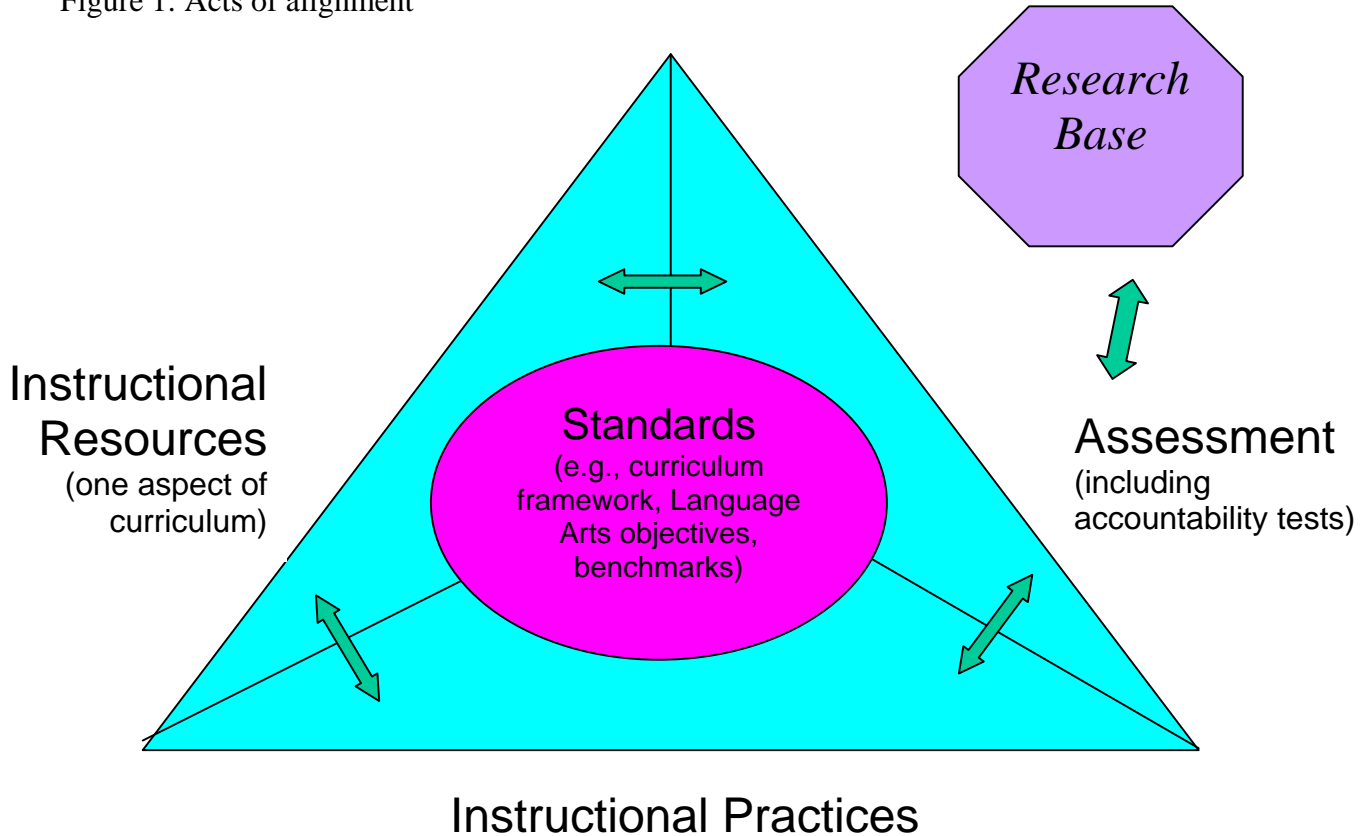


Pacific CHILD Acts of Alignment

The activity of alignment is integral to any school improvement process. It is used for formative purposes to engage teachers in activities that focus on moving all students towards grade level expectations. Figure 1 graphically configures the alignment process.

Figure 1: Acts of alignment



The early reading assessments provided in this package are research-based. They include concepts about print, letter recognition, word identification, read and retell, and written story construction. The process of aligning standards, assessments, instructional practices, and resources begins with these assessments.

What does this mean for improving school literacy practices?

