

# DHAHRAN AHLIYYA SCHOOLS

## DAS PYP ASSESSMENT POLICY

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JUNE, 2017

### Assessment Policy Committee Members

Directors  
Supervisors  
Teachers  
Students  
Parents

Dhahran Ahliyya School is a not-for-profit organization that was founded for the purpose of providing the best possible education to its students in order to fulfil its mission and vision.

## **DAS MISSION**

Inspired by the principles of Islam, the mission of Dhahran Ahliyya Schools is to empower each student to be a compassionate, thinking, lifelong bi-lingual learner who makes a positive difference, locally and globally.

## **DAS VISION**

Our vision is to provide a world-class education with an Arab and Islamic identity through a pioneering learning community that is sustainable and socially responsible.

In order to reach our vision, we have adopted the International Baccalaureate.

## **IB MISSION**

The International Baccalaureate® aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

## **IB LEARNER PROFILE**

### **Inquirers:**

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

### **Knowledgeable:**

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

### **Thinkers:**

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

**Communicators:**

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

**Principled:**

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

**Open-minded:**

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

**Caring:**

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

**Risk-takers:**

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

**Balanced:**

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

**Reflective:**

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

## **DAS EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

We believe that excellent education touches both the hearts and minds of students, developing their intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills to learn and work in a rapidly changing and globalizing world. Moreover, it should provide them with a sense of belonging in their own country while also an openness to their roles as citizens of the world, committed to taking action to help make their world a better place.

We believe that this kind of education is best provided through a collaborative, constructivist learning process that is based on inquiry, action and reflection. It should result in meaningful, rigorous, interdisciplinary academic learning which students apply to solution of real problems while, at the same time, developing the attributes described in the IB Learner Profile and the attitudes that support lifelong learning. In our approach, assessment plays an important role and must be multi-faceted and integrated in the process of learning and planning.

We believe that language is central to intellectual, social, cultural, and emotional development and, therefore, every teacher is a language teacher. Our goal is to honor and support the development of both Arabic and English. We highlight the transdisciplinary nature of language learning by teaching the academic language through content in both English and Arabic.

We believe that the consistency of a positive, supportive climate of respect, safety, and responsibility is essential. All our students deserve equal opportunity and should be treated with equal respect and dignity. However, we also recognize that to be fair to all, we need to differentiate in kinds and amounts of instruction and learning support.

## **DAS COMMITMENT: FOUR CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING DAS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

1. STUDENTS FEEL safe in the school, confident that they will be respected and not exposed to any kind of bullying – physical or emotional, from adults or fellow students.
2. STUDENTS FEEL that what they are studying is useful to them all the time and interesting to them at least 65% of the time.

3. STUDENTS FEEL that they are being asked to apply higher level thinking skills to their learning and that they are not being asked simply to memorize except in those few instances when it is absolutely necessary.
4. STUDENTS FEEL that they are able to succeed in doing the work assigned and are confident that if they have trouble they will be able to find assistance from teachers who will help them LEARN, not simply help them get good grades

## **DAS STRATEGY FOR CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT**

Our methodology for ensuring continuous development is based on the culture of the pioneering professional learning community (PLC), which requires the ongoing learning of every individual in the school, regardless of age or position. Learning must be both individual and collaborative through an iterative process of inquiry, action, and reflection best represented by the Feedback Spiral, shown below. (“Habits of Mind”, Costa and Kallick, 1995)

This process is guided by research-based, internationally recognized standards for student learning. Progress is also supported by the DAS Four Criteria for Evaluating the School Program (see above), and Standards for Good Teaching and Standards for Good Work shown in the DAS Plan for Continuous Progress in Learning (PCPL). Progress is assessed by instruments geared to all those same standards and new plans are designed on the basis of reflection on results. Maintenance of the culture of the professional learning community also requires clear, announced and updated policies and procedures which are applied consistently by all concerned. Other essential components of the culture are best represented by the DAS Pillars, shown below.

## **DAS METAPHORS**

Laboratory      Community      Family

# DAS PRIMARY SCHOOL ASSESSMENT POLICY

## PHILOSOPHY

In keeping with the school's mission and the spirit of the IB Primary Years Program, assessment in the Primary Division is geared toward improving, rather than simply documenting, student performance. The use of assessment to judge the effectiveness of both teaching and learning processes is essential to allow teachers and students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and the effectiveness of the program. The objectives and process of any assessment should be clearly explained to the students.

