

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



CHARLIE CRIST
Commissioner

September 20, 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO: Assistant Superintendents for Curriculum and Instruction

FROM: Shan Goff, Chief, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services
Thomas Fisher, Administrator, Assessment and Evaluation

SUBJECT: Technical Assistance Related to the School Readiness Uniform Screening System (SRUSS)

The purpose of this Technical Assistance Paper is to respond to questions related to the School Readiness Uniform Screening System (SRUSS). This document is the second technical assistance paper developed by the Department to address issues identified by school districts during the information and training meetings sponsored by the Department during the months of May, June, and July 2002. The intent of this technical assistance paper is to provide guidance regarding questions that more specifically relate to implementation and administration of the screening instruments. Some of the content of this paper is derived from the "School Readiness Uniform Screening System Administration Manual" provided to district coordinators of assessment on July 22, 2002, and currently available at <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/>.

For additional information, please contact Victoria Wagner at 850/488-8198 (E-mail to Victoria.Wagner@fldoe.org) or Cathy Bishop at 850/488-1106 (E-mail to Cathy.Bishop@fldoe.org).

Enclosure

cc: District Coordinators of Assessment
District Administrators, Student Services
District Administrators, Exceptional Student Education
District ESOL Coordinators
District Contacts, School Readiness
Katherine Kamiya, Director, Readiness Partnership Board

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION**

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PAPER RELATED TO THE SCHOOL READINESS UNIFORM
SCREENING SYSTEM**

Background Information

- 1. Does the School Readiness Uniform Screening System (SRUSS) replace the former “School Readiness Checklist.”**

Yes. Districts no longer have to complete the “School Readiness Checklist.”

- 2. Will districts continue to complete the data element in the automated student information system entitled “Kindergarten Readiness”?**

In prior years, school districts responded with a “Y” or “N” code for the data element entitled “Kindergarten Readiness” to reflect whether the student was evaluated and determined “ready” or “not ready” for kindergarten. This information was transmitted as part of the state report. Effective with the 2002-2003 school year, the use of this element for reporting to the state has been discontinued. However, this data element will remain available to the districts for local accountability purposes. Districts may wish to use the element for internal district purposes, upon receipt of the screening results from the Department of Education.

District staff members who participated in the annual meeting for MIS Directors and the SRUSS training meetings were informed of the intent to add a new data element for the 2002-2003 school year that would capture kindergarten screening participation. We have determined that this data element is not necessary, and, therefore, it will not be established as originally proposed.

- 3. Have revisions been made to the data element entitled “Program Participation Prior to Kindergarten?”**

Yes. Given the changes in school readiness programs based on implementation of Section 411.01, Florida Statutes, definitions of the programs in which a student participated in the year prior to kindergarten entry have changed. The primary change is the addition of a code for “Readiness Program Operated by Local Coalition” that now includes the programs formerly known as Subsidized Child Care and Prekindergarten Early Intervention.

District MIS staff have been informed of the changes to data elements as described above through the transmittal of Bulletin 02-004 on September 4, 2002.

4. Are districts still required to screen all kindergarten students for language, articulation, fluency, and voice disorders?

No. In anticipation of the implementation of SRUSS, this requirement was removed from Rule 6A-6.03012(3), Florida Administrative Code (FAC).

5. Would the SRUSS meet the requirements that relate to conducting a speech/language screening as part of the prereferral process prior to evaluation of a student to determine eligibility for Exceptional Student Education?

No. The SRUSS is not an adequate screening for this purpose.

Children To Be Screened

6. Should children who are limited English proficient participate in the SRUSS screening?

In general, all children entering a public school kindergarten for the first time within the first 21 calendar days of school must be screened using both screening instruments. To provide additional time so each child may adjust to his or her new educational setting, the administration of the Early Screening Inventory-Kindergarten (ESI-K) to limited English proficient students should be conducted as close as possible to the conclusion of the SRUSS 45 calendar day administration timeline. The administration of the ESI-K should be postponed until after the administration of the English language aural/oral proficiency test for children who have answered "Yes" in response to any of the questions posed in the Home Language Survey. This postponement, however, is not intended to extend the 45 calendar day timeline for the administration of the SRUSS.

If students have been determined to be limited English proficient and do not enter on the first day of school, there is a possibility that by the time the English language aural/oral proficiency test is administered, the 45 calendar day timeline for the SRUSS will have passed. In this circumstance, the ESI-K would not be conducted for the purpose of meeting the SRUSS requirements. However, these children may be screened at a later time for the purpose of providing additional information regarding their instructional needs.

