

Standards for Quality in the Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting of Student Achievement

1.0 Purpose:

This regulation sets out standards of quality which will be adhered to in all assessment, evaluation, and reporting of student achievement.

2.0 Definitions:

- 2.1 **Assessment** is the process of continuously gathering information about student learning and performance, using a variety of sources over time which **should** be triangulated to include observation, student-teacher conversations, and student products.
- **Assessment as Learning** is the process of developing and supporting student metacognition. Students are actively engaged in this assessment process: that is, they monitor their own learning; use assessment feedback from teacher, self, and peers to determine next steps; and set individual learning goals. Assessment as learning requires students to have a clear understanding of the learning goals and the success criteria. Assessment as learning focuses on the role of the student as the critical connector between assessment and learning. (Adapted from Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Education, 2006, p. 41.) (*Growing Success page 143*)
 - **Assessment for Learning** is the ongoing process of gathering and interpreting evidence about student learning for the purpose of determining where students are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there. The information gathered is used by teachers to provide feedback and adjust instruction and by students to focus on their learning. Assessment for learning is a high-yield instructional strategy that takes place while the student is still learning and serves to promote learning. (Adapted from Assessment Reform Group, 2002.) (*Growing Success page 144*)
 - **Assessment of Learning** is the process of collecting and interpreting evidence for the purpose of summarizing learning at a given point in time, to make judgements about the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria, and to assign a value to represent that quality. The information gathered may be used to communicate the student's achievement to parents, other teachers, students themselves, and others. It occurs at or near the end of a cycle of learning. (*Growing Success page 144*)
- 2.2 **Evaluation** refers to the process of judging the quality of student learning on the basis of established performance standards (see Chapter 3) and assigning a value to represent that quality. (*Growing Success page 38*)
- 2.3 **Reporting** is the process of providing clear feedback to students and parents that guides their efforts toward improvement.
- 2.4 **Professional Judgement** is judgement that is informed by professional knowledge of curriculum expectations, context, evidence of learning, methods of instruction and assessment, and the criteria and standards that indicate success in student learning. In professional practice, judgement involves a purposeful and systematic thinking process that evolves in terms of accuracy and insight with ongoing reflection and self-correction. (*Growing Success page 152*)

- 2.5 **Success Criteria** are standards or specific descriptions of successful attainment of learning goals developed by teachers on the basis of criteria in the achievement chart, and discussed and agreed upon in collaboration with students that are used to determine to what degree a learning goal has been achieved. Criteria describe what success “looks like”, and allow the teacher and student to gather information about the quality of student learning. (*Growing Success page 155*)
- 2.6 **Learning goals** are brief statements that describe for a student what he or she should know and be able to do by the end of a period of instruction (e.g., a lesson, series of lessons, or subtask). The goals represent subsets or clusters of knowledge and skills that the student must master to successfully achieve the overall curriculum expectations. (*Growing Success page 148*)

3.0 **Principles of Quality in the Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting of Student Achievement:**

3.1 **Principles of Quality Assessment:**

The following seven fundamental principles lay the foundation for rich and challenging practice. When these principles are fully understood and observed by all teachers, they will guide the collection of meaningful information that will help inform instructional decisions, promote student engagement, and improve student learning.

The Seven Fundamental Principles:

To ensure that assessment, evaluation, and reporting are valid and reliable, and that they lead to the improvement of learning for all students, teachers use practices and procedures that:

- are fair, transparent, and equitable for all students;
- support all students, including those with special education needs, those who are learning the language of instruction (English or French), and those who are First Nation, Métis, or Inuit;
- are carefully planned to relate to the curriculum expectations and learning goals and, as much as possible, to the interests, learning styles and preferences, needs, and experiences of all students;
- are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or course and at other appropriate points throughout the school year or course;
- are ongoing, varied in nature, and administered over a period of time to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning;
- provide ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement;
- develop students’ self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning. (*Growing Success page 6*)

Although learning skills are assessed, evaluated, and reported separately from academic achievement, the assessment, evaluation and reporting of learning skills should be fair, inclusive and respectful of all people.

The development of learning skills and work habits is an integral part of a student’s learning. To the extent possible, however, the evaluation of learning skills and work habits, apart from any that may be included as part of a curriculum expectation in a subject or course, should not be considered in the determination of a student’s grades.

Late and Missed Assignments:

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) believes success is the best way to breed more success. Every assignment provides evidence of learning and deducting marks for late assignments could misrepresent the student's true level of achievement. However, there should be clear boundaries on student behavior and known consequences for not submitting assignments for evaluation or for submitting them late. (*Growing Success page 45 and 46*)

It must be made clear to students early in the school year that they are responsible not only for their behavior in the classroom and the school but also for providing evidence of their achievement of the overall expectations within the time frame specified by the teacher, and in a form approved by the teacher. Students must understand that there will be consequences for not completing assignments for evaluation or for submitting those assignments late. (*Growing Success page 43*)

It is expected that teachers and school teams will use a variety of strategies, as described below, to ensure that students submit their assignments for evaluation and meet timelines. (*Growing Success page 44*)

In the professional judgement of a teacher, the following strategies may include but are not limited to the following: (*Growing Success page 43*)

