St. Francis of Assisi Elementary

Assessment Policy for the Primary Years Program

Final Revision: September 2025

Philosophy and principles of assessment

Assessment makes a meaningful contribution to the fulfillment of the objectives of St. Francis of Assisi Elementary as summarized in its mission statement:

In the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, we are an inclusive school community that attentively nurtures love, understanding, faith, knowledge, and individuality.

Assessment drives not only the evaluation of the learner, but also the direction, the adjustment, and redirection of curriculum planning and instruction. It allows students, teachers, and parents to monitor the learning undertaken by each student regarding their individual development. All aspects of education as embodied in the IB learner profile must be evaluated and monitored to provide students and teachers with evidence of the progress being made towards attaining the goals of the whole program. Assessment supports setting personalized learning targets and helps each student reach their full potential. It should lead to a clear understanding of the progress made by the learner and facilitate effective teaching practices based on the needs of the students. This assessment informs curriculum planning, teaching, self-reflecting and collaborating in a curriculum designed to deliver all aspects of the IB learner profile.

In a learning environment in which the curriculum reflects the needs of each student to be reflective, knowledgeable, balanced, principled, caring, confident [risk-taking], inquiring, communicative, thoughtful and open-minded, an assessment must also be personal if it is to be applicable and practical. Unless an assessment policy is capable of providing consistent feedback on these parameters, it is not adequate to the evaluation of the program.

Goals of Assessment

- To provide feedback for students and teachers for continued learning
- To inform parents of student progress towards a set of standards or criteria
- To use data to inform, enhance, and improve instruction
- To develop global thinkers by creating assessments set in a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts
- To encourage students to reflect on their own learning

- To monitor progress and determine the level of understanding
- To identify areas for growth
- To determine needs for differentiation of instruction

Principles of Assessment

- Assessment is a continuous part of the learning process
- Teachers pre-assess students' knowledge and experience
- There is a balance between types of assessments
- Students are allowed multiple opportunities to share their learning and understanding with others
- Assessments align with course learning outcomes, state standards, and PYP objectives
- Clear criteria are known and understood in advance of assessment
- Assessment feedback is provided for students' future learning
- Involves collaboration between students and teachers
- Opportunities for self-assessment and reflection are provided
- Assessments are differentiated and modifications are made when necessary to meet the needs of all students
- Curriculum and assessment reflect the intercultural aspects of PYP
- Teachers of the same course use common assessments
- Reporting to parents is meaningful and ongoing

Assessment Practices and Methods

- Diagnostic/Pre-assessment
- Formative Assessment
- Summative Assessment
- Standardized Assessments
- Assessment, evaluation methods, and expectations are discussed with students
- Teachers participate collaboratively in the planning, development, and standardization of assessments
- Teachers design authentic assessments that allow students to apply knowledge and skills to real-life situations
- Whenever possible, assessments allow for choice and differentiation
- Assessments align with course learning outcomes, state standards, and the Essential Elements of the PYP

Assessment Measures

PYP

Teachers use a variety of grading tools to provide clear and frequent feedback, including but not limited to:

- Rubrics
- Checklists
- Anecdotal notes/observational notes
- Continuums
- Standards-based grading
- Work samples
- Running records
- Individualized Education Plan (IEP) progress toward goals

Pre-Assessment

- Assists teachers in planning learning activities
- Activates prior knowledge
- Stimulates engagement

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment provides feedback to the teacher for the purpose of monitoring learning and improving instruction. Formative assessment is all classroom-based and may include any number of strategies including:

- Exit Slips
- Observations
- Group work and collaboration
- Play based interactions (PYP)
- ESGI (TK)
- Quizzes
- Self-reflection
- Homework
- Role-playing
- Scaffolded note-taking with a questioning component.
- Reciprocal Teaching
- “Checking for Understanding” strategies: partner/group talk, use of whiteboards, electronic individual answering systems, reader response journals, etc.
- Re-Teach
- Conferencing

- Journaling
- STAR Testing (K-5)
- Accelerated Reader (3-5)

Assessment in the classroom involves teachers in:

- Identifying learning-specific objectives in advance of teaching
- Using representative samples of students' work or performance to provide information about student learning
- Collecting evidence of students' understanding and thinking
- Documenting the learning processes of groups and individuals
- Developing oral and aural assessments for the classroom
- Identifying exemplary student work
- Keeping qualitative as well as quantitative records of test/task results.
- Reflecting on the efficacy of lessons

Assessment in the classroom involves learners in:

- Reflecting on their learning
- Communicating their learning to teachers and peers
- Evaluating work produced by themselves and by others towards known rubrics
- Sharing their learning and understanding with others
- Using a variety of styles and abilities to demonstrate their learning
- Analyzing their learning and understanding; what needs to be improved.

For evaluative feedback to be possible, an atmosphere of trust and cooperation must be established across the academic community. Without such an atmosphere, evaluation can be experienced as destructive rather than constructive, and, conversely, poor relationships can inhibit effective communication of information about what needs improvement. To be effective, a formative assessment must, therefore, take place in an environment which is single-mindedly dedicated to being positive and supportive.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is undertaken at the end of a unit or topic and aims to give teachers and students a clear insight into students' understanding. Summative assessment marks the culmination of the teaching and learning process, but it is not the purpose of the teaching and learning process; it gives students opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned.

Summative assessment can, and usually should, assess several elements of learning simultaneously in order to inform and lead students to improve their integrative and

trans-disciplinary learning skills; it measures understanding of central significant ideas and encourages students to undertake action.

Summative assessment enables students, teachers, and parents to gauge the level of student performance. It allows greater academic achievement, as well as ensure students reach a more complete understanding of the key concepts and their related topics.

Examples of Summative Assessment

- Portfolios
- Project work, including individual and group work
- Presentations
- Written Responses
- Exams
- Standardized Testing (ACT Grades 3-5)

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is an assessment for learning and is on-going throughout the teaching and learning process. It provides information that is used in order to plan the next stage in learning. It is interwoven with learning and helps teachers and students to find out what the students already know and can do and how well they are learning new knowledge and skills. Formative assessment and teaching are directly linked and function purposefully together to direct and shape curriculum planning. Formative assessment aims to promote learning by giving regular and frequent feedback throughout the learning process. This process helps learners to improve knowledge and understanding, to foster self-motivation and enthusiasm for learning, to engage in thoughtful reflection, to develop the capacity for self-assessment, and to recognize criteria for success. Students will grow to engage in self- and peer-assessment opportunities to develop the confidence needed if they are to be stewards of their own learning.

<u>What is Assessed?</u>

- Progress and performance in subject areas according to the Common Core State Standards
- Conceptual understanding of central ideas
- Transdisciplinary skills
- Process skills
- Conduct and Effort
- Learner Profile attributes
- Student Learning Expectations

Reporting and Sharing of Progress

Educational progress is reported to students, families, staff, and the community. Progress is reported in the following ways:

- Formal Parent-Teacher conferences take place in September each year. This early conference is an opportunity for parents and teachers to discuss student strengths and weaknesses and to help set individual goals for the year.
- Student progress is accessible anytime online through SchoolSpeak
- Trimester Standards Based Report Cards
- STAR Performance scores (Grades K-5)
- Informal conferences via telephone, e-mail, and face to face are held when deemed necessary by either the parent or teacher.
- SST and IEP meetings

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