Application for Opting Out of District Interims for 2014-2015

This application provides a process for Montessori schools whose curriculum and/or scope and sequence philosophically or pragmatically do not coincide with the district's assessments or other offered options for assessment. Use this application to propose an assessment strategy that would better fit with your schools philosophy to meet the needs of your students. It is imperative that the assessments produce data that can be used to influence instruction and increase student learning.

School Name: Denison Montessori School and Academia Ana Marie Sandoval

Content Area(s) in which waivers are being sought: Reading, Writing, Math

Grade(s) in which waivers are being sought: 3 year olds through 6th Grade

As Montessori schools, within Denver Public Schools, we are seeking to be waived from any district created assessments that are based on the DPS adopted curricula and/or DPS scope and sequence.

In lieu of district level assessments, we will join a Montessori Short Cycle Assessment Network (SCAN) with the other DPS Montessori schools.

Our SCAN meetings will be modified in recognition that our schools will not be creating new assessments, but will be improving upon the process of determining proficiency in key standards-aligned assessments that we are already giving through Montessori works (see attachment V). Our teacher leaders and school leaders will meet once per month for two hours to develop this Montessori short-cycle assessment process and to use the data based on that work to improve instruction against the standards.

How are you proposing to assess your students' progress against the standards?

As a Montessori program, which has been approved to waive the curriculum adopted by Denver Public Schools and fully implement the Montessori curriculum and pedagogy, we seek to administer our own form of Montessori assessment in lieu of the DPS Interim Assessments in Math, Reading and Writing.

From the ARE website: "*The primary purpose of the district interim assessments is to measure students' achievement of standards and inform instruction by sampling important learning goals throughout a grade level; measuring content in alignment with district pacing and planning; and limiting the scoring requirements to the extent possible.*"

As a Montessori school, the results of the district assessments can not inform our instruction because they are not in alignment to the pacing and planning used within a Montessori classroom.

As Montessorians, we use a number of measures to access students' progress towards academic standards. These are common practices that are fundamentals of Montessori implementation. These include but are not limited to:

- The Montessori three period lesson
    - 1st Period: the teacher shows and names a new concept, Example: "These shapes are congruent."
    - 2nd Period: The teacher asks the child to show a particular concept. Example, "Show me the congruent shapes."
    - 3rd Period: The teacher asks child to recall the concept. Example: "What are these shapes called?"
- The materials themselves are self-correcting which shows the child when they have made a mistake so they know to go back and try again.
- There is isolation of difficulty in the lesson sequence that allows the adult and child to assess understanding of complex processes from the beginning to the end.
- Teachers observe the child at work and review the child's work.
    - Children are guided through the verbalizing processes in one's work referred to as "self talk".
    - Teachers involve children in the assessment of their own work, "What seems to be missing here?" "How do you think you did on this?
- Students are asked to recall and apply acquired knowledge to new concepts (consistently done due to the interrelated approach of Montessori).
- Students have opportunities for peer and self-checking/editing of work.
- Students have opportunities for giving lessons to other students, which shows mastery.
- Students at the elementary and middle school levels have regular conferences with teachers, helping them make and own the choices in their educational process.
- Elementary and middle school students use portfolios and rubrics to help them reflect on their work.

- Elementary and middle school students have some quizzes and tests, both teacher and student produced.
- Elementary and middle school students complete project work culminating in presentations to students and/or parents.

We will monitor this student progression in their mastery of Common Core State Standards through a CCSS and Montessori aligned Montessori record keeping system. This will be used to individually track each student's progress toward the standard through their mastery of the related Montessori material, concept and/or standard. This mastery will be measured through observation data on learning and behavior patterns as well as utilizing formative assessments created through the SCAN process.

Additionally, we will administer all other state and district required assessments and student outcomes on these assessments would be included in the Body of Evidence alongside the Montessori record keeping system.

Formative Assessments

Formative Assessment happens frequently in the Montessori environment in the form of immediate feedback from the classroom teacher, hands on learning, project based learning, short and long responses and performance based tasks.

