

Glossary of Terms

The following glossary provides definitions of some of the terms used in the DRAFT APS 2017 System-wide Assessment Inventory.

Assessment. Assessment is the act of determining the standing of an object on some variable of interest, for example, testing students and reporting scores.

Assessment for program placement. This includes assessment to select students for programs or to place students after entry into a program.

Criterion-referenced Tests. Criterion-referenced tests are intended to determine whether students have acquired specific skills or knowledge. One example of a criterion referenced test is the International Baccalaureate (IB) Test.

Diagnostic Assessment. This type of assessment is used to determine a student's strengths and weaknesses in order to improve performance.

EL. EL is the acronym for English learner formerly known as LEP - Limited English Proficiency. In Arlington County schools, this EL designation refers to students who receive language support services through ESOL, HILT, and HILTEX programs.

End-of-Course (EOC) Tests. End-of-Course SOL tests are associated with high school courses in four core areas: English, mathematics, history, and science. There are currently 12 EOC tests administered in Virginia.

ESOL. ESOL is an abbreviation for English for Speakers of Other Languages. It is available in elementary schools only.

Evaluation. Evaluation is the systematic investigation of the worth or merit of an object (e.g., a program, project, or instructional material).

Formative (continual) evaluation. This evaluation type is the use of information to modify and improve performance of individual students, programs, or schools. Quarterly benchmark assessments in reading and math through Power School are examples of formative assessments.

HILT. HILT is an abbreviation for High Intensity Language Training. Middle and high school students in HILT receive four periods a day of English instruction. This program is also available in elementary schools.

HILTEX. HILTEX is an abbreviation for High Intensity Language Training Extension. HILTEX offers three periods of English instruction daily. It is available in middle and high schools only.

IEP. An Individualized Education Program is a document developed for students receiving special education and related services. The primary purpose is to state the child's needs and describe the specific program that will meet those needs.

LEP Participation Plan. A LEP Participation Plan is a document developed for students receiving English language instruction. The primary purpose is to state the child's needs and describe the specific program that will meet Language instructional needs.

National average. The national average is the 50th percentile, the point at which 50 percent of the norming sample scored higher and 50 percent lower.

National norm. The national norm is a set of scores obtained from the administration of the test to a representative sample of students nationwide.

National percentile. The national percentile is used to show how well a specific student or group of students scored in relation to other students across the nation. It indicates the proportion of students from the national norm group who had lower raw scores. Percentiles range from 1 to 99. A percentile of 62 means that 62 percent of the national norm group scored lower than the student or students concerned.

Norm-referenced tests (NRT). Norm-referenced tests compare a student's performance on a representative sample of test questions with the performance of a norm group on those same questions. The Naglieri is an NRT.

Percentile Rank. A percentile rank (PR) score is a type of norm-referenced score. A PR score indicates the percentage of pupils in the reference or norm group whose scores for a test fell below a particular pupil's raw score. The reference group is usually selected by the publisher of the test to represent the average school in the district, state, or country. A student's PR score will change for different reference groups.

Quartile. A quartile is one-fourth of the distribution of test scores, which means that one-fourth of the students in the national norm group, or total group tested, fell in each quartile. The first quartile includes percentiles from 0-25, the second from 26-50, the third from 51-75, and the fourth includes percentiles from 76-99. A student in the bottom quartile, therefore, scored in the range of the lowest 25 percent of scores.

Raw score. A raw score is the number of test items that a student answered correctly.

Reliability. Reliability refers to the degree of consistency of the measurement. A reliable measure provides the same answer time after time, while an unreliable measure is inconsistent.

Standards of Learning (SOL). Educational objectives approved by the Virginia Board of Education. School divisions must implement the SOL objectives or objectives designed for their school divisions that meet or exceed the Board's requirements.

Standards-referenced tests. Standards-referenced tests (SRTs) are developed by specifying content standards (what students should know and be able to do) and performance standards (how much of this content they are expected to know and do). SRTs are reported in most instances, by three or four different performance levels.

Summative (culminating) evaluation.

Summative evaluation is the use of information to judge the impact and merit of performance of students, programs, or schools. Spring SOL content assessments are examples of summative assessments.

Validity. Validity refers to a test or assessment truly measuring what it intended to measure.