

Turtle Mountain School Division



The future is in our hands.

Assessment and Evaluation Handbook

February, 2013
(Revised April, 2019)

PURPOSE

The following document outlines the “effective practices” framework that every teacher within the TMSD will adhere to. This framework reflects current understanding of successful practices in assessment and evaluation.

TMSD Context and Belief Statements

Our education system is in the midst of a tremendous opportunity to address changes in how we imagine learning for students within our school setting. Over 100 years ago, schools were developed to address the need to rank, sort, and group children in preparation for their roles in the industrial world. Despite changing societal needs, learners, family structures and increased need for accountability, education continues to employ many of the same systems it used years ago. Now, with changes in the way we understand current learning through brain research, we know that education must change to accommodate today’s learners.

Today, we are seeking to ensure all students leave school as lifelong learners who continue to build a sense of self in the community and who are engaged citizens. When we continue to use the ranking philosophy from the past, we ultimately hurt our students rather than help them learn. We must ask ourselves, are we truly preparing all our learners for success in tomorrow’s world?

When we make classroom assessment more meaningful, it means changing the conversation from one of ranking and sorting students to one of authentic assessment. It means involving students and parents, giving choices, and sharing control. When it comes to classroom assessment, solutions can be found in our informed conversations as we work together on behalf of students and their learning. Re-culturing schools to focus on meaningful assessment so it becomes embedded in school practices and habits will help strengthen the focus on learner outcomes as outlined by the Manitoba Education.

Teachers, students, and parents need the flexibility to address individual needs, in order to support each student’s learning. The role of the educator is to equip each student with the understanding and necessary skills to assess their own learning, set goals for growth and to model how learning can continually occur.

Turtle Mountain School Division holds the following statements of belief:

- **Effective instruction depends on high quality assessment.** Assessment must reflect learning outcomes and standards of quality understood by all staff members. Assessment of learning provides an accurate summary to students, parents, other teachers, employers and institutions of higher learning what the student knows and can do in respect to the curriculum. Assessment of learning is evidence of student learning.
- **The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning.** Therefore, we expect all assessments to provide accurate and timely information about student achievement. It is the expectation of the TMSD that all assessments will be directly linked to specific student learning outcomes, use assessment methodology appropriate for the subject/grade level, and allow for effective and frequent communication of results.

- **Assessment can serve as a powerful form of instruction.** By involving students in the assessment of their own achievement under direct supervision, teachers can use assessment and feedback to ensure students progress towards meeting the expected learning outcomes for each subject, at each grade level.
- **A variety of assessment events based on consistent, outcome-based assessment tools are considered appropriate within the TMSD.** Evidence of student achievement is collected over time from three different sources-observations, conversations, and student products. Any progress report should reflect varied evidence and the use of shared quality criteria.
- A differentiated instruction approach allows all students to be assessed on the same student learner outcomes in a manner appropriate to each individual.
- **Achievement and behavior should be assessed and reported separately.** The purpose of this practice is to promote accuracy when communicating about student learning. It also helps a team make informed decisions about how the learning will move forward.

Guiding Practices for Assessment

Practice #1

Include only achievement in academic assessment; this does not include student behaviors in grades (effort, participation, attendance, adherence to class rules, etc.)

- Including behaviors in marks can cause grade inflation or deflation. Many believe we should reward well behaved students and punish others; this uses grades as extrinsic motivators to control student behavior.
- Grades should reflect only student performance in understanding the student learning outcomes of the province. This means everyone can know what a grade means in achievement terms.
- Behaviors will be assessed and reported separately.
- Allow students to self-assess achievement as well as behaviors and set goals for both.

Practice #2

Provide support for the learner; this does not include reducing marks on work submitted late.

- Set up support systems and interventions at the school and classroom level to reduce or eliminate the problem of late work.
- Students should have input into developing provisions for support and/or consequences.
- The fix for late work should be a positive, supportive approach that directly affects student behavior.
- Teachers should keep records of late demonstrations of learning and report it on the behavior portion of progress reports.
- Ensure work is leading to learning of outcomes and is not just work-for-work's-sake. Direct alignment to curricula will mean less "busy work."
- Students should have input into decisions about timelines for required assessment evidence.
- (Reference provincial and local policies addressing late work. They provide additional ideas for how to do this.)

Practice #3

Seek only evidence that more work has resulted in a higher level of achievement; this does not include giving points for extra credit or bonus points.

- If students want to get higher grades, teachers may require “extra” evidence that demonstrates a higher level of achievement.
- The basic problem is distorted achievement; it emphasizes that quantity is key – more being better – rather than about achieving higher levels of learning.
- If the work is not adequate, teachers can offer students opportunities to provide additional evidence. It must be clear that this will not result merely in points being added to a total – if students are able to show that they know, understand, or can perform at a higher level, their grade must reflect this.
- Communicate clearly to students and families that better grades come from evidence of higher levels of performance, not from more work.