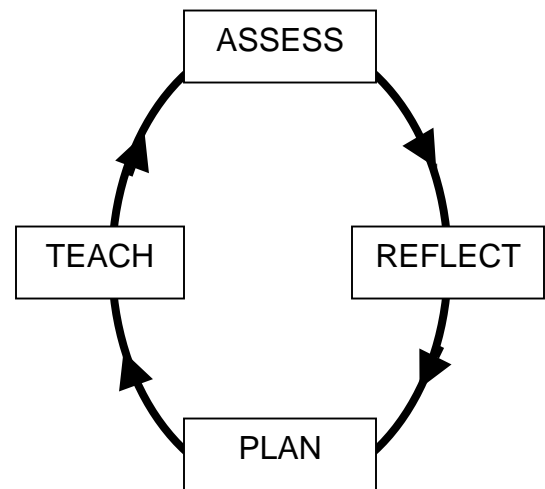
An alignment of the components of early reading creates opportunities for teachers to clarify together the purposes and functions of assessments and standards. It also creates opportunities for teachers to share their instructional ideas with each other as they reflect on assessment and standards information. In *Schools That Work*, Allington and Cunningham (2002) remind us that two key conditions for change are 1) opportunities for teachers to talk (dialogue, have

conversations, both formally and informally) and 2) opportunities for teachers to share ideas and observe each other in their classrooms. Alignment activities have the potential to do both.

What does this mean for improving instruction?

The work of alignment supports the Teaching Learning Cycle (adapted from The Learning Network), a process that uses assessment information to inform instruction. The cycle starts with assessment, then teachers are asked to reflect on the information and grade level expectations to identify the ‘gap’ for the child (e.g. the child is compared to where s/he is to where s/he needs to be by the end of the year.) The gap will vary from child to child, and for some children there will be no gap if they have already exceeded expectations. Teachers assist each child in reaching his/her potential by planning activities that meet their needs. The plan is then put into action, constantly adjusting it as the current classroom situation changes.

Figure 2: Teaching Learning Cycle



The Teaching Learning Cycle

- The teacher assesses the child, gathering evidence of what the child knows and can do.
- S/he reflects on the information while thinking about the end-of-grade expectations (standards, benchmarks, curriculum framework) for the area assessed.
- S/he plans a task that will meet the needs and interests of the children s/he has in mind, based on where the children are at the time of the assessment and end-of-year expectations.
- S/he observes the children while teaching from the plan and adjusts it as needed.

The Alignment Process

The alignment process integrates informed instruction, and accountability through a series of tables that documents assessments, corresponding grade level literacy standards (benchmarks, objectives), instructional practices, and instructional resources. The alignment process here is defined by four broad stages. Each stage does not have to be completed before doing work in another. Over time, the expectations of each stage should become more locally defined and explicit.

Assessments and expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entity staff documents the state-level accountability tests, their specific purpose, and aspects of each test related to reading using Table 2. • Entity staff documents local standards/expectations in Language Arts that align with the Pacific CHILD assessments for grades K through 3 using the P-CHILD alignment table 3. This table links local standards/benchmarks/objectives with specific early reading assessments. In the column ‘other early reading expectations’, any early reading standards not addressed by assessments should be documented.
Central office review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus group of central office staff review and validate Tables 2 and 3.
School conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entity staff and principal review and clarify Tables 2 and 3. • Entity staff support the principal in using Tables 2 and 3 with teachers to clarify purposes and functions of assessments and the aligned standards, explore their own grade-level expectations for students where there are none. • Entity staff produces Table 3 for each grade level K (1) through 3.
Action plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entity staff supports the principal in using Table 3 with teachers to look at the gaps and decide on areas to address. The grade level action plans should support entity staff in their classroom work with teachers. • Entity staff and principal work with teachers to identify instructional practices and resources which align with the content of assessments and standards. These should be recorded in Table 3. • Entity staff supports teachers in using this alignment to inform literacy assessment and instructional practices in the classroom.

Improving school literacy practices through alignment activities

Central Office Review

The following is a sample of an explanation that could be given to Central Office Staff. It is followed by guiding questions to ask Central Office Staff as needed:

We are working to align reading standards, assessments, instructional practices, and instructional resources. Would you please review with us this table on grades K-3 reading standards/objectives/benchmarks? We have been aligning the standards with the P-CHILD assessments using your curriculum documents,.

