



Anne Arundel County Public Schools

IB-PYP Assessment Policy

Developed 2014-2015

Reviewed/Updated 2017-2018

Mission

Sunset Elementary is dedicated to meeting the needs of all learners in a safe environment. We strive to give each child the opportunity to inquire and succeed, as open-minded and globally aware life-long learners. We believe that educating the whole child as 21st century learners is key to the development of caring, innovative, responsible, and reflective citizens who take action in their community and the world.

Philosophy

Assessment at Sunset Elementary is a continual process that includes the entire range of learning experiences and their outcomes. Assessment involves collecting and analyzing assessment information which is used to drive instruction and to communicate effectively with stakeholders within, as well as outside of, the community. Assessment allows for the gathering and analysis of information about student performance and informs future instructional planning. It determines what students know, understand, and can do at different stages in the learning process.

Assessment will be reflected upon and should effectively guide students through the PYP five essential elements of learning:

- acquisition of knowledge
- understanding of concepts
- mastering of skills
- development of attitudes
- decision to act

Assessment is integral to all teaching and learning. It is central to the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program's goal of thoughtfully and effectively guiding children through the essential elements of learning: the understanding of concepts, the acquisition of knowledge, the mastering of skills, the development of attitudes, development of the learner profile, and the decision to take responsible action.

All stakeholders should have a clear understanding of what is being assessed and why; the methods used to assess; and the criteria of success for each type of assessment.

Grading should be transparent and easily understood. Both children and teachers should have an active role in assessment, as part of the development of wider critical thinking and self-evaluation skills.

Assessment is crucial to teaching and learning. Assessment focuses 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, integral to the taught curriculum. It is the means by which we analyze student learning and the effectiveness of our teaching and acts as a foundation on which to base our future planning and practice. Assessment is a way to give students opportunities to develop a wide range of skills in expressing their understanding assessments should be rigorous, relevant and appropriate in assessing knowledge and skill.

Our belief that it is more important for students to engage in appropriately challenging learning experiences than it is for students to earn the highest marks, impacts our assessment beliefs. Sunset students will be challenged to strive for the highest levels of learning engagement and achievement.

We, as a staff at Sunset, recognize the importance of grades, but we promote challenging students to learn and understand, not just earn a grade. We value the importance of vertical alignment, understanding the expectations at the next level and the implications for moving forward.

Purpose—(What and why we assess—beliefs of assessment)

The Sunset Elementary Assessment Plan serves to guide and inform the staff, parents and community of the school's assessment practices. Assessment is a continual process that includes the entire range of learning experiences and their outcomes; it is not always limited to the final product. Some evaluations are designed to result in formal grades, while others are designed to provide feedback on learning without being graded.

We, as a staff, believe that:

- Students' development of the Essential Elements should be assessed continually.
- All students should be working towards mastery of learning outcomes, based on the CCSS curriculum and state standards.
- Assessment is crucial to teaching and learning; tasks should be relevant and appropriate in assessing knowledge and skill.
- Assessment tasks are an important part of the learning process and should not be distinct from learning experiences.
- Assessment allows teachers to give students many opportunities to show their understanding.
- Assessments are differentiated with modifications made when necessary.
- There are different types of assessments.
- Assessments are based on a clear set of criteria, easily understood by all stakeholders.
- With regards to assessment, considerations for students with Special Needs are made.

We, as a staff, believe that student learning is promoted through:

- Assessing prior knowledge and experience
- Engaging in authentic assessment tasks
- Personalizing instruction to meet individual needs and interests, and allowing for choice, when appropriate.
- Engaging learners in self and peer reflection to determine strengths and weaknesses and to set goals.
- Providing informative feedback.

We, as a staff, believe that information about student learning is provided through:

- Examples of student work or performances
- Data specific to benchmarks, rubrics, and/or test scores
- Test results

We, as a staff, believe that our program uses a variety of student assessments to:

- Assess students' prior knowledge
- Guide teacher planning and instruction
- Assess new/ongoing learning

- Assess student performance relative to national, state, and county standards as well as PYP expectations
- Focus on closing the achievement gaps among students
- Inform entire school community

We, as a staff, believe that Considerations for students with Special Needs must be taken due to the following reasons:

- Legal
- Inclusiveness
- Ability to provide accommodations in the context of the units

Principles—(Characteristics of effective assessment—those shared with IB)

Sunset Elementary School's Essential Agreement on Assessment is a product of a collaborative effort by the staff. It recognizes that the fundamental purposes of assessment are to acknowledge student learning and the development of the learner profile.

