

Front Street School Assessment Policy & Philosophy



(Formulated in 2019)
Updated February 2021

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of assessment at Front Street School is to inform the teaching and learning experiences that occur within our learning community. Teachers gather and analyze information about student learning in order to effectively monitor student progress, provide feedback to both students and families, and drive instructional practices. Student assessment indicates what students know, understand, and can do at different stages in the learning process, and is therefore an ongoing practice and significant part of daily life at Front Street School.

We assess to:

- Provide students with constructive feedback
- Encourage students to become self-regulated learners capable of acting on the feedback assessment provides
- Continually learn about what students know and can do
- Improve instructional practices
- Inform parents about their child's progress and learning goals
- Evaluate the effectiveness of our curriculum
- Become a more impactful learning community

II. PHILOSOPHY

“Assessment is the bridge between teaching and learning.”

At Front Street School (FSS), we believe in the power of assessment to provide invaluable insight not only into the abilities of the learner but in the effectiveness of our teaching practices. We strive to develop an assessment capable community in which there is a shared understanding of how, what, and why to assess, and the assessment process is collaborative and inclusive of all members.

III. PRACTICES

Assessment at Front Street School aims to reflect IB assessment policy for PYP schools (Making the PYP Happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education, 2009).

Requirements for the Primary Years Programme

- a. Assessment at the school is integral with planning, teaching and learning.
- b. Assessment addresses all the essential elements of the programme.
- c. The school provides evidence of student learning over time across the curriculum

According to the PYP, assessment is expressed in three interrelated areas: assessing, recording, and reporting student learning.

Assessing: How Do We Discover What Students Have Learned?

At Front Street School, we use a range of tools and strategies to assess student learning of the content and concepts taught, the transdisciplinary skills used, and the learner profile traits demonstrated:

Formative - learner-centered assessments *for* learning that support students in making connections between their previous knowledge and new understandings. These assessments occur often throughout a unit of inquiry in order to evaluate the *process* of student learning and to provide opportunities for students to test and revise their understanding of transdisciplinary concepts. Formative assessments may also be used *as* learning, in which students take responsibility for designing, managing and measuring their own learning. Each type of assessment is used as a means of personalizing learning for each student and providing them with feedback that will help them to self-adjust and set goals for improvement.

Reflective – a type of formative assessment that involves taking a reflective learning exercise and using it as a tool to assess learning (assessment *as* learning). This type of assessment allows students to identify the most significant aspects of a learning experience and identify why they are significant to the learner; learn by making links between learning and action; improve performance by using the outcomes of reflection to inform future practice; identify and maximize the personal value of a learning experience; and turn surface learning into deep learning. Students engage in reflection throughout the course of a unit using student and teacher-created rubrics, exit tickets, journal writing, student discourse, and other self-assessment tools.

Summative – occurs at the end of the teaching and learning process and gives students opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned. These assessments may vary from the traditional paper-and pencil end-of-unit assessments to more inquiry-based performance tasks that provide students with a *choice* of how to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts taught (i.e., plays, Powerpoint presentations, musical performances, research projects, speeches, poems, artwork, etc.). Students reflect on their learning at the end of each unit by completing reflection response sheets aligned to the standards addressed during the unit. They are also given the opportunity to select artifacts of their learning from each unit to add to their student portfolios.

Evaluative –used to inform curriculum planning and provide information for monitoring and accountability. This type of assessment is concerned with the overall performance of a school and used to make schoolwide decisions about curriculum, scheduling and programming. These decisions are based on assessment data in several forms.

Diagnostic – pre-assessments used to identify the individual strengths and needs of our learners. This type of assessment looks back at the prior performance of a student in order to make judgments about their current needs. It is used at the beginning of a year and/or unit in order to identify the nature of a student’s learning difficulties, and the results are used to form the basis of our response to intervention (RTI) groups in both reading and math.

- **Response to Intervention (RTI)** – an RTI framework uses a variety of assessments to support decisions about a student’s at-risk status, response to instruction or intervention, and the nature of instruction. These include universal screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic assessments. Teachers use each type of assessment to classify their students as Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3 students, and provide them with the adequate supports needed.

Tier 1 students – All students in Tier 1 receive high-quality, scientifically based instruction, differentiated to meet their needs, and are screened on a periodic basis to identify struggling learners who need additional support.

Tier 2 students – In Tier 2, students not making adequate progress in the core curriculum are provided with increasingly intensive instruction matched to their needs based on levels of performance and rates of progress.

Tier 3 students – At this level, students receive individualized, intensive interventions that target the students’ skill deficits for the remediation of existing problems and the prevention of more severe problems.

A.) **Screening** – an assessment procedure characterized by brief, efficient, and repeatable testing of age-appropriate academic skills and behaviors.

B.) **Progress Monitoring** – the practice of assessing student performance using assessments on a repeated basis to determine how well a student is responding to instruction.

