

# A

## GUIDE FOR EVALUATORS

### Philosophy and Objectives

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) wishes to thank you for joining this visiting team in an evaluation of an American/international school. Our accreditation program is a three-step process:

- A self-study conducted by the school requesting accreditation.
- An evaluation by a visiting team of experienced educators.
- A follow-up program in which the school addresses recommendations by NEASC and its visiting team.

The school has recently completed the first phase, the self-study. Now it is ready to host a visiting team to determine whether the school is worthy of initial or continued accreditation and your task is to help the team in those deliberations.

Your task as an evaluator will be to complete team assignments and individual assignments. Team assignments are those which you'll share with others, such as attendance at team meetings, assisting team members in group tasks, and participating in joint interviews. The team chair has laid out these team assignments in the team schedule. Plan your individual tasks so they don't conflict with the team schedule.

Individual assignments are those for which you are responsible, such as evaluating subject areas and the section on the school's Philosophy and Objectives. In a sense, you'll become the team's expert on these aspects of the visiting team report. Completing these tasks will entail classroom observations, group and individual interviews, discussions with other team members, examination of school resources, and deliberations on the school's accreditation status.

### Before the Visit

When you arrive at the school, you will be immersed in evaluation activities almost immediately. Time will be very precious. For that reason, we strongly advise you to become familiar with all documents before you leave home. Every hour you spend preparing beforehand will be worth many hours during the evaluation.

- A. Study the following materials which will give you an overview of the school:
  1. Community, School, Student Profiles
  2. Opinion Surveys
  3. School's Philosophy and Objectives
  
- B. Review the full self-study, examining thoroughly the documents that relate to your individual assignments.

- C. Take notes on the standards and indicators on Philosophy and Objectives provided below. From these notes, write questions to ask when you meet with members of the school community.
- D. Arrive at the school prepared to discuss your preliminary findings with your colleagues on the visiting team.
- E. Consult the glossary at the end of the guide for terms which are unfamiliar to you. (Appendix A.)

### **Standards and Indicators on Philosophy and Objectives**

The school's philosophy and objectives provides the foundation for all school activities. It sets the direction for the school's educational programs; governance, management and finances; staff; students; support services; resources; and student and community life.

The philosophy must indicate in general terms the school's intent to provide appropriate programs and activities for all students. Within the school community, there must be strong consensus about the school's mission and the importance of a collaborative approach toward the attainment of school goals. School policies and procedures must be extensions of the philosophy, indicating the manner in which the school intends to realize its objectives.

In order to complete your assignment, you will read self-study materials, observe the school in operation, and meet with individuals and groups to learn:

- a) how the statement promulgates the core values of the school and its intent to integrate them into its culture.
- b) how the school developed a consensus which reflects the needs, abilities and interests of the entire school community,
- c) how procedures determine the school's degree of success in carrying out the philosophy and objectives,
- d) how and where the school publicizes the statement throughout the entire school community,
- e) how the school promotes the spirit of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and
- f) how the school instills international and intercultural understanding into the school community.

The school will be evaluated on the basis of all NEASC standards and indicators. The evaluation of the school's Philosophy and Objectives will be based on the standards which are printed below in bold letters followed by their related indicators:

**1. The school shall have a clear and effective written statement of its philosophy and objectives, appropriate for the students it serves.**

- 1a. The philosophy and objectives statement defines the core values and mission of the school.
- 1b. The philosophy and objectives statement addresses the needs of students, and some indication of the ways in which the school intends to meet them.
- 1c. The philosophy and objectives statement establishes expectations for high quality education.

- 1d. The school's admissions policies and procedures require that adequate information be obtained, and that appropriate evaluations be carried out, to ensure that there is a reasonable match between a student's needs and the program offered.
- 1e. On-going assessment procedures monitor the extent to which any given student is benefiting from school programs. If a student is not benefiting from the program, clear and effective procedures assist such an individual to find a more appropriate education.

