

F. PLAN FOR EVALUATING PUPIL PERFORMANCE

Mountain Middle School (MMS) will have a comprehensive pupil performance assessment program. MMS will make data-driven research-based decisions in order to be continually improving student achievement.

Evaluation Methods

The complex data requirements of the federal, State, CSI, and MMS governing board demand a variety of pupil assessment types. Therefore, pupil performance at MMS will be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. A basic assumption of MMS, based on its philosophy, is that differentiating education for each student requires multiple methods for determining individual student abilities in each curricular subject area. Assessments will include standardized tests as well as embedded assessments, and qualitative measures such as portfolios and written self-assessments. Knowledge, performance, skills, and attributes will be evaluated, and the data derived will be analyzed in order to improve both instruction and student achievement. A compendium of new State requirements can be found in Section C.

Assessment Overview:

Name of Assessment	Month/Season Administered	Type and Purpose for Administering
NWEA (Measures of Academic Progress)	September, January, and May	Baseline assessment for individual student achievement in Sept. Jan. test to measure longitudinal growth and problem areas (for use in “Corrective Action” subheading later in the Section). May test to measure longitudinal growth and to plan for following year. Following year’s Sept. test will allow for examination of “summer loss.” Also see Goal III, Section C, page 33 ELL and literacy testing included.
CSAP	February/March	Mandated assessment for school accountability, measuring percent of students scoring advanced, proficient, partially proficient, and unsatisfactory in mathematics, reading, and writing. Assesses by grade level an alignment of curriculum to Colorado Academic Standards. ELL and literacy testing included
MMS assessments*	On-going	Writing across the curriculum, POL’s, exhibitions of learning, project rubric grading, self-assessment, student-lead conferences, digital portfolios, peer critique, quizzes and tests.
MMS teacher/parent/student satisfaction surveys**	Spring	Solicit specific feedback to gauge parent, student and teacher satisfaction with program design, environment, and learning outcomes of MMS.

*Most MMS assessments are outlined in Section E. Sample HTMS Assessment: Appendix XXX

** Though these surveys are not a measurement of pupil performance, MMS feels that the results can affect the approach toward instruction and assessment.

Our students will participate in all state-mandated assessments, including the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) exams. Furthermore, MMS plans to collect and use longitudinal assessment data to determine and improve the academic progress of the students from year to year. To perform the non-CSAP longitudinal analysis, MMS will compare test scores from the beginning of the school year with test scores from the end of the school year. For this analysis MMS will use the NWEA Assessment Systems, a series of computer-based assessment systems of dynamic tests offering immediate feedback, three times per year. Unique benefits of the NWEA assessments include:

- ▶ They adapt dynamically during the test to each student's current achievement level.
- ▶ They are aligned to Colorado Academic Standards.
- ▶ They provide test results immediately following the assessment so that teachers are more quickly able to modify instruction or provide intervention.
- ▶ The NWEA Learning Continuum is tied to the numeric score in a way that allows the teachers to identify what students know and have yet to master.

Longitudinal analysis of the CSAP data will also be scrutinized to look for areas of strengths and weaknesses.

The curriculum-embedded assessments are particularly important for subject areas where CSAPs are not administered. MMS will ensure that all of our students are making progress toward the Colorado Academic Standards. Curriculum-embedded assessment will measure pupil progress with tools such as pre- and post-testing, performance based tests, portfolio assessment, and presentations of learning.

