



# Early Grade Assessment Framework

The Early Grade Reading and Math Initiative (RAMP)

August 2021



## Contents

1.	Introduction.....	
1.1	Assessment in educational literature .....	4
1.2	Assessment system in the Ministry of Education (MOE) .....	5
2.	Overview of the assessment system and tests for all grades (KG2-G12).....	
2.1	Early Childhood Assessment studies/School readiness .....	8
2.2	Internal assessemnt (School administered) .....	9
2.3	External assessment (MOE center administered) National tests .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
2.4	External Assessments (Externally administered) International tests .....	11
2.5	Diagnostic tests for learning difficulties International tests .....	10
3.	Early Grades Assessment framework.....	
3.1	A description of current early grade assessments .....	13
3.1.1	Assessment Studies—measuring the children’s readiness for learning .....	13
3.1.2	Internal assessments school administered .....	16
3.1.3	External Assessments (designed, administered, and analyzed at the MOE’s central level) National tests.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
3.1.4	External Assessments (administered by external entities) International tests .....	
3.1.5	Learning Difficulties Diagnostic Assessment .....	18
4.	Major challenges identified throught the review of the current assesssment system with recommendations for improvement .....	

## Abbreviations and acronyms

CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DCT	Department of Curriculum and Textbook
DET	Department of Examination and Testing
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ETC	Department of Educational Training and Supervision
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
G1	Grade one
G2	Grade two
G3	Grade three
HRD	Human Resources Development
IEA	<i>International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement</i>
KG1	<i>Kindergarten one</i>
KG2	<i>Kindergarten two</i>
LQAS	Lot Quality Assurance Sampling
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCHRD	National Center for Human Resources Development
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RAMP	The Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Initiative

# 1. Introduction

In any educational system, assessment aims to provide a means to identify the extent to which the educational objectives, learning outcomes, and learning improvement have been achieved. In general, assessments help diagnose the quality and effectiveness of the systems, programs, learning outcomes, and instructional practices. Through these assessments as well, performances and behaviors are evaluated. Therefore, assessments are important for the success of any educational system because they enable teachers and stakeholders to make decisions to develop and improve systems, programs, learning outcomes, or practices.



## 1.1 Assessment in the educational literature

Assessment is a constant, organized process of collecting, analyzing, and using data to recognize the effectiveness of interventions and programs to improve student performance (Upcraft & Schu, 1996; Anderson, Bresciani, & Zelna, 2004.) The assessment cycle provides a framework to guide the constant assessment process, which entails clarifying the learning expectations and collecting evidence to be used for improving students' outcomes and the education system (Baker et al., 2012.<sup>1</sup>)

*Figure 1. Assessment Cycle*

Assessment is an essential part of the learning process: within the educational literature, assessment has numerous definitions all of which indicate that the purpose of an assessment should be to improve the learning and that it should be built in response to the results of student improvement measures—whether at the classroom level or that of the educational system's inputs and processes.

<sup>1</sup> • Baker, G. R., Jankowski, N. A., Provezis, S., & Kinzie, J. (2012). Using assessment results: Promising practices of institutions that do it well. National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment. Retrieved from [http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/CrossCase\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/CrossCase_FINAL.pdf)

• Bresciani, M. J., Zelna, C. L., & Anderson, J. A. (2004). Assessing student learning and development: A handbook for practitioners. Washington, DC: NASPA Upcraft, M. L., & Schuh, J. H. (1996). Assessment in student affairs: A guide for practitioners. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

The assessment cycle, presented in **Figure 1**, clearly shows that assessment is a reflective thinking process, considering that its results could lead to identifying new outcomes and processes. This cycle adopts a holistic perspective of the educational process. These procedures are not limited to assessments that take place inside the classroom; they also include assessments that take place at the level of educational programs and the different evaluations administered within the educational system—whether at the level of the school, programs, or others.

As **Figure 1** illustrates, these steps are implemented separately; however, there should be a correlation among them. They should be frequently implemented to achieve continuous improvement in the assessment process.

Briefly, the first step in the assessment process is to define the goals and objectives of the learning process while the targeted learning outcomes are identified in the next phase. Then comes the design of the assessment tools and methods, identifying the learning opportunities that can help students assimilate and acquire the knowledge and skills required to achieve these outcomes. After that, the assessment is administrated (to those expected to achieve the learning outcomes). In the fourth step, the resulting data are analyzed and findings are concluded, disseminated, and discussed to identify their implications. Finally, changes and improvements in the educational programs, learning plans, and instructional practices must be made based on those results. Without this last step, the assessment will be very limited in its ability to influence, change and/or improve performance, achieve learning outcomes, and enhance learning systems.

## 1.2 The assessment system in the Ministry of Education (MOE)

The Ministry of Education (MOE) has been always keen to enhance and update the evaluation and assessment processes that measure student performance, as well as verify the achievement of the targeted learning outcomes by using modern assessment methods and tools<sup>2</sup>. As part of the first phase of the “Education Reform for Knowledge Economy” program, two documents have been prepared: “The Theoretical Framework of Assessment Strategies and Tools — 2004”, and “The Teacher’s Guide to Design Summative Assessments — 2007”. Supervisors and teachers have been trained to use these two documents. The Department of Examination and Testing (DET) has also prepared instructions for the “Foundations of Success, Failure, and Completion in Basic and Secondary Learning Stages (for both Academic and Vocational Branches)” document. It is constantly revised and updated to clarify the different assessment types used in all grades, along with their principles and administration methods, and to explain the distribution of scores across all subjects and all grades (figure 2).