**2. The school's philosophy and objectives shall be generally known, understood and accepted by the governing body, school management, staff, parents, and students.**

- 2a. The philosophy and objectives statement was created by a process involving input from the broad school community.
- 2b. The philosophy and objectives statement is widely published in all major school documents, and is appropriately displayed on school premises.
- 2c. Promotional documents and activities project a realistic picture of the school.
- 2d. Promotional documents and activities provide parents with an adequate basis for appraising the suitability of the school for their children.
- 2e. There are periodic reviews of the philosophy and objectives, which involve the broad school community.

**3. There shall be procedures, which enable the school to determine its degree of success in putting its philosophy and objectives into practice.**

- 3a. Appropriate action planning procedures are in use to translate the philosophy and objectives into practice.
- 3b. Appropriate procedures are used to monitor the effectiveness of the philosophy and objectives in the life of the school.
- 3c. Appropriate reference is made to the philosophy and objectives in decision-making processes.
- 3d. Effective procedures are used to collect and analyze hard data and opinions to determine the school's degree of success in achieving the aspirations expressed in its philosophy and objectives.
- 3e. Effective procedures are used to enable the school to react positively if evidence shows that the aspirations expressed in the philosophy and objectives are not being achieved.

**4. The school's philosophy and objectives shall lead the school to act within the spirit of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.**

- 4a. The philosophy and objectives statement is consistent with the spirit of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- 4b. In practice, the school operates within the spirit of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**5. The philosophy and objectives shall commit the school to promoting international and intercultural experiences for its students.**

- 5a. The philosophy and objectives statement clearly states the school's commitment to promoting international and intercultural experiences for its students.
- 5b. In practice, all students at all levels are receiving experiences in internationalism and intercultural through the formal curriculum and/or activities program offered at the school.

**Please note:** Every accredited school uses the standards and indicators listed above. Schools seeking initial or continued accreditation, however, are invited to suggest additional indicators to demonstrate their compliance with NEASC standards. Visiting team members should consider these additional indicators as they evaluate the school.

## **During the Visit**

### **Tour of the School**

School officials will guide the team on a school tour to acquaint them with the facilities and grounds. During that time you should pay particular attention to areas related to the section on Philosophy and Objectives and any subject areas you have been assigned to evaluate. Please take notes on the following issues:

1. Are the general appearance and cleanliness of the campus satisfactory?
2. Do all school programs that you observe have dedicated areas? Are they adequate?
3. Do the building and grounds allow for efficient movement of people?
4. Are there serious safety hazards in the facilities?
5. Are there any serious noise problems which disrupt classes?
6. Are there areas of the school that are not handicapped accessible?
7. Are there adequate space, facilities and equipment in the library, cafeteria, auditorium, small and large group areas and classrooms?
8. Is the school's philosophy and objectives adequately displayed throughout the facility?

### **Team Orientation Meeting**

On the first evening of your visit, the team chair may ask you to review the standard on Philosophy and Objectives with the rest of the committee. If so, be prepared to give your initial perceptions, based on your reading of the self-study and your observations of the school's adherence to the standards. Sharing your perceptions with team members may help you identify areas for further investigation. Keep in mind that school improvement is the ultimate goal of the evaluation.

### **Meetings with Committees and Groups**

During the evaluation you will meet with members of the school community to verify facts presented in the school's self-study and validate its conclusions. In addition, you should be able to determine whether community members concur with and support the philosophy, revise policies and procedures periodically, and are striving to attain the school's objectives. From these discussions you will develop the reports for which you are responsible.

### **Techniques for Interviewing**

Whenever you chair a meeting, you are expected to lead the discussion. You should have a series of prepared questions to allow the group the opportunity to express opinions, ideas, and concerns. Follow these simple guidelines to chair or participate in a discussion:

- Set the stage. Begin on time, even if everyone is not present. The meeting is too brief to wait for late arrivals.
- Call the group to order. Short introductions are appropriate.
- State the purpose of the meeting to the group.
- Begin the discussion with a general question which anyone might answer. Be sure to encourage as many people as possible to respond before asking a new question. Be sensitive to the dynamics of the group.

- Be confident. Don't be apologetic about your questions. When appropriate, clarify and summarize what's been said.
- Don't pose as an expert. Instead, ask for the information that you need in a straightforward manner.
- Don't dwell on an issue if the discussion is not productive.
- Near the end of the meeting, ask if anyone has something additional to add and be sure to state your willingness to meet with individuals at a later time.
- Dismiss the group on time. Most participants will have other obligations.

