

# Assessment Policy

## **Purpose of Assessment Policy**

The Boerum Hill School for International Studies' Assessment Policy is a working document. Consistent with the standards and practices of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years and Diploma Programmes, National Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and New York State Regents Standards, this document provides an overview of our beliefs and practices regarding the purpose and use of assessment.

## **Philosophy of Assessment**

We believe effective, meaningful assessments are essential elements that support students in acquiring the skills necessary to build conceptual understanding, content mastery and self-awareness. It is a balance of diagnostic, formative and summative assessments which provides the entire learning community—students, parents, and teachers—with feedback on essential understandings, as well as opportunities for reflection that improves the inquiry process. We believe assessments should support and encourage students' learning *process* by giving students authentic actionable feedback on the mastery of content and skills, the development of Approaches to Learning (ATLs) and students' engagement in the classroom environment. Assessments must be ongoing, unbiased, and designed to meet the needs of our diverse learning community.

## **Principles of Assessment**

Teachers design assessments that allow students to demonstrate the aspects of the IB Learner Profile, to develop deep understanding of content, and to explore real-world global contexts defined by the MYP and DP frameworks. Assessment plays a vital role in the cycle of planning, teaching, assessing, reporting and reflecting.

### **Effective assessment allows students to:**

- Share their learning and understanding with others
- Demonstrate a broad range of Approaches to Learning, including, in the MYP, communication skills, collaboration skills, organization skills, affective skills, reflection

skills, information and media literacy skills, critical and creative thinking skills, and transfer skills; in the DP, thinking, communication, social, self-management, and research skills.

- Utilize a variety of learning styles and intelligences
- Analyze their own learning and perform peer editing and self-reflection on their strengths and areas for improvement
- Set goals for their own learning
- Engage with the larger world through exploring global contexts

**Effective assessment allows parents to:**

- Monitor evidence of their children's learning and growth
- Provide opportunities for support to students and teachers
- Celebrate learning

**Effective assessment requires teachers to:**

- Engage in self-reflection on their own practice to enhance and improve the teaching process
- Recognize students' different learning styles and language proficiency and develop assessments to utilize these styles and skills
- Make students aware in advance of the criteria required for producing a quality product
- Provide timely and clear criteria-related feedback to students and parents through documented records and data
- Work collaboratively to align skills, develop goals, and assess progress

**Effective assessment requires administration to:**

- Support teachers in maintaining assessment skills and in developing new assessment strategies
- Provide time and professional development for teachers to plan, collaborate, and reflect
- Use student achievement data to set school-wide, departmental, grade and individual goals

- Support teachers in implementing disciplinary consequences for late and missing work and plagiarism

### **Assessment Practices**

- *Diagnostic/Pre-Assessments* are given prior to teaching which help teachers and students determine what the students already know and can do, related to the MYP and DP criteria and the Common Core Standards for that subject. Teachers use these to determine student understandings of a concept, idea, or skill before instruction begins. By doing this, the teacher is able to design instruction appropriate to the students s/he is working with.
- *Formative Assessment* takes place throughout a course of study, informing teachers about students' learning and guiding instruction. Teachers plan a variety of informal and formal checks for understanding. Formative tasks are designed to prepare students for the summative task by assessing students' progress in acquiring skills and concepts related to the MYP and DP criteria and Common Core Standards, needed for the summative assessment. Students receive feedback on formatives from their selves, peers, and teachers.
- *Summative Assessment* is an evaluation of student achievement of the unit objectives and standards through a culminating activity or activities, generally at the end of a unit of study. Summative tasks are assessed using MYP and DP rubrics and achievement levels, ensuring that students' grades correspond to their demonstrated ability to meet the MYP and DP criteria. Teachers have begun and will continue to norm with grade teams and subject groups to ensure common understandings of achievement levels. Student work, along with MYP and DP rubrics, are housed in student portfolios (grade teams determine whether to use only digital ManageBac portfolios, or whether to also use paper portfolios) to record and track growth over time, and achievement levels are also recorded online in ManageBac. Parents can access digital student portfolios at anytime, including during conferences or meetings with the teacher/grade team. Report card grades reflect IB achievement levels, except for in grade 12, when grade are converted for DOE report cards.
- *External Assessments* are required by the International Baccalaureate, the State of New York and the City of New York. Students take New York State Regents Exams in Math, Science, English Language Arts, and Social Studies, and are required to pass a certain amount (amount dependent on the student's cohort) for graduation with a

minimum score of 65%. These exams are administered twice during the school year, in January and June, and once during the summer, in August. Students also take a city-designed exam known as Measures of Students Learning (MOSL) to give teachers insight into students' progress with reading, writing and math. Throughout the year, benchmark exams are administered to track students' progress of these skills. We are currently in the process of developing and implementing data trackers to gather and utilize data to inform instructional practices. International Baccalaureate diploma assessments are discussed below.

