Educating All Our Children:

Procedures, Roles and Responsibilities for Student Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting

2011-2012

Procedures, Roles and Responsibilities for Student Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting

Contents

1. Purpose

This procedures manual is a companion document to Department of Education, Culture & Employment's *Departmental Directive on Student Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting, 2010*. The Directive provides Ministerial direction as to what is to be done and the Procedures Manual provides the methodology and processes to be used to fulfill the Directive. The Directive requires Ministerial approval for changes while the Procedures Manual can be updated easily and does not require Ministerial approval for changes.

2. Glossary of Terms

accommodations	Changes made to the teaching process, learning environment, materials, time demands, assistance, evaluation or student products, to help students achieve the expected learning outcomes. Expected learning outcomes as stated in curricular documents are not changed. Accommodations are considered supports.
achievement	The level of a student's performance in relation to specific learning outcomes and standards. Achievement is the basis for determining if a student has successfully completed one level in a subject and is ready for the next.
Alberta Achievement Test (AAT)	Assessments for students in grades three, six and nine in the subject areas of Language arts and Mathematics. These assessments are developed by the province of Alberta where the assessments are called Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs). The purposes of the testing program are to: • determine if students are learning what they are expected to learn; • report to the public how well students have achieved curriculum standards at given points in their schooling; and • assist schools, authorities, and the territory in monitoring and improving student learning.
anecdotal record	A brief narrative description of the observations teachers make on student learning and development.
anecdotal report	A written description of a student's learning and development that indicates student performance, outlines concerns, and often provides recommendations for further student progress and achievement.
assessment	The process of collecting information on student achievement and performance that includes a variety of assessment tasks designed to monitor and improve student learning. Assessments may include classroom observations, performance testing, informal reading inventories, writing folders/samples, portfolios, teacher-developed tests, standardized tests, checklists/rating scales, oral/written examinations and assignments.

assessment **for** learning	An assessment process designed to give teachers information to modify and differentiate teaching and learning activities to meet the needs of individual students and groups of students. Teachers can use this information to streamline and target instruction and provide feedback. Also known as formative assessments.
assessment **as** learning	An assessment process that focuses on the role of the student in the learning process. It occurs when students monitor their own learning and use feedback from this monitoring to make changes in what they understand.
assessment **of** learning	An assessment process that is summative in nature and is used to confirm what students know and can do to demonstrate whether they have the achieved the curriculum outcomes. These are assessment experiences 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 with those outside classrooms. (Also called summative assessment; refers to performance data compiled as a grade).
attendance	The presence of a student in school programming provided by a school with which a student is registered. Attendance may be counted by the number of periods or the number of days.
authentic assessment	Provides students with descriptions of expected performance levels and the criteria by which they will be evaluated. Students are then requested to perform, produce or otherwise demonstrate skills that represent their learning.
content standards	Sometimes referred to as curriculum standards, represent intended learning outcomes in content areas. Within particular content areas, satisfactory competencies are identified by subject and grade level.
checklist	A two-point evaluation tool that indicates if a student has achieved a learner outcome (i.e. yes or not yet).
collaborative learning	An approach to learning that stresses, in general, the importance of such factors as teamwork, interdependence, and interaction among students. Examples of collaborative learning include small-group learning projects and peer tutoring.
criteria	What students need to do to show they have achieved the learner outcomes (e.g. compare and contrast, explain, analyze).
descriptive feedback	Part of an ongoing, specific and constructive conversation about learning that relates directly to the learner outcomes.
education program	Regular Education Program, Modified Education Program (MEP) or Individual Education Program (IEP) - all students in the NWT in kindergarten through grade 12 are to be participating in one of these education programs.

excused absence	A documented absence, reported to the principal of the school, where a student is exempted from schooling due to illness, unavoidable cause, participation in on the land activities, participation in learning activities outside of school programming, participation in spiritual or religious activities of the denomination to which the student belongs, suspension, expulsion or participation in a home school program.
exemplars	Samples of actual student work that illustrate criteria. Exemplars can be collected to set the standard for scoring in an individual classroom, a school, or an education jurisdiction. Exemplars may also be used to support consistent marking and reporting to students and their parents/guardians. When selecting and using exemplars, Access to Information and Protection of Privacy legislation should be referenced.
evaluation	The process of making judgments and decisions, based on interpretation of the evidence gathered through assessment, as to what extent students have attained the prescribed outcomes and standards in the course curriculum and identifying what knowledge and skills still need to be learned. Evaluation also involves the making of decisions about the quality, value or worth of a response for the purpose of providing descriptive feedback (formative) and marks (summative).
formative assessment	An assessment procedure that a teacher uses before and during instruction to find out what students know prior to beginning instruction and/or during instruction how well they are learning concepts and then making necessary adjustments to instruction.
Functional Grade Level	Is the grade level of curriculum that the student worked on for the majority of the school year. FGL is evaluated in relation to the learning outcomes articulated in the NWT Language Arts Curricula and the WNCP Mathematics Curriculum.
grade (mark)	A letter, number or comment reported at the end of a period of time as a summary statement of student performance based on a variety of summative assessments.
grading	A process to determine a student's performance level.
Inclusive Schooling	A philosophical and practical educational approach, which strives to respond to individual student needs, and is intended to ensure equal access for all students to educational programs offered in regular classroom settings. Inclusive schooling is mandatory within the Northwest Territories school system.

Individual Education Plan	Where existing NWT curricula, even with modification, are not suitable for a student, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) may be necessary to effectively meet the needs of the student. The student may require an IEP because his/her physical, intellectual or social/emotional needs are significantly different from those of his/her age peers. The IEP is written for a particular student, not for a program, particular course, or group of students, and it requires parental involvement. Parental/guardian consent is always required before an IEP is implemented or altered.
lates	Term used in reporting the number of instances the student was late for class.
mastery	Is attained when a student performs at a level that meets or exceeds predetermined outcomes. A student who demonstrates mastery at the completion of a course or grade in a particular subject has accomplished the curricular outcomes to a level where s/he has a foundation to be successful in subsequent grade levels.
Modified Education Program	An education program that retains the learning outcomes articulated in NWT curricula, but at a grade level other than the assigned grade level. Based on student strengths, challenges and interests, a collaborative process is used to determine and document/record necessary program changes, in a Student Support Plan.
outcomes	What students are expected to know and be able to do; the territorially mandated knowledge, skills and attitudes students are expected to demonstrate at the completion of a course or grade in a subject area.
peer-coaching	One student considering the quality of another's work and providing feedback by applying criteria to help improve performance; requires a non-threatening and supportive relationship between the peers (also referred to in the literature as peer-assessment, peer-evaluation, peer-tutoring, or peer-editing).
performance level	How well a student demonstrates grade level learner outcomes represented by a grade (mark).
performance assessment	A meaningful, real-life task that enables students to demonstrate what they know and can do in situations like those they will encounter outside the classroom as well as in situations that simulate how people do their work.
performance standards	Measure demonstration of student learning based on the outcomes identified under content standards. Content standards and performance standards are directly related. Content standards identify criteria and performance standards measure them through student performance.

