

Astral Drive Junior High
School Communication Plan
2015/2016

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Academic Rewards – Coming Soon

Introduction

Only if we expand and reformulate our view of what counts as human intellect will we be able to devise more appropriate ways of assessing it and more effective ways of educating it. Howard Gardner

Remember, we evaluate what we value. If we collect simple, comparative numerical data, we are communicating that we value that which can be measured simply and in numerical terms. We end up doing what Paul LeMahieu warns us against -- we account for learning rather than being accountable for it. (Davies, Herbst, Reynolds 2008)

Grading and reporting on student learning is part of a process that begins with and includes:

- helping students to understand what is expected of them
- engaging students in monitoring their way towards success
- involving students in collecting and presenting evidence of their learning

In this way, reporting becomes part of a dynamic and connected process in a balanced assessment and evaluation system. This system encourages, supports, and is predicated upon the involvement of student voice and engagement.

What is Assessment?

Assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development. (Palomba & Banta, 1999). It is a method for analyzing and describing student learning outcomes and informing teaching practices for next steps in student learning.

Many assessments are not just tests. For students, a reading miscue analysis is an assessment, a direct observation of student skills/knowledge can be an assessment, and a student conference can be an assessment. For programs, an interview can be an assessment, and good assessment requires feedback to those who are being assessed so that they can use that information to make improvements.

Assessment focuses on learning, teaching and outcomes. It provides information to improve learning and teaching. Assessment is an interactive process between students and teachers that informs teachers where students are in the process of learning. The information is used by teachers to make changes in the learning environment, and is shared with students to assist them in improving their learning and developing skills. A good assessment program requires a variety of assessment instruments each one designed to discover unique aspects of student learning outcomes and achievement of program objectives. Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. (Angelo, 1995)

Glossary of Assessment Terms

Assessment is the process of collecting evidence of what a student knows and is able to do in order to guide instruction and developing the skills of life-long learning. This is done through observing students, collecting products, and talking with students. This is also referred to as assessment *for* learning. Assessment occurs during the teaching and learning process and is intended to show growth over time and to inform teaching and learning.

Evaluation is the process of examining all the assessment data about a students' learning and then making professional judgment about individual performance at the conclusion of the activity, a unit of study, a term or final grade for report cards. Evaluation determines the extent to which learning occurs, also referred to as summative assessment or assessment *of* learning.

What is the difference between Assessment and Evaluation?

Evaluation is the process of analyzing, reflecting upon, and summarizing assessment information, making judgments and/or decisions based on the information collected. Evaluation focuses on grades and may reflect classroom components other than course content and mastery level. This usually involves a summative assessment and is recorded as a mark or grade.

Assessment is reviewing, collecting, and is generally more formative. It affects change in teaching practice. It focuses more on student learning and opportunities for practice.

Criteria are descriptions of what is expected from students in terms of their work or learning. Criteria help students focus on what is important and go beyond the requirement of a specific project.

Descriptive Feedback is specific information in the form of written comments or conversations that help the learner understand what he or she needs to do in order to improve.

Self – Assessment is the process of students observing their learning and collecting evidence of what they know and are able to do. This enables them to reflect - think about - their own learning and take appropriate next steps in their learning. Students that self-assess become reflective learners, knowing both their strengths and challenges as a learner.

Expected Learning Outcomes are the goal statements prescribed by the Department of Education that indicate what teachers are required to teach and students are expected to know and be able to do for each grade level and program/course. These goal statements are the general and specific outcomes that make up the written curriculum.

Curriculum Alignment is the matching of the assessments and teaching methods with the intended taught curriculum from The Department of Education.

Promotion indicates that the student has satisfied the program requirements and met the outcomes for that grade or course. The student will advance to the next higher grade.

Placement indicates that the student has not satisfied the program requirements or met the outcomes required for that grade, but has been placed in the next grade based on the decision made by the school in the best interests of the student.

Assessment and Evaluation

The **purpose of assessment** is to improve student learning. Teachers assess student learning to check mastery and understanding. Assessments inform instruction and design of the curriculum. All assessments contribute to the summative evaluation at the end of the marking period, documenting how well students “understand and apply the learning Outcome(s)” in given skills/knowledge of the program.

Teachers use a variety of strategies to gather information about student achievement. No one source is necessarily better than another. Each strategy can provide useful and different information about student achievement. The most accurate profile of student achievement is based on findings gathered from assessing student performance in a variety of contexts. Teachers utilize, but are not limited to, the following methods of assessment:

