

ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, AND COMMUNICATION OF STUDENT LEARNING

POLICY

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PREAMBLE

The Halifax Regional School Board is committed to helping students reach high levels of achievement. Assessment and evaluation are essential components of teaching and learning that together provide a basis to communicate student learning as well as to validate or inform instruction and programs.

1.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 1.1 Assessment, evaluation and communication of student learning will comply with the *Education Act* and the following provincial and regional policies:
 - 1.1.1 Nova Scotia Department of Education *Racial Equity Policy*
 - 1.1.2 Nova Scotia Department of Education *Special Education Policy Manual* and supporting documents (e.g., *Supporting Student Success* and *Challenge for Excellence*)
 - 1.1.3 Nova Scotia Department of Education *Public School Programs*
 - 1.1.4 Nova Scotia Department of Education *Guidelines for English as a Second Language (ESL) Programming and Services*
 - 1.1.5 Nova Scotia Department of Education *Student Records Policy*
 - 1.1.6 Halifax Regional School Board *Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights in Learning Policy* (C.010)

- 1.1.7 Halifax Regional School Board *Special Education Policy* (C.006)
- 1.1.8 Halifax Regional School Board *High School Attendance Policy* (B.109)

1.2 Assessment practices will be fair and equitable to all students. To promote fairness, *The Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada* (1993) will be followed.

2.0 CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT

2.1 While students are the most important users of all assessment information, the Halifax Regional School Board recognizes that classroom assessment has a variety of audiences. For each of these audiences, classroom assessment will serve the following primary purposes:

- 2.1.1 Students: To enhance the learning, motivation, and confidence of students, helping them develop skills and strategies as self-assessors who are responsible for their own learning;
- 2.1.2 Teachers: To identify individual student strengths and areas of concern in relation to the defined curriculum outcomes in order to inform next steps for instruction;
- 2.1.3 Parents/Guardians: To provide information about their children's strengths and areas of concern in relation to the defined curriculum outcomes, as well as information about how student progress and achievement can be supported;
- 2.1.4 School Administrators: To inform school targets for improvement and the allocation of resources.

2.2 Classroom assessment will:

- 2.2.1 Align with curriculum and instruction;
- 2.2.2 Inform instructional decisions;
- 2.2.3 Include a balance of formative and summative purposes;
- 2.2.4 Have a clear purpose which includes criteria for evaluation that is communicated to students in advance;
- 2.2.5 Provide equitable opportunities for students to demonstrate their achievement of the expected learning outcomes.

3.0 CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS

3.1 Students will be provided with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their progress toward achievement of outcomes.

- 3.2 Students, in consultation with their teachers, are responsible for completing all assignments.
- 3.3 All assignments will have reasonable due dates.
- 3.4 In the event that a due date for an assignment is missed, it will be at the discretion of the teacher and principal to extend the deadline.
- 3.5 Students who do not adhere to the extended deadline will have missed that opportunity to demonstrate achievement towards the outcomes addressed in that assignment.

4.0 FORMAL INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENTS AND EXTERNAL LARGE-SCALE ASSESSMENTS

- 4.1 Schools will participate in regional, provincial, national and international external large-scale assessments as required by the Department of Education and the Halifax Regional School Board.
- 4.2 Results from external large-scale assessments will not be used to determine student placement or grading.
- 4.3 Formal individual assessments will be conducted:
 - 4.3.1 Only by qualified professionals;
 - 4.3.2 Only after informed written consent is obtained from parents/guardians.
- 4.4 Schools will ensure the confidentiality of individual results from external large-scale and formal individual assessments (as required by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act).

5.0 SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

- 5.1 Every school will maintain a *School Plan for Communicating Student Learning* outlining multiple strategies and procedures to ensure effective communication and meaningful engagement of the broader community.
 - 5.1.1 Schools will use a variety of methods to communicate student achievement throughout the school year.
 - 5.1.2 Every teacher will develop a plan that is aligned with the *School Plan for Communicating Student Learning*.

