Guide to Student Assessment and Achievement 2024-2025

Grades: 7 – 12

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In Black Gold School Division, we recognize that successful student learning relies on a partnership between students, teachers, parents/guardians, and school administration. We believe that regular communication between these partners is an essential component of student assessment.

This guide will help you understand:
- responsibilities of teachers, students, parents/guardians, and school administration,
- how and when we will tell you about your child's progress and learning,
- how we assign grades/marks to your child,
- how your child is assessed, and
- steps we take if your child's work is missing or not finished.

What is assessment?
In this guide, we use the terms assessment and evaluation to describe what students have learned, and how well they have learned it. Assessment and evaluation are not just about tests and grades.

Student assessment is ongoing and cumulative. Teachers gather information about what students know and can demonstrate based on the Alberta programs of study (curriculum) and, when applicable, the Instructional Support Plan (ISP) in grades 1-12, or the Individualized Program Plan (IPP) in kindergarten. Marks are only earned through assessment of learning outcomes achieved in assignments, activities, projects, portfolios, performances, and tests. Teachers will not use your child's attendance, behaviour, effort, attitude, homework completion or work habits to decide on their grades/marks, unless it is included in the Alberta programs of study for a specific subject.

To determine a student's current level of achievement in relation to curriculum, teachers use a variety of tools. Conversations, observations, and student work are just some of the ways teachers discover students' strengths and where they might need extra help. This helps teachers shape their lesson plans and guide how they will explain a concept, to help every student meet their learning goals.

The activities also help inform the teacher's understanding so that they may assign each student a grade, course, or level of programming. All of this allows teachers to give you a clear and accurate picture of your child's progress in school.

Screening Assessments

All Black Gold schools administer universal screening assessments for reading, writing and math at the beginning of the year to help teachers identify those students who may be at risk for not meeting grade-level learning outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy. The goal is to support success for every student and screening assessments help teachers check for indicators that a child may have some gaps in their learning and identify interventions that will help to reduce these gaps so students can be more successful.

Screening assessments in the classroom work the same way that an eye screening from a doctor does. In an eye screening, your child is asked to read the eye chart. If the results show their eyesight is fine, they are not screened again for a year. If the results show that your child has some trouble seeing, the doctor will likely suggest some strategies to reduce eye strain or prescribe glasses to help your child see better.

Reading screeners consist of three short assessments, two to three minutes each, and the writing screener has students write a short story on a given topic (one class period). The math screener takes one class period. These screeners help teachers identify students who may have gaps in their understanding (based on material from the previous year) and are only used to see if your child is on track; they do not count for marks.

Teachers use this information to help plan their instruction (including lesson planning and grouping students) and determine which interventions are best for each student. Like the eye doctor, even though all children are given screening assessments, only the students with identified learning gaps will receive interventions. Teachers will re-administrator screening assessments with the identified students periodically to check that the interventions are working.

Black Gold Screening Assessment Plan		
September	**January - February**	**May - June**
English Reading: Gr. 1-10 **French Reading:** Gr. 1-10 **English Writing:** Gr. 2-9 **French Writing:** Gr. 2-9 **English Math:** Gr. 1-10	**English Reading and Math:** Gr. 1-9 *(students who were identified below grade level in Sept.)* Gr 10 – Sem 1 *(students who were identified below grade level in Sept.)* Sem 2 *2 (all students)*	**English Reading and Math:** Gr. 1-6 all students *Gr 7-10 Only those students who were identified below grade level in Jan./Feb.*

Supporting Student Success

As a parent or guardian, you are your child's first teacher. We know that understanding how your child is doing in school is important to you. This guide will help you understand student assessment in your child's school. If you have any questions, contact the school or make an appointment to see your child's teacher or Principal.

You can support your child's learning *(Education Act, Section 32)* **by:**
- working in partnership with school staff;
- providing a quiet place for your child to study at home;
- keeping current with your child's progress online through the Power School Portal.
- staying informed and staying connected with school staff. This includes reading newsletters and other school materials; and
- participating in parent-teacher conferences.

