<p style="text-align:center">***PALS* Family Letter Template for 1<sup>st</sup> Grade – Fall 2021– English**</p>

*PALS* provides this template to divisions and schools to assist with family communication about *PALS*. Division and school leaders are encouraged to send this letter home with the child's *Student Summary*. If applicable, information regarding the *intervention program* you will provide for the student may be entered into this template.

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Date: _____

Dear Family of _____,

*PALS 1-3* is a screening tool of young children's literacy development which has been used for over twenty years with first-grade students in Virginia. Results are used to determine individual children's learning goals, plan classroom instruction, and raise awareness of children who need additional support or instruction in early reading and literacy.

Focusing on early detection and early intervention of reading difficulties is a required state-wide policy (Early Intervention Reading Initiative). The *PALS 1-3* screening tool is a way to help schools and teachers meet that mandate.

*PALS* has *individual task scores* which show the number of items a student answered correctly on each task and an overall *Summed Score*. There is a different *Summed Score Benchmark* for each grade-level and each time period (fall/spring).

The *Summed Score Benchmark* for fall of 1<sup>st</sup> grade is 41.

Your child's *Summed Score* is _____.

**If your child's *Summed Score* meets or exceeds the benchmark,** your child is not identified to receive intervention funded through the EIRI initiative. However, your child's individual task scores may still indicate that your child needs instruction in those particular areas.

**If your child's *Summed Score* is below the benchmark**, this indicates that your child is *significantly* behind in basic literacy development and has been identified by *PALS* for intervention. Identified students are required by the Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI) to receive 2.5 hours of additional instruction per week above and beyond regular classroom instruction.

Divisions and schools determine how intervention is provided. The 2.5 hours per week may include time with a *person* or a *program*, or a *combination* of the two. You may ask your child's teacher for clarification.

**Your child's intervention:**
- Describe the child's intervention here. Consider including:
  - Days of the Week (e.g., Monday through Friday)

- Time of Day (i.e., 10:00-10:30 am)
- Intervention focus/goals (i.e., phonemic awareness, spelling)
- Mode of intervention (e.g., direct instruction or computer program, individual or small group)
- Name of the person working with student's intervention
- Description of materials (i.e., what will the student use?)
- Description of instruction (i.e., what will the student do?)

On the next few pages, you will find:
- a sample *First Grade Student Summary* for fall to help you understand your own child's report
- a table with more detailed task information
- a *Family Information Sheet for Literacy Screening in Virginia* that answers common questions about *PALS*
- your child's Student Summary

Sincerely,

Principal/School Division staffer name/ signature

## Sample *PALS* 1st Grade *Student Summary*: Fall 2021

The *Preprimer Word List* is required in fall of 1st grade. Additional word lists are required if the student scores 15 or more on a list.

The *Entry Level Summed Score* includes *Total Spelling Score, Preprimer Word List,* and *Letter Sounds* in fall of 1st grade.

The *Instructional Oral Reading Level* is calculated based on *Word List* and passage performance.

*Alphabet Recognition* and Level C tasks are required if the student's *Entry Level Summed Score* is below 41. Teachers may choose to give the tasks for more information even if not required. *Concept of Word (COW)* was not administered this fall. All students populate with scores of 0 if administered in a standard manner.

**STUDENT SUMMARY - FALL 2021**   pals

This report lists all scores entered for the student. In the Fall and Spring columns, task benchmarks or a Summed Score benchmark is in parentheses following selected task scores. In the Mid-Year column, Mid-Year ranges are in parentheses following selected task scores. Benchmarks and Mid-Year ranges are only generated for students who were given the assessment using Standard Administration.

▸ Student: **FirstGrade Fall**      ▸ Grade: **First Grade**
▸ Teacher: **Michelle Behnke**      ▸ School: **Example Elementary**

| ▸ PALS SECTION | ▸ PALS TASK | FALL SCORES RA | FALL MAX |
|---|---|---|---|
| SPELLING, WORD LISTS AND LETTER SOUNDS | Total Spelling Score | 9 (10) | 44 |
| | Preprimer Word List | 10 (10) | 20 |
| | Primer Word List | | 20 |
| | First Grade Word List | | 20 |
| | Second Grade Word List | | 20 |
| | Third Grade Word List | | 20 |
| | Fourth Grade Word List | | 20 |
| | Fifth Grade Word List | | 20 |
| | Sixth Grade Word List | | 20 |
| | Seventh Grade Word List | | 20 |
| | Eighth Grade Word List | | 20 |
| | Letter Sounds | 20 (21) | 26 |
| | ▸ ENTRY LEVEL SUMMED SCORE | 39 (41) | 90 |
| ORAL READING IN CONTEXT | Preprimer A            Accuracy | 94% (85%) | 100% |
| | ▸ INSTRUCTIONAL ORAL READING LEVEL | PP^A | - |
| LEVEL B | Concept of Word - Pointing | 0 | 0 |
| | Concept of Word - Word ID | 0 | 0 |
| | Concept of Word - Word List | 0 | 0 |
| | ▸ COW TOTAL SCORE | 0 | 0 |
| | Alphabet Recognition | 25 (24) | 26 |
| | Letter Sounds | 20 (21) | 26 |
| | ▸ LEVEL B TOTAL SCORE | 45 | 52 |
| LEVEL C | Blending | 6 (8) | 20 |
| | Sound-to-Letter | 8 (16) | 40 |
| SPELLING FEATURES | Beginning Sounds | 4 | 4 |
| | Ending Sounds | 4 | 4 |
| | Beg/End Sounds | - | 4 |
| | Digraphs | 0 | 4 |
| | Blends | 0 | 4 |
| | Short Vowels (CVC) | 1 | 4 |
| | Nasals | 0 | 4 |
| | CVCe | 0 | 4 |
| | Long Vowels | 0 | 4 |
| | R- and L- Influenced | | 4 |
| | Ambiguous Vowels | | 4 |
| | Syllable Juncture | | 4 |
| | Affixes | | 4 |
| | Derivations | | 4 |
| | ▸ SPELLING STAGE | E/ELN | DR |

In Fall, COW tasks were not administered by the teacher. COW tasks autopopulate with scores of 0 for all students.

