

# **Latta High School IB World School International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Assessment Policy**



## **Introduction**

Latta High School (LHS), a rural public high school in Dillon School District Three in South Carolina, has been an approved IB school since 2010. We started off with a small cohort, but we have been growing steadily since that time.

We encourage all juniors and seniors to take any IB course that interests them, whether at Standard Level or Higher Level. The IB program is open to all students who complete the LHS IB application process and register for one or more IB courses. The district currently bears the cost for all registration and examination fees for students who enroll in an IB course. In return, we expect students to complete all requirements for the course including completing all IB assessment requirements (internal and external) and sitting for the May Exam session. Students who do not complete these requirements will be asked to reimburse the district the examination fee and/or the registration fee. (Individual cases with extenuating circumstances may request that these fees be waived.)

In order to support our IB DP students in preparation for their college years, each student meets with a counselor for an Individual Graduation Plan each year to review their curriculum choices and ensure that they are in the most appropriate curriculum path for their individual needs and abilities.

The LHS assessment policy is related to and in compliance with the academic honesty, special educational needs and language policies created and promulgated by the LHS IB Diploma Programme (DP). LHS upholds the belief that every student can be an IB student. These policies work together to provide the structure that both supports and guides LHS students through their IB DP years.

## **Philosophy and Principles of Assessment Practice**

LHS believes that assessments should authentically match the demands of the curriculum. While tests and other assessments should be a fair reflection of the material covered, they should also be challenging and make students apply acquired knowledge to new situations and contexts.

The goal of assessment is to provide evaluation of student knowledge and learning. However, assessments need not be sit-down exams, nor must all assessments be used in determining a student's grade. In the most literal sense, LHS teachers are assessing each student daily, and it is common for students to be assessed multiple times in each class each day, whether formally or informally. These assessments are referred to as *formative* and are used by the teacher to help better understand the needs of each student or of the class as a whole. Formative

assessments help teachers consider the effectiveness of the instruction and allow teachers to modify lessons, including opportunities for revision.

*Summative* assessments serve as a final evaluation of student learning and are typically a basis for a student's class grade. End of unit exams are a good example of summative assessment, but other examples include essays written over time, oral exams, portfolios, projects, laboratory work, and other performances. Summative assessments may include formative aspects while allowing for multiple opportunities to show mastery of content and skills.

## **District, State, National and International Assessments**

Beyond the typical assessments that high school students would complete in class, LHS students also complete several different types of assessments created by groups and organizations external to the classroom.

*End of Course Examinations (EOC)*—EOC exams are criterion-referenced, summative, standardized tests required by the State of South Carolina for successful completion of identified courses. EOC exams are currently administered in Algebra I, Intermediate Algebra, Biology I, English 2, and U.S. History at the end of the semester for students enrolled in those classes. As these exams occur prior to the onset of the DP, there is no conflict with the Diploma Programme.

*International Baccalaureate Assessments (IB)*—IB assessments are criterion-referenced, summative, standardized assignments, performances, and exams completed during the two years of the IB DP. More information on the IB assessments system is provided in the next section.

*Advanced Placement Exams (AP)*—AP exams are norm-referenced, summative, standardized tests produced by the College Board and administered in May each year. LHS typically offers at least one course that prepares students for a specific AP exam. AP Calculus (taken senior year and sometimes conflicting with IB testing dates) is currently the only AP course offered, and it is offered only when there are enough interested students.

*Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Testing (ACT)*—The SAT and ACT are norm-referenced, summative, standardized tests used in the United States for college admission. The SAT and/or the ACT are generally taken at the end of 11<sup>th</sup> grade (first year of the IB DP) or at the beginning of 12<sup>th</sup> grade. SAT/ACT preparatory workshops are offered to LHS juniors and seniors (and sophomores in the honors program, if space is available) each fall. Students are encouraged to prepare for the SAT/ACT examinations by taking academically demanding classes and doing well in that coursework.

The State of South Carolina mandates SAT or ACT testing (at the state's expense) for all 11<sup>th</sup> grade students during the spring semester. Students take the one-time, state-sponsored exam on school grounds, but any other testing sessions must be arranged and paid for by the individual student and taken at a designated exam site.

*ACT WorkKeys* —The ACT WorkKeys assessment includes two norm-referenced sections, including applied mathematics, reading for information, and locating information. This

assessment is part of the SC Certified Work Ready Communities initiative and is administered to all third year high school students in the state in the spring semester.

