

RICHMOND SECONDARY SCHOOL

International Baccalaureate Assessment Policy

PHILOSOPHY

Richmond Secondary school is a public secondary school located in Richmond, British Columbia, and has been offering the IB Diploma Programme since 1984; however, teachers and students need to cover learning outcomes from both the required provincial and IB curricula. Assessment and evaluation processes must meet the needs of these two curricular bodies. We believe the program offered at Richmond Secondary school most certainly accomplishes this challenge. We also see a significant and positive connection between the assessment and evaluation strategies of the IB Diploma program, and the provincial, district and school programs we offer. There is close alignment between assessment practices in the IB Diploma program (reflected in documents like “Diploma Programme Assessment: Principles and Practice”) and those promoted by the BC Ministry of Education (as seen in documents like “Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind”). Similarly, the assessment policy at Richmond Secondary School is thoughtfully aligned with the Richmond School District Assessment Policy (517 – 2011).

One of the most important distinctions in sound assessment practice is that between assessment *for*, assessment *of* and assessment *as* learning. These three types of classroom assessment are characterized by the BC Ministry of Education in the following manner:

- Assessment *for* learning refers to formative assessment by which teachers collect information about student development. Assessment for learning is ongoing and provides the basis for determining what the teacher should do next to move student learning forward.
- Assessment *of* learning refers to summative assessment whereby teachers collect data from a variety of sources to evaluate student performance in relation to curricular learning outcomes. This informs students, parents and others about student achievement.
- Assessment *as* learning refers to the active involvement of students in being critical assessors who work with the teacher to become more aware of their own learning goals and how to effectively address them. The goal is for students to become aware of what helps them learn better and achieve better results, thus increasing their role in contributing to their own improvement.

At Richmond Secondary, we see a direct connection between these distinctions in assessment *for*, *of* and *as* learning, and the assessment practices employed within the IB

Diploma program. For example, in the ““Diploma Programme Assessment: Principles and Practice” the point is made that:

for formative assessment, the main purpose is to provide detailed feedback to teachers and their students on the nature of the students’ strengths and weaknesses, and to help develop students’ capabilities. Methods of assessment involving direct interaction between teacher and student are particularly helpful here. The teacher is seen as the supporter rather than a director of learning (Vygotsky, 1962; Vygotsky, 1978), and should make use of assessment tasks and instruments that help the student work in what Vygotsky refers to as the “zone of proximal development”.

This creates a direct connection with the BC Ministry of Education’s distinction of assessment **for** learning. That the teacher provides ongoing formative assessment that assists the student to achieve the required level of success in demonstrating how well they have learned a particular learning outcome. During this part of the learning process adjustments can be made by the teacher (to their instruction) and students (to their learning) to what is taking place prior to any “summative” or final evaluation taking place.

In contrast to the ongoing formative assessment that takes place in both the IB Diploma and BC Ministry provincial curriculums, there is always a thorough and detailed “summative” or assessment **of** learning that takes place. Summative assessment provides information about student achievement, gives teachers an indication as to the effectiveness of teaching methodologies, and may also give a snapshot, although not definitively, about the effectiveness of schools. The primary purpose of summative evaluation, however, is to make informed judgments about what students have learned based on assessment **of** learning evidence. These judgments are made by comparing valid evidence of student learning to standards of performance as related to prescribed curricular learning outcomes. Students as well as teachers should be clear on the standard of performance used to make these judgments. At Richmond Secondary, all staff are well versed in the notions of assessment **for** (formative) and assessment **of** (summative) student learning. Staff maintain detailed records for both the BC Ministry of Education and the IB Diploma program.

The final element of this triad of assessment practice is assessment **as** learning. As was previously stated, this element refers to the active involvement of students in being critical assessors who work with the teacher to become more aware of their own learning goals and how to effectively address them. Students also work with fellow students to provide feedback on each other’s work. Perhaps more importantly they work with teachers to clearly define targets for achievement. Students are given opportunities to clarify criteria for demonstrating their learning, with the goal being for students to become aware of what helps them learn better. This meta-cognitive approach is a valuable part of helping students more deeply grasp the learning that is taking place.