---

<sup>2</sup> The Theoretical Framework of Assessment Strategies and Tools — 2004

Figure 2: Assessments and evaluations currently implemented at the MOE schools for all grades

Learning stages	Grade	External (MOE or outsourcing administered)		Internal (School administered)	
		International tests	National tests	Classroom-based tests	School-based tests
Lower Primary stage	KG2		School readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formative performance-based ongoing assessment</li> </ul>	
	G1			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formative performance-based ongoing assessment</li> <li>Diagnostic test (Coarse-Grain Screening Tool and Fine-Grain Screening Tool)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning difficulties test</li> </ul>
	G2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LQAS</li> <li>EGRA/EGMA</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diagnostic foundational proficiency-based assessment<sup>4</sup></li> <li>Learning difficulties test</li> </ul>
	G3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grade 3 national assessment test<sup>3</sup> (Standardized)</li> <li>LQAS</li> <li>EGRA/EGMA</li> </ul>		
Upper Primary stage	G4	PIRLS	National Learning Quality control test(Standardized)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summative assessments to identify learning progress (2 assessment periods, each with 20% of the total score)</li> <li>Formative ongoing assessment across the school semester, each with 20% of the total score</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning difficulties test</li> <li>End of the semester summative test for promotion with 40%</li> </ul>
	G5				End of the semester summative test for promotion with 40%
	G6				
	G7				
	G8	TIMSS	National Learning Quality control test(Standardized)		
	G9				
	G10	PISA	National Learning Quality control test(Standardized)		
Secondary stage	G11			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summative assessments to identify learning progress (2 assessment periods, each with 20% of the total score)</li> <li>Formative ongoing assessment across the school semester, each with 20% of the total score</li> </ul>	End of the semester summative test for promotion with 40%
	G12		Final secondary exam (standardized)		

<sup>3</sup> National learning Quality Control test for G3 measures the extent to which students have foundational skills in mathematics and Arabic language

<sup>4</sup> “Foundations of Success, Failure, and Completion” 2020-2021

Despite all these efforts, there is still many challenges and difficulties in the early grades assessment system that need to improve such as:

1. Lack of alignment between the national and international assessments.
2. Lack of coordination between assessments (national/international) has resulted in overlapping purposes and an inability to measure accurately the performance of students in the different learning stages (Grades 1 to 12)<sup>5</sup>
3. The need to develop an assessment system that is suitable for conducting formative and summative assessments that measures precisely the performance of all students and their development throughout their grades.
4. The need to set a framework—along with assessment policies—for the basic and secondary learning stages to ensure consistency among all assessments.
5. The need to enable the relevant bodies to monitor and measure precisely the development of the system and the performance of students throughout their learning stages.
6. Insufficiency of assessments, and its inability to measure comprehensively the students' performance, skills, and knowledge.<sup>6</sup>
7. Need to develop a comprehensive assessment policy that monitors the quality of learning and teaching at MOE's schools.

Solutions to these seven points are addressed in this document

Based on the aforementioned challenges, the MOE has dedicated a subcomponent within its strategy (2018 - 2022) related to developing and revising the national assessment system to establish a comprehensive one that assesses all students' skills, behaviors, capacities, and knowledge and aligns them with the international standards. The implementation plan for this component included the following activities:<sup>7</sup>

- Developing a national assessment strategy
- Identifying the assessment phases following the structure of the new educational ladder (Proposed: End of the lower Basic Learning stage, end of the upper Basic Learning stage, and end of the secondary Learning stage)
- Accrediting the students' performance indicators in all learning stages (early grades learning stage KG-3, Upper Basic Learning stage 4-10, and the secondary Learning stage 11-12).
- Preparing standardized tests aligned with international standards for grades 3 and 9, to be administered centrally and applied nationally.
- Implementing a national test to assess students' skills in Reading and Math at the end of the early grades learning stage (gr.3)

---

<sup>5</sup> Human Resources Development Strategy (HRDS) 2015-2025

<sup>6</sup> MOE's Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018-2022

<sup>7</sup> The MOE's Education Strategic Plan (2028-2022) p.62

- Institutionalizing the planning for the two international assessments, TIMSS and PISA, to improve the ranking of Jordan, and expand the scope of participation in other international students' assessment studies in line with the international standards.
- Develop standards and criteria for monitoring and accountability.
- Provide awareness programs for education leaders about the importance of the assessments and their main role in the educational reform processes.

## 2. Overview of the assessment system and tests for all grades (KG-G12)

Generally, all types of tests implemented by the Ministry of Education cover all types of assessment including formative, summative, diagnostic, and performance-based assessments...etc. And those assessments as a whole, respond to the different needs at all levels (school, field directorate, MOE's center-Testing Directorate, Childhood Directorate, or Special Education Directorate). Figure 2 gives an overview of all assessment types used at all levels and for all stages and can be used as a primary means to analyze the existing and proposed assessments for individuals and working groups to make decisions. The following is a brief description of assessment and evaluation types implemented by the MOE commencing with assessments designed and implemented by teachers at the classroom level to international assessments that are designed, implemented, and data is collected and analyzed by local or international bodies outside the Ministry of Education.

