



Section Five: Instructional Programs

“Together We Learn”

506 – PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

The Board of Education believes in the following:

*"It is worth noting, right from the start, that assessment is a human process, conducted by and with human beings, and subject inevitably to the frailties of human judgment. However crisp and objective we might try to make it, and however neatly quantifiable may be our 'results', assessment is closer to an art than a science. **It is, after all, an exercise in human communication.**" - Ruth Sutton (world renowned educator and writer on education)*

Introduction

Assessment is defined as the ongoing gathering and communicating of information about students' performance and progress in relation to district goals and provincial curriculum. Through the use of ongoing assessment practices supported by research, educators (K-12) enhance and promote intellectual learning and growth, as well as social and emotional development, for all students in an inclusive, educational environment.

1. Quality assessment is authentic and promotes learning that is reflected in all aspects of our learning community.
 - 1.1 **Assessment FOR Learning (Formative Assessment):** Assessment FOR learning occurs **during** the learning process and is essential for student success. Formative assessment meaningfully engages students, and enables educators, to seek and interpret evidence of learning in order to determine where students are at, where they need to go, and how best to get there. Ongoing descriptive, written, and/or verbal feedback guides this process to support deep, meaningful learning.
 - 1.2 **Assessment OF Learning (Summative Assessment):** Assessment OF learning summarizes evidence of student learning collected through observations, conversations, and artifacts at the end of a learning cycle.
 - 1.3 **Communicating Student Learning:** Communicating student learning, in various forms, is designed to communicate snapshots of learning to students, parents/guardians, and educators. Students' academic learning needs to be clearly articulated and communicated separately from work ethic, behavior, and/or social responsibility.



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2. The Board of Education believes that quality assessment is to be undertaken in accordance with the following principles:
 - 2.1 **Assessment practices reflect current research**
 - Assessment is a key competency in which educators focus and reflect on how students learn best as well as on how to improve teaching and learning.
 - Assessment utilizes appropriate assessment tools to align with purpose: diagnostic, formative, or summative.
 - 2.2 **Assessment is fair and equitable**
 - Assessment supports the development of the whole student: intellectual, aesthetic, physical, social, and emotional.
 - Assessment is a valid reflection of the student's current understanding.
 - Assessment identifies and supports the student's individual strengths and needs.
 - 2.3 **Assessment is based on and guided by essential learning goals**
 - Assessment powerfully supports the relationship between students, teachers, and curricula by focusing on the core competencies, big ideas, and learning standards (curricular competencies and content) that are most relevant to our learners and context.
 - Assessment supports the creation of high quality learning tasks that develop critical, creative, and collaborative individuals.
 - Assessment supports and reflects Ministry and District educational goals.
 - Assessment is an essential part of effective planning that is guided by clear performance targets and criteria in all three components of the curriculum – knowing, doing, and understanding.
 - Assessment supports personalized learning as may be outlined in a student's individualized education or learning plan.
 - 2.4 **Assessment is inseparable from instruction**
 - Assessment informs and guides the instructional process by providing teachers with information about student progress towards learning goals.
 - Assessment is embedded in meaningful learning experiences, empowering teachers and students to co-develop core competencies through engaging, criteria-framed, quality tasks.
 - Assessment involves teachers in continuous interactions with their students to seamlessly provide dynamic and descriptive feedback on evidence of student learning in relation to specific criteria.



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2.5 **Assessment is flexible, authentic, and responsive to the learning needs of students**

- Assessment is responsive to each student's needs and interests, fostering voice and choice and building on individual strengths.
- Assessment is differentiated, empowering students to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.
- Assessment is ongoing, systematic, and provides multiple and varying opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning over time.
- Assessment allows teachers to triangulate evidence from observations, conversations, and artifacts to accurately determine what students know, are able to do, and are learning.

2.6 **Assessment promotes thinking and personal reflection, empowering students to become independent learners**

- Assessment enables students to articulate their learning goals and to make informed decisions about how to progress towards these goals.
- Assessment promotes understanding of criteria through the use of samples and examples.
- Assessment develops effective self- and peer-assessment skills.
- Assessment stimulates metacognition and promotes self-reflective learning.

2.7 **Assessment is a collaborative process**

- Assessment is co-constructed with students, including but not limited to: co-development of criteria, strength-based conversations, and goal setting.
- Assessment engages students and parents in conversations about learning.
- Assessment is transparent and clearly communicated with students and parents.

2.8 **Assessment is a key professional competency**

- Assessment practices reflect current research in learning and assessment, and therefore require support through ongoing professional learning.
- Assessment practices require teachers to seek knowledge and skills to assess learning. This process includes planning for instruction and assessment, observing for learning, interpreting evidence, and providing constructive feedback.
- Assessment is a critical part of teachers' reflection and ongoing refinement of their practice.



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The Board of Education recognizes the complex nature of quality assessment and the need for educators to engage in ongoing, collaborative learning in order to create the conditions for all students to reach their potential is recognized.

3. Definitions

Artifacts: an object that represents a student's learning.

Authentic: genuine and meaningful.

Big Ideas: statements that are central to one's understanding in an area of learning. A big idea is broad and abstract. It contains two or more key concepts. It is generally timeless and is transferable to other situations. Big ideas are the key concepts, principles, and theories that are used to organize knowledge within and across disciplines. A big idea is a statement of an idea that is central to an area of learning or across disciplines that links numerous understandings into a coherent whole.

Criteria: the standards by which we judge the quality of a given task.

Core Competencies: sets of intellectual, personal, and social and emotional proficiencies that all students need to develop in order to engage in deep learning and life-long learning.

Concepts and Content: what students should know and understand in a given area of learning at a particular grade level. They define the core knowledge (facts and concepts) essential to the development of big ideas for that area of learning in that grade. Concept and content learning standards in some areas of learning are displayed as a continuous view.

Curricular Competencies: the processes and skills that students need in order to meet the outcomes.

Diagnostic: pre-assessment to inform instruction.

Evaluation: the process of making judgments about what a student knows, understands, and is able to do in relation to curricular outcomes and core competencies.

Learning Standards: an explicit statement of what students are expected to know, understand and be able to do in a given grade and area of learning. In BC, learning standards are of two types: curricular competency standards, and concept and content standards. In previous curricula, these expectations were presented as learning outcomes.



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Metacognition: reflecting on thinking processes (including planning, monitoring one's own thoughts, solving problems, making decisions, and evaluating one's thought processes).

Peer-Assessment: students providing each other with descriptive and constructive feedback based upon evidence and explicit criteria, for the purpose of producing better work in the future.

Self-Assessment: students judging the quality of their own work based upon evidence and explicit criteria, for the purpose of producing better work in the future.

Triangulation of Evidence: the process of analyzing evidence of student learning from multiple sources (conversations, observations, and artifacts) in order to gain a more accurate and reliable indication of student progress.