



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

Assessment Overview

2024-2025

Last updated February 2025

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 2024-25 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?**

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 or subjects, and those are not included here. Charter schools set their own assessment calendars.

Assessments serve several purposes:

- **Universal Screening, Benchmarking, Diagnostics 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.
- **Specialized 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, Diagnostics & 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			
Online Adaptive Assessments i-Ready, iStation, Lexia, Imagine (as applicable)	X			
Gifted Screener (2nd grade only)			X	
Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI)				X
ACCESS (English Learners 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*				Star CBMs Star Early Literacy Star Reading/Math*		
	Online Adaptives				Online Adaptives				Online Adaptives
KEI (Kindergarten only)				ACCESS (English Learners only)			Gifted Screener (Grade 2 only)		

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

*Continuous progress monitoring takes place between screener windows.

Assessments in Grades 3-5

Assessments: Grades 3-5

	Screening, Benchmarking, Diagnostics & Progress Monitoring Within-Year Assessments	State and/or Federal Standardized Annual Assessments	Informational Assessment
<u>Star CBMs-Reading and Math (3rd grade only)</u>	X		
<u>Star-Reading/Math</u>	X		
<u>Online Adaptive Assessments</u> i-Ready, iStation, Achieve3000, Lexia, Imagine (as applicable)	X		
<u>PSSA/PASA ELA & Math</u>		X	
<u>PSSA/PASA Science (5th grade only)</u>		X	
<u>ACCESS (English Learners only)</u>		X	
<u>NAEP (4th grade only, select schools)</u>		X	
<u>Student Wellbeing Survey</u>			X

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*				Star CBMs Star Reading/Math*		
	Online Adaptives				Online Adaptives				Online Adaptives
	Student Wellbeing Survey				Student Wellbeing Survey			Student Wellbeing Survey	
				ACCESS (English Learners Only)					
					NAEP (Grade 4, select schools)				
						PASA Math, ELA, Science (Science grade 5 only)	PSSA/PASA Math, ELA, Science (Science grade 5 only)		

*Continuous progress monitoring takes place between screener windows.

Assessments in Grades 6-8

Assessments: Grades 6-8

	Screening, Benchmarking, Diagnostics & Progress Monitoring Within-Year Assessments	State and/or Federal Standardized Annual Assessments	Non-required Standardized Assessment	Informational Assessment
<u>Star-Reading/Math</u>	X			
<u>Online Adaptive Assessments</u> i-Ready, Achieve3000, Lexia, Imagine (as applicable)	X			
<u>PSSA/PASA Math and ELA</u>		X		
<u>PSSA/PASA Science (8th grade only)</u>		X		
<u>Keystones (8th grade only, select schools)</u>		X		
<u>ACCESS (EL students only)</u>		X		
<u>NAEP (8th grade only, select schools)</u>		X		
<u>International Baccalaureate (IB) Exam</u> (elective; 8th grade only)			X	
<u>Student Wellbeing Survey</u>				X

Assessment Timeline: Grades 6-8

September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Star Reading/Math*			Star Reading/Math*				Star Reading/Math*		
	Online Adaptives				Online Adaptives				Online Adaptives
	Student Wellbeing Survey				Student Wellbeing Survey			Student Wellbeing Survey	
					NAEP (Grade 8, select schools)			IB Exam (Grade 8 only)	
						PASA Math, ELA, Science (Science grade 8 only)	PSSA/PASA Math, ELA, Science (Science grade 8 only)		
				Keystone Exams (Grade 8, select schools)				Keystone Exams (Grade 8, select schools)	
				ACCESS (ELs only)					

*Continuous progress monitoring takes place between screener windows.

Assessments in Grade 9-12

Assessments: Grades 9-12

	Screening, Benchmarking, Diagnostics & Progress Monitoring Within-Year Assessments	State and/or Federal Standardized Annual Assessments	Non-required Standardized Assessment	Informational Assessment
<u>Star Math/Reading</u>	X			
<u>Online Adaptives</u> Achieve3000, Lexia, Imagine Math (as applicable)	X			
<u>Biology Benchmark (Biology students only)</u>	X			
<u>Keystones</u>		X		
<u>Civics Test</u>		X		
<u>NOCTI (CTE only)</u>		X		
<u>ACCESS (ELs only)</u>		X		
<u>NAEP (12th grade only, select schools)</u>		X		
<u>Advanced Placement (AP)/ International Baccalaureate (IB) exams</u> (elective; AP/IB only)			X	
<u>PSAT/SAT/ACT (elective)</u>			X	
<u>Student Wellbeing Survey</u>				X
<u>ASVAB</u> (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery)			X	

