

ICS Addis Assessment Policy

ICS Mission

We nurture the talents, character and intellect of all learners, challenging them to be a positive influence and empowering them to excel in their world.

ICS Vision

Our vision for Learning at ICS includes:

- engaging learning experiences through inquiry and reflection
- a broad range of local, global, and virtual opportunities
- innovative and flexible use of resources

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to clarify our beliefs about assessment and understanding of the assessment principles, practices, and policies at ICS. This is a constantly evolving document that reflects our school's unique assessment needs. Our assessment philosophy applies to the whole school and will be communicated to and understood by all teachers, students, parents, and leadership. This is a collaborative effort and a work in progress.

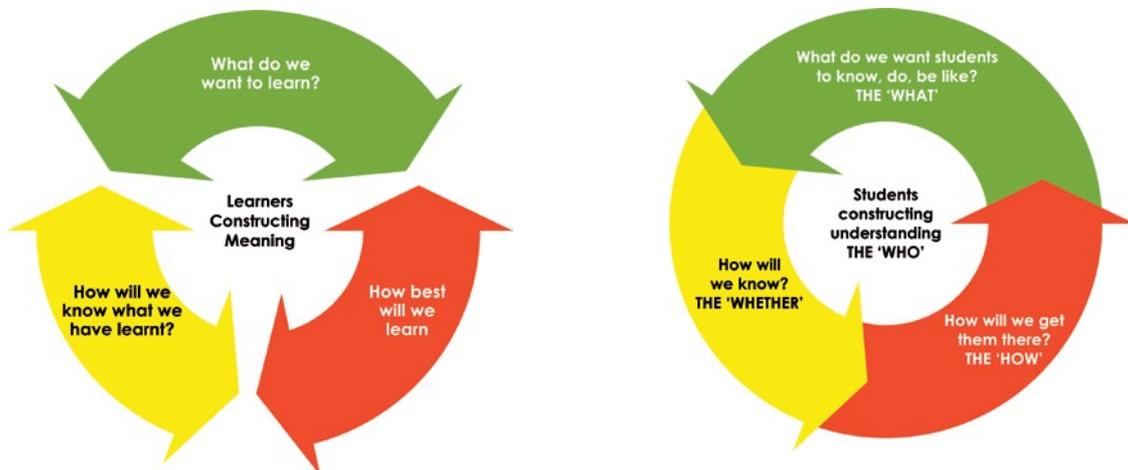
Curriculum Key Components at ICS

The Why—To support the Mission and Vision of ICS? Who do we serve at ICS?

The What—Curriculum—What do we want our students to know, do, be like (the intended learning)?

The How—Instruction—How will we get them there?

The Whether—Assessment—How do we best know that students have learned or not and whether students have achieved the desired results? What will we accept as evidence of student understanding? How will we evaluate student performance in a fair and consistent manner?



Assessment at International Community School of Addis Ababa

ICS uses standards to guide curriculum, assessment, and instruction and employs a standards-referenced approach. Assessment at ICS is guided and informed by the school's mission, vision, and strategic objectives. Assessment is an integral part of instruction and evaluation of school programs.

Definition of Assessment: Assessment is the systematic collection, analysis, and recording of information about student learning used to inform instruction and improve performance.

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Purposes of Assessment

- ✓ To assess for prior knowledge
- ✓ To gauge student learning
- ✓ To inform instruction
- ✓ To provide meaningful feedback
- ✓ To monitor student progress
- ✓ To provide evidence of student learning and growth
- ✓ To collect data
- ✓ To diagnose strengths and areas of improvement, and to develop personal goals
- ✓ To aid in planning decisions and program evaluation
- ✓ To measure the effectiveness of instructional practices
- ✓ To celebrate successes

Collection of Assessment Evidence

At ICS evidence of learning is collected in a variety of ways. **Pre-assessments** are used at a beginning of a unit to determine what students already know and can do. **Formative assessments** are on-going assessments and observations that provide meaningful feedback on a student's understanding of the concepts and what the students know and can do. Formative assessments inform, monitor and enhance student learning, instructional practice, and the curriculum. Formative assessments are used as the primary form of assessment at ICS. **Summative assessments** are designed to measure the achievement of the standards by students at the completion of a unit or course.

