

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 20 (KOOTENAY-COLUMBIA)



DISTRICT ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION & REPORTING GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of the **District Assessment, Evaluation & Reporting Guidelines and Procedures** is to establish common and consistent process/procedures for assessing, evaluating, and reporting student progress in learning.

November 2009

**Policy 1.3:
Student Assessment,
Evaluation and Reporting**

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POLICY:

Student Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting

The Board of Education of School District #20 (Kootenay-Columbia) (the “Board”) directs that assessment, evaluation and reporting procedures be constructed to support the principles of learning and best teaching practices which will enable all students to maximize their potential.

To this end, the Board directs that Ministry of Education (the “Ministry”) policy regarding the assessment and evaluation of student progress, and reporting on student progress, be adhered to. And finally, each school will establish its own processes and timetables for assessment, evaluation and reporting which will align with both Ministry and Board policy and procedures.

NOTE: This document is based on and complements the Ministry of Educations’ legislated policies and regulations. It also reflects current ‘best practice’ as it relates to assessment and evaluation. The Ministry of Education document “Reporting Student Progress: Policy and Practice” is a companion document to this district document.

ASSESSMENT:

Defined and In Practice

Assessing, evaluating and reporting student achievement and growth are integral to learning. They should be positive, supportive experiences for students.

Assessment

Defined:

The Board and Ministry of Education considers classroom assessment to play a vital role in student achievement. Classroom assessment is the process of gathering evidence of what a student knows, understands, and is able to do. Assessment should be continuous, collaborative, consultative and based on an agreed set of criteria.

Assessment can also help to identify students' learning needs. Teachers can use feedback from classroom assessment to identify areas of learning that might need increased focus and support. Students can use feedback from classroom assessment to set learning goals for themselves, identify areas of learning they want to improve and consider how they might make such improvements.

Current research literature suggests three approaches to classroom-based assessment that can be used in conjunction with each other to support student achievement:

- ✓ Assessment **for** learning refers to formative assessment through which teachers collect information about student achievement and use this information to plan follow-up classroom activities.
- ✓ Assessment **as** learning refers to the active involvement of students in assessment of their own learning. Assessment as learning assists students in understanding what they might need to improve upon in order to successfully meet learning outcomes.
- ✓ Assessment **of** learning refers to assessment practices that take place at the end of a lesson or unit so that student achievement can be reported.

In Practice:

Assessment of student performance is based on multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning using a wide variety of methods and tools. Such assessment methods and tools include:

- observation
- student self-assessments
- student interviews
- daily practice assignments
- quizzes
- samples of student work
- take home tests
- paper and pencil tests
- portfolio assessments
- group work
- peer assessment
- rubrics
- performance tasks
- oral and/or written reports
- projects
- holistic rating scales

EVALUATION:

Defined and In Practice

Defined:

Evaluation is the process of making judgements and decisions about the quality of a students' response, product, or performance, based on established criteria and standards. Evaluation provides teachers with the opportunity to make instructional decisions, monitor student progress, validate student achievement, and evaluate programs.

From information collected through multiple assessment activities, teachers evaluate student performance. They use their professional expertise, knowledge about learning and experience with students, along with specific criteria, to make judgements about student performance in relation to learning outcomes.

In Practice:

Evaluation may take different forms depending on the purpose:

- Criterion-referenced evaluation measures student performance compared to established criteria, based on learning outcomes, rather than to the performance of other students. When the program for a student with special needs is modified, evaluation should be referenced to individual goals.
- Norm-references evaluation is used for large-scale system assessments.

Criterion-Referenced Evaluation

Criterion-referenced evaluation involves the following steps:

- 1) Choose learning outcomes from the curriculum.
- 2) Establish criteria, involving students in the process whenever possible.
- 3) Plan learning activities that will help students acquire the knowledge or skills outlined in the criteria.
- 4) Provide examples of the desired levels of performance.
- 5) Implement the learning activities.
- 6) Use various assessment methods based on the particular assignment and students.
- 7) Allow students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning.
- 8) Review assessment data and evaluate each student's level of performance or quality of work in relation to the criteria.
- 9) Report the results of evaluation to students and parents.

Norm-Referenced Evaluation

Norm-reference evaluation compares one student's achievement to that of others. A norm-referenced evaluation system is not meant for classroom assessment because a classroom does not provide an appropriate reference group with which to compare an individual student's performance.

EVALUATION: Defined and In Practice

Reasons for norm-referenced evaluation include:

- large-scale system analysis
- determining ranking for scholarship competitions
- diagnosing students with learning difficulties using tests such as the WISC-R

REPORTING:

Defined and In Practice

Defined:

Reporting is the formal and informal communication to parents/guardians of information gained through the evaluation of student performance, based on criteria, standards and expectations as stated in prescribed learning outcomes. Reporting must follow the requirements for the specific grade and program as stated in legislation and Ministry policy.

In Practice:

Reporting of student performance must include a minimum of three formal written reports and two informal reports provided through a variety of methods.

Formal Reports

Formal reports communicate to parents/guardians significant aspects of the students' progress in the areas of intellectual, social, human and career development. Formal reports for each student must include:

- ✓ Structured written comments that clearly describe student progress, in relation to the prescribed learning outcomes set out in curriculum, in grades K-12.
- ✓ Ministry-approved letter grades, in grades 4-12, to indicate student performance in relation to prescribed learning outcomes.
- ✓ Percentages for all grades 10, 11 and 12 courses. (Percentages are not to be used when reporting student progress in the intermediate grades, 4 – 9.)
- ✓ Written comments to describe student behaviours, including information on attitudes, work habits and effort, in grades K-12.

