

Assessment Policy

Cornerstone Learning Community

Cornerstone Learning Community is committed to supporting the needs of the whole child. As such, assessment tools are intentionally designed to provide opportunities for students to show their learning using a variety of methods both individually and in collaboration with classmates. Assessment is used to inform teaching and guide learning in the classroom as well as being an indicator of a student's mastery of skills and concepts.

I. Determining achievement

Cornerstone's Middle Years Program uses the assessment criteria aligned with subject objectives as established by the IB in order to determine achievement levels for students. Rubrics are criterion-based and used by both teachers and students to prepare for and measure student achievement. Achievement levels are the result of the teacher's best judgment based on the evidence, but fully transparent through the use of task-specific descriptors in the rubrics.

Cornerstone values the diversity in our student body. Offering mixed grade level classes (language & literature, arts and design as well as certain levels of science, individuals & societies, and math) allows us to best meet individual needs. All assessments are grade specific and use rubrics for years 1 and 3 for sixth and eighth grades. Student rubrics for seventh grade are customized by subject area based on the plans for moving students forward through the school year, reaching the objectives for year 3 by the end of seventh grade.

In preparing formative and summative assessments, teachers are expected to ensure that assessments:

- are integral to student learning
- are aligned with objectives stated in the IB subject guide
- gather information via a variety of tasks that suit the age group
- reflect the development of the students
- provide evidence of student understanding through authentic performance whenever feasible.

As often as possible, summative assessment conditions are controlled in order to level the playing field for all students. Occasionally, it may be necessary for some tasks to be completed outside the classroom. When there is more than one teacher in a subject group (arts, math and design), teams meet to standardize their understanding of student achievement with respect to subject group objectives.

II. Recording and reporting achievement

Student achievement is tracked for formative and summative assessments using the RenWeb online school interface. Students receive feedback on their work orally, as notations on assignments, and through periodic updates to the RenWeb online student management system. Students receive feedback and scores for IB assessments from teachers throughout the school year.

Every six weeks, parents are emailed progress reports. At each twelve week interval, teachers prepare a written report card for each student. This is a structured reflection of the child's overall progress during the term. Consideration is given to social, physical, and emotional growth, as well as cognitive and intellectual development. Progress reports include summative assessment scores, evaluations of formative assessments and an extensive narrative description of student progress.

The year's final report card includes an IB achievement level for each objective in each of the subject areas. These are used to determine the overall grade and are based on teacher's records of individual assessments and their professional judgment of the final achievement level (examining patterns in the data, consistency and mitigating circumstances) in each of the criteria for each student. These are noted using the MYP general grade descriptors (1-7) given the boundary guidelines from the IB Organization.

In addition to written trimester progress reports, student-led conferences are held by middle school students twice each year. Students compile a portfolio of their work with reflections throughout their middle school years. During the conference, students discuss their work with parents and close by inviting teachers to join the conference followed by brief parent-teacher update without the student. Additional parent-teacher conferences are also scheduled as needed by teachers throughout the year or any time there is a parent request.

III. Implementation of formative and summative assessment consistent with IB expectations

Two distinct types of assessment are used within a unit. Formative assessment is a continual process that requires teachers to assess student understanding for the purpose of improving student learning as it is taking place. These formal and informal diagnostics can identify when re-teaching is needed, where students would benefit from further depth, enhance student awareness of their learning and fine-tune teaching. Summative assessments take place when teachers have determined through formative assessment that students are ready to attempt to show their understanding in a novel situation, with depth or applying the inquiry statement of a unit.

IV. Other assessment requirements

Upon transition to high school, student transcripts are available with IB grades and corresponding conventional letter grades. Students who take high school credit courses in Algebra 1 and Geometry in middle school are required to take Florida End of Course Exams in order to receive high school credit.

In addition to assessment that occurs in each subject area classroom, the Iowa Assessment is administered each fall to children in the 3rd through 8th grade. The results are helpful indicators of a child's progress from one year to the next in the areas tested: vocabulary development, reading comprehension, written conventions, math concepts, math computation and math applications. Parents receive reports and may discuss a single year's results with a teacher during conferences. Patterns observed in a single year or over a period of years or the wider implications of a child's scores are used to prompt teachers and support services staff to differentiate instruction, trigger further testing, or develop individualized strategies for learning.

V. Assessment methods

A balance of formative and summative practices are used to inform and enhance teaching, support and encourage students, promote deep understanding and develop higher order thinking skills.

Assessment strategies include:

- direct observation,
- selected response,
- journaling,
- open-ended tasks,
- portfolio reflection,
- performance which may involve tasks such as research, experimentation, essays, compositions, role play, and presentations.

Teachers assess each criterion within each subject at least twice per year using grade level rubrics.

VI. Development of the Assessment Policy

This assessment policy was developed by collaboration between teachers, administrators and support services staff. The draft policy was presented to a parent group and then piloted in our candidacy. Modifications to the policy have been made as needed and upon receipt of the *Report on School Authorization*. This policy was last revisited in the fall of 2019.

The IB Coordinator works with administrators and teachers to improve assessment practices when training new teachers, as teachers need support, and at the end of each trimester. To ensure that teachers in all subject areas are continuing to implement this assessment policy and grow in the ability to assess well and consistently, end of trimester IB team meetings include reports of student assessments as a means of accountability.