Rapides Parish Schools

DIBELS Parent Guide

What is DIBELS?

DIBELS 8th Edition is a set of short reading checks given to students in kindergarten through fourth grade in Rapides Parish schools. Most take just one minute. Your child takes them three times a year: at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year.

The results show teachers, school leaders, and families whether a student is reading on grade level or needs extra help. Each student also receives a composite score that combines the checks into one clear picture of their reading skills.

Our goal is for every student to read on grade level by the end of third grade. That is when students shift from learning to read to reading to learn in every subject.

What the checks measure

Check	Grades	What your child does
Letter Naming	K-1	Names as many letters as they can from a page. This shows how well they know their letters.
Phoneme Segmentation	K-1	Hears a word like "cat" and says each sound: /c/ /a/ /t/. This shows whether they can hear the sounds in spoken words.
Nonsense Words	K-3	Sounds out made-up words like "hap" and "lum." This shows whether they can use letter sounds to read words they have never seen.
Word Reading	K-3	Reads a list of real words for their grade level.
Oral Reading	1-4	Reads a short grade-level story aloud. Teachers count the words read correctly and how accurately they are read.
Maze	2-4	Reads a story silently and picks the best word to fill each blank from three choices. This three-minute check measures understanding.

Helpful tips for home

Getting ready to read

- Point out letters on signs, labels, and boxes. Ask your child to name each letter or say its sound.
- Play rhyming games. How many words can you think of that sound like "bat"?
- Read alphabet books and rhyming books together.

Starting to read

- Listen to your child read the words and books they bring home from school.
- Read aloud together to build vocabulary and understanding.
- Tell your child you are proud of their reading.

Reading on their own

- Reread favorite books. Familiar stories build confidence and expression.
- When your child misses a word, help them read it correctly, then have them reread the whole sentence.
- Aim for at least 20 minutes of reading a day.

Understanding the score

Your child's composite score falls into one of four levels:

- **Above Benchmark:** strong and on track
- **At Benchmark:** on track
- **Below Benchmark:** may need some extra support
- **Well Below Benchmark:** needs focused support

A note for second grade families

The end-of-year DIBELS composite score is part of the decision to promote a second grader to third grade. Students have three chances to test: in April, at the end of May, and at the end of the summer learning program.

Questions? Your child's teacher is your best first contact for questions about reading progress and how you can help at home.