



Stowers Elementary
Magnet School of International Studies
I.B. World School



Stowers Special Education Needs and Assessment Policy

Stowers Special Education Needs (SEN) Policy

At Stowers we believe that **all learners** have unique needs to consider when helping them to meet/exceed their academic and non-academic potential. To provide access to the IB Primary Years Program at Stowers we apply approaches and support systems that address the individual needs and varied learning styles of students, including those formally identified with special needs (special education and gifted and talented). By recognizing the diversity of our collective learning community, we support the development of internationally-minded people.

All authorized IB Primary Years Program (PYP) schools are required to develop an SEN policy that describes how they help provide all students with access to the learning contained within the PYP. You can find more information about how we meet the needs of Gifted and Talented learners by visiting the Gifted and Talented page on our website, or contact Mrs. Toni North at toni.north@abcusd.us. If you have questions about how we address the varied learning needs of students at Stowers please contact your child's teacher, or Ms. Kim Rath at kim.rath@abcusd.us

Stowers Assessment Policy

Assessment is a tool that drives instruction. Stowers' assessment within our IB Primary Years Program is focused on helping students develop the five essential elements of learning: the understanding of concepts, the acquisition of knowledge, the mastering of skills, the development of attitudes and the decision to take action. Students, parents, staff and administration must have a clear understanding of what is being assessed, the criteria for success and the method by which the assessment is made. Active involvement of both students and teachers results in meaningful and accurate assessment.

The Primary Years Program divides assessment into three components:

- Assessing – how we discover what students have learned
- Recording – how we make note of our findings about what students have learned
- Reporting – how we pass that information on to parents, administration and other parties directly involved in students' learning

Why do we assess?

- To promote continuous student learning and growth
- To guide children through the five essential elements of learning contained in the PYP (concepts, knowledge, skills, attitudes and action)
- To celebrate what students can do
- To set goals and plan for future student growth
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the learning program

What do we assess?

- Understanding of concepts (big ideas that transcend traditional subject areas)
- Acquisition of knowledge
- Mastery of skills
- Development of attitudes
- Decision to take action
- Demonstration of the attributes of the IB learner profile
- Student progress and performance in the following subject areas: language; mathematics; social studies; science; and physical education

When does assessment take place at this PYP school?

Assessment is a continuous process at Stowers that allows teachers, parents and students to identify areas of strength and areas that need improvement, as well as the effectiveness of the program. It is a daily activity at Stowers and takes various forms. There are two main categories of assessment:

- Formative Assessment is interwoven with daily learning and helps teachers and students find out what children already know, understand and can do in order to plan for further student learning and growth. Formative assessment occurs throughout a learning unit or process.
- Summative Assessment takes place at the end of a learning unit or process. It is a chance for students, teachers and parents to evaluate progress and demonstrate what has been learned over the course of time. It is a formal ending point to a taught unit or of a process but not necessarily the end of student learning in the areas being assessed.

What are the characteristics of effective assessments in the PYP?

- Have criteria that are known and understood in advance
- Allow children to synthesize and apply their learning, not merely recall facts
- Promote student reflection and self-evaluation
- Focus on the production of quality products or performances
- Highlight children's strengths and allows them to demonstrate mastery and expertise
- Allow children to express different points of view and interpretations
- Provide feedback regarding every stage of the learning/teaching cycle
- Based on student needs, interests and learning styles (student-driven)
- Involve collaboration between students and teachers
- Produce evidence of student growth and learning that can be clearly reported and understood by children, parents, teachers and administrators
- Identify what is worth knowing
- Begin with the end results in mind (backwards design – what students should be able to know or do by the end of a learning unit, lesson or process)

How do teachers record student progress?

Teachers use a variety of assessment tools to record student progress in the PYP, including: rubrics, checklists, continuums, task or subject-specific criteria, forms, benchmarks/exemplars and narrative records.

How is student growth reported to parents and students?

- Report cards (four times per year; kindergarten = three times per year)
- IB learner profile reflection form (twice per year)
- Student-Led conferences (held in the spring)
- Parent-Teacher, Teacher-Student and Parent-Teacher-Student conferences (held throughout the year)
- Unit of Inquiry progress reports (sent home after each unit of inquiry)
- Teacher communication with parents via notes home, emails and phone calls

Who is involved in the assessment process?

For assessment to be fully effective, students, parents, teachers and administrators must all be informed of and involved in the assessment process.

Essential Agreement Primary Years Program Stowers Elementary School

Assessment of Student Learning

Date: August 29, 2016

Beliefs: We believe that assessment is integral to the mission of Stowers Elementary School. It is a continuous process which guides teaching and learning and contributes to evaluating the effectiveness of the Primary Years Program at Stowers. The focus of assessment in an IB Primary Years Program school is to help students develop the five essential elements of learning: the understanding of concepts, the acquisition of knowledge, the mastering of skills, the development of attitudes and the decision to take action. Students, parents, staff and administration must have a clear understanding of what is being assessed, the criteria for success and the method by which the assessment is made. Active involvement of both students and teachers results in meaningful and accurate assessment. Assessment information must be shared in a forthright manner with all stakeholders and used to evaluate student progress and/or the effectiveness of the program.