Informal Reports

Informal reports are an important link between home and school. Informal reports may include:

- ✓ telephone calls
- ✓ contact through email
- ✓ interim reports (ie. anecdotal comments, check lists, etc.)
- ✓ learning journals, back and forth communication books, etc.
- ✓ conferences (three-way, parent-teacher, student led, etc.)
- ✓ written comments to describe student behaviours, including information on attitudes, work habits and effort.

A record should be kept of each informal report, noting the date, the type of informal report, and a brief summary of the content of the report (what was talked about, a copy of a printed formal report, etc.). Parents should have the opportunity to meet with teachers for a formal conference at least once each school year.

REPORTING GUIDELINES - Primary

The Student Progress Report Order authorizes the requirements for reporting the progress of all Kindergarten to Grade 12 students in British Columbia.

Primary:

- Formal reports will be sent home on Board approved report cards.

Kindergarten – Grade 3

- Formal reports for each student in Kindergarten to Grade 3 must include:
 - ✓ a performance scale indicating the student’s level of progress in relation to the prescribed learning outcomes the teacher has determined s/he will report on in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies
 - ✓ a performance scale to show progress in language arts in the specific areas of reading, writing, and speaking/listening
 - ✓ separate reporting for social studies and science for at least two reports in each school year
 - ✓ separate reporting for Health and Career Education and Physical Education for all three reports in each school year
 - ✓ reporting in each of the specific areas of fine arts (dance, drama, music and visual arts) at least once in each school year
 - ✓ written reporting comments that clearly describe, in relation to the learning outcomes:
 - what the student is able to do
 - areas in which the student requires further attention or development
 - ways of supporting the student in his or her learning
 - ✓ written comments to describe student behaviour, including information on attitudes, work habits and effort
 - ✓ a separate description of student social responsibility
 - ✓ comments about student progress with reference to the expected development of students in a similar age range (either written in the formal report or shared orally with parents/guardians during the formal reporting period); language to use here is whether the student is below, within, or above expectations for students in a similar age range; curricular areas where this is required are Language Arts and Mathematics
 - ✓ Daily Physical Activity (DPA): When students are meeting the prescribed learning outcomes of DPA, a comment of “Meeting Requirement” will be made on term and final reports. A comment of “Not Meeting Requirement” will be made at any time when students are not meeting the prescribed learning outcomes of DPA. Where a “Not Meeting Requirement” comment is made, further comment should be added to outline a plan for the student to meet the requirement.
- Using the performance scale:
 - ✓ For Kindergarten students, the teacher describes student progress as “Approaching”, “Meeting”, or “Exceeding” expectations.
 - ✓ For students in grades 1-3, the teacher describes student progress as “Not Yet Meeting”, “Approaching”, “Meeting”, or “Exceeding” expectations.

REPORTING GUIDELINES - Primary

- Suggestions for writing report comments:
 - ✓ Write meaningful comments that refer specifically to the student's progress.
 - ✓ Anticipate the questions parents/guardians may ask about their child's growth and progress.
 - ✓ Recognize that parents/guardians vary widely in their educational experiences and familiarity with educational terms and jargon.
 - ✓ Use simple words, plain language and short sentences.
 - ✓ Use only as many words as necessary to make the message clear.
 - ✓ Use point form.
 - ✓ Comments about what a student is able to do should note significant events in the student's growth, development, progress and learning.
 - ✓ When communicating areas of concern regarding a student's progress to parents/guardians, teacher should state concerns clearly, provide specific examples and describe methods to support improvement. Such concerns should not be a surprise to parents/guardians; teachers should tell parents/guardians about areas of concern in a meeting or phone call prior to sending home the formal report.
- Where specialists (for example, Speech-Language Pathologist, Physiotherapist, etc.) are responsible for some aspect of a student's educational program, these individuals should provide written reports on the student's progress for inclusion with reports from classroom teachers.
- A copy of each formal report must be placed in each student's Permanent Student Record file.

REPORTING GUIDELINES – Intermediate

Intermediate:

- Formal reports will be sent home on Board approved report cards.

Grades 4 – 9

- Formal reports for students in grades 4 – 9 must:
 - ✓ provide Ministry-approved letter grades as set out in the Provincial Letter Grades Order to indicate the student’s level of performance as it relates to the learning outcomes for each subject/course and grade
 - ✓ include written reporting comments that clearly describe, in relation to the learning outcomes:
 - what the student is able to do
 - areas in which the student requires further attention or development
 - ways of supporting the student in his or her learning
 - ✓ for grades 4 -7, include written comments that describe student behaviour, including information on attitudes, work habits, effort and social responsibility; for grades 8 and 9, the following letter symbols will be used in relation to work habit performance: E (excellent), G (good), S (satisfactory), and N (needs improvement)
 - ✓ include a written comment on Daily Physical Activity (DPA). When students are meeting the prescribed learning outcomes of DPA, a comment of “Meeting Requirement” will be made on term and final reports. A comment of “Not Meeting Requirement” will be made at any time when students are not meeting the prescribed learning outcomes of DPA. Where a “Not Meeting Requirement” comment is made, further comment should be added to outline a plan for the student to meet the requirement.
- Teachers must use the following letter grades when reporting student progress for grades 4 – 7:
 - A The student demonstrates excellent or outstanding performance in relation to the learning outcomes for the subject/course and grade
 - B The student demonstrates very good performance in relation to the learning outcomes for the subject/course and grade
 - C+ The student demonstrates good performance in relation to the learning outcomes for the subject/course and grade
 - C The student demonstrates satisfactory performance in relation to the expected learning outcomes for the subject/course or grade
 - C- The student demonstrates minimally acceptable performance in relation to the learning outcomes for the subject/course or grade
 - I In-progress or Incomplete. The student, for a variety of reasons, is not demonstrating minimally acceptable performance in relation to the learning outcomes.
 - F Failed or failing. The student has not demonstrated, or is not demonstrating, minimally acceptable performance in relation to the learning outcomes for the subject/course and grade.

