

- **St. Vrain Community Montessori School Assessment Framework**

This document provides an articulation of our year-long assessment plan and the rationale behind the assessments administered to our students. The goal of our assessment plan is to **measure what matters**. This document includes an explanation of:

- What tools we use
- Which students are tested (grades/levels)
- The test format (paper, computer, observer documented)
- When we assess (timing within the school year and frequency)
- Why we use the assessments we use (state mandates and/or valuable information to guide/classroom)

Overarching Statement on Assessment:

As a public school, there are assessments we are required to administer as part of our accountability requirements as a recipient of public education funding. There are also assessments that we choose to administer because they provide valuable information to the guides, which informs instruction. As a high-fidelity Montessori school, certain assessments we elect to administer also provide insights about whole child development and the effectiveness of our Montessori practice and environments.

Observation is a cornerstone of the Montessori practice. Montessori guides are highly trained observers; they observe the child at work in the classroom and use the information they gather to shape their lessons. The **Three Period Lesson** of the Montessori method is a tool of fluid instruction used across the Planes of Development by guides to deliver lessons, observe progress, and assess student learning. The first period is when a concept is presented by a guide (aka “a lesson”); during the second period, the child then practices independently or with a peer; in the 3rd period, the child achieves conceptual and practical independence as s/he internalizes the concept and demonstrates mastery.

In the Upper Elementary and Middle School, mastery projects and culminating projects provide an opportunity to demonstrate third period understanding. As such, much “assessment” is embedded and ongoing at SVCMS. We prioritize and value insights we receive from these well-established tools of the Montessori method.

Types of Assessments

SVCMS administers a variety of assessments by level and they serve different purposes. The purpose of individual assessments is often categorized as either diagnostic (formative), interim (benchmark), or summative. [The Colorado Department of Education’s Assessment Continuum](#) provides detail on these different types of assessments. *Diagnostic or formative assessments* are

designed to inform instruction, to provide a view into what a student knows at that moment and what the student is ready to learn. The goal is to gain a focused and detailed understanding of a student’s skills in a specific area. These assessments are less formal and are typically considered “low stakes.” *Interim (or benchmark) assessments* are administered periodically throughout the school year to measure progress in an area. The view is broader than that of a diagnostic assessment and is administered at regular intervals throughout the school year (2-3 times a year). *Summative assessments* are often considered the most formal and most rigorous. These are generally done at the end of the school year to measure the concepts acquired during a specific school year, or to measure growth year over year. Summative assessments also have the broadest audience in that parents, administrators and even the public (ie CMAS) view and reflect on these results. SVCMS also utilizes *progress monitoring* to track student mastery of skills as students progress through the scope and sequence of the curriculum. With a whole child view of cognitive development, SVCMS recognizes the importance of the development of executive functioning, a set of cognitive skills that is demonstrated by the ability to pay attention, to concentrate, to delay gratification, and to manage time. Authentic Montessori programs support the development of executive functioning. With this understanding of types of assessments, below is a table that outlines which specific assessments are used at SVCMS for these different assessment purposes. (Please see the glossary for additional details on these assessments.)

Type of Assessment	Formative/Diagnostic	Interim (Benchmark)	Summative	Progress Monitoring
Specific Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DRA ● DOG (completed by both students and guides) in Middle School ● Early Skills Evaluation in Children’s House ● Normalization/ ● Adjustment screener 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Writing prompts ● Math benchmark (LE) ● DIBELS (K-3) ● 3 Period Lesson and progress monitoring ● Early Skills Evaluation (and for Kindergarten Readiness) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CMAS ● MAP ● ACCESS (for English Language Learners only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transparent Classroom (demonstrating mastery) ● Progress Report (Social, Emotional and Executive Development)
Purpose	What student knows and what student needs to learn	Where student is at this moment in time	Yearly Growth	Assess progress
Grades:	K-5 mostly (except DOG)	K-6	3-8	All

Assessments by Level

Children's House (Preschool and Kindergarten)

- ACADIENCE (Formerly DIBELS): 3 times a year (for Read Act compliance)
- Normalization Checklist (screeners): 6 weeks in, all students ages 3-6, paper form, completed by guide, based on observation of the child
- Readiness Assessment: Early Skills Evaluation of literacy, numeracy, and cultural information, as well as six early childhood development domains (K only within first 60 school days)
- ACCESS: for English Language Learners only, annually in January (K only)
- MEFS: fall

Lower Elementary

- ACADIENCE (Formerly DIBELS): 3 times a year (for Read Act compliance)
- Adjustment Checklist: 6 weeks in, new to the classroom students, paper form, completed by guide, based on observation of the child
- DRA: new to level students, fall and as appropriate for returning students
- Math Benchmark (fall/spring): paper internal benchmark
- Writing sample (3 times a year): measures skills via a Six Traits Rubric
- CMAS: Spring summative ELA and Math for 3rd years only
- ACCESS: for English Language Learners only, annually in January
- MEFS: fall

