

York Academy Regional Charter School

PYP Assessment Policy

This policy was written by York Academy's Assessment Policy team- a team of teachers, one from grades kindergarten through fourth grade, to develop common assessment practices school-wide. This policy reflects York Academy's philosophy and position on assessment. This document can change throughout the year if needed and will be reviewed and revised at the end of each school year. During grade level meetings, teachers will have the opportunity to work collaboratively to design and reflect upon assessments.

The school's Assessment Policy team worked diligently on this policy to ensure that the PYP philosophy on assessment was the basis for our School Assessment Policy. We gathered resources from other schools, various IB documents and handbooks, as well as our state standards and requirements. Several staff met as a team to develop this document and come to a consensus on assessment in our school. We implemented the use of common progress reports and a school-wide formative assessment in Reading. Students are graded on the Learner Profile Attributes in their trimester progress reports as well as various times throughout the year. The progress report also grades their work in the transdisciplinary themes that are taught throughout that trimester. We have also reviewed this policy with all teachers and staff and it will be distributed to parents and other stakeholders once the revisions have been approved by the Board of Trustees.

School Mission Statement

With an unrelenting focus on academic excellence, the York Academy challenges students to live as global citizens within a diverse environment.

Statement of Philosophy

At the York Academy, we believe that assessment is integral to all teaching and learning. The central objective of assessment is to guide students through the five essential elements of learning: the understanding of concepts, the acquisition of knowledge, the mastering of skills, the development of attitudes, and the decision to take action. Assessment gathers and analyzes information regarding student performance. It identifies what a student knows and understands at different stages in the learning process. As the students' critical thinking and self-evaluation skills develop both students and teachers should be actively engaged in assessing progress. Teachers are also charged with evaluating the efficacy of the Primary Years Programme (PYP).

We also believe that assessment provides information to all concerned stakeholders- students, teachers, parents, administrators, as well as our Board of Trustees. Assessment should be authentic, on-going, purposeful, and varied. Within the PYP, we strive to help students understand that assessment is a fundamental part of the teaching and learning process. Teachers will start with the end in mind when developing units of inquiry and they will also address each part of the five essential elements of the PYP in their assessment and planning their units of inquiry for the six transdisciplinary themes.

The Primary Years Programme describes the taught curriculum as the written curriculum in action. Using the written curriculum and in collaboration with peers and students, the teacher will generate questions which guide inquiry and instruction. These questions address the eight key concepts which help lead to productive lines of inquiry. Assessment will focus on the quality of student learning during the process of inquiry and instruction and on the quality of the products of that

learning. Assessment is, therefore, essential to the taught curriculum. It is the means by which we analyze student learning and the effectiveness of our teacher and acts as the foundation on which we base our future planning and practice. It is essential to our goal of guiding the child, from novice to expert, through the learning process.

Purpose of Assessment

The purpose of this document is to clarify teachers' understanding of the assessment process within our school. The main purpose of assessment is to improve student learning. We use a large variety of formative and summative assessment techniques. Teachers use assessment for varied purposes which include but not limited to:

- checking for mastery of skills and concepts
- diagnosing student needs
- differentiating instruction
- gaining an understanding of students thinking and processing
- guiding instruction

School Wide Essential Agreements

At York Academy we agree that:

- Assessments will guide instruction.
- Teachers and students will regularly review teaching and learning practices through assessment data that is gathered.
- Teachers will base assessments and the students' level of understanding by measuring the level of achievement.
- Students will be aware of assessment guidelines or requirements before beginning any area of study.
- Feedback to students will be prompt and constructive.
- Teachers will keep clear and accurate records of assessments.
- Parents will be given assessment results in a timely manner.

Principles of Assessment

- Assessments will be connected to the IB Learner Profile Attributes.
- Assessments will be connected to the Central Idea of each Unit of Inquiry.
- Assessments will be connected to the predetermined objectives, concepts, lines of inquiry within the school's Programme of Inquiry.
- Assessments will be connected to the PYP Five Essential Elements.
- Assessments will be based on the conceptual understanding of the taught curriculum.
- Assessments will be based on the PA Standards and the IB and York Academy's assessment philosophy.
- Assessments will be non-threatening.
- Assessments will be frequent and ongoing.
- Assessments will begin with an end product and learning in mind.
- Assessments will differentiate student's individual needs and learning styles.
- Assessments will allow students to express their own ideas, thoughts, and opinions on a topic.
- Assessments will provide an opportunity for students, parents, and teachers to collaborate.

Recording, Reporting, Conferencing

Effective recording, reporting, and conferencing strategies should do the following:

- involve the parents, student, and teacher as a collaborative team
- reflect what the school and community values

- be comprehensive, fair, and credible
- be clear and understanding to all parties
- take place regularly throughout the school year

Effective recording, reporting, and conferencing will be done through Units of Inquiry, The Learner Profile, Student Portfolios, Student Led Conferencing, and School-Wide/State Assessments.

