The Writing Fluency CBM (Curriculum Based Measure) is a standardized, short-duration fluency measure of students’ writing skills. “School-based research has shown that having students write a story for 3 minutes given an age-appropriate story starter, is a reliable and valid general outcome measure of general written expression for typically achieving students through grade 6 and for older students with severe writing problems.” (AIMS Web, 2004).

The Writing Fluency CBM is one measure that can assist in assessing students’ writing achievement and monitoring progress. The information gathered from the students’ performance on the Writing Fluency CBM and other writing measures (i.e. student work samples, state assessments, progress reports) can assist the PBIS team in determining the need for additional instruction in writing.

Considerations:
- This instrument is for testing and standardized directions should always be used. Students should not practice completing story starters in preparation for this assessment.
- Best versus fastest writing - Students should be prepared to do their best, not their fastest writing. The assessment is timed to ensure that the testing environment is standardized, not to encourage fast writing. Timing should be discreet and best work should be emphasized. Important point: feedback from Total Words Written is not shared with students as feedback. Providing this feedback will only encourage students to simply add more words without increasing the quality of their writing.

Scoring:
Students will be scored in three categories -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Notation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Words Written</td>
<td>TWW</td>
<td>A count of the number of words written. A word is defined as any letter or group of letters separated by a space, even if the word is misspelled or is a nonsense word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words Spelled Correctly</td>
<td>WSC</td>
<td>A count of the number of words that are spelled correctly. A word is spelled correctly if it can stand alone as a word in the English Language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct Writing Sequence</td>
<td>CWS</td>
<td>A count of correct writing sequences found in the sample. A correct writing sequence is defined as two adjacent writing units (i.e., word-word or word-punctuation) that are acceptable within the context of what is written. Correct writing sequence takes into account correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, syntax, and semantics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scoring Rules

• Total Words Written (TWW)

Underline in pencil or pen words that are produced. Sum the number of words. The score is recorded but typically not shared with students as some students will write more words in the next assessment that may not be indicative of real improvement.

What is a Word?
Any letter or group of letters separated by a space is defined as a word, even if the word is misspelled or is a nonsense word.

The sky was blue. \hspace{1cm} TWW = 4
The sky was blew. \hspace{1cm} TWW = 4
I tuk a baf. \hspace{1cm} TWW = 4
I tuka baf. \hspace{1cm} TWW = 3

Figure 1 – CBM writing sample scored for Total Words Written:

I woud drink water from the ocean. \hspace{1cm} \small{.07}
and I woud eat the fruit off of \hspace{1cm} \small{.08}
the trees. Then I woud bilit a \hspace{1cm} \small{.07}
house out of trees, and I woud. \hspace{1cm} \small{.07}
gather firewood to stay warm. I \hspace{1cm} \small{.06}
woud try and fix my boat in my \hspace{1cm} \small{.08}
spare time. \hspace{1cm} \small{.02}

Word Total = \small{45}

Rule 1 - Hyphenated Words. Each morpheme separated by a hyphen(s) is counted as an individual word if it can stand alone.

My daughter-in-law had a baby boy. \hspace{1cm} TWW = 8
Rule 2 - Hyphenated Words. If one or more of the morphemes separated by a hyphen(s) cannot stand alone, the entire sequence is counted as one word.

We had to re-evaluate the case. \(\text{TWW} = 6\)

Rule 3 - Abbreviations. Commonly used abbreviations are counted as words.

Chris watched T.V. \(\text{TWW} = 3\)

Rule 4 - Story Titles or Endings. Words written in the title or as an ending are counted in the TWW.

The Big Run
On the fourth of July, I ran the Boston Marathon.
The End. \(\text{TWW} = 15\)

Rule 5 - Numbers. With the exception of dates, numbers that are not spelled out are not counted as words. One exception would be numbers representing currency. If the currency sign or the currency word is used in conjunction with the number it is counted as correct.

3 men ran. \(\text{TWW} = 2\)
Three men ran. \(\text{TWW} = 3\)
I went 2 a party. \(\text{TWW} = 4\)
It is June 10, 1989. \(\text{TWW} = 5\)
I won $100 \(\text{TWW} = 3\)
I won 100. \(\text{TWW} = 2\)
I won 100 dollars. \(\text{TWW} = 4\)

Rule 6 - Unusual characters. Symbols used in writing such as %, &, #, @, that are not spelled out, are not counted as words.

