

101 – Continuous Improvement of Assessment and Instruction

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BACKGROUND

The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve teaching and learning based upon a vision of success for all.

DEFINITIONS

This administrative procedure provides criteria for the assessment and evaluation of a student's achievement and emphasizes the importance of providing authentic evidence in relation to student learning. The various forms of assessment supported by the district are outlined with a description for the purpose of each.

Assessment: Assessment is a continuous process of gathering information about student learning and performance, using a variety of sources over time.

Assessment *for* Learning (Formative Assessment): Assessment for the purposes of increasing student learning in relation to the essential learning outcomes from the BC Ministry of Education's *Prescribed Learning Outcomes*, cross-curricular competencies and Standards of Achievement. It is designed to give teachers information so as to adjust teaching and guide instructional practice. Teachers use this information to provide feedback to students for improved learning.

Assessment *as* Learning (Formative and Self-Assessment): Assessment for the purpose of increasing students' awareness of their own learning through metacognitive processes. These assessment practices are characterized by students reflecting on their own learning to become adaptable, flexible, and independent in their learning and decision-making.

Assessment *of* Learning (Summative Assessment): Assessment for the purposes of providing evidence of student achievement for reporting in relation to the BC Ministry of Education's *Prescribed Learning Outcomes*. This is used to confirm what students know and are able to do.

Evaluation: Evaluation is the process of judging the quality of student work in the assessments, on the basis of established criteria, and the assigning of a value to represent the quality.

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POLICY

The Nanaimo-Ladysmith Public School Board is committed to providing quality learning opportunities for all students and balanced assessment practices as an integral part of teaching and learning. The Board recognizes the positive influence that high quality assessment practices have on the motivation and self-esteem of students. Assessment and evaluation practices in the district are intended to provide effective feedback to guide a learner's self-evaluation. The results of such assessments are also used to communicate achievement to students, parents, staff and others.

Assessment data also provides valuable information to the Ministry of Education and the Board of Education to guide the allocation of resources to schools and to help identify programming needs. The instruction and assessment practices of Nanaimo-Ladysmith Public Schools support the continuous improvement of learning and employ a variety of methods. Effective practices reflect the reciprocal relationship between the teacher and learner, and are based upon reflection and support the well-being of students, families, and communities.

Nanaimo–Ladysmith Public Schools Assessment Principles:

The following fundamental principles lay the foundation for authentic and focused practice. They guide the collection of meaningful information that informs instructional decisions, promotes the engagement of learners, and improves learning.

The principles also ensure that assessment, evaluation, and reporting are valid and reliable, and that they lead to the improvement of learning for all students, and allow teachers to employ practices and procedures that are characterized as being:

- Fair, transparent, and equitable for all learners;
- Supportive of all learners, including those with special education needs and those who are learning the language of instruction (English or French);
- Supportive of learners who are First Nation, Metis, or Inuit;
- Reflective of Indigenous peoples' principles of teaching and learning;
- 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 learners;
- Communicated clearly to learners and families at the beginning of the school year or course and at other appropriate points throughout the school year or course;
- Ongoing, varied in nature, and administered over a period of time to provide multiple opportunities for learners to demonstrate the full range of their learning;
- A source of ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement.
- Supportive of the development of a learner's self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning.

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Commitment to Effective Practice:

All students are expected to participate in assessment and evaluation in accordance with provincial and district policy. Students shall be accommodated according to their individually identified needs.

Nanaimo-Ladysmith Public Schools will:

1.0 Ensure that all learners participate in provincial, national and international assessments as required by the BC Ministry of Education and the Board of Education. Participation in provincial assessments provides information about system performance and identifies student progress toward provincial learning outcomes. Large-scale assessments provide a measure of accountability to parents, community and other stakeholders. Results of provincial assessments should be communicated to participating learners in order to facilitate personal growth and goal setting.

2.0 Identify and support the implementation of district assessments in order to provide for continuous improvement of instruction and assessment to enhance student learning at the local level. Under the direction of the Superintendent, district level educators will identify and support the implementation of district wide assessments in alignment with the BC Ministry of Education Curriculum, District and School Goals. District-wide assessments will be implemented on a cyclical basis to provide both formative and summative assessment information. The purpose of assessment at the district level would be to:

- Inform instruction at the school, classroom, and individual student level,
- Support grade to grade transitions,
- Identify students at risk,
- Inform professional learning, collaboration, and in-service needs for educators in the district, and
- Provide schools and the district with data to help allocate and focus district resources.

The District Assessment Review Committee, comprised of teacher, parent and administrative representatives, will review district assessment procedures at regular intervals.

3.0 Promote and utilize school and classroom assessment practices that include assessment *for, as* and *of* learning in order to meet each student's unique needs and to support the continuous improvement of instruction and assessment. School and classroom level assessments are integral to the planning and delivery of curriculum and to the identification of instructional practices that best meet the diverse learning needs of our students. Teachers will use a variety of assessment tools and practices to facilitate student learning and to develop necessary interventions and enrichments to promote personalized learning.

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Information from these assessments will enhance communication with educators, students and their families in relation to the student's demonstration of learning based upon the BC Ministry of Education's *Prescribed Learning Outcomes*. Assessment practices will be holistic in nature, and incorporate experiences that enhance a learner's self-concept and develop the learner's:

- Understanding of personal strengths and talents,
- Awareness of next steps to improve personal learning,
- Personal reflection, self-assessment and goal-setting, and
- Understanding of their personal learning processes.

Legal References:

First Peoples Principles of Learning: First Nations Education Steering Committee (2012).
Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools, 2010 Ministry of Education, Province of Ontario
Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada, developed by the Joint Advisory Committee, Centre for Research in Applied Measurement and Evaluation, at the University of Alberta, 1993.
Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind: Western and Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Education, 2006.
Student Assessment in Finland – Basic Education. The Finnish National Board of Education (2005).

Monitoring Method:

Monitoring Frequency:

Adopted:

Previous Policy Number:

Amended:

The Scottish Government Curriculum for Excellence, 2011
Internal Reports/Superintendent
Annual
2013.08.26
Policy 1.3
2017.04.26