POLICIES AND
REGULATIONS Policy #14

STUDENT ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION AND REPORTING IN PEEL ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Statement of Policy

The Peel District School Board approves a student assessment, evaluation, and reporting policy that is applied consistently throughout Grades 1-12. This policy meets the provincial policy for assessment, evaluation, and reporting required in Growing Success and provincial curriculum expectations and achievement levels outlined in the elementary and secondary curriculum. To ensure effective implementation of Ministry policy, direct statements from Growing Success and its support documents have been embedded consistently throughout Policy 14. These direct statements are referenced by endnotes.

The Student Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Peel Elementary and Secondary Schools policy is aligned with and supports the principles and expectations of the Board Human Rights policy (#51) and Equity and Inclusive Education policy ( # 54). At all times, this policy should be interpreted to be consistent with the Board’s policies and the Human Rights Code.

In Peel, it is expected that assessment, evaluation, and reporting practice is based on evidence of student achievement of the provincial curriculum expectations and alternative curriculum expectations, where appropriate, and student demonstration of learning skills and work habits.

Definitions

Assessment: The process of gathering, from a variety of sources, information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the curriculum expectations in a subject or course.

Evaluation: The process of judging the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria and assigning a value to represent that quality. Evaluation is based on assessments of learning that provide data on student achievement at strategic times throughout the grade/subject/course, often at the end of a period of learning. 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.
**Reporting:** The process of communicating with parents and students about student learning.

**Assessment as learning:** The process of developing and supporting student engagement in the assessment process by monitoring their own learning, using assessment feedback from teacher (and peers and self) to determine next steps, and setting individual learning goals.

**Assessment for learning:** The ongoing process of gathering and interpreting evidence about student learning for the purpose of determining where students are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there. The information gathered is used by teachers to provide feedback and to differentiate instruction appropriately.

**Assessment of learning:** The process of collecting and interpreting evidence for the purpose of summarizing learning at a given point in time, to make judgments about the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria, and to assign a value to represent that quality.

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**Guiding Principles**

**Purposes of Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting**
The primary purpose of assessment, evaluation, and reporting is to improve student learning. Other purposes include the collection of meaningful information that will help inform instructional decisions and the promotion of student engagement. Evaluation accurately summarizes and communicates to parents, other teachers, employers, institutions of further education, and students themselves what students know and can do with respect to the overall curriculum expectations.

**Principles of Effective Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting**
To ensure that the process of assessment, evaluation, and reporting is valid and reliable, and to ensure that this process leads to the improvement of learning for all students, Peel District School Board teachers and school teams will use practices and procedures that are:

- fair, transparent, and equitable for all students;
- supportive of all students, including those with special education needs, those who are learning the language of instruction (English or French), and those who are First Nation, Métis, or Inuit;
- carefully planned to relate to the curriculum expectations and learning goals and, as much as possible, to the interests, learning styles and preferences, needs, and experiences of all students;
- communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or course and at other appropriate points throughout the school year or course;
- 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;
- providing ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement;
• developing students’ self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning.

Components of Professional Practice

Professional Judgement

Professional judgement refers to judgement that is informed by professional knowledge of content standards (i.e., curriculum expectations), performance standards (i.e., achievement chart categories), learning skills and work habits, context, evidence of learning, and methods of instruction and assessment 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. Professional Judgement is also informed by the assumptions, values, and beliefs educators bring to their practice. In exercising professional judgement, educators commit to accurate, equitable and bias-free evaluation, assessment and placement—considering the diversity of the student population—to ensure that all students are successful and can achieve their potential (Peel DSB policy 54, page 4).

Assessment Tasks

Teachers will design assessment tasks using the framework of assessment as learning, assessment for learning, and assessment of learning. Evidence of student achievement for evaluation is collected over time from three different primary sources—observations, conversations, and student products.

Assessment Tools

Teachers will obtain assessment information through a variety of means, which may include formal and informal observations, discussions, learning conversations, questioning, conferences, homework, tasks done in groups, demonstrations, projects, portfolios, developmental continua, performances, peer and self-assessments, self-reflections, essays, and tests.

Communication About Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting

Although there are clearly identified formal reporting periods, communication with parents and students about student achievement is continuous throughout the year. The school’s assessment, evaluation, and reporting policy will be aligned with the Board policy and communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or course and at other appropriate points throughout the school year or course. In the same way, the policy regarding late and missed assignments, as well as cheating and plagiarism, will also be clearly communicated to students and parents.

