

**TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD
POLICY and PROCEDURES**

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No. 722 STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES	September 4, 2012		24

It is the Policy of the Tri-County Regional School Board to recognize that assessment provides valuable information regarding student achievement for all partners; students, parents/guardians, teachers, and the system as a whole. Its role and purpose can be divided into Assessment FOR Learning, Assessment OF Learning, and Communicating Student Learning.

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1. Principles

Assessment in schools is to be undertaken in accordance with the following principles:

- a. **Assessment supports and reflects curricular outcomes.**
 - i. Assessment addresses individual, classroom, school, and Board needs.
 - ii. Assessment is based on criteria which are consistent with provincial outcomes and expectations.

- b. **Assessment engages students.**
 - i. Students are active participants in assessment and evaluation.
 - ii. Students engaged in self-assessment become more reflective and are able to set goals for improvement.
 - iii. Students learn to take responsibility for their work and become life-long learners.
 - iv. Assessment motivates and encourages student excellence and responsibility.

- c. **Assessment focuses on “what” and “how” students learn.**
 - i. Assessment practice is consistent with current research on how students learn and includes consideration of the individual learning styles of the student.
 - ii. Assessment connects to all dimensions of the “whole child”: social, emotional, physical, and intellectual.

- d. **Assessment recognizes all educational achievement.**
 - i. Assessment recognizes achievement of the “whole child”.
 - ii. Assessment reflects achievement in all areas of learning and educational activity.

- e. **Assessment is part of effective learning and teaching.**
 - i. Assessment is an integrated part of the learning process that occurs day by day, moment by moment.
 - ii. Assessment provides opportunities for both students and teachers to obtain and use information about progress towards learning outcomes.
 - iii. Assessment is relevant to, appropriate for, and compatible with the purpose and context of the learning.
 - iv. Assessment includes feedback information that is productive, timely, and descriptive.

- f. **Assessment involves students, parents/guardians, and teachers working collaboratively.**
 - i. Assessment actively involves students monitoring their growth, in communicating their learning, in developing and using assessment/evaluation criteria in the record keeping process (e.g. portfolios, goal setting, rubrics, student-led or involved conferences, log or journal).
 - ii. Assessment includes students, teachers, and parents/guardians working together as partners.

- g. **Assessment is an ongoing, systematic process.**
- i. Assessment is a natural process that regularly occurs through all instructional activities.
- h. **Assessment includes assessment “FOR” learning and assessment “OF” Learning.**
- i. Assessment FOR Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence FOR use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.” (Assessment Reform Group 2000)
 - ii. Assessment FOR Learning communicates growth and progress to students and teachers.
 - iii. Assessment FOR Learning helps students monitor their learning over time.
 - iv. In Assessment FOR Learning, the teacher’s role is to demonstrate, model, monitor and coach success. The student is in charge of his/her learning.
 - v. Assessment FOR Learning is a tool to support student goal setting and planning.
 - vi. Assessment FOR Learning assists in the diagnosis of student needs and identifying interventions.
 - vii. Assessment FOR Learning drives and informs classroom instruction.
 - viii. Assessment FOR Learning occurs during the learning process.
 - ix. Assessment OF Learning allows opportunities for communication and reporting to stakeholders.
 - x. Assessment OF Learning responds to the need for accountability.
 - xi. Assessment OF Learning supports learning decisions by providing information to students, parents/guardians, teachers, schools, and the Board.
 - xii. Assessment OF Learning is a tool to support students, schools, and the Board with goal setting and planning.
 - xiii. Assessment OF Learning generally, but not exclusively, takes place after the learning process and informs future teacher instruction. Assessment of Learning may also occur during the learning process should a student provide sufficient evidence of successful completion of learning outcomes.
- i. **Assessment is balanced and multi-faceted.**
- i. Assessment is differentiated and therefore includes and addresses a variety of methods, purposes, and audiences.
 - ii. Assessment gathers information from several contexts and may include school, Board, and provincial assessments of learning.
 - iii. Assessment reflects the complexity of learning to include process/skill, knowledge, product, and content.
- j. **Assessment respects the dignity and reflects the developmental needs of the learner.**
- i. Assessment identifies what students know, are able to express, and are learning to do.
 - ii. Assessment addresses the developmental characteristics of the student and considers a variety of learning styles and intelligences.

- iii. Assessment considers the social, cultural, and linguistic context of the students.
- iv. Assessment celebrates student progress and growth.

k. Assessment is equitable and fair.

- i. Assessment provides students with sufficient opportunity to demonstrate knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/ or behaviours.
- ii. Assessment is designed and developed in ways that control sources of bias and distortion.
- iii. Assessment accurately represents student performance.
- iv. Assessment has clear and appropriate targets based on outcomes.
- v. Assessment tasks being used to provide evidence of achievement are to be completed under the direction of a teacher.

l. Assessment is a key professional skill.

- i. To become assessment-literate teachers require knowledge and skills to assess for learning. This includes planning for instruction and assessment, observing for learning, interpreting evidence, adjusting practice, and providing constructive, descriptive, and effective feedback.
- ii. Assessment is a critical part of teacher reflection and ongoing refinement of practice.
- iii. It is essential that assessment practices reflect current research in learning and assessment. Therefore, teachers require support through ongoing professional growth and development opportunities.

