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# Assessment of Student Learning

## When Learning from Home

May 6, 2021

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During this unique year, schools have risen to the occasion to support students with a strong emphasis on student achievement and well-being. As all schools shift to learning from home, we are confident that all educators will continue this exceptional support remotely. The transition was done seamlessly, and many parents, students and educators have commented positively on the switch to at-home learning. Thank you to all for the learning, collaboration, and student focus you have demonstrated throughout this phase of COVID.

This document provides an overview of assessment related information from the Back to School Plan as found in the detailed draft [Learning from Home: Scenario 3 document](#) and provides some additional information regarding provincial assessments, Nova Scotia Examinations in Grade 10, and other related items.

Assessment is a critical component of teaching and learning. Ongoing assessment guides the teacher's next steps in instruction and helps learners know how they are doing in relation to the outcomes taught. One aspect of assessment is providing feedback. This helps to inform students and families on how the student is progressing and allows teachers to define student strengths, needs, and next steps in instruction. As teachers assess their students while they are learning remotely, many of the same strong practices that are used in the classroom are appropriate.

The following principles should guide you in your assessment practices:

Assessments should:

- contribute to student learning, achievement, and well-being;
- be valid, reliable, and fair;
- be planned, purposeful, inclusive, and equitable;
- align with the expected learning outcomes, instructional approaches, and individual student learning;
- provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and application of concepts and skills related to the expected learning outcomes;
- provide ongoing information about student learning that is meaningful, accessible, and communicated to parents and students in a variety of ways;
- contain 'no surprises' for students and parent(s)/guardian(s).

As noted in the Inclusive Education Policy: every student can learn with enough time, practice, and equitable and responsive teaching.

### Student Engagement and Support While Learning from Home:

During these difficult times, it is important that we remain focused on supporting our students, in particular our most vulnerable. While the majority of students will be able to successfully transition to learning from home, some students will require support. The expectations for instruction are outlined in the draft [Learning from Home: Scenario 3 document](#). While all students are expected to participate fully in learning from home, there will be some circumstances where this cannot happen, and students will require different supports. A student's inability to participate should not impact them. In these rare cases, the Teaching Support Team and/or Student Planning Team will develop a plan with the family to mitigate issues and support the student to achieve success. The Teaching Support Team and Student Planning Team will ensure that plans to support students are flexible. They will consider how programming and services can be delivered to support well-being and achievement. This flexibility should extend to accommodating and or modifying assessments to allow the student to demonstrate learning.

Disengagement can happen for many reasons. Some of these barriers are within our power to change and influence. Others may not be. Continue to work with school teams to be sure that every student is invited to continue learning and is supported to do so. Engage all the resources available to best support students.

Supports for learning and engagement may include the following:

- EECD, RCEs, and CSAP will work with principals to mobilize a plan to support students who require highly specialized, individualized programming and services. This will be operationalized at the school level by the Student Planning Team, following Public Health guidelines. Some support staff can be assigned follow up for engaging students who are struggling with at-home learning.
- Access to Student Support Workers, Schools Plus staff, Attendance Support Workers, Parent Navigators, School Counselors, and others will continue.
- The Homework Hub for Mathematics will have expanded hours and increased support to provide services to Grades 4–12. These additional supports should be actively promoted by schools, RCEs/CSAP, and EECD.
- Students who do not have internet access will be provided with options to connect with teachers, receive lessons, and complete and submit assignments. For example, each school has teleconference capabilities; and USB flash drives can be loaded with learning materials and returned with completed work.

- Students should continue to have opportunities to engage with their teacher and peers. It is expected that all students, including those without internet, have regular personal contact to support their learning.

### Classroom Assessment Highlights:

- Student learning will continue to be assessed in all courses and for students with Individual Program Plans (IPPs).
- Teachers will continue to use PowerSchool Gradebook and TIENET as they have in the fully-in-school scenario to communicate assessment results.
- All teachers will continue to use ongoing assessment for learning practices by clarifying for learners their learning outcomes and criteria for success, providing ongoing feedback during the learning and providing time for learners to reflect and act on that feedback.
- All teachers will continue to evaluate learners' progress and achievement, summarizing how well students are learning in relation to their learning outcomes and criteria for success.
- Teachers will determine when enough evidence is gathered to make an informed evaluation with respect to what students needed to do, show and/or demonstrate on assessments (i.e., weekly, bi-weekly, an end of a unit of study, task, or project).
- Any changes made to the gradebook and how items would be assessed that were previously communicated to students and families should be examined to ensure these changes do not negatively impact students particularly those who are already marginalized.
- Most recent evidence of learning will assist teachers in making informed decisions about student achievement of outcomes.
- Any changes to the assessment plan will be supported and communicated to families and students in a timely way.

### Grade 3 and 8 Literacy and Mathematics Assessments:

- The Grade 3 Literacy and Mathematics/Mathématiques and Grade 8 Reading, Writing, and Mathematics/Mathématiques will not be administered this year.

### High School Assessments and Exams:

High school students will participate in summative assessments the week of June 14 as planned. This will apply if students are in school in person or if they are learning remotely. These final assessments are designed to assess students' understanding and application of the concepts and skills related to the expected learning outcomes for a subject or course. This may look different than previous years and can take a variety of forms, including but not limited to: presentations, interviews, performances, portfolios, exams, and projects. The length and time to complete these summative assessments should be taken into consideration and should not exceed 90 minutes in one session and should have additional time built in for those who require it. This will be influenced by the format of the final assessment.

- For other summative assessment considerations, schools are to continue to follow their regional/CSAP assessment policies and guidelines. Teachers are to communicate information on the summative assessment including the date(s) and weight of the assessment to students and families no later than May 21.
- The NSE English 10, Mathematics 10, and Français 10 exams will not be administered this year. Some sample questions for these courses are available to teachers which they may choose to incorporate into a summative assessment. Teachers will find these samples on the [E-Learning site on the assessment page](#).
- With the suspension of the Attendance Policy (see *Provincial Student Attendance and Engagement Policy – Suspension of Loss of Credit Decisions* - <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/covid19andattendanceen.pdf>) in the 2020/21 school year, schools are reminded that this also suspends any incentive programs that may be in place related to student attendance, such as exam exemptions and the loss of credit as outlined in the policy. Throughout COVID-19, we have been careful not to use incentives that may encourage attendance when someone does not feel well and careful not to penalize someone for remaining at home when they should.
- International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement exams will follow the assessment guidance as laid out by these organizations.

#### June Report Cards/IPP Reports:

- Students will continue to have their work assessed by teachers and included as part of their report card/IPP report.
- It is important that teachers focus on the quality of learning evidence, not the quantity. Teachers will not have the same amount or the same type of evidence for each student. The teacher can only consider the evidence they have in relation to the expected learning for each student.
- All subject areas will be reported on in June. Teachers will report using a grade (Grades 1-12) and comments (Primary – Grade 12).
- Teachers are to complete learner profiles.
- Distribution dates for June report cards/IPP reports may be adjusted by the region in consultation with the province if needed.

#### Assessment Resources for Teachers:

- [eLearning site in the assessment and evaluation section](#) this includes:
- [Professional Judgment and Evidence of Learning](#)
- [Assessment, Instruction, and Feedback for Learning](#)
- [Feedback When Learning at Home](#)

From the InSchool site:

- [Achievement levels P-12](#)

- [Report Card Comment Writing Tips: P-12](#)

Teachers and Administrators are encouraged to rely on the principles for assessment and evaluation to guide them as we complete this school year and work to support all of our students to finish strong and successfully. Thank you for your professionalism and ongoing support of students.