



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

Assessment Overview

2021-22


August 2021

Office of Evaluation, Research, and Accountability (ERA)
[Assessment Calendar](#) | [Office of Assessment](#)

This slide deck outlines **all the major assessments that SDP K-12 students will take** during the 2021-22 school year.

For each assessment, we answer the following questions:

- **What is it?**
- **Who takes it?**
- **How long does it take?**
- **What skills does it measure?**
- **What data does it give the District and how do we use it?**

A golden circle on a slide  indicates an assessment that is **new for 2021-22**.

Note: This slide deck includes information for all District-wide assessments, including those administered to specific (but sizable) student populations, such as English Learners or students with IEPs. Schools may choose to administer additional programs for certain grades, subjects, or for blended learning (such as iReady or Lexia) and those are not included here.

Assessments serve several purposes:

- **Universal Screening, Benchmarking and/or Progress Monitoring Assessments** track District-wide performance and growth over time and provide teachers with student skill-level information to inform planning and instruction.
- **State standardized assessments** are mandated and fulfill state or federal testing requirements that assess student proficiency and achievement.
- **Non-required standardized assessments** are voluntary/elective standardized assessments and are not used for accountability purposes.
- **Screeners** identify or place students who need specialized supports.
- **Informational assessments** of student abilities help teachers plan instruction.

Assessments in Grades K-2

Assessments: Grades K-2

Click the links below to skip to a slide with a description of the assessment, including what it measures and how the District uses the data.

Name of Assessment	Universal Screener, Benchmarking, & Progress Monitoring Within-Year Assessments	State and/or Federal Standardized Annual Assessments	Specialized Screener	Informational Assessment
Star-CBMs Reading and Math ●	X			
Star-Early Literacy ●	X			
Star-Reading/Math*	X			
Naglieri (2nd grade only)			X	
Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI)				X
ACCESS (EL students only)		X		
Social-Emotional Behavior screener (select schools) ●			X	
Unit Pre/Post Tests (ELA only) ●				X

*It is recommended that K-2 students who earn a scaled score of 852 on Star-Early Literacy transition to Star-Reading/Math.

Assessment Timeline: Grades K-2

September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Star CBMs* Star Early Literacy* Star Reading/Math**^			Star CBMs* Star Early Literacy* Star Reading/Math**^	ACCESS (ELs Only)		Star CBMs* Star Early Literacy* Star Reading/Math**^		Star CBMs* Star Early Literacy* Star Reading/Math**^	
KEI (K Only)	Social-Emotional Behavior Screener (select schools)		Social-Emotional Behavior Screener (select schools)		Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (Grade 2 Only)				Social-Emotional Screener (select schools)
Unit Pre/Post Tests (ELA only)									

*Continuous progress monitoring takes place between benchmark assessment windows.

^It is recommended that K-2 students who earn a scaled score of 852 on Star-Early Literacy transition to Star-Reading/Math.

Assessments in Grades 3-5

Assessments: Grades 3-5

	Screening, Benchmarking, & Progress Monitoring Within-Year Assessments	State and/or Federal Standardized Annual Assessments	Specialized Screener	Informational Assessment
<u>Star CBMs-Reading, Math (3rd only)</u> ●	X			
<u>Star-Reading/Math</u>	X			
<u>PSSA/PASA ELA & Math</u>		X		
<u>PSSA/PASA Science (4th only)</u>		X		
<u>Unit Pre/Post Tests (ELA 3rd only; Math 4th and 5th only)</u> ●				X
<u>ACCESS (EL students only)</u>		X		
<u>NAEP (4th only, select schools)</u>		X		
<u>Naglieri (3rd, 4th for 21-22 only)*</u>			X	
<u>Social-Emotional Behavior Screener (select schools)</u> ●			X	

*Only offered to 3rd and 4th grades in 2021-22 because of the truncated 2019-20 testing window and the cancellation of the 2020-21 testing window.

Assessment Timeline: Grades 3-5

September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Star CBMs* Star Reading/Math*			Star CBMs* Star Reading/Math*	ACCESS (ELs Only)		Star CBMs* Star Reading/Math*		Star CBMs* Star Reading/Math*	
	Social- Emotional Behavior Screener (select schools)		Social- Emotional Behavior Screener (select schools)		Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (Grade 3 and 4, 2021-22 only)			Social- Emotional Behavior Screener (select schools)	
				NAEP (Grade 4, select schools)			PSSA/PASA Math, ELA PSSA/PASA Science (Grade 4 Only)		

Unit Pre/Post Tests (ELA for Grade 3 only; Math for Grades 4 and 5)

*Continuous progress monitoring takes place between benchmark assessment windows.