## **IB Assessment Standards**

Since LHS is an IB World School offering the IB DP, special consideration is required in the design of the school schedule, curriculum and class syllabi to support the completion of IB assessments. One of the fundamental distinctions of the IB DP is the assessment model. Seated examinations in May are only one component of the assessment model for the IB DP, and the weight of the May exam varies among different disciplines. Other IB assessments include essays, laboratory investigations, portfolios, projects, performances, presentations, and oral exams.

*Concurrency.* Due to financial, staff, and scheduling shortages, we have implemented concurrency in a way that reasonably meets the demands of IB and the restrictions of our situation. Students understand when they sign up for an IB course that they are required to complete all coursework and IB assessments for each class. Students who qualify for an IEP or a 504 Accommodation Plan are welcome to participate in the program. The IB Coordinator and Counselor check each IB student prior to the IB Registration deadline to ensure that any accommodations are requested for that student. Finally, all fees associated with IB exam registration are currently paid by Dillon District 3, thus minimizing the burden to our students.

*Calendars.* Each year candidates are given a calendar of approximate dates of all formal IB Assessment deadlines. Each teacher is responsible for giving individual classes a calendar with more detail. Our district is transitioning LHS students to the Google classroom environment. Once this system is implemented, we will work to create a more detailed and dynamic calendar that can be easily updated for everyone. During a SCIBS (South Carolina IB Schools) event, Jonathan Bradley shared that the IB has found evidence that not being aware of upcoming deadlines is a main stressor of IB DP students. Considering this, LHS will be exploring options to improve communication of student and teacher deadlines.

Our district has implemented a policy to reduce the number of home assignments in an effort to minimize the impact of stress on our students. Another part of the policy is that students are not allowed to have more than two summative assessments on any given day. This policy as well as the IB calendar has ensured that our faculty works together to make decisions about assessment scheduling. Having one calendar that outlines the many demands that are placed on our IB students increases faculty and student awareness of the nature, scope, and sequence of the IB course load.

*Assessment Specifics.* Alignment with the IB assessment standards articulated within the IB's standards and practices documentation follows.

### **1. Assessment Requirements of LHS and the IB DP.**

Assessment can take a variety of forms, from comprehensive, structured exams to informal evaluation of student work. The key factor in any of our courses (whether IB or not) is that there is an ongoing assessment process that is informed by data. Teachers are expected to collect, analyze, interpret and critically reflect on data that issues from

student work. Regardless of the type of assessment, criteria are expected to be standards-based, consistent, transparent, and clearly communicated to students.

*Home Assignments.* Home assignments are an opportunity to improve content knowledge understanding by practicing necessary skills. As such, it provides an important source for formative assessment. However, because of the potential misuse of homework and the potential unnecessary burden that it can place on students, the Home Assignment policy (IKB) adopted by the Dillon District 3 Board in September 2017 limits the scope, subjects, and grade assignments for grades 4K - 12. Home assignments should be meaningful and relevant to current lessons, carefully planned, and differentiated for students based on skill level, ability, and availability of home support and resources. While home assignments can be used, any grading can provide no more than two points added to the final grade of each nine week period.

*Course Grades.* LHS has set a policy that final grades are comprised of 80% coursework and 20% final exam. Beyond that percentage and to make grading consistent across the LHS IB curriculum, the IB faculty has adopted the following grading scale for all IB courses. It is important to note that the ultimate basis must align with the course objectives outlined in the IB Subject Guide. Teachers generally include categories for determining the final grade that include large assessments (tests, exams, essays) as well as smaller (formative) assessments (quizzes, daily homework, in-class participation etc.).

LHS/IB GRADE CONVERSION SCALE									
A [90-100]		B [80-89]		C [70-79]		D [60-69]		F [0-59]	
IB	LHS	IB	LHS	IB	LHS	IB	LHS	IB	LHS
100	100	85-86	89	58-60	78	42-44	68	25-28	58
98-99	99	82-84	88	55-57	76	39-41	66	22-24	56
96-97	98	80-81	87	52-54	74	35-38	64	19-21	54
94-95	97	77-79	86	49-51	72	32-34	62	15-18	52
93	96	75-76	85	45-48	70	29-31	60	12-14	50
91-92	94	72-74	84					9-11	48
89-90	92	70-71	83					5-8	46
87-88	90	67-69	82					2-4	44
		64-66	81					1	42
		61-63	80					0/NHI	0

This conversion chart allows teachers to grade using IB rubrics, which are not designed to convert to percentages. For example, a score of 12/20 marks on an IB rubric indicates that a student has met expectations and falls in the middle of the grade band. If converted to a percentage, students would receive a 60/D for an assignment that meets the basic expectations. Under this conversion, the rubric marks would earn the student a grade of 78/C, which falls in line with the descriptors of the rubric.

