

Prince William County Public Schools International Baccalaureate Programme Assessment Policy

Prince William County Public Schools Vision

Every student will graduate on time with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to create a thriving future for themselves and their community.

Philosophy

Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) is committed to preparing our students for the 21st century and continuing their education by becoming lifelong learners. Our goal is that faculty and staff work as a team to ensure appropriate assessments and grading practices that reflect the policies of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Prince William County, and the International Baccalaureate Organization.

Assessment is a critical component in the learning cycle and is integral in clarifying and understanding student aptitude and readiness. Data informs and focuses on the design of our teaching practices. It identifies what students know, understand, can do, and feel at different stages in the learning process.

Purpose

The primary goal of assessment is to support and enhance student learning. It is a tool for identifying students' skills and knowledge, guiding both teaching and learning. When used effectively, assessment provides meaningful feedback – formative and summative – that helps students grow and stay motivated.

Assessment informs students, teachers, and parents, and encourages active student involvement in tracking progress and developing critical thinking and self-assessment skills. In International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme schools, assessment practices reflect research-based strategies that promote student achievement and long-term success.

PWCS Assessment Regulations

[PWCS Regulation 661-1, "Assessment and Grading Practices - Elementary"](#)

[PWCS Regulation 661-2, "Assessment and Grading Practices - Middle"](#)

[PWCS Regulation 661-3, "Assessment and Grading Practices - High"](#)

Assessment Practices

Classroom Assessments

Pre-assessments: Determine students' prior knowledge, generate interest and motivation, and help teachers plan effective, engaging instruction. Teachers use a variety of verbal and written strategies to help students synthesize their prior knowledge.

Formative assessment: Informal assessment conducted by the teacher during the learning process in order to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment. Formative assessments take place throughout a unit of study.

Summative assessment: Evaluation of student achievement through a culminating activity generally at the end of a unit or course of study. The goal of summative assessment is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against a standard or benchmark.

Self-assessments and reflections are used regularly to enable students to reflect on and assess their learning. Students have multiple mediums to assess their development and understanding of Learner Profile attributes.

Assessment Tools and Practices

Assessment strategies and tools should be varied and can include pre- and post-assessment tasks and formative and summative assessments. Students should be involved in the development of some of the assessment activities and tools (e.g., rubrics). When students are not involved in the development of assessment activities, they need to be informed of the assessment criteria. Assessment will inform and direct future learning.

Rubrics are used by all teachers to assess student performance according to set criteria. Teachers can develop rubrics with student input and use student-friendly language to ensure that all students will have the opportunity to meet the highest rubric expectations. Parents and students fully understand the expectations prior to the beginning of the learning engagement.

Checklists are used to identify all the information, characteristics, attributes, elements, or data that must be represented in a particular project or assignment. Teachers ensure that parents and students fully understand the expectations prior to the beginning of the learning engagement.

Anecdotal records are brief written notes kept by teachers and other school personnel, as needed, to document student observations.

Observations are used regularly to assess students' progress towards goals. They may be conducted by teachers, administrators, or other school personnel. In addition to observing to determine students' mastery of content knowledge, teachers also observe students to gather information on students' development of Learner Profile attributes. The results of observations are communicated through written notes/reports, spotlighting announcements, bulletin boards, and assemblies.

Performance assessments are used to give students the opportunity to demonstrate learning through multiple intelligences. As students work through assessment tasks, they build and enhance higher-order thinking skills, develop and practice social skills, and acquire and strengthen content knowledge.

Selected response assessment is a strategy used to determine whether students can select the correct answer to a quiz or test question.

Open-ended tasks enable students to construct original responses to a stimulus. As students work through open-ended assessments, they have the opportunity to use higher-order thinking skills, writing skills, drawing skills, or technology skills to demonstrate knowledge. Open-ended assessments enrich learning.

PWCS and State Assessments

There are required assessments that are administered throughout the K-12 PWCS system in addition to the IB requirements. These include benchmarks and end-of-course Standards of Learning tests, which at the high school level are how students earn credits towards graduation. These have predetermined windows, and some PWCS assessments are part of a student's PWCS grade.

IB Required Assessments

Internal Assessments: The IB has internally graded assessments at the Primary Years Programme (PYP), which completes an Exhibition Project; Middle Years Programme (MYP), which completes a Personal Project; and Diploma Programme (DP), which completes subject-specific internal assessments (IA). At the high school level, these are submitted for moderation to ensure fidelity in the implementation of the IB. These are integrated into courses and broken down into a clear timeline to allow for feedback prior to submission.

