WETASKIWIN REGIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS PRINCIPLES ON REPORTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

SECTION 1: ABOUT THIS GUIDE

WHY IS ASSESSMENT IMPORTANT?

In Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools, we're committed to transforming the learners of today into the leaders of tomorrow. We believe every student can learn and experience success. One of the ways we help all students be successful is by always improving the way we assess and evaluate what students learn. Through careful evaluation of their achievement and growth we are able to share information with students, parents and guardians.

This guide will help students, parents/guardians and staff understand:

- formative and summative assessments
- the responsibilities of staff, students, parents/guardians
- how and when achievement information will be communicated or reported
- how marks and grades are determined
- the steps taken when summative assessments are missing or incomplete

Parents and guardians are the key influences in a student's life. Understanding how a student is achieving in school and how to support that achievement is integral to success in school. Parents and guardians are encouraged to read this guide and contact the school administration if further information is required.

This document follows the Education Act, Guide to Education and WRPS Administrative Procedures, ensuring our students learn, are assessed and graded in a similar manner, regardless of which school they attend.

WHAT IS ASSESSMENT?

Assessment means gathering information about what the student knows, understands and can show the teacher based on the Alberta Programs of Study (curriculum) or their Individualized Program Plan (IPP). Teachers cannot use the students' behaviour, effort and work habits to decide on their grades, marks or codes, unless it is outlined in the Alberta programs of study for a specific subject.

Teachers regularly gather information about students' learning through a variety of assessment tools. These tools can include observations, conversations, the submission of student work, and tests or quizzes. Through these feedback opportunities, teachers determine students' areas of strength, and the areas in which students may need more time or practice. These assessment activities help teachers shape their lesson plans and allow teachers to give students, parents and guardians a clear and accurate picture of achievement and growth.

SECTION 2: CURRENT ASSESSMENT INITIATIVES

2017 – 2018
  Utilize Maplewood Markbook as a standard of practice in all schools
  Preparation to use Maplewood Markbook Portal
  Assessment Working Group – review of Assessment Policies and Practices
  Continued implementation of Common Math Assessment initiative

2018 – 2019
  Maplewood Markbook Portal as a standard reporting practice

2019 – 2020
  Transition from Maplewood to PowerSchool
  Utilizing PowerSchool Parent Portal as standard reporting practice

SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

Education systems need assessment practices that support a huge variety of needs – student learning, system accountability, program evaluation and more – to achieve the Board's priorities leading to the preparation of students to successfully transfer to post-secondary studies or work. (Cronin and Hegedus)

The following groups all have roles to play in supporting and helping students experience success in school.

Students have a responsibility for their own learning and are expected to:

- attend school every day and be on time
- complete assignments, projects and tasks to the best of their ability
- participate in activities to celebrate learning
- consistently demonstrate their learning
- take initiative to revise or redo assignments or tests so they can show growth in their knowledge and skills

School Rewrite Policy

Div 1 – formative assessment takes priority and summative assessments are usually given when students appear to have mastery of the skills. If a student does not perform well on the summative assessment, teachers work one-to-one to determine the level of understanding of the subject.
Div 2 – similar process is followed, although the option of test rewrites is available. This is to be done within one week following parent communication. Student commitment to the rewrite is a requirement for permitting a rewrite.

Parents and Guardians support the student's learning by:

- working in partnership with school staff (I.E. communication booklet, journals, school newsletter...)
- providing time and a place for the student to practice and complete assigned work at home
- staying informed about school events through the school's website, newsletters or other school materials
- keeping in touch with school staff
- regularly accessing student assessment information on PowerSchool Parent Portal
- attending parent-teacher conferences/interviews

Teachers, Educational Assistants and Administration will help the student succeed by:

- providing appropriate programming for the student
- clearly explaining what is expected of each student and how the student's work will be assessed
- use of formative assessments to provide teachers feedback for student improvement
- providing multiple opportunities and different ways for students to demonstrate their learning
- giving students who have missed important assessments and activities the chance to complete the work
- keeping records describing the student's successes and challenges
- keeping an up to date Maplewood Gradebook
- providing timely and ongoing communicating with you about the student's progress and achievement
- providing opportunities for parents/guardians to be involved in the student's learning

Central Administration Leadership Team guides our district by:

- knowing how schools and students are performing
- knowing that the curriculum is being delivered
- diagnose and provide leadership for system strategies and supports
- set required procedures
- allocation of resources

Board Trustees:

- the school division is meeting provincial accountability requirements
- set, monitor and review priorities

The Board Achievement Priorities

The WRPS Board of Trustees has identified their priority to increase the rate of high school completion.