### Purpose and process of assessment

#### **The purpose:**

As a pioneering professional learning community we are well aware that all our collaborative efforts and collective inquiry needs to be assessed on the basis of results. We need to assess our initiatives on the basis of ongoing assessments and monitor the effectiveness of our practices and their effect on student learning. In our school we use assessments as an essential tool, which supports and promotes student learning. Assessment aims to achieve this by:

- Providing feedback on the learning process.
- Informing and improving the planning and teaching processes.
- Making the learning process and expectations transparent for student, parents, and teachers.
- Promoting a deep understanding of subject content by supporting students in their inquiries.
- Providing tools for the learner for self-reflection and goal setting.
- Promoting the development of higher –order cognitive skills by providing rigorous final objectives.
- Supporting the holistic nature of learning by assessing a range of knowledge, understanding skill and attitudes.

### **The process:**

1. What do we expect our students to learn?
2. How will we know they are learning?
3. How will we respond when they don't learn?
4. How will we respond if they already know it?

## **TYPES OF ASSESSMENT**

**Pre-assessment** takes place at the beginning of instruction to find out what students already know in order to plan the next stage of learning.

**Formative assessment** is interwoven with the daily learning and provides both teachers and students with useful timely feedback on how well students understand and apply the new concepts, skills, and knowledge. It is also intended to inform teachers regarding the effectiveness of their practices. Formative assessments provide us with essential information regarding which students have learned each skill and which have not. They help us decide which students need additional support.

Common formative assessments play a vital role in the learning process for all PLC teams. They not only provide the team with timely information about how the students are performing but also provides them with a common ground to compare the results of their students with each other. It is an assessment created collaborative by the team on common standards. This practice allows the team to discuss the results in light of how each teacher approached the standards and what strategies were the most effective. This discussion leads to job embedded professional development and is connected directly to what the students and teachers need to move forward. Common formative assessments also facilitate a systematic response for the students who need additional support and modify instructional plan accordingly.

**Summative assessment** takes place at the end and/or mid of every unit of learning across disciplines. It gives the students opportunities to demonstrate what has been learned according to intended standards. Summative assessments may include any combination of the following: acquisition of data, synthesis of information, application of knowledge and processes. These can address multiple learning styles.

**Standardized Assessments:** These assessments are used as a means to evaluate teaching and monitor student progress. They are the basis for SMART goals in several subjects. They are part of the school's ongoing plan to improve teaching and learning.

Standardized assessments are used for the following reasons:

- ❖ To inform teaching
- ❖ To collect data to check for growth over time
- ❖ To set SMART goals
- ❖ To provide opportunity of comparison with the global community

Following is a list of some of the standardized assessments done in our school:

- ❖ MAP
- ❖ ISA
- ❖ TALA

For further information please refer to appendix A Standardized Periodic Tests DAS.

### **School Approved Internal Assessments:**

In addition to the standardized assessments, Dhaharan Ahliyya Schools also uses some school approved assessments that serve a similar purpose as the standardized assessments. These assessments are done internally either by the teachers or the school's Research Unit. Following is a list of school approved assessments:



- ❖ DRA2 (Developmental Reading Assessment K-8)
- ❖ Arabic Developmental Reading Assessment (K-6)
- ❖ Alquist Test (Math Gr.1-7)
- ❖ Kuwait Screening Test (KG)
- ❖ Readiness Test (KG)

**Peer and self-assessment** is interwoven throughout the daily learning to engage the students in reflection and assessment on their own learning and the learning of others. The students are given adequate time to reflect on their own and their peers' progress in all subject areas, including the attributes expressed in the learner profile.

**Assessment of the essential elements of the PYP .**The five essential elements of the PYP are assessed through the units of inquiry and are recorded on the planner of each unit.

- Knowledge: assessment of the knowledge learned in each unit is done through the summative assessment. It reflects an understanding of the central idea.
- Skills concepts and attitudes: each unit provides opportunities for different skills, concepts and attitudes. Reflection on growth in these areas is recorded on the planners and self-assessments are done by students,
- Action: Student actions that are initiated beyond the scope of the unit are recorded on the planner.

**The Exhibition** takes place at the end of Grade 5 and requires students to demonstrate their learning throughout the Primary Years Program. It is an opportunity for the students to highlight how they apply their learning in an unfamiliar situation. It provides a good summative assessment of student learning throughout our program.