Our work through SCAN will create Common Formative Assessments which will become the cornerstone of our Data Team meetings and inform differentiated student instruction. See attachment IV *Data Teams: Common Formative Assessment Review*

Montessori Record Keeping System

All Montessori schools will use a Montessori record keeping system such as Montessori Workspace. Montessori Workspace is an on-line record keeping tool, which allows teachers to track individual students' introduction to concepts, practice within the concept and proven mastery of a concept. All Montessori lessons within Montessori Workspace have been aligned to CCSS. Teachers will use a Montessori record keeping system to monitor students' progress towards the standards. Montessori Workspace produces reports so administration, teacher leaders and data teams will be able to monitor student reports three times per year.

We will create a rubric to ensure consistency of teachers' reporting of progress towards proficiency and proficiency. See Attachment V: *Sample Proficiency Rubric*

Other Measures of Academic Success:

We propose to assess our Montessori students' progress towards academic standards (district and state) in a number of ways using a variety of measures including the following:

State and District Required Assessments

State Assessments: ACCESS, CMAS, DRA/EDL

District Assessments: DRA, SRI

We understand that SCAN schools are expected to administer the End of Year Interim Assessment. We request to be waived from this interim as well OR to have a meeting with ARE and District Administration in December to discuss this question as well as share our progress within SCAN and our plans for a Montessori based end of year assessment.

Qualitative Evaluation

We will use DPS Student Perception Surveys, LEAP Observation data on Student Behaviors and the Learning Environment Domain as well as observation data to measure Montessori elements in the social, emotional and behavioral areas, including, Positive attitude toward school, Inner security and sense of order, Pride in the physical environment, Abiding curiosity, Habit of concentration, Habits of initiative and persistence, Ability to make decisions, Sense of independence and self-confidence, Self-discipline and Sense of responsibility to other members of the class, school, and community. In recognition of the goals in the Denver Plan around educating the whole child and helping children to find and develop their passions and strengths, we believe that Montessori schools can help to lead the way in determining how best to ensure that this is happening.

Ethnographic Inquiry

We will use LEAP data in the Professionalism, Learning Environment and Instructional Domains to measure the functioning of students and teachers in

Montessori classrooms. This will provide a means for contrasting the functioning of Montessori students with that of students enrolled in traditional classrooms. This comparison is integral to assessing the quality of education in factors such as time on task, independence, self-motivation, and responsibility.

Citing all of these state and district performance measures that will continue to assess our students' progress towards academic standards, we are seeking a waiver from the district interim assessments.

Name/Source of method for assessing progress: Short Cycle Assessments used in conjunction with a Montessori record keeping system such as Montessori Workspace

Frequency of method for assessing progress: Teachers will update on a regular basis. Administration, Teacher Leaders and Grade Levels will do a review of progress towards mastery three times per year.

Describe your rationale for requesting a change from the district's testing schedule and attach your alternate schedule.

District assessments provide information on students' status throughout the year, which is useful for adjusting instruction and identifying student learning needs. It also useful in conversations between teachers and school leaders about teachers' strengths, areas for growth and professional learning plans. As Montessorians, these district assessment goals can best be attained through the implementation of authentic Montessori assessments such as Montessori workspace.

Administration, Teacher Leaders and Grade Levels will do a review of progress towards mastery three times per year.

1st: October 21 (Assessment Day)

2nd: January 5 (Assessment Day)

3rd: April 13 (Assessment Day)

How will the proposed method for assessing students' progress against the standards provide information on student mastery of the content at the level of rigor required by the CCSS?

There is work being done on a national level to ensure that the Montessori curriculum has been mapped to the Common Core State Standards. Our Montessori record keeping systems have also been aligned to the CCSS.

Additionally, DPS Montessori schools have aligned the Montessori Curriculum to the Scope and Sequence documents created by DPS as well as ensured that the ELOs are being met at each grade level.

How was alignment to content and rigor of curriculum/standards determined? Please attach supporting documentation.