A variety of resources and approaches are used at Sunset Elementary to meet the needs of all learners. Backward design is utilized to ensure the appropriateness of assessments for the learning objectives being taught. Products and performances show a conceptual understanding of the learning objectives being taught. The following are some principles included in effective assessment at Sunset Elementary:

We, as a staff, believe that effective assessment should:

- Provide relevant and timely feedback for students and teachers to revise/advance performance, learning, and teaching.
- Be formative and summative.
- Be diverse and varied in method to address different learning styles
- Use of self, peer, teacher, and parent reflection as an essential and integral part of assessment.
- Be differentiated to meet the individual student's learning needs, including, but not limited to, students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Response to Intervention (RtI) Plan, and students receiving English Language Learner (ELL) and Gifted and Talented (GT) services
- Be frequent and ongoing
- Be balanced in authentic tasks and standardized assessment.
- Be consistent and grade-appropriate
- Have criteria that are known and understood in advance.
- Analyze and reflect on student learning processes and products.

We further believe that our Units of Inquiry should provide assessments which make:

- connections to IB Learner Profiles and Attitudes
- connections to the Central Idea
- connections to the pre-determined objectives, concepts and lines of inquiry within the Programme of Inquiry
- connections to the PYP Five Essential Elements

Practices—How we assess

Through the IBPYP Programme of Inquiry, Sunset Elementary teachers strive to provide the opportunity for learners to construct meaning primarily through structured inquiry. This is accomplished by emphasizing the connections between

subject-specific knowledge and transdisciplinary skills and themes. The transdisciplinary themes provide a focus for inquiry, while literacy and numeracy provide the tools. Feedback should be given on student progress and performance in each of these areas.

Additionally, feedback should be provided on the attributes listed in the PYP Learner Profile. This profile serves to increase the learner's awareness of, and sensitivity to, the experiences of others beyond the local or national community, thereby promoting an understanding that there is a commonality of human experience.

We assess performance and progress in each of the following subject areas as they comprise the required Report to Parents of students attending Anne Arundel County Public Schools: English/Reading, English/Writing, Math, Science, Social Studies, Art, Health, Music, Physical Education, citizenship education, and work/study skills. At Sunset Elementary, Spanish is being taught as an authentic engagement in the language and is not formally assessed. However, students are evaluated on their participation in language instruction.

To allow our students to be balanced effective communicators, we as a staff value the importance of providing students with multiple and varied writing situations. We value the importance of legible penmanship and also emphasize the role of technology in promoting 21st century skills in our writing program.

We assess according the mandates set into place and required by the State of Maryland. State testing occurs in Grades 3, 4, and 5.

We as a staff believe that EFFECTIVE assessment practices include:

- assessment of students' prior knowledge
- formative assessment tasks—diagnostic; and one for each line of inquiry
- summative assessment tasks—assesses central idea
- transparency—criteria for learning tasks are clear and known in advance by students, teachers, and parents (rubrics, etc.)
- utilizing a range of assessment tools
- expression of different points of view and interpretations
- monitoring and assessing student progress in the five essential elements—skills, attitudes, concepts, knowledge, and student-initiated action
- monitoring and assessing student progress in relation to the Learner Profiles including student self- and peer-assessment
- creating rich tasks that cater to a variety of learning styles, multiple intelligences and differing abilities (differentiated products and performances)
- gathering evidence from which sound conclusions can be drawn
- ensuring student progress and performance are assessed in both the subject domains and the units of inquiry
- creating grade-level grading policies to ensure consistency
- documentation of student success, growth, ability and creativity through methods such as use of student portfolios
- working with students in the preparation and evaluation of student-led conferences (minimum of one per semester)
- providing opportunities to support and celebrate student learning
- utilizing collaborative planning to build tools, reflect on implemented strategies, and share and analyze data

Types of Assessments used:

Pre-Assessment

Pre-assessment occurs before embarking on new learning to assess prior knowledge and experiences.

Screening

Screenings are conducted to identify baseline skills data: to plan groupings, interventions, special placements, and target instruction.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is an integral part of the learning process. It provides feedback about the learning and helps with the planning of the next stage.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment occurs at the end of a teaching and learning cycle. Students are given the opportunity to demonstrate what has been learned and prompt students towards action.

