

ASSESSMENT & REPORTING OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Background

This document was developed by Wild Rose Public School teachers, administrators and division instructional leaders.

Student assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Assessment is critical in determining instructional decisions and enhancing student learning.

Assessment plays a major role in how students learn, their motivation to learn, and what and how teachers teach. There are three distinct but inter-related purposes for classroom assessment:

- Assessment *for* Learning is designed to give teachers, students and parents meaningful feedback that will inform instructional decisions to enhance learning
- Assessment *as* Learning focuses on students and emphasizes assessment as a process of metacognition (knowledge of one's own thought processes) for students.
- Assessment *of* Learning is summative in nature and is used to confirm what students know or are able to do in terms of the learner outcomes

It is the professional responsibility of teachers to provide clear communication in describing student learning. Accurate and meaningful reporting requires the teacher to be able to assess student progress and achievement in valid and reliable ways. The principles embodied in this procedure identify the issues to consider in exercising professional judgment and fair and equitable assessment for all students.

WRPS follows the definitions of assessment used by the Alberta Assessment Consortium. Please see Appendix 2 for Glossary of Terms.

Procedures

1. It is the responsibility of the teacher to use assessment for learning to improve student achievement. Assessment and reporting is an on-going process that adheres to the following principles:
 - a. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment need to be aligned.
 - b. Assessment informs the teacher, student, and parents as to where each student is in relation to the learner outcomes.
 - c. Assessment for learning shapes planning and instruction.
 - d. In order to effectively influence student learning, feedback (assessment for learning) must be timely, descriptive and contain specific direction for students.
 - e. Students participate in the assessment and reporting process through activities (eg. involvement in establishing criteria, peer and self assessments, sharing portfolios, and personal goal setting.)
 - f. Teachers must keep meaningful records of evidence that indicates what the students know and are able to do in terms of learner outcomes.
 - g. Record book entries must be dated and achievement aligned with learner outcomes. All teachers must use the approved division student information system to record achievement.
 - h. A variety of performance based assessment and evaluation practices is needed to determine student achievement (e.g. extended written responses, demonstrations, projects, portfolios, observations, selected responses, personal conversations).
 - i. Teachers according to their professional judgment need to provide students with guidelines for multiple opportunities, to demonstrate their ability to meet learner outcomes.
 - j. Multiple reporting strategies will be used to communicate student achievement. (eg. formal report cards, progress reports, notes etc.)
2. It is the responsibility of the teacher to summatively assess and report what the student knows and is able to do in terms of learner outcomes. Summative assessment (assessment of learning) reports what the student knows and is able to do in terms of learner outcomes.

Consistent and accurate assessment of learning occurs when:

- a. A teacher's professional judgment is factored into the assessments.
- b. Assessment and reporting is aligned with learner outcomes as outlined in the Program of Studies.
- c. Students and parents are aware of the curricular expectations, learner outcomes and criteria for assessment at the beginning of each unit, program or course. Rubrics and exemplars may be used by the teacher to provide students with a clear understanding of expectations.

- d. Care is taken by teachers to ensure that results are not influenced by factors unrelated to the purpose of the assessment.
- e. Attitude, effort, work-habits, behavior and attendance are reported separate from grades reporting academic achievement, unless they are defined in the learner outcomes.
- f. The level of achievement reflects the most recent evidence of what the student knows and is able to do in terms of the learner outcomes. Therefore, only the levels of achievement derived from summative assessments should be reported. Practice work (assessment for learning) should not be factored into summative assessment (assessment of learning).
- g. Programs are adapted and modified based on student's IPP's.
- h. GLA - grade level of achievement will be determined and reported in provincially mandated subjects and grade levels to parents.
- i. In order to complete a course, students must demonstrate an understanding of the essential learner outcomes.

Consistent and accurate assessment DOES NOT occur when the following grading practices distort the assessment of the learner outcomes: see Appendix 1

- a. awarding extra credit or bonus points
- b. giving all members of a group a single grade for a demonstration of learning
- c. deducting marks for student work submitted after the due date
- d. deducting marks for student lates or absences
- e. applying a grade of zero as a punishment
- f. assigning zeros for academic dishonesty
- g. assigning zeros for missing evidence of learning

Culminating Assessments

- a. Culminating assessments are the teacher-developed, outcome-aligned, summative experiences near the end of the learning process (e.g. unit, course, etc.) where students demonstrate their understanding of learner outcomes through application, analysis, synthesis and/or evaluation.
- b. Culminating assessments may take the form of presentations, performance tasks, conferences, projects, practical demonstrations of learning, and/or tests. Broadening the collection of evidence increases the validity.
- c. Culminating assessments may be differentiated to meet the individualized learning needs of a student.
- d. If there is a culminating assessment at the end of a course in grades 7 to 9, it may be weighted at a maximum of 20% of a student's grade in the course. (Teachers may change marks or grades when new (more recent) information provides a fairer picture of

student achievement or when students are given second (or more) chances by having additional opportunities, more time, and varied methods of assessment.)