Assessment Timeline: Grades 9-12

September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Star Reading/Math*			Star Reading/Math*				Star Reading/Math*		
		Civics Test (Opportunity Network only)		Civics Test			Civics Test		
	Online Adaptives			Keystone Exams	Online Adaptives			Keystone Exams	Online Adaptives
				ACCESS (ELs only)		NOCTI Pre-test (Grade 11 only) NOCTI Written: March (Grade 12) NOCTI Performance: April (Grade 12)			
					NAEP (Grade 12, select schools)				
	Student Wellbeing Survey				Student Wellbeing Survey			Student Wellbeing Survey	
		Bio Benchmark		Bio Benchmark		Bio Benchmark	AP/IB Exams		
SAT/ACT, ASVAB									

*Continuous progress monitoring takes place between screener windows.

Descriptions of Assessments

(alphabetical order)

ACCESS

What is it?

ACCESS for ELLs is the required instrument for the annual assessment of English language proficiency. ACCESS for ELLs 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.* The total time required for this assessment is about 3 hours.

What skills does it measure?

It assesses social and instructional English proficiency, as well as the language associated with Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies, within the school context across the 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. 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.

*Newly entering EL students in Grades K-12 without a previous ACCESS score take the WIDA Screener at SDP enrollment.

ASVAB

What is it?

The Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is a test administered by the armed services to determine the aptitude and ability for an applicant to perform in various career fields.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

It is administered to 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students desiring entrance into the armed services. The test requires approximately 3 hours to conduct.

What skills does it measure?

The ASVAB measures aptitude, or one's ability or propensity to perform, in various career fields. These skills range from those associated with a banker, truck driver, cook, medical doctor, lawyer, engineer, pilot, and more.

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

Students are allowed to provide their highest ASVAB score for acceptance into the military if they choose to enlist in the military.

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

What is it?

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

Who takes it? How long does it take?

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

What skills does it measure?

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

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 as 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 9th-12th grade students who are enrolled in a Biology course take this assessment. The total time required for this assessment is 45 minutes.

What skills does it measure?

Benchmarks consist of 25 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 prepare students 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; there is no "passing" score. Teachers use the data to evaluate their students' skill-level performance and create a plan to address any deficiencies.

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 skills 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 governments.

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 need 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, 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 8-12 take the Keystone exam when they complete the corresponding course. There is no time limit, but each exam usually takes 2-3 hours to complete.

What skills does it measure?

Keystone Exams assess [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, as one path to meet graduation requirements, and as a tool 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 incoming students within the first 45 days of school.

How is it administered, and who takes it?

Teachers use a checklist to observe student skills and behaviors. The administration time of the assessment varies from child to child. The inventory for each child is completed throughout the KEI administration window.

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 the 30 KEI indicators. They use this data to better understand student gaps in knowledge and skills.

Gifted Screener (instrument TBD pending an RFP)

What is it?

The Gifted Screener is used to provide a measure of general ability for students of all ability levels for whom a language-free assessment is helpful/required. The Gifted Screener is also used as one of multiple measures to identify students with gifted and exceptional abilities. The Gifted Screener will assess a child's problem solving and visual-spatial reasoning abilities instead of what they have learned in school.

Who takes it?

All 2nd grade students.

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

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

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 students in the U.S. 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, 8th & 12th grade students in select schools participate in NAEP as a part of the random sample. 4th, 8th & 12th 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 (also known as “The Nation’s Report Card”) 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.

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 take NOCTI. 11th grade CTE students take an online, NOCTI pre-test in the spring. On average, 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 perform 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.

Online Adaptive Assessments (Achieve3000 Literacy LevelSet)

What is it?

Achieve3000's LevelSet is an online assessment that utilizes the Lexile® Framework for Reading and offers a scientific means of matching students to informational text. This assessment provides a measure of student ability to read and comprehend non-fiction texts. It enables students to experience expository content that's tailored to their individual levels without extensive, time-consuming tests.

Which students qualify to use the Online Adaptive Programs?

The online adaptive programs serve students in all tiers (1, 2, and 3). Students that score in the On Watch, Strategic Intervention, or Intensive Intervention performance categories on the Star assessment, regardless of grade level, should use the online adaptive programs. These programs are designed to accelerate student mastery of reading and/or mathematics skills.