Assessment criteria are shared with students ahead of the summative task and assessment. Assessment results and feedback are shared with students and parents in a timely manner. External assessments provide additional evidence of how our students compare to those in similar schools.

Our beliefs about Assessment

- ✓ Assessment should improve learning, not just audit it
- ✓ Feedback is a critical part of assessment practices
- ✓ There should be a clear alignment amongst learning standards, what is assessed and what is reported
- ✓ Assessment tasks should be varied and provide the best and authentic evidence of student learning and achievement
- ✓ Formative assessments should guide learning and are the predominant mode of assessment at ICS
- ✓ Data is an essential tool for monitoring and improving student learning, teacher practice and curriculum development

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The following table outlines each aspect of our philosophy, the resulting actions we take and examples of what assessment looks like at ICS.

Philosophy Why do we assess the way we do at ICS?	Action What assessment actions do we take because of our philosophy?	Examples What assessments look like.
Standards: We believe assessment guides planning, instruction and learning and shows progress towards standards rather than to simply generate a grade.	<p>We ensure assessment is ongoing, varied and aligns to the curriculum.</p> <p>We allow students multiple opportunities to show progress toward standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit plans and calendars show evidence of a wide variety of pre-assessments, formative and summative assessments aligned to standards. • Grades are determined by mastery of standards and benchmarks that are age/grade-level appropriate and not averages. • The learning targets within the Standards are in student-friendly language and students receive rubrics and criteria at the beginning of learning experiences. • Processing and reflection tools are made available.
Type of Assessment: We believe that because each student's learning profile is unique, assessments come in many types and serve different needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We use diagnostic assessments to determine what students already know. • We use formative assessments to continually inform and monitor student progress. • We use summative assessments to measure growth against standards. 	A wide range of varied formal and informal, standardized and non-standardized assessments. such as, but not limited to:
Assessment Tools and Criteria		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubrics • Observations/discussions • Checklists • Benchmarks/exemplars • Continuums • Informal checks in class, • Formal quizzes and tests • Academic prompts • Open-ended assessment tasks.
Planning: We believe that in curricular planning, assessment and instruction are inseparable.	The teaching/learning cycle starts with assessment, rather than teaching,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching pre and post-assessments to ensure same assessment to same-assessment comparison of student growth. • These assess student understanding of the knowledge, skills and concepts in order to promote the characteristics of the ICS Learner Profile.

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Consolidation of Learning	A culminating experience that synthesizes learning.	Exhibition Extended Essay
Coordination: We believe to optimize student success the timing of all summative/external assessments must be coordinated.	Teachers communicate with each other, students and parents the timing of summative assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principals, The Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL), and Assessment and Data Coordinator work with each division to ensure all teachers are aware of external assessments. • Teachers and Principals create procedures regarding frequency and timing of summative assessments. • Teachers and Principals use a pre-established system of communication to facilitate collaboration.
Engaging: We believe that effective assessment, just like instruction, is appropriate, engaging, targeted toward specific learning outcomes and challenging. It includes inquiry and reflection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We design relevant, authentic and performance-based tasks. • Data from relevant and authentic performance tasks are regularly included in our unit planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubrics or explicit criterion that assist students in understanding how to achieve excellence are to be provided. • Wherever possible, assessments are designed to be authentic and connected to real world problems/scenarios and allow for student choice.
Communication: Assessment data is not just important for classroom use, but for the whole community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We regularly communicate assessment data to students, teachers, parents, administration and the community. • Teachers provide regular on-going constructive feedback to improve student performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divisional reporting/assessment and portfolio calendars. • Exemplars are available for student review. • Assignments have multiple checkpoints and students are given timely feedback to guide their work. • Student led conferences/portfolios facilitate student communication of their learning to parents.

