



Assessment Glossary for Elementary Schools

Below is a brief glossary of assessment terminology to facilitate understanding of the ACPS assessment program as outlined on the Division Assessment Calendar. While not exhaustive, it provides a general overview of division-wide assessments administered at the elementary level. Prior to 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. Additional information on the ACCESS can be found at: [ACCESS for ELLs | WIDA](#)

Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT®): The CogAT® is an untimed computer-based abilities test administered to second 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 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 to be successful in school.

Science Benchmarks: Science benchmark assessments are criterion-referenced tests currently administered at the conclusion of the first two grading periods of the academic year in grades 3-5. These assessments are designed to measure students' proficiency levels relative to required curriculum standards at the conclusion of each grading period. 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 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.

DESSA Social Emotional Learning Assessment: The DESSA (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment) is a nationally standardized, strength-based behavior rating scale that assesses students' social and emotional competence in grades K-12. The DESSA provides information about eight key social and emotional competencies aligned to the CASEL standards for social emotional learning. Students' scores on the DESSA can be used to identify a child's specific strengths and opportunities for growth in each of the eight social and emotional competency domains as well as inform the delivery of social emotional interventions within a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework. Additional information on the DESSA can be found at: <https://apertureed.com/research/about-the-dessa/>

MAP Growth: MAP Growth is a computer-adaptive assessment administered in grades 2-12 in reading and math to measure achievement and growth and measure students' progress compared to students in the U.S. MAP Growth aims to determine what a student knows and is ready to learn next across reading and math strands. MAP Growth can track students' individual growth over time – from whatever achievement level they are starting and regardless of grade. Teachers can use the score to inform instruction, personalize learning, and monitor the growth of individual students. Principals and administrators can use the scores to see the performance and progress of a grade level, school, or division. Families can use MAP scores to set goals and support students' academic needs. This year, MAP Growth was approved by the VDOE as an alternative to the Virginia Growth Assessment. ACPS will continue to administer MAP Growth in fall, winter, and spring. Additional information on MAP Growth can be found at: <https://www.nwea.org/map-growth/>



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Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test® – Third Edition (NNAT®3): The NNAT®3 is a timed 30-minute nonverbal computer-based abilities test. The NNAT®3 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 NNAT®3 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. A demo of the NNAT®3 assessment can be viewed [here](#).

VALLSS (Virginia Assessment of Language and Literacy Skills Screening System): The VALLSS™ assessment is the State-provided screening tool for the Virginia Early Intervention Reading Initiative administered in grades K-3. VALLS subtests measure decoding (blending sounds together to read words), encoding (spelling words), and the comprehension and use of language. VALLS results provide diagnostic information about a child's progress in certain literacy areas. Additional information on the VALLS can be found at: <https://pals.virginia.edu/>

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. Additional information on the VKRP can be found at: <https://vkrponline.org/>

Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments: The Virginia SOL assessments 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 students should learn as they progress from kindergarten through high school. 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/>.

Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) Integrated Reading and Writing Component: Students in grades 5 and 8 will participate in the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Integrated Reading and Writing Component of the Standards of Learning (SOL). During the Integrated Reading and Writing online test, students will read a nonfiction passage in the content area of either history or science and then answer four to six questions about what they have read. One of these questions will be a writing prompt asking the students to write about what they have read. Additional information including practice items can be found on the VDOE website at: <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/student-assessment/sol-practice-items-all-subjects>.