

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Re: Communicating Student Learning in Elementary

I am writing to provide you with information regarding an alternate format to communicate student learning happening in some Mission schools this school year.

In 2016/17, the Ministry of Education changed its Reporting Order to allow districts to communicate learning in ways that more closely reflect the redesigned curriculum and in September 2023 a new reporting policy will be in effect in British Columbia. This year, a group of teachers will continue to pilot an alternative way of communicating learning in Mission. The pilot includes portfolios to demonstrate growth over time and will use proficiency scales instead of letter grades for intermediate students.

The purpose of the Communicating Student Learning (CSL) pilot (2022-2023) is to:

- ◆ Support student ownership of learning by developing greater self-awareness and understanding of growth over time, including self-assessment and goal setting;
- ◆ Ensure meaningful communication and dialogue among teachers, students, and parents/caregivers so everyone is aware of student learning;
- ◆ Align assessment practices with the redesigned curriculum, which emphasizes depth of learning, transfer of knowledge, competency development, and Indigenous worldviews and perspectives.

WHAT DOES STUDENT OWNERSHIP OF LEARNING MEAN?

Students will be central to the communication of learning. Three questions for students to answer are:

- ◆ What am I learning and why is it important?
- ◆ How am I doing in my learning?
- ◆ Where do I want to go next in my learning?

When students can recognize and describe their learning, and set and attain goals for future learning, they begin to take ownership of learning. Their active participation is important in assessing and communicating learning.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH LETTER GRADES?

Letter grades provide familiarity because we grew up receiving them. We have the impression an A means the same thing in every class, but in reality, it does not. Two students might each receive a B in Language Arts, but that B does not show what each child has learned or where they still need support. Communicating growth over time is more effective in moving learning forward.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT TO SEE?

Important aspects of the pilot include:

- ◆ Three-way communication between parents, students, and teachers;
- ◆ Students central to the communication of learning;
- ◆ Instead of 3 formal and 2 informal reports (and reporting as events) you will see 4 Learning Updates throughout the year (using the proficiency scale) and a final Summary of Progress at the end of the year;
- ◆ Reporting within timelines instead of on specific dates. This allows greater flexibility for teachers to communicate based on the learning students are doing rather than a predetermined date regardless of where the student is in their learning process. For example, you might expect to receive two Learning Updates before winter break, one before spring break, and a fourth before the end of May. Every student in the class might not receive a Learning Update on the same day. Teachers will communicate with you the specific timeframes and formats they will use.
- ◆ Formats may include digital portfolios, as well as 3-way conferences, written communication, etc. Subjects being studied will be reported on using the Ministry's proficiency scale.

Proficiency Scale	→			
	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
	The student demonstrates an initial understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.	The student demonstrates a partial understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.	The student demonstrates a complete understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.	The student demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.

- ◆ If parents request a letter grade after receiving information about their child's progress, a letter grade will be provided (this year only).

Parent Feedback from 2020-21:

"Instead of 'how was your day', I was able to ask about specific events based on what I saw posted on his digital portfolio."

"I enjoyed being able to watch his progress and to be able to discuss what he was working on."

"It was very nice to see some of the actual work and to have context regarding what it's all about!"

"Much more informative!"

We look forward to working with you this year as we continue to develop effective ways to communicate student learning. We will be seeking feedback from parents, students, and teachers as the pilot progresses. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions (karen.alvarez@mpsd.ca).

Yours truly,



Karen Alvarez, Assistant Superintendent