6.0 GRADING AND REPORT CARDS

- 6.1 While grades and report cards serve many functions, their primary purpose is to communicate student achievement to a variety of audiences.
- 6.2 Grading and reporting will be conducted in a fair manner.
- 6.3 Grades and report cards will be based solely upon individual learning and will accurately reflect achievement of the outcomes as defined by the provincial curriculum and/or individual program plan. As such, individual student achievement will:
 - 6.3.1 Be measured against defined curriculum outcomes rather than compared to other students or measures of individual academic growth;
 - 6.3.2 Not be based on measures such as students' social development and work habits, bonus points, student absence, missed/late assignments, group scores, neatness, etc.
- 6.4 Report card grades will emphasize evidence collected from students' summative assessments.
- 6.5 Schools will use only board-authorized report cards.
- 6.6 Report cards will be distributed by predetermined deadlines as directed by the Nova Scotia Department of Education.

7.0 AUTHORIZATION

- 7.1 The Superintendent is authorized to issue procedures in support of this policy.

ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION AND COMMUNICATION OF STUDENT LEARNING

PROCEDURES

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APPENDIX

A. Definitions

1.0 CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT

- 1.1 School Administrators are responsible for:
 - 1.1.1 Ensuring that appropriate classroom assessment and evaluation practices are being utilized by the teachers in their school.
- 1.2 Teachers are responsible for:
 - 1.2.1 Ensuring the assessment, evaluation, and communication of student learning is aligned with the Department of Education's programs and expected learning outcomes;
 - 1.2.2 Designing assessment tools and strategies to ensure that all students are given equitable opportunities to demonstrate their achievement of the expected learning outcomes as per the *Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights in Learning Policy C.010*;
 - 1.2.3 Interpreting assessment results with a student's personal and social context in mind (e.g., age, ability, gender, language, opportunity to learn, self-esteem, socio-economic background, special interests, special needs, "test-taking" skills);

- 1.2.3.1 If a student performs poorly on an assessment, teachers will consider the possibility that one or more of these contextual factors interfered with this performance. If appropriate, the student will be given other opportunities to learn the skills or information involved and to demonstrate this learning.
- 1.2.4 Providing students and parents/guardians with a written syllabus of expected learning outcomes, assessment and evaluation strategies and grading criteria early in the school year. This will be communicated in a language students and parents can understand and will indicate how summative assessment will be used to determine course letter grades (grades 1-8) or percentage grades (grades 9-12);
- 1.2.5 Collaborating with colleagues responsible for the same grade or course within a school to establish common expectations for student achievement of learning outcomes. Student learning will be evaluated based on these expectations;
- 1.2.6 Evaluating student learning by:
 - 1.2.6.1 Developing clear criteria for grading student work;
 - 1.2.6.2 Communicating criteria for evaluation with students before the process of learning, assessing, evaluating and reporting occurs. The criteria and guidelines can be teacher-generated, student-generated, or developed collaboratively and, where possible, will be accompanied by examples of quality performance or product for each level of proficiency;
 - 1.2.6.3 Analyzing evidence of learning from multiple sources and methods.;
 - 1.2.6.4 Focusing on students' growth and achievements in relation to expected learning outcomes, rather than on students' characteristics and/or non-academic achievement. For example, behavior, class participation, and meeting deadlines are not curriculum outcomes and will not cause the student to gain or lose grades or value;
 - 1.2.6.5 Considering students' most recent work when making professional judgments and/or assigning value to their work.
- 1.2.7 Involving students in the assessment and evaluation process by:
 - 1.2.7.1 Discussing achievement targets and classroom assessment practices with students, in an-age appropriate manner, at the beginning of instruction and continuing this conversation on an ongoing basis;
 - 1.2.7.2 Ensuring that students have a range of opportunities and ways to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and attitudes pertaining to

expected learning outcomes by using multiple assessment strategies;

