Assessment Policy

Purpose of Assessment Policy

The Boerum Hill School for International Studies’ Assessment Policy is consistent with the standards and practices of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years and Diploma Programmes, Next Generation Learning Standards, and New York State and City 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 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 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 they are 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 the Next Generation Learning Standards, needed for the summative assessment. Students receive feedback on formatives from their selves, peers, and teachers, so that students can continue to develop their skills and their understanding of content. Each marking period, at least two formative achievement levels for the criteria being assessed in the summative for each student should be recorded in each course that meets daily, and at least one formative achievement level should be recorded for courses that meet less than daily. Missing formatives can impact overall course achievement levels. When appropriate, students are welcome to reattempt a formative.

- **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. The summative is the culmination of the unit’s formatives. 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 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 digital ManageBac student portfolios to record and track growth over time, and achievement levels are recorded online in ManageBac. MYP rubrics are embedded into ManageBac. In the DP, teachers upload the task- or criterion-specific rubric to each required task, and, in cases where more than one criterion is assessed on a task, indicate in comments the achievement level for each criterion. Parents can access digital student portfolios at any time, including during conferences or meetings.
with the teacher/grade team. All report card grades for all marking periods reflect up-to-date IB achievement levels, but at the end of semester 1 (marking period 3) and semester 2 (marking period 6), final IB levels are also converted to percentages for DOE transcripts. MYP criteria levels are reported via ManageBac reports (printed or downloadable pdfs). Summative assessments represent the culmination of the most essential learning during the course, and as such, must be completed by all students, with appropriate supports and reasonable retake opportunities, for course credit.

- **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, Social Studies, and optionally in LOTE. They may also take NOCTI and NYSAA exams. Students are required to pass a certain amount for graduation, dependent on their cohort and IEP, if they have one. These exams are administered twice during the school year, in January and June, and once during the summer, in August. Students in grades 6-11 also take the DRP to assess their progress with reading skills. 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. The Extended Essay is a graduation requirement for BHS and is assessed either by the IB (for IB diploma candidates) or as a part of the 12th grade Language & Literature course. Students will begin considering their Extended Essay (EE) topics in the spring of their 10th grade year and commit to their EE topic and question in fall of their 11th grade year. All students will be supported by the EE coordinator and IB diploma candidates will have their own teacher supervisor, who will meet with them formally at least three times throughout their process, generally in November and June of their 11th grade year, and February of their 12th grade year. All students will also be supported by EE summer work days and time in IB Core. Full
drafts will be due in October of the 12th grade year, and students who do not submit full drafts at this time may become ineligible for the IB diploma.

- **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 beginning in the end of MYP 4 (Grade 9) and continuing through March of 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, MYP Year 5 coursework, 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 reports, 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 and Extended Essay process.

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 to parents. Teachers with ManageBac questions can direct them to Emily Brandt, Rebecca Crawford, and/or Fahema Patwari. Parents with questions can direct them to Jackie Carrier and/or Anna Karageorgis. Students with questions can address them to their Advisor and/or teachers.

**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.

According to the IB, “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
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. Teachers are responsible for creating task specific IB-aligned rubrics for assessments in the units they are teaching.

Students receive report cards at the end of each semester and progress reports every six weeks during a semester. These reports provide a numerical grade for each course. All formal summative and formative assessments are evaluated using MYP criteria levels and DP rubrics using a “Best-fit” approach, rather than averaging achievement levels. Students in the MYP (Grades 6-10) will receive reports of their IB Criteria Levels (1-7) in each subject, via ManageBac reports. Final grades cap at 7, as indicated by the grade boundaries laid out by the IB. The MYP grade boundaries are published in From principles into practice as shown, in full, in Appendix 1 of this Policy. For example, if a student earns a 4 for Criterion A, a 5 for B, a 6 for C, and a 6 for D, their achievement
levels total to a 21. According to the IB Boundary Guidelines, a 21 is a final grade of 5, which indicates that the student “produces generally high-quality work. Communicates secure understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, sometimes with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar classroom and real-world situations and, with support, some unfamiliar real-world situations.” For the DP, there are similar grade boundaries for each task in each subject group.

Grades reported on transcripts will be converted to numerical grades according to the scale below, which was developed through analysis of IB assessment principles and conversion charts from schools locally and internationally. Report cards for each semester are cumulative, meaning that each marking period builds on the achievement levels of the previous. Marking periods are not averaged.

Conversions: 0=40 / 1=55 / 2=65 / 3=70 / 4=75 / 5=85 / 6=95 / 7=100

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. Such variables are part of Approaches to Learning (ATLs) as outlined by the IB. 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.

**Attendance and Special Circumstances**

Attendance is crucial to student success. If a student misses an extended amount of classes and/or assessments due to extenuating circumstances (e.g. medical), the student and/or family must regularly communicate with the grade team leader and/or individual teachers. Teachers will make reasonable accommodations to support student achievement if communication is maintained by the student. However, if a student misses more than 25% of classes in a given semester, they cannot make up missing assessments without coming into the building to make up a portion of that time, as outlined in a contract created in an individualized meeting with a guidance counselor.

