

STUDENT ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

Background

Golden Hills School Division establishes and implements student assessment principles in accordance with the expectations of Alberta Education (*Guiding Principles of Assessment in Alberta*). The division believes that high quality instruction depends upon valid, reliable and authentic classroom assessment practices that best indicate the achievement/learning of the student. The key purpose of assessment is to advance student learning and guide instructional practice and planning. A continuous cycle of instruction, assessment and adjustment serves to support students in navigating their learning.

“Teachers and students need to know what students know, how they know it, how they show it, and what they need to learn next. Student agency - active and purposeful involvement in the design of learning experiences, participation in the gathering of assessment evidence, and making empowered and informed decisions about their own learning - is critical” (*Guiding Principles of Assessment in Alberta*, 2014, p.3).

Procedures

1. Teachers will ensure accurate, fair, consistent and equitable student evaluation, school level procedures, consistent with Division procedures, shall be developed and maintained.
2. Teachers shall ensure that students are informed about the learning targets, the standards or criteria that will be used for assessment, and the means of evaluation. In addition, parents or guardians shall have access to this same information.
3. The assessment and evaluation of student learning in Golden Hills schools shall be viewed as an ongoing process, serving both formative and summative functions.
4. Procedures shall be developed for interpreting and using assessment information (including that derived from the results of provincial assessments) to ensure responsive instruction.
5. A variety of assessment methods shall be used to ensure comprehensive, reliable and valid evaluation of student performance (Appendix 360A – Student Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting & GHSD Seven principles of assessment). For examples see *An Integrated Approach to Learning Experiences and Assessment* (*Guiding Principles of Assessment in Alberta*, 2014).
6. The evaluation of student progress shall be based upon the curriculum standards as outlined in the Alberta Program of Studies. Kindergarten to grade six teacher records will be kept according to outcomes.
7. The reporting systems in schools shall be based upon “how well, not when or by what means, the student has mastered specific knowledge, skills, competencies, numeracy or literacy” (*Guiding Principles of Assessment in Alberta*, 2014, p.5).

8. When determining grades for student report cards, teachers shall use the **work that best indicates the achievement/learning of the student** and it will be the result of regular and ongoing assessment. “The assignment of a grade is informed by professional judgement based on the entire collection of evidence of learning” (Guiding Principles of Assessment in Alberta, 2014, p.15).
9. Teachers and students will share the responsibility for making assessment decisions and determine the next steps in learning. Whenever possible, teachers shall involve students in regular progress conferences. This facilitates active student involvement and meaningful communication with students and parents.
10. Students will take responsibility for their own learning and assessment by engaging in self-reflection, self-assessment, goal setting and self-advocacy.
11. Student assessment and evaluation information shall be communicated to parents regularly and will include:
 - 11.1 A minimum of three (3) progress reports per year shall be provided to students and parents in grades K-9
 - 11.2 A minimum of two (2) such reports per semester regarding students in grade 10 - 12 programs will be provided to students and parents.
 - 11.3 A copy of the final report card shall be placed in the student’s cumulative file.
12. For students with an individualized program plan (IPP), assessments shall be set in relation to the outcomes and time frames identified in the IPP. This includes students on an adapted program (grade level curriculum), modified graded program (curriculum significantly below or above enrolled grade level) and modified non-graded program (life skills focus augmented by applicable curricular work). Refer to appendix 360B for selecting the correct program for the learner profile.
13. Assessment information shall be accessible only to the individual student, their parents or guardians, and teachers or other educational personnel who may require it to inform their practice.
14. Appeal procedures regarding student assessment and evaluation, available to both students and parents, are the following:
 - 14.1 If a student or parent believes an error has been made, he or she shall first appeal the assessment result/grade to the teacher within five school days of receiving the result/grade.
 - 14.2 In the event the issue is not resolved with the outcome of an appeal to a teacher, the assessment result/grade may be appealed to the Principal within five school days of receiving the appeal.
 - 14.3 The Principal shall report the results of the review to the appellant, in writing, within five school days. A copy of each appeal and a record of the Principal’s decision shall be forwarded to the Superintendent.
 - 14.4 The parent or student may appeal the Principal’s decision to the Superintendent, in writing within fourteen days of any final attempts to resolve the matter at the school level.
 - 14.5 The Superintendent or designate shall review all relevant information relating to this matter and render a decision in writing to be shared with all parties concerned within fourteen days of receiving the appeal.
 - 14.6 The parent or student may appeal the Superintendent’s decision to Alberta Education whose decision on the appeal is binding on both parties.
 - 14.7 Divisional appeal policy is outlined in Board Policy 13 and Administrative Procedure 380.

