



AMIRA ISIP's Progress Monitoring



OVERVIEW

Goal 1: Configurable To Support Your District Approach

The goal of Amira's progress monitoring is to fit into and cohere with your District's desired approach. In other words, Amira does not seek to impose a particular progress monitoring regime on the district. Rather, the system's design provides configuration options and flexibility to align with the District's goals, desired cadence and target method.

To that end, Amira supports a rather broad range of progress monitoring options. The goal of this paper is to enable District leaders to map from the District's needs to Amira's capabilities. Therefore, the document is structured around a sequence of choices the District should make in conversation with the Amira Success Manager.

Amira's Assessment Assignments

Amira delivers three forms of progress monitoring assessments. Each form has strengths and weaknesses, which is why there are three. As you make your configuration decisions, you will leverage these complementary strengths to create a regime of PMing that meets your needs.

Full Assessment: A full assessment combines a range of sub-tests with the aim of measuring overall mastery and growth. Full assessments take between 12 and 22 minutes per student. Full assessments are used for benchmarking and monthly progress monitoring. Each assignment delivers psychometrically valid and reliable scores untethered to other results. IOW, a full assessment produces a stand-alone appraisal of student mastery.

On-Demand Assessment: On-demand or ODAs are progress monitors that are individually assigned by an educator. The assignment can be made by district personnel, building level personnel, interventionist coaches, and of course teachers. ODAs are designed for those working directly with students to dial up the set of Amira-delivered constructs that mirror the emphasis of intervention. An ODA can consist of just one or several sub-tests, with different students tested in different ways.

Formative Assessment: When a student works with Amira Tutor, formative assessment happens continuously. During each tutoring session, Amira is evaluating student ability, using each word read and every dialog as a measurement opportunity.

These three forms provide great flexibility in structuring a holistic approach to progress monitoring that meets all your needs.

Goal	Full	ODA	Tutor
Psychometrically Valid & Reliable on a stand-alone basis	Yes	No	No
Can be assigned at any time	Yes	Yes	Yes
Delivers skill-building	No	No	Yes
Takes less than 10 minutes	No	Yes	Yes
Enables CBM tracking	No	Yes	No
Is Focused on designated strands of the Rope	No	Yes	No

Goal	Full	ODA	Tutor
Enables Holistic Measurement of Growth	Yes	No	Yes
Enables strand based measurement of growth	Yes	Yes	No
Designed to assess different students differently	No	Yes	No
"No test" experience for students	No	No	Yes
Delivers benchmarking	Yes	No	No
Screens for Reading Risk and Dyslexia	Yes	No	No
Suitable for Universal Screening	Yes	No	No
Populates the Mastery Model	Yes	Yes	Yes

Recommended Sequence Of Decisions

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Choice #1: All-Formal or Organic Monitoring

Amira enables a choice between utilizing an “all formal” progress monitoring process or a hybrid process. The initial decision a District should make is choosing which of these paths is best. “Formal” progress monitoring means employing psychometrically valid assessments at a prescribed cadence, with administration encompassing all students. “Organic” progress monitoring means using a mix of formal monitoring and testing that is more specific to individual students. Organic monitoring can occur either via teacher’s initiating On Demand Assessments (a CBM approach) or via Amira’s tutoring.

Amira Tutoring makes progress monitoring completely organic. Every word read to Amira is a de facto assessment item. But this way of assessing is transparent and secondary to skill building. Amira strongly recommends that tutoring-based progress monitoring be incorporated into the district's plan. There is essentially no downside to taking advantage of Amira’s formative assessment. In fact, the software will collect all relevant information and update all reports under any circumstances.

Using either Amira Tutor or ODAs or both, organic PMing collects far more data about a student in a much more targeted way than is possible with the formal approach alone. So, although organic monitoring is not psychometrically rigorous in one dimension, it enables Amira to build a more accurate mastery model and allows your team to do more targeted tracking of curriculum-based growth.

Choice:

Use Formal Progress Monitoring Only	
Use Hybrid Monitoring with either ODA or Tutoring	RECOMMENDED

When should a District go formal only?