2. Terminology

- a. **Learning Outcomes:** students' learning expectations are based on the Nova Scotia Curriculum Outcomes and/or Individual Program Plans.
- b. **Learning Targets:** learning targets are the essential skills and concepts our students master during instruction. Learning targets help to make curriculum outcomes clear to students and make the link between assessment activities and outcomes.
- c. **Assessment:** the systematic process of gathering information on student learning.
(*DOE Foundation Documents*)
- d. **Assessment for learning (formative assessment):** occurs during teaching and learning. Assessment for learning is used to inform teachers and students of what has been learned and to provide direction for instruction and student improvement.
- e. **Assessment of learning (summative assessment):** provides evidence of student achievement at strategic times throughout the grade/course, often at the end of a period of learning. "Assessment of learning" captures learning to date at a specific point in time.
- f. **Triangulation of Data:** Evidence of student achievement is collected over time from multiple sources—observations, conversations, and student products. Using multiple sources of evidence increases the reliability and validity of the assessment of student achievement.
- g. **Mark or score:** a number or code assigned to any learning task that may be used to determine a grade.

- h. **Grade or reporting code:** a grade is the symbol (number or letter) reported at the end of a period of time as a summary statement of student performance based on the learning outcomes addressed during this period of time. Grades are based on a summary of evidence collected from student assessments (assessment of learning), except in rare situations where information from existing summative assessments is not sufficient to determine a grade. Teachers will use their professional judgment.
- i. **Professional Judgment:** the interpretation of evidence, including knowledge of outcomes and drawn from the triangulation of data. This interpretation of evidence should reflect the student's most consistent level of achievement, with special consideration given to more recent evidence. Not all assessment task scores need to be included.
- j. **Evaluation:** is the process of analyzing, reflecting upon and summarizing assessment information and making judgments or decisions based upon the information gathered.
- k. **Equitable Practice:** assessment methods that are free from bias brought about by student factors extraneous to the purpose of the assessment. Possible factors to consider include culture, developmental stage, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic background, language, special interests, and special needs.
 - i. Students' success in answering questions on a test or in an oral quiz, for example, should not be dependent upon prior cultural knowledge, such as understanding an allusion to a culture, tradition or value, unless such knowledge falls within the content domain being assessed. All students should be given the same opportunity to display their strengths.
(*Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada*)

3. Communication Plans

- 3.1 It is required that all teachers and schools develop and share communication plans annually with students and parents/guardians. Each school will provide, at the beginning of the school year (or semester), a clearly communicated plan for the schedule for reports, conferences, and the range of formal and informal communication methods used by the school throughout the year and the protocol for parent/guardian communication with the school. This includes contact information and highlights individual school practices, such as homework.
- 3.2 The following excerpt from the *Draft Reporting Policy Framework 2005-2006 (New Provincial Framework being developed)* provides guidelines for schools and teachers in developing their annual communications plan.
 - 3.2.1 **School Communication Plan**
The school's communication plan outlines how information on student learning will be communicated to parent/guardians during the year. The plan should include:
 - i. schedule for reports, formal meetings, and parent/guardian-student-teacher conferences
 - ii. range of formal and informal communication methods used by the school through the year
 - iii. protocol for parent/guardian communication with the school including contact information

iv. individual school practices (e.g., school web site, newsletters, homework hot-line, school notes)

3.3 The principal is responsible for the School's Communication Plan which should be sent to parents/guardians in September. It is expected that the School Advisory Council and school staff will contribute to the development of the plan.

3.3.1 **Teacher Communication Plan**

The Teacher Communication Plan should be a reader-friendly document and be no longer than necessary to include the following information:

- i. an overview of the instructional program
- ii. expectations of the students for learning success
- iii. information on the variety of ways that student learning will be assessed and evaluated
- iv. what parents/guardians might expect to receive - for example, annotated samples of student work that demonstrate the student's progress toward expected learning outcomes
- v. how the teacher will communicate further information on the program and student progress during the year
- vi. ways in which the parents/guardians can initiate communication with the teacher
 - The Teacher Communication Plan shall be provide to parents no later than September 30 of each year.

4. Guidelines for Classroom Assessments/Evaluations and Assessment Events

4.1 **Assignments/Projects/Tests**

As students strive to reach outcomes, quality assessments will be a balance of “write, do, and say” tasks to support all students’ learning styles. This will allow them to work toward the learning target (outcome) while receiving feedback, instruction, and opportunities for focused revision. This leads to continued progress toward the learning outcome. **It is not necessary for all assessment opportunities to be marked with a number or other achievement level indicator. However, all students should receive descriptive feedback.**

Where an assignment is used for both summative and formative purposes, the teacher will ensure that the marking criteria are clearly understood by the students.

4.2 **Assessment Opportunities will:**

- 4.2.1 be directly related to the intended outcome(s). Students must understand the intended learning target.
- 4.2.2 include examples of work that approach and/or meet the intended learning target.
- 4.2.3 be differentiated to meet the needs of learners.
 - as much as possible, students should be provided options in demonstrating their mastery, extended knowledge and application of an intended outcome.
 - ensure that students are provided the opportunity to understand how to close the gap between their achievement and the target and be given the time and support to

do so. This should be followed by an opportunity to demonstrate their learning prior to assessment of learning.

4.2.4 include criteria for success and quality and can be co-constructed by the teacher and students allowing for a deeper understanding and connection to the learning outcome.

4.3 **Roles and Responsibilities**

Assessment is an integral part of instruction that enhances, empowers, and celebrates learning. Each individual plays an important role:

4.3.1 *Administrator:* Ensure that educators follow Tri-County Regional School Board policies and procedures in their classroom practices. Assessment is part of the Performance Appraisal expectations within Policy 600. Communicate with classroom teachers regarding student achievement.

Administrators, as school leaders, are responsible to keep current with respect to research and effective practices in the area of assessment.

4.3.2 Tri-County Regional School Board *Educational Consultants and Coordinators:* Provide ongoing learning opportunities and support to school staff. Communicate with schools regarding provincial and/or board assessments.

