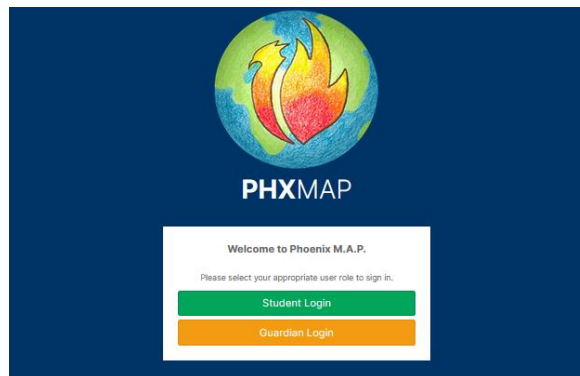


Mastery Assessment at Phoenix Middle School

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the Phoenix Middle School community! We're excited to have you and your child embark on a transformative educational journey with us. At Phoenix, we take an innovative approach to learning, rooted in decades of educational research and practice. Our guiding principles reflect our commitment to fostering intellectual discipline, global awareness, creative expression, wellness, and character in our students.

As you know, we employ a Mastery-based approach to learning and assessment. This user manual aims to help you understand the nuances of this system and how you can engage with your child's education through our Mastery Assessment Portal (M.A.P.). The portal is an essential tool for parents and students to track academic progress, access teacher feedback, and gain insights into work habits and behaviors.

As we venture through this unique learning model, this manual will act as your guide, helping you navigate and understand the fundamental components of Mastery assessment at Phoenix and the Mastery Assessment Portal.

By the end of this guide, you'll be well-equipped to:

- Understand the philosophy behind Mastery-based learning and its benefits.
- Navigate our assessment portal to track your child's academic progress.
- Interpret various types of assignments and assessments.
- Understand the work habits and behaviors expected from your child at Phoenix Middle School.

We hope this manual helps clarify any questions you might have and enhances your experience as a vital member of our Phoenix community.

2. Understanding Mastery-Based Assessment

What is Mastery Assessment?

At its core, Mastery Assessment is an educational philosophy that focuses on students' deep understanding of subject matter, rather than their ability to accumulate points or compete for grades. It's an approach aligned with Phoenix Middle School's guiding principles and aims to develop students who are accountable for what they are learning.

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The basic idea of Mastery-based learning is that learners progress from one skill, activity, or lesson to the next only when they have shown that they are ready to advance. In other words, they move to more complex learning tasks once they have shown a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental skills that they need to truly learn those complex tasks. In a Mastery-based learning environment, each new thing students learn builds on itself, helping students develop sophisticated skills and understandings that prepare them for complex learning. Progression from lesson to lesson prevents learning gaps from forming and helps learners build confidence and self-esteem along the way.

The Mechanism of Mastery Assessment

Mastery assessment starts by assessing a student's current understanding of a topic through a pre-assessment or a similar formative task. The assessment's feedback informs teaching strategies aimed at areas requiring improvement. Throughout this learning process, students receive written and/or verbal descriptive feedback rather than points or grades, enabling them to focus on understanding rather than scoring. Assessments aligned with curriculum standards gauge the students' proficiency. If Mastery is demonstrated, students proceed to the next topic; otherwise, they receive targeted remediation.

Benefits of Mastery Assessment

Mastery assessment offers several benefits:

- **Improved Student Learning and Retention** - Mastery assessment focuses on comprehension and skill development, allowing students to revisit material until they achieve Mastery. Studies indicate that this can lead to a deeper understanding of content and better retention over time (Guskey, 2010).
- **Increased Engagement and Motivation** - Mastery assessment tends to increase student engagement because it makes the learning goals clear and achievable (Anderman & Midgley, 1997). Students are motivated to put forth effort, knowing that they have multiple opportunities to succeed.
- **Reduced Achievement Gaps** - Traditional grading systems often perpetuate achievement gaps among students from diverse backgrounds. The Mastery-based assessment focuses on competency rather than speed or initial performance (Bloom, 1968; Guskey & Anderman, 2008).
- **More Meaningful Feedback** - In a Mastery assessment system, feedback is formative and aimed at improvement, which is more useful to students than a simple letter grade. This can lead to better self-assessment skills and more focused studying (Black & William, 1998).
- **Enhanced Student Responsibility and Autonomy** - Mastery assessment encourages students to take ownership of their learning, promoting self-regulation, goal-setting, and metacognitive strategies. These skills are particularly vital for middle school students who are developing greater autonomy in their learning processes (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2005).
- **Better Preparation for Future Learning** - Mastery assessment ensures that students have a solid foundation before moving on to more advanced topics, making future learning more effective. This is critical for middle school students who are building the foundation for high school and beyond (Kulik, Kulik, & Bangert-Drowns, 1990).
[Here is an example](#) of Phoenix alumni reflecting on their time at Phoenix.

Challenges to Mastery Assessment

Implementing Mastery assessment can come with its own set of challenges, particularly from the perspectives of parents and students who may be accustomed to traditional grading systems. Here are some common challenges:

- **Increased Anxiety Over "Perfection"** - Since Mastery assessment aims for students to demonstrate a solid understanding of the material, some students may feel stressed or anxious about achieving "Mastery" or "check minus" and might miss the point that it's okay to make mistakes as part of the learning process.

