

PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

Turtle Mountain School Division believes that assessment, evaluation and communication of student achievement and growth are essential to the teaching and learning process. Assessment practices should support continuous learning, development and personal growth for students. The main purpose of assessment is to improve student learning.

Turtle Mountain School Division is committed to the guiding principal of assessment through the implementation of assessment for learning.

Ongoing assessment of student learning will be reported to parent/legal guardians or adult students at regular reporting periods throughout the year.

Specialized assessments will occur upon the recommendation of the school team, with parent/legal guardian consent, after informal and school based assessments have been completed and indicate the need for further and more specialized assessment.

Results of specialized assessments will be interpreted to parents/legal guardians (and students when appropriate) in a timely manner. The assessment data will be used in developing Individual Education Plans and in making programming decisions for students.

Assessment of Learning provides an accurate summary to students, parents, other teachers, employers, and institutions of further learning what the student knows and can do with respect to the curriculum. Assessment of learning is evidence of student achievement.

Evidence of student achievement is collected over time from three different sources- observations, conversations, and student products. By using multiple sources of evidence the reliability and validity of the assessment of student achievement increases.

Assessment tasks used for reporting purposes may be in the form of performance tasks, demonstrations, projects, and/or essays as well as tests or exams and/or assignments. To ensure fairness for all students, assessment tasks are to be completed, whenever possible, under the supervision of a teacher. Care should be taken to distinguish between homework assignments designed to be graded for reporting purposes from the homework assigned to practice skills, or as preparation for future class work.

The teacher is responsible for the assessment of student learning. The teacher will consider all evidence collected through assessment tasks that the student has completed or submitted; the number of tests/exams or assignments that were not completed or submitted, and the evidence of achievement that is available in a particular grade or course.

In addition, the teacher will consider that some evidence carries greater weight than other evidence; for example some performance tasks are richer and reveal more about students' skills and knowledge than others. Teachers will weigh all evidence of student achievement in light of these considerations and will use their professional judgment to determine the student's report card grade. The report card grade represents a student's overall achievement, as demonstrated to that point in time.

The teacher will use their professional judgment in determining a grade. This includes the interpretation of evidence. The grade will reflect the student's most consistent level of achievement, with special consideration given to more recent evidence. Not all assessment scores need to be included.

Principals will ensure that there is a common understanding among all staff about the process for determining the final grade. They are expected to exercise leadership and work collaboratively with teachers to ensure the common and fair grading practices follow departmental and divisional policies.

The Division believes the writing of examinations is a valuable component of the assessment of learning process and, therefore, are part of an appropriate student assessment process. The school examination and exemption policy will be communicated to students, parents and Superintendent at the beginning of each semester or school year.

Mid-term and semester assessment of learning tasks will be conducted at the end of January or beginning of February over a period not to exceed five days. During these days classes for high school students will be cancelled and assessment results are to be returned to the student by a date determined by the principal. (G-12)

Academic Responsibility

Teachers will provide each student and their parents/guardian with a course outline or other forms of communication at the beginning of the year/course, which will clearly articulate how the students will be assessed, the importance of academic honesty; along with clear language on the importance of submitting assignments in a timely manner, and subsequent penalties for late assignments.

Teachers must establish and clearly communicate expectations regarding assignments.

Assignment requirements and assessment criteria should be discussed with students. Teachers will communicate to the students the intended learning outcomes, the nature of the products and performances, and the criteria for judging evidence of learning. Teachers should be prepared to clarify the expectations if necessary, through exemplars, and to provide timely and specific feedback to students. Students must be actively and meaningfully involved in all phases of learning and assessment. Of particular importance is the need to ensure students are "assessment literate" and able to self-assess. All students should participate in self and peer assessment. However, the final grade is determined by the teacher.

Teachers must set and communicate reasonable timelines for assignments and support students in meeting these timelines.

The timelines that teachers set should provide adequate time for students to complete the work, while being mindful of other demands and of student's strengths and challenges.

Teachers should use their professional judgment to establish reasonable but firm expectations regarding timelines. They should use their professional judgment to support and motivate students who do not take responsibility for their work through the use of a variety of strategies to ensure students make regular progress on assignments. Regular communication about student progress among teachers, students and parents will support timely completion of assignments. Other strategies should include the following:

- Solicit and consider student input and collaborate with other staff to coordinate the timing of major assignments.
- Share assignment timelines and reminders through many means, including classroom web pages, email, and course outlines.

- Assist students to manage time effectively-monitoring student progress at each stage of a complex assignment can ensure they stay on track.
- Anticipate which students may require additional supports to complete assigned tasks, and monitor those students closely.
- Choose, when appropriate, to extend time for completing assignments, especially for students who communicate with the teacher in advance of the due date.
- Contact parents to discuss strategies for keeping students on track when they are falling behind or not taking responsibility for their work.

Students' specific learning behaviours will be reported separately in order for students to understand the behaviours associated with their learning. For instance, effort, participation, and attendance require teacher feedback but not as part of a student's overall grade in a given subject area.

Establish, communicate and apply consequences for late or missing work.

A teacher can only deduct marks for late assignments after the teacher has initially acted upon other strategies.

