

Assessment Policy

Harrison Central School District

International Baccalaureate Diploma Program



2023

Philosophy

The Harrison Central School District believes the purpose of assessment is to give students opportunities to demonstrate their understanding, application and transfer of disciplinary content, concepts and skills. Responsible assessment practices utilize multiple measures of student achievement and growth as students should not be expected to express their learning through a single medium or methodology. Meaningful assessment offers students actionable feedback that is used to improve their learning. High quality assessments provide educators with valid and reliable data about student learning enabling them to differentiate instruction and/or the learning environment to better meet students' needs. Moreover, a high quality assessment system ensures equity and excellence through the delivery of a guaranteed and viable curriculum.

Principles of Assessment

The Harrison Central School District aims to support student learning through the use of assessment in the following ways:

- Support the curricular and philosophical goals of the IB program through sound research-based instructional practices and appropriate differentiation to ensure that all students have access to the benefits of rigorous study.
- Include a suitable range of tasks and instruments/components that ensure all objectives for the subject are assessed and that students can demonstrate their knowledge through multiple measures and through multiple modalities.
- Integrate assessment into learning activities; we strive to ensure that assessment is for learning and not simply a measurement of learning.
- Promote student inquiry and choice in assessment within the most authentic environment possible to promote real-world learning.
- Emphasize higher-order cognitive skills (synthesis, reflection, evaluation, critical thinking).
- Celebrate student success along a continuum designed to encourage personalized learning.
- Embed opportunities for reflection and personal evaluation within the ATL framework.
- Ensure that assessment results have a high level of reliability, and reflect both State standards and IB stated criterion.

- Endeavor to design assessments that reflect the international-mindedness of the program, to avoid cultural bias, and to make appropriate allowance for students working in their second language.
- Determine student achievement and subject grades through the professional judgment of teachers properly trained and sufficiently calibrated to ensure grades reflect content standards and avoid, wherever possible, scoring bias.

Bias in Assessment

The Harrison Central School District seeks to avoid bias in grading practices. Student assessments will be carefully developed and include a wide range of formats to minimize bias toward particular cultural groups, and so students from diverse cultural backgrounds encounter both familiar and unfamiliar contexts and tasks.

- Assessments will be based on subject specific criteria taken directly from IB guides in each subject.
- The NYS standards for each subject and Common Core standards will be integrated with IB criteria to ensure alignment.
- Students will receive task specific rubrics and checklists to make it explicitly clear what is required.
- A variety of assessments will allow for individual expression.
- Students with English as a Second Language will receive support services.
- Teachers will be highly trained to avoid cultural misconceptions and potential bias in grading, with specific attention to idiomatic phrasing and the basic conventions of grammar in the other major languages spoken in our district.

Assessment Model

The Harrison Central School District's framework for assessment is a standards - based model which seeks to align the criterion references of the IB with state and national standards. We place a great deal of attention on student-centered tracking of learning goals and the personalization of learning.

Features of this model include:

- The model seeks to make explicit the expected standards prior to assessment.
- Teachers are trained to instruct students in learning goals prior to instruction and create meaningful monitoring instruments that assist students in tracking their individual progress.
- Choice is offered in assessment, whenever possible, to ensure student-centered inquiry and agency.

- A multitude of interventions are offered, when students feel they are at risk of not meeting a particular goal or standard.
- Individual conferencing with students is a mainstay of this practice to ensure personalized tracking is accurate and represents an individualized plan for success.
- Students receive feedback at every stage of the process.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment involves the ongoing process of gathering and interpreting evidence to monitor progress in student learning.

- Teachers use the data to provide descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, and meaningful in a timely manner, in order to support improved learning and to adjust instruction to enhance learning and achievement.
- Formative assessment should happen frequently to gauge the degree to which an individual less goal has been achieved.
- Examples of formative assessments include but are not limited to: open-ended questioning, problem solving activities, journaling, etc.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment involves the process of gathering and interpreting evidence to assess a student's understanding of the course material. Summative assessments measure achievement based on established criteria used to assign a value to represent the quality of student learning at the end of a period of learning.