- 1.2.7.2.1 Using multiple assessment strategies which include, but are not limited to: presentations, portfolios, work samples, models, oral and/or written reports, journals, logs, performances, graphic/visual representations, experiments, concept maps, quizzes, tests, debates, projects, checklists, anecdotal records, conferences, surveys, or observations.
 - 1.2.7.3 Articulating expectations to students before the learning or before any form of assessment or evaluation, except when using diagnostic assessments prior to instruction to determine what students already know and what they need to know to achieve the expected learning outcomes;
 - 1.2.7.4 Helping students to understand and communicate the expected learning outcomes for which they are responsible, as well as the criteria that will be used to evaluate their work. Whenever possible students should be involved in creating the criteria;
 - 1.2.7.5 Giving students a variety of samples of student work (exemplars) to help them understand what quality looks like and what is required to achieve the expected learning outcomes;
 - 1.2.7.6 Providing timely, descriptive feedback of what each student knows and is able to do in relation to the expected learning outcomes, and how the student can improve in relation to those outcomes;
 - 1.2.7.7 Providing opportunities for students to give descriptive feedback to each other.
- 1.3 Program staff is responsible for:
- 1.3.1 Providing teachers with professional development in effective classroom assessment and evaluation practices.
- 1.4 Students are responsible for:
- 1.4.1 Accepting responsibility and ownership for their own learning through active involvement in the assessment and evaluation process in order to discover how they learn best and to understand exactly where they are in relation to the defined curriculum outcomes.

2.0 CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS

- 2.1 School Administrators are responsible for:
 - 2.1.1 Ensuring that information regarding procedures for completion of late or missed assignments are communicated to students and parents/guardians early in the school year;
 - 2.1.2 Consulting with teachers when necessary to determine a final deadline for late or missed assignments.
- 2.2 Teachers are responsible for:
 - 2.2.1 Communicating the purpose(s) of the assignment and the criteria for evaluating the work to the students when it is assigned;
 - 2.2.2 Providing timely, descriptive feedback when a product is involved;
 - 2.2.3 Ensuring that the grades students receive are a pure reflection of the student's achievement of the outcomes;
 - 2.2.4 Ensuring that assignments have clearly stated due dates that are communicated to students and parents/guardians where appropriate;
 - 2.2.5 Setting due dates for assignments which:
 - 2.2.5.1 Are reasonable and involve students where appropriate;
 - 2.2.5.2 Provide support and checkpoints;
 - 2.2.5.3 Encourage self-monitoring and the seeking of assistance;
 - 2.2.5.4 Involve consultation with other teachers within the school to avoid overlap;
 - 2.2.5.5 Can be extended at their discretion, in consultation with the principal.
 - 2.2.6 Determining an extended deadline and plan for successful completion of incomplete assignments with the student, as well as the principal. When deciding how much extra time to provide before the extended deadline, teachers will consider:
 - 2.2.6.1 The nature of the assignment and the amount of time needed for completion;
 - 2.2.6.2 The time needed for additional instruction;
 - 2.2.6.3 The need to return assignments to students for meaningful feedback;
 - 2.2.6.4 The need to maintain the logical progression of the course as prescribed by the Nova Scotia Department of Education;

- 2.2.7 Ensuring that grades are not reduced as a penalty for late assignments when extended deadlines are provided;
- 2.2.8 Providing students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their progress toward achievement of the outcomes. If an extended deadline is missed for assignments, the student's grade may be affected.
- 2.3 Students are responsible for:
 - 2.3.1 Seeking assistance with assignments when required;
 - 2.3.2 Requesting an extension for assignments in a timely manner when required;
 - 2.3.3 Completing assignments by specified due dates so that teachers can provide timely feedback.

3.0 GRADING AND REPORT CARDS

- 3.1 School Administrators are responsible for:
 - 3.1.1 Establishing school-wide early intervention systems for students requiring additional time and support before grading occurs;
 - 3.1.2 Ensuring use of board-authorized report cards;
 - 3.1.3 Ensuring distribution of report cards by predetermined deadlines as directed by the Halifax Regional School Board:
 - 3.1.3.1 Three times per school year for elementary and junior high schools;
 - 3.1.3.2 Two times over the duration of the semester, including one standard board-authorized report card at the end of the course, for senior high schools.
 - 3.1.4 Establishing school-based deadlines for submission of report cards;
 - 3.1.5 Providing direction and feedback to individual teachers on report cards as required;
 - 3.1.6 Facilitating discussions between teachers, parents/guardians and/or students on report cards when concerns arise that cannot be resolved at the classroom level;

- 3.1.7 Reviewing recommendations and supporting documentation regarding the grade-level placements of students for the following school year. The best interest of the student will guide this decision. In all cases, careful consideration will be given to possible disadvantages of placement and additional support required by the student.
 - 3.1.7.1 In cases when the grade-level placement for the following year is in question, the principal will make the final decision after consultation with others, including teacher(s), parents/guardians, Program Planning Team, and the student when appropriate.
 - 3.1.7.2 If the student is transitioning from one school to another, the principal at the originating school will make the decision regarding grade placement.

