

Ocean Avenue Elementary School

ASSESSMENT PHILOSOPHY and AGREEMENT

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to clarify understanding across our school community of the assessment practices and tools within our school setting. It is an 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 school community stakeholders. It is directly linked to our mission and vision statements, which are:

MISSION: At Ocean Avenue School, a rigorous, inquiry-based curriculum helps our children develop into independent and creative thinkers, persistent learners, and internationally-minded citizens who are prepared to act with compassion and insight in a globalized society.

VISION: Ocean Avenue Elementary School students will achieve their highest potential by being knowledgeable, principled, and courageous young people who promote a healthy and more peaceful world.

Essential Beliefs Around Assessment

At Ocean Avenue School, we believe the ultimate purpose of assessment is to guide our planning, instruction and learning experiences so that we can support and enhance student learning. We believe that the teaching/learning cycle needs to start with *assessment of prior knowledge*, to explore what students already know and can do, and thus determine where to start teaching and inquiry. We also believe that *collection of student-learning data and evidence, and shared reflection on that evidence with students*, is a vital progress-monitoring practice that allows both the teacher to adjust learning and teaching to the student's needs, and the student to reflect on his/her own understanding, skill-building and growth as an independent, capable learner. Our shared beliefs around learning are: 1) All students can learn and succeed; 2) All students and staff should aim for the highest standards of performance; 3) Students construct knowledge through inquiry-based learning and reflection; 4) School staff, parents, and the community members are all vital partners in the work of educating our students; 5) The best education reflects the most current research on cognition and student development, and happens in a safe, responsible, and respectful environment; and 6) Success cultivates self-esteem, attitude and motivation.

Ways We Use Assessment

The most important way we use assessment is to adjust teaching and student supports for each individual student to help them progress and succeed. Assessments are also used to help document and communicate student progress to other teachers and to the students' families. Another important way these assessments are used is to measure and report how well teachers, administrators, schools, and the district are doing on our job of educating students. When we combine information on assessment from many students, we can use that information to find things that are working well and to fix things that are not.

Types of Assessment

Pre-Assessment: Occurs before beginning a new unit or learning journey to understand what knowledge and experiences each student brings to the content, concepts and skills in the unit. Pre-assessment provides teachers and students insight into where instruction and learning can begin. At Ocean Avenue School, pre-assessment is used for:

- Seeing what students already know to help determine a starting point for teaching;
- Establishing a baseline for summative assessments;
- Building background knowledge for some students as well as revealing what other students know, or think they know;
- Forming differentiated/flexible learning groups.

Formative Assessment: Refers to the many different ways teachers use to collect feedback on how a student is developing understanding and skills *during* a lesson or unit. Teachers use this information to help adjust their teaching to fill in gaps in understanding or skills, and build on what has been learned toward the learning goals of the unit. Wherever possible, formative assessment evidence is shared with students to help them reflect on their own learning achievements and goals. At Ocean Avenue School, formative assessment is used for:

- On-going informal checks for understanding
- Making adjustments in instruction (either long-term or immediately);
- Monitoring progress of individual students;
- Data discussion and goal setting with students;
- Differentiating instruction.

Summative Assessment: refers to the many different methods teachers use to measure a student's learning at the end of a learning period or unit. This information is often used to assign students grades and issue status reports like report cards. A summative assessment can include projects, performance-based tasks, written/oral pieces, using rubrics for scoring, tests and student portfolios. Standardized tests are also often used for summative purposes. At Ocean Avenue School, summative assessments are used for:

- Determining if students can transfer their understanding of the IB unit central ideas to their own problem-solving;
- Evaluating/measuring against a standard;
- Grading;
- Planning for future instruction/learning.

Self/Peer-Assessment: refers to the ways students reflect on their own learning and/or share their observations about their peers' learning processes and products. Student self-assessment can be used at any point in the learning journey, and is often included as a metacognitive record along with a project or other summative assessment. Student self- and peer-assessment is useful for:

- Accountability
- Check-ins
- Planning instruction based on student-reported level of understanding
- Reflection
- Goal-setting
- Feedback between students
- Building metacognitive skills

- Building self-concept as a learner

Essential Agreements of the Learning Community

Teachers agree to:

- Develop and/or evaluate assessments to measure areas of achievement and opportunities for growth
- Provide feedback data to further student learning
- Administer assessments
- Communicate data attained to a variety of stakeholders
- Create instructional plans to guide inquiry and learning
- Utilize assessments to differentiate instruction according to varied learning styles and intelligences
- Report on the IB Learner Profile development of each student

Students agree to:

- Demonstrate their understanding, knowledge and skill development;
- Reflect diligently on their learning
- Assess their progress in data chats
- Set attainable goals in data chats
- Reflect on their growth as IB learners
- Build confidence in themselves and their abilities

Parents commit to:

- Review assessments with their student
- Communicate with teachers
- Support and communicate to teachers their student's actions that reflect their learning
- Support learning outside of school
- Celebrate learning and student accomplishments

Documenting and Reporting

Conferences

Parent/Student/Teacher conferences:

Two formal parent/student/teacher conferences are held per year, one in late fall and the other in early spring. Students' participation with their parents in the conference is a district expectation. Conferences provide the opportunity to discuss the student's progress as documented by a variety of assessments and learning goals, and students are encouraged to guide the discussion around their portfolio of selected work. Teachers also discuss the school's learning program and the district standards-based measures with parents. Parents and teachers communicate regularly through informal means such as meetings, classroom newsletters/blogs, emails and phone calls as necessary.