Diagnostic

These tests are used to pinpoint skill weaknesses in students who are not making progress.

Strategies—methods used to gather information about students' learning

- observations
- performance assessments
- process-focused assessments
- selected responses (These might include multiple choice, true/false, matching, short answer, fill-in items.)
- open-ended tasks
- reflections
- self- and peer-assessment

Tools—instruments used to collect data

- rubrics—criteria and range
- checklists—criteria
- anecdotal records
- KWL(R)+
- standardized tests
- benchmarks
- continuums

County Assessments

County assessments are mandated to be given, and are done so on a timeline set form by our board of education. Alignment to the Units of Inquiry is done, as appropriate and allowed.

State Testing

Maryland is a Governing State in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), a consortium of 24 states working together to develop an assessment system aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The new assessments will be anchored in college and career readiness; provide comparability across states; and be able to assess and measure higher-order skills such as critical thinking, communications, and problem solving.

The assessments will be computer-based and will include a mix of constructed response items, performance-based tasks, and computer-enhanced, computer-scored items.

PARCC will assist educators in the classroom by providing instructional tools to support implementation, student achievement data, professional development modules, and educator-led training to support “peer-to-peer” training. K-12 educators across the consortium of PARCC states will be involved throughout the development of the PARCC assessments and related instructional and reporting tools to help ensure the assessment system provides the information and resources educators need most.

The PARCC assessments were fully implemented in Maryland during the 2014-15 school year and replaced the Maryland School Assessments.

To view the PARCC Frameworks and additional information about the new assessments, visit the PARCC website at www.parcconline.org.

Taken from <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/testing/parcc/>

Reporting—feedback on student progress

Sunset Elementary provides meaningful feedback consistently to students, parents and community members through a variety of methods.

Reporting is a means of giving feedback about learning. Effective reporting should:

- involve parents, students, and teachers as partners
- reflect what the school community values
- be comprehensive, honest, fair, and credible
- be clear and understandable to all parties

(PYP Assessment)

Reports will:

- be timely
- consist of the county report cards issued every 9 weeks
- deal with academic and non-academic learning
- include for each subject studied a “grade” or “progress notation”
- be in plain language to be readily understood by parents and guardians
- be followed by opportunity for discussion between the child, parents/guardians and teacher, as needed

A. On-line Grade Book

Expectations set out by the county grading policy for quantity and frequency of recorded grades.

- Grades entered within a certain time of the assigned date
 - County policy = every 5-8 days
- At least half have to be entered by the time of Interims
- Grade books are to be updated weekly to facilitate open communication with parents and students for grades 1-5.
- In Kindergarten....TBD

B. Graded Assignments

By sending home graded assignments teachers are keeping parents informed of student progress. Teachers will clarify with parents at the beginning of the school year their expectation regarding how many/which grades will be sent home. Some work will be kept to become part of the student portfolio, and parents must be made aware of this and this will facilitate the understanding of the nature of an inquiry-based program. By sharing graded assignments with parents, there is a hope of creating an understanding of shared responsibility for student learning. This will also assist in extending the learning beyond the school day.

C. Conferences

Parents, students, and teachers are all valued partners in the reporting process and in sharing the responsibility both for learning and for accounting student progress. Pathways for communication need to be open and reciprocal to share advancements as well as concerns.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools builds into the school calendar Parent/Teacher conference days. In addition, we provide many opportunities throughout the school year for conferencing. Parents, teachers, and/or students may participate, depending upon the purpose. Student led conferences in K-5 are slated to occur at the end of the 2016-2017 school year, with Exhibition being a student led conference, of sorts, to share learning having begun in 2015-2016.

D. Written Reports

County-mandated report cards are sent home every quarter. Transdisciplinary Skills, Student Profile, and Attitudes are reflected in the comments that teachers write on the report card. Since POI units are not reflected on our district report card, we strive to communicate, share, and reflect on student learning throughout each unit of inquiry.

Plan for Implementation and Review

The SIT Committee and Pedagogical Leadership Team accept the responsibility for ensuring the assessment policy is put into practice. Teachers and administrators will communicate assessment policy to parents and students. The Leadership Team will regularly evaluate implementation of assessment policy as evidenced by classroom observations and school presentations.

The Sunset Elementary School Assessment Policy will go into effect during the 2014-2015 school year and will be reviewed every year, or as needed, by the SIT committee and the pedagogical leadership team.