Additional methods that will be used to assess the development of students' knowledge and skills as a result of attending MMS include: Presentations of Learning (POLs), Digital Portfolios, Project Rubrics, Public Exhibitions of Work, Writing Across Subjects, and Grading on traditional Quizzes and Tests described below:

Presentations of Learning (POLs)

A Presentation of Learning is a formal presentation given by a student to a panel of peers, community members, administration, teachers, and parents at minimum the end of each of the two semesters, delivered in one of the following formats (determined by the teaching team):

1. Public Exhibition of Work – Students in all grades have project displays and deliver presentations of their project work, and answer community questions;
2. Reflective Portfolio POL – Presentation that shows growth, work samples, reflects on strengths and areas of improvement;
3. Project-Specific POL – Occurring at the conclusion of specific projects, and can take many possible forms such as an award ceremony, a documentary video presentation, a student debate, the performance of a play, a visual art exhibition, etc.; and
4. Personal Growth POL – A transitional POL; reflective presentation given at end of year; required for promotion to next grade level.

Before a POL, students practice their presentations in their advisory group. Advisory groups focus on presentation skills and give feedback to each student on how they can revise and improve their POL before the final presentation. Each type of POL must incorporate a reflective piece regarding the learning goals.

For the end-of-school-year POL, teaching teams conduct transitional POLs (Personal Growth POLs) to determine whether students are ready to advance to the next grade. During the 15-25 minute individual, formal presentation, the students must demonstrate their mastery of grade level standards and their readiness to proceed to the next grade. The requirements for the POL are grade-level specific, but include an oral presentation, use of the student's digital portfolio, artifacts from standards-bearing project work in the humanities, math and science, and elective courses. Each grade level will use a common rubric to evaluate POLs and determine each student's readiness to advance to the next grade. Students who attempt but do not pass the POL will be given one additional opportunity to present once they have revised their work based on input from the review panel.

Peer Critique

Peer critique can serve as a catalyst for engaging students more deeply in the learning environment. The instructor might use peer critique as a way for students to express learned outcomes, as a chance for students to articulate their ability to evaluate, to have students express themselves orally in a group setting, or through writing on an individual basis. Peer critique is also an opportunity to teach students leadership skills and introduce them to educational terminology and concepts such as a grading rubric. Lastly, middle school peer critique can be the foundation for the adult skill of working in a group and teasing out the best ideas in a productive manner. Mostly peer critiques will take place in conjunction with POL's and group project work.

Information for teachers to train their students on peer critique can be found at:

