



STUDENT ASSESSMENT POLICY

This policy was approved by the Governing Council on November 30, 2016.

Purpose

The accurate assessment of student achievement is an essential component of Mountain Phoenix Community School's educational program. Mountain Phoenix integrates a broad array of measures to assess student learning in order to ensure healthy student progress, to provide timely assistance to teachers and students, and to report about student growth and achievement to parents and school, district, state and federal stakeholders, as needed.

In order to remain consistent with our mission and vision, our assessment approach reflects Mountain Phoenix's commitment to:

- Promoting a developmentally-based approach to education, realizing individual children develop at their own rates, while also identifying typical benchmarks for each grade within the curriculum
- Assessing students as whole human beings, learning, developing, and progressing in both academic and non-academic areas (including social/emotional, behavioral, the arts, movement)

Essential Components to MPCS Assessment Approach

- a. Full student growth and development, including continuous increases in student academic achievement, are at the core of the mission, vision, and methods of Mountain Phoenix.
- b. The Mountain Phoenix student and program assessment approach fully honors and reflects, in its structure and content, the school's goals and vision of the developing student, grades K-8. Such an assessment system, in its breadth and depth, is a distinctive innovation at the school-wide level.
- c. To meet the challenge for innovation in assessment implicit in the schools' program, the Mountain Phoenix assessment system addresses all key components of student development through a balanced assessment system employing multiple measures of multiple dimensions of student growth. The Mountain Phoenix assessment system focuses on the identification of key indicators of student development and academic achievement (things that students say, do, and create) as measures of student progress in learning and development.
- d. The Mountain Phoenix assessment system is designed to provide teachers with the information they need to engage in work together to improve the quality and coordination of the curriculum and instructional program at each grade level and across grade levels--to support the fullness of individual student development, K-8.
- e. The Mountain Phoenix assessment system provides timely information to faculty and school leaders to inform school program structures and processes for continuous improvement in curriculum and instruction and to address the learning needs of all students.
- f. The Mountain Phoenix assessment system gathers and provides appropriate information about student growth to all school stakeholders (with an emphasis on informing and engaging parents and the school community) to ensure the quality of their work together on behalf of the students.
- g. The Mountain Phoenix assessment system complies with all applicable federal, state and school district requirements for assessment.

Assessment Types and Uses

Classroom, school, district, and state assessments serve a variety of purposes at different points in the learning process and also have a place in school, district, and state accountability systems.

Formative Assessments

Formative assessments inform students as to their progress toward Mountain Phoenix learning goals within an instructional unit and inform teachers as to the instructional changes needed to help students meet those goals.

Interim Assessments

Interim assessments provide a measure of student progress toward meeting Mountain Phoenix grade level content standards. Standardized interim assessments also provide useful information regarding student attainment of Common Core State Standards relative to national norms.

Summative Assessments

Summative assessments provide the degree to which students have met the learning targets within an instructional unit or have met the end-of-year grade level content standards. Summative assessments can include classroom and school assessments used to make decisions such as the accomplishment of Mountain Phoenix grade level expectations and/ or program placement. State summative assessments include the required assessments managed by the Colorado Department of Education.

This comprehensive approach to assessment directly supports teachers in their work with students and provides essential guidance to ensure successful preparation of students for high school, college, careers and for life.

Administration of Assessments

Mountain Phoenix teachers use a balanced variety of these assessments to communicate with students and parents, modify instruction, and make decisions. In order to make sound decisions, interim and summative assessment information must be accurate and comparable. Therefore, Mountain Phoenix staff must administer all assessments in accordance with federal, state, and local laws and policies. Mountain Phoenix adheres to district procedures related to training, test security, administration. Mountain Phoenix staff is expected to administer assessments and use results in an ethical manner. Assessment results must be treated as confidential and should only be used for appropriate, bona fide educational purposes in accordance with Mountain Phoenix and Jeffco policies directing the management of student records.

Assessment Formats (Paper/pencil vs. Computer-based Environments)

As a Jefferson County public charter school offering an educational program aligned with the principles of Public Waldorf Education, Mountain Phoenix determines the assessment format most appropriate to accurately students' learning. Determination of the most appropriate testing format is based on the recommendation made to the Governing Council by the Director of Education, aligned with our mission, vision, and philosophy of education in collaboration with the School Accountability Committee, having considered for each assessment:

- a. purpose and intended use of results
- b. role in Mountain Phoenix accountability systems
- c. relative alignment with Mountain Phoenix curriculum
- d. delivery mode with respect to the developmental age and stage of students to be assessed

Based on the joint recommendation of the Director of Education and the School Accountability Committee, the Paper-based format is the approved assessment format for the administration of state required summative assessments, for all students grades 3-8.

Student Participation in Federal and State Required Assessments

State Summative Assessments

State summative assessments managed by the Colorado Department of Education provide important information about student achievement of state standards and are an important source of information for accountability systems. Mountain Phoenix staff encourages participation in these assessments in order to monitor and increase student achievement and improve the school's instructional program. However, if a parent/guardian does not want their student to participate in a state summative assessment and provides the request in writing according to school and district protocols, the student will not be required to take the assessment. Students whose parents have excused their child's participation in a state summative assessment will not be penalized for not taking the assessment and should attend school during the assessment window given the important learning opportunities that exist throughout the school day. An alternate setting will be provided **for state assessments only**, and the school is not required to provide equivalent assessment or alternate instructional activities during the time of the assessment.

CO READ Act Assessments

The state requires schools to administer standardized interim, diagnostic (formative), and summative assessments in Kindergarten through third grade to provide initial and ongoing analysis of student's progress in attaining reading competency by the end of third grade. In alignment with state law, Mountain Phoenix recognizes:

- The greatest impact for ensuring student success lies in a productive collaboration among parents, teachers, and schools in providing a child's education, and enabling each student to achieve the grade level expectations for reading.
- The importance of working closely with the parents and teachers of students in kindergarten or first, second, or third grade to provide the students the instructional programming, intervention instruction, and support, at home and in school, necessary to

ensure that students, by the completion of third grade, can demonstrate a level of competency in reading skills that is necessary to support them in achieving the academic standards and expectations applicable to the fourth-grade curriculum.

Mountain Phoenix encourages participation in these assessments and collaborates with parents to ensure a transparent understanding of how and when these standardized assessments align with Mountain Phoenix grade level expectations for reading. However, if a parent/guardian does not want their student to participate in these assessments, and provides the request in writing according to school and district protocols, the student will not be required to take the assessment.

Communication of Student Assessment Framework

Mountain Phoenix encourages clear and transparent communication to key stakeholders about the school's approach to student assessment. Mountain Phoenix maintains an Overview of Student Assessments document that communicates the following information for each state required and school wide assessment administered to students:

- Purpose
- Data use, including how results impact the school's accreditation status
- Frequency
- Format
- Alignment with Mountain Phoenix Curriculum Standards
- Implications regarding parent excusals

POLICY HISTORY

Jeffco Policy Reference: IAA Student Assessment (IAA) - *Requested waiver*

Original: proposed by GC on October 26, 2016.