### 2.1 Early Childhood Assessment studies/School readiness

The National Center for Human Resources Development (NCHRD), in partnership with UNICEF and the Ministry of Education (Childhood Directorate), is conducting a study to measure the level of children's readiness (6 years old in grade 1) to learn using the Child Development Tool, which has been modified to reflect the Jordanian environment periodically and repeatedly (3 years). The Ministry utilizes the results of this study to modify its policies and programs related to early childhood. Curricula and educational programs are modified to suit male and female children in country and city schools to improve the level and quality of their performance in the following school years.

### 2.2 Internal assessments<sup>8</sup> (School administered)

School assessments are those assessments that are designed, implemented, and analyzed at the school or classroom level. In General, the purpose of those assessments is assessment for learning, assessment as learning, or assessment of learning. They are implemented based on "Foundations of Success, Failure,

---

<sup>8</sup> Instruction mentioned in the 2020/2021 Foundations of Success, Failure, and Completion document



and Completion” instructions issued by the Ministry to the educational field every year. They are continuous formative or summative assessments, implemented during the learning process (formative) and predefined assessments periods (monthly), and at the end of the school semester (summative). Assessments data is used to address any academic weaknesses of students on a rolling basis in cooperation with the school administration, parents, subject supervisors, and the school improvement team.

1. Lower primary stage assessments (KG- Gr.3)

- Each school, at the beginning of the school year, conducts for its Gr.1 to Gr.3 students, a test to reveal the extent to which students master the basic competencies of Arabic language and Math. In light of these test results, teachers, in cooperation with the school improvement team and the supervisor, prepare remedial plans to address students’ weaknesses and accelerate their learning.
- Student learning is assessed during the school semester by using various formative and performance-based assessment strategies. The student's result, at the end of the semester, consists of his total evaluation scores obtained (through teachers' observations) in the four assessment periods at 25% for each period, and each student has a portfolio.

2. Upper primary stage and secondary stage assessments (Gr.4- 12)

- Students’ performance is assessed by their teachers through summative tests (2 tests, 20% of the total score is allocated for each one), as well as the ongoing formative and performance-based assessment throughout the year, for which 20% of the total score is allocated.
- Learning is assessed through achievement tests, developed based on the official learning outcomes of the curriculum with 40% of the total score, at the end of the school semester.

2.2 External Assessments (MOE center administered) National tests

The OE aims to implement national tests to provide decision-makers with an authentic, reliable, and comparable measurement of students’ proficiency at the national level in skills and knowledge in (Arabic, Math, and science), including levels of achievement and chronological progress at the local (school and field district) and international levels. It also aims to provide information and recommendations to educational policy-makers, school principals, teachers, students, and parents, to enhance the effectiveness of learning. Below is a description of national tests and studies implemented by the Ministry:

1. National 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade assessment Test: It is a standardized curriculum-based test. Yearly implemented for all grade 3 students (Randomly selected 50% of students set for the Arabic test, and 50% of the set for the Math test. This test aims to measure the extent to which students have Reading and Math foundational skills to identify strengths and weaknesses in students' performance, develop appropriate remedial plans to address them, and reveal the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process before moving to grade 4. Based on the results of this test, important decisions are made at the center level (improve the quality of learning, review and update curriculum learning outcomes),

school and field district level (improve students learning performance, design and implement improvement and remedial plans, review and improve the teaching and learning practices)

2. **LQAS test:** This is implemented at the end of the first semester to a sample of grade 2 and 3 students from each school. It is a quick and low-cost tool designed to collect information about students' performance in grades 2 and 3 and results are used to inform School Report Cards and Districts Report Cards. School Report Cards and results are annually presented to and discussed with parents during the General Assembly of the PTC. The school is held accountable in light of its results in this test by parents, FDs, and the Ministry. In cooperation between the school and the FD, remedial plans are designed and implemented to improve students' performance.
3. **EGRA and EGMA:** This national sample-based survey measures reading and math proficiencies against national standards every two years. Data is collected and analyzed at the Ministry level, test results analysis is used to review curricula, teaching and learning materials, teaching strategies,...etc.
4. **National learning quality control test:** It's a national annual test prepared at the center level/DET to measure students' performance and learning outcomes achievements in the targeted grades (4, 8, and 10) in math, science, Arabic, (and English only for 8 and 10 graders). It is administered to all students (one grade per year). It is meant to collect information to help decision-makers in making evidence-based decisions. Detailed test results analysis reports are prepared at FD and school level to identify the strengths and weaknesses in students' learning, which would enable the Ministry to rebuild and develop curricula and organize training programs for teachers, in addition to preparing remedial programs at the school-unit level.

