



PROCEDURE

Title: **ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION
OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT** Procedure No.: **5015b**
Effective Date: **2022 May 2**

Department: Learning Support Services

Reference(s): Assessment and Evaluation of Student Achievement Policy, 5015 (to be revised – winter 2022)

- Reporting Student Achievement Procedure, 5015a (to be revised - winter 2022)
- Growing Success, Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools, First Edition, Covering Grades 1 to 12, 2010
- Growing Success, The Kindergarten Addendum, Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools, 2016
- The Kindergarten Program, 2016
- Learning for All, A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013
- [“Assessment and Evaluation, Content Standards and Performance Standards”](#) Ontario Ministry of Education, 2021
- [“Assessment and Evaluation, Categories of Knowledge and Skills”](#) Ontario Ministry of Education, 2021
- English Language Learners ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007
- Ontario’s Education Equity Action Plan, 2017

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of Assessment and Evaluation is to improve student learning. Thames Valley District School Board’s assessment and evaluation practices are grounded in the belief that all students should be able to demonstrate their learning in an environment that reflects the values of fairness, equity, inclusion and respect for all.

The use of evidence-informed assessment and instructional strategies that adhere to the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and differentiated instruction, combined with ongoing monitoring and responsiveness to a student’s progress, are essential to support [all students]. (*Learning for All*, 2013, p. 12-24)

Administered By: **Learning Support Services**

Amendment Date(s):

Most Recent EIE Review Date:

2.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Seven Fundamental Principles: The following seven fundamental principles, as outlined in *Growing Success* (2010), lay the foundation for rich and effective assessment, evaluation and reporting practices and help ensure that these practices are valid and reliable in order to lead to the improvement of learning for all students.

Educators use practices and procedures that:

- 2.1 Are fair, transparent, and equitable for all students
- 2.2 Support all students, including those with special education needs, those who are learning the language of instruction (English or French), and those who are First Nations, Métis, or Inuit.
- 2.3 Are carefully planned to relate to the curriculum expectations and learning goals. As much as possible, they should also relate to the interests, learning styles and preferences, needs, and experiences of all students.
- 2.4 Are communicated clearly to students and families at the beginning of the school year or course and at other appropriate points throughout school year or course.
- 2.5 Are ongoing, varied in nature, and administered over a period of time to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning.
- 2.6 Provide ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved student learning and achievement.
- 2.7 Develop students' self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning.

3.0 CONTENT AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The Ontario curriculum for Grades 1 to 12 comprises content standards and performance standards. Assessment and evaluation will be based on both the content standards and the performance standards.

The content standards are the overall and specific curriculum expectations given in the curriculum for every subject and discipline.

The performance standards are outlined in the achievement chart, also provided in the curriculum for every subject and discipline (each achievement chart is specific to the subject/discipline; see the sample charts provided). The achievement chart is a standard province-wide guide and is to be used by all teachers as a framework for assessing and evaluating student achievement of the expectations in the particular subject or discipline. It enables teachers to make consistent judgements about the quality of student learning, based on clear performance standards and on a body of evidence collected over time. It also provides teachers with a foundation for developing clear and specific feedback for students and families. ([*Assessment and Evaluation, Content Standards and Performance Standards*](#).” Ontario Ministry of Education, 2021.)

The purposes of the achievement chart are to:

- provide a common framework that encompasses all curriculum expectations for all subjects/courses across the grades;
- guide the development of high-quality assessment tasks and tools (including rubrics);
- help teachers plan instruction for learning;
- provide a basis for consistent and meaningful feedback to students in relation to provincial content and performance standards; and
- establish categories and criteria for assessing and evaluating students' learning.

Criterion-referenced assessment and evaluation is expected, as it aligns with established criteria for four levels of achievement that are standard across the province. Students are not to be compared to other students or ranked based on student performance. The goal of using a criterion-based approach is to make the assessment and evaluation of student achievement as fair, reliable, and transparent as possible. "Assignments for evaluation may involve group projects as long as each student's work within the group project is evaluated independently and assigned an individual mark, as opposed to a common group mark. The evaluation of student learning is the responsibility of the teacher and must not include the judgement of the student or of the student's peers." (*Growing Success*, 2010, p. 39)

The achievement chart also identifies four levels of achievement, defined as follows:

- **Level 1** represents achievement that falls much below the provincial standard. The student demonstrates the specified knowledge and skills with limited effectiveness. Students must work at significantly improving in specific areas, as necessary, if they are to be successful in a subject or course in the next grade.
- **Level 2** represents achievement that approaches the standard. The student demonstrates the specified knowledge and skills with some effectiveness. Students performing at this level need to work on identified learning gaps to ensure future success.
- **Level 3** represents the provincial standard for achievement. The student demonstrates the specified knowledge and skills with considerable effectiveness. Families of students achieving at level 3 can be confident that their children will be prepared for work in subsequent grades or courses.
- **Level 4** identifies achievement that surpasses the provincial standard. The student demonstrates the specified knowledge and skills with a high degree of effectiveness. However, achievement at level 4 does not mean that the student has achieved expectations beyond those specified for the grade or course.

