Introduction

Our Assessment Policy is a constantly evolving document that reflects the assessment needs of the district and its individual schools. Collaborative reflection will continue to be a key component in the development of future assessment practices.

We believe the purpose of an assessment policy is to:

- provide information through its diagnostic, formative and summative components and involve students, parents, teachers and administrators.

- provide teachers with a common language of the assessment process within the Midland Public Schools.

Effective assessment components allow:

- students to be an active part of the learning process through reflection and the demonstration of understanding.

- teachers to collaboratively assess what the student can do and to what level of proficiency/expertise.

- measurement of the application of targeted knowledge rather than the mere recall of facts.

- measurement of growth over time through the use of a portfolio system.

- active reflection on the part of the student and teacher, including self and peer evaluation.

- individual needs to be met.

- students, teachers, parents, and administrators access to information for continuous improvement in curriculum, instruction, meaningful work, and assessment tasks.

- goal setting for students, teachers and administrators.

- reflection and assessment of growth of the Learner Profile attributes by both teachers and students.

- students and teachers to utilize and assess understanding of the five essential elements of the PYP (knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes and action) when engaged in the units of inquiry.

Philosophy

"Assessment involves the gathering and analysis of information about student performance and is designed to inform practice." (Making the PYP Happen, 2009)

For successful citizenship in the 21st Century, Midland Public Schools' students must develop broad-based knowledge through conceptual understanding, diverse skills, personal

attributes and perspective leading to action. Individually, each is an important element of our instructional program and collectively these elements are essential to the IB-PYP curriculum framework, providing students with both a richness and depth of learning. Our assessment beliefs are based upon the understanding that we have a responsibility to assess, evaluate, and provide consistent and continual feedback as students develop and apply these elements through learning experiences and in daily life.

Assessment is ongoing, authentic, varied and purposeful. It is a collaborative and informative process that involves students, teachers, parents and the greater learning community. Instructional and curricular decision-making is driven by our assessments.

Types of Assessment

Pre-Assessment:
- Takes place at the beginning of instruction to discover what students already know in order to plan the next stages of learning

Formative Assessment:
- Interwoven with the daily learning/inquiry and provides both teachers and students with useful feedback on how well students are understanding and applying the concepts, skills, and knowledge in order to inform instruction

Summative Assessment:
- Takes place at the end of the teaching and learning cycle and gives students opportunities to demonstrate what has been learned

Self-Assessment/Peer-Assessment:
- Occurs throughout the learning experiences/inquiry to engage students in reflection and assessment of their own learning and/or that of their peers
- Multiple opportunities and adequate time to reflect on learning that may include reflection of collaborative group work
- Attributes of the Learner Profile assessed formally and informally

(Summative Assessment) The Exhibition:
- The Exhibition takes place at the end of Grade 5 and requires students to demonstrate engagement with the five essential elements of the programme: knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and action. It is a transdisciplinary inquiry as well as a summative assessment that is a celebration as students complete their Primary Years Programme experience. Students engage in a collaborative, transdisciplinary inquiry process that involves identifying, investigating, and offering solutions to real-life issues or problems.

Assessment Strategies

As students have contact with a number of teachers throughout the elementary school day, a variety of assessment strategies are used. These strategies cover a broad range of approaches from subjective and intuitive to objective and scientific. These strategies are viewed as complimentary since they have been selected in order to provide a range of approaches and a balanced view of the student. Below is a list of possible assessment strategies.

Observations:
- are made often and at regular intervals.
- are conducted for individuals, groups and the whole class depending upon the purpose.
- are conducted in a variety of contexts to increase validity.

Performance Assessments:
- are goal-directed tasks with established criteria and provide opportunities for problem solving.
- utilize multiple transdisciplinary skills.
- have more than one correct response.

Selected Responses:

Closed:
- used to determine student knowledge or skill level on a particular task (tests, quizzes, dictation, etc.).

Open:
- used to stimulate an original response by students and to demonstrate learning and provide information that can inform instruction.

Assessment Tools

These assessment tools may be used in conjunction with other forms of assessment, such as standardized tests, in order to assess both student performance and the efficacy of the programme.

