



# **Guide to Student Assessment and Achievement 2023-2024**

**Grades K–6**

**Willow Park School**

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## **Guide to Student Assessment and Achievement 2023-2024**

In Black Gold School Division, we recognize that successful student learning relies on a partnership between students, teachers, parents/guardians, and school administration. We believe that regular communication between these partners is an essential component of student assessment.

This guide will help you understand:

- responsibilities of teachers, students, parents/guardians, and school administration,
- how and when we will tell you about your child's progress and learning,
- how we assign grades/marks to your child,
- how your child is assessed, and
- steps we take if your child's work is missing or not finished.

### **What is assessment?**

In this guide, we use the terms assessment and evaluation to describe what students have learned, and how well they have learned it. Assessment and evaluation are not just about tests and grades.

Student assessment is ongoing and cumulative. Teachers gather information about what students know and can demonstrate based on the Alberta programs of study (curriculum) and, when applicable, the Instructional Support Plan (ISP) in grades 1-12, or the Individualized Program Plan (IPP) in Kindergarten. Marks are only earned through assessment of learning outcomes achieved in assignments, activities, projects, portfolios, performances, and tests. Teachers will not use your child's attendance, behaviour, effort, attitude, homework completion or work habits to decide on their grades/marks, unless it is included in the Alberta programs of study for a specific subject.

To determine a student's current level of achievement in relation to curriculum, teachers use a variety of tools. Conversations, observations, and student work are just some of the ways teachers discover students' strengths and where they might need extra help. This helps teachers shape their lesson plans and guide how they will explain a concept, to help every student meet their learning goals.

The activities also help inform the teacher's understanding so that they may assign each student a grade, course, or level of programming. All of this allows teachers to give you a clear and accurate picture of your child's progress in school.

## Screening Assessments

All Black Gold schools administer universal screening assessments for reading, writing and math at the beginning of the year to help teachers identify those students who may be at risk for not meeting grade-level learning outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy. The goal is to support success for every student and screening assessments help teachers check for indicators that a child may have some gaps in their learning and identify interventions that will help to reduce these gaps so students can be more successful.

Screening assessments in the classroom work the same way that an eye screening from a doctor does. In an eye screening, your child is asked to read the eye chart. If the results show their eyesight is fine, they are not screened again for a year. If the results show that your child has some trouble seeing, the doctor will likely suggest some strategies to reduce eye strain or prescribe glasses to help your child see better.

Reading screeners consist of three short assessments, two to three minutes each and the writing screener has students write a short story on a given topic (one class period). The math screener takes one class period. These screeners help teachers identify students who may have gaps in their understanding (based on material from the previous year) and are only used to see if your child is on track; they do not count for marks.

Teachers use this information to help plan their instruction (including lesson planning and grouping students) and determine which interventions are best for each student. Like the eye doctor, even though all children are given screening assessments, only the students with identified learning gaps will receive interventions. Teachers will re-administrator screening assessments with the identified students periodically to check that the interventions are working.

<b>Black Gold Screening Assessment Plan</b>		
<b>September</b>	<b>January - February</b>	<b>May - June</b>
<b>English Reading:</b> Gr. 1-10 <b>French Reading:</b> Gr. 1-10 <b>English Writing:</b> Gr. 2-9 <b>French Writing:</b> Gr. 2-9 <b>English Math:</b> Gr. 1-10	<b>English Reading and Math:</b> Gr. 1-9 <i>Only those students who were identified below grade level in Sept.</i> Gr 10 – <i>semester 2 courses</i>	<b>English Reading and Math:</b> Gr. 1-6 all students <i>Gr 7-10 Only those students who were identified below grade level in Jan./Feb.</i>

## Supporting Student Success

As a parent or guardian, you are your child's first teacher. We know that understanding how your child is doing in school is important to you. This guide will help you understand student assessment in your child's school. If you have any questions, contact the school or make an appointment to see your child's teacher or Principal.

**You can support your child's learning (*Education Act, Section 32*) by:**

- working in partnership with school staff;
- providing a quiet place for your child to study at home;
- keeping current with your child's progress online through the Power School Portal.
- staying informed and staying connected with school staff. This includes reading newsletters and other school materials; and
- participating in parent-teacher conferences.

**Teachers will help your child succeed (*Education Act, Section 196*) by:**

- providing programming that is suitable for your child;
- providing many opportunities and diverse ways for students to show what they know;
- giving students who have missed important assessments and activities the chance to complete the work, as specified in the course outline;
- providing a course outline for all courses that clearly explains what is expected of students and how student work will be graded/marked;
- keeping detailed, accurate notes describing your child's successes and challenges;
- communicating with you regularly about your child's progress and achievement; and providing opportunities for you to be involved in your child's learning.

