

Toronto District School Board

Policy P.040 CUR: Accountability for Student Achievement

Statement

The mission of the Toronto District School Board is to “enable all students to reach high levels of achievement and to acquire the knowledge, skills and values they need to become responsible members of a democratic society.”

Being accountable for and finding ways to improve student achievement is of paramount importance to the Toronto District School Board. Staff, students, parents and the community share the responsibility for creating the conditions that allow students to succeed.

Effective learning requires environments that are safe, nurturing and stimulating. To help create a classroom learning environment that allows students to meet these high levels of achievement, the Toronto District School Board is committed to a continuous cycle of planning, implementing, evaluating and reporting. This on-going process reflects a strong commitment to public accountability, quality programming and continuous improvement.

The following foundation statements outline the Toronto District School Board’s principles regarding accountability for student achievement:

1. The Toronto District School Board holds high expectations for all learners.
2. Accountability at the Toronto District School Board includes the following practices:
 - (a) Assessment of student achievement
 - (b) Review of school effectiveness
 - (c) Assessment of Board educational programs and initiatives
 - (d) Communication regarding the successes of our students to all stakeholders
 - (e) Engagement in system-wide self examination and reflection
 - (f) Commitment to continuous improvement.
3. The primary purpose of student assessment and evaluation is to improve learning. Assessment has the greatest potential to improve learning when it is an integral part of all classroom activities and when it is used to identify students’ strengths and weaknesses to outline the next steps for learning. It should never be an end unto itself, but rather, the means through which to inform teaching and learning.
4. Assessment is the collecting and analyzing of data and information about a learner’s progress and achievement.
5. Evaluation is the application of judgement to the data collected and its analysis in order to place a “value” on the learner’s achievement.

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6. The Toronto District School Board believes in a balanced approach to assessment. These assessments provide the necessary information to:
 - (a) Diagnose and track student progress and achievement;
 - (b) Report to students and parents/guardians about student progress and achievement;
 - (c) Foster the development of students' ability to evaluate their own progress;
 - (d) Help guide decisions regarding grading, student placement and certification;
 - (e) Provide information for teachers, schools and the Board for planning;
 - (f) Implement and improve instruction, curriculum and educational programs for all students;
 - (g) Communicate information for accountability purposes.
7. Student assessment and evaluation are based on clear expectations for all learners--consistent with those described in the Ontario Curriculum--and sound research regarding assessment and evaluation, learning, and teaching practices.
8. All educators require specific skills in the areas of assessment and evaluation, learning, and teaching practices in order to support student achievement for all students, including those with special needs. The Toronto District School Board and its educators are jointly responsible for ongoing professional training and dialogue to develop and refine these skills.
9. Effective student assessment and evaluation methods are varied in approach, equitable and free of bias. These methods ensure that all students are given equal opportunities to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. In order to be valid, these methods must:
 - (a) Measure what they are intended to measure;
 - (b) Give an accurate description of what students are actually capable of doing;
 - (c) Be consistent with curriculum expectations;
 - (d) Accommodate the special needs of students;
 - (e) Be appropriate for and compatible with the purpose and the context of the assessment;
 - (f) Provide enough information to allow an accurate judgement of student achievement, that is consistent and dependable over time.

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Administrative Procedure

Information Sharing

Information regarding expectations, assessment methods and results should be communicated to all stakeholders as promptly, clearly and openly as possible.

Assessment and evaluation information related to individual students will be shared with students and their parents, but is otherwise kept confidential.

Effectiveness Reviews

School effectiveness reviews will be conducted in order to provide a process for informed decision-making and school improvement planning at the local level with input from the local community.

Reviews of the effectiveness of programs and practices designed to support student achievement will provide the basis for informed system planning and allocation of resources and support.

Planning

The processes of system-wide assessment, school reviews, school and system planning for improvement and reporting of data are to be designed and planned well in advance so that implementation efforts at all levels (provincial, Board, school and classroom) can be coordinated.