Teacher/student conferencing:

Teacher/student conferencing is conducted on a continuous basis throughout the school year. The focus of conferencing may include chats around progress-monitoring data, reading and writing demonstrations, student goal setting, reflection, and progress towards exemplifying the IB learner profile.

Report Cards

District-developed report cards are sent home at the end of each trimester during the school year. Teachers include written comments that inform parents and caregivers of the learning goals and outcomes in their classrooms during the target period. Starting in the 2015-16 school year, Ocean Avenue teachers also complete an addendum that provides feedback for each student on their achievements and areas for growth around the IB learner profile.

Student Portfolios

Samples of student work will be retained in a student-work portfolio based on criteria determined by each grade-level team. In the 2015-16 school year, we are developing our student portfolio practices. Work to be included in the portfolio is determined by both the student and the teacher, and will include IB unit summative assessments. Students reflect on each of their chosen pieces, as an essential part of the portfolio. Portfolios will be shared during parent/student/teacher conferences. Ocean Avenue School has a goal of developing an electronic portfolio.

District-wide Assessments

As a member of Portland Public Schools, Ocean Avenue School uses a number of required assessments for pre-teaching measurement, progress-monitoring, formative and summative measurement and standardized data collection. A summary of these is listed below:

Summary of District-Wide Assessment				
Name of the Assessment	Description	Grades	When it is used	Links For More Information
CAP (Concepts About Print)	An assessment that measures students' familiarity with books and text. Things like which way to hold a book and that words in a book tell a story. Teachers work directly with a student to administer the assessment. It is used primarily as a formative assessment.	K	Fall	Teacher's College Website
NWEA CPAA (Northwest Education Assessment Measures Children's Progress Academic Assessment)	An online formative assessment that measures students' skills in literacy (reading and writing).	K-2	Fall	NWEA CPAA Website
NWEA MAP (Northwest Education	Online formative assessments that measures students' skills	Literacy 3-9	Fall	NWEA MAP Website

Assessment Measures of Academic Progress)	in math and literacy (reading and writing).	Math 6-11		
PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test)	A written assessment that measures students' skills in math and literacy (reading and writing). It is used for formative and summative purposes.	10 & 11	Fall	PSAT Website
ACCESS for ELLs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners)	An online and spoken summative assessment for identified English Language Learners to measure students' skills in the English language. .	K-11	Winter	ACCESS for ELLs Website
MEA Science (Maine Educational Assessment)	A written assessment that measures student's knowledge and skills in science. It is used primarily for summative purposes.	5, 8 & 11	Spring	MEA Science Website
On Demand Writing	A written assessment that measures students' skills in writing. Includes assessments on narrative, informational, and opinion/argument writing. It is used primarily as a summative assessment.	K-12	Three times per year, one for each type of writing.	Teacher's College Website
Letter Identification	An assessment that measures students' skills in identifying upper and lower case letters. Teachers work directly with a student to administer the assessment. It is used primarily as a formative assessment but can also be reported as a summative measure.	K	Ongoing throughout the year.	Teacher's College Website
High Frequency Word Lists	An assessment that measures students' skill	K-2	Ongoing throughout	Teacher's College Website

	<p>in reading by measuring how many common words a student can read. Teachers work directly with a student to administer the assessment. It is used primarily as a formative assessment, but also can be used as a summative measure.</p>		<p>the year.</p>	<p>Website</p>
<p>Elementary Math Benchmark Assessments</p>	<p>Each Portland elementary school uses a math program – either Everyday Math or Envision. Each program has assessments to measure students’ skills and progress in math. These assessments are used for both formative and summative purposes.</p>	<p>K-5</p>	<p>Ongoing throughout the school year.</p>	<p>Everyday Math Website</p> <p>Envision Math Website</p>
<p>Fountas and Pinnell Instructional Text Level</p>	<p>An assessment that measures students’ skills in reading. Teachers work directly with a student to administer the assessment. It is used primarily as a formative assessment, but also can be used as a summative measure.</p>	<p>1-5</p>	<p>Ongoing throughout the year.</p>	<p>Fountas and Pinnell Website</p>
<p>ESI (Early Screening Inventory)</p>	<p>Ocean Avenue Elementary School uses this assessment to measure students’ development in areas such as language, movement, basic concepts, etc. Teachers work directly with a student to administer the assessment. It is used primarily as a formative assessment.</p>	<p>K</p>	<p>Given in late August/early September just before students begin Kindergarten as part of screening.</p>	<p>ESI Website</p>

Approved by OAES staff September 2015