- *International Baccalaureate Diploma Assessments* are required by students planning to achieve the full diploma or individual course certificates. Each Diploma Program course, including Theory of Knowledge, has both external assessments (marked externally by IB examiners) and internal assessments (marked by BHS teachers and moderated by IB examiners). These assessments cannot count towards a student's BHS grade, but are required as a part of the course. Students who plan to achieve the full diploma must complete 3 HL and 3 SL DP courses, along with Theory of Knowledge, an Extended Essay, and the Creativity, Action, and Service (CAS) requirements.
- *Extended Essay* gives students the opportunity to embark upon an individual work of scholarship. Students will begin considering their Extended Essay (EE) topics in the spring of their 10<sup>th</sup> grade year and commit to their EE topic and question in November of their 11<sup>th</sup> grade year. All students will be supported by the EE coordinator and each will have their own teacher supervisor, who will meet with them formally at least three times throughout their process, in February, and June of their 11<sup>th</sup> grade year, and September of their 12<sup>th</sup> grade year. Students will also be supported by EE weekend and summer work days and time in their IB Core course. Final drafts will be due in October of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade year. For the 2017-2018 school year, seniors will complete a Senior Thesis that follows the basic structure of the Extended Essay. The Senior Thesis/Extended Essay is a graduation requirement for BHS.
- *Personal Project* gives students the authentic opportunity to select and explore topics and global contexts of their own choosing, and to create a product of their choice by following the Design Cycle. The Personal Project is a student-centered project in MYP Year 5 (Grade 10). This requires students to use the Approaches to Learning (ATLs) they have developed in their courses of study, particularly self-management and creative thinking. While the majority of work is completed outside of classes, the Personal Project is supported through assigned teacher supervisors, Advisory and Town Hall structures, and communication via ManageBac. As students work throughout

the year on their project, they are required to meet regularly with their supervisors (generally, their Advisory teacher) and keep process journals. These journals are the foundation for the Personal Project and are assessed, along with student goals, products and reflections, using the MYP Personal Project criteria. Details about the Personal Project can be found in the handbook distributed to sophomores in the fall.

### **ManageBac**

All teachers record unit plans and assessment guidelines and report achievement levels for assessments in ManageBac. Students use ManageBac to record service learning reflections and; in 10th grade, to record their Process Journal for their Personal Project; and in the DP to record their CAS achievements.

Trainings on using ManageBac are offered to teachers in September and ongoing on an as-need basis. Grade teams coordinate a time/plan early in September to teach students how to access and navigate ManageBac. At parent conferences and orientations, training and instructional materials on accessing and navigating ManageBac are offered. Teachers with ManageBac questions can direct them to Emily Brandt, Rebecca Crawford and/or Mark Isakson. Parents with questions can direct them to Jackie Carrier. Students with questions can address them to their Advisor.

### **Diploma Program late/missing work policy:**

Official IB external and internal assessments for the Diploma Program must be completed at each assessment's stipulated deadline. There will be no late work accepted, unless it is as a result of adverse circumstances as defined in section A7.2 of the IB *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*. Missing IB assessments result in a student being unable to receive IB credit for the relevant course, and thus the student would not be able to achieve their diploma. Neither BHS nor the IBO are liable for any financial implications thereof.

The IB defines adverse circumstances as "adverse or unforeseen circumstances are defined as those beyond the control of the candidate that might be detrimental to his or her performance, including temporary illness or injury, severe stress, exceptionally difficult family circumstances, bereavement, or events that may threaten the health or safety of a candidate. Adverse circumstances may also include an event that affects the whole school community, such as civil unrest or a natural disaster. Adverse circumstances do not include shortcomings on the part of the school at which a

candidate is registered. It is a school's responsibility to ensure that all candidates comply with programme and assessment requirements."

In cases of adverse circumstances, a student's individual case must be reviewed and approved by the International Baccalaureate Organization.