portfolio	A purposeful collection of student work over time that serves as the basis for evaluating student progress and achievement in a subject area. It is a tool for accumulating and organizing evidence of the literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, and communication skill development of a student. A wide range of student work should be contained in a portfolio.
rating scale	An evaluation tool of three or more points that illustrates how frequently, consistently or independently a student demonstrates a learner outcome.
Regular Education Program	The education program determined by the learning outcomes articulated in NWT curricula for a specific grade level, from kindergarten through grade12.
reporting	Is the process of summarizing and clearly communicating student progress on curricular outcomes to various client groups, including students, parents, administrators and the Department. Reporting also includes the recording of student data into the student record for each student and submitting data requested by the Department.
rubric	A fixed measurement scale and list of criteria that describe the quality of products or performances used to evaluate a student's performance.
self-reflection	Considering the quality of one's own work by applying criteria; requires that a student feels safe enough to be honest in making objective observations about the work (also referred to in the literature as self-assessment or self-evaluation).
standardised tests	Standardized tests are achievement assessment instruments given to a large number of students under similar circumstances. Standardised tests may be administered at a national, territorial and board level.
student portfolios	A student portfolio is a means to organize a collection of evidence.
Student Support Plan	A written plan that documents either:

- Accommodations for difficulty, or enrichment strategies required for success in the Regular Education Program for a student whose performance levels are near or at grade level; or

- Targeted curricular outcomes for subjects in which the student is on a Modified Education Program because they are working on curricular outcomes either below or above grade level; and necessary accommodations/enrichment strategies, if any.

summative assessment	An assessment/evaluation that is designed to provide information to be used in making judgments about a student's progress toward the attainment of prescribed learning outcomes at the end of instruction.
three-way conferencing	Conferencing involving the student, parents/guardians and the teacher.
unexcused absence	Absences from school programs that are undocumented, not reported to the school by the parent /guardian or do not fulfill the requirements of an excused absence.
working level	The level of curricular outcome/s the student worked on most recently. The working level assumes that the student has mastered or achieved the curricular outcomes for the preceding grade level.

3. Classroom based Assessments

A. NWT approved curricula are to be used as the standard against which students are assessed and evaluated.

Teachers must use NWT approved curricula.

K-9 CURRICULA

The *Elementary and Junior Secondary Handbook* is available on the Department's website (http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/) and provides a listing of NWT approved curricula.

Should you require further information, contact your board office or the Director of Early Childhood and School Services at the Department at (867) 920-3491.

SENIOR SECONDARY CURRICULA

The list of courses for NWT Senior Secondary Schools has been approved by the Minister. Credit will only be given for courses that appear on the approved list or have been approved by the Minister. The listing enables students to obtain a diploma with the greatest possible opportunity for career choices, training, further education and lifelong learning. Schools must ensure that each student's needs, interests, abilities and career paths receive every consideration when planning his/her Student Career Program Plan.

Information on senior secondary courses is provided in the *Senior Secondary Handbook* which is available on the Department's website. The handbook also provides direction on the process for gaining approval of locally developed courses.

Should you require further information, contact your board office or the Director of Early Childhood and School Services at the Department at (867) 920-3491.

B. Purposes of Classroom based assessments

Teachers are expected to use a variety of formative and summative classroom based assessments over the course of a unit.

1. FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS/ASSESSMENTS FOR LEARNING

Prior to beginning instruction, teachers should assess where his/her students are in relation to grade level and the learning outcomes in the curriculum. Some information may be available in student records and report cards from previous years. However, it likely will be necessary to implement assessments to gain more information.

An assessment implemented at the beginning of a unit or specific learning outcome to determine what the students already know and can demonstrate is a formative assessment or an assessment for learning.   An assessment for learning is designed to provide teachers with information that can be used to modify and differentiate teaching and learning activities to meet the needs of individual students and groups of students. Once the teacher has determined where his/her students are at in relation to specific curriculum outcomes, planning for instruction can begin. Teachers can use information collected from formative assessments to streamline and target instruction and provide feedback.

2. SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS/ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

An assessment designed to collect information about learning and to make judgments about student performance and achievement at the end of a period of instruction is a summative assessment or an assessment of learning. These assessments are summative in nature and are used to confirm what students know and can do to demonstrate whether they have the achieved the curriculum outcomes.

Students must be given a variety of opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do in relation to a curriculum outcome.

3. DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENTS

Diagnostic assessments are used to diagnose individual student strengths and needs; to collaborate with others to improve the student's learning; and, if necessary, to develop and implement a plan of intervention for the student. Diagnostic assessments may involve parents and professionals from outside of the school.

The Inclusive Schooling Directive and Programming for Student Success manual should be consulted for more information.

> The Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) produced the document
>
> **_Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind: assessment for learning, assessment as learning, assessment of learning_**
>
> This document is a valuable in providing assistance to teachers in planning and preparing assessments in the classroom. It is available on the WNCP website or at
>
> http://www.wncp.ca/media/40539/rethink.pdf

C. Evaluation of teachers on their classroom assessment practices

1. It is a duty of a school principal to evaluate teachers.

    Classroom assessment practices are one of the criteria considered when a teacher undergoes evaluation. The directive on teacher evaluation requires beginning teachers and teachers new to the NWT to undergo a formal evaluation during each of their first two years of teaching in the NWT. Experienced teachers, with two or more years of teaching in NWT schools are required to be evaluated on a five year cycle or more frequently should the principal determine it to be necessary.

    The document _Teacher Growth and Evaluation in the Northwest Territories_[1] identifies the criteria to be used in the evaluation of a teacher on his/her classroom assessment practices.

2. It is a responsibility of a superintendent to see that staff evaluations are done and all teachers' certifications are current.

D. Planning and Developing Classroom-based Assessments

Planning for instruction, assessment, evaluation, and reporting is critical to effective student learning. Each curriculum has general learning outcomes that are further detailed in measurable specific learning outcomes. The NWT English Language Arts curriculum has the learning outcomes for each grade further organized along a Continuum. A Continuum of learning shows a sophistication of knowledge, skills and strategies acquired over time. Individual learners have different beginning and end points: for instance, a student placed in a grade three classroom may be working on a combination of Learning Outcomes (LO) from grades two, three and four.

