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## Purpose/Background

The primary goal of assessment and communication of student learning is to inform teaching and to promote student learning. Assessment shall be ongoing, meaningful, consistent and accurate for all students, embracing multiple forms of assessment as significant processes for student success. Regular feedback to students and parents is expected.

A comprehensive assessment program provides relevant information about a learner. This information facilitates understanding of what the student knows, how the student makes sense of that learning and accurately measures the achievement of desired outcomes. The assessment cycle: *assessment for learning*, *assessment as learning*, and *assessment of learning* offers information to guide future programming and instructional differentiation. Assessment has the greatest impact when it is integrated into all learning activities and is aligned with the Programs of Study.

Classroom assessment methods must be fair and accurate – minimizing all possible bias and giving all students equal opportunities to demonstrate what they know and are able to do.

Classroom assessment refers to “all activities in the classroom that enable students to demonstrate what they understand, know and can do”. (AAC)

Sound assessment:

- Reflects current research, is reviewed and updated regularly with supporting professional development and collaboration.
- Has a clear purpose: to understand, promote, enhance or measure student learning.
- Is balanced and reflects the principles of Understanding by Design and Universal Design for Learning.
- Focuses on a broad range of the prescribed outcomes, reflecting multiple dimensions of skill development.
- Is an ongoing process with methods and instruments used in a variety of contexts and approaches, rather than a set of isolated, summative events.
- Communicates both the purpose of and the assessment method(s) to the student/parent(s).
- Enables students and parents to easily understand the assessment results in plain language.
- Is part of instruction and clearly reveals to students what is expected of them, and the learning outcomes they are working toward.
- Uses methods that are consistent, equitable, accurate and take into account the student’s developmental and cultural background.
- Encourages meaningful dialogue and feedback between teacher and student/s that indicates how well the learner is moving toward the specific learner outcomes and provides supportive opportunities to improve or be further challenged.
- Provides information to address recommendations for additional supports and/or enrichment.

- Consists of an appropriate body of evidence to support the judgment being made (e.g., Triangulation of assessment - conversation, observation and product, is a process which utilizes information from a variety of assessments to collect evidence of achievement).
- Uses the results of assessment to improve teaching practice and learning activities.
- Supports metacognitive thinking in students to help them gauge where they are in their learning, and to set direction for future learning.
- Encourages students to use feedback to improve upon and take responsibility for learning through a variety of assessment tools such as self-reflection and peer-coaching, rubrics, and exemplars.

## **Procedures**

### 1. Assessment

#### 1.1. All assessment must:

- 1.1.1. Be based on the appropriate Program of Studies.
- 1.1.2. Provide opportunities for students to use accommodations and/or assistive technology as appropriate.
- 1.1.3. Focus on a range of outcomes reflecting multiple dimensions of skill development (Guide to Education).
- 1.1.4. Ensure grades are based on an individual's performance rather than group achievement grades.
- 1.1.5. Separate effort, participation, attitude, attendance and other behaviours that may not be curriculum-based, from academic achievement.
- 1.1.6. Use learning tasks, such as homework/practice activities, as a source of formative assessment which are not to be factored into a student's achievement grade.
- 1.1.7. No single assessment event will typically be considered as the main source of evidence when making professional judgments about student achievement toward the expected learning outcomes.

#### 1.2. Teachers and principals will:

- 1.2.1. Be assessment literate and follow guiding principles about assessment outlined by administrative procedures.
- 1.2.2. Use a variety of strategies and tools for assessment in order to give students a range of opportunities and a variety of ways to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and attitudes pertaining to the expected learning outcomes.

- 1.2.3. Consider cultural background, language proficiency, and prior experiences, in order to give all students equitable opportunities to demonstrate their achievement of the expected learning outcomes.
- 1.2.4. Adapt assessment tools and strategies for students with specific needs to ensure all students have equitable opportunities to demonstrate their achievement of expected learning outcomes.
- 1.2.5. Establish common expectations for levels of student achievement of learning outcomes for students in the same grade or course within a school, and should assess student learning in light of these expectations.