The assessments were developed from evidenced-based research in early reading. We want to identify the standards that align with them. We also want to include any standards based on important local reading practices that may not align with the assessments. We would appreciate you drawing our attention to those standards.

Guiding questions:

1. Have we interpreted the standards as they were intended? Does this alignment of assessments and standards seem logical/right to you?
2. Did we miss any standards that you think would relate to any of these assessments?
3. Are there any standards that you are using that are not linked to any of these assessments?
4. We were confused with this standard. Could you please explain to us what it means and if you think it relates to any of the seven assessments that guide this alignment work?

School Alignment Conversations

To build capacity with the principal, help her/him think through the alignment process and its connection to school change. Use questions to guide his/her planning of how to engage school staff in cross-grade conversations about end-of-grade expectations in reading.

Guiding questions:

1. Do you think it is important for teachers to talk with each other about the reading expectations they have for students at different grade levels? Why? Why not?
2. How might you create the conditions for those conversations? What will they look like? What would you do with the information they generate?
3. How could you use the alignment information to support those conversations?
4. Discussing grade level expectations includes agreeing on cut scores for each area of reading that is assessed. How could you involve teachers in decisions of cut scores?
5. How will these discussions help create an action plan for the school?
6. How would you involve teachers in creating an action plan?
7. How might you use the alignment information and the assessment information together for school-wide discussions?

Aligning Pacific CHILD Assessments and Entity Standards The Republic of the Marshall Islands

Table 1: P-Child early reading assessments are based on proven practice-based research. Their purposes are listed below.

Early Reading Assessment	Purpose of the early reading assessment
Concept About Print	To determine how much prior experience a child has had with books. This assessment involves giving appropriate responses to questions about the conventions of print within the context of a book. To gather evidence of a child's book handling skills and awareness of print conventions.
Letter Recognition	Purpose is to find what letters sounds the child is familiar with. Children need to be able to quickly recognize letters and the sound each letter makes. To collect evidence of how a child knows letters (symbols).
Retelling	To gather evidence of the reader's ability to organize ideas, recall details, identify key ideas, summarize, and interpret based on the story heard.
Word Identification	To collect evidence of a child's ability to identify sight words. These are words that are repeated in early reader tests and are harder to decode. Quick and easy recognition of these words contributes to an increased reading rate and improved fluency.
Phonological /Phoneme Awareness	To gather evidence of a child's phonological and phoneme awareness (e.g., ability to relate sounds to words, syllables, isolated phonemes).
Written Story Construction	To collect a sample of a child's writing behavior as an indication of what a child knows about print and what features of print s/he is attending to (e.g., story structure and concepts about print).

Aligning Pacific CHILD Assessments and Entity Standards The Republic of the Marshall Islands

Table 2: State Level Accountability Tests

TEST	Purpose	Aspects of literacy assessed
<p>PILLS – Pacific Islands Language and Literacy given end of grade three (English)</p>	<p>To assess the English literacy level in students' transitional year of schooling.</p>	<p>Reading comprehension Written paragraph.</p>
<p>MISAT – Marshall Island Student Achievement Test MISAT 1 – grade 3 MISAT 2 – grade 6</p>	<p>To assess student achievement towards MI standards.</p>	<p>Reading comprehension Written paragraph</p>
<p>MIHET – Marshall Islands High school Entrance Test</p>	<p>Twofold: 1) to track achievement 2) to determine who goes on to high school.</p>	<p>Reading comprehension</p>

Aligning Pacific CHILD Assessments and Entity Standards The Republic of the Marshall Islands

Table 3: Aligning early reading assessments with Standards/Benchmarks/Curriculum Objectives

Assessment	Grade 1 Language Arts Objectives	Grade 2 Language Arts Objectives	Grade 3 Language Arts Objectives
Concept About Print	1. Write own name.		
Letter Recognition	1. Know letter sounds.	1. Recognize Kajin Majol letters of the alphabet in print.	
Word Identification	1. Use Kajin Majol courtesy words.		
Phonological/Phoneme Awareness	1. Listen to the sound and pronunciation of Marshallese words. 2. Use letter sounds.	1. Recognize sound of letters and sound of letters put together (blending sounds, etc). 2. Can pick out words that have the same beginning letter/sound. 3. Can say the sound of each letter in a short word and then blend the sounds together into a recognizable word. 4. Decode simple one and two syllable words.	

