Administrative Procedure 240

STUDENT ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

Vision

To improve student learning and inform instructional practice, Northern Lights School Division No. 69 uses a comprehensive approach for student assessment.

Background

- The primary purpose of assessment is to gather information about student progress in order to improve teaching and learning.
- The primary purpose of evaluation of student achievement is to measure the extent to which curricular outcomes are being met.
- The primary purpose of reporting is to provide students and parents with accurate communication of student achievement and performance in relation to the learning outcomes.

Where students are served according to an Individualized Program Plan (I.P.P.) or where curricula have been specifically adapted and/or modified for an individual student, assessment standards shall be set in relation to the outcomes and time frames identified in the I.P.P. and approved by the parent or guardian.

The following principles guide Northern Lights School Division's assessment procedures:

1. Assessment for learning shall form the basis for effective instruction.
2. Student involvement in assessment for learning is essential.
3. The principles of effective assessment shall be taken into account.
4. Grades shall only reflect academic achievement based on curricular outcomes.
5. Learner attributes (i.e. effort, participation, attitude, behavior, work habits, etc.) shall be reported separately.
6. Evaluation and reporting shall include clear and timely communication among parents, students, and teachers of standards, criteria, and student achievement of learning outcomes.
7. Assessment design and implementation is a professional responsibility of the teacher. (Teaching Quality Standard - Section I)

Each part of the process should be respectful and promote growth. Practices should be carried out in such a way that they support continuous learning and development, and should be congruent with current research-based principles.

Similarly, the Division is committed to ensuring the best possible education for all students supported by a comprehensive, consistent approach to student assessment. Through Student Learning Assessments, Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Examinations, Alberta Education provides support for student evaluation to school authorities. These assessment/evaluation instruments

complement the on-going evaluation of student achievement by teachers, who assess results in a variety of ways to maintain and further improve the quality of education provided to students in Northern Lights School Division No. 69.

A companion document, *Teacher Guide: Assessment and Communication of Student Learning*, is provided to administrators and teachers to support the implementation of this procedure.

Guiding Principles

1. Assessment for learning shall form the basis for effective instruction.
   Assessments for Learning (formative) are a means to an end designed to let the teacher and students know what concepts and skills have been learned, and which may need to be further developed before an Assessment of Learning (summative) is used.

2. Student involvement in assessment for learning is essential.
   a. Students shall engage in self-assessment and goal setting activities.
   b. Students shall participate in formal and/or informal conferences.
   c. Students shall be involved in the co-construction of assessment criteria when appropriate.

3. The principles of effective assessment shall be taken into account.
   a. In order to assign as few zeros as possible, each school shall develop a Reluctant Zero Policy that takes into account missing assignments, tests, absenteeism, etc. that is consistent with assessment for learning and best assessment practices.
   b. Scoring guides, rubrics, benchmarks, exemplars, written feedback and checklists that guide improvements are examples of effective feedback.
   c. Triangulation of evidence is important to ensure validity and reliability of overall achievement.
   d. Teachers will provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning on summative assessments when appropriate.
   e. Students should be provided with a variety of ways to demonstrate their learning.

4. Grades shall only reflect academic achievement based on curriculum outcomes.
   a. Achievement of curriculum outcomes in the Program of Studies which has been substantiated through fair assessment and evaluation practices will be the only basis for measuring academic achievement.
   b. Typically, academic achievement is most often determined from varied summative assessments. Assessment for learning (formative) is typically meant to inform students and teachers of progress towards achievement of learner outcomes though in some situations may be used summatively.

5. Learner attributes (i.e. effort, participation, attitude, behavior, work habits, etc.) shall be reported separately.
   a. Learner attributes and attendance are not used to determine a

> student's achievement level. These important aspects of the learning process shall be evaluated and reported in a separate category on the report card.

6. Assessment shall include clear and timely communication between parents, students, and teachers
   a. Students and/or parents will be provided with an overview of the learner outcomes being assessed, the criteria for and methods of assessment and how this assessment information will be used.
   b. This overview is provided to students and parents within the first four weeks of the start of the school year /term/semester.