Practice #4

Respond to academic dishonesty with consequences, including a re-assessment to determine actual level of achievement.

- It is important that teachers not assume students understand what is meant by the terms plagiarism or cheating, and should fully explain this to students in an age-appropriate manner, including an explanation of consequences.
- Develop assignments that reduce dependence on cheating.
- Deducting marks does not deter academic dishonesty, nor does it accurately reflect achievement of learning outcomes. Other consequences should include re-demonstration of learning.
- Use grading to assign a consequence for academic dishonesty as a last resort only.

Practice #5

Report absences separately; don't include attendance in grade determination.

- Because outcomes-based learning is not about seat time, it is about what students know, understand and can do – grades should be accurate reflections of achievement and achievement alone.
- Record attendance separately.
- Have attendance policies that address ways to offer another opportunity, consider personal issues, and provide support.

Practice #6

Use only individual achievement evidence; don't include group scores in grades.

- Understand that cooperative learning is a learning activity, not an assessment tool. Assess students individually after a class has experienced cooperative learning. Group scores may not accurately reflect the achievement of each student and therefore may be unfair to some.
- Assess skills in working effectively in groups separately and report separately on progress reports.
- Develop accountability strategies for groups other than those that affect grades.
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Practice #7**Base academic assessments on provincial student learning outcomes only.**

- Organize grade books by curriculum outcomes or reporting categories (grades 1-8).
- Develop and share assessment and evaluation protocols with students before they begin learning experience.
- Students must know what will be part of their summative assessment.
- Students and parents should have access to information of students learning progress as appropriate.
- Students should track, record and report their own learning (of outcomes).

Practice #8**Provide clear descriptions of achievement expectations/student learning outcomes; Assign grades using clear performance descriptors of student learning outcomes.**

- Ensure the continuum of learning for provincial student learning outcomes are in understandable student and parent friendly language, made available before, during and after instruction (e.g. course outlines).
- Exemplars of student work make various levels of proficiency clear.
- Have professional dialogue about student learning outcomes among teachers, to develop shared understanding, apply standards consistently and establish shared levels of proficiency. (Define standards. Do you mean quality criteria or provincial standards)?
- Don't grade homework. Assess knowledge gained from homework at another time. Students should be held accountable to complete assigned work, even if not for grading purposes. This applies to work assigned in class and/or homework. Work assigned specifically as homework should focus on outcomes previously learned, (reach back), rather than new outcomes.

Practice #9**Compare each student's performance to student learning outcomes. Do not assign grades based on comparisons to other students.**

- Base grades on provincial student learning outcomes – to be criterion referenced, not norm referenced.
- It is motivating to few students to be compared to others. A teacher's responsibility is to assist every learner to reach grade level outcomes.
- There must be alignment between intended learning outcomes, assessment techniques, and learning experiences. This linkage provides for curriculum-based assessment.

Practice #10**Rely only on quality assessments.**

- Avoid bias that can distort results. There can be problems with the students, the assessment setting, the scoring process, or the assessment itself that can cause the score to misrepresent student achievement. Other problems that can occur include lack of reading skill, emotional upset, poor health, evaluation anxiety, heat, noise, lack of light, and insufficient time for all students to complete the assessment.

- Assessment techniques should provide for a range of abilities, interests, and learning styles to accommodate students who learn at different rates and in different ways.
- All students are given an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do as part of the assessment process. Adaptations are available for students including students with learning or physical disabilities, to allow them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, provided that the adaptations do not jeopardize the integrity or content of the test
- Teachers should work together to address clear purpose, clear learning goals, sound design and avoidance of bias.
- Students can participate in developing quality assessments by clarifying performance criteria based on outcomes and exemplars.
- The assessment environment should be infused with the learning environment (exams in the gym should be limited).

Practice #11

Use sound assessment practices when summarizing information and determining a final grade.

- Grades may mislead when they are based on simply calculating the mean (average) of a series of scores, due to the effect of outlier scores.
- Think and talk about the determination of grades including performance levels.
- Recognize that grading should not be merely a numerical, mechanical exercise. Don't depend on the numbers to tell you how a student is doing.
- Ensure students understand assessment practices.
- All classroom practices should emphasize "continuous" or infused assessment.
- For grades 9-12, the final exam schedule is not to exceed 5 days in January and in June. For grades 7 and 8, any final exams/assessments will be held during regular classes in January and June.
- Students will not be exempt from completing final assessments.
- Though final exams/assessments can occur within class time in grade 7 and 8, and will occur during an established exam period in 9-12, cumulative final exams which assess the entirety of a course will occur beginning in grade 10. Mid-term exams are not a requirement, and if mid-term exams are used students must understand final exams at the end of a course will be cumulative. Teacher practice throughout a course must reflect this. This information should also be clearly communicated in course outlines which should be shared with parents at the beginning of a course.
- No final assessment will exceed 20% of the final mark unless the student is attempting to challenge a course (with the exception of Provincial Exams).