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<p>Evaluation: Assessment should be used in evaluating school success.</p>	<p>We use internal and external data to improve individual units, courses, divisional goals and ultimately schoolwide objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and administrators regularly use the data from all assessments as a part of reflection, planning and improving. • Where appropriate teachers/administrators engage in data dialogues to determine changes in instruction and programming.
<p>Participatory/ Reflective: Assessment is a collaborative process that is most effective when it involves self, peer, and teacher feedback and growth based on reflection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students reflect on their own learning and the process • Students assess themselves, each other and help to develop rubrics and goals. • Teachers provide direct instruction and opportunities for effective self-assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are to be provided with opportunities to learn how to assess their own work and to set goals for improvement such as Embedding 3 way conferences and Goal Setting conferences. • Teachers and the leadership meet regularly to reflect on practices and the curriculum.
<p>Effort vs Performance: We believe that assessment of behavior is separate from academic performance.</p>	<p>We report <i>Effort</i> and academic progress separately.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An <i>Effort</i> descriptor is assigned at the divisional level. • Individual academic student achievement is not to be based on measures such as students' work habits, social development, bonus points, student absence, missed/late assignments, group scores, neatness, etc.

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Internal and External Assessments at ICS

These are the internal and external assessments used at ICS, to guide instruction, develop programs and evaluate student performance and growth.

Assessment	Grade	Calendar Window	Purpose	Application of Results
External Assessments				
Common Writing Assessment (Education Northwest)	3, 6, 9	Fall	Formative measures of Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor progress in Writing Instructional improvement and intervention Identify large scale trends
NWEA- Measure of Academic Progress (MAP)	2-10	Fall, Spring, Winter (for at-risk students)	Formative measures of Reading and Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional improvement and intervention Measures of performance and growth
End of Year Exams	9-11	Spring	Summative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grading and Reporting
IB Examinations	12	Spring	Award of IB Diploma and Certificate of Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal qualification College and University entrance
PSAT	11	Fall	College Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College Application and Testing Choices
SAT	12	4x annually according to College Calendar	College Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College Application and Testing Choices

Internal Assessments

Common Writing Assessment	KG-10	Fall, Spring	Formative measures of Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor progress in writing Instructional improvement and intervention Identify large scale trends
IB Mocks Exams	12	March	Preparation for IB Exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predicted grades for IB Exams, Grading and Reporting
Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2) and/or Teacher's College Reading Assessment	K-8	Fall, Winter, Spring	Measure of Reading levels Monitor Progress in Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify differentiation need and groupings

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Assessment	Grade s	Calendar Window	Purpose	Application of Results
IB Internal Assessments and IB Core requirements (EE, TOK, CAS)	11-12	Ongoing	Award of IB Diploma and Certificate of Results	Formal qualification College and University Entrance
FastBridge*	1-8	Ongoing for select students	Progress Monitoring	Formative assessments to tailor instruction for students and to develop instructional groups
WIDA*	K-12	Ongoing for select students	English Language Proficiency	Formative assessments to tailor instruction for students and to develop instructional groups
DIBELS*	K-6	Ongoing for select students	Progress Monitoring	Formative assessments to tailor instruction for students and to develop instructional groups
PAST*	ES and MS as needed	Ongoing for select students	Performance Monitoring and programing for instructional needs	Formative assessments to tailor instruction for students and to develop instructional groups.
Core Phonics*	ES and MS as needed	Ongoing for select students	Progress Monitoring	Formative assessments to tailor instruction for students and to develop instructional groups

*Denotes assessments used in Learning Support.