4.3.3 *Teacher:* It is expected that the teacher will draw from current research to inform classroom and professional practice. The teacher is responsible for ongoing communication with students, parents/guardians, colleagues, and school administration with respect to student achievement, grading and reporting.

4.3.4 *Student:* It is expected that the student will be actively engaged in the learning process. Specific to assessment, the student should practice self-assessment and reflection as related to the learning outcomes.

4.3.5 *Parents/Guardians:* It is expected that parents/guardians will seek clarification from the school when questions arise regarding classroom assessment and evaluation practices and support the student in the learning process.

4.4 **Classroom Assessment and Evaluation**

While students benefit the most from all assessment information, classroom assessment has a variety of audiences. For each of these audiences, classroom assessment will serve the following primary purposes:

4.4.1 *Student:* to enhance the learning, motivation, and confidence of students, helping them develop skills and strategies as self-assessors who are responsible for their own learning.

4.4.2 *Teachers:* to identify individual student strengths and challenges in relation to the defined outcomes in order to inform next steps for instruction; to communicate student achievement in a timely and ongoing manner.

4.4.3 *Parents/Guardians:* to provide information about their children's strengths and challenges in relation to the defined outcomes, as well as information about how student progress and achievement can be supported.

4.4.4 *School Administrators:* to inform school targets for improvement and the allocation of resources; to engage in professional conversation with teachers.

4.5 Classroom assessment will:

- 4.5.1 align outcomes and instruction
- 4.5.2 inform instructional decisions
- 4.5.3 include a balance of formative and summative purposes
- 4.5.4 have a clear purpose which includes criteria for evaluation that is communicated to students in advance
- 4.5.5 provide equitable opportunities for students to demonstrate their achievement of the expected learning outcomes

4.6 Student Involvement in Assessment

Students should play a role in their assessment. When this occurs, students will maintain a greater ownership and interest in their education. This can take place through:

- 4.6.1 with teachers, co-constructing criteria for assessments
- 4.6.2 personal goal setting
- 4.6.3 self and peer assessments
- 4.6.4 student led assessment
- 4.6.5 student led conferences
- 4.6.6 portfolios
- 4.6.7 tracking progress towards attainment of outcomes
- 4.6.8 negotiation with the teacher (democratic classroom practices)
- 4.6.9 student choice in assessment method

5. Classroom Assignments

5.1 School Administrators are responsible for:

- 5.1.1 ensuring classroom assignments provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their progress toward achievement of outcomes.
- 5.1.2 ensuring that guidelines reflect Tri-County Regional School Board expectations and reasonable due dates are in place.
- 5.1.3 ensuring that information regarding the procedures for completion of late or missing assignments is communicated by each teacher to students and parents/guardians early in the school year/semester as part of the Communication Plan.
- 5.1.4 consulting with teachers, when necessary, to determine a final deadline for late or missed assignments.
- 5.1.5 ensuring that an in-school support system is in place for students requiring additional support in order to complete assignments.

5.2 Teachers are responsible for:

- 5.2.1 communicating the purpose and expectations of the assignment, the criteria for evaluating the work, and the weighting (if appropriate) to the students when it is assigned. Care must be taken to distinguish between major assignments designed to be graded based on learning outcomes as compared to assignments whose purpose is to practice knowledge or skill development, or as preparation for future learning.
- 5.2.2 providing criteria through use of descriptors of levels of achievement with samples of student work at the different levels.

- 5.2.3 providing timely, descriptive feedback to a conversation, observation or product and at various stages of a complex assignment. Depending on the complexity and size of the assignment timely feedback could occur the same day and not longer than 2 weeks from the assigned due date.
- 5.2.4. ensuring that the grades students receive are an accurate reflection of the student's achievement of the outcomes.
- 5.2.5. ensuring that assignments have clearly stated due dates that are communicated to students and parents/guardians where appropriate.
- 5.2.6. using a variety of assessments to determine student achievement including performance assessments, projects, written work, demonstrations, portfolios, observations and examinations.
- 5.2.7. deriving grades from a variety of sources. These can be loosely categorized as evidence from conversations, observations and products. Summative assessments provide a summary of each student's achievement of the learning outcomes at a given time during the school year. The report card grade represents a summary of a student's overall achievement as demonstrated to that point in time.
- 5.2.8. setting due dates for assignments which:
- allow time for the teacher to hold students accountable for completing the work.
 - are reasonable and involve students where appropriate.
 - provide support.
 - encourage self-monitoring and the seeking of assistance.
 - involve consultation with other teachers within the school to avoid overlap.
 - provides 'check in' times for conversations and communication with the student throughout the period of time the assignment is being completed to ensure that the student is on task.
- 5.2.9. determining an extended deadline and plan for successful completion of incomplete assignments with the student. When deciding how much extra time to provide before the extended deadline, teachers will consider:
- the nature of the assignment and the amount of time needed for completion.
 - the time needed for additional instruction.
 - the need to return assignments to students with meaningful feedback.
 - the need to maintain the logical progression of outcomes (some concepts need to be understood prior to moving on to another concept).
 - ongoing communication with parents.
- 5.2.10. ensuring that marks/grades are not reduced as a penalty for late assignments when extended deadlines are provided. If an extended deadline is missed for assignments, the student's mark/grade may be affected.
- 5.2.11. providing students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their progress toward achievement of the outcomes.
- 5.2.12. ensuring that all reasonable supports and efforts are explored and offered, including a fair negotiated final deadline. If the student's assignment is not submitted, the teacher may use his/her professional judgment to conclude that there is insufficient evidence to make a determination that outcomes were met. This should be noted in the comment section of the report card.
- 5.2.13. ensuring that there is sufficient evidence to determine the level of achievement.

