

McAuliffe Manual: Academic Supports and Policies

Academic Honesty

Because we are an International Baccalaureate candidate school, we encourage students to be principled, caring, reflective, and balanced. In the context of academics, this means that students must do and present their work honestly. In other words, they may not cheat.

There are numerous definitions of cheating, but they all come down to one basic concept: You cheat when students are not honest in their conduct or work. Examples include any of the following conduct:

- Claim credit for work that is not your own,
- Use unauthorized aids when taking tests or completing assignments
- Submit the same work for more than one assignment,
- Make up sources or information, or
- Assist other students in cheating.

Teachers and administrators deal with cheating on a case by case basis. That said, the following are possible consequences if students violate our academic honesty policy:

- Students will be assigned an afterschool detention where students can redo the assignment or take other actions to rectify the situation.
- Parents/guardians will be notified of the incident.
- The offense will be entered into Infinite Campus as a Type One Intervention.
- If students repeatedly cheat or in particularly egregious circumstances students will be suspended.

Assessment and Grading Policy

**adpoted from MIS, updated 6.17.16*

Philosophical Underpinnings

Assessment is the process by which learners show what they know. A school must consider the development that occurs in early adolescence in order to define the way it uses assessment. Therefore, McAuliffe International School emphasizes the MYP Approaches to Learning skills that promote collaboration, self-assessment, choice, and general awareness of ability and engagement. The “growth mindset” resulting from this emphasis pairs well with the philosophy that true assessment allows learners multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of a standard. Instead of thinking they have failed, students should hear the message that they haven’t succeeded *yet* but have an opportunity to try again and improve their performance using peer and teacher feedback.

Though students do differ in natural intellect and motivation, effort and achievement have a correlative relationship. Students must own their learning in order to produce work that can be assessed accurately. Furthermore, we believe

students should demonstrate their learning for authentic audiences. Taking action as a result of their inquiry, students should be able to publicly display and celebrate the results of their efforts.

Formative assessment is a crucial part of McAuliffe's assessment philosophy. When the feedback on such assessments is timely and specific, formative assessments inform future teaching and learning experiences and should always be oriented toward the summative task. Whereas formative assessment is the practice, summative assessment is the game. Summative assessment should require students to transfer learned knowledge, skills and concepts to new situations. Success on summative assessments is the expectation for all learners.

Common Practices for Internal Assessment

Because the Middle Years Programme requires valid, reliable, and relevant assessments, teachers make data-driven choices and use their expertise as educators to design their own assessments. Through the MYP unit planning process (facilitated by an online tool named ManageBac), teachers create end-of-unit summative assessment tasks. These tasks

- give students the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the objectives learned in the unit.
- explore the unit's statement of inquiry.
- align with the command terms found in the MYP objectives, as well as in other pertinent content standards.
- vary in form so that the year captures a balance of assessment methods.
- are planned so that each objective strand is addressed twice throughout the course of the year.
- provide the opportunity for metacognition whenever possible.

In each subject area at each level, a clear, student-friendly rubric or grading scale accompanies the assessment task. Each objective that the assessment measures is assessed against the appropriate criteria. Before grading these assessments, teachers convene during collaborative planning time (or during a full day of collaboration) to standardize their scoring and define what each level "looks like" in order to generate valid and reliable data on student performance.

Teachers use the data from formative assessments, summative assessments, and benchmark tests (see below) in weekly data team meetings. Teachers identify strengths and areas for improvement, plus instructional strategies that will close the gaps in learning identified through the process. The goal is that each student receives the differentiated approach he or she needs in order to reach the highest level of achievement according to the assessment criteria.

Reporting on Academic Progress

Reporting should represent a full view what a student knows and can do. Performance on varied assessment tasks over time allow teachers to make a "best-fit" judgment against the criteria to report on a student's mastery. In addition to the

quantitative number that fits the MYP (0-8) scale, a report should provide qualitative feedback that elaborates on what a student knows and can do. It is important for all stakeholders - teachers, students, parents, and administrator - to have access to the reporting tool.

McAuliffe uses a standards-based recording and reporting system and will help Year 3 (8th grade) students transition to a traditional (A-F) reporting system by showing them the likely conversion. (For example, if a student demonstrates work at the 6th level of achievement according to MYP criteria, she probably would have earned a B+ on that assignment in a high school.) McAuliffe uses the district recording and reporting tool, Infinite Campus and gradebooks should show 0-8 scores for all assignments. Below is a description for each MYP score.

Description	MYP Score	District Score
Exceptional	8	4
Distinguished	7	
Strong	6	3
Competent	5	
Approaching	4	2
Partial	3	
Limited	2	1
Minimal	1	
The student does not meet any of the requirements in the standard	0	Incomplete

Additional helpful information:

- If your student is demonstrating “Competent Command” or “Strong Command,” on assessments, then he or she is meeting the grade-level standards covered throughout the unit.
- If your student is demonstrating “Approaching Command,” this means they are very close to where they need to be. Your student will probably be able to reach a “Competent Command” level without much extra support outside of class. Perhaps a bit more practice outside of class, as well as a bit more

effort, participation, and question-asking during class, will enable them to reach the competent command or strong command level.

- If your student is demonstrating below an “Approaching Command,” that is, below a “4,” then he or she may need extra support outside of school. If you have questions about how to support your student at home, please email the teacher for suggestions.
- To reach an “Exceptional” or “Distinguished” command level, your student must meet expectations that are above grade-level. These command levels are truly exceptional, and should be celebrated as such. If your student does not bring home an “Exceptional” or “Distinguished” command level on an assessment, this is not something that should cause worry. It just means your child has not demonstrated thinking and understanding that is truly above the high standards that are set for each assignment.
- Each student has a section in their binders with returned work that you can check with more detailed feedback on your students’ work.