Student Exhibition – fifth grade students carry out an extended, in-depth, collaborative project in their final year at Front Street School known as the PYP Exhibition. During this time the students work collaboratively to conduct an in-depth inquiry into real-life issues or problems by synthesizing all the essential elements of the PYP. The exhibition provides students with the unique opportunity to not only showcase their learning to the school community, but to exhibit the attributes of the learner profile traits developed throughout their time as a PYP student at Front Street School.

Action – students are expected to transfer their understanding within each unit of inquiry in order to take meaningful action on their learning. Action is a powerful way to apply knowledge, skills, and understandings to new contexts. Students take part in a range of action experiences, including direct, indirect, advocacy, and research.

Recording: How Do We Collect and Analyze Data?

Classroom Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers take anecdotal notes throughout all phases of inquiry using notes and/or checklists.• Teachers provide “Quick Check” opportunities to check for understanding.• Teachers incorporate physical student responses to informally assess student understanding (ex. “thumbs-up,” 4-corner debate, etc.)• Teachers observe student demonstration of the learner profile trait of the month. Teachers and students then select a Student of the Month based on that trait.
Benchmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NWEA administered three times a year in the fall, winter and spring.• iReady benchmarks in math and reading.• Student independent reading levels are determined four times a year and recorded on the school’s shared drive.• Students complete end-of-unit chapter tests in math.• 100 Book Challenge milestone assemblies for students who reach a certain number of “steps” (time spent reading) according to the school’s weekly goals.
Performance Assessments and Exhibition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summative assessments in PYP planners are accompanied with rubrics.• Formative assessments assess each line of inquiry within a unit and use checklists to specify assignment criteria• Writing rubrics in each genre are used by both students and teachers to assess formal writing• The Exhibition provides the opportunity for the observation of action and the application of the five elements of the PYP program.
Response to Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Universal screening procedures are conducted for students who are “at-risk” for academic failure.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress monitoring data is used to determine a student's movement through the three tiers.
Portfolios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolios are used to monitor and analyze student progress throughout the year • At the end of each unit students select artifacts that demonstrate their understanding of the concepts taught in the unit. • Student portfolios are shared with families during student-led conferences.
Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students reflect on their experience during lessons using journal prompts, discussion, exit tickets and a school wide self-assessment rubric that identifies learners as a novice, apprentice, practitioner, or expert. • Students complete PYP graphic organizers throughout each unit of inquiry to reflect on their knowledge of each PYP element. • Students reflect on summative assessments at the end of each unit using reflection response sheets • Students reflect on their academic and behavioral performance each quarter using conference reflection sheets in preparation for the student-led conferences.

Reporting: How Do We Choose to Communicate Information about Assessment?

- Information about student assessment is reported to students, families, teachers, administration and other parties directly related to students' learning.
- Teachers provide students with consistent feedback on assessments.
- The principal provides teachers with benchmark assessment data for the purposes of teacher self-assessment and assessment-driven instruction.
- Student reading levels are uploaded quarterly to Front Street School's shared drive.
- Information is reported to parents through progress reports, report cards, and student-led conferences.
- Teachers communicate with parents via various electronic platforms such as Schoology Learning Management System, Class Dojo, What's App, Microsoft OneNote, Remind, Zoom, phone calls, Proprio translation, email and text messages.
- Parent newsletters are sent home during the beginning of each unit of inquiry to inform parents of the formative and summative assessments for the unit.

IV. POLICIES

Classroom:

Unit of Inquiry Wall – each classroom must display and maintain a unit of inquiry board that shows student work surrounding the Concept-Based Inquiry model, as well as the key elements of the UOI.

Wonder Wall – each classroom displays a student “wonder wall” where students post their inquiries into the unit.

Class Bulletin Boards – teachers display student work within the current unit of inquiry and learner profile attributes on display boards both inside and outside of the classroom.

A formative assessment must follow the exploration of each line of inquiry.

A summative assessment must conclude each unit of inquiry.

Grading:

IB Assignments and Projects: 20%

Summative Assessment: 40%

Formative Assessments/Quizzes: 20%

Homework: 10%

Participation: 10%

Report Card Level Equivalents:

Expert – 91% - 100% (Report card level 4)

Practitioner – 80% - 90% (Report card level 3)

Apprentice – 66% - 79% (Report card level 2)

Novice – 65% and below (Report card level 1)

Testing:

New York State standardized testing – students in Grades 3-5 take the yearly New York State ELA exam.

NWEA – students are tested in reading and math using this adaptive assessment three times a year: fall, winter, and spring.

NYSESLAT - an annual New York State assessment of the English language proficiency of all English Language Learners.

Fountas and Pinnell reading levels – teachers use the Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments to determine students’ independent and instructional reading levels four times throughout the year (September, December, March, June).

iReady- students take an adaptive diagnostic assessment at the beginning of each year, which provides teachers with actionable insight into student needs. These results also set a personalized

learning path for each student, ensuring that they're working on instruction that meets their unique learning needs as they use the program throughout the year.

Genre-specific rubrics for writing – students design and use rubrics as a tool to monitor, assess, and reflect on their own writing abilities.