Students must understand that there will be consequences for not completing assignments that provide evidence of learning or submitting those assignments late. If, after establishing and clearly communicating expectations regarding assignments, setting and communicating timelines for assignments, and supporting student learning using the strategies provided above, student work is still late or missing, teachers should apply the following strategies based on their professional judgment:

- Confer with the student and, where appropriate, with the student's parents about the reasons for not completing the assignment, and consider the legitimacy of reasons.
- Develop an agreement with the student to complete the work.
- Require the student to complete missing work during school time or at lunch or after school with a supervised setting in accordance with division policy.
- Provide appropriate support to students in the form of counseling or peer tutoring to address issues and barriers that may be preventing the student from completing assigned work.
- Provide additional supports to students who are learning English as an additional language.
- Provide alternative assessment tasks that accommodate diverse learning needs.

When faced with deducting marks, a teacher, if they decide to do so, must not deduct marks so as to misrepresent the student's achievement. If the above strategies are unsuccessful in supporting students to complete their work, teachers may deduct marks for late or missing assignments. Teachers should ensure that mark deduction will not result in a mark that, in the professional judgment of the teacher, misrepresents the student's actual achievement.

In applying consequences to late or missing work, teachers will consider the nature of the assignment, the individual circumstances of the student (especially struggling learners), and the potential impact of the consequence on subsequent learning and motivation. Whatever the consequences, students are ultimately responsible for the timely completion of their assignments and for knowing that there are consequences for failure to adhere to those parameters.

In situations where a student has numerous incompletes (IN) in a course, the teacher must consult with their school-based administrator, prior to determining the final academic status of a student in the course.

Including this step in assessing a student's progress ensures the teacher has exhausted all possible sources of evidence in support of whether the student met the outcome(s) of the course.

Academic Honesty

Teachers and administrators, when dealing with issues related to academic honesty, should consider the Code of Conduct Policy H-1 along with the wording in this document. Students are expected to exhibit self-discipline and be responsible for their behavior. To this end and in accordance with the Provincial Assessment Policy Kindergarten to Grade 12: Academic Responsibility, Honesty, and Promotion/Retention (Manitoba Education, 2010), the Division expects all students will demonstrate integrity, ethical conduct and academic honesty in all assessments, research, class work and homework assignments. The Division will not tolerate academic dishonesty, which includes the following:

- Cheating: e.g. copying others work, using cheat sheets, any methods whereby a student gains an unfair advantage.
- Deception: e.g. misrepresenting contributions to group work, providing false information in order to obtain an extension on deadlines.
- Plagiarizing: e.g. submitting or misrepresenting someone else's work on one's own.

The principal and teacher are responsible for ensuring that expectations for academic honesty are communicated and reinforced frequently and consistently with all students. At the beginning of each school year, schools are to communicate this information in school newsletters, websites and course outlines.

Teacher, in consultation with the principal, will determine whether a breach for academic honesty has occurred. In circumstances where it has been determined that the student has engaged in dishonest behavior the principal/or teacher will:

- Inform the student's parent/guardian promptly.
- Document the incident in the student's file.
- Ensure that the student completes the work honestly.

The principal and teacher may determine an additional consequence be implemented such as the following:

- Student takes an active role in helping other students learn the value of academic honesty.
- Enforce loss of privileges for the student at the school.
- Deduct marks for academic dishonesty.
- Detention
- Suspension

In determining an appropriate consequence the Division expects that the principal and the teacher will 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. In all cases, both the principal and the teacher will ensure that support is provided to teach students how to demonstrate academic honesty.

Academic Promotion Retention

Turtle Mountain School Division recognizes that students vary in their ability to learn and the rate at which they learn. Decisions around promotion or retention have far-reaching implications for student success in school.

Whether the decision is to promote or retain a struggling student, the school will address the student's learning needs by providing the appropriate supports through an individualized education plan (IEP).

In kindergarten to grade 8, the decision for a student's grade level placement that best supports and extends their learning is based on the evidence of the student's progress and growth, and considers the grade level placement that would support and extend the student's learning. This decision rests with the principal in consultation with teachers, parents and other specialists as appropriate.

In grade 9 to 12, the final decision on whether to grant credits rests with the principal, who consults with teachers, parents and other specialists as appropriate. Granting credits and diplomas must be based on clear evidence of achievement of the learning outcomes set out in the provincial curricula or modified curricula (as set out in an individual education plan), as appropriate.

If a student does not submit the necessary evidence of learning to be granted a credit in a course, then the student may be assigned a failing grade or be assigned a grade of "IN" (incomplete). If an "IN" is assigned, a plan must be put in place at the school level to assist the student in submitting the outstanding evidence of learning to receive the credit within a reasonable, agreed-upon timeframe. Once a student has been granted a percentage mark, this information will be reported to the Department of Education.

Promotion Appeal Process

In the event that parents/guardians do not agree with the decision regarding the promotion or retention of a student, the following procedures will be in place.

The parents/guardians will request that the principal conduct an inquiry of the decision to promote or retain the student. The results of the inquiry will be communicated to the parents/guardians in writing and a copy retained in the student's file.

If the principal's findings continue to be unsatisfactory to the parents/guardians, a letter may be written to the Superintendent outlining the concern, the superintendent shall review the circumstances with the principal and will convene a meeting of the parents/guardians, principal and any other individual pertinent to the review.

The Superintendent will inform the applicable staff, parents/guardians of the outcome of the review within a reasonable and mutually agreed upon timeframe.