1. <u>Decide the best and most relevant method(s) for assessment</u>. The assessment can be formative or summative in nature. Curricular outcomes use key words as to what the

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[1] Department of Education, Culture and Employment, _Teacher Growth and Evaluation in the Northwest Territories_. 2004

student is expected to demonstrate. These key words provide direction as to what assessment method/s will be most appropriate.

discuss	revise	formulates
adjusts	integrate	records
explain	infer	evaluates
seek	talks about	organizes
applies	creates	uses library to access information
respond	categorizes	uses computer to access information

2. <u>Select or develop the assessment instrument(s)</u>. Classroom teachers develop the majority of assessments conducted in schools. An array of commercially designed instruments is also available. Whether developing or selecting an instrument, teachers need to ensure that the assessment:

   a) reflects territorial curriculum;
   b) measures the learning goals and objectives identified for the unit of study;
   c) is designed to serve instructional purposes;
   d) actively involves the student, whenever possible, as the student's age and needs permit; and
   e) provides all students the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do.

3. <u>Describe the scoring criteria and determine standards or expectations.</u> The criteria, standards or expectations for satisfactory and exemplary achievement should be constructed at the same time as the assessment tool. Some NWT curricula provide exemplars of student work expected for each grade level and specific outcome.

4. <u>Communicate the criteria and standards</u>. Acceptable standards or expectations for an assessment should be communicated to the student/s and, for some assessments, the parents in advance. When students and their parents/guardians are aware of the expected outcomes and scoring criteria, they will be more focused on learning.

5. <u>Collect information</u> about student learning over time, in a variety of situations, and using a range of formal and informal assessment methods and instruments. Both the product and the process of learning experience should be assessed. These include, but are not limited to:
   a) observations;
   b) demonstrations;
   c) interviews;
   d) questioning;
   e) assignments;
   f) projects;
   g) presentations;
   h) portfolios;
   i) self assessment and reflections
   j) written tests;
   k) formal examinations;
   l) miscue analyses;
   m) peer assessments;

n) parent assessments;
o) learning and response logs.

Students must be given a variety of opportunities and methods to demonstrate what they know and can do in relation to curricular outcomes.

6. Evaluate student performance.   Teachers will analyze and interpret student performance in context and according to:

a) learning outcomes identified for that unit of study in the curriculum;
b) prior learning experiences of the student(s).

In order to judge how good a student's achievement is, teachers must integrate information contained in the on-going student progress records. Teachers evaluate student achievement throughout the year, and for a variety of reasons. As a result of evaluation, teachers will:

a) adjust programs and instruction to improve learning;
b) report the student's attainment and readiness for further study or work;
c) plan and implement intervention strategies for individual students, as necessary.

7. Recording Progress. Teachers must keep detailed records of individual student performance in a range of assessments over time and in context, in order to demonstrate growth in knowledge and skills. Student performance records include, but are not limited to:

a) anecdotal notes;
b) checklists;
c) rating scales;
d) rubrics;
e) portfolios;
f) student record.

E. Criteria for Report Cards

1. Each school shall provide to students and parents, at the beginning of the school year, a written description of the school/course procedures that will be used to assess, evaluate and report student achievement and performance.

2. Each Board shall establish the number of regular reporting periods per year and the number of Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences and provide this information to parents.

3. Written progress reports shall be provided to parents/guardians at each reporting period. Progress reports should identify students' skills and progress in relation to curricular outcomes.

4. All progress reports are to be reviewed and approved by the principal or assistant principal prior to distribution.

5. Written progress reports (report cards) must include:

    a) Name, address and contact information for the Board and school.
    b) Interpretation section that includes the purpose of progress reports and defines any symbols, terminology or descriptors used in the report.
    c) Name and signature block for the principal/assistant principal indicating that s/he has reviewed the report. Review should be done with a mind to ensuring that progress is documented in relation to curricular outcomes.
    d) Indication of the plan or program the student is on: Regular Program, Regular Education Plan with accommodations for difficulty, Regular Education Plan with adaptations for enrichment, Modified Education Plan below grade level, Modified Education Plan above grade level or Individual Education Plan. Descriptions of progress and the curricular outcomes the student is working on, and name of subject teacher(s).
    e) Date of progress report.
    f) A letter grade, percentage or descriptor to report the quality of performance compared to curriculum standards.
    g) Attendance information. Attendance information should include the number of classes/days the student attended, the possible number of classes/days, the percentage attendance, the number of times the student was late, and the percentage of times the student was late.

F. Criteria for Reporting Student Progress

Teachers are required to regularly report on student progress to parents, students, administrators and other professionals. This process includes both formal (e.g. written report cards and parent/teacher interviews) and informal reporting (e.g. telephone calls or conferences). It is important to be honest, fair and sensitive when reporting on a student's progress.

1. Formal student progress reports must communicate to the parent or guardian the following information in relation to the curriculum outcomes or Individual Education Plan

    a) the outcome/s the student is working on or worked upon,
    b) what the student is able to do in relation to specific outcome/s
    c) the grade level the student was/is working on for curricular outcome/s
    d) the level of mastery the student demonstrated for that specific outcome
    e) areas of learning that require further attention or development

G. Reporting of Placement or Promotion at the end of the School Year

In keeping with the Departmental Directive on Inclusive Schooling, all students have the right to participate in educational programs offered in regular classroom settings with their age peers.

1. Placement. Parents must be informed if a student in grades one through eight will be working on curricular outcomes below what is expected of them and their age peers at the beginning of the next school year. Parents are to be advised that the student will be *placed*

in a classroom of his/her age peers and provided appropriate educational programming. Not only is the parent to be informed that their child in the next school year will be working on curriculum below grade level it also must be clear to the parent the number of grade levels below. In the case of secondary school, the student will **not** be allowed to move on to the next level of study.

2. <u>Promotion.</u> Students who achieve at or exceed satisfactory standards on the curricular outcomes identified for their grade of enrolment and subject area are **promoted** to the next grade, or in the case of secondary school, to the next level of study. As is the case with students that are placed, it should be clear to the parents the grade level of curriculum the student has achieved and whether the student will be provided educational programming in the following year.

