

# Metropolitan School of Panama

## Assessment Policy

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### Table of Contents

- I. Introduction
  - a. Our Mission
  - b. Our Vision
  - c. Philosophy of assessment
  - d. Principles of assessment
- II. Assessment in practice
  - a. Roles and responsibilities
  - b. Purposes & indicators of effective assessment
    - i. Types of assessment
  - c. Reporting on assessment
    - i. Formal reporting
    - ii. Informal reporting
  - d. MEDUCA expectations
- III. Program-specific practices
  - a. PYP
    - i. Report cards in the PYP
  - b. MYP
    - i. MYP summative assessment
    - ii. eAssessment and ePortfolios
    - iii. Understanding the MYP assessment criteria
    - iv. Other assessed work in the MYP
    - v. Report cards in the MYP
    - vi. Failed courses
  - c. DP
- IV. Conclusion

## **I. Introduction**

This assessment policy is based on the assessment principles and practices of the Metropolitan School of Panama and the International Baccalaureate Organization. It is intended to make clear to the whole school community the philosophy, expectations and practices relating to assessment in the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP), and the Diploma Programme (DP). The policy has been developed from educational and pedagogical values and methodologies and represents a statement of intent that outlines the principles and practices for achieving educational goals relating to all aspects of PYP, MYP, and DP assessment.

The aim of this policy is to answer the following questions:

- Why do we assess? (purpose of assessment)
- How do we assess? (types of assessment)
- What makes assessments effective?
- When do we assess?
- How do we document and report student's learning?

The Assessment Policy is reviewed yearly with all faculty and published for all stakeholders on the MET website.

### **a. Our Mission**

The MET is committed to each child reaching their personal level of excellence through a balanced academic program that nurtures their self-esteem and potential and engages them in the world that surrounds them.

### **b. Our Vision**

To set a new standard of excellence for private schools in Panama by providing a world-class academic program in an educational environment that stimulates the development of talent, the formation of moral character, and a sense of civic responsibility.

### **c. Philosophy of Assessment**

Assessment is integral to all teaching and learning at the Metropolitan School of Panama. It aims to support, encourage and enhance student learning, progress and achievement.

Assessment informs instruction and guides curriculum development by identifying what students know, understand, can do and feel at different stages in the learning process.

Assessment is an ongoing process of monitoring, gathering, analyzing, measuring, documenting, reflecting and acting on evidence of student learning to inform teaching. This

information gathered is used to provide timely and constructive feedback to students on their performance. Both students and teachers are actively engaged in assessing, reflecting, and goal setting upon student progress as part of the development of wider critical thinking and self-assessment skills.

Understanding the purpose, types, strategies and tools of assessment is essential for all members of the learning community.

#### **d. Principles of Assessment**

- Effective assessments are an integral part of teaching and learning and should reflect the range of learning objectives.
- Effective assessments:
  - drive instruction, guide learning, and inform curriculum development;
  - include collaboration between students and teachers;
  - consider different cultural contexts and different ways of learning and knowing;
  - produce evidence that can be reported and understood by all stakeholders;
  - have clear criteria for success that are known and understood by students in advance;
  - allow students to reflect, analyze, and take responsibility for their own learning;
  - demonstrate the range of students' conceptual understandings, knowledge, skills and universal values;
  - provide students with opportunities to synthesize and apply their learning in relevant contexts;
  - give room for students to express different perspectives and interpretations.

## **II. Assessment in Practice**

The MET places importance on effective and meaningful assessment. Our aim is to ensure that:

- the school provides a stimulating and fair environment in which our students can actively demonstrate their learning through a variety of assessments;
- the school curriculum is guided by the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) scopes and sequences, and IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Program (DP) subject guides, which ensure that students engage in assessment *for, as, and of* learning.

## **a. Roles and Responsibilities**

All community members have a role in implementing our assessment policy's objectives.

### **Students will:**

- reflect the attributes of the IB Learner Profile in all academic and personal aspects of learning and assessment;
- demonstrate integrity in learning by observing all regulations and criteria in the completion of assessment tasks and examinations ethically as outlined in the school Academic Integrity Policy;
- reflect on progress of learning to improve own performance;
- meet all internal deadlines as prescribed by the teacher and the school;
- be organized with materials and assignments ready for class.