It is important to recognize that there may be challenges in communicating with some parents. Teachers may need to use interpreters, settlement workers, or other community support personnel to assist in communicating information about student progress and achievement. For First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students, teachers should consider involving Aboriginal counsellors and/or members of the extended family.

Professional Judgement and Reporting

It is the duty of a teacher to “ensure that report cards are fully and properly completed and processed” (O. Reg. 209/03, s.1). For Grades 1 to 12, reporting is based on evidence of student achievement of the provincial overall curriculum expectations. Also, teachers will ensure that students’ demonstration of their achievement is assessed in a balanced manner with respect to the four categories of the achievement chart (Knowledge, Thinking, Communication, Application).
Determining a report card grade will involve the teacher’s 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. This aspect of professional practice is in keeping with the recognition that there “is a need to move away from using computers which calculate a student’s mark based on parameters entered into a program to generate a neatly quantifiable result”. Supporting Your Child’s Learning Through Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting (page 6) asserts the Ministry of Education’s expectation that, in determining a report card grade, “Teachers do not simply calculate averages.”

The teacher will weigh and consider:

- all evidence collected through observations, conversations, and student products;
- evidence for evaluation that the student has completed or submitted, the number of assignments for evaluation that were not completed or submitted, and the evidence of achievement that is available for each overall expectation for a subject in a particular grade or course;
- that some evidence carries greater weight than other evidence;
- all evidence of student achievement in light of these considerations and will use their professional judgement to determine the student’s report card grade. The report card grade represents a student’s achievement of overall curriculum expectations, as demonstrated to that point in time.

In writing report card comments, teachers should describe in overall terms what students know and can do and should provide parents with personalized, clear, precise, and meaningful feedback. Comments should be in clear, meaningful language that students and parents can understand and should provide essential information to parents and students to help students improve their learning. In describing the achievement of students who are not being evaluated on the expectations in Ontario curriculum, teachers will use the required comment. Late and missed assignments for evaluation may also be noted on the report card as part of the evaluation of a student’s development of the learning skills and work habits. When appropriate, a student’s tendency to be late in submitting, or to fail to submit, other assignments may also be noted on the report card as part of the evaluation of the student’s development of the learning skills and work habits.

When commenting on student performance that the teacher has evaluated as an “R” (Grades 1-8) or below 50 per cent (Grades 9-12), teachers will describe specific remedial measures that are planned or strategies that have been developed to address the student’s specific learning needs. When students are struggling, it is expected that teachers will contact the parents in a timely manner in order to consult with them and involve them in supporting the student.

Levels of Student Achievement

When evaluating student achievement, teachers will refer to the achievement charts described in Growing Success (page 40). The achievement charts have the following structure:

**Level 4 /“A” (Grades 1-6)/ 80%-100% (Grades 7-12)**

A very high to outstanding level of achievement. Achievement is above the provincial standard but still within the grade level.
Level 3/ “B” (Grades 1-6)/ 70%-79% (Grades 7-12)
A high level of achievement. Achievement is at the provincial standard.

Level 2/ “C” (Grades 1-6)/ 60%-69% (Grades 7-12)
A moderate level of achievement. Achievement is below, but approaching the provincial standard.

Level 1/ “D” (Grades 1-6)/ 50%-59% (Grades 7-12)
A passable level of achievement. Achievement is below the provincial standard.

“R” (Grades 1-8)/ “0-49%”(Grades 9-12)
The code “R” represents achievement that falls below level 1 and is used in the evaluation and reporting of student achievement in Grades 1 to 8. Both “R” and marks below 50 per cent signal that additional learning is required before the student begins to achieve success in meeting the subject/grade or course expectations. Teachers and school teams will refer to Peel District School Board Operating Procedure Curriculum and Instruction Support Service 7, as needed, to support elementary students who are struggling to meet curriculum expectations.

For achievement below level 1 in Grades 9 to 12, percentage marks below 50 per cent may be assigned. For students in Grades 9 to 12, if the teacher’s professional judgement is that the student’s report card mark is 20 per cent or below, then the teacher must consult with the principal before assigning the report card mark.

Insufficient Evidence
For Grades 1 to 10, the code “I” may be used in a mark book and/or on a student’s report card, including the final report card, to indicate that insufficient evidence is available to determine a letter grade or percentage mark. For the report card, teachers will use their professional judgement to determine when the use of “I” is appropriate and in the best interests of the student.

