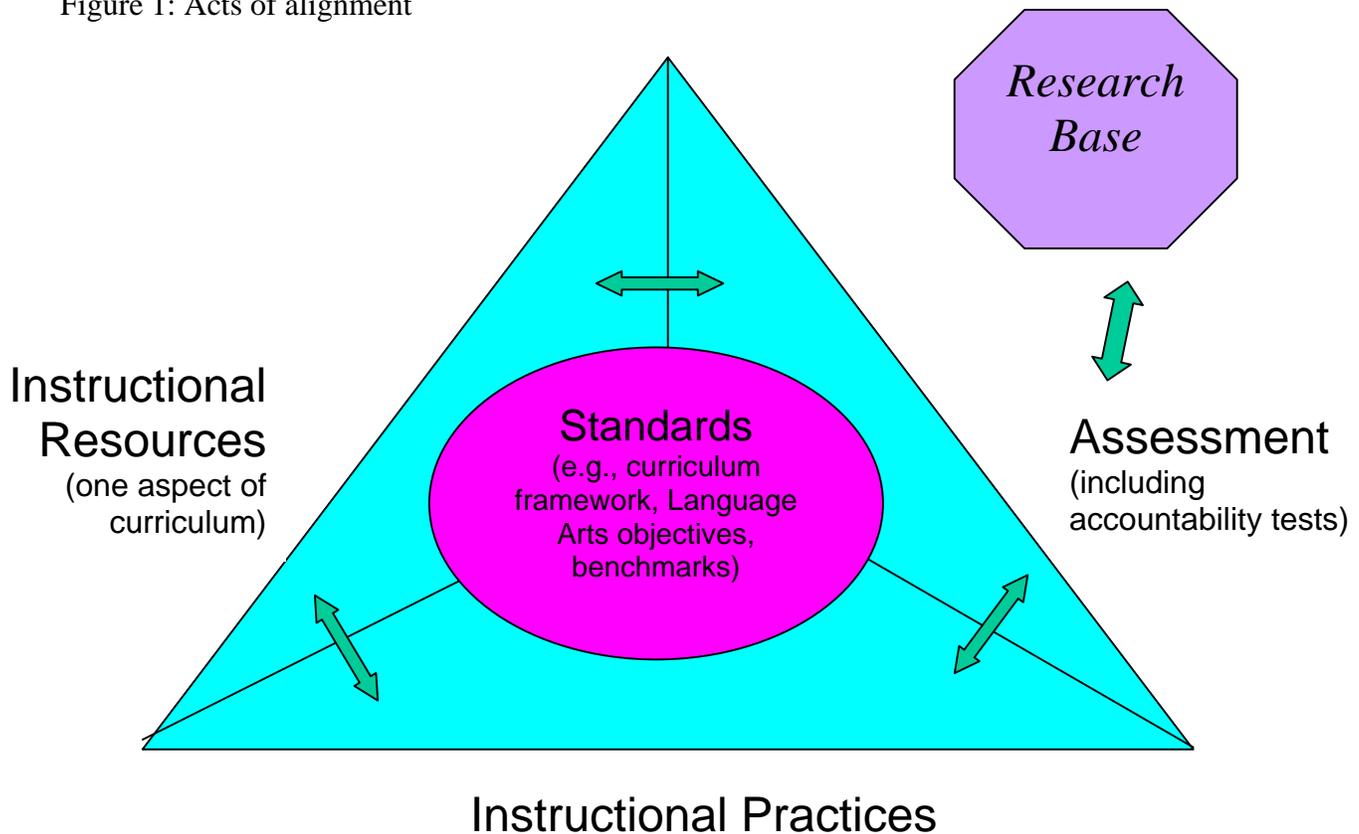


Pacific CHILD Acts of Alignment

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?

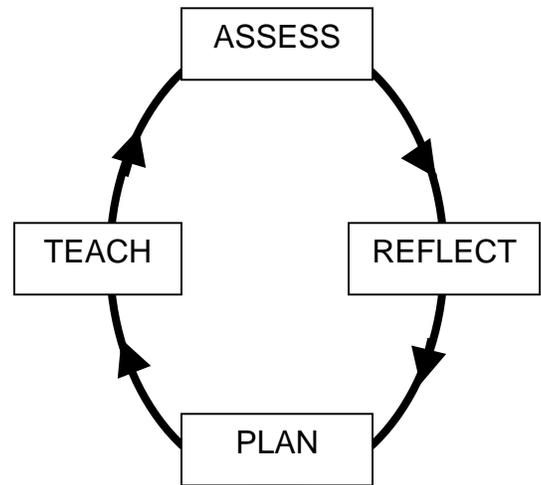
An alignment of the components of early reading creates opportunities for teachers to clarify together the purposes and functions of assessments and standards. It also creates opportunities for teachers to share their instructional ideas with each other as they reflect on assessment and standards information. 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 Assessment and Entity Standards Pohnpei

Table 1: Pacific CHILD Early Reading assessments are based on proven practices and/or evidence-based research. Their purposes are listed below.

