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## GUIDE FOR EVALUATORS

### Student Support Services

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 Student Support Services. In a sense, you'll become the team's expert on these portions 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. We've found that every hour you spend preparing beforehand will be worth many hours during the evaluation.

- A. Study the following materials which have been sent by the school:
  1. Community, School, Student Profiles
  2. Opinion Surveys
  3. School's Philosophy and Objectives
  
- B. Review the entire self-study, examining thoroughly the documents that relate to your individual assignments.

- C. Take notes on the standards and indicators on Student Support Services provided below. From these notes, write questions for your meetings 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 Student Support Services**

Student support services enhance student opportunities for learning and provide the variety of services necessary to support school programs. These include provisions for addressing learner needs, including identified disabilities or other special needs, the need for English Language Support, and attention to nurturing exceptional talents or achievements. Support services should be designed to assist students in managing curriculum requirements and in participating fully in school life.

Appropriate guidance and health services are important in meeting the complex personal, physical, social/emotional, academic and career counseling needs of students. Among the variety of activities and protocols to protect the health and well being of the members of the school community should be a health policy which includes provisions for recording keeping, descriptions of access to health care and clearly articulated emergency procedures.

Your report on the school's compliance with the standards on Student Support Services must indicate:

- a) how the school addresses the needs of students with learning disabilities, limited English proficiency and other special needs;
- b) how guidance and health services meet the social/emotional, academic and career counseling needs of the students; and
- c) how the school develops effective procedures for identifying the learning needs of students, both at admission and thereafter.

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

**1. There shall be effective procedures for identifying the learning needs of students, both at admission and thereafter.**

- 1a. Identification of students who will benefit from support services is accomplished through referral by teachers, counselors or parents, or by screening programs within the school.
- 1b. As part of the admissions process, the school secures relevant diagnostic information about individual student's abilities/disabilities and learning styles.
- 1c. The school has a clearly defined referral system through which teachers are able to refer students experiencing academic difficulties.

**2. If children with learning or other disabilities or remedial needs are admitted, the school shall provide specific curricula and programs to meet those needs.**

- 2a. The roles of management, teachers, and other personnel providing services to special needs students are defined and understood by the professional staff.
- 2b. The special needs program ensures that all relevant professional staff, parents, and where appropriate, the student, are involved in the collaborative development of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or equivalent.

**3. The school shall have the trained special needs personnel needed to serve students with identified learning disabilities.**

- 3a. The number of special needs personnel is appropriate to the number of identified special needs students.

**4. There shall be effective practices to address the needs of students of exceptionally high ability, achievement, and/or talent.**

- 4a. The school solicits information about unique talents and achievements of new students.
- 4b. The curriculum and teaching practices include opportunities for high ability students to extend and enrich their learning.
- 4c. The school offers specialized programs, or provides referral information about local community resources and programs, that accommodate exceptional talents and interests.

**5. If students whose native or first language is not English (and whose English is not sufficiently developed to follow the full school curriculum) are admitted, the school shall provide English Language Support (ELS.)**

- 5a. ELS staff has specific preparation in the teaching of English as a Second (or Other) Language.
- 5b. All staff members are assisted with strategies to accommodate students who need English language support.
- 5c. The program of studies in ELS is so designed that students learn the skills necessary to participate fully in mainstream classes.
- 5d. There is a program of assessment of student development and accomplishment in the English language, the results of which are used for placement and exit decisions as well as for analyzing and strengthening the ELS curriculum.
- 5e. Emphasis is placed on the use of the English language as the means by which other subjects may be learned, while encouraging students to maintain skills in their native language whenever possible.

