

Uplift North Hills K-12 IB ASSESSMENT POLICY

Assessment and the Uplift North Hills Preparatory Mission Statement

“The mission of Uplift North Hills Preparatory is to provide an education that empowers scholars to reach their highest potential and inspires a love of learning.

We will achieve this Mission by:

- Providing a preparatory curriculum of the highest standard that encourages children to raise the level of expectations that they place upon themselves and motivates them to become successful leaders.
- Creating a diverse community that embraces the ideals of responsible citizenship in an environment of respect for our world and its peoples.
- Creating traditions and symbols that continually illustrate and reinforce our goals among all members of our community.”

We believe that assessment plays a critical role in driving the quality curriculum necessary to empower scholars to reach their potential. Assessment tells us where scholars are in their learning, and provides scholars guidance towards higher levels of achievement. Assessment is central to the North Hills Preparatory effort to achieve its mission by “providing a preparatory curriculum of the highest standards that encourages children to raise the level of expectations that they place upon themselves and motivates them to become successful leaders.”

Uplift North Hills Preparatory Assessment Beliefs

On March 23, 2022, all K-12th grade staff members came together to collaborate and define our current assessment beliefs by discussing the following seven questions.

At Uplift North Hills Preparatory, we believe that:

1. What is the purpose of assessment?
 - Assessments should allow a student to accurately represent their understanding of a concept or skill in various ways.
 - Assessments gauge progress towards clearly-defined goals that provide parents, teachers, and students with data to inform further instruction and assessment until mastery is achieved
2. What types of assessment do we use at UNHP?
 - Teachers use both formal and informal tools to assess students' knowledge and concept attainment.
 - A variety of assessments aligned with the PYP, MYP, and DP Programmes drive instruction and is a guide for all of our lessons. We believe that the flexibility of assessments is the best way to measure students where they are and that all students can be successful. We believe that a variety of assessments are needed to measure student success, illuminate passion, encourage lifelong learning, and drive instruction.
3. Why and how should assessments and student progress be communicated to parents/students?
 - Students should have a clear understanding of where they stand. They should receive frequent, timely feedback that informs their future learning.

- Parents should receive weekly updates in the online grading portal to stay informed on their child's progress in their classes.
 - Communication should be consistent; teachers should aim to update the gradebook weekly so parents and students receive consistent communication.
 - Building and maintaining a culture of community and connection requires consistent communication, particularly at the beginning of the year.
4. How can we best empower students as it relates to assessment?
- Scholars are empowered by knowing their areas of strength, understanding that their path may look very different from others' paths. We work with students to find the tools and methods that give them the best possible opportunity for personal growth so that they can self-advocate. We believe that assessment is more of an ongoing process of self-evaluation and reflection that is openly communicated to set realistic and personalized goals for academic growth rather than an annual event.
 - We can best empower students by promoting agency in assessment.
5. What role does equity play in our types of assessment?
- Equity means that each student has what they need to successfully demonstrate what they have learned.
6. How should assessments be designed?
- Assessments should be thought provoking, differentiated, and relevant to a specific goal being tested.
7. What non-negotiables are there surrounding assessment?
- We believe that we need to collect a variety of assessments that illuminate passion and encourage durable lifelong learning.
 - We believe that the purpose of an assessment is growth. Therefore, the assessment should be
 - vertically aligned
 - have varied, student-centered responses
 - provide feasible 'next steps'
 - have clearly defined expectations

Further Beliefs on Assessment

Assessment is a central tool driving instruction.

Assessment is necessary to:

- determine scholars' level of knowledge and skills prior to new instruction,
- set goals,
- design learning activities according to group and individual needs identified by assessment,
- track and guide scholar progress during instruction, and
- evaluate scholar understanding and the success of activities based upon the achievement of goals.

A variety of assessment tasks are necessary because they:

- allow for a balance between summative and formative assessment tasks.
- accommodate a variety of learning styles and points of view while challenging scholars to grow in new modes of learning and to understand differing points of view,
- expose scholars to the many different academic and authentic, real-world applications of their knowledge and skills, and



- enhance scholars' love of learning by demonstrating the variety of authentic applications of knowledge and skills.