### 2.3 External Assessments (Externally administered) International tests

Jordan participates in those studies - externally managed - to measure students' learning outcomes at different stages and compare them with other countries according to international standards at the regional and international levels. The National Center for Human Resources Development (NCHRD) is the external agency in charge of cooperating with the Ministry of Education to implement all the international tests, which are:

1. **PIRLS:** The MoE implements this year 2021, for the first time a PIRLS international test to measure the progress of grade 4 students' literacy skills according to international performance indicators.
2. **TIMSS** test has been implemented in Jordan since 1999 for a sample of grade 8 students. The last study was conducted in 2019. TIMSS results are used to compare students' performance in science and Math with other countries according to international indicators, and the progress of students' performance in Jordan over the test implementation periods.
3. **PISA** test has been implemented in Jordan since 2000 for a sample of grade 10 students. The last study conducted in Jordan was in 2018, and its results are used to compare students' performance in literacy, Math, and science according to international standards with students in other participating countries and identify the development of students' performance in the three areas over the test implementation periods.

## 2.4 Learning difficulties Diagnostic tests for

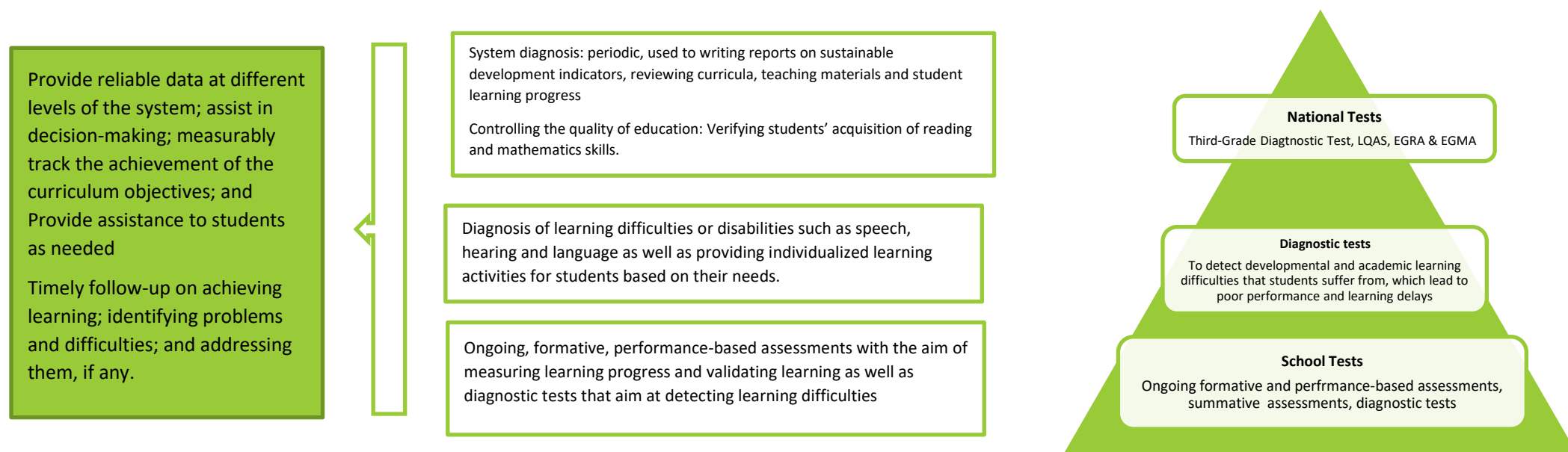
The Ministry of Education uses various diagnostic tests for grades (1 to 6) such as; the “Learning difficulties test” administered by the special education teacher and the Arabic and math teachers at the school level. The results are analyzed, and remedial programs are provided by specialists as needed at the school level to improve the teaching-learning process and respond to the individual students’ special needs by providing inclusive differentiated learning. In this framework, only the diagnostic tests that are implemented for early grades to detect developmental learning difficulties related to attention, memory, thinking, oral language difficulties, and academic difficulties related to academic achievement appear in one or more of the following academic skills: reading, writing, and Math will be addressed. Specialized remedial programs are provided to help students overcome their learning difficulties.

## 3. Early grades assessment framework

"Believing in the importance of evaluation and its policies, and its impact on improving learning and education systems at all levels is central to having an assessment framework that improves quality and ultimately outcomes. All components of the assessment system in the early grades, at various levels (classroom, school, district, and ministry) have been unified and coordinated in an integrated and coherent framework to generate complementarities, interdependence and avoid duplication and conflict of goals and purposes so that all of them work effectively to improve students’ learning and their learning performance results in this stage, reduce the burden on teachers and students in conducting unnecessary assessments, and ensure that assessment data is analyzed and used more efficiently. To achieve this goal, all the assessments results should mainly help understand the effectiveness of educational programs, measuring the students' learning outcomes in early grades. The Assessment Framework must meet the following criteria:

1. The purpose of each assessment should be stated clearly and specifically.
2. Ensure that each assessment is valid for its stated purpose
3. Avoid over-testing at the expense of teaching and learning time.
4. Define clear expectations for how assessment data will be used
5. Ensure that results of all assessments conducted at all levels of the system (DET, FDs, schools, teachers, etc.) and for all purposes (formative, summative, diagnostic, etc.) are used to inform decision-making.
6. Ensure that the national tests conform to the international standards and performance indicators.
7. All assessments have guidelines for design, administration, and implementation.

