

## Assessment in Schools Today

A Guide for Elementary and Secondary Students and their Parents/Guardians



### Revised Assessment Policies for Schools in Ontario

In May 2010, the Ontario Ministry of Education released the 1st Edition of *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools (Grades 1-12)*. The purpose of this policy document is to:

- update, clarify, consolidate, and coordinate policy; and
- achieve fairness, transparency, equity, and consistency across the province in the assessment, evaluation, and reporting of student learning.

Assessment, evaluation and reporting has changed as a result of the Ministry of Education's new policy document. Some key changes include:

- new report cards for elementary and secondary students;
- renewed focus on learning and growth supported by fair and more transparent methods of evaluating student work;
- clear and ongoing communication with parents/guardians throughout the school year; and
- balancing the responsibilities of learning and success between students and teachers.

All student learning is based on curriculum expectations set by the Ontario Ministry of Education. Every teacher in Ontario designs instruction around this common curriculum combined with knowledge of their learners and learning, and knowledge of teaching skills and strategies. Student achievement is evaluated in relation to provincially determined performance standards outlined in the achievement chart.

*"The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning."  
(Growing Success, p6)*

Assessment that supports student learning has a variety of purposes and specific terms to explain those purposes.

**Assessment** is the process of gathering information that reflects how well a student is learning the curriculum expectations of a grade or course.

When teachers use this information to adjust their instruction, select appropriate resources and provide feedback that supports learning, they are engaged in **assessment for learning** practices.

When students use this information to monitor their own growth, set individual goals for improvement and provide feedback to their classmates, they are engaged in **assessment as learning** practices.

When students submit their work to be judged by their teacher against the achievement chart, the teachers are engaged in **assessment of learning**.

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## Active Role of Learners

Students benefit from being active participants in their own learning and assessment.

To help students reach provincial standards in every grade and subject, teachers clarify learning goals with students. When students know what is expected from them and what successful demonstration of learning looks like, they are more likely to be successful.

Teachers work with students and parents/guardians to help them have a clear picture of success while at the same time developing learning skills and work habits necessary to support life-long learning.

Assessment, evaluation and reporting practices in the York Region District School Board are designed to help our learners to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable achievement, personal well-being and full participation in an interconnected and changing world community.

## Students and Teachers Are Partners

Teachers and students work in learning partnerships when students are engaged and have opportunities to:

- create clearly stated criteria;
- assess their own progress;
- make adjustments;
- reflect on their learning; and
- set individual goals for learning.

Teachers involve students in their learning as they provide opportunities to:

- identify and clarify learning goals and success criteria;
- gather information about student learning through listening to classroom discussions and other active learning tasks;
- provide specific and timely feedback during the learning that helps students succeed;
- engage students as learning resources for one another; and
- help students to be active learners who problem-solve, think critically, celebrate growth and build upon strengths during their ongoing learning.

## Important Role of Parents and Guardians

Parental guidance, encouragement, and support have a positive effect on student learning.

Here are some strategies you may wish to consider when supporting your child.

- Invite your child to share what he/she is learning and what criteria will be used to assess his/her progress.
- Encourage your child to share his/her school work with you and explain how he/she is using teacher and peer feedback to improve and set individual learning goals.
- Take advantage of opportunities to communicate and / or meet with your child's teacher(s) to learn about your child's progress, the curriculum, and become involved in the school.
- Encourage a regular homework time with limited distractions.
- Establish appropriate times for phone calls, and leisure time on computers and electronic games.

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## Resources

[\*Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools \(Grades 1-12\)\*](#) is available from [The Ontario Ministry of Education's website](#).

For more tips and information about how your engagement supports your child's learning visit the [Ministry of Education Parents Resources site](#).

