

Harry R. Hamilton- Communicating Student Learning

Introduction

Aligning with our Provincial Assessment Policy, our school has developed a plan to communicate student learning with families. Our school plan will explain what we do at the school to assess and evaluate your child's learning, and how we will communicate our expectations for learning and achievements. *It is our goal to ensure that families are informed on their children's learning at school and that teachers are informed on the rich knowledge that students bring from home to create true learning communities in our classrooms and school.*

Assessment & Evaluation

Improving student learning is the primary purpose of assessment and evaluation. Since assessment and evaluation are integral parts of the same reflective process, it is important to be clear on what each term means.

Assessment- the systematic process of gathering information on student learning. Teachers use a variety of tools and experiences to assess students multiple times.

Formative assessment (Assessment for Learning): It is ongoing and impacts student learning and achievement. Students benefit from feedback, develop confidence and take ownership for their learning when they know what to improve and have chances to show it. Formative assessment forms the future direction for student learning and fosters independent learners. It gives teachers a clear plan of action and a better understanding of each student's learning styles. Formative assessment informs learning.

Summative assessment (Assessment of Learning): It is carried out from time to time such as the end of unit to get a snapshot in time of how a student achieved on a final product. Summative assessment summarizes learning.

Evaluation: includes analyzing, reflecting upon, monitoring, listening, conversing, observing, summarizing and then making decisions/judgments based upon the assessment information gathered for the next steps in learning.

How Students Learn:

We develop our educational programs based on a common set of understandings about how students learn, referred to as the Principles of Learning. It is our responsibility as teachers to plan for our students with the following principles in mind:

- Learning is a process of actively constructing knowledge.

- Students construct knowledge and make it meaningful in terms of their prior knowledge and experiences.
- Learning is enhanced when it takes place in a social and collaborative environment.
- Students need to continue to view learning as an integrated whole.
- Learners must see themselves as capable and successful.
- Learners have different ways of knowing and representing knowledge.
- Reflection is an integral part of learning.

What Students Learn:

The Principles of Learning offer a framework as to how students learn. The content of what students learn is legislated by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Teachers in the province are provided with curriculum guides that describe what students are expected to know and able to do at various points along a continuum of learning in each curriculum area. For each stage, there are "outcomes" which indicate the knowledge and skill expectations. Families can learn more about this by discussing it with teachers at school or visiting the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development website.

Teachers use the expected learning outcomes for planning and teaching, and as the basis for assessing and evaluating student learning. Teachers must get to know each student as a learner so they can guide students to reach those outcomes.

Families can explore curriculum outcomes by reading the curriculum information provided by teachers, asking questions about curriculum, participating in parent-teacher progress conferences, observing your student's schoolwork, asking your child about school and by viewing the HRCE and school's website and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's website.

Assessment & Evaluation Tools

Teachers may use many of the following tools to ensure a balanced assessment.

- Work Samples - daily assignments
- Reports/Projects/Presentations - formal assignments extending over a period of time which demonstrate student understanding of the topic.
- Performances - skits, puppet shows, public speaking, debates, plays, role-playing, singing and dance.

- Observations/Anecdotal Records/checklists - these are methods used to continuously collect information on student learning
- Journals/ Responses/Reflective Writing - expressive writing often shared with a variety of audiences.
- Oral Language conversations
- Test and Quizzes - a written or oral response to questions on a specific topic
- Running Records - structured assessment tools to determine reading progress.
- Portfolios - a collection of student/teacher selected work that chronicles student progress over a period of time.
- Conferencing/ Feedback - a discussion, student to student or student to teacher, regarding student work.
- Formal Screening Tests - generally completed by support staff, these tests help to determine future plans for student learning.
- Questioning - the use of question and answer in various settings to determine what a child knows.
- Rubrics - identifies and describes the criteria used to assess student performance.

Teachers use all gathered information to evaluate student learning. Evaluation involves weighing and balancing the information using professional decisions. Teachers are aware that students have different strengths and different ways of learning, as well as various ways of demonstrating their learning. Knowing where children are in relation to the expected learning outcomes is essential for planning for success. It is important for teachers to share this information with students and parents/guardians to support your child's learning.