Students scoring in the Tier 1 (at/above benchmark) performance category can work independently and use the programs to develop advanced literacy skills through individualized learning pathways. These students can use the programs for reinforcement and enrichment, but the programs are *not* mandatory.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

LevelSet is a fixed-form, computer-assisted assessment. LevelSet is available in both English and Spanish. For each language, there are 11 versions, corresponding to grade levels 2 through 12. The LevelSet assessment has 30 questions. During the initial Pre-test, if a student answers incorrectly on each of the first 5 items, or answers incorrectly on 5 or more of the first 10 items, the test will move to an easier version. Because of this, some students may receive up to 40 items. The length of time it takes a student to complete varies, but a typical range would be 20-60 minutes. It does not need to be completed in one sitting.

What skills does it measure?

LevelSet is both a norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment. Scores on the LevelSet can be compared to MetaMetrics' National Lexile Norms to determine how a student performed compared to other students of the same grade. Scores can also inform whether a student is at a certain level of reading proficiency. LevelSet scores can be used to determine if a student is on track for College and Career Readiness.

Online Adaptive Assessments (Achieve3000 Math LevelSet)

What is it?

The LevelSet Math assessments are designed to measure a student's readiness for instruction on appropriate grade-level material. Teachers can assign a test at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. For each grade, Beginning of Year forms were created covering prior grade skills and concepts. The purpose of the Beginning of Year form is to determine a general Quantile level for the student to set a baseline for the growth in Quantile measures that will occur throughout the year. The second and third test forms were designed to monitor progress during the remainder of the school year.

Which students qualify to use the Online Adaptive Programs?

The online adaptive programs serve students in all tiers (1, 2, and 3). Students that score in the On Watch, Strategic Intervention, or Intensive Intervention performance categories on the Star assessment, regardless of grade level, should use the online adaptive programs. These programs are designed to accelerate student mastery of reading and/or mathematics skills.

Students scoring in the Tier 1 (at/above benchmark) performance category can work independently and use the programs to develop advanced literacy skills through individualized learning pathways. These students can use the programs for reinforcement and enrichment, but the programs are *not* mandatory.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

The LevelSet Math assessments focus specifically on 3-12. Each LevelSet assessment has 30 questions and no scaffolding (hints, step-by-steps, videos, etc.). On each form, if a student has answered five items in less than two minutes and provided at least three incorrect answers, the LevelSet Math assessment will stop and notify the teacher of the respective student. The length of time it takes a student varies, but a typical range would be 20-60 minutes. It does not need to be completed in one sitting.

What skills does it measure?

The Quantile measure of a student will reflect their understanding of over 550 mathematical skills and concepts. The Quantile Framework is a unique measurement system that uses a common scale and metric to assess a student's mathematical achievement level and the difficulty of specific skills and concepts. The Quantile Framework describes a student's ability to solve mathematical problems and their command of the skills and concepts typically taught in third-grade mathematics through algebra II, geometry, trigonometry, pre-calculus, and calculus.

Online Adaptive Assessments (Imagine Language & Literacy Benchmark/Diagnostic Test)

What is it?

The Imagine Language and Literacy Benchmark Test provides a baseline to show growth in students' literacy and oral language skills as they progress throughout the school year. The results of any Benchmark Test can be directly compared to students' initial Placement Test results, or to any Benchmark Tests students have previously taken, to measure changes in student performance. Benchmark tests in Imagine Language and Literacy are represented in Scaled Scores.

Which students qualify to use the Online Adaptive Programs?

The online adaptive programs serve students in all tiers (1, 2, and 3). Students that score in the On Watch, Strategic Intervention, or Intensive Intervention performance categories on the Star assessment, regardless of grade level, should use the online adaptive programs. These programs are designed to accelerate student mastery of reading and/or mathematics skills.

Students scoring in the Tier 1 (at/above benchmark) performance category can work independently and use the programs to develop advanced literacy skills through individualized learning pathways. These students can use the programs for reinforcement and enrichment, but the programs are *not* mandatory.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

All students using Imagine Language & Literacy will take the Placement Test and Benchmark Tests. Teachers should plan on at least 25 minutes for administration of the Placement Test or the Benchmark Test. Since the Placement Test and Benchmark Tests are **adaptive**, students may take anywhere from 10-60 minutes to complete the test, depending on their skill level.

What skills does it measure?

The Imagine Language & Literacy Placement Test determines students' proficiency in key skill areas and places them in the Imagine Language & Literacy curriculum so that they receive the instruction that they need. The Placement Test determines students' proficiency in the skill areas of Print Concepts, Phonological Awareness, Phonics and Word Recognition, Reading Comprehension, Oral Vocabulary, and Grammar. Placement Test results also serve as a baseline, point-in-time comparison for student growth throughout the school year.

Online Adaptive Assessments (Imagine Math Benchmark/Diagnostic Test)

What is it?

The Imagine Math Benchmark Test is a series of assessments administered throughout the school year that show evidence of student growth over time. Administrators and Teachers can compare the latest student Benchmark Test results with previous Benchmark Test results. Imagine Math also uses Benchmark Test results to refine where students are placed in Imagine Math. Benchmark tests on Imagine Math are represented in Quantiles/Quantile Measure.

Which students qualify to use the Online Adaptive Programs?

The online adaptive programs serve students in all tiers (1, 2, and 3). Students that score in the On Watch, Strategic Intervention, or Intensive Intervention performance categories on the Star assessment, regardless of grade level, should use the online adaptive programs. These programs are designed to accelerate student mastery of reading and/or mathematics skills.

Students scoring in the Tier 1 (at/above benchmark) performance category can work independently and use the programs to develop advanced literacy skills through individualized learning pathways. These students can use the programs for reinforcement and enrichment, but the programs are *not* mandatory.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

K-2: Educators should plan on at least 25 minutes to administer the Benchmark Test. Since the Benchmark Tests are adaptive, students may take anywhere from 20-60 minutes to complete the test, depending on their skill level. **Grade 3 and Above:** Each of the three benchmark assessments have been constructed to be taken within a single class sitting. The tests contain 30 multiple choice questions each. Generally, students should take between 30 and 45 minutes to complete an assessment. Both Placement & Benchmark Assessments consist of approximately 30 items.

What skills does it measure?

K-2: The Benchmark Test determines students' proficiency in the following skill areas: Counting, Cardinality, & Numbers in Base 10; Addition & Subtraction; and Geometry, Measurement, & Data. **Grade 3 and Above:** The Benchmark Test determines students' proficiency in the following skill areas: Algebra & Algebraic Thinking; Data Analysis, Statistics, & Probability; Geometry; Measurement; Number Sense; and Numerical Operations.

Online Adaptive Assessments (i-Ready Diagnostic)

What is it?

The core component of i-Ready Assessment is i-Ready Diagnostic (K–8), a computer-adaptive assessment. This assessment provides a deep, customized evaluation of every student, and tracks student growth and performance consistently and continuously over a student's entire K–8 career. By dynamically adapting based on student response patterns, i-Ready Diagnostic derives large amounts of information from a limited number of test items.

Which students qualify to use the Online Adaptive Programs?

The online adaptive programs serve students in all tiers (1, 2, and 3). Students that score in the On Watch, Strategic Intervention, or Intensive Intervention performance categories on the Star assessment, regardless of grade level, should use the online adaptive programs. These programs are designed to accelerate student mastery of reading and/or mathematics skills.

Students scoring in the Tier 1 (at/above benchmark) performance category can work independently and use the programs to develop advanced literacy skills through individualized learning pathways. These students can use the programs for reinforcement and enrichment, but the programs are *not* mandatory.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

i-Ready Diagnostic is designed for any K-8 student. Due to the adaptive nature of the Diagnostic, it is untimed. The average minutes of activity testing by grade are as follows: Grades K-1 (25-35 minutes); Grades 2-5 (40-60 minutes); Grades 6-8 (60-75 minutes).

What skills does it measure?

i-Ready Diagnostic assesses the following key domains in Reading: foundational skills; phonological awareness, phonics, & high-frequency words; vocabulary; comprehension for informational text; and comprehension in literature. i-Ready Diagnostic also assesses the following key domains in Math: number and operations; the number system; algebra and algebraic thinking; measurement and data; and geometry.

Online Adaptive Assessments (iStation ISIP)

What is it?

An integral part of the Istation blended learning program, ISIP (iStation's Indicators of Progress) is a nationally normed, adaptive assessment that provides screening, progress monitoring, and formative data. In SDP, ISIP Reading spans K-8, while ISIP Lectura (Spanish literacy) spans K-5. Additionally, Istation offers Oral Reading Fluency (K-5) and Rapid Automatized Naming (K-3) assessments in English and Spanish.

Which students qualify to use the Online Adaptive Programs?

The online adaptive programs serves students in all tiers (1, 2, and 3). Students that score in the On Watch, Strategic Intervention, or Intensive Intervention performance categories on the Star assessment, regardless of grade level, should use the online adaptive programs. These programs are designed to accelerate student mastery of reading and/or mathematics skills.

