

# Westlake Middle School: Assessment Policy

**Disclaimer: This WMS Assessment Policy does not supercede any Mount Pleasant Board of Education Policy (see #7210) that may either directly or indirectly connect to these contents.**

Westlake Middle School's (WMS) Assessment Policy is discussed and communicated to students and parents to ensure full understanding of assessment expectations during each school year. Effective during the school year 2017-18, an abbreviated version of the Assessment Policy is published in the student handbook. The full version of the policy is available on the school's website: <http://wms.mtplcsd.org>.

## **Philosophy of Assessment**

At WMS, we are committed to effective assessment, which places students at the center. Students are encouraged to establish positive attitudes towards assessment, thus enabling them to give their best effort. Teachers take individual student needs into account and show flexibility. Teachers monitor students' progress and adjust instruction to improve learning.

## **Principles of Assessment**

Assessment provides WMS students with a deeper level of understanding throughout all stages of the learning process and will:

- Encourage the application of their knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts.
- Be integrated into learning activities.
- Support and encourage learning by providing time-sensitive feedback.
- Promote self-responsibility – working to deadlines, asking questions for clarification, recording tasks, timely submission of work and acting on feedback.
- Affirm success and progress.
- Inform and enhance teaching practices.
- Promote positive attitudes towards learning.
- Promote a deep understanding of the content.
- Where appropriate, support students' inquiry in an authentic, real-world context.
- Promote the development of higher order thinking and questioning skills.
- Support the MYP's fundamental concepts of communication, holistic learning and intercultural understanding.
- Provide opportunities for organization, reflection and evaluation through the MYP Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills framework.

## **Basis for Assessment**

WMS assesses curricular objectives using the following sources:

- The Middle Years Program (MYP) International Baccalaureate (IB) subject specific criteria are used to determine achievement levels when MYP units are taught in the classroom.

- The New York State Common Core Standards are applied and used in association with all MYP units and in all other applicable units of study.
- New York State Regents curriculum requirements are used for assessment in all Regents classes and MYP assessment criteria will be used when appropriate.

### **Assessment Model**

The MYP assessment framework is a criterion-related model. This model has the following features:

- The model allows students to understand what is expected of them to reach each level of achievement prior to beginning their work.
- The model helps teachers to clarify and express their expectations about assignments in a way that students can understand.
- The model allows students to be assessed on what they can do, as opposed to being ranked against each other.
- Students receive feedback on their performance based on the criteria level descriptors.

The aim of the MYP assessment model is to support and encourage student learning. Teachers continually gather and analyze information on student performance and provide feedback to students improve to their performance. Students become involved in evaluating their own progress through self-assessment and reflection. This student-centered process enables them to develop wider critical thinking and self-assessment skills.

### **Assessment Practices**

For each MYP unit implemented in the classroom, all teachers at WMS implement the mandatory IB MYP assessment criteria for MYP Years 1 and 3. Teachers of MYP Year 2 courses use the same assessment criteria, but are modified to ensure developmental appropriateness. Common assessment practices include:

- Teachers assess all MYP units using the grading criteria for each subject area and assess each objective and strand twice during the school year.
- Assessment is differentiated where appropriate.
- Assessment is also carried out using required New York State Common Core Standards and Regents Assessment guidelines.
- Teachers who implement assessments for Regents courses use the MYP unit planner model to implement curriculum when and where it is appropriate, including summative assessments. Final assessments for Regents courses are determined by the New York State Board of Regents.

### **Formative Assessment**

In the spirit of building healthy student attitudes towards assessment for learning, a range of purposeful formative assessment activities are used to develop students' skills, knowledge and understanding. These assessments are designed to assist students in reaching the requirements for summative assessment tasks. Effective formative assessment is part of the instructional process and actively involves students. They learn to self-assess, assess using peer feedback and/or their teacher's feedback, in order to set goals for instruction. As part of this process, teachers provide:

- Key vocabulary terms
- Examples and exemplars of student work
- Scaffolded samples
- Questions that uncover and expand student learning
- Samples of rubrics

### **Summative Assessment**

Summative assessment tasks are a culmination of the WMS MYP teaching and learning process. They assess a student's knowledge and understanding against a set of criteria and standards previously defined during the MYP unit. At WMS, summative assessments are used in every MYP subject area and are continually developed by teachers as part of the MYP unit development process. Teachers design rubrics with specific task requirements. These rubrics are based upon the assessment criteria levels and MYP achievement strands. The tasks required to meet the summative assessment challenges are clearly communicated at the beginning of the unit of study. In addition, the task provides continued guidance to the students as their learning develops.

A well-constructed rubric should:

- Support learning, by providing clear targets.
- Provide transparency to the process for students, their families and teachers.
- Provide clear, measurable evidence of learning.
- Be useful in curriculum review and in helping to identify what content has been taught.
- Link generic descriptors to task-specific clarifications.

WMS understands the value of teacher collaboration in developing the IB MYP units, summative assessment pieces and task-specific rubrics. Teachers share these rubrics with the students in the early stages of the unit to empower students by familiarizing them with the expectations of the task, leading them to a greater understanding of the MYP assessment criteria.

