

STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING CONSIDERATIONS

APRIL 3, 2020; This Document Will Be Updated and Redistributed If Any Information Changes

In these extraordinary circumstances, when First Nations leaders across the country have announced that their communities are in a state of emergency, the BC First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNEESC) and First Nations Schools Association (FNSEA) will continue to provide information and resources intended to support First Nations as they make plans for supporting their students and families.

As schools are planning for continuous learning opportunities while classes are suspended, FNEESC and FNSEA recognize that First Nations have authority for the education of their citizens, including having full responsibility for their own schools.

- How individual First Nations choose to address continued learning while their schools are closed will vary from community to community, but it is almost certain that learning will look very different from the conventional school day.
- In many cases, learning opportunities will likely focus on ideas that families can implement easily, and that are feasible in a range of contexts and with varying levels of access to technologies, connectivity, and resources.

The Ministry of Education also has communicated that public schools can implement a variety of measures to ensure continued education for students. The suspension of in-class instruction means learning will continue in a different form for most students. The Ministry has provided guidelines to help educators consider a range of learning opportunities that can be implemented remotely, but the suggestions are not prescriptive. Intensive online learning may not be a realistic option for many students, and recognizing considerations such as system capacity, student suitability, and access, the Ministry has stated that “Transfer requests for online/Distributed Learning should not be allowed between now and June 30, 2020.”

As part of these exceptional circumstances, it is critical that students not be penalized for the physical closure of schools; they should have every opportunity to transition to the next grade at the beginning of the next school year. All students should then be provided necessary supports when classes resume, including specific interventions for students who need them. Provincial Ministries of Education across the country have stated that students will transition to the next grade level next year.

Important Considerations Related to Retaining Students

- Concerns about students being held back a grade because of school closures could negatively impact the mental health and well-being of students and families at a time when too many people are already feeling significant anxiety and stress.

- A wealth of research in the past decade has concluded that promoted students generally have higher academic achievement, better personal adjustment, and more positive attitudes toward school than retained students, and studies show that retaining students can increase the likelihood that they will drop out of school.
- Overall the preponderance of available evidence argues that students who repeat a grade are no better off, and are often worse off, than if they had been promoted with their classmates.¹

Given this information, it is critical to consider carefully how assessment and reporting will be handled during this unprecedented time to promote continued progress for students.

The BC Ministry of Education has communicated that public school teachers will be empowered to determine a final grade for children based on work completed to-date and the assessment of their participation in learning opportunities that occur over the coming months. Public school teachers are expected to prepare report cards for their students for June. *First Nations schools can take the same approach.*

As we shift to new ways of working and learning, the evaluation of learning that takes place while regular classes are suspended will likely vary. British Columbia's Student Reporting Policy allows significant flexibility for public schools and school districts regarding the content and format of report cards. *First Nations schools are also able to complete report cards according to their specific needs and circumstances.*

As communicated by the BC Ministry of Education, for students in grade 12 on track to graduate this year, the focus of assessment and reporting should be on the total 80 credits needed for graduation. For adults pursuing the Adult Dogwood, the focus should be on the 20 required credits.

- The Ministry is not prescribing a minimum number of hours that must be completed for a student to receive credit for a grade 10, 11, or 12 course. Hours do not necessarily reflect actual learning. The focus should be on determining if, and how, *sufficient learning* has taken place before the end of the school year.
- *Sufficient learning* can be determined by teachers using their professional judgement; teachers can assess what individual students know, understand, and are able to demonstrate to determine whether students will be able to pursue further learning in the curricular and content area.
- For elective courses with unique challenges, public school teachers can use their discretion to provide a passing grade if *sufficient learning* has been achieved, and if receipt of an "incomplete" grade would result in a student not graduating, teachers are especially being encouraged to support and appropriately assess the student's achievement in that subject to ensure suitable credit is awarded.

¹ Jane David. *What the Research Says About Grade Retention*. <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar08/vol65/num06/Grade-Retention.aspx>

The Ministry has made a commitment that every student eligible to graduate this year will graduate. This does not mean that students will graduate “no matter what.” Teachers will use their professional judgement in determining student marks and the granting of graduation credit for required courses.

- For the requirement of 30 hours of work experience or career-life experience, students can be given many opportunities to fulfil these requirements in alternative ways. For example, students could do work around their home such as babysitting younger siblings, household cleaning, yard maintenance, food preparation, etc. With this stated, student safety is paramount and normal mentorship requirements may not be possible.
- For capstone projects, students should be able to complete many aspects of the self- assessment and critical analysis, as well as the planning for capstone representation.

Graduation Assessments

- The previously scheduled April 2020 graduation assessment administration is cancelled. The Ministry is now determining a range of alternatives for those grade 12 students who have not completed the Numeracy 10 Assessment required for graduation but who are otherwise on track to graduate this school year.
- In addition, the Ministry is closely monitoring the evolving situation to consider how the scheduled final administration of the Language Arts 12 exams in June may be impacted *for the small number of students in the province to whom the exams apply*. The Ministry will again consider a range of alternative mechanisms in the event that this exam is cancelled or offered via alternative means in June, and will work to ensure students are not negatively impacted.

