



315 McFarland Boulevard East Suite M., Tuscaloosa, AL 35404 | Phone: 205-759-3653 | Fax: 205-759-3784

Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools – Middle Assessment Policy (Last update: November 2023)

The purpose of this document is to provide insight into the philosophy, policies, practices, and procedures with regard to assessment at TMS-M.

Philosophy and Policies

At TMS-M, we believe that assessment is best utilized to guide teachers and administrators in both the planning for, and the implementation of, instruction. Therefore, we assess students first and then plan for instruction. We seek parent input in an effort to maintain transparency in our program as assessments should create dialogue between parents and schools. Not only are the assessments of ALCOS (Alabama Course of Study) and Common Core standards reflected in the grades on student report cards, but subject-specific MYP aims and objectives are assessed through project-based units and will be reported twice yearly for the purpose of parent communication and transparency of the program.

Practices and Procedures

At TMS-M, we assess in a variety of ways. Assessment is conducted formally and informally and can be formative or summative. In all cases, assessing students is a daily, fluid practice in all classes.

According to IB Philosophy, teachers, parents, and students will assess, record, and report learning throughout the following:

- ***Daily assignments, including thinking maps, exit slips, quizzes, reflection journal entries, and self-assessments of projects/learning goals (formative assessments)***
- ***Laboratory experiments and reports (summative)***
- ***laboratory write-ups and reflections (formative and summative)***
- ***Formal, objective tests, essays, and final projects (summative)***
- ***Units utilizing one of the MYP Global Contexts***
- ***Learner Profile (embedded in MYP unit plans and Advisor/Enrichment classes)***
- ***Student Portfolios (digital portfolio creation is now in progress)***
- ***Conferencing***
- ***Common district formative assessments in English Language Arts; HMH textbook benchmark tests***



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- ***Pre- and post- common (district-created) formative assessments in Mathematics***
- ***Standardized Assessments:***
 - ***STAR Performance Assessments, given three times yearly in Reading and Math***
 - ***Pathways to Proficiency standards-based assessments, given twice yearly; aligned with the Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP)***
 - ***Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP) testing occurs yearly, in April***

Daily Formative Assessments:

While summative assessments are used to assess the learner's knowledge at the end of an MYP unit, formative assessments are used to guide instruction along the way. Because both types of assessments guide planning and instruction, TMS-M faculty will assess in a variety of ways on a daily basis. For example, writing products in subject area classes will be assessed informally through strategic teaching products such as journal entries, thinking maps, and exit slips, while formal writing products will be assessed through detailed rubrics that are reviewed by students and parents prior to completion of the composition. All rubrics and assignments are available on the Schoology learning management system. In subjects such as Mathematics, informal assessments may be given through exit slips and board work, while projects will be assessed by more extensive, multi-step problem solving and the integration of the visual arts for final projects. Science will be assessed by multi-step projects and the following lab experiences:

- StemScopes
- Virtual labs
- AMSTI (Alabama Math Science Technology Initiative) science kits and their associated units of study

MYP Units:

Purpose: Each MYP unit will include both formative and summative assessments using formal and informal methods. Assessments will be fair and consistent throughout grade levels within the planner to maintain the integrity of the written curriculum. All assessments will be explained to the students by detailing the essential MYP objectives being assessed; for instance, Knowledge; Concepts, Skills, and Attitudes; Organization; Presentation. Many of the following methods will be used in assessing students: exemplars (student samples), anecdotal records, checklists, rubrics (student and teacher-created), open-ended tasks, and performance tasks. These will take place through observation,



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performance, process-focused activities, projects, and selected response (tests and quizzes).

Learner Profile purpose: The purpose of the Learner Profile is to allow learners to reflect on the attributes of an IB Learner. Each attribute will be embedded throughout the curriculum in each subject area and in every unit. Additionally, the daily Advisory classes will engage students in learning the traits through multi-media projects and presentations. While students will not be given grades on the Learner Profile, teachers will report Learner Profile development in each child periodically, in conferences and in portfolio checklists.

Student Portfolio purpose: The purpose of student portfolios at TMS-M is to provide both information on the process and an indication of growth throughout the MYP. As an assessment piece, the portfolio will serve as a container of assessed material (formative and summative) selected by students and teachers alike. We are in the process of guiding the students in managing their portfolios in a digital format, on Google Drive. Teachers of enrichment classes will guide students in managing their digital portfolios on a quarterly basis.

The following guidelines will be used to develop each student's portfolio:

- *student pieces will be divided by content area*
- *formative and summative pieces associated with each unit of study will be uploaded in each core course ; representative pieces will be chosen from each course for interdisciplinary units*
- *for each unit of study, students will complete a reflection that addresses the AtL skill/s practiced for the unit as well as address the inquiry questions developed for the unit.*

Reflection:

In all classes, students will complete written reflection pieces on a mid-term basis. These may be digitally or manually produced.

