

ROLLING RIVER SCHOOL DIVISION POLICY

Student Assessment and Communication of Student Achievement

IKAA/P

Rolling River School Division believes that assessment and the communication of student achievement and growth are essential to the teaching and learning process. These practices must be conducted in a positive way that supports continuous learning, development and growth. The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning.

The Board expects and supports assessment and communication of student achievement that is consistent with:

- Provincial legislation, policy and support documents
- Provincial curricular outcomes
- Divisional procedures and guidelines
- Current research

Foundations

Rolling River School Division is committed to the guiding principles of assessment through the implementation of Assessment FOR Learning, Assessment AS Learning and Assessment OF Learning principles, as outlined by Manitoba Education (Communicating Student Learning: Guidelines for Schools, p.2, 2008):

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 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 the 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, adaptation, and even major changes in what they understand.

Assessment OF Learning is summative in nature and is used to confirm what students know and can do, and, occasionally, to show how they place in relation to others. Teachers concentrate on ensuring they use assessment evidence to provide accurate and sound statement of students' proficiency, so that recipients of the information can use it to make reasonable and defensible decisions.

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Date Adopted: June 27, 2000

Date Revised: September 7, 2011

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1. Responsibilities:

- A. Every teacher shall:
- Design, adapt, develop and choose on-going assessment methods for all students that are fair, and appropriate for the age, ability, background, prior experience and grade level of the student. Assessment practices will reflect provincial policy, Divisional procedures and current research.
 - Administer a variety of assessments
 - Collect and use assessment data when developing programming, planning for student learning, and making decisions for individual students.
 - Use grading procedures that are consistent with provincial policy and curricular outcomes, and Divisional Grading Guidelines (*Appendix A*).
 - Provide for students, parents / guardians, school administration and the Superintendent's Department with a course outline at the beginning of each course or program that outlines:
 - i. The prescribed units of study and expected learning outcomes based on provincial curriculum
 - ii. Course expectations
 - iii. Expectations regarding academic honesty
 - iv. A description of student assessment and evaluation criteria and expectations
 - Communicate student learning results and recommendations for growth to students, parents / guardians, and school administration on a regular basis.
 - Formally report progress as per the Public Schools Act.
- B. The school administrator shall:
- Ensure the implementation of the provincial curriculum and the assessment policies.
 - Ensure that assessment practices reflect the Division policy and procedures.
 - Review on an annual basis each teacher's program plan and assessment procedures.
- C. The Superintendent's Department shall:
- Support the implementation of the provincial and Divisional policies and procedures through professional development.

2. Appropriate Education Programming:

Teachers are expected to use differentiated instruction and adaptations to help students meet the expected learning outcomes as per the provincial regulation (Appropriate Education Act).

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Differentiated Instruction - A method of instruction or assessment that alters the presentation of the curriculum for the purpose of responding to learning diversity, interests and strengths of pupils.

Adaptations - A change made in the teaching process, materials, assignments or pupil products to help a pupil achieve the expected learning outcomes.

Modifications - A change in the number or the content of the learning outcomes a student with a significant cognitive disability is expected to meet in the Provincial curriculum as determined by the Student Support Team. These changes are documented in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Individualized Programming/Individualized Programming Designation - Some students' cognitive disabilities are so severe that they require learning outcomes that are individualized and different than the Manitoba curricular outcomes. These students need appropriate educational programming based on highly individualized and, functional student-specific outcomes within age-appropriate school and community environments. A team that includes parents makes the decision to provide individualized programming based on the student's cognitive ability. The student's specific outcomes or goals should be outlined in an IEP. Students receiving an individualized programming designation in high school do not use Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth curriculum. Individualized programming often includes vocational and transition planning for life after school. The Individualized (I) programming designation is not course specific but identifies a full year of individualized programming. Students do not receive marks; their progress is documented through the IEP process.

Note: students can participate in the modified course designations (M) or individualized designations (I), but not both.

3. Final Assessments and Examinations:

Final summative assessments and examinations are an important element of assessment of student learning when they are conducted in such a way that they effectively assess the achievement of the curricular learning outcomes upon which the course is based.

The following regulations will apply:

- All core subjects will have a final summative assessment in Grades 7 & 8.
- The percentage of the final mark for subjects in Grades 9-12 that have a final summative assessment will be as follows:
 - Grades 9 & 10 20%
 - Grades 11 & 12 30%
 - Grades 11 & 12 20% of students final course grades for Essential Mathematics

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- There will be no exemptions from final summative assessments (unless stated in the Student Specific Plan).