For students looking to pursue post-secondary studies next school year, the Ministry will ensure transcripts reflect all final course marks submitted to enable post-secondary institutions to proceed with their admission processes under the current circumstances. Furthermore, the Ministry will continue to work with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training and with post-secondary institutions to ensure the smooth transition of graduating students in this extraordinary year.

Suggestions for the Consideration of First Nations and First Nations Schools

Given the information described above, and respecting that First Nations and First Nations schools will appropriately make their own decisions related to assessments and reporting, FNEsc and FNSA **suggest**:

1. Students should progress to the next grade level in the fall, except in exceptional and very unique circumstances.
2. All students who would be eligible to graduate this year should be given every opportunity to do so.

3. Teachers should assign end of year grades based on a combination of student work completed in their classrooms prior to the suspension of classes, as well as demonstrated learning since classes were suspended.
 - Teachers can interpret demonstrated learning broadly and flexibly, recognizing learning opportunities such as, but not limited to: reading; listening to stories and books read aloud; writing stories, journal entries, or poems; practicing math through games, cooking, or on-line activities; practicing speaking or listening to their First Nations language; dancing and singing in the home; cultural activities; learning on the land; practice of specific skills using on-line web sites; drawing, painting, and other art projects; sewing; taking virtual tours of museums, aquariums, sites on-line; etc.
 - Teachers can assess the demonstrated learning in a number of ways, such as (but not limited to): reviewing student activity logs; interviewing students about their learning by phone or through technology connections; reviewing products of learning, such as written reports, photos, artwork, videos, audio recordings, etc.; speaking to parents about student learning activities and the results; using on-line quizzes or apps; student self-assessments; etc.
4. Teachers should complete report cards according to regular school policy and procedures, including final grades assigned by teachers.
5. Teachers should also assign final grades for grade 10, 11 and 12 courses based on demonstrated learning, providing credits whenever possible so that eligible students are supported in graduating this school year.

ATTACHMENT:

Excerpt from The Ministry Of Education’s Continuity Of Learning Planning Guide For Teachers

View the entire document at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/col-planning-guide-for-teachers.pdf>

Assessing In A Remote Learning Environment

Kindergarten – Grade 9

During these exceptional circumstances, teachers will continue to use their professional judgement in determining how to best support students in a remote learning environment. Teachers will identify essential learning priorities for their students, and what can be learned from home, and then base their assessments on these priorities. Teachers will continue to provide feedback on an on-going basis in relation to literacy-related and numeracy-related learning standards. Some strategies are as follows:

- Emphasize learner self-assessment by continuing to scaffold and support the self- assessment practices to ensure students are actively engaged and own the learning process:
 - Example 1: if learners in your class generally co-construct self- assessment rubrics, you can perhaps give them a teacher created, self- assessment rubric with directions to add some of their own criteria.
 - Example 2: Continue the discussion of what meaningful self-assessment looks like by providing exemplars for the teacher-created, self-assessment rubrics
- Have virtual or telephone conferences with your students to determine where they are in the learning, provide descriptive feedback, and discuss next steps
- Find creative ways for learners to share with you what they are doing at home and encourage them to come up with their own ideas to demonstrate their learning. (Examples may include: creating a classroom blog where learners document their daily activities and self-assessment; encouraging learners to record themselves reading out loud; or having learners talk to peers about their learning via text or social media and then send their conversation to their teacher.)

Based on student work completed to date, and the assessment of participation in learning opportunities during the coming months, teachers will report on student learning as outlined in the K-9 Student Reporting Policy.

10-12

Student learning priorities during these exceptional circumstances will be determined by teachers using their professional judgement. For graduation program subject teachers, there are many assessment strategies that fit best within the subject area depending on the way your course materials, activities and assessments were planned and being delivered prior to spring break. Your assessments of individuals and groups can be maintained or adjusted based on the degree to which regular, in-class activities and assessments can be adapted for home-based learning. Grounded in the big ideas,

curricular competencies, and content areas, teachers will assess what individual students know, understand, and are able to demonstrate. To do this, teachers will prioritize which learning standards are most important and can be learned from home, with particular emphasis on the development of a student's literacy, numeracy, and core competencies.

Teachers will determine a final grade for students based on work completed to-date and the assessment of participation in learning opportunities that will occur over the coming months. Teachers will work with students to fulfill course requirements according to their district and school plans during the suspension of in-class instruction. The evaluation of learning taking place after the suspension of in-class instruction should be in relation to a prioritized selection of learning standards which students are able to complete at home. In doing so, they will consider the unique needs or circumstances of individual students and differentiate as appropriate.