Teachers will help your child succeed *(Education Act, Section 196)* **by:**
- providing programming that is suitable for your child;
- providing many opportunities and diverse ways for students to show what they know;
- giving students who have missed important assessments and activities the chance to complete the work, as specified in the course outline;
- providing a course outline for all courses that clearly explains what is expected of students and how student work will be graded/marked;
- keeping detailed, accurate notes describing your child's successes and challenges;
- communicating with you regularly about your child's progress and achievement; and providing opportunities for you to be involved in your child's learning.

Students have a responsibility for their own learning *(Education Act, Section 31)* **and are expected to:**
- come to school every day and on time;
- finish their assignments, projects, and tasks to the best of their ability;
- participate in activities to celebrate learning;
- demonstrate that they are learning; and
- take advantage of chances offered to revise or redo assignments or tests so they can show growth in their knowledge and skills.

Our Communication Plan for Reporting Progress

PowerTeacher Pro Electronic Gradebook:

All teachers will use PowerTeacher Pro to record and communicate student assessments and provide comments to parents/guardians and students. Students and parents/guardians can access current marks at any time.

- Schools will provide parents/guardians with instructions on the school's website on how to access PowerSchool Parent Portal, view student grades and learning outcomes.
- If you have questions about your child's mark at any time, please contact your child's teacher to discuss.
- If parents/guardians do not have technology to view student grades, please contact the school to view your child's grade.
- If you would like assistance in accessing the PowerSchool Parent Portal, please contact us at 780-941-3924
- assessment. Small assessments should be graded and returned back to students within a one-week turnaround time. Larger assessments may take much longer to grade but teachers will endeavor to use PowerTeacher Pro icons to act as placeholders in the gradebook (collected, missing, etc.). NSCHS teachers have agreed to enter an assessment into their gradebooks within 2 days of when it is collected.
- What is a current grade book? As a general rule of thumb, NSCHS teachers have agreed that assessments will be inputted into a gradebook on a weekly basis. This will be done to the best of their ability taking into consideration shortened weeks and large-scale assessments. Teachers will use both formative and summative assessments to keep their gradebooks current.

Reporting Periods:

Quarter One:	August 28 – October 31
Quarter Two:	November 4 – January 28
Semester One:	August 28 – January 28
Quarter Three:	January 30 – April 11
Quarter Four:	April 14 – June 25
Semester Two:	January 30 – June 25

Formal Reports will be issued to students and their parents online via Power School. These grades are reported live throughout the school year. Formal reports are made available to students quarterly throughout the school year. A print version of cumulative final grades is placed in the students' cumulative file at the end of every completed school year.

If a student has an Instructional Support Plan (ISP), it will be included as part of the formal report. Paper copies will be made available upon request.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: November 7th, 2024 & April 17th, 2025

Parent communication is important, and parents/guardians are always welcome to contact their child's teacher at any time during the school year to discuss their child's progress. Each school will provide at least two separate opportunities per year for their parents/guardians to meet with teachers to discuss student achievement and progress. The intention of these conferences is to celebrate growth in learning and set future goals.

Parents/Guardians can book appointments by booking them online at
http://www.schoolappointments.com/

Then select the "Schools Using the System" tab at the top of the page and then locate NSCHS under the Canadian schools' section.

Instructional Support Plan (Gr 1 – 12) and Individualized Program Plan (Kindergarten):

For students who need specialized services and supports, the ISP, or IPP for Kindergarten, is a working document that is developed within the first two months of the school year. The ISP (or IPP) is a record of specific goals for a child. It provides information about accommodations and strategies a child is using to succeed. It is reviewed at least three times per year. The student and the parents/guardians are expected to provide input into the ISP, or IPP for Kindergarten.