Assessments in Grades 6-8

Assessments: Grades 6-8

	Screening, Benchmarking, & Progress Monitoring Within-Year Assessments	State and/or Federal Standardized Annual Assessments	Specialized Screener	Informational Assessment
<u>ACCESS (EL students only)</u>		X		
<u>Star Math/Reading</u>	X			
<u>PSSA/PASA Math and ELA</u>		X		
<u>PSSA/PASA Science (8th grade only)</u>		X		
<u>Keystones (7th and 8th only)</u>		X		
<u>NAEP (8th only, select schools)</u>		X		
<u>Biology Benchmark #1 (8th only, select schools)</u>	X			
<u>Social-Emotional Behavior Screener (select schools)</u> ●			X	
<u>International Baccalaureate (IB) Exam (elective; 8th)</u>		X		
<u>Unit Pre/Post Tests (math only)</u> ●				X

Assessment Timeline: Grades 6-8

September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Star Math and Reading*			Star Math and Reading*	ACCESS (ELs Only)		Star Math and Reading*		Star Math and Reading*	
		Bio Benchmark (Grade 8 only)		Bio Benchmark (Grade 8 only)		Bio Benchmark (Grade 8 only)	IB Exam (Grade 8 only)		
				NAEP (Grade 8, select schools)			PSSA/PASA Math + ELA PSSA/PASA Science (Grade 8 only)		
Keystones (Grade 8 only)**				Keystone Exams (Grade 8 only)				Keystone Exams (Grade 7 and 8 only)	
	Social-Emotional Behavior Screener (select schools)		Social-Emotional Behavior Screener (select schools)					Social-Emotional Behavior Screener (select schools)	

Unit Pre/Post Tests (Math only)

*Continuous progress monitoring takes place between benchmark assessment windows.

**Keystone Exam rescheduled from Spring 2021.

Assessments in Grade 9-12

Assessments: Grades 9-12

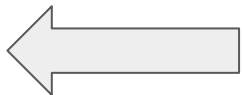
	Screening, Benchmarking, & Progress Monitoring Within-Year Assessments	State and/or Federal Standardized Annual Assessments	Specialized Screener	Informational Assessment
<u>ACCESS (ELs only)</u>		X		
<u>Star Math/Reading</u>	X			
<u>Keystones</u>		X		
<u>Civics Test</u>		X		
<u>National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) (CTE only)</u>		X		
<u>Unit Pre/Post Tests (math only)</u> ●				X
<u>Advanced Placement (AP)/ International Baccalaureate (IB) exams (elective; AP/IB only)</u>			X	
<u>Biology Benchmark (Biology students only)</u>	X			
<u>PSAT/SAT/ACT (elective)</u>			X	
<u>Social-Emotional Behavior Screener (select schools)</u> ●				X

Assessment Timeline: Grades 9-12

September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Star Math and Reading*		Civics Test (Opportunity Network Only)	Star Math and Reading		Civics Test	Star Math and Reading		Star Math and Reading	
	NOCTI Pre-test (Grade 12 only)			ACCESS (ELs only)					
						NOCTI Pre-test (Grade 11 only) NOCTI Written: March (Grade 12) NOCTI Performance: April (Grade 12)			
Keystone Exams	Social-Emotional Screener (select schools)		Social-Emotional Screener (select schools)	Keystone Exams			Social-Emotional Screener (select schools)	Keystone Exams	
		Bio Benchmark		Bio Benchmark		Bio Benchmark	AP/IB Exam		
SAT/ACT									
Unit Pre/Post (Math only)									

*Continuous progress monitoring takes place between benchmark assessment windows.

Descriptions of Assessments



Click the title hyperlink to find out more about the assessment.

What is it?

ACCESS for ELs is the required instrument for the annual assessment of English language proficiency. ACCESS for ELs is a standards-based, criterion referenced English language proficiency test designed to measure English Learners' proficiency in English.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

ACCESS is taken annually by English Learners in Kindergarten through Grade 12.¹ The total time required for this assessment is 3 hours.