REPORTING GUIDELINES – Intermediate

- The following may be used only on final reports when reporting progress for grades 4 – 9:
 - SG Standing Granted. Although completion of normal requirements is not possible, a sufficient level of performance has been attained to warrant, consistent with the best interests of the student, the granting of standing for the subject/course and grade. Standing Granted may be used in cases of serious illness, hospitalization, late entry or early leaving, but may only be granted by an adjudication process authorized by the school’s principal or vice-principal, or the district’s Director of Instruction.
- The letter grade I (In-progress or Incomplete):
 - ✓ may be assigned at any time during the school year and is not restricted to term and formal reports
 - ✓ must be communicated to the student and parent/guardian; this can be done in a variety of ways, including in writing, by telephone, or in a direct meeting
 - ✓ must be assigned prior to a failing standing being assigned
 - ✓ will have a teacher developed action plan attached to it that should be shared with the student and parent/guardian; the plan of action should have an articulated time line or completion date
 - ✓ must be converted to another letter grade:
 - when letter grades are recorded on the permanent student record card
 - before the submission of a student’s transcript of grades to the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training
 - before a student’s records are transferred to another school, unless there is agreement between the principals of the two schools to defer the conversion of the “I” to another letter grade
- The letter grade assigned to a student should represent the student’s culminating achievement in relation to the outcomes for the term. Assessment best practice requires meaningful feedback be provided to students regarding their performance on learning tasks/assignments versus teacher feedback being the traditional number score/percentage/letter grade, and that students be provided with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning of a concept. Averaging numerical scores over a term may not reflect the true picture of student learning; students may not demonstrate good performance or understanding of a concept when initially introduced to it, but after a number of opportunities to work through a concept, do eventually demonstrate a good understanding. The letter grade assigned in such an instance should reflect the student’s culminating level of understanding; students should not be penalized for early misconceptions, misunderstandings, or misfiring related to their learning.
- Unless Prescribed Learning Outcomes are behavioural, for example, reducing grades because of behaviours, attitudes, work habits, effort, attendance, etc., is not acceptable. As per the Student Progress Report Order, letter grades should reflect student performance in relation to expected learning outcomes set out in the curriculum.

REPORTING GUIDELINES – Intermediate

- Suggestions for writing report comments:
 - ✓ Write meaningful comments that refer specifically to the student’s progress.
 - ✓ Anticipate the questions parents/guardians may ask about their child’s growth and progress.
 - ✓ Recognize that parents/guardians vary widely in their educational experiences and familiarity with educational terms and jargon.
 - ✓ Use simple words, plain language and short sentences.
 - ✓ Use only as many words as necessary to make the message clear.
 - ✓ Use point form.
 - ✓ Comments about what a student is able to do should note significant events in the student’s growth, development, progress and learning.
 - ✓ When communicating areas of concern regarding a student’s progress to parents/guardians, teachers should state concerns clearly, provide specific examples and describe methods to support improvement. Such concerns should not be a surprise to parents/guardians; teachers should tell parents/guardians about areas of concern in a meeting or phone call prior to sending home the formal report.
- Where specialists (for example, Speech-Language Pathologist, Physiotherapist, etc.) are responsible for some aspect of a student’s educational program, these individuals should provide written reports on the student’s progress for inclusion with reports from classroom teachers.
- A copy of each formal report must be placed in each student’s Permanent Student Record file.

REPORTING GUIDELINES – Graduation

Graduation:

- Formal reports will be sent home on Board approved report cards.

Grades 10 – 12

- Formal reports for students in grades 10 - 12 must:
 - ✓ provide Ministry-approved letter grades as set out in the Provincial Letter Grades Order to indicate the student’s level of performance as it relates to the learning outcomes for each subject/course and grade
 - ✓ include written reporting comments that describe, in relation to the learning outcomes:
 - what the student is able to do
 - areas in which the student requires further attention or development
 - ways of supporting the student in his or her learning
 - ✓ describe student behaviour, including information on attitudes, work habits, effort and social responsibility; the following letter symbols will be used in relation to work habit performance: E (excellent), G (good), S (satisfactory), and N (needs improvement)
 - ✓ provide percentages for Grades 10, 11 and 12 courses as outlined in the Provincial Letter Grades Order
 - ✓ include the credits assigned toward meeting the general requirements for graduation as set out in the applicable Graduation Order
 - ✓ For students in the Graduation Transitions Program: When students are meeting the Prescribed Learning Outcomes of the Graduation Transitions Program, a comment of “Meeting Requirement” will be made on term and final reports. A comment of “Not Meeting Requirement” will be made at any time when students are not meeting the prescribed learning outcomes of DPA. Where a “Not Meeting Requirement” comment is made, further comment should be added to outline a plan for the student to meet the requirement.
Upon successful attainment of the Graduation Transitions Program, “Requirement Met (RM)” will be recorded on the student’s transcript.
- Teachers must use the following letter grades when reporting student progress for grades 10 - 12:
 - A The student demonstrates excellent or outstanding performance in relation to the learning outcomes for the subject/course and grade
 - B The student demonstrates very good performance in relation to the learning outcomes for the subject/course and grade
 - C+ The student demonstrates good performance in relation to the learning outcomes for the subject/course and grade
 - C The student demonstrates satisfactory performance in relation to the expected learning outcomes for the subject/course or grade
 - C- The student demonstrates minimally acceptable performance in relation to the learning outcomes for the subject/course or grade

