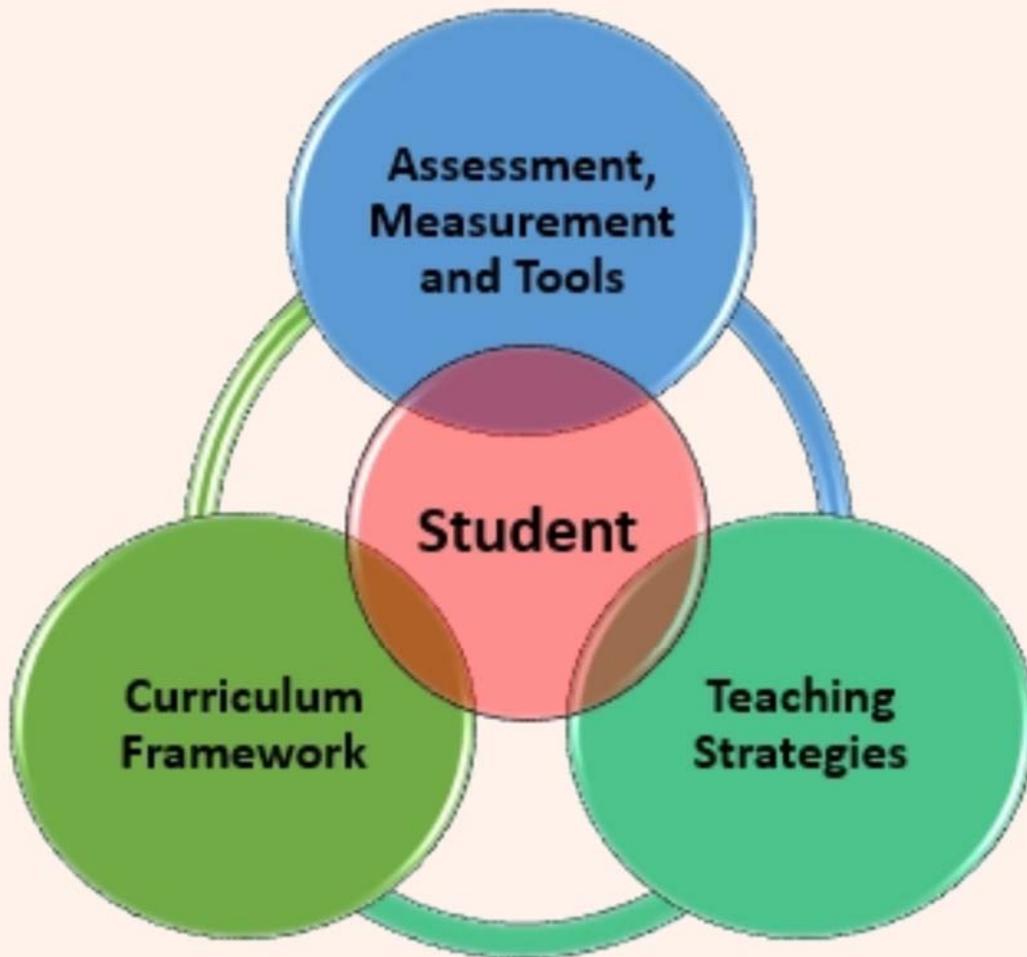


Government of the Republic of Palau

Ministry of Education

**PALAU NATIONAL STUDENT
ASSESSMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK**



February 02, 2018



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The Ministry of Education management truly appreciates the hard work and support of everyone involved from the developmental stage of this project to the establishment of the PNSAPF for the education system in Palau. The management team extends gratitude and acknowledgment to all of you for the concerted effort throughout the process that made this project possible that would be beneficial for our children.

Message from the Minister of Education

The Palau National Student Assessment Policy Framework (PNSAPF) serves as the skeletal structure of invaluable information on the policies, rules and regulations relating to assessments of students in all schools of Palau. The document covers the assessment guidelines and standards procedures for all schools, public and private, to adhere to for compliance including the laws of the education system in Chapter 22 of the Palau National Code.

