

# Screening With Support

Strengthening Family-School Partnerships for Literacy Success



# Welcome!

New dyslexia legislation has placed a stronger emphasis on family engagement, creating both opportunity and challenge. Families often receive screening data without context, which can feel overwhelming or discouraging. Our goal in this session is to bridge that gap, moving schools beyond simply delivering results to creating meaningful dialogue that supports students and builds trust.

We'll unpack what current policies require, especially around universal literacy screeners, and show how schools can meet those mandates while keeping the process human-centered. Instead of leaving families with more questions than answers, we want to equip educators with tools that clarify, simplify, and invite collaboration.

You'll explore practical resources we've developed: flowcharts that make sense of screening systems, conversation guides that reduce overwhelm, and caregiver tools that build understanding. By the end, you'll walk away ready to take small, specific actions that strengthen family-school partnerships and align practice with legislation.

*Rebecca Bush & Randi Stone*



## ABOUT US

Together, we bring decades of experience working with students, families, and educators to make literacy accessible for all learners.

What unites our work is a shared commitment to turning the science of reading into practices that are evidence-based, human-centered, and inclusive.

# From Data to Dialogue

## Your Starting Point

This optional quiz is included as a starting point for your own sensemaking about screeners and data. It's a chance to reflect on your beliefs, experiences, and questions around family communication.

### **How do I feel about universal screeners in my classroom or school?**

- Essential for identifying student needs
- Useful, but not always applied well
- Unclear about their purpose
- Stressful or not very helpful

### **When I share screening data with families, I feel...**

- Confident and prepared
- Somewhat comfortable
- Nervous about overwhelming families
- Avoidant of these conversations

### **In my school, family communication about screeners is...**

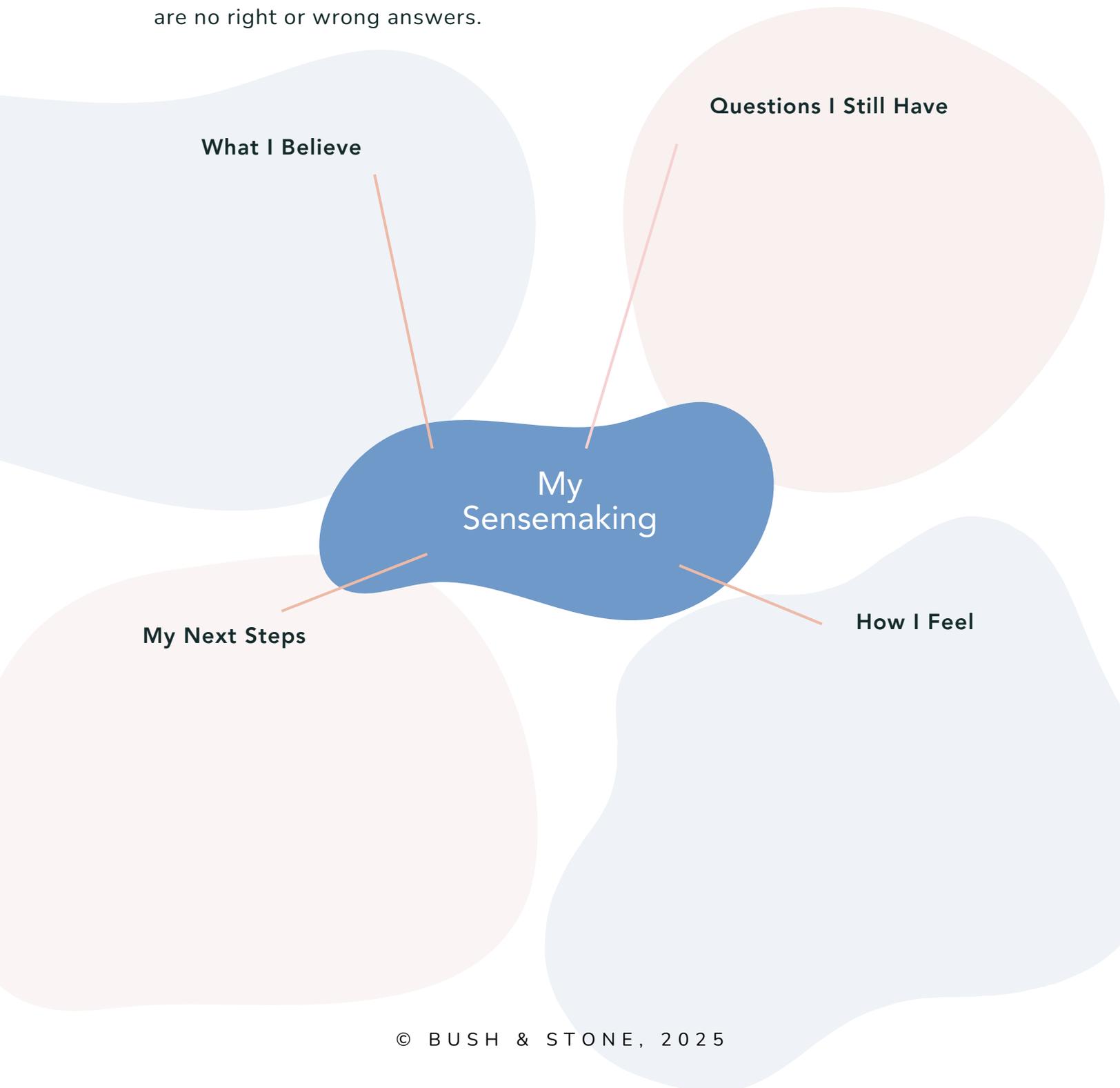
- Consistent and collaborative
- Uneven across teachers/grades
- Limited or unclear
- Mostly left to families