REPORTING GUIDELINES – Graduation

I In-progress or Incomplete. The student, for a variety of reasons, is not demonstrating minimally acceptable performance in relation to the learning outcomes.

F Failed or failing. The student has not demonstrated, or is not demonstrating, minimally acceptable performance in relation to the learning outcomes for the subject/course and grade.

- The letter grade I (In-progress or Incomplete):
 - ✓ may be assigned at any time during the school year and is not restricted to term and formal reports
 - ✓ must be communicated to the student and parent/guardian; this can be done in a variety of ways, including in writing, by telephone, or in a direct meeting
 - ✓ must be assigned prior to a failing standing being assigned
 - ✓ will have a teacher developed action plan attached to it that should be shared with the student and parent/guardian; the plan of action should have an articulated time line or completion date
 - ✓ must be converted to another letter grade:
 - when letter grades are recorded on the permanent student record card
 - before the submission of a student’s transcript of grades to the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training
 - before a student’s records are transferred to another school, unless there is agreement between the principals of the two schools to defer the conversion of the “I” to another letter grade
- The following may be used only on final reports when reporting progress for grades 10 - 12:
 - SG Standing Granted. Although completion of normal requirements is not possible, a sufficient level of performance has been attained to warrant, consistent with the best interests of the student, the granting of standing for the subject/course and grade. Standing Granted may be used in cases of serious illness, hospitalization, late entry or early leaving, but may only be granted by an adjudication process authorized by the school’s principal or vice-principal, or the district’s Director of Instruction.
 - TS Transfer Standing. This may be granted by the school’s principal or vice-principal, or the district’s Director of Instruction, on the basis of an examination or records from an institution other than a school as defined in the School Act. Alternatively, the principal, vice-principal or Director of Instruction may assign a letter grade on the basis of an examination of those records. Transfer Standing may not be used for the Graduation Transitions Program.

REPORTING GUIDELINES – Graduation

- Percentages for grades 10, 11 and 12 courses are to be provided. Percentages associated with letter grades are:
 - A 86 – 100%
 - B 73 – 85%
 - C+ 67 – 72%
 - C 60 – 66%
 - C- 50 – 59%
 - F 0 – 49%

The successful completion of a course numbered 10, 11 or 12 requires a minimum of a C-.

- The letter grade assigned to a student should represent the student’s culminating achievement in relation to the outcomes for the term. Assessment best practice requires meaningful feedback be provided to students regarding their performance on learning tasks/assignments versus teacher feedback being the traditional number score/percentage/letter grade, and that students be provided with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning of a concept. Averaging numerical scores over a term may not reflect the true picture of student learning; students may not demonstrate good performance or understanding of a concept when initially introduced to it, but after a number of opportunities to work through a concept, do eventually demonstrate a good understanding. The letter grade assigned in such an instance should reflect the student’s culminating level of understanding; students should not be penalized for early misconceptions, misunderstandings, or misfiring related to their learning.
- Unless Prescribed Learning Outcomes are behavioural, for example, reducing grades because of behaviours, attitudes, work habits, effort, attendance, etc., is not acceptable. As per the Student Progress Report Order, letter grades should reflect student performance in relation to expected learning outcomes set out in the curriculum.
- When communicating areas of concern regarding a student’s progress to parents/guardians, teachers should state concerns clearly, provide specific examples and describe methods to support improvement. Such concerns should not be a surprise to parents/guardians; teachers should tell parents/guardians about areas of concern in a meeting or phone call prior to sending home the formal report.
- Where specialists (for example, Speech-Language Pathologist, Physiotherapist, etc.) are responsible for some aspect of a student’s educational program, these individuals should provide written reports on the student’s progress for inclusion with reports from classroom teachers.
- A copy of each formal report must be placed in each student’s Permanent Student Record file.

REPORTING GUIDELINES – Graduation

- Reporting Graduation Transitions Assessment:

The Graduation Transitions Program is a mandatory four-credit requirement for student following the 2004 Graduation program. Students begin working on their Graduation Transitions requirements in gr. 10. When students are meeting the Prescribed Learning Outcomes of the Graduation Transitions program, a comment of “meeting requirement” will be made on term and final reports. A comment of “not meeting requirement” will be made at any time when students are not meeting the Prescribed Learning Outcomes of the program. Where a “not meeting requirement” comment is made, it is recommended that a further comment is added to outline a plan for the student to meet the requirement.

Upon successful attainment of the Graduation Transitions Program, “Requirement Met (RM)” will be recorded on the student’s transcript.

Students with Special Needs

Students with identified special needs may require either an adapted or a modified program. All of these students require an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and assessment, evaluation and reporting procedures will have variations from students in regular education programs.