| Category | Strategy/Method | Information Provided |
|--|---|---|
| Tests/Quizzes/End of the Year Assessment | *Multiple Choice *True/False *Short Answer *Matching *Extended Response | recall, recognition, memorization, problem solving process, content mastery pre and post test of knowledge |
| Learning Logs | *Reflective Journals *Personal Response Journals *Portfolio *Self/Peer Assessment | personal connections, connection to concepts in literature, understanding of story elements, personal experience, goal setting, background knowledge, written ability |
| Observations | *Anecdotal Records *Conferences *Checklists | social skills and behaviors, immediate evaluation and feedback of learning, teamwork, attitude, oral language skills, listening skills, leadership skills, respect, levels of understanding |
| Performance Tasks | *Demonstrations *Labs *Presentations *Technological Productions | creativity, end product, public speaking, group work, organizational skills, real life application, reasoning skills |
| Projects | *Models *Experiments *Surveys *Scrapbooks | knowledge, planning, research skills, organization, perseverance, cooperation |
| Written Language | *Essays *Research Papers *Journals *Stories *Articles *Story Boards | comprehension, following directions, writing skills, expression, vocabulary, style, understanding of different writing structures/genres, research skills, evaluation |
| Oral Language | *Debate *Interviews *Questions/Responses *Teaching a Lesson *Games *Reader's Theatre *Class Discussions/ *Critique Process | comprehension, paraphrasing, speaking and listening skills, reasoning, perspective, organization, decision making skills, attitude, memorization, confidence, articulation |
| Visual Communication | *Illustrations *Story Boards *Collages *Maps *Dioramas | comprehension, organization, creativity, depth of conceptualization, application of knowledge and skills, equipment use, decision making |

Qualities of Effective Assessment



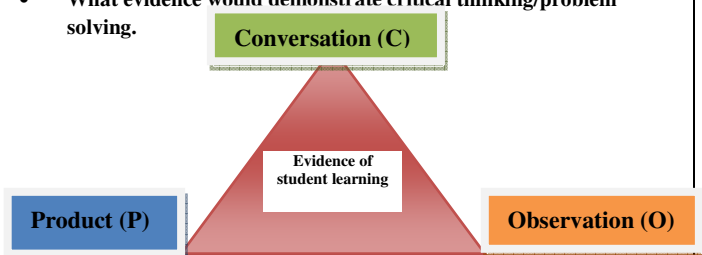


In order for assessments to be effective tools for measuring student learning, students and teachers should be able to answer the following questions:

1. **What is being assessed?**
Clearly defined and in a language students can understand and communicate. *What curriculum outcomes are being assessed?*
2. **What is the purpose of the assessment? Why is the assessment taking place?** Define and communicate a clear purpose to students. *What purposes will this assessment serve?*
3. **How will this be assessed or evaluated?**
What tools, methods or strategies will be used to collect information that accurately reflect student learning of the intended outcome.
4. **Is this assessment fair?**
Has bias been removed and do students have the skills to complete the activity?
5. **Have students been involved in the assessment & evaluation process?**
Has this involvement helped students to develop the skills and strategies to become self-assessors?

Prior to each assessment, teachers will inform students what is expected, what quality looks like and how they will be assessed.

Astral Drive Junior High Developed Planning Tool for Learning

Through our CSI plan and teacher professional development, the staff as developed a planning tool that teachers use as a way of thinking when planning assessments to check learning and providing ongoing feedback. **Planning to Make Classroom Assessment Work for Teaching and Learning**

| | |
|--|---|
| <p><u>1. Destination/Learning Outcomes</u></p> <p>POWER LEARNING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the big ideas? Essential questions? And/or powerful learning/applications students will need to know and be able to demonstrate? • List and revise in a student friendly language. Describe the learning outcome(s) • Identify the skills students need to learn to build their knowledge • How will you include critical thinking/problem solving in your plan to ensure connections to CSI and level 4 understanding.  <p>“Students can hit any target that they can clearly see and holds still for them” Richard Stiggins, 2001</p>  | <p><u>3. Evidence of learning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will count as evidence of student learning? • List assessments strategies/tools you will use to collect evidence of student learning. Pg. 3 School communication Plan for methods • How will you involve students, peers, groups, parents to give descriptive feedback and/or self-assessment? What evidence can student collect to prove their level of understanding/application • What evidence would demonstrate critical thinking/problem solving. <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> |
| <p><u>2. Showing Quality. What does quality look like?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What samples, exemplars anchors do you have to show quality • What evidence do you need to involve students in co-constructing criteria/identifying what quality looks like  | <p><u>4. Evaluation: Professional Judgement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describing the level of student achievement using all the evidence collected over time from “COP” this will ensure validity of profession judgement when assigning a grade. • Keep student information/work to share with parents when describing the learning and level of achievement. <p>Are evaluations aligned with outcomes identified/involvement/practice and time for student to understand and apply the learning?</p>  |

Research Summaries and Connections

Davies, Herbst, Reynolds: *Leading the Way to Assessment for Learning: A Practical Guide*, 2012

Involving Students in Assessment: Research Summary

Research shows that when students are involved in their own assessment, they learn more. Student involvement in assessment has many different looks and may include students:

- Co-constructing criteria and looking at samples of student work to better understand quality and what is needed for success.
- Self –assessing and giving themselves timely feedback.
- Asking themselves questions that guide their thinking.
- Thinking about their learning as they articulate their understanding.
- Coming to see mistakes as feedback and a natural part of the learning process.
- Making choices about what to focus on as they have an opportunity to identify next steps and set goals
- Selecting evidence of their own learning, considering strengths and areas to improve, and explaining their thinking to others
- Being involved in their own assessment and providing teachers with more information so teachers can better design instruction to meet their needs.

