



IB Assessment Policy



Philosophy, Principles, and Practices

At Bellerose Composite High School, we believe that assessment is inextricably linked to teaching and learning; thinking and knowing; and cognition and metacognition. We also believe that “assessment,” as a necessary and integral part of a student’s intellectual growth, is not merely “marking,” or “grading,” or the sum averaged total of a litany of numbers entered into a teacher’s mark book; rather, the philosophical principles of our assessment policy lie in the etymological meaning of the word: “to sit beside.”

We believe that learning is an often circuitous and protean *process*, where the learning needs of each individual student must be considered, and that assessment is continuous and cumulative. As students have opportunities to engage, think, challenge, experience, share, and reach for deeper understanding, cumulative knowledge is garnered, and this newfound mastery will be communicated to both students and their parent/guardians. Our teachers stimulate, instruct, engage, provoke, and challenge students to generate new meanings and deepen understandings; our teachers truly assess while “sitting beside” their students.

We believe that that assessment needs to move beyond the common constructs of “assessment *of* leaning” and “assessment *for* learning.” Rather, we strive for “assessment *as* learning,” where feedback on intellectually rigorous and engaging assignments and examinations offer students the opportunity to metacognitively gauge *their own intellectual growth*—not only to see where they are “at” on a particular day on several curricularly-derived outcomes, but, more importantly, where they need to “go next” to continue their academic and personal growth.

Assessment happens in many forms, not merely the traditional “paper and pen” assignments and examinations that focus predominantly on product. We embrace the International Baccalaureate philosophy of considering the *process* in the student’s learning, which affords students the opportunity to embody the Learner Profile characteristics of open-mindedness, reflective, and risk-taking learners; so often students who are being assessed *only* by poorly-designed traditional means (for instance, multiple choice examinations, examinations that merely ask the student to parrot information provided in class) are reticent to take a risk in their thinking. We believe in generating **product**-based assignments and examinations that engage, stimulate, and ask the student to think critically, modelled on the summative assessments generated by International Baccalaureate. We encourage teachers to assess students by way of **observation**, watching their students engage and communicate with each other in a collaborative fashion. We believe that accurate and telling assessments of a student’s growth can be determined through open **conversation** with students, both as individuals and as a class.



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Partners in Successful Assessment

Students who enrol in the IB programme at our school come from a variety of social, cultural, familial, intellectual contexts, and, as such, require differentiated assessment, even when there is a class-common assignment. Students respond best to those assessments that are honest, timely, and that establish/maintain the student/teacher relationship. The student must be able to use criterion-referenced mark bands to be able to accurately assess his or her own work and to peer-assess the work of their peers and colleagues. Students must understand that each assessment is merely one indicator of their intellectual growth, and that each assessment is to be utilized by the student to generate their own understanding of “where to improve” on the next assessment.

Homework may be an integral part of this process; homework must be meaningful, relevant, and ideally engaging. Homework offers the student the opportunity to concretize material learned in the classroom; mastery of learned information, and a student’s personal comfort-level with said information, is sometimes dependent on assiduous practice. We strive to make homework engaging and enlightening, often times offering enriching experiences that bolster concepts discussed in class. In addition, several of our teachers are experimenting with “flipped classrooms” to offer more time in-class for rich conversation and pedagogical (including both the teacher *and* the student) collaboration.

Students studying in a Second Language are assessed for clarity of thought, complexity of idea, and deep understanding of curricular material. Teachers will note areas of syntax, vocabulary, and grammar that need to be addressed, but these areas will be marginally considered. The student and teacher, in partnership with school administration and parent/guardian, will make an individualized plan to ensure student growth and eventual success. Bellerose Composite High School offers a number of possibilities for the Student Studying in a Second Language, including a supportive Learning Strategies course and augmented reading time to bolster language acquisition. The goal is student comfort and competency with the newly acquired language. For more information, please see the *Bellerose Composite High School Language Policy*.