Practice #12

Zero does not show evidence of learning. Don't include them; instead use alternatives, such as re-assessing to determine real achievement or use "IE" for incomplete or insufficient evidence. Give opportunity to replace an incomplete with a score without penalty.

- A zero skews a student's average to the point that it no longer reflects what students know and can do.
- Zeros give a numerical value to something that has never been assessed and that therefore has no basis in reality.
- Zeroes can have counterproductive effects on student motivation. Once a student has more than one zero, they have little chance to recover, increasing the likelihood they will give up.

- The best alternative to the use of zeros is the use of an “IE” for Incomplete or Insufficient Evidence. It is the student’s responsibility to produce sufficient (but not necessarily all) evidence required so the teacher can make a valid summary judgment.
- When students understand the impact of not submitting required assessment evidence, and know what alternatives are in place in their school, they are better able to decide about submitting needed academic evidence and/or making up an Incomplete.
- Students can also be involved in determining the consequences for failure to submit required assessment evidence.
- It is not acceptable for students to “opt out” of learning. Students should be held accountable to complete assigned work.

Practice #13

Student work is assessed frequently (formative assessment) and graded regularly (summative evaluations). Allow students the opportunity to practice and increase their learning before summative assessment.

- It is important for teachers, students, and parents to recognize learning as a process.
- Students will rarely perform at high levels on their first attempt. Deep understanding or high levels of proficiency are achieved only as a result of trial, practice, adjustments based on feedback, and more practice. Therefore, learners must believe it is important and worthwhile to try and that it is acceptable to take risks and make mistakes; it is not necessary to always “get it” the first time.
- Frequent assessment and clear feedback invite students to engage in metacognition and reflection in order to encourage optimal student learning.
- Formative assessments and other practice work (e.g., homework) are used descriptively as feedback to inform teachers and students of what has been learned and the next steps in learning.
- Engage in strategies that teachers can use to involve students including reviewing strong and weak samples in order to determine attributes of a good performance or product, practicing using criteria to assess anonymous work, working in pairs to revise anonymous weak work samples.
- Regular summative assessment remains important to ensure students are accountable for their effort and learning.

Practice #14

Emphasize most recent achievement.

- Most recent evidence completely replaces out-of-date evidence when it is reasonable to do so. For example, how well students write at the end of the reporting period is more important than how well they write at the beginning, and later evidence of improved content understanding is more important than early evidence.
- By emphasizing the more recent information we acknowledge learning and embedded assessment as a process. One of the most unfortunate effects of simply adding up all the scores is that many students will never be able to overcome the impact of early failures and very low scores.
- Establish procedures for re-submissions, improvements and do-over’s.
- Re-demonstrating is not simply “making corrections” or “doing more.” In order for students to show teachers that an increase in learning has occurred, they must demonstrate their understanding in new ways...not just fix old mistakes. In other words, more work does not always mean more learning. We must ensure we are measuring understanding and not measuring work.

Practice #15

Involve students. Students can – and should – play meaningful and key roles in assessment and grading that promote achievement; don't leave students out of the grading process.

- One of the most powerful and straightforward ways a teacher can provide feedback which encourages learning is to have students track their own progress.
- Classroom assessment is one form of feedback. Timely and specific feedback is the most powerful single modification that enhances achievement.
- Feedback should originate from both teachers and learners, be continuous, allow students to self-adjust and try again, be specific and not evaluative in nature and tell specifically: 1) what they have done well 2) what needs improvement 3) how they can improve.
- Metacognition is what helps students develop their learning about their own learning.
- It is the teacher's responsibility to evaluate the summative assessments, but students should be involved in peer and self-assessment of formative assessments.
- Help students learn how to monitor/ track, report and communicate about their own progress. Use graphs, charts and visuals to monitor their learning.

Practice #16

Use a Variety of Assessments - No single method can paint the picture needed and thus no single assessment should be the 'one' that gives the mark.