## 2. Communication of Student Learning

### 2.1. Communication about student learning must:

- 2.1.1. Use formal and informal methods of communication that are timely, ongoing, clear, concise, accurate, embedded in the learning process and are meaningful for the students and parents.
- 2.1.2. Clearly communicate the learning outcomes and the essential elements of the successful completion of the learning task to the student/parents.
- 2.1.3. Describe what the student is able to do, and provide direction for next steps.
- 2.1.4. Encourage the student to set and revise learning goals.
- 2.1.5. Utilize portfolios to help provide student evidence of their learning.
- 2.1.6. Make reference to adaptations when communicating student learning.
- 2.1.7. Help teachers, students and parents plan collaboratively for student success.
- 2.1.8. Assist parents in supporting the student at home.
- 2.1.9. Transparently outline procedures for the students/parents right to appeal.

### 2.2. Teachers and principals will:

- 2.2.1. Strive to communicate in ways that encourage students to understand themselves as learners, to understand where they are in the progression of their learning and to understand the direction they need to take their learning or what they need to do differently in order to be more successful.
- 2.2.2. Provide frequent opportunities within their instructional routines, for students to discuss their learning with others using a wide variety of strategies such as effective use of conferencing and portfolios, the collaborative identification of assessment criteria and the corresponding indicators of quality work, and the routine use of self-reflection and peer coaching to enable students to internalize the attributes of quality work and performance.

- 2.2.3. Communicate frequently with students and parents about student learning, providing feedback on student performance.
- 2.2.4. Separate effort, behaviour and participation from achievement of outcomes in the Program of Studies.
- 2.2.5. Ensure procedures are in place for assessment for learning, assessment as learning in addition to assessment of learning and these are communicated annually to parents.

### 3. Reporting Student Achievement

- 3.1. Assessment of learning (Summative Assessment) is concerned with examining and summarizing the critical evidence of student work that reflects achievement of the learning outcomes in a given grade and subject. Teachers use a variety of strategies to communicate student progress and achievement. At the K-12 level, communication about student achievement will include summary information about student achievement, and narratives about their strengths, areas for improvement, and next steps. (Reference - Communicating Student Learning: Guidelines for Schools 2008 Manitoba Education, citizenship and Youth).
- 3.2. The reporting of student achievement must be in the divisionally prescribed format and include:
  - 3.2.1. School name, address and phone number.
  - 3.2.2. School Division logo and mission statement.
  - 3.2.3. Name of the school principal and the student's teacher(s).
  - 3.2.4. Record of student attendance and punctuality.
  - 3.2.5. Alberta student identification number and legal name of student, or preferred alternative name, where both names are recorded in PowerSchool.
  - 3.2.6. Grade or program placement level of student, including an indication where the program has been modified to meet individual needs.
  - 3.2.7. A year-end program placement for Kindergarten to Grade 9 students.
- 3.3. Teachers and principals will:
  - 3.3.1. Establish ongoing reporting procedures to ensure parents receive information in real time throughout the school year. Grade books should be updated every two to three weeks.
  - 3.3.2. A year-end progress report will be provided.
  - 3.3.3. Make provisions for at least two conferences (student involved or student-led) for the purpose of discussing student learning during each school year and one per high school semester.
  - 3.3.4. Work with the jurisdiction to make provisions for proficient specialized services to facilitate effective conferencing or interviews with parents and students where appropriate.