In summary, research over many years has consistently shown that when students are involved in their own assessments they learn to self-monitor and self-regulate, these are important elements of success in school and in life.

Motivation: Research Summary

Mastery learning-oriented students challenge themselves to learn. When teachers focus on learning and actual performance, they support students to continue to be intrinsically motivated and encourage them to take risks. Specific, descriptive feedback fosters interest and creativity and can lead to increased intrinsic motivation. The result is more learning (Covington 1998; Deci and Ryan 2002; Dweck 2000)

Grades, Percentages, and Other Symbols: Research Summary

Researchers report that grades and other symbols that communicate evaluative feedback have negative effects on learning for all students. Over the years, research has persistently shown negative effects are most pronounced with low-achieving students (Butler 1987, 1988, Butterworth and Michael 1975; Calkins 1991; Curwin 1978; Harter 1978; Kyle 1992; Natriello 1984)

Research shows that students of high achievement decode evaluative feedback so it provides information that assists learning (Brookhart 2001). Specific descriptive feedback that focuses on what was done successfully and points the way to improvement has a positive effect on learning.

Students with poor grades are more likely to see themselves as failures. They are less likely to succeed as learners. Further, limiting specific feedback means students have less information to support their future learning. It appears that because grades and other symbols give many students

the message that they are not able learners, they become less successful at school (Deci and Ryan 2002; Harlen and Deakin Crick 2003; Kohn 1999)

Therefore, when possible, refrain from giving evaluative feedback such as grades, percentages, and other symbols. When grades, marks, and symbols must be used (e.g., report cards), taking the time to help all students learn to decode evaluative feedback so that it gives them specific information to support their learning (e.g., “do more of this, do less of this”) is important. One way to do this is by defining grades and other symbols by providing a detailed description of the quality of the evidence that results in different grades, marks, or symbols.

Feedback for Learning: Research Summary

Hattie (1992) explains, “... the most powerful single moderator that enhances achievement is feedback... It means providing information how and why the child understands and misunderstands, and what direction the student must take to improve” (p.4)

ADJH School Goal for Improved Student Achievement

Please see our full Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSI plan) for Math and Literacy goals along with rational and next steps on our school website <http://astraldrivejunior.ednet.ns.ca/>

To Goal 3: To positively impact student learning through use of effective assessment practices.

Strategies to achieve the goal:

1. Develop a common understanding and school wide use of the 1-4 rubric using the DOE **Achievement Levels - Primary -12**. Teachers will collect and find samples to use with students to show what level 4 quality achievement looks like, aid in self- assessment and descriptive feedback
2. Teachers will involve students in the assessment process.
3. Teachers will develop and use both formative and summative assessment to improve student achievement and guide teacher practice.
4. The school will develop a communication plan to inform parents of effective assessment practices.
5. The school will have a systematic and tiered model of intervention (literacy/math support blocks, school referral process and program planning team: action steps clearly defined).

Report Card Descriptors (Department of Education/HRSB)

Using Gradebook to Support Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting

Throughout the teaching term, the primary focus of classroom assessment is to promote student learning. To facilitate this, formative assessment strategies are used before, during and after instruction to help teachers be more responsive to student needs in their instruction, to inform students on where they are in relation to the learning targets and to give valuable descriptive feedback to students on how to make improvements. This type of assessment also informs teacher practice. At the end a unit or period of learning, more summative types of assessment strategies are used to gather evidence of student achievement at that point in time.

Recording and tracking assessment information in PowerTeacher Gradebook may look like this:

| Students (15) | (T1) Final... | Classifying nu... 09/01/2011 pts: 0 | A1 model a... P-12 Outco... LTR | A7 compar... P-12 Outco... LTR | Classifying nu... 09/12/2011 pts: 0 | A1 model a... P-12 Outco... LTR | A7 compar... P-12 Outco... LTR | Comparing and... 09/12/2011 pts: 0 | Exponent mystery 09/12/2011 pts: 0 |
|------------------|---------------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Andrews, William | --- | ✓ | 3 | 3 | ✓ | 3 | 4 | ✓ | |
| Arbuckle, Travis | --- | ✓ | 4 | 4 | ✓ | 4 | 4 | ✓ | |
| Ashley, Tony | --- | ✓ | 3 | 3 | ✓ | 3 | 4 | ✓ | |
| Ellis, Morgan | --- | ✓ | 2 | 3 | ✓ | 3 | 4 | ✓ | |
| Forrest, Matthew | --- | ✓ | 3 | 4 | ✓ | 3 | 4 | ✓ | |
| Gill, Marissa | --- | ✓ | 2 | 3 | ✓ | 3 | 3 | ✓ | |
| Gray, Liam | --- | ✓ | 3 | 3 | ✓ | 4 | 4 | ✓ | |
| Higgins, Kaylie | --- | ✓ | 4 | 3 | ✓ | 3 | 3 | ✓ | |
| Hiltz, Karley | --- | ✓ | 3 | 4 | ✓ | 3 | 4 | ✓ | |
| senor, Jessica | --- | ✓ | 3 | 3 | ✓ | 3 | 4 | ✓ | |
| senor, Jessica | --- | ✓ | 4 | 3 | ✓ | 4 | 4 | ✓ | |
| MacPherson, Fawn | --- | ✓ | 4 | 3 | ✓ | 3 | 3 | ✓ | |
| McMullin, Drew | --- | ✓ | 3 | 2 | ✓ | 3 | 4 | ✓ | |
| Dakley, Conner | --- | ✓ | 3 | 3 | ✓ | 3 | 3 | ✓ | |
| Russell, Chad | --- | ✓ | 2 | 3 | ✓ | 3 | 4 | ✓ | |