- A variety of assessment methods are necessary to create a complete picture of students understanding and mastery.
- When appropriate, provide students with options for how they will demonstrate their learning. Offer students a variety of tasks and chances to show their understanding – a menu of options.
- If the aim is to deepen understanding, then the tasks must be grounded in real life situations and applications.
- Use Bloom's Taxonomy to determine which level of thinking the curriculum is asking for and develop assessments accordingly.
- Offer students a choice regarding variety of tasks, chance and assessments to show their understanding. Clarify whether the product students use to demonstrate their learning is flexible or whether the process they will use to get to a specific product is where the flexibility lies.

Individual Education Planning

Teachers are expected to provide instruction based on the curriculum for every student in their classroom. This includes differentiated instruction, adaptations, and modifications to assist the students to meet expected learning outcomes. When assessment is required, qualified classroom teachers, student services personnel, and specialists, such as clinicians and therapists will complete the assessment with the student. The student services resource teacher coordinates an assessment to determine the student's learning needs. Assessment data could include academic achievement levels, behaviour, physical health, social/emotional health, learning styles, personal history, developmental level, classroom environment observations, cognitive functioning, and adaptive functioning. Possible sources of information in the assessment process are:

- **Inspection of previously collected data** – such as cumulative files, student evaluations
- **Informal consultation** – with classroom teacher, parent, referred student, clinicians
- **Structured Interviews** – that are planned in advance and seek specific information from classroom teacher, parent, referred student
- **Data Collection Devices** – such as checklists, rating scales, inventories, continuums
- **Standardized Tests**
- **Criterion-referenced tests**
- **Observation**

Please refer to the Student Services Manual for further details on IEP processes.

Communication with Home and Reporting

Pacing Guides and Assessment Plans

During the first week of classes, teachers will provide students and parents with an age appropriate course outline which includes a pacing guide and description of assessment practices, including how formative assessment will be used for descriptive feedback (coaching) and how summative assessment (judging/evaluating) throughout the grading period will occur. Teachers will discuss classroom assessment practices with students in an age appropriate manner at the beginning of each semester (or grade). Teachers will also submit the pacing guides and assessment plans to the principal to ensure appropriate planning has taken place.

To monitor student achievement effectively, each classroom teacher should begin every Understanding by Design unit of instruction or course of study with a clear vision of the specific student learning outcomes to be met. Teachers will begin planning with the curriculum outcomes, moving onto to determining the criteria for assessment, and then structure lessons to lead students to progress over time to demonstrate understanding of provincial curricula.

Teachers will clearly indicate their intended learning outcomes or essential questions at the start of each lesson to ensure their students understand the focus of the lesson and that all learning experiences will support that outcome.

Reporting to Students and Families

Beginning in the fall of 2013, the TMSD will alter the way it reports student progress. (Provide link to the Provincial Report Card website).

Grades 1 to 6

In Grades 1 to 6, the following grade scale from 1 to 4 is used on report cards to show your child's academic achievement for each subject category (explained below) within each subject.

Subject Categories

Subject categories are areas of knowledge and skill in each subject your child takes at school. They are used for all subjects, from Grade 1 to Grade 8. They give you a better understanding of your child's learning. The subject categories help to clarify for parents the "what" of student learning.

Grade Scale Academic Achievement of Provincial Expectations

4 - Thorough understanding and in-depth application of concepts and skills.

3 - Very good understanding and application of concepts and skills.

2 - Basic understanding and some application of concepts and skills.

1 - Limited understanding and minimal application of concepts and skills; see teacher comments.

ND - Does not yet Demonstrate the required understanding and application of concepts and skills; see teacher comments.

Additional Codes

NA - Not Applicable (use rarely)

IN - Incomplete: not enough evidence available to determine a grade at this time.

Grades 7 and 8

In Grades 7 and 8, in addition to the grade scale from 1 to 4, a percentage scale is used for providing an overall subject grade. This is intended to help with the transition to high school report cards where overall subject grades are given for each subject, using a percentage scale, to summarize student achievement as students earn credits toward graduation.

Grades 9 to 12

Thorough understanding and in-depth application of concepts and skills 80% to 100%.

Very good understanding and application of concepts and skills 70% to 79%.

Basic understanding and some application of concepts and skills 60% to 69%.

Limited understanding and minimal application of concepts and skills; see teacher comments 50% to 59%.

ND - Does not yet demonstrate the required understanding and application of concepts and skills; students with a final grade of less than 50% are not granted course credit.

Learning Behaviours

In addition to reporting academic achievement, report cards show your child's effort and attitude in class. Learning behaviours are not included directly in students' grades, but they can affect their academic achievement.

In Grades 1 to 6, learning behaviours are reported once on your child's report card (for all subjects). In Grades 7 to 12, they are reported for each subject your child takes.

Personal Management Skills

Uses class time effectively; works independently; completes homework and assignments on time.

