Philosophy of Assessment for the IB Primary Years (PYP) at EXCEL Academy Public Charter School -in Prince George's County Public Schools

At EXCEL Academy Public Charter School, we believe in consistent and fair assessment in order to meet the needs of our students. Through differentiated and developmentally appropriate assessments, EXCEL Staff and students are able to monitor student growth through a reliable lens. Our assessment philosophy consists of the elements detailed below.

In Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), we believe that assessments are an essential component of the teaching and learning process. Assessments are a tool that provides accurate and timely feedback to educators, students, and parents regarding a student's academic growth, needs, and readiness. In addition, assessments, either formative or summative, provide students and teachers with opportunities to determine to what extent have students' mastered content knowledge and skills in the prescribed curriculum documents, reflect on their progress, and self-evaluate strengths and areas of improvement for each subject area.

Purpose of Assessments

Our IB programs use assessments to:
- Collect data that informs, enhances and improves the teaching process;
- Communicate student strengths and areas for improvement to all stakeholders including parents and school staff;
- Monitor student progress;
- Enable students to take ownership of their own learning;
- Support and encourage student learning by providing feedback on the learning process;
- Provide opportunity for students to exhibit transfer of skills across disciplines, such as in the PYP Exhibition
- Establish a culture of high expectations and learning; and
- Promote the development of critical- and creative-thinking skills.

Characteristics of an Effective Assessment

Although assessments differ by content and grade level, effective assessments should:
- Engage students as critical thinkers;
- Provide evidence of student mastery of content and skill;
- Apply real world context and application to promote student engagement;
- Be utilized as a learning tool;
- Measure student success against a rubric or specific criteria;
- Provide varied methods of measurement to meet all student needs;

- Focus on the individual student's progress;
- Measure what has been taught by the teacher;
- Be fair and specific with clear directions and language;
- Reflect the international-mindedness of the programme by allowing assessments to be set in a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts; and
- Align with PGCPS and IB curriculum (a requirement).

Types of Assessment

Pre-assessment

Pre-assessments are any type of information teachers gather from students prior to beginning a unit. Its purpose is to inform the teacher's instruction and planning. Pre-assessment strategies could include but are not limited to a pre-test, survey, review of prior assessment scores or grades.

Formative Assessment

This form of assessment is connected to instruction and learning in order to provide continuous feedback related to the learning process. Examples of formative assessments include but are not limited to:

- Classroom observation
- Peer to peer communication
- Peer review
- Student and teacher created content specific rubrics
- Graphic organizers
- Teacher generated activities
- Group discussions
- Portfolios
- Journals
- Quizzes
- Constructed responses
- Investigations

Summative Assessment

This form of assessment enables students to show what they have learned at the culmination of the learning process and unit. It also provides the teacher with concrete data to determine the effectiveness of their instructional practices. Examples of summative assessments include but are not limited to:

- Unit Tests
- Projects
- Exhibition
- Essays
- Portfolios
- PGCPS Quarterly Assessments

IB Culminating Assessments

The following IB culminating assessments use the IB rubrics and criteria set by the IBO:

- PYP Exhibition (Grade 4);

Formal Assessments

As a public school system in the state of Maryland, PGCPS is obligated to adhere to the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) which provides information to educators, parents and the public on student progress towards proficiency on the Maryland state content standards. The table provided outlines the list of Maryland state assessments per course and grade level.

Mathematics	English Language Arts/Literacy	Science	Social Studies
Mathematics (Grades 3–8)	ELA/L (Grades 3–8, and Grade 10)	MISA 5* *Maryland Integrated Science Assessment*	
Early Childhood	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) is an observational and assessment tool administered to all kindergarten students within the first few weeks of the school year. The KRA measures skills, knowledge and behaviors kindergarteners should be able to demonstrate at the start of the year.		
ACCESS for ELLs	Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) for English Language Learners (ELLs) is a secure, large-scale English language proficiency assessment given to kindergarten through 12th graders who have been identified as English language learners (ELLs). It is given annually in WIDA Consortium member states to monitor students' progress in acquiring academic English.		