At the end of a unit or period of learning, teachers pause and reflect on the evidence of student learning collected to make an evaluative, summative judgment on where each student is in their learning at that point in time. Teachers use multiple sources of evidence, collected in a variety of ways, to look at most recent work and trends in student learning over time to make a professional judgment of a students' grade.

PowerTeacher Gradebook has the ability to tabulate student evidence of learning into more summative evidence for reporting purposes. Rubric scores for each outcome/learning target can be summarized by the following setting options: most recent (teachers can select how many rubric scores are to be included in the tabulation and each can be weighted in terms of their significance in the summary score); mean, median, mode and highest. Most recent is the default setting and the recommended setting in most cases. Teachers can always exercise professional judgment and override the tabulated summary score if the evidence suggests otherwise.

Gradebook Shot Highlighting Summary Rubric Scores

| Reporting Term: | T1 | Mode: | Assignments | Final Grades | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---|---|--|--|---|
| Andrews, William | | | | | | |
| Assignments (4) | Scores | B3 create a... P-12 Outco... LTR | B4 apply pe... P-12 Outco... LTR | B5 add and... P-12 Outco... LTR | B6 add and... P-12 Outco... LTR | B7 multiply... P-12 Outco... LTR |
| Assignment 1 | | | 2 | 2 | 1 | |
| Assignment 2 | | | 2 | 2 | 2 | |
| Assignment 3 | | | 4 | 3 | 3 | |
| Assignment 4 | | | 4 | 3 | 4 | |
| Final Score - most recent | | | 4 | 3 | 4 | |
| mean | | | 3 | 3 | 3 | |
| weighted mean | | | | | | |
| median | | | 3 | 3 | 3 | |
| mode | | | | | | |
| highest | | | 4 | 3 | 4 | |
| most recent - 3 | | | 4 | 3 | 3 | |
| times assessed | 0 | | 0 | 4 | 4 | |
| Summary | | | | | | |

Understanding Your Child's Report Card - Grades 7-12

Purpose of the Report Card

The purpose of a report card is to provide a student's parent(s) or guardian(s) with a summary of how well a student understands what is being taught, and their level of academic achievement and social development. Report cards should be used in addition to other forms of communication between the home and school such as the Student-Parent Portal, parent-teacher meetings, newsletters, websites, ongoing assessment through students feedback/communication, e-mails...

Report cards for grades 7 – 12 have four parts:

- Attendance - Reports the number of days the student has absent from school. Teachers monitor student attendance daily using PowerSchool and include the information in report cards.
- Learner Profile - Reports on the social development and work habits using codes that show how often they are displayed over the reporting period. The codes are assigned based on the grade level expectations for social development and work habits:
 - C – Consistently
 - U – Usually
 - S – Sometimes
 - R – Rarely
 - N/A – Not applicable
- Course comments – A short summary of what the student has learned, which includes:
 - Strengths (areas of the curriculum where your child is having success);
 - Learning needs (areas of the curriculum where your child is still developing);and
 - Suggestions to support further learning.

Please note that for each grade teachers are given an allotted number of characters for each course that includes spaces. Teachers are given the following;

400 character's for the following courses in grades 7-9 for both Immersion and English program

| | | |
|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Science | Core French | Physical Education |
| Social Studies | Immersion ELA | Art |
| Healthy Living | Technology Education | |

800 Character's for the following courses in grades 7-9 for both Immersion and English program

| | |
|---------|------|
| ELA/FLA | Math |
|---------|------|

- Grades - Grades represent academic achievement only. Although social development and work habits impact student achievement, they are reported in the Learner Profile.

Grades are based on the evidence of student learning and understanding the curriculum concepts and skills taught in the classroom. Evidence is collected over time in a variety of ways, including work products, conversations and observations, etc.

Reporting codes are used to describe how well a student understands the material covered and how well they can apply concepts and skills in relation to the learning outcomes for each subject:

Beginning this year teachers in Grades 7-12 will use the same grades and descriptors.

90-100% - Demonstrates *excellent* understanding and application of concepts and skills in relation to the learning outcomes.

80-89% - Demonstrates *very good* understanding and application of concepts and skills in relation to the learning outcomes.

