

Local School Division Student Assessments at Kindergarten Enrollment and During Kindergarten: Current Practices Across Virginia

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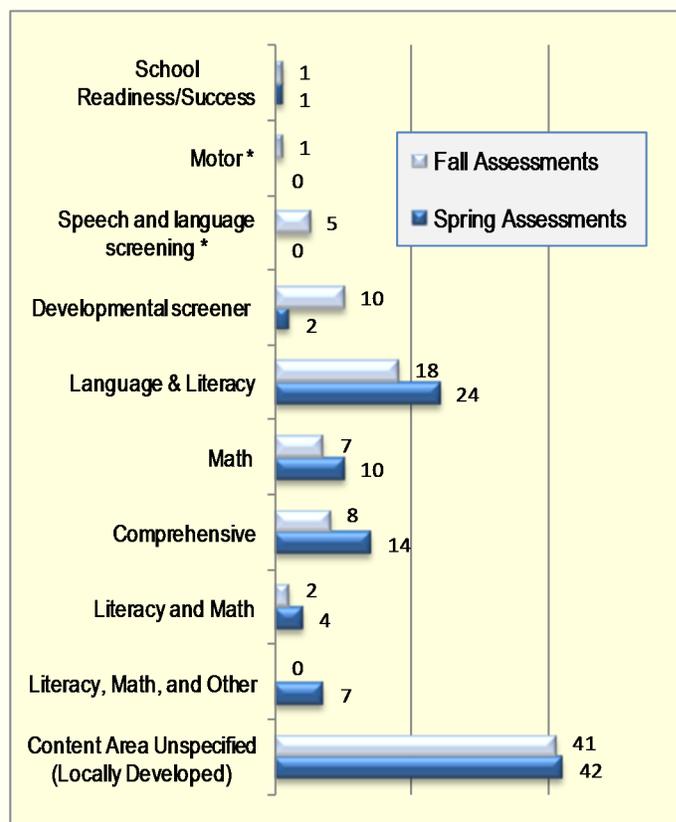
The Commonwealth of Virginia has 132 school divisions that operate under the authority of local school boards. This report describes what divisions are currently collecting by way of child screenings or assessments when children enroll in Kindergarten, in the fall of the Kindergarten year, and in the spring of that academic year. Information was obtained from division personnel through a web-based survey and follow-up telephone contact during the fall term 2009.

Response rates were excellent. One hundred twenty-six school divisions (95.5%) responded, and 78 (59%) sent requested enrollment forms to illustrate how the division collects required information on preschool activities. No differences in response rates were found between the five state regions (Northern, Eastern, Central, Western and Southwestern). The wide distribution and high response rates indicate the survey results are representative of the Commonwealth at the current time.

Findings indicate that all divisions conduct formal student assessments during Kindergarten, and 62 percent of divisions reported having at least one elementary school that conducts enrollment screenings. In Kindergarten, the most common type of screening or assessment concerns literacy; 131 (99%) divisions use the fall and spring Kindergarten version of the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screener (PALS-K). Ten divisions (8%) reported using a separate standardized math assessment. Others used tools that included both literacy and mathematics, or offered comprehensive assessments that may also include science, social studies, and personal/social development. A few divisions reported using types of health or developmental

screeners, typically in the fall and not repeated in the spring. Most of the measures reported, however, tracked student progress from fall to spring.

Types of Assessment Used in Kindergarten, by Frequency



Of the 126 participating school divisions, 62 reported using locally-developed assessments, while another 25 divisions used some type of commercial or research-based assessment measure (besides the PALS-K).

A description of the survey procedure and a list of reported measures is provided on the next page.

Survey Procedure

The survey was created by Project Child HANDS team members, with input provided by Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) personnel. A memo from the Superintendent of Education (#218-09) was sent to the superintendent of each school division in Virginia in August of 2009, requesting survey participation. The survey took approximately five minutes and was completed online or by telephone. School divisions were also asked to send a copy of their kindergarten enrollment forms to learn what kind of information regarding preschool experience is collected. (Beginning in 2007-2008, the VDOE required all school divisions to collect information on preschool experience of entering kindergarteners.) Survey results will be used in the development of an interactive, web-based data system for Virginia's public early childhood programs and initiatives.

Category placement

Assessments reported by school divisions were placed into mutually-exclusive categories to represent their content area.

The content area categories included:

- School Readiness/Success
- Motor development/performance
- Speech and language screening
- Health exam (Vision, height, weight, hearing etc.)
- Developmental screener (Disability and general developmental tests)
- Language Arts (Literacy, Reading, Spelling, Writing)
- Mathematics
- Comprehensive academic progress
- Literacy & Mathematics
- Literacy & Mathematics & Other
- Content area unspecified (locally-developed assessments in which content area was not identified)

Standardized Assessments Used by Virginia School Divisions during Kindergarten

Brigance
 Daberon Screening for School Readiness
 Denver Developmental Profile II
 Developmental Spelling Analysis
 Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning
 Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills
 Developmental Reading Assessment
 Group Mathematics Assessment & Diagnostic Evaluation
 Group Reading Assessment & Diagnostic Evaluation
 Measures of Academic Progress
 Metropolitan Readiness
 Otis-Lennon School Ability Test
 Qualitative Reading Inventory
 Reading Mastery Assessment
 Rigby
 Running records
 Scott Foresman Reading Assessment
 Scott Foresman Reading Placement Test
 Scott Foresman Reading Street
 Stanford 10 (Achievement Test Series)
 Stanford Reading First
 STAR Early Learning Literacy Assessment
 Virginia Test for Higher Standards - English
 Virginia Test for Higher Standards - Math
 Title I Matrix Eligibility