

North Shore Schools

Student Performance and Assessment

The North Shore Schools Board of Education supports the professional staff in the belief that student and school performance can improve continually as a result of passionate engagement in learning that is deep and meaningful. The school community is committed to supporting all students in achieving at high levels consistent with the District Statements of Mission and Vision, as well as the annual goals adopted by the Trustees.

North Shore students will demonstrate their understanding of North Shore's richly-textured, well-articulated curriculum that is aligned with the standards of New York State and various discipline-based professional organizations. The professional staff uses a range of both formative and summative assessments to determine how well students have developed the understandings, knowledge, and skills of the curriculum. These assessments are used to inform professional staff as to student strengths and learning needs and to develop curriculum and teaching approaches that will foster growth. The Board expects teachers to appropriately prepare students for assessments through a balanced approach. This balanced approach assumes preparation will be meaningful, regularly imbedded into instruction and that teachers will familiarize students not only with the format of standardized tests and New York State assessments, but will provide instruction in the pertinent strategies necessary for success.

The Board of Education reviews the Superintendent's Report on Student Achievement as well as a summary of annual progress made in achieving the District Goals. These reports serve as a basis for program and instructional planning and are used as part of the Board's broad program appraisal, planning and resourcing responsibilities.

Principles of Responsible Assessment

Conclusions about student performance must rest on a considered review of varied sources of information and on observations and data acquired over time. The sources of information about student performance must effectively measure the knowledge, skills and understanding students are expected to learn for success in school and over a lifetime.

Purposes of Assessment

The primary purpose of evaluating student and school performance is to provide the professional staff and the Board with information to support improvement in student learning. Assessment should be both formative and summative, with the results viewed in context, as part of a developing picture of a student or group of students' progress throughout a school career. The Board reaffirms its commitment to the belief that the primary purpose of assessment is to ascertain how each North Shore student is progressing toward both North Shore standards and New York State Standards. While the results of these assessments are to be used primarily for instructional purposes, a pattern of achievement, over time, may be an indicator of teacher performance and should be used to support professional development.

More specifically, the Board and staff concentrate on developing the skills, understandings, and knowledge necessary for students to succeed in a competitive college or complex job, and as responsible/compassionate citizens.

Uses of Assessment

Assessments are instructional tools used to gain insight into student learning and to inform instruction, as opposed to ends in themselves. Assessments, both formal and informal, should require students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding directly, to approximate real-world tasks, be interesting and engaging, and be as much a natural part of the learning process as possible.

The primary and essential source of information about student performance remains the teacher's observation and professional judgment. This anecdotal evidence, when complemented by district developed assessments and standardized assessments are the basis for decisions to improve student learning.

Members of the North Shore community, including students, their families, and professional staff are responsible for working collaboratively, to use assessment results to support and enhance growth in students and the schools.

Reporting Assessment Results

It is challenging to find measures that quantify how well North Shore achieves some of its most important goals—the development of thinking and problem solving skills, communication, collaboration, respect for diversity, commitment to serve others, and desire for continuous learning. Though these lifelong goals may not be able to be measured in a traditional sense, meaningful assessments include research studies, portfolios, exhibitions, and other authentic indicators.

Assessment results should be communicated in a form which is understandable and helps improve learning. Although some assessment results may be expressed numerically, they are to be viewed as short-hand for more important descriptions and analyses.

Professional staff will confer with parents/guardians during the school year as necessary to support the child. They will review any significant findings or conclusions at the elementary and sixth grade parent teacher conferences held in the fall and spring and in the annual planning meetings with secondary guidance counselors.

Community Education

New York State requires schools to provide parents/guardians with reports of student results on NYS Assessments. Therefore, an ongoing concerted effort to educate the community about these assessments, and how they fit into the overall picture of student performance is essential.