



#245-21

Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #245-21

DATE: August 27, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Algebra Readiness Initiative - Frequently Asked Questions 2021-2022 School Year**

The **Algebra Readiness Initiative** provides mathematics intervention resources and services to students in grades six through nine who are at risk of failing the Algebra I end-of-course test, as demonstrated by their individual performance on any diagnostic test that has been approved by the Department of Education.

The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) will support school divisions as they plan for intervention services during the 2021-2022 school year:

1. The Algebra Readiness Initiative (ARI) specifies that school divisions must utilize diagnostic methods to assess students in order to target those who will receive intervention services. Can schools provide smaller diagnostic assessments throughout the school year instead of administering one diagnostic test at the beginning of the school year?

Policy regarding the Algebra Readiness Initiative as established in the Standards of Quality does not specify that the diagnostic test must occur in one setting. Using smaller formative assessment to diagnose student unfinished learning is certainly appropriate as long as schools are able to ascertain whether a student has shown improvement by the end of the year. School divisions can use locally-designed

diagnostic assessments or locally selected (i.e., vendor created) diagnostic tests. Locally-designed or selected diagnostic tests must meet Virginia Department of Education established criteria. The Mathematics Standards of Learning Assessments that were administered in spring 2021 could certainly be used as a diagnostic assessment to ascertain areas for individual student improvement during the 2021-2022 school year. The fall 2021 growth assessments to be administered in grades 6-8 could also serve as a diagnostic assessment. The Mathematics Standards of Learning Assessments to be administered in the spring 2022 may also be used as a post-assessment at the end of the 2021-2022 school year.

2. Can school divisions provide Algebra Readiness intervention services to students using a virtual platform or does the service need to occur face-to-face during the 2021-2022 school year?

Algebra Readiness Intervention services can be provided to students in a virtual setting and do not need to occur face-to-face or in a school building. The intervention services should provide 2½ hours of instruction per week in addition to regular classroom instruction. Current Appropriations Act Algebra Readiness Initiative language provides flexibility for school divisions to utilize online resources and educational materials with students learning in a virtual setting in order to provide Algebra Readiness intervention. There is an expectation that, when possible, a component of the intervention will occur virtually through synchronous instruction from a tutor, but with some flexibility to pair these services with other asynchronous instruction provided through online resources and other educational materials to total 2½ hours of instruction per week.

3. Algebra Readiness Initiative funding is intended to provide mathematics intervention services to students in the targeted grades, including teachers and paraprofessionals for tutoring, student transportation to and from intervention services, and other costs associated with providing intervention services. Can ARI funding be used to purchase online resources and educational materials to support intervention during the 2021-2022 school year?

Current Appropriations Act Algebra Readiness Initiative language provides flexibility for school divisions to purchase online resources and educational materials in order to

provide intervention services to students who are learning from home in remote or virtual settings. Again, the expectation is that the use of these online resources in an asynchronous setting would also be paired with synchronous instruction from a tutor, whenever possible, to provide a total of 2½ hours of intervention services to a student each week.

For more information

If you have questions regarding the Algebra Readiness Initiative, please contact Tina Mazzacane, Mathematics Coordinator, at Tina.Mazzacane@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 225-4849.

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