

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The teachers and administrators at our school are committed to helping your child become a successful reader. As part of this commitment, our school has chosen to use a test called *DIBELS* to help us examine how your child is doing in learning important reading skills.

DIBELS stands for *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills*. *DIBELS* tests four skills that are necessary for learning to read. Children who learn these skills become good readers. The skills are:

- **Phonemic Awareness:** Hearing and using sounds in spoken words
- **Phonics:** Knowing the sounds of the letters and sounding out written words
- **Accurate and Fluent Reading:** Reading stories and other materials easily and quickly with few mistakes
- **Reading Comprehension:** Understanding what is read

DIBELS is made-up of six short individual tests. Because each test focuses on a different reading skill, your child may be given two to four *DIBELS* tests depending on his or her grade level.

Each test takes approximately 1 minute because the tests are used only as *indicators*. Much like using a thermometer to take a child's temperature is an indicator of overall health, each test is an indicator of how well a child is doing in learning a particular early reading skill. *DIBELS* is used to determine the reading skills of millions of children throughout the United States. The scores tell us whether a child is likely to be "on track" for learning to read or whether a child may need some help in learning important reading skills. Your child's teacher will use the information to better help your child. For example, a *DIBELS* test may tell us that we need to spend more time teaching your child how to "sound out" unknown words.

DIBELS is used to identify children who may need extra help to become good readers and to check up on those children while they receive the extra help to make sure they are making progress. *DIBELS* also may be used to make decisions about how well our school's overall reading program is working for all children. *DIBELS* will not be used to grade your child.

We are working hard at school to make sure that every child is on target for success, and we thank you for your efforts at home. Together, we will help your child become a successful reader.