- 5.2.14. providing opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning using a variety of methods.
- 5.2.15. ensuring that accurate records of student achievement are kept that reflect a variety of assessments (Conversations/Observations/Products).
- 5.2.16. providing alternative assessment tasks that accommodate diverse learning needs.
- 5.2.17. contacting parents/guardians to discuss strategies for keeping students on track when they are falling behind or not taking responsibility for their work.
- 5.2.18. expecting that most students will meet the timelines of an assignment. However, for a variety of reasons, there are students who do not meet deadlines. In cases such as this, the teacher will apply the following interventions and consequences:
 - confer with the student and/or the student's parents/guardians about the reasons for not completing the assignment, and consider the legitimacy of reasons.
 - develop a plan with the student to complete the work.
 - require the student to complete missing work and/or refer the student for in-school support.
 - in the event that the above interventions are not successful, the teacher may assign a mark of "Incomplete" or a "0".
 - determine in consultation with the principal when necessary, student and parent/guardian that the student has not met the outcomes of the course.
- 5.2.19. where a student has been approved for a transfer to a school with the Tri-County Regional School Board it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all assignments are completed and submitted to the leaving school for assessment. No incomplete assignments shall be used for assessment by the receiving school. The final assessment information shall be forwarded from the leaving school to the receiving school.

5.3 Students are responsible for:

- 5.3.1 being active participants in all aspects of their learning.
regular attendance.
- 5.3.2. being accountable for completing work and providing evidence of learning.
- 5.3.3. seeking assistance with assignments when required.
- 5.3.4. taking advantage of additional in-school support if needed.
- 5.3.5. completing assignments by specified due dates so that teachers can provide timely feedback.
- 5.3.6. requesting an extension for assignments in a timely manner when required.

6. Constructing Summative Assessments

It is important that assessments be constructed to reflect the outcomes taught, and the method of assessment must be appropriate for the purpose. Students must have had the opportunity to learn the content prior to being assessed. High quality assessments will yield high quality results. To be of high quality, an assessment must be valid, fair, reliable, and free of bias. There will be consideration given to the use of the assessment and matching the type of assessment to the intended outcomes.

7. Marking Group Projects/Assignments

Cooperative Learning is essentially a learning activity, not an evaluation tool. Learning that occurs in a group should be thought of as formative only. For summative purposes, a student must be

assessed individually on the work that he/she completed in the group. No common group marks will be given.

8. Homework

For detailed direction and information, see Tri-County Regional School Board Supporting Document: “*Homework: Its Purpose and Assessment*”

- 8.1 Homework tasks should support classroom learning and instill a sense of competence in the learner. The role of homework can be to support a pre-learning activity, check for understanding, practice (where needed), and reflect on concepts and apply knowledge learned to new situations. Homework should not be assigned a mark based solely on completion. When homework is formative in nature, students have opportunities to practice, receive descriptive feedback and are motivated to improve. To maximize the potential benefit of homework on student achievement, teachers should engage in dialogue with students about the work completed.
- 8.2 Projects and larger assignments must be initiated, supported, and at least partially completed during class time. Authentic assessment activities must be teacher directed. For these projects/assignments that are summative in nature, it is essential that the learning outcomes are clear and that the method of determining a mark is also clear to students and parents/guardians.
- 8.3 In addition, a system of checkpoints and feedback needs to be in place throughout the learning process. Setting up checkpoints throughout the duration of the assignment will ensure that the teacher and student are communicating about the intended learning throughout the process. Schools need to ensure that there are systems of support in place so that students can access assistance and materials that may not be available in their home.
- 8.4 *General Guidelines for Homework:*
 - 8.4.1 Individual student needs and abilities must be considered when assigning homework.
 - 8.4.2 Homework should be viewed as a means of enhancing student learning and care must be taken to avoid it from becoming punitive or a negative influence.
 - 8.4.3 Homework should be coordinated so the frequency, length and difficulty of tasks are realistic and fair for all students.
 - 8.4.4 Where homework is to be evaluated, the criterion for that evaluation is to be clearly communicated to students.
 - 8.4.5 Homework is not be assigned over regular school vacations – specifically Christmas Break and March Break.
 - 8.4.6 Individual school homework policies are to be communicated to the total school community – students, parents/guardians.

9. Determining Grades for Students with Minimal Evidence

9.1 Grades P-8

9.1.1 If at the end of the term you have minimal evidence for a student (due to absenteeism, completing minimal work in school, missing work assigned for completion at home, etc.) it is still important to assign a fair grade. To do this, *first see if there is enough other evidence that shows the student has met the outcome. If there is, base the grade on the existing body of evidence. If there is no other evidence or the evidence related to this outcome is insufficient, interpret this as the student has not demonstrated achievement of the outcome.* It is also important to consider interventions that are necessary to address the issue of school refusal (the student is not attending school and thus not getting work done) or work refusal (the student is in school but not doing the work). Teachers should identify this trend as early as possible and support students with attendance or work completion issues to limit the likelihood the problem will continue until the end of the term. This may include:

- conversing with student as often as possible to determine needs
- contacting parent/guardian to “check-in” or remind them of coming due dates
- communicating with other teachers to see if the issue is apparent in other courses
If the problem persists, be sure to document the evidence and your communication about it clearly including:
 - notify administration and seek support

9.2 Grades 9-12

9.2.1 In the event of a late assignment and if conversations with the student were not held and/or observations were not made, use Score Code ‘INC’ (*Incomplete*) as a temporary place holder and designate the assignment as Late (L). If late assignments are received by the fair and negotiated new due date, replace the INC with a mark that reflects the level of achievement (without penalty for lateness). The Late (L) code should remain as a record of concerns around lateness, work completion or absenteeism. This will then be reported in the learner profile and may require other support or interventions to address the source of the problem. If there is no other evidence or if the evidence related to the outcomes covered is insufficient, *replace the INC mark/score with a zero and replace the Late (L) with Missing (M) for work.* This mark may now be used to determine a grade. In this case it is important to consider interventions that are necessary to address the issue of school refusal (the student is not attending school and thus not getting work done) or work refusal (the student is in school but not doing the work).