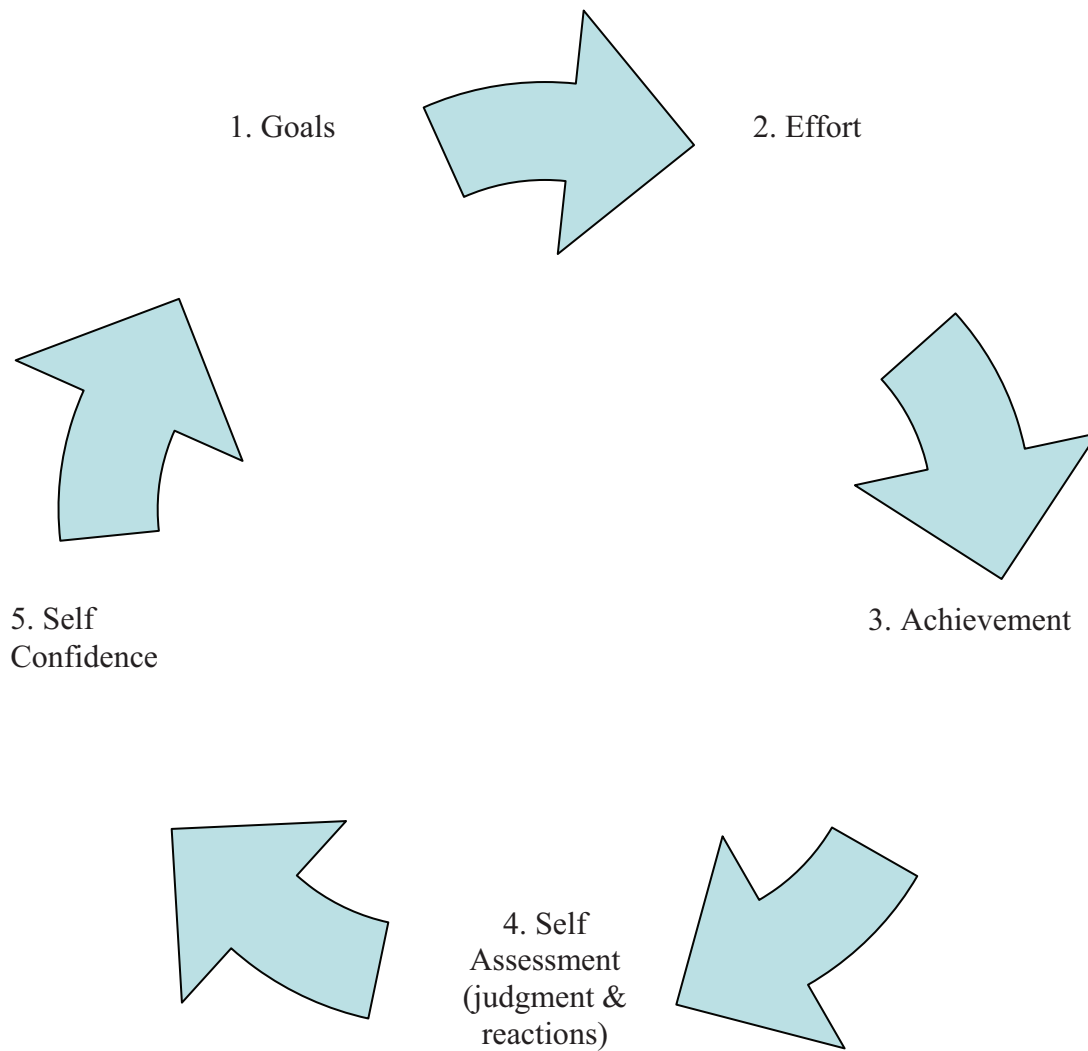
<http://howtovideos.hightechhigh.org/video/195/Peer+Critique>

<http://www.docstoc.com/search/peer-critique>

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/peer-edit-with-perfection-786.html>

Self Assessment

Self-evaluation is defined as students judging the quality of their work, based on evidence and explicit criteria, for the purpose of doing better work in the future. The Center for Development and Learning (CFDL) states that when teachers instruct students on how to assess their own progress, and when students do so against known and challenging quality standards, research finds that there is a lot to gain. Self-evaluation is a potentially powerful technique because of its impact on student performance through enhanced self-efficacy and increased intrinsic motivation. The CFDL cites research that support an emotional and intellectual cycle associated with self assessment:



MMS student self-assessment will take place upon each project completion. Student self-assessment tools for teachers can be found at:
http://www.cdl.org/resource-library/articles/self_eval.php;
<http://userpages.umbc.edu/~blunck/pdf/1.%20TEACHING/1.%20SELF%20REFLECTION%20-TEACHING/Self%20Reflection%20-%20Teaching.pdf>;
http://www.ehow.com/about_5372457_journal-topics-middle-school-students.html; and
<http://www.edutopia.org/creating-culture-student-reflection>

Student-led conferences

The primary value for student-led conferences is an increased accountability which moves the student from passive – and frequently second-hand – recipient of information shared between teacher and parent, to active participant in a three-way interaction among parent, teacher, and student. The student is in charge of the academic conference with the parents while the teacher serves as a discussion facilitator. The goals of MMS student-led conferences are: to encourage students to accept personal responsibility for their academic

performance; to teach students the process of self-evaluation; to facilitate the development of students' organizational and oral communication skills; to increase their self-confidence; to encourage students, parents, and teachers to engage in open and honest dialogue; and to increase parent attendance at conferences.