Figure 3. Early Grade Assessment System



After reviewing the MOE assessment system currently applied in early grades, it was found that it is a comprehensive system that covers various types of evaluation and gives the data needed by the system at various levels (classroom, school, and ministry) in order to review and improve performance, and control the quality of teaching and learning for students at this stage. . Figure No. (3) Shows this, as there is a diversity of assessments in response to different data needs in order to achieve the main objective, which are as follows:

- **Assessments at the school and classroom level:** continuous formative assessments based on performance designed and implemented by the teacher during learning with the aim of following up on students' learning development and discovering any difficulties that students face in their learning and addressing them directly. In addition to the summative assessments that aim to measure the achievement of learning for the purposes of promotion.
- **National tests:** administered nationally at the level of the centre, which aim in general to provide the system with reliable data on achieving its objectives and outcomes and help in making decisions based on evidence.
- **Diagnostic tests** aim to detect difficulties or obstacles to learning and remedy them as quickly as possible.

### 3.1 The current early grades assessment system

In light of the (aforementioned) criteria, that any assessment used by the Ministry must meet to assess and evaluate learning at various levels; to identify the achievement, goals, and outcomes of targeted learning; and to control the quality of education in early grades, a detailed description of all types of assessments currently implemented at this stage, is provided to ensure whether the current assessments meet the criteria and foundations set out above.

#### 3.1.1 External Assessment Studies—measuring the children’s readiness for learning

Assessment	Grade(s)	Purpose	Scope/sample	Frequency	Type of the assessment	Learning subjects /domains	Responsibility	Use of results	Results reporting
Children’s school readiness in Jordan	KG2	Measuring the children’s readiness for learning	A representative sample	Once every 3 years	Study	Physical health/ social competencies/social maturity/linguistic and cognitive development/communication skills and general knowledge	The National Center for Human Resources Development / UNICEF in cooperation with the Ministry of Education (Childhood Directorate)	Amending curricula and educational programs to make them suitable for children to improve the level and quality of their learning in the G1 and above	MOE

#### Observations and recommendations

##### Observations:

- The study is implemented by an external party without any interference from the MOE; however, the study’s findings are utilized by the MOE to reconsider the KG programs and curricula.

**Recommendations:**

- None.

**3.1.2 Internal assessments (School administered)**

Assessments are designed, managed and their results analysed by the teacher or under the supervision of the administration at the school and classroom level.

Assessment	Grade(s)	Purpose	Scope/sample	Frequency	Type of the assessment	Learning subjects/domains	Responsibility	Use of results	Results reporting
Foundational competencies test	G3	Measuring students' acquisition, and mastery of reading and math foundational competencies	All students	At the beginning of the school year	Pre- test Diagnostic/not standardized	Arabic and Math skills	The school: design and administration	Addressing learning weaknesses in cooperation with the school improvement team and the subject teacher, provided that it is approved by the supervisor	Classroom/School administration /parents/Field District
Diagnostic (Coarse-grain tool)	G1, G2,G3	Measuring students' acquisition of reading and math skills	All classroom students	At the beginning of the semester	Diagnostic	Performance-based assessment of reading and math skills	Standardized, administered by the teacher	Guiding the teacher towards students' mastery of reading and Math skills by reviewing and modifying lesson plans and teaching strategies and designing remedial activities	Classroom/School administration /parents
Diagnostic (Fine-grained tool)	G1, G2, G3	Identifying students' weaknesses in reading and math skills	The lowest 20% of students as per the coarse grain diagnostic	When needed	Diagnostic	Performance-based assessment of reading and math skills	Designed by RAMP, and administered by the teacher	Developing remedial plans and providing individualized learning activities	Classroom/School administration /parents
Assessment periods (monthly)	G1, G2, G3	Measuring learning progress	All students	Monthly	Ongoing formative/various	All subjects	The teacher	Reviewing and modifying lesson plans in light of the assessment results	Classroom/School

					us assessment strategies				administration /parents
End of the school semester-assessment	G1, G2, G3	Verification of learning	All students inside the classroom	Once	Summative	All subjects	Teacher\School	Students' achievement of the targeted learning outcomes for each subject	Parents/Student's file/FD/EMIS

### Observations and recommendations

#### Observations

- According to the "Success, Completion, and Failure guidelines" in the first three grades, students' learning performance in learning is assessed by using various evaluation strategies.
- Test results are reported to parents and documented in the student's portfolio and included in the Education Management Information System (EMIS), but are generally not subject to any analysis, and no actions are taken based on the results.
- The diagnostic tools (Coarse-grained) is included in the student's activity book that is distributed annually for all students, and there are test models and clear instructions for the teacher to apply them.
- The diagnostic tools (Fine-grained) are included in the teacher's guide, and there are clear instructions for the teacher to apply them.
- There is repetition and overlap between the Foundational competencies test, and the Coarse-grained tool for measuring grade 3 reading and Math skills, noting that the Foundational competencies test is approved and endorsed in the document of "Success, Completion and Failure guidelines"

#### Recommendations

- To provides teachers with designed templates of formative assessment that can be used during lessons and instruction.
- To avoid repetition and overlap between the Foundational competencies test, and the Coarse-grained tool for measuring grade 3 reading and Math skills, it is recommended to replace the foundational competencies test by the Coarse and Fine-grained as diagnostic tools for reading and math competencies as it is a standardized diagnostic tool, while the other diagnostic test is not standardized and developed by the teacher at the school level. To abandon the basic competency test for grade 3 due to the overlap between it and the "coarse and Fine-grained" diagnostic tools.
- To build the early grades teachers' capacities in various assessment strategies and tools, and analysis of tests results.
- To build the early grades teachers' capacities in designing remedial plans to improve student's performance based on assessment results and individualized learning strategies.

