

What is the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP)? And what is its purpose?

The University of Virginia has partnered with school divisions across the Commonwealth and the Virginia Department of Education to create a common comprehensive assessment. Faculty and researchers at the University of Virginia conducted an examination of a representative sample of Virginia's children entering kindergarten in 2014 and found that 34% arrive unprepared in one or more critical learning domains (literacy, math, self-regulation, and social skills). These results confirmed that Virginia teachers need information beyond the already-assessed literacy skills to meet the instructional needs of entering students. These results were shared with the Virginia State Legislature and the statewide implementation of VKRP began.

The Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP), based at the University of Virginia, expands the assessment of children's early skills in kindergarten to include the domains of math, social skills, and self-regulation. For most divisions, these assessments are combined with assessments of children's literacy skills that are already assessed using the existing Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) test.

What does the new legislation passed by the General Assembly say about participation in the VKRP?

The Virginia General Assembly legislation requires all kindergarten students be assessed using the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) by the end of the 2019-2020 school-year, and annually thereafter ([HB5002, Item 128, H.](#)). The VKRP Team has developed and piloted a spring assessment and will continue to offer professional development sessions on how to effectively use VKRP data to inform instruction. With the funding appropriated over two years, the Virginia Department of Education will coordinate with school divisions and the VKRP Team to efficiently onboard divisions for statewide use of the multi-dimensional assessments across the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years.

Will participating in VKRP require any costs from school divisions?

No. UVA researchers will train teachers and other personnel and provide all of the assessment materials without any cost to school divisions. Divisions should select personnel to be trained as a VKRP Trainer. VKRP will offer Train-the-Trainer sessions to both newly participating and returning school divisions.

What training will teachers receive?

Representatives from each school division are trained by the VKRP staff. Teachers then participate in in-person or online training before the school year begins. These trainings provide an overview of the different VKRP components, including the assessments, reports, and linked instructional resources.

What assessments are utilized?

Students' mathematics skills are assessed using a teacher-administered direct assessment, and their self-regulation and social skills are assessed using an observational rating scale completed by teachers.

The Early Mathematics Assessment System (EMAS) is a direct assessment of early math skills. Based on piloting across the state of Virginia, the EMAS takes 20-25 minutes per student, on average. The assessment is administered via an online interface, and while it is preferred that teachers administer the measure in one sitting, the assessment is designed so that teachers may break from the assessment at any point without losing data.

Social skills and self-regulation skills are measured using the Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS). The CBRS is programmed into an online form and is completed after observing students across several weeks. Generally, teachers need 1–3 minutes to complete the rating scale per student.

When is the VKRP Assessment Window?

VKRP recommends that teachers conduct the mathematics assessments and complete the social skills and self-regulation ratings in the two to three weeks prior to the PALS assessments.

Where will teachers access the online assessments and enter student data?

Teachers will be able to access the VKRP assessments via PALS, using their PALS login information. Additionally, student roster data from the PALS database will automatically be pulled in to VKRP, so teachers will only need to enter it once. It is important to note that since the VKRP assessments pull roster info from PALS, teachers may need to enter their roster information into the PALS site earlier than usual.


How will VKRP help teachers use the data?

Teachers will have access to student- and classroom-level reports on four critical domains of kindergarten readiness: mathematics, self-regulation, social skills, and literacy skills. The reports link teachers to instructional resources they can use for the whole classroom or individual students. The VKRP online system also contains informational documents about interpreting and using the reports.

How can school divisions share information about VKRP assessments with families?

VKRP provides a [family letter](#) to use as a template that is available on the public website, vkrponline.org. School divisions can adapt the letter to meet the needs of their families, such as including information about the division's assessment schedule or local contacts. Teachers also have access to a family report for each student and family-focused resources within their VKRP web portal.

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