### **Forms of Assessment**

Assessment of student learning will take many forms. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Open-ended, problem-solving activities
- Investigations
- Organized debates
- Hands-on experimentation
- Analysis
- Reflection
- Quizzes
- Tests/exams
- Portfolios/Notebooks/Journals
- Verbal responses
- Presentations
- Project-work including individual and group work projects
- Class discussions
- Group-work participation

- Compositions
- Performances
- Peer assessment
- Self-assessment
- The creation of solutions to problems
- The creation of short films
- Portfolio development (arts)
- Live Performance (Music/Theater)
- Labs (Science, Math and Technology)

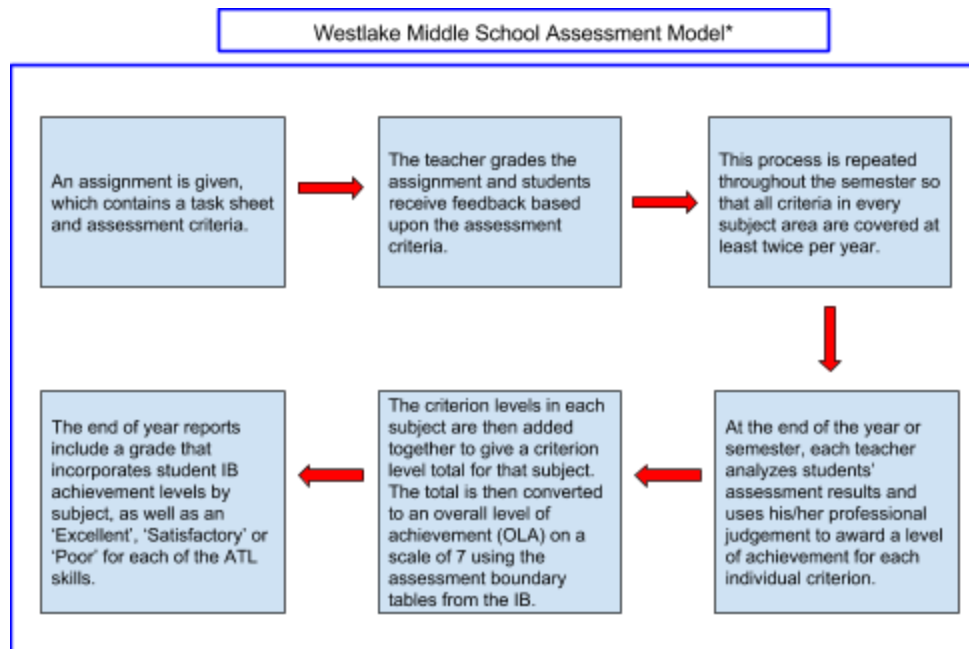
### **Assessment Considerations**

Flexibility with deadlines is granted only for legitimate reasons, such as an excused absence. Students who fail to turn in their work on-time face the possibility of a reduced grade and/or disciplinary action. It will be up to the individual teacher or department to determine whether to grant an extension for a deadline. In addition, teachers may require students attend additional lessons or after-school help to complete their assessment tasks.

### **Assessment Grading & Reporting**

All students who participate in learning within the MYP unit plan framework will be assessed according to the MYP Assessment Criteria and will receive an Overall Level of Achievement (OLA) grade for their work from their teacher. Student levels of achievement reached through the IB grading process will then be converted from an IB level of achievement to a score out of 100. These scores will be combined with other assessed work completed by the student and reported to parents via the [Parent Portal](#) as a score out of 100.

Within the Portal, parents can monitor student progress at all times in the gradebook. They can also view comments made by the teacher about a specific assessment. Further, students and parents are formally informed every ten weeks of academic progress through the report card, also visible within the Portal. These report cards are posted four times per year at the conclusion of each marking period and show the student's grades and academic performance in each class or course. In addition, report cards indicate a student's attendance, including absence and tardiness.



\*The above assessment model is being phased-in at WMS under the following plan of action:

- In 2017-18, for all MYP units, teachers will include a task sheet and assessment criteria.
- In 2017-18, for all MYP units, students will be graded based upon the MYP assessment criteria.
- In 2017-18, for all MYP units, teachers will convert the MYP grades to a number grade to enter into the [Parent Portal](#).
- In future years, teachers will cover all objectives and strands in the MYP program as it becomes fully integrated into the WMS school structure.
- In future years, the MYP grades will be integrated into our electronic reporting system to assign an IB OLA grade.

### **Assessment Policy Summary**

At WMS, students are at the center of assessment. Teachers monitor student progress through both formative and summative assessments, provide feedback and adjust instruction to improve learning. For each unit of study, students are assessed using common criteria aligned to NYS Learning Standards and the IB Middle Years Program Framework. Based on these assessments, achievement levels are assigned, recorded and reported through the Parent Portal. For additional information see the WMS IB Middle Years page.

### **History of Policy Development**

In 2014-15, committees formed at WMS to develop the IB policies. The committees consisted of administration, teachers and parents, who met to establish the outline of the policies. During 2016-17, the policies were further refined by the IB Consultant, IB Coordinator, IB Steering Committee, by the teachers at a full faculty meeting and lastly, by administration. The policies are annually reviewed and updated by the IB Steering Committee.