Standardization of Scoring Assessments

For each IB programme, teachers will utilize collaborative planning time and other data analysis time allocated by the instructional leadership teams to conduct internal standardization of

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assessments to determine student achievement levels. Standardization meetings can be conducted by subject group teams and grade level teams as it applies to the program and subject. Teams will be expected to evaluate evidence of student assessments and learning experiences, reflecting on the unit in order to ensure they are assessing to the same standard. It is expected that standardization of assessment meetings occurs at least once a semester.

Assessment Expectations

Assessments can impact stakeholders in a variety of ways. Therefore, each group of stakeholders have the following expectations.

Expectations of IB Programme Teachers:

- Design assessments that allow for assessing teaching and learning.
- Assign various types of assessments in order to address all students' needs.
- Formative Assessments should be given with timely feedback provided to the students prior to the summative assessment.
- Design guided and open-ended learning experiences that allow for a range of opportunities to demonstrate skills in different contexts.
- Provide students with the opportunity for reflection and self-evaluation.
- Provide clear due dates for assessments and, for larger bodies of work, checkpoints along the way.
- Provide students with clear, specific guidelines for the assessment.
- School District and State of Maryland generated assessments should not be used by the teacher as a part of the course grade.
- Provide students with assessments that model the format and content of the formal and IB assessments.
- Allow student choice when appropriate as it aligns with the assessment criteria.
- All new teachers to IB will be advised by the IB Coordinator on the IB Assessment Policy and Academic Honesty Policy guidelines along with IB Assessment Criteria.

Expectations of IB Programme Students:

- Be accountable for their learning and produce quality products and performances to the best of their ability;
- Always turn in original work and upholding to the standards and practices outlined in the Academic Honesty Policy;
- Ask questions when they do not understand an assessment task, the course content, or how to complete a task;
- Take ownership of their own learning; and
- Meet specific deadlines outlined in the assessment criteria.

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Expectations of IB Programme Parents:

- Review all assessment criteria for each course;
- Ensure students are submitting original work;
- Monitor student progress via the online portals and platforms;
- Communicate any student needs or concerns to the school staff; and
- Participate in the child's learning and progress.

Grading, Practices, and Marking of IB Assessments

Primary Years Programme (PYP)
PGCPS schools with the PYP will use rubrics designed to demonstrate the obtainment of the objective and standards of any specified assignment as well as the county approved grading system for elementary (please see the county's grading system below):

The grades eligible for use on assignments, assessments, and report cards are A, B, C, D, E,~~+~~, ~~P, F~~, PR, IP, EM, N, ND with no plus or minus signs. Reading level grades are AGL, OGL, and BGL.

Interpretation of grades is as follows:

1. Kindergarten and Grade 1
PR = Proficient – a child can demonstrate indicator independently 90 – 100%
IP = In Process – a child can reliably demonstrate indicator 80 – 89%
EM = Emerging – child demonstrates indicator with assistance 70 – 79%
ND = Needs Development - a child does not demonstrate indicator 50 – 69%

2. Grades 2 – 4
A = Excellent progress at the level of instruction indicated 90 – 100%
B = Above Average progress at the level of instruction indicated 80 – 89%
C = Average progress at the level of instruction indicated 70 – 79%
D = Below Average progress at the level of instruction indicated 60 – 69%
E = Unsatisfactory progress (failure) at the level of instruction indicated below 60%

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Resources

This document was developed using the following resources and sites:

"Assessments." *Maryland State Department of Education*,
www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DAAIT/Assessment/index.aspx.

Patrick Henry High School IB Assessment Policy. 2016. PDF file. Retrieved October 2020.
https://henry.mpls.k12.mn.us/uploads/phhs_ib_assessment_policy_may_2016.pdf

Prince George's County Public Schools. "Administrative Procedure – 5121.3."
https://www.pgcps.org/

Wiggins, G and McTighe, J. 2005. Understanding by design (Second edition). Alexandria, VA,
USA. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

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