



#299-21

**Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #299-21**

DATE: October 22, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Virtual Instruction and VKRP Assessments**

The Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) is the Commonwealth's statewide school readiness assessment system. Teachers use VKRP assessment data to understand students' foundational skills in the fall and spring of each school year. In 2021-2022, the VKRP is required for all kindergarten students in the fall and spring, and is also required for Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) four-year-olds in the fall and spring. This memo provides information regarding administering the VKRP in virtual settings for the 2021-2022 year.

Teachers use VKRP to assess mathematics skills (measured by the Early Mathematics Assessment System (or EMAS)), self-regulation and social skills (measured by the Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS)), and literacy skills (assessed by the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)). Having complete VKRP assessment data on all students in the fall and the spring will be critical to understanding the impact of COVID-19 on young children's learning and development and in supporting recovery.

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is committed to ensuring that every child required to take the VKRP assessments has access, regardless of instructional settings. Although VKRP was originally designed to be administered in-person, the following adjustments have been made for each of the assessments that are included in the VKRP.

Administering VKRP for Students that are Attending a Fully Virtual Instructional Setting

Students who are attending a fully-virtual instructional setting must still be assessed on the PALS, EMAS, and CBRS in the fall and in the spring of the 2021-2022 school year. If a student is enrolled in a fully-virtual school (such as Virtual Virginia, STRIDE, or division-supported virtual academies), a partnership between the regional school assigned to the child (enrolling school) and the virtual school will be necessary. The enrolling school division is still responsible for ensuring that the student is placed on the PALS classroom rosters at the start of school, even though they will not attend physically within their building. Divisions may determine how they roster students attending a virtual school: students may be placed on a roster at a brick-and-mortar school, a division's virtual academy school, or a special situation school. Please contact the [PALS Office](#) for assistance with setting up a special situation school.

For PALS and EMAS: Enrolling school teachers (teachers from the local public school) or designated testing personnel are required to complete the EMAS as well as the PALS for fully virtual students.

Remote or in-person administration options, as outlined in the VKRP Teacher Manuals (accessed within the VKRP web portal Assessment Guides tab-Essential Documents) and on the PALS website (via the Resources tab-Remote Administration Materials), may be utilized for EMAS and PALS. Division leaders will need to coordinate when assessments will occur, in accordance with the [2021-2022 VKRP and PALS Assessment Calendar](#).

For the CBRS: Virtual teachers, who will have more frequent interactions with virtual students, will complete the Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS) to assess students' self-regulation and social skills. **The CBRS should be completed after 4-6 weeks of virtual instruction.** This will require coordination between the enrolling school and virtual school. Division leaders will also need to communicate with virtual teachers when assessments will occur.

Sharing Data: Virtual programs and enrolling school divisions/teachers are expected to share information on students' skills to support students' growth throughout the year.

These [guidance procedures](#) should be followed to gather and share information on students participating in instruction via virtual platforms.

Having VKRP and PALS data on students' skills is critical this year in order to provide appropriate support for students. Thank you for approaching this effort with a collaborative spirit.

For more information

Visit vkrponline.org to learn more about VKRP or contact Wanda Weaver, VKRP Director of Outreach and Support at vkrp@virginia.edu or by telephone at (866) 301-8278 ext. 1. Contact PALS at pals@virginia.edu or by telephone at (888) 882-7257. For more general inquiries on VKRP as the state's readiness assessment system, contact Dr. Tamiyah Richardson, Director of Early Childhood Learning at Tamiyah.Richardson@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-4781.

JFL/TR/lh