**RA** : Remote Administration and below Summed Score Benchmark (not an option at M-Y)

🡒 END OF REPORT

An RA symbol indicates one or more tasks was administered remotely. If the RA is red, the score is below the *Summed Score benchmark,* and the student must receive 2.5 hours of literacy intervention *per week* during the school year.

An ID symbol indicates that the student either: 1) scored below the *Entry Level Summed Score Benchmark* of 41, or 2) remains ID'd from the previous screening window if assessed remotely. A student with the ID designation must receive 2.5 hours of literacy intervention *per week* during the school year.

The numbers in parentheses represent task benchmarks. A score below a task benchmark indicates that targeted instruction is critical. The number in the gray column indicates the maximum score for that task.

*Spelling* is not marked only as correct or incorrect. Students also receive credit for spelling/ phonics features used correctly.

pals k-3
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening

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# First Grade Fall 2021 *PALS* Tasks

| | Who | Task Name | Task | Max | Fall Benchmark Information |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Level A: Entry-Level** | All students | **Spelling** | use letters to represent sounds | 44 | • Students spell 16 words<br>• Partial credit earned for correct target phonics features<br>• Fall benchmark = 10 |
| | | **Word Lists** | read words commonly found in grade-level texts | 20 | • All students begin with the *Preprimer Word List*<br>• Fall benchmark (Preprimer) = 10<br>• Students may read more lists based on performance |
| | | **Letter Sounds** | produce letter sounds for uppercase letters | 26 | • Fall benchmark = 21 |
| | | **Oral Reading in Context** | read a passage and, depending on level, answer 6 comprehension questions | 8th | • Passage selection is based on the highest-level word list on which the student could read 15 or more words correctly<br>• Instructional level = 90-97% accuracy (Primer and higher)<br>• Students are timed to determine Words Per Minute (WPM) on Primer or higher passages<br>• 6 multiple-choice comprehension questions are required for passage levels 4th-8th ; optional for Primer-3rd<br>• If WPM or comprehension scores are too low, an additional passage may be required<br>• Fall benchmark = 85% Preprimer |
| **Level B: Alphabetics** | Students with **Level A** score below 41 | **Alphabet Recognition** | identify lowercase letters of the alphabet | 26 | • Fall benchmark = 24 |
| | | **Letter Sounds** | produce letter sounds for uppercase letters | 26 | • Fall benchmark = 21<br>• Score from Entry-Level tasks used, if task is required |
| | | **Concept of Word** | | 0 | • *Concept of Word* not administered<br>• Task scores of 0 populate for all students who were administered *PALS* in a standard manner |
| **Level C: Phonemic Awareness** | Students with **Level A** score below 41 | **Blending** | orally blend 2-4 speech sounds to produce words | 20 | • Fall benchmark = 8 |
| | | **Sound-to-Letter** | identify letters at the beginning, middle, and end of words | 40 | • Fall benchmark = 16 |
| **1st Grade Fall Entry- Level Summed Score** | | | | 90 | • Fall benchmark = 41<br>• *Preprimer Word List* score + *Spelling* score + *Letter Sounds* score only |

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Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening

## Family Information Sheet for Literacy Screening in Virginia

**What is literacy?**

Literacy means that someone can read and write. The goal of reading is to be able to understand (comprehend) what one reads. Children need to be able to:

1. *decode* –blend sounds together to read words
2. *encode* – spell words
3. *understand and use language*

As children's skills improve in these three areas, they develop *fluency* and *comprehension*.

**What is a screener?**

A literacy *screener* (also known as a *test* or *assessment*) is designed to identify children at high risk for reading problems. If students are identified as needing additional support, they receive *intervention* (i.e., extra instruction) to help the student make progress. Early intervention is critical because research tells us that risk for reading difficulties can be detected as early as kindergarten. Additionally, *PALS* task scores allow teachers to target instruction to meet student needs.

**What is *PALS*?**

*PALS* is the Virginia Department of Education sponsored literacy screener that is designed to give a snapshot of critical literacy skills at a single moment in time. Rather than focus on all parts of literacy, *PALS* focuses on *decoding* and *encoding*. PALS does **not** offer a comprehensive picture of your child's literacy skills.

**What do *PALS* scores mean?**

*PALS* has *individual task scores* which show the number of items a student answered correctly on each task and an overall *Summed Score*. If a child's *Summed Score* is below the *Summed Score Benchmark*, the student is eligible to receive state dollars for intervention. There is a different *Summed Score Benchmark* for each grade-level and each time period (fall/spring).

**If your child's *Summed Score* meets or exceeds the benchmark,** your child's individual task scores may still indicate that your child needs instruction in these particular areas.

**If your child's *Summed Score* is below the benchmark**, this indicates that your child is *significantly* behind in basic literacy development and has been *Identified below the Summed Score Benchmark* by *PALS*.

Students who have 🆔 and/or 🟥 by their name have a *Summed Score* below the benchmark and are required by the Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI) to receive 2.5 hours of additional instruction per week above and beyond regular classroom instruction. Divisions and schools may decide what intervention looks like and how to communicate the plan to families. The 2.5 hours may include time with a *person* or a *program*, or a *combination* of the two. *You may ask your child's school about EIRI intervention provided for your child.* The *PALS Office* provides a letter template that divisions and schools can use to give you additional information about your child's *PALS* scores.