- asking the student to be accountable in clarifying the reason for not completing the assignment;
- helping students develop better time-management skills;
- collaborating with other staff to prepare a part- or full-year calendar of major assignment dates for every class;
- planning for major assignments to be completed in stages, so that students are less likely to be faced with an all-or-nothing situation at the last minute;
- maintaining ongoing communication with students and/or parents about due dates and late assignments, and scheduling conferences with parents if the problem persists;
- in secondary schools, referring the student to the Student Success team or teacher;
- taking into consideration legitimate reasons for missed deadlines;
- setting up a student contract;
- using counselling or peer tutoring to try to deal positively with problems;
- holding teacher-student conferences;
- reviewing the need for extra support for English language learners;
- reviewing whether students require special education services;
- requiring the student to work with a school team to complete the assignment;
- for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students, involving Aboriginal counsellors and members of the extended family;
- understanding and taking into account the cultures, histories, and contexts of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and parents and their previous experiences with the school system;
- providing alternative assignments or tests/exams where, in the teacher's professional judgement, it is reasonable and appropriate to do so;
- deducting marks for late assignments, up to and including the full value of the assignment. (*Growing Success page 43*)

Grades 1 to 6:

In Grades 1 to 6, late and missed assignments for evaluation will be noted on the report card as part of the evaluation of the student's development of the learning skills and work habits. When appropriate, a student's tendency to be late in submitting, or to fail to submit, other assignments (including homework) may also be noted on the report card as part of the evaluation of the student's development of the learning skills and work habits. (*Growing Success page 44*)

Grades 7 to 12:

It is expected that teachers and school teams will use a variety of strategies, as described above to ensure that students submit their assignments for evaluation and meet timelines. The window of opportunity for submission of work will be posted by the teacher and where possible, be established in consultation with the student. These deadlines will be clearly communicated to students and where appropriate to parents/guardians. The last day of this period of time will be deemed an absolute deadline. Despite on-going assessment for and as learning, some students may not submit a major assignment within the given time period. The teacher may determine an absolute deadline for submission of work for evaluation. It is possible that marks may be deducted for late assignments up to and including the full value of the assignment. Teachers will ensure that mark deduction will not result in a percentage mark for the report card that, in their professional judgement, misrepresents the student's actual achievement.

For Grades 1 to 10, the code "I" may be used in a teacher's record of marks and/or on a student's report card, including the final report card, to indicate that insufficient evidence is available to determine a letter grade or percentage mark. For the report card, teachers will use their professional judgement to determine when the use of "I" is appropriate and in the best interests of the student. For example, teachers may find it appropriate to use "I" when evidence of a student's achievement is insufficient because the student has enrolled in the school very recently or because there were issues or extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control, such as protracted illness, that affected his or her attendance and/or ability to provide sufficient evidence of achievement of the overall expectations (*Growing Success page 42*)

In addition, assessment, evaluation and reporting in the DDSB will adhere to the following standards of quality:

3.2 Accountability:

Teachers will be accountable for maintaining and collecting information on which evaluations are made. In cases where there are questions about evaluations, the first recourse for resolution should be discussion of the evaluation with the teacher, followed by discussion with the administrator.

3.3 Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting is Based on Individual Achievement:

Even where a cooperative or independent learning strategy is used, assessment will be based on individual achievement. Assignments for evaluation may involve group projects as long as each student's work within the group project is evaluated independently and assigned an individual mark, as opposed to a common group mark.

The evaluation of student learning is the responsibility of the teacher and must not include the judgement of the student or of the student's peers. (*Growing Success page 39*)

3.4 Clear and Timely Communication of Feedback of Student Achievement:

The Durham District School Board supports a shared partnership among the school, the student, the parent/guardian and the community at large. To that end, feedback about board-wide student achievement, as well as methods of assessment, evaluation and reporting will be made available to parents, students and the community. Individual student data will be shared with the student and/or parent/guardian.

Communication will be timely, will accurately reflect achievement and will be understandable to student, and parent/guardians. Parent/teacher interviews and/or three-way conferencing, as well as informal feedback, are an integral part of that communication. The purpose of all these communications will be to share information regarding the total development of the student.

Student achievement is typically reported using progress reports and report cards. Teachers may also use communication methods such as portfolios, conferencing, narrative or anecdotal reports, checklists, rating scales, rubrics and test scores for communicating assessment and evaluation of student achievement.

3.5 Confidentiality:

Assessment, evaluation and reporting information about individual students will be kept confidential and all procedures regarding assessment, evaluation and reporting will be conducted with discretion and sensitivity, paying due attention to the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

3.6 Frequency of Reporting:

The Durham District School Board will conform to Ministry of Education guidelines with respect to frequency of reporting.

3.7 Ongoing Commitment to Development of Assessment Literacy:

To ensure that staff are familiar with, and using the most appropriate methods in, assessment, evaluation and reporting, the Board will maintain an ongoing commitment to staff development so that capacity and literacy in the areas of assessment, evaluation and reporting are built.

By extension, capacity building around assessment literacy is a shared responsibility between all stakeholders, i.e., teachers, parents/guardians, students and the community at large.

3.8 Transparency of Goals and Content Standards:

Students learn better when they know what good work looks like and how they can achieve it. Teachers need to share learning goals and success criteria with students at the outset of learning to ensure that students and teachers have a common and shared understanding of these goals and criteria as learning progresses.

(Growing Success page 28)

Appendix:

None

Effective Date

2011-05-17

Amended/Reviewed

2016-11-15