

Las Colinas Elementary Primary Years Programme Assessment Policy, updated Nov. 2016

I. Philosophy

At Las Colinas Elementary, we recognize that teaching, learning and assessment are fundamentally interdependent.

- Assessment focuses on the quality of student learning during the process of inquiry and on the products resulting from that learning.
- Assessment is designed to improve student learning and helps to measure effectiveness of teaching strategies and materials.
- Assessment is anchored in authentic tasks.
- Assessment utilizes a balanced range of strategies for formative and summative tasks.
- Timely, specific and supportive feedback is central to all learning and teaching.
- Students should have wide variety of assessment opportunities such as written tasks, oral presentations, field work, practical work, exhibitions, lab reports, performances, examinations, research papers, etc.
- Students should have an active role in peer and self-assessment.
- Reflection is an essential process within assessment and indicates understanding over time.

II. Assessment Practices

Formative Assessment

Assessment should be formative (for learning) to assist students in building understanding, skills and knowledge. Through a variety of methods, ongoing and regular assessment will be used during the teaching and learning process to inform teacher and students about how they are developing. Formative assessment and teaching are directly linked and provide feedback that is responsive to student needs and informs teaching practice.

Summative Assessment

Assessment should also be summative (of learning) to assess what students understand, know and are able to do. Summative assessment happens at the end of the teaching and learning process or experience but is planned at the beginning of the unit. The assessment is designed so that students can demonstrate their learning in authentic contexts and apply it in new ways.

Strategies of Assessment

Observation: Observation is a direct means for learning about students' knowledge and skills and to allow teachers to plan ways for meeting their academic needs. Observations about Knowledge and the Approaches to Learning Skills can be made during:

- Independent work time
- Peer interactions
- Reading time/writing time
- Large or small group discussion

Student Led Conferences: When conducting student led conferences, the student is in charge of the academic conference with parents. The teacher facilitates discussion as needed, and allows students to be active participants in demonstrating their understanding of various concepts as they share their academic work. During the conference, students share their “portfolios” with their family.

Portfolios: Portfolios are collections of student work representing their academic levels of achievement. Every student in grades K-5 has an individual portfolio, which is a binder, and has a sample of student work from each unit of inquiry. Student reflection about the strengths and weaknesses of each piece, as well as additional student reflections from the year are part of the portfolio. This tool supports the student’s role in constructing understanding while teachers are promoting ongoing understanding.

Tools for Assessment

Assessment information can be qualitative or quantitative and may be gathered from rubrics, district or state mandated tests, anecdotal records, behavior folders, projects, etc.

Recording and Reporting Assessment in the IB:

Information about students’ progress can be recorded and reported to parents through any of the following means: student report cards from current and previous years (including the PYP insertion), photographs, portfolio pieces, reading records, progress reports, and scores from district and state assessments.

III. Additional requirements

Local school policy requires that, per progress reporting period, students be given three formative assessments which count for 25% of the student’s grade and one summative assessment which counts for 75% of the student’s grade. If a student scores below a 70 on the summative assessment, then the student must attend tutorials in order to repeat the summative task. Parents are notified in writing of their student’s progress. Students at Las Colinas take all state and locally mandated tests. This includes common unit assessments in core subjects as provided by the local school district. The State of Texas Assessment Of Academic Readiness (STAAR) occurs annually in grades 3-5 in reading, writing, math, science.

Students who have Special Needs and/or have Language needs will be assessed to the most appropriate level of criteria, taking into consideration their Individualized Education Plan and their level of academic English. Students shall be assessed in multiple ways as appropriate to document their achievement of local standards and IB expectations.

Review of Assessment Policy

This policy shall be reviewed by all stakeholders each year to ensure continued alignment with IB and local district expectations. Newly hired teachers shall be trained about required assessment practices throughout the first semester of their teaching contract. Parents and students shall be made aware of this policy through normal communication channels at the beginning of each semester.