SECTION 3: DETERMINING STUDENT ACHEIVEMENT
CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT BELIEFS

1. The instructional decisions that have the greatest impact are made day to day in the classroom
2. Teachers must possess and be ready to apply knowledge of sound classroom assessment practices
3. Teachers understand that supportive classroom assessment strategies benefit all students
4. Students need meaningful feedback to take responsibility for their learning
5. Grades, marks and codes are determined in a variety of ways

Types of Assessments
Formative Assessments (Assessment <u>FOR</u> learning)

Throughout the year, the student will work on many activities that help them increase what they know and practice their skills. These activities show the student's teacher how they are doing, what their strengths are and where they can improve.

Teachers use this information to adjust their teaching, give the student feedback to help them improve and prepare the student for times when they will receive grades, marks and codes.

Summative Assessments (Assessment <u>OF</u> Learning)

During the school year, the student will have a chance to show what they have learned up to that point in time.

Using their judgment as professionals, teachers make decisions and give grades, marks and codes to the student. They base these decisions on what they've seen the student do (observations), discussions they have had with the student (conversations) and the work the student has completed (products).

Planning

Teachers are required to plan instructional strategies to move learning forward. Planning can come in a variety of forms and follow Alberta education documents including Program of studies and Math prioritized outcomes/Literacy Scope and Sequence. An easy tool for parents is the curriculum at a glance on the Alberta Education website.

Student Work
The Role of Homework

Homework is meant to:
- help support the student's learning
- reinforce what the student has learned in school
- give the student more practice
- completion of class assigned work
- prepare for upcoming learning

Homework Policy

> Homework is as extension to classroom learning and is opportunity to complete tasks not completed in class. We provide homework as an option and encourage participation to reinforce concepts taught at school but marks are not typically given for homework. Students are expected to complete their homework assignments.
> Homework assignments vary by the teacher but commonly include nightly reading, word list/sight word practice, concept sorts, and games or booklets relating to math facts.

Missing or Incomplete Student Work

When the student has missing or incomplete work, we will:

- have conversation with the student about the work
- provide reasonable supports for the work to be completed and submitted. This might include: extra time, provision of school time to complete the work and/or provision of teacher assistance
- provide reasonable task modification or adaptations, if needed
- if concerns continue regarding assignment completion/submission, parents may be contacted through, for example; notes in the student agendas, phone calls, emails, etc.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students are expected to behave ethically. Cheating, plagiarism (copying someone else's work and passing it off as your own), copying, stealing tests or assignments and getting answers for a test or assignment in advance is not acceptable. Unethical behaviour also includes giving answers or work to others to claim as their own.

If the student is suspected of plagiarism or cheating, school administration will meet with them and take action in accordance with Administrative Procedure 360

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Alberta Education mandates that Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Exams be administered each school year. Results from these assessments provide schools, school authorities and the province information about student learning and achievement in order to monitor and improve student learning.

The Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs)

PATs measure student learning based on grade-level outcomes prescribed in the curriculum. Students in Grades 6 and 9 in English language arts, math, science and social studies are expected to take the PATs. Aggregated results are shared publicly to show how Alberta students are doing, compared to provincial standards. We will report individual results to students and parents/guardians in a statement in the June progress report. While PATs are an important part of determining student growth and achievement, they are just one part of the assessment process.

Diploma Examinations:

Diploma Examinations, have three main purposes:

- to certify the level of individual student achievement in the selected 30-level courses;
- to ensure that province-wide standards of achievement are maintained; and
- to report individual and group results

The program has diploma exams in selected 30-level courses: Biology 30, Chemistry 30, English Language Arts 30–1, English Language Arts 30–2, Français 30–1, French Language Arts 30–1, Mathematics 30–1, Mathematics 30–2, Physics 30, Science 30, Social Studies 30–1, and Social Studies 30–2.

To receive a high school diploma, students are required to write at least two diploma exams, either English Language Arts 30–1 or English Language Arts 30–2 and either Social Studies 30–1 or Social Studies 30–2.

Individual School Specific Assessment Tools

Lakedell School assesses student progress throughout the year to determine progress made and support required. This includes teacher-developed tests, quizzes, projects, writing samples, and classwork.

Benchmarking data is collected each school year. This may include Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments, reading inventories including sight words, Early Years Evaluations, Reading Readiness Screening Tool results, and math diagnostic data.

SECTION 4: GRADES, MARKS AND CODES

Teachers use evidence and their professional judgement to determine the student's grade, mark or code, to communicate achievement.

GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING

- **Class Averages:** Student's progress is independent of their peers and class averages will not be reported
- **Effort/Behaviour/Attendance:** Student's reported learning is in reference to the learning outcome. 'Behaviour factors' (effort, participation, attendance etc.) will not have an impact on a grade reflecting academic achievement; unless they are specifically set out in the program of studies as a learning outcome
- **Group Work Marking:** Each student is individually accountable for their learning. A group project or group assessment strategies, will only be added into a student's mark when the intent of the group project is to develop 'role skills' or the course of study sets group skills as an outcome of the learning.
- **Late:** Student's achievement relative to the learning outcome is the basis for grading. Work submitted late will not be graded downward and then factored into the final grade. Support mechanisms or pyramids of intervention must be in place within the school site to address the concern/issue.

- **Zeros:** Assessment of students utilizing zeros is not a true reflection of student learning. The Division discourages the utilization of zeros in the assessment process, but recognizes that they might need to be used a part of evaluation.
- **Bonus Marks:** Bonus marks are not appropriate when assessing learning outcomes but other learning opportunities could be provided to improve a mark.

HOW ARE WE GOING TO USE ASSESSMENTS

It is important to provide frequent, descriptive and prescriptive feedback to students, based on the learner outcomes.

Formative Assessments (Assessment of Learning)

- students are assessed on the basis of the learner outcomes as stated in the programs of study (including locally developed courses and electives designed at individual school sites)
- student grades are compiled in reference to how each student is progressing toward mastery of the learning outcomes
- learning is developmental; therefore, it is most appropriate to emphasize the most recent stage of achievement when reporting student level of learning/mastery of the learning outcome
- it is not appropriate for formative assessment information, which is used by students and teachers to inform teaching/learning strategies, to be factored into the final report or grade

Summative Assessments (Assessment for Learning)

- teachers plan directly from the Program of Studies, and therefore can articulate in advance of teaching, which learner outcomes their students are to achieve and what will be accepted as evidence of their achievement
- students must clearly understand the learner outcomes they seek to achieve, and that they understand what will be accepted as evidence of their achievement (assessment criteria). Students should be actively involved in the feedback process
- teachers understand and utilize the relationship between assessment and student motivation; therefore teachers have a responsibility to build assessments that enhance learning
- teachers continually use classroom assessment information to revise instruction

Individual School Assessment Policy

Formative assessment is completed on a regular basis to gain an understanding of how students are progressing in learning. This information is used to support learners in mastery academic areas. Summative assessments are usually given when students have demonstrated understanding of the units of study through formative assessment and may take the form of tests, quizzes, assignments, or projects.

CODES

Why codes are used

Codes provide students, parents/guardians and teachers a cumulative description of how a student is doing based on the learning outcomes.

<mark>School</mark> Codes

On the student's progress report, a teacher may use these codes for reporting grades/marks.

<mark>**Student achievement is reported using the following scale:**</mark>

Kindergarten to grade 2:

ACH – The student has mastered the outcome

APP – The student has gained an understanding and is approaching mastery of the outcome

BEG – The student is at the beginning phases of learning the outcome

NYA – The student has not yet achieved the outcome

Grades 3-6:

EXC – The student is able to independently apply and demonstrate the outcome

ACH – The student is able to demonstrate the outcome with some prompting or guidance

APP – The student has gained an understanding and is approaching learning the outcome

BEG – The student is at the beginning phases of learning the outcome

NYA – The student has not yet achieved the outcome

Grade Level of Achievement (GLA)

GLA shows the current grade level at which a student is being taught. This is usually the same grade in which a student is enrolled. GLA appears on each progress report for English and French language arts and math.

SECTION 5: COMMUNICATION FOR REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

Understanding how a student is achieving in school and how to support that achievement is integral to success in a school. There are many ways we report student's learning throughout the year. We encourage parents/guardians to review the student's reports and attend conferences regularly.

REPORTING

- Academic achievement (summative assessment) shall be reported separately from the academic growth and the behavioural characteristics that impact learning.

- Our reporting mechanisms (formative assessment) provide feedback to stakeholders on all three elements of learning. Reporting mechanisms may be in the form of, but not limited to, Maplewood, report cards, progress reports, portfolios, parent-teacher interviews and student led conferences.
  - ❑ Students receiving adapted programming (on the graded program of studies) or modified programming (off the graded program of studies) will be stated within the reporting mechanism.
  - ❑ The 'academic growth' element shall reflect how the student has progressed relative to their initial understanding of the outcome, and/or their ability to perform any skills inherent in the outcome. We will inform stakeholders about the degree of progress a student has made, even if they have not fully accomplished the outcome. This information will be provided in a 'comments box' within the reporting mechanism, in the student's growth portfolio, in communication with the parent; or whatever form is most appropriate to the school site and the individual student.
  - ❑ The 'social-personal' element shall reflect the students' work habits in relation to achieving the learning outcomes. Areas like attendance, completion of assignments, listening skills, level of effort, etc. are important in each student's mastery of the outcome, but are more appropriately separated out from the students' academic achievement grade.
  - ❑ The 'symbolic representation' of student learning relative to the outcome is less important than the process by which it was determined. Therefore percentages, letter grades or rubric derivations are all acceptable methods of reporting, if the process by which they were determined was outcomes based and capable of showing student progress towards mastery.