**Students have a responsibility for their own learning (*Education Act, Section 31*) and are expected to:**

- come to school every day and on time;
- finish their assignments, projects, and tasks to the best of their ability;
- participate in activities to celebrate learning;
- demonstrate that they are learning; and
- take advantage of chances offered to revise or redo assignments or tests so they can show growth in their knowledge and skills.

## Our Communication Plan for Reporting Progress

### PowerTeacher Pro Electronic Gradebook:

All teachers will use PowerTeacher Pro to record and communicate student assessments and provide comments to parents/guardians and students. Students and parents/guardians can access current marks at any time.

- Schools will provide parents/guardians with instructions on the school's website on how to access PowerSchool Parent Portal, view student grades and learning outcomes.
- If you have questions about your child's mark at any time, please contact your child's teacher to discuss.
- If parents/guardians do not have access to technology to view student grades, please contact the school to make arrangements to view your child's grade.
- If you would like assistance in accessing the PowerSchool Parent Portal, please contact us at 780.986.8456
- Gradebooks are updated regularly by classroom teachers with 2-5 assessments entered per month in each subject.
- Assessments are typically returned to students within a week's time.

### Reporting Periods:

Term One: August 30, 2023 to January 26, 2024

Term Two/Final Marks: January 27, 2024 to June 26, 2024

### Formal Reports Issued:

Formal Reports will be issued on January 26, 2024 and June 26, 2024 by email to the parents and/or guardians listed on PowerSchool.

If a student has an ISP (or IPP for Kindergarten students), it will be included as part of the formal report. Paper copies will be made available upon request.

### Conferences:

Parent communication is important, and parents/guardians are always welcome to contact their child's teacher at any time during the school year to discuss their child's progress. Each school will provide a minimum of two separate opportunities per year for their parents/guardians to meet with teachers to discuss student achievement and progress. The intention of these conferences is to celebrate growth in learning and set future goals.

The dates for these conferences are November 8 & 9, 2023 and March 21, 2024.

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Parents/guardians can book appointments through their classroom teachers.

### **Early Years Evaluation Teacher Assessment (EYE-TA):**

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This EYE-TA is used to assess the universal, targeted, and individualized areas of growth and strengths of children as they enter kindergarten and as a tool to identify children who may require specialized services and supports.

### **Instructional Support Plan (Gr 1 – 12) and Individualized Program Plan (Kindergarten):**

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For students who need specialized services and supports, the ISP, or IPP for Kindergarten, is a working document that is developed within the first two months of the school year. The ISP (or IPP) is a record of specific goals for a child. It provides information about accommodations and strategies a child is using to succeed. It is reviewed a minimum of three times per year. The student and the parents/guardians are expected to provide input into the ISP, or IPP for Kindergarten.

The ISP, or IPP for Kindergarten, is updated as students show growth and learning. ISP and IPP co-planning conferences will take place in September.

- ISP planning input forms will be sent home in September
- ISPs will be shared electronically by October 27th
- A completed signature page will be collected and stored at the school.
- Reviews will be completed by March 22<sup>nd</sup> and June 7th

### **English Language Learners:**

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For students learning English, the ESL Proficiency Benchmarks are used to measure a student's English abilities in four areas: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Teachers use this tool to help them plan lessons and communicate with you about your child's progress in learning English.

In addition to student progress reports and/or conferences, teachers may share the student's ESL Proficiency Benchmark. Teachers will inform parents/guardians of goals, accommodations or supports provided to students which may be associated with the ESL Proficiency Benchmark.

## **Grades/Marks and Codes**

To decide on your child's grade/mark at the end of a reporting period, teachers use evidence of what your child has learned and their professional judgment. All marks are cumulative. When percentages are used, 47.5 and up will be rounded to 50 as a final grade only.

At Willow Park School we use the following Grading Scale(s):

<b>Kindergarten – Grade 3 Grading Scale</b>		
Every course uses K-3 Grading Scale		
<b>Label</b>	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>EXP</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>	Achievement is exemplary and consistently meets grade level outcomes. Student independently demonstrates in-depth understanding.
<b>PRF</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	Achievement consistently meets grade level outcomes. Student consistently demonstrates achievement independently.
<b>ACQ</b>	<b>Acquiring</b>	Achievement generally meets grade level outcomes. Student requires support in some areas.
<b>BEG</b>	<b>Beginning</b>	Achievement does not yet meet grade level outcomes. Student requires ongoing support.
<b>INS</b>	<b>Insufficient</b>	Insufficient evidence to assess.

