

# Screening: What Principals Need to Know

*Key points from Policy/Program Memorandum 168 for Administrators*

## What?

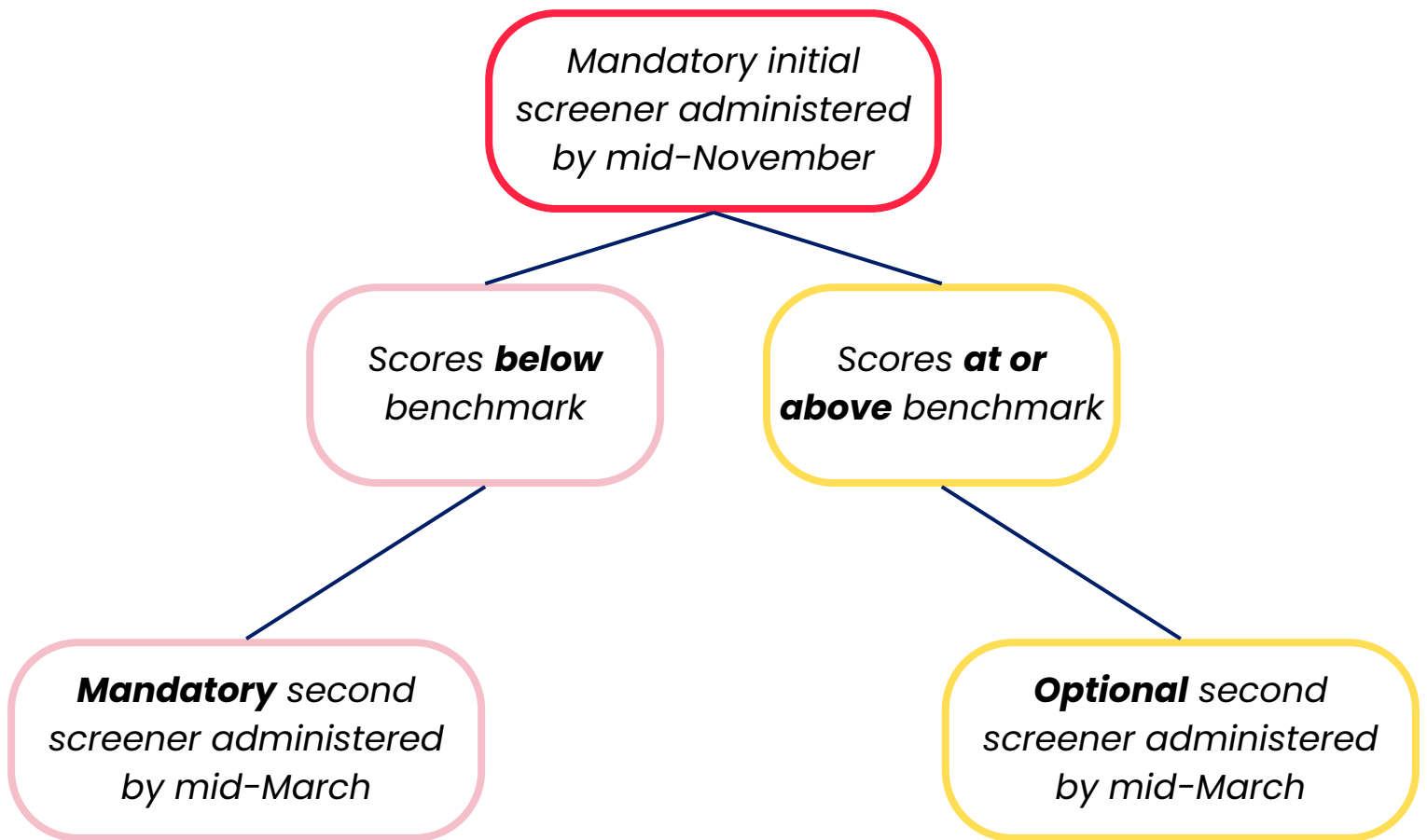
- Starting in September 2024, all Ontario's publicly funded schools are required to complete annual early reading screenings. Early reading screening is a process of assessing a student's foundational reading in the early years of school. It involves administering a series of measures to identify students who may be at-risk for reading difficulties.
- Early reading screening is used to inform educators as they provide instruction and further intervention support to students.

## Why?

- This mandated reading screening is in response to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's (OHRC) Right to Read Report, released in February 2022. In structured literacy, data-based decision-making is paramount to ensure all children meet their right to learn to read.
- Evidence-based screening is the most effective way to identify struggling and at-risk readers. It is an objective and measurable way to improve student outcomes and reduce bias in assessment, including for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Bias can affect teachers' and other educational professionals' perceptions of student ability and performance. Universal screening safeguards against these potential biases.

# When?

- **Mid-November:** The first ministry-mandated screening must be completed.
- **Mid-March:** The second ministry-mandated reading screening is required for all students who did not meet the benchmark in the first ministry-mandated screening, but is optional for students who did meet the benchmark.



## Who?

- The Ministry mandates that all students in Year 2 of Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 must be screened.

## How?

### ***Principal Responsibilities:***

- Communicate to parents/guardians with information about early reading screening via a letter before or within the first week of class, (see [Appendix A](#) for a sample communication for school boards).
- For students who did not meet the benchmark in their first ministry-mandated screening, results should be communicated with parents/guardians in a timely manner to encourage collaboration with the school to support the student's progress in reading (see [Appendix B](#) for a sample communication for sharing results with parents/guardians).
- The results of early reading screening must be recorded on the Kindergarten Communication of Learning and the Elementary Provincial Report Card. Reports will communicate the date and results of the first ministry-mandated screening and, where applicable, the second ministry-mandated screening.
- Include a student's most recent early reading screening results in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR), if the student is transferring to another school.

**1**

***First week of school:***

Letter home communicating information about screening.

**2**

***By mid-November:***

Initial screening must be completed.

**3**

***After initial screener:***

Results communicated with parents.

**4**

***First Term Reports:***

Record date of administration and if the student is at or above benchmark, or below benchmark.

**5**

***Mid-March:***

Second screening for required students must be completed.

## Next Steps

As Ontario moves toward province-wide early reading screening in September, it is important to consider how to use screening data to inform instruction. First and foremost, the goal of screening to improve instruction and student outcomes.