It is crucial that from time and again, the management may revisit the laws of the Republic of Palau in terms of school charters and procedures for review and may require submission of reports related to assessments of students, collection of data needed such as annual school survey to produce academic achievements, absence rates, retention rates, drop-out/suspension, and any other matters concerning student services in the school system in Palau.

With this, it is imperative that all educators, parents, major stakeholders and partner agencies become knowledgeable of the contents of the PNSAPF for the benefit of our children. I come to you all asking for support and enduring partnership in the implementation of this document as our education system prepares our children with a vision to be successful in the Palauan society and the world.



Sinton Soalablai
Minister of Education

INTRODUCTION

The Palau National Student Assessment Policy Framework (PNSAPF) provides the overall policies, guidelines, and procedures for developing, administering, monitoring & evaluating (M&E), and managing the assessment system in the Ministry of Education. It also dispenses the rationale, principles, credibility, values, and best practices that guide all student assessment and evaluation of student performance.

This document is generally aligned with the curriculum framework and the five priority areas in the Ministry of Education ten-year master plan 2017-2027. This PNSAPF reinforces the implementation of the School Handbook 2010 and grading system, the Homework Policy, the FOC Intervention program, the Promotion Policy, the Policy on Student Journal Writing, and School Technology Resources Policies & Guidelines Handbook of the Ministry of Education. It complements and works in parallel with the mandates of the Office of the President Management Action Plan to enhance services for students in all schools in Palau.

Furthermore, the PNSAPF is in compliance with the RPPL No. 4-57, 22 PNC Chapter 1 Section 181. Charter; Procedures, Section 182. Attendance; report; failure to meet standards, Section 183. Benefit to students, and Section 184. Supervision by Ministry. This policy framework addressed all learners, teachers, school principals, management, and governing bodies, the Government of Palau, and other related partner agencies and stakeholders in terms of student testing and other related services provided by the Ministry of Education in the Republic of Palau.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MOE – Ministry of Education
BCI – Bureau of Curriculum & Instruction
BOEA – Bureau of Education Administration
DSM – Division of School Management
DCIMD – Division of Curriculum Instructional & Material Development
DIITT – Division of Instructional Implementation & Teacher Training
DPM – Division of Personnel Management
DRE – Division of Research & Evaluation
ADB – Asian Development Bank
QPENP – Quality Primary Education in the North Pacific
PAT – Palau Achievement Test
QAT – Quarterly Assessment Test
SBA – School Based Assessment
SAT – Scholastic Aptitude Test
TOEFL – Teaching of English as a Foreign Language
SAT 10 – Stanford Achievement Test (Tenth Edition)
Iowa Assessment – University of Iowa Assessment
PILNA – Pacific Islands Literacy Numeracy Assessment
PNSAPF- Palau National Student Assessment Policy Framework
PNC – Palau National Code
FOC – Focus of Concern
IEP – Individualized Education Plan

PALAU NATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK

VISION: Our students will be successful in the Palauan society and the world.

MISSION: The Republic of Palau Ministry of Education, in partnership with students, parents, and the community, is to ensure student success through effective curriculum and instruction in a conducive learning environment.

SECTION 1: Objectives of the Assessment Policy Framework

- 1.1. The objective of the Palau National School Assessment Policy is to provide a framework for assessing students' learning and system effectiveness.
- 1.2. Palau National School Assessment Policy Framework is to provide guidelines and procedures for developing and implementing student assessments as prescribed by the curriculum frameworks and reporting student learning progress in elementary and secondary level of education.
- 1.3. These policies are subject to review, revision, and improvement as deemed necessary by the Ministry of Education.