When using either behavioral observational tool with a child who is not proficient in English, sensitivity to the child's cultural and linguistic diversity is vital to ensure that appropriate observations and assessment of the child's behavior are conducted.

7. What types of accommodations should be considered for children who are limited English proficient?

The ESI-K should be administered by an examiner who is bilingual and who can present the tasks in the child's home language. When administering the ESI-K, an alternate setting that is quieter than the regular classroom should be considered.

8. Should a child who has been identified as a child with a disability be screened? What type of accommodations should be considered?

Again, in general, all children entering public school kindergarten for the first time within the first 21 calendar days of school must be screened using both screening instruments. However, the ESI-K screening instrument may not be appropriate for some children with a disability, including those children who are blind or have low vision, children who are deaf or hard of hearing, or those children with significant cognitive deficits or physical impairments.

In these circumstances, the behavioral screener should be administered since it is a tool that is based on the teacher's observation of the child in the context of ongoing classroom activities.

If use of the ESI-K is inappropriate for a child with a disability, the "non-participation field" on the ESI-K scan sheet should be marked "other" and submitted.

When administering the ESI-K, an alternate setting that is quieter than the regular classroom should be considered.

9. Will kindergarten children who are receiving an "Opportunity Scholarship" participate in the SRUSS program?

No. Since these children will not be enrolling in public kindergarten, they will not be included in the SRUSS program. Some private schools implement screening activities as a part of their routine procedures for entering students. Opportunity scholarship students may be included in such activities.

Examiners

10. Who may administer the screening instruments?

The screenings should be administered by individuals who have received appropriate training in the administration of the screening instruments provided by the district.

For the ESI-K, it is most desirable that the child's kindergarten teacher administer the screening. This will provide an opportunity for the teacher to have direct knowledge of the child's performance. Having this information will benefit the instructional planning that the teacher conducts. Since this may not be possible in all circumstances, other school district personnel who could serve as examiners include, but are not limited to, guidance counselors, members of school diagnostic teams, and instructional paraprofessionals.

Since both behavioral screening instruments are based on observations of the child within the context of the daily classroom routine, the kindergarten teacher is the most appropriate examiner.

11. What strategies are districts using to facilitate administration of the ESI-K by the kindergarten teacher.

School district administrators and principals may wish to consider the following strategies to facilitate the opportunity for kindergarten teachers to administer the ESI-K for the children in their classrooms.

- When classroom instructional aides are available, the aide supervises the class while the teacher administers the ESI-K to an individual child in a quiet place away from the classroom activity. The teacher intentionally schedules two to three blocks of time each day for a two-to three-week period to use for the purpose of conducting the screening.
- Other school instructional staff members (e.g. art, music, physical education teachers) are scheduled to come into the kindergarten classroom for a special project or activity. The kindergarten teacher uses this time to administer the ESI-K.
- A substitute teacher is hired to “float” among kindergarten classes, supervising the class while the kindergarten teacher schedules blocks of time to be used to screen individual children.

Screening Results

12. If a child refuses several tasks on the ESI-K and the screening is discontinued, should the scannable answer sheet be submitted?

Yes. The answer sheet should be submitted with the tasks refused marked under the “R” column on the answer sheet.

13. What action should be taken if the result of the ESI-K screening is “rescreen?”

“Rescreen” indicates that there may be other factors that influenced the child’s performance during the screening. The publisher’s manual recommends that the child be rescreened a second time within eight to ten weeks. However, the results of the second screening **would not** be submitted as part of SRUSS. Teachers should consider this result as an opportunity for the teacher to further monitor the child’s performance and determine any specific instructional needs.

14. What action should be taken if the result of the ESI-K screening is “refer?”

“Refer” means that a child’s performance during the screening did not demonstrate age appropriate development. This should alert the kindergarten teacher to consider implementing strategies to bridge the developmental gap for the child.

If a child’s score on the ESI-K was in the “Refer” category **AND** administration of the behavioral screening instrument identified significant concerns for the child, an academic improvement plan and/or administration of one of the reading diagnostic program instruments may be appropriate strategies for consideration.

15. Which student identifying number should be used on the demographic side of the scannable documents?

Either the student's social security number or the Florida student number identifier is acceptable. If the nine digit Social Security number is used, an "X" should be gridded in the final column. The Florida student number identifier is the district assigned number. Questions regarding the Florida student number should be referred to the district assessment coordinator.