### **Self-Study Committee on Philosophy and Objectives**

The self-study committee spent considerable time in creating or revising the statement of philosophy and objectives and developed a sense of how well the school meets NEASC's standards on Philosophy and Objectives. The committee should be able to provide the following responses:

1. Has the philosophy and objectives changed in any significant ways since the self-study was last approved? Please explain.
2. Do you feel that the revision process permitted sufficient input from the school community? Please explain.
3. Where is the statement displayed? Do you feel these locations are sufficient to ensure a familiarity with the document?
4. Do members of the school community understand and accept the statement? How have you determined that?
5. What are the school's plans to revise the statement on a routine basis?
6. Do you feel that the philosophy considers the range of students the school seeks to educate? Why?
7. How does the statement promote intercultural and international experiences for its students? Please elaborate.
8. What plans has the school made to review the philosophy and objectives on a routine basis?
9. Does promotional literature convey a realistic picture of the school?

### **Board**

The board should have a clear understanding of the philosophy and objectives and the degree to which the statement affects every aspect of the school.

1. How was the board involved in the development of the philosophy and objectives?
2. In what ways does the philosophy and objectives influence all school activities?
3. Does the board support the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Please elaborate.
4. Does the board support the provision of intercultural and international education? Please elaborate.

### **Management**

The school head and management team must be very familiar with the philosophy and objectives and understand how it provides the impetus for school improvement. On a

daily basis management will carry out the intentions of the school philosophy.

1. How was management involved in the development of the current philosophy?
2. How does the philosophy and objectives influence all school activities?
3. In what ways does the statement guide you in your daily work?
4. How does the school publicize the philosophy throughout the school year?
5. Does the system of grade reporting adequately inform students of their academic status?

### **Teachers**

The instructional staff ought to be very knowledgeable about the philosophy and should endeavor to incorporate its objectives into their teaching. They can provide daily encouragement to students in carrying out the philosophy.

1. How were teachers involved in the development of the statement?
2. Do you accept the philosophy and objectives as a guiding influence in your work? Please explain.
3. In what ways is the philosophy considered when the school plans curriculum revisions?
4. In what ways have you promoted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in your discussions with students?
5. In what ways have you promoted intercultural and international themes in your teaching?

### **Alumni and Parents**

Parents and graduates of the school should feel that they are important elements in the school community and that their opinions are sought and valued in developing school goals.

1. Does the philosophy reflect your child's needs?
2. Do you feel that the school is attempting to provide an appropriate education for your child(ren)?
3. Do you feel that your opinions were carefully considered when the philosophy was last revised?
4. Does the system of grade reporting keep you aware of your child's academic status?

### **Owner**

The owner(s) have considerable latitude in operating the school but there should be opportunities for management and staff to contribute their professional expertise to school operations.

1. What members of the school community assisted in developing the philosophy and objectives?
2. How do groups in the school community assist in developing school programs?
3. What outside professional consultation has been sought in school operations?
4. How do you attempt to carry out the philosophy in your decisions about the school? Please explain.

### **Students**

Students should be aware of the school's purposes in order to appreciate the programs and activities which are offered. Questions posed should consider the relative maturity of the students.

1. When have you heard the philosophy and objectives discussed?
2. Where have you seen the philosophy and objectives displayed? Do you understand how the philosophy affects all that happens in the school?
3. How were students involved in writing the philosophy and objectives?
4. Have you discussed the school's philosophy with your classmates?
5. Do you feel that you are learning enough about other countries and their culture?

### **Admissions**

The admissions office deals with candidates for school entrance and should be aware of the school's materials to recruit new students and its efforts to seek more appropriate education for those who were unable to profit from the school's programs.

1. Are school publications, including admissions materials, consistent with the philosophy and objectives?
2. Do successful candidates for admission reflect the range of students noted in the philosophy? Please explain.
3. Are students being provided the academic programs necessary to be successful in future schooling? Please explain.
4. Does the school assist unsuccessful students to find more appropriate schooling?
5. How?
6. Does the information sought on candidates give promise that those admitted can be successful?