SECTION 2: Purposes and Functions of Assessment

- 2.1. The Purposes of the Assessment System shall be to:
 - 2.1.1. gauge and monitor students' learning progress;
 - 2.1.2. gather data to inform teachers, parents and different education stakeholders of their instructional and learning progress;
 - 2.1.3. determine the level of implementation of the curriculum frameworks;
 - 2.1.4. identify areas for improvement of teaching practices; and
 - 2.1.5. establish accountability for students' learning.
- 2.2. The Functions of the Assessment Tools included shall be to:
 - 2.2.1. improve students' learning;
 - 2.2.2. inform the stakeholders so that they will be well informed in the decision-making;
 - 2.2.3. evaluate the level of implementation of the curriculum for its strengths and weaknesses;
 - 2.2.4. enhance the teaching practices;
 - 2.2.5. strengthen school accountability towards students' progress; and
 - 2.2.6. ensure students' meet the learning expectations

- 2.3. The Types of Assessment Tools shall include:
- 2.3.1. national assessments;
 - 2.3.2. state - wide assessments;
 - 2.3.3. school - based assessments; and
 - 2.3.4. assessment of student with disability
 - 2.3.5. Others -

SECTION 3: National Assessment

- 3.1. National Assessment is designed to describe the level of achievement of the whole education system. It is composed of assessment tools that allow the gathering of information about students' knowledge and skills against the national curriculum framework and the level of achievement of the defined learning outcomes (and core competencies) for a selected level of schooling. It is also administered as a survey of schools to provide evidence of school program.
- 3.2. The National Assessment shall be administered under the auspices of the Ministry of Education through the Division of Research and Evaluation (DRE).
- 3.3. National Assessments shall include:
- 3.2.1. Palau Achievement Test (PAT); and
 - 3.2.2. Palau English Reading Assessment (PERA).
- 3.4. The PAT shall be administered annually to all students of Grades 8 and 12 at the end of each school year. Grade 8 shall take PAT for all five Core Subjects (English, Math, Science, Social Studies and Palauan Studies) and Grade 12 shall take PAT for four core subjects only (English, Math, Science, and Social Studies). It shall be considered a system assessment to determine the effectiveness of implementation of the curriculum frameworks and how students achieved the identified learning targets for primary and secondary school students.
- 3.5. The PERA shall be administered to all students from Grades 1 to 8, at the beginning of the school year (pre-test) and towards the end of the school year (post-test). The PERA is administered to primarily assess reading level and monitor reading progress of all students. Moreover, the PERA shall be administered to improve teaching practices, inform instruction and provide information to various stakeholders.
- 3.6. The PAT Mathematics at Grade 8 shall serve as a placement test for Mathematics for the in-coming freshmen (Grade 9) of Palau High School.
- 3.7. The information from the National Assessments shall be used to compare schools in relation to teaching of the core subjects so as to enable system-wide improvement, professional development for teachers and allocation of resources.

SECTION 4: State-wide Assessment

- 4.1. State-wide Assessments shall be administered to assess the progress and level of achievement of students according to clearly defined learning targets and identified timelines. These examinations shall be administered centrally under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, particularly the Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction (BCI). This assessment shall measure progress of student achievements in core subjects at various period of the school year.
- 4.2. The State-wide Assessment primarily intends to measure individual student's learning progress in all core subject areas. The main functions of the State-wide Assessment are to:
 - 4.2.1. monitor students' learning progress on a periodic basis;
 - 4.2.2. inform improvement in the teaching-learning process;
 - 4.2.3. diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses in particular learning targets and periods of studies; and
 - 4.2.4. information of students' achievement to various stakeholders.
- 4.3. The Quarterly Assessment Test (QAT) shall be the principal State-wide Assessment. It shall be:
 - 4.3.1. required for all students;
 - 4.3.2. administered four (4) times a year in all core subject areas of grades 1-8;
 - 4.3.3. administered on a semester basis, that is, twice a year for grades 9-12; and
 - 4.3.4. twenty five percent of the quarter grade for grades 1-8 and semester grade for grades 9-12 (students who do not take the test will get 0% QAT score).
- 4.4. The only exception to students not taking the quarterly exam as scheduled and who are eligible to take the exam at a later date are as follows:
 - 4.4.1. Student(s) did not take the test due to hospitalization or other illness
 - 4.4.2. There is a death in the immediate family
 - 4.4.3. Student(s) did not take the test as scheduled due to natural causes such as natural disaster or other catastrophic events that the student(s) or their parents/guardians had no control over.

