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Vision Statement

In Maryland, early childhood professionals share accountability for the results of providing early learning opportunities. Any assessment, determining such results, is rooted in each practitioner’s interaction with the young child as a learner. This relationship provides for an in-depth understanding of the strengths and needs of individual learners. The assessment of young children should promote learning, not simply measure it. Ready for Kindergarten (R4K): Maryland’s Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System, which includes the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), provides a framework to assess what students should know and be able to do when they enter kindergarten to ensure they are ready to learn. The KRA will provide data that teachers can use to differentiate instruction and ensure quality early learning opportunities for children by building on the strengths of every child.

Specifically, the KRA will support and advance children’s early learning and academic achievement by:

- Informing prior education and care stakeholders of early learning standards and experiences that promote kindergarten readiness;

- Identifying individual children’s needs, gaps in foundational learning and providing necessary supports to children and teachers;

- Assisting teachers in data-driven instructional decision making at the child and classroom level; and

- Providing families with information about their children’s learning and development;
Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)

Assessment of Kindergarten Students

The KRA, part of the R4K: Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System, is designed to:

• measure entering students’ skills and abilities in relation to end-of-prekindergarten standards;
• identify individual children’s needs, gaps in foundational learning and necessary supports;
• assist teachers with data-driven instructional planning, intervention, and enrichment;
• inform decision-makers about professional development needs;
• inform prior early learning and development stakeholders; and
• provide families with information about their children’s learning and development.

The KRA replaced the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) kindergarten assessment beginning in the 2014-15 school year. It provides information about what foundational knowledge and skills children have and can demonstrate as they transition into kindergarten and what supports they will need to actively and effectively engage in and benefit from classroom instruction. The KRA includes items that measure school readiness indicators in the developmental content areas of Social Foundations, Language and Literacy, Mathematics, and Physical Well-Being and Motor Development.

The KRA is a statewide assessment that will be administered to all kindergarten students, therefore, parents cannot opt their child out of participating in the KRA. The KRA must be completed annually for all entering kindergarten students beginning the first day of school and ending no later than the first day of November.

The KRA results shall not be used to prohibit a child from entering kindergarten. The results of the KRA shall be recorded in each student’s cumulative record. The KRA assessment information must be shared with the parents or guardians of the students.
KRA Online Site, Communities, and Resources

Ready for Kindergarten Online

The Ready for Kindergarten Online site (Maryland.kready.org) is the enterprise system for KRA data collection, user management, reporting, and professional development. The website is designed to be used by teachers to browse the assessment items and supporting materials, enter assessment scores and comments for each child, and access embedded professional development dashboards and reports. Parents and other people interested in learning more about the KRA and the Ready for Kindergarten Early Comprehensive Assessment System can go to the site: http://pd.kready.org/r4kmaryland

Technology Specifications

There are two main technical categories of the KRA which include required components for teachers and their use in the classroom with students: types of browsers and end-user devices.

What browser can be used with the Ready for Kindergarten Online?

- Chrome
- Firefox
- Internet Explorer 9+
- Safari

It is recommended that the most up-to-date version available be used to ensure that everything on the site works smoothly and that you enable auto-updates for Chrome & Firefox. If this is not possible, it is recommended that the version being used has been updated in the past 12 months.

What devices can I use?

Accessing the Ready for Kindergarten Online system:

- Desktop/laptop computers - The Ready for Kindergarten Online is a browser-based system. The main delivery platform is desktop/laptop computers, PC Windows, or Mac OSX for Apple
devices. The version of the Operating System is less important than the version of the browser as previously described.

- iPad and Android tablet devices - The Ready for Kindergarten Online is functional on recent generations of iPad and Android tablet devices. Depending on the device, and the size and resolution of its screen, there may be layout variations.

- Smart phones - The Ready for Kindergarten Online is not optimized or supported for phones; however, it may be functional via the phone’s browser.

- Hardware specifications are determined by the browser being used. The Ready for Kindergarten Online is not highly memory or graphics intensive and should work on any device running a supported browser (generally any computer purchased within 5 - 7 years with updated browsers).

Accessing the KRA App:

- The KRA app, available for both iOS and Android, contains items that can be delivered and scored electronically. The desktop version of the KRA app for Windows and Mac will be available to download and install.

MSDE recommends that school districts only use end user devices that are owned or leased by the school system.

Test Administration and Training

All public elementary schools in Maryland are responsible for administering the KRA. It is required that the KRA be administered by test administrators who are employees of the school district and hold a license/certificate/permit issued by the MSDE. Teachers must receive training on the KRA and take the content and simulator assessments (receiving a score of at least 80% on each one). Teachers who completed training during the first year of administration do not need to complete the training again. Instead, these teachers will complete a brief online refresher training prior to administering the KRA. In addition to general education kindergarten teachers, specialized educators, English speakers of other languages (ESOL) teachers, and other certified teachers that have met all the requirements of training are eligible to administer the KRA. Such fully trained teachers may assist in administering the KRA. A new feature of the R4K Online system allows multiple users to have access to the class roster of the kindergarten teacher of record. For example, a trained special educator or ESOL teacher, having separate login credentials, may access a kindergarten’s class roster to administer assessment items. The local school system will determine the protocol for allowing multiple users and will create accounts for the
multiple users. The teacher of record will still assume overall responsibility for assuring that the reported data is an accurate representation of that student.

The required KRA training consists of the following components:

- 2 days of training (face-to-face, online or blended)
- Additional online training modules as required by the school district
- Access to the Maryland.kready.org site
- Successful completion of all content and simulator assessments to be certified to administer the KRA to students (passes assessments with a score of 80 percent or better).