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- 3.3.5. Share and/or review the Board policy, philosophy, and procedures with parents and teachers annually as part of the orientation to the year / semester.
  - 3.3.6. Ensure information is effectively communicated to parents of Kindergarten to Grade 9 students what their child knows and can do in relation to learning outcomes.
  - 3.3.7. Communicate student progress of learner attributes separately from achievement, at all levels.
  - 3.3.8. Use Grade 3 Student Learner Assessments (SLAs) as formative assessment to guide instructional practice.
  - 3.3.9. Use Grade 6 Provincial Achievement Test results for no more than 10% of the student's final grade, if at all.
  - 3.3.10. Use Grade 9 Provincial Achievement Test results for no more than 10% of the student's final grade, if at all.
  - 3.3.11. Base the final assessment in all Grade 12 Diploma courses upon a weighting of the school-based assessment and the Diploma Exam result as per weightings indicated by Alberta Education Policy.
  - 3.3.12. Follow the guidelines below to ensure grades in Rocky View Schools are meaningful, consistent, accurate and supportive of learning:
    - 3.3.12.1. Learning outcomes are the basis to record evidence and determine grades (not assessment methods, i.e., tests, projects, assignments).
    - 3.3.12.2. The meaning of grades comes from clear description of performance standards. Regardless of the symbol system used, it is the descriptions that make the level of performance meaningful to the teachers, students, and parents.
    - 3.3.12.3. Only academic achievement is reported in the grades. Learning behaviours such as effort, attitude and other non-academic factors are separated from academic reporting.
    - 3.3.12.4. A variety of summative assessments are used to gather evidence of learning. Quality assessments are used and characterized by clear targets, clear purpose, appropriate target-method match, appropriate sampling of learning outcomes, and avoidance of bias and distortion.
    - 3.3.12.5. The most consistent level of achievement is used with special consideration for more recent evidence of achievement; reassessment opportunities are provided if the student shows they have engaged in learning activities that increase likelihood of success.
    - 3.3.12.6. "Body of evidence" and professional judgement are used to determine grades; consider using median (middle value) or mode (most consistent).
    - 3.3.12.7. Multiple opportunities are provided to students to demonstrate their learning. Alternatives to zeros in grading are developed and implemented.

3.3.12.8. Students are involved in assessment throughout the teaching/learning process, and are given choice and voice.

3.3.13. Ensure a copy of the student's progress report or a record of final levels of achievement be added annually in the student's cumulative file.

#### 4. Individual Program Plan (IPP), Modified Programming and Adapted Programming

4.1. All progress reports shall include an explanation of cases in which a grading was not applicable to a particular student and/or an evaluation has not been made (e.g., a coding such as N.A (Not Applicable) might be used with an accompanying definition).

4.2. For students on a modified program, the following must be in place:

4.2.1. Parents need to be informed of the nature of the modified learner outcomes, their impact on future educational programming and provide consent.

4.2.2. The progress report needs to clearly indicate if a student's learning goals have been modified.

4.2.3. Assessment of a student's achievement, if receiving adapted programming, is relative to the currently assigned grade placement or program.

4.2.4. Assessment of a student's achievement, if receiving modified programming, is relative to the modified learner outcomes.

4.3. For students with a formal Individual Program Plan (IPP) the following must be in place:

4.3.1. If a formal IPP has been prepared for a student in one or more subject areas, their progress shall be reported on the IPP in relation to the IPP goals.

4.3.2. For curriculum outcomes where the IPP is not relevant, the progress report shall be used to communicate the student's achievement.

4.3.3. Where graded curriculum is used as the basis for IPP learning, the IPP must communicate the student's grade level of achievement in each curriculum area with the statement "This grade is based on achievement of learning goals in the student's learning plan that are significantly different than grade-level learning expectations."

4.3.4. Students with exceptional learning needs whose entire programs are directed by an IPP shall have their progress reported on the IPP and IPPR (Individualized Program Plan Report Card). If student progress is not being measured against grade level curriculum standards, appropriate alternative descriptors and anecdotal evidence may be used to describe student performance.

4.4. A copy of the student's IPP shall be placed in the student's confidential file.

*Reference:*

- Section 11, 18, 31, 32, 33, 41, 52, 53, 55, 56, 196, 197, 222 Education Act
- RVS AF360-A Informed Consent for Assessment (access via PowerSchool)
- RVS AF360-B Gifted and Talented Code 80
- RVS AF360-C Consent for Referral and Release of Information to a Contract Psychologist
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Practice Review of Teachers Regulation 11/2010
- Student Evaluation Regulation 177/2003
- Student Record Regulation 225/2006
- Ministerial Order 015/2004 – Standards for Special Education
- Ministerial Order 001/2013 – Student Learning
- Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12
- Achievement Testing Program Grades 3, 6 and 9 General Information Bulletin
- Diploma Examinations Program General Information Bulletin
- Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada
- Alberta Education Teaching Quality Standard
- Alberta Education Leadership Quality Standard

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## **APPENDIX A – Definitions: Assessment and Communication of Student Learning**

### **1. Definitions**

#### **Accommodation:**

A change or alteration in the regular ways a student is expected to learn, complete assignments or participate in classroom activities.

