

# The Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program

## Phase Three Overview

The Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) expands the assessment of children at kindergarten entry to include the school readiness domains of math, social skills, and self-regulation. These assessments are combined with assessments of children's literacy skills that are already assessed using the existing Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS).

During phase two of the VKRP, teachers in 100 classrooms across the eight superintendents' regions of Virginia completed additional readiness assessments with 2,036 kindergarten students prior to their administration of the PALS during the Fall of 2014. We found that 34% of children in the Commonwealth arrive at kindergarten unprepared in one or more critical learning domains (literacy, math, self-regulation, and social skills). These results were reported to the Virginia State Legislature ([the executive summary and full legislative report are available here](#)) who allocated funding to begin statewide implementation of the expanded assessments in order to provide a more comprehensive snapshot of kindergarten children's incoming skills and inform teacher practice.

In this next Phase, UVA is beginning the process of statewide implementation of the expanded assessments. We are building from the success and infrastructure of PALS to further develop the assessment system.

This fall, UVA will work with school divisions to implement the expanded assessments in approximately 500 classrooms. This graduated roll-out will allow for continued input from stakeholders to enhance feasibility and usefulness of the assessment system for teachers, schools, divisions, and the Commonwealth.

***As of July 15, 2015, 40 school divisions totaling over 900 kindergarten classrooms (and an estimated 18,000 kindergarten students) have expressed interest in participating in VKRP. The level of school division interest has come with minimal recruitment efforts and has surpassed UVA's expectations. Our aim will be to recruit a diverse sample of school divisions across the state.***

**Phase three activities flow directly from the recommendations set forth in the VKRP legislative report and are as follows:**

- ***Finalize the assessment protocol.*** UVA will choose measures that demonstrate reliability and validity, are aligned with the Virginia Kindergarten Standards of Learning, and are feasible for teachers to administer.
- ***Develop training materials.*** UVA will train all teachers this fall. UVA will work with school administrators to develop a train-the-trainer program where division leaders can directly train teachers in the future.
- ***Support teachers to conduct assessments.*** UVA will work with teachers and administrators to determine the level of support needed for teachers to conduct assessments accurately and to improve feasibility and usefulness of the assessment system for teachers, schools, and districts.
- ***Develop an integrated data system.*** Teachers need a centralized, web-based system to efficiently input data on all assessments. Currently, each assessment has a separate data entry portal, which is not feasible at-scale. We will collaborate with our colleagues at PALS to create a more seamless interface.
- ***Make data useful for teachers and administrators.*** We will develop reports that provide information about students' strengths and areas of challenge, describe the variability of students' skills, and provide strategies for effectively instructing students.
- ***Provide teachers with training around individualized instructional strategies linked to readiness data.*** Teachers need more support to use these data to individualize instruction, particularly in relation to strategies to support students' social skills and self-regulation. We will develop and pilot in a sub-sample of classrooms, a more individualized consultation process.