St. James Academy
International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme
Assessment Policy

I. Assessment Philosophy

The St. James Academy (SJA) International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme is dedicated to providing each student with a balanced programme by which s/he can acquire knowledge and skills necessary to prepare for balanced future learning. Students are given the opportunity to develop higher-order thinking skills in various disciplines and to increase their depth of local and global issues. Our teachers believe foremost that the purpose of assessment is to support and encourage student learning. Our assessment practices endorse teacher and student reflection. SJA is committed to communicating the student learning process to each MYP parent. Moreover, SJA provides a balanced program of instruction guided by the IB Philosophy of curriculum and assessment alignment, as well as the aims and objectives of the Middle Years Programme.

II. MYP Assessment at SJA

MYP assessment is internal, as opposed to external because SJA teachers design assessment tasks, strategies, and tools through discussion and collaboration. The MYP assessment model is **criterion-related**, and is based upon pre-determined criteria to which all students have access. All teachers are expected to structure both curriculum and assessment procedures according to the needs of their students and content areas.

All SJA MYP assessments are aligned with the IB MYP assessment model. It is acceptable to determine MYP grades and then convert these grades for our norm-referenced system. It is **not** acceptable to determine grades from other systems and then convert these to MYP grades.

The MYP objectives and assessment criteria are described in each subject guide as the final goal. Each subject area teacher monitors and assesses students throughout the IB MYP Programme using criteria that are related to the objectives. **Formative assessment** is the key feature of teaching and learning in the MYP. Assessment is planned in the first stage of creation for MYP units of work and used throughout. Assessments take place frequently, in order to extend student learning. The school determines the frequency of student assessment using the MYP criteria in each subject area.

Summative assessment supports learning and contributes to the determination of an achievement level for each student. This form of assessment occurs at the conclusion of an MYP unit of work, a semester, or school year. Ongoing assessment of students using the MYP criteria allows teachers to adjust instruction supported by evidence from assessments during the formative learning period.

SJA offers a three-year inclusive Middle Years Programme and therefore cannot culminate our MYP with a Personal Project. SJA's Level 3 Leadership and Research classes, however, do provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate developmentally appropriate initiative, creativity, and understanding of real world themes by completing community service and project, respectively.

The aim of assessment in the MYP is to (*MYP: From Principles to Practice)***

- Support and encourage student learning through differentiation
- Inform, enhance, and improve the teaching process
- Promote positive student attitudes toward learning
- Promote a deep understanding of subject/content using the areas of interaction
- Promote the development of higher-order cognitive skills by providing rigorous final objectives that value these skills
- Reflect the international-mindedness of the programme by allowing assessments to be set in a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts
- Support the holistic nature of the programme by including in its model principles that take account of the development of the whole student
- Collaboration and reflection by teachers to provide holistic learning
- Documented and shared vertical and horizontal growth

III.   Assessment Overview

Why do we assess?

SJA's goal is to provide a clear understanding of the purposes of assessment to students, teachers, parents, and administration.

- To support and encourage positive student metacognition by providing feedback on the learning process
- To provide formative assessment as a tool to identify the learning needs of students
- To provide summative assessment as a developmentally appropriate accountability tool regarding holistic student achievement in each subject matter
- To inform, enhance, and improve the teaching process
- To evaluate both student performance and efficacy of the program
- To guide pacing and mapping of content/skills
- To provide student performance data as mandated by local, state, and IB criteria

How do we assess?

SJA utilizes multiple assessment tasks each addressing at least one IB MYP objective. The following list is a sample of assessments:

- Open-ended tasks – compositions, reports, presentations (verbal, written or graphic)
- Examinations – selected responses on tests and quizzes
- Questionnaires
- Investigations
- Research
- Performances – demonstrate understanding in real-world contexts
- Process Journals – meaningful and purposeful reflection
- Original works

- Class discussion

Who is responsible for assessment and how?
- Teachers are responsible for assessment in collaboration/consultation with the IB Coordinator. The IB Coordinator determines how often each subject area assesses students using MYP criteria. SJA *suggests* that each subject area IB unit generate at *least two* assessment tasks for each trimester of the school year per subject.

How should assessment information be recorded?
- All assessment information is recorded in SJA Report Card format.

How should assessment information be analyzed and reported?
- Teachers in each subject will meet and analyze/standardize the assessments annually. Year 3 will submit subject samples for monitoring beginning 2011-12. The monitoring reports will be used to generate discussion on the assessment process: e.g. rigor; appropriateness of the IB assessment task; complexity of the assessment task; allowance for students to reach their highest achievement levels; determination that criteria are addressed fully. Teachers will then have the opportunity to make changes and adjustments to the curriculum based on this feedback and their collaboration.

How will assessment information be reported to students and parents?
- Students receive timely and regular feedback through direct student-teacher interaction pre/post assessment. Parents receive interim progress reports in the middle of each 11-week trimester. Parent teacher conferences are held during the first trimester of each school year and by mutual request thereafter. Report Cards are issued three times per year.

Who will have access to assessment information and where will it be located?
- Each teacher at his/her discretion maintains online and/or hardcopy grade book assessment information. SJA is currently exploring the creation of individualized electronic student files per subject. Data storage is provided and protected digitally as well as locked, fireproof storage for paper reports.