- Summative assessments are given at the end of a unit of study
- Summative assessments modeled after the prescribed IB papers for a given course and to reflect external NYSED testing where appropriate.
- Examples of summative assessment include but are not limited to: portfolios, projects, on-demand writing prompts, and presentations

IB Assessments

Internal Assessment

In the journey to build the academic skills necessary for the internal assessments, teachers use summative assessments, based upon IB rubrics that help prepare students for the internal assessment challenge. Student progress is communicated through student teacher conferences using the IB rubric.

External Assessment

Teachers present students with mock exams, questions from previous years, and unit examinations are modeled after IB external exam formatting and rely in part on questions obtained from the IB question act. Teachers reserve time in class to review exams ensuring that students understand how the rubric was applied to their responses. Some teachers use the tools of test correction to further use the exam as a learning device.

School-Based Assessment

IB teachers use a variety of assessments which not only serve the need of identifying the IB curriculum but also students' progress toward meeting State and National Standards. Assessments leading to a report card grade reflect past IB exam questions, as well as NYS Board of Education assessments. Although State Assessments do not contribute towards the final IB grade, they are reflected in the student's transcript which notes their final course grade on a one hundred point scale.

Assessment Practices

Common summative assessments are utilized in each subject that conform to the following practices:

- Teachers assess based on IB rubrics aligned with disciplinary standards outlined by NYSED.
- Teachers explicitly address when IB and State standards overlap and one a certain skill or topic is exclusive to one or the other.
- Assessment is differentiated where appropriate.
- Grading is calibrated through the use of exemplar papers from both the IB and NYSED.
- Teachers are given time to calibrate grading practices both through professional development hours and through release time.
- An emphasis is always placed on language and professional learning about cultural differences.

Assessment Considerations

We believe that assessment for learning should be emphasized. The following pedagogical practices support formative assessment of learning:

- Explicit instruction of tier three vocabulary at the beginning of a unit.

- Explicit instruction and modeling of critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- Scaffolded samples of student work and enrichment activities provided for students in need.
- Multiple opportunities for guided practice through gradual release.
- Direct feedback about learning progress with opportunities to reflect, review and refine work prior to summative assessment.

The Harrison Central School District is committed to both accessibility and adaptability. We allow as appropriate for the following considerations:

- Flexibility in deadlines
- Modification of modalities
- Instructional support within and outside the classroom
- Support inside and outside the school day

Grading Policy

Harrison believes that a high quality, balanced assessment system is principled on a research-based, multiple measure model. Grading practices should align to the model, be valid and reliable measures of learning and provide useful, actionable feedback to students in regard to their learning progress.

- Grading shall be related directly to stated learning goals for the course.
- Criterion-referenced standards shall be used to distribute grades and marks
- On the Internal Assessment and teacher designed assessments intended to prepare students for External Assessments in any given course, IB rubrics for that assessment are used, marks assigned accordingly, and the grade converted to the IB 7 point scale.
- Individual achievement of stated learning goals shall be the only basis for grades.
- Effort, attitude, participation and other learning behaviors shall not be included in grades but be reported separately unless they are explicitly stated as a learning goal.
- Incomplete assessment evidence will be handled as follows:
 - Not submitted will be identified in the grade book as NS (not submitted) or Incomplete. Zeroes will not be calculated.
 - Students are expected to complete all required work and will be given opportunities and support to do so.
- Formative assessment shall be an integral part of learning. Formative assessment marks will not be included directly in grades.
- Only Summative marks will be used for grading.

- Grading is an exercise in professional judgment wherein the educator seeks to ensure that the grade each student receives is an accurate representation of his/her performance.
- Consideration shall be given to the use of statistical measures other than the mean for grade calculation (e.g. median, mode).
- Teachers shall discuss and put in writing the course assessment policy and practice in clear, transparent manner with both students and parents.

Recording and Reporting

At Harrison Central School District we seek to establish and maintain meaningful partnerships with families and the wider community as a whole. To that end, we inform families about assessment and procedures for assessments utilizing multiple communication streams.

- The district maintains an electronic grading portal that is open to students and families; this allows students and families to monitor assessment grades in real time.
- Grading policies are communicated at events such as open houses, IB grade orientation, IB informational nights, PTA meetings, Board of Education presentations, and other public venues.
- The district also maintains a website where school policies can be accessed.
- Report cards are distributed 4 times a year, one for each quarter. Midway through each quarter a progress report is issued to track students' achievement prior to the issuance of a final grade for that quarter.