

STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Background

The fundamental purpose of this policy is to ensure that assessment, evaluation, grading and reporting practices in all Northwest School Division schools are consistent with Ministry of Education policies.

It is the role of all educators to ensure that assessment, evaluation, and reporting are valid and reliable, and that they lead to the improvement of learning for all students, therefore teachers must use practices and procedures that:

1. Honor the needs and abilities of each learner.
2. Are fair, transparent, and equitable for all students;
3. Support all students, including those with intensive educational needs, those who are learning the language of instruction (English or French), and those who are First Nation, Métis, or Inuit;
4. Are carefully planned to relate to the curriculum outcomes and learning goals and, as much as possible, to the interests, learning styles and preferences, needs, and experiences of all students;
5. Are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or course and at other appropriate points throughout the school year or course;
6. Are ongoing, varied in nature, and administered over a period of time to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning;
7. Provide ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement;
8. Develop students' self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning;
9. Student achievement is a student's determined standing (% or rubric level grade) relative to curriculum standards;
10. Learner attributes such as effort, participation, behavior, attitude, work habits and attendance are communicated separately from achievement.
11. Punitive grading or distorted grading is not part of sound assessment practices; however, when a student fails to submit a sufficient number of summative assessments for grading purposes, and every effort has been exhausted, teachers, in consultation with the principal, use professional judgment to determine students' marks (failing grade, zero mark, or incomplete status) for missing, unfinished or late assessments. Please see Section E.

Procedures:

A. Assessment of Learning

1. Principals ensure that the guidelines and procedures are in place within the school to support assessment of learning. Principals ensure that teachers' instructional plans include assessment of learning.
 - 1.1. The assessment of the learning plan reflects the magnitude of learning outcomes.
 - 1.2. Teachers assess students' performances and determine their achievement (attainment of the learning outcomes in the Saskatchewan curriculum) across the range of learning outcomes. Most assessments will assess a number of integrated outcomes.
 - 1.3. Assessment tasks and instruments:
 - 1.3.1. Assess enduring understandings and transferable skills where reasonable; (big ideas)
 - 1.3.2. Are clearly linked and compatible with learning outcomes being assessed;
 - 1.3.3. Are reviewed on an ongoing basis for validity and reliability.
 - 1.4. Teachers assess students' performance and determine their achievement of learning outcomes at the grade level assigned for their instruction or their Personal Program Plan (PPP.)
 - 1.5. Teachers select assessment methods that are varied and compatible with the learning outcomes being assessed.
2. Principals ensure teachers inform and actively involve students in their own assessment of learning.
 - 2.1. Teachers establish, with students clear performance and achievement standards, based on learning outcomes. Teachers assist students in articulating what they need to know and be able to do and to what degree.
 - 2.2. Teachers inform students on an ongoing basis of how their level of achievement will be determined.
 - 2.3. Teachers provide students with clear descriptions of performance criteria and standards, such as in rubrics and exemplars, prior to assessment tasks.
3. Principals ensure teachers provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their best achievement.
 - 3.1. Teachers use a variety of assessment methods.
 - 3.2. Teachers ensure students with intensive needs receive appropriate accommodations to complete assessments.
 - 3.3. Teachers ensure students have sufficient assessment for learning opportunities before assessment of learning occurs.
 - 3.4. Teachers allow opportunity for students, in a timely manner, to re-submit evidence of learning. (For example, using descriptive feedback or showing evidence to rewrite a test or resubmit a project.)

- 3.5 Teachers' assessments of students' learning in enrichment programming are based on their achievement of the learning outcomes in the Saskatchewan curriculum. Students who complete assessment requirements for an external examining body, such as Advanced Placement, attain that credential in addition to and independent of their achievement in the corresponding Saskatchewan curriculum course.
 - 3.6 Teachers determine students' achievement independently of the achievement of others. That is, if students meet the standard expected they receive the grade regardless of how many other students meet the same learning outcomes.
4. Principals ensure that procedures and supports are in place within the school to enable the collection of a reliable body of evidence to determine students' summary grades.
 - 4.1 Teachers retain assessment records in indirect forms such as: anecdotal notes, recordings, rubrics, and percentage scores.
 - 4.2 Teachers use the evidence that accurately indicates their students' achievement of the learning outcomes. For example, a teacher may exclude an assessment that contradicts achievement consistently demonstrated by a student when determining a final grade or determine the final grade on the most recent assessment evidence.
 - 4.3 A final assessment is comprehensive and may be administered to students in several forms. For example, a final assessment may be a performance task to measure skills, an exit portfolio and interview or an examination.
 - 4.4 All equivalent comprehensive and culminating assessments must be administered to all students registered in a class/subject.

