

## Administrative Procedure 350

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# ASSESSING & EVALUATING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

effective February 2016

### Background

Student achievement of learner outcomes in provincially prescribed programs, locally developed, or modified or an adapted program must be assessed and evaluated regularly and reported (communicated) periodically to the students, the students' parents, and the Board.

Locally Developed/Acquired and Authorized Junior and Senior High School Optional Courses require a Program Rationale & Philosophy, Assessment Strategy, and Learning Outcomes. These will be reviewed by the Superintendent prior to submission to the Board for approval. *Alberta Education Policy 2.1.2 Student Evaluation* requires that student learning in education programs shall be assessed to assist in: improving programs, establishing and maintaining standards, and improving student achievement.

Ideals of hope, affirmation, reconciliation, and renewal should direct and guide the processes of evaluation of student progress and the celebration of learning. The goals and objectives of the District and those of Alberta Education provide the basis for these processes.

### Definitions

Grande Prairie & District Catholic Schools 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 learner outcomes.

**Assessment** - refers to the **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)

**Criteria** - refers to what students will do to show they have achieved the outcomes

**Evaluation - making decisions** about the quality, value or worth of a response for the purpose of providing descriptive feedback (formative) and marks (summative)

**Formative Assessment** - provides information about a student's progress and direction for steps in learning; teaching and learning are indistinguishable from assessment.

**Mark (grade)** – a **letter, number or comment** as a **statement of student performance** relative to the learner outcomes.

**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

**Performance - how well** a student **demonstrates** grade level **learner outcomes**

**Performance Assessment** – is an authentic 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.

**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.

**Checklist** – is a two-point evaluation tool that indicates if a student has achieved a learning outcome (yes or not yet).

**Summative Assessment-** provides information to make judgements about student achievement at the end of a period of instruction; achievement data is usually compiled into a single number, score, mark or comment.

## **Guidelines**

1. The Achievement of Learner Outcomes must be measured in a manner consistent with the curriculum outcomes from the Program of Studies.
2. Achievement of the Learner Outcomes in the Program of Studies must be the only basis for grades. The report card mark, which has been objectively substantiated, through fair assessment and evaluation practices will indicate the Grade Level of Achievement that the student has achieved. Extraneous and arbitrary factors such as effort, participation, homework, attitude, work habits, attendance, and behaviour shall not be used to determine a student's grade. These characteristics, while extremely important aspects of a student's education, shall be evaluated and reported in a separate category on the Report Card, for example "Work Habits".
3. Fair and accurate grades for students will be determined by assessment that is ongoing, and that involves multiple reporting strategies. Evaluation must not be viewed as a snapshot, not a one-shot exercise. Therefore students need to be provided with subsequent opportunities to demonstrate their learning if evidences are demonstrating

that individual students or groups of students are not meeting the learner outcomes. *Policy 4.2.1 Teaching Quality Standards Applicable to the Basic Provision of Education in Alberta. Approved May 14, 1997.* Arbitrary high stakes evaluation, evaluation that upholds the element of surprise, and evaluation that is not based on a reasonable body of evidence are not appropriate ways to achieve valid evaluation.

4. Formative evaluation provides minute-by-minute diagnostic information and as such, should not be used in the calculation of a report card grade. Formative assessments are 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 readiness for summative evaluation.
5. Students who know the purpose of an assessment are in a better position to respond in a successful manner. Students must be told why and how assessment information is being collected, how this information will be used in the grading process, and what criteria will be measured. Scoring guides, rubrics, benchmarks, exemplars, and detailed course outlines are essential.
6. Students must be provided with an opportunity to review all assessments that have been collected by the teacher in establishing a grade to enable the student's continuous improvement. Feedback to students must be presented in a manner that engenders self-confidence and a belief that they are capable learners.
  - 6.1 Punitive grading does not meet the goal of evaluation. A student's failure to submit work is a critical behavioural and discipline issue as defined by the *School Act (2004, 12)* in that "a student shall conduct himself or herself so as to reasonably comply with the following code of conduct: (a) be diligent in pursuing the student's studies.  
Punitive grading shall be considered an unacceptable and indefensible practice.
  - 6.2 The use of zeros as an evaluation strategy is an example of a punitive grading practice. It is not supported in the research, clearly do not promote success, do not represent what students have learned, and do not provide incentive to improve learning. Schools, under the leadership of the Principal, must establish intervention processes to ensure that students are committed to learning and complete work when expected to do so.
7. A teacher is responsible for ensuring that they make available to students the opportunity to be reassessed. A reasonable process for reassessment must be clearly communicated to students and it is not defined as redoing a course. Acceptable reassessment allows for students to redo or challenge part or all of a particular assessment.
8. Students must have the right to appeal an assessment in any subject. *Alberta Education Policy 2.12 – Student Evaluation* 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 this appeal process fails, the student may request a hearing from the Office of the Superintendent. The decision of the Superintendent will be considered final.

Teachers are required to respect the confidentiality of student evaluation records and must release information in accordance with FOIPP regulations.

9. The Board believes that 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, in compliance with *Alberta Education's Course Challenge Policy 1.9.1*, will have the following characteristics:

The student provides a portfolio or "body of evidence" to the administrator or designate that demonstrates he/she has the skills as outlined in the Program of Studies to challenge a summative assessment of the course.

The student is afforded an interview with a committee established by the Principal, or an advisor designated by the Principal in order to determine eligibility; and

The student participates in a summative assessment process that will accurately reflect core competencies within the course. The student is afforded the opportunity to participate in the regular course program in the event that he/she does not meet the course challenge process.

## **Procedures**

1. The teacher shall establish the evaluation criteria at the beginning of each course. The teacher is required to reflect the curriculum's philosophy and incorporate a wide variety of formative and summative assessment strategies.
2. At the Junior and Senior High levels evaluation criteria shall be communicated in writing to the Principal prior to the start of the school year for the alignment with this Procedure. Students will receive the evaluation criteria for each course within the first fourteen days. Teachers should also communicate their assessment plan to parents. Teachers may want to or need to change their assessment criteria during the school year to better meet student needs, subject to a review by the Principal.
3. Reports on student progress at the Kindergarten to Grade Nine level shall be made at least three times each year, and at least twice per semester at the Grades 10 to 12 level. The dates of such reports shall be those agreed upon by the Administration.
4. Parent-teacher interviews shall normally be held twice yearly. Teacher and/or parents may request and arrange interviews at times other than those arranged above.
5. In Grades 7 through 9 the Final Assessment will be weighted at no more than 10% of the entire year's weighting.
6. In Grades 10-11 the Final Assessment will be weighted no more than 20% of the entire year's weighting. The Final Assessment in Grade 12 shall be worth no more than 30%.
7. In order to provide students with subsequent opportunities to demonstrate their learning, teachers shall use a cumulative approach to evaluation for reporting purposes. Term weighting shall not be used.

8. If Final assessments are not part of a Junior/ Senior High School plan, then Principals and teachers will ensure the time is instructional time for all students.
9. Principals are required to actively monitor every teacher's evaluation plan to ensure adherence to Alberta Education, District, and School Policy or Regulation compliance.

Reference: Section 18, 20, 60, School Act

Student Evaluation Regulation 169/98

Student Evaluation Policy 2.1.2

Ministerial Order on Student Learning #001/2013

Ministerial Order on Teaching Quality Standard #16/97

Cross-Reference: Board Policy 13 – Appeals and Hearings Regarding Student Matters