### **Classroom Visits**

One of the team's responsibilities is to visit all classroom teachers at least once. When you visit classrooms, your task will be to gain a sense of such things as the following:

- the extent to which the curriculum reflects the school's philosophy.
- patterns of instruction in the school, e.g. whether there is a predominant teaching style, such as lecturing, or whether a variety of styles is used.
- the pace of the day - whether the teachers and students are comfortable with the time allotted to complete their assigned tasks.
- the degree of rigor of instruction, e.g. whether all or only some of the students in the classes are challenged.
- The teacher's attentiveness to the individual differences of students.
- the climate of the class - whether there is appropriate adherence to rules and mutual respect, and whether the environment is inviting and comfortable.
- the adequacy of classroom furniture, space and other resources to support the curriculum.
- the level of integration of technology in classroom instruction.

Summarize your findings and give them to the chair(s) of appropriate section committees such as Student Support Services, Curriculum and Resources.

### **Evaluation of School Policies and Procedures**

The Seventh Edition of the NEASC/CIS Guide to School Evaluation and Accreditation emphasizes specific policies and procedures in its standards and indicators. As the team member responsible for Philosophy and Objectives, you will review and critique the written policies and procedures that relate to this section, including:

1. admissions and placement
2. student assessments
3. student records, including policies on confidentiality
4. reports on student achievement
5. procedures which assist such an individual to find a more appropriate education.

Comments on the specific policies and procedures should be inserted in your section on Observations.

### **Writing the Philosophy and Objectives Report**

Your report on Philosophy and Objectives should contain three sections: (1) Observations, (2) Commendations and (3) Recommendations.

#### **Observations**

Your observations will be a narrative describing the most important issues you have noted in the Philosophy and Objectives section. To allow readers to understand the commendations and recommendations which you will soon prepare, you must first ensure that there is a thorough list of observations of the school at the time of the evaluation. As part of its self-study, the school has prepared such a description of its Philosophy and Objectives. Feel free to borrow any of the school's description that you're sure is accurate.

After meeting with individuals and groups and reviewing the school's self-study material, you will be ready to sort out your ideas. First, look at the school's description and the various processes noted. Are any particularly effective? If so, make note of them. Do any create problems or not work well? Make note of them also.

In addition, recall your conversations with the groups and individuals. What major areas of strength were noted? What weaknesses? Write these down. Finally, take another look at the school's self-study material on Philosophy and Objectives. What areas did the school self-study identify as warranting commendations and recommendations? Note the quality of school policies as well as those which do not exist. (Please see **Evaluation of School Policies and Procedures** above.)

With all of this information in front of you, identify the school's major areas of strength. Write a paragraph(s) explaining why each of these is commendable or describe how each is working especially well. Then examine your notes to identify major problems or deficiencies. Write (an)other paragraph(s) explaining why something is not effective and describe resultant problems.

### **Commendations**

Now, you are ready to write specific commendations. Look at the paragraph(s) in Observations which discuss the school’s strengths. Every strength that you’ve singled out here should be written as a commendation. Does the commendation apply to other sections as well?

Are there other strengths you would like to note? Commend those aspects which indicate strong preparation, commitment, imagination, effort, and/or achievement in the area of Philosophy and Objectives. Remember that no school ever suffered from too much praise.

### **Recommendations**

Finally, you are now ready to write specific recommendations which should come from two sources, a standard which is not fully met or a discrepancy between what the school described in its self-study and what the visiting team observed during the evaluation. The school must share the disposition of all recommendations in the visiting team report with the accrediting agencies in subsequent progress reports.

You must follow the same procedure as you did in identifying commendations. For every problem or limitation which you noted under Observations, prepare a clear, concise, understandable recommendation.

Each recommendation must begin with a verb for purpose of consistency. Clarify whether a recommendation applies to only one or several area(s) of the school.

## **Philosophy and Objectives**

### **Rating the Standards**

You are responsible for recommending to the visiting team a rating: “Meets (M), Exceeds (E), or Does Not Meet (D)” on the school’s adherence to the standards on Philosophy and Objectives.

Each standard which is rated “Exceeds” or “Does Not Meet” must be accompanied by a brief explanation.

The team chair will give you the form on which these ratings will be recorded.