Reference: Section 12, 18, 20, 22, 23, 39, 60, 61, 113, School Act
Ministerial Order 016/97 – Teaching Quality Standard
Practice Review of Teachers Regulation 4/99
Student Record Regulation 71/99
Student Evaluation Regulation 169/98
Student Evaluation Policy 2.1.2
Use and Reporting of Results on Provincial Assessments Policy 2.1.3

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Golden Hills School Division recognizes and understands the need to utilize both formative and summative assessment strategies for student assessment, evaluation and reporting. The primary purpose for all three of these processes is to increase student learning and achievement. It is understood that effective assessment practices are designed to engage students and promote student learning. As well, assessment must be planned, purposeful and accurate. Formative assessment refers to an ongoing exchange of information (feedback) between students and teachers that moves student learning towards clearly specified learner outcomes. Formative assessment refers to information that is not used for grading purposes. Summative assessment refers to assessment experiences designed to collect information about learning to make judgements about student performance and achievement at the end of a period of instruction to be shared with those outside classrooms.

Toward this end, it is recommended that all approaches to student assessment, evaluation and reporting in Golden Hills be designed to:

- seek authentic evidence of student learning, determining their strengths and areas for growth through a variety of methods, including conversations, observations and products. This body of evidence and professional judgment are used to determine grades.
- enhance the ability of teachers to make informed instructional decisions and for teachers and students together to self-reflect, set goals and plan next steps in learning based upon authentic evidence.
- describe and communicate information about achievement and student learning within a prescribed period of time based upon learning outcomes.

Golden Hills recognizes the importance of alignment between curriculum, instruction and assessment and the need to plan assessment prior to instruction using principles of backwards design. Teachers are engaged in asking questions such as: What do I expect students to know and be able to do at the end of a lesson or unit? How will I determine whether students have learned what is expected and what are the lessons I will teach so that students can demonstrate what they have learned? It is intended that this backwards by design framework will guide teachers toward a common understanding about student assessment, evaluation and reporting.

Effective Assessment: Evaluation and Reporting Processes

Effective assessment determines what learning has occurred and provides the next steps in the learning journey. Assessment also offers students with feedback to improve their learning. Therefore, our assessment and evaluation will be used to inform students and their parents about how well the students have learned a particular outcome.

Assessment and evaluation are a continuous process. Therefore, data will arise from the ongoing, day-to-day classroom activities. Evidence will be gathered through the triangulation of data (conversations, products and observations). Teacher records will be organized by outcomes, rather than activity or task, so that mastery of each outcome is apparent.

Teachers utilize a variety of unbiased measures and observations when forming conclusions regarding student performances. This summative evaluation will represent the student's most recent work and current understanding. In grades one through six, categorical grading will be used rather than percentages and/or letter grades on any formative or summative work. Rubrics and feedback will guide formative growth and summative reporting will use a four point scale:

Limited – Student demonstrates insufficient knowledge and skills in relation to the Alberta Program of Studies. Student shows an incomplete understanding of the concepts and skills.

Satisfactory – Student demonstrates basic knowledge and skills in relation to the Alberta Program of Studies. Student shows an adequate understanding and is starting to apply learning.

Proficient – Student demonstrates solid knowledge and skills in relation to the Alberta Program of Studies. Student show a strong understanding and relevant application of the learning.

Excellent – Student demonstrates exemplary knowledge and skills in relation to the Alberta Program of Studies. Student shows an in-depth understanding and insightful application of the learning on a variety of situations.

Assessment and evaluation must focus on what the student can do relative to the curriculum. Therefore, our measures will be proficiency-oriented, and will use the student's strengths to facilitate growth in areas of need.

Assessment and evaluation will help each student increasingly take ownership and responsibility for his or her own learning and evaluation. Students will have opportunities to participate in determining the methods and criteria being used to assess their work, progress and achievement. Assessment is a collaborative endeavour that is most effective when it involves self, peer, and teacher assessment and it helps students to be reflective learners who take ownership of their own learning. Therefore, the students will be involved in setting criteria and monitoring and reporting their own progress. They will be encouraged to recognize what they are learning and how they are learning and to transfer this to learning situations outside of the particular classroom context (promotion of habits for lifelong learning).