Teachers who successfully completed KRA training during the first year of KRA administration in 2014 will only be required to complete the following:

- A brief online refresher module
- Successful completion of a content assessment based on the refresher module

It is important to note that the following individuals may not serve as KRA administrators:

- Students
- Student teachers
- Classroom assistants, or
- Parents

Substitute teachers (i.e., long-term substitute) may serve as a KRA administrator if the school system defines the substitute teacher as an employee. However, any teacher who will assess children using the KRA must participate in the required Maryland State Department of Education training.

Assistance with proctoring may be given in certain circumstances when students are using the app to respond to virtual performance items on the KRA (17 items on version 1.5 of the KRA). The app provides directions to the student and scores the virtual performance items. Therefore, the person proctoring a student (s) plays a limited role. A teacher assistant (school system employee) or a teacher may serve as a proctor if they receive the required training and sign a nondisclosure agreement. The person must receive and review proctoring instructions (available to teachers on the Ready for Kindergarten Online site). The administration of the virtual items must occur in the room with the teacher of record in the event additional support is needed. A teacher eligible to administer the KRA accesses the
KRA app with his or her login credentials and then gives the end user device to the person serving as the proctor or directly to the student(s).

**Local early childhood coordinators/supervisors** are responsible for ensuring that all administrators and proctors of the assessment complete the required training session and that they become aware of and adhere to the policies and procedures as outlined in this *Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Administration Guide*. Responsibilities include establishing a protocol with the school district and individual schools for the recordkeeping of certificates of training and nondisclosure agreements for KRA administrators and proctors.

**Testing Window**
The KRA is administered anytime between the beginning of school and November 1st. All scores must be entered into the Ready for Kindergarten Online prior to the end of the testing window (midnight on November 1). The system **will not** be accessible for entering scores after this time.

**Distribution of Item Types on the KRA**
The KRA is designed to provide a measurement of school readiness in four domains by utilizing both direct (selected-response and performance tasks) and indirect (observational) item types that were developed to be explicitly linked to a particular standard or group of standards. The following table provides a breakdown of the types of assessment items on the KRA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Selected Response</th>
<th>Performance Task</th>
<th>Observational Rubric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Foundations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and Literacy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Well-Being and Motor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Administration of Selected-Response and Performance-Task Items
Teachers are encouraged to plan lessons that intentionally include opportunities for assessing certain items in a small or large group setting. Selected-response and performance-task items require the teacher and the student to directly interact (students using the app would follow the directions on the app). The testing area should be prepared prior to item administration. The student should sit or stand in a position that allows the teacher to easily observe the student and that allows the student to easily view the Test Item Images on the end-user device or from the paper booklet. The teacher must follow the directions exactly as written in the *Teacher Administration Manual*. The scripted directions are formatted to guide the teacher through the administration and to help ensure proper testing procedures. Below are examples and descriptions of the two different types of formatting used in the *Teacher Administration Manual*:

**SAY**  Text printed in bold.  Read aloud to students only what is marked with “SAY” and printed in bold type.

*Text printed in italics.*  Information in italics should not be read aloud.

Administration of Virtual Selected-Response and Performance-Task Items on the App
The KRA app allows students to answer certain selected-response and performance-task items (17 items for the 2015 administration). The teacher has more flexibility in the administration of such items since student directions and scoring are built into the app.

Administration of Observational-Rubric Items
Individual and team planning is encouraged to develop lessons that purposely include opportunities for assessment items to be observed. Observational-rubric items do not require the teacher and the student to interact directly. Teachers should review the observational-rubric items in advance of the testing window, to become familiar with the skills and behaviors that are being assessed. Teachers should be familiar with observational techniques in the classroom, including feasible formats of documentation. Every student should be observed in the classroom and other school settings and scored accordingly, based on the descriptors in each observational rubric, for each item. It is optional for teachers to record the date and location of the observation in the comment box.
Observational evidence is best recorded during live classroom activities. However, if a teacher needs additional rubric scoring time, video and photographs evidence may be obtained and scored later with the following conditions being met. Teachers must attain approval of school building administrator.

**Video and Photographs**

Video recording or photographing of everyday activities may be used as a method for gathering evidence of skills and behaviors that would be scored as observational items.

It is not permissible to video tape or photograph KRA assessment items, materials or scripted directions from the Teacher Administration Manual.

The LEA must obtain family/parent permission before any photography or recording occurs. It is the responsibility of the LEA to ensure that appropriate family/parent permission is obtained and documented prior to the photography or video recording for recording, storage, and distribution of video evidence, as applicable.

**Materials Required for Administration (for test kit users)**

Specific materials are needed for the administration of the KRA. Every teacher who is trained and will assess children using the KRA will be given a test kit (i.e., a bag with the materials) that contains the following required materials:

- *Teacher Administration Manual* (TAM);
- *Test Item Images*;
- Manipulatives (teachers should provide each student with a blank sheet of paper for the writing tasks in the Language and Literacy section);
- 2 Allowable Supports *Quick Guides*; and
- *KRA Administration Guide* (i.e., this document);

Score sheets or additional supporting materials can be downloaded from the Ready for Kindergarten Online system, or Maryland.kready.org. **Note: Teachers are using end-user devices in addition to a test kit, unless an LEA directs teachers to only use the test kit.**
Scores for the KRA

All scores for the KRA items must be entered into Ready for Kindergarten Online prior to the end of the administration window (by midnight on November 1st). Assessment items will by default be marked “Needs to be Administered” when the teacher opens the system. All students must have a recorded response, either a score or “Not Scorable” for every assessment item on the KRA. However, in the unlikely event that a student is not physically present for an extended period of time (i.e., unexpectedly stops attending school without being formally withdrawn), the assessment will be considered incomplete due to the remaining items not being scored (those items would continue to display “Needs to be Administered”).

