



Principles of Assessment and Guidelines for Grading and Reporting

A. Guiding Principles of Assessment and Reporting

Grades provide information about student achievement in a summary format. They are a key part of the communication system. For grades to be of high quality, they must meet four standards: meaningful, consistent, accurate, and supportive of learning.

- **Meaningful**

Grades must meaningfully represent the achievement of learning outcomes. By organizing assessment information by learning outcomes, it enables teachers to create a profile of strengths and areas requiring improvement.

When grades are organized meaningfully, teachers can effectively plan for entry points in instruction, and adjustments can be made during the course or year. Organizing by learning outcome supports teachers in determining whether they have sufficient evidence about achievement of all outcomes to determine grades.

- **Consistent**

Grades need to be consistent – in other words, the same performance would result in the same grade from different teachers of the same subject or grade level. In order to achieve consistency, teachers need to ensure they are working from a common understanding of learning outcomes and performance standards.

- **Accurate**

Grades should not be affected by other factors such as effort, behavior, attitude, and other non-achievement factors to inflate or deflate the grade. Grades should be as accurate a measure of achievement as possible.

- **Supportive of Learning**

When students are involved in the learning process, grading is most supportive of learning. Students need to know what the goal and criteria for success are, as well as which assessments will be used as summative indicators of achievement for grading purposes. This will enable a student to see the purpose of assessment as learning, and not only for the accumulation of marks.



When grades are used to reward and punish student behavior, they become inaccurate and their use in supporting real learning is decreased.

When grades are meaningful, consistent, accurate, and supportive of learning, they provide valuable sources of information that students, teachers, and parents can use to make good decisions.

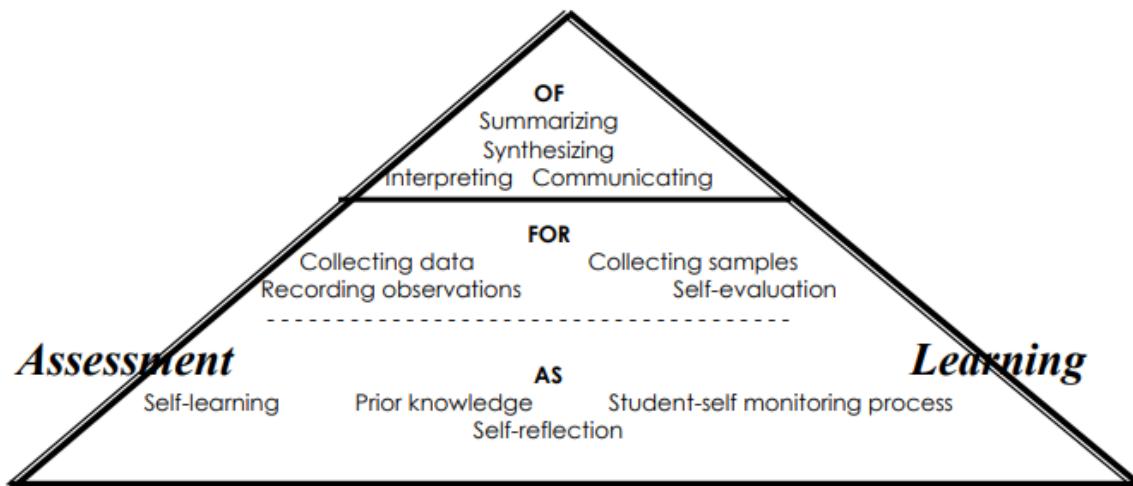
When grades do not meet even one of these conditions, inadequate decisions may result.