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### **Our Thanks**

We’re sure that you’ll find the evaluation experience intense and often tiring, but we hope that you’ll also find it enjoyable and rewarding.

We are certain that your contributions will improve the school immensely. Thank you very much for your help.

### **NEASC Glossary for Guides for Evaluators**

The following acronyms or terms may have been used in self-study materials. The glossary will help the reader understand their context in this school.

**ACT** – derives its name from the independent, nonprofit organization which creates and administers the test. American College Testing provides college entrance examinations which seek to predict secondary school students' success in colleges and universities. The three-hour, standardized test may play an important part in students' acceptance into college. ACT consists of several sections: personal interest inventory, a course and grade information questionnaire, a student profile and a series of tests on the standard high school curriculum to include an English test, reading, mathematics and science reasoning. The English test is divided into two parts: Usage and Mechanics, and Rhetorical Skills. ACT is located in Iowa City, Iowa.

**Alternative assessment** is any form of measuring what students know or are able to do other than traditional standardized tests. Alternative forms of assessment include portfolios, performance-based assessments and other means of testing students.

**AP** – the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) in Princeton, NJ, USA sponsors Advanced Placement Programs. The Board provides syllabi for students who wish to study college-level courses while in high school. Students then take related CEEB examinations in the spring of the year. Students may earn appropriate credit and placement in college on the basis of satisfactory performance in the examinations. Scores are awarded on a scale from 1-5, from highest to lowest grade.

**Baccalauréat, French** – The French national secondary leaving exam for French nationals. Students who pass three-hour exams are given automatic entrance into national universities. There are three series for academic, university bound students, each with a different emphasis. The “S” series emphasizes math and science; “ES” emphasizes economics, history and social sciences and “L” stresses literature, philosophy and languages. Students take a prescribed course to prepare for one of the series with few electives, except in languages. Two foreign languages are required in each series. Additional series emphasize pre-vocational courses and technology.

**Betriebsrat** is the group which represents the professional staff in negotiating specific school issues. (Germany)

**CAS** – Creativity, Action, Service – is a fundamental part of the IB program. (Please see below.) It helps students to highlight the importance of extracurricular activities as a balance to the school's academic life. Diploma candidates must contribute at least 150 hours of community service, artistic, and physical activities over a two-year period.

**DALF** is the advanced level of the DELF. (Please see DELF below.)

**DELFL** – Diplôme des Etudes de la Langue Française is the national French language competency exam for foreigners, similar to the TOEFL exam.

**Diploma Programme**, provided by IBO, is considered to be a rigorous pre-university course of studies leading to examinations that meet the needs of highly motivated secondary school students between the ages of 16-19. The program allows its graduates to fulfill requirements of various national educational systems. The program is available in English, French and Spanish.

**Edexcel** was formed by the merger of BTEC, the leading provider of vocational tests and the University of London Examinations and Assessment Council (ULEAC), one of the major GCSE and GCE examining bodies. The merger provides vocational and academic examinations to help promote employability and personal development. The Edexcel International operates in over 100 countries worldwide through more than 5700 centers.

**ELMLE** - European League of Middle Level Education

**External audit** – a complete accounting of the school’s financial status conducted by an independent auditing firm.

**GNVQ** – General National Vocational Qualification (UK)

**Governing body** is the duly constituted group which has the ultimate authority to make decisions on behalf of the school. It may be called the school board, school council, School committee or the like.

**Hadith** is the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad which were codified in the Middle Ages to support and expand Islamic law.

**Head of school** is the person who leads and supervises the daily operations of the school and ensures that the policies of the governing body are implemented. The position may also be called director, principal, superintendent or the like.

**Head of subject** is usually a teacher who also has a supervisory of middle management role in a subject or group of subjects.

**HR** - Human Resources

**IB** – International Baccalaureate

**IB Diploma** – is awarded upon successful examination results in six subjects, three at the higher level and three at subsidiary level. The examinations at higher level are of the same general standard as Advanced Placement examinations of the CEEB in the United

States or the Advanced Level General Certificate of Education examinations in the UK.