The KRA is an assessment of what children should already know, understand, and can do when they enter kindergarten. It is not an assessment of what a child will learn. Therefore, test administrators may not change assessment item scores during the testing window with few exceptions.

❖ Scores can only be changed for the following reasons:

• A student’s behavior shows signs of sickness or extreme tiredness on the days when he or she is scheduled to be assessed and is expected not to perform to their true ability;

• Immediately during or after assessing and entering a score for a student, the teacher observes that a student is displaying unusual behaviors which indicate that the child is experiencing stress (e.g., student is responding to another child’s verbal or physical actions) or the test administration is compromised or unduly interrupted;

• Sometimes the teacher may not observe a specific skill or behavior of an observational item. This does not necessarily indicate that a student cannot demonstrate the skill. Teachers are encouraged to use multiple opportunities for observing students before making a final score (as long as the observed skill has not been taught by the teacher).

❖ Scores cannot be changed for the following reasons:

• A student appears to have gained the assessed skill through learning opportunities in the kindergarten classroom anytime from the beginning to the end of the assessment window (e.g., cannot assess the child a second time to improve his or her score).
In certain instances, a student with disabilities or an English learner may receive a “Not Scorable” for an assessment item if that student is unable to access it with allowable supports. Students receiving “Not Scorable” will not receive an overall score, but will receive scores for the domains that do not have any “Not Scorable” responses. Information about “Not Scorable” is located elsewhere in this document.

**Students Who Transfer**

The guidelines for administration of the assessment with students who transfer are as follows:

- If a student transfers from another Maryland public school and enrolls in the second school after September 30th, what remains of the assessment should be completed by the new teacher.

- If a student is new to Maryland or attended a private school and enrolls in kindergarten after September 30th, that student is exempted and will not be assessed. All of the items will be left “Needs to be Administered” and the information will not be included in the KRA data collection.

**Allowable Supports for Test Administration**

The KRA was designed to be accessible to all children, including children with a wide range of background experiences and developmental needs (i.e. children with disabilities or English learners). The *Guidelines on Allowable Supports for Administration of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment* document, which is located in the Maryland.Kready.org and as *Quick Guides* in booklet form in each testing kit, provides a list of universally designed allowances to be used, if needed, with all students participating in the KRA.

If the universally designed allowances are not sufficient to enable children with disabilities and English learners to demonstrate their skills and knowledge, the teacher should use the appropriate *Level the Field* supports described in the *Guidelines on Allowable Supports for Administration of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment* document and testing kit “*Quick Guides.*”
Test Security (applies to selected response and performance task items only)

All KRA assessment items and materials are subject to the test security provisions of COMAR 13A.03.04.05. The test administrators, i.e., teachers of record, must be certified for the KRA administration as described in Test Administration and Training (see above). They are bound to abide by the regulations governing test security violation, namely any violation whereby test administrators:

(a) Give students access to test items through repeated practice prior to testing for scoring;
(b) Give unauthorized individuals (e.g., parents) access to test items or materials;
(c) Copy, reproduce, use, or otherwise disclose in any manner inconsistent with the test security regulations any portion of test materials, including recorded evidence of student test performance;
(d) Provide clues or answers orally or by other means unless specified as appropriate in the Guidelines on Allowable Supports for Administration of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment;
(e) Coach students during testing by giving them answers to the test questions or altering the students’ responses to test items;
(f) Fail to keep test materials under lock and key on school;
(g) Fail to properly monitor test administration, including permitting inappropriate collaboration among peers;
(h) Participate in, direct, assist, or fail to report test security violations;
(i) Fail to complete all test items by the specified closing time and date, i.e., midnight November 1.

Test administrators shall advise their classroom assistants about the test security regulations and set of violations.

Breaches of test security must be reported to the school test coordinator, school principal, and local accountability coordinator. The LAC shall inform the early learning coordinator/supervisor about any test security violation and submit a Testing Incident Report Form to MSDE’s Test Security Officer.

Students Identified as English Learners

Note: Limited English Proficient (LEP), English Language Learners (ELL), Dual Language Learners (DLL) and English Learners (EL) are terms used to refer to students whose primary language is not English at home and whose level of English proficiency might not be at the proficiency level needed to fully engage in the KRA. In this document, the term English Learner or EL will be used.
Identification of EL

If a language other than or in addition to English is spoken in the home, the student’s English proficiency is measured based on the results of the listening and speaking portions of the KWAPT® created by the WIDA© Consortium. The table below shows how the KWAPT raw score relates to the Oral Proficiency Score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>Oral Proficiency Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 10</td>
<td>Low – Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 18</td>
<td>Mid – Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 – 28</td>
<td>High – Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 – 30</td>
<td>Exceptional – Not considered an English learner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The most recent English language proficiency assessment data should be used to determine the level of support a child needs.
- Typically, the KWAPT is the screening instrument used for kindergarten students as they are registered in order to identify students who potentially qualify for ESOL services in kindergarten.
- If a student attended a public PreK during the previous school year, they may have been screened during the spring of their PreK year.
- If a student is repeating kindergarten, the most recent ACCESS for ELs assessment results would be used rather than the KWAPT results from the previous year.
- If you do not know who your ESOL teacher or contact is, check with your school’s principal or testing coordinator or the person in your school system’s ESOL Office.
- ESOL teachers assigned to an elementary school should collaborate with the school’s staff to schedule the listening and speaking portions of the KWAPT for potential English learners. Meet with the kindergarten teacher(s) in order to share the KWAPT results.