Practices: Standards-based assessments issued by the State of California and the ABC Unified School District must be administered yearly to students at Stowers. These assessments help complete a profile of student progress toward proficiency of mandated state standards. The results of these assessments are shared with students and parents. Teachers analyze the body of evidence provided by assessment data to help design learning experiences for the student. Teachers and students also make use of assessments within PYP Units of Inquiry to analyze student development of unit knowledge, skills and understandings.

These assessments: • reflect input from students as well as staff • focus on student understanding of the central idea (summative) • are continuous throughout the inquiry (formative) • launch the planning process • provide opportunities for reflection on the process • show evidence of students' understanding and thinking • allow students to express different points of view and interpretations • are developmentally appropriate • highlight student strengths • address a range of needs and learning styles • provide opportunities for differentiation Teachers use a range of methods to document student learning as a means of assessing student understanding.

Access and Review of our assessment policy: Agreed-upon assessment practices at Stowers are accessible to all stakeholders. Our assessment practices are reviewed by the faculty and stakeholders and are revised as our assessment practices continue to evolve.

Student Portfolios at Stowers Elementary School Adopted: 2012 Revised: August 2016.

IB Portfolios:

-Purpose: To identify student growth and to provide a continuum for students to track their learning process and define their growth as a learner. The portfolio is to provide data for the IB program on student progress by looking at individual reflection, parent-teacher interviews, teacher reflection/data collection, and possible student-led conferences.

-To include: The following sections:

Self Reflections: This is to be a piece created by the student about themselves at the beginning and end of each school year. Student is to describe themselves in anyway, drawing, writing, etc... (2 pieces per year)

Showcase Work: This section is for students to "show off" the work that they are most proud of. (1-2 pieces per year)

Units of Inquiry: All units should include student reflections and summative assessments from all planners during the year. (must be from all 6 planners every year)
Should include 1 picture/ unit.

Language Arts: This section is to include any work from this subject, reading, writing, oral language, etc... (1-2 pieces per student per year)

Math: This section is for students to include work they have done in math. (1-2 pieces per student per year)

Specials Reflection: This section can be reserved for students to include work or reflection pieces from their Enrichment classes. (1-2 pieces per student per year)

-Format: Can be a variety of forms such as but not limited to: hard copy of original work and student samples, digital uploads and reflections, classroom portfolios kept by the teacher but accessible by the students, pictures of posted work, etc. Students are given the opportunity to take home their work at the end of the school year.

-Selection/Collection Process: Both student and teacher can select items to go into the portfolio. The work collected should reflect the student's growth as an inquirer/learner. This is so students can reference their work as the year progresses.

-Time Frame: The portfolio is first created at the beginning of the school year. This portfolio should consist of work from each unit, gathering various work samples over time.

Conferences:

Parent/teacher conferences:

Conferences are an opportunity to address goals and concerns for the year to come. Parent teacher conferences/Student-lead conference will be held in the fall. This is an opportunity for the teacher and parent to meet and discuss student challenges and proficiencies. A student-lead conference option can be used to allow the student to lead their own conference with their parent and/or teacher to discuss their own learning and progress during the year. The student is able to highlight what they feel is important and share their strengths as they see fit. In these conferences students will plan their own presentation, with teacher modeling and practice before-hand.

Teacher-student conferences:

These conferences will be held on a continuous basis throughout the school year. This is an ongoing process that should almost happen frequently. These can be formal or informal. Formal to be held when needed and the informal is part of everyday best teaching practice.

Reporting:

As a grade level or classroom teacher determines grading tools such as rubrics may be created as needed. Expectations and assessment format should be created, when appropriate, with student input and collaboration, particularly assessments related to units of inquiry.

In addition to ongoing classroom evaluations, every month, students and teachers will have a chance to focus on and reflect on the Learner Profile, Transdisciplinary Skills, and the essential elements. These reflections allow the students to reflect on their "self" and set goals for the future. Parents are then asked to reflect on their own child's development within the 3 sections. Each trimester our teachers reflect on each student as an individual and recommend goals and strategies for growth.

Mandatory Requirements:

All faculty and staff will be required to administer the following assessments:

All formative and summative assessments can be used. Student self-reflections taken from three of their transdisciplinary themes during the school year.

Assessments will be informal and formal as necessary for student to demonstrate success. Examples of assessments to measure success may be classroom observations, anecdotal records, student discussions, conferences, etc.,

School selected curriculum chapter tests and district benchmarks, Smarter Balanced assessments. Any other assessments may be used that match this criteria and as required by our stated curriculum and resources.