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- **Time and Workload Concerns** – Mastery assessment at Phoenix requires all students to reassess and/or revise work at some point in the school year. This might be viewed as an additional workload for students, and parents might be concerned about the time commitment required to attain Mastery of multiple topics.
- **Social Comparison and Competition** - In a Mastery-based system, the focus shifts from competition between students to individual growth. Some parents and students who value class ranking may worry that Mastery grading doesn't adequately distinguish high performers.
- **Learning Curve for Independent Skills** - Mastery assessment often requires higher levels of self-regulation and self-assessment from students. Some may initially struggle with these independent skills, leading to frustrations at home.

3. Types of Assignments and Assessments

At Phoenix, we tailor our assignments to follow the natural learning curve, which has three distinct stages: introduction, practice, and Mastery. Each type of assignment serves a different but crucial role. Let's break down these assignment types to better understand how they fit into the grand scheme of educational growth.

Introduction Assignments

- *What They Are:* These are the initial steps into a new topic or skill. Think of it like showing your child their new bike and explaining how all the parts work together - training wheels, brakes, handlebars, etc.
- *Purpose:* To introduce new concepts and foundational skills needed for more advanced work.
- *How They Fit into the Learning Cycle:* Much like first getting on a bike with training wheels, Introduction assignments give students the initial framework and understanding they need to start the learning journey.

Practice Assignments

- *What They Are:* These are the bread and butter of our educational model, making up about 80% of all assignments at Phoenix.
- *Purpose:* To refine skills and deepen understanding of the concepts introduced.
- *How They Fit into the Learning Cycle:* Just as you spend most of your time practicing riding a bike without training wheels, these assignments help uncover misconceptions, and provide the sustained practice needed to truly grasp new concepts and skills.

Mastery Assignments

- *What They Are:* Think of these as the final test—riding your bike around the neighborhood without any help.
- *Purpose:* To assess whether a student has "mastered" the given concept or skill to the satisfaction of the teacher.
- *How They Fit into the Learning Cycle:* Like that moment when you finally ride a bike around the neighborhood unaided, Mastery assignments offer students a chance to demonstrate that they can "ride" on their own, showing a complete and deep understanding of the material.

Summary

In summary, Introduction assignments are like using training wheels to get a feel for riding a bike. Practice assignments are the countless hours spent practicing, making up most of the learning experience. Mastery assignments are the moment when the training wheels come off, and your child shows they can ride solo. We believe this structure fosters a deeper, more enduring understanding of the subject matter.

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4. Separating Academic and Behavior Assessment

In educational research, there's a growing consensus on the importance of separating behavior from academic performance when assessing students. But why do we emphasize this at Phoenix Middle School, especially for our middle-schoolers?

Imagine your child is learning a piano piece for a recital. If the teacher assessed them solely based on behavior—like the number of hours they practiced, how well they can sit still on the bench, or their positive attitude—it would not accurately reflect how well they can play the piece. On the flip side, a student might sit attentively and practice diligently, yet still struggle with hitting the right notes or grasping the emotional nuances of the composition, never really understanding the skill and musical concepts needed to play the piece.

Academic vs. Behavioral Assessment

At Phoenix, we assess academics to gauge how well a student understands a concept or a skill—this is where our Mastery, Progressing, and Not Progressing grades come into play. Behavior, on the other hand, falls under our Work Habits and Behavior Assessments, where we evaluate traits like timeliness, quality of work, active engagement in class, organization, and following directions.

The Research-Based Rationale

1. **Clearer Feedback:** Research shows that when grades are conflated with behavior, students get muddled feedback (Brookhart, 2011). By separating the two, it's easier to determine whether an academic issue is really a behavioral one, or vice versa.
2. **Targeted Interventions:** With distinct measures for academics and behavior, interventions can be more targeted (O'Connor, 2011). For example, a student who is punctual but academically struggling may benefit more from tutoring than a lecture on responsibility.
3. **Equity:** Studies have found that behavior-based grades can disproportionately affect minority and disadvantaged students, sometimes reflecting cultural bias more than true academic performance (Carter & Wun, 2020).
4. **Social-Emotional Learning:** Middle school is a time of significant social and emotional development. Separating behavior and academic performance allows educators to address these aspects individually (Eccles & Roeser, 2011).
5. **Motivation:** When students see that their efforts in academics and behavior are being evaluated separately, it can serve as a double motivation. They can clearly see the areas in which they excel and those that require improvement, which is crucial for middle school students who are at a stage where they're developing a sense of responsibility and self-regulation (Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser, & Davis-Kean, 2006).

By separating behavior from academics in our assessments, we offer a more nuanced, complete picture of a student's strengths and areas for growth. This approach allows us to provide targeted support in the specific areas where each student needs it, whether that be in mastering academic concepts or in cultivating effective work habits.

5. Academic Assessment (Student Workflow)

The Mastery Learning model works in tandem with the natural learning process, recognizing that true understanding is built over time through structured stages of learning. Our assignments are crafted to facilitate this progression, with each stage of the workflow tailored to cultivate deep, lasting comprehension.

Introduction Phase: Laying the Foundation

The journey to Mastery begins with the Introduction Assignments. This crucial first phase is about presenting new concepts and skills in a way that's both accessible and engaging. In the natural learning cycle, this is likened to "getting to know about it" – a stage where curiosity is sparked and initial exposure to new material occurs. During this phase, students are not just passive recipients of information; they are active participants, beginning to form connections with the material that lay the groundwork for deeper understanding.