In cases where the teacher does not have sufficient evidence to determine a letter grade or percentage mark but has been able to collect some evidence of what a student has learned, strengths and the next steps for improvement are indicated in the report card comments. The report card comments should indicate why an “I” has been assigned. In Grades 9 and 10, a student who receives an “I” on the final report card to indicate insufficient evidence will not receive a credit for the course. However, there may be instances where students in Grades 9 and 10 who receive an “I” on their final report card may be considered for credit recovery. These are cases where, in the professional judgement of the teacher, evidence of achievement is available for at least a few overall expectations. It is then possible to identify the remaining expectations to be achieved for the credit to be earned.

Absence of Evidence of Student Achievement
As demonstrated by our Character Attributes in Action, we expect all those in our learning community to act in a responsible manner. The student is responsible for providing evidence regarding what he or she has learned or accomplished in the time frame allowed by the teacher. At appropriate times throughout the school year (e.g., at the beginning of the term, when an
assignment is given, etc.), teachers will communicate deadlines and the consequences for not completing assignments for evaluation or for submitting those assignments late.

In some cases, students do not provide any evidence of their achievement of the overall curriculum expectations. Rarely is this the case in student observations or conversations; however, it can occur in the case of student products. When students do not submit products to the teacher at all (missed assignments), the evidence for teacher to assess is limited to conversations and observations. Similarly, when students do not submit products in a timely manner to the teacher (late assignments), assessing the evidence can be problematic. Student products that are plagiarized also fail to provide any evidence of student achievement. When responding to students who are experiencing difficulty in providing evidence of achievement, teachers and school teams will use a clear procedure that considers four mitigating factors when determining the appropriate consequences and support for the student:

- the grade level of the student
- the maturity of the student
- the number and frequency of incidents
- the individual circumstances of the student.

Before considering mitigating factors, the first step is to ask the student to clarify the reason for not completing the assignment so that legitimate reasons for missed deadlines can be taken into consideration. After considering mitigating factors, teachers will choose the most appropriate response(s) from a range that includes:

- helping students develop better time-management skills;
- maintaining ongoing communication with students and/or parents about due dates and late assignments, and scheduling conferences with parents if the problem persists;
- in secondary schools, referring the student to the Student Success team or teacher;
- setting up a student contract;
- using counselling or peer tutoring to try to deal positively with problems;
- holding teacher-student conferences;
- reviewing the need for extra support for English language learners;
- reviewing whether students require special education services;
- requiring the student to work with a school team to complete the assignment;
- for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students, involving Aboriginal counsellors and members of the extended family;
- understanding and taking into account the cultures, histories, and contexts of students and parents and their previous experiences with the school system;
- providing alternative assignments or tests/exams where, in the teacher’s professional judgement, it is reasonable and appropriate to do so.

After clarifying that there were no legitimate reasons for the product to be late or missed, and considering mitigating factors, teachers may deduct marks for late or missed assignments, in Grades 7-12. However, teachers must ensure that mark deduction will not result in a mark on the
Assigning a Zero
Assigning a zero is an indicator that the student has not provided any evidence of his or her learning. Therefore, a zero may be used as a placeholder during assessment for learning and assessment as learning. A zero provides an opportunity for the teacher to discuss with the student and parent the student’s obligation to provide evidence of learning and for the student to be responsible for his or her learning. A zero may also be used to assign value to student work where the student has plagiarised or cheated until the student has demonstrated his or her learning.

Teachers will use their professional judgement in gathering information from observations, conversations and products, not simple mathematical calculations (e.g., averaging all marks), to determine a report card mark. In an assessment of learning context (e.g., a unit test), teachers may use their professional judgement to assign a zero. However, teachers must ensure that the assignment of a zero in an assessment of learning context will not result in a misrepresentation of the student’s overall achievement as signified by the report card mark.

For students in Grades 9 to 12, if the teacher’s professional judgement is that the student’s report card mark is 20 per cent or below, then the teacher must consult with the principal before assigning the report card mark.

Plagiarism and Cheating
As demonstrated by our Character Attributes in Action, we expect all those in our learning community to act in an honest manner. Plagiarism is defined in Ministry policy as the use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another without attribution, in order to represent them as one’s own original work. School teams and teachers will make it clear to students that the evaluations they complete must be their own work and that cheating and plagiarism will not be condoned. School teams and teachers will address the prevention of cheating and plagiarizing by communicating to students and parents the process of documentation to be used in the class, grade, and school. School teams and teachers may use whatever means of detecting cheating and plagiarism that best supports student achievement and success.