Allowable Supports for EL

The MSDE believes that the instructional staff who work with the ELs are in the best position to make judgments about which allowable supports are appropriate for these students. There are no special test formats for the KRA. Only students who have been identified as ELs using the identification requirements described above (i.e., conversion table of the KWAPT) may be allowed additional supports.
on the KRA. The Guidelines on Allowable Supports for Administration of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment document, which is located on Maryland.kready.org and also provided as a Quick Guide in booklet form in each testing kit, provides a list of universally designed allowances to be used, if needed, with all students participating in the KRA. If the universally designed allowances are not sufficient to enable ELs to demonstrate their skills and knowledge, the teacher should use the appropriate Level the Field supports provided. **Note:** Level the Field supports should be considered for each student and each assessment item separately. It is possible that a student may need the support with some but not all items.

Some items may not be within the student’s abilities given any allowable support. Therefore, the item is “Not Scorable.” “Not Scorable” is defined as the teacher being unable to score the item because the student could not access it given allowable supports. Teachers are encouraged to look for the skill in naturally occurring routines and activities, and record information/observations useful for instructional decision-making. A score of “0” indicates the student was able to access the item, but did not demonstrate the skill according to the scoring criteria. “Not Scorable” and a score of “0” are fundamentally different.

When following the decision-making process for administering the KRA to ELs, there may be instances when the teacher is advised to pause the administration of a domain. This is advised when the student is not able to access three items in a domain given allowable supports (i.e., three items are “Not Scorable;” *not necessarily three consecutive items*). In such cases, the test administrator should review the remaining items in the domain with the ESOL teacher and determine whether or not any of them could be administered with allowable supports (e.g., UDAs or Level the Field supports) that would result in a score. If it is determined that the student should not continue to be assessed in that domain, the remaining unanswered items should be marked as “Not Scorable” (do **not** leave as “Needs to be Administered”) in that domain. **It is important to remember that every assessment item must have a recorded response, either a score or “Not Scorable.”**

**Assessment of ELs**

All children entering Kindergarten in Maryland must take the KRA, including ELs whose primary language is not English. An ESOL teacher can administer the KRA only if they have received training by the local school system’s staff that has been certified by MSDE as a KRA trainer. Test administrators
must qualify by scoring 80% or better on the online PD assessments or complete the refresher training if training was completed the previous year.

Guidelines on Translation for the KRA

Sight translation and interpretations are not allowed as Level the Field supports. If the test administrator speaks the student’s home language, they cannot translate words for the student or allow the student to respond in their native language.

Students with Disabilities

Identification of Students with Disabilities

The MSDE requires that all students, including students with disabilities, be included in the KRA. For the KRA, a student with a disability is defined as a student with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a Section 504 plan. Expectations for students with disabilities participating in the KRA have been established with consideration for their unique developmental needs and levels of school readiness.

Allowable Supports for Students with Disabilities

Universally Designed Allowances (UDAs) encompass the range of actions, material presentations, procedures, and settings that are acceptable for use with all students when administering the KRA. In order to be developmentally responsive to the specific needs of the targeted age group for the KRA, a combination of accessibility features for young children and traditional supports for specialized populations allow for the assessment of students with varying learning and behavioral characteristics with this instrument. This philosophy not only maximizes participation, but also represents developmentally appropriate practice for the age group participating in the KRA.

Even with the use of UDAs, the student’s instructional team may find it necessary to provide additional individualized supports to students with disabilities. For the purposes of the KRA administration, the use of such individualized strategies has been identified as Level the Field supports. Level the Field supports provide equal access and opportunity for participation in the assessment without substantially altering what the student is expected to do or impacting the validity or reliability of assessment results. Level the Field supports are unique to students with disabilities and ELs.
The UDAs and Level the Field supports are to be utilized to provide additional access to each item. However, if a student is unable to access a particular item without the use of the modifications to item delivery or script (e.g., including the use of visual supports to enhance comprehension of an item) the item should be regarded as a “Not Scorable.”

The supplementary aids, services, and other supports that are identified in the student’s IEP or Section 504 plan and provided in the classroom or other education-related settings on a regular basis should be used, as appropriate, when administering the KRA. When determining which supports or changes to implement with a student with a disability during KRA administration, the student’s instructional team members (e.g., specialized educators, related service providers) should first thoroughly familiarize themselves with the student’s individual learning characteristics, including a detailed review of the student’s IEP or Section 504 plan and previous assessment results. After considering the student’s characteristics, the team should look at each individual KRA item. It is critical that teachers note in detail on the Student Details Page of the online data capture system which supplementary aids, services, and other supports, as well as Level the Field supports were implemented during item administration.

**Assessment of Students with Disabilities**

Some items may not be within the student’s abilities given any allowable support. Therefore, the item is “Not Scorable.” “Not Scorable” is defined as the teacher being unable to score the item because the student could not access it given allowable supports. Teachers are encouraged to look for the skill in naturally occurring routines and activities, and record information/observations useful for instructional decision-making. A score of “0” indicates the student was able to access the item, but did not demonstrate the skill according to the scoring criteria. “Not Scorable” and a score of “0” are fundamentally different.

When following the decision-making process for administering the KRA to a student with a disability, there may be instances when the teacher is advised to pause the administration of a domain. This may apply, for example, when the student is not able to access three items in a domain given allowable supports (i.e., three items are “Not Scorable;” *not necessarily three consecutive items*). In such cases, the student’s instructional team should review the remaining items in the domain and determine whether or not any of them could be administered with allowable supports (e.g., UDAs or Level the Field supports) that would result in a score. If it is determined that the student should not continue to be assessed in that domain, the remaining unanswered items should be marked as “Not Scorable” (do *not* leave as “Needs to
It is important to remember that every assessment item must have a recorded response, either a score or “Not Scorable.”