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Practice Phase: Strengthening the Framework

With the foundation set, students move into the Practice Phase, where the core of learning takes place. This phase is all about application and exploration. As students "try it out" and "get feedback," they have numerous opportunities to delve into the material, identify their misunderstandings, and receive targeted feedback. Here, our assignments are designed to challenge students' thinking, to push them to engage critically with the concepts, and to practice applying their new skills in various contexts. This stage is iterative and encourages students to reflect and adjust, promoting a growth mindset.

Mastery Phase: Demonstrating Proficiency

In the Mastery Phase, students demonstrate their solid understanding of the material presented. Mastery Assignments are the equivalent of "using it" in real-world situations, where knowledge is applied fluently and confidently. These assignments are an opportunity for students to show that they can integrate and apply their learning independently, highlighting a deep and comprehensive understanding. Only when students show they can 'use' the knowledge effectively, without support, do they truly demonstrate Mastery.

Our Mastery Assessment Portal (M.A.P.) is tailored to reflect and support this workflow, ensuring that students, parents, and teachers are all on the same page.

6. Work Habits and Behaviors

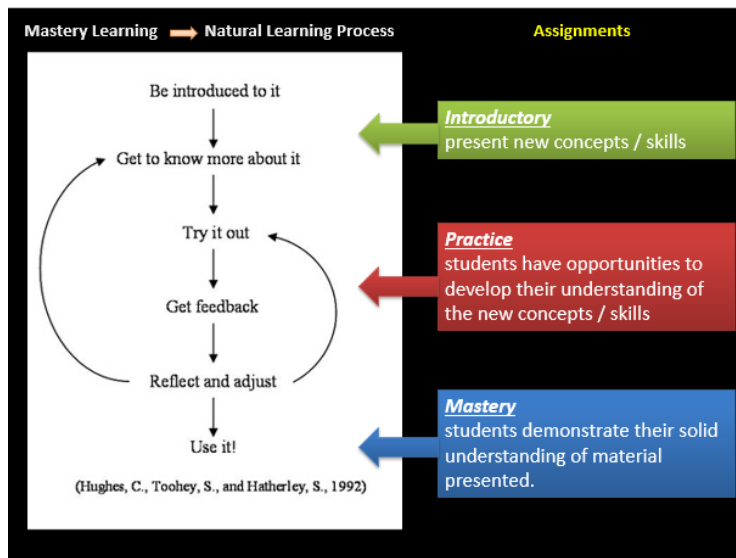
At Phoenix Middle School, we are committed to nurturing not only the academic growth of our students but also the development of their work habits and behaviors – which are vital to their success both inside and outside the classroom. We understand that academic proficiency and behavioral development are interwoven, yet distinct aspects of student growth. As such, we purposefully assess them separately to give a clear, unbiased view of each student's progress and to support their development holistically.

Our Philosophy: Why We Separate Academics from Behavior

The separation of academic achievement from work habits and behavior is a philosophy grounded in the understanding that while the two are interconnected, they are not the same. Academic assessments are meant to reflect a student's understanding and Mastery of the subject matter – untangled from their behavior or disposition. Conversely, assessing work habits and behaviors provides us with insights into a student's ability to engage productively, persist through challenges, collaborate effectively, and manage their time and resources. By differentiating the two, we can provide more targeted support, celebrate specific successes, and address areas of need without one overshadowing the other.

The Connection Between Good Work Habits and Academic Success

Good work habits and positive behavior are foundational to academic success. They include being organized, maintaining a strong work ethic, persisting through difficulties, and contributing positively to the classroom environment. These habits are the scaffolding upon which academic accomplishments are built. Students with strong work habits are better equipped to handle the demands of a challenging curriculum, engage deeply with learning material, and achieve their academic goals. We emphasize this connection to our students regularly and encourage parents to reinforce its importance at home.



Mastery Assessment at Phoenix Middle School

Assessment and Communication Process At the beginning of each quarter, we optimistically presume that all students possess the work habits and behaviors necessary to thrive. Should a student’s behavior become a barrier to their own success or the success of others, teachers will address the issue through direct conversation and support within the classroom setting, documenting this negative behavior in the Mastery Assessment Portal (M.A.P.) as a record of the intervention. This proactive approach allows us to handle concerns early on and to collaborate with the student in finding solutions.

If the behavior persists, we extend the conversation to include parents, providing insights and updates on the student's progress. Notations made in M.A.P. about work habits and behaviors serve as a communication tool and do not influence academic assessments. This transparency ensures that parents are informed and can participate in guiding their children toward better habits.

Parental Involvement and Setting Consequences

While students may not face traditional punitive measures at school for behavior issues, we believe that partnership with parents is essential in shaping students’ understanding of the importance of good work habits and behaviors. We rely on parents to set appropriate consequences at home and to discuss the critical role these traits play in their child's overall success. By doing so, we hope to foster a consistent message that, while making mistakes is a natural part of learning, taking responsibility and improving upon them is what leads to growth and development.

In this way, the Work Habits and Behaviors Assessment reflects our comprehensive approach to education – one that values the full spectrum of student development as we prepare them for success beyond our classrooms.