**6. The school shall provide appropriate guidance services, including academic and personal counseling as well as career/tertiary education advice for secondary students.**

- 6a. The school has an appropriate number of qualified and/or experienced guidance personnel.
- 6b. Counseling and help are available to students with academic problems.
- 6c. Counseling and help are available to students with personal problems and emotional needs.
- 6d. Career and college counseling and assistance with application procedures are available to secondary students.
- 6e. Guidance records are adequate, accurate, up-to-date, and limited to items that are important to the guidance function.
- 6f. School records are stored in a secure manner.
- 6g. Student records, under proper safeguards, are available to the students, teachers and other staff members who need to use them

**7. The school shall work cooperatively with parents and keep them informed of the academic and social development and progress of their children.**

- 7a. The school has a schedule of regular reporting of student progress to parents.
- 7b. The school includes parents, and students as appropriate, in decisions about student placement, progress, and post-secondary planning.
- 7c. The atmosphere in the school encourages parental and student participation in the all-round educational process.

**8. The school shall provide opportunities for students to take all appropriate tests, including those for admission to institutions of higher education, and shall assist parents and students in processing required application materials.**

- 8a. The school administers appropriate assessments upon admission to assist in the proper placement of a student.
- 8b. The school facilitates access to the testing required for post-secondary planning and applications.

**9. The school shall provide adequate health care, and shall insure provisions for emergencies on-site and at school functions, which take place away from the school premises.**

- 9a. Governing body policies and school practices demonstrate a concern for the health of building occupants.
- 9b. The school has procedures for providing first aid in case of accident or illness on school premises or during school functions away from the school.
- 9c. First aid supplies are readily available and easily accessible.
- 9d. The school has effective protocols for securing assistance in more serious cases, including emergencies, and these are clearly communicated to students, parents, and all staff.

**10. The school shall have health policies, which includes collection of medical information for all staff and students, immunization against common diseases and the maintenance of comprehensive records.**

- 10a. The school requires medical information for all students and staff members on entering the school, with regular updating thereafter.
- 10b. Health information is shared on a "need to know" basis while respecting mandated confidentiality.
- 10c. The school meets all local authority health requirements.

**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 tour of the school to acquaint them with the facilities and grounds. During that time you should pay particular attention to areas related to the section on Student Support Services and any subject areas you have been assigned to evaluate. 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. Are the health facilities adequate to meet the needs of building occupants and insure privacy?

### **Team Orientation Meeting**

On the first evening of your visit, the team chair may ask you to review the standard on Student Support Services 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 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, strive to attain its objectives, and revise policies and procedures periodically. 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 Student Support Services**

The purpose of the meeting with the self-study committee is to clarify information contained in the self-study report. Do not share your judgments or conclusions with the members of the self-study committee, but be certain to confirm your impressions with the other members of the visiting team. During the meeting ask questions such as the following:

1. Have the student support services changed in any significant ways since the self-study was last approved? Please explain.
2. Does the listing of special needs services represent a complete and accurate account of those which are currently available?
3. Are the services adequate to meet students' special needs?

4. Does the description of the English Language Support accurately reflect current services that are available at the school?
5. How are parents and guardians informed about these services?
6. How are written student health policies and procedures distributed to parents and guardians?
7. Are the health policies and procedures adequate?
8. Do health forms provide the information needed to make informed decisions about students' medical needs?
9. How is student progress in guidance and counseling reported to parents and guardians?
10. Describe the process used to refer a student for counseling.
11. Do college acceptances meet the expectations of the parents?
12. Are those community resources listed for health and counseling services current?
13. Which services does the school use most frequently?

### **Special Needs Staff**

Special needs personnel have direct contact with students and should be able to offer information regarding profile(s) of those students with special needs and the school's success in meeting their needs. The questions should address the success of the school in serving students who are experiencing academic difficulty or who are academically talented. Special needs personnel may provide services to students with learning disabilities, academic talents as well as those students who do not speak English as their primary language. During the interview ask questions such as:

1. How do admissions materials match the profiles of those students with special needs?
2. Describe the process used to refer students with academic difficulty for a diagnostic evaluation?
3. What are the roles of special needs and classroom teachers in making the referrals for diagnostic evaluations?
4. What is the role of the parent or guardian in the special education referral process?
5. Describe the instructional resources and written curricula provided to meet the needs of special education students.
6. What input do you have with respect to the budget for the special education program?
7. What processes provide students with modifications to the regular education curriculum?
8. Describe the process to insure that regular education and special education staffs have sufficient time for common planning and/or consultation.
9. Does the current number of special needs faculty meet the needs of the student population?
10. How are students with high academic potential and unique talents identified and accommodated?

How does the identification process compare with admissions materials?

11. Describe curriculum modifications that are provided for these students.
12. How does the school accommodate students whose primary language is not English?

### **Guidance Staff**

Guidance counselors have direct contact with students. They can provide the team with important information about the guidance services at the school and the post secondary planning process. They can also outline the strengths and the weaknesses of the guidance services and comment on any changes in these services since the publication of the self-study.

1. Describe the primary functions of the guidance personnel.
2. Describe the duties and responsibilities of the guidance personnel.
3. Are these functions and tasks consistent with the information in the admissions materials?
4. What formal interactions do guidance counselors have with parents each year?
5. Describe the typical yearly contact between guidance counselors and parents.
6. How is student academic performance on standardized tests reported to parents?
7. Describe the process and/or approach used by guidance counselors to assist students in college/career planning.
8. What records do guidance counselors maintain for each student and how are these records stored?
9. What is the role of guidance counselors in advocating for students who are experiencing academic difficulty?
10. Discuss the range of standardized tests available to students in seeking admission to institutions of higher learning and the role of the guidance counselor in scheduling these assessments.

### **Health Services Staff**

Health personnel may include nurses, physicians and health aides. These individuals can describe the current range of services and the strengths and weaknesses of these services. Health personnel can also discuss the protocols and procedures used in responding to general and emergency health situations.

1. Describe the roles and responsibilities of each member of the health department.
2. How are parents informed about the school requirements for health records?
3. What training is provided for teachers and other staff concerning responses to emergencies in school or at off-campus school events?
4. What are the procedures for referring medical emergencies that are beyond the scope of the school health services?
5. Do current policies and procedures adequately address the health and safety needs of the students?
6. How are these policies and procedures made known to parents and staff?
7. Describe the school's safeguards to insure confidentiality of student information.
8. Are current health facilities adequate to support the instructional program?

9. What community resources are available to support school health services?
10. What process does the school use to record and monitor student health records in accordance with local health requirements?

### **Parents**

Every effort should be made to meet with parents/guardians to learn their perspective of the support services. The meeting can also inform the team if the support services that are provided are consistent with the services as outlined in the school materials.

1. Describe how the school assists students who are experiencing academic difficulty.
2. Does the school's program of study match that which is outlined in the admissions materials?
3. What resources does the school provide to support unique talents and abilities of the students?
4. How does the school inform parents about student academic progress and performance on standardized tests?
5. Describe the frequency and type of communication you have with the guidance counselors.
6. How were you informed about school health requirements and emergency procedures?
7. What recommendations would you offer to improve guidance, special needs and student health services?

### **Students**

Students are the beneficiaries of student support services. Students may not be familiar with the results of the self-study or the protocols and procedures. Students can, however, give their perception of these services.

1. How do students who are having academic problems obtain extra help?
2. How often do you meet with your guidance counselor?
3. What help is available to students who are experiencing social and emotional problems?
4. What services are provided to students through the health office?
5. What changes would you suggest to improve the guidance department or the health services?

### **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, i.e. 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 standards committees such as Student and Community Life, Curriculum and Resources.

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

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

1. procedures for identifying the learning needs of students, both at admission and thereafter, and
2. health policies, including collection of medical information for all staff and students, immunization against common diseases and the maintenance of comprehensive records.

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

### **Writing the Student Support Services Report**

Your report on Student Support Services 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 Student Support Services 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 Student Support Services. 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 a note of them. Do any create problems or not work well? Make a 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 Student Support Services. 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 that commendation apply to other areas of the section on student support services 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 Student Support Services. 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 that 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.

## **Student Support Services**

### **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 Student Support Services.

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 will find the evaluation experience intense and often tiring, but we hope that you will 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** – (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.)

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**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.