- For detailed direction and information, see Tri-County Regional School Board Supporting Document: “*Creating an INC Score Code in Gradebook*”

9.2.2 As early as possible it is important to *establish steps or interventions to support students with attendance or work completion issues.* This could include: contact with parents to “check-in” or remind them of coming due dates, encourage parents to refer to the Parent Portal, talking with other teachers to see if the issue is apparent in other courses, and notifying administration for their support.

10. Bonus Points

Marks will be directly related to the intended learning outcome. Bonus points for completing tasks not related to achievement of the outcome distort the validity of the mark/grade. This is especially problematic when marks that include bonus points are included as part on a course grade. Therefore it is not acceptable to give a mark or grade above 100%.

11. Academic Integrity and Dealing with Academic Dishonesty

- 11.1 Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarizing/copying someone else's work, cheating, citing references incorrectly, and handing in the same assignment for more than one course. Regardless of the nature, students may engage in this behaviour at times intentionally and other times unintentionally.

For example, some students are overwhelmed, may feel as though they are incapable of being successful on their own, or do not realize that they have engaged in a form of academic dishonesty. Employing a proactive approach will help promote academic integrity and limit incidents of academic dishonesty.

Schools are encouraged to develop a range of progressive consequences in response to academic dishonesty in order that students may accept responsibility for their actions. The progressive nature of the school policy would take into account: age, maturity, grade level, and pattern of behaviour (e.g. consequences for a grade 9 student who has plagiarized may look quite different from consequences for a grade 12 student or a student who is a first-time offender versus a repeat-offender).

11.2 **Guidelines for teachers**

- 11.2.1 Explicitly state and discuss with students the traits associated with good academic integrity.
 - 11.2.2 Educate students on what academic dishonesty is to ensure that they have a clear understanding of what it is and looks like, as well as consequences for engaging in this behaviour.
 - 11.2.3 Include the teaching of referencing and research skills for tasks requiring students to use these skills.
 - 11.2.4 Allow for time in instructional and assessment practices to confer with students to keep track of their progress and provide them with next steps toward success.
 - 11.2.5 Have research notes and 'earlier' drafts submitted with the final copy as evidence of preparatory work.
- 11.3 Each school will include an academic integrity policy as part of its school code of conduct. Students need to face consequences for behaviours that are contrary to good academic integrity. However, giving a zero does not accurately reflect what the student has learned, nor will it deter this behaviour from occurring again.

The following are provided as examples:

- 11.3.1 redoing the assignment within an appropriate time to enable the student to provide evidence of his or her learning, as defined by school protocol
- 11.3.2 contacting the parents/guardians of students involved
- 11.3.3 applying an appropriate consequence to deter the behavior that does not distort the marking of the assessment

12. Final Assessment Activities

12.1 All courses require a `final assessment` (*either Examination or a Culminating Assessment*) in grades 9-12.

12.2 *Examinations*

School Based Examinations **will be the default final assessment** and occur for all credit courses in grades 9 through 12. A Culminating Assessment may take place instead of an examination in consultation with the school administrator.

12.2.1 Examinations and Culminating Assessments will have the following values:

- Grade 9: 10% - 15% of the total mark for a course for the year or the semester
- Grade 10: 15% - 20% of the total mark for a course for the year or the semester
- Grade 11: 20% - 25% of the total mark for a course for the year or the semester
- Grade 12: 25% - 30% of the total mark for a course for the year or the semester

12.2.2 *Exemptions* – there are no exemptions in grade 9-12

There may be extenuating individual circumstances where a student may be exempt as determined by the school administration.

12.2.3 Maximum length of time for exams:

- Grade 9: 2 hours
- Grade 10: 2.5 hours
- Grade 11 & 12: 3 hours

12.3 *Culminating Assessments*

As determined by the classroom teacher with school administration, a ‘culminating assessment’ may be appropriate. Consideration needs to be given to maintain consistency within a school across courses.

Samples of Culminating Assessments may include but are not limited to:

- Multiple day project
- Performance
- Oral Presentation
- Conference/Interview

12.4 Guidelines and strategies for preparing authentic assessment/evaluation in exams and other selected response:

- I. Multiple Choice should be limited to no more than 35% of the total mark



- II. Final assessment/evaluation requires a variety of question types that may include but are not limited to:
- a. Essay
 - b. Multiple Choice
 - c. Question – Answer
 - d. Open – ended questions
 - e. Diagrams
 - f. Multi-Level Question/Response (Bloom`s Taxonomy)/Level 1,2,3 Questioning
 - g. Short answer
 - h. Matching
 - i. Conversation/Observation
 - j. Portfolio
- 12.5 End of year examinations for senior high students shall not commence prior to day 187 of the current school year. End of semester one examinations shall not commence prior to five days immediately preceding the end of the first semester.
- 12.5.1 Mid-semester examinations are left to the discretion of the school and must be communicated in the teachers' communication plan at the commencement of the course.
- 12.6 Students with IPPs may write an individualized examination or may continue with regular programming as determined by the School Program Planning Team.
- 12.7 All marked examinations will be made available to students upon request of the student and/or parent/guardian. It is highly recommended that review of the examinations be an ongoing part of the learning process. At year end, students will be given the opportunity to view their exams. At the end of the first semester, students will be able to view their examinations within two weeks of the new semester.
- 12.8 School based student examinations should be kept for a period of one year.
- 12.9 Teachers are required to provide the principal with a copy of examinations at least one week prior to the date it is to be written. The principal or designate is responsible for reviewing the exams and providing feedback to teachers. These examinations must be kept on file for a period of five (5) years.
- 12.10 The method of disposing of student examinations is shredding.
- 12.11 **Regional or Provincial Examinations**
When Regional or Provincial Examinations are a part of a course, the percentages will be determined by Department of Education Personnel or Tri-County Regional School Board central office staff. This will override the percentages prescribed in section 12.2 of this policy.