- 3.2 Teachers are responsible for:
 - 3.2.1 Employing early intervention for students requiring additional time and support before grading occurs;
 - 3.2.2 Explaining to students and parents/guardians how report card grades will be determined for the course(s) they teach;
 - 3.2.3 Using methods other than report cards to regularly inform students and parents/guardians about student progress toward the expected learning outcomes. Examples of these methods include notes, phone calls, meetings, web pages, newsletters, assessments, curriculum nights, student-led conferences, and parent-teacher interviews;
 - 3.2.4 Providing clear and well-supported feedback about student progress toward, and achievement of, the expected learning outcomes;
 - 3.2.5 Using language that is based on provincial curriculum outcomes and is easily understood by parents/guardians;
 - 3.2.6 Identifying the student's strengths, areas needing improvement, and what the individual student, parents/guardians and teacher can do to support learning in relation to the expected outcomes;
 - 3.2.7 Developing accurate report cards by:
 - 3.2.7.1 Always relating grading and reporting to expected learning outcomes;
 - 3.2.7.2 Excluding characteristics that are not linked to curriculum outcomes (such as effort, behavior and attendance);

- 3.2.7.3 Ensuring that the grade each student receives is a fair reflection of what he/she knows and can do, emphasizing the most recent summative assessment information. This information will be documented in a way that ensures its accuracy over time.
- 3.2.8 Basing report card grades and comments upon evidence gathered through classroom assessments;
 - 3.2.8.1 Results from large-scale external assessments will not be used for report card grades;
 - 3.2.8.2 Notwithstanding the above, at the senior high level results from Nova Scotia Examinations will form a component of report card grades as specified by the Department of Education.
- 3.3 Program staff is responsible for:
 - 3.3.1 Providing teachers with professional development on fair and equitable outcomes-based grading practices.

4.0 EXTERNAL LARGE-SCALE ASSESSMENTS

- 4.1 School Administrators are responsible for:
 - 4.1.1 Working with the school assessment coordinator and teachers to oversee the administration of all external large-scale assessments;
 - 4.1.2 Developing, in conjunction with program staff, a communication plan to report assessment results to parents/guardians and the broader school community;
 - 4.1.3 Communicating assessment results to the school community in a timely manner;
 - 4.1.4 Using external large-scale assessment data, along with other relevant data (e.g., classroom assessment information, school surveys, etc.), to plan for improvement. For example, the data may help in:
 - 4.1.4.1 Identifying strengths and areas of concern;
 - 4.1.4.2 Identifying what additional information is needed and how to collect the information;
 - 4.1.4.3 Determining next steps for improving student achievement;
 - 4.1.4.4 Setting school and classroom targets;
 - 4.1.4.5 Aligning resources with identified needs.
- 4.2 Teachers are responsible for:

- 4.2.1 Participating in developing, training for, administering, scoring and communicating the results of external large-scale assessments, as required by the Department of Education and the Halifax Regional School Board.
- 4.3 Students are responsible for:
 - 4.3.1 Participating in external large-scale assessments as required by the Department of Education and the Halifax Regional School Board
- 4.4 Program staff is responsible for:
 - 4.4.1 Using external large-scale assessment information to analyze system-wide, as well as school and classroom-based strengths and areas of need in order to determine where additional resources are required;
 - 4.4.2 Developing a report to the Board in order to communicate assessment results to parents/guardians and the broader school community in a timely manner. The plan will include, but not be limited to:
 - 4.4.2.1 A general statement to put the data in context;
 - 4.4.2.2 An explanation of the purpose of the assessments;
 - 4.4.2.3 A summary of results;
 - 4.4.2.4 A summary of strengths;
 - 4.4.2.5 Areas of concern revealed by the data;
 - 4.4.2.6 Next steps for improvement.
 - 4.4.3 Facilitating discussions on how to respond to areas requiring improvement;
 - 4.4.4 Designing and delivering professional development that reflects identified needs;
 - 4.4.5 Assisting schools in analyzing and using external large-scale assessment data, along with other relevant data (e.g., classroom assessment information, school surveys, etc.), to inform their plan for improvement.