G. Reporting of Working Level and Functional Grade Level to Parents
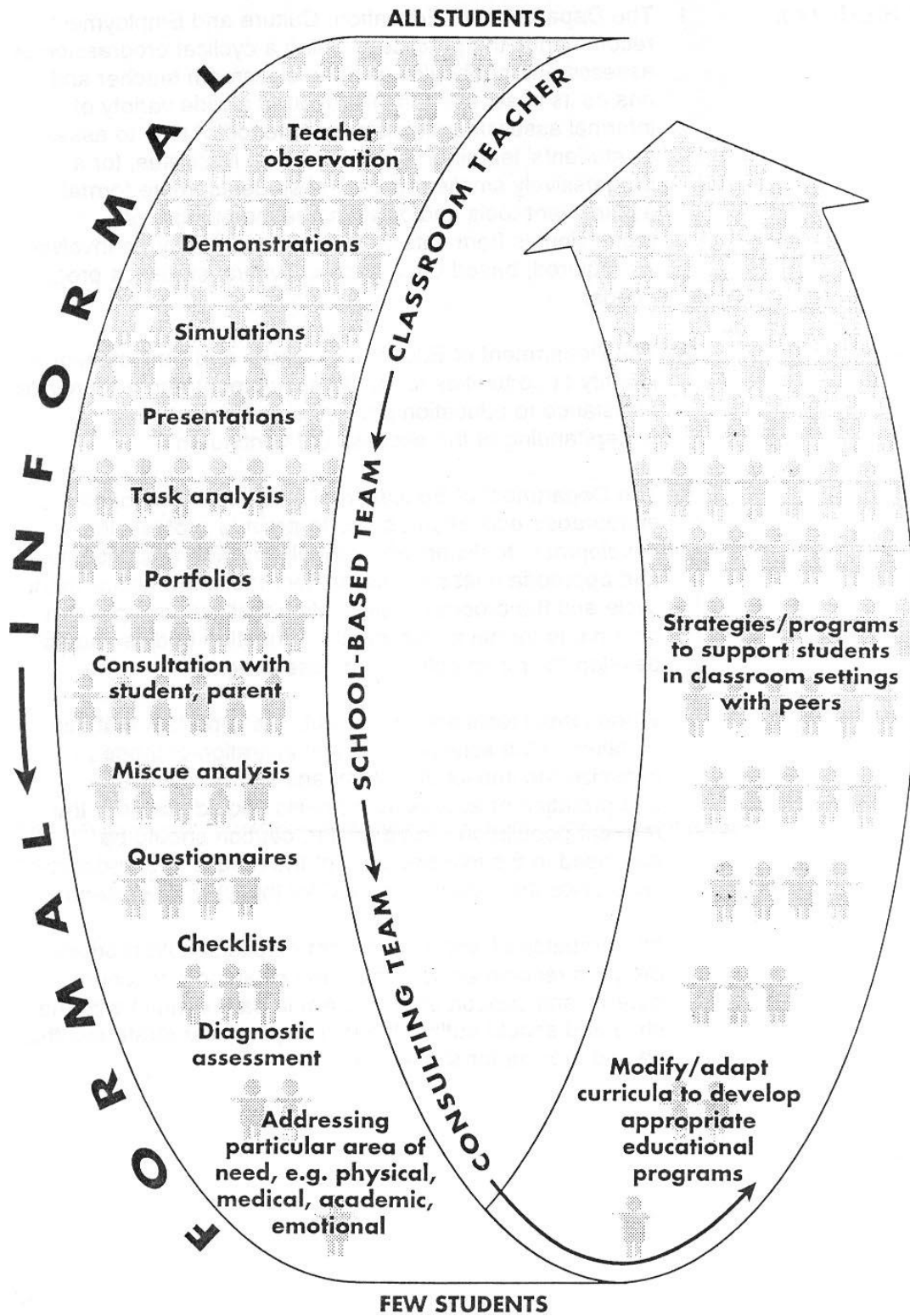
Some school jurisdictions use the term 'working level' when reporting to parents. Working level is the grade level of the curricular outcome/s the student worked on most recently. The working level assumes that the student has mastered or achieved the curricular outcomes for the preceding grade level.

Working level is different from Functional Grade Level (FGL) as the FGL is a 'roll up' or summary of the levels of curriculum the student worked upon for the full year. To arrive at a functional grade level, all the processes and the products of a student's profile must be considered.

> *Although FGLs are collected for each individual student, the FGL is considered to be a systemic assessment.*

The FGL is NOT required to be reported to the parents. Caution should be used if the FGL of the student is reported to the parent. For example, a student may have worked on grade three curricular outcomes for the majority of the year and mastered them by the end of the year. This student's FGL would be grade three. Parents of that particular student should be informed their child had achieved the grade three curricular outcomes; not that their child worked on grade three curricular outcomes for the majority of the year.

ASSESSMENT

ALL STUDENTS

INFORMAL

FORMAL

Teacher observation

Demonstrations

Simulations

Presentations

Task analysis

Portfolios

Consultation with student, parent

Miscue analysis

Questionnaires

Checklists

Diagnostic assessment

Addressing particular area of need, e.g. physical, medical, academic, emotional

CLASSROOM TEACHER

SCHOOL-BASED TEAM

CONSULTING TEAM

Strategies/programs to support students in classroom settings with peers

Modify/adapt curricula to develop appropriate educational programs

FEW STUDENTS

4. Systemic Assessments

For the most part, systemic assessments are standardised assessments developed external to the classroom. Systemic assessments serve different purposes from those of classroom assessments. They supply information about the effectiveness of education systems at the level of the school, district, division, territory and nation. The NWT in involved in three systemic assessments on an annual basis: Functional Grade Levels, Alberta Provincial Achievement Tests (AATs) and Alberta Diploma Examinations.

A. Functional Grade Levels - Submissions

Teachers are required to report Functional Grade Levels, for each student in grades one through nine, annually.

1. The electronic Student Information System (eSIS) computer program will be used in all schools in the NWT for the 2011/12 school year. ***It is important to ensure that the class lists are kept accurate and current*** in eSIS. This will prevent problems when it comes time to register students for Alberta Achievement Tests and enter FGLs. Changes to student enrolment must be reported to the Records and System Support Officer, Bonnie Koslowski.

    In early April class lists will be downloaded from eSIS and sent to schools for confirmation. It is important for schools to verify the accuracy of the lists as it will make FGL collection easier for all. At the end of April the revised class lists will be loaded into a FGL collection website. Each school will be assigned a password to access the list of students in the school. School Boards will also be supplied a password that will allow them to access information for all schools within their jurisdiction.