Rubrics:
- are descriptors that students and assessor(s) use to determine what criteria or characteristics will be used in classroom work/assignments/projects and how to rate that work on a predetermined scale.
- can be developed by students and/or teachers.

Checklists:
- are lists of information, data, and/or attributes that are evident and marked as learning takes place or skills are acquired.

Anecdotal Records:
- are brief written notes based on observations of students.

Exemplars:
- are samples of students' work that serve as concrete standards against which other samples are judged. (Generally, there is one benchmark for each achievement level in a scoring rubric. Each school is encouraged to set benchmarks that are appropriate and usable within their particular school context.)

<u>**Continuums**</u>:
- are visual representations of developmental stages of learning, showing a progression of achievement or identity where a student is in a process.

Documentation

The documentation of evidence of student learning is an assessment strategy relevant to all students throughout the PYP. Teachers use a range of methods to document student learning as a means of assessing student understanding. Documenting is a means of giving feedback.
- In Grades K-3, students are assessed using a standards-based performance system.
- In Grades 4-5, students are assessed using a standards-based performance system in addition to traditional letter grades.

<u>**Teacher-Student Conferences:**</u>
- are usually informal and are incorporated into regular classroom routines.
- are designed to provide students with feedback on their progress in any given area and also allow students to reflect upon their work.

<u>**Scheduled Teacher-Parent Conferences:**</u>
- are a more formal conference between classroom teachers and parents to provide feedback about the students' progress and needs.
- answer parent questions, address concerns and help define roles in the learning process.
- may be scheduled with specialist teachers.
- are held twice a year; however informal conferences can be requested and held at any time.

<u>**End of Unit Reporting:**</u>
- occurs at the end of each Unit of Inquiry.
- allows students and teachers to select work for portfolios. (The creation of a portfolio is another opportunity for students to share their work/knowledge with their parents and to reflect upon this work in order to create a plan to address any areas that may need improvement.)

<u>**The Written Progress Report (Preschool-5):**</u>
- is used to document students' progress.
- is completed by the classroom teacher with input from single-subject teachers twice yearly with regard to their specific subject areas.
- in Grades K-3, provides feedback using the following scale: Not Assessed, Developing, Achieving, Extending. (Handbooks for each grade level contain rubrics and expectations for progress reporting.)
- in Grades 4-5, provides feedback using traditional letter grades. (Handbooks for each grade level contain rubrics and expectations for progress reporting.)

Portfolios

"A portfolio is a record of students' involvement in learning which is designed to demonstrate success, growth, high-order thinking, creativity, assessment strategies and reflection. A portfolio is a celebration of an active mind at work." (Making the PYP Happen, IBO 2009)

Purpose of Portfolios:
- empowers students to be active participants in their own learning.
- encourages reflection of the learning process and achievements.
- encourages students, teachers and parents to see learning as a continuous process.
- encourages a sense of pride in one's work and thereby building self-esteem.

Formal Internal Assessments Used by the Midland Public Schools (Preschool-5)

Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2):
- measures students' fluency, accuracy and comprehension in Grades K-3 (can be used in Grades 4-5 as needed).
- uses rubrics to inform and guide instruction.

Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI):
- measures students' fluency, accuracy and comprehension of both narrative and expository passages in Grades 3-5.
- provides information for instructional strategies as well as possible intervention instruction.

Writing Assessments:
K-2
- are created in Writing Workshop or other authentic situations and are selected twice yearly (Winter/Spring).
- are scored using the MPS Six-Point Writing Rubric and entered into the district's database system: District Assessment Record (DAR), where results are shared with students and parents and used to inform instruction.

3-5
- include two essays assessed each year (Winter/Spring).
- include district-selected prompts or a topic of student choice.
- are scored using the MPS Six-Point Writing Rubric and entered into the district's database system: District Assessment Record (DAR), where results are shared with students and parents and used to inform instruction.

Math District Assessments (K-5):
- assess students' knowledge of math concepts based on Michigan Academic State Standards.
- are given quarterly in Grades K-5, and information is entered into the district's database system: District Assessment Record (DAR), where results are shared with students and parents and used to inform instruction.

