

School Administration

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| Administrative Procedure: Assessment and Communication Student Learning | | | |
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Assessment and Communicating Student Learning

Border Land School division believes that *assessment for learning* and *assessment of learning* are central to the education of students and shall be based on the best available research, be classroom-based, and build on teachers' extensive knowledge of students, linked to improved student learning and student self-assessment.

In communicating student learning, the division believes that schools must be clear about the kind of information being conveyed, whether it is student achievement, growth, or progress. *Achievement* is a measure of a student's current level of performance. *Growth* is the increase in learning from the beginning of an instructional period to the current reporting. *Progress* identifies learning still to be done to reach the agreed-upon or known goal.

It involves *assessment FOR learning* where teachers use assessment as an investigative tool to:

- Discover as much as possible about what their students know, can do, and understand
- Determine next steps.
- Build student understanding of goals

- Build student understanding of progress towards goals
- Build student understanding of quality
- Help students know what needs improving
- Increase student motivation and engagement

It involves *assessment OF learning* where data from assessments is collected at a point in time to:

- Inform students and parents of student *progress*
- Provide evidence of *achievement* to students, parents, other educators, and sometimes to outside groups
- Support school planning and reporting
- Provide information for schools and the division about areas requiring further attention

It involves *communicating student learning* where teachers:

- provide prompt, frequent, and descriptive feedback to students during the learning process
- inform students and parents about *progress, growth, and achievement* up to a point in time
- inform students and parents with enough time to make appropriate decisions about next steps in the student's learning

For the purposes of this procedure, assessment is the process of collecting and interpreting evidence about student's progress, achievement, and growth toward attaining the identified knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours to be learned. Assessment is to inform teachers as to whether learning outcomes have been attained and shape further instruction.

Principles Guiding Assessment

The Division considers the following five principles from *Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada* as fundamental factors when exercising professional judgment and in striving for the fair and equitable assessment of all aspects of student performance:

- Assessment and evaluation methods shall be appropriate for and compatible with the purpose and context of the assessment.
- Students shall be provided with sufficient instruction and opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviours being assessed.
- Procedures for evaluating student performance shall be appropriate for the assessment method used and be consistently applied and monitored.
- Procedures for summarizing and interpreting assessment results shall yield accurate and informative representations of student performance in relation to the goals and objectives of instruction for the reporting period.
- Assessment and evaluation reporting shall be clear, accurate, and of practical value to the audiences for whom they are intended.

Border Land School Division believes that curriculum and assessment are two essential components for student learning. Curriculum provides an outline of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours to be learned and/or demonstrated. Assessment measures student progress toward the curriculum outcomes articulated for instruction. Effective teaching blends these components so that they interact in a meaningful way for students. Teachers use, curriculum and assessment together to develop unique learning opportunities for students. This procedure is based on the following:

- Research and practice confirm the inter-relatedness of curriculum, learning, instruction, and assessment.
- Effective teaching requires specific outcomes against which to gauge student work.
- Effective teaching necessitates the gathering and interpretation of information from enough different sources over time so that student learning is described accurately and consistently.
- Exemplary instruction requires the establishment of criteria that student work must meet, a clear public definition as to what is evaluated, and criteria for that evaluation.
- Descriptive feedback during the process of learning will be provided so students can learn from and use that feedback in further revisions and continued practice.
- Collaboration between teachers and shared decision making between teacher and student are effective strategies to ensure confidence in the assessment process.
- Student involvement and self-reflection shall be inherent in the assessment process as it enhances learning, ownership, and motivation.

Assessment of Learning: Grading Guidelines

The assessment of student learning is the responsibility of the teacher. Teachers will take various considerations into account before making a decision about the grade to be entered on a report card. The teacher will consider all evidence collected through assessment tasks that the student has completed or submitted in order to determine the learning of particular outcomes.

Teachers will weigh all evidence of student achievement and will use their professional judgment to determine the student's grade. This should reflect the student's most consistent level of achievement, with special consideration given to more recent evidence. Not all assessment task scores need to be included in a student's grade. The grade represents a student's overall achievement, as demonstrated to that point in time. Principals have a critical role to play in ensuring that there is a common understanding among all teachers about the process for determining the final grade. They are expected to exercise their leadership and work collaboratively with teachers to ensure common and equitable grading practices.

1. All grading procedures will be linked to curricular goals/standards and/or outcomes as determined by Manitoba Education.

Grades must be derived from clear descriptions of curriculum outcomes and standards (criterion-referenced). Student learning should be communicated based on the achievement

of these outcomes. When tracking student results, teacher's grade books will indicate student achievement by goal or outcome as opposed to by the method of assessment.