How often will we review our assessment practices?
- Review of SJA assessment practices is continuous, collaborative, and ongoing.

IV.   Assessment Practices

A. Assessment Types by Grade Level
Grade 6
School Assessments
ERB – CTP4 Standardized Tests
MYP Criterion-related Assessment Tasks per subject

Grade 7
School Assessments
ERB – CTP4 Standardized Tests
MYP Criterion-related Assessment Tasks per subject

Grade 8
School Assessments
ERB – CTP4 Standardized Tests
MYP Criterion-related Assessment Tasks (IB samples four core subjects to be sent for monitoring, 2012)

B. Assessment Strategies & Tasks

Reflection
Daily/Weekly formative assessments
Benchmark assessments
Observations-both informal and formal
Peer activities
Group activities
Teacher led assessment
Portfolio assessment (under study)
Performance assessment
Tests and quizzes - oral and written
Summative - concluding a unit of inquiry
Projects
Sharing with choices for demonstration
Notebooks/journals
Lab assessment
Mid-term and Final subject area examinations
Dialogue - student to student; and/or teacher and student

C. Assessment Tools

Rubrics
Benchmarks
Exemplars
Anecdotal Records
Report Cards
Conferences
Performances
Presentations - verbal (oral or written); graphic - various media
MYP Assessment Criteria
Charting student progress

V. Reporting Practices

All SJA teachers are expected to communicate progress to students and parents on student achievement in each subject. This communication takes place at a variety of times and forms (written, electronic, and face-to-face). Interim reports and report card cycles occur three times per year. When student achievement is reported to parents, IB performance levels are communicated. The process is designed to be open, transparent, constructive, and collaborative.

SJA's MYP Programme awards and communicates assessments for all levels. In the final Year of the Programme, teachers strive to increase the **reliability** of the grading process by standardizing the understanding and application of criteria to determine achievement levels. Grades will be calculated by using grade **boundary tables** (*published in the MYP Coordinator's Handbook),* and adapted in Years 1-3.
See **Appendix A:** SJA Sample Grade Conversion Chart - Language A.

SJA regularly reports on student demonstration of the learner profile and the areas of interaction. Teachers must self monitor that **no numerical or letter grades** are reported for the aforementioned two elements.

Reporting formats:

- Report Card grade documentation and Report Card narratives
- Interim Reports
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- ERB – CTP4 Standardized Tests
- Exhibitions/Performances/Presentations
- MYP Internal Assessments
- Internal standardization

Written Fall 2009
Revised Spring 2010
Revised Fall 2013

V.   Appendix

Appendix A
SJA Sample Grade Conversion Chart

Appendix B
Science – Task Specific Rubric – Illegal Substances
Year 3 Grade 8

Resources:
- IBO *Programme Standards and Practices*
- *MYP: From Principles into Practice*
- *MYP Coordinators Handbook, 2010*
- International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (The Unique Benefits of the MYP) (OCC)
- MYP Unit Planner (OCC)
- Evaluating MYP Unit Planner, 2010 (OCC)

Appendix A

Sample Grade Conversion Chart for Formative Assessment: IB MYP achievement to SJA grade book

This conversion is necessary because IB MYP rubrics are not based on percentages in which, for example 93% mastery of work equals an 'A' for excellence or 62% equals an 'F' for failure. SJA uses official IB guidelines that group rubric-based points or mark schemes, which vary according to subject area and assessment component into mark bands that correspond to 1 - 7 final IB grades.

Sample - Language A:

Score out of 10– IB rubric	IB Mark Band (out of 7)	% Out of 100 grade book recording purposes
10	7	100
10	7	98
10	7	96
10	7	93
9	6	90
9	6	87
9	6	84
8	5	80
8	5	77
7	4	74
7	4	70
6	3	67
5	2	64
5	2	60
4	2	57
3	2	54
2	1	50
1	1	47
1	1	44

Appendix B
Science – Task Specific Rubric – Illegal Substances
Year 3 Grade 8

IB Criterion B: Communication in science

Name _____ Date _____

Students should be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding when communicating scientific information.
- Use appropriate scientific language.
- Acknowledge the sources of information and document these appropriately.

	Incomplete (0)	Amateur (1-2)	Novice (3-4)	Expert (5-6)
The Student:	☐ The student does not reach the standard describe-d by and of the descript-ors provided	☐ **Attempts** to communicate scientific information using **some scientific language**, though **often** incorrectly. ☐ **Presents some** information in an appropriate form. ☐ **Attempts** to **acknowl-edge** sources of information but this is **inaccurate**.	☐ **Communicates** scientific information using **scientific language**, though **sometimes** incorrectly. ☐ **Presents most** of the information in an appropriate form. ☐ **Acknowledges** sources of information with **occasional** errors.	☐ **Communicates** scientific information **effectively** using **scientific language correctly**. ☐ **Presents ALL** information required in an appropriate form. ☐ **Acknowledges** sources of information in a **correct** format.
Task Specific:	☐ **All research is clearly addressed and questions are answered.** ☐ **Presentation is communicated to classmates in a form that students are able to take notes on the topic** ☐ **Project is creative, engaging, and appropriate for Middle School Students** ☐ **Information is correct and sources of information are documented in MLA format**			

Comments: