



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

DATE: August 14, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Assessment Options for Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) - Early Mathematics Assessment System (EMAS) and Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS)

As noted in [Superintendent's Memo 167-20](#), administration of the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) assessments resumes this fall. The VKRP, implemented by the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia (UVA), in partnership with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), adds measures of mathematics, self-regulation, and social skills to complement Virginia's statewide assessment of literacy skills using the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS). Administration of the VKRP is required for all of Virginia's kindergarteners in both the fall and spring.

Completing a timely and accurate assessment of kindergarten students will be more essential than ever in fall 2020. Early school closures due to COVID-19 prevented administration of spring VKRP assessments and interrupted the formal care and education provided to early learners. The disruption, stress and trauma that children have experienced is likely to have caused negative effects on children's learning and development, thus it is even more critical that a current approximation of students' readiness in the critical areas of literacy, math, self-regulation and social skills at school entry is maintained. VKRP is an essential tool for kindergarten teachers in providing responsive and targeted instruction.

The VDOE recognizes that reopening plans for divisions and programs will be variable and may entail beginning school 100% virtually. **Four scenario-based options for VKRP assessment administration (i.e., the EMAS and CBRS) for the fall assessment term are outlined in this memorandum.** The VKRP assessment term for fall 2020 is from July 15-November 19; details can be found in [Superintendent's Memos 167-20](#) (VKRP), [151-20](#) (PALS K-3) and [173-20](#) (PALS-PreK). As detailed in the scenarios below, the CBRS assessment may be administered based on remote instruction if needed. The EMAS assessment requires an in-person administration. School divisions are encouraged to consider options for providing an in-person administration of this important assessment.

The VKRP team has provided recommendations around adjusting EMAS implementation to meet CDC guidelines. **Additional physical distancing protocols and guidance, including illustrations, are included on pages 9-13 of Attachment A: The VKRP Kindergarten Manual, Fall 2020.** Other COVID-related updates are highlighted in the introductory letter of the manual, which has been sent to division VKRP contacts and is also posted on the VKRP web portal. Divisions and programs should look for notifications regarding updates to the manual as conditions change.

Note on Pre-K Pilot of CBRS: PreK teachers, as noted in [Superintendent's Memo 184-20](#), also have the option to pilot use of the Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS), the assessment tool used to measure self-regulation and social skills, as part of VKRP this school year (2020-2021). These same recommendations apply for the PreK administration of CBRS.

Divisions that decide to participate should select a "PreK VKRP Division Representative" who can reach out to VKRP. **Contact information and participation intent should be submitted via the VKRP-CBRS [PreK Pilot Interest Form](#) by Friday, August 14.** VKRP will provide further information on participation guidelines, training and support.

VKRP Assessment Options- EMAS and CBRS

The following scenarios provide recommendations for divisions dependent on their status in providing in-person instruction.

Note: PALS guidance on assessment options is distinct from the current recommendations for EMAS and CBRS assessment administration. As noted in [Superintendent's Memos 151-20](#) (PALS K-3) and [173-20](#) (PALS-PreK), additional guidance is forthcoming.

Scenario 1: Division is 100% virtual for the full assessment term (7/15-11/19)

- CBRS should be completed for all students after 4-6 weeks of virtual instruction.
- Consider scenarios to safely bring students in for in-person EMAS assessments.
- If it is not possible to assess a student (e.g., the family declines to bring the child in for the assessment or the school system does not have an approach for in-person assessments), teachers should mark a child as "exempt" within the assessment system, but should complete the text box with this information: "Not possible to bring child in for in-person assessment during 100% virtual instruction".

Scenario 2: Division starts at 100% virtual but then moves to in-person instruction before the term is over (11/19)

- CBRS should be completed for all students after 4-6 weeks of virtual instruction.
- *For students assessed before in-person return:* Consider scenarios to safely bring students in for in-person EMAS assessments.
- *For students' assessment after in-person return:* EMAS should be completed in person following guidelines outlined in the manual.
- If it is not possible to assess a student (e.g., the family declines to bring the child in for the assessment), teachers should mark a child as "exempt" within the assessment system, but should complete the text box with this information: "Not possible to bring child in for in-person assessment during 100% virtual instruction".

Scenario 3: Division starts in-person but then moves to 100% virtual before the term is over (11/19)

- CBRS should be completed for all students after 4-6 weeks of in-person/virtual instruction.
- EMAS should be completed following guidelines outlined in the manual. If unable to assess all students prior to virtual instruction, consider scenarios to safely bring students in for in-person EMAS assessments.
- If it is not possible to assess a student (e.g., the family declines to bring the child in for the assessment), teachers should mark a child as "exempt" within the assessment system, but should complete the text box with this information: "Not possible to bring child in for in-person assessment during 100% virtual instruction".

Scenario 4: Division has a mix of students that are in-person and virtual throughout assessment term

- CBRS should be completed for all students after 4-6 weeks of in-person/virtual instruction.
- EMAS should be administered, following guidelines outlined in the manual, to students who are receiving in-person instruction.
- Consider bringing students who are engaging in virtual instruction in for in person EMAS assessments.
- If it is not possible to assess a particular student (e.g., the family declines to bring the child in for the assessment), teachers should mark a child as "exempt" within the assessment system, but should complete the text box with this information: "Not possible to bring child in for in-person assessment during 100% virtual instruction".

If you have questions regarding this VKRP assessment guidance, please contact Tamilah Richardson, Associate Director of Early Childhood Learning, by email at Tamilah.Richardson@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-4781. For questions about the VKRP, please contact Wanda Weaver, VKRP Project Coordinator, by email at vkpr@virginia.edu or by telephone at (866) 301-8278 ext. 1.

JFL/TR/lh

Attachment

- a. [VKRP Kindergarten Manual Fall 2020](#)