# Prairie South School Division
# Grading Practices Research & Suggested Changes to Grading Practices 2019

## Effective grades must be:

1. **Consistent**
   - All teachers in the same grade and same subject/course should:
     - have common guidelines and practices for grading
     - determine grades in similar ways
     - compare each student's performance to pre-set student learning outcomes (criterion referenced and not to other students – norm referenced)
     - measure published, expected learning outcomes of what students are to **know, understand** and be **able to do**
     - use the same performance standards to evaluate student work determine various levels of student proficiency
   - This consistency in the meaning of grades should be systemic at all levels – school, division, and, ideally, province.

2. **Accurate**
   - Traditionally teachers have combined a large amount of evidence/data into a single summary symbol. If even one is wrong the grade inaccurately reflects student achievement. Also, blending achievement with behaviours as well as inappropriate use of the mean (average) may result in less accuracy.

3. **Meaningful**
   - Grades must communicate useful information to students and to everyone interested in or needing to know about their learning.
   - Grades are meaningful if they directly report on student progress regarding specified learning goals.

4. **Supportive of Learning**
   - Grades should reflect and support improved learning.

*(Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis & Chappuis, 2005)*

## Definitions:

**Mark/Score**
The number or letter given to any student test or performance that may contribute to the later determination of the grade.

**Grade**
The number or letter reported at the end of a period of time as a **summary** statement of student performance.

**Assessment**
Planned or serendipitous activities that provide information about students' understanding and skill in a specific measurement topic (Marzano, 2006).

**Formative assessment**
When evidence is actually used to adapt teaching, to meet learners' needs, to involve students and to be used as effective feedback (Black & Wiliam, 2004; Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis & Chappuis, 2004).

**Evaluation**
The process of making judgments about the levels of students' understanding or skill based on an assessment (Marzano, 2006).

*(O'Connor, 2007)*

## Purpose for Grades:

- To provide students with information that reports their progress against provincial curriculum outcomes.

- To provide teachers with information regarding effectiveness of instruction and for instructional planning.

- To communicate student achievement to students, parents, school administrators, the board, post-secondary institutions and employers.

- To provide teachers, administrators, parents and students with information for student placement.

*Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis & Chappuis, 2005)*

**Levels of Implementation:**

**Awareness:**  At the individual and staff levels, new ideas are provided through the reading and discussion of research material.  Discussion takes place at staff or department meetings about the new idea.

**Exploration:**    New ideas are being introduced at the classroom level.  Discussion takes place amongst staff and as appropriate with students regarding the nature of the change and issues that arise. Plans emerge to address key issues.

**Synthesis:**  Classroom practices have changed to encompass the new ideas.  Issues still arise in special circumstances, but the ideas are actualized in most cases.  Plans are made to establish procedures at the school level.

**Refinement:**    New ideas are consistently and uniformly applied in all classrooms.  As special issues arise, the intention of the research takes precedence in making decisions.

## The following chart demonstrates some of the most significant changes that have been implemented over the past ten years.

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| **2006-2007** | Teacher committee met to begin discussions re: changes to grading in response to new curriculum development |
| **2007-2008** | Wrote research document & shared it at all schools. |
| **2008-2009** | Intro changes:<br>• No recommends<br>• No group grades<br>• Raise staff awareness<br>  - separate behaviour & achievement<br>  - don't ignore lates – consider school-wide supports and interventions<br>  - moving toward outcomes-based grading<br>  - no zero without one intervention<br>  - distinction between formative assessment and summative evaluation<br>  - finals no more than 25%<br>  - use most recent achievement<br>• Renamed interviews to Student-Teacher-Parent Conferences and expected students to attend |
| **2009-2011** | **Awareness**:<br>• Schools begin to develop an academic intervention plan<br>  - Lates and zeroes<br>  - two directed interventions with no grades deducted<br>  - track lates<br>• Redo – based on a Plan for Improvement<br>  - Plagiarism<br>  - do not accept – consequence behaviour<br>  - redo work<br>• Don't include attendance in grades<br>• Student-led conferences. Students report on one subject<br>• One summative evaluation shall come from other than selected response (see Assessment Strategies and Tools, next page)<br>• Homework is not to be used summatively in grades. |
| **2011-2013** | **Synthesis:**<br>• all schools implement the established division policy on *Academic Integrity and Student Responsibility* which addresses the issues of lates, the use of zero as a grade, redo's and plagiarism<br>• all schools encourage the active participation of students in student led conferences<br>**Awareness:**<br>• all schools implement Learning Improvement Teams as a method to use formative assessment practices within the classroom selected individuals and schools use StudentsAchieve or TeacherLogic to assist teachers to report learning skills/behaviour separately from academic achievement and to track formative assessment results. |
| **2014-2016** | **Synthesis:**<br>• All high schools establish a plan for credit recovery using division-wide guidelines<br>**Exploration:**<br>• Grades 1-8 teachers in selected schools pilot Students Achieve as an electronic gradebook and to generate progress reports<br>• New Progress Reports have been developed specifically for Kindergarten and EAL students<br>• High school teachers will use Teacher Logic as a gradebook and to support the calculation of percentage grades.<br>**Awareness:**<br>• Parents of Grades 1-8 students are provided with information about the use of Students Achieve and the new Progress Report format |
| **2017-2018** | **Synthesis:**<br>• All schools grade 1-8 full implementation of Students Achieve and outcomes based reporting<br>• Grades 7 and 8 will no longer receive a percentage mark on the progress report. Achievement indicators used only.<br> **Exploration:**<br>• Grade 3-5 French Immersion progress report developed<br>• Pilot Students Achieve in grades 9-12 in some rural schools<br>• Continue with administrator growth on understanding outcomes based reporting<br>**Awareness:**<br>• Discovery year for some schools and the Parent Portal module of Students Achieve |

