

# Lowell International Elementary School

## Assessment Policy

### MISSION

The mission at Lowell International Elementary School is to develop globally minded learners of strong character, who are goal driven towards higher education.

### Philosophy

At Lowell International Elementary School, we believe that assessment is a continuation of the learning process. Assessment is not only used to gather data, but it is also used to inform instruction. It is essential in the development of the next learning steps for both teacher and student. Lowell teachers use both formative and summative assessments. The purpose, method, and success criteria of the assessment are evident during all phases of the assessment process.

### Purpose of Assessment at Lowell International Elementary School

Assessment is used by students, teachers, and parents to inform, monitor, and guide learning and instruction. It is a purposeful tool that enables students to set and achieve individualized goals, and which provides opportunities to reflect on that data.

**Students:** Assessment assists students in the demonstration of the skills/strategies/attitudes they have mastered and in the identification of those they need to improve. It engages students in reflection and gives them ownership of their learning.

**Teachers:** Assessment assists teachers in instructional planning as they reflect on how best to engage and serve the needs of their students in the types of learning that the Primary Years Programme supports.

**Parents:** Assessment strengthens the parent/ student/ teacher relationship. It informs parents regarding student strengths, weaknesses, and areas of growth.

**School:** Assessment informs school wide goal- setting and school improvement plans. It gives us a base from which to operate.

## **Recording and Reporting**

K5- 5<sup>th</sup> grade report cards are shared with parents in writing six times a year, through the use of three interim report cards and three trimester report cards. K4 report cards are sent home three times a year. Formal parent/teacher conferences are held twice a year, and informal conferences are held on an on-going basis. Report card envelopes are signed by parents and returned to school.

The district STAR (Renaissance Learning) scores are printed and shared with parents three times a year. The state Forward Exam scores are shared annually in the Fall. All scores are available on the school district's application page via the "Dashboard" page or in Infinite Campus. Hard copies are maintained in each student's cumulative folder.

## **Types of Assessment:**

### **Pre- Assessment**

Pre- assessment occurs before students engage in new learning. It activates prior knowledge and experiences and dictates further learning. Examples of pre- assessment include KWL charts, "I wonder" boards, questionnaires, and written responses.

### **Formative Assessment**

Formative assessment is incorporated into the daily learning process. It provides teachers with the information they need to inform students about how to improve their performance. Frequent use of formative assessment allows for differentiation of instruction for all students. Examples of formative assessments include Classroom Assessments Based on Standards, observations, self-assessment, anecdotal notes, checklists, and student/teacher conferencing.

### **Summative Assessment**

Summative assessment occurs at the end of a teaching and learning cycle. It gives students the opportunity to demonstrate what has been learned by applying their knowledge in new and authentic ways. It informs and improves student learning and the teaching process. The summative assessment task for each unit of inquiry is collaboratively designed at the beginning of each unit by the teacher, and directly measures the understanding of the central idea. A clearly defined rubric is used as the assessment tool by the teacher and as a self-assessment tool by the student. At the completion of each unit of inquiry, students engage in a reflection response summarizing their understanding. Examples of summative assessments include reports, plays, presentations, displays, and 5th grade Exhibition.

### **Student Self-Assessment**

Student self-assessment is interwoven throughout daily learning to engage students in reflection as a continual process. Students use the rubric in each unit to assess their work alongside the teacher. Students are given adequate time to reflect on their progress in both academic areas and on the attributes expressed in the learner profile.

### **Portfolios**

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 a student's involvement in learning and is designed to demonstrate success, growth, higher-order thinking, creativity, assessment strategies, and reflection (*Making the PYP Happen, 2007*).

Each portfolio contains examples of a student's work and is designed to serve two main purposes. First, portfolios can be utilized by students to view their body of work and to explore their own growth over time. Second, portfolios are an important means of communication between the school and the parent. Portfolios help parents to see their child's development throughout the year. The authentic work assembled in the portfolio is representative of the child's true abilities and will reflect aspects of the International Baccalaureate PYP attitudes, trans-disciplinary skills, and learner profile that may otherwise go unnoticed.

### **Exhibition**

The final year of the PYP at Lowell Elementary School is grade five. All fifth grade students will participate in the PYP Exhibition. This is a self-directed experience in which students demonstrate their understanding of the essential elements (knowledge, skills, attitudes, action, and concepts) of the PYP program. The Exhibition provides an authentic summative assessment of the PYP programme. As a culminating experience, it is an opportunity for students to exhibit the attributes of the IB learner profile that they have been developing through their engagement with the PYP. Students are involved in identifying, investigating, and offering solutions to real-life issues.

### **District and State Assessments**

**Forward Exam:** The Lowell students in grades 3- 5 take the Wisconsin Forward Exam. The Exam is designed to gauge how well students are doing in relation to the Wisconsin Academic Standards. These standards outline what students

should know and be able to do in order to be college and career ready. The Forward Exam is administered online in the spring of each school year. Grades 3 and 5 are assessed in the area of English Language Arts and Mathematics. Grade 4 is assessed in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.

**STAR:** STAR is a universal screener used in grades 1 through high school to assess the areas of early literacy, reading, and math. It is available in both English and Spanish and provides teachers with information on students' academic performance relative to whole-class instruction and is used as part of the identification process of students for additional support and intervention. Every student uses a goal setting sheet to identify their current score in each section and to set a goal for the next test. Students identify their own roadblocks to overcome and create an action plan with self-assessment.

**ACCESS for ELLs:** Students identified as English Learners (ELs) are required to be assessed annually to determine their level of English language proficiency (ELP) and ensure that they are progressing in achieving full English proficiency. The pedagogical team utilizes this data in determining programming for the next year. The data is also used for state and federal reporting purposes.

**CogAT:** The CogAt Test (Cognitive Abilities Test) is administered to all second graders annually, in the month of November. CogAT assesses students' abilities in reasoning and problem solving, using verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal (special) symbols. It is used as a screener in second grade to help identify students for possible eligibility for gifted and talented programs and may also be used in other grade levels on an individual student basis.

**Teacher's Observation of Potential in Students (TOPS):** The TOPS tool is used to screen potentially gifted and talented behavior and characteristics in elementary grade students. Each year, September to December, teachers

trained in using TOPS will observe their students with an at- potential, strength- based approach during hands- on learning experiences such as inquiry units or STEM. In December, based on multiple student observations, teachers will nominate students that demonstrated gifted potential with frequency and/or intensity.

**Reading Readiness:** [Wis. Stats. 118.016](#) requires each pupil enrolled in 4- year- old kindergarten to 2nd grade in a school district or in a charter school to be annually assessed for reading readiness. Starting in 2021- 2022, MPS will use a new combination of tools to meet these requirements at each grade level. Brigance Screens III is the new assessment for K4 and K5 students. The purpose of this tool is to provide teachers and parents of students in grades K3- K5 including Head Start with consistent and reliable assessment data of child development, behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, and emotional skills, as well as identify students in need of targeted support in learning, early literacy skills, and overall general development. The screener is administered within the student's first 45 days of school each year. The first and second grade students take STAR as their Reading Readiness assessment.

**NAEP:** National Assessment of Educational Progress is administered to a random selection of 4th grade students. This data is used to create the Nation's Report Card.