## **Assessments Recording & Reporting**

### **Rubrics & Report Cards**

Students receive report cards at the end of each semester and progress reports every six weeks during a semester. These report cards provide a numerical grade for each course. All summative and some formative assessments are evaluated using MYP and DP criteria levels using a "Best-fit" approach. Students in the MYP (Grades 6-10) and the DP (Grade 11) will receive reports of their MYP Criteria Levels (1-7) in each subject. For the 2017-2018 school year, seniors' IB achievement levels will be calculated in ManageBac and are then converted to the following point values.

Conversions: 0=40 / 1=55 / 2=65 / 3=72 / 4=78 / 5= 86 / 6=94 / 7=100

We regularly use rubrics (on paper and/or in ManageBac) to report assessment levels to students. Our rubrics are aligned to the MYP and DP criteria, and are informed by the Common Core Standards. Teachers are responsible for creating task specific IB-aligned rubrics for assessments in the units they are teaching.

Our school community has moved from a traditional grading policy to criteria-based grading which clearly defines learning targets aligned to high quality, balanced assessments that will bridge student performance and learning. Unlike the traditional grading policy, a criteria-based grading system measures each student's mastery of grade-level standards aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and IB criteria levels through formative and summative assessments. Variables such as effort, participation, timeliness, cooperation, attitude and attendance are assessed through feedback separately, not as an indicator of a student's academic success. While those variables are not included as "grades," they do ultimately impact students' overall achievement levels when learning, practicing, and mastering new content and skills.

Each teacher records student grades online in ManageBac, which students, parents, teachers and administrators all can access at any time.

## **Portfolios**

Summative and select formative tasks in all eight subject areas (Arts, Design, Individuals and Societies, Language Acquisition, Language and Literature, Mathematics, Physical and Health Education, and Sciences) are collected in student digital portfolios each marking period. Some grade teams may elect to also use paper portfolios. These portfolios allow students, teachers, and parents to better reflect on overall learning and mastery of the MYP and DP criteria.

## **Global Action Project Celebration**

Beginning in spring of 2015, each year two Global Action Project (GAP) celebrations offer students the opportunity to prepare and present transdisciplinary summative projects. In the spring GAP, 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will present Community Action Projects; sophomores will present their Personal Projects; juniors will present their Extended Essays; and seniors will present their senior thesis (2017-2018) and then their CAS projects (2018-2019 and beyond). All other grades will present transdisciplinary projects unified around one of the six global contexts (Identities and relationships, Orientation in space and time, Personal and cultural expression, Scientific and technical innovation, Globalization and sustainability). Parents and community members are invited to celebrate our students' successes and provide guidance for next steps.

## **Special Education Needs & Supports**

- Special Education Students: The families of Special Education students receive communication through Individual Education Program (IEP) progress reports. Students receive a variety of support services such as smaller classes, integrated collaborative classes, and differentiation of assessments. There are monthly School Implementation Meetings (SIT) and annual IEP meetings in effort to track student progress and goals through assessments.
- English Language Learners: Students who are learning English receive support services and are programmed for classes such as "pull out" support, small learning classes and/or integrated collaborative classes.

## **Conferences**

Twice per year, teachers, parents and students come together for a formal conference. Through our advisory program, there is the opportunity for advisors, parents and

students to meet more frequently to share and discuss student work and collaborate to improve the student's holistic performance. This program supports student self-reflection and goal-setting.

Every six weeks, students also engage in a personal case conference with their advisor. This provides students a chance to reflect on their learning and their development of the IB Learner Profile attributes.

### **Note on Policy Review Process**

This Assessment Policy—like our Language Policy, Academic Honesty Policy, and Inclusion Policy—was created through a careful review process, and undergoes annual revision. It is a working document, meaning that we keep it up to date with the needs of the student population and in line with national and local legislation. Samantha Schmoeger, our Assistant Principal (Senior Grade Team Facilitator at the time of drafting), drafted this policy in November 2014 in accordance with the IB policy guidelines (as presented in *MYP: From principles into practice September 2014-January 2015*). The draft underwent review and revision by BHS' MYP Coordinator, teachers, students, and other stakeholders. In addition to annual revision, in 2016, the policy was revised by the DP Coordinator designate (with reference to *DP: From principles into practice*) and reviewed by the Cabinet, administration, students, and other stakeholders. Each year, including in summer of 2017, the policy is updated and approved, with any final edits, by the school administration and then made available to the entire school community. Annually, it is evaluated for its effectiveness and to ensure that it is accurate and up-to-date.