2. **Grades must be accurate estimates of student learning and meaningfully support student self-awareness and progress.** Accurate and meaningful grades are a worthwhile source of information that students, teachers, and parents use to make appropriate decisions.
3. **Teachers will use their professional judgement to determine student grades.** Teacher professional judgment, based on the best evidence available, is important to provide a realistic and fair reflection of student performance.
4. **A student's grade will represent the latest and most consistent evidence of achievement relative to curricular learning outcomes.** This means that teachers will not simply calculate average scores from every assessment task that was marked. Rather, teachers will consider the latest and most consistent evidence of achievement and use their professional judgment when determining grades. The final grade should be a fair reflection of the student's achievement at the end of that term/semester. The final grade should be an accurate reflection of achievement relative to curricular learning outcomes.
5. **Grades will be based on individual achievement and not on group achievement.** Collaborating and learning with others is highly desirable, but each student should be assessed and evaluated individually.
6. **Grades will be calculated on summative assessments (assessment of learning) and not on formative assessments (work/assessments completed in the 'process of learning': practice work, homework, pre-tests and the like).**
7. **Teachers will collect evidence of student performance using a variety of methods such as observations, conversations and products.**
8. **Teachers must establish and clearly communicate expectations regarding assignments.** Learning goals, assignment requirements, and assessment criteria will be discussed with students. Teachers will communicate to students the intended learning outcomes, the expected evidence of learning, and co-create the criteria for judging the evidence of learning with students. Teachers will clarify the learning in multiple ways, including providing exemplars, and through timely and specific feedback to students.
9. **Students must be actively and meaningfully involved in all phases of learning and assessment.** Of particular importance is the need to teach students how to self-assess. It is critical that all students learn and participate in self and peer assessment. However, evaluation and grading is the teacher's professional responsibility.

Assessment of Learning: Behaviour

1. **Behaviour and academics should be assessed, evaluated, and graded separately.** Student's specific learning behaviours will be reported separately in order for students to understand the behaviours associated with their learning. For instance, effort, participation, and attendance require teacher feedback but are not part of a student's

overall grade in a given subject area.

2. **Teachers must set and communicate reasonable timelines for assignment completion and support students in meeting these timelines.** Teachers need to set timelines for students to reach learning targets and complete the assigned work. Teachers need to be mindful of student's individual circumstances, including academic strengths and challenges.
3. **Teachers should use their professional judgment to establish reasonable but firm expectations regarding learning timelines, and support and motivate students who struggle to take responsibility for their learning. Teachers need to ensure students make steady progress in their learning and in completing assignments.** Regular communication about student progress among teachers, students, and parents will support timely completion of assignments. Other expected teacher actions include:
 - Solicit and consider student input and collaborate with other staff to coordinate the timing of major assignments;
 - Share assignment timelines and reminders with students and parents, through many means, including phone calls, classroom web pages, email, and course outlines;
 - Teach and assist students to manage time effectively. Monitor student progress at many stages of a complex assignment to ensure they stay on track;
 - Anticipate which students may require additional supports to complete assigned tasks, and monitor those students more closely;
 - Contact parents to discuss strategies to keep students on track when they fall behind or do not take responsibility for their work;
 - Choose, when appropriate, to extend time for completing assignments, especially for students who communicate with the teacher in advance of the due date.
 - Use 'Inc' for 'Incomplete' to act as an interim mark until the work is completed. A detailed plan must accompany an Inc indicating specific timelines and work to be completed.
4. **Establish, communicate, and apply consequences for late and missing work.** Students must understand the consequences for late or incomplete assignments that provide evidence of learning. **Teachers should establish and clearly communicate expectations regarding assignments, set and communicate timelines for assignments, and support student learning.** If student work is still late or missing, teachers will apply the following strategies based on their professional judgment:
 - Confer with the student and, where appropriate, with the student's parents about the reasons for not completing the assignment, and consider the legitimacy of reasons;
 - Develop an agreement with the student and, where appropriate, with the student's parents, to complete the work;
 - Require the student to complete missing work during school time or at breaks or after school within a supervised setting in accordance with school division policy;

- Provide appropriate supports to students in the form of re-teaching, counseling or tutoring to address issues and barriers that may prevent the student from completing assigned work.
- Provide additional supports for students who are learning English or French as an additional language;
- Provide alternative assessment tasks that accommodate diverse learning needs.
- Communicate concerns and actions taken with the principal

If these strategies are unsuccessful in supporting students to complete their work, and/or the school year is ending, teachers may deduct marks for late or missing assignments. **Mark deduction should not take place until all strategies have been exhausted and communication has been made with parents and school administration regarding the process undertaken.** Teachers should ensure that mark deduction will not result in a mark that, in the professional judgment of the teacher, misrepresents the student's actual learning. When deducting marks for late or missing work, teachers will consider the nature of the assignment, the individual circumstances of the student (especially struggling learners), and the potential impact of the consequence on subsequent learning and motivation. Whatever the consequence, teachers need to support students' learning.