Evaluation focuses on the students' achievement of the Overall Expectations. Evidence of student achievement for evaluation is collected over time from three different sources – conversations, observations, and student products.

The Achievement Chart identifies four categories of knowledge and skills that are common to both the elementary and secondary panels and to all subject areas and disciplines.

The categories, are:

- **Knowledge and Understanding:** Subject-specific content acquired in each grade/course (knowledge), and the comprehension of its meaning and significance (understanding)
- **Thinking:** The use of critical and creative thinking skills and or processes
- **Communication:** The conveying of meaning and expression through various forms
- **Application:** The use of knowledge and skills to make connections within and between various contexts.

Teachers will ensure that student learning is assessed and evaluated in a balanced manner with respect to the four categories, and that achievement of particular expectations is considered within the appropriate categories. The emphasis on “balance” reflects the fact that all categories of the achievement chart are important and need to be a part of the process of instruction, learning, assessment, and evaluation. However, it also indicates that for different courses, the relative importance of each of the categories may vary. ([“Assessment and Evaluation, Categories of Knowledge and Skills”](#) Ontario Ministry of Education, 2021.)

4.0 ASSESSMENT FOR, AS AND OF LEARNING

The use of assessment for the purpose of improving learning and helping students become independent learners requires a culture in which student and teacher learn together in a collaborative relationship each playing an active role in setting learning goals, developing success criteria, giving and receiving feedback, monitoring progress, and adjusting learning strategies. The educator acts as “lead learner”, providing support while gradually releasing more and more responsibility to the student, as the student develops the knowledge and skills needed to become an independent learner (*Growing Success*, 2010, p. 30).

Evaluation refers to the process of determining and communicating the quality of student learning on the basis of established performance standards in relation to overall curriculum expectations. Evidence for evaluation is collected over time from three different sources – observations, conversations, and student products. Using multiple sources of evidence increases the reliability and validity of the evaluation of student learning.

For grades 1 to 12, all curriculum expectations must be accounted for in instruction and assessment, but evaluation focuses on students’ achievement of the overall expectations. A student’s achievement of the overall expectations is evaluated on the basis of their achievement of related specific expectations.

Determining a report card grade will involve teachers’ professional judgement and interpretation of evidence and should reflect the student’s most consistent level of achievement, with special consideration given to more recent evidence. (*Growing Success*, 2010, p. 39)

The Purposes of Assessment, the Nature of Assessment for Different Purposes, and the Uses of Assessment Information (*Growing Success*, 2010, p. 31)

Purpose of Classroom Assessment	Nature of Assessment	Use of Information
Assessment for learning “Assessment <i>for</i> learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there.” (Assessment Reform Group, 2002, p. 2)	Diagnostic assessment: occurs before instruction begins so teachers can determine students’ readiness to learn new knowledge and skills, as well as obtain information about their interests and learning preferences.	The information gathered: is used by teachers and students to determine what students already know and can do with respect to the knowledge and skills identified in the overall and specific expectations, so teachers can plan instruction and assessment that are differentiated and personalized and work with students to set appropriate learning goals.
	Formative assessment: occurs frequently and in an ongoing manner during instruction, while students are still gaining knowledge and practicing skills.	The information gathered: is used by teachers to monitor students’ progress towards achieving the overall and specific expectations, so that teachers can provide timely and specific descriptive feedback to students, scaffold next steps, and differentiate instruction and assessment in response to student needs.
Assessment as learning “Assessment <i>as</i> learning focuses on the explicit fostering of students’ capacity over time to be their own best assessors, but teachers need to start by presenting and modelling external, structured opportunities for students to assess themselves.” (Western and Northern Canadian Protocol, p. 42)	Formative assessment: occurs frequently in an ongoing manner during instruction, with support, modelling, and guidance from the teacher.	The information gathered: is used by students to provide feedback to other students (peer assessment), monitor their own progress towards achieving their learning goals (self-assessment), make adjustments in their learning approaches, reflect on their learning, and set individual goals for learning.
Assessment of learning “Assessment <i>of</i> learning is the assessment that becomes public and results in statements or symbols about how well students are learning. It often contributes to pivotal decisions that will affect students’ futures.”	Summative assessment: occurs at or near the end of a period of learning, and may be used to inform further instruction.	The information gathered: is used by the teacher to summarize learning at a given point in time. This summary is used to make judgements about the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria, to assign a value to represent that quality, and to support

Purpose of Classroom Assessment	Nature of Assessment	Use of Information
(<i>Western and Northern Canadian Protocol</i> , p. 55)		the communication of information about achievement to students themselves, families, teachers and others.