## Portfolios:

A student portfolio is one method of collecting information, which is used to assess student progress. It is a way to keep a record of the student's performance in academic skills, development of knowledge, conceptual understanding, transdisciplinary skills, attitudes and the attribute of the learner profile. It reflects the progress they are making in critical thinking, creativity. It includes the student's reflection on his/her own work. The students use it to identify their own areas of strength and improvement. It is also used to communicate student's performance to the parents and helps the students become participants in their own learning.

It becomes the students' evidence of learning and includes a range of curriculums. It can be used as a tool for assessment and reporting purposes.

## ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

The purpose of an assessment is to provide the educator with an in depth view of the students' abilities. They help teachers understand the learner and modify their practices accordingly. In order for any assessment to be considered effective, it should align with the following criteria. These components are applicable to both summative and formative assessments.

- i. **Valid:** Happen in authentic contexts and assess identified objectives
  - ii. **Educative:** Provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their range of knowledge, conceptual understanding and skills. Students and teachers should learn from the experience.
  - iii. **Explicit:** Criteria are stated clearly, so that the student can understand them and is shared with them in advance for creating a quality product or performance.
  - iv. **Fair:** Student should be able to demonstrate their ability
  - v. **Comprehensive:** a range of information is gathered over time
- Effective assessments not only provide the students with an opportunity to show their abilities but also allow teachers to:

- ❖ Use and reflect on the teaching and learning process effectively.
- ❖ Plan in response to student needs
- ❖ Gather evidence to reflect on practices and modify.
- ❖ Collaboratively review the students' work to check for progress

Teachers use a range of assessment strategies to document the evidence of student learning. The strategies selected to assess student learning may not only assess the process of inquiry but also the product created through the process. Teachers rely on several assessment strategies to collect necessary information to create a balanced view of the student.

<b>Assessment Strategy</b>	<b>Description</b>
Observation	Students are observed often and regularly. May be wide-angle (whole class) or close up (one student). Observation is particularly valuable when assessing attitudes or skills.
Selected response	Single snapshot, samples of what students know or are able to do.
Open-ended tasks	Students are asked to communicate an original response. The response could take many forms, such as a presentation, an essay, a diagram or a solution to a problem.
Performance assessments	Performance assessments can allow students to perform the learned skills and show their understanding in real-world contexts.
Process journals	Regular written personal statements by the students about key issues or important activities can lead to enhanced understanding of the concepts.
Student self-evaluation	Students are given the opportunity to reflect upon their learning and to assess progress against criteria.
Peer assessment	Students who are assessing can clarify their own thinking and understanding of the assessment criteria. The student being assessed can use this process to learn from peer feedback.

- ❖ Internal
  - For internal student placement testing, refer to the Grading and Reporting Policy for grades 7-12.
- ❖ New Students
  - To know more about the process for new admission, refer to the schools' Admission Policy.
- ❖ Any student who falls under special education needs should refer to the policy for students on probation

## ASSESSMENT TOOLS:

- ❖ **Rubrics:** an established set of criteria for rating students in all areas. The descriptors tell the assessor what characteristics or signs to look for in students' work and then how to rate that work on a predetermined scale. Rubrics can be developed by students as well as by teachers.
- ❖ **Checklists:** A list of criteria against which students are assessed (e.g. information, data, attributes or elements that should be present)
- ❖ **Exemplars:** samples of students' work that serve as concrete standards against which other samples are judged. Generally, there is one benchmark for each achievement level in a scoring rubric. Each school is encouraged to set benchmarks that are appropriate and usable within their particular school context. The exemplars should be reviewed by teachers and updated regularly based on changes.
- ❖ **Anecdotal records:** anecdotal records are brief written notes based on observations of students. "Learning stories" are focused, extended observations that can be analyzed later. These records need to be systematically compiled and organized.
- ❖ **Continua:** these are visual representations of developmental stages of learning. They show a progression of achievement or identify where a student is in a process.

## ASSESSMENT PRACTICES:

### **Collaborative Assessments:**

Teachers in PLC teams create assessments together to ensure that all students have access to the same essential curriculum and assess the quality of student work according to the same standards.

Teacher teams will de-privatize their work and share openly with others about their successes and failures in order to provide mutual support toward agreed-upon goals.

The teachers also calibrate their scoring on all common assessments by grading the same piece separately using the same rubric and comparing the different scores. This is done with several papers until full understanding of the rubric is reached.

