's intervention plan. Sharing this data with students and families ensures transparency and helps all stakeholders stay engaged in the student's progress.

Timeliness of Progress Monitoring

Students scoring in the Below and Well Below categories on a literacy screener should be prioritized for progress monitoring. The following are recommendations for progress monitoring frequency based on best practices:

- For Students scoring Well Below, progress monitor **weekly**, if possible
- For students scoring Below, progress monitor **every 10 days**
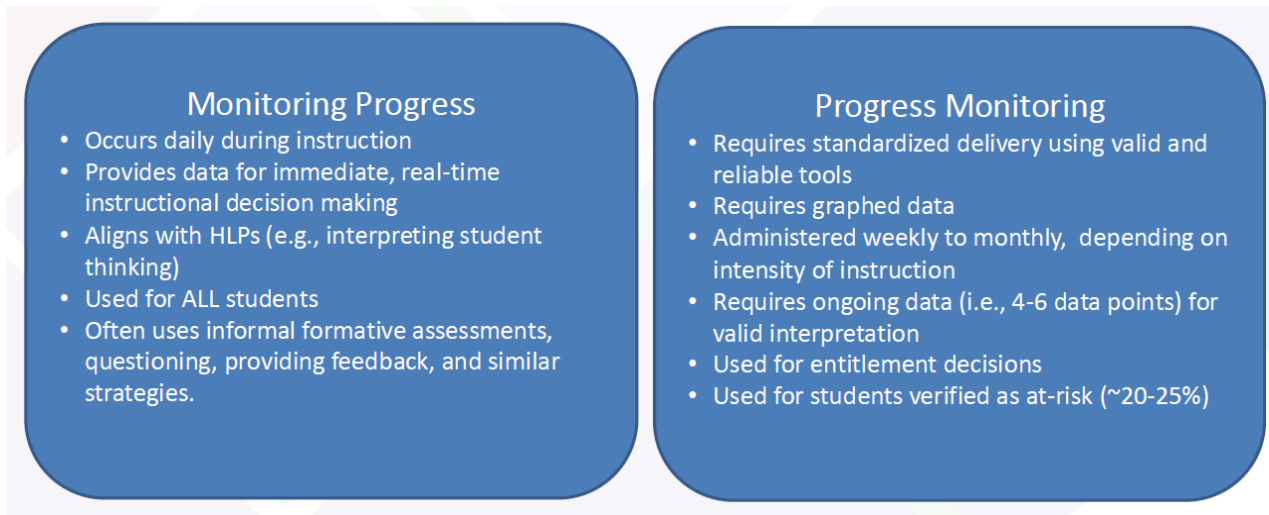- Students at Benchmark should also be monitored **at least monthly** to ensure they remain on track

**As benchmark ranges shift from BOY to MOY to EOY, regular monitoring is essential to reflect rising expectations met through instruction.

The Role of Progress Monitoring in the Tiered Pathways for Literacy Support

The Tiered Pathways for Literacy Support (TPLS) outlines other considerations for progress monitoring. For instance, if a student has 3 data points below the aim line, that constitutes a change in intervention. IF there are an additional 3 data points below the aim line even after a change in intervention, it may indicate a need to move the student along and change their tier of support.

Data Tracking and Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring is the ongoing and frequent collection of formal data to inform decision-making regarding interventions. Note the difference between monitoring progress and formal progress monitoring below:

Monitoring Progress
- Occurs daily during instruction
- Provides data for immediate, real-time instructional decision making
- Aligns with HLPs (e.g., interpreting student thinking)
- Used for ALL students
- Often uses informal formative assessments, questioning, providing feedback, and similar strategies.