7. Discovery Day & Sports Eligibility

Discovery Day

At Phoenix, Discovery Days embody the spirit of our Mastery Assessment framework, enabling students to incorporate their interests and creativity into the curriculum. These days are a pivotal component of our educational ethos, encouraging students to apply their academic Mastery in diverse, real-world contexts. For students, participation in Discovery Days is a privilege that hinges on their academic persistence and ability to stay on track with Mastery coursework. Students are required to reach Mastery in all their classes by the established deadline to participate in these unique learning opportunities.

Discovery Days are intentionally integrated into our ongoing assessment process, ensuring that Mastery in the classroom translates to enriched learning experiences. Should students fail to meet the Mastery criteria on time, the first Discovery Day provides a supportive environment to work directly with teachers one-on-one or in small groups to review the curriculum or complete work. This underscores our educational philosophy that values deep understanding and application of knowledge over mere memorization.

Parents are vital to the success of Discovery Days. They should engage by marking Discovery Days on their calendars, brainstorming with their child, helping to plan, and supporting the completion of these experiential learning projects. After participating in Discovery Days, students reflect and share their experiences, fostering a culture of accountability and meaningful learning.

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Discovery Day Summary

Eligibility Criteria:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achieve Mastery in all classes by the deadline set before each Discovery Day.• Submit and receive approval for a Discovery Day plan from parents and teachers.
For Non-Eligible Students:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend school on the first Discovery Day for targeted support and work towards Mastery.
Parental Involvement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mark Discovery Days on the family calendar.• Engage in discussion and planning of the Discovery Day activities with their child.• Review and sign off on their child’s Discovery Day planning paperwork.• Support their child in the completion of their Discovery Day experience.

Sports Eligibility

Sports eligibility at Phoenix Middle School is seamlessly aligned with our Mastery Assessment philosophy. Academic Mastery is the foundation of our student-athletes' success, both in the classroom and in sports. Our eligibility criteria remind student-athletes of the essential role that academic performance plays in their holistic educational journey. Quarterly and weekly eligibility reviews act as incentives for student-athletes to sustain their academic Mastery. We recognize that the qualities essential for success in academia—like discipline and effective time management—are also vital in sports. Hence, connecting sports participation with academic Mastery not only encourages ongoing academic engagement but also promotes the development of transferable skills.

Ineligibility for sports is not intended as a punishment but rather as a constructive response, encouraging students to concentrate on their academic responsibilities. The goal is to reinforce their understanding and command of the curriculum, thereby enhancing their overall educational growth.

Sports Eligibility Summary

Quarterly Eligibility Criteria:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achieve Mastery in at least 4 out of 6 core classes by the end of the quarter
Weekly Eligibility Criteria:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain Mastery in at least 4 out of 6 core classes.• Have fewer than 9 missing or in-progress assignments.
Warning Period:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If weekly criteria are not met, students enter a warning period but can still practice and compete.• If criteria are not met by the following Monday, the student becomes ineligible for that week.
Regaining Eligibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ineligible students must attend Learning Extensions and complete work to regain eligibility.• Families are promptly notified of any changes in eligibility status.

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8. Sharing Student Progress - The Mastery Assessment Portal (M.A.P.)

Now, let's talk about how we keep families in the loop with academic progress. Enter M.A.P., our Mastery Assessment Portal, custom-built in collaboration with the wonderful folks at [Jacq Design](#).

What's M.A.P. All About?

None of the off-the-shelf grading apps quite met our needs, so we thought, "Why not create our own?" After countless brainstorming sessions and endless cups of coffee, we rolled out M.A.P., designed to offer families real-time, transparent insights into their child's progress.

Your Comprehensive Guide to Navigating M.A.P Screens

Mastering the ins and outs of our Mastery Assessment Portal (M.A.P) is a breeze. Here's a detailed walkthrough:

1. Ease Into M.A.P with Logging In

- Unlike traditional middle schools, student scheduling, confirmation of their 7th and 8th-grade courses, and M.A.P. registration usually happen during the first two to three weeks of school. Following student registration, a link to the M.A.P. parent/guardian registration form is sent to all new Phoenix families. Once the M.A.P. admin confirms the database link between parents/guardians and students, parents/guardians can log into phxmap.org to view the assessment.

2. Current Assessment: Your All-In-One Dashboard

- The moment you're in, you're greeted with a user dashboard. Not just assessment, but alerts on academic progress, effort levels, eligibility for extracurricular activities, and upcoming Discovery Days.

3. Student Assignments: The Whole Nine Yards

- This screen displays course assignments—every assignment, from every course, spanning every quarter. Plus, you can filter your view by term, course, or even effort metrics.

4. Class Efforts: Behaviors, Minus the Academics

- Here's where behavior assessments land—those teacher-noted observations that may or may not be tied to academic work. In short, it's the place to understand the habits shaping a student's classroom experience.

5. Course Standards: The Connection to the Graded Course of Study

- This screen organizes the assessments by academic standard, across all courses. It's your go-to for understanding your child's academic milestones.

6. Guardian Alerts: Stay in the Loop, Always

- Customize your alerts and choose to receive real-time notifications via email or text. Whether it's academic or effort updates, you're the first to know!

7. User Settings: Your Personal Corner




- From updating your profile and password to tweaking your contact details, this screen offers full control. It's also where you can peek into your student's user profile.

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There you have it! Your brief guide to M.A.P. We will also explain all screens and functionality during our first Parent Forum (usually within the first month of school). Enjoy exploring!