70-79% - Demonstrates *good* understanding and application of concepts and skills in relation to the learning outcomes.

60-69% - Demonstrates *satisfactory* understanding and application of concepts and skills in relation to the learning outcomes.

50-59% - Demonstrates *limited* understanding and application of concepts and skills in relation to the learning outcomes.

Below 50% - Has not met minimum requirements of the course

INS - Insufficient evidence to determine a grade

IP - In progress until all components of the course are completed.

NA- Not applicable at this time. (Used only for reporting in strands in Mathematics grades 7 & 8)

For grades 7-8, in English Language Arts, French Language Arts and Mathematics students will continue to receive a grade for each major area of the curriculum.

- In English Language Arts the major areas for evaluation are: Speaking and Listening, Reading and Viewing, and Writing and other Ways of Representing. In French Language Arts the major areas for evaluation are: Speaking and Listening, Reading and Viewing, Writing and Other Ways of Representing, and Appreciation of the French Language and Cultural Diversity.
- In Mathematics, the major areas for evaluation are: Number (Number sense and Operation sense), Patterns and Relations, Measurement, Geometry, and Data Management and Probability.

Teachers' communication plans and year plan/course outline will give you information on course outcomes, and assessment and evaluation processes that the teacher uses.

Department of Education: Achievement Levels- Primary -12

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Level 4 | In-depth knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Able to extend the application of related skills to a variety of contexts. |
| Level 3 | Competent knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Appropriate application of the related skills. |
| Level 2 | Developing knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Developing in the application of the related skills. |
| Level 1 | Limited knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Limited application of related skills. |



**Astral Drive Junior High - School Evaluation Rubric
(Student Version) of the 1-4 Achievement Levels**

| Letter Grade | Description of student on expected learning outcomes and program expectations |
|--------------|--|
| (4) | In-depth knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Able to extend the application of related skills to a variety of contexts. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the topic. • I can think critically and problem-solve to apply what I've learned to new situations. • I can do it well and on my own. |
| (3) | Competent knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Appropriate application of the related skills. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I get it. • I have good understanding. • I can do everything that was taught. • I know everything that was taught. |
| (2) | Developing knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Developing in the application of the related skills. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand some of it. • I am almost there. • I can do it with support. |
| (1) | Limited knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Limited application of related skills. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't get it. |

This rubric was created with student involvement to ensure students understand each component of the achievement level. We continue to work with student and provide samples using this rubric to refine it so students know what quality looks like, develop clear expectations/criteria and continue to involve students in the process of self/peer – assessing. The outcome is that students are then able to recognize quality and give both themselves and others feedback.

All Teachers at ADJH are using achievement levels as described in the new DOE provincial rubric with achievement levels 1-4, scores of 3 and 4 denote levels of student achievement that is meeting the outcomes and scores of 1 and 2 denote levels of student achievement that do not yet meet the outcomes. PLEASE NOTE: a 2 on student assessments is not equal to a 50% in any way, as a 1 is not 25% or a 3 is not equal to 75%. Please see pg. 13 to read what a 1-4 looks like.

Our 1-4 at ADJH is based on the quality of work and level of understanding the student demonstrates. A 4 demonstrates that the student is able to communicate their understanding to new and novel situations – showing application and analysis for example.

In PowerTeacher Gradebook, letter grades can be determined by examining the **summary outcome scores** and the ADJH school wide evaluation rubric. Please note, with all grades 7-9; teachers collect ongoing and various forms of evidence of student learning other than what is posted in grade book. Examples included but not limited to practice questions, brainstorming, observations, conversations/conferencing, group work, peer/self-assessment etc... (see page 4) Teachers will consider all evidence of students demonstrating what they know and are able to do along with recorded marks from powerschool to determine a final grade of achievement for each student.

All Grades 7-9 will use the ADJH school wide evaluation rubric; the calculation of a percentage grade using the summary of rubric scores.

Convert all summary rubric scores to points and use total points/total possible points to convert to a percentage. (**Note:** individual rubric scores should never be converted to points or percentages on individual assessment events. For classroom assessment the purpose of rubric scores, which are linked to specific descriptors relevant to the curriculum being addressed, is to feed student learning forward. For reporting purposes at the end of a period of learning, summary rubric scores are used more generally to give a summative evaluation of overall student achievement.)

Ex: If 10 outcomes were addressed during a reporting period and all were equal weight, then the total possible points would be 40 (10 outcomes multiplied by a possible summary rubric score of 4 = 40). If the total of the actual summary rubric scores is 36, then $36/40 = 90\%$. Use Excel and professional judgment to calculate the final %

From all staff at ADJH we truly hope this information is helpful. We are in the revision phase and currently asking for student feedback and we would like to extend this to our parents/guardians. We welcome feedback and any questions you may have so we can communicate effectively about student learning and most importantly develop independent, life long learners that know their strengths and challenges as a learner.

Communicating Student Learning – Our Next Steps...