Active Participation in Learning

Participates in class activities; self-assesses; sets learning goals

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Works well with others; resolves conflicts appropriately; respects self, others and the environment; contributes in a positive way to communities.

SCALE

C – Consistently: almost all or all of the time

U – Usually: more than half of the time

S – Sometimes: less than half of the time

R – Rarely: almost never or never

IEP (Individual Education Plan): This code is used if behaviour ratings are based on expectations that reflect special learning needs.

In the TMSD, teachers will involve their students in student led conferencing to engage the learner in the reporting process and to ensure that a high level of accountability and future planning takes place. The purpose of such conferences is to look at examples of student learning, highlight strengths, discuss areas requiring improvement, and set goals during the reporting period.

Academic Promotion and Retention

Retention

Every year there are students who struggle to succeed academically and behaviourally in their classrooms. Turtle Mountain School Division recognizes that although retention is sometimes offered as an option for students who struggle, there are often many alternatives to retention. Students should be placed in the grade that is appropriate for their curricular, cognitive, social and emotional learning needs. Decisions around promotion or retention of students may have far-reaching implications for student success in school.

A review of the literature in area of retention indicates that it is generally not beneficial to retain the student in the same grade. Research clearly shows that retention has a negative effect on students, despite the belief by many teachers and parents that it is beneficial.

54 out of 63 controlled studies showed overall negative effects from retention – students that have been retained generally do worse academically than if they had gone on without repeating. The remaining 9 out of 63 studies that did not show negative effects of retention did show that the benefits of retention diminished over time so that the difference between the retained students and the control students disappeared in later grades. A large 1989 study found that students who were retained were 20 – 30 % more likely to drop out of school. A 1980 study looked at the emotional effects of retention and found that students held a common view that repeating a grade is the punishment for not learning or for being bad in class.

Repeating a grade actually lowers achievement levels in subsequent years. There are no proven benefits to repeating students in the Kindergarten year. In fact, children who repeat Kindergarten do no better academically than children who did not and are more likely to have lower self-concepts. Merely repeating the same instruction and curriculum is not a solution for students who have failed to achieve grade-level standards. Students have been repeating grades for a long time and the achievement/performance of graduates have not noticeably improved.

In another meta-analysis of the research, 61 out of 70 studies found a negative relationship between retention and academic achievement, self-concept, school attendance, school dropout, and student attitude toward school. A student who is retained once, as was mentioned already, is more likely to drop out of school. A student, who is retained twice, has almost a 100% chance of dropping out of school.

In the 9 out of 70 studies that did find a positive relationship between retention and achievement. Flaws in how the studies were conducted were noted. For example, these studies only included high socio-economic students, did not include students who had changed schools, and only looked at classrooms with very low teacher/pupil ratios (1:5). One study compared teacher and student attitudes towards retention. It was found that teachers often underestimated the effects that retention had on students and felt that the effects would only be short-term. Student data revealed that there is a huge feeling of personal failure, disappointment, and confusion about retention.

Some absolute “do nots” regarding retention include – do not retain students who have a learning disability, have low self-esteem, who have been repeated before or who are older than grade three.

Possible factors to consider in favour of retention include chronic attendance issues.

A review of the retention literature offers alternatives to retention, such as: remedial services, and individual tutoring; a home assistance program; before and after school programs; adapt the curriculum; provide assessment to diagnose strengths and weaknesses; develop an individual educational program plan; vary the materials used; vary the instructional practices; provide experiences that enhance learning; peer tutors; and lastly, send work home with the parents and have the parents work with the student over the summer.

Additional alternatives to retaining students include:

1. Accept and recognize the fact that all children come to the classroom with a variety of strengths and gifts. Not every child learns in the same way or will meet the same standard. “If you treat everyone the same, you don’t treat anyone fairly.”
2. Know your students. At the beginning of the school year, read the information in the pupil file folders. Read the information the Student Services Resource teacher has put together. Talk to the previous teacher. Get a good idea of what the learner’s strengths and weaknesses are.
3. Know the enduring understandings of the curriculum. Each student is expected to meet these foundational outcomes. If they cannot, then the student needs further support, adaptations /or modifications.
4. Examine carefully the specific learning outcomes for each curriculum. These can be reduced in number if a student is unable to be successful with the complete set of specific learning outcomes.
5. Plan how to use adaptations for students keeping in mind the student’s strengths or weaknesses in specific areas. Teachers can change three areas; adjustments can be made to the curriculum content, instructional practices, and the learning environment. The essential outcomes are not changed. For example, adaptations are being used in the curriculum content area when you omit, substitute, or add a specific objective without changing any essential outcome.
6. Adaptations are being used in the instructional area when you do things such as: decide to use a whole group instruction method; when you decide to teach concepts to a small group of students based on similar needs and abilities; when you decide that 1-1 instruction is necessary. Other examples of adjusting instructional practices include cooperative teaching, peer tutoring, and changing the pace of instruction. Teachers may need to slow down for some students and speed up for others.