See Attachment I *Common Core State Standards and Montessori Correlation*
See Attachment II *DPS Scope and Sequence & Montessori Alignment*
See Attachment III *Montessori Workspace*
See Attachment V *Sample Proficiency Rubric*

How will data be collected within the school? Include how you will ensure reliability/consistency of scoring.

School administration and teacher leaders will monitor data within Montessori Workspace. Short Cycle Assessments that focus on ELGs will be administered and collaboratively examined by grade level teams. Please see attachment IV *Common Formative Assessment Review as evidence of Data Team Work at Denison*

How will data be used to inform instruction?

The goal of all assessments is to provide information on students' status throughout the year, which is useful for adjusting instruction and identifying student learning needs as well as gaps. It also useful in conversations between teachers and school leaders about teachers' strengths, areas for growth and professional learning plans.

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_____ _____

Principal Signature Date

_____ _____

SAL Signature Date

Please submit this form to Accountability, Research and Evaluation (ARE) for approval. Email this form as an attachment to Glen Sirakavit, glen_sirakavit@dpsk12.org by May XX, 2014. This process will be reviewed by your instructional superintendent, Teaching and Learning, and ARE.

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_____	_____
IS Signature	Date
_____	_____
T&L Signature	Date
_____	_____
ARE Signature	Date

__ Approved **__ Denied**

ATTACHMENT I: Common Core State Standards and Montessori Correlation

College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards	Third Grade CORE Standards	Learning Activity	Montessori Materials	Aim of Materials (Direct and Indirect)
Anchor Standards for Reading	**3rd Grade Reading Standards for Literature:**			
Key Ideas and Details	**Key Ideas and Details**			
1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	1. Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.	Ability to read, ability to identify and extract key components, compose a sentence, ask questions, use language from the text to answer questions and to demonstrate understanding	Vocabulary cards, Variety of genres and media	
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.	Ability to read, ability to identify and extract key components, reads and understands a variety of materials, locates main idea, supporting details and different components of stories, engages in guided discussion, ability to show understanding through creative expression like visual art, drama, music, and written expression	Variety of books; ancient creation stories, ancient myths and fables as related to our "Cosmic Education" curriculum, ancient civilization timelines, Blooms Taxonomy command cards	
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.	Ability to read, ability to identify characters, ability to have a text to self connection, reads and understands a variety of materials,ability to identify and name a variety of feelings, recognizes literature as an expression of human experience, can sequence the events in the stories, engages in guided discussion, ability to show understanding through creative expression like visual art, drama, music, and written expression, uses descriptive language, understand cause and effect, identify inferences	Variety of books, adjective key lesson, command cards, grammar boxes and symbols, character education materials, blooms taxonomy cards, sequencing materials, timelines, cause and effect cards	
Craft and Structure	**Craft and Structure**			
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.	Analyzing, decomposing, transposing and reconstructing sentences, participates in guided discussion, uses metaphors and similes in spoken and written expression	Sentence and reading analysis and extended studies, grammar symbols, Parts of Speech materials, oral commands and activities, grammar boxes, command cards, teacher made material	
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.	Identify vocabulary for parts of stories and can name, reads a variety of materials, participates in guided discussion, ability to sequence	Variety of books, teacher made materials, sequencing activities,	
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.	Ability to infer, identify characters, identify feelings and character traits, compare self to text, apply complex thinking skills, show understanding of text, participate guided discussion	Variety of literature, command cards, bloom's taxonomy cards	
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**			
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words	7. Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).	Ability to infer, participate in guided discussions, look, attain to and compare and connect, and evaluate the illustration to text	Variety of literature, bloom's taxonomy cards	
8. Decircleate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	(Not applicable to literature)			

ATTACHMENT II: *DPS Scope and Sequence & Montessori Alignment*
(Montessori Lessons in Yellow)