The ISP, or IPP for Kindergarten, is updated as students show growth and learning. ISP and IPP co-planning conferences will take place at the end of September.

- ISP planning input forms will be sent home by the end of September.
- ISPs will be mailed home to parents in November along with arranging a time to meet with the lead teacher assigned to the ISP.
- A completed signature page will be collected and stored at the school. Parents are asked to sign their child's ISP as it is required for PAT and Diploma exam accommodations.
- Reviews will be completed during November and April Parent Teacher Conferences. As well, a transition meeting will be held in May and June to begin the process for the upcoming school year.

English Language Learners:

For students learning English, the ESL Proficiency Benchmarks are used to measure a student's English abilities in four areas: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Teachers use

this tool to help them plan lessons and communicate with you about your child's progress in learning English.

In addition to student progress reports and/or conferences, teachers may share the student's ESL Proficiency Benchmark. Teachers will inform parents/guardians of goals, accommodations or supports provided to students which may be associated with the ESL Proficiency Benchmark.

Grades/Marks and Codes

To decide on your child's grade/mark at the end of a reporting period, teachers use evidence of what your child has learned and their professional judgment. All marks are cumulative. When percentages are used, 47.5 and up will be rounded to 50 as a final grade only.

At NSCHS we use the following Grading Scale(s):

Grades 7 - 9 Core Courses Grading Scale
6 core courses (ELA, FLA, Math, Science, Social, PE) use % (can include Grades 7 - 9 Non-Core Grading Scale for formative assessment only)
• Percentage grades will be given for summative assessment in all core courses (0% - 100%).   • Teachers can choose to use percentages, checkmarks and/or the non-core scale for formative assessments as these do not count in final grades.

Grades 7 - 9 Non-Core Grading Scale
All other courses (Fine Arts/Options, Second Languages, Health, CTF)

Label	Scale	Description
E	Exemplary	Exemplary and consistent achievement of grade level outcomes; evidence shows in-depth understanding achieved independently.
P	Proficient	Consistent achievement of grade level outcomes; evidence shows substantial understanding with occasional support.
S	Satisfactory	Basic achievement of grade level outcomes; evidence shows adequate understanding with some support needed.
L	Limited	Inconsistent achievement of grade level outcomes; evidence shows inaccurate understanding and ongoing support is needed.
I	Insufficient	Insufficient evidence to assess.

Grades 10-12 Grading Scale for ALL subjects
• Every course uses % for summative assessments.   • Teachers can include Grades 10-12 Formative Assessment Letter Scale for formative assessment only.
Grades 10-12 Formative Assessment Letter Scale

Label	Scale	Description
This scale can be used by any teacher who wishes to record formative assessment - these marks will not count towards a final grade.		
E	Exemplary	Exemplary and consistent achievement of grade level outcomes; evidence shows in-depth understanding achieved independently.
P	Proficient	Consistent achievement of grade level outcomes; evidence shows substantial understanding with occasional support.
S	Satisfactory	Basic achievement of grade level outcomes; evidence shows adequate understanding with some support needed.
L	Limited	Inconsistent achievement of grade level outcomes; evidence shows inaccurate understanding and ongoing support is needed.
I	Insufficient	Insufficient evidence to assess.

Missing or Incomplete Student Work:

about missing or incomplete student work. When your child has missing or incomplete work, we will do **one or more** of the following:
- provide student with additional time to complete the assignment
- assign an alternative assignment
- assign student to complete the activity at lunchtime or after school
- Provide targeted tutorials
- contact student's parent/guardian
- meet with parents/guardian, teachers, students and administration to emphasize consequences if work is not completed
- create a behavioural contract between the student and the teacher
- assign an "**incomplete (INC)**" which awards a mark of 0 on the assignment.