### **IB Programme Coordinators will:**

- communicate with the school community the expectations of assessment in the programmes;
- provide and/or co-create assessment criteria and processes of all assessment for each subject;
- work with incoming staff to understand the philosophy, policy, and practices for assessment, in addition to providing support to learn the tools of assessment;
- monitor teacher designed instruction, pacing and assessment to ensure it meets the subject requirements of the IB programmes;
- monitor and provide support to teaching staff when assessment has been revised by the IB;
- collect data from each teacher on student achievement and progress and assist teachers in interpreting data to inform instruction and assessment practice.

### **MAP Coordinator will:**

- organize and administer MAP testing for students in grades 2-10;
- support teachers in interpreting and analyzing MAP test data;
- present data to the academic leadership team and help facilitate conversations about areas of need in teaching, learning, and written curriculum as well as identifying trends in data;

- lead optional information sessions for the parent community to help them understand their children's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) reports.

**Teachers will:**

*Provide students, at the beginning of each class, with an understanding of:*

- the class content and formal assessment components;
- the nature of the summative assessments required by IB;
- the nature of the formative assessment tasks;
- rubrics by which all formative and summative assessments are assessed both internally and externally, or opportunities to co-create rubrics when appropriate;
- expectations as to deadlines, due dates, content, assignment format, submission practices and academic integrity.<sup>[1][SEP]</sup>

Teachers are expected to record, report, and utilize data in the following manner:

- report to students and parents on student progress;
- post or share grades or feedback in a timely manner (within two weeks depending on the nature of the assessment);
- reflect on student achievement to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and assessment instruments.<sup>[1][SEP]</sup>

**Parents or Guardians will:**

- encourage positive assessment preparation such as good study and sleep habits;
- reflect on assessments, grades, progress reports and report cards with their child/children;
- attend parent-teacher and student-led conferences.

**b. Purposes & Indicators of Effective Assessment**

The PYP, MYP, and DP's approach to assessment recognizes the importance of assessing the process of learning as well as the product of learning. The IB assessment model insists on student learning being monitored and assessed at regular stages of the programmes against predetermined learning objectives and assessment criteria by use of formative and summative assessment.

At the MET we use both external and internal assessments. External assessments allow us to monitor students' learning in a larger context beyond the MET, allowing us to determine how well students are achieving relative to other students internationally. Internal assessments are assessments predominantly developed and administered by teachers. Some of these assessments have standardized benchmarks, and others use benchmarks set by the teachers.

### **i. Types of Assessments**

**Pre-assessment/Diagnostic/Provocation** = Assessment of prior knowledge

Pre-assessment determines students' prior knowledge, skills and experiences before embarking on new learning. These are baseline assessments which are not included as a part of a student's formal evaluation. These assessments activate students' prior knowledge and inform teachers' planning for the next stages of the learning process.

**Formative Assessment** = Assessment for learning and assessment as learning

These are woven into the daily learning process. They provide teachers and students with information about how learning is developing. Assessment for learning is used to allow students to demonstrate their progress of learning new knowledge and understanding and practice essential skills. Formative assessment is used to monitor student progress throughout the learning process and as a tool to improve student learning. Data collected from significant formative assessment tasks are not typically reported on, although they may be used to determine overall levels of achievement when necessary.

Through formative assessment students demonstrate their progress and can identify specific areas that they need to improve and further develop. In addition, formative assessment enables the teacher to determine the effectiveness of the teaching and to adapt instruction where necessary to improve student learning and performance. Formative assessment enables the student to build a solid foundation of knowledge, understanding and skills through practice and constructive feedback from the teacher. Purposefully planned and administered formative assessment tasks will enable students to reach higher levels of achievement in directly related summative assessment tasks.

**Summative Assessment:** = Assessment of learning

These assessments occur at the end of a unit. Students are given the opportunity to apply, or transfer, what they know, understand, feel, and are able to do in new and authentic contexts.

These assessments take many forms including (but not limited to) traditional exams and performance tasks.

**Self-Assessment/Reflection:** Self-assessment is integral throughout the learning process to engage students and teachers in reflection and assessment of their own learning. The students are given time to reflect on progress within the essential elements, including the attributes expressed in the IB Learner Profile.