**This grading scale does not apply to all assignments in an IB course, only to assignments marked according to an IB rubric or an IB rubric adaptation.**

*Extra Credit Work.* LHS allows teachers, in general, to provide extra credit work at the teacher's discretion. It is noted that teachers are not likely to assign extra credit if students have not applied themselves to the regular course work. However, it is the unanimous decision of the faculty that extra credit should not be assigned for any IB DP

course. Therefore, all students are encouraged to complete assigned coursework diligently and completely when it is assigned.

*Internal Assessments.* The internal assessment will take the place of the school-level exam for all IB courses. This assessment will be mandatory and cannot be exempted. This assessment will count as the 20% exam grade for the course. Internal assessments will be graded according to the late work policy.

*Examination Requirements.* LHS is committed to following the IB examination requirements as outlined in the 2020 updated Diploma Programme *Assessment procedures*. The staff would like for students and parents to be particularly aware of guideline 11.6, “Inform candidates that their handwriting must be legible. Poor handwriting will not be penalized, but if an examiner cannot read a script, then he or she cannot mark it.” As this is IB’s official position on handwriting, it is also the position that LHS will implement on any handwritten assessments.

In general, teachers use IB rubrics and criteria for the majority of their assessments. This has the benefit of preparing students for their formal IB assessment experiences. LHS uses numeric marks for assessments and assignments as well as a final percentage in the computation of the final letter grade, A, B, C, D or F. LHS transcripts document this final grade each semester and also compute a Grade Point Average (GPA). The grade is reported for the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy (SC UGP) with a weight up to 5.0 and for the standard Grade Point Average, in which each letter mark is given a numeric value on a 4.0-point scale (A=4, F=0). A “D” is considered the lowest passing grade, resulting in the awarding of credit. These systems (IB, GPA, & SC UGP) are different means of communicating student achievement. At the end of the day, we are interested in understanding and reporting what a student knows at the conclusion of the course in relation to the stated aims and objectives.

## **2. Communication of the assessment philosophy, policy, and procedures to the school community.**

The LHS Assessment Policy as well as other pertinent documents can be found on the school website. In addition, we use the Lightspeed phone system to inform students and their parents of IB events, testing schedules, assessment procedures, and conferences, as needed. When the Google classroom platform is fully implemented, it will give administration, faculty, and students an additional communication tool.

## **3. Strategies and tools to assess student learning.**

Structured assessments obviously take many forms, including but not limited to the following:

- Individual oral commentaries and presentations
- Interactive (group) oral presentations
- Socratic seminars (and less structured classroom discussions)
- Individual and group projects

Debates and simulations  
Reflective journals  
Written commentaries  
Formal essays  
Extended Essay research  
Labs and lab portfolios  
Interdisciplinary projects  
Portfolio projects (here, principally Groups 4-6)  
Performance and composition (mainly Group 6)  
Work-site learning and internships  
May session written IB examinations  
State and national exams

As part of a school initiative to emphasize the Approaches to Teaching/Learning in the school along with Inquiry-Based Learning, there has also been a push towards more concept-driven inquiry. As a part of this emphasis on criterion-related assessment, it is especially incumbent on IB DP teachers to judge student work by rubric attainment level or other assessment and not by comparisons to the work of others.

One additional strategy employed is the effective use of relationships. We work diligently to provide a safe and nurturing environment for our students. Because of our unusually homogenous and rural makeup, many of our staff and students have relationships, familial or otherwise, outside of the school. One of the advantages to this tight community involvement is that we can often informally 'assess' students in ways in which formal or institutional assessments cannot hope to match. These ungraded, unrecorded observations are instrumental in connecting with students and their families to build a relationship that has each child's success as its goal.

#### **4. Feedback to inform and improve student learning.**

School-based feedback is varied, but is formal and structured in three specific ways recognizable by students and parents: (1) PowerSchool and Parent/Student Portal, (2) grade reporting, and (3) Google Classroom.

