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Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools – Middle
Assessment Policy (Last update: May 2026)

The purpose of this document is to provide insight into the philosophy, policies, practices, and procedures concerning 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, assessment informs instructional planning. 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. Throughout these project-based units, student assessments will promote international-mindedness by valuing diverse perspectives and engaging students with global contexts, including identities and relationships, personal and cultural expression, orientation in space and time, scientific and technical innovation, fairness and development, and globalization and sustainability.

At TMS-M, the Assessment Policy is developed in alignment with the school's Inclusion Policy, Language Policy, Admissions Policy, and Academic Integrity Policy to ensure a cohesive and transparent approach to teaching and learning. These policies work together to support equitable access, linguistic inclusion, ethical academic practices, and consistent evaluation and reporting procedures for all learners. Assessment practices are designed to reflect the IB philosophy while promoting fairness, collaboration, reflection, and student growth.

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. When appropriate, assessment communication and support may be adapted to meet the linguistic needs of multilingual students and families in alignment with the school's Language Policy.

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
• Pre- and post- common (district-created) formative assessments in Mathematics

• Standardized Assessments:
- I-Ready 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. Assessment practices include appropriate accommodations, differentiation, and scaffolding in alignment with the TMS-M Inclusion Policy to ensure equitable access for all learners. 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, performance, process-focused activities, projects, and selected response (tests and quizzes).

Learner Profile Purpose

The purpose of the Learner Profile is to guide students in reflecting on and developing the attributes of an IB Learner. Each attribute will be intentionally embedded throughout the curriculum across all subject areas and within every unit of study. Additionally, daily Advisory classes will provide opportunities for students to explore these traits through multimedia projects, discussions, and presentations.

While students will not receive traditional grades on the Learner Profile, teachers will periodically report on each child's growth through conferences, portfolio reflections, and developmental checklists. Rubrics and reflection tools will help students make connections between their learning behaviors and the Learner Profile traits, fostering self-awareness and ownership of their learning journey.

Rubrics will describe how each attribute can be demonstrated at varying levels of proficiency—from "Emerging" to "Consistently Demonstrated." For example:

- **Communicator:** *Emerging* – Shares ideas when prompted; *Developing* – Expresses ideas clearly in small groups; *Consistent* – Listens actively and communicates effectively in various formats.

Reflections will prompt students to think deeply about how they embody the Learner Profile traits within academics and relationships. These reflections will be used in portfolios, Advisory discussions, and student-led conferences.

Sample Reflection Prompts:

- *Thinker:* How did I use problem-solving skills to overcome a challenge this week?
- *Caring:* How have I shown kindness or empathy toward others in my class or community?

By integrating rubrics and reflections, the Learner Profile becomes a living part of the learning culture—encouraging students to set personal goals, celebrate growth, and continuously connect who they are becoming to how they learn and interact with the world.

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.

<u>Practices in Progress:</u>
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

- *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 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, 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 and Alabama Course of Study (ALCOS) standards through consistent and transparent communication. Teachers will report student progress in multiple ways throughout the academic year to ensure families are fully informed and engaged in the learning process. Updates are reviewed each fall with faculty and shared at the first parent information night.

Reporting methods will include:

1. **PowerSchool Home Portal:** Reporting of Practice (20%) and Evidence of Mastery (80%) tasks with Evidence of Mastery assignments, including standards tagging

directly correlated to the Alabama Course of Study.

2. **ManageBac:** Reporting of MYP achievement levels and narrative feedback on IB objectives at the end of January and May. Students and parents may access this data using individual ManageBac credentials.

3. **Schoology:** Access to daily assignments, rubrics, formative assessments, and unit resources. Teachers will post study guides, task-specific clarifications, and upcoming summative assessment dates to support student preparedness and family awareness.

4. **Student-Led Conferences:** Students will reflect on their learning and present their progress and goals to parents and teachers, promoting ownership of their learning. This includes goal-oriented meetings with our counselor and/or principal.

Parents will also receive a **bi-annual MYP Grade Report Explanation**, which outlines how MYP assessment levels correspond to the Alabama Course of Study standards and the school district's grading scale. This guide, including the MYP Grade Conversion Chart, will be provided digitally through the TMS-M website and Schoology.

At the beginning and conclusion of each unit, teachers will encourage parent engagement by sharing unit overviews and key assessment examples. Families will be invited to provide feedback through brief digital surveys and/or the Parent Action Committee (PAC).

Communication Plan:
Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools–Middle is committed to maintaining open, ongoing, and collaborative communication among students, parents, teachers, and administrators regarding assessment practices and student progress.

Assessment information is communicated through:

- Schoology postings of assignments, rubrics, study guides, and unit objectives;
- PowerSchool reporting of grades and standards-based progress;
- ManageBac reporting of MYP achievement levels and narrative feedback;
- ParentSquare notifications, PAC meetings, conferences, and school communications;
- publication of policies and grading guides on the TMS-M website.

The Assessment Policy is reviewed annually by faculty and administration in collaboration with stakeholders. Updated policies and procedures are shared during faculty meetings, parent information sessions, and IB orientation opportunities.

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 the 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, where 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 development**
- **assessments (upcoming and ongoing)**

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

<u>Standardized Assessments: schedule published by Tuscaloosa City Board of Education</u>

Universal Screeners – I-Ready 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.

Leadership Review and Implementation

The pedagogical leadership team uses this policy to guide curriculum planning, instructional decisions, and professional learning. Leadership reviews assessment data regularly during mid-term checks, nine-week grading periods, and bi-monthly PLC and RtI meetings to identify trends in student performance and determine needed instructional adjustments.

Data from standardized assessments, common formative and summative assessments, MYP criterion reports, and student reflections are analyzed collaboratively to support equitable student growth and ensure alignment between MYP objectives and ALCOS standards.

Assessment findings also inform ongoing professional development by identifying instructional needs, refining assessment practices, and strengthening consistency across grade levels and subject areas. The Assessment Policy is reviewed annually in consultation with teachers, administrators, students, parents, and district stakeholders to ensure continued alignment with IB philosophy and best practices.

Connection to Curriculum and Professional Development

Assessment practices at TMS-M are intentionally connected to curriculum planning and professional development. Teachers use assessment data to refine unit planners, adjust pacing, and ensure that instruction aligns with both ALCOS standards and MYP objectives. Leadership integrates assessment findings into ongoing professional learning by designing PD sessions that address observed instructional needs, support effective use of rubrics and criteria, and strengthen consistency across grade levels and subject areas. This cyclical connection between assessment, curriculum, and professional growth ensures that teaching and learning remain responsive, reflective, and rigorous across the program.

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 parents and school district stakeholders. Our policies are available for review on our school website: https://tmsm.tuscaloosacityschools.com/for-families/ib-middle-years-programme-information