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Teachers generate and administer relevant, meaningful, and curricularly-derived assignments and examinations that engage student knowledge through a variety of different means. Teachers ensure that their assessments take into account both local and global concerns and contexts, giving students the opportunity to reflect and consider their individual place in the world. Teachers understand the necessity for students to understand, even internalize, criterion-referenced IBO assessment tools so that students may metacognitively understand where they are situated in their intellectual journey. Through examination of a student’s learning from product, observation, and conversation, teachers are able to metacognitively assess their own classroom practice and effectiveness of their teaching methodology.

Teachers take advantage of our daily “FLEX blocks” to provide students with opportunities to review material not understood during the classroom period, to enrich a student’s intellectual growth by providing information that deepens a student’s understanding of concepts and catalyzes intellectual engagement, and to bolster student confidence in the required content of the programmes of student so that they are confident in their active positions of knowledgeable, inquiring thinkers.

FLEX blocks are also times where a student may be afforded the opportunity to re-write an examination or assignment that he or she feels did not accurately reflect his or her intellectual growth or understanding. However, this does not occur until the student has had the opportunity to **self-assess** where the difficulties with their learning occurred, to **re-learn** the concepts “sitting beside” their teacher who will employ other teaching methodologies to assist the student in his or her understanding, and to **enhance** their understanding through means provided (that is, peer-study groups; relevant “flipped-classroom” opportunities; secondary resources that bolster and enrich student understanding).

Teachers **record and report** assessments in a timely and instructive manner. Bellerose Composite High School uses PowerSchool, which has the option of reporting both numbers and letter grades to students and their parent/guardians. PowerSchool is an online assessment student which gives both student and parent/guardians immediate access to the teacher-entered information reported regarding assessment. We are working in concert with District Office and PowerSchool in order to be able to enter assessment feedback using the International Baccalaureate mark bands so that formative assessments may be reported in a manner in which students and their parent/guardians come to understand, and metacognitively reflect upon, the IBO assessment standards.



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The IB Coordinator and Discipline-Specific Department Heads ensure that members of Departments teaching the same courses are assessing in the same manner throughout the year, Department-designed formative assessments aligning closely with the rigorous demands of the summative International Baccalaureate assessments. As well, the IB Coordinator and Discipline-Specific Department Heads are responsible for instructional mentorship of teachers new to the IB programme, including assessment policies. Department Heads are also responsible for the monitoring of their Staff's recording and reporting of student assessment in the PowerSchool, the school's reporting system.

Parents/Guardians are an integral part of the assessment process at Bellerose Composite High School. Parents/guardians are encouraged to read, review, and discuss with their child the feedback provided by students on formative assessments; it is our hope that parent/guardians will become as fluent as the students and their teachers in the vernacular of assessment and the IBO mark bands; to this end, we actively encourage and welcome parents/guardians to be efficacious partners in their child's intellectual and personal growth through phone conversations, email/other technological means (e.g. *Remind*), and in-person conversations. In person Parent/Teacher interviews are scheduled twice a year to ensure that the dialogue about individuated student progress is ongoing. Through PowerSchool, parent/guardians are encouraged to chart their student's learning; they may log into the program any time, any where, and garner feedback on their student's learning.

Academic Honesty and Assessment

The school's expectation is that students will follow the Academic Honesty Policy for all assignments, examinations, and homework required for the most accurate assessment of student learning. Please see our *IB Academic Honesty Policy*.

Communication of the IB Assessment Plan

This IB Assessment Policy has been a collaborative effort, with input from students, parent/guardians, teachers, Department Heads, and administration. It is provided to students and their parent/guardians upon entry into the Diploma Programme. It is available to students and their parents/guardians at all IB information evenings. There is a link to the Assessment Plan on the IB page of our school website, available to all interested partners in assessment at any time.

The plan is referred to when discussing student grades, and is the catalyst for fruitful conversation between all partners in successful assessment. Bellerose Composite High School recognizes that this IB Assessment Policy is a living document, and, as such, will continue morph and grow. Currently, we are reviewing the policy in partnership with administration, teachers, and students biannually. Any changes to the policy will be made prior to the start of the new school year (i.e., August) to ensure equity and consistency in assessment between disciplines for the entire year.