



ASSESSING AND EVALUATING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Background

Board Policy 1: Board Mandate, Mission, Vision, Values and Goals identifies the mandate of the Board as providing students with a complete offering of learning opportunities delivered within the context of Catholic teachings and tradition. As such, assessment practices should honour the inherent dignity of all students. Student achievement of learner outcomes in provincially prescribed programs, locally developed, or modified or an adapted program must be assessed regularly and periodically report results of ongoing assessments to the students, the students' parents/guardians and the Board (Section 196, *Education Act* 2023).

Alberta Education - Student Assessment Policy requires jurisdictions to develop, document, keep current and implement student assessment policies and procedures for conducting continuous assessments and evaluations of student learning in education programs that provide for:

- accurate, fair and equitable student assessment
- the student's right of appeal and procedures for appeal
- the role of the student and the teacher in assessments
- the use of assessment information for the improvement of the quality of educational programs
- timely communication of assessment information to students, parents/guardians and school councils

Alberta's Teacher Quality Standard 3: Demonstrating a Professional Body of Knowledge requires that teachers apply student assessment and evaluation practices that:

- accurately reflect the learner outcomes within the programs of study;
- generate evidence of student learning to inform teaching practice through a balance of formative and summative assessment experiences;
- provide a variety of methods through which students can demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes;
- provide accurate, constructive and timely feedback on student learning; and
- support the use of reasoned judgment about the evidence used to determine and report the level of student learning.

Ideals of hope, affirmation, reconciliation, and renewal should direct and guide the processes of assessing, evaluating, communicating and celebrating student learning. The learning goals and objectives of Alberta Education and the Division provide the basis for achieving these ideals. Students and parents/guardians need to understand how student learning is assessed, evaluated, and communicated.

Definitions

Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Separate School Division recognizes the importance of using language effectively to inform educational practice in the interest of higher levels of student achievement.

“Achievement,” refers to a student’s demonstration of knowledge, skills and attitudes relative to grade level curriculum standards.

“Assessment,” refers to the collection of information on student achievement and performance to improve student learning.

“Assessment for Learning” or **“Formative Assessment,”** is the ongoing exchange of information between students and teachers about student progress toward clearly specified learning goals.

“Assessment of Learning” or **“Summative Assessment,”** is the summarizing information collected about learning in order to share that information with those outside classrooms.

“Assessment Criteria,” refers to what students will do to show they have achieved the outcomes

“High School Credits”: students are awarded credits for achieving at least 50% in a high school course. Credits are awarded by Alberta Education at the end of a quarter, semester or school year based on the recommendation of the Principal.

“Evaluation,” is a judgment regarding the quality or worth of a response.

“Grade (mark),” is a summary statement of student achievement relative to curriculum standards.

“Learner Outcomes,” refer to what we expect students to learn; the knowledge, skills and attitudes we expect students to demonstrate as a result of schooling.

“Performance Assessment,” is 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.

“Descriptive Feedback,” is part of an ongoing hopeful conversation about learning that relates directly to the expected learning outcomes.

A **“Rubric”** or **“Scoring Guide,”** is a fixed measurement scale and list of criteria that describe the quality of products or performances used to evaluate a student’s performance.

A **“Checklist,”** is a two-point evaluation tool that indicates if a student has achieved a learning goal (yes or not yet).

A **“Rating Scale,”** is an evaluation tool of three or more points that illustrates how frequently or consistently a student demonstrates a learning outcome.

“Self-reflection,” occurs when an individual considers the quality of their work by applying performance standards. The practice is employed to improve students’ understanding of course outcomes as well as improve their metacognitive skills.

“Portfolio” or **“Portfolio Assessment,”** is an assessment tool used to document student learning through a series of student and teacher-developed artifacts. Considered a form of authentic assessment, it offers an alternative or complement to traditional methods of communicating student achievement.

“Peer Assessment,” is a process whereby a student’s peers provide formative feedback based on the teacher’s benchmarks. The practice is employed to improve students’ understanding of course outcomes as well as improve their metacognitive skills.

“Self-Assessment,” is a process whereby a student evaluates their own work based on a teacher’s benchmarks. The practice is employed to improve students’ understanding of course outcomes as well as improve their metacognitive skills.

