Informed Directions: Foundations for the DRAFT K–9 Student Reporting Policy (2019) and Pilot

In September 2016, the Ministry of Education introduced the Kindergarten to Grade 9 curriculum. The concept-based, competency-driven curriculum is designed to help students develop the core and curricular competencies, develop proficiencies in literacy and numeracy, and learn essential content required for success in our rapidly changing world.

The introduction of the redesigned provincial curriculum offered an opportunity to rethink the way we assess and report on student progress in British Columbia. Informed by research on effective practices, as well as thorough engagement with parents and education experts, the ministry invited schools and districts to pilot a DRAFT K-9 Student Reporting Policy (2019) designed to support innovative practices that enhance student learning and success.

Formal piloting schools and districts are trialing the draft policy, which is designed to support reporting practices that:

- communicate student learning and progress in ways that are meaningful, varied, and responsive
- encourage open dialogue between the learner, home, and school
- focus on conceptual learning (know-do-understand), with an emphasis on competencies
- promote student ownership of learning
- rely on authentic evidence of learning
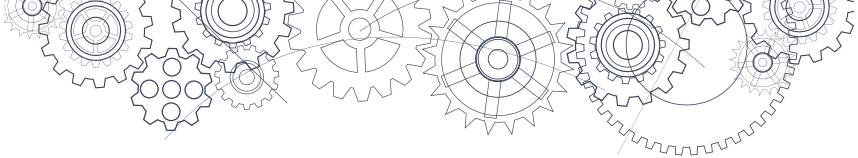- establish consistent provincial standards

Foundations for the draft policy

Provincial policy shifts in K-9 reporting have been informed by school and district innovations, along with extensive academic research, national and global findings, and engagement with B.C. parents and educators.

Research

On behalf of the ministry, the University of British Columbia, the University of Victoria, and Vancouver Island University conducted a review of current academic research and literature on assessment, evaluation, and reporting. Key findings include the following:

- **Frequent communication:** Researchers stress the importance of ongoing, comprehensive, and timely communication with parents. Increased communication between home and school has a positive impact on student learning, engagement, motivation, and effort.

- **Focus on proficiency:** Traditional report cards (with letter grades) have been found to reduce motivation and diminish student learning. Assessment that is focused on student proficiency in relation to the established learning standards leads to improved reliability of assessment results and increased student engagement.

- **Self- and peer-assessment**: Student assessment, both self and peer, leads to an increase in student confidence in their abilities, improved performance, greater responsibility for their own learning, greater student satisfaction and independence, and positive and productive learning environments.

The ministry also undertook an interjurisdictional review of assessment transformation across Canada and other leading international public education systems. Many other jurisdictions are working to modernize assessment and reporting practices, and governments are revising reporting policies to reflect standards-based assessment and reporting of defined learning standards. Broadly, there is increased emphasis on formative assessment and reporting.

Engagement with parents

In the 2016/17 school year, the ministry invited parents to provide input on provincial reporting practices. Over 5,500 parents participated in Your Kid's Progress, a public engagement initiative including 19 face-to-face community meetings and an online survey. Although respondents expressed views on a wide range of topics, detailed in the *Your Kid's Progress: Engagement Summary Report*, the focus was largely on grading, assessment, and the personalization of feedback about student learning:

- **Use of letter grades and percentages:** Those supporting the use of letter grades and percentages cited student motivation, familiarity, and ease of transition to post-secondary education as reasons for maintaining current measures. Those opposed questioned the alignment of letter grades and percentages with the concepts of the new curriculum and cited inconsistency and inaccuracy in grading practices, and student complacency or poor self-esteem as reasons to explore alternative performance indicators.

- **Frequency and timeliness:** A majority of participants expressed a desire for more frequent informal communications about student learning between school and home. There were many requests from parents for communication to take place as an ongoing process throughout the school year, rather than only at set reporting times.

- **Need for more personalization:** Overall, parents would like teachers to provide more descriptive and individualized feedback about their child's progress.
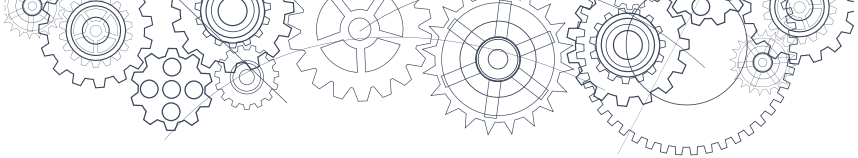
Survey of school districts

Beginning in the 2016/17 school year, boards of education and independent school authorities were provided with two policy options for reporting student progress in K-9:

- **Option A:** a flexible interim option enabling school districts to design and create their own reporting policy and structure for K-9