### **Result Orientation:**

Data plays a vital role in helping the teams identify their areas of need and then set SMART goals based off them. To make our goals SMART it needs to conform to the following criteria:

Specific

Measurable

Attainable,

Result oriented

Time bound

The PLC teams go through a simple collaborative inquiry cycle to positively impact student learning.

- i. Plan their assessments and data gathering tools **(Plan)**
- ii. Implement what they planned and gather data by using the tools they identified in the planning stage**(Do)**
- iii. Study the data together to identify gaps, reflect on own practices and make necessary changes to the plan. **(Study)**
- iv. Review the plan and make necessary changes based on analyzed data. Prepare to go through the cycle again starting from D (do). **(Act)**

Each PLC team goes through a long inquiry cycle, which is yearlong and is related to the team's SMART goal while the short cycle is done within every unit.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

In the 2009-2010 school year, DAS became a school with a dual-language international program for all students from pre-school until the last year of secondary. It also offers an alternative for those students who choose to transfer into the Muqararat program for grades 10-12. As a result, DAS has four different systems for grading and reporting:

- ❖ K-5 PYP;
- ❖ 6-10 MYP;
- ❖ DAS system for secondary students who continue in the International Secondary Program to receive the American diploma;
- ❖ Ministry of Education system for the secondary students who transfer to the Muqararat program to receive Ministry diploma.

## REPORTING CRITERIA:

In all four systems, DAS reports on student achievement will meet the following criteria:

- ❖ Reflect student performance on DAS standards, benchmarks and grade level expectations;
- ❖ show all instructions and categories in both Arabic and English on the same page;
- ❖ include two kinds of information on the same page: achievement results, and the work
- ❖ Habits and/or behaviors (including attendance and punctuality) that have influenced those results;
- ❖ Give enough information about student performance to be useful but be compact enough to be practical;
- ❖ Be manageable for the teachers;
- ❖ Be understandable by parents, students, teachers, other schools where DAS students might go, and Ministry of Education personnel;

- ❖ Be entered and communicated electronically;
- ❖ Be available for school and parents' viewing on the internet through the DAS Management System (DASMS);
- ❖ Be delivered to parents on paper two times per year for the intermediate and secondary levels and four times per year for the elementary levels;
- ❖ Be the same at the same age level for both the girls' school and boys' school.

## PYP RECORDING AND REPORTING:

Reporting involves parents, students and teachers as partners. It needs to clearly indicate what the child knows, understands and can do.

Reporting to parents and students occurs through:

- ❖ Conferences (Teacher/Student) (Student Led)(Teacher/Parent)
- ❖ The portfolio
- ❖ The exhibition in grade 5
- ❖ End of unit reporting
- ❖ Quarterly Reports

### **Teacher/Parent Conferences:**

Parent conferences are formal reporting sessions between the parent and the teacher which take place twice in an academic year. They are used to discuss the student's progress and sample work they have done. The agreements between the parent and the teacher are recorded. If needed follow up meetings are requested either from the parents or the teachers.

### **Student-Led Conferences:**

These are conferences between the parent and the student. Students are involved in choosing what is shared with the parent. Students address all 5 components of the IB program. Teacher greet the parents and go around the room throughout the conference.

### **Teacher/Student Conferences:**

These take place formally or informally in the classroom during the lessons. They take place to provide specific feedback to the students based on their needs.



### **The Portfolio:**

The portfolio is an integral part of the student's journey through the PYP program. It provides a record of student effort and an all of the school's curriculum. Each student has his/her own portfolio which is to be shared with the parents during all forms of conferences.

### **The Exhibition:**

The exhibition done at the end of the PYP program involves the students doing a comprehensive collaborative inquiry. One of the purposes the exhibition serves is student driven reporting.

### **End of Unit Reporting:**

At the end of every unit the students are given a summative assessment which includes the essential skills that students worked on during the unit. Through the summative assessment the student shows his/her proficiency in the selected standards. The assessment along with its breakdown and the students' performance is sent home to the parents.

### **Quarterly Reports:**

Every quarter Dhahran Ahliyya Schools has a reporting period. A report card reflecting the learning that occurred during the quarter and the student's performance in light of the skills is sent home to parents.

### **Assessment Review**

As a staff, we will review our assessment agreements and policy annually.

### **References**

(2009).PYP-Making it happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education.  
[www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org)