At Phoenix Middle School, we recognize that the most valuable feedback for students comes from oral and written evaluations provided by our teachers. However, to facilitate a clear and efficient way for parents to monitor their child's progress on the Mastery Assessment Portal (M.A.P.), we have developed a set of symbols as progress markers. These symbols provide a snapshot of a student's learning and should not be misunderstood as traditional grades. For instance, a Mastery assessment 'M' is an indication of a student's understanding of a skill or concept (sometimes after revisions), and it is distinct from the traditional grade of 'A', which is based on points attained from an initial assessment. Below, the academic and effort assessment symbols used in the M.A.P. are outlined to help both students and parents understand their meanings.

Assessment Key - Introductory and Practice Assignments



Symbol	Meaning	STUDENT Next Steps	PARENT Feedback
Check+ 	The student has gone above and beyond the expectations for the Introductory or Practice assignment.	None – Explore enrichment or move on to the next assignment.	Acknowledge your child for going above and beyond, but also ask them what they found interesting or challenging about the assignment.
Check 	The student has demonstrated a solid understanding of the concept or skill.	None – Explore enrichment or move on to the next assignment.	Acknowledge that your child has grasped the concept well, but also ask them what they found interesting or challenging about the assignment.
Check- 	Student work is incomplete and/or there seems to be a misunderstanding of the concept/skill.	Identify mistake(s) and revise the assignment ASAP. Meet with the teacher for make-up or revision instructions.	Don't Panic! - Discuss where the gaps in understanding might be and encourage your child to seek clarification or extra help from the teacher.

Assessment Key - Mastery Assignments

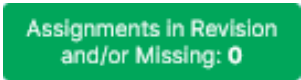

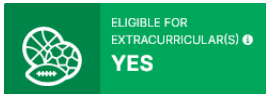
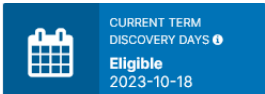


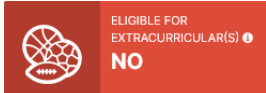

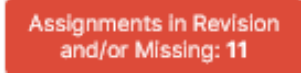

Symbol	Meaning	STUDENT Next Steps	PARENT Feedback
Exemplary 	The student has gone above and beyond the expectations for the Mastery assignment.	None – Explore enrichment or move on to the next assignment.	Acknowledge your child for going above and beyond, but also ask them what they found interesting or challenging about the assignment.
Mastery 	The student has demonstrated a solid understanding of the concept or skill.	None – Explore enrichment or move on to the next assignment.	Acknowledge that your child has grasped the concept well, but also ask them what they found interesting or challenging about the assignment.
Progressing 	Student work is incomplete and/or there seems to be a misunderstanding of the concept/skill.	Identify mistake(s) and revise the assignment ASAP. Meet with the teacher for make-up or revision instructions.	Don't Panic! - Discuss where the gaps in understanding might be and encourage your child to seek clarification or extra help from the teacher.

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Assessment Key - All Assignments

Symbol	Meaning	STUDENT Next Steps	PARENT Feedback
Not Progressing NP	The student's work shows a profound misunderstanding of the concept or skill, or the assignment is missing .	Immediately review practice assignments & the concepts with the teacher. Submit any missing work or revisions.	Encourage your child to communicate openly with their teacher about their difficulties, and to complete any missing work ASAP. Discuss the reasons for missing the deadline and strategize ways to manage time more effectively.
Excused EX	The student has been excused from completing work. This can happen when the teacher or student chooses an alternative assessment.	None - Check in with the teacher before moving on to the next assignment.	None – Contact the teacher if you have any questions.
Collected 	Work has been collected from student on time and is in the process of being assessed.	Move on to the next assignment . Wait for the teacher's instructions or feedback.	Reassure your child that their work is being reviewed and remind them to check for the teacher's feedback once it's available.
Missing 	The student did not turn in the assignment , or the assignment was incorrectly submitted and not received by the teacher.	Turn in the assignment ASAP! If necessary, student should meet with teacher for make-up or revision instructions.	Encourage student to complete the work ASAP. Discuss the reasons for missing the deadline and strategize ways to manage time more effectively.

