**ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK**

**Chinook School Division**

**Policy, Guidelines and Resources**



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## I. Assessment Policy

The Chinook School Division is a supportive, inclusive and reflective learning environment. Our assessment processes ensure that reliable and valid data is used to guide, support and improve teacher instruction and student learning.

The Chinook School Division believes that assessment is a process that engages all stakeholders in the attainment of the outcomes of the Saskatchewan Curriculum.

Reporting student progress to parents and guardians is a vital practice essential to the education of every student.

Assessment processes that engage stakeholders are defined as follows:

* + - Assessment *as* learning
    - Assessment *for* learning
    - Assessment *of* learning

The Chinook School Division believes that as professional educators, teachers guide the evaluation and reporting process.

Guiding Principles of Assessment

* Assessment is the foundation of instructional design.
* Assessment measures curricular outcomes.
* Formative assessments are a priority. They can provide differentiation and, as a

result, improve student achievement.

* Assessment is part of the learning cycle.
* Assessment is an ongoing and systemic process.
* Assessment engages students and creates ownership in the learning

process.

* Assessment involves students, parents, teachers, and administrators

working collaboratively.

* Assessment is balanced and multi-faceted.
* Common assessments contribute to evidence of learning.
* Assessment is equitable and fair.
* Assessment considers and incorporates the research on how the

brain learns and the learning styles of the student.

* Assessment is a key professional skill.

#### Procedures

##### 1. General

a. Each school is required to have a systematic and articulated program for evaluating student progress that is consistent with the Chinook School Division Assessment Handbook.

b. School Assessment Plan

The school assessment plan is part of the school learning improvement plan. The School improvement plan will be developed collaboratively by school staff and will be an exemplar for the classroom assessment plan. The assessment plan will be aligned with Division policy and provincial curriculum requirements. There will also be alignment between the school assessment plan and the classroom assessment plan developed for individual classrooms.

c. School-based Assessment

Assessment will be conducted by the classroom teacher, school-based student services personnel, and cluster area student services personnel. Assessment is used to provide day to day data for student improvement. It includes formative assessment or assessment “for” learning.

d. Evaluation

Evaluation includes the marking, scoring and grading of assignments and student learning. Evidence of learning will be considered from the perspective of triangulation of evidence. Triangulation includes data gathered from products, conversations and observations. Evidence from triangulation will inform summative evaluations. The evaluation process is to be diagnostic, formative, and summative.

e. Assessment by student services teacher

When assessment information reveals that a student is experiencing difficulties, the teacher will make adaptations to meet individual student needs and will continue to monitor the student’s response to the intervention. If the ongoing assessment reveals that a student continues to have difficulties, the teacher will discuss the concerns with the parent and other targeted interventions will be implemented.

The student services teacher may conduct further informal and/or formal assessment(s). Information from parents, student records, other service providers, and health-related information to aid the assessment process will be used. Other assessments may also be utilized as appropriate.

##### 2. Parent-Teacher Conferences

a. Reporting student progress to parents and guardians is a vital practice that is essential to the education of every student. Chinook School Division believes that as professional educators, teachers guide the evaluation and reporting processes.

b. Three-way conferences will be scheduled on two common days each year. Three-way conferences are a part of the overall student assessment and evaluation process. Conferences are to be scheduled twice yearly.

##### 3. Written Report

a. Reporting

Report cards will be developed from a template at the Division level, and will reflect the specific learning outcomes in all subject areas and at all grade levels.

Report cards will indicate mastery of the learning outcomes and marks will be determined by continuous evaluation.

Teachers are to report student progress to parents or guardians by means of parent-teacher conferences, report cards, and personal contact.

b. Report Card Guidelines

Academic programming descriptors must be included on the report card. Report cards will include citizenship and work habits. Attendance shall be reported separately on the report card. Classroom behaviours will be reported separately on the report card. Report cards will indicate if a PPP or TIPP is in place for the student.

c. Student Progress and Promotion

Students will proceed through school by one grade each school year in an age appropriate grouping. Although retention is not supported by recent research, there may be instances where retention may be considered in the best interest of the student.