**Peer Assessment:** Peer assessment is incorporated regularly throughout the learning process to promote collaboration, provide feedback, and empower students to be responsible for their own learning.

**Standardized Tests:** Standardized tests are examinations that are graded in a predetermined and consistent manner. They allow for the comparison of student achievement from year-to-year, across locations or schools, or in relation to another group, which informs instructional program decisions. Our school administers MAP tests twice yearly for Reading, Mathematics, Language Usage and Spanish in Grades 2 through 10. MAP tests are computerized, adaptive measures of academic achievement and growth.

## **c. Reporting on Assessment**

### **i. Formal Reporting**

**Teacher-Parent Conferences:** These are annual conferences between teacher(s) and the parents of elementary students, to provide feedback about the student's progress and needs. Teachers take this opportunity to answer parents' questions, to address their concerns and to help define roles in the learning process.

**Teacher-Parent-Student Conferences:** These are annual conferences between a teacher, student, and the parents, to provide feedback about the student's progress and needs. Teachers take this opportunity to answer parents' questions, to address their concerns and to help define roles in the learning process.

**Student-Led Conferences:** These are conferences between students and parents. Before the conference, with the support and guidance of the teacher, students will select and reflect on

their evidence of learning. During the conference, students will be responsible for using evidence to discuss their learning with their parent(s) and create goals for growth.

**The Written Report:** A written report on student progress is sent to parents at the end of each trimester. The report card includes reports from all teachers involved in student learning. More information is provided in the programme specific sections below.

**Portfolios:** A collection of student work which may be presented during student-led conferences or submitted to the IB for external assessment. A portfolio demonstrates learning and progress over time and is not a final product or display.

## ii. Informal Reporting

**Teacher-Student Conferences:** These conferences are incorporated into the regular classroom routines and are meant to provide the students with feedback on their progress. These conferences also allow students to reflect on their own work and set goals to improve learning.

**Teacher-Parent Meetings:** During any time of the year, both teachers and parents can request a conference to discuss student progress.

**Evidence of Learning:** During the year, teachers inform parents of individualized student learning using a variety of formative and summative assessment evidence.

**Celebrations of Learning:** During anytime of the year, celebrations of learning are organized to be shared with parents, students and other members of the school community. These celebrations showcase a variety of content, skills, collaboration, and products.

## d. MEDUCA expectations

The MET follows MEDUCA expectations in the following ways:

- The school year is divided into 3 trimesters, the MET works on this system;
- the national grading scale goes from 1 to 5 for 1st to 12th grade.
- preschool education is qualitative. Schools create their scales, but MEDUCA also offers a model;
- at the end of each trimester an average grade is calculated;



- at the end of the school year the grades of the 3 trimesters are averaged to obtain the student's final year grade/score;
- The minimum grade/score required to "pass" the year and automatically continue to the next school year is 3.0
- In Elementary School the final average will determine if a student passed the year.
- In Secondary School a pass is determined by subject. If a student fails 3 or less subjects, they are allowed to resit or "recover" these subjects during summer resit exams.<sup>1</sup>
- If a student fails more than three Secondary School subjects, they have to repeat this grade level the following year.

### **III. Program specific practices**

#### **a. Primary Years Program (PYP)**

In the PYP, the five essential elements of the PYP are assessed in all classes using the types of assessments outlined in the previous section. The essential elements are:

- Acquisition of Knowledge
- Understanding of Concepts
- Demonstration and Application of Skills
- Development of IB Learner Profile Attributes and Attitudes
- Commitment to Take Action

The five elements are assessed in alignment with subject specific scopes and sequences, the MET programme of inquiry, and the MET Approaches to Learning continuum.

In addition to regular and ongoing assessment throughout the PYP, **The Exhibition** is the culminating experience for the IB Primary Years Programme, representing an authentic summative assessment of student learning throughout the PYP, integrating all the essential elements. It is a celebration of learning which unifies students, teachers, families, and community members.

#### **i. Report Cards in the PYP:**

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<sup>1</sup> More information regarding credit recovery sessions over the 'summer' can be found in the student handbook.