Teachers are not advised to pause administration of a domain after three scores of “0” unless there are other reasons to do so (e.g., student fatigue, scheduling/time constraints). KRA online modules can be made available for the student’s instructional team to access for additional information related to administration procedures and the Guidelines for Allowable Supports document.

Test Administrator and Allowable Supports
The Guidelines on Allowable Supports for Administration of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment document and the Quick Guide are two resources that provide information related to administration procedures for students with disabilities. The KRA online modules provide training on these documents.

Help Desk and Technical Assistance Protocol
If a teacher needs technical assistance to use the Ready for Kindergarten Online system or KRA app, there will be a 24/7 help desk available. The contact information for the help desk can be found on the homepage of http://Maryland.kready.org. If a teacher has any assessment or content questions, the teacher can use the FAQ and resources available as part of the training sites, or the teacher may contact the trainer or local early childhood supervisor.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 1</td>
<td>The Ready for Kindergarten Online system, KRA app, and KRA professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>development (i.e., new teacher training and refresher module) are available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>District data managers are responsible for creating all accounts to the Ready</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for Kindergarten Online system. The system will send an email to individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>when their accounts are created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August (prior to beginning</td>
<td>District data managers are loading teacher, student, and enrollment data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of school)</td>
<td>into the Ready for Kindergarten Online system and are responsible for keeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that data as up-to-date as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning of School –</td>
<td>Teacher KRA Assessment Window.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1st</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1st</td>
<td>All assessment data entered into the Ready for Kindergarten Online system by 11:59 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Individual student reports will be available to be printed by teachers and shared with parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February/March</td>
<td>MSDE, Division of Early Childhood Development presents “Children Entering School Ready to Learn” report to the Maryland General Assembly and State Board of Education. Local school systems and the early childhood community receive copies of the report at this time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May/June</td>
<td>Share information on school year progress with first grade teachers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If a student transfers to another Maryland kindergarten class after September 30th, but has an assessment that has been started and is on file, what remains of the assessment should be completed by the new teacher.

**Ready for Kindergarten (R4K): Maryland’s Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System (EC-CAS)**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE KRA**

This document covers questions about the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), which is part of Maryland’s Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System. The other features of the system are: (1) Early Learning Assessment (birth to 4-72 months), (2) online reporting on students’ skills and knowledge, (3) professional development resources, and (4) measures of student growth (to be developed for Version 2.0). Another document, *Guidelines on Allowable Supports for Administration of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment* has essential information about universally designed allowances, Level the Field supports, and the decision-making process for English learners (ELs) and for children with disabilities. The Guidelines are posted on the Ready for Kindergarten Online site (www.Maryland.kready.org) for teachers and trainers. A KRA kit, given to every kindergarten teacher, contains the following six items: *Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Administration Guide, Teacher Administration Manual, test item images, manipulatives, and Quick Guides (two) on allowable supports for children with disabilities and ELs. The FAQ below is divided into five sections: Assessment, Technology, Implementation, Special Education, and English Learners.*
**ASSESSMENT**

*Who is assessed with the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment?*

Maryland is requiring all kindergarten students in public schools to participate.

*What is the purpose of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)?*

The purpose of the KRA is to support and advance children’s early learning and academic achievement. The data collected will be used to:

- Inform prior education and care stakeholders
- Identify individual children’s needs and direct teachers recommended supports for children
- Assist teachers in data-driven instructional decision making at the school and classroom level
- Provide families with information about their children’s learning and development

*What type of assessment formats are teachers using?*

There are three item types on the KRA: selected response, performance tasks, and observation. Teachers have the ability to add comments to document students’ growth in learning and to facilitate communication with parents and families.

*How many standards will be assessed in the KRA and in the Formative Assessment?*

The KRA assesses 26 standards in four of the seven domains of learning (see below). The standards in the Science, Social Studies and Fine Arts domains are included in the Early Learning Assessment. The number of standards being assessed is weighted toward Social Foundations, Language and Literacy, and Mathematics.

*When is the KRA administered?*

An assessment window begins at the beginning of the school year and closes November 1st.

*With a seven to eight week assessment window for the KRA, does it matter when teachers assess the students?*

The assumption of an assessment window is that the first “testing” day equals the last one. The need for incoming kindergarteners’ adjustment to the school routine, their developmental range, and the nature of the assessment are the main reasons for such a long assessment window.

*If I assess students in the beginning on certain standards and I notice they do really well toward the end of the assessment window, what do I report?*

The purpose of the KRA is to determine students’ readiness for kindergarten. There are times when a teacher may delay or override a previous score of an item due to circumstances (i.e., student feeling ill or uncomfortable, new to the class or is unsure what is being asked). For example, if a child is unable to demonstrate the skill at a particular point in time, but the teacher sees the child performing the task in another setting (i.e., at recess the next day), then the teacher may override a previous score of an item. This permits a more valid representation of the students’ skills. However, assessing a specific skill that has been explicitly taught by the teacher just prior to the assessment would not be valid.
How will teachers handle assessing students who enroll late or transfer from another school?
Teachers of students who transfer from another school in the state will be able to continue assessing them as their assessment data will follow them as soon as they are removed from enrollment by the previous LEA and enrolled in the new LEA. Out-of-state or private school students who enroll after September 30th will not be assessed.

Will my school be held accountable for children who do poorly on the KRA?
No. School systems receive kindergartners with a variety of previous learning experiences. The KRA results will inform policymakers and program administrators about general trends of incoming kindergarteners’ school readiness skills and help create policies and programs that support children before they start kindergarten. The information will be part of the state’s longitudinal data system.