### 3.1.3 External assessments / National tests (designed, administered, and analyzed at the MOE's central level)

Assessment	Grade(s)	Purpose	Scope/sample	Frequency	Type of the assessment	Learning subjects /domains	Responsibility	Use of results	Results reporting
National assessment test	3	Measuring the students' performance level in Arabic language and math skills	All G3 students in public and military schools	Annually	Summative assessment	A written test in Arabic language and math in which, randomly, half of the G3 students take the Arabic language test and the other half takes the Math test  It is based on the national curricular learning outcomes	Department of Examination and Testing (DET)	Developing reform policies to improve teaching and learning in the early grades.  Results reported in the School Report Card which is sent to school administration and shared with PTC.  School and Teachers accountability	School, FD, and technical departments at the MOE
Quality control test (LQAS )	2 and 3	Controlling the quality of learning reading and math skills	Administered at the school level to 19 students—10 from G2 and 9 from G3 or vice versa	Annually (the 1 <sup>st</sup> semester)	Performance-based diagnostic assessment	Reading and math foundational skills	DET with support from RAMP	Reviewing learning plans, improving teaching and learning strategies, Informs District Improvement Plan FD accountability	School, parents (PTA), FD
The national survey	2 and 3	Measuring students' competencies in	It is applied in 20 schools from each governorate, and on	Once every two years	Performance-based	Reading and math foundational skills	DET with the support of RAMP	Reviewing school plans, improving	Governorate , FD, MOE



(EGRA and EGMA)		reading and math skills against international standards	19 students from each school—schools and students are randomly selected		diagnostic assessment			teaching and learning strategies	technical departments
-----------------	--	---	---	--	-----------------------	--	--	----------------------------------	-----------------------

## Observations and recommendations

### Observations

- Grade 3 national assessment test, which is implemented annually, aims to ensure that students have acquired the learning outcomes targeted in the curriculum (basic skills and knowledge) at the end of the early grades stage before they move to the intermediate stage.
- The LQAS assessment is implemented annually to a sample of G2 and G3 students in a sample of schools at the end of the first semester to control the quality of students' learning of reading and math skills. Results inform District Improvement Plans (DIP) and Field Directorates are accountable for results to the MOE.
- The EGRA/EGMA National Survey is administered to a sample of schools once every two years. The MOE—in collaboration with RAMP—builds the instruments, trains assessors, and administers the assessment. Expertise in collecting and analysing test results has been transferred to MOE's specialists.
- RAMP holds communities of practice with the field directorates (collectively) to share and discuss the results at the governorate level. In 2019, the results were also shared with the heads of the supervision divisions who then shared the results with the schools, which in turn responded positively.
- The MOE does not have guidelines or protocols that regulate the LQAS or the EGRA/EGMA assessments.

### Recommendations

- As the MOE is annually implementing a grade 3 national test, in addition to the national survey EGRA/EGMA every 2 years, and to avoid the overlap between 2 tests for the same purpose. It is recommended to apply only the Grade 3 National assessment test after reviewing it and incorporating listening and problem solving skills to the testing tools.
- To apply EGRA/EGMA only for grade 2 in order to get early indicators about students' performance in reading and math, and enable the ministry at the Center and field levels to build remedial plans to improve students learning performance before the end of the early grades learning stage
- Administering the LQAS assessment annually to sampled G2 and G3 students in a sample (19 schools) of schools from each FDs.to activate an accountability process based on the FD's results.

- Discussing and analysing the test results with the relevant MOE departments, such as the Department of Curricula and Textbook and the Department of Supervision and Educational Training, so that the results are considered whenever programs are designed.
- Sharing the schools' LQAS assessment results with Education councils and holding the districts accountable for their results during their regular meetings.
- Perusing and analysing the test results by the field directorates to help teachers design follow-up remedial plans.
- Incorporating the different assessment results into the indicators of school and district development plans and to be later monitored by the MOE's Accountability Unit.
- Institutionalizing the national survey (EGRA and EGMA) for G2 and the LQAS assessment for G2 and G3 by preparing guidelines that regulate the test along with detailed administration instructions.
- Building the capacity of an MOE team of educational supervisors on the assessments methods used in this test.