What skills does it measure?

It assesses social and instructional English as well as the language associated with Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies within the school context across the four language domains. The test rates students' English proficiency in four language domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

Students receive a scale score in each domain, which is then translated to a level (1.0-6.0) representing English Language Proficiency (ELP), with a 5.0+ considered proficient. A composite ACCESS score combines the domain scale scores and also ranges from 1.0 to 6.0. The scale score required for students to reach proficiency varies by grade level. This information informs the goals set for ELs in order to ensure that they are making progress towards English proficiency. (Note: The W-APT produces a simplified score for EL identification purposes, not a proficiency level score.) This assessment is part of the Pennsylvania state assessment system and is used for Federal, state and local accountability purposes.

¹Newly entering EL students in Grades 1-12 without a previous ACCESS score take the WIDA Screener at SDP enrollment. Newly entering Kindergarten students whose English learning needs are assessed take the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT or the K-WAPT screener).

Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB) Exams

What is it?

The Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate® (IB) exams are summative assessments for AP or IB courses, respectively. Many colleges will grant college credit to students who pass AP and/or IB courses. IB exams can be comprised of multiple assessments and projects over the course of school year, while each AP exam is a single summative exam.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

All 8-12th grade students enrolled in an AP or IB course offered by the District. The total time required for AP exams are 3 hours; IB exams time vary based on subject.

What skills does it measure?

Both exams are focused on subject-specific content related to the student's course work.

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

Students who take an AP or IB course receive a course grade that counts towards their final high school GPA. Students who score at least a 3 on an AP exam, or a 4 on an IB exam, may also be eligible for college credit. The District tracks the number of schools that offer these courses as well student participation and performance. This data is used as a component of college and career readiness in school accountability metrics.

Biology Benchmark

What is it?

The Biology Benchmark is a low-stakes, formative assessment. It is designed by SDP to inform instruction, as the content tested aligns to that which is specified in the Biology curriculum.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

Any 8-12 grade students who are enrolled in a Biology course. The total time required for this assessment is 45 minutes.

What skill does it measure?

Benchmarks consist of 20 multiple-choice questions and one constructed response assessing the student's content knowledge in Biology. This assessment is designed to track student progress, inform instruction, and to prepare for the Biology Keystone. It does not, however, predict performance on the Keystone Exam.

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

Benchmark scores are reported as raw scores and percent correct only and there is no "passing" score. Teachers use the data to evaluate their students' skill-level performance and create a plan to address any deficiencies. They cannot validly predict performance on the keystones, nor can they be used to show growth over time.

Civics Assessment

What is it?

The Civics Assessment was developed in response to PA Act 35. The administration of the test is mandated by the State, though the test's content and scoring criteria are the responsibility of SDP.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

SDP must administer this test to all students (one time) prior to graduation, at any point between grades 9 and 12. In practice, it is administered to students enrolled in *Social Science, Civics, IB History, and AP US Government and Politics* courses. The test requires one hour to complete.

What skill does it measure?

This test is designed to assess students' understanding of civic responsibility and engagement, as well as principles of local, state and federal government.

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

Test administration data must be reported to the state. In addition, test results are used by SDP to identify schools with model Civics instruction, and/or needs for support.

Keystone Exams

What is it?

The Keystone Exams are end-of-course assessments designed to assess proficiency in the subject areas of Algebra I, Literature, and/or Biology. They will be part of state-mandated requirements for graduation (starting with the Class of 2023), wherein students must either demonstrate proficiency on each Keystone Exam, or else must complete alternate requirements.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

Students in grades 7-11 in Literature, Algebra I, or Biology are expected to take the Keystone for that subject. There is no time limit, but the exams usually takes 2-3 hours to complete.

What skills does it measure?

Subject-specific content in Algebra I, Literature, or Biology. Questions are aligned to PA Core Standards and assess whether students are college and career ready in each subject area.

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

Student scores are categorized as Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, or Advanced. Student scores need to be categorized as proficient or advanced to demonstrate proficiency on the exam. The District uses this data as a component of college and career readiness in school accountability metrics, graduation requirements, and to identify which schools are in need of academic supports. This assessment is part of the Pennsylvania state assessment system and is used for Federal, state and local accountability purposes.

The Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI)

What is it?

The Pennsylvania Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI) is a Kindergarten readiness tool developed by the PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) that Kindergarten teachers use to assess every incoming student within the first 45 days of school. It is not a universal screener, assessment, or diagnostic exam.

How is it administered and who takes it? How long does it take?

Teachers use a checklist to observe student skills and behaviors. The administration time for this checklist is 30 minutes.

What skills does it measure?

Social and Emotional Development; English Language Arts; Mathematics; Approaches to Learning through Play; and Health, Wellness, and Physical Development.

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

Teachers assign students one of four skill levels (not yet evident, emerging, evident, or exceeds) in each of 30 KEI indicators. They use this data to better understand student gaps in knowledge and skills.

The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test

What is it?

The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT) is a nationally normed, non-verbal, culturally neutral test of academic ability.

Who takes it?

All second-grade students. Only during school year 2021-22, 3rd- and 4th-grade students will **also** be tested in the fall because of the truncated 2019-20 testing window and the cancellation of the 2020-21 testing window.

What skills does it measure? How long does it take?

The test is comprised of a series of visual puzzles that are administered online in 30 minutes.

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

SDP recommends students who score at or above the 90th percentile on the NNAT be further evaluated for giftedness.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

What is it?

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. NAEP is a congressionally mandated project administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES).

Who takes it? How long does it take?

4th- and 8th grade-students in select schools participate in NAEP as a part of the random sample. 4th and 8th grade students are currently assessed at the national and state levels in mathematics and reading every 2 years and in other subjects periodically. The total time required for this assessment ranges from 1.5 to 4 hours.

What skills does it measure?

Subjects include civics, economics, geography, mathematics, music and visual arts, reading, science, technology and engineering literacy, U.S. history, and writing.

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

NAEP results are reported for the nation and, in most cases, for states, as well as for selected urban districts that participate in the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA). Results are reported as scores and as percentages of students reaching NAEP achievement levels—Basic, Proficient, and Advanced.

The National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI)

What is it?

NOCTI is contracted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Bureau of Career and Technical Education (BCTE) for Career and Technical Education (CTE). CTE programs have specific NOCTI exams approved by BCTE that allow students to demonstrate knowledge and skills within their CTE occupational program. Each NOCTI consists of a written component, and a performance component.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

All 12th grade students enrolled in a state-approved CTE program, who are scheduled to graduate in June of their senior year and have received a minimum of 50% of the technical hours required in their chosen CTE program. 11th grade CTE students take a NOCTI pre-test in the spring. The total time required for this assessment is 6 hours (3-hour written component, and 3-hour performance component).

What skills does it measure?

Each test consists of an online, multiple choice exam (Written), and an exam that allows students to demonstrate their skills by performing individual jobs or tasks that demonstrate the skills needed for the specific occupation (Performance).

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

Students are categorized in Basic, Competent or Advanced levels according to their test scores. Students who achieve at the Advanced level receive the Pennsylvania Skills Certificate, and students who achieve at the Competent level receive the Pennsylvania Certificate of Competency. The CTE office oversees the 120 CTE programs offered in over 30 high schools, and uses this data to support, improve and promote program offerings. In addition, the District uses NOCTI data as a component of career readiness in school accountability metrics.

What is it?

The Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) is a statewide alternate assessment designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate meaningfully in the Pennsylvania State Assessment System (PSSA) or Keystone Exams, even with accommodations. The PASA is a series of individually administered image-based, multiple-choice test items given by the child's teacher or another certified test administrator who knows the student well.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

Students in the tested grades participate in the PASA. Like the PSSA, the PASA is administered in grades 3 through 8 and 11th English, language arts, and math. The PASA science is taken in grades 4, 8, and 11. Students must also be deemed eligible to participate in the PASA by the individualized education program (IEP) team in accordance with the PASA eligibility criteria. The total time for this assessment varies by subject, but can range from 2.5 hours to 5.5 hours.

What skills does it measure?

Standards in ELA, Mathematics, and Science and Technology identify what a student should know and be able to do at varying grade levels.

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

Performance on all state assessments, including the PASA, is one way for schools, teachers, and parents to gauge how students and schools are performing in regard to proficiency of the academic standards. Assessment results are one measure that IEP teams may consider when determining future academic instructional needs. Scores provide a better representation of how the child is performing based against grade-level standards and alternate eligible content that are reduced in depth, breadth, and complexity. This assessment is part of the Pennsylvania state assessment system and is used for federal, state and local accountability purposes.