2. Once class lists are loaded into the website, changes cannot be made to the lists until the FGL collection deadline has passed.   If there are students missing or that have transferred out of the school after the class lists were loaded onto the website, contact the Records and System Support Officer, Bonnie Koslowski at the Department.

3. Using the FGL collection website, teachers are required to submit a Functional Grade Level (FGL) and program type for each student in grades one through nine. The deadline for submission of FGLs, unless otherwise communicated by the Department, is ***May 15.***

4. A FGL is required for all students except those following an Individual Education Program when that program contains no expected learning outcomes. These students are identified under the FGL drop down menu as *IEP-n/a*.

5. FGLs are collected for the subject areas of:

    English Language Arts for all students in grades one through nine, including Immersion and French Firs Language students. The Department is to be advised if students in French Immersion and French First Language are not receiving instruction in English Language Arts.

French Language Arts for students in the French Immersion Program

Français for French First Language students

Mathematics for students receiving Mathematics instruction in the English language

Mathématiques for students in French Immersion and French First Language programs

Aboriginal Language for students in an Aboriginal Language Immersion Program.

6. In accordance with the Student Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting (SAER) Directive, FGLs are also to be entered on to the student's cumulative record.

B. Functional Grade Level - Determination

The NWT curricular outcomes for each subject are used to determine FGLs. A FGL is a summation of the grade level of curriculum outcomes the student worked on for most of the yea. The FGLs of students, as a group, give the Department and education authority information on student progress at a class, school, education council/authority, cohort and territory-wide level.

- The FGL is the grade level of curricular outcomes a student worked on for the majority of the school year. It is an indication, not an absolute.

- A student's FGL indicates that the student has mastered or achieved the curricular outcomes for the preceding grade level.

- Mastery means that the student has accomplished the curricular outcomes to a level where the student has a strong enough foundation to be successful in subsequent grade levels.

1. COLLECT EVIDENCE. Over the course of the school year, teachers conduct assessments to collect evidence of student performance. Evidence must come from a variety of sources and be done using a variety of methods that are intended to gauge student progress in relation to the NWT curricular outcomes.

- Assessments implemented at the end of a period of instruction and designed to collect information and make judgment about student performance and achievements are *assessments of learning*. This is a process that is summative in nature and is used to confirm what students know and can do to demonstrate whether they have the achieved the curriculum outcomes. These are also known as *summative assessments*.

2. COMPARE THE EVIDENCE TO CURRICULAR OUTCOMES. Teachers compare the evidence collected through assessment of each student against curricular outcomes and expectations to determine the grade level of curriculum the student is working on. This should be done regularly throughout the school year. Some school jurisdictions refer to this as *'working level'.*

3. **DETERMINE THE GRADE LEVEL OF CURRICULUM THE STUDENT WORKED ON FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE YEAR.**
Using the regular evaluations of the grade level of curriculum each student worked on throughout the school year, teachers then determine the grade level of curriculum the student worked upon for the majority of the school year *The functional grade in one subject area (e.g. Language Arts) is independent from the FGL of another area (e.g. Mathematics).*

During the year, a student will work a number of curricular outcomes. A teacher is to use a variety of assessments to collect evidence of student knowledge and skills as s/he works on curricular outcomes. Using the evidence collected through the assessments, the teacher uses the curriculum outcomes to evaluate the grade level of skill and knowledge the student was working on achieving. It is not necessary for the student to have achieved the grade level of curriculum they were working on – just curriculum outcomes from the previous grade level.

For example:

Student 'A' worked on the following grade level of learning outcomes over the year:

Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June
Gr. 2	Gr. 2	Gr. 3	Gr. 3	Gr. 3	Gr. 2	Gr. 3	Gr. 3	Gr. 4	Gr. 3

Student A worked on grade 2, 3 and 4 level curricular outcomes; however the student worked on grade 3 curricular outcomes for the majority of the year. Student A's functional grade level would be '3'.

4. **FGLS ARE TO BE RECORDED IN THE STUDENT RECORD**

It is a requirement of the *Student Record Regulations* for each student's FGL to be recorded in his/her student record. It is not a requirement for FGL to be reported in report cards.

5. **FGLS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO BE REPORTED IN STUDENT REPORT CARDS**

The FGL is NOT required to be reported to the parents. Caution should be used if the FGL of the student is reported to the parent. For example, a student may have worked on grade three curricular outcomes for the majority of the year and mastered them by the end of the year. This student's FGL would be grade three. Parents of that particular student should be informed whether or not their child had achieved the grade three curricular outcomes and the grade level of curricular outcomes the child will be working on next; not that their child worked on grade three curricular outcomes for the majority of the year.

5. Reporting of Student Programs with FGLs

A. Teachers are required to report the *Program* for each student

Section 7(1) of the Education Act (1996) is titled Inclusive Schooling and states "Every student is entitled to have access to the education program in a regular instructional setting in their home community. "

Inclusive schooling is based on a philosophy or a belief system which welcomes all learners and values each as both unique and capable of learning. The philosophy requires a compatible set of practices so that all students are not only physically included in regular instructional settings, but more importantly provided with an education program, and required supports, that are responsive to the students' strengths and challenges.

Every student is entitled to receive an educational program that is challenging and at the same time provides the student with a realistic opportunity to succeed. Students in schools in the NWT follow one of three programs depending on their strengths and needs. In short, a student's program is characterized by the learning outcomes:

At the same time FGLs are collected, teachers are also required to identify and submit the type of program each student was on for the subject areas FGLs are collected in.

On the FGL collection website, the list of programs is provided on a drop down menu. For each subject area, use the drop down menu to select the program the student is following:

- Regular Education Program
- Regular Education Program with accommodations for difficulty
- Regular Education Program with adaptations for enrichment
- Modified Education Program – above grade level,
- Modified Education Program – one grade below grade of enrolment,
- (51) MEP – two or more grade levels below grade of enrolment
- (52) IEP

The NWT *Inclusive Schooling Directive 2006* recognizes that all children are unique and have the right to participate in education programs in a regular classroom. As such, classrooms in the NWT contain students of similar age working at different grade levels in the curricula.   Educators, in consultation with parents, and students, when deemed appropriate, need to make decisions regarding student placement, programming and promotion. This information needs to be clearly communicated to parents.

A student's program is characterized by its learning outcomes. The *Programming for Student Success* Manual supplies direction as to the types and situations for student programs.

Students in schools in the NWT follow one of three programs depending on their strengths and needs. These are defined as follows:

1. Regular Education Program

A Regular Education Program (REP) is determined by the learning outcomes articulated in NWT curricula for a specific grade level. To be on a REP the curricular **learning outcomes the student is working on are to be at the same grade level as the grade of enrolment**.