### 3.1.4 Learning Difficulties Diagnostic tests

Assessment	Grade(s)	Purpose	Scope/sample	Frequency	Type of the assessment	Learning subjects /domains	Responsibility	Use of results	Results reporting
Learning Difficulties Diagnostic tests	G2 and G3	Identifying learning difficulties	Students with Learning difficulties	At the beginning of the school year	Diagnostic	Arabic language and Math	The school's referral committee, which comprises the school principal, the special education teacher, the educational counselor, and the Math and Arabic language teachers	Providing each student with need-based remedial programs by a special education teacher— this service is provided to students in the resource room.	Classroom, school administration, and parents

## Observations and recommendations

### Observations

- The initial diagnosis is made by the special education teacher at the school via an unstandardized test designed by the special education teacher in collaboration with the Arabic and Math teachers. The result of the test determines whether the student has learning difficulties or academic delay due to other reasons.
- If it appears that the student has learning difficulties, their parents are informed. The student then takes a standardized test (based on the Stanford–Binet Intelligence Scales) developed by specialists at Special Education Directorate in the MOE.
- The result of the standardized test helps the relevant individuals at school identify the exact problem. The students are then referred to centers affiliated with the Ministry of Health for an examination upon which the students are transferred to the learning resource room at the school where they are subjected to part time remedial programs designed according to their special needs. The programs, which last for two year, are developed by the school special education teacher.
- In some schools, the number of students referred to the learning resource room is too large, which hinders the effective implementation of remedial programs.
- The learning resource rooms are ill-equipped.

### Recommendations:

- Building the capacity of special education teachers in administering standardized tests.
- Building the capacity of special education teachers in designing remedial activities for students with learning difficulties.
- Providing the learning resource rooms with adequate equipment to implement remedial programs for students with learning difficulties.

Figure 4

The annual calendar of the aforementioned assessments—several which overlap, which creates a burden on the different stakeholders, including students, parents, and the MOE.

Semester 1						Semester 2				Year 1		Year 2
Grades	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	June	
KG2	Ongoing classroom-level performance-based assessment					Mid-school year break	Ongoing classroom-level performance-based assessment					
G1		First assessment	Second assessment	Third assessment	End-of-first-semester assessment			First assessment	Second assessment	Third assessment	End-of-second-semester assessment	End-of-second-semester assessment
							The coarse-grained reading and math diagnostic tool (administered to all students) at the beginning of the semester, and when needed  The fine-grained reading and math diagnostic tool (administered 20% of class—the lowest performers)					
G2		First assessment	Second assessment	Third assessment	End-of-first-semester assessment			First assessment	Second assessment	Third assessment	End-of-second-semester assessment	End-of-second-semester assessment
				LQAS								EGRA/EGMA
	The coarse-grained reading and Math diagnostic tool (administered to all students) at the beginning of the semester, and when needed  The fine-grained reading and Math diagnostic tool (administered 20% of class—the lowest performers)											

G3	Math and Arabic Language Basic Competencies Test	First assessment	Second assessment	Third assessment	End-of-first-semester assessment			First assessment	Second assessment	Third assessment	End-of-second-semester assessment	End-of-second-semester assessment
	The coarse-grained reading and Math diagnostic tool (administered to all students) at the beginning of the semester, and when needed  The fine-grained reading and Math diagnostic tool (administered 20% of the class—the lowest performers)										Grade 3 National assessment test	Grade 3 National assessment test
												EGRA/EGMA

#### 4. Major challenges identified through the review of the current assessment system with recommendations for improvement

Based on the review findings of the current assessment system, it appears that there is a need to establish a clear assessment policy for the early grades stage, which ensures that all assessments are consistent and help both teachers and the MOE track and measure accurately the development of the system and the performance of students. According to aforementioned description of the current assessment system and challenges, below are suggested recommendations for improvement:

#	Domain	Challenge	Recommendation
1	Performance indicators and benchmarks	There are no clear learning performance indicators or benchmarks for teachers to help them assess and measure learning against expectations while designing the tests, and to determine whether the learning has occurred.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop performance indicators and benchmarks for student learning in early grades aligned with the international standards. The Math and Reading Global Proficiency Framework, which was recently developed by UNESCO and other organizations, can be used for this purpose.<sup>9</sup></li> <li>- Implement awareness programs for teachers and parents about the learning outcomes and expectations for students in each grade.</li> </ul>

<sup>9</sup> Global Proficiency Framework

2	Avoid over-evaluations	There is repetition and overlap between the “Foundational competencies test” and the “Coarse-and fine grained test” since they are both diagnostic tests designed to measure grade 3 students reading and Math skills at the beginning of the school year.	To avoid over-testing and repetition between these two tests that are designed for the same purpose. It is recommended to stop implementing the "Foundational competencies test" because it is not a standardized test (Designed and implemented at the school level), and to keep the “Coarse and Fine-grained” diagnostic tools since it is designed by specialists, and combined with the students textbooks and the teacher’ guide.
		<p>Grade 3 students are setting every two years for 2 national tests:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Grade 3 national assessment test-</b> designed to ensure that students have acquired the learning outcomes targeted in the curriculum (basic skills and knowledge) at the end of the early grades stage, and before they move to the intermediate learning stage</li> <li>2. <b>The EGRA/EGMA national survey</b> which designed to measure students' competencies in reading and math skills against international standards</li> </ol>	<p>To avoid over testing, it is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement only the “Grade 3 National assessment test” after reviewing it to make it aligned with the international standards.</li> <li>2. Keep the EGRA/EGMA national survey only for grade 2 in order to get early indicators about students’ performance in reading and math, and enable the ministry at the Center and field levels to build remedial plans to improve students learning performance before the end of the early grades learning stage.</li> </ol> <p><i>Endorse the suggested assessment annual calendar for the early grades shown below in figure 4</i></p>
3	Capacity building Teachers	There are weaknesses among teachers in their capability to use the formative assessment strategies to measure learning progress despite having clear	- Introduce teachers, especially new ones, to the formative and summative assessment strategies tools, and mechanisms, and train them to use and activate them in the classroom (when and how).

