

**Virtual Curriculum and Achievement Subcommittee Report
Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.
Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA**

Called for the purpose of Understanding Elementary Literacy Assessments.

Subcommittee Members Present: Member Hudson (Co-Chair), Member Harding

Also Present: Jennifer Amigone, Director of Assessment & Accountability; Emily Bryan, Director of ELA; Heather Francis, Executive Director of Academics; Chad Leith, Chief Accountability Officer

Co-Chair Hudson started the meeting at 5:03 p.m. by confirming the meeting is live and welcomed the group.

Co-Chair Hudson turned the meeting over to Dr. Heather Francis, who gave an overview of literacy assessments used in Cambridge Public Schools, primarily focusing on elementary grades which can be found on this [website](#).

During the presentation, Dr. Francis, Jennifer Amigone, and Emily Bryan, shared the following highlights regarding literacy assessments:

- CPS uses a range of assessments to measure literacy development across grade levels
- The Great Reading Assessment is used for pre-kindergarten students and focuses on early pre-decoding skills
- The MCLASS (DIBELS) assessment is used in grades K–2 to measure foundational reading skills, including fluency and word recognition
- The i-Ready assessment is used in grades 3–5 and is computer-adaptive, measuring both foundational skills and grade-level comprehension
- The MCAS ELA assessment is administered annually and measures proficiency on Massachusetts standards

They emphasized that each assessment serves a different purpose and, when used together, provides a comprehensive understanding of student learning.

Emily Bryan also explained how assessments align with reading development frameworks, including Scarborough's Rope, and how data is used to guide targeted instruction and intervention.

Further highlights included:

- i-Ready is administered three times per year to monitor progress and inform instruction
- MCAS provides a broader measure of grade-level proficiency but does not always identify specific skill gaps
- Data from multiple sources is used collectively to support student learning and instructional planning
- There is generally a close alignment between i-Ready and MCAS proficiency rates

The team discussed the importance of early literacy screening and noted updates to Massachusetts regulations requiring early identification of reading challenges.

The presentation also included an overview of classroom-embedded assessments. These include:

- Teacher observations
- Student written responses
- Oral discussions and comprehension checks

Co-Chair Hudson asked questions regarding family engagement, communication of assessment results, and how to better support families in understanding student data. Dr. Chad Leith, discussed the importance of family engagement centered around understanding student expectations and progress.

Co-Chair Hudson opened the floor for public comment. Given the time constraints, each speaker was allotted three minutes. The following caregivers and community member, Caroll McGill and Nina Mitchell shared the following sentiments:

- Concerns that elementary school websites contain outdated literacy information not aligned with current science of reading practices, and that updated resources are difficult for families to access due to navigation barriers
- Emphasized the need for clearer, more accessible communication of literacy expectations and student assessment information to better support family engagement
- Questions regarding district alignment with national literacy approaches (including comparisons to states like Mississippi), clarification on assessment practices such as CKLA formats, and interest in future meetings or webinars focused on math curriculum and assessments

Emily Bryan clarified that i-Ready is not used in grades K–2 because it is not as strong or precise as MCLASS for assessing early literacy skills. She emphasized that MCLASS provides a more accurate measure of foundational reading development, particularly in areas such as phonemic and phonological awareness, which require human-administered, one-on-one assessment. She also noted that i-Ready is not state-approved for use in these early grades.

Co-Chair Hudson concluded the meeting by thanking the team for their efforts and suggesting pre-literacy meetings to provide context for data and assessments. The meeting concluded at 6:30 p.m.