District Science Assessments (K-5):
- measure students' knowledge (pre and post) of unit concepts that accompany district-created kits.
- align with Michigan Academic State Standards.
- are scored and information is entered into the district's database system: District Assessment Record (DAR), where results are shared with students and parents and used to inform instruction.

Social Studies Assessments (K-5):
- use a variety of assessment tools that measure knowledge of Michigan Academic State Standards and broader concepts.
- can include district-created assessments, unit tests, projects, presentations, etc.
- are scored and information is entered into the district's database system: District Assessment Record (DAR), results are shared with students and parents and used to inform instruction.

Language B (Spanish) Assessments:
- In Grade 2, all students take a district-wide common assessment to measure interpretive communication skills. When provided with a variety of topics, students listen/read and respond to questions or identify correct answers. A Pass/Fail system is used with 75% being the cut score for passing.
- In Grade 5, all students take a district-wide interpersonal oral common assessment. Students are provided with scenarios in which they hold a conversation with a peer in Spanish. They are assessed based on a district-created Interpersonal Four Point Rubric.

High Scope Preschool Assessment (Preschool):
- High Scope's research-validated authentic assessment tools serve multiple purposes. It provides teachers with valuable and practical information to understand and plan for the developmental needs of our youngest learners. Information on progress is gathered in the course of everyday classroom activities; therefore, the results can be utilized to strengthen the classroom programme.
- It is designed to look at meaningful educational outcomes, gather information in ways that are natural and comfortable for children and adults, and provide accurate data that can be used for planning and policy-level decision making. This assessment aligns with State and National Early Learning Standards.

External Assessments Used by the Midland Public Schools (K-5)

M-STEP
- Michigan's assessment system includes scenario-based assessments designed to measure student growth effectively. The areas of assessment include English Language Arts and Mathematics (Grades 3, 4, and 5), Science (Grade 4), and Social Studies (Grade 5).

W-APT
- WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) is an English language proficiency screener given to incoming students who may be designated as English language learners. The W-APT is one component of WIDA's assessment system.

- **W-APT** test items are written from the model performance indicators of WIDA's five English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards. Each test assesses the four language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- If the student does not score proficient on the W-APT, he/she will be flagged as LEP (Limited English Proficient) for state reporting and the student will be assigned an MPS English Language tutor for one or two hours per week.

ACCESS for ELLs
- ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) is a secure large-scale English language proficiency assessment given to kindergarten through twelfth graders who have been identified as English Language Learners (ELLs). It is administered annually in WIDA Consortium member states to monitor students' progress in acquiring academic English.
- ACCESS for ELLs test items are written from the model performance indicators of WIDA's five English language proficiency standards.

Assessment Review/Future Steps:

The assessment policy will be reviewed annually at both the district and staff level.
As we move forward in our PYP journey and shift our thinking and practices in terms of assessment, we will begin to take the following steps:

Writing Prompts:
- Developed from Units of Inquiry
- Concept-based from within past or present Units of Inquiry or directly from Transdisciplinary Themes
- Connected to Learner Profile attributes and/or Attitudes

Reading:
- QRI-text related to Transdisciplinary Themes or Learner Profile attributes (narrative) or concepts (culture, diversity, etc.)

Social Studies:
- Extended responses added to current social studies tests based on concepts covered within the unit (ex. American Revolution would write about *revolution* as a concept or Thirteen Colonies as *settlement*)
- Take multiple choice questions and add a blank for students to identify which key concept the question best represents/supports with evidence

Science:
- Extended responses can be added to connect to concepts taught within the unit rather than topics
- Align learning experiences with concepts and "big ideas" rather than isolated facts
- Continue to build upon learning engagements and summative assessments to align with M-STEP performance tasks; look for application of concepts and transfer of knowledge gained

Other:

- **Progress reports/grade level handbooks will continue to be aligned with PYP Scope and Sequence (Process began with a 2015 Summer Study and is ongoing)**
- **Learner Profile Self-Assessments will be utilized twice yearly and become part of the student portfolios**