7. Adaptations are being used in the learning environment when you consider such things as: physical setting (seating arrangements, use of space), and grouping students and having the groups change as topics change.
8. Alternate assessment methods are part of adaptations and generally help all students to be as successful as possible. The purpose of assessment is to see if the student has learned the concepts.
9. Assessment tools should clearly explain what is being tested. Employing a variety of methods ensures students have a chance to display his or her knowledge in a form other than in the written form. Some examples of outcomes that can be marked include: oral reports, tape recorded reports, debates, research papers, daily work, poems, stories, plays, diorama, inventions, clothing designs, models, murals, maps, games, role plays, music productions, pantomimes, radio reports, puzzles, riddles, photo essay, a statistical report, journals, and raps.
10. Take into account learning styles and the multiple intelligences theory. Not every child learns the same way or demonstrates their knowledge in the same way. By using information such as multiple intelligences, students are more successful.
11. Specialized computer programs, such as Kurzweil, can help some students to be more successful with daily classroom work.

TMSD has adopted the following practices based on the extensive research in the area of retention, some of which appears above:

- “In Kindergarten to Grade 8, final promotion decisions rest with the Superintendent/CEO or designate, who consults with principals, teachers, parents and other specialists as appropriate. The decision is based on the evidence of the student’s progress and growth, and considers the grade placement that would support and extend the student’s learning.
- Whether the decision is made to retain or to promote a struggling student, the school must address the student’s learning needs. For example, simply having a student retained in a grade to repeat all the work done the previous year will not necessarily address the student’s learning needs and result in success. In a similar manner, simply promoting a struggling student, without adequate supports, will not lead to success.” (*Manitoba Education , Provincial Assessment Policy Kindergarten to Grade 12, policy- Academic Promotion/Retention p.10*)
- Except in very exceptional circumstances, students will not be retained in Kindergarten as there is no benefit to be gained from this action.
- Retention for students in grades one to eight will only occur in exceptional circumstances.
- “In grade 9 to 12, the final decision on whether or not 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 provincial curricula or modified curricula (as set out in an individualized 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 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 a credit within a reasonable, agreed upon timeframe.” (*Manitoba Education, Provincial Assessment Policy Kindergarten to Grade 12, policy- Academic Promotion/Retention p.10*)

- Once a student has been granted a percentage mark, this information will be reported to Manitoba Education.

Teachers will identify students of concern as soon as concerns about the student's progress are identified. The expectation is that these students will likely be identified prior to Christmas. The exception to this would be students who arrive later than school start-up. Teachers will identify these students by submitting the names to the Student Services Resource Teacher and/or the school RTI team. Once the referral is made a student support/RTI (Response to Intervention) team will be developed.

The student support/RTI team will meet to discuss the student's strengths and weaknesses and will develop strategies and options that will support the student in the classroom. Students of continuing concern will be referred to TMSD clinicians as appropriate (if the referral has not been made). Referrals to other agencies may be considered as well. Principals will submit to the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services a list of students that are continuing to struggle with their current grade placement no later than April or May of each school year.

A Continuous Progress Meeting Dialogue Form will be completed for each student identified and a meeting time will be arranged. (*Please see the Continuous Progress Meeting Form for further details.*)

Teachers and principals will not make retention recommendations to parents prior to the Continuous Progress Meeting.

If a student in grades one to eight is to be retained, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a Student Support Plan (SSP) will be developed for the student. The IEP/SSP will be developed by a team consisting of school staff, parent, and the student if possible.

If the team recommends that a student in grades one to eight should be retained, the principal will inform the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services of this recommendation via a formal letter on behalf of the school.

Continuous Progress Meeting

Preamble

By the end of January each year the principal (or designate) will submit to the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services a list of students that are struggling with their current placement level. The Assistant Superintendent of Student Services will distribute the following Continuous Progress Meeting Dialogue forms to the school. The form is to be completed by the classroom teacher prior to the meeting. Everyone invited to the meeting will get a copy of the completed form prior to the meeting date. The Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, along with the principal, will arrange suitable times for the Continuous Progress Meetings to take place. The meeting will involve the principal, the classroom teacher, and the resource teacher, along with the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services.

This meeting is not intended for parents to attend. Parents will be included at subsequent placement meetings if necessary. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss which strategies, services, and programs have been implemented with the student and to brainstorm further activities that will help the student to be as successful as possible with his same-age peers. The Continuous Progress Meeting dialogue is a good time to outline strategies and options that will support the student in the classroom with same-age peers.

