



## **Peoria Academy Assessment Policy**

### **Peoria Academy Mission Statement**

Peoria Academy is a diverse community of students, parents, and educators working together to provide a rigorous educational experience. Using progressive techniques that nurture the whole child, our independent school fosters intrinsic motivation, resilience, and creativity.

### **Assessment Philosophy: *Focusing on Continuous Growth***

Peoria Academy's assessment philosophy and principles are based in our community's belief that quality assessment is both a measure of and motivation for learning. In this spirit, we design and implement assessments that acknowledge the innate curiosity of our students and their desire to understand.

We also recognize that students have different interests and learning styles, and that they make progress at different rates. For this reason, we tailor our education program to meet the needs, interests, talents and goals of individual students and we structure our assessments to reflect this.

Teachers at Peoria Academy use a variety of formative and summative assessments to determine and communicate each student's progress. These assessments are related to specific learning targets identified by our faculty following a review of relevant standards.

### **Assessment Tools - Formative, Summative and Standardized**

#### *In school formative assessments*

Formative assessments allow teachers, families and - importantly - students themselves to monitor their learning during each unit of study. In addition to the formal feedback mechanisms described below, students receive feedback from their peers, teachers and from themselves through reflections to support and direct their inquiry. Teachers use feedback from formative assessments to guide instruction, to enhance learning, and to assess the extent to which knowledge, skills and understanding have been acquired.

Some examples of formative assessments are reflections, observation journals, peer evaluated oral and/or written commentaries, group presentations, inquiry-based science and design labs, Socratic Seminars, journal entries, drafts, homework and sketchbooks.

#### *Homework as formative assessment*

Students at Peoria Academy experience full days of academics, extracurriculars and athletics. We wish for all students to be able to take full advantage of these offerings, and some students will be engaged in our enriching programming from 7:15 am until 5:15 pm.



When students get home they should have time for family, relaxation and recharging. They will also be expected to:

- Read at home. Our expectations for reading begin with approximately 15 minutes of nightly story time and reading in the lower school and will regularly include fiction and non-fiction selections moving through to the middle school.
- Practice math concepts: Students reinforce their understanding of mathematical concepts and operations through regular practice. This is not to regularly exceed 20 minutes per night. After 20 minutes of practice, families are encouraged to make a note of where they are stopping. If students are regularly unable to finish their math practice in the allotted time, families should reach out to their teachers for additional accommodations or support.
- Review Take-home Folders and Planners - Lower school teachers regularly send take-home folders including choice activities, extension materials, suggestions for enrichment etc. Upper elementary and middle school students should make a habit of reviewing their planners and the grade level calendar to make sure they are prepared for upcoming assignments.
- Finish projects: Some extended projects will require work at home for successful completion. For example, a student may need to put the finishing touches on a science fair project over a weekend or rehearse their opening speech for a debate the night before.

### *Summative assessments*

Summative assessments are opportunities for learners to demonstrate achievement towards course expectations including aims, objectives, criteria, standards, and school defined grade-level or subject outcomes. Students receive formal narrative feedback and criterion-based feedback using established rubrics. At the Lower School level, summative assessments play a key role in determining final feedback including areas in which students are applying, achieving, approaching or below grade-level expectations for specific knowledge and skills. At the Middle School, summative assessments are used to determine the four criterion scores per course as well as their final grade assigned.

Some examples of summative assessments are: exams/end of unit tests (written and/or oral), lab reports, performances, presentations, essays, research papers/projects, portfolios, and debates.

### Standardized assessments

In addition to the above mentioned summative and formative assessments, Peoria Academy utilizes standardized tests detailed below as an additional helpful tool in evaluating our students, teaching and programming. Primary tools in this category include the ERB Milestone Program.

### **Assessment Practices**

#### **Whole school:**



- All students at Peoria Academy are challenged.
- All students at Peoria Academy feel success.
- All classes at Peoria Academy use a variety of assessment strategies, affording students multiple opportunities and avenues to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Peoria Academy teachers provide holistic feedback via narrative feedback and overall achievement levels in the Lower School, and assessment criteria and final grades in the Middle School as opposed to averaging individual assignments over the course of each term.
- Formal accommodations are provided for students with identified assessment needs. In addition, Peoria Academy teachers differentiate learning experiences for all students based on interests, abilities, and previous learning experiences among other considerations.
- Peoria Academy's approach to homework and formative assessment is designed to support summative assessment.
- Peoria Academy teachers provide regular feedback, including progress reports, report cards, parent-teacher conferences and regular parent communication. Further details regarding Peoria Academy's approach to feedback and grade reporting is detailed below.
- Please note that standardization and moderation of student work is an essential component of building understanding of assessment criteria and developing shared understanding and common language for discussing student development and achievement. For this reason, discussion of student progress, including the formal moderation of specific pieces of student work, is a regular component of divisional meetings. See below for specific information on the role moderation plays in the assessment of the Community Project.

#### **Lower School:**

Students in the Early Childhood Center and Lower School receive narrative report cards. Lower School reports include the following:

- An overview of learning experiences and assessments in the homeroom class as well as in the arts, physical education, and languages
- Feedback on areas in which students are applying, achieving, approaching or below grade-level expectations for specific knowledge and skills.
- Teacher reflections on the student's development of learner profile attributes. • Student reflections on their own learning (where applicable).

#### **Middle School:**

All Middle School summatives use rubrics based upon Middle School assessment objectives. These rubrics are generated in relation to year-level Middle School assessment criteria and are housed in



Peoria Academy's online learning management system Toddle.

Middle School students and their families receive reports that are a developmentally appropriate blend of narrative and numerical feedback. Middle school report cards are generated by Toddle and include the following:

- An overview of learning experiences and assessments in each class.
- An overall achievement level for each class.
- Specific, quantitative feedback on achievement levels in four different areas for each class.
- Overall grade awarded for each class based on the achievement levels mentioned above.
- Detailed narrative feedback on areas in which students are excelling, making progress, having challenges etc. including knowledge/understanding and skills development.
- Teacher and student reflections on the learner's development.

At the end of Middle School, students will complete a Community Project that will be moderated according to the following procedures:

- All four Community Project advisors will convene at the conclusion of the community projects to moderate marks.
- At this meeting, each Community Project advisor will bring his/her marks - both for the project they supervised and for all other projects.
- These marks will be shared. If the marks are 'in tolerance' for a given project, which is to say that they are within a specified range for the overall scores awarded as well as marks per criterion - then no moderation will be required.
- If they are not, moderation will take place by consensus, and the scores awarded will be adjusted accordingly.

### **Review Process and Policy Communication**

Each spring, representatives from the lower and middle school will form a committee to review the current Assessment Policy. The Assessment Policy will be reviewed by a team constituted of the following members:

- Lower & Middle School teacher representatives
- Lower School Coordinator
- Middle School Coordinator
- Principal

At the commencement of each school year, the coordinators will facilitate reflection on the policy and agreements with all teaching staff to ensure the policy is a working document evident in planning, teaching, and assessment. The Assessment Policy will be incorporated into the five-year program review for both the lower and middle school programs. Amendments to the policy will be made annually or as needed based on stakeholder feedback. The document is distributed to faculty and posted on the school website.



The Assessment Policy is best understood in connection with other key program documents, links to which are publicly available at [peoriaacademy.org](https://peoriaacademy.org).

- Language Policy
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Inclusion Policy

Revised: August 20, 2025