Unless a student identified with special needs is able to demonstrate his or her learning in relation to the expected learning outcomes set out in the curriculum for the course or subject and grade, a student progress report for that student must contain written comments describing (a) what the student is able to do, (b) the areas in which the student requires further attention or development, and (c) ways of supporting the student in his or her learning in relation to the expected learning outcomes as set out in that student's IEP. Further, student progress reports for such students must also contain a statement that the progress of the student is in relation to the expected learning outcomes for that student in his or her IEP and is not in relation to the expected learning outcomes set out in the curriculum for the course or subject and grade. Where appropriate, written comments describing ways to enable the student to demonstrate his or her learning in relation to expected learning outcomes set out in the curriculum for the course or subject and grade, and the time period required to enable the student to demonstrate his or her learning in relation to expected learning outcomes set out in the curriculum for the course or subject and grade. A letter grade may only be assigned for a student with special needs where that student is able to demonstrate his or her learning in relation to the expected learning outcomes set out in the curriculum for the course or subject and grade.

Adapted programs:

- ✓ Students work toward the same grade level intended learning outcomes (PLOs) as their regular education program peers.
- ✓ Teaching methods, materials, output expectations, and/or assessment methods are altered or adapted to support individual learning needs.
- ✓ Goals are stated in an IEP or Learning Plan.
- ✓ Additional support for the student may be provided.
- ✓ Letter grades reflect achievement for the student against the curricular PLOs.
- ✓ Examples of adaptations include special seating, extended time, adjusted output expectations, taped materials, and so on.

Modified programs:

- ✓ The PLOs that the student is working toward are substantially different from the grade appropriate curriculum in which the student is enrolled.
- ✓ PLOs may or may not be from a provincial curriculum.
- ✓ The student's program and PLOs are described in an IEP.
- ✓ The report card will contain anecdotal comments describing achievement relative to the selected PLOs as set out in the IEP.
- ✓ Letter grades, percentages and/or performance scales should not be used to describe student progress in relation to the outcomes of the modified curriculum or the goals of the student's IEP.

Students with Special Needs

School Completion Certificate Program

Placing a student on a modified program is a significant decision. Students who complete secondary school while on a modified program receive a “School Completion Certificate” rather than a Graduation Dogwood at the completion of grade 12.

It is possible to assign letter grades to students with special needs enrolled in a Locally Developed (LD) course. As per the Student progress Reporting Order, “a letter grade may only be assigned for a student with special needs where that student is able to demonstrate his or her learning in relation to the expected learning outcomes in the curriculum for the course or subject and grade.” Where a student is able to demonstrate his or her learning in relation to the expected learning outcomes in the curriculum for an LD course, it would be appropriate to assign a grade.

Assessment

School-based professionals and support staff, through consultation and shared classroom observations, are required to collaborate to collect information to develop an appropriate IEP for a child identified with a special need. In addition to classroom teacher assessments, assessment procedures are carried out by other professionals. District Special Education specialists may be consulted to be part of the school-based team which develops the IEP. These could include the Director of Student Support Services, the Speech-Language Pathologist, the Physiotherapist, the Teacher of Hard of Hearing, District Psychologist, and/or Challenge Teacher. Formalization of IEPs are the responsibility of trained Student Support Services personnel. Once IEPs are in place, the classroom teacher continues to have prime responsibility for both the child’s educational program, including classroom instruction and assessment.

Promotion/Retention

“A long trail of research tells us that retention is not the route to take in our efforts to improve student achievement.” (Educational Leadership, Sept. 1998,
Grade Retention: A History of Failure)

Policy: Placement of students will be decided on the basis of the most appropriate program for the student. Recommendations will be made by the school-based team, in consultation with parents of elementary students, and, as appropriate, with parents of secondary students.

Procedures: Regular Stream

Students who have met the prescribed learning outcomes will be promoted to the next grade.

Primary (K-gr. 3)

Every effort should be made to support the continuous progress of students in primary grades while with their peer group. In keeping with the revised Primary Program (1999), retention of primary students is not supported. In the rarest of situations where retention is being considered, District Staff must be involved with the school-based team and parents.

Intermediate (gr. 4-7)

If a student is identified as being at-risk of failing, parents should be contacted immediately so that concerns can be shared. A written record of the conversation should be kept. Parents should not be surprised by their child's lack of success or challenges at report card time. Work should continue with parents, as part of the school-based team, to develop a plan for home and school support, especially as the student transitions into the next grade (promotion with intervention). Retention of students in gr. 4 – 7 is not typically supported.

In rare instances, students may be retained in the same grade if parents and the school-based team believe it is in the student's best interest. This decision should be made only after all other options have been tried and after consultation with the Superintendent or designate.

Secondary (gr. 8-12)

Students in grade 8 - 12 are promoted by subject. Students repeating 3 or more courses may be registered in a lower grade. Only those students eligible for graduation in June of the school year will be placed in grade 12.

Course Equivalency

What is Course Equivalency?

- Course equivalency is the process of receiving credit, based on documentation which indicates the student achieved the learning outcomes for an approved Grade 10, 11 or 12 course outside of the BC school system. Common situations may involve students who have moved from another province or country, or who have credentials from an out-of-school program that Boards of Education or the Ministry have deemed equivalent.

Which courses qualify for equivalency?