5.0 COMMUNICATION OF STUDENT LEARNING

- 5.1 Administrators are responsible for:
 - 5.1.1 Involving parents/guardians in developing and implementing procedures that promote effective communication between the home and school;
 - 5.1.2 Using a variety of methods to communicate student achievement throughout the school year including, but not limited to:

- 5.1.2.1 Scheduling at least two curriculum-related events each year to inform the school community about curriculum, expected learning outcomes, and assessment and evaluation practices and procedures;
- 5.1.2.2 Scheduling at least two interviews each year for parents/guardians to meet with teachers in order to review the progress and achievement of their children, as defined by the Halifax Regional School Board calendar. Invitations will be extended to all parents/guardians. These meetings may take the form of parent-teacher conferences, parent-student-teacher conferences, or student-led conferences.
- 5.1.3 Developing a school plan for communicating student learning each year. This plan must be in a language that the school community can understand and will include the following components:
 - 5.1.3.1 Definitions (e.g., formative assessment, summative assessment, external large-scale assessments);
 - 5.1.3.2 A clear statement about the alignment between assessment and evaluation of student learning and provincial curriculum outcomes;
 - 5.1.3.3 A general description of the strategies and tools used to assess student achievement, highlighting the importance of using multiple assessment and evaluation strategies to meet the learning styles of all students;
 - 5.1.3.4 Expectations for informing parents/guardians about a student's progress and achievement, including when concerns may arise;
 - 5.1.3.5 Provisions to help parents/guardians when concerns arise, making reference to the Parent Concern Protocol;
 - 5.1.3.6 A school year calendar that includes dates for curriculum nights, parent-teacher interviews, release of report cards, as well as when external large-scale assessments will take place;
 - 5.1.3.7 A clear but brief user's guide to the school report card;
 - 5.1.3.8 A statement outlining provisions for students who miss deadlines for classroom assignments, indicating that students will be provided with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning;
 - 5.1.3.9 Information about identification, assessment, referral and program planning for students with special needs.
- 5.2 Teachers are responsible for:
 - 5.2.1 Adhering to the School Plan for Communicating Student Learning, recognizing the instrumental role they play in ensuring the successful implementation of the Plan;

5.2.2 Developing a communication plan that is aligned with the School Plan for Communicating Student Learning. This plan will contain:

- 5.2.2.1 An outline of assessment and evaluation strategies, practices and procedures;
- 5.2.2.2 An explanation of the purpose of assessment and evaluation;
- 5.2.2.3 Multiple assessment and evaluation strategies that meet the learning styles of students and are aligned with the written curriculum outcomes.

5.3 Program staff is responsible for:

5.3.1 Supporting schools in communicating with their communities about the expected learning outcomes and students' progress toward these outcomes.

6.0 ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES

6.1 Students with Special Needs

6.1.1 School Administrators are responsible for:

- 6.1.1.1 Ensuring that parents/guardians are aware of the board's policies and procedures for identification, referral and assessment of students with special needs at the time of registration or early in the school year;
- 6.1.1.2 Ensuring that informed written consent is obtained from parents/guardians, using the Consent for Service Form, before any formal individual assessment and/or consultation is carried out by school board personnel;
- 6.1.1.3 Ensuring that the results of formal individual assessments are clearly communicated to parents/guardians in a timely manner;
- 6.1.1.4 Ensuring that parents/guardians are provided with a copy of the written results of the formal individual assessments when the school receives them;
- 6.1.1.5 Receiving, disseminating, documenting and storing reports based on formal individual assessments from school board personnel and/or outside agencies. Formal individual assessment reports must be:
 - 6.1.1.5.1 Made known to members of the student's program planning team;
 - 6.1.1.5.2 Documented in the student's Cumulative Record Folder and stored in the Folder or, in the case of confidential records, in the Special Documents Envelope located in the Cumulative Record Folder.

6.1.1.6 Ensuring a standard board-authorized Individual Program Plan report card is used for students following Individual Program Plans. These report cards will be distributed at the same time as regular program report cards.

