



Rethinking How We Report Student Progress



BC's redesigned curriculum is promoting greater student engagement in the learning process. The implementation of the new curriculum is also prompting widespread reflection on how to report on student learning in ways that are more meaningful and relevant.

In September 2016, the Ministry of Education introduced a redesigned concept-based, competency-driven Kindergarten to Grade 9 curriculum designed to help students develop core and curricular competencies, build proficiencies in literacy and numeracy, and learn essential content required for success in our rapidly changing world. In August 2018, the Ministry launched a **K-9 Student Reporting Policy Pilot** so that teachers and students around the province could explore new and more meaningful ways to communicate student progress with families. The pilot will continue in the 2019/20 school year and the work will inform a new K-9 reporting policy that aligns with and supports the implementation of the redesigned curriculum.



The K-9 Student Progress Reporting Policy Pilot

Informed by research on effective practices and developed following extensive engagement with parents and educators, the draft K-9 Student Reporting Policy is supporting new approaches to reporting. These include moving from event-style report cards to more timely and flexible communication with parents; replacing letter grades with the strength-based four-point provincial proficiency scale and descriptive feedback; and placing greater emphasis on student reflection and self-assessment of the core competencies to increase student engagement and ownership.

Piloting schools are aiming to increase student engagement and ownership by providing students with opportunities to become more involved and invested in assessment and evaluation processes. Teachers are inviting students to select evidence of their learning and reflect on their growth, sharing strength-based formative feedback that focuses on what a student can do and what they are working toward. Research has shown that an emphasis on strengths and goal-setting leads to increased engagement and promotes student ownership of learning.

The goal of the first year of the pilot program was to trial the draft reporting policy to see how it works in practice. Feedback from piloting teachers, parents and students will directly inform future reporting guidelines.

Pilot Participants

Thirteen school districts and two independent schools formally piloted the draft K-9 Student Reporting Policy in 2018/19 and will continue to provide feedback to the Ministry in the 2019/20 school year

- SD 5 Southeast Kootenay
- SD 8 Kootenay Lake
- SD 10 Arrow Lakes
- SD 34 Abbotsford
- SD 38 Richmond
- SD 42 Maple Ridge & Pitt Meadows
- SD 48 Sea to Sky
- SD 60 Peace River North
- SD 62 Sooke
- SD 68 Nanaimo
- SD 69 Qualicum
- SD 73 Kamloops
- SD 93 Conseil Scolaire Francophone
- Our Lady of Lourdes, West Kelowna
- Fraser Academy, Vancouver



What the findings from year one of the pilot told us

Overall, most administrators, teachers, parents and students say they prefer the new approach, finding it provides more meaningful information and is having a positive impact on student ownership of learning.

The new approach to reporting on learning has catalyzed discussions about the connections between our competency-driven curriculum and assessment practices. “One benefit of participating in the pilot is that our conversations have been invigorating,” says Lynn Archer, Associate Superintendent in SD 38 Richmond. “Teachers are voluntarily collaborating, talking about assessment and reporting approaches. This pilot is helping the implementation of curriculum more than anything else to date.”

Teachers report that the new format encourages students to reflect and self-assess in deeper ways than before. A secondary school teacher in SD 42 Maple Ridge & Pitt Meadows notes that the new four-point proficiency scale supports a growth mindset, saying that students are “focusing less on the grades, and more on where they are and areas for growth.”

Two administrators in SD 69 Qualicum concur, stating that “Students of all ages are able to talk more specifically about their learning: strengths, stretches and next steps.”

This sentiment is echoed by Travis Thielmann, a teacher at Fraser Academy, a Vancouver school for students with dyslexia and language-based learning differences. “[Descriptive feedback on student progress] naturally facilitates greater student engagement by giving students the information and the opportunity to become a more active participant in their learning. Specifically, as students gain greater understanding of their learning, the more intentional and strategic they can be about improving their learning, thus becoming more engaged and successful.”

Many schools are also providing authentic evidence of student learning by uploading photos, videos and other samples of work to secure online portals. This supports the goal of moving to more flexible and ongoing communication with parents. As a parent in SD 5 Southeast Kootenay remarked: “This has hands down been the best reporting I have ever received for my children. I can actually see the progress made from the photos and videos starting in September to now and also know what my child is working on in various





subjects. It is updated all the time so instead of receiving progress reports three times a year, I'm getting it weekly. The student-led conferences in my children's school are also another thing I really appreciate. My children are so excited to show us and explain their work. It really adds value for them as well as builds their confidence and excitement about school. This kind of reporting seems so much more relevant than the traditional paper report card to the new curriculum that is being implemented and as a parent, it makes so much more sense to me."

Feedback from parents

In July 2019, pilot sites submitted parent survey results for the first year of the Student Reporting Policy Pilot. In total, 4,275 parents completed the survey. In summary:

- 60% of the parents who responded agreed or strongly agreed that they received quality, accurate and sufficient information on their child/children's progress; 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 10% were neutral or didn't know;
- 56% said they have a clear sense of what their child is working on to move forward in their learning; 32% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 12% were neutral or didn't know;
- 74% agreed or strongly agreed that they understand the language on the proficiency scale and what it indicates about their child's progress; 21% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 5% were neutral or did not know; and
- 51% agreed or strongly agreed that they noticed their child making connections between their learning and the core competencies; 26% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 23% were neutral or did not know.

Not everyone has embraced the new reporting system, with some saying they prefer letter grades and percentages. One parent wrote: "There is nothing wrong with grades ... they have been working well since the inception of formal learning environments, and no one seems to understand why the district switched to the new format."

This comment underlines the need for additional engagement with teachers, parents and students to communicate the benefits offered by the new reporting practices, and for the need to refine the draft reporting policy and guidelines over the coming year.



Goals for year two

Over the 2019/20 school year, pilot sites will continue to trial the draft policy to test out the most effective strategies for shifting local reporting practices. Their feedback, along with the quantitative and qualitative data they collect, will be used to inform the creation of a new K-9 Student Reporting Policy that fully aligns with and supports our redesigned provincial curriculum.

It's not only pilot sites that are exploring new ways of communicating student learning. The draft policy is supported by current legislation, which means that any district or school in BC can implement the draft K-9 Student Reporting Policy, even if they are not formally participating in the pilot program.

Although change can be challenging, our new concept-based and competency-driven curriculum demands a new approach to reporting that places students at the centre, focuses on their personal strengths and goals, and ultimately, increases their ownership and success as lifelong learners.

Learn More

- › For more information about the K-9 Student Progress Reporting Policy Pilot visit curriculum.gov.bc.ca/assessment/classroom-assessment-and-reporting