Amira strongly recommends that Districts avail themselves of organic progress monitoring to supplement formal monitoring – a hybrid model. We believe there are many advantages to a hybrid approach that employs 3 formal, psychometrically valid assessments over the course of the year, interim progress monitoring via formative assessment (tutoring) and targeted use of ODAs for students in Tier 2/3.

A formal only protocol makes sense when:

- The District is not utilizing tutoring. OR
- The District is in a state where there is a legislative mandate for 20+ prescribed progress monitoring assessments per year.

Choice #2: Utilize ODAs

Under any circumstance, a District should make a choice about whether to utilize Amira’s On-Demand Assessment (ODA) capabilities. Amira enables teachers to do “assessment whenever and however”, triggering an assignment for testing as helpful. ODA tests are constructed by the teacher to track student progress on a bespoke basis. ODAs can be tailored to 1 student, a group or a whole class.

ODAs are:

- Assigned by the teacher, not the District
- Designed to test particular dimensions of reading mastery as opposed to measure holistic growth
- Centered on a curriculum-based measurement (CBM) approach where progress is tracked by the number of items answered correctly over time.

In short, one approach to Progress Monitoring emphasizes consistency and essentially involves every student in the district receiving foundational assessment from Amira on a periodic basis. The other approach to progress monitoring is to surround a skeleton of formal progress monitoring with extensions controlled by the teacher and tailored to the needs of each student.

Choice:

Do not utilize ODAs	
Utilize ODAs	RECOMMENDED

When should a District eschew ODAs?

Even when a District is relying on a formal-only PM approach, Amira recommends allowing teachers, coaches and interventions to use ODAs on a spot basis. The exceptions are:

- When a District is highly concerned about over-testing OR
- When teachers are overwhelmed with change (perhaps because of a new curriculum adoption).

These two foundational decisions should be captured at the outset of discussions with the district about the approach to progress monitoring and should become the reference points for further discussions. Once these choices are made, they become the controlling factors in deciding on how to apply Amira's progress monitoring capabilities.

Note that a decision to utilize ODAs triggers alterations in teacher training.

Choice #3: Utilize Benchmarking or Not

Benchmarking progress monitoring is almost essential to enabling Amira to deliver value. Benchmarking means that the District creates BOY, MOY and EOY testing windows and that all students are assessed during these windows with a psychometrically valid process. Benchmarking has many benefits for the District (including better data for measuring Amira's impact). But benchmarking is also extremely helpful in grounding Amira's tutoring, boosting progress monitoring accuracy and generally ensuring that Amira's AI is able to optimize its recommendations.

Amira is designed to benchmark using the classic 3 window approach. The District should assess students as early as possible in the school year, then again at the beginning of the winter term, and finally prior to the summative assessment, with enough of a gap to enable final instructional course correction.

Choice:

Do Not Utilize Benchmarking Assessments	
Utilize Benchmarking	RECOMMENDED

Given that Amira requires around 15 minutes to administer a benchmark, does all proctoring and scoring, we recommend that Districts use at least 3 formal assessments per year.

Exceptions:

- The District is employing another Benchmarking assessment AND
- There are significant concerns about over-testing AND
- The District is not using Amira Tutor.

Bottom line: Benchmarking ought to be incorporated into almost any progress monitoring regime, but is optional.

Choice #4: Windows or Months

Assuming that benchmarking is desired (choice #3), the District needs to select either a 3-window (BOY, MOY, EOY) or monthly (August, September, October) protocol.

The window-based approach is centered on you dividing your school calendar into three periods. Windows means students receive 3 formal assessments during the school year; a monthly cadence typically translates into 10 assessments.

A monthly regime incorporates benchmarking via the designation of three months as benchmark tests (see Choice #6). The other non-benchmark months provide progress monitoring. Monthly PMing was the staple of the ISIP protocol and is fully supported in Amira ISIP. A monthly Progress Monitor updates reports and the Mastery Model with a robust flow of information.

Windows	RECOMMENDED
Monthly	

If the District is employing Amira Tutor and/or is utilizing ODAs as an integral component of the MTSS/RTI process, then Amira recommends using a Windows-based approach. If neither of those is true, then we recommend using the monthly protocol.

Choice #5: Formal Progress Monitoring Configuration

The District configures the tasks to be administered at each grade level, per much other documentation.