Students and their parents or guardians will know the learning targets and how they will be assessed. Therefore, courses and programs will be guided by objectives that are derived from the Program of Studies and are articulated to both the students and their parents or guardians.

GOLDEN HILLS SCHOOL DIVISION SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

Principle 1: Purpose

- Increases student achievement – moves learning forward
- Guides instructional practice
- Communicates about student achievement

Principle 2: Intentional Connection to Curriculum

- Begins with the end in mind
- Performance is measured against learning outcomes
- Clarifies and shares learning outcomes and success criteria

Principle 3: Ongoing Process with Actionable Feedback

- Formative Assessment
- Moves learning forward through timely, descriptive and specific feedback -“Feedback loop”
- Determines students readiness
 - Find out what students know
- Active student involvement in the assessment process
 - Students as owners of their learning through:
 - self-assessment and peer assessment
 - goal setting
- Uses exemplars to identify next steps in learning
- Students are given second chances to demonstrate learning

Principle 4: Purposeful Assessment Design

- Provides clear descriptions of achievement expectations
- Compares student performance to curricular outcomes
- Provides students with multiple ways to demonstrate their learning

Principle 5: High Quality Evidence of Student Achievement

- Meaningful, accurate information about student achievement
- Uses evidence from a variety of assessment approaches (including professional judgement)
 - Triangulation of data – products, conversations and observations are used to determine student achievement

Principle 6: Clear and Accurate Reporting of Data

- Avoid using effort, behaviours, late or incomplete work, attendance or ‘bonus’ points as evidence of student achievement
- Emphasize recent achievement
- Rely on central tendency and professional judgment rather than averages
- Use individual achievement as evidence of learning - avoid using group scores
- Avoid punishing academic dishonesty with reduced grades – When necessary, seek direction from school administration.
- Recognize that including zeros in determining student achievement is not a recommended practice. The teacher will work with the student to ensure that work is completed. When necessary, seek direction from school administration.
- Use summative assessments to report student achievement.

Principle 7: Meaningful Communication about Student Achievement

- Ongoing through the learning process
- Clear and accurate information provided to students and parents

Glossary:

Assessment for Learning (Formative Assessment): assessment that result in an ongoing exchange of information between students and teachers about student progress toward clearly specified learner outcomes

Assessment of Learning (Summative Assessment): assessment designed to collect information about learning to make judgments about student performance and achievement at the end of a period of instruction to be shared outside of the classroom

Learner Outcomes: what we expect students to learn; directly related to the Program of Studies

References: Alberta Assessment Consortium. (2015). Assessment Glossary. Retrieved May 28, 2015 from <http://www.aac.ab.ca/projects-grants/communicating-about-student-learning/definitions-2/>
O'Connor, K. (2012). Fifteen Fixes for Broken Grades: A Repair Kit. Toronto: Pearson Canada.
William, D. (2011). Embedded Formative Assessment. Bloomington: Solution Tree.

SELECTING THE CORRECT PROGRAM FOR THE LEARNER PROFILE

More than one type of program may be used to communicate a student’s level of achievement.

Program	Definition	Would these students have a code?	On Learner Profile Characteristics Successful Learners be used?	On Learner Profile which Achievement Indicators would be used?	Accommodations Checklist Required?	IPP Required?
REGULAR Program	The student is on a regular program and is provided with curriculum at their enrolled grade level.	No	Yes	Limited Satisfactory Proficient Excellent	No	No
ADAPTED Program	The student is provided with curriculum work at his/her enrolled grade level. Adjustments to the instructional process are provided to address the needs of the student.	Possibly	Yes	Limited - Adapted Satisfactory - Adapted Proficient - Adapted Excellent – Adapted *these codes would be used for the subjects which have been adapted	Yes – staple to back of Learner Profile	Only if student has a code. If an IPP is used then the accommodations checklist may not be necessary.
MODIFIED Program: GRADED	Students are provided with curriculum work that is significantly below/above their enrolled grade level	Possibly (code 40’s, 50’s, or 80)	Possibly if it makes sense for the student. If the characteristics are not a fit then just use the IPP.	Report progress on IPP, not on Learner Profile	No (info would be in IPP)	Yes – either staple to front page of Learner Profile (if Characteristics of Successful Learners chart is used) or just use IPP
MODIFIED Program: NON-GRADED	Students are provided with curriculum work that is significantly below their enrolled grade level and would most likely have a life skills focus.	Yes (code most likely a code in the 40’s)	No	Report progress on IPP, not on Learner Profile	No (info would be in IPP)	Yes