



Joel C. Harris Middle School *Assessment Policy*

Philosophy of Assessment

Assessment at Joel C. Harris Middle School is driven by the processes of collecting, analyzing, and reporting data of what students know and can do; these processes directly inform our planning, teaching, and learning. *Because the single most important aim of assessment is to support and encourage student learning by providing feedback on the learning process*, teachers continually monitor student progress and adjust instruction in order to improve achievement.

The Harris staff agrees that assessments should---

- inform, enhance, and improve the teaching and learning processes;
- be grade-level and developmentally appropriate and address the specific needs of students in special programs to include special education, LEP, 504/Dyslexia, At-Risk, Pre-AP, and gifted/talented (G/T);
- be varied, meaningful, and valid and address different learning styles;
- promote the development of higher-order thinking skills;
- allow students to demonstrate a deep understanding of subject content;
- provide opportunities for students to reflect on their own learning;
- provide students with feedback for future learning;
- be developed based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) as well as IB aims and objectives for each of the eight subject groups.

Types of Assessments at Joel C. Harris Middle School

- **Formative assessments**, such as observations, questioning, and quizzes, which are used to evaluate student understanding and to modify teaching and learning activities in order to improve student achievement
- **IB summative assessments** based on IB Middle Years Program principles and practices and include, but are not limited to, compositions (musical, physical, artistic), creations of solutions or products in response to problems, essays, examinations, investigations, research, performances, and presentations (oral, written, graphic) through various media
- **Traditional summative assessments**, including selected-response tests (multiple choice, true-and-false, matching), district benchmarks, Curriculum Based Assessments (CBA) and standardized tests
- **State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)**, the state-mandated standardized tests in reading (6-8), writing (7), mathematics(6-8), science(8), social studies (8), Algebra 1 EOC (8).
- **End-of-Course (EOC) exams** for students taking high-school-credit classes (Algebra 1).
- **Other district-mandated assessments**, including MAP(Measure of Academic Progress), TSI-Texas Success Initiative (college readiness),Technology Literacy Assessment (TA-TEKS), and the Fitness Gram (PE).

How Do IB Assessments Differ from Traditional Ones?

When administering IB assessments, teachers must use a **criterion-related** system in which student learning is assessed using **rubrics** that reflect subject-specific criteria (standards) used by IB schools worldwide.

Rubrics, which are developed by the teachers themselves and shared with students, communicate specific information on the expected outcomes at each level of achievement. Assessing students using rubrics is very helpful because the students know before attempting the work what needs to be done to reach the highest achievement level.

Students will normally receive *two* grade formats when completing IB assessments: (1) an IB achievement level, which is a number between 0 and 8, and (2) a converted district grade based on the traditional 0–100 system.

Collecting, Evaluating, and Posting Assessment Data

Collecting and Evaluating---

- Brief written notes based on observations and actual performance are kept for any student struggling with class work, as well as all 504/Dyslexia, LEP, At-Risk, special education students, in **Response to Intervention (RTI)** folders; other informal notes may be kept by teachers on any individual, group, or entire class
- Samples of student assessments are maintained so that they can serve as examples for the different achievement levels in the rubric as well as a basis for teacher critiques and discussions. The goal is to move toward an online portfolio system to be used by all students.
- Samples of student assessments are also kept for yearly IB monitoring. IB monitoring is a process in which assessments created at Harris are sent to trained monitors worldwide to be evaluated.

Posting---

- Students and parents/guardians receive report cards four times per year, based on nine-week grading periods; progress reports are given at 3 week intervals prior to the report card each grading period. Parent/Guardians have access to student grades either through direct contact with teachers or **iData Portal**, the district's on-line communication tool.
- In addition, grading guidelines for each department are accessible through course outlines distributed at the beginning of the year as well as **iData Portal**.
- Student data on district benchmarks and state assessments are posted on an on-line information management tool called **Eduphoria** (accessible only by teachers but can be shared with parents/guardians).
- A **cumulative/confidential folder**, which includes a history of a student's performance on state assessments, is located in Harris's Main Office and is accessible only to individuals legally involved in that student's education.