

Algebra Readiness Initiative – 2020-2021 Guidance

The beginning of the 2020-2021 school year for many school divisions has students learning from home in remote or virtual settings. Guidance regarding the Algebra Readiness Initiative (ARI), established in the Standards of Quality, is included in this document to support school divisions as they plan for the implementation of Algebra Readiness Initiative programs during the 2020-2021 school year. The VDOE [Algebra Readiness Initiative](#) webpage has additional supporting information and resources.

Background Information – Algebra Readiness Initiative

Standards of Quality ([Sec. 22.1-253.13:1\(D\)13](#))

Local school divisions shall provide algebra readiness intervention 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. Local school divisions shall report the results of the diagnostic tests to the Department of Education on an annual basis, at a time to be determined by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Each student who receives algebra readiness intervention services will be assessed again at the end of that school year.

2020 Appropriations Act Language – Budget Bill – Chapter 1289 [Item 145.C.16](#)

a. An additional payment of \$15,194,903 the first year and \$15,239,492 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund shall be disbursed by the Department of Education to local school divisions for the purposes of providing math intervention services to students in grades 6, 7, 8 and 9 who are at-risk of failing the Algebra I end-of-course test, as demonstrated by their individual performance on diagnostic tests which have been approved by the Department of Education. These amounts reflect \$200,000 the first year and \$200,000 the second year apportioned to each school division to account for the cost of the diagnostic test. The Department of Education shall review the tests to ensure that such local test uses state-provided criteria for diagnosis of math deficiencies which are similar to those criteria used in the state-provided test. The Department of Education shall make the state-provided diagnostic test used in this program available to local school divisions. School divisions shall report the results of the diagnostic tests to the Department of Education on an annual basis at a time to be determined by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

b. These payments shall be based on the state's share of the cost of providing two and one-half hours of additional instruction each week for an estimated number of students in each school division at a student to teacher ratio of ten to one. The estimate number of students in each school division shall be determined by multiplying the projected number of students reported in each school division's fall membership by the percent of students that qualify for the federal Free Lunch Program.

c. These payments are available to any school division that certifies to the Department of Education that an intervention program will be offered to such students and that each student who receives an intervention will be assessed again at the end of that school year. Localities

receiving these payments are required to match these funds based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay.

2019-2020 Algebra Readiness SOQ Compliance Report

School divisions will use the following criteria when providing Algebra Readiness Initiative (ARI) intervention services to individual students:

- a. Determine the student's knowledge and skills of the Mathematics SOL for grades 3 through 8 and Algebra I.
- b. Support the following five mathematical process goals for students found in the SOL:
1) Becoming Mathematical Problem Solvers; 2) Communicating Mathematically; 3) Reasoning Mathematically; 4) Making Mathematical Connections; and 5) Making Mathematical Representations.
- c. Identify mathematics content strengths and challenges, and indicate the level of performance where intervention may be necessary to be successful in each of the following categories:
Grades 3 through 8:
1) Number and Number Sense;
2) Computation and Estimation;
3) Measurement and Geometry;
4) Probability and Statistics; and
5) Patterns, Functions, and Algebra.
Algebra I
1) Expressions and Operations;
2) Equations and Inequalities;
3) Functions; and
4) Statistics.

All school divisions must submit an annual report to VDOE outlining the remediation efforts used, the number of students who received ARI services, and the number of students demonstrating improvement. To receive SOL Algebra Readiness Initiative Payments, the school division certifies that it will:

- Offer an intervention program to such students;
- Utilize diagnostic methods to assess students at the beginning and at the end of that school year;
- Submit a report to the Virginia Department of Education by August 1 outlining the methods used for diagnosing individual student mathematics content strengths and challenges, remediation efforts used, the number of students who received ARI services, and the number of students demonstrating improvement; and
- Match these funds based on the composite index of local ability-to-pay.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. The Algebra Readiness Initiative 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 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. The Standards of Learning Assessments to be administered in spring 2021 could certainly be used as an assessment at the end of the year to ascertain individual student improvement.

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?

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 2 ½ 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?

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 2 ½ hours of intervention services to a student each week.