

## High Benchmark Designation and Making the Icon Appear

### Purpose of High Benchmark Designation

The purpose of the high benchmark is to exempt from future PALS screening those students whose PALS scores are so high that it is unlikely that future PALS screenings will identify them for additional instruction. High benchmark designation may be useful for schools that choose to use PALS only as a screener, and forgo its use as a diagnostic and progress-monitoring tool.

### Eligibility in your district

Whether to use the High Benchmark designation to exempt students from PALS assessment is a local decision. Many PALS users prefer to continue using PALS even for students who achieve High Benchmark, for the purposes of instructional planning, grouping, and progress monitoring. Please consult your PALS District Rep regarding whether your district has a specific policy regarding use of the High Benchmark.

### Eligibility in the PALS Online System: How to Make the High Benchmark Icon Appear

The high benchmark icon will appear for certain students beginning in the spring of first grade, assuming that enough data has been entered to demonstrate eligibility. Students are not eligible for the high benchmark earlier than this because student performance is too variable at these ages.

The high benchmark icon appears when scores are entered that reflect an independent reading level that is above the student's current grade level. Note that the system usually only requires enough data entered to establish an *instructional* oral reading level; scores from additional tasks may need to be entered to demonstrate the high *independent* level and make the high benchmark icon appear.

For instance, second grade students in the fall must demonstrate all three of the following criteria, in addition to meeting or exceeding the Entry Level Summed Score benchmark:

| Fall Second Grade High Benchmark Criteria |   |
|---|---|
| ✓   | Read 18 or more words from the third grade word list or higher        |
| ✓   | Read the third grade passage (or higher) with 98% or greater accuracy |
| ✓   | Read that same passage with a fluency rating of 3                     |

*(Criteria for making the high benchmark icon appear in the spring of first grade can be found on page 18 of the PALS 1-3 Administration & Scoring Guide.)*