

Merrill Middle School Assessment Policy

**2015 - 16**

Last Updated: March 2016

This document is meant to be used in conjunction with Merrill’s Assessment Policy, Inclusion Policy, and Language Policy.

**Philosophy**

The Merrill Middle School community believes assessment is an integral part of the instructional cycle, and effective assessment practices allow for the collection and analysis of information to support and encourage effective teaching and learning. Further, we believe that it is crucial to:

* assess the process and product of an inquiry through summative and formative assessments.
* implement differentiation strategies to meet the needs of all students.
* use a variety of instructional techniques, including service learning, to accommodate the various learning needs and styles of all students.
* encourage student choice in assessment tasks.
* engage students in meaningful tasks that replicate authentic, real-world challenges.
* offer multiple opportunities for students to explore content and concepts.
* provide continual and frequent feedback to students.

**Development and dissemination**

The assessment policy was developed in conjunction with parents, students, community members, faculty, and staff. It will be reviewed annually by stakeholders. The policy is posted at ***www.merrill.dmschools.org***, made available in hard copy form, and provided to all Merrill community members as requested.

**Formative assessment**

Formative assessments are designed to inform instruction and provide information to teachers about each student’s level of proficiency. These assessments, which can be formal or informal, provide timely, detailed feedback for students and allow time for students to make self-adjustments. They are used throughout units to allow students to explore content, concepts and to provide the knowledge and skills they will need to perform summative tasks. Well-designed learning experiences, self-assessment, observations, and anecdotal notes are examples of formative assessments used at Merrill Middle School.

**Summative assessment**

Summative assessments, also referred to as culminating tasks, are assessments that are administered at the end of a unit of inquiry to measure students’ proficiency of standards and subject-area objectives. Authentic summative assessments prompt students to action and communicate learning to parents/guardians, students, and teachers. Tests, projects, essays, and presentations are some examples of summative assessments used at Merrill Middle School. Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency, including summative tasks.

**Assessment in the Middle Years Programme**

Merrill will follow the assessment guidelines set forth in the IB Middle Years Programme.

* Teachers will collaborate to design common course assessments according to MYP objectives. These assessment tasks will be age-appropriate, allow students to gather information from multiple perspectives, and will align with standards and subject-area objectives.
* In MYP units of work, MYP criterion rubrics will be used on summative tasks. In addition, teachers will collaborate to standardize criterion rubrics.
* In each unit, teachers will choose teaching strategies and learning experiences that align with the Statement of Inquiry.
* Subject-area MYP objectives will be used to assess work in each year of the programme. These objectives are available to parents and community stakeholders on the school’s website.
* It is expected that each subject-area objective strand will be assessed a minimum of two times in the year.

**Self-assessment and Reflection**

Merrill strives to create inquiring and reflective learners who self-assess their academic progress. Students are given the opportunity to reflect on their learning, the work of their peers, and the Learner Profile during the course of each unit.

**Recording and Reporting**

Beginning in August 2014, all DMPS middle schools implemented a standards-referenced grading system to measure students’ academic proficiency of Iowa Core Standards. This system of assessment allows teachers to better target instruction to meet student needs. Important student behaviors such as work completion, participation, and working with others will be reported separately using the DMPS Citizenship and Employability Skills Rubric.

Merrill teachers will use a four-point scale to assess formative assessment tasks. Teachers use IB criterion rubrics to assess culminating tasks and complex formative tasks. Achievement levels are reported through Infinite Campus.

For reporting purposes, teachers convert IB rubric scores to the DMPS four-point scale when communicating proficiency of DMPS learning topics.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| IB Rubric Score | Infinite Campus Score | Level of Proficiency |
| 8 | 4 | Exceeding |
| 7 | 3.5 | Exceeding |
| 6 | 3 | Proficient |
| 5 | 3 | Proficient |
| 4 | 2.5 | Developing |
| 3 | 2 | Developing |
| 2 | 1.5 | Beginning |
| 1 | 1 | Beginning |
| 0 | 0 | No evidence of student understanding in submitted work |
| M | 0 | Student has not submitted evidence |

Students are offered multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency. If a student does not turn in a task, an *M* is designated on Infinite Campus to show that a judgment against the standard could not be made; however, students may still turn in the assignment as evidence of their learning with no academic penalty. Students and parents/guardians have the ability to monitor levels of achievement on Infinite Campus at any time. In addition, progress reports are distributed to parents/guardians every nine weeks.

Along with this formal reporting, the Merrill website includes regular curriculum updates. Faculty members also use Infinite Campus, e-mail, phone calls, and parent meetings to update parents and guardians about classroom activities and students’ levels of achievement.

The MYP encompasses eight subject areas, each with specific aims and objectives. The table below represents criterion categories in which each student is assessed. The objective strands under each criterion are assessed a minimum of two times each year.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject Criteria** | **Arts** | **Individuals & Societies** | **Language & Literature** | **Language Acquisition** |
| **Criterion A** | Knowledge and understanding | Knowledge and understanding | Analyzing | Comprehending Spoken & Visual Text |
| **Criterion B** | Developing Skills | Investigating | Organizing | Comprehending Written & Visual Text |
| **Criterion C** | Thinking Creatively | Communicating | Producing Text | Communicating in Response to Spoken, Written & Visual Text |
| **Criterion D** | Responding | Thinking Critically | Using Language | Using Language in Spoken & Written Form |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject Criteria** | **Mathematics** | **Physical Education & Health** | **Sciences** | **Design** |
| **Criterion A** | Knowledge & understanding | Knowing & Understanding | Knowing & Understanding | Inquiring & Analyzing |
| **Criterion B** | Investigating patterns | Planning for Performance | Inquiring & Designing | Developing Ideas |
| **Criterion C** | Communicating | Applying & Performing | Processing & Evaluating | Creating the Solution |
| **Criterion D** | Applying Mathematics in Real-Life Contexts | Reflecting & Improving Performance  | Reflecting on the Impacts of Science | Evaluating |

**Parent Communication Nights**

Merrill holds scheduled parent communication events for each grade level. During these conferences, students share their work and reflect on their progress in each subject area of the MYP.

**Mandatory Assessments**

* Iowa Assessments
* Subject-area DMPS Tiered Assessments
* Scholastic Reading Inventory
* Scholastic Math Inventory
* Language Acquisition Placement Exam
* English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21)
* Physical Education Fitness Gram

**Academic Integrity**

Merrill is dedicated to upholding the academic integrity of its program. Per Des Moines Public School policy, any student who engages in academic dishonesty will incur a Level One Act of Misconduct. At the discretion of the building administration and faculty, classroom penalties may also occur.

Please refer to Merrill’s Academic Honesty Policy for further information on this subject.

**MYP Assessment: Further Information**

Additional information on MYP assessment, including subject-area criterion rubrics and objective strands, can be found the Merrill Middle School website.

Source:

*MYP: From Principles into Practice*. Cardiff: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014.

Print.