- e. The decision of whether to use Provincial Achievement Test results as summative evidence is part of teacher professional judgment, and may be part of a collective staff or teaching team's decision.
 - f. If there is a culminating assessment at the end of a course in grades 10 to 12, it shall be weighted at a maximum of 30% of a student's grade in the course.
 - g. In Diploma Exam courses, classroom-based culminating assessments at the end of a course (including in class final exams) are to be weighted at a maximum of 20% of the school-awarded mark (i.e. 10% of a student's total final mark).
3. Schools on semester system will provide written reports to parents at least twice per semester, while schools not on a semester system will provide written reports to parents at least three times per year.

Schools must schedule parent conferences a minimum of twice in the school year, and are encouraged to hold three-way or student-led conferences involving students, parents, and teachers.

4. The student report is produced through the Wild Rose Public Schools Student Information System and will include the following:
- a. School name
 - b. School division logo
 - c. Statement of school mission
 - d. Name of the school principal and student's teacher(s)
 - e. Principal's signature
 - f. Record of student attendance and punctuality
 - g. Alberta student identification number and legal name of student, or preferred alternative name where both names are recorded in the Student Information System
 - h. Grade or program placement level of student, including an indication if the program has been modified to meet individual needs
 - i. Provision for parent and student input and response
 - j. Provision for conference request by school, student or parent
 - k. Year-end program placement recommendation for K-9 students
 - l. Grade level of achievement as demonstrated by students in Grades 1-9 in areas required by Alberta Education.
 - m. Opportunity for teacher comments regarding student progress for each subject area

- n. Identification of the quality of performance in all subject areas according to learner outcomes and reported by descriptors (K-6), letter grades and/or percentages (7-12).

5. The following process applies when a student wishes to appeal a final course grade:

- Within five days of receipt of the grade, the appeal shall be made in writing to the principal and co-signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s). Reason(s) for the appeal shall be included.
- The Principal shall initiate whatever steps he/she deems necessary to review the basis for the grade, including the following:
 - Consultation with the teacher(s) involved
 - A check of the records
 - An investigation of the assessment procedures followed
- Within five days of receipt of the letter of appeal, the principal shall share his/her findings with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s).
- In the event the student is not satisfied with the principal's findings, he or she may appeal in writing to the Superintendent within five days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Superintendent is considered final.
- Marks appealed after the end of the June term will be dealt with prior to the commencement of the fall term.

6. Promotion and Retention of Students

- a. Promotion means that a student proceeds to the next grade level in the subsequent school year. Acceleration means that a student misses or skips one or more grade levels. Grade retention means that a student is required to repeat the same grade due to lack of achievement.
- b. Overall, research strongly favours alternatives to grade retention, such as adapting or modifying programming where necessary at the next level of learning. Many studies reveal long-term negative impacts of retention, such as increased high school dropout rates for students who have been retained. The research also outlines the difficulty of predicting which students would benefit from retention.
- c. In the commitment to ongoing, transparent communication, parents/guardians will be contacted by the teacher by February 1 if retention is being considered.
- d. By March 1, a learning team (e.g. teacher(s); principal or vice principal; counselor; learning facilitator; EA, where applicable; and parent/guardian) will be assembled to consider promotion/retention for the coming school year.

7. Junior High and High School

The following table represents the letter grades and percentages used to report student progress in our Junior and Senior High School report cards. Student marks are based on "achievement" in relation to the outcomes in the Alberta Education Program of Studies. Individual schools may choose to report achievement using descriptors percentages or letter grades. Schools choosing to use descriptors will use the ones outlined in section 8.

In Junior High, Work Habits, Study Skills, and Social Awareness will be reported separately using the following descriptors:

Consistently Frequently Occasionally Seldom

A	100-80%	Demonstrates an in-depth performance and understanding of learner outcomes
B	79-65%	Demonstrates consistent performance and understanding of the learner outcomes
C	64-50%	Demonstrates inconsistent performance and understanding of the learner outcomes
D	49-05	Demonstrates minimal performance and understanding of the learner outcomes
INC		Work is incomplete – unable to assess
F		

8. Elementary Schools

The following table represents the descriptors used to report student progress in our Elementary report cards. Student marks are based on "achievement" in relation to the outcomes in the Alberta Education Program of Studies. Kindergarten will report on the seven learning areas identified in the Kindergarten Program Statement

Descriptors	Equivalence
Excelling	Demonstrates superior performance and in-depth understanding of learning outcomes
Meeting	Demonstrates consistent performance and understanding of learning outcomes
Approaching	Demonstrates inconsistent performance and understanding of learning outcomes
Not Yet	Demonstrates minimal performance and little understanding of learning outcomes
IPP	Student is working on an Individual Program Plan. Please see insert.

Note: "+" or "-" is not to be added to these.

