

O'Connell Drive Elementary

Communicating Student Learning 2017-18

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. These outcomes describe the knowledge, skills and attitudes the student will demonstrate by the end of each grade level.

The outcomes framework has been developed by the provincial Department of Education in collaboration with the other Atlantic Provinces. This framework, together with a set of statements that describe what we know about how students learn, forms the basis for the school program in Nova Scotia for all students from primary to grade twelve. The outcomes framework tells us *what* children will learn and the Principles of Learning tell us *how* children will learn. All core subjects have now been streamlined into Integrated Language Arts and Integrated Mathematics.

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:

- Reports/Projects/Presentations - formal assignments extending over a period of time demonstrating their understanding of a concept or topic.
- Journals - informal writing shared among students and teachers.
- Models - two or three-dimensional representation or construction.
- 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.
- Goal Setting - collaborative process among student, teachers and parents/guardians to establish goals the child will work towards over a specified period of time.
- Peer and Self-Evaluation - Students assessing own and each other's work using clear guidelines.
- Conferencing - discussion between student and teacher regarding student accomplishments.
- Work Samples - collected and dated daily assignments.
- 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.
- Rubrics - identifies and describes the criteria used to assess student performance.
- Tests/Quizzes - a time limited written or oral response to teacher questions on a specific concept.
- 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.

Teacher will use some combination of the above to ensure a balanced assessment of each student but may not use all of the above methods of assessment.

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:

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

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 on December 5, April 5 and June 29. 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:

September 28	Curriculum Night
Oct 11 and 12	Grade 6 DOE Literacy Assessment
Oct 17 and Oct 19	Grade 6 DOE Math Assessment
Dec 5	Report Cards Sent Home
Dec 7	(AM PD) Parent/Teacher Int. (1-3 pm and 6-8 pm)
April 5	Second Term Reports
April 18	Parent/Teacher Int. (6-8 pm)
April 19	(AM PD) Parent Teacher Interviews (1-3 pm)
	Literacy/Math Night (evening)
June 29	Final Progress Reports sent home

We especially encourage parents/guardians to participate in the 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.

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 students 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 HRSB 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 policy on student assessment and evaluation can be accessed by visiting the board's website: www.hrsb.ns.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.