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Glossary of Terms

Analytic Rubric	Analytic-trait scoring of performance involves the use of scoring work, typically involving separate rubrics for each key criterion.
Assessment	The systematic collection, analysis and recording of information about student learning used to inform instruction and improve performance.
Assessment Policy	A systematic approach to assessment that includes schoolwide and classroom assessments which makes clear how learners are to be assessed in the school and how assessment is tied to curriculum and pedagogy.
Assessment Tasks	Guidelines on suggested and required assessment tasks. These should align with the desired standards that need to be met, and the knowledge and skills to be taught and assessed in the unit.
Authentic Assessment Task	An authentic assessment task is designed to simulate or replicate important, real-world performances.
Benchmark	A benchmark explores specific aspects of the standards and provides a clear description of what the learning looks within a standard at a given point, appropriate to a grade level or band (at particular grade levels or bands). A learning target that explores specific aspects of a standard.
Common Assessment	Assessments that are designed and planned in collaboration by colleagues to ensure consistency and alignment of the learning outcomes, and given to all students across or between a grade level/subject.
Criterion	The qualities or descriptors of the requirements and expectations needed for success on the task. The qualities that must be met by performances and products for work to measure up to the standard.
Criterion Referenced Grades	Grades that aligned to a set of explicit assessment criteria. <i>*Grades are not averaged at ICS.</i>
Data	The observable evidence collected on student learning.
Diagnostic/Pre-assessment	Diagnostic assessments used at the beginning of a learning cycle in order to determine pre-existing knowledge and skills, and identify misconceptions in comparison to the targeted standards.
Differentiated Assessment	Multiple and varied opportunities for students to demonstrate understanding and show progress towards the assessed standards.
External Assessment	Tools designed outside of ICS to collect evidence of how our students compare to those in other similar schools. External moderation of an assessment, exam or task by an outside agency.
Feedback	Timely and ongoing comments and information on how the student is learning. Feedback may be written, verbal, or recorded, and may be given by peers, other adults, or teachers.
Formative Assessments (Assessment for learning)	Ongoing assessments and observations that provide students feedback on their learning and progress. Learning tasks that generate formative feedback are essential for students to learn the skills needed for summative assessments, as well as being essential for new learning. Formative assessments provide opportunities for students to try new approaches, make managed errors, and learn from their mistakes without penalty to their grade.
Performance Task	A complex assessment challenge that requires the use of one's knowledge and skill to effectively perform or create a product to reveal one's understanding of proficiency.
Rubric	A scoring guide describing levels of performance on a task or standard. A rubric is based upon a continuum of performance quality and provides key features of performance of each level of scoring (descriptors) which signify the degree to which the criteria has been met.

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Standard	A big understanding that the students are expected to develop and deepen over time.
Strands	A way of grouping standards thematically.
Summative Assessments (Assessment of learning)	Assessments given at the end of the unit of study or course. Summative assessments provide a means of evaluating learning before moving on to new topics or skills. Summative assessments only assess the standards, knowledge and skills that were explicitly covered and taught within the unit and determine the achievement grade.
Test	A formal, often in written or oral form, summative assessment.

Glossary of Assessments ****Standardized acroynms**

CORE Phonics and PAST	The CORE Phonics Survey and Phonemic Awareness Screener Tool assesses the phonics and phonics related skills that have a high rate of application in beginning reading. Each survey presents a number of lists of letters and words for the student to identify or decode. Pseudo-words, or made-up words, are included since the student must use decoding skills to correctly pronounce these words and cannot have memorized them.
DIBELS	The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills from kindergarten through sixth grade.
FastBridge	Computer Adaptive Tests (CAT) and Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM). This multi-source, multi-method approach facilitates data -based decision- making for students' programming and instructional needs.
IB Exams	The International Baccalaureate Organization uses internationally benchmarked, criterion-referenced assessments and awards points leading to an IB Diploma. The grading guidelines and rubrics used are identical for all IB schools across the world. Requirements for a full Diploma include a minimum passing score of 24 out of 45 points. Students may also opt to take exams in individual IB subjects and receive an IB Certificate with a score of 3 or more in that subject.
Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)	All students in Grades 2-Grade 10 take the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) developed and scored by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), at least two times a year (August and May). The test is aligned with international school standards for reading, mathematics and language usage frameworks. The MAP test measures student growth and performance in relation to our curricular standards. MAP scores are shared with parents at the end of the year.
The Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test (PSAT)	Administered yearly to all Grade 10 students. US students may also take the PSAT in Grade 11 in order to qualify for National Merit Scholarships. The main purpose of the PSAT is help Grade 10 and 11 students prepare for the Scholastic Achievement Tests in Grades 11 and 12.
The Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT)	Administered to students in Grades 11 and 12. The SAT measures critical thinking skills proven to promote academic success at the university level. The exam contains Critical Reading, Mathematics and Writing sections. Each section of the SAT is scored on a scale of 200-800 with two writing sub-scores for multiple-choice and the essay. The SAT II exam is taken separately as an additional subject specific assessment, sometimes required for college admission applications.
WIDA	A standardized EAL assessment tool to determine what level of English instruction the student will need by assessing the student's proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking English. It is used primarily as an entry and exit assessment tool for English as Additional Language (EAL) learners.

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Assessment Research

The following research was used in creation of this document and supports ICS's assessment policy:

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