



What does a grade mean?

Effective student reporting honours the many ways that your child learns:

- ✍ oral and written reports
- ✍ written tests
- ✍ journals and portfolios
- ✍ student work such as projects, experiments and labs
- ✍ performances

Good assessment and reporting is not about ranking and sorting students.

What can I do?

Parents have the right and responsibility to ask questions about how their child is doing in school. Parents should talk to teachers about their child's learning.

Use the following questions to guide an exploration of testing, assessment and evaluation with your child's teacher.

- ✍ How is my child being assessed?
- ✍ Does my child know what is expected?
- ✍ Does my child understand how classroom work is assessed?
- ✍ How are test results used?
- ✍ What support can I provide at home or at school?

Maintain regular communications with the teacher by telephone, e-mail or student diary. Be sure to schedule appointments with your child's teacher when you have concerns.

Assessment: the big picture

Teacher Developed Assessments	Common Assessments	District-level Assessments	External Assessments
← ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING		ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING →	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✍ ongoing student self-assessment and classroom assessment ✍ quizzes, essays, projects, and teacher observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✍ collaboratively developed assessments based on a shared understanding of curriculum goals ✍ rubrics and unit tests developed by teacher teams in the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✍ identify groups of at-risk students ✍ entrance and exit testing such as Canadian Test of Basic Skills, Highest Level of Achievement Tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✍ compare provincial performance to established benchmarks ✍ Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Examinations based on a limited range of student outcomes
DAILY		ONGOING	PERIODIC

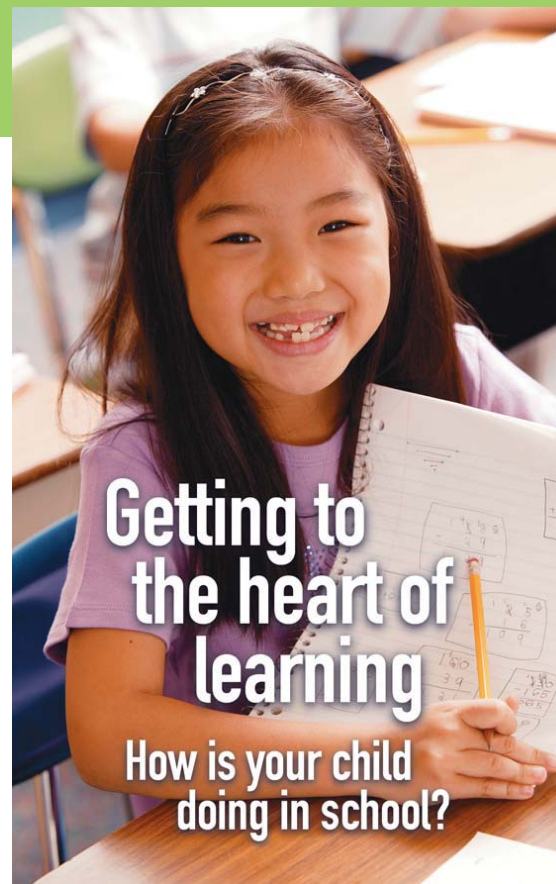
For further information about assessment and testing, contact:



Alberta Teachers' Association
1-800-232-7208
www.teachers.ab.ca

Additional references available from:

Alberta Assessment Consortium
www.aac.ab.ca
Fair Test – The National Center for Fair & Open Testing
www.fairtest.org



Getting to the heart of learning

How is your child doing in school?

A PARENT GUIDE TO REPORTING STUDENT LEARNING



PUBLIC EDUCATION...
Shaping the future



How do I know my child is learning?

Your child is more than a grade or a number. Assessments should reflect the variety of knowledge, skills and abilities that support the development of the whole child to:

- be creative and critical thinkers and learners,
- value themselves as learners and develop a love for learning, and demonstrate healthy lifestyles, and
- develop an appreciation for the arts.

The teacher's professional judgment is the best indicator of how your child is doing in school.



What is the proper role of assessment?

Good classroom assessments should improve learning and support teaching by:

- motivating students to learn better,
- helping teachers make important instructional decisions, and
- involving students meaningfully in setting goals for their learning.

Your child has a unique learning style that cannot be captured on a single assessment.



DID YOU KNOW?

Research clearly shows that the teachers' professional judgement of student progress is a much stronger predictor of future success than performance on single large-scale examinations such as provincial achievement tests. Finland leads the world in literacy and numeracy yet it has no large-scale testing programs in its elementary schools.

- In Alberta, upon the advice of the teacher and principal, superintendents may excuse a student from writing provincial achievement tests when the student's educational needs may not be served by writing the test.
- In Alberta, parents may withdraw their child from writing provincial achievement tests by contacting the school principal.

Talking about assessment

Teachers use multiple sources of information to determine your child's progress. A shared understanding of the language of assessment and student reporting will enrich conversations between school and home.

- Assessment:** Process of collecting information on student achievement and performance to improve student learning.
- Evaluation:** Making decisions about the quality, value or worth of a response for the purpose of providing descriptive feedback (formative) and marks (summative).
- Assessment for Learning:** Assessment experiences that result in an ongoing exchange of information between students and teachers about student progress toward clearly specified learner outcomes. (Also called diagnostic and formative assessment; refers to information not used for grading purposes.)
- Assessment of Learning:** Assessment experiences designed to collect information about learning to make judgments about student performance at the end of a period of instruction to be shared with those outside classrooms. (Also called summative assessment; refers to performance data compiled as a grade.)

DID YOU KNOW?

Except for a few of the written response components in Language Arts, Provincial Achievement Tests are multiple-choice. Only about one third of student outcomes can be assessed on these tests. Consider:

- of the 200 learner outcomes in grade 9 Science, only 63 (32%) can be assessed.
- of the 51 learner outcomes in grade 9 Mathematics, 24 (47%) can be assessed.
- of the 67 learner outcomes in Social Studies, 22 (33%) can be assessed.