Provincial Tests:

These criterion – based tests are intended to provide pertinent information about each student's knowledge and skills related to learning outcomes as set out in provincial curriculum documents.

They count for:

- 30% of students' final course grades for Language Arts, Applied and Pre-Calculus Mathematics
- 20% of students' final course grades for Essential Mathematics

4. Academic Honesty:

Students must understand that the assignments they submit as evidence of learning and the tests / examinations they complete must be their own work and that academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

Teachers have the responsibility to communicate and reinforce expectations of academic honesty with students. Where academic dishonesty has occurred, the teacher is expected to respond appropriately. Aspects of academic dishonesty include copying others' work, using cheat notes, and submitting or representing someone else's work as one's own (plagiarism).

Teachers need to consider the nature of the assignment, the age and maturity of the student, the individual circumstances of the student and the potential impact of the consequence on subsequent learning and motivation when dealing with academic dishonesty. Whatever the consequence, students are expected to complete their work in an honest way.

5. Appeal of Marks and Grades:

A student who disagrees with an assessment of their work may appeal the result within five school days of the grade being issued according to the following procedure:

- The student (or parent / guardian) must verbally request a re-assessment from the teacher.
- The teacher will re-assess and communicate the results. It is understood that mark may be raised, lowered or remain the same.
- The student (or parent /guardian) may request, in writing, a second re-assessment to the principal within five school days after the results of the first appeal are made known.
- The principal is responsible to provide a re-assessment of the work. The assessment criteria and / or scoring rubric must be provided.

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- The mark allocated as a result of the re-assessment will be considered the final mark whether the mark is raised, lowered or remains the same.

A student who disagrees with the final grade may, within five school days of the grade being issued, request a re-calculation of the grade according to the following procedures:

- The student (or parent /guardian) must submit, in writing, a request for a grade re-calculation.
- The principal will conduct the grade re-calculation. The grade allocated as a result of the process will be considered the final grade for that course.

6. Reporting:

In accordance with the Public Schools Act, Rolling River School Division has an obligation to conduct regular assessments of student learning, record that data, and report formally to parents at regular reporting periods using the Manitoba Provincial Report Card.

K–8 schools will report a minimum of three times throughout the school year: November, March and June.

High Schools will report a minimum of two times during the course of a semester: November and February; April and June.

Student achievement must be reported and communicated appropriately, meaningfully and accurately to students, parents / guardians, and other teachers. The results must indicate the achievement of learning outcomes. In written reports, comments provided must describe student achievement in relation to the curriculum:

- What the student knows and is able to do;
- Areas of learning that require further attention and development;
- Ways in which the teacher is supporting the students learning needs, and ways the student can support his / her own learning.

Teachers will keep the school administrator informed of the progress of all students, including those students performing above and below grade or course expectations. Whenever a student is judged to be achieving below grade or course expectations, parents must be fully informed through regular communications.

Teachers must also consider the following when reporting student progress:

- Teachers are expected to make informal contact with parents/ guardians regarding student progress. Informal reports can be accomplished in a variety of manners, including (but not limited to) student agendas, telephone or electronic communications, notes, letters, or meetings.

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- The involvement of students reporting to parents is considered to be a vital part of the assessment process. Student self-assessment, reflections, portfolios and student-led conferences are strategies that can assist with this process.

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Appendix A – Rolling River School Division Grading Guidelines

Date Adopted: June 27, 2000

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Appendix A

Rolling River School Division Grading Guidelines

1. Relating Grading Procedures to the Learning Outcomes:

- All grading procedures will be linked to curricular outcomes as determined by Manitoba Education.
- Grade determination will be based solely on students' achievement of the stated outcomes.
- Teachers' grade books will indicate achievement by outcomes, rather than by assessment method.

2. Use of Performance Standards:

- Teachers will use the most effective assessment methods meeting the standards of quality assessment by:
 - Determining clear outcomes
 - Teachers, in collaboration with their colleagues, will determine the essential outcomes for each course / unit of study. Teachers are expected to understand and teach these outcomes.
 - Stating purpose of assessment and learning
 - Teachers will be clear on the purpose of assessment, i.e. whether it is FOR, AS or OF learning.
 - Matching outcome methods
 - Teachers will develop an appropriate repertoire of assessment strategies and will determine which strategies are best suited to measure the outcome.
 - Selecting appropriate samples
 - Teachers will give multiple opportunities for students to show their learning, choosing the most recent and / or most representative summative samples to create the grade.
 - Controlling distortion
 - Teachers will consider and address distortions such as time, noise, test anxieties and environment.
 - Providing timely feedback
 - Teachers will recognize the importance of feedback and will ensure students' assignments / tests are returned in a timely fashion.
 - Keeping accurate records
 - Teachers will keep records that reflect the principles of effective grading practices (i.e. based on summative, not formative samples, and based on outcomes, not types of assignments).
- Teachers will provide students with a written course outline, including an overview of their assessment plan for a given unit or course of study