Assessment should go beyond memorization and drill, focusing upon higher order thinking skills (such as application, interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation), as this both enables true, durable learning for scholars and builds a passion for life-long learning.

Feedback on assessment should be timely, specific, and supportive guidance that enables scholars to understand where they are in relation to their goals and plan strategies for goal achievement.

Reflection is vital to quality assessment, as:

- teacher reflection upon assessment allows the development of strategies for the improvement of learning activities and assessment,
- scholar peer and self-assessment enables scholars to set goals and develop strategies for improvement, and
- a solid understanding of where we are and our successful growth increases our comfort in establishing more lofty goals for the future, encouraging risk-taking and the expansion of our learning horizons.

Assessment Practices

Types of Assessment

- Assessment of Prior Knowledge should be carried out before embarking upon new instruction.
- Formative Assessment is ongoing and regular assessment that both guides scholar learning and informs the teacher as to scholars' learning progress. Formative assessment tasks will reflect learning objectives and assessment criteria. There are many informal methods of formative assessment, such as classroom participation, discussion, direct observation, notes, scholar reflections, peer-to-peer evaluations, etc. More formal formative assessment includes pre-tests, practice activities, charts, lab reports, quizzes, etc.
- Summative Assessment occurs at the end of the learning process and is used to determine scholar achievement of learning goals and the effectiveness of teaching activities. Examples of summative assessment include projects, portfolios, presentations, research papers, exams, etc.
- Standardized Tests, particularly in multiple choice format, are not the preferred method of assessment at North Hills Preparatory, and a variety of assessment strategies are used. Nevertheless, Uplift North Hills scholars participate in all mandated local, state, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate Diploma Program standardized testing. As such, scholars are given the practice necessary to be successful in a variety of standardized test formats.
- Group Work constitutes a valuable means of collaborative learning, and is encouraged as one strategy for formative assessment. Scholars must be assessed according to their individual achievement, however, and group work will not be used for summative assessment unless the contributions of individual scholars are clearly visible and assessable using the assessment criteria.



Support for Scholars with Diverse Learning Needs

Scholars possess diverse learning needs, and additional support is provided for scholars with learning differences, who speak English as a second language, and/ or possess extraordinary intellectual gifts and talents. North Hills Preparatory provides a variety of accommodations and modifications of instruction and assessment to enable each scholar to reach his or her highest potential.

Assessment Criteria

Achievement is assessed qualitatively using assessment criteria drawn from appropriate subject and course objectives. These objectives are provided by the state of Texas, International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, Uplift, or North Hills Preparatory departmental committees, where applicable. IB MYP, IB DP, or AP assessment criteria are also used where applicable to derive a criterion-referenced, qualitative grade. These criteria are utilized for assessments in all subject groups and for culminating projects such as the MYP personal project and the DP extended essay. PYP Exhibition is assessed using criteria created by the NHP primary faculty.

Homework

Homework provides scholars opportunities to practice skills and build knowledge in a meaningful way. As a result of completing homework assignments, scholars should see improved performance on in-class assessments.

Homework may or may not be graded. When not graded, the success of homework in reinforcing scholar knowledge and skills will be measured through an in-class formative assessment.

Late Work

As the purpose of homework is to enable scholars to be more successful on in-class work, it is counter-productive if homework is not completed by the in-class due date. To encourage scholars to complete homework in a timely manner, graded homework that is turned in late can earn a minimum score.

Failure to complete homework is unacceptable. At a teacher's discretion, scholars who do not complete graded homework will be required to complete their work, thereby improving their knowledge and skills.

Summative Assessment Policy

No scholar shall be required to complete more than two major assessments (tests, projects, etc.) on the same day. It is the scholar's responsibility to schedule another due date at least two days (48 hours) in advance with the teacher who assigns the third major assessment.

Scholars may retake major assessments for a maximum reported grade of 80 (on the state 100 point scale). However, their IB level of achievement will not be lowered due to the retake. In Primary Years, any scholars who fail a test are permitted to retake the test. In middle and upper school, whether a retest is offered is teacher discretion, and unless the teacher offers a retake for an entire class, it is the scholar's responsibility to seek a retake test within one week of receiving a failing test grade.