Early Reading Assessments	Purpose
Concepts About Print	To gather evidence of a child’s book handling skills and awareness of conventions.
Letter Recognition	To collect evidence of how a child knows letters (symbols).
Word Identification	To collect evidence of a child ability to quickly identify commonly used and frequently occurring words, those that cannot be easily decoded using phonics.
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.
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 sample of a child writing behaviors 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 Assessment and Entity Standards Pohnpei

Table 2: State-level Student Accountability Tests Administered in Pohnpei

Test	Purpose	Aspects of literacy assessed
National Standards Test NST (Grades 6 & 8)	To collect evidence of a child's performance based on minimum standards in FSM states.	
Stanford Achievement Test - SAT 9 (Grades 6, 8, 10)	To collect evidence of student aptitudes in Language and Math.	
Grade Level Exit Tests <i>Locally Developed</i> (Grades 4, 6, 8, 10)	To collect evidence of student achievements in grades by standards and benchmarks.	
PICS High School Entrance Test (Grade 8)	To collect evidence of students' ability to enter high school.	
COM or College Entrance Test (Grade 12)	To collect evidence of students' ability to enter post secondary education, the College of Micronesia.	

Aligning Pacific CHILD Assessment and Entity Standards Pohnpei

Table 3: Aligning Early Reading Assessments with Standards/Benchmarks/Curriculum Objectives

Early Reading Assessments	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Concepts About Print	<p><u>Reading Standard 1</u>: Develop skills in handling books.</p> <p><u>Writing Standard 2</u>: Apply basic handwriting strokes. Write from left to right. Write own names and other names correctly and legibly.</p>		
Letter Recognition	<p><u>Writing Standard 2</u>: Use capital and period correctly.</p>		
Word Identification	<p><u>Reading Standard 1</u>: Read wall stories, flash cards, and posters independently in Pohnpeian. Recognize and understand common Pohnpeian words.</p>	<p><u>Reading Standard 1</u>: Identify common signs, logos, and words in Pohnpeian and English.</p>	
Phonological/ Phoneme Awareness	<p><u>Reading Standard 1</u>: Demonstrate knowledge of phoneme awareness. Apply strategies to unlock unknown word.</p>		

Aligning Pacific CHILD Assessment and Entity Standards Pohnpei

Retelling	<p><u>Reading Standard 1:</u> Draw, write, and talk about stories. Identify favorite part of a story.</p>	<p><u>Reading Standard 1:</u> Retell a story (main idea) in own words - Compare and contrast different events and stories.</p> <p><u>Oral and Visual Communication Standard 3:</u> Ask question to develop clear understanding.</p>	<p><u>Reading Standard 1:</u> Ask and answer question about a story read. Recite, relate event in a story to life experience. Identify story elements</p>
Written Story Construction		<p><u>Reading Standard 1:</u> Create mental image from pictures.</p> <p><u>Writing Standard 2:</u> Use pictures, objects and experiences to generate ideas for writing topics.</p>	<p><u>Writing Standard 2:</u> Write about different content area topics, familiar or newly learned. Use personal experiences to assist with writing.</p>

Aligning Pacific CHILD Assessment and Entity Standards Pohnpei

Table 4: Early Reading Alignment for Grade 1

Early Reading Assessments	Grade 1	Instructional Strategies	Resources
Concepts About Print	<p><u>Reading Standard 1:</u> Develop skills in handling books.</p> <p><u>Writing Standard 2:</u> Apply basic handwriting strokes. Write from left to right. Write own names and other names correctly and legibly.</p>		
Letter Recognition	<p><u>Writing Standard 2:</u> Use capital and period correctly.</p>		
word Identification	<p><u>Reading Standard 1:</u> Read wall stories, flash cards, and posters independently in Pohnpeian. Recognize and understand common Pohnpeian words.</p>		
Phonological/ Phoneme Awareness	<p><u>Reading Standard 1:</u> Demonstrate knowledge of phoneme awareness. Apply strategies to unlock unknown word.</p>		
Retelling	<p><u>Reading Standard 1:</u> Draw, write, and talk about stories. Identify favorite part of a story.</p>		

Aligning Pacific CHILD Assessment and Entity Standards Pohnpei

Table 5: Early Reading Alignment for Grade 2

Early Reading Assessments	Grade 2	Instruction Strategies	Resources
Concepts About Print			
Letter Recognition			
Word Identification	<p><u>Reading Standard 1</u>: Identify common signs, logos, and words in Pohnpeian and English.</p>		
Phonological/ Phoneme Awareness			
Retelling	<p><u>Reading Standard 1</u>: Retell a story (main idea) in own words - Compare and contrast different events and stories.</p> <p><u>Oral and Visual Communication Standard 3</u>: Ask question to develop clear understanding.</p>		
Written Story Construction	<p><u>Reading Standard 1</u>: Create mental image from pictures.</p> <p><u>Writing Standard 2</u>: Use pictures, objects and experiences to generate ideas for writing topics.</p>		

Aligning Pacific CHILD Assessment and Entity Standards Pohnpei

Tble 6: Early Reading Alignment for Grade 3

Early Reading Assessments	Grade 3	Instructional Strategies	Resources
Word Identification			
Retelling	<u>Reading Standard 1:</u> Ask and answer question about a story read. Recite, relate event in a story to life experience. Identify story elements		
Written Story Construction	<u>Writing Standard 2:</u> Write about different content area topics, familiar or newly learned. Use personal experiences to assist with writing.		

Aligning Pacific CHILD Assessment and Entity Standards Pohnpei

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.