You have nearly complete control over the subtests, (the constructs used grade by grade) administered to your students. Assessment works best when you configure between 5 and 9 tasks per grade. Earlier grades typically benefit from being near the upper end of this range. The point is to balance reliability & validity with test time. Too few constructs mean Amira is unable to measure mastery across Scarborough’s Rope (Scarborough, 2001). Too many constructs elongate the test, turning the process into an assessment of student attention level as opposed to literacy level.

As shown below, Amira has introduced new Tasks (subtests) that can be done by most pre-readers. These tasks are not traditional reading assessments. Instead, they measure the brain's facility in doing oral activities that are highly predictive of the degree to which a student may struggle with a dimension of reading mastery. Incorporating a few of these tasks into your configuration enables Amira to give you more useful data on your pre-readers. This is typically not necessary for Grades 2+, but is recommended for Grades K and 1.

Naturally, our recommended configuration is the Amira data science default setup for your state. This suggested configuration represents our best attempt to balance your state's guidance, psychometric accuracy, student experience and neuroscience. However, we also recommend that you do not simply accept the recommended task list. You may have special needs or goals – so talk to your Success Manager about whether you should alter the default.

Choice #6: Secondary Configuration of Test Cadence

If you are using Windows, you need to designate the start dates for BOY, MOY and EOY. The recommended approach is to use the default dates.

If you are using Monthly, you need to designate the BOY, MOY and EOY months. The recommended approach is to use your first full month of school, January and the month prior to your Summative.

Choice #7: Your Source of Truth Metric

The last and most important decision is deciding on your source of truth metric. You have 3 choices for a metric that will serve as the foundation for District decision-making. This choice does not preclude you from using many metrics emanating from Amira's reporting. However, one metric should be selected to inform the progress monitoring process. The three choices are:

Single-Moment ARM Score

The Amira Reading Mastery (ARM) score is a grade-level equivalent (GLE) metric that provides a norms-based indication of student ability. ARM scores in Amira's benchmark report are shown below

Using ARM has some wonderful advantages. Because GLE scores are expressed in time, ARM makes it easy to track whether a student (or any group of students) is progressing faster or slower than the typical pace. Following the ARM scores that exhaust from full assessments over the course of the year corresponds to traditional use of benchmark scores and will require little re-orientation for staff.

ISIP Score:

Even more familiar, you can employ the ISIP score as the basis of change. For long-standing ISIP Districts, this ensures continuity and comparability. ISIP scores for the 2025/26 school year will be psychometrically calibrated to maintain your ability to use them without disruption from previous years.

Estimated Mastery Score:

Amira's Estimated Mastery Score (EMS) is specifically designed to support progress monitoring. The score incorporates everything that Amira knows about a student and every interaction that Amira has with the student. As shown in the Progress Monitoring report below, Estimated Mastery is a "blended in time" score that takes each discrete measurement of student ability and smooths the data into a best estimate. Estimated Mastery benefits from not relying on a single measurement point. Fluctuations in student performance are handled by the advanced algorithm – there is a bias towards recency but the EMS is far more stable.

ARM	
ISIP	
EMS	RECOMMENDED

Amira recommends centering your progress monitoring on Estimated Mastery. This will give you the best possible basis for determining student growth. EMS ensures that you have the most timely and continuous data.

Factor	ARM	ISIP	EMS
Norms-based	Yes	Yes	Yes
Calculated Continuously	No	No	Yes
Grade Level Equivalent	Yes	No	Yes
Provides Istation Continuity	No	Yes	No
Directly mirrors growth in time	Yes	No	Yes
Smooths student performance over many observations and days	No	No	Yes
Employs AI	No	No	Yes
Provides predicted end of year outcome	No	No	Yes

Wrap-Up & Worksheet

Making the 7 decisions will enable you to extract the greatest value from Amira Progress Monitoring. Step by Step, you can figure out how to match Amira’s unmatched configurability to your needs.

Decision	Recommended	Your Choice
All Formal OR Some Organic	Organic	
Utilize ODAs OR Not	Utilize ODAs	
Utilize Benchmarking or Not	Utilize Benchmarking	
Windows or Months	Windows	
Task Configuration	State Default	
Secondary Configuration	Use Defaults	
Source of Truth Metric	Estimated Mastery Score	