## Menu of Assessment Strategies and Tools

| WAYS TO SHOW STUDENT EVIDENCE OF LEARNING | ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES<br>• **To show understanding of curriculum outcomes**<br>• **Means by which teacher assesses student progress** | | ASSESSMENT TOOLS<br>• **Teacher uses to record info gathered** |
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| It is not the tool itself that is formative or summative—rather the *function it serves* that determines if a tool is formative or summative. Is it to assess student proficiency to improve learning &/or for practice (formative) OR to evaluate achievement of CURRICULUM OUTCOME (summative)? | | | |
| **Conversations**<br><br>(What students say) | • Agree/disagree and why<br>• Answer specific<br>• Ask a question<br>• Choral reading<br>• Class discussions<br>• Conferences<br>• Continuum lines/corners' discussions<br>• Conversations<br>• Debate<br>• Interview or conference - oral defense, exam, presentation, seminar<br>• Interviews<br>• Make a comment<br>• Music | • Observing play with peers, social skills<br>• Oral exams<br>• Oral presentations<br>• Oral Q & A<br>• Play/drama<br>• Podcast<br>• Radio show<br>• Read alouds<br>• Small group talk<br>• Story/event retelling<br>• Think-Pair-Share<br>• Thinks aloud<br>• You're the judge | **Anecdotal record** – ongoing written observations about students' performance or work samples, collected over time<br><br>**Anchors** – student work samples that correspond to the performance levels set out in a rubric<br><br>**Exemplars** – samples within the anchor set that represent the expected standard of quality<br><br>**Answer key** – shows acceptable answers. Most suited to supply response items.<br><br>**Checklist** – a list of specific skills to be demonstrated during a performance task or attributes required in a product |
| **Observation**<br><br>(What students do to demonstrate skills, develop products) | • Assessment stations<br>• Debate<br>• Demonstrations<br>• Design Project<br>• Exhibits<br>• Experiments<br>• Game playing<br>• Gestures to show ideas<br>• Hand signals for music conducting<br>• Inquiry project<br>• Interviews<br>• Investigation<br>• Lab or other set up<br>• Learning centers<br>• Matching answers to questions cards<br>• Measurement<br>• Media product/project | • Model building<br>• Movement to answer corners<br>• Performance<br>• Picture sorting<br>• Placement of sticky notes on a wall<br>• Presentation – oral or visual<br>• Proposal<br>• Recital<br>• Re-enactment<br>• Retelling<br>• Role playing<br>• Searches<br>• Seminars<br>• Simulation<br>• Steps in a sports move<br>• Think-Pair-Share<br>• Total physical response | **Criteria** – the standards by which something may be judged or valued. What counts? May be set with or without student involvement. Involving students increases their understanding of what is expected & builds buy in. Are used for assignments, projects & performances (not for everything we do). (Davies, 1997)<br><br>**Developmental continuum** – a detailed chart that identifies typical stages of skill acquisition and the observable indicators associated with each stage<br><br>**Frequency scale** – a scale used to measure how frequently a desired behaviour or attribute occurs<br><br>**Rating scale** – a scale that assigns a numerical value to one or more assessment criteria<br><br>**Rubric** – a set of criteria and performance indicators arranged according to expected levels of performance - Holistic or Analytic |
| **Products**<br><br>(What students create) | • Annotation of their bookmarks<br>• Blog or Wiki entry<br>• Color coding of important items<br>• Compositions<br>• Computer blog, wiki, Google doc<br>• Concept map<br>• Demo<br>• Draft work<br>• Drawing of a concept<br>• E-movie or YouTube video<br>• Entrance/exit slips<br>• Essay/compositions/poem/letter<br>• Exhibits<br>• Experiment/searches<br>• Fill in blank<br>• Film Exhibits<br>• Graphic/visual organizer - mind/concept map, word/idea web<br>• Investigation/Inquiry<br>• Journal or log<br>• Matching<br>• Models<br>• Multiple choice<br>• Organizers<br>• Paragraphs, narratives, essay<br>• Photographs | • Portfolio<br>• Poster<br>• PowerPoint presentation<br>• Pre/Post test<br>• Presentations/recitals<br>• Project<br>• Quiz/test/exam (matching, true/false, multiple choice, essay questions, short answer<br>• Research report<br>• Response journal/learning log<br>• Review<br>• Select Response<br>• Seminars<br>• Short answer<br>• Simulation<br>• Stations<br>• Student developed graphic, concept maps, organizers and timelines<br>• Student Response Devices - white boards, entrance/exit slip, traffic lights<br>• Summary, write ups<br>• Supply Response<br>• Survey<br>• Video conference preparation<br>• Written responses—editorial, defence essay | **Running record** – a form of anecdotal record most often used to record reading performance<br><br>**Samples** – show levels of proficiency<br><br>**Scoring guide** – a precise explanation of how grades are awarded for specific questions on a test or for specific performance indicators on a product |