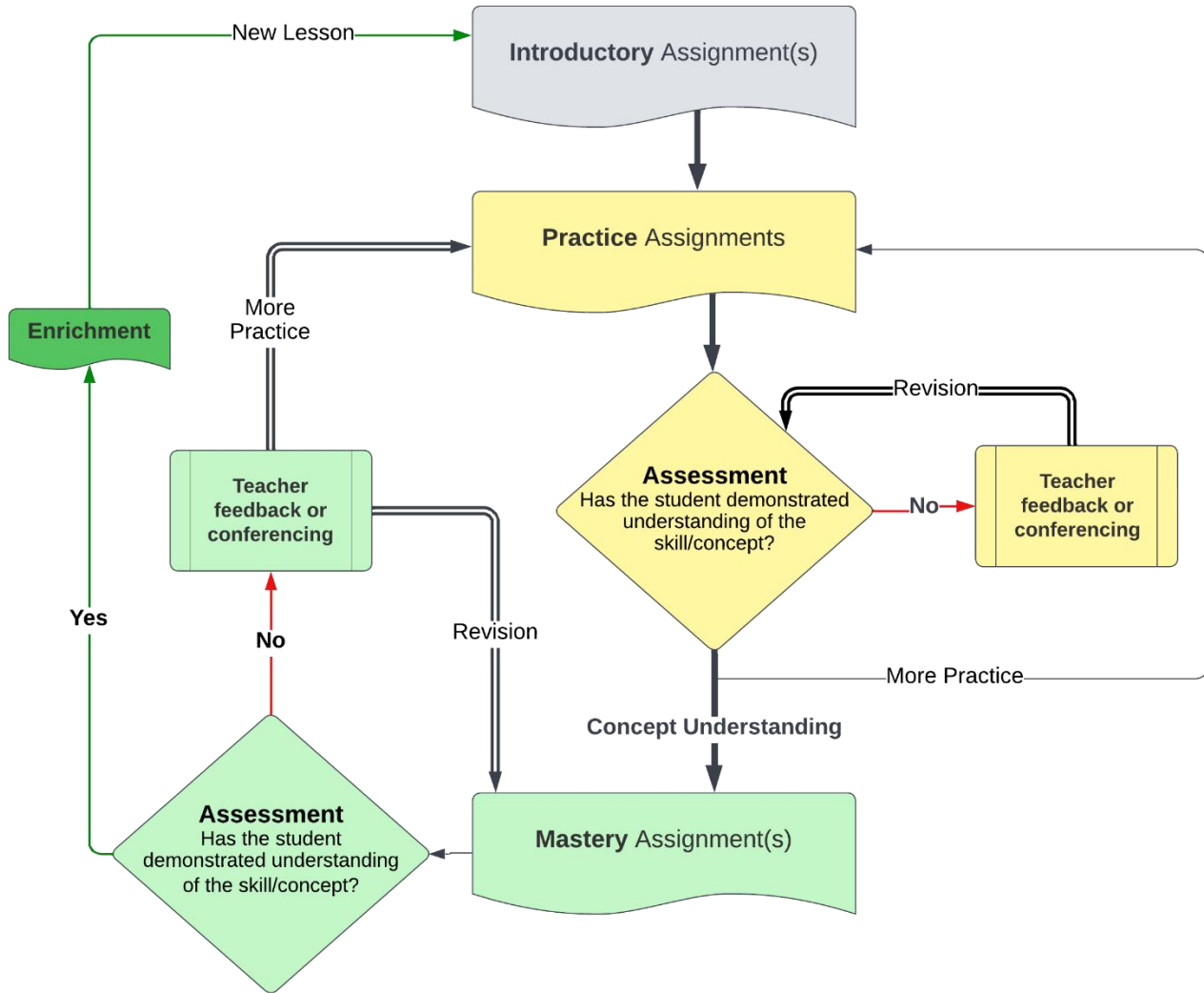
Mastery Assessment Portal - Alert Button Key

Academic Progress	Effort Progress	Athletic Eligibility	Discovery Days
 <p>The student is progressing as expected. All assignments are up to date.</p>	 <p>The student is progressing as expected. There are no negative student behaviors posted.</p>	 <p>The student is eligible for athletics and school activities.</p>	 <p>The student is eligible for Discovery Day. All courses are at Mastery</p>
 <p>The student is progressing as expected. The color indicates that there are fewer than 5 assignments (2 in this case) that are missing or in revision. The user can click the button to view specifics.</p>	 <p>The student is progressing as expected. The color indicates that there are fewer than 5 negative behavior assessments (3 in this case) posted. The user can click the button to view specifics.</p>	 <p>The student is NOT eligible for Extra Curricular(s). Student has >75% @ Mastery or >5 Revision/Missing</p>	 <p>The student is NOT eligible for Discovery Day. One or more courses are not at Mastery.</p>
 <p>The student is NOT progressing as expected. The color indicates that there are 5 or more (in this case 11) assignments that are missing or in revision. The user can click the button to view specifics.</p>	 <p>The student is NOT progressing as expected. The color indicates that there are 5 or more (in this case 6) behavior assessments posted. The user can click the button to view specifics.</p>		

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9. Detailed Assessment Flowchart and Table

The assessment flow serves as a visual guide, illustrating the Mastery-based assessment process. Accompanied by a table (below), the flow chart details how students progress from the initial introduction of concepts, through practice, and finally to Mastery, clearly showing the evaluation stages for each. This flow chart and table provide an easy-to-understand overview, helping students and parents to grasp and track the educational journey and assessment methods used at Phoenix.