If we seek higher-order skills, like critical thinking, innovation and creativity (21st century competencies), we will have to assess these skills to know if we are successful and determine the next step in learning – for both teachers and students. As a society we search to find the simple, turnkey solution to fix it, instead of understanding it and embracing a process that maybe different paths but lead to possible solutions that could be built on, as opposed to right or wrong... for now? Developing Habits of Mind as reflective educators\learners we will need to use effective assessment strategies to consider all evidence, continuously ask questions and involve others to explore new and novel ideas.

Making classroom assessment work means reframing the conversation about ranking and sorting students to assessing learning in the context of our students' futures. It means talking with and listening to learners, their parents, and the community about learning and about assessment. It means involving students and parents, giving choices, and sharing control. When it comes to classroom assessment, solutions can only be found in thoughtful, informed conversation as we work together on behalf of students and their learning. (Anne Davies – adapted from *Making Classroom Assessment Work* – pp. 77-78.)

When students are involved in quality classroom assessment, they have a voice in their learning, see their work as relevant, challenging and open to inquiry. Students build skills to explore the unknown as opposed to just understanding what we already know, students become engaged, discipline issues decrease and they become reflective learners - which are essential steps toward the realisation of powerful, competent learners.

“Building knowledge is an active, creative process in which discoveries and mastery are not the end points of the work teachers and students do. Instead, new knowledge should always launch more, and deeper, and more intriguing questions, puzzles and ideas”. (Galileo Educational Network February 25, 2010)

ADJH Evaluation Rubric

Teachers at ADJH will provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate what they know and are able to do using a variety of assessment strategies. The following is used to report on student learning.

As a team at ADJH we have started to define what this means for teaching and student learning. Our first draft can be seen below. We have been sharing this with our students for their input and feedback, we would also like to hear from you. We will update as we go. **Please see page 9 for our student version.**

Astral Drive Junior High - School Evaluation Rubric *Draft: For student and parent input/feedback*



| Letter Grade | Description of student on expected learning outcomes and program expectations | |
|--|---|---|
| (4) | In-depth knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Able to extend the application of related skills to a variety of contexts. | |
| In-depth knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. | Demonstrates understanding of content / concept by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-solving • Thinking critically • Synthesizing • Analyzing/Evaluating • Making complex inferences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmer grows 97kg of apples. He sells them to a local grocer who divides them into 5 and 7kg bags... • Whose point of view do we hear? Who is missing? • Asking a math question that requires students to combine multiple skills. • Of all the ways to stay safe on the internet, which do you think is the most important? • Of all the causes of WWI, which do you think was the most important? • What does the author seem to believe about life / technology / love / etc? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Able to extend the application of related skills to a variety of contexts. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the main character change over the course of the story? What causes this change? |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to demonstrate a skill effectively and independently. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to multiply fractions mentally over time. Uses lab instruments effectively and accurately. Magic of Three for speaking and listening skills. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can apply what you've learned to new and novel situations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would happen if mitosis did not exist? What organelle could be called the police officer of the cell (and why)? |
| (3) | Competent knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Appropriate application of the related skills. | |
| Met Outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates achievement of curriculum outcomes Demonstrates good understanding and knowledge Comprehends what is taught (explicitly) Explanations are clear, with supporting evidence Demonstrates good understanding of the concept and can apply it to practice Can carry out the mechanics of the skill Yep, they can do it ☺ | |
| (2) | Developing knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Developing in the application of the related skills. | |
| Progressing Towards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partial understanding with help/guidance of simple task Can grasp the simple concepts but needs help to go beyond basics (such as: more complex processes/ideas) Explanations are vague Demonstrates understanding with the aid of prompts Developing knowledge and understanding Approaching outcome Quality is below expectations | |
| (1) | Limited knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Limited application of related skills. | |
| Meeting Few Outcomes; Insufficient Evidence or Incomplete | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiences difficulty with simple and complex ideas/concepts No evidence of strategy or procedure Incomplete work/unable to assess Insufficient evidence Does not demonstrate understanding Support is required | |

Astral Drive Junior High was accredited by the Department of Education as meeting our school improvement goals on December 6, 2011. We have identified assessment as next steps for the school focus. With the new software for grade book and focus on 21st century understandings, assessment for learning and grading connections are key strategies for both improved student achievement and meeting the needs of all students. We have started the conversation around assessment and best practices, student involvement and connections to grading. Our school based professional development will continue this conversation with a focus on developing consistency around the DOE "Levels of Achievement", 1-4 rubrics, letter grades and percentages. This will assist our staff to make connections to the work we are doing leading to quality student feedback and students as

partners in their learning - Where our students demonstrate their understanding of key curricular concepts to new and novel situations. We have identified several component of effective assessment practices strategies as both professional development targeted and strategies supported by research that are proven practices, to lead to higher levels of student achievement and develop deep, powerful learners. Please see page 6 for our school assessment goal and our CSI plan for full school goals.