		guidelines provided by the MOE to help teachers prepare monthly formative assessments <sup>10</sup> and summative tests <sup>11</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduce teachers to the summative assessment and to use it at the classroom level (when and how)</li> <li>- Design classroom-based assessments guidelines for teachers with templates to make it as easy as possible for teachers to follow.</li> <li>- Include in the teacher materials the lesson-based, unit- or chapter-based assessments they can easily use to check student progress</li> </ul>
4	Capacity building Supervisors	Teachers should be provided with formative and summative assessment templates and tools to be incorporated in the textbooks and teacher guides after every unit/lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build the capacities of supervisors and curricula and textbooks writers and specialists to design performance-based assessment tools to measure the students' competencies and knowledge learning outcomes.</li> <li>- Build the capacity of supervisors to develop summative tests and writing test items.</li> </ul>
5	Use and dissemination of tests' results	There is no explicitly stated format or clear guidance for teachers on how the formative assessment data should be used to improve student's learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build the capacity of teachers to analyze test data, how to use it to identify learning progress, and design remedial plans for any decline in performance that appears during the analysis of the results.</li> </ul>
		There are no official instructions clarifying procedures for sharing and using test results to come up with recommendations and action plans of the related departments at the center and district levels to address weaknesses in students' performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build the capacity of supervisors on how to analyze the assessments data at the FD and school levels.</li> <li>- Build the capacity of supervisors on designing remedial plans based on the results of assessments data analysis to improve students' performance.</li> <li>- School Assessment results should be shared only with parents and school administration as the purpose of these assessments is to monitor learning progress, review lesson plans, and design remedial and individualized learning activities.</li> <li>- The MOE is to be responsible for collecting and analyzing the results of the national assessments data and sharing the results with FDs and schools to inform</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> "Theoretical Framework of Assessment Strategies and Tools" — P1, P2

<sup>11</sup> "The Teacher's Guide to Design Summative Assessments"

			<p>them about their performance levels and help them develop remedial plans as needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a methodology to ensure that curriculum specialists and supervisors use the analysis of assessment results when reviewing their programs and plans.</li> </ul>
6	Accountability	There is a weak follow-up and accountability by the FD or the school to the results of the assessments to make decisions for improvement, design remedial plans, and hold them accountable regarding the results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop follow-up regulations and accountability measures for the school in light of its results by parents and the local community.</li> <li>- Include the results of national assessments in the performance indicators of the school and field directorate improvement plans to be monitored by the Education Quality and Accountability Unit.</li> <li>- The LQAS test results report is issued at the FD level. Results comparison is made at the national level. Measures are taken to hold the FD accountable in light of its results in this test.</li> </ul>
7	Institutionalization and sustainability of national tests	There are no regulations or guidelines for international and national assessments to ensure their sustainability and allocation of the necessary financial resources for implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop and approve regulations and procedural guidelines for early grades national assessments to ensure their sustainability and allocation of financial resources for implementation.</li> <li>- The FD is responsible to conduct the (LQAS) assessment under the MOE direct supervision (Testing Department).</li> <li>- Build the capacities of a core team of supervisors on the assessment strategies used in the national tests such as (EGRA &amp; EGMA national assessment and Quality Control tests)</li> </ul>



Figure 5: The proposed annual calendar of early grade assessments

First Semester						Second Semester				Year 1	Year 2
Grade	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jun.
KG2	Performance-based constant formative assessment at the school level					Performance-based constant formative assessment at the school level					
G1		First assessment	Second assessment	Third assessment	End-of-semester assessment		First assessment	Second assessment	Third assessment	End-of-year-1 assessment	End-of-year-2 assessment
						Coarse-grained tool administered to all students/Fine-grained tool administered to 20% of students– the lowest performers					
G2		First assessment	Second assessment	Third assessment	End-of-semester assessment		First assessment	Second assessment	Third assessment	End-of-year-1 assessment	End of year 2
	The coarse-grained reading and math diagnostic tool (administered to all students) at the beginning of the semester, and when needed  The fine-grained reading and math diagnostic tool (administered 20% of the class—the lowest performers)										EGRA/EGMA National Survey
G3	Math and Arabic Language Basic Competencies Test	First assessment	Second assessment	Third assessment	End of semester		First assessment	Second assessment	Third assessment	End-of-year-1 assessment  National assessment test	End-of-year-2 assessment  National assessment test

	<p>The coarse-grained reading and math diagnostic tool (administered to all students) at the beginning of the semester, and when needed</p> <p>The fine-grained reading and math diagnostic tool (administered 20% of the class—the lowest performers)</p>							<p>EGRA/EGMA National Survey</p>
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--------------------------------------

