

## Horizons-On-The-Hudson Elementary School PYP Assessment Policy

The purpose of this document is to clarify teachers’ understanding of the assessment process within our school setting. It is a constantly evolving document that reflects our school’s unique assessment needs. Our assessment philosophy applies to the whole school and is to be communicated to and understood by all continuing and new teachers, IB coordinator, administrators, parents and students. It is directly linked to our mission statement which is:

*Inspiring students to become tomorrow’s leaders beyond Academy Field.*

At Horizons-on-the-Hudson Elementary School, we believe that assessment is integral to identifying what students understand, know and are able to do. It is to guide our planning and instruction to support and enhance student learning. It is part of an ongoing process used to determine where students are in their learning and to set goals for continued progress. Assessment is vital to teaching and learning because it drives instruction.

| PHILOSOPHY (WHY)<br>Why do we assess the way we do at Horizons-on-the-Hudson Elementary School?  | ACTIONS (WHAT)<br>What assessment actions do we take because of our philosophy?   | EXAMPLES (HOW)<br>How does assessment look at our school specifically?  |
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| If we are asked why we assess, the answer would be “to guide instruction.” We believe the ultimate purpose of assessment is to use data to guide our planning and instruction so that we can support and enhance student learning, rather than to simply generate a grade. | Because assessment guides our planning and instruction, we make sure it is frequent, on-going, varied and continuous.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rubrics</li> <li>• Checklists</li> <li>• Benchmarks/exemplars</li> <li>• Continuums</li> <li>• Observations/discussions</li> </ul>   |
| We believe that the teaching/learning cycle starts with assessment, rather than teaching, because if you don’t know what students already know and can do, you don’t know where to start and guide that teaching.  | We assess frequently to find out what the student already knows and can do, in order to discover what the next best teaching/learning steps would be.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-assessments before all units</li> <li>• Anecdotal records to individualize instruction</li> </ul>  |
| The Zone of Proximal Development is different for every child in every area of learning. Each student is a complex individual with a wide range of existing abilities, skills and knowledge.   | Because the Zone of Proximal Development differs for every child in every area, we assess in many different areas in many different ways.   | We do not rely on any one test to plan our instruction, but consider a wide range of relevant and authentic performance data, formal and informal, standardized and non-standardized.   |
| We believe that teachers are professionals with the ability to make valid and “weighty” informal assessments, and that parents also can and do make contributions which should be actively sought.   | We collaborate regularly with other teachers to design, discuss, and reflect on student learning.   | At the beginning of units we solicit parent input, support, and involvement. At the end, we ask for parents to reflect and give feedback as to how students were demonstrating new learning from the unit at home.  |
| In order to be tomorrow’s leaders beyond Academy Field, as our mission statement asserts, students must be able to self-assess competently to reflect on learning in order to subsequently grow and change as a life-long learner.   | We actively teach our students to be competent at self-assessment in both academic and behavioral areas.  | We constantly solicit fresh assessment data and reflections from students and parents, at minimum twice a year, and use this valuable information to help guide our planning and instruction. At the end of units, students are asked to reflect on experiences and make contributions to their portfolios. |
| We believe that the best assessments are those that are most authentic, or most like the task as it actually exists in the real world.   | We assess, for instance, reading by reading, and writing by writing, rather than assessing these complex tasks by doing an artificially contrived task that does not exist in the real world. | We seek assessments that affect the real world... for instance, by writing a letter to someone or some publication. We seek assessments that do what our motto states: to be tomorrow’s leaders.  |

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| We understand that whatever knowledge, skill, or ability is being assessed, there are many possible and valid ways for an individual student to show that understanding to us. | We do not require all students to have their knowledge and abilities assessed in the same way every time, understanding that the important thing is to know if a student “got it”, rather than expecting all students to show understanding in the exact same way. We honor and validate multiple and often creative forms of assessment. | Every summative assessment in every unit offers choice in how a student can demonstrate his or her acquisition of the central idea of that unit and its connection to the transdisciplinary theme. |
| Assessment data is not just important for teachers, but for everyone involved.   | We regularly communicate assessment data to students, teachers, parents, administrators, and the community.   | We do not wait only for parent conferences and/or official report cards to share assessment data and/or concerns with parents.   |

*Teachers, students and parents will assess, record and report learning in various ways within 1 or more of the following:*

