Section 3.5 Universal Screening

WHAT is universal screening?
Universal Screening is a general outcome measure used to identify underperforming students and to determine the rate of increase for the district, school, classroom, and student in reading and math. A Universal Screening will not identify <u>why</u> students are underperforming; rather it will identify which students are not at the expected performance criteria for a given grade level in reading and mathematics.

According to Jenkins (2007), the key feature in a screening measure is the accuracy in classifying a student as "at risk" or "not at risk". Additionally, a strong screener will address the issue of False Negatives, (students not identified as at risk who truly are at risk) and False Positives (students identified as at risk who are not). A system can risk wasting intervention resources if attention is not given to false positives and false negatives.

At the secondary level, schools should ensure screening tools are chosen that meet the criteria below. Understanding an adolescent's approach to this type of screening process will be important. While this assessment is not a grade, it is important to support students' understanding that their performance on this screener will identify classes that will be a part of their course of study during their high school years.

For a screening measure to be useful, it should satisfy three criteria (Jenkins, 2003):
- It needs to identify students who require further assessment.
- It needs to be practical.
- It needs to generate positive outcomes (accurately identifies students without consuming resources that could be put to better use).

Purpose of a Universal Screener from NASDSE (2005):
- Identify individuals in need of further assessment and possible movement to Tier 2 interventions
- Provide feedback about class performance to help school leadership identify when a teacher might require support
- If implemented on a regular basis across grade levels, it will identify false negatives; students who slip through the screening at one level but are then identified at later points in the year.

Georgia DOE Criteria for evaluating possible universal screeners:
- Easily Administered
- Research Based
- Highly correlated to skills being assessed
- Benchmark or predictor of future performance
- Reliability and Validity
- Sensitive to small increments of change
- Expected identified rates of increase
- Data analysis and reporting component

School administrators routinely review assessment data. The use of Georgia's summative assessments (EOCT, CRCT, and GHSGT) can be a part of the universal screening process. However, the use of additional screeners will be needed to ensure appropriate identification of individuals needing support. For example, the 8th grade CRCT should be reviewed by high schools and their feeder middle schools collaboratively. This process will help create an initial list of students potentially needing additional screening assessments immediately upon entering 9th grade. The 9th grade teachers and administrators

should use a reading and/or mathematics screening tool designed to identify missing essential learning skills needed for success at the high school level.

WHEN do I administer a universal screening?

Universal screenings should be administered three times a year (fall, winter, spring) in reading and math. Data from universal screenings needs to be maintained in a system database that is used for decision making in instruction. Fuchs and Fuchs'(2007) recommendation is that schools use schoolwide screening in combination with at least five weeks of weekly progress monitoring in response to general education to identify underperforming students who require preventive intervention. **The Department recommends the use of a universal screening process three times per year.** The rationale is that a one-time universal screening at the beginning of the year can over-identify students who require preventative interventions.

The structure for administering a universal screener can vary by school and system. Approaches to implementing the universal screening process could include:

Elementary Level
- Teachers administer reading and math assessments, analyze results, and make collaborative decisions based on their schools problem solving model.
- Computer assisted assessment tools could allow for a classroom to complete an assessment at the same time
- SWAT – school wide assessment team could be used. Non classroom teachers and administrators are trained in the assessment, visit a classroom, and quickly assess all individuals in a timely fashion. SWAT could also be in the media center and classrooms visit on a rotational schedule.

Secondary Level
- Computer assisted assessment tools.
- SWAT – school wide assessment team could be used. Non classroom teachers and administrators are trained in the assessment, visit a classroom, and quickly assess all individuals in a timely fashion. SWAT could be in the media center and classrooms visit on a rotational schedule (ex. All 9th grade English classes are scheduled in the SWAT rotation).
- Mini assessments for students enrolling new to the school. While paperwork is completed by parents, students could complete a quick paper and pencil assessment.

At the secondary level, data from universal screenings should be shared with all content area teachers. For example, math, science, and social studies teachers should know immediately which students in their classes struggle with reading and comprehension. Since these classes have an increasing amount of reading embedded in the work, teachers need to be able to support student mastery and application of content. The conversations across content areas will allow ELA/reading teachers to identify reading instructional strategies for use in other content areas.

HOW do I interpret the results of a universal screening?

Schools and systems should set universal screening performance criteria to determine which students should be targeted for additional "detective work". This performance criteria should be connected to the Georgia Performance Standards for reading and math at a given grade level. All teachers should be involved in developing performance criteria to ensure a common understanding of expectations.

Systems and schools should have a data team/problem solving team that is responsible for analyzing the data from universal screenings relative to the skills to ascertain whether the data indicates curriculum, instruction or student issues. The team will use data during the year to monitor growth in terms of the

rate of increase shown at the district, school, classroom, or student level. The data team is responsible for targeting the areas of needed improvement and working to address the specific issues related to those areas. Additionally, the data team will identify additional "detective work" assessments needed to determine the root cause of the identified underperformance. The results from these additional "detective work" assessments will be used to identify specific instructional and/or behavioral interventions needed for individual/groups of students.

Local school norms are how a specific school performs on the universal screening data. Initially the school may need to develop local norms by looking at the school norms on the state assessments. Schools should look at their local norms in relation to the district and state norms and then determine a rate of increase.