Reporting Procedures and Guidelines

The reporting of student achievement shall adhere to the following:

1. Regular communication between home and school is based on the ongoing assessment of each student's progress.
   a. The report card is one form of communication about a student's achievement and should accurately reflect the student's development of demonstrated understanding, skills and knowledge relative to outcomes contained in the Program of Studies.
      i. The school division requires at least three summative reports per school year.
      ii. School-based administrators shall review and sign report cards before distribution.
      iii. Report card comments regarding student progress will outline student areas of strength, areas for growth and next steps.
   b. Additional tools to be used in communicating student learning on an ongoing basis that might be included in a multifaceted reporting system can be, but are not limited to, phone calls to parents, school open houses, student-led conferences, portfolios, exhibits of student work, notes to parents, online repositories (ie. PowerSchool Parent Portal), parent/teacher meetings, student self-assessments and parent feedback forms.
      i. Grades K – 4 will provide a portfolio representing aspects of student learning, with opportunity for parent feedback, on a monthly basis.
      ii. Grades 5 – 12 teachers will regularly maintain an online gradebook with access being provided to parents and students on a regular basis. PowerSchool Gradebook will be the repository of student assessment information for teachers of Grade 5 – 12.
   c. Each school will make provision for at least two parent-teacher conferences during each school year.
   d. Each school will provide opportunity for at least one student-led conference during each school year.

2. Division report cards will adhere to the following formats.

   <u>Kindergarten</u>
   a. For students in Kindergarten, the first and second reports will take the form of Parent/Teacher Conversations. Transcripts of these conversations, using the Division Kindergarten Parent/Teacher Conversation Report template, will be

signed and given to parents with a copy for the student record.
b. The final report will be a written report indicating student performance based on achievement in the seven learning areas identified in the Kindergarten Program Statement.
c. For students in Kindergarten, the following descriptors shall be used to report student learning in each program area identified in the Kindergarten Program Statement:

A	**Accomplished** The skill or learning outcome is demonstrated consistently by the student and evidence of learning indicates a solid level of understanding.	
E	**Emerging** The skill or learning outcome is developing and evidence of learning indicates a basic level of understanding.	
N	**Not Yet** The skill or learner outcome has not yet been demonstrated, the student requires direct support or evidence of learning is minimal.	

Grades 1 – 4
a. For students in Grades 1 – 4, the following descriptors shall be used to report student learning in relation to the key learning outcomes in the Program of Studies.

Exemplary	The student demonstrates an in-depth and broad understanding of the outcomes; uses and applies acquired skills and strategies in a wide variety of learning situations
Proficient	The student demonstrates a well-developed and consistent understanding of the outcomes; uses and applies acquired skills and strategies in most learning situations
Emergent	The student demonstrates a general and basic understanding of the outcomes; uses and applies acquired skills and strategies in some learning situations
Not Yet	The student demonstrates a limited understanding of the outcomes; rarely uses and applies acquired skills and strategies in learning situations.

Grades 5 - 8

a. For students in Grades 5 - 8, the following descriptors shall be used to report student learning in relation to the key learning outcomes in the Program of Studies.

Exemplary	The student demonstrates an in-depth and broad understanding of the outcomes; uses and applies acquired skills and strategies in a wide variety of learning situations
Proficient	The student demonstrates a well-developed and consistent understanding of the outcomes; uses and applies acquired skills and strategies in most learning situations
Emergent	The student demonstrates a general and basic understanding of the outcomes; uses and applies acquired skills and strategies in some learning situations
Not Yet	The student demonstrates a limited understanding of the outcomes; rarely uses and applies acquired skills and strategies in learning situations.

b. In the four core subjects of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies achievement will also be indicated summatively by a percentage grade determined by a varied body of assessment evidence and teacher professional judgement.

High School (Grades 9 - 12)
a. In all subject areas, achievement will be indicated summatively by a percentage grade determined by a varied body of assessment evidence and teacher professional judgement.
b. There will be no final grades of 49% or 79%.

Assessment Glossary

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].

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.

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

Portfolios

Portfolios are collections of student work that provide a representation of students' learning. These portfolios may contain a variety of works that reflects different forms and different ways of learning and knowing. Some examples may be, but are not limited to, audio and video recordings, photos, graphic organizers, first and final drafts, journals, artwork, tests/quizzes and assignments. Portfolios provide opportunity for student and parent reflection on student learning.

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).

Triangulation of Evidence

Describes how evidence accumulated from three main sources, over a period of time is considered collectively to ensure validity and reliability of assessment. (For example: observations from anecdotal records and checklists, reports from self-assessments and conferences, and evidence from the products of students' work are combined to inform judgments about students' achievement of learning outcomes).

Triangulate

To consider assessment information from observations, products and conversations to determine how well students learned what they need to know and be able to do for a grade level or course.

Validity

An assessment method is valid if it measures student achievement of the learning outcomes that the assessment was intended to measure. It also means that an overall judgment of student achievement is based on a representative and varied body of assessment information.

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