When your child has missing or incomplete work, we will make arrangements for your child to complete the work. This may include:
- Teacher/student discussion
- Contact with parent/s guardians
- Drop in support
- Peer tutoring in academic support center or teacher's classroom
- Targeted tutorials through subject/department teachers

If your child is away from school for an extended period of time, other than vacation, please contact their teacher/administrator. As partners in your child's learning, we can work together to design a plan that best meets your child's needs including homework, alternate assignments or other strategies that will support them through their course. Homework can be requested through the school office for extended illness, etc. As well, students can access supports such as Google Classroom and Remind for specific assignments details.

Vacations:

Students are expected to attend school on scheduled school days and take holidays according to the school year calendar. If parents/guardians choose to take their child out of school at times other than school holidays, teachers will not provide work for that time. Any missed work or tests will be made up when the student returns, at the teacher's discretion.

Types of Assessment:

Student assessment relies on both assessment for learning (formative) and assessment of learning (summative). While it is crucial that students' work, abilities, and progress be tracked and assessed throughout the entire learning process, it is also important that teachers have evidence of what the students have learned during that process.

Formative Assessment:

Formative assessment provides an ongoing exchange of information between students and teachers about student progress, but it does not provide marks/grades. It is also referred to as "assessment for learning" as it is intended for the student and teacher to know what the student's strengths are and where they can still improve. Many of these activities help students increase what they know and practice their skills. Teachers also use this information to adjust their teaching, give your child feedback to help them improve and prepare your child for summative assessment.

Summative Assessment:

Summative assessment is the evidence used to determine grades/marks and future directions for students. This is also known as assessment of learning. Your child will have many opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of learning outcomes and receive grades/marks for their work. These summative assessments are evidence of student learning and come in many forms; assignments, performance tasks, projects, performances, quizzes, tests, videos, etc. Using their judgment as professionals, teachers make decisions and give grades/marks to your child. They base these decisions on what they have seen your child do (observations), discussions they have had with your child (conversations) and the work your child has completed (products).

Additional Mark Codes and definitions:

In addition to the marks from the grade scale, the following mark codes may be used within PowerTeacher Pro for individual assignments.

Icon	Label	Description
Other Icons		
Missing		Assignment was not handed in. Please contact your teacher to discuss.
Collected		Work has been collected but no mark will be assigned (often used for formative assessment).
Late		Assignment is late or was handed in late. Please contact your teacher to discuss.
Incomplete		Assignment is not complete. Please contact your teacher to discuss.
Exempt		Student is exempt from this assignment.
Absent		Student was absent. Please contact your teacher to discuss.
Comment		Click the icon to read a comment on this assignment from the teacher.
Excluded		This assignment is not required from this student.
ISP	ISP	The student has an Instructional Support Plan.
Has Description		Click the icon to see the description of the assignment.
Outcomes/Standards		Click the icon to see the learning outcomes assessed by this assignment.

How We Determine Student Grades/Marks

Course Outlines:

Teachers will provide a course outline to all students and parents/guardians within the first two days of the course. This will highlight the topics and units that students will be learning and explain how student grades are determined for the course. Please contact your child's teacher(s) if you do not receive one.

Reluctant Zeroes:

Students are expected to take ownership of their own learning. If they fail to complete a daily task or assignment, they must talk to their teacher about catching up on the assignment. If they still do not complete the assignment, they may receive a zero.

Parameters:
1. A reluctant zero policy will apply to daily tasks and assignments. Major projects and evaluations are expected to be completed by all students in a timely manner. Parent and grade advisor communication will be utilized for students who do not complete major evaluative tasks that greatly affect their marks.
2. Students can access their marks through PowerSchool or printouts from their teacher to keep track of their incomplete assignments.
3. Students may only work to complete tasks in the current reporting period. Once report cards are issued, marks are locked, and zeros will be reluctantly awarded.
4. Teachers will consider the reasons for absences before awarding a zero. Excused absences may be considered a reason to work beyond a scheduled due date. If a teacher feels that a student is overusing the reluctant zero policy, he/she will contact a parent to discuss work ethic and homework habits of the student.
5. If a teacher determines that a student is abusing the policy, the privilege can be parent to discuss work ethic and homework habits of the student.
6. If a teacher determines that a student is abusing the policy, the privilege can be rescinded by the teacher.
7. It is the responsibility of the student to connect with their teacher after an absence to submit missed work.