Students scoring in the Tier 1 (at/above benchmark) performance category can work independently and use the programs to develop advanced literacy skills through individualized learning pathways. These students can use the programs for reinforcement and enrichment, but the programs are *not* mandatory.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

K-5 students enrolled in the Dual Language program take ISIP Reading and ISIP Lectura to measure reading ability and skill development in English and Spanish. Students are automatically assessed once a month. Teachers also have the ability to assess on demand, using either the entire assessment or just a portion of the assessment (i.e. a "subtest" that focuses on one particular skill area). The duration of the assessment varies depending on grade level and student performance, but is typically completed in 15 to 30 minutes. Each "subtest" typically takes anywhere from 3-10 minutes to complete.

What skills does it measure?

ISIP Reading (K-3) assesses all critical areas of early reading literacy and measures students' overall reading ability using: Listening Comprehension, Phonemic Awareness, Letter Knowledge, Alphabetic Decoding, Vocabulary, Comprehension, Spelling, Text Fluency (Text Fluency is not used to calculate the overall reading ability). Each student will begin the school year by taking an assigned set of assessments ("subtests") based on their grade level.

Online Adaptive Assessments (Lexia Core 5)

What is it?

Auto Placement is a tool that is used only once when a student first logs on to Lexia® Core5® Reading. It is designed to place each student in the appropriate program level based on their performance. The program screens both word recognition skills (Phonemic Awareness and Phonics) and meaning-based skills (Vocabulary and Comprehension), placing the student in one of 21 levels.

Which students qualify to use the Online Adaptive Programs?

The online adaptive programs serve students in all tiers (1, 2, and 3). Students that score in the On Watch, Strategic Intervention, or Intensive Intervention performance categories on the Star assessment, regardless of grade level, should use the online adaptive programs. These programs are designed to accelerate student mastery of reading and/or mathematics skills.

Students scoring in the Tier 1 (at/above benchmark) performance category can work independently and use the programs to develop advanced literacy skills through individualized learning pathways. These students can use the programs for reinforcement and enrichment, but the programs are *not* mandatory.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

All students beginning the Lexia® Core5® Reading program take the Auto Placement to determine their personalized starting point and address their individual reading needs. While it is not necessary to have all students complete Auto Placement more than at the start of the program, some school leaders may choose to have all students or a subgroup of students complete Auto Placement again at the beginning of each school year. On average, the Auto Placement takes around 11 minutes for most students to complete. Students who place far above or below their grade level may take slightly longer to complete the test, up to around 20 minutes. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

What skills does it measure?

The tool contains word recognition activities (Core5 strands: phonological awareness, phonics, structural analysis) and comprehension activities (Core5 strands: vocabulary and comprehension). Auto Placement starts with two activities that correspond to the student's assigned grade in myLexia.com, and adjusts based on their performance.

Online Adaptive Assessments (Lexia PowerUp)

What is it?

Auto Placement, taken when students first log in to PowerUp, determines where each student is placed in each strand and ensures that student learning is personalized. The Auto Placement tool uses short, sequential activities to place students into the appropriate starting points in the Comprehension, Word Study, and Grammar instructional strands of the program.

Which students qualify to use the Online Adaptive Programs?

The online adaptive programs serve students in all tiers (1, 2, and 3). Students that score in the On Watch, Strategic Intervention, or Intensive Intervention performance categories on the Star assessment, regardless of grade level, should use the online adaptive programs. These programs are designed to accelerate student mastery of reading and/or mathematics skills.

Students scoring in the Tier 1 (at/above benchmark) performance category can work independently and use the programs to develop advanced literacy skills through individualized learning pathways. These students can use the programs for reinforcement and enrichment, but the programs are *not* mandatory.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

All students beginning the Lexia® PowerUp Literacy™ program take the three Auto Placement activities once to determine their personalized starting point in the program's Comprehension, Word Study, and Grammar strands. On average, the Auto Placement takes between 10 and 30 minutes for most students to complete. The Word Study and Grammar sections take between 3 and 10 minutes each, and the Comprehension section takes most students between 10 and 20 minutes to complete. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

What skills does it measure?

Word Study Placement: This Auto Placement task consists of reading and spelling of nonwords. **Grammar Placement:** This Auto Placement task asks students to identify nouns, verbs, and other parts of speech. **Comprehension Placement:** This Auto Placement task requires students to independently read between one and three passages, and answer comprehension questions related to the passages.