Practices in Progress:

Teacher roles in assessment include the following:

-compile/develop assessments based on rubrics that demonstrate alignment of MYP criteria and ALCOS standards; these rubrics provide students with task-specific clarifications for the MYP criterion strands assessed

- ***Newly formatted MYP assessment rubrics, based on subject area objectives/criteria and associated strands, were developed by the MYP Coordinator and all subject area teachers in the 2021-22 school year. Specific professional development on assessment practices is ongoing in monthly IB***



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meetings; it includes refining the task-specific clarifications so that students can better understand the MYP 8-point grading scale, its alignment with ALCOS standards and the 100-point grading scale set by the TCS school district, and its relevance as an assessment practice standard on a global scale.

- administer assessments
- reflect on assessments
- communicate data attained

Student roles in assessment include the following:

- develop learning goals and assessments (self)
- evaluate assessments
- complete assessments
- reflect and report on data

Parent roles in assessment include the following:

- review assessments on Schoology and ManageBac
- reflect on assessments
- provide feedback to school on assessments

Reporting to Parents:

Parents will be informed of their student's progress toward meeting the MYP criteria. Teachers will inform parents in three ways:

- 1) Reporting criterion-referenced scores as well as ALCOS converted scores via PowerSchool Home Portal.
 - 2) Returning the actual MYP criterion-referenced assessments to students so they can take them home to discuss with their parents.
 - 3) Student-led conferences.
 - 4) MYP achievement levels reported on ManageBac at the end of January and at the end of May for each subject. **Access to ManageBac grades may be made by individual students via their ManageBac login credentials.**
www.tmsm.managebac.com
- ***Parents will receive a bi-annual MYP GRADE REPORT explanation to guide them in interpreting and understanding how MYP assessment levels correspond to and align with the Alabama Course of Study standards and the school district's***



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100-point grading scale. The MYP Grade conversion chart is included in this explanation as well. [Link to the MYP GRADE REPORT explanation.](#)

Each MYP Unit will have multiple formative assessments (as listed above) as well as at least one summative assessment. Parents will be made aware of specific examples of assessments used when possible, such as study guides, which are posted on the teachers' Schoology learning management system. At the beginning and conclusion of each unit, parents will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the assessments as well as the unit.

Grade Accessibility and Conferences

At TMS-M, assessment data will be reported each mid-term and nine week grading period throughout the year. The PowerSchool Home Portal allows parents to review assessments of students' work (grades) at any time. Google Drive, Schoology, and web-based tools make student projects accessible. Our core courses, including assignments, lesson plans, rubrics, links, due dates, etc. are available to parents and students via our LMS, Schoology. Through the use of formal conferencing, all stakeholders will have an opportunity to review assessed material and curriculum. Through the use of whole group, small group and individual conferencing, standards will be assessed according to benchmarks. These assessments will allow all stakeholders to reflect on the learning outcomes and the actual learning, except in the case of pre-assessment whereby prior knowledge is assessed to plan for instruction. Additionally, assessment data will be reported when available through parent communication folders and upon parent request.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Formal conferences including parent/guardian, principal, teachers, and student will take place upon request and as needed. Teachers may set up a conference with parents one time in the fall unless otherwise necessary. As part of each conference, teachers and parents will discuss the following items:

- **portfolios (work samples/expectations)**
- **learner profile (behavior)**
- **assessments (upcoming and ongoing)**

Teachers will provide copies of written reflection to all stakeholders after the conference.

Standardized Assessments: schedule published by Tuscaloosa City Board of Education



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Universal Screeners – (STAR Reading and Math Performance Assessments and Pathways to Proficiency Reading and Math performance assessments, which are online benchmark and performance assessment series, chosen by TCBOE)

In addition to these standard assessments, TMS-M will implement ongoing (informal) assessments within the classroom. Reporting of the data takes place in collaborative PLC and RtI meetings bi-monthly.

TMS-M has established a **Parent Action Committee** (PAC) in order to communicate expectations and procedures to all stakeholders and include them in the process of assessment within the MYP.

TMS-M is a magnet program based on academics. As such, TMS-M will use the standardized assessments listed above in order to accept prospective students according to TCBOE policy.

- ***Assessment policy revision takes place regularly, at the beginning of each academic year. It is reviewed and updated by the faculty of Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools - Middle in our whole-school faculty meetings and reflects the input from parent and school district stakeholders. Our policies are available for review on our school website:***

<https://www.tuscaloosacityschoos.com/Page/2000>