Questions to ask when considering the retention of a student:

1. Why is this student not succeeding? What adaptations have been put in place to help this student to be as successful as possible?
2. Has the student been assessed for a learning disability?
3. Does this student have a learning disability? If so, have appropriate accommodations been put in place to help this student cope with the learning disability?
4. Do behaviours interfere with learning? If so, has this student been assessed for any behavioural disorders?

Continuous Progress Meeting Log

Student Name: _____

DOB:

Age: _____

Grade: _____

School: _____

Teacher:

Discussion attended by:

Background Information

Parents:

Family:

Siblings:

Other Agencies/Services involved (e.g. SLP, Learning Consultant, Counselor, etc.)

Test Results:

Schools Attended:

Previous Retentions:

School Performance

Classroom (Academic):

Behavioural (e.g. social relationships, self-esteem, attendance, motivation, etc.)

Classroom Programming (identify programming interventions utilized e.g. small group, individual assistance, etc.)

Parental Involvement (including parent involvement in school and attitude towards retention):

Other Pertinent Information:

Follow-up Activity:

Sources:

North East School Division Student Services Manual

Smith, Mary Lee, and Shepard, Lorrie A. "What Doesn't Work: Explaining Policies of Retention in the Early Grades." Phi Delta Kappan, Oct. 1987.

Smith, Mary Lee, and Shepard, Lorrie A. "Synthesis of Research on Grade Retention." Educational Leadership, May, 1990.

Madak, Paul R. "Grade

Divisional, Provincial, National and International Assessments

The TMSD participates in provincial and international assessments as a means of collecting data on performance in targeted areas and, ultimately, informing instruction and learning. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) randomly selects students to assess within randomly chosen schools within the TMSD. Provincial Standards Assessments are conducted in Grade 3, Middle Years at Grade 7 & 8 and in Grade 12. The following is a description of these large scale assessments:

International: PISA

PISA is an international assessment that measures the skills and knowledge of 15-year-olds in the areas of reading, mathematics, and science. The assessment has a primary focus on one of the key reporting areas. Reports that are generated can compare data on the variances between provinces as well as gender differences in the three academic areas.

Canadian: (PCAP)

The Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) randomly selects Grade 8 classes or Grade 8 students across Canada to assess in the areas of Mathematics, Science, and Reading.

Provincial:

Manitoba Education assesses students in Grade 3 in Reading and numeracy, Middle Years assessment at grade 7 and 8 key competencies in Mathematics, Reading Comprehension, Expository Writing and Student Engagement. Grade 12 in Language Arts and Math. Provincial Standards Assessments are written by all Grade 3, 7, 8, 9 and 12 students selects all schools and all students within the school division at specific grade levels in specific areas of study.

Glossary of Terms

1. **Assessment for learning (formative assessment)** occurs throughout the learning process as teachers gather as much data as they can about what students can do in order to understand where the learning gaps may be. This data gathering provides the basis for determining what teachers and students need to do in order to move student learning forward. It provides the basis for providing descriptive feedback for students and deciding on instructional groupings, instructional strategies, and instructional resources. Assessment for learning requires ongoing assessment of the curricular outcomes that guide learning experiences. Teachers create assessments that will expose students' thinking and skills in relation to the intended learning.
2. **Assessment as learning** is based in research about how learning happens, and is characterized by students reflecting on their own learning and making adjustments so they achieve deeper understanding. Educators must constantly remember that the ultimate purpose of assessment is to enable students to assess their own progress in order to continue learning. For students to be actively engaged in creating their own understanding, they must learn to be critical assessors who make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge, and use it for new learning. By coming to know the criteria by which learning will be measured, students will come to recognize their own growth and opportunities for further learning. Educators need to present and model opportunities for students to assess themselves and reflect on learning
3. **Assessment of learning (summative assessment)** refers to strategies designed to confirm the degree to which students have met curriculum outcomes or the goals of their individualized programs. Its purpose is to provide evidence of achievement to parents, other educators, the students themselves, and sometimes to outside groups (e.g., employers, other educational institutions). *Assessment of learning* is the assessment that becomes public and results in statements or symbols about how well students are learning. It requires the collection and interpretation of information about students' accomplishments in all curricular areas, in ways that represent the nature and complexity of the intended learning. In *assessment of learning*, the methods chosen need to address the intended curricular outcomes and the continuum of learning required to reach the outcomes.
4. **Accountability** – student performance on assessments linked to content standards that lead to rewards or consequences for schools and sometimes educators. Large-scale standardized tests are used to collect the information used for accountability decisions. (This definition limits professional roles of teachers to themselves and their students. An external focus but not contradictory to Manitoba Education dictates.