In summary, the primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to support and enhance student learning. Assessment and evaluation support student learning by providing feedback that informs teachers and students about what has been learned and what is not yet understood. Assessment and evaluation practices are integral to the planning and delivery of IB Diploma curriculum and to implementing instructional approaches to best meet student needs and ways of learning, thereby supporting and enhancing student growth and achievement.

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES (that teachers are expected to follow)

- we view assessment *for* learning, *as* learning, and *of* learning as being very important.
- teachers understand that assessment for learning and as learning play an important role in determining assessment of learning.
- our assessment grades are criterion-referenced with criteria from the IB Diploma Programme.
- we discourage awarding of effort grades, and where those are awarded, there needs to be clear criteria for awarding them.
- we regularly give feedback information about achievement and progress to students.
- formative assessment practices include: testing, oral presentations, group presentations, monitoring student workbooks/journals/portfolios, evaluation of practical skills, performances, display work, individual and group work, exhibitions.
- self-assessment and peer assessment are used as part of assessment procedures.
- teachers are encouraged to discuss grades with students before issuing reports.
- teachers issue preliminary IB predicted grades in May of the grade 11 year, and the IB coordinator meets with students to discuss the interim predicted grades.
- teachers issue early IB predicted grades in October of the grade 12 year for universities with early admission policies
- teachers share with students the IB rubrics (criterion referenced) for internal and external assessments.
- we use criteria (rubrics) to provide clear targets for curricular expectations, aims, and goals.
- teachers use exemplars (exams, essays, portfolios, orals, labs) to guide assessment practices.
- students are provided with class time and opportunities to clarify criteria, and to clarify concepts unclear to them.
- students engage in setting criteria for specified tasks in their diploma subjects.
- teachers are encouraged to set few but significant summative tasks for each reporting period.
- teachers emphasize quality of work rather than quantity of work.
- all teachers help students to manage their workload.
- students complete mock IB exams and internal assessment tasks in each of their subject courses

SCHOOL-WIDE ASSESSMENT EXPECTATIONS

- All teachers, in all classes, employ methods of differentiated instruction. This means that teachers are continually assessing the skill-base and knowledge-level of students and devising learning activities and assessments based on individual student's levels of readiness. Accordingly, within a given class, not all students will always be completing the exact same learning activities or assessments.
- All teachers are required to keep a daybook and to complete a Preview for each of the courses they teach. In addition, each teacher shares with students and parents the assessment procedures for each of the subjects the teacher teaches.
- All grades entered in the grade book for any class must reflect student achievement. Teachers are not permitted to enter grades based on any student activity that does not reflect student achievement in the course. For example, teachers may not count vague, subjective participation grades; any grades based on class participation must be quantifiable, identified with a Prescribed Learning Outcome, and clearly related to student achievement.
- No one assignment, test, or project may count for more than 20% of the student's entire grade for any given marking period.

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES: GRADING/MARKING

At Richmond Secondary School we use the BC Ministry of Education's grading scale, which as stated earlier, applies to all students. The BC Ministry of Education mandates that all grading, at the high school level, must be reported to parents as a percentage (as shown in the table below):

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	86-100
B	73-85
C+	67-72
C	50-66
D	40-50
E	0-39

Of course, teachers also keep records of students' IB standing in the course. As stated above, we release interim predicted IB grades, as requested by the students, parents, or post-secondary institutions.

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES: RECORDING/REPORTING

Course grades and student progress are reported to parents/guardians on an ongoing basis through three official report card periods, and two Interim Progress Reports. Additionally, we host parent-teacher conferences (by appointment) over two days in

October and two days in April. Teachers also report informally via email and telephone as necessary.