Kim spoke @ the conference. \(\text{TWW} = 4\)

January 19, 2010
• **Words Spelled Correctly (WSC)**

A word is spelled correctly if it can stand alone as a word in the English language. *Contextual clarity is not an issue.*

- Bill will read the book. \[WSC = 5\]
- Bill will reed the book. \[WSC = 5\]
- Bill wa reed mmus reddy \[WSC = 2\]
- and can rat pake \[WSC = 3\]
- dzq ran down the rode \[WSC = 4\]

### Figure 2 – CBM writing sample scored for Words Spelled Correctly:

```
I woud drink water from the ocean. . . . . . .06
and I woud eat the fruit off of . . . . . . .07
the trees. Then I woud build a . . . . . . . .05
house out of trees, and I woud . . . . . . . .06
gather firewood to stay warm. I . . . . . . .06
woud try and fix my boat in my . . . . . . . . . . .07
spare time. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .02
```

Total Words Spelled Correctly = 39

---

**Rule 1 - Hyphenated Words.** Each morpheme separated by a hyphen(s) is counted as an individual word if it can stand alone and is spelled correctly.

- My dauta-in-law had a baby girl. \[WSC = 7\]
- My daughter-in-law had a baby girl. \[WSC = 8\]

**Rule 2 - Hyphenated words.** If one or more of the morphemes separated by a hyphen(s) cannot stand alone, the entire sequence is counted as one word if it is spelled correctly.

- I had to re-evaluate the case. \[WSC = 5\]
- I had to re-evaluate the case. \[WSC = 6\]

**Rule 3 - Abbreviations.** Commonly used abbreviations (Dr., Mrs., Blvd.) are counted as words.

- Jan lives on Sunset Blvd. \[WSC = 5\]

January 19, 2010
Rule 4 - Story Titles. If students include a title, words spelled correctly in the title are included.

The Big Run
On the fourth of July, I ran the Boston Marathon.
The End. WSC = 15

Rule 5 - Capitalized Words. Proper nouns and the proper pronoun "I" must be capitalized to be considered as correct. Proper names are counted as correctly spelled as long as they are capitalized, even if the spelling does not create a recognizable name. Capitalization of the first word in a sentence is not required for the word to be spelled correctly.

Mary saw the book. WSC = 4
We crossed the Mississippi. WSC = 4
vicki sat with bill. WSC = 2
vicki sat with the bill WSC = 4

Rule 6 - Words with Reversed Letters. Words containing reversed letters are counted as correctly spelled words unless the reversed letter causes a word to be spelled incorrectly. This rule applies most frequently to the letters p, b, q, d, n, and u. (Again, a word is spelled correctly if it can stand alone as a word in the English language.)

There was a bad storm. WSC = 5
There was a dad storm. WSC = 5
The dolphin swam in the sea. WSC = 6
The dolphin swam in the sea. WSC = 5
Joe’s pig won first place at the fair. WSC = 8
Joe’s qig won first place at the fair. WSC = 7

Rule 7 - Contractions. For a contraction to be counted as a correctly spelled word, an apostrophe in the correct place in the word is required if the word cannot stand alone.

I won’t go. WSC = 3
I wont go. WSC = 2
Rick’s hungry. WSC = 2
Ricks hungry. WSC = 1
Correct Writing Sequence (CWS)

Two adjacent writing units (words and punctuation units) that are correct within the context of the sentence. (Contextual clarity is an issue.)

A caret “^” is used to mark each unit of the correct sequence. There is an implied space at the beginning of the first sentence.

\[
\begin{align*}
^\text{The}^\text{sky}^\text{was}^\text{blue}^. & \quad \text{CWS} = 5 \\
^\text{The}^\text{sky}^\text{was}^\text{blew}^\text{.} & \quad \text{CWS} = 2 \\
^\text{The}^\text{sky}^\text{was}^\text{blue}^\text{.}^\text{It}^\text{was}^\text{pretty}^\text{.} & \quad \text{CWS} = 8
\end{align*}
\]

Figure 3- An illustration of selected scoring rules for Correct Writing Sequence:

Rule 1 - Pairs of Words Must Be Spelled Correctly.

\[
\begin{align*}
^\text{All}^\text{of}^\text{the}^\text{kids}^\text{started}^\text{to}^\text{laugh}^\text{.} & \quad \text{CWS} = 8 \\
^\text{All}^\text{of}^\text{the}^\text{kids}^\text{started}^\text{to}^\text{laugh}^\text{F} & \quad \text{CWS} = 6
\end{align*}
\]
Rule 2 - Words Must Be Capitalized and Punctuated Correctly with the Exception of Commas. Correct punctuation must be present at the end of the sentence. The first word of the next sentence must be capitalized and spelled correctly for a correct writing sequence to be scored. Proper nouns must be capitalized for a correct writing sequence to be scored. Words that should not be capitalized must begin with a lower case letter.