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

- **Assessment FOR Learning** is designed to give teachers information to modify and differentiate teaching and learning activities. . . . It requires careful design on the part of teachers so that they use the resulting information to determine not only what students know, but also to gain insights into how, when, and whether students apply what they know. Teachers can also use this information to streamline and target instruction and resources, and to provide feedback to students to help them advance their learning.
- **Assessment AS Learning** is a process of developing and supporting metacognition for students. It focuses on the role of the student as the critical connector between assessment and learning. When students are active, engaged, and critical assessors, they make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge, and use it for new learning. This is the regulatory process in metacognition. It occurs when students monitor their own learning and use the feedback from this monitoring to make adjustments, adaptations, and even major changes in what they understand.
- **Assessment OF Learning** is summative in nature and is used to confirm what students know and can do, and, occasionally, to show how they are placed in relation to others. Teachers concentrate on ensuring that they have used assessment evidence to provide accurate and sound statements of students' proficiency, so that recipients of the information can use it to make reasonable and defensible decisions.



Figure 1: Balance Among Assessment Purposes





Evidence of Learning

A variety of methods should be used to collect accurate evidence about student learning.

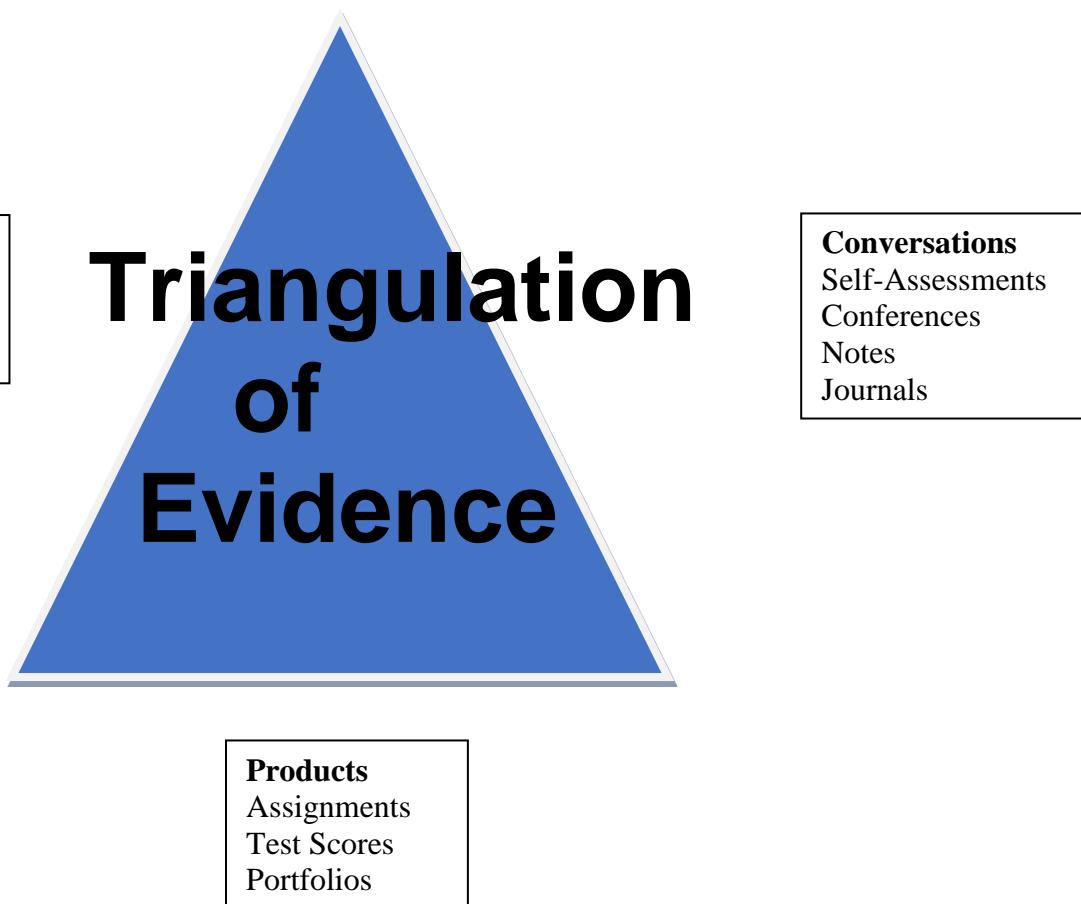
There are three general sources of assessment evidence collected in classrooms:

Observations - circulate the classroom and observe student learning

Products - tangible materials used to assess student learning

Conversations - discuss learning with students

When evidence is collected from three different sources over time, trends and patterns become evident. This is referred to as **triangulation**.