B. Assessment for Learning

1. Principals ensure that procedures are in place within the school to support assessment for learning.
2. Teachers use a variety of methods to gain insights into students' interests and learning profiles for the purpose of planning assessment. Evidence of student achievement for evaluation is collected over time from three different sources – *observations, conversations, and student products*. (Triangulation of data sources) Using multiple sources of evidence increases the reliability and validity of the evaluation of student learning. "Student products" may be in the form of tests or exams and/or assignments for evaluation. Assignments for evaluation may include rich performance tasks, demonstrations, projects, and/or essays. To ensure equity for all students, assignments for evaluation and tests or exams are to be completed, whenever possible, under the supervision of a teacher. Assignments for evaluation must not include ongoing homework that students do in order to consolidate their knowledge and skills or to prepare for the next class. Assignments for evaluation may involve group projects as long as each student's work within the group project is evaluated independently and assigned an individual mark, as opposed to a common

group mark. The evaluation of student learning is the responsibility of the teacher and must not include the judgment of the student or of the student's peers.

3. Teachers use ongoing assessment to inform instructional design and respond to students' learning needs.
4. Teachers provide time and opportunities for students to internalize their learning through the use of feedback and guided practice to independence. Teachers provide assessment for learning tasks that allow risk taking and exploration in learning.
5. Teachers prepare students for assessment of learning by providing assessment for learning tasks that are similar in form and content.
6. In some cases, when mastery of learning outcomes is noted during assessment for learning, a teacher may use this assessment of learning as evidence.

C. Assessment as Learning

1. Principals ensure teachers use assessment as learning strategies as an integral part of instruction and learning.
2. Teachers ensure that assessment as learning is an integral part of students' learning experiences and teach students to use a variety of assessment as learning strategies to move from support to independence.
3. Teachers provide students with feedback that describes in a clear and understandable way students' current performance relative to learning outcomes.
4. Teachers teach students to become aware of their own learning strengths and needs and to identify their own progress toward learning outcomes.
5. Teachers support students in establishing achievable personal learning goals.

D. Communication and Reporting of Student Achievement

1. Principals ensure communication with parents/guardians about students' learning.

Teachers will take various considerations into account before making a decision about the grade to be entered on the report card. The teacher will consider all evidence collected through observations, conversations, and student products (tests/exams, assignments for evaluation). The teacher will consider all the tests/exams and assignments for evaluation that the student has completed or submitted as evidence of achievement for outcomes in a particular grade or course. Students must complete all core assessments. In addition, the teacher will consider that some evidence carries greater weight than other evidence; for example, some performance tasks are richer and reveal more about students' skills and knowledge than others. Teachers will weigh all evidence of student achievement in light of these considerations and will use their professional judgment to determine the student's report card grade. The report card grade represents a student's achievement of overall curriculum outcomes, as demonstrated to that point in time. Teachers should include written comments that help inform and provide guidance to parents and students about present and future academic and behavioral achievement.

Determining a report card grade will involve a teacher's professional judgment and interpretation of evidence and should reflect the student's most consistent level of achievement, with special consideration given to more recent evidence.

Teachers will benefit from leadership by the principal to ensure that there is a common understanding among all staff about the process for determining the final grade based upon the guidelines outlined in the Assessment Policy. The principal will work with teachers to ensure common and equitable grading practices that follow Northwest School Division policy.