What about test security? Is it necessary to complete paperwork if other people are in the room when the assessment is given?
Test security procedures are found in this document. It is not necessary to complete any paperwork if other people are in the room during the administration; however, assessment items and manipulatives are secure and cannot be shared.

Do students repeating kindergarten participate in the assessment both years?
Yes, every kindergarten child is to be assessed. If a child is repeating kindergarten, their prior care will be listed as kindergarten.

Will this be part of a teacher’s performance evaluation?
The KRA is not designed to be used for teachers’ performance evaluation. The KRA is only administered at the beginning of the kindergarten year and does not have its equivalency later in the school year or the next grade.

Will the KRA assessment information from my classroom or my school be posted online?
The KRA information will be used for instructional purposes at the classroom level and at the school level as part of school improvement. MSDE plans to post the information online, as it has done in the past, by jurisdiction and for the state. Results will be reported as a composite of all domains and information will also be given at the domain level.

My school district has asked me to use local assessments (mostly early reading and math diagnostics). How do the formative assessments and the KRA relate to them? Am I asked to assess the students twice?
We expect the KRA to reduce the use of local diagnostic assessments. The KRA was designed to have its assessment standards align with the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards and to meet all the technical requirements for assessment development.
What level of Help Desk support is offered to test administrators?
If a teacher needs technical assistance to use the Ready for Kindergarten Online system or KRA app, there will be a 24/7 help desk available. The contact information for the help desk can be found on the homepage of http://Maryland.kready.org. If a teacher has any assessment or content questions, the teacher can use the FAQ and resources available as part of the training sites, or the teacher may contact the trainer or local early childhood supervisor.

TECHNOLOGY

Is the teacher supposed to score test items or is it built into the computer-based system?
The KRA will include a combination of items that need to be administered and scored by the teacher and (optional) items that can be administered and scored by the KRA app.

What will I use instead of the computer-based system if I don’t have any connectivity?
All data entry is electronic. Hard copy versions of the assessment will be available for teachers who have no computer or similar devices for internet access. While the hard copy versions are used with students in the classroom, all teachers will be responsible for entering data electronically, including transferring data from hard copy versions of the assessment to the KRA system which is online.

How will teachers use the computer-based system – all of the time or just during the KRA?
Teachers and students will interact with the computer-based system for the administration of the KRA, i.e., first day of school to November 1. Kindergarten and prekindergarten teachers are able to use the computer-based Early Learning Assessment if their local school systems decides to use it.

How will I use the computer-based system if my classroom does not have functioning Wi-Fi?
The system can be accessed through wired internet connections.

IMPLEMENTATION

Who administers the KRA?
The KRA is a standardized assessment that requires a qualified teacher to administer the assessment to students. The teacher must be fully trained by someone who successfully completed the training given by Johns Hopkins University School of Education Center for Technology in Education.

How long does the KRA take to administer?
It will take approximately one (1) hour per student to administer the KRA over a 7-8 week period. To help reduce the administration time, the KRA app can be used to deliver and score a subset of KRA items. Also, the professional development training and refresher module provide tips and resources for incorporating KRA administration into a typical day.

What data will teachers receive from the KRA?
The Ready for Kindergarten Online system will provide teachers with an individual student report and parent report that gives an overall KRA score as well as domain scores. Additionally, teachers can access a breakdown of scores by student for individual assessment items.
**Will the KRA take away instructional time?**
The KRA will provide information on students’ critical skills and behaviors to assist teachers in planning instruction that advances students toward established learning objectives for their kindergarten year.

**How are teachers trained to administer the KRA?**
Teachers will receive online and/or face-to-face training on the administration of the KRA. The training modules are organized around pre-administration, administration, and post-administration topics.

**What should a teacher do if a student does not want to complete an assessment task?**
Classroom and behavior management strategies are part of the pre-administration and administration training modules. Teachers receive information and resources on encouraging student participation, as well as ways to organize and plan for administering the assessments.

**How will teachers find out what students know and are able to do?**
Interpreting assessment data is included in the teacher training modules. Teachers receive information and resources on using the Ready for Kindergarten Online site to gather and use student performance data to inform instruction.

**How will teachers share assessment information with parents?**
The teacher training modules will guide teachers in communicating assessment results to parents and families, including helping families understand their child’s performance on the KRA.

**Observations can be subjective. How will this assessment fix that?**
With the KRA, the assessment information of groups of students is shared with others and requires, therefore, a set of objective criteria for observing. The KRA includes three features that increase the objectivity of rating items in accordance with standard assessment practices:
- A required simulation test as part of the teacher training to establish inter-rater reliability;
- Selective response and performance task items;
- Observational rubrics that define learning situations.

**Will the school systems be required to enter the prior care for each incoming kindergartener?**
Yes, they will have to enter prior care exactly like they did for the MMSR.

**How are changes made to student demographics?**
Student demographic data, such as whether or not the student is an English learner or has an IEP, will be available in the system as read-only. That data will be uploaded into the system by the district data managers so teachers do not need to identify which students are ELs or have IEPs. As a student becomes identified as EL or has an initial IEP during the assessment window, the district data manager will make the update to the student demographics. The teacher will be able to select/identify the level of field supports if one is needed for a student with an IEP or is an EL.
How would the KRA be administered at a French immersion school, as students are taught in French, and expected to respond in French only from K to grade 2?
The KRA must be administered in English.

Is the option to receive "Not Scorable" available on the KRA for a student without a disability or is not EL?
It would be very unusual, but possible. For example, a student that had a broken leg during the window of administration would receive a score of “Not Scorable” if the item required, for example, hopping or jumping.

What if a child has a broken bone for the duration of the testing window? Would the team need to develop a 504 plan in order to access the “Not Scorable” option, or would a doctor's note be sufficient?
A doctor’s note would be sufficient. The teacher would also make a note on the Student Details page on the Ready for Kindergarten Online site and mark “Not Scorable” on only the specific items that the student cannot access.