Formative Assessment:

Formative assessment is used to provide feedback to students and teachers so they can make appropriate instructional decisions to their learning and teaching. Emphasis will be on words and not numbers. These assessments should not be a part of grade calculation.

Summative assessment:

Summative assessment should be used for the primary source of information for determining grades. Students should be made aware which assessments are summative, and provide varied opportunities to demonstrate what they know, understand, and can do.



B. Appropriate Education Programming:

In accordance with Appropriate Education Programming, Regulation 155 of the Public Schools Act, accommodations can be made for assessing all learners to assist the pupil in meeting the expected learning outcomes.

Differentiated Instruction, Adaptation, Modification, and Individualized:

Differentiated instruction: A method of instruction or assessment that alters the presentation of the curriculum for the purpose of responding to learner diversity, student interests and strengths.

Adaptation - A change made in the teaching process, materials, assignments or student product to help a student achieve the expected learning outcomes. Adaptations are not a reduction in expected learning outcomes, yet students would not experience success in their learning without the adaptations in place. Adaptations must be specific to learning outcomes and include recommendations from Clinicians or divisional support staff when available. All students are to be evaluated and graded based on their demonstrated achievement of expected learning outcomes. Students who require and receive adaptations are assessed and evaluated on their achievement of the same outcomes as their peers. However, the manner in which they demonstrate their learning may differ.

Modification - Changes in the number or the content of the learning outcomes a student is expected to meet in the provincial curriculum - made by the teacher or student support team. The student requires a psychological assessment to determine if they meet criterion A of an Intellectual Disability diagnosis according to the DSM-5 for an M-designation at the High School level.

Individualized Programming/Individualized Programming Designation -

Some students' cognitive disabilities are so severe that they require learning outcomes that are individualized and different from the Manitoba curricular outcomes and do not access the Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth curriculum. A team that includes guardians makes the decision to provide individualized programming based on the student's cognitive ability. The student's specific outcomes or goals are outlined in an IEP. For students who have IEP goals for domains NOT reported on the provincial report card, progress towards these goals is reported separately on the IEPR (IEP Reporting Form), and then attached to the report card. (Some examples of IEP domains not included in the provincial report are transition, adaptations, behavior, life skills, and physical needs)

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



Appropriate Education Programming:

Classroom Teachers are expected to use differentiated instruction and adaptations to help students meet expected learning outcomes (**Appropriate Educational Programming Regulation 155/2005**). When a student receives adaptations or modifications, parents must be informed. This information may be communicated by a Student Specific Plan (SSP) through an Adapted Education Plan (AEP) for adaptations or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for modifications. These plans can be used at any time during the school year to communicate the adaptations or modifications that have been put in place for a student to be successful with their learning. When a student receives adaptations or modifications, the following steps will occur:

- An AEP or IEP is prepared with assistance of the student's Teacher, Case Manager or Resource Teacher, and student as appropriate;
- Parents are valued partners in their child's education. Parents must be informed of the adapted or modified programming in place on a regular basis. Parents will be given the opportunity to meet with their child's school team on a regular basis to collaborate on programming, discuss the extent of the adaptations and or modifications, and implications for their child's learning.

Sources

[STUDENT - SPECIFIC PLANNING - A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Individual Education Plans \(IEPs\), 2010.](#)

[APPROPRIATE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING - A Handbook for Student Services, 2007](#)



C. Grading Guidelines

1. Effective Assessment of Learning Practices

Grading Guideline

1.1 Teachers will use the most effective assessment methods meeting the standards of quality assessment:

- determine clear outcomes
- state the purpose for learning
- match assessment strategy to the outcome
- select appropriate samples
- control distortion and avoid bias
- provide timely feedback
- keep accurate records

Rationale

Using quality assessment methods ensure students are assessed in ways that are equitable, and that the marks awarded are an accurate reflection of their learning

Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Teachers will understand the outcomes they are expected to teach and with their colleagues, determine those curricular outcomes that produce essential learning.