The six subjects must include:

1. Language A - English, the language of instruction;
2. Language B – English, French, German, Spanish;
3. Study of Man – Contemporary History, Economics, Psychology;
4. Experimental Science – Biology, Chemistry, Physics;
5. Mathematics;
6. Art, Music, Computer Studies, or a further subject from items 2, 3, 4, or 5 above.

**IBO** – International Baccalaureate Organization is a nonprofit educational foundation based in Switzerland which offers the International Baccalaureate, a recognized pre-university course which leads to examinations for separate subject certificates or the IB Diploma for students in the final two years of secondary school. All of the main disciplines are included, languages, social studies, experimental sciences, mathematics, and optional subjects which means that the program can be built on any sound curriculum. It also sponsors the **MYP** and the **PYP** Programs. (Please see below.)

**IBO Grading Scale** - Faculty in grades 6-12 follow the assessment guidelines laid down by the IBO Middle Years Program. The IBO 1-7 grading scale is utilized in the middle school.

In giving grades for overall achievement, teachers use the following criteria as a guide by balancing a pupil's strengths and weaknesses and assigning the grade that best describes the student's achievement.

**Grade 7** is a mark of distinction. This grade is reserved for students who consistently produce excellent written work handed in on time. Grade 7 students regularly make an outstanding contribution to class work. This grade is rarely awarded.

**Grade 6** is a mark of superiority. Grade 6 students show initiative and work well with others. Written assignments are consistently completed with care and accuracy and are handed in on time. Work shows originality, understanding and insight. Students regularly make a valuable contribution to class work.

**Grade 5** represents above average accomplishment. While it represents less achievement than a grade 6, the same qualities are frequently evident. Very able students who do not fulfill their full potential may warrant this grade, as may less able students who apply themselves fully and effectively. Grade 5 students cooperate well in groups and hand in work on time.

**Grade 4** represents satisfactory achievement. Assigned work is done in an acceptable fashion. Students display reasonable understanding of the course work and their written work shows some understanding if not originality. They work cooperatively and complete work on time.

**Grade 3** indicates that the student is either finding the course work very difficult, producing work that does not show a reasonable level of understanding, or is not fulfilling his/her potential. The teacher will make the reason for the allocation of this grade clear in a written narrative. Grade 3 students rarely show initiative

although they do not obstruct the progress of others. A parent teacher conference should take place.

**Grade 2** indicates progress that is short of a passing grade. It may reflect a lack of effort and failure to complete assignments properly or a high level of difficulty for the student. A parent teacher conference should take place.

**Grade 1** is awarded when performance is well below that required to pass. Work is superficial or irrelevant and assignments have not been handed in (see INC grade). A parent teacher conference should take place.

**L Grade** indicates that the student is presently studying English as a second language at elementary or intermediate level. Good effort and progress are being made, but assignments and evaluation may have been modified. When the student's English proficiency enables them to work at grade level, the L grade is no longer used.

**NG** (No grade given) is used when a student has not been in the class long enough for a grade to be awarded.

**INC** (Incomplete) Assignments have not all been completed. This grade will be changed to "1" unless outstanding assignments are handed in within two weeks.

Each department determines how they use the subject specific criteria to assess student work and meet the required aims and objectives. For each course, each trimester, students receive a 1-7 grade that is reported home along with a narrative comment that includes overarching attitudes to learning indicators and subject specific measurements. At the end of each year, the three trimester grades are averaged to determine the final grade. Around half-term for each trimester, the school schedules a parent-teacher conference day in order to give a formative assessment of students achievements for the trimester.

**ICT** – Information and Communication Technology

**IEP** – Individualized Educational Plan is a carefully crafted design of courses to meet the specific needs of one student, based on ability, interest and relative maturity.

**IGCSE** – International General Certificate of Education is a program sponsored by the University of Cambridge in the UK that provides the syllabi outlining required material to be covered and sets the examinations on which students are assessed at the end of grade 10. The IGCSE curriculum is divided into five subject groups: Languages; Humanities and Social Sciences; Sciences; Mathematics, and Creative, Technical and Vocational. Examinations are a series of tests and are not limited to conventional written papers.