OUR COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR REPORTING PROGRESS

Division I and II are under a formative assessment report card

Division III and IV are under a summative assessment report card

Individual School Reporting Policy

Student achievement is reported three times per year in writing through Student Progress Reports with Parent Teacher interviews being scheduled to discuss these reports.
Student summative marks are available electronically through the Maplewood Parent Portal, allowing parents opportunity to view their child's progress. Teachers are willing to meet with parents outside of scheduled interview dates to discuss student progress.

Early Years Evaluation Teacher Assessment (EYE-TA)

Assess the developmental strengths and areas for growth of children as they enter kindergarten and as a tool to identify children who may require specialized services and supports.

The results of the EYE-TA will be shared with parents/guardians at the November Parent Teacher Conference. A written progress report is not required in the fall for children enrolled in kindergarten. Parents/guardians of kindergarten children will receive two written progress reports to document learning.

Individualized Program Plans (IPPs)

IPPS for students who need specialized services and supports, the IPP is a working document that is developed within the first reporting period of the school year. It is a record of the student's progress related to specific goals and strategies. It gives confirmation that a student's needs are being addressed and provides information about accommodations and supports the student needs to succeed. The IPP is reviewed at least three times a year. We expect all stakeholders involved to provide input into the IPP.

Individual Schools IPP Procedures

IPPs are developed at the beginning of each school year and updated at each term. Teachers will meet with parents to collaborate and discuss the IPP goals and progress and have the IPP signed.

SECTION 6: APPENDIX

Definitions used within Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools: Using language consistently and effectively will allow a shared understanding of assessment and grading; and inform our educational practice in the interests of higher levels of student learning. Provided below are definitions pertaining to assessment/reporting throughout WRPS.

GLOSSARY OR RELEVANT TERMS:

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

achievement level: A student's demonstration of knowledge, skills and attitudes relative to grade level learner outcomes.

adapted programming: Programming that retains the learning outcomes of the program of studies 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.

assessment for learning: Ongoing exchange of information between students and teachers about student progress toward clearly specified learning goals. (also called formative assessment) Formative assessment: assessments that take place during instruction and learning to:
- inform students, on an ongoing basis, about their progress towards achieving the intended learning outcomes as set out in the programs of study.
- identify the gains and difficulties students are experiencing in what they are being asked to learn or perform.

- provide specific, descriptive, and meaningful feedback.
- motivate students to learn by providing feedback on a continuous basis. Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools Administrative Procedures Manual
- monitor student performance toward the expected learning outcomes as set out in the programs of study and adjust instruction on the basis of the findings where necessary.

assessment of learning: Assessment experiences designed to collect information about learning to make judgments about student achievement and performance at the end of a period of instruction that can be shared with those outside the classroom. (also called summative assessment) Summative assessment: assessments that take place after an instructional segment (e.g., group of integrated lessons, unit, reporting period, grade) to:

- describe the degree to which each student has achieved the learning outcomes as set out in the programs of study.
- analyze assessment information and results obtained from assessments conducted for each instructional segment to understand each student's progress and achievement at the end of the instructional segment and to inform future instructional planning.
- synthesize assessment information and results obtained from assessments conducted for each instructional segment for the reporting period to form comments and grades, which summarize the student's strengths and areas of need, to be communicated to students and their parents/guardians at the end of the reporting period.
- evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction used during the reporting period.

enrichment: Providing more in-depth learning opportunities with respect to the learner outcomes at or above the enrolled grade level.

grade level of achievement: A teacher judgment, based on the results from a variety of classroom assessments throughout the school year, expressed as 'at, above or below' in relation to learner outcomes in a subject area after a course for a specific grade level has been completed at the student's enrolled grade.

learner outcomes: What Alberta Education expects a student to learn; the knowledge, skills and attitudes a student demonstrates as a result of schooling.

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.

OTHER LINKS

AAC visual https://www.aac.ab.ca/updated-aac-key-visual/

WRPS Big Ideas https://wrps.staffconnect.ca/document

Curricular Exemplars https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/mychildslearning/