6.1.2 Program Planning Teams are responsible for:

6.1.2.1 Considering a wide range of assessment and evaluation information when developing, reviewing and revising Individual Program Plan outcomes, methods, materials and strategies. When appropriate, students will be involved in this process;

6.1.2.2 Considering a wide range of assessment and evaluation information when developing, reviewing and revising adaptations. When appropriate, students will be involved in this process.

6.1.3 Teachers are responsible for:

Adaptations:

6.1.3.1 Determining appropriate adaptations for students with moderate needs and making them available to students as part of any assessment and evaluation process;

6.1.3.2 Engaging parents/guardians and, if appropriate, the student, in development of programming adaptations recommended to assess and evaluate the students' progress toward the expected learning outcomes;

6.1.3.3 Ensuring assessment and evaluation adaptations are not recorded on the student's report card (adaptations to instructional or assessment/evaluation strategies are designed to enable students to meet grade-level Public School Program learning outcomes);

6.1.3.4 Recording adaptations on the Programming Adaptations Form;

6.1.3.5 Providing a copy of the Programming Adaptations Form to parents/guardians;

6.1.3.6 Storing a copy of the Programming Adaptations Form in the student's Cumulative Record Folder;

6.1.4 Individual Program Plans:

6.1.4.1 Aligning assessment and evaluation with outcomes identified on the student's Individual Program Plan, and focusing primarily on the student's progress toward those outcomes;

6.1.4.2 Reviewing results from individual formal assessments and using this information, along with classroom assessments, to inform program planning for the student.

- 6.1.5 Professional support staff is responsible for:
 - 6.1.5.1 Collaborating with classroom teachers in the writing of report cards for students when appropriate;
- 6.1.6 Speech Language Pathologists, School Psychologists, and Severe Learning Disabilities Teachers are responsible for:
 - 6.1.6.1 Submitting written reports on students with identified special needs for whom they have provided sustained support services;
- 6.1.7 Resource Teachers are responsible for:
 - 6.1.7.1 Submitting written reports on students for whom they have provided sustained support services. This report will include frequency/duration of support, a description of remediation, compensation and learning strategies used, and student progress.
- 6.1.8 Program staff is responsible for:
 - 6.1.8.1 Ensuring that qualified professionals conduct formal individual assessments (e.g., psycho-educational assessments, KeyMath, Woodcock Reading Mastery), interpret the results, and provide recommendations to parents/guardians, teachers and others involved with the student's program;
 - 6.1.8.2 Ensuring that informed written consent is obtained from parents/guardians before any formal individual assessments are initiated.
- 6.2 English as a Second Language Students
 - 6.2.1 School Administrators are responsible for:
 - 6.2.1.1 Ensuring that individual students who require ESL programming services are provided with the appropriate assessment and evaluation methods and strategies to support their needs.
 - 6.2.2 English as a Second Language teachers are responsible for:
 - 6.2.2.1 Collaborating with program staff, classroom, resource and learning centre teachers to assist ESL students in achieving the learning outcomes;
 - 6.2.2.2 Assessing and evaluating students using the following process:

- 6.2.2.2.1 Assessments for the purpose of qualification for ESL placement;
- 6.2.2.2.2 Formative assessments to guide teaching and learning;
- 6.2.2.3 Assessments for the purpose of discontinuing direct ESL programming and services.
- 6.2.2.4 Ensuring that annual assessments of English proficiency are conducted;
- 6.2.2.5 Ensuring that linguistic and cultural diversity are factored into the interpretation of assessment results;
- 6.2.2.6 Providing individual written reports on the progress of each student for whom they have provided direct support services; including information regarding the student's English proficiency;
- 6.2.2.7 Making appropriate adaptations available to English as second language students as part of any assessment and evaluation process. ESL teachers will collaborate with classroom teachers to help provide appropriate adaptations.
- 6.2.3 Classroom teachers are responsible for:
 - 6.2.3.1 Collaborating with program staff, ESL, resource and learning centre teachers to assist English language learners in achieving the learning outcomes;
 - 6.2.3.2 Using effective assessment and evaluation strategies to assist ESL students achieving learning outcomes;
 - 6.2.3.3 Requesting additional support as required when ESL students are unable to meet the language-dependent outcomes specific to various subject areas.
- 6.2.4 Program staff is responsible for:
 - 6.2.4.1 Providing teachers with professional development in the area of assessment and evaluation of ESL students;
 - 6.2.4.2 Establishing appropriate assessment and evaluation supports for ESL students including, but not limited to, allocation of personnel, time and materials;