- Equivalency credits are only granted for courses and programs that meet all of the following requirements:
 - ✓ The student is able to provide documentation that the course has been successfully completed.
 - ✓ The course matches approximately 80% of the prescribed learning outcomes of a Ministry Authorized, Board/Authority Authorized, or Locally Developed course taught within the district.
 - ✓ The course has been taken at another institution or educational jurisdiction outside the regular BC school system.
 - ✓ The course satisfies different learning outcomes than those of the courses for which the student already has credit – a student cannot receive credit for two equivalent courses.

Who can seek equivalency credits?

- Students are entitled to have course work reviewed for equivalency if they are currently:
 - ✓ enrolled in the school district where equivalency is being requested, or
 - ✓ registered with the school district for home schooling where equivalency is being requested, or
 - ✓ enrolled in the Distance Education school where equivalency is being requested.

Ministry's Role

- The Ministry will periodically review courses, programs and certificates which are offered to a large number of students across the province to determine equivalency. Those which are deemed equivalent will be added to Schedule 3 of the Graduation Requirement Order. Other courses which the Ministry approves for credit will be added to Schedule 4 (External Courses). Equivalent and external courses will be included in the Course Information Handbook each year.

School District Responsibilities

- Where the Ministry has not already assessed the equivalency of credentials from other institutions and jurisdictions, Boards of Education have the authority to determine equivalency. School districts should review local programs for which students frequently request equivalency. Once an equivalency review is completed, all students with the same documentation receive the same credit.

Course Equivalency

- When determining equivalency, the district's policy should consider the following:
 - ✓ Whether the learning outcomes of the external course match at least 80% of the learning outcomes of the Ministry Authorized, Board/Authority Authorized, or Locally Developed course taught within the district.
 - ✓ Whether the external institution's instructors are qualified or certified by an organization or association.
 - ✓ Whether the assessment criteria of the external institution are reasonable in comparison to the criteria for the equivalent course within the BC school system.

Resources

- School personnel who need assistance regarding equivalency may find the following resources useful:

Resource	Contact Information
<i>Secondary Education in Canada: A Student Transfer Guide</i>	http://www.cmec.ca Council of Ministers of Education, Canada 252 Bloor St. W., Suite 5-200 Toronto, Ont. M5S 1V5
<i>International guide to Qualifications in Education</i>	ISBN 0-7201-2217-1 International Credential Evaluation Service 4355 Mathissi Place Burnaby, BC V5G 4S8 (604) 431-3402
<i>Provincial curriculum guides</i>	Google search of Provincial Ministry of Education sites

External Credentials (Courses)

What is an External Credential?

- An external credential is one that has been developed outside the Ministry and is earned by students either:
 - outside the regular classroom setting (e.g., BC Conservatory of Music courses); or
 - in the regular classroom setting (e.g., IB and AP courses).

Note: External credentials in the 2004 Graduation Program may meet Required Courses or Elective Requirements as specified. External credentials may also count toward credit for the Adult Graduation Diploma, provided they are 4-credit courses.

Questions Concerning External Credentials

- Questions may be directed to:
 - Graduation Standards Unit
 - Governance and Accountability Department
 - 250.387.3935
 - Policy - website:
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/earning_credit_through.htm

External Credentials and Equivalency Comparison Chart

- The following table summarizes the distinctions between external credentials and credit for courses through the equivalency process:

External Credentials	Equivalency
The Ministry approves credentials earned in courses, programs, and assessments that are developed outside the BC school system and taken either inside or outside the regular classroom setting. External Credentials are not equivalent to Ministry-Developed curriculum.	Recognizes documented learning from outside the BC school system, which school districts deem equivalent to the learning outcomes of either a Ministry-Developed, Board/Authority Authorized or Locally Developed Grade 10, 11 or 12 course. The recommended guideline for determining equivalency is approximately an 80% match of learning outcomes with a Ministry-Developed, Board/Authority Authorized, or Locally Developed Grade 10, 11 or 12 course.

Course Information for the Graduation Program

- The Ministry provides a publication that gives information for schools about courses that students take in grades 10, 11 and 12. This publication is updated annually and is available at:
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/graduation/courseinfo/
- The database for Board/Authority Authorized courses is available on the BC School Trustees Association website: www.bcsta.org

External Credentials (Courses)

How to Report an External Credential to the Ministry

- Each external credential is designated a course code, which schools must use for reporting to the Ministry. All external credentials have also been assigned a credit value.
- In order to provide a school mark, the school must first examine credentials from the external institution. It is the student's responsibility to present this credential as proof of successfully completing the course. In the event that a student's credential may require verification, schools should contact the external organization.
- After examining the documentation from the external organization, the school must decide whether to report the student's level of achievement as a school percentage and letter grade. It is possible to assign a percentage based on the mid-point of a letter grade, or on other performance indicators. When a school mark cannot be determined, please use a Transfer Standing (TS) letter grade. TS has no effect on a student's GPA. The session date indicates the date the school received the required documentation (e.g., certificate or letter) from the student. The date of the certificate or other verification can be earlier than the session date reported. Only those external credentials that have been reviewed and approved by the Ministry can be applied toward graduation.

