



Louise R Johnson Middle School

Assessment Policy



Our mission is to inspire students to achieve academic excellence, embrace global diversity and become lifelong learners.

Philosophy

We at Louise R. Johnson Middle School believe that assessment shines a light on student achievement. It provides feedback and this feedback must be effective, useful and understandable. Assessment is a measure of what a child has learned and how a child applies this learning to his or her life. It is the beginning of learning, not just a demonstration of the outcomes. Our use of assessment supports our school mission of inspiring students to achieve academic excellence, embrace global diversity and become lifelong learners. By using assessment to guide our teaching, we create the desire in students to make global connections and to understand how these connections fit in the scheme of life, thus inspiring students to continue learning by making connections to those things that he or she has internalized. Being able to internalize, critique, and self-evaluate is pivotal to a lifetime of learning. As John C. Maxwell said, “A man must be big enough to learn from his mistakes, smart enough to profit from them, and strong enough to correct them”.

What is being assessed, the criteria for success, and the method by which assessment is made, must be clear to all stakeholders. Manatee County public schools use a variety of assessments to provide students, parents, and educators with information used to guide decisions that will improve the education of students. The assessments required by Manatee County are blended with IB assessment practices to provide a seamless and effective picture of student achievement. Assessment is an essential piece of the instructional cycle. Formative assessment is used as a tool aimed to identify the learning needs of the students. Summative assessment is used as an accountability tool regarding student achievement in each subject group. Assessment provides information about student learning and development, which is an ongoing process. It is also used to evaluate both student performance and efficacy of the program.

Types of Assessments:

- Pre-assessment – used to obtain information on students’ prior knowledge
- Formative assessment – utilized throughout the unit or project. This might be administered by the teacher, peer, or self. DQGs are usually diagnostic in nature.
- Summative assessment – conducted at the end of a unit or project. These are evaluated according to IB Assessment Rubrics with task specific clarification.
- Standardized Assessment – mandated by state or federal guidelines. The Florida Department of Education and the School Board of Manatee County, which govern LRJMS, follow the guidelines of the federal *No Child left Behind Act*. This act requires all public schools to standardize tests for all students in an effort to close the achievement gap. Tests include:
 - Florida Assessment Instruction in Reading (FAIR) – given school-wide three times per year
 - District Mathematics Benchmark – given school-wide three times per year
 - District ELA Benchmark – given school-wide three times per year
 - District Science Benchmark – given school-wide three times per year
 - Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) ELA – given school-wide once per year
 - Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) Mathematics – given school-wide once per year
 - Comprehensive English Language Learners Assessment (CELLA) – given to English Language Learners only once per year
 - State mandated End of Course Exams for Algebra 1, Geometry, and Civics – given once per year
 - District End of Course Exams for all courses without a state mandated exam – given once per year

Assessment Strategies:

The MYP values the use of a variety of assessment strategies during the program. The following list of strategies is not exhaustive, and the strategies themselves are not mutually exclusive; indeed, they should be used in conjunction with one another to provide a more balanced view of student achievement.

- Observation - Teachers may choose to observe all students regularly and often, taking a wide-angle view (for example, focusing on the whole class) or a close-up view (for example, focusing on one student or one activity). Teachers can observe from the point of view of a non-participant (observing outside the task) or of a participant (observing when engaging in the task with the student). Observation will be particularly useful when assessing some behaviors and skills.
- Selected response - Tests and quizzes are the most familiar examples of this form of assessment. Selected responses allow the teacher to ask general or specific questions to elicit responses from students that will indicate understanding and, possibly, misunderstanding. This strategy is particularly useful during the course of a unit, in formative assessment, as it is usually quick and straightforward to administer and can provide instant feedback for students and teachers.
- Open-ended tasks - This strategy allows teachers to present students with a stimulus and ask them to communicate an original response. The response could take many forms, such as a presentation, an essay, a diagram or a solution to a problem. Open-ended tasks

- may be combined with other strategies, such as performance assessments.
- Performance - The MYP assessment model provides opportunities for teachers to devise assessment tasks that enable students to demonstrate the range of knowledge, skills, understandings and attitudes that they have developed in the classroom. Performance assessments can allow students to perform the learned skills and show their understanding in real-world contexts. Teacher-designed performances of understanding may take the form of a composition, a research report, a presentation or a proposed solution. Such performances serve two functions: they build student understanding, and they make such understanding visible and available for assessment. Teachers can use the information to find out how to support students further (formative assessment) and whether the student has achieved the learning objectives (summative assessment). Performances of understanding allow students to both build and demonstrate their understanding in and across subjects. They are based on the theory that understanding is not something we have—like a set of facts we possess—but rather is something we can do. In unit designs, performances of understanding take different forms depending on where in the unit they are placed (beginning, middle or end) and whether they target disciplinary or interdisciplinary understandings. The MYP uses the term “performance” in its widest sense to describe all forms of assessment where students are assessed on their ability to demonstrate predetermined learning objectives.
 - Process journals - Reflection is an essential element of effective learning. The MYP objectives for all subject groups require students to develop higher-order thinking skills and conceptual understanding. Student reflection and metacognition are essential aspects of that process. The use of process journals (required in some subject groups, such as the arts or design) can allow the teacher and student to communicate about the processes of learning, and can be used for meaningful and purposeful reflection. Regular recorded reflections by the students about key issues or important activities can lead to enhanced understanding of the concepts.
 - Portfolio assessment - Portfolios can be used by students and teachers to record their learning achievements and express their identity. Students and teachers will choose pieces of work, or include observations or evidence from other assessment strategies, that show their levels of knowledge and understanding, and that demonstrate their skills and attitudes. Portfolios are useful ways to involve students in their own learning and the assessment of that learning.