13. Determining a Grade for the Report Card

- 13.1 Grades are derived using evidence from a variety of sources such as conversations, observations and products. Summative assessments provide a summary of each student's achievement of the learning outcomes at a given time during the school year. The report card grade represents a summary of a student's overall achievement as demonstrated up to that point in time.
- 13.1.1 In grade Primary teachers must collect evidence throughout the term to determine student achievement and progress. Communication of this progress is made through anecdotal comments. The process used must be clearly communicated to the parents/guardians in the teacher communication plan. Teachers share this process with students through conversation and modeling in the classroom, often with work samples accompanied by codes and symbols used for feedback.
- 13.1.2 In grades 1 through 8, where a letter grade is given, teachers must collect evidence throughout the term to determine a report card grade. The process used must be clearly communicated to the student and parents/guardians in the teacher communication plan. To create an accurate picture of what learning has taken place throughout the grading period, teachers must refer to the descriptors for A, B, C, and D and student individual achievement in relation to the course outcomes.
- 13.1.3 In grades 9 through 12, where a numerical grade is given, teachers must collect evidence throughout the term to determine a report card grade. The process used must be clearly communicated to the student and parents/guardians in the teacher communication plan. Teachers must be clear in their communication plans as to how grades will be determined.
- 13.2 Assessment is inherently a process of professional judgment. Day-to-day, minute-by-minute formative assessment informs teacher practice. At times, when summative information is discovered in the course of the formative assessment process, it is appropriate to use this information to inform course grades. Summative assessment information should be the determinant of the report grade. The purpose of the assessment must always be kept in mind, whether it is to inform practice or to inform the final grade.

14. Guidelines for Report Card Comments

For detailed direction and information, see Tri-County Regional School Board Supporting Document: "Creating Strong Report Card Comments"

- 14.1 Comments on report cards should provide clear, straightforward information to parents/guardians about how their child is achieving and progressing in school in relation to provincial program expectations/expected learning outcomes or, for students with individual program plans, the annual and specific individualized outcomes.

- 14.2 The central focus must be on the outcomes and the types of performance that represent achievement of the outcomes. Care needs to be taken that, where possible, information is free of jargon and complex language.
- 14.3 Comments on report cards should assist students in evaluating their learning, reflecting on their progress toward expected learning outcomes, and setting goals for future learning.
- 14.4 Comments on report cards should address students' strengths and learning needs, so that strengths can be built upon and problem areas addressed. Accuracy in reporting strengths and learning needs is essential for stimulating and reinforcing improved performance.
- 14.5 Indicators of learning behaviours not directly related to achievement of specific learning outcomes must be communicated through the learner profile and its comment section.
- 14.6 Comments should provide information that will assist students in taking relevant follow-up actions and assist parents/guardians in supporting student learning at home.
- 14.7 As much as possible, comments need to be personalized to reflect the learning of each student.

15. Communication of Student Achievement to Parents/Guardians and Students

15.1 Evaluating, Grading, and Reporting

Assessment provides information about a student's progress in achieving expected learning outcomes. Teachers use the information to make professional judgments as they evaluate student learning in relation to the outcomes. This should be clearly and accurately communicated to students and parents/guardians. Initially, this is done in the Teacher Communication Plan, but also should occur on an ongoing basis throughout the school year and in the School Communication Plan.

Evaluation/Grading is the process of using summative assessment information related to the outcomes taught to determine a report card grade (letter or percentage). This is distinct from marking, which is the process of assigning a number or code to a piece of individual student work.

The primary purpose of grading is to communicate achievement status at a point in time to students, parents/guardians, and others. The secondary purposes of grading are: to provide information which students can use for self-evaluation and growth; to encourage student growth and progress in learning; to identify students for available educational opportunities; and to evaluate the effectiveness of curricular, instructional and assessment practices and programs.

- 15.2 Students and parents/guardians should be informed of student progress on an ongoing basis. *The Parent Portal provides information on individual student grades, and is available to everyone.* Report cards are the summation of this information and are sent out according to provincial and Board guidelines.

- 15.2.1 There shall be a minimum of three formal reporting periods during a school year for non-semestered programs (November, March, and June).
- 15.2.2 There shall be a minimum of two formal reporting periods (February and June) and two interim reports (November and April) during a school year for semestered programs.
- 15.2.3 There shall be a minimum of two formal parent-teacher visitation times during a school year.

Informal reporting to parents/guardians and students is encouraged on a regular and ongoing basis when necessary (e.g., phone calls, emails, descriptive feedback, teacher web pages, parent/guardian/student portal).

By its nature, evaluation/grading is a subjective process. Evaluation/Grading involves professional judgment. It involves establishing clear grading criteria based on the outcomes and is reflective of a student's level of achievement throughout the grading period. It is recognized that not all student work requires a mark. The value of some student work is found in the practice of the academic goal. This practice allows for focused revision by both the teacher and the student.

