



Your Future **in MIND**

Guide to Reporting Student Achievement

2016 – 2017

Grades 7 - 12

Next Step

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Updated June 1, 2016

About This Guide

We believe every student can learn and experience success. One of the ways we help students learn and succeed is to carefully evaluate their achievement and growth, and to share that information with parents and guardians.

This guide will help parents and guardians understand:

- assessment;
- the responsibilities of students, staff, and parents and guardians;
- how and when achievement information will be communicated or reported;
- how marks and grades are determined; and
- the steps taken when summative assessments are missing or incomplete.

Parents and guardians are the key influences in a child's life. Understanding how a child is achieving in school and how to support that achievement is integral to success in school. Parents and guardians are encouraged to read this guide and contact our school's administration with any questions or if further information is required.

What Is Assessment?

Assessment is the process of collecting and communicating information about student achievement. In essence, assessment informs students, teachers, and parents about what students have learned and how well they have learned it. Teachers regularly gather information about students' learning through a variety of assessment tools. These tools can include conversations, observations, the submission of student work, and tests or quizzes. Through these feedback opportunities, teachers determine students' areas of strength, and the areas in which students may need more time or practice. All of these opportunities allow teachers to give parents and guardians a clear and accurate picture of student achievement and growth.

Assessment is based on the knowledge and skill areas outlined in the Alberta Programs of Study or a student's Instructional Support Plan (ISP). Teachers do not use a child's behaviour, effort, or work habits to determine grades or marks unless otherwise stated in the Alberta Programs of Study.

Supporting Student Achievement and Success

In alignment with the [School Act](#), students, teachers, parents, and guardians all have roles to play in supporting and helping students experience success in school.

Students have a responsibility for their own learning and are expected to:

- attend school every day and be on time;
- complete assignments, projects, and tasks to the best of their ability;
- participate in activities that celebrate learning;
- consistently demonstrate their learning; and
- take advantage of opportunities to revise or redo assessments to demonstrate their learning.

Teachers will help students succeed by:

- providing appropriate programming for each student;
- clearly explaining what is expected of each student and how student work will be assessed and reported;
- ensuring students have multiple opportunities and ways to demonstrate their learning;
- giving students the opportunity to redo/complete missed assessments and activities;
- keeping detailed, accurate information describing student successes and challenges;
- providing timely and ongoing communication with parents/guardians, students, and school administration.

Parents and guardians can support a student's learning by:

- working in partnership with school staff;
- providing time and a place for children to practice and complete assigned work at home;
- ensuring regular school attendance;
- staying informed about school events and keeping in touch with school staff;
- regularly accessing student assessment information via PowerSchool; and
- attending Parent-Teacher-Student conferences/interviews.

Instructional Support Plan (ISP)

Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) is using the Instructional Support Plan to support programming for students with diverse learning needs. An ISP may be created for students with identified learning needs in Early Childhood Services (ECS) to grade 12. The ISP process aligns with Alberta Education initiatives and supports the success of each and every student.

Parents and/or guardians of students recommended to have an ISP to support his/her learning during the 2016/2017 school year will be contacted by the school in September or early October.

Features of EIPS' new ISP that help make a student's programming more effective include:

- ways in which a student likes to learn which allows teachers to focus on a student's strengths and interests.
- class-wide and more student-specific strategies that increase learning opportunities for all students.
- an online format making the creation, updating, and communication of ISPs more efficient with a plan in place for the ISP to become available online to parents in the future.
- scheduled meetings with parents during the course of the year during which ISP goals and student progress is shared and discussed.

Course Outlines

Due to the varied start dates course outlines are provided to students when starting the course and can be obtained from the teacher.

A full list of our courses is offered on our website:

[Next Step course list](#)

Information about the Alberta Curriculum can be accessed from Alberta Education's, [My Child's Learning - A Parent Resource](#). Further specific details about course content can be provided by the classroom teacher.

Determining Report Card Grades

Teachers consider multiple sources of evidence and use professional judgment to determine the report card grade.