Learning supports will be provided to facilitate student learning in the school environment. These supports may include: enrichment and differentiation in the delivery of the grade level curriculum, adaptations and accommodations in instruction, environment, and evaluation. All of these adaptations will be documented by the classroom teacher and placed in the student cumulative folder.

Intensive supports – Students who have learning programs that are modified to an extent of more than 50% of the regular curriculum, will require a Personal Program Plan.

**II. Assessment Philosophy**

**1. Chinook Assessment and Data Vision Statement**

The Chinook School Division is a supportive, inclusive and reflective learning environment. Our assessment processes ensure that reliable and valid data is used to guide, support and improve teacher instruction and student learning.

The Chinook School Division believes that assessment is a process that engages all stakeholders in the attainment of the outcomes of the Saskatchewan Curriculum. Assessment processes that engage stakeholders are defined as follows:

* Assessment *as* learning
* Assessment *for* learning
* Assessment *of* learning

Assessment *as* Learning

Assessment *for* Learning

Assessment *of* Learning

(Adapted from Earl & Katz, 2006)

The representation of the Chinook assessment model as an inverted triangle emphasizes the priority that is given to assessment *as and for* learning. Assessment *of* learning is important to the assessment (evaluation) process but is a lesser priority relative to the instructional focus and the time spent improving student learning.

**2. Assessment**

**A. Assessment AS Learning**

**Ownership**: The primary reason for the process of collecting reliable and valid assessment data is to enable students to become independent learners. To reach this goal of independence, the focus for assessment is primarily on assessment **AS** learning. Assessment **AS** learning requires students to have a clear understanding of the curricular outcomes (learning destination). They are provided with timely and specific feedback and they are knowledgeable participants in ensuring their academic growth through participation in co-constructing some assessment criteria.

**B. Assessment FOR Learning**

**Improvement**: Assessment **FOR** learning engages teachers in the process of using assessment to improve instruction. Data is collected continuously through the learning process so that instruction can be differentiated to meet the academic needs of all students. Assessment **FOR** learning has teachers looking at assessment as feedback to guide further instruction, not as an end to learning or evaluation.

**C. Assessment OF Learning**

**Accountability:** When engaged in assessment **OF** learning, teachers and others are checking to see what has been learned to date. Assessment **OF** learning is used to communicate student progress in the achievement of the Saskatchewan curricula outcomes. This is the summative evaluation that is required for accountability to stakeholders. Data for summative evaluation will include products, conversations, and observations. Assessment **OF** learning is the marking / grading process.

**D. Triangulation of Data for Evidence of Learning**

**Observations of Process**

**Collections of Products**

**Conversations - Process**

(Davies, 2007)

**E. Assessment Learning Cycle**

There are three general parts to a classroom assessment process:

1. First, teachers identify the learning destination where they review the curriculum outcomes and describe the learning that students are expected to accomplish. Students understand from the beginning what they are to learn. Teachers focus on assessment *for* learning (improvement) data to develop lessons and to reflect on student progress through the unit of instruction.
2. Second, teachers collect and review samples, exemplars and models that show what the learning looks like for students of a particular age range, and they think through the kinds of evidence their students could produce to show mastery. In this stage, teachers work with students to bring them into the assessment *as* learning process. Teachers talk with students about learning, provide samples and discuss what the evidence might look like. An important process is the setting of assessment criteria (co-constructing) with students; this engages them in self learning (ownership of their learning).
3. Third, the cycle continues as students present their work to others (teacher, parents, peer) and receive feedback to improve their work. Students then review the feedback, reconsider the criteria and continue to learn, practise and grow prior to evaluation. Students are now partners in the assessment *as* learning cycle. Teachers can continuously report student progress (assessment *of* learning), with the understanding that knowledge is growing and ever changing in this environment. Formative assessment is the main focus, with summative evaluation as an end to the learning cycle.

**3. Chinook Guiding Principles of Assessment**

**A. Assessment is the foundation of instructional design.**

* The learning destination is the starting point for identifying learning expectations.
* Co-constructing criteria creates ownership by students.
* Specific descriptive feedback comes from the teacher, peers and self and is based on co-constructed criteria.
* Peer and self assessment is a process that needs to be taught.
* Triangulation of evidence of learning includes product, conversation and observation.
* Evidence of learning can be diverse and have a focus on using students’ areas of strength.
* Models, samples and exemplars reinforce student understanding of quality and expectations.
* Goal setting consists of long-term and short-term goals.
* Exit slips provide immediate feedback to the teacher on learning for the class just taught.
* Prediction allows teachers and students to assess learning before the summative evaluation. This process allows both to consider if the required learning has been realized.