- Units of Inquiry
- Exhibition
- Domain and Module State Curriculum related assessments (ELA & Math)
- State and Local Assessments
- Student Portfolios
- Learner Profile Assemblies

**Our values and attitudes about assessment are:**

- Sharing learning goals with the students
- Helping students to self-assess
- Giving feedback so students recognize their next steps and how to take them
- To instill confidence in students so that they believe that they can improve
- To provide examples of what we expect from students

**Why do we assess?**

At Horizons-on-the-Hudson, we assess to promote continuous student learning and growth through the five essential elements of learning in the PYP. Each unit of inquiry includes both formative and summative assessments that evaluate the effectiveness of the learning program. At Horizons-on-the-Hudson, we believe that the most single important outcome is to give all of our learners the possible knowledge and skills to flourish beyond Academy Field.

**What do we assess?**

Through our assessments, we assess the understanding of the big ideas (concepts), acquisition of knowledge, mastery of skills and the student’s progress and performance of all major subject areas (Literacy, Writing, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies). Since assessments guide our planning and instruction, we make sure it is frequent, on-going, varied and continuous.

**When does assessment take place?**

Assessment is a continuous process that provides feedback to identify areas of strength and areas that need improvement. Students are assessed and monitored throughout units in the form of pre-assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessment to drive instruction and track student progress.

**Units of Inquiry**

Pre-Assessment

Pre-assessments occur at the beginning of units to uncover prior knowledge and to direct further learning. These pre-assessments are used to identify prior knowledge to drive instruction in depth.

Some examples of pre-assessments include, but are not limited to:

- class discussions
- inquiry boxes
- concept maps
- brainstorming strategies
- role play
- read aloud
- primary documents
- KWL charts
- scenarios
- skills tests
- written responses.

### Formative Assessment

Formative assessment provide teachers and students with information about how the learning is developing. Formative assessments are taken at varying intervals throughout a unit. They provide information and feedback that will help improve the quality of student learning and the quality of the unit itself. Not only does it provide the student with feedback of their learning process within units and across disciplines, but it helps the teacher plan next steps for learning.

Key Elements of Formative Assessments:

- The identification by teachers and learners of learning goals, outcomes and criteria for achieving the goals.
- Rich conversations between teachers and students that continually build and go deeper.
- The provision of effective, timely feedback to enable students to advance their learning.
- The active involvement of students in their own learning.
- Teachers responding to identified learning needs and strengths by modifying their teaching strategies.

Examples of formative assessments include, but are not limited to:

- teacher observations
- teacher-student conferences
- self-assessment
- peer-assessment
- research process
- anecdotal notes
- checklists to monitor assessment data
- application of essential elements
- demonstration of conceptual understandings
- process charts

### Summative Assessment

Summative assessment takes place at the end of teaching and learning cycles (unit or process). It is a chance for students to demonstrate what has been learned throughout the unit in new and authentic ways. It is an opportunity for students and teachers to evaluate the progress and demonstrate what has been learned over the course of time. A summative assessment is a formal ending point to an experienced unit/concepts. The summative assessment task for each unit of inquiry is collaboratively designed at the beginning of each unit by grade level teachers and should directly demonstrate conceptual understanding of the 5 Essential Elements of the PYP: Knowledge (Transdisciplinary themes), Concepts, Skills, Attitudes, and Action, as well as application of the Learner Profile. A rubric is the common tool for assessing summative assessments. Rubrics must be created at the beginning of the Unit of Inquiry which outline the expectations for what students will learn and be able to demonstrate. Examples of summative assessment tasks include, but are not limited to:

- inquiry report
- presentations
- written reports/responses
- exhibition presentations

- student created project and/or models
- demonstration of conceptual understandings

### Exhibition

In Grade 5, the final year of the PYP at Horizons-on-the-Hudson Elementary School, students participate in the PYP Exhibition. Exhibition is the collaboration of students demonstrating their understanding of and connection to the five essential elements of the programme: Knowledge (Transdisciplinary themes), Concepts, Skills, Attitudes and Action as well as the Learner Profile. This culminating project allows students to apply such elements to a community based issue. Rubrics and reflections are the common tools for assessing participation in Exhibition, as related to process and understanding.