Assessment for and of Learning: Academic Honesty

Students must understand that the tests/exams they complete and the assignments they submit as evidence of learning must be their own work and that cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated.

1. Teachers and principals have the following responsibilities:
 - Model and teach honesty and academic integrity.
 - Communicate and reinforce expectations of academic honesty with students;
 - Respond appropriately to academic dishonesty. Aspects of academic dishonesty include copying others' work, using cheat notes, misrepresenting circumstances to obtain extensions, and submitting or representing someone else's work as one's own (*plagiarizing*).
2. Teaching strategies to deal with academic dishonesty may include the following:
 - Teach students the skills to complete assignments with integrity.
 - Support and direct students as they redo the work honestly;
 - Contact parents;
 - Document the incident in the student's file;
 - Report this behaviour on the report card;
 - Other disciplinary measures as determined by the teacher and principal;
 - Deduct marks.

Teachers need to consider the nature of the assignment, the age and maturity of the student, the individual circumstances of the student, and the potential impact of the consequence on subsequent learning and motivation. Whatever the consequence, students should demonstrate they have learned the expected outcomes and complete the work in an honest way.

Communicating Student Learning

Border Land School Division believes that the communication of student learning between the teachers, students, and parents shall be ongoing throughout the school year, and at regular intervals throughout the year. Written reports, such as anecdotal reports, letter grades, rubric or continuum indicators, and/or percentages, on the academic and behavioural progress of every student will be provided to support the ongoing communication.

Schools may also provide oral reports of student progress to parents/guardians (student led conferences). Parents/guardians also have the option of requesting an oral report on student progress.

In every school, the principal has final responsibility for student reports.

Promotion and Retention of Students:

Students should be placed in the grade that is appropriate for their age, curricular, cognitive, social, and emotional learning needs. Decisions around promotion or retention of students have far-reaching implications.

Whether the decision is to promote or to retain a struggling student, the school must address that student's learning needs. For example, simply promoting a struggling student, without adequate supports, will not lead to success. In a similar manner, simply having a student retained in a grade to repeat all the work done the previous year will not necessarily address the student's learning needs and result in success.

Should teachers suspect that a student in Kindergarten to Grade 8 will not be successful in completing grade level outcomes; a meeting must be held with the personnel from the Assistant Superintendent's office to discuss adequate supports for the remainder of the year.

If any student is unable to achieve grade or course learning outcomes with additional supports, the parent(s) must be informed of the possibility of retention. This contact with parent(s) will occur within a reasonable time-frame (i.e. February for K-8, mid-semester for grades 9-12) and through regular parent-teacher contacts for the remainder of the school year or semester. Parents shall receive an explanation of their child's current academic standing in relation to grade/course learning outcomes, the school's assessment of the student's learning difficulties, what interventions the school has used to support the student's achievement to expected levels, and possible year-end options if the student does not meet grade level outcomes.

Retention will **only** be considered after all other instructional avenues have been explored and only for the purposes of assisting a student to master the requirements necessary for success at

the next level. All discussions of retention will be individualized for that student. An Individual Education Plan must be established for the student's year of retention. Grade retention should not be only grade repetition – there should be a clear focus, a detailed plan, and specific supports identified for the learner to successfully meet grade-level outcomes.

Kindergarten – Grade 8

Promotion decisions rest with the principal, who consults with teachers, parents, and other specialists as appropriate. The decision is based on the evidence of the student's progress and growth, and considers the grade level placement that would support and extend the student's learning. Any recommendation regarding retention of a student must be communicated to the Assistant Superintendent by May 15th.

Grades 9-12

If a student does not submit the necessary evidence of learning to be granted a credit in a course, then the student may be assigned a failing grade or be assigned a grade of “Inc” (incomplete). If an “Inc” is assigned, a plan must be put in place at the school level to assist the student in submitting the outstanding evidence of learning in order to receive the credit within a reasonable, agreed-upon timeframe.

The final decision on whether or not to grant credits rests with the principal, who consults with teachers, parents, and other specialists as appropriate. Granting credits and diplomas must be based on clear evidence of achievement of the learning outcomes set out in provincial curricula or modified curricula (as set out in an Individual Education Plan), as appropriate.

Appeal

Parents/guardians and students are advised that marks and promotions or failures may be appealed to the school administration. Failing resolution at the school level, a further appeal may be brought to the Superintendent.