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- Assessment of learning (summative assessment) is a critical component of a balanced assessment process. Where final examinations, projects, presentations, etc., serve as an assessment of learning in a given course, all students will complete the final summative assessment.

3. Creating the Grade:

- Grades will be based only on the demonstration of an individual student's knowledge and skills components of the outcome:
 - Teachers are required to use the most relevant and representative assessment information.
 - A student's grade will be determined by the teacher only; self- and peer- assessments will not be a part of a student's final grade.
 - Academic grades are based on curricular learning outcomes (i.e., they are criterion-referenced, not norm-referenced), and reported separately from learning behaviours.
 - Non-academic factors such as attitude, effort, and behaviour are not included in the determination of students' grades. However, it is understood that these factors affect student achievement and, therefore, grades.
 - Grades are based on individual student achievement, not group achievement.
- When determining the grade, the teacher will decide whether there is sufficient evidence of achievement. If not, the grade recorded will be an IN (incomplete), and no credit will be given until the missing work is completed. Teachers will determine with students and parents / guardians a plan for completion. Work will be accepted by the teacher until the last day of the semester / term, or at a mutually agreed upon time.
- Students are expected to meet the essential outcomes of each course. Professional discretion should be used to determine when it is appropriate to use the code 'IN'.

The code 'IN' may be used in the following scenarios:

- When a student's level of achievement cannot be assessed due to extended absence (professional judgement is applied when a substantial portion of subject content is missed during the term) or being new to the school with no available information from the previous school
- When the nature of the course is such that an interim grade cannot be determined (e.g., Grades 11 and 12 Health/Physical Education/Health Education, work placement, Independent Study Option (ISO))
- As an alternative to a failing grade related to missing evidence of achievement, the code 'IN' may be used when there is a plan in place to address the issue, as follows:
 - at Grades 1 to 6, in any term, including 'Final'
 - at Grades 7 and 8, in any term, including 'Final' and the 'Overall Grade'

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- at Grades 9 to 12, for any term, but not as a 'Final Grade' which is left blank until a final grade is determined, including cases where a course is extended beyond the time (according to a plan, as indicated above) when a final grade would normally have been determined.
- Grades will be calculated on summative information only, and not on homework, pre-tests, practice tasks, etc.
- Marks pertaining to a particular learning outcome will be determined using median or mode; the final grade will be determined using the mean of all learning outcome marks. Essential outcomes will be weighted equally.
- The final grade calculation will be a fair reflection of the student's achievement of the learning outcomes.

4. Communicating Learning:

- The grade on the student's report card will ONLY reflect the student's achievement of the learning outcomes, using only summative assessment information. Specific learning behaviours (e.g. effort, participation, homework / assignment completion, attendance) will be reflected separately and will not constitute part of the overall grade.
- Student achievement will be communicated to parents in multiple ways in order to provide on-going, clear and concise information about student achievement.
- Students who disagree with a final grade may, within five days of the grade being issued, request a review of the grade.

5. Professional Judgment

- Grading and reporting will always involve some degree of subjectivity. Based on the best evidence available, the teacher will use professional judgment to determine the grade. Above all, the grade should be an accurate reflection of what the student has learned.

Sources:

1. Communicating Student Learning - Guidelines for Schools (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2008)
2. How to Grade for Learning 3rd Edition (Ken O'Connor, 2009)
3. Manitoba Provincial Report Card Policy & Guidelines Partners for Learning (Manitoba Education & Training, 2017).
http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/docs/report_card/full_doc.pdf

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4. Policies and Procedures for Provincial Tests (Manitoba Education & Training, 2017)
5. Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind: Assessment for Learning, Assessment as Learning, Assessment of Learning. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education, Citizenship & Youth, 2006.
http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/wncp/full_doc.pdf
6. Provincial Assessment Policy Kindergarten to Grade 12 – Academic Responsibility, Honesty, and Promotion / Retention (Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2015)
7. Towards Inclusion: A Handbook for Individualized (I) Programming Designation, Senior Years at: www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/individu/index.html