Formative Assessments

Throughout the year, students will be given opportunities to participate in or work on many activities which will help them improve their knowledge and skills. These practice assignments, projects, or other activities demonstrate to teachers the areas in which students need more practice and where students can improve. These are called *formative* assessments. Teachers use formative feedback to help guide their instructional plans and to offer students more ways in which they can demonstrate their learning.

Summative Assessments

Summative assessments provide students a formal chance to “show what they know”. Using professional judgment, teachers consider summative assessments, observations, and conversations with student in determining report card grades.

Next Step expects students to take advantage of all opportunities to complete summative assessments. Final summative assessments are available to support the teachers in using their professional judgments in determining a final grade. Final summative assessments in secondary core subjects provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate their learning at the end of a course. Final summative assessments will be used to influence assessment of learning in the units of study in the core course.

Missing, Incomplete, or Resubmitted Student Work

As outlined in Administrative Policy 360, principals work with their teachers to ensure:

- A. teachers collect reliable and valid evidence that supports their judgment about students' achievement. Teachers may choose to exclude assessments that are inconsistent with the teacher's professional judgment;
- B. students are offered opportunities to redo and resubmit summative assessments;
- C. communication plans for reporting student achievement and growth to parents/guardians/students are developed and aligned with school-wide assessment and intervention plans;
- D. students have been given multiple opportunities and ways to demonstrate learning;
- E. teachers engage in ongoing, timely communication with parents/guardians/students and the principal regarding missing or incomplete work;

- F. follow up has occurred to determine the reason why a summative assessment (assignment, test, project, etc.) is missing or incomplete, and that opportunities are provided for the student to resubmit and/or fulfill the requirements of the summative assessment (assignment, test, project, etc.);
- G. once the student has been given opportunities to resubmit summative assessments, but does not submit missing or incomplete summative assessments, the student and parents/guardians are informed and the teacher, in consultation the student and student's parents/guardians will determine a plan to hold the student accountable and/or plan for further learning;
- H. the teacher, in consultation with the principal, uses professional judgment to determine the impact of the missing or incomplete assignments on the student's grade;
- I. that provided the preceding have been followed, the teacher may assign the student a mark of zero for that missed summative assessment item (assignment, test, project, etc.).

Next Step uses a mastery learning model. This means that we support, not penalize, students who require different amounts of time to learn or multiple assessment attempts. If a student receives a grade on an assessment that is not satisfactory, they may retake or redo an assessment as many times as required as long as they receive additional support and are part of a learning intervention between each attempt. The student and the teacher are responsible for having a conversation to discuss the timing of the relearning and reassessment of the material. The best evidence of learning will inform the teacher's professional judgement in the determination of a final grade.

Junior High Grading Scale

Grades in junior high language arts, math, science and social studies courses will be reported using percentages.

(Adapted from Alberta programs of study)

80 - 100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning goals are met in an astute and comprehensive way. • Assignments are well crafted, organized in a purposeful fashion, and demonstrate attention to precise details. • Demonstrates an in- depth understanding and degree of skill on summative assessments.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has assembled an in- depth understanding of the concepts, generalizations and skills fundamental to the program.
65 - 79%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning goals are met in a practical and thorough way. • Assignments are complete, organized in a competent fashion, and demonstrate attention to relevant details. • Demonstrates a substantial understanding and degree of skill on summative assessments. • Has assembled a thorough understanding of the concepts, generalizations and skills fundamental to the program.
50 - 64%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning goals are met in an appropriate and reasonable way. • Assignments are generally complete, organized in an acceptable fashion, and demonstrate attention to predictable details. • Demonstrates a satisfactory understanding and degree of skill on summative assessments. • Has assembled a basic understanding of the concepts, generalizations and skills fundamental to the program.
0 - 49%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student has demonstrated insufficient performance in relation to learner outcomes.