Student Involvement

Teachers will work towards developing and maintaining learning environments that promote student involvement. In such learning environments, the students:

- Understand and are able to express the expected learning outcome.
- Know what good quality work looks like and are able to collect and refer to samples that show ideas and a range of quality work.
- Are able to describe evidence of learning.
- Assist with the development of rubrics by co - constructing criteria and defining quality.
- Use scoring guides to evaluate real work samples, give descriptive feedback, and/or revise the work.
- Have time to learn, practice and apply their skills and knowledge.
- Receive specific, descriptive feedback as they learn.
- Collect information regarding their learning from self, peers and others.
- Self-assess and set goals.
- Revisit and revise the criteria as they learn more.
- Collect evidence of their learning. Knowing when and how to ask for help.
- Communicate and present their evidence of learning to others, and receive feedback.

Homework Policy

ADJH, in accordance with the NS Homework Policy believes that homework can help students develop academically and personally when the work is carefully planned, directly connected to classroom learning, meaningful to students, and appropriate for a student's age and stage of development. The Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Child Development states that homework may serve one or more of the following three purposes:

- Prepare information or materials for future learning activities.
- Practice new knowledge or new skills (e.g., read for pleasure, practice physical skills, practice a musical instrument, use new knowledge to complete a project, or practice basic literacy and math skills).
- Enrich students' understanding of a topic and apply it in new ways (e.g., research local news, investigate a science experiment, write daily or weekly reflections in a journal, or apply skills to a class project).

Homework assignments must: be planned and organized, have a clear purpose and expectations, clearly stated deadlines and returned to the student in a timely manner, along with descriptive feedback that students can use to improve their learning.

It is important for students to complete their assignments on time so that teachers can provide timely feedback. Timely assessment information helps teachers and students to make decisions and plan next steps for instruction and learning.

When timelines and due dates are specified, teachers must make provisions for students who

legitimately miss the dates. In such cases, the teacher and student should consult together in order to set an absolute deadline and negotiate a plan for successful completion.

No extensions will be given to students without a legitimate reason. Students who miss the due date without a legitimate reason have missed an opportunity to demonstrate progress toward the expected learning outcomes. The missed due date will influence the students' summative evaluation. Students, in consultation with their teachers, are responsible for completing work missed during absences. There may be an **occasion** when a student is not able to complete homework on a given night. If this situation arises, parents can write a note to the teacher explaining the circumstances. The work still has to be done but arrangements can be made for the student to complete the work after school or hand in the homework or assignment on the next school day. Students should also take advantage of after-school support that teachers provide on a regular basis.

Grade Level Placement Decisions

It is the responsibility of the teachers and the school administration to establish early interventions, two-way communication and involvement with students at risk and their parents/guardians.



The principal and teachers will review recommendations and any supporting documentation about the grade level placement of students. The best interest of the student will guide this decision. In all cases, careful consideration will be given to possible disadvantages of placement and additional support required by the student.

In cases where the grade level placement is in question, the principal and teachers will make the decision in consultation with the parents/guardians and (when appropriate) the student. Following consultation the principal will make the final decision.

Identification, Assessment, Referral and Program Planning For Students with Support:

ADJH is committed to supporting the learning needs of all students. As part of this commitment, the school has established a process for the identification, assessment and program planning for students who may need support in meeting their curriculum outcomes and goals. The parents/guardians play a key participatory role throughout this entire process. This process follows the guidelines set out by the Provincial Department of Education and Culture in the Special Education Policy Manual. This is in keeping with the Halifax Regional School Board's Special Education Policy and Procedures. Parents and guardians who wish to read the Special Education Policy Manual or the Board's policy and procedures should either contact the school or visit the relevant websites:

Department of Education <http://www.ednet.ns.ca/educ/program/ssvcs/specialed.html>; Halifax Regional School Board: www.hrsb.ns.ca:8080.board.policy.index.html .

-  Identification of students who may require support: Classroom teachers, resource teachers, parents and students may initiate and/or assist in identifying students and providing relevant assessment information. When formal individual assessments seem needed, they will be conducted by qualified personnel and will be undertaken only after parents/guardians have given written informed consent.
-  Program Adaptations: Classroom teachers will explore a variety of adaptations which take into account the actual characteristics of the learner and are appropriate to his/her needs, age, and level of educational achievement. These adaptations and their effectiveness in assisting

students in meeting outcomes will be recorded and the information communicated to parents/guardians on the Programming Adaptations Form.

- Program Planning Team: If the classroom teacher(s) requires further support to meet the needs of a student, the teacher(s) will contact the school Program Planning Team. The team members include the principal or vice-principal, the teachers involved, the parents/guardians, and the student, when appropriate. Parents'/guardians' participation is essential at this stage. It is also through the meeting of the Program Planning Team that a decision is made on whether an Individual Program Plan is needed for the student.
- Individual Program Plan: The development and implementation of an Individual Program Plan (IPP) follows a process suggested by the Nova Scotia Department of Education. Parents/guardians who have been involved in the stages outlined above will, in the course of those activities, have been informed regarding "next steps" as appropriate. When possible, students will be involved in the process, practices and procedures of their assessment and evaluation.
- The HRSB Special Education Policy and the supporting documents will guide the use of alternative procedures for collecting information about student learning
- Qualified school board personnel will conduct formal individual assessments of students only after obtaining informed written consent from parents/guardians.