**B. Assessment measures curricular outcomes.**

* Assessment only reflects the outcomes and indicators and resulting classroom instruction and there are no departures from the learning destination.
* Begin with the end in mind. The outcomes and indicators of the curriculum provide both the starting and the end points for student learning and evaluation of that learning. (Refer to Appendix V for Understanding by Design)

**C. Formative assessments are a priority.**

* Formative assessment promotes a continuation of learning.
* Formative assessment does not provide a mark but does provide specific descriptive feedback for improvement in learning.
* Formative assessment can be provided by the teacher, peers, self or even by parents and is based on a set of criteria.

**D. Assessment is part of the learning cycle.**

* The cycle of assessment driven teaching and learning becomes the focus for planning and management of learning.
* Assessment and evaluation both play a role in the learning cycle, with formative assessment or assessment “for” and “as” learning being the driving force for improvement.
* Summative evaluation, or assessment “of” learning, provides conclusive evidence and a resulting statement of student success in terms of achievement of curricular outcomes and indicators.

**E. Assessment is an ongoing and systemic process.**

* Formative assessment is a continuous, natural and improvement driven process that regularly occurs throughout all instructional activities.
* Formative assessment includes specific descriptive feedback that is timely and appropriate, based on criteria (possibly co-constructed) which allow students to adjust their learning for improvement.
* Assessment and evaluation focus on improvement, ownership and accountability.
* Assessment and evaluation data can be obtained and addressed at the individual, classroom, school and division levels as well as the provincial and international levels. Chinook students will participate in assessments / evaluation at each of these levels.

**F. Assessment engages students and creates ownership in the learning process.**

* Students are active participants in assessment and evaluation through co-constructing, formative assessment, feedback and triangulation of evidence of learning.
* Assessment involves students in monitoring their own growth, communicating their learning, developing and using criteria and / or rubrics and the record keeping process.
* Students engaged in peer and self assessment become more reflective and are able to set goals for their own improvement in learning and learn to talk about their understanding of the learning process.
* When students use assessment “as” learning, they begin to take responsibility or ownership for their work and begin to become life-long learners.
* Formative assessment creates motivation and encourages all students to become accountable and work towards excellence. Multiple opportunities to improve learning help the progress towards excellence for students.

**G. Assessment involves students, parents, teachers, and administrators**

**working collaboratively.**

* + A school assessment plan that includes reporting and communicating learning to students and parents ensures that teachers and administrators collaborate and that daily teaching and learning align with the plan.
  + School-based administrators, as instructional leaders, provide both leadership and support for developing and implementing a school assessment plan. They facilitate the identification and utilization of resources to support the plan with the entire professional staff.
  + The school assessment and communication plan will be used to involve students, parent, School Community Councils and other stakeholders. (Refer to Appendix III- School Assessment Plan Template)

**H. Assessment is balanced and multi-faceted.**

* Assessment is differentiated and includes and addresses a variety of instructional methods for the purpose of assessment “as”, “for” and “of” learning.
* Assessment uses triangulation of evidence of student learning (product, observation and conversation).
* Assessment may include common assessments at the school or division level and utilize data from provincial assessments.

**I. Common assessments contribute to evidence of learning.**

* + Common assessments are encouraged and will help teachers, schools and the system focus on quality assessments and evaluations that are both valid and reliable.
  + Common assessments can be both formative and summative.

a) Formative – for learning (for improvement)

b) Summative – of learning (for accountability)

* + They are periodic or interim assessments/evaluations collaboratively designed by grade level or subject level teams of teachers (teacher-created, teacher owned assessments).
  + They are a means of collecting data to be analyzed and used in data based decision making where teachers adapt instruction to best meet student needs.
  + They can be designed as pre and post assessments or evaluations to ensure accurate comparison of student learning growth.
  + Student results are scored and analyzed with a commonly developed rubric or scoring guide by collaborative teams.
  + Common assessments provide the opportunity for new teachers to Chinook to become familiar with the assessment / evaluation process quickly and effectively through collaboration and teamwork.