Junior High Complementary Courses Grade Scale

Letter Grade	Description of Achievement Standards
A+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement is highly sophisticated and adept. • Consistent demonstration of a high degree of effectiveness that <i>may</i> surpass provincial standards for learning outcomes for the subject and grade.
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement is refined and skillful.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent demonstration of a high degree of effectiveness in relation to provincial standards for learning outcomes for the subject and grade.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement is competent and methodical. • Consistent demonstration of considerable effectiveness in relation to provincial standards for learning outcomes for the subject and grade.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement is marginally adequate. • Effectiveness falters occasionally in relation to provincial standards for learning outcomes for the subject and grade.
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistently achieves at an acceptable level. • Limited effectiveness or inconsistent performance is demonstrated in relation to provincial standards for learning outcomes for the subject and grade.
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of Achievement Standards

Senior High Grading Scale

All senior high courses will be reported using percentages.

(Adapted from Alberta programs of study)

80 - 100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning goals are met in an astute and comprehensive way. • Assignments are well crafted, organized in a purposeful fashion, and demonstrate attention to precise details. • Demonstrates an in- depth understanding and degree of skill on summative assessments. • Has assembled an in- depth understanding of the concepts, generalizations and skills fundamental to the program.
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<p>65 - 79%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning goals are met in a practical and thorough way. • Assignments are complete, organized in a competent fashion, and demonstrate attention to relevant details. • Demonstrates a substantial understanding and degree of skill on summative assessments. • Has assembled a thorough understanding of the concepts, generalizations and skills fundamental to the program.
<p>50 - 64%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning goals are met in an appropriate and reasonable way. • Assignments are generally complete, organized in an acceptable fashion, and demonstrate attention to predictable details. • Demonstrates a satisfactory understanding and degree of skill on summative assessments. • Has assembled a basic understanding of the concepts, generalizations and skills fundamental to the program.
<p>0 - 49%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student has demonstrated insufficient performance in relation to learner outcomes. The student will not earn credits and will not fulfill prerequisite requirements for higher level courses.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to behave ethically. Cheating, plagiarism (copying someone else’s work and passing it off as one’s own), copying, stealing tests or assignments and/or getting answers for a test or assignment in advance are not acceptable. Unethical behavior also includes giving answers or work to others to claim as their own.

If a student is suspected of unethical behavior, school administration will meet with the student and take action in accordance with [Administrative Procedure 350 - Student Conduct](#).

Reporting Student Achievement

Communication with parents and students about student achievement will be continuous throughout the year. Communication may include: parent-teacher or parent-student-teacher meetings, portfolios of student work, interviews, phone calls, checklists, and informal reports.

Reporting Periods

There are many ways we help you stay informed about your student's learning throughout the year. We encourage you to review your student's progress via PowerSchool and communicate with the teachers regularly. As well, you may request a progress report of your current marks from your classroom teachers as required. If you require a printed report card please contact the school.

Grade 7-12

We have two report times:

End of January

End of June

Junior High Schools

Marks for assignments will be available on the [Parent Portal](#) in PowerSchool and can be accessed by clicking the double dashes (--) for each subject. At the end of June, the Parent Portal will show a cumulative score.

Senior High Schools

Marks for assignments will be available on the [Parent Portal](#) in PowerSchool and can be accessed by clicking the double dashes for each subject. At the end of each semester, the [Parent Portal](#) will show a cumulative score. CTS and Next Step marks suppression practices will be reflective of our unique assessment landscape.

Conferences/Interviews

Next Step provides ongoing support and communication throughout the school year. We encourage parents and students to review their progress through PowerSchool and attend meetings when they are scheduled. Parents and students can also arrange for a meeting with their teacher at any time.

Grades/Marks Appeal Process

To appeal a grade a student has been given, parents or students are encouraged to contact the classroom teacher. If the appeal cannot be resolved with the teacher, the parent or student shall appeal to the principal who will make and communicate the final decision. A principal's authority to rule on such appeals is set out in the School Act.

The Role of External, Large Scale Assessments

Alberta Education mandates that Student Learning Assessments, Provincial Achievement Tests, and Diploma Exams be administered each school year. Results from these assessments provide school divisions with information about student learning and achievement.

Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs)

[PATs](#) measure how well students demonstrate what they are expected to learn. School and division results are shared publicly to show how Alberta grade six and nine students are doing compared to provincial standards. Results from PATs help schools, school authorities and the province monitor and improve student learning. Note that if students require accommodations in order to write PATs (scribe, reader, assistive supports), students must have an ISP in place which identifies the use of the accommodation throughout the course of the school year.

Next Step offers Provincial Achievement Tests to students registered with us in June. These tests are scheduled by Alberta Education and are available online:

[PAT schedule](#)

Students who are absent for the scheduled PAT writing will write when they return to school, provided the exams have not yet been returned to Alberta Education. After that time students will not be able to write the exams. With the permission of the Superintendent or his/her designate, students may be allowed to write PATs early. Students may, through special arrangement with the teacher, write Final Exams other than PATs outside the official exam schedule.

While PATs are an important part of determining student growth and achievement, they are only one part of the assessment process.

According to Alberta Education:

- The achievement tests address only those learning outcomes that can be readily assessed by a paper-and-pencil or digital test.
- The clearest picture of students' growth and development is gained when a wide variety of assessment information is considered. The achievement tests provide part of the picture.

Alberta Education expects schools to report the scores from Grades 9 PATs.

Diploma Examinations

The Grade 12 [Diploma Examinations](#) Program, established in 1984, has three main purposes:

- to certify the level of individual student achievement in selected Grade 12 courses;
- to ensure that province-wide standards of achievement are maintained; and
- to report individual and group results.

The program has diploma exams in selected Grade 12 courses: Biology 30, Chemistry 30, English Language Arts 30–1, English Language Arts 30–2, Mathematics 30–1, Mathematics 30–2, Physics 30, Science 30, Social Studies 30–1, and Social Studies 30–2.

All 30-level diploma courses listed above are offered at Next Step. To pass a diploma course a student must earn a final 'blended' mark of at least 50%. The weighting for the mark is 70/30 where the school awarded mark is worth 70% and the diploma mark is worth 30%.

Diploma write times are scheduled by Alberta Education and are available online:

[Diploma Exam Schedule](#)

Next Step offers five writing times throughout the school year: November, January, April, June, and August. The August writing time is during Summer School and all students who wish to write, must seek permission to write with Next Step Continuing Education or Next Step Outreach.

In order for to receive accommodations on diploma exams (scribe, reader, assistive supports), students require an ISP which identifies the use of the accommodation throughout the course of the school year.

To receive a high school diploma, students are required to write at least two diploma exams, either English Language Arts 30–1 or English Language Arts 30–2 and either Social Studies 30–1 or Social Studies 30–2.

Further high school completion requirements are found here: [Alberta High School Completion Requirements](#) (p. 91).

Three-Year Education Plan/Priorities

Priority 1: Promote growth and success for all students

GOAL 1 EXCELLENT START TO LEARNING

Outcome: More children reach social, intellectual, and physical developmental milestones by Grade 1.

GOAL 2 SUCCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT

Outcome: More students achieve a minimum of one year's growth in literacy and numeracy.

Outcome: The achievement gap between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students and all other students is reduced.

GOAL 3 SUCCESS BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

Outcome: More students are engaged in school, achieve excellence, and are supported in their transition beyond high school.

Priority 2: Enhance high quality learning and working environments

GOAL 1 A FOCUS ON WELLBEING INCLUDING STUDENT CITIZENSHIP AND STAFF ENGAGEMENT

Outcome: Our learning and working environments are welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe.

GOAL 2 QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ALL

Outcome: Student learning is supported through the use of effective planning, managing, and investment in division infrastructure.

GOAL 3 BUILD CAPACITY

Outcome: All staff have the opportunity and are supported in increasing their professional and leadership capacities.

GOAL 4 A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Outcome: The division uses evidenced-based practices to improve student engagement and achievement.

Priority 3: Enhance public education through effective engagement, partnerships, and communication

GOAL 1 PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Outcome: Student learning is supported and enhanced through parent engagement.

GOAL 2 SUPPORTS AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

Outcome: Community partnerships support the needs of our students.

GOAL 3 ENGAGED AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

Outcome: The division is committed to ongoing advocacy to enhance public education.