A student on a REP be placed on a Student Support Plan (SSP) in the following situations

- *Regular Education Program with accommodations/adaptations for learning difficulty*
  A student following the Regular Education Program may be close to achieving the learning outcomes of the NWT curricula at grade level but, because of certain needs or challenges, is at risk of not achieving that goal.

- *Regular Education Program with accommodations/extensions*
  A student who exhibits abilities and capabilities beyond their age peers may achieve the learning outcomes at their grade level with ease. For such a student, the teacher offers more challenge through enrichment strategies.

Accommodations/adaptations do not alter the learning outcomes of a program, but they help students achieve those outcomes by taking into account individual strengths and needs.

2. Modified Education Program

A student who is attempting to achieve the learning outcomes of the Regular Education Program may be unable to do so, even with differentiated instruction and/or accommodations/adaptations. For such a student the teacher targets the areas of most concern and has the student work on learning outcomes at a level below grade placement and closer to his/her performance level. A Modified Education Program, as written in a plan (MEP), retains the learning outcomes of the curricula but at a level other than that of the grade of enrolment. A MEP is a different type of Student Support Plan from a REP with accommodations/adaptations. The Department collects information on MEPs in three different categories:

- *Modified Education Plan – one grade below grade of enrolment*
  This is used to identify students working on curriculum outcomes that is one grade level below their year in school; for example a student in a grade 6 classroom working on grade 5 curriculum outcomes.

- *(51) Modified Education Plan – two or more grade levels below grade of enrolment*
  It is important to identify students that are working on curricular outcomes two or more grade levels below grade apart from those students working one grade level below. Students working on curricular outcomes that are two or more grade levels below the grade of enrolment are eligible to be excused from participation in Alberta Provincial Achievement Tests.

- *Modified Education Plan – above grade level*
  A student who demonstrates exceptional abilities in one or more subject areas may *achieve the learning outcomes of the REP more rapidly and be able to handle* learning outcomes of a higher grade level. This is different from a REP with adaptations where the student continues to work on curriculum at grade level.

In essence, a Student Support Plan documents one of four alternatives:
- Regular Education Program with Accommodations/Adaptations for Learning Difficulty;
- Regular Education Program with Accommodations/Extensions for Enrichment; Modified Education Program – Student working Below Grade Level; and

- Modified Education Program – Student working above grade level

3. **Individual Education Program**

An Individual Education Program is a student-specific program and is outlined in an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The plan may or may not include learning outcomes articulated in NWT curricula

Teachers are to refer to the NWT *Inclusive Schooling Directive 2006* and the guidelines for development of Individual Education Plans and Student Support Plans.

6. Alberta Provincial Achievement Tests

Students in grades three, six and nine are required to write Alberta Provincial Achievement Tests (AATs) in Language Arts and Mathematics. Alberta provides a bulletin for the administration of the tests at:

http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/achievement.aspx

Included in the bulletin are dates for writing the different assessments and how to apply for special formats. Principals should check the site periodically to see if there are any changes to schedules.

A. Registration of Students for AATs

1. The electronic Student Information System (eSIS) computer program will be used in all schools in the NWT for the 2011/12 school year. ***It is important for each school to ensure that the class lists in eSIS are kept accurate as it will cut down on the amount of work required for registering students for AATs and entry of FGLs.*** Students identified as being in grades 3, 6 & 9 in eSIS will be registered with Alberta. Registration for AATs occurs at two times during the year; October for January writings and February for May-June writings. If you are planning to have students write AATs in January, please inform the Records and System Support Officer of such in October.

2. In early February the Department will provide staff at the education boards and Yellowknife authorities instructions on how to access a web student information collection site with the listing of students in grade 3, 6 and 9 in their schools. Some school jurisdictions will have their schools complete the information on students while others have staff at the board office do it.

   a) The web collection site will have a list of students by school. Each student must be checked to ensure the information is accurate and if it is not, corrected. Information that needs to be confirmed includes:
   - Legal name
   - Alternate names
   - Birth date
   - Home address
   - Mailing address
   - Ethnicity
   - Grade of enrolment
   - Home room assignment

b) Information that needs to be inputted for each student includes:

- **Language program –** English, Dene Language Immersion, French First Language or French Immersion.

- **Program Type –** One of the following must be selected

  o Regular Education Program
  o Regular Education Program with accommodations for difficulty
    o Regular Education Program with adaptations for enrichment
  o Modified Education Program – above grade level,
  o Modified Education Program – one grade below grade of enrolment,
  o (51) MEP – two or more grade levels below grade of enrolment
  o (52) IEP

B. Excusing Students from AATs

1. A superintendent may, on an individual basis, excuse a student from writing an achievement test for the following reasons:

   a) The student is not capable of responding to the assessment in its original or approved accommodated form.

   b) Participation would be harmful to the student.

2. Students identified as a (51) MEP or (52) IEP on the web collection site and having a documented student support plan or IEP should be excused from participation in the AATs.

   a) (51) MEP identifies a student following a modified education program, as documented in a Student Support Plan, and two or more years below the assigned grade level in the subject area being assessed.

   b) (52) IEP identifies a student following an individual education program, as written in an Individual Education Plan (IEP):

      (1)   with annual student outcomes that are:
            (a)   not reflected in *any* approved NWT curricula; and
            (b)   not assessed by the curriculum-based AATs

      (2)   with curricular outcomes in some or all regular curricula that are two or more grade levels below the assigned grade level.

3. When a student with a (51) MEP or (52) IEP is excused from the AATs, this should be indicated on the AAT website.

Only the superintendent has the authority to excuse a student from writing the AATs. The superintendent or his/her designate will check the website and decide whether or not the student will be excused.

4. If a student requires special format materials in order to participate in the AATS, the education authority is responsible for completing a *Request for Special Format Materials* form and submitting the form to Alberta Education. Special format materials include large print versions of the assessment, CD format and taped responses.

    Please refer to the section on 'Accommodations' in the Achievement Testing Program General Information Bulletin. The bulletin is available on the Alberta Learning web site at: http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/achievement.aspx

5. For the purposes of NWT reporting, the results of any student identified as (51) Modified Education or (52) Individual Education Program who wrote the tests will have their results removed from the school, jurisdiction and NWT results. These students are treated as if they had been excused from the assessment. The deadline for submission of NWT AAT student information, unless otherwise communicated by the Department, is February 1.