Academic Integrity

The Uplift North Hills Preparatory Honor Code is based upon the belief that true learning depends on an honest assessment of scholar growth. Such an honest assessment is in the best interest of all members of the Uplift North Hills community: scholars, parents, teachers, and administrators. As such, Uplift North Hills Preparatory acts on the basis of mutual trust and respect between all members of the community. All members of the Uplift North Hills community are expected to demonstrate integrity and individual responsibility, both personally and academically, in order to maintain a healthy and productive environment for personal and academic growth. As a learning tool to prevent plagiarism and maintain integrity, scholars in grades 8 through 12 will submit all major original written work and research to Turnitin.com. Consequences for failure to uphold Uplift North Hills standards for academic integrity are addressed in the Uplift North Hills Preparatory Academic Honesty Policy.

Uplift North Hills Preparatory Honor Code

The honor of the Uplift North Hills Panther entails constantly striving to maintain respect for oneself, others, and the environment.

This respect is exemplified through:

- I. A recognition of the inherent dignity in all human beings;
- II. Proper deference to authority and the responsible use of one's own authority;
- III. Acting in a manner appropriate to setting and circumstances;
- IV. Sustaining a positive attitude;
- V. Responsible stewardship of one's environment;
- VI. Maintaining an honest relationship with one's community, both personally and academically.

Honor Pledge: *"I pledge to uphold the honor of the North Hills Panther, and that all uncited work carrying my name is mine alone."*

Communication of Learning Expectations, Activities, and Assessment Strategies

Syllabi and Assessment Guidelines

Quarterly and unit syllabi with learning expectations, upcoming class activities, assignments, formative, and summative assessments are distributed to scholars and parents and updated on the course pages of the school website.

Assessment Feedback

Assessment feedback is returned to scholars promptly. At no point will a scholar undertake an assessment that builds upon feedback from a formative assessment which has not yet been returned.



Reflection

Scholars engage in reflection over their progress towards their educational goals through both self and peer evaluation. Teachers utilize data from both formative and summative assessments, as well as scholar surveys, to reflect upon and adapt their goals and instructional strategies. Such reflection and adjustment is conducted both individually and in instructional teams. Teacher instructional teams reflect upon the adjustment of class activities and assessment strategies, and collaborate in order to standardize assessment practices horizontally across subject groups and vertically within subject groups. In addition, in PYP, reflection will occur as grade level teams after each unit of inquiry is taught.

Portfolios

Scholars and teachers work together to maintain portfolios of representative samples of their work. Selection of work aids scholars in reflecting upon their progress towards learning goals, and provides a record of growth that follows scholars from kindergarten through grade 12. PYP: Scholars will carry one portfolio, which is a binder, with them from Kindergarten-5th grade. Every year scholars will select a scholar-generated piece of a work from each unit of inquiry and it will include a piece from Science, Humanities, Writing, Fine Arts, and Math and reflect on why they chose to include that piece of work in their portfolio.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences to communicate scholar's progress are built into the school schedule during the academic year. In addition, primary holds scholar-led conferences in the spring. Teachers, parents, and scholars at all levels hold additional meetings as needed.

Standardization of Assessment

Consistency of assessment quality and marking is addressed through grade level and departmental collaboration in each subject group. Uplift Education, the parent charter district of North Hills Preparatory, conducts three Common Assessments a year that include IB MYP written tasks. Grading of these tasks is standardized after each CA assessment through district-wide meetings of subject teachers. Additionally, MYP assessments are monitored by IB monitors, and DP assessments have both external components marked by IB examiners and internal components moderated by IB examiners.