### State and Local Mandated Assessments

Due to the fact that Horizons on the Hudson is a public school in a large district, many of the assessments, recording and reporting policies and strategies are dictated by our Central Administration. State and local testing that students take each year include:

| Assessment  | Purpose  | Frequency                      | Grade Level |
|---|--|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Common Core English Language Arts Test  | To measure student proficiency in English Language Arts knowledge, skills and application  | Once a year                    | Grades 3-5  |
| Common Core Mathematics Test  | To measure student proficiency in Mathematics knowledge, skills and application  | Once a year                    | Grades 3-5  |
| Science Written and Performance Test  | To assess mastery of K-4 Science Curriculum  | Once a year                    | Grades 3-5  |
| NYSESLAT test   | To determine English Language Proficiency for English Language Learners and to determine language support services                                   | Once a year                    | Grades K-5  |
| Reading and Math Local Benchmark Assessments                                      | To evaluate reading and math comprehension and skills application. Intended to assess student level of proficiency and to inform teacher instruction | Three times per year           | Grade K-5   |
| Dibels  | A set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills  | Three times per year           | Grades K-5  |
| Running Records<br>Rigby PM (K-2)<br>Teacher's College (2-5)                      | To measure student progress in reading, plan for future instruction, and provide a way for students to understand their own progress                 | Four times per year            | Grades 2-5  |
| Domain and Module Assessments in ELA and Mathematics (NYS Common Core curriculum) | To measure student proficiency in standards based English Language Arts and Mathematics  | Ongoing throughout school year | Grades K-5  |

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|  | knowledge, skills and application  |                                |              |
| Universal Screening Rtl                            | To identify students who without further intervention will be likely to develop reading deficiencies at a later time | On an as needed basis          | Grades 3-5   |
| Kindergarten Readiness Assessments in ELA and Math | To evaluate Kindergarten Readiness skills to target for remediation, proficiency and enrichment                      | Ongoing throughout school year | Kindergarten |

### How do we collect and analyze the data?

At Horizons-on-the-Hudson Elementary School we use various tools to collect and analyze data to monitor our students' progress. These assessment strategies and tools form the basis of a comprehensive approach to monitor what the students have learned.

#### Assessment Strategies: How do students demonstrate learning at HOH? (Include, but are not limited to)

- **Observations:** All students are observed regularly with the focus on the individual, the group, and/or the whole class. Checklists and anecdotal notes are common methods of recording observations.
- **Performance Assessment:** Students demonstrate their learning through individual, small group, and whole group presentations. This may take the form of individual student presentation of inquiry, small group presentations and/or exhibitions, and whole class presentations such as student created plays, debates, etc.
- **Selected Responses:** Students demonstrate their individual through tests and quizzes. Some examples of selected responses at HOH are teacher made or engage NY module assessments, System 44, Fast Math/Reflex Math, TC Running Records, SRI, guided reading

#### Assessment Tools: How do teachers at HOH record student progress? (Include, but are not limited to)

- **Rubrics:** Rubrics are created by teachers and/or students to give a clear understanding of the expectations of the assessment. All rubrics provide a clear description of the standard/criteria being assessed as well as teacher feedback (stars & steps).
- **Checklists:** Checklists are formed by the teacher or students to list the information, data, attributes, or elements that should be presented in the assessment.
- **Anecdotal Records:** Teacher records anecdotal records (brief, written notes based on observations of students). This information can be shared with student during conferences or feedback forms.

### IB Portfolio Guidelines: Documentation of Student Learning in the PYP

*A portfolio is one method of collecting and storing information that can be used to document student progress and achievement. It is a record of students' involvement in learning and is designed to demonstrate success, growth, higher-order thinking, creativity, assessment strategies and reflection (Making the PYP Happen, 2007).*

#### Objectives of the Portfolios:

- The portfolio is designed to demonstrate the development of the child's active mind at work (success, growth, higher order thinking, creativity, and reflection) over the academic school year.
- The portfolio should celebrate the child's journey through the PYP, the development of the whole child both within and outside of the Program of Inquiry in all subject areas.

- The portfolio should contain examples of the student's work chosen from the different subject areas to demonstrate what the student has achieved.
- The portfolios must be well presented and show the progress of the child during each academic school year.
- To accurately show the achievement, the pieces of work should mostly be done without the aid of the teacher. The aim is to be able to show the progress of the child during the year and, in order to do this:
  - The work must be representative of the child's true understanding of the 5 Essential Elements of the PYP
  - The samples of work must reflect aspects of the IB PYP transdisciplinary themes, transdisciplinary skills concepts, attitudes, and action as well as the Learner Profile.