Teachers will be clear about the purpose of the assessment. Is this assessment “for” or “of” learning?

Teachers must establish and clearly communicate expectations regarding assignments. Teachers must set and communicate reasonable timelines for assignments and support students in meeting these timelines. The timelines teachers set should provide adequate time for students to complete the work, while being mindful of other demands and of student strengths and challenges.

Teachers will have a repertoire of assessment strategies and understand how to use the method best suited to the outcome(s). Is there a balance of observation, product and conversation?

Teacher will determine when to sample for student performance.

Teachers will build their awareness of variables that can cause distortion. “A number of variables can cause assessment results to be distorted. There may be concerns about student-specific issues (e.g. low reading skill, physical health, emotional setback), disturbances in the assessment setting (e.g. noise, lighting, temperature), and concerns with the assessment itself (e.g. clarity of wording of directions and questions, time



available to complete). Teachers must be conscious of all the factors that can interfere with quality assessment, and attempt to avoid or mitigate them. If that is not possible, an alternative assessment opportunity should be provided." *Communicating Student Learning - MECY*

Teachers will make a commitment to grade assessments and return them to students in a timely fashion. For example, a one week turnaround time would be viewed as appropriate.

Teachers will keep records of student performance, using a system that supports effective grading practices.

Grading Guideline

1.2 Teachers will provide students with a written overview of their assessment plan for a given unit of study.

Rationale

By providing an overview of the assessment plan, students will have an understanding of the outcomes and the assessment strategies to be used.

Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Teachers will consider how they will assess their students and why they will use the approach they are using.

Teachers will use a variety of assessment methodologies as they relate to a varied instructional approach.

Teachers will think about the role students play in assessing their own achievement and build it into their assessment plan.

Grading Guideline

1.3 Summative assessment (assessment of learning) is a critical component of a balanced assessment process. Final examinations are a summative tool. Therefore the practice of exemptions will be discontinued.

Rationale

All students should be provided with an opportunity to demonstrate their learning.

Students who are most likely to be exempt from an exam are often the students who would most likely benefit from the exam writing process. These students often continue their studies at a post-secondary institution where exams are frequently used to assess learning.



Assessment research suggests that exemptions only motivate those students whose marks are just beneath the exemption criteria.

Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Teachers may experience an increase in exam marking.

The increase in students writing exams may have an impact on exam scheduling.

Teachers may need to revisit the use of written exams as the only summative tool at the end of the semester or term. What other summative assessment tools might effectively assess higher levels of thinking such as analysis, application, synthesis and evaluation?

Students who are exempt from exams will believe the new guideline is unfair and therefore the school will need to clearly articulate the rationale.

Grading Guideline

1.4 Summative assessment is one component of quality assessment. When an end of semester summative assessment (examination, project, etc.) is appropriate, the value will not exceed the following: Grade 9 – 15%, Grade 10 – 20%, Grade 11 – 25%, Grade 12 – 30%.

Rationale

By using a graduated value system, students can develop exam-writing and risk taking skills, for example, through their high school years becoming more proficient as the value increases.

Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Teachers may need to reconsider the value they place on final summative assessments.

Teachers may need to consider which outcomes they are assessing using the end of the year summative process and the time required to complete the assessment.

2. Focus on Outcomes

Grading Guideline

2.1 All grading procedures will be linked to curricular outcomes, goals/standards as determined by the Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth.



Rationale

In order to understand what a mark or grade truly represents we need to know they are based on common curricular outcomes, with some degree of consistency across the province. That is, the same result could be achieved should a student move from one classroom to another or from one school or another. When grades are “accurate, meaningful and consistent” teachers, students and parents can make good decisions for their students.

Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Teachers will be required to understand the curricular goals/outcomes and performance standards expected from their students.

By focusing on outcomes/goals and standards, teachers will be able to determine what student has learned or some cases not learned.

Teachers will be required to come to a shared understanding of essential learning to ensure a certain level of consistency between classrooms and schools.

Focusing on outcomes/goals and performance standards, allows parents and students to know what's expected of them.