- **Units of Inquiry**

Purpose: Each unit of inquiry will include both formative and summative assessment and will be described in the unit planner. These assessments will be fair, consistent, and developmentally appropriate. York Academy's teachers will be aware and make sure that all essential elements are assessed: knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes, and action. The purpose and means of assessment will also be clearly explained to the students.

Diagnostic/Pre-Assessment: Diagnostic assessment prior to teaching helps teachers and students discover what the student already knows and what the student can do. The provocation in the unit planner is considered the Diagnostic/Pre-Assessment in each Unit of Inquiry.

Formative Assessment: Formative assessments provide information that is used in order to plan the next stage in learning within the unit of inquiry. It is interwoven with daily instruction and learning and allows both teachers and students to have frequent communication which lends to regular feedback to students. It also gives students an opportunity to improve their understanding and cultivate enthusiasm for learning. Teachers use different assessment tools to keep a record of student progress. The tools that teachers use are: anecdotal notes, checklists, performance tasks, observations, as well as quizzes and tests.

Summative Assessment: Summative assessments take place at the culmination of each unit of inquiry and allow the learners to show what they have learned and highlight the knowledge, concepts, and skills that have been learned throughout the process. Students are given the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned by applying their knowledge. These types of assessments also allow students to effectively understand the central idea of the unit.

Student Reflections: Student reflections will take place at the end of each unit. They can include by are not limited to:

- A response to a piece of work from the unit of inquiry

- A general reflection on the unit of inquiry, including knowledge and understanding gained about the central idea

Teacher Reflections: Teachers will prepare a reflection of each Unit of Inquiry it is taught.

As a grade level team, teachers will rewrite and/or revise numbers 6, 7, and 8 in their unit planners. Teachers will also date notes made in number 9 of the unit planner and change the footer in the planner to annotate any revision dates.

- **Essential Elements:** The five essential elements of the Primary Years Programme are assessed through the units of inquiry and are recorded for each unit.

Knowledge: assessment of the knowledge learned in each unit is done through the summative assessment. It reflects an understanding of the central idea.

Skills, concepts, and attitudes: each unit provides opportunities for different skills, concepts, and attitudes. Teacher reflection on growth in these areas is recorded on the planners and self-reflections are also done by the students.

Action: student actions that are initiated beyond the scope of the unit are recorded on the planner. There is also a place for student action pieces in each student's IB portfolio.

Both teachers and students also make use of assessments with their grade level specific units of inquiry. This is done to evaluate and analyze a student's development of unit knowledge, skills, and understanding. Students are graded on their Units of Inquiry and this grade is reflected on the trimester progress report. Teachers will use a range of methods to document student learning as a means of assessing student understanding. Each grade level team will decide which items are assessed from each unit. These assessments will do the following:

- launch the planning process
 - provide opportunities for differentiation
 - focus on the student's understanding of the central idea/summative assessment
 - continue throughout the inquiry/formative assessment
 - provide opportunities for reflection on the learning process
 - show evidence of student' understanding and thinking
 - allow students to express different viewpoints
 - highlight students' areas of strength
 - address a range of students' needs and learning styles
- **The Learner Profile:** One of the learning outcomes of York Academy's Primary Years Programme is to prepare students for the outside world by striving to embody the ten attributes expressed in the Learner Profile. These learning outcomes are value laden and are actively taught as a whole on a continuum, not separately and they will be evaluated throughout the year. The grade is recorded on the trimester progress report. We believe the Learner Profile attributes exemplify being internationally minded. Each trimester, every student is asked to reflect on an attribute they feel they represented throughout the trimester. These attributes are assessed through the following actions:
- Literature is chosen by the PYP Coordinator, librarian, and classroom teacher to reflect particular attributes followed by students writing reflective pieces on characters that personify particular attributes and student's self-reflections of these attributes.
 - Observation by York Academy staff through the student's daily language and how it is interwoven through daily interaction as well as the curriculum.
 - Student's reflection upon attributes displayed by their peers.

Learner Profile Evaluation Key

B= Beginning Exploring at an introductory level

- D= Developing Acquiring more knowledge over time and demonstrating with assistance
- AP= Applying Demonstrating consistent understanding and independently applying skills

o **Student Portfolios**

Purpose: The purpose of student portfolios is to provide students with an opportunity to reflect on their learning, to show growth over time from year to year, and to show development of the whole child both in and out of the realm of York Academy's Program of Inquiry in all subject areas. The portfolio allows all those involved in the learning process to see a true picture of the student. It also allows the teacher to reflect, assess, and teach.