Portfolio content at each grade level should include the following for each Unit of Inquiry:

- At least one student-selected work as evidence of the inquiry process and application; i.e. the summative assessment
  - Teachers should help students learn how to thoughtfully choose which item/s to include
  - Students should understand the purpose of the portfolio, the process used to compile it, and be able to explain why specific materials are in his/her portfolio
- One student-generated written reflection including:
  - Unit of Inquiry date
  - Transdisciplinary Theme
  - Central Idea
  - Key Concepts/Lines of Inquiry
  - Description of understanding of transdisciplinary theme (students as inquirers of knowledge), key concepts, transdisciplinary skills, attitudes, and student-initiated action (the 5 Essential Elements) as well as the learner profile.
- Evidence of one or more of the following embedded in student self-selected work:
  - Language Development
    - Reading Development and Skills
    - Writing Development and Skills
    - Listening Development and Skills
    - Speaking Development and Skills
  - Mathematical Development
  - Social Studies Development
  - Science Development
  - Physical, Social and Personal Education Development
  - Arts Development
- Dividers separating the binder into grade levels as well as a cover sheet for each Transdisciplinary Theme within each grade level division.

Portfolio Management Guidelines:

- Portfolios are intended to be student-managed with teacher guidance so students take ownership of their portfolios. Teachers should help students learn how to thoughtfully choose which items to include/keep in their portfolios and provide students opportunities to thoughtfully remove items as well.
- At the end of each unit, students are to insert required portfolio documentation within the given transdisciplinary theme section as guided by the teacher for all 6 transdisciplinary themes
- Portfolios should be easily accessible to students. Students should understand the purpose of the portfolio, the process used to compile it, and be able to explain why specific materials are in his/her portfolio.
- Portfolio content need not be limited to written work. A variety of media can be represented to reflect different learning styles and experiences.
- Portfolios will be made available to share with parents during Parent/Teacher conferences. All portfolios will be shared with the school community during Exhibition Night.

- Portfolio content is to be stored in 3-ring binders supplied by the school. These follow students from one grade to the next. At the end of each school year, all portfolio binders will be passed to the student's next year teacher respectively.
- At the end of 5th grade portfolio contents are to be given to students to take home.
- Portfolios of students who have been discharged from the school will be given to the IB Coordinator to house for a maximum of one school year.

### **How is student growth reported to parents and students?**

A district report card required in all grades. Students in grades K-5 receive 3 report cards per year. Additionally, students receive progress reports to maintain families informed of their child's progress.

### **Learner Profile**

#### Assessment of Students Understanding and Application

**Purpose:** While at Horizons-on-the-Hudson Elementary School, all participants are expected to model the attributes of the Learner Profile. The assessment of such practice will be for students to set goals and self-reflect based on such attributes as connected to their learning and developmental process.

#### Tools/Strategies:

- Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade students will be introduced to the Learner Profile focusing on one attribute a month.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will use the Horizons-on-the-Hudson Learner Profile Reflection to self-assess their growth and understanding of the Learner Profile. Teachers agree to give students time at least 2-3 times a year to complete the document. This will be housed in the student's portfolio and a copy given to the IB Coordinator.
- All grade level students will engage in units of inquiry that embed focus Learner Profile attributes which will be continuously emphasized throughout the unit and used to drive student reflections per unit.
- 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will reflect on their personal and academic growth as related to the Learner Profile and such reflection will be embedded and evident in their Exhibition culminating final project.
- The entire school community of students will participate in monthly Learner Profile assemblies, which has become a part of our school culture in order to celebrate the Learner Profile, one attribute per month.

#### Agreements

- Assessment of the Learner Profile and its attributes will be student driven.
- Parents are encouraged to facilitate student goal setting and reflection with regards to modeling the Learner Profile and attitudes of the PYP. Learner profile and definitions of such are shared monthly with our community of parents/family members through the school newsletter. Suggestions are offered to encourage parents to become active participants in driving the Learner Profile attributes at home as well.
- Students, parents, teachers and school administration are expected to model the Learner Profile while attending Horizons-on-the-Hudson Elementary School.
- Students are held accountable to show evidence of modeling and understanding the attributes of all Learner Profiles through behavior, learning experiences and written reflections.
- Learner Profile strategies and agreements are shared with community partnerships in order to equip collaborations and learning experiences with a common IB Language.