**INSET** – in-service training

**International A levels** – are based on the "A" level examinations required to qualify for most British universities. "A" level examinations are usually taken two years after the IGCSE examinations. The extensive range of "A" level syllabi includes provision of many school subjects. Some subjects such as geography and history are tailored for

candidates in specific parts of the world. In addition, a wide range of languages is offered.

**ISEE** – The Independent School Entrance Exam, developed for the Educational Testing Bureau in the United States, has become the test of choice for many independent schools. These scores have been accepted as an alternative entrance exam to the **SSAT**. (Please see below.) It consists of four multiple choice sections and an essay section.

**ITBS** – The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills is a series of general achievement tests for grades three through eight. Along with others, such as the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills and the Stanford Achievement Test Series, they are designed to measure how well a student has learned the basic knowledge and skills taught in U.S. elementary and middle schools, in such areas as reading and mathematics.

**Koran**– the sacred text of Islam, considered by Moslems to contain the revelations of God to Mohammed. (See also Qur'an)

**LMC** – Library Media Center

**Management Team** is the group whose main role is to supervise school operations.

**MUN** – Model United Nations is a non-profit educational organization which provides a realistic simulation of the United Nations. Students attend annual international conferences at which they represent countries in devising mock solutions to international problems.

**MYP** (Middle Years Programme) is sponsored by the IBO for students from ages 11 to 16. It is represented as a complete and coherent program that provides a framework of academic challenge and life skills appropriate to this stage of adolescence. The program covers grades from 6 to 10.

**NCTM** - National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

**NMSQT** – National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test - (Please see PSAT)

**PE** - Physical Education

**Performance-based Assessment** requires students to perform hands-on tasks, such as writing an essay or conducting a science experiment. Such assessments are becoming increasingly common as alternatives to multiple-choice, machine-scored tests. Also known as authentic assessment.

**Philosophy and Objectives** includes all similar school terms such as mission, charter, vision and the like.

**Portfolio** is a systematic and organized collection of a student's work throughout a course or class year. It measures a student's knowledge and skills and often includes some form of self-reflection

**Professional development** is a school program designed to strengthen the educational background of the board, management and staff, often called in-service training.

**Project Zero** is a research institute, based at Harvard University, which examines the interplay of teaching, learning and understanding.

**PSAT** – Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test is designed to help students practice for the SAT1. (Please see below.) It is sponsored by the College Entrance Examination Board in Princeton, New Jersey. It may also be called the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT) because students who score well are eligible for scholarships awarded by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. The test is virtually the same as the SAT1 but with fewer sections. The test does have a writing skills section not found in the SAT1. Colleges do not consider PSAT scores for admissions.

**PYP** (Primary Years Programme), sponsored by the IBO, is an international curriculum designed for children between the ages of 3-12 years. The program attempts to focus on the total growth of the developing child, affecting hearts as well as minds and addressing social, physical, emotional, and cultural needs in addition to academic welfare. The PYP draws from a range of national systems with a wealth of knowledge and experience from international schools.

**Qur'an** is the sacred text of Islam, considered by Moslems to contain the revelations of God to Mohammed (Please see Koran.)

**PSAT** – Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test is designed to help students practice for the SAT1. (Please see below.) It is sponsored by the College Entrance Examination Board in Princeton, New Jersey. It may also be called the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT) since students who score well are eligible for scholarships awarded by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. The test is virtually the same as the SAT1 but with fewer sections. The test does have a writing skills section not found in the SAT1. Colleges do not consider PSAT scores for admissions.

**School community** is the group of stakeholders in the school: governing body, managers, staff, students and parents.

**School division** refers to horizontal units in the school such as primary division, elementary division and the like.

**SIRS** – Social Issues Research Service – an electronic library resource

**Special needs** refer to student characteristics which require special assistance from the professional staff. These students may have learning difficulties and/or exceptionally high abilities or talents.

**Staff** includes all personnel with management, teaching or support roles.

**TESOL** – Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

**TOEFL** – Test of English as a Foreign Language

**TOK** – Theory of Knowledge – IB candidates must take this interdisciplinary course which explores the relationships among academic courses and encourages critical reflection and analysis.

**UCLES** - University of Cambridge (UK) Local Examinations Syndicate

**Units of inquiry** are six themes organized by PYP for teaching students of ages 3-12 through a multidisciplinary approach.