- 1.1. Principals ensure that the schedule for final assessments and Report Cards is communicated to students and parents/guardians.
- 1.2. Teachers employ a variety of strategies to communicate student progress and achievement to parents/guardians. Although there are regular formal reporting periods, communication with parents and students about student achievement should be continuous throughout the year, such as parent-teacher or parent-student-teacher conferences, student-led conferences, parent gradebook portal, portfolios of student work, interviews, phone calls, checklists, and informal reports, electronic reporting. Communication about student achievement should be designed to provide detailed information that will encourage students to set goals for learning, help teachers to establish plans for teaching, and assist parents in supporting learning at home.
- 1.3. Teachers communicate in a positive and constructive manner about student achievement.
- 1.4. Teachers communicate information about students' academic achievement separately from information about social growth or work habits (participation, effort, or learner attributes).
- 1.5. Teachers inform parents/guardians and students about the achievement standards.
- 1.6. All schools will report on curricular outcomes as outlined in the Administrative Procedure 360 Appendix A - Division Assessment Document. Other forms of grading are discouraged.
- 1.7. Students unable to write a final assessment because of serious illness, injury, bereavement, or for other compelling reasons for which sufficient cause is demonstrated, should apply to the principal who determines if an alternative final assessment is appropriate. Accommodation may take the form of:
 - 1.7.1. An exemption from the final assessment if sufficient assessment evidence is available to determine students' achievement of the learning outcomes; or
 - 1.7.2. Students writing an equivalent final examination or the same final assessment administered under secure conditions.
- 1.8. Report cards are issued a minimum of twice during a semester and a minimum of three times for full year programs in Kindergarten to Grade 12.
- 1.9. The report card and Personal Program Plan (PPP) are complementary documents for students identified with intensive education needs. A PPP is based on diagnostic

information and provides the basis for intervention strategies. The report card indicates achievement in life skills, foundational skills, academic readiness and/or achievement of learning outcomes.

- 1.10. English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners who may require accommodations but who do not require modified expectations, evaluation of achievement will be based on the appropriate subject/grade/course curriculum expectations and the achievement levels. For students who require modified or alternative expectations, evaluation of achievement will be based on the modified or alternative expectations rather than the regular subject/grade/course curriculum expectations. See section VII and VIII for detailed information about students with intensive education needs and English Language Learners.

E. Students with Intensive Needs: Modifications, Accommodations, and Alternate Programs

1. All Northwest School Division schools must have procedures in place to identify the level of development, learning abilities, and needs of every child who is enrolled in the school. The schools will ensure that educational programs are designed to accommodate those needs and facilitate the child's growth and development. The pyramid of interventions must be articulated to all school stakeholders including students, teachers, and parents. These procedures are part of a process of *continuous assessment and program planning* that should be initiated when a child is first enrolled in school and that should continue throughout a child's school life.
 - 1.1. For students with intensive education needs, assessment and evaluation are key components of programming, as the Education Act makes clear: "Special education program' means, in respect of an exceptional pupil, an educational program that is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation and that includes a plan containing specific objectives and an outline of educational services that meet the needs of the exceptional pupil"
 - 1.2. A student's Personal Program Plan (PPP) describes his or her educational program and any accommodations that may be required. The PPP specifies whether the student requires:
 - accommodations only; or
 - modified learning expectations, with the possibility of accommodations;
 - or an alternative program, not derived from the curriculum expectations for a subject/grade or a course.
 - 1.3. For a student with intensive education needs who requires modified or alternative expectations, assessment and evaluation of his or her achievement will be based on the modified curriculum expectations or alternative expectations outlined in the student's Personal Program Plan (PPP). For a student with intensive education needs who requires "accommodations only", as described in his or her PPP, assessment and evaluation of achievement will be based on the appropriate subject/ grade/course curricula expectations and the achievement levels outlined in

the curricula documents. (Note that the PPP also identifies accommodations for provincial large-scale assessments, which are consistent with accommodations required for regular classroom assessment and evaluation and permitted by the Assessment for Learning Dept. Saskatchewan Ministry of Education).

An impact profile shall be completed for every child with intense needs based on Protocol provided by the ministry of education.

Reference: Sections 85, 87, 175, 231 Education Act
The School Division Administration Regulations 45, 49

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