Grading Guideline

2.2 The individual student's achievement of a stated learning goal or outcome is the only consideration when determining a grade.

Rationale

The Manitoba curriculum is outcome based and students are expected to be assessed against those outcomes. Including factors outside of the stated goals or outcomes such as specific learning behaviours, distorts the meaning of the grade and in turn the clarity of communication with students and parents.

Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Teachers will need to be clear about the goals and outcomes they are assessing.

Teachers will need to use a variety of strategies to help students develop effective learning behaviours.

Teachers will be required to track learning behaviours separately from learning goals and outcomes.

Students will need to understand that effective learning behaviours continue to be critically important to learning.



Grading Guideline

2.3 When tracking students' results, teachers' grade books will indicate student achievement by goal or outcome not by the method of assessment.

Rationale

Tracking students' achievement by goal or outcome allows teachers to clearly understand the areas the student has successfully learned and those requiring additional teaching and learning. Concrete evidence of learning as it relates to the goal or outcome is available. Outcome-based tracking ensures the teacher has covered the curricular expectations.

Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Teachers will need to have a strong working knowledge of curricular outcomes for a given course.

Teachers will need to collaborate with colleagues teaching the same course to determine the essential learning they will cover.

Teachers will need to change their approach to tracking student learning. This may require exploring alternatives to accommodate an outcome-based approach.

Teachers will be required to determine the level of specificity they will use in tracking evidence.

Teachers will need to recognize that a single assessment may cover more than one curricular outcome.

If teachers use a variety of assessment strategies such as observations, conversations and performance assessments, each using a different grading scale, a common conversations scale will need to be created to generate a percentage grade.

Students will need to have a clear understanding of what they know and don't know and will need to set appropriate learning goals to address the gaps in their learning.

3. Creating the Grade

Grading Guideline

3.1 Zero (0) will be used to indicate that a student has not learned any aspects of the curricular outcomes. Zeros will NOT be given for non-attendance or behaviour related performance. Missing or incomplete assignments will be indicated using 'IN' for incomplete.



Rationale

Students must be held accountable for poor learning behaviour and signing a zero may be a way of “letting them off the hook.”

Marks should only be used to indicate student achievement.

Marks should not be used as a form of punishment.

Assigning zeros for things other than achievement confuse the meaning of the grade
Zeros skew results.

Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Teachers will be required to give an ‘IN’ designation for incomplete work.

Teachers will give marks only as they relate to student achievement

Schools will need to explore alternative solutions to dealing with students who chronically do not complete or hand in assignments, behave poorly in class and/or do not attend classes regularly.

When students do not attend class, teachers must consider the level of student engagement within their classes.

Teachers must consider the quality and relevance of the assignment they are asking students to complete.

The role of homework in supporting student learning will need to be re-examined.

Students will be required to provide evidence of their learning.

Students must accept responsibility for their poor learning behaviours beyond simply receiving a zero.

Grading Guideline

3.2 Teachers will establish, communicate, and apply consequences for late and missing work.

Rationale

Handing in assignments late is a poor learning behaviour and must be addressed as such. Students must understand that there will be consequences for not completing assignments that provide evidence of learning or for submitting those assignments late.



Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Teachers should use their professional judgment to establish reasonable but firm expectations regarding timelines, and support student learning using the strategies listed.

Regular communication about student progress among teachers, students, and parents will support timely completion of assignments. Student must understand that there are consequences for not completing assignments that provide evidence of learning or for submitting those assignments late.

If student work is still late or missing, teachers will 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 within a supervised setting in accordance with school 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 for students who are learning English or French as an additional language.
- Provide alternative assessment tasks that accommodate diverse learning needs.

If these strategies are unsuccessful in supporting students to complete their work, teachers will be required to give an 'IN'.

In applying an 'IN' for late or missing work, teachers will decide whether there is sufficient evidence of achievement. Students are expected to meet the essential outcomes of each course. Teachers will use their professional discretion and 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. 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' may be used when there is a plan in place to address the issue, as follows:

- at Grades 1 to 6, in any term including 'Final'
- at Grades 7 and 8, in any term, including 'Final' and the 'Overall Grade'



- at Grades 9 to 12, if 'IN' is assigned for a 'Final Grade', principals have been provided with required steps to follow, so that final mark data sent to the province does not include these courses.