- 6.2.4.3 Collaborating with ESL, classroom, resource and learning centre teachers to develop effective assessment and evaluation methods and strategies for English as a second language students;
- 6.2.4.4 Ensuring that qualified school board personnel (e.g., ESL teacher or someone with equivalent training) will conduct initial formal individualized assessment;
- 6.2.4.5 Ensuring that informed written consent is obtained from parents/guardians before any formal individual assessments are initiated;
- 6.2.4.6 Ensuring that diagnostic achievement tests are used only as initial assessments to identify what the student has already learned academically, to target the best point in the curriculum to begin instruction, and to assist in the selection of instructional materials;
- 6.2.4.7 Ensuring that ability (IQ) tests written in English are not used with students from non-English speaking backgrounds until they have had time to develop capacity within the English language and a broader understanding of the local culture.

6.3 Elementary Schools

6.3.1 School Administrators are responsible for:

- 6.3.1.1 Determining final placement of students entering primary from private schools to ascertain if appropriate placement is in primary or grade one.
 - 6.3.1.1.1 Students who will complete a year of schooling in a private school setting in June of the same year will be identified in January/February.
 - 6.3.1.1.2 Assessment of students will take place during the month of May.
 - 6.3.1.1.3 Final placement of students will occur in late May/early June after consultation with school personnel and parents. Consideration will be given to the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of these students.

6.3.2 Teachers are responsible for:

- 6.3.2.1 Emphasizing descriptive feedback when communicating student learning to Primary students and their parents/guardians, rather than letter/number grades and grades;
- 6.3.2.2 Considering no single assessment event as the main source of evidence when evaluating, grading and reporting student progress toward achievement of the expected learning outcomes.

6.4 Junior High Schools

6.4.1 School Administrators are responsible for:

6.4.1.1 Ensuring that no written examinations are given at the Junior High level, except for those falling under the provisions of Procedure 6.4.3 described below.

6.4.2. Teachers are responsible for:

6.4.2.1 Deriving no more than one-third of a student's term grade or final course grade from tests;

6.4.2.2 Assigning no single assessment event a value of more than one-third of a student's term grade or consider such an event as the main evidence when evaluating, grading and reporting student progress toward achievement of the expected learning outcomes;

6.4.3 Teachers of grade 9 students are responsible for:

6.4.3.1 Assessing student learning in part by having students participate in a cumulative assessment event in all Public School Program core subjects during their final term in Grade 9.

6.4.3.1.1 This cumulative assessment event should allow students to demonstrate an appropriate range of the expected learning outcomes of the course(s) of study and, as such, will form an integral component of the teacher's assessment and evaluation plan.

6.4.3.1.2 The cumulative assessment can take many forms. If this assessment takes the form of a written examination, it will take place during the same timeframe as senior high school examinations. Any exceptions to this must have prior approval from the Director, Program.

6.4.3.1.3 No student will be exempt from the cumulative assessment event except for exceptional circumstances or as determined by an Individual Program Plan.

6.4.3.1.4 The cumulative assessment event (year-end summative assessment) will determine no more than one-quarter of the student's third term grade.

6.4.3.1.5 School administrators may alter the school schedule to accommodate these assessment events, as described by the school in its School Plan for Communicating Student Learning.

6.5 Senior High Schools

6.5.1 School Administrators are responsible for:

- 6.5.1.1 Consulting with the School Advisory Council and parent/guardian when making decisions regarding exemptions from examinations;
- 6.5.1.2 Defining the relationship between student behaviour and the qualification for exemption. This will be communicated to students and parents/guardians.