ASSESSMENT: HOMEWORK

Richmond High's homework policy

At Richmond Secondary we believe the main purposes of Homework are:

- to promote organizational and goal setting skills*
- to reinforce curricular learning*
- to encourage independent learning and thinking*

Tasks

Homework will vary depending on the subject and grade level. Generally it is assumed that the higher the grade level the more difficult or complex the homework may be. Students are expected to assume more individual responsibility for their homework as they progress through the grades.

Homework may consist of :

- completion of class work
- study and preparation for tests
- self-assigned and teacher assigned activities
- research projects and presentations, eg. EEs, IA components, etc.
- practice activities (eg. calculations, writing and analysis)
- completion of readings
- comprehension questions relating to readings

Time Guidelines

Most students in Grade 8 and 9 should not spend more than 75 minutes a night on any regular basis in order to complete classwork or homework. This may increase to 90 minutes per night for Grade 10 students. A wide range of homework requirements for Grade 11 and 12 students will occur due to the specialization of their programs and it is not realistic to provide uniform time limits. In any case, no student should be subjected to an unhealthy combination of demands from school work and their other commitments. Occasionally, the maximum times noted above will be exceeded and as long as these higher workloads are infrequent they are not necessarily harmful.

Homework will not be assigned during winter, spring or summer holidays although these times may be used by students to complete unfinished work, complete and/or carry on research for the EE, as an example. As a general principle, homework will be assigned so that flexibility is fostered to help students develop planning and goal setting skills. Students will be given opportunities, where possible, to schedule the homework assigned to accommodate individual needs. Each of the participants in the student's

education (student, teacher, parent) has a responsibility to communicate with the others regarding any problems with respect to inadequate homework completion or excessive homework demands.

Communication

Homework acts as communication between student, parents and teacher. The student can use homework to inform both the teacher and parents on their learning experiences. Parents have the opportunity to know what their child is studying, support their child's learning and pass on to the teacher how their child responds to homework. The teacher needs to know the difficulties a student experiences with homework and the student's attitude towards homework.

Student's Role

The student's role in homework is to:

- understand what is expected and ask questions to clarify.
- contact the teacher or another student to find out about homework assigned during an absence
- complete and submit homework tasks on time
- ask for help when necessary
- learn to plan their time
- use organizational tools such as the student agenda to plan their time and complete work in manageable stages.

Teacher's role

The teacher's role is to provide homework that is :

- relevant to the instructional plan for the class, and is
- appropriate for the varying abilities and circumstances of the students, and is a balance between open-ended, creative, challenging, problem solving, and practice activities.

The teacher should take a consistent approach to homework, which starts with the teaching of the skills necessary to complete homework, clear explicit instructions, followed by feedback and backed up with consequences.

Role of parents

The parent's role in homework should begin by taking a supportive and encouraging interest in their child's work and should also include:

- establishing a regular time and place for work to be done at home
 - providing necessary school supplies so that tasks may be completed at home
- in the junior grades, checking student planners to help students understand homework tasks and to help their child to learn to plan their time to complete assignments in manageable stages
- reviewing homework with the child to encourage them to proofread for errors and/or to prompt them with questions which guide or extend their thinking

Special Assessment Needs

At Richmond Secondary School, in accordance with IB policies, we believe “that all students should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible. Where standard assessment conditions could put a student with special educational needs at a disadvantage by preventing him or her from demonstrating his or her level of skill and knowledge attainment, special arrangements may be authorized.” Such arrangements follow the principles and guidelines of the IB Diploma Programme as set forth in the IB document entitled “Candidates with Special Assessment Needs” (May 2009). Special assessment need policies are available to parents in the document entitled “Diploma Programme: General Regulations,” available in its entirety on the Richmond Secondary School web site. The excerpt from that document pertaining to special needs assessments appears here:

Article 21: Definition of special needs

A special need is any permanent or temporary diagnosed need that could put a candidate at a disadvantage and prevent him or her from being able to demonstrate skills and knowledge adequately. Article 22: Applicable procedure

22.1 Before candidates enroll in the Diploma Programme, the school is responsible for verifying whether the programme includes any requirements that are incompatible with any known diagnosed special needs.