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| **1. Include only achievement**<br>Student behaviours should be reported separately from grades.<br><br>"The development of learning skills and work habits is an integral part of a student's learning. To the extent possible, however, the evaluation of learning skills and work habits, apart from any that may be included as part of a curriculum expectation in a subject or course, should not be considered in the determination of a student's grades. Assessing, evaluating, and reporting on the achievement of curriculum expectations and on the demonstration of learning skills and work habits *separately* allows teachers to provide information to the parents and student that is specific to each of the two areas of achievement" (Ontario Ministry, 2010, p. 10). "Jurisdictions may use different names for these skills; however, there is broad agreement, both nationally and internationally, that [learning] skills [and work habits] of this type, by whatever name, are critically important to student success" (Ontario Ministry, 2010, p. 12). | • "A grade should give as clear a measure as possible of the best a student can do. Too often, grades reflect an unknown mixture of multiple factors. How effective is such a communication system? The problem transcends individual teachers. Unless teachers throughout a school or district completely agree on the elements and factor them into their grading in consistent ways, the meaning of grades will vary from classroom to classroom, school to school" (Tomlinson and McTighe, 2006, p. 133).<br>• Including behaviours in grades can cause grade inflation or deflation. Some believe we should reward well behaved students and punish others; this uses grades as extrinsic motivators to control student behaviour; researchers, however, disagree (Guskey and Bailey, 2010).<br>• They are often combined because teachers have no way to communicate separately about behaviours. | • Grades should reflect only student performance in mastering the public, published student learning outcomes of the province.<br>• Use outcomes-based expanded format report card where the desirable behaviours are listed and rated separate from achievement. It enables schools to show very clearly which behaviours it values in students.<br>• This means everyone can know what a grade means in achievement terms. | **Refinement:** Teachers determine student grades based on academic performance alone relative to the outcomes and indicators of the provincial or the locally determined curriculum. In the case of non-renewed curriculum, grades are based on the learning objectives.<br><br>**Synthesis:** Grade 1-8 teachers report students' academic behaviours and social development using the "Traits of a Successful Learner" rubric and with using the Students Achieve platform. |
| **a. Behaviours, Learning Skills and Work Habits**<br>**Late or incomplete work**<br><br>Teachers value the importance of students submitting work on time and it being complete. The reality is, that as part of life, lates do occur.<br><br>"It must be made clear to students early in the school year that they are responsible not only for their behaviour in the classroom and the school, but also for providing evidence of their achievement of the overall expectations within the time frame specified by the teacher, and in a form approved by the teacher. Students must understand that there will be consequences for not completing assignments for evaluation or for submitting those assignments late" (Ontario Ministry, 2010, p. 43). | • Lates should be reported on separate behaviour portion of report card.<br>• There are problems with the practice of reducing marks on work submitted late:<br>  o They distort the grade's representation of the student's true achievement of curriculum.<br>  o They can motivate exactly the opposite behaviour than that intended and do not promote learning.<br>  o "Having absolute deadlines (and penalties) for everything does not prepare students for the world beyond school. In the 'real world' timelines are frequently negotiated or adjusted to circumstances; deadlines range from fixed to considerably flexible. If unable to meet a deadline we communicate and arrange a new mutually agreeable timeline, and then work to meet it.<br>• Our world is full of redo's; students should be permitted redo's, **within reason**. The work should be submitted within a common predetermined due date" (Wormelli, 2006, p. 148). | • Penalties that effect grades do not work because they do not change behaviour.<br>• Set up support systems and interventions at the school level that reduce or eliminate the problem of late work.<br>• Teachers should not ignore lates; they should keep records and note it on the expanded format report cards.<br>• They can also assign consequences as they would for any other unacceptable classroom behaviour.<br>• The fix for late student work should be a positive, supportive approach that directly affects student behaviour.<br>• Leave the grades as pure measures of achievement. | **Refinement:** All schools implement the established division Administrative Procedure 366 on *Academic Integrity and Student Responsibility*.<br><br>Students are expected to submit assignments on time. When a student does not submit work on time, the teacher will use his/her professional judgment to determine an appropriate course of action, taking into account factors such as age and maturity of the student, medical status, other personal circumstances, grade level and past behaviour. Teachers may use their professional discretion to provide students who have missed deadlines due to exceptional circumstances with alternative arrangements to complete assignments. Actions related to late assignments will be taken within the context of a school-wide plan.<br>These actions may include, among others:<br>• Employ proactive measures such as the development and communication of local school procedures and/or professional learning to enhance assessment and evaluation practices that increase student engagement;<br>• Communicate with the student and parent/guardian to discuss the reasons for non-completion and develop a plan to complete the work;<br>• Develop an agreement with the student to complete the assignment;<br>• Require completion of work outside of school hours such as lunchtime or after school;<br>• Provide peer support for the student;<br>• Provide an alternative assignment to accommodate a diverse learning need;<br>• Track the work until it is complete or the issue has been resolved,<br>• Report late assignment behaviour separately from achievement related to curriculum outcomes on progress reports;<br>• Involve the input of learning specialists such as student support teachers, counsellors and outside agencies. |

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| **b. Zero**<br>Zero does not show evidence of learning.<br>It is preferable that zeros not be used; however, they may be used only after directed intervention supports have not been successful. | • A zero skews a student's average to the point that it no longer reflects what a student knows and can do.<br>• Rather than use a zero, the piece of work should be considered **lack of evidence** or incomplete.<br>• When combined with other evidence, using zeros affects marks so the resulting grade does not accurately reflect student achievement.<br>• There are fundamental problems with zeros :<br>  - Zeros give a numerical value to something that [may never have] been assessed and that therefore has no basis in reality.<br>  - They can have counterproductive effects on student motivation. Once a student has more than one zero, they have little chance of recovery, increasing the likelihood that they will give up (O'Connor, 2007, p. 86).<br>• They involve inappropriate mathematics. "A zero has a devastating influence, so much so that no matter what the student does, the zero distorts the final grade as a true indicator of mastery" (Wormeli, 2006 p. 137). | • Use evidence, or equal difference scales or a 'floor' score that makes a percentage scale an equal difference scale (O'Connor, 2007, p. 85).<br>• Schools/districts develop policies regarding these alternatives, then indicate to their teachers which alternative(s) they can or should use in their classroom. | **Synthesis:** Teachers respond to incomplete work by using a plan for intervention.<br><br>• While the student receives support to complete the work, rather than assigning zero, use Incomplete (INC) for incomplete or insufficient evidence.<br><br>• As a last result, zeroes may be assigned:<br>  - If intervention attempts have been unsuccessful<br>  - By semester or term end<br><br>• Students may not choose to "take a zero" without intervention attempts. |
| **c. Redo**<br>Students may have an opportunity to redo assignments or evaluations or parts thereof based on the intervention plan and/or recommended practice. | | | **Exploration**: Schools consider the procedures that will work in their situation so that students may have more than one attempt to demonstrate their learning. The following parameters should be considered: All students should have this opportunity. It's not dependent on behaviour or what grade a student has earned. Schools may limit the number of redo attempts. A plan for improvement must be approved by the teacher before the next attempt is allowed. This should include:<br>• Timeline<br>• Identify what work is required to be done by the student as evidence of additional effort before they get a rewrite opportunity<br>• Attendance at structured support sessions<br>• Apply consequences and contact the parent if the issue involves unacceptable behaviour (plagiarism, cheating, copying, and lack of diligence).<br>• If the redo is a summative evaluation, the teacher may change the format or items in the evaluation.<br>• Students who habitually need second attempts may need intentional intervention support. |
| **d. Credit Recovery**<br>High schools will compile procedures that enable students who have not completed the required course work by the end of a semester/year to recover the credit for the class. | | | **Synthesis:** The procedures include attention to these points:<br>• Credit recovery must occur within the same school year for first semester classes or within the first 30 days of the following school year (Ministry of Education regulations, September 2015).<br>• Credit recovery is not a replacement for effective, positive instruction and intervention during the initial credit attempt, including the usual supports provided through student support.<br>• Teachers will use their discretion to provide credit recovery for students who receive a final grade of **less** than 40%. If teachers chose to provide credit recovery for students who receive a final grade of less than 40%, the student will be offered the opportunity to recover the credit up to 100% of all outcomes not currently attained.<br>• Credit recovery programming should consider all factors that limited success in the initial program. |