^The^sky^was^blue^.  ^It^was^pretty^.
CWS = 9

^The^sky^was^blue^.  °it°was^pretty°
CWS = 6

^Let's^go^swimming^today^.  
CWS = 5

^let's^go^swimming^today^.  
CWS = 3

^She^asked^me^to^give^the^book^to^Nate^.  
CWS = 10

^She^asked^me^to^give^the^book^to^nate°.  
CWS = 8

^The^monkey^ate^a^banana^while^swinging^from^the^tree^. CWS = 11

^The^Monkey^ate^a^Banana^while^swinging^from^the^tree^. CWS = 7

Commas are not counted as part of a correct writing sequence except when included in a series of nouns. When part of a series, commas must be used correctly.

^Next^take^out^the^garbage^.  
CWS = 6

^Next^take^out^the^garbage^.  
CWS = 6

^Max^went^to^the^store^to^buy^bread^milk^and^cheese^. CWS = 12

^Max^went^to^the^store^to^buy^bread^milk^and^cheese^. CWS = 11

Other punctuation marks, such as quotes, colons, and semicolons are not counted as part of the correct writing sequence total.

^He^yelled,"^Watch^out^for^that^dinosaur^".  
CWS = 8

^He^yelled,"^watch^out^for^that^dinosaur^".  
CWS = 8

Rule 3 - Words Must Be Syntactically Correct. Sentences that begin with conjunctions are considered syntactically correct. Pronouns must be used correctly.

^I^had^never^seen^the^wolves^before^.  
CWS = 8

^I^never°seen°the^wolves°ever°.  
CWS = 3

^And^then^the^boy^gave^the^duck^some^bread^.  
CWS = 10

^Her°gave°the^boy^a^pencil^.  
CWS = 5

^She°gave°the^boy^a^pencil^.  
CWS = 7
Rule 4 - Words Must Be Semantically Correct.

^Jamall^went^to^the^library^.  \( CWS = 6 \)
^Jamall^went^too^the^library^.  \( CWS = 4 \)
^My^dad^made^the^treehouse^especially^for^me^.  \( CWS = 9 \)
^My^dad^made^the^treehouse^specially^for^me^.  \( CWS = 7 \)

Rule 5 - Contractions.  Apostrophes are required if the word cannot stand alone without it.

^I^went^to^Sam's^house^.  \( CWS = 6 \)
^I^went^to^Sams^house^.  \( CWS = 4 \)

Rule 6 - Words With Reversed Letters.  Words containing reversed letters are included in the total CWS count unless the reversed letter causes a word to be spelled incorrectly.

^There^was^a^bad^storm^.  \( CWS = 6 \)
^There^was^a^dad^storm^.  \( CWS = 4 \)
^The^dolphin^swam^in^the^sea^.  \( CWS = 7 \)
^The^bolphin^swam^in^the^sea^.  \( CWS = 5 \)

Rule 7 - Story Titles and Endings.  Words written in the title or endings that are capitalized and spelled correctly are included in the total CWS.

^The^Big^Run^  \( CWS = 4 \)
^the^Big^Run^  \( CWS = 2 \)
^The^End^.  \( CWS = 3 \)
^The^end^.  \( CWS = 1 \)
^The^End^  \( CWS = 3 \)

Rule 8 - Abbreviations.  Commonly used abbreviations that are spelled correctly are included in the total CWS count.

^Jan^lives^on^Sunset^Blvd^..  \( CWS = 6 \)
^Mr^Jones^was^late^.  \( CWS = 3 \)
^Mr.^Jones^was^late^.  \( CWS = 5 \)
**Rule 9 - Hyphens.** Hyphenated words are counted in the total CWS count as long as each morpheme separated by hyphen is spelled correctly.

```
^My^sister-in-law^graduated^from^school^.
CWS = 6
```

```
^My°sister-in-law°graduated^from^school^.
CWS = 4
```

**Rule 10 - Numbers.** With the exception of dates, numbers that are not spelled out are incorrect and not included in the total CWS count. One exception would be numbers representing currency. If the currency sign or the currency word is used in conjunction with the number it is counted as correct.

```
^°3°men^ran^.
CWS = 2
```

```
^Three^men^ran^.
CWS = 4
```

```
^°It^°is^°June^°10,^°2004^.
CWS = 6
```

**Rule 11 - Unusual Characters.** Symbols used in writing that are not spelled out are not included in the total CWS count.

```
^°I°won°a°prize°@°the°carnival^.
CWS = 6
```

**Rule 12 - Compound Words.** A compound word written as two words should be counted as one word that has been misspelled.