**J. Assessment is equitable.**

* Equity is defined as a condition or state of fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences. Assessment has a focus on individual improvement and ownership.
* Formative assessment, assessment that takes place during teaching to make adjustments to the teaching process, provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge, skills, processes and procedures. It also allows students the opportunity to improve their learning through descriptive feedback.
* Inclusion is an attitude or belief system supporting an unconditional commitment to help every child and young person succeed in school, at home and in the community. Once adopted, the practice of inclusion drives all decisions and actions at the division, school and classroom level. Assessment is an integral part of this process.
* Assessment has clear and appropriate targets. (Refer to Grading Practices, Appendix II).
* Summative evaluation is based on recognized standards of reliability and validity.

**K. Formative assessments can reflect differentiation and improve student**

**achievement.**

* + In a differentiated classroom there is a strong emphasis on formative assessment to improve individual student achievement.
  + Differentiation may occur at all levels of learning; from students requiring support for learning to students requiring additional challenge in learning (enrichment).
  + Differentiation may include:
* Adjust the content (curriculum)
* Adjust the process by which the student learns the content
* Adjust the product where the student demonstrates what they have learned
* Adjust the emotional atmosphere (or the affect) of the classroom
* Adjust the learning environment (i.e. different student groups or use of adaptive technology)

**L. Assessment considers and incorporates the research on how the brain learns and the learning styles of the student.**

* + Assessment reflects the complexity of learning to include differentiated instruction, learning styles, multiple intelligences and meta-cognition (thinking about thinking) to meet the needs of all children.
  + Learning style refers to the dominant way of thinking, perceiving and responding that a student relies on in a learning situation.
  + Assessment considers the theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983).

**M. Assessment is a key professional skill.**

* Assessment becomes the critical piece that causes students and teachers to reflect on learning and the ongoing refinement of practice, process and procedures.
* Assessment practice has a focal point on the use of research and data and therefore requires professional development support to enhance teachers’ understanding of the concepts, analysis of data and application of assessment and instruction practices.

**4. School-Based Assessment and Evaluation**

**A. Assessment**

Assessment is typically conducted by the classroom teacher, school-based student services personnel, and cluster area student services personnel. Formative assessment is most often used to provide day to day data for student improvement. Assessment as a general rule is not a part of the evaluation process but some parts of formative assessment can be included if it would be beneficial to the student.

**B. Evaluation**

Evaluation is most often referred to as summative evaluation and includes the marking, scoring and grading of assignments and student learning. Evidence of learning should be considered from the perspective of triangulation of evidence, collected over time, in order to confirm and demonstrate agreement of the gathered learning data. If conversation and observation data are in agreement with product data, we know we have a reliable summative evaluation / student grade.

**C. Classroom-based Assessment**

Assessment begins with the classroom teacher and implementation of curriculum and instruction. Saskatchewan’s renewed curriculum uses a model of teaching and learning that integrates curriculum, instruction and assessment. The curriculum strives to use inquiry and deeper understanding as a basis for instruction and learning.

The classroom teacher uses a variety of information gathering processes and tools to monitor each student’s progress, interests, and responsiveness to instructional approaches, materials and the environment. The collection of student data from multiple sources collected over time is vital to reliable and accurate grading practices. Providing students the flexibility and opportunity to work and demonstrate evidence of their learning that reflects their strengths is also vital to accurate grading practices.

Comprehensive and current record keeping on expectations as well as student progress is critical for instructional planning (assessment), evaluation, and reporting to parents. The data collected should have a developmental focus that allows students the opportunity to demonstrate their learning related to outcomes (evaluation).

The products (things students create), observations (observed learning) and conversations (discussing learning with the student) that need to be used as sources of evidence of learning can include the following and contribute to triangulation of assessment data. (Refer to Appendix VI).