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| | | | • The integrity of the recovered credit must be preserved by the student demonstrating achievement of the overall course expectations – student learning outcomes.<br>• Any student achieving a final grade of 40% or above will be offered the opportunity to recover the credit up to 100% of all outcomes currently not attained.<br>• School based administrators are responsible for monitoring final marks and flagging students who fit the criteria for credit recovery.<br>• No failing grades will be given for a modified or alternate course under any circumstance. Students may receive an 'incomplete' while completing the final learning outcomes in order to earn a passing grade.<br>• The school is responsible for providing any support deemed necessary by the team including the student in order to fully recover the course.<br>• Classroom teacher will provide a list of all achieved and outstanding student learning outcomes.<br>• Classroom teacher provides all needed materials and completes all assessments/grading. |
| **e. Plagiarism**<br>"Students must understand that the tests/exams they complete and the assignments they submit for evaluation must be their own work and that cheating and plagiarism will not be condoned. School divisions must work to develop strategies to help students understand the gravity of such behaviour and the importance of acknowledging the work of others. School boards will also develop procedures that address, at a minimum, the following:<br>• prevention of cheating and plagiarizing<br>• detection of incidents of cheating and plagiarizing consequences for students who cheat or plagiarize.<br>[Procedures] will reflect a continuum of behavioural and academic responses and consequences, based on at least the following four factors: (1) the grade level of the student, (2) the maturity of the student, (3) the number and frequency of incidents, and (4) the individual circumstances of the student" (Ontario Ministry, 2010, p. 42-43). | • This uses the assessment/grading policy as a tool to discipline students for inappropriate behaviour, thus distorting student achievement. Some believe that severe punishment will deter cheating. Others state that academic dishonesty needs appropriate behavioural consequences.<br>• We should not assume that students understand plagiarism or cheating.<br>• While no one accepts or condones plagiarism, it is a reality made more challenging with the ease of technology. Academic **dishonesty** should not be punished with reduced grades.<br>• Apply consequences to the behaviour and offer a redo opportunity to determine actual level of achievement of outcomes. | • Do not use grading to assign a consequence to students who cheat.<br>• Have an academic honesty policy that clearly describes inappropriate practices and the consequences for breaches and that students must redo any assessment that involves academic dishonesty.<br>• Require students to redo the test or assignment without cheating or plagiarizing, to establish an accurate achievement record for grading. | **Refinement:** All schools implement the established division Administrative Procedure 366 on *Academic Integrity and Student Responsibility*.<br><br>• When a student plagiarizes the whole or a portion of an assignment the teacher will use his/her professional judgment to determine an appropriate course of action, taking into account factors such as age and maturity of the student, medical status, other personal circumstances, grade level and past behaviour.<br>• Actions related to plagiarism should proactively deter students. These may include:<br>  - Create an open environment for discussion in the classroom, and respond to students' questions about plagiarism<br>  - Teach students how to conduct research, properly cite information sources, use quotations in their work and develop paraphrasing skills<br>• Require the student to complete the assigned work without plagiarizing or penalty on grades. |
| **f. Attendance**<br>Attendance is not included in grade determination; report absences separately. | • Because outcomes-based learning is not only about **seat time**, it is about what students know, understand and can do related to the student learning outcomes, grades should be accurate reflections of achievement and achievement alone. | • Record attendance separately.<br>• Have attendance policies that address ways to offer another opportunity, consider personal issues, provide support and address students with habitual attendance problems.<br>• School sets up support systems that reduce or eliminate the problem of continuous absences. | **Refinement:** Attendance is not included in grade calculation unless it is a stated educational outcome of the curriculum. |