Teachers will have four areas to organize: their own preparation for each student, the preparation of each student, the actual conference, and a student evaluation. Tools for teacher can be found at:

<http://www.ericdigests.org/1997-4/middle.htm>

<http://www.edutopia.org/teaching-module-assessment-why>

<http://www.edutopia.org/student-led-parent-teacher-conference>

Digital Portfolios

Every MMS student will be required to create a personal digital portfolio. Although students may take creative license in the design of their portfolio, each portfolio must include the following:

- ▶ Projects – Samples of work, Colorado Academic Standard areas learned, and reflections on their learning; and
- ▶ Art and Design – Employing skills of an artist-designer who is a creative practitioner and image-maker who brings form to emotions and ideas; Skills and content areas learned are communicated through individual art and design.

Access to student digital portfolios will be limited to each student, teachers and parents/guardians.

Grading System

Semester Grades

MMS will assign traditional grades on a four-point scale for all academic courses (A, B, C and F). The use of grades is an important indicator of student mastery of a particular subject, and will transfer easily into high school academics. Report cards will be delivered at the end of each of the two semesters.

MMS will require each student to earn a grade of C- or higher in all academic courses. Students who do not achieve this minimum grade requirement in a maximum of one core course will be given options of attending self-funded summer school (unless MMS receives grant funds for summer programming) or repeating the grade to achieve the minimum requirement. Students who do not achieve the minimum grade requirement in both core courses must repeat the grade.

Missing assignments may result in a grade of Incomplete. Teachers will determine deadlines for submission of incomplete work as well as the associated consequences and final grade.

These unique learning measures and alternative assessment methods augment state and authorizer accountability requirements. They offer ways to gauge and demonstrate the levels of attainment in vital aspects of MMS's design principles that are not readily or adequately measured by standardized assessment.

Rubric Grading

Rubrics for assessment, and sample project evaluations can be found in Section E and Appendix XXX.

Standards for creating rigorous rubrics can be found:

▶ A summary of Jon Mueller's book, *Assessing Critical Thinking Skills*:

<http://jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/rubrics.htm#top>

▶ Rubistar software (free), allowing for digitally interactive rubric:

<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/>

▶ The George Lucas Education Foundation's review of how students and teachers understand the standards against which work will be measured:

<http://www.edutopia.org/teaching-module-assessment-rubrics>

▶ The Buck Institute for Education

http://www.bie.org/tools/useful_stuff/rubric_for_project_design/

Specialty rubrics design templates are also available:

▶ A Collaboration Rubric is for assessing how well an individual student works as a member of a team during a project:

http://www.bie.org/tools/useful_stuff/pbl_starter_kit_21st_century_skills_rubrics/

<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/triton/tidepoolunit/Rubrics/collrubric.html>

<http://www.multiage-education.com/multiagelessons/authors/collabrubic.html>

▶ A Presentation Rubric is for assessing oral, content, organization, presence and digital portfolio presentation skills:

http://www.bie.org/images/uploads/useful_stuff/SampleRubrics.pdf

<http://www.ncsu.edu/midlink/rub.pres.html>

http://www.uen.org/Rubric/rubric.cgi?rubric_id=9393

▶ A Research Paper Rubric is for assessing content, mechanics, organization of sources, and illustration:

http://www.bie.org/images/uploads/useful_stuff/SampleRubrics.pdf

http://www.winona.edu/AIR/resourcelinks/Science_Rubrics.pdf

<http://www.sdst.org/shs/library/resrub.html>

▶ A Critical Thinking Rubric is for assessing communication techniques, material application, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis:

http://www.bie.org/images/uploads/useful_stuff/SampleRubrics.pdf

<http://academic.pgcc.edu/~wpeirce/MCCCTR/Designingrubricsassessingthinking.html>

https://my.wsu.edu/portal/page?_pageid=177,276578&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

Data Management

MMS will use a Student Information System (SIS) that collects and stores pertinent student data. MMS will also use a data warehouse that can access the SIS information as well as the assessment data (CSAP, NWEA, and curriculum-based tests) for analysis of multiple indicators. MMS will collaborate with other charter schools through the Accountability Program offered through the Colorado League of Charter Schools.