**Rule 13 - Slang Terms.** Slang terms used in writing are counted as correct if spelled correctly. Text messaging shortcuts are not counted as correct.
An Additional Scoring Option - Total Letters Written - This is a more sensitive measure that may be used for students with limited writing skills (many kindergarten students early in their kindergarten year and older students who struggle significantly with writing) and counts the total number of letters written regardless of spelling or context.

Figure 4 - CBM writing sample scored for Total Letters Written:

```
I woud drink water from the ocean. ....... 27
and I woud eat the fruit off of ............ 24
the trees. Then I woud bilit a .............. 23
house out of trees, and I woud ............. 23
gather firewood to stay warm. I .......... 25
woud try and fix my boat in my ........... 23
spare time. ................................. 09
  Letter Total = 154
```

**Rule 1 - Letter Reversals.** Reversed letters are included in the letter count.

**Rule 2 - Story Titles.** Words written in the title are counted in the total letter count.

**Rule 3 - Abbreviations.** Commonly used abbreviations are included in the total letter count.

**Rule 4 - Numbers.** With the exception of dates, numbers are not counted as letters.

**Rule 5 - Unusual Characters.** Symbols used in writing that are not spelled out are not counted as letters.

**Rule 6 - Hyphens and Apostrophes.** Hyphens and apostrophes are not counted as letters.
Administration:

Considerations –
• Monitor students’ performances. If students stop writing for about 10 seconds before the test is finished, quietly point to their paper and encourage them to keep writing the best story you can. The prompt can be repeated for students should they pause again or stop writing.
• Do not answer questions such as “How do I spell the word….?” Do not provide corrections. Examiner talk should be kept to a minimum.

Standardized Directions –
1. Provide students with a pencil and sheet of lined paper.
2. Say these specific directions to the students: “You are going to write a story. First, I will read a sentence, and then you will write a story that tells what happens next. You will have 1-minute to think about what you will write and 3 minutes to write your story. Remember to do your best, not fastest, work. If you don’t know how to spell a word, you should guess. Are there any questions? (Pause). Put your pencils down and listen.
   For the next minute, think about …. (insert story starter)
3. After reading the story starter, begin your stopwatch or timer and allow 1 minute for students to think. After 30 seconds say, “You should be thinking about...(insert story starter).
4. At the end of 1 minute say: “Now begin writing.” (restart the stopwatch / timer.)
5. Monitor students’ participation. If individual students pause for about 10 seconds or say they are done before the test is finished, move close to them and say “Keep writing the best story you can.” This prompt can be repeated to students should they pause again.
6. After 90 seconds say: “You should be thinking about...(insert story starter).”
7. At the end of 3 minutes say: “Stop. Put your pencils down.”

If students want to finish their story, it is allowable for them to do so as long as they complete it on a separate sheet of paper.
**ESTIMATED TARGETS BASED ON SELECTED SCORES FROM MULTIPLE RESOURCES** (Best Practices in School Psychology V) These scores represent averages of the selected scores. Use with caution. As we collect data, we will develop local norms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Time of year</th>
<th>TWW</th>
<th>WSC</th>
<th>CWS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>14-20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>12-24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>23-36</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>34-36</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>33-41</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>27-38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>41-46</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39-42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>37-51</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>36-46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>42-57</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>48-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>41-47</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>53-58</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>51-54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>48-51</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>48-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>55-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>59-74</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>54-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>58-67</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>59-67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RECOMMENDED USE OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE CBM SCORES AT EACH GRADE LEVEL FOR BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Recommended scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>TWW (fall) (WSC added as an optional score for winter and a required score for spring)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>TWW &amp; WSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>TWW &amp; WSC (CWS &amp; TWS added as an optional score for winter and a required score for spring)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-12</td>
<td>CWS &amp; TWS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TWS = Total Word Sequence (Add the correct word sequence and incorrect word sequence markings together to get total word sequence.)