What is it?

The annual Pennsylvania System School Assessment (PSSA) is a standards-based, criterion-referenced assessment which provides students, parents, educators, and citizens with an understanding of student and school performance related to proficiency in the academic standards.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

Every Pennsylvania student in grades 3 through 8 is assessed in English Language Arts and Math. Every Pennsylvania student in grades 4 and 8 is also assessed in science. The total time for this assessment varies by subject, but can range from 2.5 hours to 5.5 hours.

What skills does it measure?

These standards in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology identify what a student should know and be able to do at varying grade levels.

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

Individual student scores and growth, provided only to their respective schools, can be used to assist teachers in identifying students who may be in need of additional supports, and school scores provide information to schools and the District for curriculum and instruction improvement discussions and planning. The District uses this data as a component of student academic performance in school accountability metrics. This assessment is part of the Pennsylvania state assessment system and is used for federal, state and local accountability purposes.

SAT/PSAT and ACT

What is it?

The SAT and ACT assess academic readiness for college and are required entrance exams by most colleges and universities. The SAT consists of a Reading test, a Writing/Language test, and a Math test, while the ACT consists of subject area tests in English, Math, Reading, Science, and Writing. The PSAT provides practice for the SAT.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

Students in 9th, 10th, and 11th grade are eligible to take the PSAT. Students in 11th and 12th grade are eligible to take the SAT or ACT. The total time required for the PSAT and SAT is 3 hours and 50 minutes. The total time required for the ACT is 3 hours and 30 minutes.

What skills does it measure?

The SAT assesses students' literacy, numeracy, and writing skills that are needed for academic success in college as well as how they analyze and problem solve. The ACT assesses students' general education knowledge and their ability to complete college-level work.

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

Scores are used to determine if students would be successful at the college/university level. The District tracks student scores and participation rates and uses the data as a component of college readiness in school accountability metrics.

Social-Emotional Behavior Screener (SEB)

What is it?

A screener designed for classroom teachers to assess students' social and emotional behaviors. The screener will be used to recommend interventions and student supports when need. School year 2021-22 will be a pilot year in 14 selected schools.

How is it administered and who takes it? How long does it take?

The screener is only used by classroom teachers, completed at three time points over the school year, and takes 1-2 minutes to complete. All K-12 classroom teachers will use the screener in the following 14 schools: George McCall School, Kensington High School, Parkway Northwest High School, James Logan School, Andrew Morrison School, Joseph Pennell School, Mary Bethune School, James Blaine School, Cayuga School, William Cramp School, Lewis Elkin School, William D. Kelley, Kenderton Elementary, and Thomas Peirce School.

What skills does it measure?

The Social-Emotional Behavior Screener cover three domains: Social Behaviors (e.g. arguing, cooperation with peers, temper outbursts), Academic Behaviors (e.g. interest in academic topics, preparedness for academic instruction, production of acceptable work), and Emotional Behaviors (e.g. sadness, fearfulness, adaptable to change).

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

The Social-Emotional Behavior Screener provides data on the percent of students at risk for social and emotional behaviors. School MTSS teams will use this data to adjust Tier 1 framework supports or determine whether individual students may need additional Tier 2 supports. The screener data will be reviewed district-wide to align supports and resources to individual school's climate frameworks.

Star Early Literacy (K-2)

What is it?

Star Early Literacy is a computer-adaptive test (CAT) that students take independently, that assesses key early literacy and numeracy skill development. It is designed for early learners to measure the skills needed for later academic success.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

All K-2nd grade students take the Star Early Literacy assessment. Once students achieve a score of 852 and demonstrate an understanding of grade-level concepts, it is recommended they transition to taking [Star Reading and Math](#). The Star Early Literacy assessment consists of 27 items and takes approximately 14-17 minutes to complete.

What skills does it measure?

Star Early Literacy assesses proficiency in three broad domains: Word Knowledge and Skills, Comprehension Strategies and Constructing Meaning, and Numbers and Operations.