If a child is not verbally responsive to an assessment item, what latitude does the teacher have if the child does understand the question?
The universally designed allowances allow all students to point to or touch an item instead of a verbal response. If a verbal response is required for the integrity of the item (i.e., speaking or saying a specific sound) and the student does not respond, a score of “0” would be entered. Please refer to the Special Education section of the FAQ for additional information of students with disabilities.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Will Maryland require the participation of all students with disabilities on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)?
Maryland is requiring all students to participate, following the decision-making process, to be implemented by the child’s instructional team, for item administration outlined in the Guidelines on Allowable Supports document. A quick guide version of the Guidelines document is also included in the KRA kit.

Which members of the student’s instructional team will be trained on the assessment to provide input on decision-making?
The local school system determines which teachers receive the training on the administration of the KRA. KRA online modules will be made available for the student’s instructional team to access for additional information related to administration procedures and the Guidelines document.

Are supports available to all students? Which supports are unique to students with disabilities?
All students, including students with disabilities and English learners (EL), can benefit from accessing Universally Designed Allowances (UDAs). The basic premise of the UDAs is to support all learners accessing and responding to the KRA, and to eliminate the greatest number of barriers possible, while maintaining valid and reliable results that can be interpreted confidently. These allowances are aligned to best practices for access to instruction and assessment for all young learners.

Even with the use of UDAs, the student’s instructional team may decide to provide additional individualized supports to students with disabilities. For the purposes of the KRA administration, the use
of such individualized strategies has been identified as Level the Field supports. Level the Field supports provide equal access and opportunity for participation in the assessment without substantially altering what the student is expected to do or impacting the validity or reliability of assessment results. Level the Field supports are unique to students with disabilities and ELs.

What role should the IEP/504 team have in deciding whether or not items can be administered with allowable supports (e.g., how will the IEP/504 team help teachers administering the assessment identify issues related to accessibility)?
While the KRA decision-making conversation may be discussed during the student’s IEP/504 team meeting, it is not part of the IEP/504 process. The teacher of record should consult with the student’s “instructional team” (as defined in the Guidelines document). Any individual with knowledge of the student’s instructional needs should be involved in determining the supports to be provided for the student; however, the test items are considered secure and, therefore, cannot be shared with family members.

When a student’s IEP states that an American Sign Language interpreter is required for assessment administration, does the interpreter have to be trained in the administration of the KRA? Interpretation/transliteration for students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing can be found on the Instructional and Testing Accommodations page of the IEP, under Visual Presentation Accommodations. The American Sign Language interpreter will not receive formal KRA training in the administration of the KRA. However, the Kindergarten teacher of record must be present during administration to score the student’s response and collect data.

When a student’s IEP identifies that he/she has limited expressive communicative ability, can the teacher reword the assessment directions to support multiple modes of communication? For example, instead of "say the picture" the teacher would say, "point to the picture?"
Pointing is an acceptable response; however, the language and delivery of the item cannot differ from what is stated in the Teacher Administration Manual. If the student responds by pointing to an answer without any modification of the language of the item, the response should be scored appropriately.

Allow the student to gesture, touch, use eye gaze, or indicate a response through whatever dominant communication mode/language he or she utilizes, including sign language, sign language approximations, and digital language (e.g., use of augmentative communication devices, allowing the student to “show” versus “tell”). The use of UDAs and Level the Field supports, including multiple modes of communication, does not invalidate the assessment results.

When a student’s IEP lists “paraphrasing directions” as an accommodation, should the teacher paraphrase or alter the script when administering KRA items?
Paraphrasing directions has not been identified as a Level the Field support or a UDA. If the student is unable to access the item without paraphrasing the script, the teacher can record the item as "Not Scorable" due to lack of accessibility and include this critical information on the Student Details Page.

How can the supplementary aids and services be included in the administration of KRA items?
The supplementary aids, services, and other supports that are identified in the student’s IEP or Section 504 plan and provided in the classroom or other education-related settings on a regular basis should be used, as appropriate, when administering the KRA. When determining which supports or changes to implement with a student with a disability during KRA administration, the student’s instructional team members (e.g., specialized educators, related service providers) should first thoroughly familiarize themselves with the student’s individual learning characteristics, including a detailed review of the
student’s IEP or Section 504 plan and previous assessment results. After considering the student’s characteristics, the team should look at each individual KRA item. It is critical that teachers note, in detail on the Student Details Page, of the online data capture system the supplementary aids, services, and Level the Field supports implemented during item administration.

**What constitutes "not within a student's abilities" to access the KRA items?**
Some items may not be within a student’s abilities given any allowable support. Therefore, the item is “Not Scorable.” However, teachers are encouraged to look for the skill in naturally occurring routines and activities, and record information/observations useful for instructional decision-making.

**Will the “Not Scorable” option be available to observational items?**
Yes, the teacher would follow the decision-making process for students with disabilities and ELs to determine if “Not Scorable” is appropriate.

**When an initial IEP meeting is held and a student is identified as requiring specialized education services during the testing window, who will make the update to the student demographics?**
Student demographic data, such as whether or not a student is an EL or is a student who has an IEP, will be available in the system as read-only. That data will be uploaded into the system by the district IT managers so teachers do not need to identify which students are ELs or have IEPs. As a child becomes identified as an EL or has an initial IEP during the assessment window, the district IT manager will make the update to the student demographics.