Content Area	Mathematics	**Grade Level**	1

Grade 1 Common Core State Standards

Domain	**Clusters**
Operations and Algebraic Thinking (1.OA)	Represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction. (Major)
	Understand and apply properties of operations and the relationship between addition and subtraction. (Major)
	Add and subtract within 20. (Major)
	Work with addition and subtraction equations. (Major)
Number and Operations in Base Ten (1.NBT)	Extend the counting sequence. (Major)
	Understand place value. (Major)
	Use place value understanding and properties of operations to add and subtract. (Major)
Measurement and Data (1.MD)	Measure lengths indirectly and by iterating length units. (Major)
	Tell and write time. (Additional)
	Represent and interpret data. (Supporting)
Geometry (1.G)	Reason with shapes and their attributes. (Additional)

Resources	
Montessori Lessons	• +/- Golden beads, strip board, finger board, snake game, long red box (addition box), charts, number line operations, bead bar, • Greedy goose <,>; building and comparing numbers with golden beads, • Hundred board, bead chains, operations with golden beads, • Houston story problems, math drawers, • Number line operations
Instructional Tasks	N/A
Technology	• Ten Frame: http://illuminations.nctm.org/ActivityDetail.aspx?ID=75 (number and addition fluency) • Number Line Arithmetic: http://nlvm.usu.edu/en/nav/frames_asid_156_g_1_t_1.html?open=activities&from=search.html?qt=partial%20sum (illustrates operations with number line)
Performance/ Learning Task	• Lesson 1*14 Open Response: *Counting Buttons* (could be used as an instructional task)
Misconceptions	• Students in grade 1 say "1" before jumping on the number line. When using a number line, students should not count tick marks. Students should count the distance between tick marks. • Students assume key words or phrases in problems suggest the same operations will be used every time. For example, they assume the word "left" always means that subtraction must be used to find the solution. Providing problems in which key words such as this one are used to represent different operations is essential. For example, the word "left" in this problem does not indicate subtraction as a solution method: Jose

ATTACHMENT III: *Montessori Workspace*

1) Mathematics

Expressions and Equations (CCSS 6.EE)

Geometry (CCSS 4,5,6.G)

Geometry - Measurement: *Area-Circle* , *Area-complex by deconstru* **Geometry - Polygons:** *Polygon Concept* , *Polygon Names* , *Polygon Properties* **Geometry-Lines&Shifts:** *Equiv/Sim/Congruent* , *Lines - perpendicular, parallel* , *Symmetry - of shapes* **Math - Graphing:** *Coordinates*

Geometry (CCSS Middle/High School)

Grade 7, 8 Mathematics (CCSS 7,8)

Mathematics not linked to Common Core State Standards

Math - Number Sense: *Egyptian Number Systems*

Measurement and Data (CCSS 4,5.MD)

Geometry - Measurement: *Area-Square* , *Perimeter* **Math - Graphing:** *Graphing - Bar* , *Mean, median, mode, range* , *Tables* **Math - Measurement:** *Linear* , *Liquid/Volume* , *Mass - Using a balance* , *Money* , *Time-Clock* **Math - Percents:** *Percents-Concept* **Math - Statistics and Probability, Ratio and Proportion:** *Probability-concept* , *Probability-likely/unlikely*

Number and Operations - Fractions (CCSS 4,5.NF)

Math - Decimal Fractions: *change Decimal to Fractio* , *Change fraction to decima* , *Number Line* **Math - Fractions:** *compare 1/10,1/100 to dec* , *Concept* , *Identify fraction part of* , *Quantity and symbol* **Math - Number Sense:** *Number Lines* **Math - TCAP Practice:** *Computation and Estimation Practice*

Number and Operations in Base Ten (CCSS 4,5.NBT)

