



Assessment Glossary for Elementary Schools (2019-20)

Below is a brief glossary of assessment terminology to facilitate understanding of the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) testing program as outlined on the Division Testing Schedule. While not exhaustive, it provides a general overview of division-wide tests administered at the elementary level. Prior to test administration, additional information will be available.

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0: The Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) test is the state-designated assessment tool for English learners (EL students). WIDA ACCESS measures oral and written language skills of K-12 EL students. The goal of the test is to monitor students' progress in learning academic English. As communication takes many forms, the test addresses both academic content knowledge and social aspects of language by assessing students' English language proficiency in five academic domains: social and instructional language, English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. There are four components of the test: listening, reading, writing, and speaking.

Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT®): The CogAT® is an abilities test administered to third grade students that measures a child's cognitive skills or the skills involved in "learning how to learn." Cognitive refers to the reasoning process by which knowledge is gained. The CogAT® is a battery of tests that assesses three skill areas: verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal. It measures developed abilities, not innate abilities. Results can help teachers and parents identify young children who have well-developed learning skills, guide teachers in planning instructional activities, and provide insight regarding students who may need help in acquiring and developing the specific skills necessary to be successful in school.

Curriculum Benchmarks: Benchmark assessments are criterion-referenced tests currently administered at the conclusion of the first two grading periods of the academic year in grades 3-12. These assessments are designed to measure students' proficiency levels relative to required curriculum standards at the conclusion of each grading period. The test design for each benchmark addresses those quarterly standards identified in the "Sequence and Pacing" charts included at the beginning of every curriculum guide in the Canvas curriculum and instructional management system. Whenever possible, these curriculum benchmark assessments contain test items designed to reflect item-design features of Virginia Standards of Learning tests. Teachers, administrators, and professional learning communities can use aggregated and disaggregated benchmark assessment data to determine the effectiveness of curriculum pacing, levels of standards proficiency attained by students, and areas where re-teaching or intervention may be needed to help students attain standards mastery each quarter.

Imagine Math: Imagine Math consists of an adaptive benchmark series designed to measure individual student growth and progress from Grade 3 Mathematics through Algebra and Geometry. Results from Imagine Math are used to assess student readiness to learn math using a relatively small number of items. Imagine Math scores are also used in ACPS to support and monitor student progress toward grade-level success and college readiness. Imagine Math scores are one of multiple data points for determining a student's instructional math level.



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Mathematics Diagnostic Assessment (MDA): Mathematics Diagnostic Assessment (MDA) is the grade level inventory assessments adapted from *Math Expressions*. The assessments are designed to measure skill levels by mathematical strand of students entering their respective grades. They also cover a majority of skills required by the 2016 Standards of Learning (SOL) in mathematics. The objective is to measure the level of pre-knowledge students have entering into first and second grade. Results provide instructional information for the teacher to facilitate the planning of a specific and appropriate mathematics program for each student.

Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test® – Third Edition (NNAT3): The NNAT3 is a brief nonverbal measure of general ability. The NNAT3 was designed to utilize progressive matrices to allow for a culturally neutral evaluation of students' nonverbal reasoning and general problem-solving abilities. Nonverbal abilities measures were developed to assess reasoning and problem-solving abilities without requiring the student to read, write, or speak. The NNAT3 measures developed abilities, not innate abilities. Results can help teachers and parents identify young children who have well-developed learning skills, can guide teachers in planning instructional activities, and can provide insight regarding students who may need help in acquiring and developing the specific skills necessary to be successful in school.

Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS™): The PALS™ assessment is the State-provided screening tool for the Virginia Early Intervention Reading Initiative administered in grades K-3. PALS™ measures young children's understanding of fundamentals of literacy, including phonological awareness (awareness of the sounds of spoken words), alphabet knowledge, letter sounds, spelling, word concepts, recognition of words in isolation, and oral passage reading. PALS™ results provide diagnostic information about a child's progress in certain literacy areas.

Reading Inventory™ (RI): The Reading Inventory™ (RI) is a low-stakes screening tool ACPS uses in grades 3-12 to evaluate students' reading ability, monitor student reading progress, set goals for reading growth, and identify students who may need additional diagnostic assessment or supplemental instruction. The RI is taken on a computer and lasts 20-30 minutes. The types of questions a student receives and the results that are reported are based upon the student's grade level and reading level.

Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP): The VKRP is an initiative led by UVA's Curry School of Education and expands the assessment of kindergarteners to include the school readiness domains of math, social skills, and self-regulation. These brief assessments are combined with the already administered PALS literacy results to produce a more comprehensive view of the whole child.

Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments: The Virginia SOL assessments were developed by the State and are required at grades 3 through 8 and for students enrolled in certain high school courses. The SOLs outline the basic knowledge and skills in the four essential academic content areas (English, mathematics, science, and history/social science) that a student should learn as he or she progresses from kindergarten to twelfth grade. The SOL assessments measure students' mastery of the objectives specified in the SOLs. These SOL assessments are administered online and challenge students to apply what they have learned. The SOL assessments include "technology enhanced" items that require students to demonstrate critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, much as they do in response to classroom assignments from teachers. Additional information on the Virginia SOLs can be found on the VDOE website at: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/>.