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| **g. Extra credit or use of bonus points is not done.**<br>Seek only evidence that more work has resulted in a higher level of achievement of student learning outcomes. | • The basic problem is distorted achievement; it emphasizes that **quantity** is key –**more being better** – rather than about achieving higher levels of learning. | • Eliminate extra credit and bonus points that do not relate to achievement.<br>• Communicate clearly to students and parents that better grades come from evidence of higher levels of performance, not just from **more** work. | **Refinement:** Bonus points and extra credit may not be given to "top up" students' grades by doing extra work; rather by showing evidence of increased understanding of the curriculum outcomes. |
| **2.** Use only individual achievement evidence; don't include **group scores** in grades.<br><br>Cooperative or group learning is not an evaluation strategy; it is a learning strategy. The intention is to develop achievement and social improvements as students learn. Activities that occur in groups are learning activities and any assessment of them should be **formative** for practice and improved learning and should not be used for grades. Group scores may not accurately reflect the achievement of SLOs of each student and therefore may be unfair to some. | • Cooperative learning is a powerful learning strategy when used as designed. It involves 5 key characteristics of academic and social learning:<br>  - Positive Interdependence<br>  - Individual Accountability<br>  - Processing<br>  - Face to Face Interaction<br>  - Social Skills<br>• Spencer Kagan notes 7 reasons for opposing group scores/grades:<br>  - Are not fair (student is receiving credit for something he/she didn't do)<br>  - Debase report cards<br>  - Undermine motivation<br>  - Convey the wrong message<br>  - Violate individual accountability<br>  - Are responsible for resistance to cooperative learning<br>  - May be challenged in court | • No group scores<br>• Understand that cooperative learning is a learning activity, not an assessment tool. Assess students individually during or after a class has experienced cooperative learning. | **Refinement:** Group scores are not to be used in grading. Students will be assessed individually based on evidence of their understanding of curriculum outcomes. |
| **3.** Organize and report evidence by student learning outcomes; don't **organize** information in grading books/records by assessment methods or simply summarize into a single grade. | • Don't blend evidence of learning from multiple sources into a single grade.<br>• Grades are inaccurate when they are not directly based on outcomes and do not give information about achievement of outcomes.<br>• Fixing this requires reporting of student learning outcomes. | • Base grades on provincial learning outcomes. Report grades for outcomes to create a more complete profile of individual student strengths and weaknesses. This requires curriculum, instruction, assessment, evaluation, grading and reporting all to be organized and aligned around the student learning outcomes.<br>• Record this evidence by outcome dedicating columns or blocks of space in grade books to each learning outcome.<br>• This can be done using most grading software, by setting the categories to be outcomes as opposed to tests, projects, etc. | **Synthesis:** Teachers of Grades 1-8 fully implement Students Achieve as an electronic gradebook and to generate Progress Reports.<br><br>**Awareness:** Teachers of Grades 7-8 begin the use of achievement indicators for reporting purposes as well as for gathering assessment data. All Progress Reports beginning in the 2017-2018 school year will show only achievement indicators, not percentages for Grades 1-8<br><br>Exploration: Teachers of Grades 1-6 determine the meaning of "Enriched Understanding" as it applies to gathering evidence and determining grades. |

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| 4. Provide clear descriptions of achievement expectations/student learning outcomes; don't assign grades using **inappropriate or unclear** performance student learning **outcomes**. | • Grades are inaccurate when they are determined using poorly defined student learning outcomes, such as letter-number relationships, that have traditionally masqueraded as performance standards.<br>• Use clearly defined and agreed upon student learning outcomes in understandable student friendly versions, made available before and during instruction. | • Use clear student learning outcomes with clear descriptions communicated to students up front.<br>• The challenge is to create clear descriptors of curriculum to judge students achievement so we can identify student achievement as competent or for a certain grade.<br>• Have professional dialogues about student learning outcomes among teachers, so they develop shared understanding, apply standards consistently and establish shared levels of proficiency. | **Synthesis**: Student learning outcomes should be made explicit for the student so that it is evident how the task is related to the outcome. This could be done, for example, by having writing them on student assessments and assignments or citing them in lessons. |
|  | • "Teachers have received little guidance on how to assign fair grades to exceptional learners, and a number of common myths cloud many educators' thinking about this task. Most teachers make their own individual grading adaptations—for example, assigning extra points for effort or improvement, basing grades solely on an individual's goals, giving different weight to assignments, or using an altered grading scale." (Jung & Guskey, 2010) | A suitable model for reporting for students with special needs includes:<br>• Determining the suitability of the provincial curriculum outcome.<br>• Determine what type of adaptation of outcome is needed.<br>• Determine the appropriate outcome.<br>• Base evaluation on the modified outcome rather than the grade-level outcome.<br>• Communicate the meaning of the grade<br>Assessments are modified for students with special needs in ways that match instructional modifications described in IIPs. | **Exploration**: Teachers of students with special needs and those on reduced curricula will differentiate their assessment practices to best accommodate the students' needs and to provide evidence regarding the Inclusion and Intervention Plan. |
| 5. **Compare** each student's performance **to preset student learning outcomes**; don't assign grades based on student's achievement compared to other students. | • Grading students by comparing their performance to one another distorts individual achievement.<br>• The rationale for creating a competitive grading environment in standards-driven schools is that it provides motivation for students and that highly motivational students learn more; however, the motivational effects are not beneficial for all students (O'Connor, 2007). | • Base grades on preset achievement student learning outcomes – to be criterion referenced, not norm referenced in assigning grades. | **Refinement:** As new curricula are implemented, teacher groups will collaborate to determine clarify student learning outcomes, construct common assessments or develop unit plans and model lessons. |
| 6. Rely only on **quality assessments;** don't rely on evidence gathered using assessments that fail to meet standards of quality. | • "We try to be aware of and avoid problems that may affect student achievement, such as reading skill, emotional upset, poor health, lack of test wiseness, insufficient time and evaluation anxiety. Problems within the physical setting can distract student attention" (O'Connor, 2007, p. 77).<br>• "All students are given an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do as part of the assessment process.<br>• Adaptations are available for students to allow them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, provided that the adaptations do not jeopardize the integrity | • Teachers should work together to address:<br>  - Every assessment for quality – clear purpose, clear learning goals, sound design and avoidance of bias.<br>  - "The teacher can articulate standards of quality, and can show evidence of consideration of these standards in his/her classroom assessments:<br>  - Clear and appropriate learning outcomes<br>  - Clear and appropriate users and uses | **Synthesis:** Teachers use provincially prepared assessment tools as they become developed and distributed. These include common assessments in Mathematics and common rubrics in English Language Arts.<br><br>**Synthesis**: All schools implement Learning Improvement Teams as a method to use formative assessment practices within the classroom. This includes the use of common teacher-made assessments. |

