McAuliffe Manual Middle School

Assessment Policy

Steering Committee: Stephanie Gronholz, MYP coordinator; Rachel Shea, Data and Assessment Coordinator; Sarah Frederick, Individuals and societies teacher; Tasheka Norman, Language and literature teacher; Ally Hyatt, Sciences teacher; Cindy Young, parent and office manager; Valerie Almovodar Cortez, parent and office manager.

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Philosophy
At McAuliffe Manual Middle School (MMMS), we believe assessment is ongoing. Teachers are continuously assessing what our students know, what skills they can do, and what concepts they understand, but we pause at intentional intervals in the learning process to deliver formative and summative assessments. While summative tasks occur at the end of the unit as a culmination of learning, formative tasks occur in the throughout the unit in order to provide students with the feedback they need for success on the summative task. Formative tasks exist along a continuum, from active monitoring for the purpose of immediate feedback, to exit tickets that help a teacher adjust instruction for future classes, to formal formative tasks that are developed to mimic part of the summative task and receive more individualized feedback from the teacher informed by the summative task’s rubric.

One important aspect of our model is that each unit culminates in a high-quality summative task that presents a worthy intellectual task grounded in local and Middle Years Programme (MYP) objectives. Authentic tasks should be meaningful to our students -- relevant to the world around them, offering a true opportunity to demonstrate critical thinking skills. To that end, authentic tasks that provide simulated or real-world application of learning are privileged over traditional multiple-choice exams. The requirements of these tasks and their criteria for success should be known in advance by the students. Student self-reflection is essential for internalizing such expectations.

Another important aspect is that students should have multiple attempts to show mastery. Depending on the situation, the student may attempt a different task entirely that demonstrates similar objectives. A third aspect is that throughout the year, while it is important that ideas and the assessment of those ideas are revisited, there should also be multiple types of demonstrations of learning, which creates global citizens who demonstrate flexibility in their communication choices. All of these values not only align with the MYP assessment philosophy, but also help to promote a growth mindset.

Common Practices in Using the Criteria
The following practices are expected to be in place throughout the school:

- Each strand is formally assessed twice per year through summative tasks; a summative task may focus on one objective or, in some cases, up to all four.
- A uniform approach to presenting rubrics ensures that teachers, students and parent/guardians are aware of the end-of-year MYP objective, strand, and criteria. It is important that the teachers
understand the command terms in each level’s descriptor so that they can make the rubrics specific to the task students are completing. Consulting third-party rubrics to make task-specific clarifications is allowed and sometimes encouraged if it strengthens the connection between local and MYP objectives.

- Summative tasks must be developed to allow for achievement of a 7-8.
- Teachers must collaborate to develop a shared understanding of each level across subject areas. To that end, we have adapted the McAuliffe International School proficiency scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Description</th>
<th>MYP Score</th>
<th>Comparable District Standards-Based Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distinguished</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approaching</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student does not meet any of the requirements in the standard</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following information may help parents/guardians understand our use of the criteria:

- The numbers we use are not meant to be part of a traditional grade calculation. A 4 is not a 4/8, or 50%. Rather, the 4 represents a description that comes from an MYP rubric.
- If your student is demonstrating work in the 5-6 level, then they are meeting most of the grade-level expectations as they are taught throughout the unit and supported by the teacher. As MYP objectives are written as end-of-year outcomes, demonstrating work at this level earlier in the year is expected.
- To reach the 7-8 level, your student must independently demonstrate the end-of-year objectives in unfamiliar or challenging situations, which often requires a transfer of knowledge or understanding beyond what was explicitly taught in class.
- If your student is demonstrating work at a level 4, this means they are still demonstrating the objective to some extent. 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 good command level.
- If your student is demonstrating below a level 4, then they 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.
Common Practices in Reporting and Recording

MMMS works within the existing parameters of using a district-provided gradebook called Infinite Campus (IC). In setting up the gradebook at the beginning of the year, teachers go through a process of creating categories that align MYP objectives and local standards. There are at least five categories in each gradebook: Objective A, Objective B, Objective C, Objective D, Formative Assessment, and (optionally) Classwork. Classwork is entered as a grade under the local standard of “effort.” Grades in the Criteria categories must come from formal formatives and summative tasks only, and all graded work must be assessed with the MYP criteria. The grading scale for every class is pre-loaded with a 0-8 rubric.

Teacher are expected to have a minimum of two formal formative tasks for each summative task. (It is best practice to note in IC if a formative task was written to a maximum achievement level of anything less than 7-8.) This creates the body of evidence that teachers will consult at the end of the trimester. IC does not pre-calculate grades, so a best-fit judgment is required when determining final grades. Through this process, teachers make a decision about the student’s overall level of performance against the MYP assessment criteria at the conclusion of the grading period. Low scores early in the trimester are not penalized; the student’s most recent, most consistent scores ideally demonstrate improvement in scores throughout the trimester.

External Assessments

Interim assessments and state exams are a piece of the larger process for assessment. Math, Language and literature, Individuals and societies, and Sciences use school- or district-created assessments that mirror the state exams students take annually. Based on multiple select-questions, technology-enhanced constructed response questions, and essay prompts, students receive a score on a 1-5 scale. Ideally, the interim assessments are a new assessment of the content that has been selected for the MYP unit.

Other measures include the STAR reading and math assessments and ACCESS for English language learners. These standardized assessment help us monitor status and growth against

Communication

Parents/guardians can learn more about this assessment policy at Back to School Night and during parent-teacher conferences. They have access to “real time” grades through Parent Portal and receive printed trimester grade reports at parent-teacher conferences and through the mail.

It is important to note that the written curriculum, including assessments, changes as the result of teacher and student reflection. We also respond to current events by making appropriate changes to students’ learning experiences.

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 Instructional Leadership Team.
- The most recent assessment policy will always be available to the school community on McAuliffe’s public website.