5.0 LEARNING SKILLS AND WORK HABITS, GRADES 1-12

The development of learning skills and work habits is an integral part of a student's learning. To the extent possible, however, the evaluation of learning skills and work habits, apart from any that may be included as part of a curriculum expectation in a subject or course, should not be considered in the determination of a student's grades. (*Growing Success*, 2010, p. 10)

Growing Success (p.11) provides sample student behaviours in each area of Learning Skills and Work Habits to guide educators in their instruction, assessment, and evaluation. The sample behaviours are intended to assist but not restrict educators in their efforts to help students become effective learners and will look different at the various grade levels.

6.0 KINDERGARTEN

Assessment is the process of gathering and interpreting information that accurately reflects the child's demonstration of learning in relation to the knowledge and skills outlined in the overall expectations of *The Kindergarten Program* (2016). The primary purpose of assessment is to improve learning and to help children become self-regulating, autonomous learners.

Educators engage in assessment for learning as they observe and document evidence of children's learning (through the process of "pedagogical documentation") and provide descriptive feedback to the children that is designed to help them move forward in their development. Educators engage in assessment as learning when they support children in setting individual goals, monitoring their own progress, determining next steps, and reflecting on their thinking and learning, to help them become confident, autonomous learners.

The child and the child's family are encouraged to join the educators in supporting the learning of the child through assessment for and as learning. (*Growing Success: The Kindergarten Addendum*, 2016, p. 6)

7.0 STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

For students with special education needs, assessment and evaluation are key components of their programming. Appropriate methods of assessment and evaluation are integral to the improvement of student learning.

A student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) describes their educational program and any accommodations that may be required. The IEP specifies whether the student requires:

- accommodations only; or
- modified learning expectations, with the possibility of accommodations; or
- an alternative program, not derived from the curriculum expectations for a subject/grade or course. (*Growing Success*, 2010, p. 70)

Accommodations

For a student with special education needs who requires “accommodations only”, as described in [their] Individual Education Plan, assessment and evaluation of achievement will be assessed based on the appropriate subject/grade/course curriculum expectations and the achievement levels outlined in the curriculum documents. (*Growing Success*, 2010, p. 70)

Modified Expectations

Modifications are changes made to the grade level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs. Modifications may include the use of expectations at a different grade level and/or an increase or decrease in the number and/or complexity of expectations relative to the curriculum expectations for the regular grade level. (*Growing Success*, 2010, p. 72)

Modifications may only be undertaken with the support of the School Superintendent and the parent/guardian.

Alternative Learning Expectations

Alternative learning expectations are developed to help students acquire knowledge and skills that are not represented in the Ontario curriculum expectations. Alternative learning expectations should be measurable and specify the knowledge and/or skills that the student will demonstrate independently, given the provision of appropriate accommodations. Planning for the assessment and evaluation of a student's learning should be incorporated in the development of each alternative learning expectation. The student's achievement of the alternative learning expectations outlined in the IEP should be assessed and evaluated using a variety of methods. (*Growing Success*, 2010, p. 72-73)

8.0 ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

English language learners (ELLs) are learning the language of instruction at the same time as they are learning the curriculum. In addition to assessing the achievement of curriculum expectations, teachers are required to track ELLs' developing proficiency in English utilizing the Ministry Steps to English Proficiency (STEP).

Student strengths and needs are identified through Initial Assessment, STEP, and classroom assessment strategies. Effective assessment and evaluation of ELLs depends on the frequent monitoring of their progress and next steps in English language acquisition. Educators will provide students with a wide range of opportunities to demonstrate their learning in ways that reflect an ELL's individual STEP levels, taking into consideration their cultural and linguistic needs.

Accommodations for ELLs are determined by the assessment process and are based on an ELL's individual STEP levels. In addition, teachers may be required to temporarily modify some of the curriculum expectations to support ELLs, especially those who are in early STEP levels or those who have had limited prior schooling. Assessment and evaluation will be based on the appropriately modified expectations. (*Growing Success*, 2010, p.76-78; *English Language Learners ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12*)

9.0 ACHIEVEMENT OF CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

It must be made clear to students early in the school year that they are responsible for providing evidence of their achievement of the overall expectations within the time frame specified by the teacher, and in a form approved by the teacher. (*Growing Success*, 2010, p. 43).