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| | or content of the test" (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and You, 2006, p. 1). | - Choosing the best assessment method<br>- Writing clear, unambiguous questions<br>- Good sampling<br>- Avoiding potential sources of bias and mismeasurement (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2005, p. 224). | |
| **7.** Summarizing information and determining final grade. | • Final grades are criterion referenced, not norm referenced. They are based on preset student learning outcomes.<br>• Final grades for students with special needs are criterion referenced, and indicate level of attainment of the learning goals as specified in the IIP. The targets on which grades are based are clear to all parties. | • "The gradebook may or may not have a mix of symbol types, but there is a sound explanation of how to combine them.<br>• Rubric scores are converted to a final grade using a decision rule that results in an accurate depiction of the level of student attainment of the learning targets" (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2005, P. 223).<br>• The gradebook shows if/how students met learning outcomes. | **Exploration**: High school teachers will contribute to a division-wide discussion to achieve consistency when using Students Achieve in 2017-2018, specifically regarding the formation of decision rules for the calculation of percentage grades. |
| **8.** Consider the measures of central tendency and use professional judgment; don't only rely on the mean. | • Grades may mislead when they are based on simply calculating the mean (average) of a series of scores, due to the effect of outlier scores.<br>• "The purpose of grading and reporting is to provide an accurate description of what students have learned, then averaging must be considered inadequate and inappropriate" (Guskey, 1996a, p. 21).<br>• "Teachers often believe that grades calculated from statistical algorithms are more accurate and more reliable… Computers use only numbers. They know nothing of the individual students who produced those numbers, the learning environment, or the nature and quality of the assessments. Can having such knowledge sometimes result in teacher judgments being biased positively or negatively? Of course." (Guskey & Jung, 2016) | • Do not average grades together. The averaged grade does not reflect the student's achievement of targeted outcomes.<br>• Do not use the mean as 'the measure'. Consider other measures of central tendency and use professional judgment based on discussion with teachers.<br>• Think and talk about not only the calculation, but the determination of grades.<br>• Exercise professional judgment when determining which algorithm is used for grading. Override calculated grades when examination of the assessment evidence indicates that a change is required. | **Exploration:** Grades 1-8 teachers will develop skills in using the "most consistent" scores, the "most recent" scores and the professional judgment override in Students Achieve to provide fair and accurate term grades which are supportive of learning. |
| **9.** Student work is assessed frequently (formative assessment) and graded occasionally (summative evaluation).<br><br>Use only **summative** evidence; don't use information from practice and formative assessments to determine grades. | • It is important that teachers, students, and parents recognize that learning is a process in which learners increase their knowledge, understanding, and skills as a result of effort, instruction, feedback from teachers and peers, and self-assessment and adjustment.<br>• "We know that students will rarely perform at high levels on challenging learning tasks at their first attempt. Deep understanding or high levels of proficiency are achieved as a result of trial, practice, adjustments based on feedback, and more practice" (McTighe, 1996-1997, p.11). Therefore learners must understand that it is important and | • Don't grade practice.<br>• Don't grade everything – if everything is graded, there's no time for students to practice, try again, improve or recover.<br>• "'Scores' on formative assessments and other practice work (e.g., homework) are used descriptively as feedback to inform teachers and students of what has been learned and the next steps in learning. Grades are based only on summative evaluations" (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2005, p. 222). | **Synthesis:** Grades 1-8 teachers will develop skills in designating assessment tasks and assignments as being either "formative" or "summative" using StudentsAchieve. |

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| | worthwhile to try, and that it is acceptable to take risks and make mistakes; it is not necessary to always 'get it' the first time.<br>• There is a clear distinction between activities for learning and practice (formative assessment), and those summative evaluations that show what students know (O'Connor, 2007).<br>• Classroom [formative] assessment is one form of feedback. Feedback is "the most powerful single modification that enhances achievement…give dollops of feedback" (Hattie & Timperley, 1992, p.9). | • "Grades are broken if scores for everything students do, find their way into report card grades. The fix is to include, in all but specific, limited cases, only evidence from summative evaluations" (O'Connor, 2007, p.95).<br>• The primary purpose of grades is to communicate a summary of student achievement at a particular point in time; that is, what students know, understand, and can do as a result of their learning.<br>• Teacher and students should track formative assessments to show growth of knowledge over time. | |
| **10. Final exams** | • Exams are *one* way for students to demonstrate understanding for a culminating evaluation activity. Other examples include projects, demonstrations, talks, shows and performance assessments.<br>• "Use a proper assessment method for the context; that is, a method that will effectively and efficiently gather the needed evidence of student achievement. The proper method depends on the nature of the learning goals (O'Connor, 2007, p. 76). | • Final exams or other culminating assessments will be worth **no more than 25%** of a student's final grade.<br>• Evaluation should be authentic; it should determine the highest level of performance on worthy intellectual tasks.<br>• Having a continuum or menu of assessments and evaluations is preferable. However, in order to **improve** performance a variety of assessment options is required.<br>• If the purpose of final evaluation is for students to demonstrate what they have learned, then all students should be involved.<br>• If a school division or school determines it is beneficial for students to write finals, they should determine why, what finals, at what grade, and all students should write. | **Refinement:** All 10, 20, 30 courses with culminating evaluation will be no more than 25% of pupil's final grade.<br><br>**Exploration**: High school teachers are encouraged to share culminating evaluations for courses on a system-wide basis. |
| **11. Recommends** | • Give priority to the most recent evidence.<br>• Give priority or greater weight to the most comprehensive forms of evidence.<br>• Give priority to evidence related to the most important student learning outcomes (Guskey & Bailey, 2001). | • All students participate if a culminating assessment is used.<br>• Only use the most recent and comprehensive evaluation information.<br>• Quite often, the students who struggle through the course are the ones who end up writing a final exam. | **Refinement:** Recommends will not be given. |
| **12. Final Numerical Grades** | | | **Refinement:** Students will not receive a final grade of 48 or 49% in a 10, 20 or 30 level subject. |
| **13.** Emphasize more recent achievement.<br><br>"Most recent evidence completely replaces out-of-date evidence when it is reasonable to do so. For example, how well students write at the end | • Overtime, we will move away from summarizing evidence accumulated over time; learning is developmental and will grow with time and repeated opportunities. | • For any developmental learning we must emphasize the more recent evidence and allow new evidence **to replace, not simply be added to**, previous evidence. | **Exploration:** Teachers should use their professional judgment to replace earlier grades when evidence indicates that further learning has taken place at a later time. Time restrictions may apply, such as work done within a term. |