22.2 Special needs must be reported by the candidate or his/her legal guardian to the school’s Diploma Programme coordinator when the candidate enrolls in the programme, with appropriate professional documentation. Temporary special needs, resulting from illness or accidents, should be reported to the Diploma Programme coordinator as soon as possible after they arise, together with supporting professional documentation and other relevant information.

22.3 If a candidate with a special need requires special assessment arrangements, the Diploma Programme coordinator must request the arrangements according to procedures stated in the current handbook. Special assessment arrangements can only be authorized by the IB Organization.

LINKS BETWEEN ASSESSMENT POLICY AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

a. Connection to our admission policy

Richmond School District’s motto is, “The focus is on the learner”. It seems to us that all IB documents have a similar philosophy or mandate, but particularly the document titled, “The Diploma Programme: From principles into practice”.

The idea of assessment needs to be broad enough, not only to address the assessment of subject specific components, but also to address the admission of students into the IB

programme. Thus, at Richmond Secondary School, our admission policies are aligned (are assessed) in light of important and programme defining characteristics such as accessibility. We fully support the notion that the Diploma Programme, rather than a partial programme, should be made available to the majority of students. Our admission policy at RHS is motivated and modeled on the following set of principles:

The IB believes that the Diploma Programme provides an excellent educational framework for students of a wide range of abilities and backgrounds and should be made available as widely as possible. The IB has identified as a priority the need to increase access and enable more students to benefit from experiencing its programmes. In 2006, in its report From Growth to Access: Developing an IBO access strategy (available on the IB website: <http://www.ibo.org>), the IB's governing body defined access as "enabling more students to experience and benefit from an IB education regardless of personal circumstances".

Access includes a number of concepts:

- *encouraging and enabling more schools that are located in economically underserved environments to participate in the Diploma Programme*
- *encouraging more students to enroll in the full Diploma Programme rather than just to work towards individual subject certificates*
- *broadening the subject choices and options that students can select in schools as part of their Diploma Programme and ensuring that students can study appropriate courses for their needs*
- *assisting students with various language backgrounds to access the Diploma Programme*
- *providing opportunities for students with special educational needs to access the Diploma Programme.*

The IB is constantly looking at ways to improve access and to help schools reduce barriers that impede student participation in the Diploma Programme. ("The Diploma Programme: From principles into practice", page 8)

Students entering the IB Diploma Programme at Richmond Secondary School are expected to write the Formal IB Intake Assessment. This assessment tool is designed to generate student data that will allow us to anticipate the supports that we will need to provide for individual students in the two years that we will work with them. We are committed to a programme that admits students "of a wide range of abilities and backgrounds..."

b. Connection to our Language policy

Assessment is connected to our Language policy in several ways. Firstly, because we have a large part of our student population who are non-native English speakers, we make accommodation for some of our IB diplomas to take a Language A1 other than English (as a self-taught option, or sometimes for the purpose to get a bilingual

Diploma) so that they achieve success, and have the opportunity to complete an IB Diploma. Secondly, several second languages are available to IB diploma students, so that they have a greater opportunity to cope with the rigor of second language assessments.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING, EVALUATING AND REVIEWING THE ASSESSMENT POLICY

It is the principal's and the IB Coordinator's role to implement the Assessment policy.
It is the IB teachers', the IB Coordinator's, and the administrations' role to evaluate and review the Assessment policy. Of course, final decisions are left up to the principal, but always with the judicious input and participation of all teachers.
It is the IB Coordinator's and the principal's role to ensure that new teachers are trained.