External Assessments: At the DP level, students submit extended essays and take IB exams that are graded and reported back to IB. These assessments **do not** count towards a student's PWCS

grade. These assessments are also bound by IB deadlines and cannot abide by the division's late work policy to the full extent.

Grading and Marking

Teachers are grading and marking using [PWCS' grading scale](#) starting in third grade. Before third grade, students are graded as S+, S, and S- in relation to the standards. Formative assessments are graded to ensure that students are making progress towards the assigned learning target. Summative assessments are reflective of a student's mastery of the learning target.

IBMYP and IBDP promote criterion-normed marking for assessments, which is implemented in those courses. There is an agreed-upon MYP conversion scale for the PWCS gradebook. Teachers are expected to grade norm within their Collaborative Learning Team (CLT) meetings for consistently applied criteria.

Reassessment and Remediation

All students deserve the opportunity to learn and demonstrate mastery—not just those who succeed within traditional guidelines. To support this, students should have multiple chances to show growth through reassessment, revisions based on feedback, or alternative formats. This approach uses the most recent evidence of learning to determine summative grades and better reflects how learning happens, preparing students for life beyond school. Reassessment is not unlimited. Its purpose is to help students learn from mistakes and improve. As Ebert notes in O'Connor (2009), "Reassessment is the opportunity, and students learn responsibility."

Students with limited understanding will receive targeted support. Teachers have the autonomy to set expectations for retakes. Learning is not uniform – students face various challenges (social-emotional, academic, workload) that affect performance. If a student seeks to relearn and improve, it is our ethical duty to provide that chance.

If a teacher has evidence of a student's understanding but the student underperforms on an assessment, they should collaborate to offer a reassessment opportunity aligned with the student's typical performance. Often, retakes come with an "opportunity cost" – students must show effort or progress, such as completing an assignment or attending a work session. Reassessments typically involve a different version of the assessment, not a repeat of the original.

Late and Missing Work

The true intent of teaching is learning; learning occurs best through practices of differentiation. Students are expected to complete their assigned work in preparation for developing content and conceptual knowledge and performing well on academic achievement assessments. Not all

students learn at the same rate; therefore, penalties distort the achievement record the grade is intended to communicate, can harm student motivation, and for many students do not result in changes in behavior.

Since the goal of teaching is learning, it is far better to set up support systems that reduce or eliminate the problem of late work.

Teachers will keep records of students' timeliness and report on this behavior in the work habits section (effort) of the report card.

To clarify, "due date" indicates when an item is initially due to the teacher for evaluation; "deadline" indicates a firm, final date for completion.

PWCS does not allow numerical penalties for late assignments. IB Internal and External Assessments have hard deadlines dictated by the International Baccalaureate Organization and are not subject to the same flexible submissions.

Recording and Reporting

All PWCS teachers are required to maintain an online gradebook that is updated weekly. Teachers will label the assignment with the appropriate learning target or criterion assessed, and correctly categorize assignments between informative, formative, and summative.

When recording MYP assessments, there is a notation feature for teachers to report the MYP rubric score for the assessment in addition to the PWCS grade conversion.

Teachers also report quarterly on behavior and work habits indicating outstanding, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory behavior. These are published alongside the student's letter grade on the quarterly report card.

Parents have 24/7 live access to the gradebook through our online portal, ParentVUE. This ensures that they can monitor and support student success.

Connections to IB Policies

Assessment in PWCS always considers the needs of the individual student, especially with respect to their Individual Educational Plan (IEP), 504 Plan, or language development. Specific accommodations and supports can be found in our Inclusion and Language policies.

Our Academic Integrity policy supports integrity in assessments at all levels. Our goal is for our assessments to be a true reflection of student progress or mastery.

Roles and Responsibilities

Policy Implementation and Oversight

It is the responsibility of the IB coordinator and head of school to ensure that all stakeholders in their building follow the assessment policy. This may be reinforced through schoolwide professional development and reflected in course syllabi.

Policy Updates and Governance

Changes to policy or regulations are initiated by district-level leaders and subsequently reviewed and updated in the official IB policy.

Collaborative Review and Communication

PWCS IB coordinators will regularly review and revise policies collectively. When a new policy is published, it will be translated and posted on all IB school websites to ensure public accessibility.

Reviewed May 2025