SECTION 5: School-based Assessment

- 5.1. School-based Assessment (SBA) is defined as any assessment activity that is conceptualized and implemented by the teacher for a particular subject and class. SBA is defined as an assessment approach where assessment is carried out in schools by teachers.
- 5.2. The main purpose of SBA is to determine students' achievement based on the assessment of individual teachers, for providing feedback to students for the improvement of learning. Hence, SBA is implemented as formative assessment.

- 5.3. SBA shall be implemented by all teachers at all levels of schooling, from Grades 1 to 12. All teachers shall be encouraged to use various types and modalities of SBA, and shall not be limited only to paper-and-pencil tests. Teachers shall be expected to identify all their SBA Plan and submit them to the school administrators at the beginning of each school year.
- 5.4. The results of SBA shall be used primarily to grade student performance, along with the results of the QAT based on the approved grading system.
- 5.5. All Principals shall have the responsibility to review all SBA tools and to supervise the implementation of any SBA in their schools. They also have the responsibility to ensure that all teachers shall use SBA to gather useful feedback on what, how much, and how well students are learning.
- 5.6. Since SBA shall be created, administered and analyzed by the teachers themselves, teachers shall be strongly encouraged with fidelity to apply the results of the assessment to improve their students' learning and to enhance their teaching.

SECTION 6: Assessment of Student with Disabilities

- 6.1. Students with Disabilities are those students who were evaluated and determined to have:
 - 6.1.1. Traumatic brain injury
 - 6.1.2. Visual impairment including blindness
 - 6.1.3. Deaf-blindness
 - 6.1.4. Deafness
 - 6.1.5. Hearing impairment
 - 6.1.6. Autism
 - 6.1.7. Emotional disturbance
 - 6.1.8. Speech and language impairment
 - 6.1.9. Intellectual disability
 - 6.1.10. Specific learning disabilities
 - 6.1.11. Other health impairment
 - 6.1.12. Orthopedic impairment
 - 6.1.13. Multiple disability
- 6.2. All students with disabilities shall be accommodated in all assessment processes as determined through the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), particularly during actual administration of assessment depending on their identified disabilities and specific needs.
- 6.3. Students with significant cognitive disabilities shall be allowed to take alternate assessments as determined through the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- 6.4. Individual result of all assessments of children with disabilities shall ensure that the four levels of performance (beg, dev, prof, adv) will be reported accordingly by DRE.

SECTION 7: Other Assessment Programs

- 7.1. Other assessments such as TOEFL, SAT10, SAT, IOWA, and PILNA shall be administered as required.
- 7.2. All other assessments shall be coordinated by the DRE.

SECTION 8: Governance of the Assessment System

- 8.1. The Management Team of the Ministry of Education, chaired by the Minister of Education, shall perform the overall management and supervision of the Assessment System of Palau.
- 8.2. The Management Team, being a clearinghouse and decision-making body on all matters pertaining to assessment, shall:
 - 8.2.1. approve all policies, procedures and practices of all assessment activities;
 - 8.2.2. approve all test blueprint/table of specifications;
 - 8.2.3. monitor and evaluate the implementation of this PNSAPF; and
 - 8.2.4. ensure that curriculum, instruction and assessment are cohesively aligned.
 - 8.2.5. create committees and appoint members of the committees to perform specific tasks related to assessment.
 - 8.2.6. review and approve all assessments results before they are disseminated.
 - 8.2.7. ensure the timely release of results to various stakeholders.
- 8.3. The BCI shall be responsible in the development of National Assessments and State-wide Assessments.
- 8.4. The DRE shall be responsible in the administration of National Assessments while Schools shall be tasked to administer the State-wide Assessments.
- 8.5. The School Principals shall oversee the scoring process of all State-wide Assessments and all scoring of National Assessments shall be carried by DRE.
- 8.6. All analysis and reporting of assessment results shall be done by DRE in a timely manner (nationals assessment reports are due at the end of each school year and state-wide assessment reports are due at the end of each quarter).