- (1) PowerSchool and Parent/Student Portal:** PowerSchool is a web-based system that has distinct subcomponents for administrative, teaching, and parent/student access. Parents and students can view and track progress of all course assignments and grades at any time from any web device.
- (2) Grade Reportings:** Our district distributes progress reports to all students four times a year at the half point of each nine weeks and issues a formal grade at the end of each nine weeks. Teachers have the opportunity to add additional comments for parents and students at that time, although these comments are not a part of the student's permanent transcript record.

**(3) Google Classroom.** This platform has been implemented for our district. There is a transition phase as teachers undergo training in the new system, but eventually teachers will be expected to create an interface to disseminate course material, publish calendars and deadlines, and generally collaborate and communicate in their classrooms.

**5. Recording student progress aligned with the assessment philosophy of the IB DP.**

LHS is bound to the district's choice of the PowerSchool grading system for the recording and reporting of student progress. The IB Coordinator, along with the CAS, EE, and TOK staff, is in charge of recording diploma candidates' progress on the core components.

**6. Reporting student progress aligned with the assessment philosophy of the IB DP.**

Student progress is reported in myriad ways. Teachers report student progress to the administration through their PowerSchool gradebooks. Also, sections five and six of each teacher's unit plan are devoted to analysis of student performance and reflection. Teachers may share any progress concerns through this tool. Teachers may also schedule time with the Principal or the IB Coordinator to discuss concerns. Teachers communicate student progress to students and parents/guardians through informal discussions, phone calls, and/or formal conferences.

The district provides Parent/Student Portal, a feature of PowerSchool, so that parents/guardians and students have real-time access to student information such as attendance and grades. The School Bulletin section of the dashboard is linked to daily announcements, happenings at school, and other concerns. Messages may be delivered via a phone tree system to the whole school community or any selected section. Finally, we offer formal, school-wide conferencing at various times of the year to give faculty and parent/guardians an opportunity to discuss student progress.

**7. Analysis of assessment data to inform teaching and learning.**

Data analysis is completed each year by the individual teachers. Due to our small staff and school size, our subject areas have only one or two teachers. Each year the IB coordinator distributes all assessment results to the IB faculty, including all the component scores, IA feedback, and Subject Reports. In addition, school-level data is accessible to any teacher or building administrator through the PowerTeacher or PowerSchool interface. Teachers, through PowerTeacher, are able to see students who are currently enrolled in their classes and their information. The PowerSchool reports allow us to see a snapshot of real time data including grades, attendance, discipline, assessments, graduation requirements, extracurricular activities, and more. Administrators are able to search, filter and export any of this data individually or for use in our various staff meetings.

We have taken a few steps to improve the analysis of assessment data in the last two years.

*Monthly IB Staff Meetings* – A regularly scheduled monthly meeting allows time for all IB staff to meet and discuss the results from their formative and summative assessments.

*Teacher Unit Plans* – An unit plan template disseminated to teachers includes a section for teachers to describe and analyze student performance during each individual unit. Sections include prompts for teachers to explain how analyzed data better helps them understand the strengths and weaknesses of their students as well as list any aspects of their instruction that should be modified in the future.

*IB Semester Reflections* – The IB Coordinator requires each IB faculty member to complete a reflection at the end of each semester. This reflection is a time for IB faculty members to reflect on the scores, the students, and the semester as a whole, as well as make any adjustments that may be needed before the next semester begins. A copy of the reflection is stored by the faculty member and by the IB Coordinator. The reflections can be accessed at a later date to see if any needed changes were made and whether or not they were successful.

**8. Opportunities for students to participate in, and reflect on, the assessment of their work.**

Reflection is a foundation of the IB DP and an essential process in the growth of an IB student. Since reflection is a cornerstone to make each of us aware of our performance, whether staff or student, a time for reflection is included in each staff meeting as well as in teachers' unit plans (Section 6). These moments of reflection help staff to continually improve classroom instruction and expand learning philosophies. While teachers are expected to reflect on their experiences, they also incorporate those expectations into their classrooms. Teachers in the IB DP, as well as in the school as a whole, encourage students to reflect, whether through informal discussion or formal written reflection, to increase awareness of their growth and experience on an academic and personal level.