An alternative format exists for reporting on the progress of special needs students: "Student is working on an Individual Program Plan. Please see insert to report card. (No mark given.)"

Meeting: is the level at which most students achieve.

Work Habits, Study Skills, and Social Awareness will be reported separately using the following descriptors:

Consistently Frequently Occasionally Seldom

References:

School Act Sections 18 (e), 20 (h) 23, 39, 47

Alberta Regulation # 71/99 Student Records

Alberta regulation # 177/2003 Student Evaluation

Alberta Education Policy 2.1.2 Student Evaluation

Alberta Education Policy 2.1.3 Use and Reporting of results on Provincial Assessment

Ministerial Orders and Directives 4.2.1 Teaching Quality Standards Applicable to the Provision of Basic Education in Alberta

The Principles For Fair Assessment Practices For Education in Canada (1993)

Alberta Assessment Consortium www.aac.ab.ca

Appendix 1

LATE AND MISSED ASSIGNMENTS

It must be made clear to students early in the school year that they are responsible not only for their behavior in the classroom and the school but also for providing evidence of their achievement of the overall expectations within the time frame specified by the teacher, and in a form approved by the teacher. Students must understand that there may be consequences for not completing assignments for evaluation or for submitting those assignments late.

Where in the teacher's professional judgment it is appropriate to do so, a number of strategies will be used to help prevent and/or address late and missed assignments. Teachers shall document strategies used to support the student in completing assignments. Administration should be kept informed if these steps fail.

Steps include:

- asking the student to clarify the reason for not completing the assignment;
- helping students develop better time-management skills;
- collaborating with other staff to prepare a part- or full-year calendar of major assignment dates for every class;
- planning for major assignments to be completed in stages, so that students are less likely to be faced with an all-or-nothing situation at the last minute;
- maintaining ongoing communication with students and parents about due dates and late assignments, and scheduling conferences with parents if the problem persists;
- in secondary schools, referring the student to the Program Planning Team;
- taking into consideration legitimate reasons for missed deadlines;
- setting up a student contract;
- using counseling, aboriginal counselor, extended family or peer tutoring to try to deal positively with problems;
- holding teacher-student conferences;
- reviewing the need for extra support for English language learners;
- providing alternative assignments or tests/exams where, in the teacher's professional judgment, it is reasonable and appropriate to do so;
- And only lastly deducting marks for late assignments, up to and including the full value of the assignment.

Appendix 2

Assessment Glossary

The Alberta Assessment Consortium recognizes the importance of using language effectively to inform educational practice in the interest of higher levels of student achievement.

achievement level	a student's demonstration of knowledge, skills and attitudes relative to grade level learner outcomes.
assessment	process of collecting information on student achievement and performance that includes a variety of assessment tasks designed to monitor and improve student learning.
assessment for learning	assessment experiences that result in an ongoing exchange of information between students and teachers about student progress toward clearly specified learner outcomes (also called diagnostic and formative assessment; refers to information not used for grading purposes)
assessment of learning	assessment experiences designed to collect information about learning to make judgments about student performance and achievement at the end of a period of instruction to be shared with those outside classrooms (also called summative assessment; refers to performance data compiled as a grade)
checklist	a two-point evaluation tool that indicates if a student has achieved a learner outcome [yes or not yet]
criteria	what students need to do to show they have achieved the learner outcomes (e.g. compare and contrast, explain, analyze)
descriptive feedback	part of an ongoing, specific and constructive conversation about learning that relates directly to the learner outcomes
evaluation	making decisions about the quality, value or worth of a response for the purpose of providing descriptive feedback (formative) and marks (summative)
grade (mark)	a letter, number or comment reported at the end of a period of time as a summary statement of student performance based on a variety of summative assessments [based on OConnor, 1502, 241-242]
grade level of achievement	a teacher judgment based on the results from a variety of classroom assessments throughout the school year in relation to learner outcomes in a subject area after a course for a specific grade level has been completed.
grading	a process to determine a student's performance level
learner outcomes	what we expect students to learn; the provincially mandated knowledge, skills and attitudes we expect students to demonstrate as a result of schooling
peer-coaching	one student considering the quality of another's work and providing feedback by applying criteria to help improve performance; requires a non-threatening and supportive relationship between the peers (also referred to in the literature as peer-assessment, peer-evaluation, peer-tutoring, or peer-editing)
performance level	how well a student demonstrates grade level learner outcomes represented by a grade (mark)

performance assessment	a meaningful, real-life task that enables students to demonstrate what they know and can do in situations like those they will encounter outside the classroom as well as in situations that simulate how people do their work
rating scale	an evaluation tool of three or more points that illustrates how frequently, consistently or independently a student demonstrates a learner outcome
rubric	a fixed measurement scale and list of criteria that describe the quality of products or performances used to evaluate a student's performance
self-reflection	considering the quality of one's own work by applying criteria; requires that a student feels safe enough to be honest in making objective observations about the work (also referred to in the literature as self-assessment or self-evaluation)

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