Assessment Tasks:

Tasks will be specific to MYP objectives, although various categories of tasks exist that are broadly represented by the following list. To this end, all tasks will be specific to the MYP unit of work and use a variety of methods to showcase student knowledge of learning. The following is a general list of assessment tasks. At no time in this policy are the lists complete or represent all that is possible with assessment.

- Compositions
- Product or solution creations
- Essays
- Examinations
- Questionnaires
- Investigations
- Open-ended problem solving
- Experimental or lab work
- Research
- Performances
- Presentations (oral, written, graphic, multi-media)
- Journal

Assessment Tools:

Assessment tools are the devices used in helping to monitor the effectiveness of the assessment strategies.

- Anecdotal records – These are brief written notes based on observations of students. These need to be systematically compiled and organized.
- Continuums - These provide visual representations of developmental stages of learning, and can be very useful for teachers and students when applied to skills development. They show a progression of achievement and can identify where a student has reached in relation to that learning process. These are particularly useful when used for Approaches to Learning skills.
- Rubrics - These are established sets of criteria used for scoring or rating students' tests, portfolios, or performance.
- Examples - These can serve as concrete standards against which other samples are judged. Generally, there should be at least one example for each achievement level in an assessment rubric.
- Checklists - These are comprised of data, information, attributes, or elements that should be present in any assigned task.

Achievement Levels

At the end of each unit, students will complete a summative assessment task that will be graded on an IB rubric(s) for subject criteria with task specific clarification. Each criterion is divided into various achievement levels (numerical values) that appear in bands, and each band contains general, qualitative value statements called level descriptors. The levels 1 and 2 appear as the first band, levels 3 and 4 as the second band, and so on. Level 0 is available for work that is not described by the band descriptor for levels 1 and 2. All criteria have four bands and a maximum of eight achievement levels. All MYP subject groups have four assessment criteria divided into four bands, each of which represents two levels of achievement. MYP criteria are equally weighted.

The level descriptors for each band describe a range of student performance in the various strands of each objective. At the lowest levels, student achievement in each of the strands will be minimal. As the numerical levels increase, the level descriptors describe greater achievement levels in each of the strands.

Determining Achievement Levels

At the end of a period of learning, teachers must make judgments on their students' achievement levels in each subject-group criterion using the rubrics provided by the teacher for summative task. When applying the assessment criteria to student performance, the teacher will determine whether the first descriptor describes the performance. If the student work exceeds the expectations of the first descriptor, the teacher will determine whether it is described by the second descriptor. This will continue until the teacher arrives at a descriptor that does not describe the student work; the work will then be described by the previous descriptor. In certain cases, it may appear that the student has not fulfilled all of the descriptors in a lower band but has fulfilled some in a higher band. In those cases, teachers must use their professional judgment in determining the descriptor that best fits the student's performance.

Factors that may influence the teacher's decision on an achievement level, include the following:

- Student support—students will experience varying levels of support in their units, since peer conferencing, formative assessment with feedback from the teacher, editing and correcting are all essential learning tools. Teachers will be mindful that achievement levels accurately reflect what students can do.
- Group work—teachers will document carefully the input of individuals working in a group situation so that the achievement levels for individual students can be determined.

In these ways, at the end of a period of learning, evidence of student learning, gathered from a range of learning experiences in each of the objectives, can be matched to the appropriate assessment criteria to determine the student's achievement level.

Feedback and Reporting:

During the three years in the MYP, students and parents will receive communication regarding students' achievement in each subject group. This communication will be provided regularly and promptly in order to inform and improve student learning. The feedback and reporting of student achievement will adhere to the following guidelines:

- Assessment follows the IB MYP objectives, criteria, and strands as found in each subject guide provided by the IB organization.
- Assessment in years 1, 2, and 3 is criterion-related, using age appropriate and task specific clarification.
- Each subject assesses each of the four subject criteria a minimum of twice per year.
- Each unit of study includes a summative assessment graded on the appropriate IB rubrics with task specific clarification.
- Assessments include regular reflection by students on the learning process and approaches to learning skills.
- Assessment practices provide diverse opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning in relation to each criterion in each subject.
- Assessment deadlines are clearly communicated to students and parents.
- All MYP teachers regularly engage in internal standardization of student work to ensure consistency in the application of the criteria.
- In addition to the Manatee County report cards provided each quarter, students will receive the IB MYP report card each semester, which includes a reflection on approaches to learning skills and a record of achievement for each of the 8 subjects.
- Focus Online Grade Viewer is used as the system for recording information regarding student learning along with subject area records of achievements. This system is accessible to parents.
- IB grades are recorded in our American grading reporting system using the following conversions:
 - Level 1 --- 55
 - Level 2 --- 65
 - Level 3 --- 70
 - Level 4 --- 75
 - Level 5 --- 85
 - Level 6 --- 90
 - Level 7 --- 95
 - Level 8 --- 100

Policy Review

The International Baccalaureate leadership team at Johnson Middle School annually reviews this assessment policy. Any changes or modifications that are made must then be brought up for discussion and agreement with the entire faculty.