

O'Connell Drive Elementary School

Communicating Student Learning 2020-21

We value a collaborative approach to educating children. Students, teachers, and parents/guardians can all work effectively together when they have a shared understanding of expectations and achievements. This plan outlines the means by which we will achieve improved communication between school and home.

The policy indicates that the basis for assessing and evaluating student learning will be the expected learning outcomes established by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD). These outcomes describe the knowledge, skills and attitudes the student will demonstrate by the end of each grade level.

Recently, the EECD rolled out streamlined curriculum documents from grades primary to six . This framework, together with a set of indicators for success under each outcome, combines language arts, math, health, social studies, science, visual arts and information/communication technology together. The outcomes tell us *what* children will learn and the indicators are the specific skills and knowledge required to meet these outcomes. All core subjects have now been streamlined into integrated language arts and integrated mathematics so teachers assess outcomes from all disciplines simultaneously. The grade P-3 report card will only have comments for Integrated Language Arts and Integrated Mathematics. The grade 4-6 reports will have separate comments and developmental codes for the core subject in addition to Integrated Mathematics and Language Arts.

Tools for Assessment and Evaluation

We have defined assessment as the process of gathering information for student learning. We use a variety of methods in assessing student learning so that we gain a more accurate picture of what students know and are able to do. We refer to this as balanced assessment.

The following are examples of assessment strategies we have used to gather information on student learning:

- ◆ Work Samples - collected and dated daily assignments.
- ◆ Models - two or three-dimensional representation or construction.
- ◆ Journals - informal writing shared among students and teachers.
- ◆ Reports/Projects/Presentations - formal assignments extending over a period of time demonstrating their understanding of a concept or topic.
- ◆ Performances - skits, puppet shows, public speaking, debates, plays, role-playing, singing and dance, instrumental music.
- ◆ Tests/Quizzes - a time limited written or oral response to teacher questions on a specific concept.
- ◆ Peer and Self-Evaluation - Students assessing own and each other's work using clear guidelines.
- ◆ Observation/Anecdotal Records/Checklists - specific methods that support continuous gathering of information on student learning.
- ◆ Portfolios - a collection of student/teacher selected work that portrays student's effort, progress. And achievement over a period of time.
- ◆ Student Led Conferences - students present evidence of their learning to parents/guardians.
- ◆ Goal Setting - collaborative process among student, teachers and parents/guardians to establish goals the child will work towards over a specified period of time.
- ◆ Rubrics - identifies and describes the criteria used to assess student performance.
- ◆ Observation Survey - structured assessment activities giving evidence of child's reading ability.
- ◆ Questioning - the use of question and answer in various settings to determine what a child knows.
- ◆ Conferencing - discussion between student and teacher regarding student accomplishments.

Not all teachers will use all of the above methods of assessment. However each teacher will use some combination of the above to ensure a balanced assessment of each student.

Once teachers have gathered all this information we must make sense of it by evaluating student learning. Evaluation involves weighing and balancing all available information and using professional judgement in making decisions based upon that information. It is important for teachers to share this information with students and parents so that we can collaborate in supporting each child's learning.

Communicating Student Learning

Just as there are many ways that student learning can be assessed, there are also many ways that information can be communicated to parents, students and other teachers. These may include:

- Curriculum nights
- Open houses
- School and classroom newsletters
- Calendars
- Special events
- Homework (especially interactive activities between student and parent)
- Home and school communication journals
- Homework notebook/agendas
- Email
- Reading at home programs
- Reading logs
- Monthly assemblies
- Phone calls
- Collaborative goal setting
- Performances
- Portfolios
- Conferences
- Report cards

Some of these possible ways for communicating student learning in relation to the expected learning outcomes will be undertaken on a school wide basis and others pertain to individual classes, students and teachers.

In addition to the ongoing communication of your child's progress, you can also expect to receive three progress reports. The first reporting period covers September-November, the second covers December-March and the third reporting period spans from April-June. Report cards will be sent home in December, April and June. Curriculum planning and assessment are focused on the learning outcomes outlined in provincial curriculum guides. The report will provide information about your child's progress in meeting these outcomes.

There are two parent-teacher conferencing periods, the first in November, the second in April. Parents are not limited to the scheduled conferencing times and are encouraged to make an appointment with the teacher to discuss their child's progress at other times if they feel it is necessary. Your child's teacher can be reached by calling the school.

The following is a proposed plan for the communication of student learning:

- December 3 Parent/Teacher
- April 8 Parent/Teacher
- June 30, 2021 Final Report Cards go home

*Please note that parents and guardians have the right to phone or meet with teachers at any time during the school year to learn about progress and achievement. The parents teacher/interview dates above are set but there is limited time for interviews on each day (10 minutes)

We especially encourage parents/guardians to participate in our various school events. These opportunities will prove helpful in understanding the complexities of teaching and learning. As often as possible we will make every effort to have you participate with your children.

Attendance

The EECD has implemented a provincial [Student Attendance and Engagement](#) policy. This policy places more responsibility on families and students to attend school regularly. If our teachers notice a pattern of chronic tardiness or excessive time missed, they will contact you and work with you to support the development of regular attendance habits. Should students continue to miss time beyond this intervention our school planning team would become involved to offer additional supports. In some cases Child Welfare could be called to work with families and the school. Children who miss time due to family vacations or community sporting events will not be given work packages by our staff. It will be the responsibility of the student and their family to catch up on their own after returning to school.

Children Requiring Additional Support

The school is committed to supporting the learning of all students. We believe in the early identification of students requiring extra support. Early identification and timely intervention is the most effective approach in meeting the needs of children. Parents are informed before any intervention such as resource support takes place.

A process has been established for the identification, assessment, and program planning for students with special needs. Classroom teachers, resource teachers, and parents may initiate and/or assist in identifying special needs. In some cases when a student is identified as having special needs a referral is made to the school program planning team. The program planning team generally consists of the principal, school psychologist, language pathologist, resource teacher, classroom teachers, EPAs and parents as needed.

Parents are consulted and written permission is required for any formal individual assessment. Parents are informed of the test results. The test results along with other information will be used in making adaptations to the student's program or developing an Individual Program Plan (IPP) for the student. The program planning team will be involved in making adaptations or developing an IPP for the student.

Parental Concerns

If you have a concern, we encourage you to address the teacher first. A meeting can be arranged with the teacher where the administration may or may not be present. If a follow up meeting is arranged with the administration, resolution of the matter raised will involve the teacher, even if the teacher is not present at all meetings. The goal is to resolve the issues in a climate of mutual respect while

maintaining the dignity of all concerned and keeping in mind the best interests of the child. (Refer to the HRCE Parent Concern Protocol Document)

Review of the School Plan

The school plan for communicating student learning will be reviewed regularly (no less than three years) and amended as needed by the principal after consulting with staff and the school advisory council.

For Further Information

Parents/Guardians wishing to review the relevant provincial curriculum guides may borrow a copy from the school or access them through the government websites: <http://doc-depot.ednet.ns.ca> or <http://apef-fepa.org>. The Halifax Regional Centre policy on student assessment and evaluation can be accessed by visiting the board's website: www.hrce.ca.

If the standard forms of communication to parents prove to be inappropriate (e.g. Non-English speaking parents), alternate methods of communication will be pursued to ensure that all parents have a clear understanding of their child's progress.

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