Progress Monitoring
- Requires standardized delivery using valid and reliable tools
- Requires graphed data
- Administered weekly to monthly, depending on intensity of instruction
- Requires ongoing data (i.e., 4-6 data points) for valid interpretation
- Used for entitlement decisions
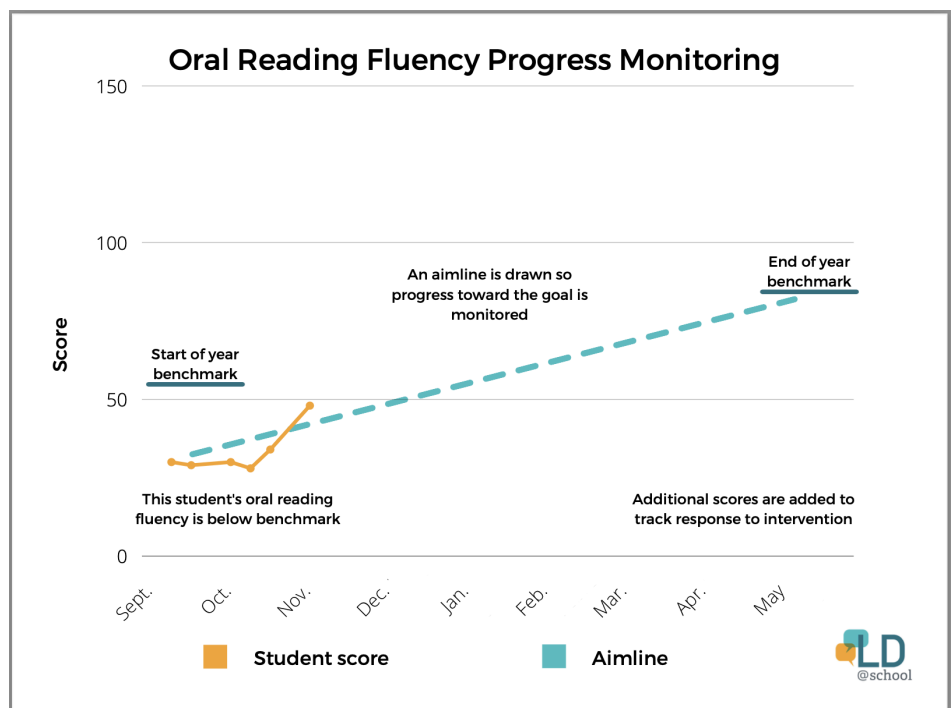- Used for students verified as at-risk (~20-25%)

Grade-level and intervention teams analyze student data to determine how students respond to intervention and if adjustments are needed. Data analysis involves tracking trends and comparing students' growth rates relative to the necessary progress rate to meet their goals. At the system level, district and school teams can use aggregated progress monitoring data to evaluate the effectiveness of broader intervention strategies.

Example of Progress Monitoring Graph

To graph student progress, start by plotting the student's baseline (beginning-of-year) data point and their goal (end-of-year benchmark), which can typically be determined using normed data such as the [Hasbrouck-Tindal norms](#) by grade level and time of year. Draw a line between these two points to create the aim line.

As progress monitoring data is collected, plot each new data point and connect them to visualize the student's progress toward the goal.

Oral Reading Fluency Progress Monitoring

An aimline is drawn so progress toward the goal is monitored

End of year benchmark

Start of year benchmark

This student's oral reading fluency is below benchmark

Additional scores are added to track response to intervention

Score: 0, 50, 100, 150

Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec. Jan. Feb. Mar. Apr. May

Student score ■ Aimline ■

Key Considerations for Grades 4-12:

- In Grades 4-12, it is recommended that progress monitoring tools align with the focus of the intervention provided.
    - Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) and Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) are the most effective measures for tracking progress over time. Therefore, these subtests should be prioritized for progress monitoring in applicable grades when a student shows risk on one of these subtests.
    - For grades 4-8, the recommended progress monitoring frequency for ORF is every 2-3 weeks for students at risk (red) and every 4-5 weeks for those students who score at some risk (yellow).
    - DIBELS offers ORF and Maze measures through 8th grade, with materials suitable for up to 12th grade to monitor oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. However, Maze progress monitoring should be infrequent, as reading comprehension improves too gradually for short-term measurement. Using Maze for progress monitoring is recommended no more than 3-4 times between benchmark occasions.
    - A progress monitoring tool below grade level may be necessary for older students who struggle with foundational reading skills, such as phonemic awareness and word recognition. Selecting such a tool should be a strategic decision guided by the literacy data team, with the primary goal of accelerating student progress toward grade-level proficiency as quickly as possible.

For more information on progress monitoring, please consult the TPLS Framework or the *DIBELS 8 Administration and Scoring Guide.*