



Valley View Charter Montessori Middle School

Assessment Policy

Our Belief

At Valley View Charter Montessori Middle School, we believe assessment is an ongoing and systematic process that evaluates and informs instructional practices and measures student learning. Assessment is an essential element of our IB Program and enables teachers to provide a quality global education for all students. At Valley View, and throughout the Buckeye Union School District, we believe assessment drives our instruction. As such, we use a variety of assessment opportunities to ensure growth for all students.

Students who are authentically assessed are:

- **Inquirers** - Those who possess the skills to conduct inquiry and work independently
- **Principled** - Those who approach assessment practices with integrity
- **Reflective** - Those who thoughtfully consider individual levels of understanding
- **Communicators** - Those who articulate their understanding confidently and creatively
- **Knowledgeable** - Those who acquire knowledge and understanding in many subjects

Valley View believes these qualities are what lead to lifelong learning, both in and out of the classroom. Characteristics will be introduced, modeled, encouraged, and rewarded in each classroom and all areas on campus.

Types of Assessment

All work of Valley View students is assessed in a variety of ways to determine the effectiveness of the instructional practices as well as the students' understanding. Please note: Not all work is assessed for a score/grade.

Teachers use the following formats to ensure student learning: diagnostic, formative, and summative.

- ❖ **Diagnostic** assessments are given **prior to** instruction in order to determine the current level of student understanding and skill level. Such assessments may be in the form of pretests, surveys, interviews, or teacher observation.
- ❖ **Formative** assessments are given **during** instruction in order to guide instructional decisions and provide students with feedback that will inform and improve learning. Such assessments may be in the form of quizzes, discussion, reflection, journaling, content-specific questioning, cooperative learning activities, assignments, and self (or peer) assessment.
- ❖ **Summative** assessments are given **after** instruction and provide students a way to demonstrate their understanding and apply their knowledge in new and authentic ways. Students use the IB-MYP rubric and criteria provided by teachers to better understand what mastery of learning looks like at their grade level. Such rubrics provide guidance for students as they demonstrate their understanding in a variety of possible forms: pieces of writing, performances, unit exams, lab and/or research reports, presentations. Additionally, in Grade 8, we use the *Community Project* as a summative opportunity for students to demonstrate responsible action through, or as a result of, learning.

Reporting Student Growth

At Valley View we believe in the value of reporting student growth as a means of communicating levels of understanding in order to facilitate student learning. The following are possible (but not limited to) ways in which teachers report on student growth:

- **Teacher feedback on student work:** written comments on schoolwork that is sent home or used in class to inform next steps.
- **Criterion based reporting:** the MYP rubrics provide students opportunities to reflect on their own learning throughout their work.
- **AlmaNow Home Access:** available 24/7, teachers update the on-line reporting system regularly in order to provide parents and students a better understanding of student performance. It is Buckeye Union School District's practice to formally report student grades three (3) times each year on a trimester basis.
- **Open Communication:** Teachers communicate with parents via emails and/or phone calls. We encourage students to reach out directly to the teacher first, then enlist the help of their parent(s) if further questions persist.
- **Individual meetings with teachers:** parents or teachers may request to meet in order to discuss performance and progress. These meetings are scheduled by appointment.
- **Student-Teacher Conference:** These conferences are usually informal and incorporated into the regular class. They are used to provide students with feedback on their progress in real time.
- **Student Success Team (SST) Meeting:** This is a formal conference between the teacher, any member of the student's educational support team, and the parent to provide feedback about the student's progress and needs. This is an opportunity for parents and teachers to ask questions, address concerns and help define their role in the learning process.
- **Individualized Education Plans (IEP) Meeting:** These meetings are for students who have qualified for Special Education Services. Please refer to our Inclusion Policy for more information ([linked here](#))
- **Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA):** The state of California uses the Smarter Balanced Assessment to determine an overall achievement level of students. SBA is administered each spring during a predetermined assessment window for students in grades 3-12 for English Language Arts and Mathematics. The results of this assessment are shared with parents directly via *AlmaNow*.
- **California Science Test (CAST):** In addition to the SBA, California also uses the CAST to determine an overall achievement level of students in Science. CAST is also administered each spring during a predetermined assessment window, but is only given to students in grades 5 and 8 and at least once during high school. The results of this assessment are shared with parents directly via *AlmaNow*.

MYP General Grade Descriptors

In alignment with the International Baccalaureate assessment model, Valley View first determines the overall achievement level of a student based on the MYP General Grade Descriptor Narrative provided in the document, *From principles into practice (2017)* as well as the *Subject Guides* for each discipline. The process for determining a student's demonstrated achievement level is as follows:

- An overall achievement level has been identified by aligning student work with the MYP General Grade Descriptor Narrative for each IB Objective.
- The score for each IB Objective is then added together to determine an IB Final Grade (1-7)
- Teachers have worked collaboratively to align the IB Description of Student Work and the IB Final Grade with a Local Grade (A, B, C, D, F), since this is what *Alma* uses to report grades.
- Teachers use the Evidence Toward the Standard Category reported in *Alma* to determine a student's achievement level.
- The Local Grade (A, B, C, D, F) is then reported in *AlmaNow* Home Access.
- Parents can use the [Understanding of IB-MYP Reporting of Final Grades](#) document to better understand their students' demonstrated achievement level.

Communication and Review of Policy

Valley View Charter Montessori Middle School shares its Assessment Policy with all stakeholders at the beginning of each school year in student information packets, parent handbooks, and links on the school website. The Pedagogical Leadership Team reviews the Assessment Policy yearly to ensure its practices remain relevant and accessible for all students.

Works Cited

International Baccalaureate Organization, *Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy*: Geneva, Switzerland. 2008.

International Baccalaureate Organization, *Learning in a Language Other Than Mother Tongue in IB Programmes*: Geneva, Switzerland. 2008.

International Baccalaureate Organization, *Making the MYP Happen*: Geneva, Switzerland, 2000.

We also gathered ideas for organization and wording from the following IB MYP school language policies:

H. Clarke Powers, California, USA

Frank C. Martin International K-8 Center, Florida, USA

Parkway Middle School, Kissamee FL

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