PROBLEM-SOLVING & SCREENING FLOWCHART

ALIGNED TO DIBELS 8, NEBRASKA'S APPROVED UNIVERSAL SCREENER

All students are given the DIBELS 8th Edition screener in accordance with Nebraska Reading Improvement Act (Section 79-2601-79-2607).

ASSESS COMPREHENSION SKILLS

Does the student have good comprehension when reading?

Grades K-1: Teacher Observations of Comprehension Retelling
Grades 2-6: DIBELS MAZE, HQIM Curriculum Assessments

AT OR ABOVE BENCHMARK → Continue evidence-based instruction aligned to your HQIM.

BELOW BENCHMARK → Consider need for language comprehension assessment (consult your SLP).

ASSESS FLUENCY SKILLS

Is the student fluent (accurate and automatic) and also uses expression? (accuracy, automaticity + expression)

Grades 1-6: DIBELS ORF (rate, accuracy, expression)

AT OR ABOVE BENCHMARK → Focus instruction on vocabulary and text comprehension work.

BELOW BENCHMARK

ASSESS WORD RECOGNITION SKILLS

Does the student have automaticity with sound-spelling correspondences, blending, and recognition of high frequency words?

Grades K-1: DIBELS NWF, WRF
Grade 2: DIBELS NWF, WRF, & ORF (rate = WCPM)
Grades 3-6: DIBELS ORF (rate = WCPM)

AT OR ABOVE BENCHMARK → Focus instruction on fluency skills emphasizing expression and phrasing.

BELOW BENCHMARK

ASSESS DECODING & PHONICS SKILLS

Is the student accurate with sound-spelling correspondences, decoding, encoding, and recognition of sight words?

Kdg: DIBELS NWF; Alphabet Knowledge (letter sounds)
Grade 1: DIBELS NWF & ORF (accuracy, automaticity)
Grade 2: DIBELS NWF (accuracy, automaticity) & ORF (accuracy, automaticity, expression)
Grades 3-6: DIBELS ORF (accuracy, automaticity, expression)
Diagnostic Example: CORE Phonics Survey, Spelling Inventory

AT OR ABOVE BENCHMARK → Focus instruction on fluency skills (automaticity) in both word and text levels.

BELOW BENCHMARK

ASSESS PHONEMIC AWARENESS SKILLS

Does the student have strong and automatic phonological awareness skills including work with individual phonemes?

Grades K-1: DIBELS Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)
Diagnostic Example: PAST Assessment

AT OR ABOVE BENCHMARK → Focus instruction on decoding/phonics skills including encoding/spelling.

BELOW BENCHMARK → Focus instruction on phonemic awareness skills.

Adapted from: Assessment for Reading Instruction, Fifth Edition, Stahl, Flanigan, & Lupo, 2026.

words
Workshops on Reading Development Strategies

Intensifying Instruction

When students have four data points below the aimline, consider these steps to provide targeted and intensified instruction. **This is a starting point for intensification, use additional data to identify other strategies.**

STEP 1: Is the instruction being delivered as prescribed?

TEACHER VARIABLES

- Is the intervention targeted to the student's specific needs, based on data?
- Are students receiving the full instructional minutes as scheduled? (Not including transition time).
- Is the intervention being implemented with fidelity?

STUDENT VARIABLES

- Is the student in attendance during instruction and intervention time?
- Is the student attentive and engaged during instruction?
- Does the student consistently leave class, causing instructional gaps?

STEP 2: Choose from these strategies to intensify instruction.

INCREASE INTENSITY

Classroom Support:

- Position the student closer during whole-group lessons.
- Increase lesson pacing.
- Increase student engagement with frequent response opportunities.
- Check for understanding 2-3 times per lesson: start (review), middle (adjust), and end (exit ticket).
- Offer specific, targeted, and immediate feedback.

Switch and Collaborate

- Ensure that students with the highest need receive instruction from the highest qualified teacher.
- Collaborate to align Tier 1 and Tier 2 or 3 instruction.
- Use a more intensive intervention program.
- Add layers (e.g. phonemic awareness with phonics intervention).
- Pre-teach Tier 1 content two days ahead during small group time.

INCREASE TIME

- Provide a 2-5 minute intervention immediately following instruction while other students transition.
- Ensure students are attentive and engaged during instruction.
- Ensure students remain in class for the entirety of the core instruction to avoid learning gaps.

DECREASE GROUP SIZE

- Pre-teach Tier 1 material in a small group prior to the whole group lesson.
- Re-teach Tier 1 material in a targeted small group, noting those skills which students are particularly struggling with.

For additional evidence-based practices to support intensified instruction, visit:
go.unl.edu/intensified-instruct