A teacher comment must provide an explanation at all grade levels.

Grading Guideline

3.3 Grades will be calculated on summative (assessment of learning) information only and not on formative (assessment for learning) assessment (practice work, homework, pre-tests, unrelated bonus marks, etc).

Rationale

Students should be given ample opportunities and time to practice the specific learning outcomes before summative assessment takes place.

Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Teachers will be required to give careful consideration to the summative assessment strategies they will use for a given learning unit. Strategies may include observations, conversations and products.

Teachers will provide varied opportunities for students to practice their learning.

Teachers will be required to shift their focus from assessment of learning to assessment for learning. Assessment for learning (formative) requires teachers to provide descriptive feedback on student learning and engage students in self and peer assessment. It requires teachers to correct misunderstandings before the more formal summative assessment takes place.

Teachers will emphasize the value of practice.

Students will need to learn to reflect on themselves as learners through the use of strategies such as peer and self-assessment, portfolios, and the development of criteria for learning.

Grading Guideline

3.4 Students will be given multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning over the duration of a course. In determining a grade, special emphasis should be placed on more recent achievement.



Rationale

Students may need several opportunities to demonstrate their learning which may mean assessment a given outcome more than once or reassessing an outcome if it allows a student to demonstrate their understanding.

The purpose of summative assessment is to determine students' achievement against a specific learning outcome. If a student has opportunity to engage in further learning between one assessment opportunity and the next, the new learning must be acknowledged and noted. More practice time and opportunities should generate better results.

Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Within reason, teachers will need to be prepared to reassess student's learning. See implications for students.

Teachers will need to recognize that students' marks may need to be changed as new learning is demonstrated.

Teachers must recognize there may be times that students' results on a given summative assessment may require re-teaching and therefore re-testing.

Students must understand that reassessment can be earned by demonstrating a willingness to engage in additional practice or learning activities before the reassessment takes place.

Grading Guideline

3.5 The act of collaborating and learning with others is highly desirable. However, grades will be based on individual achievement and not on group achievement.

Rationale

Students must be assessed on their individual achievement. Students should not be penalized for the inadequate contributions of some nor rewarded for the exemplary efforts of others.

Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Teachers need to have clear guidelines and expectations for individual achievement, particularly if the assessment is completed in the context of a group.

Students will need to collaborate with teachers on setting clear criteria for individual achievement as it pertains to group work.



Grading Guideline

3.6 It is critical that all students participate in self and peer assessment. A student's grade however, will be determined by the teacher and not on a student's self and/or peer assessment.

Rationale

Peer and self-assessment promote reflection and pro-social skills that are critical factors in future success. These practices promote social responsibility because they focus the students on evaluating their performance against personal goals and curricular outcomes.

The teacher is responsible for making final judgments of a student's learning in relation to the curricular outcomes.

Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Teachers must consider developing strategies to teach self and peer assessment and provide multiple opportunities for students to practice.

Students will need to develop their self and peer assessment skills.

Grading Guideline

3.7 When determining final grades, teachers will decide whether they have sufficient evidence of achievement. If not, the grade recorded will be 'IN' (incomplete) and no credit will be given until the outcome can be assessed. The teacher must consult with their school-based administrator prior to determining that a student's final academic status is incomplete. Evidence will be accepted by the teacher until the date established by school policy.

Rationale

This approach allows students every opportunity to demonstrate their learning while accurately indicating when students have not generated enough evidence to earn a grade and/or credit.

Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Students will be encouraged to meet classroom deadlines for assignment completion. Should this become problematic, the school's process or procedures for assignment completion will be implemented.

Teachers will need to determine what and how much evidence is necessary to clearly determine a final grade for each student.



Teachers will need to be prepared to accept assignments until the date set as per school policy.

Teachers will substitute an 'IN' in place of the final grade.

School teams will need to determine how to address incomplete credit acquisition on an individual basis.