SECTION 9: Procedures and Administration of the National and State-wide Assessments

- 9.1. All assessment tools and processes and procedures shall adhere and comply with the highest standards and requirements that uphold validity, credibility, fairness, reliability, and transparency in educational assessment.
- 9.2. Strict adherence to confidentiality and security shall be observed at all times.

- 9.3. All assessments shall be developed adhering to the highest quality and best practices of test development process. A test blueprint or table of specifications shall be required before commencement of any item writing activity. All test blueprint shall be approved by the Management Team.
- 9.4. All tests shall be pilot-tested and their psychometric properties shall be technically sound (proven validity and reliability) before being administered.
- 9.5. Palau educators, including classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, special education specialists, and administrators shall serve as item writers, who shall be trained comprehensively before they are tasked to write and review items according to acceptable and best practices of items writing. An external technical consultant may be hired to provide support and technical direction during item writing and review process.
- 9.6. All developed test items will be placed into an item bank, which will be periodically reviewed and tested.
- 9.7. Test assembly shall be done by BCI.
- 9.8. National and state-wide assessment test schedules shall be specified on the school calendar. Any changes must be approved by MOE Management.
- 9.9. Only trained and fully-supervised individuals shall be allowed to become examiner and administer, score and interpret test results. Hence, a training is required to all test administrators before they are allowed to administer tests.
- 9.10. MOE Staff assigned as coordinator of assessments shall be responsible for the security and proper use of all assessment materials.
- 9.11. Each Assessment Coordinator (e.g. PAT Coordinator or QAT Coordinator) shall conduct proper inventory before distributing for administration and receipt of all assessment materials after administration. They shall strictly maintain records of inventory of all assessment materials.
- 9.12. Test Administrator at the schools who shall receive assessment materials from Assessment Coordinator, shall at all times, check materials received using the approved Test Materials Inventory Form. He/She shall check materials in terms of quantities (number of booklets and answer sheets) and quality of test materials. Moreover, the Test Administrator in schools shall ensure that all assessment materials shall be secured at all times.

- 9.13. Each Test Administrator shall observe and implement the policies and instructions for accommodating students with disabilities.
- 9.14. Scoring and marking of test shall be done only by trained individuals.
- 9.15. Analysis of test results shall be done by the DRE.
- 9.16. Dissemination and reports of results shall be done by Chief of DRE, after review and approval by the Management Team.
- 9.17. The results of National Assessments shall be reported during the Annual Education Conference.

SECTION 10: Professional Development Programs for Teachers, Principals and MOE Staff

- 10.1. The MOE, through the Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction in collaboration with the Division of School Management and Division of Research and Evaluation shall provide all principals, teachers, education specialists, and other key staff with appropriate and on-going training on school assessment focusing on areas such as
 - 10.0.1. Assessment philosophies
 - 10.0.2. Assessment principles
 - 10.0.3. Development and monitoring of assessment plans
 - 10.0.4. Different assessment tools and activities
 - 10.0.5. School-based Assessments
 - 10.0.6. Test development
 - 10.0.7. Test Administration
 - 10.0.8. Marking and scoring
 - 10.0.9. Analysis and interpretation of student results
 - 10.0.10. Reporting
 - 10.0.11. Utilization of assessment data
 - 10.0.12. Research and instructional evaluation
- 10.2. Various modes of training shall be used such as face-to-face, distance and flexible learning, e-learning, and video conferencing.



Ministry of Education

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