Self - Advocacy and Student Ownership for Learning

When a student is a self-advocate they are able to:

- Describe their own strengths and challenges
- Set their own goals and create plans to meet them
- Know when to ask for help
- Make decisions and then take responsibility to deal with the consequences of these decisions

Students at Astral Drive Junior High are expected to take ownership for their learning and ask for the things they need such as an extension on a deadline due to illness or notes from a class missed due to participation on a school team. Similarly, a student is encouraged to ask for the assistive technology that has been identified on an Adaptation form during an assessment if it is not initially provided. Students are also encouraged to follow through with strategies suggested by their teacher such as attending support times offered at lunch or after school, peer tutoring sessions or utilizing a tracker to assist with homework - Where students are involved in the learning/assessment process.

Communication with Parents/Guardians

At Astral Drive, we truly value all parent/guardian involvement in their child's learning and school functions/activities. Communication is a high priority between staff and the home of our students. We provide many opportunities for this to occur, including on line access of the Student-Parent Portal, regular school reporting periods (3 per year), parent/teacher interviews (2 per year), our school web site, teacher web site, e-mails, voice mail for all staff and tri-monthly newsletters. In the

past, we sent home paper copies of the newsletters. This year we will post our newsletter on the ADJH website, which will eliminate paper, copying time and expense.

Our school web site will be the main communication site where students and parents will find a school calendar, daily announcements, class schedules, functions/events, activities and important dates to keep people informed and involved. We also have School Messenger, where a phone call will be made to all of our families about major events, such as curriculum night, report cards etc...

Communication Calendar

| Event | Date | Purpose |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Term 1 Begins | Thursday, September 3, 2015 | |
| Curriculum Night | Wednesday, September 23, 2015 6:00-8:00 pm. | Meet and greet, obtain an overview of the programs and assessment strategies |
| Parent/Teacher Conferences | Thursday, November 26, 2015 1:00 - 3:00 pm. 6:00 - 8:00 pm. | Discuss students' academic achievement to date, update on behavior and work habits |
| Term 2 Begins | Monday November 16, 2015 | |
| Report Cards (Term 1) | Thursday, November 19, 2015 | Using Department of Education authorized report card to report students' academic progress and update on behavior and work habits |
| Report Cards (Term 2) | Thursday, April 9, 2016 | |
| Term 3 Begins | Monday April 4, 2016 | |
| Parent/Teacher Conferences | Wednesday, April 13, 2016 6:00 - 8:00 pm. Thursday, April 14, 2016 1:00 - 3:00 pm. | Discuss students' academic achievement to date, update on behavior and work habits |
| Final Report Cards | Tuesday, June 28, 2016 | Final report on students' academic achievement of expected learning outcomes; promotion or placement for coming academic year |

Parental Concerns Protocol

“The Halifax Regional School Board is committed to addressing parent concerns in an efficient and respectful manner. Every reasonable effort will be made to resolve issues brought to the attention of the Board and its professional staff.”

If you have a question or concern regarding your child, the channel of communication begins with your child's teacher. Concerns related to classroom issues should always be addressed with the teacher first. If the issue remains unresolved, it should then be directed to the principal. Should the matter not be resolved by this communication, please refer to the “Parental Concern Form”.

Parent concerns related to school administration issues should be addressed with the school principal. If the issue remains unresolved, the parent may direct the concern to the School Administration Supervisor.

If after addressing the concern at the school site and with a School Administration Supervisor the issue remains unresolved, the parent has the option to complete the *Parent Concern Reporting Form* and forward it to the Director-School Administration.

Where the parent is dissatisfied with the response of the principal and subsequently the School Administration Department, The Parent Concern Protocol Policy, following a systematic process, provides the parent the opportunity to appeal in writing to the Superintendent.

The *Parent Concern Reporting Form* may be used, at the request of the parent, when all attempts to resolve the concern at the school have not been successful.

School Communication Plan Review – Annually Reviewed

Links and Resources

Making Classroom Assessment Work

(2nd Edition)

Author: Anne Davies

Knowing What Counts Series

Authors: Kathleen Gregory, Caren Cameron, and Anne Davies

www.connect2learning.com

<http://www.damiancooperassessment.com/contact.html>

<http://www.oconnorgrading.com/>

<http://www.specialconnections.ku.edu/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/speconn/main.php?cat=instruction§ion=main&subsection=udl/portfolio>

<http://powerschool.com/products/powerteacher/ken/fix15/>(Video)

<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php?screen=WhatIs&module=Rubistar>

<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schrockguide/assess.html>

www.readwritethink.org

Sites for Descriptive Feedback

<http://www.curriculum.org/secretariat/inquiring/feedback.shtml>

<http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/ssass/html/feedbackexamples.html>

Astral Drive Junior High – <http://astraldrivejunior.ednet.ns.ca/>