- In EC3, EC4 and Kinder, report cards provide feedback based upon what students can do using the MET Approaches to Learning developmental continuum.
- In Grade 1 through 5th Grade report cards provide feedback in three ways. Firstly, the homeroom teacher writes a narrative comment about the child's achievements, and a comment about their next learning steps. Secondly, for each subject strand (eg. 'writing' in English), students receive a letter indicating where they fall on the developmental scale from exceeding expectations to needs improvement. Finally, for each subject (eg. English), students receive an overall numerical grade from 1-7. See the table below for further details.
- Students who receive EEP services also receive a supplement report to the written report.

MET IB PYP Scales	
Achievement Scale	
7 Exceeding	The learner demonstrates an <b>extensive</b> understanding of the concepts, knowledge and skills, <b>going beyond what is expected</b> in this grade level at this time of year. The learner is able to analyze, evaluate, and utilize these understandings in a <b>wide</b> variety of contexts <b>and in new situations independently</b> .
6 Mastery	The learner <b>consistently</b> demonstrates a <b>solid</b> understanding of the concepts, knowledge and skills expected in this grade level at this time of year. The learner is able to analyze, evaluate, and utilize these understandings in <b>several contexts independently</b> .
5 Meeting	The learner demonstrates a <b>basic</b> understanding of the concepts, knowledge and skills expected in this grade level at this time of year. The learner is able to utilize these understandings in <b>several contexts mostly independently</b> .
4 Approaching	The learner <b>inconsistently</b> demonstrates <b>some</b> understanding of the concepts, knowledge and skills expected in this grade level at this time of year. The learner is able to utilize these understandings <b>with occasional reminders or support</b> .
3 Limited	The learner demonstrates a <b>limited</b> understanding of the concepts, knowledge and skills expected in this grade level at this time of year <b>with support</b> . The learner is able to utilize these understandings with <b>frequent reminders and support</b> .
2 Very Limited	The learner demonstrates a <b>very limited</b> understanding of the concepts, knowledge and skills expected in this grade level at this time of year <b>when provided with support</b> . <b>Constant intervention and assistance is required</b> .
1 Minimal	The learner is <b>unable</b> to demonstrate a very limited understanding of the concepts, knowledge and skills expected in this grade level at this time of year <b>even when provided with constant support</b> . <b>Intensive intervention and constant assistance is required</b> .
N/A	Not applicable this trimester
IE	Insufficient evidence

Developmental Progress and Effort Scale							
<b>E</b>	Exceeding Expectations	<b>M</b>	Meeting Expectations	<b>A</b>	Approaching Expectations	<b>N</b>	Needs Improvement

## b. Middle Years Program (MYP)

### i. MYP Summative Assessment = Assessment of Learning

- Formal assessment requires students to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to tasks that determine overall levels of achievement. This type of assessment is described as 'summative' assessment. Levels of achievement in summative assessment tasks are recorded as final.

- Summative assessments that require significant preparation (i.e. tests) will not exceed 2 in any given day. This does not apply to tasks such as conducting research or writing essays.
- Retakes: If a parent or student requests a retake of a summative assessment, it must follow the specific guidelines of the department for which the retake is requested (e.g. Mathematics). These subject specific guidelines are based on these general guidelines:
  - all formative assessments from the unit must be completed and submitted;
  - a reflection of some kind (e.g., corrections of the original summative assessments) must be completed and submitted;
  - the retake must be requested within one week of receiving grades/feedback (exceptions can be made with excused absences such as illness accompanied by a doctor's note);
  - only one retake can be completed per class per trimester;
  - Retakes cannot be requested in the last two weeks of a reporting period (i.e., at the end of a trimester).

## **ii. eAssessment and ePortfolio<sup>2</sup>**

MYP 5 students will complete the externally assessed eAssessment in May. This onscreen examination is offered for the following subjects:

- Integrated Sciences
- Integrated Humanities
- Language and Literature OR Language Acquisition
- Mathematics

Additionally, students will complete an ePortfolio for Design class.

## **iii. Understanding the MYP Assessment Criteria**

The MYP publishes a set of individual subject specific objectives for each subject group that are directly related to the assessment criteria for that particular subject group (See chart below). Each objective is measured by a predetermined criterion. Each criterion has an applied maximum achievement level (numerical value) as shown in the table below.