District/State Assessments

Assessment	Scholars
Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)	Grades K-10
DRA	Grades K-2
STAAR	Grades K-8
EOC	Eng 1 & 2, Alg 1, Biology, US History
Common Assessments	Grades K-12
PSAT/SAT	Grades 9-12
TELPAS	ELL Scholars
PLAN/EXPLORE/ACT	Grades 9 - 11

Grade Reporting

Formal and Informal Grade Reporting

Scholars and families are given formal progress reports on a regular basis, every 4 weeks in the primary school and every 3 weeks in the middle and upper schools, as well as informal progress reports as needed. Grades are formally reported every quarter (9 weeks), semester (18 weeks), and at the end of the year (36 weeks). These reports are according to a state-mandated 100 point scale. A formal report of scholar’s overall IB MYP grade or IB DP grade, where applicable, is made to parents and scholars every semester.

Formal Grade Reporting Scale for Primary, Kindergarten through Second Grade

Number Grade	Letter Grade	Descriptor
90-100	E	Excellent
80-89	S	Satisfactory
70-79	N	Needs Improvement
0-69	U	Unsatisfactory

Formal Grade Reporting Scale for Primary, Third through Fifth Grade

Number Grade	Letter Grade	Descriptor
90-100	A	Excellent
80-89	B	Satisfactory
70-79	C	Needs Improvement
0-69	F	Unsatisfactory

Formal Grade Reporting Scale, Middle and Upper Schools, Grades Six through Twelve

The state of Texas requires that formal grade reports be issued using a 100 point scale, shown below:

Texas Reporting 100-point Grade Scale		
Number Grade	Letter Grade	Descriptor
90-100	A	Excellent
80-89	B	Good
70-79	C	Satisfactory
0-69	F	Unsatisfactory

International Baccalaureate Diploma Program Levels of Achievement



IB Levels of Achievement are determined through qualitative assessment utilizing IB assessment criteria. In the Middle Years and Diploma Program, IB grades are formally reported each semester, using a scale of 1-7, shown below:

IB Levels of Achievement	Brief Descriptor	Detailed Descriptor	100% Conversion
7	Outstanding Achievement	A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them almost faultlessly in a wide variety of situations. There is consistent evidence of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation where appropriate. The scholar consistently demonstrates originality and insight, and always produces work of high quality	95-100
6	Excellent Achievement	A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them in a wide variety of situations. There is consistent evidence of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation where appropriate. The scholar generally demonstrates originality and insight.	90-94
5	Good Achievement	A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them in a variety of situations. The scholar generally shows evidence of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation where appropriate and occasionally demonstrates originality and insight.	80-89
4	Satisfactory Achievement	A good general understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them effectively in normal situations. There is occasional evidence of the skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.	70-79
3	Limited Achievement	Limited achievement against most of the objectives, or clear difficulties in some areas. The scholar demonstrates a limited understanding of the required knowledge and skills and is only able to apply them fully in normal situations with support .	50-69
2	Very Limited Achievement	Very limited achievement against all the objectives. The scholar has difficulty in understanding the required knowledge and skills, and is unable to apply them fully in normal situations, even with support .	30-49
1	Minimal Achievement	Minimal achievement in terms of the objectives.	<29

Conversion of IB Assessment Grades to the Texas 100 Point Reporting Scale

Where applicable, assignment levels of achievements are derived using the appropriate IB grading criteria. To determine an IB level of achievement for assignments, an IB grade is issued which is then converted to a grade on a 100-point scale in order to meet state of Texas requirements for grade reporting.

Policy Revision

This policy was reviewed and revised in May 2022 by Julie Hills (PYP Coordinator), Nicolau Pereira (MYP Coordinator), and Katie Biela (DP Coordinator.)

Initial revisions were completed in May 2019 by the committee of parents and educators as listed: Katie Biela, Nicolau Marques Pereira, Graham Bartlett, Kathryn Vernon, Karen Edwards, Cindy Tsimberg, Stephen Patterson, Matthew Kingsley, Pratibha Sinha, Lauren Trebert, Lauren Heavin, Julie Hills, Heather Pereira, Bindhu Mathews, Rachel Follett, Veronica Moore.

Additionally, the policy will be reviewed and revised annually by a committee of parents and educators. Any changes and/or revisions are determined by the committee and communicated to all interested parties via the following venues: student handbook (also posted on the school website), in the monthly newsletter with a link to the school website, and in person during the curriculum meetings in January.