- 15.3 While non-academic factors may contribute to the student's achievement, those factors must be communicated separately from an academic achievement grade. These should be documented in the Learner Profile or Work/Study Habits section of the Provincial Report Card. The following are examples of non-academic factors and are not to be included in the course grade:
 - 15.3.1 -behaviour
 - attendance
 - attitude
 - punctuality
 - effort
 - 15.3.2 class participation not based on outcomes
 - 15.3.3 homework that is based solely on completion.
- 15.4 Specialist area subjects where Course Outcomes include 'active participation' teachers assess these outcomes and may comment in the academic section of the Report Card.
- 15.5 In addition, teachers need to include:
 - 15.5.1 a variety and balanced collection of evidence through Triangulation of Assessment
 - conversation
 - observation
 - product
 - 15.5.2 most recent assessment data
 - assessment data that is appropriately weighted based on number of outcomes met and time spent.
- 15.6 **Standardized Report Cards (Province of Nova Scotia)**
Tri-County Regional School Board will use the provincial reporting templates as provided by the N.S. Department of Education.

16. Appeal process for Marks

- 16.1 It is highly recommended that the student, parents/guardians and the classroom teacher discuss the mark or grade in question prior to initiating the appeal process.
- 16.1.1 Students and parents/guardians have five business days from the time a mark or final grade is released to appeal.
- 16.1.2 The initial request should be made to the school administration. Administration is required to respond within five business days of the request.
- 16.1.3 Within three business days of receiving the school's decision, the student and parents/guardians may request an appeal, in writing, to the Director of Programs and Student Services.
- 16.1.4 The Director, in consultation with parents/guardians and school administration, will make a final decision within five business days. A written communication of this decision will be sent to the parents/guardians and school by the Director.
- 16.1.5 For a Nova Scotia Examination appeal, please refer to provincial guidelines.

17. Promotion, Retention, Placement and Acceleration

Definition of terms:

- i. Promotion: the student has successfully completed the prescribed courses (adapted or regular) in a grade and is qualified to proceed to an appropriate program at the next grade level.
- ii. Retention: the student has not successfully completed all prescribed courses (adapted or regular) in a grade, and is retained at that grade level.
- iii. Placement: the student has not successfully completed all the prescribed courses (adapted or regular) in a grade but is placed in the next grade level.
- iv. Acceleration: Acceleration occurs when a student has progressed beyond age appropriate coursework and/or grade level groups. Acceleration is the practice of enabling a student to meet curriculum outcomes at a faster pace or a younger age commensurate with their needs and abilities. At any point when the student's outcomes are changed, involvement of the program planning team is necessary, especially when an appeal of decision could happen. (Nova Scotia Department of Education, *Gifted Education and Talent Development*, page 116) The student's program planning team determines that it is in the best interest of the student for acceleration to occur and recommends the appropriate type of acceleration. For forms and levels of acceleration please refer to the Nova Scotia Department of Education Gifted Education and Talent Development Guide.

17.1 **Retention**

Retention is not a practice recommended by Tri-County Regional School Board. In those rare cases when retention is viewed as an option for the student, full and comprehensive consultation with the student's parents/guardians must be an integral part of the process.

When there is a possibility that a student will be referred for retention, this must be communicated to the parents/guardians in writing, as soon as the student is identified, but not later than March 31 of that school year. A meeting(s) concerning possible retention will occur no later than June 15 of that year. At these meetings, which include appropriate school/school board staff, parents/guardians and student as applicable, appropriate programming will be developed with input from all partners.

17.1.1 The Tri-County Regional School Board expects that teachers and school administrators will:

- i. encourage all students to make maximum progress in school according to students' strengths, abilities, levels of maturity and efforts,
- ii. make a referral to the School Program Planning Team as soon as concerns arise regarding individual student progress,
- iii. make arrangements, if necessary, to meet with the student's Individual Program Planning Team,
- iv. participate in the development of a plan for the student's success,
- v. communicate regularly and clearly with the student's parents/guardians and other members of the student's Individual Program Planning Team,
- vi. within the scope of resources available from the Tri-County Regional School Board, utilize staff support, pedagogical resources, and organizational structures that are effective in helping students reach their full potential.

17.2 **Placement**

An individual Program Planning team may decide to 'place' a student in the next grade, level, course, or program when that student has not met the majority of the expected learning outcomes. In such an instance, the student is placed with his or her age-appropriate peers.

When there is a possibility that a student will be referred for placement, this must be communicated to the parents/guardians in writing, as soon as the student is identified, but not later than March 31 of that school year. A meeting(s) concerning possible placement will occur no later than June 15 of that year. At these meetings, which include appropriate school/school board staff, parents/guardians and student as applicable, appropriate programming will be developed with input from all partners.

17.3 **Acceleration**

Schools and teachers are expected to work with students and parents/guardians to provide purposeful programming, rewarding learning activities, and challenging assessment opportunities that address the full range of interests and abilities of all students so they may enjoy growth and acquire capacities in the company of their age-appropriate peers. Consequently, in most cases, students will remain with their age-appropriate peers, but will be supported with a Program Plan. For assistance with providing enrichment for highly capable students, please refer to the Nova Scotia Department of Education Gifted Education and Talent Development Guide.

When there is the possibility that a student will be referred for accelerated programming, this must be communicated to the parent/guardian in writing, as soon as the student is identified, but not later than March 31 of that school year. A subsequent meeting(s) concerning possible acceleration will occur no later than June 15 of that year. At the initial meeting, this includes appropriate school/school board staff, parents/guardians and student as applicable, appropriate programming will be developed with input from all partners.

17.4 Communication of Student Progress

Progress Report Cards are provided in November and in April for Semestered and Year-long courses. This will provide the student and parent/guardian with a 'formal' progress report for that reporting period.

Informal reporting to parents/guardians and students is encouraged on a regular and ongoing basis when necessary (e.g., phone calls, emails, teacher web pages).

The Student-Parent Portal will also provide ongoing tracking of student achievement.

Along with the above interventions, the TCRSB encourages parents/guardians to communicate regularly with teachers.