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<sup>2</sup> eAssessment will be introduced on a trial basis during the 2023-2024 academic year. eAssessment and ePortfolio will be more fully implemented during the 2024-2025 academic year.

Criteria for each Subject				
Subject	A	B	C	D
<b>Language and Literature</b>	Analyzing	Organizing	Producing text	Using language
<b>Language Acquisition</b>	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
<b>Individuals and Societies</b>	Knowing and understanding	Investigating	Communicating	Thinking critically
<b>Sciences</b>	Knowing and understanding	Inquiring and designing	Processing and evaluating	Reflecting on the impacts of science
<b>Mathematics</b>	Knowing and understanding	Investigating patterns	Communicating	Applying mathematics in real-world contexts
<b>Arts</b>	Investigating	Developing	Creating/Performing	Evaluating
<b>Physical and Health Education</b>	Knowing and understanding	Planning for performance	Applying and performing	Reflecting and improving performance
<b>Design</b>	Inquiring and analyzing	Developing ideas	Creating the solution	Evaluating
<b>Interdisciplinary</b>	Evaluating	Synthesizing	Reflecting	N/A
<b>Community Project (MYP 3)</b>	Investigating	Planning	Taking Action	Reflecting
<b>Personal Project (MYP 5)</b>	Planning	Applying Skills	Reflecting	N/A

Objectives:	Achievement level
Criterion A	Maximum 8
Criterion B	Maximum 8
Criterion C	Maximum 8
Criterion D	Maximum 8
Total Maximum:	32

Criterion achievement levels are described further in a general way by an accompanying achievement level descriptor (narrative). Achievement level descriptors describe the differences in student accomplishment for each criterion and correspond to the numerical achievement level as shown in the table below.

In determining the final grade, the levels of student achievement in each of the subject specific objective criterion are added together to determine an overall total. Predetermined grade boundaries are used to convert criterion totals into a final grade of 1 to 7.

The final level of achievement awarded is described by a numerical grade of 1 to 7 and a corresponding grade descriptor.

Achievement level	Achievement level descriptors
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1	0-5	Produces work of very limited quality. Conveys many significant misunderstandings or lacks understanding of most concepts and contexts. Very rarely demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Very inflexible, rarely using knowledge or skills.
2	6-9	Produces work of limited quality. Expresses misunderstandings or significant gaps in understanding for many concepts and contexts. Infrequently demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Generally inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, infrequently applying knowledge and skills.
3	10-14	Produces work of an acceptable quality. Communicates basic understanding of many concepts and contexts, with occasionally significant misunderstandings or gaps. Begins to demonstrate some basic critical and creative thinking. Is often inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, requiring support even in familiar classroom situations.
4	15-18	Produces good-quality work. Communicates basic understanding of most concepts and contexts with few misunderstandings and minor gaps. Often demonstrates basic critical and creative thinking. Uses knowledge and skills with some flexibility in familiar classroom situations, but requires support in unfamiliar situations.
5	19-23	Produces generally high-quality work. Communicates secure understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, sometimes with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar classroom and real-world situations and, with support, some unfamiliar real-world situations.
6	24-27	Produces high-quality, occasionally innovative work. Communicates extensive understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, frequently with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar classroom and real-world situations, often with independence.

7	28-32	Produces high-quality, frequently innovative work. Communicates comprehensive, nuanced understanding of concepts and contexts. Consistently demonstrates sophisticated critical and creative thinking. Frequently transfers knowledge and skills with independence and expertise in a variety of complex classroom and real-world situations.
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Grade boundaries when converting **4** criteria to a mark out of 7

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Boundary	1-5	6-9	10-14	15-18	19-23	24-27	28-32

Grade boundaries when converting **3** criteria to a mark out of 7

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Boundary	1-4	5-7	8-10	11-13	14-17	18-20	21-24

Grade boundaries when converting **2** criteria to a mark out of 7<sup>3</sup>

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Boundary	1-2	3-5	6-7	8-9	10-11	12-13	14-16

#### iv. Other assessed work in MYP

**Interdisciplinary Units:** The MYP requires at least one interdisciplinary unit per year, though many interdisciplinary connections are made between subjects throughout the academic year. Interdisciplinary units are graded using 3 criteria as opposed to the typical 4. These grades are largely determined based on a reflection of interdisciplinary development and understanding following a meaningful project of two or more subjects. Interdisciplinary teaching and learning are integral to developing important transfer skills in students. These

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<sup>3</sup> The MYP does not calculate a grade out of 7 when less than 4 criteria are being reported on. These conversion charts were created by the MET to satisfy MEDUCA reporting requirements.

are designed to encourage synthesis and application of disciplinary knowledge to new situations.