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

Star Early Literacy scaled scores provide an individualized assessment of students' literacy/numeracy skill development to identify students who need intervention or enrichment on specific skills. Scores will enable teachers to easily track progress and facilitate individualized instruction. Star Early Literacy scores can be used in conjunction with [CBMs](#) to monitor student achievement and growth toward Board Goals and track understanding of skills aligned to state and Common Core State Standards.

Star CBM Reading and Star CBM Math (K-3)

What is it?

Star Curriculum Based Measures (CBMs) are timed assessment that are administered by teachers. CBMs are designed to assess discrete, foundational grade-level literacy and math skills.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

All Kindergarten-3rd grade students are administered Star CBM Reading and Star CBM Math. CBMs are 1-minute assessments and vary in number of items per measure. Based on a student's grade level, a minimum of 4 to a maximum of 7 CBMs can be administered in one testing window. The total time spent (including **both** reading and math) can range from 4 -7 minutes, depending on the CBMs required for each grade.

What skills does it measure?

Star CBM Reading assesses students' understanding of letters and their sounds, basic phonological awareness and early decoding, and finally to passage reading. Star CBM Math assesses students' developing math competency, including recognizing numerals and their value, as well as learning basic facts in addition, subtraction, and multiplication.

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

Star CBMs measure discrete literacy and/or math skills at each grade level. This score can help facilitate individualized instruction by identifying students who need intervention or enrichment on specific skills. CBM scores can be used in conjunction with [Star Early Literacy](#), [Star Reading](#), or [Star Math](#) to monitor student achievement and growth and track understanding of skills aligned to state standards and Common Core State Standards.

Star CBM Reading (4-5)

What is it?

Star Curriculum Based Measures (CBMs) are timed assessment that are administered by teachers. CBMs are designed to assess discrete grade-level literacy skills.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

All 4th- and 5th-grade students are administered Star CBM Reading. CBMs are 1-minute assessments and vary in number of items per measure. Students are administered one CBM per testing window.

What skills does it measure?

Star CBM Reading assesses students' oral reading fluency.

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

Star CBMs measure discrete literacy skills at each grade level. This score can help facilitate individualized instruction by identifying students who need intervention or enrichment on specific skills. CBM scores can be used in conjunction with [Star Reading](#) to monitor student achievement and growth towards Board Goals, and track understanding of skills aligned to state standards and Common Core State Standards.

Star Reading and Star Math (3-12)

What is it?

Star Reading and Star Math are computer-adaptive tests (CATs) that student take independently, that assess students' reading and math skills, monitor achievement and growth, and track understanding of skills aligned to state and Common Core standards.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

All 3rd-12th grade students (and K-2 students with a scaled score of at least 852 on [Star Early Literacy](#)) take Star Reading and Star Math. Both Star Reading and Star Math consist of 34 items. Students taking **both** Star Reading and Math assessments may take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete both.

What skills does it measure?

Star Reading assesses students' skills in vocabulary, reading comprehension, analyzing literary text, understanding author's craft, and analyzing argument and evaluating text.

Star Math assesses students' skills in numbers and operations, algebra, geometry and measurement, and data analysis, statistics, and probability.

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

Star Reading and Star Math scaled scores can help facilitate individualized instruction by identifying students who need intervention or enrichment on specific skills. Star Reading and Math scores can be used in conjunction with [CBMs](#) to monitor student achievement and growth towards Board Goals, and track understanding of skills aligned to state standards and Common Core State Standards.

Unit Pre- and Post-Tests

What is it?

The Office of Curriculum and Instruction has designed pre- and post-tests to be administered at the beginning and end of each ELA and Math unit.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

All Kindergarten-3rd grade students will take an ELA pre- and post-test. All 4th-12th grade students will take a Math pre-and post-test. Each test will be administered by classroom teachers before and after ELA or Math unit. There is no time requirement for this assessment to date.

What skills does it measure?

Each test will measure students' comprehension and skill development at the beginning and end of each unit.

What data does it give us and how do we use it?

The data collected with each pre- and post-test will be used to help teachers plan class-wide instruction around students' abilities and will help teachers identify who need more time on particular topics.