External Dual Credit Post-Secondary Courses

- A student who presents a transcript from a recognized post-secondary institution, showing successful completion of a for-credit post-secondary course that leads to a credential, is entitled to have that course count toward secondary school graduation. All such courses count as elective courses at the Grade 12 level.
- Since a post-secondary institution may use a different letter grade system than the K-12 system, refer to the transcript notations or the institution's calendar to determine the appropriate letter grade and percentage for reporting the course to the Ministry's transcript system.
- An external course will appear on the transcript generically as a post-secondary course. For example, if the course was taken at Douglas College it would be reported as "PSIF 12A" and show on the transcript as "Douglas College Course 12A." A note on the Ministry transcript would direct readers to review the student's post-secondary transcript for additional information.

Course Challenge

What is challenge?

- If documentation is not available to do an equivalency review, it is appropriate for a student to challenge a course. Course challenge is the process of receiving credit for a Ministry Authorized Course, Board/Authority Authorized Course or Locally Developed Course taught within the school district through an assessment of a student's undocumented prior learning. Prior to engaging in a challenge process, schools must review any documentation of prior learning that a student presents in order to determine if credit can be awarded through equivalency.
- A student is entitled to challenge a course if s/he:
 - ✓ is currently enrolled in the school district, is currently registered as a home schooler, or is enrolled in the Distance Education school where the challenge is being requested
 - ✓ has not completed the course through previous enrolment
 - ✓ can give compelling evidence that s/he will succeed in the challenge
 - ✓ shows that the challenge is linked to his or her Student Learning Plan
- Schools must determine if credit can be awarded through a review of documents for equivalency before proceeding to the challenge process.
- All students are entitled to a free challenge process for Ministry or local Board/Authority Authorized courses.

Responsibilities of the School District

- Boards must make challenge available for Board/Authority Authorized courses taught within their districts. Ministry Authorized grade 10, 11 or 12 courses must be available for challenge one year after full implementation of the IRP. School districts are not obliged to provide challenge for Board/Authority Authorized courses taught in other school districts.
- If the enrolling Board of Education arranges with another Board to conduct a challenge assessment for a Ministry Authorized course not offered in the enrolling school district, then the enrolling Board must pay any fee charged by the non-enrolling Board to cover the costs of obtaining services in the non-enrolling school district.

Challenge Process (Ministry Guidelines)

- The challenge process begins when it is determined that credit cannot be awarded through equivalency and a student has given compelling evidence that s/he will succeed in a challenge assessment.
- There is no limit to the number of credits that may be awarded through the challenge process.
- Schools must document the challenge assessment delivered to each student, including a pre-challenge equivalency review, and the documentation must be made available to Ministry auditors if requested.
- Students should be able to demonstrate their readiness to challenge a course based on factors such as a recommendation from a previous teacher, or from evidence that relevant learning has been acquired outside the regular classroom setting. The demonstration should not be an onerous process. School staff, in consultation with students and parents, should make the decision about readiness.

Course Challenge

- Examples of assessment strategies that could be used in a challenge process include, but are not limited to, such things as hands-on demonstrations, oral presentations, interviews, performances, written examinations, or presentations of a portfolio of work.
- Awarding credit through the challenge process should be based on the same standards used for students who have taken the course through enrollment.
- To receive credit for a course that does not have a required exam, a student must:
 - ✓ obtain at least a C- (50% minimum) grade/score in the challenge course assessment.

Challenge Process (Local District Guidelines)

- Typically, the challenge process will occur in the school that the student is enrolled in providing the course the student is challenging is offered in that school.
- In most cases, students will be granted only one opportunity to challenge a specific course.
- The successful challenge of a course does not result in credit being granted for previous level courses. To obtain credit for a previous level course, students must enroll in the course or challenge it separately.
- A teacher may recommend a student for challenge.
- The final decision for challenge will be responsibility of a principal or vice-principal, in consultation with the student, parents, teachers, and other educators/mentors.
- The principal or vice-principal shall designate a “Challenge Coordinator” who is responsible for the administration, monitoring, and reporting aspects of the challenge process.
- Local district procedures:
 - ✓ A student interested in challenging a course meets with the Challenge Coordinator and states the reason(s) for the challenge. If the Challenge Coordinator determines that the possibility of a challenge exists, the Coordinator will provide a copy of the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for the course to the student, as well as a “Challenge Application Form”.
 - ✓ Once the application form is submitted, the Coordinator will convene a panel to review the form and consider the compelling evidence. This Review Panel shall include the student’s counselor, the principal or vice-principal, and a teacher at the school who is familiar with the content of the course being requested to be challenged.
 - ✓ If the application to challenge is accepted, a “Challenge Agreement Form” will be completed for the student. This form will indicate the challenge details and the assessment criteria as determined at a meeting of the Review Panel.
 - ✓ If the student agrees to the details provided regarding the challenge, as presented in the “Challenge Agreement”, then the student will complete the “Checklist for Course Challenge” form. Once completed, this form will be presented to the Coordinator.
 - ✓ If the challenge is not approved at any step of the process, a letter detailing the reasons why the challenge is not approved is to be issued to the parents/guardians of the students.
 - ✓ Copies of all documentation pertaining to all course challenges shall be kept in the student’s file for audit purposes.

Course Challenge

- The assessment and evaluation strategy(ies) should be determined jointly by teachers, principals or vice-principals, the student, and his or her parents, and should reflect the range and depth of the ILOs for the course. As well, the assessment and evaluation process should include more than a single activity, and should ideally be a process over time.
 - ✓ The final decision regarding the assessment and evaluation process shall rest with the principal or vice-principal.
 - ✓ The assessment and evaluation process must be completed at least four weeks prior to the start of the semester exam schedule.