Mastery Assessment at Phoenix Middle School

Assessment Table

Assignments	Explanation	Example
Introductory	This initial step introduces students to new topics, providing foundational knowledge.	<i>Example:</i> Watch and discuss a video about plant cells. In groups, complete a worksheet labeling cell parts (cell wall, chloroplasts, nucleus, etc.).
Practice	These assignments allow students to apply and practice the concepts they've learned, deepening their understanding.	<p><i>Example Assignments:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cell Component Research: Research and present on a specific plant cell component. Plant Cell Diagram: Draw and label a detailed plant cell diagram. Cell Comparison: Create a Venn diagram comparing plant and animal cells. Cell Function Exploration: Write an essay on how different parts of a plant cell work together.
Assessment and Revision	Teachers evaluate each assignment for the student's understanding of the skill or concept and determine if additional practice is necessary. If a student's work doesn't meet the expected standards, they have to revise and improve it based on teacher feedback.	<p><i>Example:</i> If a student's plant cell diagram lacks detail, they revise it to include more accurate and comprehensive labeling. The teacher will provide individual or small group help if necessary.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> If a student struggles with the "Cell Component Research," the teacher might recommend revisiting the assignment for better comprehension. The teacher will provide individual or small group help if necessary.</p>
Mastery	Depending on the teacher's assessment, students either revisit practice assignments or move on to a culminating Mastery Assignment.	<p><i>Example:</i> Students demonstrate understanding by choice of media. For example, students do a stop-motion video explaining plant cell organelles and cell division. If they meet the criteria, they progress; if not, they revise their work, often reviewing related Practice Assignments.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> Students build and explain a 3D model of a plant cell. If they meet the criteria, they progress; if not, they revise their work, often reviewing related Practice Assignments.</p>
Practice to Mastery	There are cases when a student does not complete Practice assignment(s) and can move on to Mastery for a concept or skill. In these cases, missing Practice assignments are noted on the Mastery Assessment Portal (and are not removed), but the Portal will still indicate that the student is "Mastered" for the course. If a student cannot demonstrate a clear understanding of the skill or concept, they may be required to revisit and/or complete all Practice assignments before attempting Mastery revision.	
Enrichment	For students who have demonstrated Mastery, enrichment activities offer further exploration and a deeper understanding of the topic.	<i>Example:</i> Students who have mastered the plant cell unit could engage in a project where they compare the efficiency of different plant cells in photosynthesis or research the latest developments in plant cell biology.

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10. Feedback at Home

Providing constructive feedback at home is essential for students to improve and develop their skills. This is especially true in a Mastery-based learning environment. Remember, the objective of Mastery-based grading is not just to assign a label to the student's work but to help them grow and understand their own learning process. The feedback parents provide is a vital part of that growth. Here are some types of feedback parents could provide:

Negative Behavior Assessment	General Parent Feedback	Example
Timeliness Work not handed in on time	Encourage better time management and responsibility.	"I've noticed some of your assignments are late. Let's work on planning and sticking to a schedule so you can turn them in on time. Being punctual is important for your success."
Quality of Work Subpar presentation quality	Stress the importance of effort and neatness in work.	"Your teacher mentioned that your project presentation could use some improvement. How about we review your work together before you turn it in next time? A second look can help catch any errors and improve the overall quality of your presentation."
Active Engagement Problems with actively listening	Highlight the value of participation and attentiveness.	"Let's discuss ways you can appropriately engage more during discussions, like taking notes or asking questions. You can choose two classes and try asking one question or making one comment in each class"
Organization Lack of a successful system for organizing work/materials	Assist in developing organizational skills.	"Staying organized helps keep track of your work and reduces stress. Let's create a system for organizing your materials that works for you."
Directions/Formatting Not following instructions	Emphasize the importance of attention to detail.	"Following directions and formatting is key to completing tasks correctly. Let's review the instructions together next time to ensure you understand them fully."
Late for Class Consistently late for class	Discuss punctuality and its impact.	"Being on time for class is important. It shows respect and helps you not to miss important information. Let's figure out what's causing the delays and how we can address it."
Academic Assessment	General Parent Feedback	Example
"Check+" or "Exemplary"	Praise your child for going above and beyond, but also ask them what they found interesting or challenging about the assignment.	"I can see you put extra effort here, especially with the detail you put in the map you colored. Great job!"
"Check" or "Mastery"	Acknowledge that your child has grasped the concept well and encourage a deeper or broader application of the knowledge.	"Great job! You've got it! What was your strategy in understanding this concept so well?"
"Check-" or "Progressing."	Discuss where the gaps in understanding might be and encourage your child to seek clarification or extra help from the teacher.	"You seem to be struggling with this concept. What do you think went wrong?" "Do you need more help or more time?" "Maybe it's time to ask your teacher for help. "
"Missing"	Discuss the reasons for missing the deadline and strategize ways to manage time more effectively.	"You missed this assignment. Let's figure out how to manage your time better." "Do you need more help or more time?" "This is serious; missing a Mastery assignment means you've lost a chance to prove your understanding. Let's figure out how to catch up."

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11. How to Register for M.A.P.

1. Retrieve Worthington Student ID from Infinite Campus:

Students were given their student IDs (student number) in class, but they can also be retrieved online by accessing your student information via [Infinite Campus](#) and clicking on your Phoenix student's profile. The student number should be under your Phoenix student's photo. Carefully Record the Student Number. This is what links you to your child in our M.A.P. database.

2. Enter your contact information to Register for MAP:

Go to the Mastery Assessment Portal [Parent/Guardian registration page](#) to complete the M.A.P. registration form. If you would like to receive text updates when we post weekly grade reports, enter your cell number and service provider.

Parents/Guardians can register as a couple by putting two first names in the "First Name" field (ex. Robert & Stephanie), OR Parents/Guardians can register with separate accounts...

OPTION 1: Parents/Guardian Signup - One account

ex. First Name: **Robert & Stephanie** Last Name: **Estice**

OPTION 2: Parents/Guardian Signup - Multiple accounts

ex. Account 1 - First Name: **Robert** Last Name: **Estice**
Account 2 - First Name: **Stephanie** Last Name: **Estice**

3. Review the information and click the " Register" button.

Please use a Username/Password that is secure, and that you can remember. Usernames and Passwords are encrypted on the server and can only be reset by clicking the "Forgot Password?" link on the MAP login page ([phxmap.org](#)).