Aligning Pacific CHILD Assessments and Entity Standards The Republic of the Marshall Islands

Retelling	<p>1. Understand and responding to what was heard.</p>	<p>1. Listen and be able to response.</p> <p>2. Answer questions about what was heard in a story, a song, or a talk after listening.</p> <p>3. Retell a story or make up a story to tell others.</p>	
Written Story Construction		<p>1. Listen quietly and be able to response (in writing).</p> <p>2. Prepare for writing by developing topic and story ideas using personal experiences, listening to stories, etc.</p> <p>3. Write stories from interest, experiences and imagination.</p> <p>4. Responding to or thinking about my/own writing.</p>	<p>1. Preparing for writing.</p> <p>a) Expand strategies for getting ideas for writing about selected topic- pick out words and pictures from reading, web possible detail about a topic, take part in group brainstorm, etc.</p> <p>2. Write stories and write to give information.</p> <p>a) Write stories that they've heard, read or viewed in own words.</p> <p>b) Write a short story by describing pictures.</p> <p>c) Write stories and information about a main idea.</p> <p>d) Add detail to the main idea of a story.</p>

Aligning Pacific CHILD Assessments and Entity Standards The Republic of the Marshall Islands

Table 4: Early Reading Alignment for Grade 1

Assessment	Grade 1 Language Arts Objectives	Instructional Strategies	Resources
Concept About Print	1. Write own name.		
Letter Recognition	1. Know letter sounds.		
Word Identification	1. Use Kajin Majol courtesy words.		
Phonological - Phoneme Awareness	1. Listen to the sound and pronunciation of Marshallese words. 2. Use letter sounds.		
Retelling	1. Understand and responding to what was heard.		

Aligning Pacific CHILD Assessments and Entity Standards The Republic of the Marshall Islands

Table 5: Early Reading Alignment for Grade 2

Assessment	Grade 2 Language Arts Objectives	Instructional Strategies	Resources
Letter Recognition	1. Recognize Kajin Majol letters of the alphabet in print.		
Phonological/ Phoneme Awareness	1. Recognize sound of letters and sound of letters put together (blending sounds, etc). 2. Can pick out words that have the same beginning letter/sound. 3. Can say the sound of each letter in a short word and then blend the sounds together into a recognizable word. 4. Decode simple one and two syllable words.		
Retelling	1. Listen and be able to response. 2. Answer questions about what was heard in a story, a song, or a talk after listening. 3. Retell a story or make up a story to tell others.		
Written Story Construction	1. Listen quietly and be able to response (in writing). 2. Prepare for writing by developing topic and story ideas using personal experiences, listening to stories, etc. 3. Write stories from interest, experiences and imagination. 4. Responding to or thinking about my/own writing.		

Aligning Pacific CHILd Assessments and Entity Standards The Republic of the Marshall Islands

Table 6: Early Reading Alignment for Grade 3

Assessment	Grade 3 Language Arts Objectives	Instructional Strategies	Resources
Word Identification			
Written Story Construction	<p>1. Preparing for writing.</p> <p>a) Expand strategies for getting ideas for writing about selected topic- pick out words and pictures from reading, web possible detail about a topic, take part in group brainstorm, etc.</p> <p>2. Write stories and write to give information.</p> <p>a) Write stories that they've heard, read or viewed in own words.</p> <p>b) Write a short story by describing pictures.</p> <p>c) Write stories and information about a main idea.</p> <p>d) Add detail to the main idea of a story.</p>		

Aligning Pacific CHILD Assessments and Entity Standards The Republic of the Marshall Islands

Aligning Assessment to Instruction

Assessments	Instructional Activities
Concepts About Print	Shared reading
Letter Recognition	Alphabet Linking Chart activities Letter Knowledge
Phonological and Phonemic Awareness	(This assessment is not available)
Word Identification	Word walls
Retelling	Retelling Storytelling
Written Story Construction	Shared writing Interactive writing Concept mapping

See the REL's Early Literacy and Assessment for Learning K-3 Series for more activities related to letter recognition, sight word identification, and read and retell.

A package of assessments is available in the REL Resource Kit and includes Concepts About Print, Letter Recognition, Sight Word Identification, Read and Retell, and Written Story Construction. For a phoneme assessment we recommend using,

Yopp, Hallie K. (1995). A Test for Assessing Phoneme Awareness in Young Children. *The Reading Teacher*, v. 49. #1.