- In determining a final mark, teachers will consider a student's most recent and most consistent level of achievement. (*Growing Success*, 2010, p. 88) Conversations, observations and student products will be considered over time in determining a mark. (*Growing Success*, 2010, p. 39)
- In all subjects and courses, students should be given numerous and varied opportunities to demonstrate the full extent of their achievement of the curriculum expectations across the four categories of knowledge and skills defined as Knowledge and Understanding, Thinking, Communication and Application. (*Growing Success*, 2010, p. 17)
- Opportunities to demonstrate improved achievement should be based upon descriptive feedback provided by the teacher.
- Teachers will use their professional judgement to determine the achievement level/grades of students. Professional judgement is defined as being informed by professional knowledge of curriculum expectations, context, evidence of learning, methods of instruction and assessment, and the criteria and standards that indicate success in student learning. In professional practice, judgement involves a purposeful and systematic thinking process that evolves in terms of accuracy and insight with ongoing reflection and self-correction. (*Growing Success*, 2010, p. 152)

Several strategies may be used by staff to prevent and/or address late and missed assignments in order to determine a students' level of achievement. In all instances, it is critical that teachers employ a variety of assessment measures. This offers students the opportunity to clearly demonstrate their understanding. A student's final grade/mark must represent the student's actual level of achievement.

Preventative Measures:

- establish deadlines for submission of assignments for evaluation, in collaboration with students when appropriate, and clearly communicate those deadlines to students, and, where appropriate, to families;
- implementation and integration of tiered intervention strategies;

- assist students in developing time-management skills;
- consider evidence of student achievement for evaluation over time from three different sources: conversations, observations, and student products (triangulation of data);
- ensure that the needs of students are met, consistent with the strategies outlined in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs);
- consider the cultures, histories, and contexts of all students, their lived experiences, and those of their families;
- plan for major assignments to be completed in steps, so that students achieve success at incremental stages;
- confer with students to monitor progress of assignment completion; and
- maintain ongoing collaborative communication with students and families about student achievement and assignment due dates.

Responsive Measures:

- seek clarification from the student regarding the reason for not completing the assignment;
- collaboratively establish an alternate date for submission of a late assignment;
- provide an alternate assignment to assess the student's achievement of the overall expectations;
- apply alternate assessment methodologies to address barriers;
- seek the assistance of the school team for strategies to support the student (e.g., Learning Support Teacher, ESL Teacher, Student Success Teacher, Guidance Counsellor, Indigenous Counsellors, school administration, etc.);
- schedule conferences with students and families to discuss any barriers to success;
- when a student is in jeopardy of failing a course/subject, school staff will provide students with additional opportunities to demonstrate achievement of curricular expectations before the end of the course/subject; and
- late assignments may impact the Learning Skills section of the report card and teachers will implement the responsive measures listed above, as needed
- missed assignments may impact the Learning Skills section of the report card and may result in teachers using the responsive measures listed above and/or utilizing other evidence of a student's achievement of overall expectations to determine a subject/course mark

10.0 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It must be made clear to students that they are responsible for providing evidence of their learning within established timelines, and that there are consequences for cheating [and/or] plagiarizing. Students must understand that the [assignments]/tests/exams they complete for evaluation must be their own work and that cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. (*Growing Success*, 2012. p. 42)

Plagiarism is defined as “[t]he use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another without attribution, in order to represent them as one’s own original work.” (*Growing Success*, 2021, p. 152)

Preventative Measures:

- communicate the definition of plagiarism and cheating to students and families and the fact that they will not be tolerated;
- teach explicit strategies for citing sources properly and for avoiding plagiarism;
- have students complete assessments under the supervision of the teacher, whenever possible;
- provide meaningful class time for the completion of assignments;
- notify students and families if anti-plagiarism software is being used; and
- on-going monitoring of the process work.

Responsive Measures:

- seek clarification from the student regarding the reason for the cheating/plagiarism;
- consider mitigating factors including the grade level of the student; the maturity of the student; the number and frequency of incidents; and the individual circumstances of the student;
- consult with the school administrator to determine next steps, which may include redoing part/all of the assignment; completing an alternate assignment; a mark of zero for the assignment; responses in alignment with progressive discipline;
- inform the families; and
- school administrators will maintain a record of any reported cheating/plagiarism and the resulting actions.