6.5.2 Teachers are responsible for:

- 6.5.2.1 Providing students with a written outline of the course assessment and evaluation plan, including components and values, in the first week of a course. The teacher will inform students if he or she changes the plan;
- 6.5.2.2 Using an appropriate balance of written tests and examinations, as well as other performance assessment strategies, as indicated by the course outline. Tests and examinations will account for no more than 60% of the final grade in any course;
- 6.5.2.3 Assigning no single assessment event, including an examination, a value of more than 30% of the final course grade;
- 6.5.2.4 Assessing student learning in part by having students participate in a final assessment event that allows them to demonstrate an appropriate range of the expected learning outcomes for the course. For most courses, this event will be a written examination, as commonly understood by the school community, scheduled during the examination period. This final assessment, whether an examination or an alternative assessment event, will be worth no more than 30% of the final course grade;
- 6.5.2.5 Having only one examination if teaching semestered courses that assess student learning in part by written examination. Non-semestered courses that assess student learning by written examination may have one or two examinations for the course.

6.5.3 High School Exemptions

- 6.5.3.1 The school is permitted to allow students to be exempt from one examination per semester.
- 6.5.3.2 A student who has any unexcused absence in any course will not be considered for an exemption.
- 6.5.3.3 In order to qualify for an exemption, the student must have completed all major assessment components (other than the final

assessment/examination) in each of the courses which s/he is enrolled.

6.5.3.4 A student cannot be exempted from a Nova Scotia Examination except on the terms laid down by the Department of Education.

6.5.3.5 A student cannot be exempt from any grade 11 course examination for which there is a grade 12 Nova Scotia Examination.

6.5.3.6 A student shall not accumulate any more than:

- 6 excused absences in any course in which the student is enrolled within any one semester;
- 6 excused absences in any course in which the student is enrolled for the full year;
- 3 excused absences in any half credit course in which the student is enrolled.

APPENDIX A

Definitions

Assessment is the act of collecting information on student progress and achievement using a variety of tasks designed to monitor and improve student learning.

- **Formative Assessments (Assessment *for* Learning)** are ongoing assessments that take place during the teaching and learning process *for the purpose of* showing growth over time, determining student needs, planning next steps in instruction, and providing students with descriptive feedback. Assessments become formative when teachers use the information gathered to adapt their teaching in order to meet the needs of students.
- **Summative Assessments (Assessment *of* Learning)** are assessments that take place at the end of a period of learning *for the purpose of* determining the extent to which learning has occurred. In **assessment *of* learning**, the teacher assesses students' achievement of the outcomes. These assessments are used to make statements about student learning to those outside the classroom.

Evaluation is the act of analyzing, judging and/or making decisions about assessment information for the purpose of providing descriptive feedback (formative) or evaluative feedback (summative).

Descriptive Feedback is specific oral or written information that helps students understand what they are doing well and what they need to do next in order to improve.

Evaluative Feedback is a summary of how well students have performed on a particular task or during a term/semester. It often involves symbols, such as letters, numbers or check grades, as well as phrases such as "excellent", "well done", "try harder next time". Evaluative feedback lets students know whether or not they need to improve, but it does not provide them with information about how to improve.

Grading is the process of using summative assessment evidence of student achievement of the outcomes to determine the report card grade (number or letter). This is distinct from **gradeing**, which is the process of assigning a number or letter to a piece of student work throughout the term.

Reporting is the process of communicating student progress toward achievement of the expected learning outcomes.

External Large-Scale Assessments are assessments and evaluations that are designed by a group outside the school in order to collect data for use at the national, provincial, regional, school and classroom levels.

Expected Learning Outcomes are the goal statements prescribed by the Department of Education that indicate what teachers are required to teach and students are expected to

know and be able to do for each grade level and program/course. (see <http://www.ednet.ns.ca/index.php?sid=865172598&cat=1&t=1>). These goal statements are the general and specific outcomes that make up the written curriculum.

Curriculum Alignment is aligning the written Department of Education provincial curriculum outcomes with all assessments and instructional practices.

School Community consists of students, parents/guardians, teaching and non-teaching staff serving the school, school advisory councils, school groups, community members, partners, board members, board staff, and others with a connection to the school.

Formal Individual Assessments are assessments, such as standardized tests, intended to produce diagnostic information about the student's ability or achievement. Formal assessment instruments have standardized procedures for administration, scoring and interpretation.

Promotion indicates that the student has satisfied the program requirements and met the outcomes for that grade or course. The student will advance to the next higher grade or course.

Placement indicates that the student has not satisfied the program requirements or met the outcomes required for that grade or course, but has been placed into the next grade/course based on the decision made by the school in the best interest of the student.