

Lexington Middle School

An International Baccalaureate Candidate Program

INSPIRE PREPARE EMPOWER



Assessment Policy

2016-2017

School Assessment Philosophy

At Lexington Middle School, our mission is to inspire, prepare, and empower students to make their world a better place. To reach this goal, we aim to develop students who view assessment as an integral part of the learning process. Students, parents, teachers, and administrators understand that assessment serves a variety of purposes and should be guided by multiple principles, all based on our fundamental belief that all students can learn.

Assessment Purposes

At LMS, we believe that assessment should:

- Produce evidence of student progress toward learning goals
- Provide data that is used to make instructional decisions including determining needs for differentiation, intervention, remediation, and enrichment
- Promote student and teacher reflection on the learning process
- Support teacher collaboration

Assessment Principles

Several principles guide assessment practices at LMS:

- **Assessment provides meaningful data:**
 - Descriptive, timely, ongoing, and consistent
 - Includes process and product
 - Drives instructional decisions
 - Addresses student strengths as well as opportunities for growth
- **Assessment is authentic, rigorous, and student-centered:**
 - Includes real-world, transferrable application
 - Appropriately challenging
 - Provides multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills
 - Designed to support development of Approaches to Learning skills, IB objectives, South Carolina academic standards, and characteristics of the South Carolina Profile of the Graduate
- **Assessment is varied:**

- Differentiated according to Special Education needs
- Delivered in multiple formats
- Used for diagnostic, formative, and summative purposes
- Provided through internal and external sources
- **Assessment is a transparent, collaborative process:**
 - Uses rubrics to present and clarify learning goals and expectations to students and parents prior to the assessment
 - Includes student-parent-teacher discussion of assessment data
 - Provides students with reflection opportunities
 - Involves calibration
 - Supports collegial conversation and professional discourse across content and grade levels

Assessment Practices

Multiple forms of assessment serving a variety of purposes are used at LMS.

- **Formative Assessment:**

Formative assessments are used daily to gauge student knowledge and skill acquisition in order to guide next instructional moves. Teachers use a variety of assessment forms, such as exit slips, selected-response, essay, and personal communication to monitor student learning. Based on the formative assessments for learning, students and teachers can evaluate students' learning and use the information as a guideline for the learning process.

- **Summative Assessment:**

Summative assessments are administered at the end of a unit or concept for the purpose of evaluating student achievement of objectives and standards. Teachers use a variety of assessment methods such as selected-response, essay, performance, and product in order to assess the level of mastery demonstrated by the student. The level of mastery is determined using a rubric for the assessment, and the grade is recorded in PowerTeacher, which is the electronic grading reporting system used by Lexington School District One.

- **Internal Assessment:**

Teachers collaborate within content areas to produce formative and summative assessments appropriate for various learning engagements and units. Such assessments may include informal progress checks as well as formal formatives and summatives. Cross-curricular assessments are also created in-house to evaluate student learning during interdisciplinary units. Resource and ESOL teachers provide support in creating, delivering, and evaluating assessments that meet the needs of all learners. Collaboration includes creation of rubrics and checklists used to score assessments. To establish and maintain appropriate rigor and consistency of expectations, teachers calibrate scoring of common assessments.

At the beginning of the 2015-16 school year, the LMS School Improvement Council, an advisory board consisting of parents, faculty, and community members, was made aware that LMS would begin transitioning to proficiency scoring using the IB criteria. In the fall, LMS administration sent a letter to parents informing them of the transition from traditional grades to proficiency scores, explaining the benefit of such scoring, and providing an example of the new report card. During the second semester of the 2015-16 school year, Arts and Design teachers will implement proficiency scoring using the IB criteria. The first score reports using the IB criteria will be issued at interim of the third nine weeks in Arts and Design courses. Full school implementation will occur during the 2016-17 school year when the remaining subjects transition to IB scoring.