- **Option B:** substantively the same as the existing reporting policy (first established in 1994), with minor revisions

Option A	Option B
• Boards of education establish district policy on local procedure to report student progress • Reports happen a minimum of five times per school year • Reports include a summative report at the end of the school year or semester • Summative report includes information on student progress in all areas of learning, as well as a student self-assessment of the Core Competencies • District policies determine whether a letter grade is used on summary reports; letter grades must be provided to parents on request	• Boards of education follow existing ministry policy to report student progress • Reports happen a minimum of five times per school year • Three of the reports are formal written reports, one of which must be a summative report at the end of the school year or semester • Two informal reports are determined by schools and teachers and may include telephone calls, student-led conferences, parent-teacher conferences, and use of journals, e-mails, and other means • The summative report includes information on student progress in all areas of learning as well as a student self-assessment of the Core Competencies • The formal reports include a performance scale and descriptions of progress (K-3), letter grades and written comments (4-5), or a combination of letter grades and reporting comments (6-9)

At the end of the 2016/17 school year, the ministry surveyed school districts to determine if and how they were implementing the Student Reporting Policy Option A (Schedule 2) in schools. The findings included the following:

- Eighty-six percent of districts reported trialing locally developed reporting policies meeting Option A requirements.

- A majority of districts had implemented various performance scales in K-7, opting to provide letter grades to parents only on request.

- Educating parents on shifts in practices was noted as a key to success.

- While districts welcomed the option to design reporting policies to meet their local needs, many expressed a need for greater provincial consistency in reporting approaches.
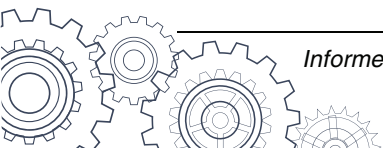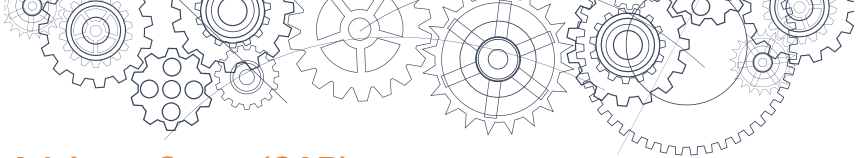
Classroom Assessment and Reporting Advisory Group (CAR)

In 2016, the ministry formed the Classroom Assessment and Reporting Advisory Group (CAR), bringing together over 40 field experts to discuss the future of classroom assessment and reporting in B.C. CAR representatives include superintendents (BC School Superintendents Association), principals and vice-principals (B.C. Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association), teachers (BC Teachers' Federation and Federation of Independent School Associations), and Indigenous educators from the First Nations Education Steering Committee.

CAR has echoed the need for alignment between classroom assessment and provincial reporting policy. Moving forward, there is a strong desire for a balance between clear policy direction from the ministry and flexibility at the local level to design reporting policies to meet student needs.

The engagement with provincial educational leaders and parents, the review of academic literature on best practices in assessment, and the research on provincial, national, and international shifts in reporting have informed the DRAFT K-9 Student Reporting Policy (2019). In the coming school year, piloting schools and districts will continue to provide invaluable feedback on the DRAFT K-9 Student Reporting Policy (2019), helping to inform the renewal of provincial reporting legislation and policies for the purposes of enhancing student learning and success in British Columbia.
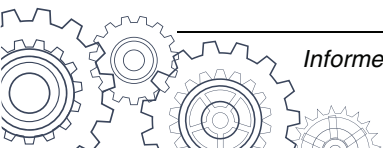
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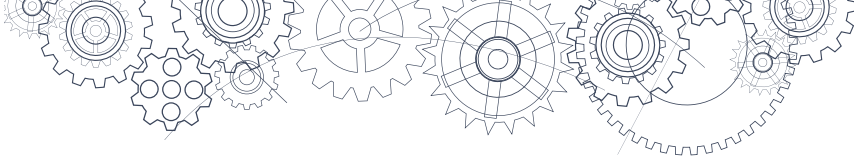
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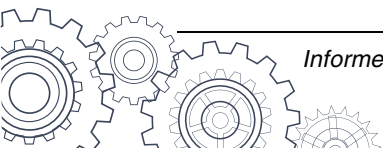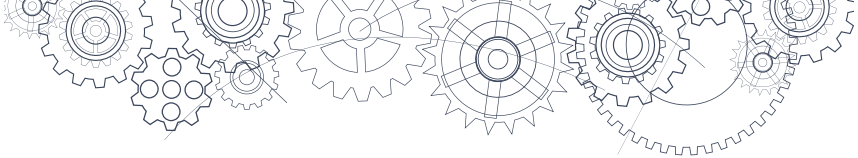
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