**Will all items be administered to students with disabilities?**
When following the decision-making process for administering the KRA to a student with a disability, there may be instances when the teacher is advised to pause the administration of a domain. This is advised when the student is not able to access three items in a domain given allowable supports (e.g., three items are “Not Scorable;” not necessarily three consecutive items). In such cases, the student’s instructional team should review the remaining items in the domain and determine whether or not any of them could be administered with allowable supports (e.g., UDAs or Level the Field supports) that would result in a score.

**What is the difference between the score of “0” and “Not Scorable”?**
“Not Scorable” means the teacher was not able to score the item because the student could not access it given allowable supports. A score of “0” means the student was able to access the item, but did not demonstrate the skill according to the scoring criteria. Teachers are not advised to pause administration of a domain after three scores of “0,” unless there are other reasons to do so (e.g., student fatigue, scheduling/time constraints).

**Is the KRA intended for use as a formative assessment?**
The KRA is intended to be a summative assessment reflecting a student’s performance over a several week window. A supplementary assessment, the Early Learning Assessment, has been created to align with the KRA and provide guidance to inform instruction. The conceptual framework for the Early Learning Assessment recognizes that all students develop and grow at individualized rates. The assessment is anchored in 32 learning progressions from birth through 72 months of age. Students will be assessed in ways that can be differentiated to meet the variety of learning styles and developmental needs of all Kindergarten students.
ENGLISH LEARNERS

How are entering kindergarten students identified as English learners (ELs)?
If a language other than or in addition to English is spoken in the home, the student’s English proficiency is measured based on the results of the listening and speaking portions of the KWAPT created by the WIDA Consortium. Typically, the KWAPT is the screening instrument used for kindergarten students as they were registered in order to identify students who potentially qualify for ESOL services in kindergarten.

- If the student attended a public pre-K during the previous school year, he/she may have been screened during the spring of their pre-K year.
- If you do not know who your ESOL teacher or contact is, check with your school’s principal, testing coordinator or the person in your school system’s ESOL Office.
- If you are an ESOL teacher assigned to an elementary school, collaborate with the school’s staff to schedule the administration of the listening and speaking portions of the KWAPT to potential ELs. Meet with the kindergarten teacher(s) in order to share the KWAPT results.

Who should receive Level the Field support? (Level the Field supports should be considered for each student and each assessment item separately. It is quite possible that a student may need the support in some but not all items.)

- **ELs with Beginning (Low) English Language Proficiency** – corresponds to a raw score of 0-10 on the KWAPT Listening and Speaking Conversion Table that is used for screening to determine a student’s eligibility for ESOL services. ELs at the beginning (low) level of English language proficiency tend to have the greatest need for supports. These students may be able to respond with gestures, works or phrases to songs, chants, or stories modeled by teachers and typically are able, at most, to answer questions with only one or two words, or short phrases in English.

- **ELs with Intermediate (Mid) English Language Proficiency** – corresponds to a raw score of 11-18 on the KWAPT Listening and Speaking Conversion Table. ELs at the intermediate (mid) level typically have developed some proficiency in English (e.g., able to act out songs and stories using gestures and retell short narrative stories through pictures; repeat sentences from rhymes and patterned stories).

Who should not receive Level the Field supports?

- **ELs with Advanced (High) English Language Proficiency** – corresponds to a raw score of 19-28 on the KWAPT Listening and Speaking Conversion Table. ELs at the advanced (high) English language proficiency level would be expected to have less of a need for assistance with understanding the assessment items. For example, these students are able to order pictures of
events using sequential language, arrange objects or pictures according to descriptive oral discourse, and tell original stories with emerging detail.

**How does the KWAPT raw score relate to the Oral Proficiency Score?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>Oral Proficiency Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 10</td>
<td>Low - Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 18</td>
<td>Mid - Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 – 28</td>
<td>High - Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 – 30</td>
<td>Exceptional – Not considered an EL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How should we interpret the results of the KRA for an EL?**

It is important to consider the results of the KRA in the context of each EL’s English proficiency level at the time the assessment is given. The lower the student’s proficiency in English the more difficult it is to measure what skills the student may already have acquired in his or her home language. If a school team determines the need for an EL to be placed in an intervention, it is important that it is appropriate for his/her level of English proficiency level and the student has sufficient English skills to benefit from the intervention. Decisions can be addressed by a team of educators that includes the student’s teacher and an ESOL professional as well as the student’s family.

**Why should we involve the student’s family?**

It would be very helpful to have input from the student’s family regarding the development of the student’s home language as well as input from the classroom teacher on how the student is adapting to the kindergarten setting. Many families of ELs are not familiar with the United States’ educational system; it’s critical to provide outreach to these families so they understand what the assessment is measuring and how the results will be used.

**Should the school document any attempts to contact families for a meeting?**

Whether or not a school documents attempts to contact families for a meeting is a local school system decision.

**Can an ESOL teacher administer the KRA?**

Yes, an ESOL teacher can administer the KRA as long as he/she has received training by the local school system’s staff trained by the Johns Hopkins University School of Education Center for Technology in Education professional development staff. This training provides all details necessary for administering, scoring, and interpreting the KRA’s results. Test administrators must qualify by scoring 80% or better on the online assessment.
If the test administrator can speak the student’s home language, can he/she translate words for the student or allow the student to respond in his/her native language?
No, sight translation and interpretation is not allowed as Level the Field supports.

Is this the only data that teachers will use for grouping students for instructional purposes?
This is a local school system’s decision. However, please see the response to the question “How should we interpret the results of the KRA for ELs?” An analysis of an EL’s score should include his/her English proficiency level and other indicators that relate to his/her classroom performance. Multiple measures will provide a more meaningful analysis.

Can parents opt out of having their child take the KRA?
No. This is a statewide assessment given to all kindergarten students. It is critical that we have this data on all kindergarten students, including English learners and students with disabilities.