Guidelines

1. Achievement of learner outcomes should be measured and reported in a manner consistent with the curriculum outcomes from the Curriculum/Program of Studies. High School credits for courses will be awarded when students successively achieve passing grades on the majority of course outcomes.
2. Achievement of the learner outcomes in the Curriculum/Program of Studies should be the only basis for grades. The reported mark, which has been substantiated through fair assessment and evaluation practices, will indicate the grade level of achievement that the student has achieved. Factors outside of the program of studies such as effort, participation, attitude, work habits, attendance, and behaviour should not be used to determine a student’s grade, except in the instance of performance-based curricular outcomes (i.e., Fine Arts or Physical Education). These characteristics, while extremely important aspects of a student’s education, should be evaluated and reported separately.
3. Fair and accurate grades for students should be determined by assessment that is ongoing, and that involves multiple strategies. Evaluation should not be viewed as a snapshot, nor a one-shot exercise. Therefore, students may need to be provided with subsequent opportunities to demonstrate learning if the evidence indicates. Arbitrary high-stakes evaluation, evaluation that upholds the “element of surprise,” and evaluation that is not based upon a reasonable body of evidence are not appropriate ways to achieve valid evaluation. Teacher professional judgment is used to triangulate evidence of learning to provide accurate assessment and reporting of student learning.
4. Formative evaluation provides ongoing, timely diagnostic information and, as such, should not be used in the calculation of a grade. Formative assessment is purely a means to an end designed to let the teacher and student know what concepts have been learned, and which skills need to be further developed before a summative assessment is made. Formative evaluation determines appropriate next steps in instruction as well as readiness for summative evaluation.

5. Students should be informed how and why assessment information is being collected, how this information will be used in the grading process, and the criteria used in the assessment. Scoring guides, rubrics, benchmarks, exemplars, self-assessment tools, and detailed course outlines are methods of ensuring student engagement in assessment.
6. Students should be provided with an opportunity to review assessments that have been collected by the teacher in establishing a grade to enable the student's continuous improvement.
7. Feedback to students should be presented in a manner that engenders self-confidence and a belief that they are capable learners.
8. Punitive grading does not meet the goal of evaluation. A student's failure to submit work is a critical behavioral and discipline issue as defined in Section 23, *Education Act, 2023*, in that "a student, as a partner in education, has the responsibility to: (b) be ready to learn and actively engage in and diligently pursue the student's education". Punitive grading should not be considered an acceptable practice and should be avoided.
 - 8.1 Under the Principal's leadership, schools should establish intervention processes to ensure that students are committed to learning and provide evidence of learning when expected. These strategies may include:
 - direct communication with the student to ensure they understand the importance of providing evidence of learning
 - direct communication with parents and/or school administration
 - additional time (this could require the student to complete the task during a break or after the school day) or extended deadlines *as communicated by teachers and/or the school Principal
 - alternative assignments that allow students to demonstrate their learning a variety of methods
 - extra help
 - teacher professional judgment
 - 'Incomplete' used as a temporary placeholder in the grading software to indicate which learning outcomes the student has yet to provide evidence/demonstration of learning
 - intervention strategies for attendance (refer to AP 316: Student Attendance)
 - alternative course offerings (for example, credit recovery in high school)
 - consequences and discipline procedures, as described in AP 315: Student Code of Conduct

9. Students must have the right to appeal an assessment in any subject. Alberta Education - Student Assessment Policy makes reference to appeals. When students question a grade, a teacher must constructively address the concern. A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an appeal to the teacher may appeal to the Principal. If the decision is unacceptable, the student may request a hearing from the Office of the Superintendent. The decision of the Superintendent will be considered final.
10. Students will acquire proficiency under various circumstances and at different rates; consequently, students may wish to challenge the completion of a course through a process and protocol that does not require mandatory attendance in the course to be challenged. The Principal will be responsible for establishing guidelines and procedures for course challenges. Guidelines and procedures regarding course challenges will be addressed in compliance with the procedures outlined in Alberta Education's, *Guide to Education*.

References *The Guide to Education*
 Sections 31, 197, Education Act
 Alberta Education: Teaching Quality Standard
 Alberta Education: Student Assessment Policy