C. Administration of the AATs

1.   School administrators are responsible for the administration of the AATs. Instructions and guidelines are available from the AAT General Information Bulletin, which is available at http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/achievement.aspx. The test administration instructions are provided under the heading, *Administration Directives, Guidelines, & Procedures.* Also provided in the bulletin are the scheduled dates for the assessments.

2. The AATs will be shipped directly to the schools. If there are a large proportion of students excused from the assessment, a full class set of assessments will not be shipped.

3. Should a student require a scribe or reader, as is documented in their student support plan or IEP and is a practice in use as a classroom practice, the scribe and reader must follow the instructions provided in the General Information Bulletin under the heading of "*Accommodations*".

4. All assessments must be returned directly to Alberta. No copies of the assessment may be made and retained.

D. Accessing AAT Results

1. School AAT results are available to authorized individuals from Alberta Learning's extranet site at: https://phoenix.edc.gov.ab.ca/login/default.asp Authorized individuals include staff of individual schools and education board.

2. To acquire authorization to access the results, an application form must be completed and signed. Application forms are available on the site.

a) Once authorization is received, the AAT results for the school and/or education board may be downloaded from the site. The results reports are provided by subject area and grade.

E. Individual Student Profiles of Students Participating in AATs

1. Individual Student Profiles (ISP) of each student participating in the AATs are also available for download from Alberta Learning's site. In the download, there are ISPs for Parents and ISPs for the school.

    a) Teachers should provide the ISP to parents in person and provide an interpretation of how the student did on the assessments. The ISP presents the results in two formats, graph and table, so as to accommodate different ways of looking at the information.

    Parent Guides are available at:

    http://education.alberta.ca/parents/resources/exams.aspx

    b) *The school's copy of the ISP must be placed in the student's record.*

F. Release of AAT results

1. In the public reporting of AAT results, it is important to protect the privacy of individual students and teachers. As there are many small schools in the NWT where a single grade may include only a few individuals and to ensure consistency across the education system, results by individual school are not to be released to the public.

2. Following the Territorial release of AAT results, divisional education councils/Yellowknife district education authorities are free to release their results at a division/Yellowknife district level only, if they wish. Superintendents will be advised in advance as to when the NWT results will be released.

3. Individual district education authorities may wish to examine school results for purposes of planning. In such cases, it is suggested that the public meeting deal with results in general terms and focus on school planning. An in-camera meeting of DEA members could be held if the school results need to be discussed in detail.

4. Parents and guardians must be provided with their child's Individual Student Profile with the AAT results, either as a matter of course, or upon request.

5. In the case where releasing the results of a education division or Yellowknife education authority would mean that the results of just one class in a subject area are being released, those results should not be released. Such a situation might arise in the case where there is only one French immersion class at a particular grade level in a jurisdiction. However, where results for two or more classes at a particular grade level in a subject area are available, a jurisdiction may release the amalgamation of these results at a jurisdictional level.

7. Diploma Exams

Please refer to section 22 of the Senior Secondary Handbook.

8. Parent and Student Appeals

The July 1996 enactment of the *Education Act* allows for the parent of a student or a student, if the student is an adult, to appeal a decision that significantly affects the education, health or safety of a student.

- The role of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is to set the regulations for the appeal procedure: not to hear appeals;
- An appeal may only be made to the body that made the decision with which the parents/guardians take issue; for instance, an appeal of a decision made by the District Education Authority may only be made to the District Education Authority; an appeal of a decision made by the Divisional Education Council may only be made to the Divisional Education Council;
- In each instance, there is no higher level of appeal;
- The decision of the committee that hears the appeal is final.

It is assumed that education bodies, parents and students will proceed with an appeal as quickly as possible and with careful attention to the procedures outlined in the Education Appeals Regulations.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

A. Parents

Parents/guardians are responsible to:

1. Encourage their child to be responsible, and to put forth the consistent effort required to be successful;
2. Attend parent-teacher conferences and consult with the teacher(s) about attendance, behaviour, progress and achievement of their child in school.
3. provide the classroom teacher(s) with relevant information about their child that will enhance the teaching and learning processes;
4. Participate with their child in making informed education decisions, including the development of formal plans such as the Career and Program Plan or an Individual Education Plan.
5. Participate in decision making at the local school level through various means, such as membership in the District Education Authority or a school Parent Advisory Committee.

B. Roles and Responsibilities of Students

Students are responsible to:

1. Be accountable for their own learning, and put forth the consistent effort required for success;

2. Be open to learning and accept opportunities to experience activities, make sense of new information, and express new understandings;

3. Provide the classroom teacher(s) with relevant information about their learning, including individual strengths, needs and interests, and ask for support when needed;

4. Participate in setting goals and determining learning objectives, and in assessing the degree to which those goals are being met;

5. Communicate with their parents and teacher(s) regularly, through student-led parent/teacher conferences and other means, about school, and about their hopes and aspirations for the future;

6. Participate with their parents and teacher(s) in directing their learning, including the development and review of formal plans for achieving their goals, such as the Career and Program Plan or Individual Education Plan;

7. Participate with their parents and teacher(s) in making informed decisions about their learning, such as selecting appropriate courses and course sequences;

8. Participate in decision making at the classroom or local school level through various means, such as membership in the student council, town council or local aboriginal organization(s).

C. Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers

Teachers are responsible to:

1. Develop classroom based assessments in relation to the outcomes stated in the NWT curriculum for the subject/course;

2. Advise students about subject area expectations and review assessments and scoring criteria with them;

3. Provide all students with opportunities to demonstrate, **in a variety of ways**, and reflective of different learning styles and world-views, what they know or can do;

4. Perform, over the course of the school year, a variety of assessments to obtain a complete profile of a student's knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities;

5. Perform a balance of formative assessment to determine what students need to learn and summative assessments to establish what students have learned

6. Apply sound instructional, assessment, evaluation and reporting practices in their classrooms that promote **validity**, **reliability** and **fairness** to all students;

7. Ensure that assessment methods are free from bias that may arise from culture, ethnicity, gender, developmental stage, socio-economic background, and language;

8. Learn about students' strengths and needs through ongoing observation and listening;

9. Identify students with possible physical, social, emotional or intellectual needs which may impede learning, and provide support or refer for diagnostic assessment as required;

10. Provide support, in collaboration with education team as required, in order that all students can experience success;

11. Seek information from parents to gain a better understanding of the most appropriate learning experiences and assessment methods for their child;

12. Engage students and their parents in identifying learning goals and objectives, and involve them in the process of measuring the degree to which these have been attained;

13. Provide written and verbal reports on student progress and achievement that are clear, accurate and meaningful to their intended audiences;