**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. These portfolios allow students, teachers, and parents to better reflect on overall learning and mastery of the MYP and DP criteria.

**Celebrations of Student Learning**
Since 2015, the school community celebrates student learning through showcases twice each year per grade. These celebrations were formerly called Global Action Projects (GAP). These showcases—in the form of roundtables, exhibitions, or performances—offer students the opportunity to prepare and present summative projects across subject groups. For example, in the fall, 6th graders perform their TED talks and 12th graders present their Extended Essays in roundtables. In the spring, 7th graders exhibit their Future projects, 8th graders present their Community Projects, and 10th graders showcase their Personal Projects. 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 integrated collaborative classes, targeted interventions, 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. There are safety nets for Regents exams and state assessments. See our Inclusion Policy for more information.

- **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. See our Language Policy for more information.

**Conferences**

Twice per year, teachers, parents and students come together for a formal conference. Through our Tuesday parent time, there is the opportunity for advisors, teachers, parents and students to meet more frequently to share and discuss student work and collaborate to improve the student’s holistic performance. Our Advisory program also supports student self-reflection and goal-setting, and advisors are resources for parents as well.
Credit Recovery (per DOE policy)

Earning Credit after Previously Failing a Course Teachers must enter final grades into STARS no later than four weeks (or 20 days) after the end of the term. Within this window, some teachers and schools choose to give students a few extra days right after the end of the course before grades are entered and finalized to turn in work. This option must be clearly outlined for students in the school’s grading policy. Once final grades are entered, even within this 20-day window, they cannot be changed without completing a Transcript Update Form. After final course grades are officially on student transcripts, students have three options for making up failed course credits. Students can:

- **Retake the course:** Students who have missed significant amounts of class time or have not yet mastered a large portion of the subject matter can benefit from retaking the entire course again. These students can make up the course in another term during the school year or in summer school. They might also be offered the course again as an online or blended course.

- **Take credit recovery:** Students who previously failed a course and meet specific eligibility criteria can make up credit through credit recovery. Credit recovery is a targeted experience, specifically for students who attended most of a failed course and mastered the majority of the content. In this option, the student does not retake the full course, but works with a teacher to receive instruction only in the portion of original course content in need of mastery. After instruction in and mastering of the remaining content of the originally failed course, the student may earn credit. However, there are specific NYCDOE and NYSED policies regarding the use of credit recovery.

- **Receive an incomplete course mark** (‘NX’ or ‘NL’) in accordance with the policies for using those marks: Students must successfully complete remaining course requirements by the end of the next semester in order to receive a final grade and credit, if applicable. If the following term is a summer, and the school is not open or the student is not available for summer school, the student will have until the end of the subsequent term to complete the outstanding course work. These marks may then be updated using a transcript update.

**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 2019, 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.
MYP general grade descriptors

To arrive at a criterion levels total for each student, teachers add together the student’s final achievement levels in all criteria of the subject group.

Schools using the MYP 1–7 scale should use the grade boundary guidelines table that follows to determine final grades in each year of the MYP. The table provides a means of converting the criterion levels total into a grade based on a scale of 1–7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Boundary guidelines</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1–5</td>
<td>Produces work of very limited quality. Conveys many significant misunderstandings or lacks understanding of most concepts and contexts. Very rarely demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Very inflexible, rarely using knowledge or skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6–9</td>
<td>Produces work of limited quality. Expresses misunderstandings or significant gaps in understanding for many concepts and contexts. Infrequently demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Generally inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, infrequently applying knowledge and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10–14</td>
<td>Produces work of an acceptable quality. Communicates basic understanding of many concepts and contexts, with occasionally significant misunderstandings or gaps. Begins to demonstrate some basic critical and creative thinking. Is often inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, requiring support even in familiar classroom situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>15–18</td>
<td>Produces good-quality work. Communicates basic understanding of most concepts and contexts with few misunderstandings and minor gaps. Often demonstrates basic critical and creative thinking. Uses knowledge and skills with some flexibility in familiar classroom situations, but requires support in unfamiliar situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>19–23</td>
<td>Produces generally high-quality work. Communicates secure understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, sometimes with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar classroom and real-world situations and, with support, some unfamiliar real-world situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>24–27</td>
<td>Produces high-quality, occasionally innovative work. Communicates extensive understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, frequently with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar classroom and real-world situations, often with independence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>28–32</td>
<td>Produces high-quality, frequently innovative work. Communicates comprehensive, nuanced understanding of concepts and contexts. Consistently demonstrates sophisticated critical and creative thinking. Frequently transfers knowledge and skills with independence and expertise in a variety of complex classroom and real-world situations.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>