**III. Procedures and Guidelines**

**1. Student Assessment and Evaluation**

**A. School Assessment Plan**

The school assessment plan is part of the school learning improvement plan (*Foundations for Learning* document). The plan is developed collaboratively by school staff and will be an exemplar for the classroom assessment plan. The assessment plan needs to be aligned with Division policy and provincial curriculum requirements. Alignment also needs to occur between the school assessment plan and the classroom assessment plan developed for individual classrooms. The plan needs to be reviewed and communicated to stakeholders on a yearly basis. (Refer to Appendix III for an assessment plan template and sample)

**B. Assessment and Evaluation Dictate Instruction**

All assessment and evaluation should reflect curriculum outcomes and indicators. Teachers need to integrate curriculum, instruction and assessment using the Understanding by Design process to plan for quality instruction. (Appendix V)

When assessment information reveals that a student is experiencing difficulties, the teacher makes adaptations to meet individual student needs and continues to monitor the student’s response to the intervention. If ongoing assessment reveals that a student continues to have difficulties despite the classroom-based interventions, the teacher discusses the concerns with the parent and other targeted interventions will be implemented.

**C. Assessment by Student Services Teachers**

The student services teacher may conduct further informal and/or formal assessments. This typically starts with a classroom observation and review of information provided by the classroom teacher. In addition, the student services teacher synthesizes information from parents, student records, other service providers, and health-related information to aid the assessment process. Other assessments that may be provided by the student services teacher include:

* Achievement testing using criterion-referenced or norm-referenced assessment.
* Instruction for the purposes of error analysis and response to specific instructional approaches.
* Systematic observation of behaviour and functional behavioural analysis in collaboration with classroom teacher and parent.
* Social skills checklists.
* Behavioural checklists.
* Interviews (with student and/or parent).

**D. Assessment by Cluster Area Student Services Team**

When further information is required to assist in planning or evaluating the student’s program, a referral is made to the cluster area student services team. Depending on the nature of the student and family needs, further assessment and intervention may be provided by one or more of the following:

* Educational psychologist
* Speech-language pathologist
* Student service counselor
* Youth worker
* Occupational therapist
* Curriculum Coordinator

**2. Reporting to Parents**

**A. Reporting Terms**

* For elementary and middle years grades, report cards are traditionally sent home a minimum of three terms.
* For high school programs reporting shall occur a minimum of three times per semester.

**B. Report Cards**

i) Report Card Guidelines:

* Academic programming descriptors will be included on the report card (PPPs / TIPs).
* Report cards shall include citizenship and work habits.
* Attendance shall be reported separately on the report card.
* Classroom behaviours shall be reported separately on the report card.

ii) Kindergarten report cards are to reflect their unique program.

iii) Report cards will be developed from a template at the Division level, with input from teachers and will reflect the specific learning outcomes in all subject areas.

iv) K – 9 reporting will use a criterion-referenced system for reporting achievement and citizenship and work habits.

v) High school report cards will report achievement, attendance, work habits and behaviour separately.

Grade 10-12:

* Grades 10, 11, and 12 will report using percentages.
* Final mark reporting – 46%, 47%, 48%, 49%:
  + Marks of 46% may be recorded as such
  + Marks of 47%, 48%, 49% are to be recorded as a mark of 50%

**C. Student, Parent, Teacher Conferences**

* Student led conferences are a part of the overall student assessment and evaluation process along with report cards and other school – student / parent communication processes. (See Appendix VIII for information related to student led conferences)
* Every effort shall be made to have meaningful engagement related to student learning, with parents and students on a regular basis. Student led conferences need to be planned by school staffs and focus on explaining and improving student learning.
* Student led conferences will be scheduled on two common days each year. Schools may choose to schedule the conferences for a full day, a half day and an evening or two evenings.
* Communication with parents should not be limited to student led conferences. Schools should consider developing a yearly communication plan with parents and the community.

**D. Connecting Assessment and Evaluation to Reporting**

Report cards will indicate the mastery of the learning outcomes in subject areas. This is consistent with the course outline / assessment plan / learning destination presented at the beginning of the unit / semester / year and will reflect the following:

* Mastery of learning outcomes and indicators.
* Marks will be determined by continuous evaluation and this process will be communicated within the School Assessment Plan.