Reporting a Successful Challenge

For reporting and transcript purposes, schools must assign a letter grade and percentage to all credits awarded through challenge processes, as well as ensure that the appropriate TRAX code is used in the “Course Type” field. Only successful challenges are funded by the Ministry.

Resources

Assessment Handbook Series

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/classroom_assessment/abouthand.htm

BC Performance Standards

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf_stands/

Course Information for the Graduation Program

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/graduation/courseinfo/

Curriculum: Integrated Resource Packages

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/irp.htm>

Handbook of Procedures for the Graduation Program

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/handbook/0809handbook_procedures.pdf

Reporting Student Progress: Policy and Practice

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reportcards/08_report_student_prog.pdf

Secondary Education in Canada: A Student Transfer Guide

<http://www.emec.ca>

The Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/primary_program/welcome.htm

Appendix

Ideas for Adapting Curriculum

The following is not an exhaustive listing. Other appropriate suggestions exist.

Pacing

- extend time
- vary activities often
- omit assignments requiring time limit for copying

Environment

- preferential seating
- reduce/minimize distractions
- teach rules for use of space

Presentation of Subject Matter

- teach to student's learning style and strengths
- visual
- auditory
- tactile
- multi
- experiential
- individual instruction
- group instruction
- taped instruction/replay for discussion
- provide notes
- manipulatives
- pre-teach vocabulary
- adjust language level
- adjust reading level
- use visual/picture cues
- repeat instructions
- stand close to student
- break down instructions into steps; provide visual representations of steps
- use different coloured pens, highlighters, post-it notes
- dictate to scribe
- pre-teach vocabulary and/or "big ideas" connected to topic

Materials

- taped texts
- highlight text materials
- note-taking assistance
- computer
- calculator
- technology

Assignments

- give directions in small steps (written, picture, verbal)
- use written backup for oral directions
- lower difficulty level
- reduce amount of paper and pencil tasks
- give extra cues/prompts

- avoid penalizing for spelling errors/messy work/penmanship
- allow to record or word process

Self-Management

- agenda book
- parent reinforcement

Testing Adaptations

- oral
- taped
- read to student
- answers orally
- modify format
- extend time

Provide Feedback

- frequent, specific meaningful feedback
- praise and encourage
- establish a private symbol to cue student

Performing Assignments – Keeping Students on Task During Seat Work

- check for clarity re: directions
- give one task at a time; divide larger assignments into smaller segments
- monitor frequently
- modify assignments as needed
- give extra time as needed
- integrate the teaching of planning and self-monitoring skills into lessons
- develop organization and concentration strategies
- use cues
- assign a study buddy for clarification purposes
- “I need help” signal
- have student highlight key words in written instructions

Dealing with Written Language Problems

The student with attentional problems may write more slowly, produce less work, and have difficulty organizing their thoughts. Try:

- using a computer
- teaching strategies for theme writing
- using note cards for main idea
- using an alternate to writing
- modifying assignments/tests
- taping the instructions for the student to listen to
- providing a reader for tests
- minimizing boardwork and copying from overheads

Poor Reading Comprehension

- track text by using a bookmark (sliding it down the page line by line)
- allow student to access book summaries
- taped books
- Kurzweil Personal Reader program

Organizational Strategies

- agenda book
- use of checklists
- watch alarm
- time lines
- keep personal space tidy
- consistency re: organizational expectations
- buddy who provides reminders

Homework

- assign a peer study buddy to check that homework has been recorded
- copy homework assignments from board
- review homework assignments at end of day
- parents made aware of homework routines and expectations
- modify homework assignments as necessary
- backpack check before leaving room



Student Application Form information

Student Name: _____

Course(s) to be Challenged: _____

Date Application Form Received: _____

Name of Challenge Coordinator: _____

Checklist

Pre-Challenge Equivalency Review Date completed: _____

Panel Review of Application Date completed: _____
Principal/Vice-Principal: _____
Teacher Consultant: _____
Guidance Counsellor: _____

Parent Consult Date completed: _____

Student Consult Date completed: _____

Intended Learning Outcomes for course provided to student Date completed: _____

This course challenge application is hereby approved: Yes No

Challenge Coordinator's Signature: _____

Date: _____



Student Name: _____

Date of Application: _____

Course(s) to be Challenged: _____

Your Course Challenge Application has been approved. Please note the following:

Course Challenge must be completed by: _____

Provincial Exam Date (if applicable): _____

Course Challenge Details: _____

Assessment Criteria: _____

Student Checklist:

Initial

- I have reviewed and am confident that I will be able to demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes designated for the Course Challenge. _____
- I understand the variety of assessment procedures to be used. _____
- I understand that the full course must be challenged for credits. _____
- I understand that I must write the provincial exam, if applicable, in order to fulfill the requirements for receiving credit for this course. _____
- I have met with the Challenge Coordinator and understand the Course Challenge process and timeline. _____

I wish to proceed with the Course Challenge.

Student's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Challenge Coordinator's Signature: _____

Date: _____

School Principal's Signature: _____

Date: _____



“I” LETTER GRADE RECORD FORM

~ SAMPLE ~

Student Name: _____

Term: _____

Date: _____

Closure Date: _____

Learning Area(s) needing improvement:

Action Plan(s)/Goal(s) and Timeline

The student will ... by:

The teacher will ... by:

The parent will ... by:

Follow-up

Date: _____

Action Taken: Letter grade issued: _____

“I” extended: Yes no

Comments: