

PINEWOOD
CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
ESTABLISHED 1996



**Policy for Student Assessment
and Evaluation of Effectiveness
of Teaching and Learning**

This policy outlines the following:

- the responsibilities of PCA faculty, staff, administration, students and parents/guardians in teaching and learning
- how PCA assesses each child's progress and learning
- how PCA assigns grades to each student
- how PCA communicates with parents regarding student progress
- how PCA evaluates teaching and learning school-wide
- how PCA communicates school effectiveness and improvement to its stakeholders

VISION STATEMENT

PCA develops Christian thinkers whose actions reveal the character of Christ, who live as disciplined, culturally wise, yet Biblically relevant men and women, and who recognize that their destiny and purpose is to use their gifts to engage the culture and change the world.

MISSION STATEMENT

PCA partners with the Christian family to educate covenant children to be world-changers through a rigorous, Christ-centered, Biblically based school program with excellence in academics, athletics, fine arts, and technology.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS*

accommodations – teaching techniques that help students work around limitations related to a disability, ensuring that he/she can participate as fully as possible in the general curriculum; accommodations enable students with disabilities to meet the same standards as his/her classmates.

assessments – the methods and tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, and/or educational needs of students.

formative assessments – evaluations of student learning that give educators in-process feedback about what students are learning or not learning so that instructional approaches, teaching materials, and academic support can be modified accordingly; they are typically administered multiple times during a unit, course, or academic program and they may take a variety of forms, from informal questioning and in-class discussions to more formal classwork/homework assignments and quizzes.

performance assessments – considered by some educators to be more accurate and meaningful evaluations of learning achievement as they typically require students to complete a complex task such as a writing assignment, science experiment, speech, presentation, or portfolio; teachers will often use scoring guides, rubrics, and other methods to evaluate whether the work produced by students shows that they have learned what they were expected to learn.

modifications – changes in the curriculum for a child with a disability who cannot work on the same grade level as his or her classmates; modifications will be considered only after all types of accommodations have been exhausted.

standardized tests – designed, administered, and scored in a standard, or consistent, manner, often using a multiple-choice format; they can be administered to large student populations of the same age or grade level in a state, region, or country, and results can be compared.

Norm-referenced tests measure how well test takers perform compared to other test takers of the same age or grade level (for example: a student who scores in the 70th percentile performed as well or better than 70% of other test takers).

Standards-based or *Criterion-referenced* tests measure how well students can demonstrate their understanding or mastery of the knowledge and skills they were expected to learn throughout the year.

summative assessments – evaluations of student learning at the conclusion of an instructional period, unit, course, semester, program, or school year to determine whether students have learned what they were expected to; they typically include tests, presentations, and/or projects.

**these definitions were adapted from the Glossary of Education Reform at edglossary.org*

SUCCESS IN LEARNING

PCA's mission is to partner with parents. As such, we acknowledge that parents are a child's primary teacher. Therefore, the following expectations of each party in the education process are as follows:

PCA will help each student succeed by:

- providing an academic program that is challenging yet appropriate for all students
- clearly explaining what's expected of students in all grades and subjects, and how their work will be assessed
- providing many opportunities and different ways for students to demonstrate what they know
- providing reasonable time for students to complete important assignments and assessments (especially those who have missed school)
- keeping detailed, accurate records describing each student's successes and challenges
- communicating with parents regularly about their student's progress

Students will succeed in their own learning by:

- attending school on time every day (unless providentially hindered)
- completing all assignments, projects, and tasks to the best of their ability
- upholding and contributing to the school's culture of embracing every God-given opportunity to learn and grow
- taking advantage of all opportunities to improve their learning through class participation, seeking extra help when needed, and properly studying and reviewing when appropriate
- demonstrating maturity through executive functions such as planning, organization, and responsibility (texts and materials, project completion, etc.).

Parents will promote learning success by:

- working in partnership with school faculty, staff, and administration
- staying informed and keeping in touch with teachers
- upholding and contributing to the school's culture of embracing every God-given opportunity to learn and grow
- encouraging completion of all assignments and appropriate study habits (e.g. providing a quiet place and time for students to work and study at home)
- ensuring academic integrity in the completion of all assignments, projects, and tests (see also *Academic Integrity* on p.7)
- being judicious in scheduling extra-curricular activities that may compete or even interfere with school work

EVLAUATING STUDENT PROGRESS

Throughout the year, students will work on many activities that help them increase their knowledge and practice their skills. These activities demonstrate how they are doing, what their strengths are, and where they can improve.

Formative Assessments

PCA teachers will use formative assessments to fine-tune their teaching to meet the needs of each learner, and provide feedback to students to help them improve. Formative assessments may include, but are not limited to: classwork (and homework), group work, discussions, observations, teacher-student conferences, quizzes, reviews, reflections, writing samples, and graphic organizers. These assessments may be drawn from the curricula and/or created by the teacher. *Students in grades K-2 will also use Renaissance Learning (Accelerated Reader/STAR) to promote and evaluate improvement of literacy skills.*

Homework

Practice is essential if students are to acquire certain skills and achieve independence in the learning process. In many cases (especially in the higher grades) there isn't enough time during the school day for sufficient practice. This is why homework is essential.

Moreover, homework provides students with opportunities to develop executive functioning as they learn to manage their time; organize their assignments; and transport their textbooks and materials to and from school. Therefore, PCA teachers will familiarize students with the demands of homework, and teach them the skills necessary for its successful completion.

Students will be assigned reasonable amounts of homework daily, at the discretion of the teacher. Typical expectations* for homework will be as follows:

- Grades K-2 = 20-30 minutes
- Grades 3-5 = 45-60 minutes
- Grades 6-8 = 60+ minutes

**These expectations do not include long-term or ongoing assignments, such as reviewing math facts or spelling words, science/history projects, book reports, research papers, etc.*

Make-up Work

Make-up work will be allowed for excused absences only. The responsibility will rest upon the student to obtain missed assignments and/or arrange to take missed quizzes or tests upon his/her return to school. One day of make-up time will be provided for each day of excused absence; this grace period will not include long term projects, which will remain due on the originally scheduled dates.

If a student knows he/she will miss multiple days in a row he/she will be encouraged to use the *Extended Absence Form* to keep track of all missed assignments, which will be due on the dates indicated by the teacher. Long term projects due after the student's return to school will remain due on the originally scheduled dates.

Summative Assessments

Teachers will use summative assessments, along with their professional judgment, to assign grades throughout the year. These grades may be based on what teachers observe students doing, discussions they have with students, and the work students complete. These assessments may include, but are not limited to: traditional assessments such as tests, reports, and essays; and performance assessments such as presentations, projects, and portfolios. These assessments may be drawn from the curricula and/or created by the teacher, and may include alternative forms of evaluation, such as scoring guides and rubrics.

Grading Codes and Scales

Grades will be assigned to students as follows:

| | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| K-2nd | + = Exceeds expectations | |
| | ✓ = Meets expectations | |
| | -- = Below expectations | |
| 3rd – 8th | A – Excellent | 90-100% |
| | B – Very Good | 80-89% |
| | C – Average | 70-79% |
| | D – Below Average | 60-69% |
| | F – Failing | 0-59% |
| Resources | O – Outstanding | 90-100% |
| | S – Satisfactory | 80-89% |
| | P – Progressing | 70-79% |
| | N – Needs Improvement | 60-69% |
| | U – Unsatisfactory | 0-59% |

Promotion Requirements

PreK: to be considered eligible for kindergarten at PCA, students must demonstrate 80% mastery of skills on the end-of-year assessment

Kindergarten: 80% mastery of kindergarten skills*

Grades 1-2: overall *Progressing* or better in Language Arts, Mathematics, and Bible*