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| of the grading period is more important than how well they write at the beginning, and later evidence of improved content understanding is more important than early evidence" (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2005, p. 223). | • "Educators generally recognize learning as a progressing and incremental process. Most also agree that students should have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning.<br>• But is it fair to consider all these **learning trials** in determining students' grades? If at any time in the instructional process students demonstrate that they have learned the concepts well and mastered the intended learning goals, doesn't that make previous information on their learning of those concepts inaccurate and invalid? Why then should such information be 'averaged in' when determining students' grades" (Guskey, 2002, pp. 777-8). | • By emphasizing the more recent information we acknowledge learning as a process. One of the most unfortunate effects of simply adding up all the scores is that many students will never be able to overcome the impact of early failures and very low scores.<br>• When it comes to what grade to record in the grade book, the higher or lower one, always choose the higher grade.<br>• Consider formative assessments as evidence of learning and/or practice, don't include in grade. | |
| **14. Involve students**<br><br>Ensure students have meaningful involvement in tracking and reporting their learning status. (Black & Wiliam, 1998).<br><br>Student should track, monitor and report their own work so they know & can report on their own knowledge gain over time (Marzano, 2008). | • Students can – and should – play meaningful and key roles in assessment, evaluation and grading that promote achievement; include students in the grading process.<br>• "One of the most powerful and straight forward ways a teacher can provide feedback that encourages learning, is to have students track their own progress" (Marzano, 2006, p.89). | • Comments lead to learning gains. Grades and separate comments (Page, 1958; Butler, 1987, 1988).<br>• Do learners have another chance to demonstrate what they can do better **without penalty** of previous effort?<br>• Allow new evidence of learning to replace old evidence.<br>• Use models, samples, exemplars.<br>• Teachers use **feedback** to assist students. In order to promote learning, feedback should be:<br>• Not only social and managerial – but should help improve student learning.<br>• Timely – at time of learning, not after Continuous; allows students to self-adjust, try again, before it counts.<br>• Specific –descriptive not evaluative feedback. Give:<br>  - what they have done well<br>  - what needs improvement, and<br>  - what they can do to improve. | **Refinement**: All schools encourage the active participation of students in student led conferences.<br><br>**Synthesis:** Teachers regularly use feedback in an effective way to support learning. |
| **15.** Use a **Variety of Assessments** | • We encourage the use of more than a single method or single evaluation to assign a grade.<br>• Aim to assess/evaluate upper level thinking. Students need to **apply** their knowledge.<br>• "Use a proper assessment method for the context; that is, a method that will effectively and efficiently gather the needed evidence of student achievement. The proper method depends on the nature of the learning goals. For example, to assess student mastery of content knowledge, we can rely on selected response or essay formats. But to assess mastery of performance skills or the ability to create products that meet certain standards of | • A variety of assessment methods are necessary to create a complete picture of student understanding and mastery and to reflect curricula.<br>• Provide students with options for how they will demonstrate their learning. Offer students a **variety of tasks** and **chances** to show their understanding – a **menu of options**.<br>• If the aim is to improve learning, then the tasks must portray real life situations. | **Exploration:** High School teachers will make discretionary use of a variety of assessment task types (product, conversation or observation) within their assessment plan.<br><br>**Synthesis:** Teachers in Grades 1-8 will select the assessment task type (product, conversation or observation) using Students Achieve and will use a variety of assessment task types—as it fits the students' needs. |

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| | quality, we must turn to performance assessment" (O'Connor, 2007, p. 76). | • Match assessment or evaluation purpose to appropriate assessment or evaluation method.<br>• Use Bloom's Taxonomy to develop assessments and evaluations that address a variety of levels of thinking.<br>• Use the Menu of Assessment and Evaluation Options to choose what kind of assessment best suits the needs | |
| **16. Homework**<br>Homework is only valuable when it is closely tied to learning outcomes (Marzano, 2001, 2007, Kohn, 2006).<br><br>Why assign homework:<br>   - Practice<br>   - Intro new content Explore student interests<br>   - Prepare for upcoming lessons<br><br> (Marzano, 2007; Wormeli, 2006; O'Connor, 2007) | • Homework [is most effective when] used as formative assessment & to adjust instruction (Marzano, 2007, Wormeli, 2006, O'Connor, 2007).<br>• Homework is not an evaluative tool. Too much homework may diminish its effectiveness or even become counter-productive (Cooper, Robinson & Patall, 2006).<br>• Students have little or no learning gains when they complete practice homework after demonstrating mastery of a skill (Marzano, 2007).<br>• Homework may have inequities in the chances for success (Kohn, 2007).<br>• 64% of today's students go home to no one (Spence, 2009).<br>• Don't assume the home in homework (Willms, 2010). | • Don't grade homework. Quiz or check items directly from the homework at another time.<br>• Follow division & develop school-wide guidelines & common procedures re: homework. Be sure why and what kind of homework teachers assign.<br>• Homework should not be used for summative evaluation (grading).<br>• Descriptive feedback should be given to the student on the quality of the homework.<br>• Homework assignments must be explicit in student requirements, tied to learning outcomes and show criteria for success.<br>• Homework should be designed to be completed independently with high success rates. It should be challenging and interesting for students. Teachers should not assign homework just as a matter of habit.<br>• Carefully monitor the amount of homework so that it is appropriate for the student and does not take too much time away from other home activities.<br>• Do not assign practice homework for students who have already demonstrated proficiency at particular skills.<br>• Differentiate the homework expectations to suit students' abilities and needs so that success is ensured and it meets student learning needs.<br>• Check student understanding, IN CLASS, the next day by assessing (formatively or summatively) a few questions.<br>• To be effective, teachers should provide feedback to students regarding their homework (Guskey & Bailey, 2010; Marzano, 2009). | **Refinement:** Homework is not to be used summatively (in grades).<br>• Homework is used formatively to give descriptive feedback, to improve student learning, to practice & to adjust instruction.<br>• Homework may be an effective learning practice when used appropriately. We are not saying NO homework; we are saying use it properly.<br>• Schools should be aware across grades & departments of the amount and nature of homework being assigned.<br>• Schools should consider homework guidelines to be used by all classes.<br>• Next day questions may reveal student understanding of homework (and student learning outcomes). |