Membership in the Colorado Education Performance Network (CEPN) through the Colorado League of Charter Schools (CLCS) will help MMS improve student achievement through analysis of student data. MMS will look to the Accountability Program to provide assistance in:

- ▶ Conducting value-added analysis and reporting results;
- ▶ Selecting and implementing data management software;
- ▶ Selecting and implementing benchmark assessments; and
- ▶ Providing high-quality professional development for teachers and school leaders.

Participation in this program will increase staff's understanding of the data analysis process and assist MMS to efficiently apply the findings to promote change and growth in educational programs that result in increased student achievement.

The SIS software will need to effectively manage achievement data at MMS. It will have the capability to provide disaggregated data in typical categories, but also allows for custom groupings to be developed to meet the specific needs of schools and teachers. Such comprehensive features will allow MMS to incorporate a value-added analysis of all achievement data that will provide a foundation to evaluate the effectiveness of current programs and to assist in decision-making and planning. MMS will consider using systems proven to be user-friendly with other Colorado charter schools, such as Pearson School Systems' SASI or Chancery Student Management Solution's SMS as an SIS, and Alpine Achievement Systems as a data warehouse. The decisions regarding software will be made after hiring the Head of School.

Corrective Action

Mountain Middle School staff will make regular use of student performance data to inform instructional practices. Both "snapshot" and longitudinal data will be used in addition to embedded assessment to identify students in need of remedial support.

Corrective intervention will begin should any student not make sufficient growth in a year's time or if a student fails to score proficient or advanced on the CSAP, or does not earn a passing grade in a content area not measured by CSAP. Depending on the unique situation of the individual student, any or all of the following strategies will be pursued in an attempt to remedy the situation:

- ▶ The student's teacher may begin a remedial program that will include any or all of the following: additional instructional time with the teacher, other staff, or parent volunteers; at-home work; or after-school work.

- ▶ The student’s teacher and/or MMS staff may call for a conference with parents or guardians to discuss possible interventions. This conference will explore specific strategies for increasing the student’s achievement.
- ▶ The student may be referred to special education services. Those responsible for special education services will work in conjunction with the classroom teacher to identify the root problem and create a remedial strategy for that student.
- ▶ The student may be recommended for testing to establish whether an IEP is needed (Special Education services to be purchased through the district).
- ▶ As a last resort, grade retention may be required.

In the context of staff meetings at MMS, faculty will routinely review student work and discuss strategies to meet the individual needs of students. In these “Looking at Student Work” discussions, teachers receive support from one another to assist students in achieving the standards required. Teachers advise the presenting teacher, collaborating with specific ideas and practices in order to provide targeted support to improve student’s learning outcomes. At times these discussions are broadened to include parents and the students themselves so that coordinated intervention and support services can be offered. As such, this powerful staff development protocol ensures that the analysis of daily student performance data:

- 1) informs refinement of practice in the classroom;
- 2) provides a basis for regular communication with parents and students in person via telephone and/or electronically; and
- 3) supports student achievement and maintaining appropriately challenging expectations.

At the classroom level, MMS teachers will use a variety of strategies to monitor student understanding and progress on a daily and weekly basis. These may include quizzes, weekly student reflections, and daily “check-ins,” e.g., asking students at the end of a class session to write and submit a quick reflection. In addition, MMS teachers will establish protocols for weekly reviews of student work including using learning logs or journals, and weekly check-ins to gauge progress on long-term projects.

Sections P and Q outline more detailed information on Corrective Action, including Response to Intervention.

MMS also plans to issue regular progress reports and grade-status updates to students’ teacher-advisors who can then intervene with students who may be in danger of not receiving passing grades. Such intervention may include meeting with students’ parents/guardians to assess what additional home supports might assist the students with their learning.

Parents are invited into the classroom at their discretion, with an appointment. There is a Culture of Transparency in the curriculum and access to daily performance by parents and the public at large.