**9. Demonstrate consolidation of learning through the completion of the Diploma Programme extended essay.**

LHS has committed to having an Extended Essay Coordinator since our program authorization. The EE Coordinator, EE supervisors, and students have an authorized meeting time during the school day through our IPASS meeting times. IPASS is a daily scheduled time when students can come to school for extra review with teachers or to attend meetings as needed with their supervisors.

Students at LHS begin working on their Extended Essays at the outset of their Junior Year. Their first task is to isolate a subject area and to request a mentor from among our DP teachers. Due to the small student size of our school, our full diploma student ratio is proportionately small. We can usually accommodate the students' subject area and mentor requests without any significant problems. The EE Coordinator tracks and monitors progress of all of the students, provides instruction on research techniques in the first months of the essay, provides professional development to the supervisors, informs students, parents and teachers of deadlines and expectations, and monitors progress on the three reflection sessions. A rough draft of the EE is due in June of Year 1

so students can focus on their coursework and college planning during Year 2. The final product is due in September of Year 2, with a viva voce scheduled to follow in October.

## **Summary Statement of Responsibilities**

The LHS community recognizes valid assessment of student knowledge and learning is an important function of high school.

### *The LHS administration shall:*

Stay informed about and be an advocate for IB assessments and requirements.

Ensure that the best choices are made in creating classes and the master schedule to allow for continuity of the IB program offerings and assessments.

Support and encourage staff to update their classroom grades frequently in PowerTeacher (our online gradebook) so students and parents/guardians are kept informed about class progress.

Support through space, materials, and providing substitutes as needed for staff to conduct all types of assessments.

Understand and support students in fulfilling their CAS group projects.

Fund IB training and conferences for teachers to better understand the program and its assessments.

### *The LHS staff shall:*

Administer in-class assessments that are aligned to course aims and objectives and allow students to demonstrate complex understanding and/or skills related to standards.

Utilize rubrics (IB, District, or other) to determine fulfillment of standards.

Provide multiple opportunities for mastery, in recognition that students are at different levels of ability.

Base class grades on mastery of standards and showing understanding rather than behavior and attendance.

Develop rigorous and relevant assessments and activities with academic integrity.

Schedule large-scale assessments, especially those required for the IB DP, evenly over time ensuring students have had appropriate chances to practice before summative assessments are administered.

Provide timely feedback on all assessments and assignments, no later than two weeks from completion.

Meet the deadlines set by IB DP Coordinator for the submission of IB Predicted Grades and Internal Assessments.

Participate in cross-curricular and same-subject collaborative planning. Teachers will do this by attending the regularly scheduled staff meetings with the IB Coordinator as well as by meeting informally with their peers.

Attend IB training and conferences scheduled by the IB Coordinator and make known training requests to the Coordinator so that professional development needs are anticipated.

Provide accommodations for all assessments and activities to Special Education students as outlined in the LHS Special Education Policy and accordance of policies set forth by Dillon School District 3.

Use assessment data to continually improve instruction.

*The LHS students shall:*

Approach both formative and summative assessments with integrity and academic honesty; assessments intended to be a measure of individual student performance should be a measure of that student alone.

Meet the deadlines set by each teacher for the completion of assessments, including in-class summative examinations as well as large-scale assessments (e.g. essays, lab reports, portfolios, projects).

Utilize rubrics to guide completion of assignments and assessments.

Adjust coursework based on given feedback or rubric marks.

Make the necessary arrangements to be present and on time for scheduled IB assessments.

*The LHS parents and guardians shall:*

Support academic integrity.

Refer to the available resources in learning about the nature of assessments in each class and in the IB program.

Understand that a class grade is determined by how many and what types of assignments and assessments have been collected.

Understand that how an assessment is scored, and how it might calculate into a classroom grade, varies by the nature of the assessment, the individual teacher, and by what skills/content are being assessed.

Support students in arranging their schedules so they can be present and on time for IB assessments.

## **Assessment Policy Review**

The DP Assessment Policy is a living document, subject to ongoing review and revision with the IB DP Coordinator taking the lead role in keeping the school informed of the principles and

practices established by IB. As such, the policy will be reviewed annually after the May exam session by the collective DP faculty.

The building administration is responsible for the formal evaluation of teachers to include adherence to IB principles and practices as a responsibility for teaching a DP course. This includes holding teachers accountable for ensuring that assessment practices are followed to ensure the best possible outcomes for students.

*This assessment policy is based on the Foss IB World School Assessment Policy created by Foss High School and Daniel Erickson, Foss HS IB Coordinator. The content and format are used with permission.*