**Teacher Information on Grading and Reporting**

**What if I haven't yet done enough assessment to warrant reporting a grade?**

- In some cases you may not have had time to gather evidence for a particular strand or outcome before the end of a term.

- There must be enough evidence of learning to report a grade without using formative results. This evidence can be obtained in a variety of ways and these should agree with each other. Consider carefully if triangulated results don't agree.

- Do not report a score for areas that have not been sufficiently evaluated.

- For Kindergarten, use the report cards especially designed for Kindergarten reporting.

**What about a student working on "reduced curriculum"?**

- Reducing outcomes is a team decision and must follow the "Reduced Outcomes Process".

- Documentation including planning, instruction, assessment and reporting is the responsibility of the classroom teacher.

- All changes to outcomes must be clearly documented by the classroom teacher in the "individual learner profile"

**How is student evaluation different for students who are designated as "English as an Additional Language"?**
For Grades 1-8

- There is no specific CfR level that a Grade 1-8 student needs to reach in order to be assessed and have learning reported. This will vary for each student (ex. some EAL students may be able to demonstrate proficiency on Math outcomes while not being able to attain any Language Arts outcomes).

- Where possible teachers should begin to use portions of Students Achieve as soon as they feel EAL students have begun to demonstrate achievement in accordance with Ministry of Education Student Learning Outcomes.

- In areas where the curriculum is not reduced due to EAL considerations they are graded exactly the same as the other students using the outcomes of the provincial curriculum.

For Grades 9-12

- High school students who have not attained a CfR level of B2.1 may not be able to earn Ministry of Education credits for language based courses and should not be evaluated according to provincial outcomes in these courses.

- In courses where the regular curriculum is used, EAL students are graded exactly the same as the other students using the outcomes of the provincial curriculum.

- For all levels, summative evaluation will include reporting a CfR level for each reporting periods by the classroom teacher once Ministry of Education approval has been received.

- High school teachers are encouraged to document the outcomes that a student has achieved and extend the opportunity to earn a credit over more than one semester where possible.

- An EAL credit is earned when the student has completed 200 hours and all outcomes for the designated EAL course as per the EAL Report Card

For all Grades

- A student led conference must occur for all students. Interpreters may be used to assist in the student led conference for students and parents who are English Language Learners.

**What is the best way to construct subject comments?**  (Based on Guskey, T. & Bailey, J. M. (2010). Developing standards-based report cards. Thousand Oaks,CA: Corwin Press.)

The purpose of the progress report is to 'provide information about the strengths and challenges of learners and is meant to help educators and parents focus on ways to support learning at home and school'. Based on this Guskey (p. 128) suggests that we:

- Focus on the goals, not the learner

- Provide detailed comments

- Offer small, manageable suggestions for improvement

- Relate comments to specific goals or outcomes

- Avoid comparisons with other students

Suggested structure:

- Opening anchor statement (may or may not be necessary) that includes overall level of achievement related to the subject area.

- State the strength – what the evidence shows that student achieved/learned

- Identify a challenge – what the evidence shows that the student has not achieved/learned

- Next steps – what is being done to address the challenge (home and school)

| Try to… | Try not to… | Ask yourself,  after writing a comment, if the parent will: |
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| <ul><li>Focus on the child</li><li>Relate comments to outcomes</li><li>Focus on what was learned/achieved</li><li>Give an example to clarify</li><li>Identify strengths and challenges</li><li>Connect next steps to identified challenge</li></ul> | <ul><li>List what was taught</li><li>Include comments about attendance, behaviour, homework, attitude (there is another section for this)</li><li>Use teacher jargon</li><li>Mix speaking to parents and student interchangeably by saying "good job Jason" or "bravo". There is another spot for this</li></ul> | <ul><li>Understand clearly how the child is doing in your class?</li><li>Understand his/her area of strength?</li><li>Understand his/her area of need?</li><li>Know what is being done to address the need?</li><li>Be aware of your interest in the child as an individual learner?</li></ul> |

- For Grades 1-9, comments are required for Math and ELA.  Other comments are optional.  For students who have significant challenges with Math or ELA but are strong in some other area, use that comment space to provide a strength and a way to grow even more in that area.

- When reporting behaviour try to avoid the use of absolute words such as "unable", "can't", "won't", "always" and "never".

**What do the achievement indicators in MySchoolSask mean?**

| Academic Achievement Scale | | |
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| **Alpha** | **Term** | **Description** |
| EX | Exemplary | Evidence indicated in-depth understanding, demonstration or application of the outcome. |
| ME | Meeting | Evidence indicates understanding, demonstration or application of the outcome. |
| AP | Approaching | Evidence indicates progression towards understanding, demonstration or application of the outcome. |
| BE | Beginning | Evidence indicates initial understanding, demonstration or application of the outcome. |

| Other Scale Terms | | |
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| **Abbreviation** | **Term** | **Descriptor/Definition** |
| IE | Insufficient Evidence | The student has not yet demonstrated enough evidence for reporting purpose. |
| NA | Not Applicable | This topic, unit or outcome was not taught or assessed this term. |
| IG | Individualized Goals | The student demonstrates understanding of outcomes that are adjusted in number and complexity as discussed with parents/guardian prior to this report. |