Students will need to provide evidence of their learning.

Students will need to understand the ramifications of handing in assignments late.

4. Creating the Grade

Grading Guideline

- 4.1 A student's specific learning behaviours will be reported separately. Effort, participation, assignment completion, homework and attendance are important and require teacher feedback. They will not be part of a student's overall grade in a given subject area.

Rationale

A student's learning behaviours has a significant impact on academic success. Therefore the reporting of these behaviours as a separate entity is critically important. When learning achievement and learning behaviours are reported separately, teachers, students and parents are able to determine whether student improvement is contingent on learning, or behaviours or both.

Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Teachers will need to determine the criteria and performance standards they expect for learning behaviours in their classrooms.

Teachers will be required to consistently reinforce the learning behaviours they want their students to acquire.

Students will understand that learning behaviours contribute to learning success and that their engagement impacts performance.

Grading Guideline

- 4.2 Grades will be communicated to students and parents in clear and concise ways. Multiple opportunities to share student achievement beyond the report card will be made available to students and parents when and where relevant.



Rationale

Report cards need to provide detailed and helpful information about both student achievement and student learning behaviours. Students and parents need to be informed so they understand what the student is doing well and what needs improvement.

Report cards cannot be the only information students and parents receive. Because of the relative infrequency of report cards, students and parents will need other forms of communication (phone calls, progress reports, emails, PowerSchool portal, etc.) at more regular intervals.

Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Teachers will need to collect information on both student achievement and learning behaviours.

Teachers will incorporate other forms of communicating achievement including parent/teacher/student conferencing, portfolios, phone calls, interim reports, and emails.

Teachers may consider reporting both the strengths and challenges as they relate to a student's achievement.

Teachers will be required to provide on-going, open communication between parents and school when and where relevant.

Grading Guidelines

4.3 Students/parents will have an opportunity to appeal a grade.

Rationale

By providing students with an opportunity to appeal a grade, they experience ownership for their own learning and learn the value of due process in evaluation.

Possible Implication for Teachers and Students

Students will be required to present a sound rationale as to why a grade should be reviewed through an appeal process

Teachers will need to utilize an effective, fair and reasonable evaluation process.

Teachers will need to be able to describe their assessment process and how a given grade was determined.



5. Professional Judgment

Grading Guideline

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

Rationale

Marks and corresponding grades should indicate all the learning the student has successfully accomplished against the curricular goals and outcomes. If in the process of calculating a grade, the teacher believes the grade is not an accurate reflection of the student's learning, the grade should be adjusted accordingly. Teachers know their learners.

Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Teachers will need to review each student's grade and be assured that it is an accurate reflection of their learning. If it is not, they will need to decide how best to determine the grade.

6. Academic Honesty

Grading Guideline

6.1 Students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work.

Rationale

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

Possible Implications for Teachers and Students

Teachers will communicate and reinforce expectations of academic honesty with students.

Teachers will respond appropriately to academic dishonesty. Aspects of academic dishonesty include copying others' work, using cheat notes, misrepresenting circumstances to obtain extensions, and submitting or representing someone else's work as one's own (*plagiarizing*).

Teachers may employ the following strategies to deal with academic dishonesty may include the following:



- Have the student redo the work honestly
- Contact parents / guardians
- Document the incident in the student's file
- Report this behaviour on the report card
- Other disciplinary measures as determined by the teacher and principal
- Teachers need to consider the nature of the assignment, the age and maturity of the student, the individual circumstances of the student, and the potential impact of the consequence on subsequent learning and motivation. Whatever the consequence, students should complete the work in an honest way.

Sources:

1. [Communicating Student Learning - Guidelines for Schools \(Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2008\)](#)
2. [Manitoba Provincial Report Card Policy & Guidelines \(Manitoba Education & Training, 2018\)](#)
3. [Provincial Assessment Policy Kindergarten to Grade 12 – Academic Responsibility, Honesty, and Promotion / Retention \(Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2015\)](#)
4. [Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind: Assessment for Learning, Assessment as Learning, Assessment of Learning. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education, Citizenship & Youth, 2006.](#)