**E. Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting**

* Teachers will use evidence of learning that supports the most accurate judgment about student achievement of the learning outcomes.
* Final evaluation (grading) could be comprehensive and may be administered to students in several different forms (tests or assignments) to allow students to demonstrate their learning based on their strengths. When learning is developmental, the most recent evaluation evidence may be considered reliable as long as triangulated data aligns. As a general rule a final exam should not be worth more than 25% of the final mark, although this may be adapted for individual cases.
* Recommends (exemption from writing the final exam) will not be used in the Chinook School Division.
* There should always be consequences for academic dishonesty that includes cheating or plagiarism. Chinook School Division does not condone academic dishonesty. Students who have been found to be cheating or plagiarizing will have their behaviour addressed by school policy.
* Homework is an individual teacher’s choice. It is defined as an assignment given to a student to be completed outside the regular class period. Completion of homework should not be considered in the evaluation process. It is recommended that homework be limited.
* Various types of evaluation (exams / assignments) during the final exam week may be used at the grade 10, 11 and 12 levels. Scheduling the evaluations in gyms may be necessary however teachers should consider other settings that are familiar to the students.
* Zeros will not be used to reflect student achievement unless a school based intervention process has been tried and a student has not demonstrated evidence of learning. They may then be used for individual assignments but never for term or year end marks because triangulation of data ensures that term or year end marks are available.

When teachers are dealing with intentional non-learners (students have chosen to opt out of learning), they may use a variation of supplemental interventions that could include:

* Mandatory study hall;
* Mandatory homework help;
* Frequent progress reports;
* Study-skills classes;
* Goal setting and career planning support;
* Targeted rewards;
* Parent contact;
* Alternative ways to demonstrate learning.

**F. Student Progress and Promotion**

The belief of the Chinook School Division is that students have the right to be educated in an age appropriate and inclusive environment. All students will proceed through the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education curricula according to their individual capabilities.

Retention is not supported by research and will not be generally supported in practice in the Chinook School Division. Extenuating circumstances may occur that require some students to be retained in a grade for an additional period of time.

Learning supports will be provided to facilitate student learning in the school environment. These supports may include:

* Differentiation which includes adaptations and enrichment in the delivery of the grade level curriculum.
* Adaptations and accommodations (instruction, environment, evaluation). These must be documented by the classroom teacher and placed in the Cum file (TIPP – Teacher Instructional Program Plan).
* Intensive supports. E will be included within e a PPP (Personal Program Plan) which is developed with guidelines from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education and Chinook School Division (Chinook Student Service Manual). Support from Student Services may be required.

**3. Assessment Related to Differentiated Instruction**

When assessment information reveals that a student is experiencing difficulties, the teacher makes adaptations to meet individual student needs and continues to monitor the student’s response to the intervention. If the ongoing assessment reveals that a student continues to have difficulties despite the classroom-based interventions, the teacher discusses the concerns with the parent and submits a pre-referral to the student services teacher.

When the assessment information reveals that the student is not being challenged with the regular program, then enrichment needs to be a part of the learning process for that student.

**IV. Communication**

**A. Report Cards**

Reporting student progress to parents and guardians is a vital practice that is essential to the education of every student. Chinook School Division believes that as professional educators, teachers guide the evaluation and reporting processes.

Report cards will be developed from a template at the Division level, with input from teachers and in time, will reflect the specific learning outcomes in all subject areas and at all grade levels.

**B. Reporting for Personal Program Plans (PPP)**

The following practices will be used for reporting when a PPP for a student is in place:

* The report card indicates that the student is working on a PPP in the specific subject area(s) and includes comments on progress on the specific objectives of the PPP as well as comments on progress within the broader content of classroom activities and curricula.
* The SMART goal on the PPP provides the basis for precise assessment of progress.
* SMART goals are used to report to parents.
* Comments may also be provided through an additional brief written report inserted in the report card.
* Other professional Student Services personnel who are responsible for providing a portion of the student’s educational program may also provide a written report on the student’s progress for inclusion in the report completed by the classroom teacher

**C. Communication Plan**

Schools should consider developing a yearly communication plan that will deal with report cards, students lead conferences, communication with parents regarding curriculum, instruction and assessment changes. Additional pieces to the communication plan should also be included.

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