When responding to students who have plagiarized or cheated, teachers and school teams will use a clear procedure that considers four mitigating factors when determining the appropriate outcomes and support for the student:

- the grade level of the student
- the maturity of the student
- the number and frequency of incidents
- the individual circumstances of the student.

When a student plagiarises or cheats, the student does not provide evidence of achievement. Based on the consideration of mitigating factors, school teams and teachers will choose from a variety of possible responses (see p. 6). Some resolutions include assigning of a zero and/or the opportunity to complete a similar evaluation.
Assessment and Evaluation in Grades 9-12
For Grades 9 to 12, a final grade (percentage mark) is recorded for every course. The final grade will be determined as follows:

- **Seventy per cent** of the grade will be based on evaluation conducted throughout the course. This portion of the grade should reflect the student’s most consistent level of achievement throughout the course, although special consideration should be given to more recent evidence of achievement.

- **Thirty per cent** of the grade will be based on a final evaluation administered at or towards the end of the course. This evaluation will be based on evidence from one or a combination of the following: an examination, a performance, an essay, and/or another method of evaluation suitable to the course content. The final evaluation allows the student an opportunity to demonstrate comprehensive achievement of the overall expectations for the course.

General Administrative Expectations

- Decisions about the type of assessment to be used should be based on the purposes and principles outlined in the Guiding Principles section.

- Equity and fairness must be reflected in teacher assessments in Peel secondary schools. Emphasis of achievement categories in the determination of marks must be consistent among all sections of the same course within a school and from semester one to semester two.

- The grade level, the pathway of the student, the curriculum expectations and the achievement chart, will be considered when determining the nature of a summative assessment. A wide range of assessment strategies/options must be considered. In Peel secondary schools, final evaluations are worth 30 per cent (as per Ministry policy) and should address all categories in the achievement chart. A range of assessment strategies to ensure course expectations are met will need to be considered. Emphasis in the final evaluations should reflect the emphasis of the achievement categories in the term.

Secondary Final Evaluations

- Secondary final evaluations will be created and developed to allow for the following:
  - communication of promotion recommendations to students and parents.
  - discussion of the impact of the term or semester results on the student’s future educational plans.

- There will be a common, district-wide calendar for both semested and non-semested schools for scheduled final evaluations.

- Final evaluation schedules should take into account fairness to students with respect to timing for proper review and study:
  - in-class components of final evaluations must be scheduled with fairness in mind, especially when held outside of the evaluation schedule.
  - when a student is scheduled in more than two evaluations in one day. (Possible resolutions could include completing an assessment at an alternate time or an alternate form of assessment).
  - where a final evaluation is missed for medical or compassionate reasons, a resolution that considers fairness to the student must be approved by the administration. (Possible
resolutions could include completing an assessment at an alternate time or an alternate form of assessment).

- Accommodations on final evaluations for ELLs include:
  - allowance of extra time;
  - use of alternative assessment strategies (e.g., oral interviews, learning logs, or portfolios);
  - use of simplified language and instructions (e.g., in the context of tasks that require completion of graphic organizers and cloze sentences).
- Accommodations on final evaluations for exceptional students and all other students with IEPs must be consistent with the accommodations outlined in their IEP.
- Arrangements are to be made for students under suspension to participate in final assessments. Expectations and arrangements must be clearly communicated to the student and parent.
- Final evaluations administered toward the end of the course must be consistent with the assessment experiences that the students have had during the course. In general, teachers are encouraged to use appropriate weighting in the four achievement chart categories (Knowledge, Thinking, Communication, Application).

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Approved April 26, 2011 (replaces former Policy#14 - Student Assessment & Evaluation in Peel Elementary& Secondary Schools)
(Note: Revised Policy #14 takes effect in September 2011)

The release date of the finalized program documents for Full-Day Kindergarten and the second edition of the Growing Success policy is June 2012. At that time, this policy will be updated to include Kindergarten. Until that time, full-day Kindergarten teachers will be basing their assessment practice on the Ministry document Full-Day Early Learning—Kindergarten Program(2010-2011). All other Kindergarten teachers will be basing their assessment practice on the Ministry document The Kindergarten Program (2006).

Growing Success, page 143
For the purposes of this policy, “parents” refers to parents/guardians. Teachers and school teams will communicate assessment information with the parents/guardians of a student (age 18 or older) unless and until that student provides direction in writing that all further communication by school staff regarding education matters must be with that student only. If students are 16 or 17 years of age and have removed themselves from the care and control of their parent/guardian, then all communication regarding assessment will be with the student only.


Reporting Student Learning: Guidelines for Effective Teacher-Parent-Student Communication, page 7