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?

The PASA is administered in grades 3-8 and 11 for English Language Arts and Math. It is administered in grades 5, 8, and 11 for Science. Students must be deemed eligible to participate in the PASA by their 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 3.5 hours to 6 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 relative to grade-level standards and alternate eligible content that is 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 of 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 5 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 can be used to assist teachers in identifying students who may be in need of additional supports. 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 PSAT 8/9 and the PSAT NMSQT provide practice for the SAT. Additionally, the PSAT NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) provides entry to the National Merit Scholarship Program, an academic competition conducted by NMSC. The PSAT 8/9 and SAT each consist of a reading test, a writing & language test, and a math test. The PSAT NMSQT consists of a reading & writing test (combined) and a math test. The ACT consists of subject area tests in English, Math, Reading, Science, and Writing.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

Students in 9th grade, along with some 8th grade students, are eligible to take the PSAT 8/9 which is 2 hours and 25 minutes long. Students in 10th and 11th grade are eligible to take the PSAT NMSQT which is 2 hours and 14 minutes long. Students in 12th grade are eligible to take the SAT or ACT. The total time required for the SAT is 3 hours. The total time required for the ACT is 3 hours and 30 minutes.

What skills does it measure?

The SAT assesses the literacy, numeracy, and writing skills that are needed for academic success in college, as well as how well students 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.

Star Early Literacy (K-2)

What is it?

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

Who takes it? How long does it take?

All K-2 students are expected to take a Star computer-adaptive test during each required universal screening window. K-2 students who are not yet independent readers should take the Star Early Literacy CAT, while K-2 students who are independent readers should take the Star Reading and Star Math CATs. Students who achieve a unified scale score of 852 on their Star Early Literacy CATs are likely independent readers and are eligible to move on to [Star Reading and Star Math CATs](#).

The Star Early Literacy assessment consists of 27 items and takes approximately 15-25 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. The Star Early Literacy CAT is read aloud to students.

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

Star Early Literacy scores provide an assessment of students' literacy/numeracy skill development to identify students who need intervention or enrichment. 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, as well as track understanding of skills aligned to state and Common Core Standards.

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

What is it?

Star Curriculum Based Measures (CBMs) are timed assessments 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 K-3 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 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, as well as track understanding of skills aligned to state standards and Common Core Standards.

Star CBM Reading (4-5)

What is it?

Star Curriculum Based Measures (CBMs) are timed assessments 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 in grades 4 and 5 only take the Passage Oral Reading CBM which consists of a passage as opposed to a number of items.

What skills does it measure?

The Passage Oral Reading CBM 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, as well as track understanding of skills aligned to state standards and Common Core Standards.

Star Reading and Star Math (3-12)

What is it?

Star Reading and Star Math are computer-adaptive tests (CATs) that students take independently. They 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](#) and who are proven independent readers) take Star Reading and Star Math. Both Star Reading and Star Math consist of 34 items. Star Reading and Star Math each take approximately 15-25 minutes to complete.

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, as well as track understanding of skills aligned to state standards and Common Core Standards.

Student Well-being Survey (3-12)

What is it?

The Student Well-being Survey (SWBS) gathers formative Tier 1 information on students' use of SEL skills and competencies, as well as how they feel about their experiences and relationships at school.

Who takes it? How long does it take?

All 3rd-12th grade students take this survey three times a year. The survey is designed to take 5 minutes. However, some students may require a bit longer.

What skills does it measure?

The questions on the SWBS are aligned with the 5 social-emotional competencies: Relationship Building; Social-Awareness; Problem-Solving; Self-Awareness; and Self-Care. These competencies are important for creating a positive school climate and building pro-social skills.

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

The survey provides school-wide and grade-wide data related to students' perceptions of their relationships with their peers, relationships with adults, and intrapersonal relationships. The SWBS data should be reviewed by school administrators and MTSS or school climate teams to problem-solve and make decisions towards building a positive school climate aligned with the school's vision. School teams should use the Developing Student Well-Being: Resource Guide when responding to student voice feedback.

SWBS responses are private and not meant to evaluate the behavioral/health needs of individual students.

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 among 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 data from the 2018-19 school year.
- Steps were taken to ensure the resulting norms were nationally representative of K–12 US student populations with regard to certain important characteristics, including 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 CBM 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 meet 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](#), page 47.

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 who judge whether each passage meets the criteria outlined below. 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:
 - 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 38-41.

2024-25 Assessment Calendar

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.