Parent/Guardian Access

Parents and guardians have access to Parent Portal which allows them to see assignments teachers have entered into Infinite Campus. Throughout the school year, McAuliffe teachers will report, at a minimum, every summative assessment, as well as formative assessments that have been an integral part of the summative assessment. When appropriate, teachers will post tasks that relate to student effort/Approaches to Learning. After the end of each trimester, parents and guardians receive an Infinite Campus-generated report card which will include marks for academic standards, and at least 1 comment. Finally, at the end of every school year, teachers report cumulative marks for academic standards and a single end-of-year proficiency rating for academic achievement in their subject.

External Assessment

In addition to the MYP objectives for each subject area, McAuliffe holds students to other local, state, and national standards.

- Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Mathematics and Language and literature
- Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) for Individuals and societies, Language acquisition, Arts, and Physical and Health Education
- Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) for Sciences
- Standards for Technological Literacy for Design

Starting in this 2014-2015 school year, The Colorado Measurement of Academic Success (CMAS) will annually assess literacy and math skills. The state has joined the Program of Assessment for Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) to create examinations that combine evidence-based selected response questions, technology-enhanced questions, and prose constructed response performance-

based tasks. The CMAS will assess social studies skills in 7th grade and science skills in 8th grade.

On a district level, interim exams assess students three times a year against the curriculum that has been taught in Language and literature. McAuliffe has received waivers for the math, individuals and societies and science district interims because our teacher-developed curricula does not align with the district's prescribed scope and sequence. A rigorous math interim has been developed to align with our curriculum, and it will be administered four times over the course of the year in order to measure growth. Science and individuals and societies assessments have been developed to measure mastery of the unit's content and skills.

Policy Maintenance

- The assessment policy steering committee, or substitute representatives, will review the language policy at the beginning of each academic year. Significant changes in philosophy, practice, or external requirements will require that the committee revise the policy.
- The MYP coordinator will communicate changes to the Building Leadership Team.
- The most recent assessment policy will always be available to the school community on McAuliffe's public website.

Progress Reports

Progress reports will be sent home three times a year using a standards-based grading format in Infinite Campus; however, a student data is available in real time and can be accessed via the Parent Portal.

Effort and IB Attributes Grades

Each progress report will include feedback on student's participation and effort made in class. Effort grades include the IB MYP programme focus on developing skills across the curriculum that helps students "learn how to learn." For more information on these skills visit <http://ibo.org> and search for Approaches to Learning (ATL). Effort grades are given on the following scale:

- 1 –Student sometimes refuses to participate, isn't prepared for class, doesn't ask for help, and/or disrupts their own or others' learning.
- 2—Student is willing to participate (especially when encouraged), is developing their ATL skills, demonstrates **inconsistent** engagement and preparedness for class, sometimes asks for help, and/or can sometimes be distracted.
- 3— Student **sometimes** is ready to and actively participates in class, meets expectations, asks for help when needed, attentive, utilizes some ATL skills, and supports others in their learning.

- 4—Student **demonstrates** consistency in being ready to and actively participating in class, goes above and beyond expectations, asks for help when needed, attentive, utilizes a wide variety of ATL skills, and supports others in their learning.

Additionally, students receive feedback and grades on their ability to demonstrate the IB learner attributes using the following scale:

- 1—Very rarely displays attribute
- 2— Sometimes or inconsistently displays attribute
- 3— Often and regularly displays attribute
- 4—Almost always and consistently displays attribute

Honors and Awards

- At the end of each trimester, academic and IB Learner Attribute honors are awarded to students at the sole discretion of the faculty and staff. The following academic honors and awards may be awarded to students:
- **High Honors:** Awarded to students who receive an “7 or 8” in each class and a grade of “3” or higher in all IB Learner Attributes.
- **Honors:** Awarded to students who receive an “5 or 6” in each class and a grade of “3” or higher in all IB Learner Attributes.
- **Effort Award:** Given to students with the best overall academic effort during the trimester.
- **Improvement Award:** Given to students who have improved the most over the previous trimester.
- **Trimester IB Learner Attributes Honors:** Awarded to students who earn a grade of “3” or “4” in all their IB Learner Attributes.
- **Year-End IB Learner Attribute Award:** These awards are given to students who have best lived and represented the IB Learner Attributes over the past year, based on the student vote.
- **Attendance Award:** Given to students with perfect attendance at the end of the first and second trimester. At the end of the third trimester, students receive a cumulative award for attendance. The cut-off date for the award will be communicated to families.
- **Faculty Community Leadership Award:** Given to the one student who best lives the IB Learner Attributes on a daily basis and who exhibits service and values through extraordinary community leadership.

Advisory Program

The Advisory program is an essential component of creating a powerful learning community fulfilling our principle of high expectations. Each student will be known,

cared for and held accountable for his/her community participation and service, academic effort and achievement through the advisory program.

Every day (excluding Morning Meeting days) students will participate in a 30-minute advisory class where they will have breakfast in the classroom. During advisory students learn organization methods, study skills, test-taking strategies, Cornell note-taking, and methods of inquiry. Advisory time will also be used for character education and reflection. The purpose of these activities is to help students make a successful transition from elementary school to middle school academically, socially and emotionally. Twice a month teachers will conference with individual students to set and monitor personal and academic goals.

Advisors are parent and guardians first and primary contact with the school. Advisors will be expected to be in contact with their advisees' parents or guardians regularly to apprise them of their students' behavioral and academic progress (includes back-to-school night and parent-teacher conferences).