Technical Information about the Samples and Representativeness of Select Assessments

Star

- Star Reading, Math, and Early Literacy were renormed in 2017 using student assessment data from 2014-15. During the norming period, a total of 5,814,221 US students in grades K–12 took current versions of all assessments.
- Star CBM Reading and Star CBM Math were renormed in 2020 using student assessment data collected from 2019–20 from a sample of schools across the US. Due to COVID-19, the norms for both the Reading (with the exception of Passage Oral Reading) and Math CBMs were based on data collected from fall and winter with spring norms determined by extrapolating those results. For Passage Oral Reading, separate norms were created for fall, winter, and spring using student assessment from the 2018-19 school year.
- Steps were taken to ensure the resulting norms were nationally representative of grades K–12 US student populations with regard to certain important characteristics: geographic region, district socio-economic status, and district/school size.
- Item development meets established demographic and contextual goals that are monitored during development to ensure the item bank is demographically and contextually balanced. Goals are established and tracked in the following areas: use of fiction and nonfiction text, subject and topic areas, geographic region, gender, ethnicity, occupation, age, and disability.
 - Items are free of stereotyping, representing different groups of people in non-stereotypical settings.
 - Items do not refer to inappropriate content that includes, but is not limited to content that presents stereotypes based on ethnicity, gender, culture, economic class, or religion.
 - Items do not present any ethnicity, gender, culture, economic class, or religion unfavorably.
 - Items do not reference illegal activities, sinister or depressing subjects, religious activities or holidays based on religious activities, witchcraft, or unsafe activities.

Note: For more information on the demographics of the Reading, Math, and Early Literacy national samples, see the Star Reading technical manual, pages 94-95, the Star Math technical manual, pages 78-79, and the Star Early Literacy technical manual, pages 83-88. For more information about the Star CBM Reading and Star CBM Math norming process, see the Star CBM Reading technical manual, pages 56- 63, and the Star Math technical manual pages, 51-56 .

PSSA

- At every stage of the item and test development process, procedures are employed that are designed to ensure that items and tests met Standard 7.4 of the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (AERA, APA, NCME, 2014), which states that test developers should strive to identify and eliminate language, symbols, words, phrases, and content that are generally regarded as offensive by members of racial, ethnic, gender, or other groups, except when judged to be necessary for adequate representation of the domain.
- The guidelines for bias, fairness, and sensitivity include instruction on how to eliminate language, symbols, words, phrases, and content that might be considered offensive by members of racial, ethnic, gender, or other groups. Areas of bias that are specifically targeted include, but are not limited to, stereotyping, gender, regional/geographic, ethnic/cultural, socioeconomic/class, religious, and biases against a particular age group or persons with disabilities.
- To meet Standard 7.4, a series of internal quality steps are implemented:
 - Specific training is provided for test developers, item writers, and reviewers on how to write, review, revise, and edit items for issues of bias, fairness, and sensitivity (as well as for technical quality). Training also includes an awareness of and sensitivity to issues of cultural diversity.
 - External training is provided to the review panels of minority experts, teachers, and other stakeholders.

Note: For more information on bias, fairness, and sensitivity reviews, see the [PSSA technical manual](#), pages 51-52.

Keystones

- All Keystone passages to be included in the pool of passages for possible use on the Keystone Literature Exam are reviewed and approved by PDE and the Pennsylvania Reading Content Committee (a committee of Pennsylvania educators). The passages are reviewed by Pennsylvania educators to judge whether each passage meets the criteria outlined above. All potential passages are also reviewed by the Pennsylvania Bias, Fairness, and Sensitivity Committee.
- A number of factors are taken into consideration when deciding whether a passage will be placed in the pool for possible use on the Keystone Literature Exam. The factors include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Does the passage stand the test of time as an example of literary fiction, literary nonfiction, and/or informational text, and is it judged by the committee of Pennsylvania educators as having sufficient quality?
 - Do the passages represent a range of reading levels appropriate to the grade level?
 - Are the passages free of issues of bias, fairness, and/or sensitivity?
 - Does the pool of passages represent diversity in the areas of gender, culture, ethnicity, urban/rural status, socioeconomic status, physical differences, and age?
- Vocabulary was also addressed at the Bias, Fairness, and Sensitivity Review, although the focus was on how certain words or phrases may represent possible sources of bias or issues of fairness or sensitivity

Note: For more information on bias, fairness, and sensitivity reviews, see the [Keystones technical manual](#), pages 40-41.

For more information on the District's Assessment Program,
visit the [ERA Assessment website](#).

If you have any additional questions, please email
assessment@philasd.org.