12. Frequently Ask Questions

1. What is Mastery Assessment at Phoenix Middle School?

Mastery Assessment is Phoenix Middle School's approach to evaluating student understanding and proficiency in subject matter. Instead of traditional points and letter grades, students progress through Introduction, Practice, and Mastery assignments, demonstrating a deep and comprehensive understanding of the material before moving on to new concepts.

2. How does Mastery Assessment differ from traditional grading?

Mastery Assessment at Phoenix Middle School is a paradigm shift from traditional grading systems, which often focus on cumulative points and averages across a variety of assessments and activities. Instead of merely tallying correct answers for a letter grade, Mastery Assessment evaluates a student's deep understanding and proficiency in specific learning objectives.

The process is iterative, allowing students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning through a series of progressively challenging assignments. It emphasizes growth, understanding, and the ability to apply knowledge rather than simply rewarding the ability to recall information. This approach fosters a more personalized and meaningful assessment of each student's educational development.

3. Does the Mastery Assessment prepare students for high school and college?

Absolutely. The Mastery Assessment system at Phoenix Middle School is meticulously designed to equip students with the critical thinking, problem-solving, and deep understanding required for success in high school, college, and beyond. By focusing on Mastery rather than memorization, students develop a robust foundation in core academic areas, as well as the

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learning skills necessary to tackle complex and advanced topics. Our system encourages independence, self-assessment, and a growth mindset — all of which are key attributes that high schools and colleges look for in successful students.

Additionally, the ability to reflect on feedback and continuously improve is a significant part of the college experience, which our students practice regularly. As they progress through Phoenix's unique curriculum, they not only become adept at mastering subjects but also at managing their learning process, setting them up for a seamless transition to higher education. See [what some Phoenix alumni say](#) about their experience at Phoenix.

4. What happens if a student doesn't achieve Mastery by the deadline?

Students who don't achieve Mastery by the set deadline will have the opportunity to receive additional support and instruction on Discovery Days, focusing on the areas where they need further development to meet the learning objectives.

5. Are students punished for late work?

In the Mastery Assessment system at Phoenix Middle School, the concept of "punishment" for late work is replaced with a more constructive approach. Instead of penalizing students, the focus is on understanding the reasons behind late submissions and providing support to help them manage their time and workload better.

Here's how late work is addressed:

- **Supportive Interventions:** When work is late, teachers initially engage with students to determine any underlying issues that may be affecting their ability to complete assignments on time. This could involve discussions around time management, organization skills, or other personal challenges.
- **Additional Opportunities:** Students may be given additional opportunities to complete their work, especially if they have valid reasons for the delay. The goal is to ensure that all students have the chance to achieve Mastery of the learning objectives.
- **Learning Extensions:** For repeatedly late work, students may be required to attend Learning Extensions, which are sessions where they can focus on completing their assignments with teacher support.
- **Parental Involvement:** If a pattern of late submissions continues, parents are informed so that they can work together with the school to create strategies that support their child's learning habits.
- **Reflection and Responsibility:** Students are encouraged to reflect on the impact of late work on their learning and to take responsibility for their schedules. This reflective process is intended to help them develop better habits and understand the importance of meeting deadlines.

It's important to note that while late work does not result in traditional punishments such as detention or reduced grades, it can affect a student's eligibility for certain privileges, like participation in Discovery Days or school sports, if it leads to a lack of Mastery in the required coursework.

6. How do work habits and behaviors factor into student assessment?

While work habits and behaviors are assessed separately from academic Mastery, they are crucial for student success. Good work habits and positive classroom behaviors support the learning process and contribute to overall academic achievement.

7. What happens during Discovery Days for students who are not eligible to participate in external activities?

Students who are not eligible for external Discovery Day activities will remain at school for these days, receiving targeted instruction and support from teachers to help them achieve Mastery in their coursework.

8. How does Phoenix support students who are struggling to reach Mastery?

Phoenix offers a variety of support mechanisms for students struggling to achieve Mastery, including additional help on Discovery Days, Learning Extensions programs, and direct communication with parents for a collaborative approach to improvement.

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9. If a student is gifted, how are they challenged further in the Mastery system?

Due to the iterative nature of our process, teachers can identify students who demonstrate early Mastery and provide them with advanced challenges tailored to their abilities. Enrichment opportunities such as deeper research projects, complex problem-solving activities, and the integration of cross-disciplinary themes encourage gifted students to stretch their cognitive boundaries.

Teachers can leverage the flexibility of the Mastery system to offer these students accelerated content, more sophisticated applications of learned concepts, or exploration of topics at a greater depth. Furthermore, self-designed independent studies permit gifted students to delve into subjects of personal interest, promoting autonomy and self-directed learning. The goal is to ensure that every student, regardless of their starting point, is continually challenged and supported.

10. How do I apply to Phoenix Middle School?

To apply to Phoenix Middle School, start by exploring our educational philosophy on our website to ensure our approach aligns with your expectations. We also recommend attending one of our informational meetings to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Phoenix experience. Once you're ready, complete the online application by the specified deadline. For a detailed overview of the application process, including key dates and procedures, please visit our [How to Apply](#) page.

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13. References

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