Content for the Portfolio

- A self-selected piece of work and a corresponding reflection from each unit of inquiry (a total of six pieces and six reflections)
- Two IB Learner Profile Attribute reflection documents
- One sample of student work from math, reading, and writing (this could include transdisciplinary work from a unit of inquiry for a total three pieces)
- One sample of student work from art, music, physical education, Spanish (this could include transdisciplinary work from a unit of inquiry within the Program of Inquiry or single subject work outside the Program of Inquiry for a total of four pieces)
- At least one piece of student action that has occurred
- Large items could also be photographed and the photograph placed in the portfolio
- The portfolio may also include additional pieces based on the needs of the individual student which could include, but are not limited to:
 - Additional student selected items
 - Photos, correspondence, etc.
 - Parent Reflections

Organization and Management of the Portfolio

- Kindergarten-Second grade students will put their documents in 1-inch binders provided by the school; Third & Fourth grade students will put their documents in 2-inch binders provided by the school
- A uniform binder cover and spine label will be provided for you at a later date
- All portfolio items must have a date and a grade (Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.) on them
- Teachers should designate a place for student portfolios in their classroom. At the end of the school year, teachers keep their students' portfolios. At the beginning of the next school year, teachers pass them along to the appropriate grade level team. Second grade teachers will only pass the content to third grade teachers. They will pass the binders to Kindergarten teachers. Third grade teachers will receive new 2-inch binders at the start of the school year.
- Do not send the portfolios or content home at the end of the school year.

o **Student Led Conferences**

Philosophy: The idea behind reporting student progress is to establish, encourage and maintain communication between the home and school, the student and their families, and the learner and teacher. Conferences are held in November and March of every year.

Purpose: Student led conferences provide an opportunity for students to report their growth to their parents. It also allows students to reflect on their own growth and take ownership for their own learning. Students are asked to set goals with their parents to make sure that there is continued success in their academic career.

o **School-Wide/State Assessments**

As with all assessments at York Academy, formative assessments will be on-going to inform instruction and student progress. The chart below lists summative measures that are consistent within our school and the State of Pennsylvania.

School-Wide/State Assessment	Students
Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment	Grades 1-4: August, January, June Kindergarten: November, February, June
Pennsylvania System of School Assessment Reading and Math	Grades 3-4: March
Pennsylvania System of School Assessment Science	Grade 4: May

Assessment Practices

By law, York Academy is required to use the Pennsylvania Standards Aligned System which includes Common Core Standards designed specifically for Pennsylvania (PA Common Core). Standards based education requires the teachers at York Academy to use ongoing assessment that is critical to helping them understand how students are performing in relation to the selected standard of study. Teachers have worked hard to ensure that the state standards are integrated into our school's Primary Years Programme. Both teachers and students collaboratively work together in the process of learning to more effectively implement the PYP philosophy and practices of assessment with the Pennsylvania Standards Aligned System. This is integrated through the Learner Profile as well as various types of assessments. Teachers develop their units of inquiry by using the grade level specific Pennsylvania Standards to ensure that the required standards are embedded in their PYP units of inquiry. Specialist teachers may also collaborate on assessments within a unit of inquiry. Professional development time will be given to develop common assessments for grade levels.

Teachers report student progress in formal and informal ways. Formal progress reports are completed by teachers at the end of each trimester. Student report cards are based on Pennsylvania Standards Aligned System and the IB Framework. Reflections on the IB Learner Profile Attributes are completed at every grade level and are shared with parents at conferences and are included as a part of each student's IB portfolio. The Key Concepts and Transdisciplinary Skills are integrated in each unit of inquiry and assessed through observation, reflection, and the summative assessment. State assessment results are reported to parents following the completion of the tests in the summer.

School-Wide Grading Scale

A/Advanced= 95-100

P/Proficient= 75-94

B/Basic= 65-74

BB/Below Basic= 64 and below

School-Wide Grading Key

A= Advanced Proficient	Reflects superior academic performance. Indicates an in-depth understanding of grade-level skills included in the Pennsylvania Standards Aligned System.
P= Proficient	Reflects satisfactory academic performance. Indicates a solid understanding and adequate display of skills in the Pennsylvania Standards Aligned System.
B= Basic	Reflects developing academic performance. Indicates a moderate understanding and limited display of skills in the Pennsylvania Standards Aligned System.
BB= Below Basic	Reflects some problems with academic performance. Work indicates little understanding and minimal display of skills in the Pennsylvania Standards Aligned System.

Informal ways teachers report student progress include feedback from teacher made tests, rubrics and checklists, corrected student work, notes, emails, and phone calls home. A formal student led conference is scheduled two times per school year in November and March. Additionally, many opportunities are provided for parent/teacher conferences throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher should they feel the need to conference.

While there is no standardized testing that is required by the IB at the Primary Years Programme level, the state of Pennsylvania requires that all third and fourth grade students take the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Students in fourth grade are also administered the assessment in Science. The PSSA's are aligned to the PA Common Core English Language Arts and Mathematics Standards. Our students are prepared for these assessments because the teachers effectively interweave the State standards into the IB Framework and PYP units of inquiry.

Annual Review

At the end of each school year, York Academy teachers and stakeholders will review our assessment agreements and policy to determine any changes or additions to the policy. This document is not static but one that can be changed throughout the school year. Should any major concerns arise before the end of the school year; the Assessment Policy team will meet to determine the outcome of the concern.

References

(2009). *PYP- Making it happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education.*

This policy will be reviewed annually and posted for public viewing at our school website, yorkacademy.com.

Last updated: 2-11-20