14. Report on student attitudes and behaviours in addition to and separate from achievement;

15. Advise parents on ways to encourage and support student progress and achievement;

16. Participate in school or regional assessments as required by principals or directors/superintendents;

17. Participate in territorial, national or international assessments as required by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment;

18. Improve knowledge and skills in assessment, evaluation, and reporting through participation in professional development opportunities;

19. Collaborate with colleagues in the development of student assessment and evaluation strategies, and reporting formats;

20. Evaluate a student to determine the grade level of curriculum outcomes the student has mastered and the grade level of curriculum outcomes the student is working to master. Mastery infers the student has the foundation to be successful in subsequent grades;

21. Provide, in a timely manner, reports, records and data required by the Department, superintendent or principal.

D. Roles and Responsibilities of Administrators

School administrators are responsible to:

1. Implement approved policies related to assessment, evaluation and reporting;

2. Ensure appropriate classroom assessment and evaluation practices are being used by the teachers in their school. NWT jurisdictions have been directed to use the document *Teacher Growth and Evaluation in the Northwest Territories* in evaluation of a teacher on classroom assessment practices.

    a. Beginning teachers and teachers new to the NWT are required to undergo a formal evaluation during each of their first two years of teaching in the NWT.

  b. Experienced teachers, with two or more years of teaching in NWT schools are required to be evaluated on a five year cycle or more frequently should the Principal determine it to be necessary.

3. Ensure information requested by the Department is provided on time, accurate, complete and submitted in the format requested. This information includes but is not limited to

  a. Student records

  b. Attendance data

  c. Student programs

  d. Functional Grade Levels

  e. Report cards

  f. Data required to register students in systemic assessments

  g. High school courses completed and final marks

4. Provide parents current information on their child's attendance and advised when it is an issue;

5. Protect the privacy of individual students and teachers;

6. Encourage the use of 3-way conferencing and student portfolios as a means to communicate and enhance understanding of student achievement;

7. Encourage and support on-going discussion, consultation and collaboration among teachers in matters of assessment, evaluation and reporting of student progress and achievement;

8. Encourage and provide support for professional development opportunities designed to strengthen assessment, evaluation and reporting competencies of school staff;

9. Provide leadership for effective collaboration between teachers and parents in the development and implementation of sound assessment, evaluation and reporting policies and practices at the school level;

10. Ensure the use of appropriate assessment instruments.

11. Ensure that parents are provided with information on their child's progress and achievement on a regular basis, keeping in mind language barriers and other potential barriers to understanding;

12. Ensure completion of report cards to standards established by Department and DEC policy;

13. Review all report cards before distributing them to parents or delegate authority for this to a vice principal;

14. Promote the use of assessment and evaluation information to enhance teaching and learning;

15. Provide appropriate information to parents and other community members/leaders that will assist them in becoming full and active educational partners. This includes information on learning outcomes; standards; teaching and learning approaches; and assessment, evaluation and reporting policies and practices;

16. Participate in school or regional assessments as required;

17. Participate in territorial, national or international assessments as required by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment;

18. Review the cases of student recommended to be excused from external assessments and decide whether excusing the student is warranted.

E. Roles and Responsibilities of Education Bodies

Divisional Education Councils and the two District Education Authorities in Yellowknife are responsible for the delivery of education programs. As such they are responsible to:

1. Develop and implement a written policy for student assessment, evaluation and reporting for their jurisdiction, which is consistent with the directive statement and principles of the Departmental Directive on Student Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting and in keeping with the Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada;

2. Ensure that schools within their jurisdictions develop written policies for student assessment, evaluation and reporting, consistent with the departmental directive and regional policy;

3. Make sure appropriate classroom assessment and evaluation practices are being used by the teachers in their school. NWT jurisdictions have been directed to use the document *Teacher Growth and Evaluation in the Northwest Territories* in evaluation of a teacher on classroom assessment practices.

4. Ensure beginning teachers and teachers new to the NWT are undergo a formal evaluation during each of their first two years of teaching in the NWT.

5. Make sure experienced teachers, with two or more years of teaching in NWT schools, are evaluated on a five year cycle or more frequently should the Principal determine it to be necessary.

6. Ensure information requested by the Department is provided on time, accurate, complete and submitted in the format requested. This information includes but is not limited to
   a. Student records
   b. Attendance data
   c. Student programs
   d. Functional Grade Levels
   e. Report cards
   f. Data required to register students in systemic assessments
   g. High school courses completed and final marks

7. Protect the privacy of individual students and teachers; information from the assessment and evaluation of students may be provided to the Board of Trustees as a generalized indication of performance but is NOT to be released or discussed when there is a

possibility the information may lead to the identification of individual students or teachers.

8. Encourage the use of 3-way conferencing and student portfolios as a means to communicate and enhance understanding of student achievement;

9. Encourage and support on-going discussion, consultation and collaboration among teachers in matters of assessment, evaluation and reporting of student progress and achievement;

10. Use results from assessments and evaluations to enhance teaching and learning;

11. Participate in territorial, national or international assessments, as required by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment;

12. Monitor the implementation of written policies on student assessment, evaluation and reporting in schools;

13. Review the effectiveness of the implemented policies in schools.

F. Roles and Responsibilities of the Department

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has the responsibility to establish and maintain a comprehensive approach to setting high standards, monitoring and measuring actual results, and planning improvements. The Department also has the responsibility to promote fair and equitable systemic reviews of student assessment practices.

The Department of Education will:

1. Advise education bodies on the development of student assessment policies;

2. Monitor the effectiveness of education bodies' student assessment policies as part of the review process;

3. Involve students in territorial, national or international assessments as deemed necessary;

4. Provide the public with general information regarding the purpose and procedures for large-scale assessment programs;

5. Report to education bodies on results of systemic evaluations;

6. Provide the public with specific information on the results of any territorial-wide assessments;

7. Analyze and interpret results appropriately and thoroughly and implement change accordingly;

8. Share data, where appropriate and supply education authorities with summaries of information that is collected from their students;

9. Conduct regular curriculum, program and policy reviews to determine what adjustments or improvements may be needed;

10. Review curriculum standards regularly to make sure they are in line with national and international standards of student achievement;

11. Develop clearly defined learning outcomes as a basis for assessment;

12. Develop performance standards, defining degrees of student mastery or levels of achievement;

13. Recommend appropriate methods for assessing curriculum outcomes and provide illustrations.

Updates to the Procedures

Date	Changes
July 2011	6.A.1 6.A.2.a 6.B.1 and 2 6.C.