

# Student Evaluation Policy

## Definitions of Terms

- **Achievement** - a student's demonstration of knowledge, skills and attitudes relative to grade level learner outcomes in the Alberta programs of study or in Individualized Program Plans (IPPs).
- **Assessment** - the process of gathering, from a variety of sources, information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the Alberta programs of study.
- **Evaluation** - the process of judging the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria and assigning a value to represent that quality. Evaluation is based on assessments of learning that provide data on student achievement at strategic times throughout the course, often at the end of a period of learning.
- **Formative Assessment** - assessment experiences that result in an ongoing exchange of information between students and teachers about student progress toward learner outcomes. Formative assessment is also referred to as "assessment *for* learning" which refers to information not used for evaluation.
- **Progress** - changes in student learning over time, measured against the relevant programs of study and/or IPP.
- **Individualized Program Plan (IPP)** - a concise plan of action designed to address students' special education needs, and is based on diagnostic information which provides the basis for intervention strategies.
- **Learning Coach** - Alberta Certificated Teacher who supervises the instruction of students at the Phoenix Education Foundation.
- **Programs of Study** - provincial documents that define the learning outcomes for all students working on the graded curriculum.
- **Students in Need of Specialized Supports and Services** - students in need of special education programming because of behavioral, communicational, intellectual, learning or physical characteristics or a combination of those characteristics. An IPP is created for all students in need of specialized support and services.
- **Summative Assessment** - the process of collecting and interpreting evidence for the purpose of evaluation. This is also known as "assessment of learning" which refers to information used for evaluation.

## References

The Phoenix Education Foundation offers two significantly different educational programs to students, BlendEd / Online and Home Education. As a result some practices will apply to good assessment standards generally and some will be program specific. This policy references the Education Act (sections 31 and 32), the Guide to Education Assessment section for school-directed programs and for home education programs and the Home Education Regulation. Staff can find additional resources, examples and guidelines in the Phoenix Guide to Assessment document.

## Background

The purpose of the policy is to encourage and enhance the use of assessment to guide instruction and improve learning. Assessments provide teachers with information to help them understand what students know and do not know. This information is then used to guide instruction and provide support for students.

Phoenix is committed to ensuring that information about student achievement and growth is used to guide instruction and to meet students' individual educational needs. Assessments and evaluations shall be based on evidence of learning demonstrated throughout the school year.

Information on achievement and growth shall be related to learner outcomes as stated in the student's educational program plan.

Assessment information is required for students, parents and teachers to track and understand individual student progress and to inform a student's performance, grade/course placement and/or level of programming.

Our programs are based on the premise that parents are equal partners with the Learning Coach and student in the education process. Within this framework the parent, student and Learning Coach set targets for accomplishments and decide how these will be assessed. Outside of this framework, the school is bound by the regulations of Alberta Education and guided by the Guide to Education in regards to the student evaluation.

The purpose of this policy is to assist in improving programs, establishing and maintaining standards, and improving student achievement. The Foundation shall develop, document, keep current and implement student evaluation policies and procedures for conducting continuous assessments and evaluations of student learning in education programs that provide for:

- accurate, fair and equitable student evaluation;
- the parent's right of appeal and procedures for appeal;
- the role of the student, parent and the teacher in evaluations;
- the use of evaluation information for the improvement of the quality of educational programs; and
- timely communication of evaluation information to students, parents and other key stakeholders.

To be most useful, assessment should have the following characteristics:

- It should be part of instruction and should clearly reveal to students what is expected of them. The Learning Coach shall assist the parent by supplying the outcomes of the programs of study for school-directed programs or by assisting the parent in the development of a home-education plan.
- It should be an ongoing process rather than a set of isolated events, with the methods and instruments varied and used in a variety of contexts.

- It should be constructive. It should focus on what a student can do, clearly identifying both strengths and areas of difficulty. It should encourage improvement in areas of difficulty, linking new learning to what a student already knows and can do. Rich descriptive feedback is preferred.
- It should involve students where possible. This gives them responsibility for their own learning and fosters lifelong learning.

## Requirements

1. The Principal shall be responsible for the development of assessment in collaboration with school staff. The school assessment plan shall be consistent with the provincial goals stated in our 3 year plan, the school's performance measures, and school philosophy.
2. A variety of assessments should be used to measure progress over the course of the school year. See the Guide to Assessment for a description of assessment forms and their intended use.
3. All learning activities, including assessment shall be linked to the learner outcomes in the programs of study and/or an IPP, or the goals of a home education plan.
4. The Principal shall ensure that all assessments are reliable and valid, and that evaluation is fair.
5. The Principal shall make grade and/or course placement decisions in consultation with staff and parents/guardians. These decisions are based on student achievement and the best interests of the student.
6. Learning Coaches are expected to provide ongoing support and opportunities for students to demonstrate their achievement.
7. Learning Coaches shall determine students' final level of achievement and communicate the level of student achievement through the final report card that shall be placed in the student record at year end.
8. Students shall complete the prescribed assignments in order to demonstrate their achievement throughout the term of their course of studies. Learning Coaches shall communicate to students and parents/guardians when assignments are absent or incomplete; and communicating to students and parents/guardians about the remedial procedures that are in place when incomplete or absent student work will adversely impact student achievement.
9. Home Education parents as per the regulation are required to keep a dated portfolio of work and a list of assessments for the teacher to review. Teachers will meet twice per year with Home Education families to conduct two evaluations and review this portfolio.
10. All school-directed students shall participate in provincial standardized testing each year. Our strategy for implementing this is detailed in our three year plan. Home Education students shall, as per the regulation, continue to have the opportunity to participate in these exams.

## **Disputing an Evaluation**

When a parent doesn't agree with an evaluation, they may take the following steps:

1. Inform the Learning Coach in writing of concerns regarding the evaluation.
2. If a resolution can't be reached between the parent and Learning Coach, the parent may submit, in writing, his/her concern and an outline of the action taken with the Learning Coach to the Principal.
3. The Principal will arrange to meet with the parent to discuss his/her concerns and possible solutions.
4. If a resolution is unattainable between the Principal and parent, the parent can submit his/her concerns in writing to the Head of School.
5. The Head of School will meet with the parent to hear his/her concerns and work toward a solution. The decision of the Head of School is final.

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