#### **Adapted Programming:**

Programming that retains the learner outcomes of the programs of study and where adjustments to the instructional process are provided to address the special education needs of the student.

#### **Assessment:**

Process of collecting information on student achievement and performance that includes a variety of assessment tasks designed to monitor and improve student learning (AAC Glossary). Throughout this document the term “assessment” encompasses assessment for learning, as learning and of learning.

#### **Assessment for Learning:**

Assessment for learning is designed to give teachers information to modify and differentiate teaching and learning activities. It requires careful design on the part of teachers so that they use the resulting information to determine not only what students know, but also to gain insights into how, when, and whether students apply what they know. Teachers can also use this information to streamline and target instruction and resources, and to provide feedback to students to help them advance their learning.

#### **Assessment as Learning:**

Assessment as learning is a process of developing and supporting metacognition for students. It focuses on the role of the student as the critical connector between assessment and learning. When students are active, engaged, and critical assessors, they make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge, and use it for new learning. This is the regulatory process in metacognition. It occurs when students monitor their own learning and use the feedback from this monitoring to make adjustments, adaptations, and even major changes in what they understand.

#### **Assessment of Learning:**

Assessment of learning is summative in nature and is used to confirm what students know and can do. Teachers concentrate on ensuring that they have used assessment evidence to provide accurate and sound statements of students’ proficiency, so that recipients of the information can use it to make reasonable and defensible decisions.

#### **Classroom:**

A learning space, either physical or online, in which both students and adults learn. Learning may occur through various modalities including in-person (face to face), online, or blended instruction.

**Communication of Student Learning (COSL):**

Communication of Student Learning is an ongoing process that involves students, parents, and teachers in making sense of a student's learning. COSL is a comprehensive reporting strategy comprised of four pieces: Goal-Setting, Three-way Conferencing, Portfolios and Real Time Reporting.

**Descriptive Feedback:**

Part of an ongoing, specific and constructive conversation about learning that relates directly to the learner outcomes (AAC Glossary)

**Formative Assessment:** (Assessment for Learning)

Assessment experiences that result in an on-going exchange of information between students and teachers about student progress toward clearly specified learner outcomes (not to be used for grading purposes (AAC Glossary)

**Goal-Setting:**

Learner goal-setting is a shared activity between students, teachers and parents. Goal-setting helps students understand where they are in their learning and envision where they'd like to be. From there, they map out strategies to achieve their goal. Studies show that this type of goalsetting boosts both achievement and a student's confidence in their ability.

**Grade:** (mark or level of understanding)

A summary statement of student achievement relative to curriculum standards. (AAC Glossary)

**Learning Outcomes:** (from Alberta Education Programs of Study)

What we expect students to learn; the provincially mandated knowledge skills and attitudes we expect students to demonstrate as a result of schooling. (AAC Glossary)

**Modified Programming:**

Programming in which the learner outcomes are significantly different from the programs of study and are specifically selected to meet students' special education needs.

**Portfolios:**

Learner portfolios gather evidence of student learning in one physical and/or online space. It is a place for students to select, organize and reflect on their learning. This gives students, teachers, and parents numerous examples of the learning that has taken place and helps them determine what next steps are needed to further skill development.

**Real-Time Reporting:**

Real-Time Reporting provides up-to-date assessment information which assists teachers in their lesson planning to improve student learning. As students learn concepts, teachers are providing regular feedback for students and parents through an online system called the PowerSchool Public Portal (often referred to as the Parent Portal). The feedback will show students where they currently are in

the learning process, and may give suggestions for improvement. Parents and students have access to this feedback at any time.

**Summative Assessment:** (Assessment of Learning)

Assessment experiences designed to collect information about learning to make judgments about students' performance and achievement at the end of a period of instruction. (AAC Glossary)

**Three-Way/Triad Conferences:**

Parent/teacher/student conferences are scheduled periodically through the year. The frequency and format for scheduled conferences varies depending on grade level and community. Parents are encouraged to request a meeting with teachers whenever they would like more information, or have questions and concerns.