- **External Assessment:**

Students in all grades complete external assessments that are used to evaluate student proficiency in the subject areas. Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress assessments (MAP) for English/Language Arts and math are delivered in the fall and in the spring. Students also take state assessments each spring. State assessments include South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Assessments (SC Ready) for reading,

writing, and math and the South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (SCPASS) for science and social studies. Finally, students taking Algebra I and English I participate in the South Carolina End-of-Course (EOC) test program, which assesses students in these subjects each spring.

Assessment Methods & Tools

Various assessment methods are used at LMS to gain data on student background knowledge, monitor learning during the process, and evaluate mastery of learning goals. These strategies and tools include but are not limited to:

- **Teacher observation:** Teachers observe individuals, small groups, and whole class engagement to assess student progress and make in-process instructional decisions.
- **Selected response:** Multiple-choice items are used on warm-up activities, formative assessments, and summative assessments. Digital response tools including Socrative and Kahoot provide students and teachers with immediate feedback. Traditional paper-pencil selected response assessments are also used.
- **Peer assessment:** Students provide feedback to their peers on daily tasks as well as goals within long-term projects. Peer assessment allows students to develop a deeper understanding of the learning goals and expectations by providing opportunities to give and receive formative feedback. Peer assessment may take the form of partner or small group discussion or written response using strategies such as Three Pluses and a Wish or Written Conversation.
- **Open-ended response:** Students communicate their understanding through a response to a prompt or task provided by the teacher. Open-ended response methods include exit slips, discussions, written responses, and presentations. Open-ended response may be used to assess a range of understanding from basic knowledge and skills acquisition to complex synthesis of concepts.

- **Performance tasks:** Students apply their learning through demonstration of skills and concepts. Examples of these tasks are lab activities in a science class and a concert in a performing arts class.
- **Process journals:** These journals facilitate student reflection on the learning process and outcomes including acquisition and development of standards-based knowledge, skills, and concepts as well as the Learner Profile Traits and Approaches to Learning. Journals are used in the arts courses, design courses, and during the Community Project. These journals provide students with a means to become actively involved in their own learning, leading to improved understanding.
- **Portfolios:** Students and teachers compile evidence of learning achievements throughout a unit or course. Portfolios involve students in reflection and self-assessment as they chose pieces of work that demonstrate their level of knowledge and understanding as well as their skills.

Assessment Responsibilities

Because assessment is a collaborative process, responsibilities are shared by students, parents, and teachers.

- **Student Responsibilities**
 - Participate in the formative assessments to grow in concept, skill and knowledge strength in preparation for summative assessments
 - Meet all academic deadlines as prescribed by the teacher and the school
 - Be organized with materials and assignments for class and monitor Schoology daily
 - Bring into the classroom a willingness to grow in the Learner Profile Traits and Approaches to Learning skills
 - Submit quality work that is their own and represents their own efforts and abilities (see *Academic Honesty Policy* for more information)
 - Regularly reflect on assignments and academic progress
- **Parent Responsibilities**

- Stay informed about their student's academic progress by regularly communicating with their student and teachers including checking Schoology regularly
- Share important information that may impact their student's academic performance
- Attend conferences
- **Teacher Responsibilities**
 - Clearly state daily learning targets
 - Communicate teacher expectations including rubrics
 - Communicate grading procedures such as deadlines, due dates, and make-up policy
 - Collaborate with other teachers to discuss scheduling of major assessments and projects (not to exceed two tests per day)
 - Use a variety of instruction and assessment strategies to differentiate for student needs
 - Analyze assessment data to identify patterns of student performance and needs
 - Reflect on the effectiveness of instruction and assessment in professional learning communities
 - Provide timely written and verbal feedback on student assignments and assessments
 - Maintain appropriate communication regarding student progress with students and parents including posting information regularly on Schoology

Assessment Policy Committee

The LMS Assessment Policy Committee consists of several LMS teachers, administrators, and the IB Coordinator. In order to continue providing the highest quality educational experiences possible, this committee will review the school assessment policy annually.