"Would we ever give a zero? Absolutely," said Michael Hauptman, superintendent of EICS. "But we call them reluctant zeros. What that means is, we give them because we've done everything possible to support that student to be successful, and it really is about

assessment, where giving a zero on the first time a child fails could be considered to be — let's just say, would we be doing our job?"

"We recognize that there does come a point in time where, yup, we have to give a zero because the student is just not responding to intervention or choosing to accept assistance, so we can't leave it blank," Hauptman said.

"It's a policy of supporting students first and reluctant zeros second, not first," Hauptman added. "To say that you'd never give a zero would be incorrect, but to say that the first time a child fails, you'd give a zero, is also not appropriate, either. It's a balanced approach between assessment versus consequence."

"Where do zeros start? That's a lengthy conversation. Do we give zeros in Grade 1? Do we give zeros in Grade 12?" he asked.

Academic Integrity:

Cheating is not acceptable. This includes plagiarism (copying someone else's work and passing it off as your own), copying, taking work from a source without citing the source (including electronic sources), stealing tests or assignments and getting answers for a test or assignment in advance. Cheating also includes giving answers or work to others to claim as their own. If your child is suspected of plagiarism or cheating, school administration will meet with them and investigate the circumstances. If it is determined that cheating has occurred, a zero will be applied to the student's assessment.

Grades/Marks Appeal Process:

To appeal a mark (assignment, test or final mark), students/parents/guardians are encouraged to talk to the teacher within 10 school days of receiving the grade. If they can't resolve the appeal with the teacher, they should contact the principal who will make the final decision. The principal's decision is final.

Exams

Semester 1 exams will be written during a 4-day window from January 23-28, 2025. The NSCHS exam schedule will be posted a month in advance and will be available on the school website.

Semester 2 exams will be written during a 4-day window from June 20-25, 2025. The NSCHS exam schedule will be posted a month in advance and will be available on the school website.

Gr. 12 Diploma exams have a provincially set administration schedule. To access the schedule please go to:

https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/edc-diploma-exam-schedule.pdf

Please do not book family vacations during this time.

Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs):

Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) measure how well students are learning what they are expected to learn. Results are shared publicly to show how Alberta students are doing, compared to provincial standards. Results from PATs help schools, school authorities and the province monitor and improve student learning.

Students in Grades 6 and 9 in English and French language arts, math, science and social studies write PATs. The PATs will be administered in June of the current school year.

While PATs are an important part of determining student growth and achievement, they address only those learning outcomes that can be readily assessed by a paper-and-pencil 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.

How do PAT scores affect student marks?

Student final marks will be determined by the classroom teacher and approved by the principal. The weightings and grade calculations will be consistent with what was shared with parents/guardians and students, on the course outline at the beginning of the course.

In Grade 9, the final exam category will be weighted between 10% and 20% of the student's final mark in English and French Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies. The final exam category may include the PAT and/or a teacher developed final exam at the principal's discretion.

The Alberta government requires that we report the raw scores from Grade 6 and 9 PATs. Unofficial results will be reported on the final formal report in June. Official results will be available when released from Alberta Education according to their timeline.

The Grade 12 Diploma Examinations Program:

The Grade 12 Diploma Examinations Program
- certifies the level of individual student achievement in selected Grade 12 courses.
- helps maintain province-wide standards of achievement.
- reports individual and group results.

For all 30-level diploma courses, the school mark will be weighted at 70% of the total mark, and the diploma examination mark will be weighted at 30% of the total mark. To pass a diploma

course, a student must earn a final 'blended' mark of at least 50%. More information about the Diploma Examination Program is available online at https://www.alberta.ca/diploma-exams.aspx