**Community Project and/or Personal Project:** MYP 3 students complete the Community Project in groups of 2 or 3 to address a need in the community. This collaborative project counts towards each student's Service as Action requirement and can focus on a local, national, or global issue. This serves as an important preparation for the Personal Project.

MYP 5 students complete the Personal Project individually, though with the support of a faculty advisor/mentor. This project can be service oriented but does not need to be. It is the capstone project of the entire Middle Years Program which allows students to demonstrate their ability to be independent inquirers. It also allows students to demonstrate their Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills to achieve their learning and outcome goals. The Personal Project is externally moderated by the International Baccalaureate to ensure consistent and rigorous grading.

#### **v. Report Cards in the MYP**

In Grades 6 through 10 report cards provide feedback for each course including interdisciplinary units as well as MYP Projects when applicable (i.e. grades 8 and 10). For each course, the report includes achievement levels for each of the four criteria (A-D), an overall trimester grade (as well as a final year grade at the end of trimester 3), qualitative indicators for Approaches to Learning skills (e.g. participation), and comments based on teacher observations. Attendance of excused and unexcused absences is also included in the report.

Students who receive EEP services also receive a supplement report to the written report.

#### **vi. Failed Courses**

A student must pass two out of three trimesters with a score of 3 or higher to earn a course credit for the year. If a student fails 2 trimesters of any course, they will be required to recover that course in order to be promoted to the next grade level. If all 3 trimesters are failed the student will need to complete two credit recovery assessments to earn a credit for the year. According to MEDUCA Decree 810 students can recover up to 3 courses and still be promoted to the next grade level.

### **c. Diploma Program (DP)**



Formal assessment in the Diploma Programme is defined as assessment directly contributing to the final qualification. Most formal assessments are external and include examinations or work completed during the course and then sent to an external examiner.

Formal assessment requires students to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to tasks that determine overall levels of achievement. This type of assessment is described as 'summative' assessment. Levels of achievement in summative assessment tasks are recorded as final.

Final grade generation in the Diploma Programme are subject specific but include both internal and external assessment. In general, 75% of the final grade is earned during the IB May exam session of the student's grade 12 year. Approximately 25% of the final grade is generated from internal assessments (IA) in each subject. The assessment of DP Arts is the exception where all work is completed internally.

DP students are also required to complete the three core aspects of the IB philosophy: the Extended Essay (EE), Theory of Knowledge (TOK) and Creativity Activity and Service (CAS). The EE and TOK have graded assessments that contribute to three possible 'bonus' marks to their final subject totals. CAS is pass / fail but is also a requirement for the IB diploma to be awarded.

Eligibility for the DP is assessed each trimester. Students who are not earning a minimum of 30 points overall (world average is approximately 32) have supervised work periods when they have no class scheduled. Alternative course pathways to earn the MET / MEDUCA diplomas are available.

On top of several formative experiences, a minimum of 2 summative assessments per trimester is required to fairly and accurately report on student learning.

To better track and predict student success in the DP, all students will complete a general and adaptive aptitude online test (CEM test). Similar to MAP testing, it assesses competence in Language, Math and general aptitude. The results are correlated to thousands of other students worldwide and their final IB scores. This allows teachers to better predict final scores, assist students with course choices and help inform families with expectations.

Mock exam sessions June of grade 11 and Feb of grade 12.

## **IV. Conclusion**

At The MET, we strive to support all students in growth through authentic learning. We understand the important role that assessment has in this process and work to ensure that assessments are fair, relevant, and predictable. This is possible, in part, by implementing this policy consistently and with fidelity.