5. **Achievement** – a student’s demonstration of knowledge, skills & attitudes relative to grade level learner outcomes.
6. **Assessment** – the process of gathering information about student achievement, most often in relation to defined learning expectations. Using a variety of methods can provide information to a variety of users for a variety of decisions.
7. **Authentic Assessment** – Authentic assessment clearly assesses the outcomes in a context that reflects the actual learning experience. In other words, we assess in the exact same way we have invited students to learn. Authentic assessment also invites us to ask how students may come to apply the knowledge and skills they have gained and assess them based on that information.
8. **Common Assessment** – teachers may work together in developing common assessment items, with accompanying rubrics outlining performance characteristics and examples of student work along a continuum of performance. Common assessment items may be utilized and scored in a classroom independently of administration in other classrooms or they could be used as a school or as a division.
9. **Criteria** – what students need to do to show they have achieved the learner outcomes (e.g. compare and contrast, explain, analyze).
10. **Criterion-Referenced Test** – an assessment that measures student progress toward specific curriculum goals or standards. Scores are reported in comparison to a predefined acceptable level of performance rather than in comparison to other students.
11. **Curriculum** –The provincial document of expectations for learning for each subject area at each grade level. Curriculum outlines the depth and breadth of learning experiences appropriate for students in the classroom. It is phrased in terms of outcomes and indicators as part of broader learning goals.
12. **Descriptive feedback** – information related to the assigned learning task and provided to students to help them take the next steps in their learning by showing them what they already do well, what they need to improve, and how.
13. **Documentation** – a process by which a teacher collects (written notes, audio or video tape, artifacts) childrens’ ideas, words, creations and learning, to encourage the development of and reflection about meaningful experiences. Documentation displays evidence of student learning and guides future planning.
14. **Formative Assessment (Assessment as and for learning)** – purposeful, ongoing collection of information about how students are learning while there is still time to improve. Both teacher and student then use the information to guide continuous improvement toward the intended learning.
15. **Grading** – the process of assigning letters or numbers at the end of a period of time (term, semester, etc.) as a way to summarize the quality of student performance.
16. **Grade Level of Achievement** – a teacher judgment, based on the results from a variety of classroom assessments throughout the school year, expressed as a whole number in relation to learner outcomes in a subject area after a course for a specific grade level has been completed.

17. **Learning Outcomes** – the expectations for students learning; the provincially mandated knowledge, skills and understanding we expect students to demonstrate as a result of schooling and are articulated through assessment.
18. **Norm-Referenced Test** – a test, often one of basic skills and concepts, developed to measure one student’s performance against the performance of other students of the same age and/or grade who have previously taken the same test.
19. **Observation** - to observe the actions of students to determine their intellectual, socio-emotional, physical, and spiritual knowledge and behaviours. Observations can be recorded in a variety of ways including anecdotal records, audio recordings, checklists, photographs, and video recordings.
20. **Performance Assessment** – assessment based on authentic tasks such as activities, exercises, or problems that require students to show what they can do and ultimately, their degree of understanding. Assessment of the knowledge and/or skills displayed is based on criteria which are derived from outcomes.
21. **Performance Standard** – the predetermined level of acceptable performance on an assessment, answering the question, “How good is good enough?”
22. **Portfolio** – is a compilation of evidence collected over time of a student’s learning. It demonstrates the student’s efforts, progress, and achievement. A portfolio can be cumulative, working/developmental, or showcase in nature.
23. **Rating scale** – an evaluation tool of three or more points that illustrates how frequently, consistently or independently a student demonstrates a learner outcome.
24. **Rubric** – a list of criteria and accompanying performance standards that describe the quality of products or performances used to assess student learning.
25. **Self-reflection** – considering the quality of one’s own work by applying criteria; requires that a student feels safe enough to be honest in making objective observations about the work (also referred to in the literature as self-assessment or self-evaluation).
26. **Standardized Tests** – tests that are given and scored in exactly the same way for all students. Standardized tests can be either norm or criterion referenced, which refers to how the scores are reported.
27. **Summative Assessment (Assessment of learning)** – an assessment given in class at the end of the period of study, or an external, standardized test used to summarize what students have learned up to that point. Frequently evaluations of students are made and grades are assigned based on their results.
28. **Understanding by Design (UbD)** - A planning process whereby outcomes come to be clearly understood, assessment criteria and performance standards are clarified and the learning plan emerges from the first two processes. This process invites a deep knowledge about where the learning is going in order to better understand where students are now so that the steps taken are always in the right direction.

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