Math - Decimal Fractions: *Add/Sub Money* , *Addition* , *Decimal Fractions-Concept* , *Decimal grid* , *Decimal Place Value* , *Decimal-Stan/Exp notation* , *Number Line* , *Quantity and Symbol* , *Subtraction* **Math - Number Sense:** *Place Value - abstractly* , *Place Value-hierarchical Material* , *Rounding and Estimation* **Math - TCAP Practice:** *Computation and Estimation Practice* **Math - Whole Number Operations:** *- dynamic subtraction -no materials* , *+ dynamic addition - no materials* , *2 Digit Division no materials* , *Division dynamic-no materials* , *Division dynamic-Test tubes* , *Division static-no materials* , *Division static-Test tubes* , *Division-Test Tubes-2 digit* , *Word problems multi-step* , *Word/Story Problems* , *x Dynamic Multiplication - multi digit* , *X Dynamic Multiplication -Checkerboard* , *X Dynamic Multiplication -no materials*

ATTACHMENT IV: *Data Teams: Common Formative Assessment Review*

Common Formative Assessment Review

DUE: Tuesday, October 1

Provide a copy of your CFA along with responses to the following:

Number of students measured: 51

A chart of Student Data from CFA: The graph gives information with an overall baseline data for each classroom. We will be looking at student growth by a point system and not just the proficiency level. (See graph on page 3)

Which standards did your assessment address (Common Core, State or DPS Trajectory)? The Fireside writing sample meets CCSS Writing3

Respond:

- How are our students doing? Most students produced writing and some did not attempt to respond to the prompt. Most of the students scored partially proficient on the assessment.

- Why do we think they performed the way they did? Challenges included: ability to organize ideas, ability to include interesting details and language, using correct paragraph structure, frequent spelling errors in age appropriate words, errors with conventions, not receiving third grade writing instruction yet, many students including ELLs cannot depend on their oral language skills to develop their writing.

- What are we going to do about intervening for students who are still not proficient? Provide instruction using a variety of methods including Guided Reading Plus, Step Up to Writing, develop a kid friendly rubric, include instruction about the writing process such as revising and editing, developing some Step Up to Writing materials for use in our Montessori classrooms such as work on the shelf.

- How will we accelerate instruction for students who continue to excel so that we keep them motivated and progressing according to their own leaning needs? Allow more authentic writing purposes, following the child with any genre of interests, Dragon's

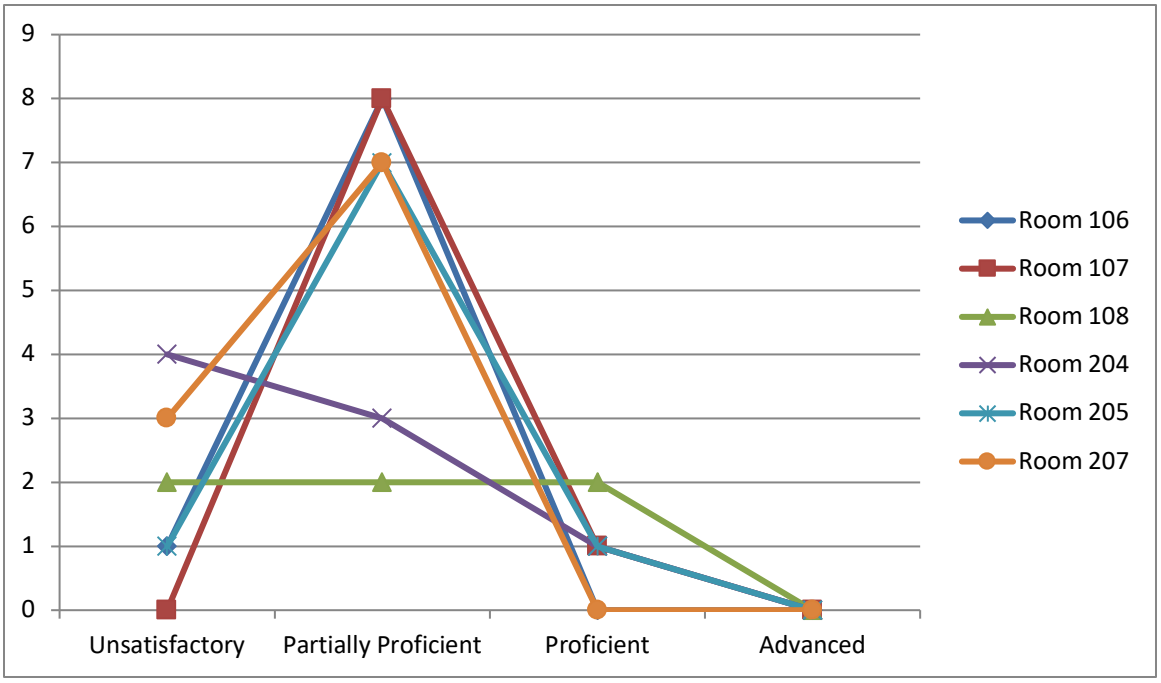
Blood, letter writing with correct format, possible use of Lucy Caulkins new writing genres aligned with the CCSS.