17.5 Appeal of Promotion, Retention, Placement and Acceleration

At school level, the principal shall have the final authority for promotion, retention, acceleration and placement of all pupils.

The parent/guardian may appeal the school's decision to the Director of Programs and Student Services. The Director of Programs and Student Services will chair an Appeal Panel consisting of the Director and two Coordinators.

18. Students with Special Needs

18.1 Adaptations

Adaptations are strategies and/or resources to accommodate the learning needs of an individual student. They are planned, implemented, and evaluated to enable a student to meet the public school curriculum outcomes. Adaptation strategies and/or resources are documented in the student's cumulative record folder but not indicated on a student's high school transcript. As soon as possible, it is recommended that individual students be involved in the program planning process. Students who become active participants in their learning have increased academic success. The development of self-advocacy skills is critical for students who require adaptations.

According to Tri-County Regional School Board Student Services Policies and Procedures, Adaptations must be documented. Adaptations must be reviewed yearly (or at the end of semestered courses) by the School Program Planning Team or Individual Program Planning Team. Recommendations must be attached to the plan.

18.1.1 Adaptations are developed for a student in one or more of the following areas:

- i. Organizational Strategies
- ii. Resources (Human & Material)
- iii. Presentation/Instructional Strategies
- iv. Assessment Strategies
- v. Motivational Strategies
- vi. Environmental Strategies

18.1.2 Adaptations should be monitored regularly to ensure they remain appropriate for the student. Regular monitoring provides an opportunity to examine the implementation of adaptations and whether their purpose is being achieved.

- **Please refer to the Nova Scotia guidelines for each provincial assessment (<http://plans.ednet.ns.ca>), as each assessment has specific guidelines for adaptations.**

18.2 **Individual Program Plans**

Individual Program Planning Teams are expected to carry out ongoing assessment in their area(s) of responsibilities. Sections 2.2 and 2.6 of the Provincial Special Education Policy indicate that a review of the program plan should take place prior to each reporting period. Integral to the implementation of a student's Individual Program Plan is the ongoing monitoring of student progress in relation to his/her individualized outcomes. The assessment information that teachers gather through this process, using assessment strategies as identified in the IPP, forms the basis for judgment or evaluation of student progress. The accountability of teachers for reporting student progress to parents/guardians is the same for students who have IPPs as for all other students. Teachers are expected to use the provincial reporting template for reporting on IPP outcomes. This template does not replace the report card, but is attached to the report card.

18.2.1 A *formal* review of the Individual Program Plan must take place at least twice annually/semester. The review provides the Individual Program Planning Team with the opportunity to evaluate both the student's progress and the program itself. It is during the formal review when the original IPP document is updated.

19. **French Immersion Considerations**

All practices and supports as outlined in this Policy are to be applied to French Immersion Programming.

In cases where consideration is given to a student leaving the French Immersion Program the following will apply:

19.1 The decision to remove a student from the immersion program should be an individual program planning team decision involving the student (when appropriate), the immersion teacher, appropriate student services/school board staff, the principal and the parents/guardians.

20. Provincial Assessments

The Tri-County Regional School Board participates in provincial, national, and international assessments as part of the Program of Learning Assessments for Nova Scotia (PLANS).

- 20.1 Assessments developed and/or mandated by the Department of Education shall be administered.
- 20.2 Board personnel shall administer other group/individual assessments that may be approved for administration from time to time, with direct involvement and assistance from school principals and teachers as required.
- 20.3 Assessment results produced by the Department of Education shall be presented by Board staff to the Board's Education Committee.
- 20.4 In the context of school improvement planning, external assessment results may be considered.
- 20.5 Individual student assessment information will be made available to students and/or parents/guardians upon request, in accordance with the provincial policy.

21. External Assessments

21.1 Schools will participate in External National and International Assessments including:

- 21.1.1 PISA: *Programme of International Student Assessment*
 - International assessment that assesses 15-year-old students' abilities in mathematics, reading and science.
- 21.1.2 PCAP: *Pan Canadian Assessment Program*
 - National assessment program administered to grade eight students, and assesses their abilities in mathematics, reading, and science.
- 21.1.3 PIRLS: *Progress in Reading Literacy Study*
 - International Assessment administered to grade 4 students

21.2 **School Administrators will:**

- 21.2.1 work with the school assessment coordinator and teachers to oversee the administration of all provincial and external large-scale assessments
- 21.2.2 develop, in conjunction with Programs and Student Services staff, a communication plan to report assessment results to parents/guardians and the broader school community
- 21.2.3 communicate assessment results to the school community in a timely manner
- 21.2.4 use external large-scale assessment data, along with other relevant data (e.g., classroom assessment information, school surveys.), to plan for improvement. For example, the data may help to:
 - i. identify strengths and areas of concern.
 - ii. identify what additional information is needed and how to collect the information.
 - iii. determine next steps to improve student achievement.
 - iv. set school and classroom targets.
 - v. align resources with identified needs.

21.3 Teachers will:

21.3.1 participate in developing, training for, administering, scoring and communicating the results of external large-scale assessments, as required by the Department of Education and the Tri-County Regional School Board.

21.4 Students will:

21.4.1 participate in external large-scale assessments as required by the Department of Education and Tri-County Regional School Board

21.5 Given that the immersion program parallels English programming, a student has most likely achieved several of the curriculum outcomes which are transferable from one language to the other. It should not be considered common practice to repeat a student in the same grade when a decision has been made to withdraw the student from the immersion program.

21.6 During the individual planning team meetings, discussion should focus on appropriate supports for the student as he/she moves to the next grade level whether he/she transfers to the English program or remains in the immersion program. Teachers should have assessment data readily available in order to support programming decisions.