### **Where do I most need support in family communication?**

- Understanding results myself
- Explaining results in plain language
- Reducing overwhelm and building trust
- Connecting to policy requirements

# Sensemaking Your Starting Point

Use this page to jot down your thoughts after completing the optional quiz. Think of it as a mindmap of where you are right now, including your reflections, questions, and ideas for next steps. This is just for you; there are no right or wrong answers.





# From Data to Action: The Educator Sensemaking Cycle

## DATA

- Receive results from universal screening.
- Gather additional context (student history, classroom performance, language considerations).



## SENSEMAKING



- Make sense of the screening tool.
- Interpret results through a science of reading lens.
- Ask: Is this caused by a skill gap, language acquisition, or other factors?
- Ask: Do I know what this gap means? Do I know how to address it or who can help me?
- Involve leadership or specialists if needed.

## ACT



- Implement instructional next steps and accommodations.
- Monitor progress and return to data collection.
- Loop continues as new information refines understanding.

## COMMUNICATE



- Share information with families in plain, empathetic language.
- Encourage families to ask questions and make sense of the data.
- Provide clarity before, during, and after screening.
- Offer follow-up touchpoints for questions and trust-building.



# From Screening to Partnership: A Communication Map

Pre-Screener

1

## EDUCATOR SENSEMAKING: SCREENER



Educators work together to understand what the screener measures, why it's required, and how results will be used. They ask questions and seek input to prepare to communicate.

2

## FAMILY SENSEMAKING: SCREENING TOOLS



Families are informed about what the screener is, why it matters, and how it supports their child's learning. This is a big-picture, parent-friendly framing of what is coming up.

3

## SCREENER



The assessments are administered and data is collected.

4

## EDUCATOR SENSEMAKING: DATA



Teams work to analyze results. They plan instruction and intervention. They also prepare "key takeaways" for families in plain language.

5

## COLLABORATIVE SENSEMAKING WITH FAMILIES



Educators turn data into dialogue by sharing results with empathy, pairing strengths with areas of need. They reduce overwhelm and provide concrete next steps for school and home. They invite family voice and questions to strengthen the partnership.

Post Screener

# From Screening to Understanding

## A Practical Guide

### Pre Screener Sensemaking

Making sense of the literacy screener: the what and why

Educators

Families & Caregivers

What is the screener?  
Why is this screener used?

What inputs (professional development, coaching, resources) guide my understanding of these screeners?

Where can I access those resources?

What inputs (videos, a parent guide, or one-on-one conversations) would help me feel more confident in understanding the purpose of this screener?

Where can I access those resources?

# Pre Screener Sensemaking

Making sense of data: preparing for a collaborative conversation

Educators

Families & Caregivers

Who at the school can explain these results to me in plain language?

Which indicators or patterns are hardest to interpret?

What barriers make it hard to act quickly and/or confidently on the data?

If the student's results are below the expected benchmark, how can I tell whether that reflects a skill gap, language development, or other factor?

What do acronyms like ORF (oral reading fluency) or PA (phonological awareness) mean?

When I get my child's screening results, how do I know what's most important to focus on first?

What questions should I be asking?

## My Notes

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# From Screening to Understanding

## A Practical Guide

### Post Screener Sensemaking

Making sense of the literacy screener: reducing overwhelm

Educators

Families & Caregivers

How am I feeling about this information right now?  
Am I noticing overwhelm or feeling overwhelmed?

I know this is a lot of information, so let's hit pause and check in. How are you feeling right now?

Let's take this one piece at a time so it doesn't feel overwhelming.

I want to highlight the most important takeaway right now before we go into the details.

This feels like a lot to take in. Can we pause for a moment?

I'm trying to process everything. Could you share the most important part first?

How can I clarify what's being shared so that everyone understands?

Can I pause here and check if this part makes sense?

Before I share more, what questions do you have about what we've covered?

I'm feeling a little unsure about what this means. Could you explain that part again?

I understand some of this, but I'm still wondering about \_\_\_\_.

# Post Screener Sensemaking

## Making sense of data: a collaborative conversation

Educators

Families & Caregivers

How can I explain in plain language or understand education jargon?

What is the real world application for this data?

Provide plain-language explanations of key measures through use of mini examples (PSF, LNF, NWF, etc.).

For example NWF:

- **Example:** When your student sees the nonsense word “mig” they read it as /m/-/ĭ/-/g/ = mig.
- **Why it matters:** Nonsense words require students to use their phonics skills to sound them out. They’ve never seen the word before, so it’s impossible for them to recognize it and read it automatically. This shows whether they can apply what they’ve learned about letter-sound relationships to read new words.
- **In plain terms:** This helps me understand if kids can really read by sounding out, not just recognizing words they’ve memorized.

I’m feeling a little unsure about what this part means. Could you explain it again in simpler terms?

If my child is reading nonsense words, why is this important?

Could you give me an example of what this looks like in my child’s reading?

# Post Screener Sensemaking

Making sense of data: a collaborative conversation continued

Educators

Families & Caregivers

How can I explain or understand education jargon through real examples?  
What does this mean about their current performance or future success?

Frame “below expected” scores with context:

- What does this mean now?
- What supports can help?

For example, a student scores below benchmark on NWF on DIBELs at BOY:

- “There’s a lot of jargon here, so let’s walk through it. At the beginning of first grade, we expect students to start blending sounds to read short CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words, like “cat.” The child would sound it out, /c//ă//t/, and then read the word cat.
- A below benchmark score shows that your child needs more practice with connecting letters to sounds and blending them together. With daily, targeted support, like practicing letter sounds, building and reading simple words, and working with decodable books, they can make growth.
- The good news is we caught this now and we know consistent practice should help them catch up quickly and ensures this gap does not widen.

Is a “below average” score a major concern, or is it something that can improve with support?

What does this mean for them as a reader and a student?

What sort of practice will my child get during the school day?

# Post Screener Sensemaking

## Checking in: a collaborative reflection and action plan

Educators

Families & Caregivers

How can we reinforce understanding and partnership?

What are our next steps?

Invite families to share their biggest questions or concerns before closing.

Guide families to focus on what matters most.

Can you share the one part that feels most concerning to you right now?

Highlight priority skills and next steps for the parents.

Suggest home practice routines and share available resources.

Set expectations for progress monitoring and follow-up options (progress checks, resources, next meeting).

We'll monitor progress together and adjust as needed.

This feels like a lot to take in.

What is the most important thing for me to walk away understanding?

What should I expect next?

What specific activities or routines can I do at home to support my child?

How will we know if the first intervention is working and when should we check back in?

Can we schedule a follow-up to see how things are going in a few weeks?

# Post Screener Sensemaking Appendix

## Making sense of data: speaking to a potential diagnosis

Educators

Families & Caregivers

Should we be thinking about a potential diagnosis?  
Is this major cause for concern right now?

Respond to questions about a potential diagnosis:

- I can't diagnose dyslexia, but I can share what the results mean for your child right now. We'll put supports in place, watch progress closely, and if concerns arise or continue, we can talk about the next steps for evaluation.
- It's something we want to pay attention to, but it doesn't mean your child can't catch up. The good news is we have supports we can start right away, and we'll watch progress closely together.

So does my child have dyslexia?

How concerned should I be?

## My Notes

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# Thank you!

## Interested in learning more?

We'd love to continue the conversation, so please reach out to connect with us. We're excited to grow this work together.



## Contact:

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