Upper Elementary

- DRA: incoming UE 4th years in the Fall and as appropriate for returning students
- Adjustment Checklist: 6 weeks in, paper form, completed by guide, based on observation of the child (new to the level)
- Writing sample (3 times a year): measures skills via a Six Traits Rubric
- MAP Growth: Fall and Spring for all UE grades: reading, language usage, math. 5th and 6th years also science; Math only in the Fall
- ACCESS: for English Language Learners only, annually in January
- CMAS: Spring summative ELA and Math all grades; Social Science grade 4; Science grade 5

Middle School

- DOG: on-going and aligned with conferences/trimesters
- Adjustment Checklist: 6 weeks in, paper form, completed by guide, based on observation of the student (new to the level)

- MAP Growth (year end summative): Fall for math; and spring for reading, language usage, math and science
- ACCESS: for English Language Learners only, annually in January
- CMAS: Spring summative ELA and Math all grades; Social Science grade 7; Science grade 8

Schoolwide Environmental Assessment

- DERS: environment rubric to check for Montessori essentials, ongoing 3 times a year; multi-layered (self, peer, level leader, admin)

Glossary of Assessments-Description of Assessment Tools, with links:

Acadience Learning (Formerly Dibels)

Who: Administered to Kindergarten through 3rd Year Students

When: 3 times a year (fall, winter, spring)

Format: Paper

Why: In compliance with the Colorado READ Act, SVCMS chooses the Acadience assessment to meet this requirement because it is a paper-based test that offers insight into early phonological skills of emergent readers.

The test is administered to students individually allowing guides the opportunity to observe and listen to students read. Acadience is used to determine if a student has a Significant Reading Deficiency (SRD) and will be on a READ Plan and will receive extra literacy support.

DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment)

Who: Lower Elementary new to the classroom and 4th Years

When: Fall

Format: Paper

Why: To provide deep and meaningful information about a child's reading level, reading ability. This assessment provides both an Independent reading level and an Instructional reading level.

MAP Growth (Measures of Academic Progress)

Who: Grades 4-8

When: Fall, math only, grades 4-8

Spring reading, language usage, math grades 4-8 and science grades 5-8 only.

Format: Computers (chromebooks for student use)

Why: MAP is a nationally-normed, adaptive assessment designed by the NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association), a not-for-profit company that designs research based assessments. MAP offers simple, short sessions and results that are norm-referenced on a national basis. This means MAP allow us to measure students' academic skills vs. same aged peers on a national basis in areas like reading, writing, math, and science. MAP assessments also offer the benefit of being adaptive, meaning the item selection responds to the student, so every student is taking an assessment designed for them, vs. taking one that is

simply standards aligned to their grade level. This is important in terms of meeting students where they are with content that is accessible based on their current work.

MEFS (Minnesota Executive Function Scale)

Who: Children's House and Lower Elementary students

When: Fall

Format: An iPad (with test administrator guidance)

Why: MEFS is a well-established, scientifically-rigorous, valid and reliable assessment of executive functioning skills. It is quick to administer (5 minutes) and can be used with young children through to elementary ages. It offers a reliable measure of the important executive functioning skills such as concentration, impulse control, and focus.

DERS (Developmental Environmental Rating Scale)

Who: All classrooms

When: Minimum 3 times a year; more frequent if possible

Format: An iPad App used by a trained adult observer

Why: The DERS is a unique assessment as it is not an individual assessment on or by a student; rather it is an observation and rating of Montessori classrooms. Designed by the NCMPS (National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector), the DERS is a tool used by a trained observer in a Montessori classroom. The DERS is administered by lead guides, level peers, level leader, and admin.

A trained observer rates 60 attributes (20 each for the child, the adult, and the environment) over a one hour observation. The DERS report is focused on five outcomes: initiation and concentration, inhibitory control, working memory, linguistic and cultural fluency, and social-emotional flexibility.

CMAS (Colorado Measures of Academic Success)

Who: Grades 3-8 Math and English Language Arts); Science (Grades 5 & 8) and Social Science (Grades 4 & 7)

When: Spring, as determined by the Colorado Department of Education

Format: SVCMS has historically elected the paper option for students in grades 3-5 and computer-based administrations for students in grades 6-8. Most elementary schools in SVVSD use computer-based administration.

Why: Required by ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act), which replaced No Child Left Behind.

ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State)

Who: English Language Learners

When: Annually in January

Format: Paper

Why: To measure growth in English language skills for English Language Learners.

Normalization/Adjustment Checklists (from NCMPS)

Who: Children's House, students new to Lower/Upper Elementary, and Middle School

When: 6 weeks into the start of school

Format: Paper

Why: The NCMPS created two checklists for Montessori schools to use to assess a child's "general ability to navigate and thrive in the Montessori prepared environment."

It is a tool for Guides to use to screen for children who may be having difficulties, to pinpoint the domain of the difficulties.

DOG (Dimensions of Observable Growth)

Who: Middle School Students. It is self-administered by students and by Guides.

When: 2-3 times a year (aligned with conferences) and ongoing

Format: Paper

Why: The DOG is a rubric that measures non-academic domains of growth for adolescents. Domains include attention and concentration, purpose and will, self-mastery, social integration and spiritual integration. It can be used both as a self-assessment tool and a Guide assessment tool for students.

Internal Assessments

Writing Benchmarks

Math Benchmarks

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Diagnostic (aka Early Skills Evaluation)