Grades 3-8: Promotion to the next grade level is contingent upon successful completion of the required course work, and the student achieving the following:

- a final average of **C** or above in Mathematics

- a final average of **C** or above in Language Arts (Reading, English, and Spelling)
- and an overall average of **C** in Science, Social Studies, and Bible

High school credits may be earned according to the following criteria:

- a final average of **C** or above in Algebra I (1 year)
- a final average of **C** or above in Spanish 1 (2 years)
- a final average of **C** or above in Technology (3 years)

K-8 students may be retained if absences exceed 15% of the total number of school days (or 26 days) – this includes excused as well as unexcused absences. Absences due to extraordinary circumstances may not exceed 20% of the total number of school days (or 35 days).

Academic Integrity

Cheating subverts learning and is therefore unacceptable; it is also dishonest and therefore displeasing to God. Cheating may include, but is not limited to: copying another student's responses on classwork, homework, quizzes, or tests; stealing tests or assignments, or buying teacher materials online to get answers in advance; and plagiarism (copying someone else's work and passing it off as one's own). Cheating also includes *giving* answers or work to others to claim as their own.

If a student is caught cheating, a school administrator will meet with them and take action in accordance with the procedures outlined in the PCA Discipline Policy and the Parent/Student Handbook. Because the ultimate goal is for PCA students to learn, teachers and administrators will determine together whether and how an assignment or test should be redone, and whether the student will receive a grade for it or not.

DIVERSE LEARNERS

All Pinewood Christian Academy students receive flexible, high-quality, scientifically-based instruction. Students are considered passing (i.e. meeting grade level expectations) if they receive an average grade of C or higher in each subject.

At times, there will be students whose learning needs cannot be met through regular classroom instruction; these students may face challenges such as a speech and/or hearing impairment, a specific learning disability, or a persistent health issue. These students are typically characterized as lacking success despite significant effort in a particular area or subject. If a teacher suspects a student may be experiencing extraordinary difficulty in meeting the school's academic or behavioral standards, formal psychoeducational testing may be recommended to the parent.

If a child has hitherto been formally evaluated by a licensed professional, a copy of those test results, along with any recommendations for accommodations, should be provided to the administration. While PCA is not obligated to implement Individualized Education Plans (IEP) from the public school system, parents will be encouraged to meet with the teacher and administration to determine whether appropriate accommodations can be provided.

Because students with a disability who are not challenged to reach the same level of achievement as their nondisabled classmates in elementary or middle school may find that they are not ready for a program that leads to a standard diploma in high school, PCA will only provide *modifications* for students with disabilities in very rare cases. Lowering curricular and performance expectations can cause confusion for both students and parents, and may lead to miscommunication regarding performance should a student transfer to another school.

COMMUNICATING STUDENT PROGRESS

There are multiple ways PCA will inform parents about their student's learning throughout the year:

Weekly Progress Updates

Pre-K through 2nd grade teachers will use folders which will be sent home daily/weekly. Each folder may include a form for teachers to communicate with parents regarding academic progress and conduct. Parents will be encouraged to review the contents of the folder and return it to the teacher; a parent signature may be required. Additional information may be conveyed via phone and/or email.

3rd through 8th grade teachers will update students' grades weekly on the online parent portal. Additional communication regarding academic progress and conduct will be done via phone and/or email.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

PreK/VPK parents will be required to conference with teachers once in the fall and once in the spring to discuss their student's academic progress and readiness for kindergarten.

K-8 parents may request a parent-teacher conference at any time during the school year. However, a mandatory conference will be scheduled at the end of the first grading period; first quarter report cards will be given at that time. After the first quarter, teachers will be required to request a parent-teacher conference if they see a drastic change in a student's behavior and/or performance, or if a student is in jeopardy of failing one or more subjects. *Parents and teachers may also communicate regularly via phone and/or email.*

Report Cards

Report cards will be sent home at the end of each grading period. Parents will be encouraged to review the report card, and sign and return the report card envelope within three days.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

All students at PCA will participate in annual standardized testing. Results will be reported to the parents with the caution to use discretion when sharing them with their children. Every child is made in the image of God and is endowed by Him with various gifts and abilities. Test results are a valuable tool for assessing students' academic progress, and not a measure of their value, worth, or intelligence.