- Which instructional strategies produced the greatest results? What were the specific actions of team members that produced real results in student learning? We believe that the instructional practices listed by the second and third bullets in conjunction with continuing Read Aloud books that use rich vocabulary will produce the greatest results.

- What other changes or modifications do you want to make based on our work in collaboratively designing, administrating, scoring and analyzing common formative assessment? Going through the CFA process with Montessori materials such as looking at students that have been given a lesson on the same type of material and analyzing that group.

Please review the CFA Process:

- Identify Things Your Team Did Well in this Assessment
  Working well together to identify needs and instructional practices and strategies to improve writing, listening to colleagues, responsive to differences in opinions.
- Identify Areas Where Your Team Could Improve
  Creation of the next assessment using Montessori materials
- Identify Benefits of Collaboration
  The opportunity to come up with appropriate teaching materials and strategies to meet the wide variety of needs our students have.
- Identify Challenges of Collaboration
  Allotting enough time for everyone to be a part of the collaboration process, time to make the materials or "dig deeper" into the strategies discussed.


9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
Unsatisfactory
Partially Proficient
Proficient
Advanced
Room 106
Room 107
Room 108
Room 204
Room 205
Room 207

ATTACHMENT V: *Sample Proficiency Rubric*

Student's Name: _____
Essential Learning Goal: _____

	Montessori Work Space		
1	O	Initial Presentation/ Lesson given to student	
2	OO	Initial Exploration of Concept	• Student actively **investigates** the newly introduced concept • Teacher observes evidence of early **concept** synthesis through written, oral, visual or material means • Begins to show focus, concentration and effort in **completing** the work or **investigating** the concept.
3	OO	Self-Directed Concept Exploration	• Student actively **explores** the concept to develop proficiency • Teacher observes evidence of early **skill** synthesis through written, oral, visual or material means • Student shows determination, cooperation and effort in **exploring** the concept
4	OO	Working Toward Proficiency	• Student actively **seeks to apply** the concept to develop greater proficiency • Teacher observes **on-going development** of concept synthesis through written, oral, visual or material means • Student shows determination, cooperation and effort in **applying** the concept
5	OOO	High Level Proficiency	• Student actively **demonstrates** a highly developed level of proficiency in applying concept • Teacher observes the **retention and ability to apply** the concept through written, oral visual or material means • Students show a very high level of determination, cooperation and effort in **applying** this concept
6	OOO	Very High Level Proficiency	• Students actively **chooses to expand** the level of proficiency through continued repetition and application of concept or by relating it to and using it within other contexts in which it has value, use and/or meaning • Teacher observes the child's **inner need/desire to return** to the concept for refreshment, refinement or in relating and using the concept in other areas in which it has use, value and/or meaning • Student shows a continued very high level of determination and effort in **expanding** the concept's proficiency and/or in working with the concept in conjunction with other concepts

Based on Work of Tim Seldin
Chairperson, The International Montessori Council

Montessori Workspace Record Keeping:

O	Record date of presentation
OO	Record dates that student explores the concept and provide a sample or description of work
OOO	Record date that student showed proficiency and include evidence (Include this cover sheet with evidence in students work portfolio) Add additional evidence as student reaches level 6