Communicating Student Learning

Just as there are a variety of ways of assessing student learning; there are many ways that information may be communicated. The following list gives a variety of methods that may be used to communicate student learning:

- Curriculum Information Teachers share with families.
- Monthly Class Newsletter
- School website
- Calendars
- Home Reading Programs
- Phone calls
- Student Planning Team Meetings
- Report Cards Parent
- Teacher Progress Conferences

Report Cards:

Report cards for elementary schools will enable the teachers to provide effective communication to parents/guardians regarding student learning. However, they are not the only method of communication about student learning.

The school year will consist of three terms. The first reporting session will end in November, the second in March and the final session in late June. The narrative comments in these reports along with letter grades/indicators will provide information about your child's progress in meeting the learning outcomes outlined in our provincial curriculum guides.

Reporting on student learning should be clear and accurate. We will use a variety of methods and opportunities to communicate your child's progress and achievement. There will be two scheduled Parent/Teacher progress conferences each year and report cards are sent home just before or after these dates.

Conference sessions will focus on your child, recognizing his/her strengths and interests. Areas for further development will be approached in a collaborative, problem-solving manner, which will best meet the interest of the child. *We recognize that our families know their children as learners and we value the information you share to help us plan and grow too!*

Teachers or families can contact each other at times other than the set report dates. It is our wish for parents/guardians to be full participants in the learning process of their children.

Parent Concern Protocol:

Families who have a concern regarding their child should first contact the child's classroom or specialist teacher. If there is a concern regarding a teacher, families should communicate their concern with that teacher. Following this, parents who wish, may contact the Principal or Vice Principal.

Teacher Support Teams and Student Planning Teams:

Our Teacher Support Team meets regularly to discuss how we as teachers can better support learning in our school. Individual Student Planning Teams including parents/guardians and school staff will work together to make decisions for next steps for individual students.

Homework Policy:

All grades from primary to grade 12 get homework. The amount of homework students receive will vary by grade level. Homework will be age and developmentally appropriate.

At our school, most homework will be given weekly. This will help allow parents to aid their children in planning a schedule to complete the assigned tasks. We encourage students to do a little bit of homework each day and not all at once. This allows students to refresh their skills daily and help with retention and understanding. All homework will be related to what is being taught in class and it meant to reinforce strategies and outcomes that are being taught in class.

School Calendar:

The following events/reports have been scheduled for this school year. Other activities/events, which occur throughout the school year, will be sent via school messenger. If the event is specific to an individual class, communication will be made by the classroom's teacher. If the dates or times below need to be changed, you will be informed through our **Week at a Glance newsletter**.

SEPTEMBER:

15: NS Lunch Program begins

25: Terry Fox Run

26: Observe Orange Shirt Day

29: Professional Development Day - no classes all schools

30: National Day for Truth & Reconciliation - no classes all schools

OCTOBER:

1: Treaty Day - Culturally Significant Day - schools open

13: Thanksgiving Day - no classes all schools

15: SAC and PTA

24: NSTU Provincial conference day - no classes all schools

31: Halloween at HRH (Will happen throughout the school day)

NOVEMBER:

10: Remembrance Day Assembly

11: Remembrance Day - no classes all schools

19: SAC and PTA

21: Elem/Middle/Jr evaluation day - no classes elem/jr high only

DECEMBER:

3: Report Cards sent home

4: Progress Conferences & Teacher Professional Practice Day - no classes all schools

9 and 10: Holiday Concert

19: Last day of school before holiday break for students

22: Teacher Professional Practice Day - no classes all schools

JANUARY:

5: First Day Back After Break

21: SAC and PTA

FEBRUARY:

February is Registration Month!

12: PTA event

16: Nova Scotia Heritage Day - no classes all schools

18: SAC and PTA

MARCH:

13: Elem/Middle/Jr assessment & evaluation day - no classes elem/middle/jr only

16-20: Spring Break - no classes all schools

APRIL:

1: Report cards will be sent home

1: Progress conferences (evening)

2: Elem/Middle/Jr progress conferences & Teacher Professional Practice & high school professional development day - no classes all schools

3: Good Friday - no classes all schools

6: Easter Monday - no classes all schools

15: SAC and PTA

29: Elem/Middle/Jr professional development day - no classes all schools

MAY:

15: Black Excellence Day - Culturally Significant Day - schools open

18: Victoria Day - no classes all schools

29: Spring Fling

JUNE:

21: National Indigenous Peoples Day - Culturally Significant Day

29: Assessment & evaluation day - no classes all schools

30: Last day of school year