Following is a list of the standardized tests to be used at PCA, to whom they will be given, and when they will be administered:

| Test | Type | Group | Areas Tested | Time of Year |
|--|-----------------|--------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Bright Beginnings® Florida VPK Assessment | Standards-based | VPK | Letter Recognition Phonemic Awareness Phonics Number Sense Basic Arithmetic | September, January, and April |
| Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) - Growth | Norm-referenced | K-8 | Reading Math | September, January, and April |
| Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) - Growth | Norm-referenced | 5, 8 | Science | September, January, and April |

In addition to these assessments, 7th and 8th graders are given pre- and post- summative assessments in timed, content-based, expository and persuasive writing.

EVALUATING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

Longitudinal records of standardized test scores will be kept to track annual student progress as well as identify trends for the purposes of improving instructional methods, content, and curricula. A yearly summary report of standardized testing results (both annual and longitudinal) will be made available for review by all stakeholders.

Each classroom teacher will conduct an annual review of their students' standardized test scores. The review will include a comparison of results to the school's performance standards, as well as a comparison of current-year results to those of the previous three years to identify any trends.

Each teacher will also submit a written report to the administration, which will include at least one goal for improvement of student learning for the following year, and an action plan to achieve that goal.

Performance Standards

Educational standards define the knowledge and skills students should possess at critical points in their education. While educators play an important role in assessing student learning, the use of standards provides an objective basis for the evaluation of school effectiveness. Following are the performance standards PCA will use to assess the efficacy of teaching and learning at our school. For detailed and/or grade-specific learning objectives, consult PCA's Curriculum Guide.

Pre-Kindergarten (including VPK)

- Students will recognize, name, and say the sounds of both upper- and lower-case letters with 80% accuracy on the Bright Beginnings® Florida VPK Assessment.
- Students will demonstrate awareness and manipulation of the different sounds in a word with 80% accuracy on the Bright Beginnings® Florida VPK Assessment.
- Students will demonstrate facility with both expressive and receptive language, and basic understanding of word functions and meanings with 80% accuracy on the Bright Beginnings® Florida VPK Assessment.
- Students will demonstrate numeracy skills including counting, numerical relations, and arithmetic reasoning with 80% accuracy on the Bright Beginnings® Florida VPK Assessment.

Kindergarten

- Students will recognize the names and sounds of both upper- and lower-case letters at the 90th percentile or higher on a norm-referenced standardized test.
- Students will read and comprehend words and sentences at the 61st percentile or higher on a norm-referenced standardized test.
- Students will demonstrate numeracy skills including counting, numerical relations, basic arithmetic, and geometric and spatial reasoning at the 61st percentile or higher on a norm-referenced standardized test.

1st – 2nd Grades

- Students will read and comprehend sentences and paragraphs at the 61st percentile or higher on a norm-referenced standardized test.
- Students will demonstrate facility in numeracy, basic arithmetic, and geometric and spatial reasoning at the 61st percentile or higher on a norm-referenced standardized test.

3rd – 8th Grades

- Students will read and comprehend literary and informational passages at the 61st percentile or higher on a norm-referenced standardized test.
- Students will demonstrate facility in mathematics at the 61st percentile or higher on a norm-referenced standardized test.

3rd & 5th Grades

- Students will demonstrate knowledge and application of scientific principles at the 61st percentile or higher on a norm-referenced standardized test.

7th & 8th Grades

- Students will demonstrate facility with written language including proper focus, organization, evidence, elaboration, and basic conventions of English at 70 percent or higher on an annual assessment.