<b>Grades 4-6 Core Courses Grading Scale</b>		
5 core courses (ELA/ELAL, FLA/FILAL, Math, Science, Social) use % (can include letter scale for formative assessment only)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage grades will be given for summative assessment in all core courses (0% - 100%).</li> <li>Teachers can choose to use percentages, checkmarks and/or the non-core scale for formative assessments as these do not count in final grades.</li> </ul>		
<b>Grades 4-6 Non-Core Courses Grading Scale</b>		
All other courses (Fine Arts, Second Languages, Phys Ed & Wellness, CTF)		
<b>Label</b>	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>EXP</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>	Achievement is exemplary and consistently meets grade level outcomes. Student independently demonstrates in-depth understanding.
<b>PRF</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	Achievement consistently meets grade level outcomes. Student consistently demonstrates achievement independently.
<b>ACQ</b>	<b>Acquiring</b>	Achievement generally meets grade level outcomes. Student requires support in some areas.
<b>BEG</b>	<b>Beginning</b>	Achievement does not yet meet grade level outcomes. Student requires ongoing support.
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### Missing or Incomplete Student Work:

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Principals will ensure that teachers communicate with parents/guardians promptly and regularly about missing or incomplete student work. When your child has missing or incomplete work, we will do **one or more** of the following:

- provide student with additional time to complete the assignment.
- assign an alternative assignment.
- assign student to complete the activity at lunchtime or after school.
- Provide targeted tutorials.
- contact student's parent/guardian.
- meet with parents/guardian, teachers, students, and administration to emphasize consequences if work is not completed.
- create a behavioural contract between the student and the teacher.
- assign an **"incomplete (INC)"** which awards a mark of 0 on the assignment.

When your child has missing or incomplete work, we will make arrangements for your child to complete the work. This may include:

- Teacher/student discussion.
- Contact with parent/s guardians.
- Drop-in support.
- Missed assignment room.
- Targeted tutorials through subject/department teachers.

If your child is away from school for an extended period of time, **other than vacation**, please contact their teacher/administrator. As partners in your child's learning, we can work together to design a plan that best meets your child's needs including homework, alternate assignments or other strategies that will support them through their course. Homework can be requested through the school office for extended illness, etc. As well, students can access Google Classroom for specific assignments details.

### **Vacations:**

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It is the expectation that students will attend school on scheduled school days and take holidays according to the school year calendar. If parents/guardians choose to take their child out of school at times other than school holidays, teachers will not provide work for that time. Any missed work or tests will be made up when the student returns, at the teacher's discretion.

### **Types of Assessment:**

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Student assessment relies on both assessment for learning (formative) and assessment of learning (summative). While it is crucial that students' work, abilities, and progress be tracked and assessed throughout the entire learning process, it is also important that teachers have evidence of what the students have learned during that process.



**Formative Assessment:**

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Formative assessment provides an ongoing exchange of information between students and teachers about student progress, but it does not provide marks/grades. It is also referred to as "assessment for learning" as it is intended for the student and teacher to know what the student's strengths are and where they can still improve. Many of these activities help students increase what they know and practice their skills. Teachers also use this information to adjust their teaching, give your child feedback to help them improve and prepare your child for summative assessment.











**Summative Assessment:**

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Summative assessment is the evidence used to determine grades/marks and future directions for students. This is also known as assessment of learning. Your child will have many opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of learning outcomes and receive grades/marks for their work. These summative assessments are evidence of student learning and come in many forms; assignments, performance tasks, projects, performances, quizzes, tests, videos, etc. Using their judgment as professionals, teachers make decisions and give grades/marks to your child. They base these decisions on what they have seen your child do (observations), discussions they've had with your child (conversations) and the work your child has completed (products).

**Additional Mark Codes and definitions:**

In addition to the marks from the grade scale, the following mark codes may be used within PowerTeacher Pro for individual assignments.

<b><i>Other Icons</i></b>		
<b>Icon</b>	<b>Label</b>	<b>Description</b>
	Missing	Assignment was not handed in. Please contact your teacher to discuss.
	Collected	Work has been collected but no mark will be assigned (often used for formative assessment).
	Late	Assignment is late or was handed in late. Please contact your teacher to discuss.
	Incomplete	Assignment is not complete. Please contact your teacher to discuss.
	Exempt	Student is exempt from this assignment.
	Absent	Student was absent. Please contact your teacher to discuss.
	Comment	Click the icon to read a comment on this assignment from the teacher.
	Excluded	This assignment is not required from this student.
<b>ISP</b>	ISP	The student has an Instructional Support Plan.
	Has Description	Click the icon to see the description of the assignment.
	Outcomes/Standards	Click the icon to see the learning outcomes assessed by this assignment.

## How We Determine Student Grades/Marks

### Course Outlines:

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Teachers will provide a course outline to all students and parents/guardians within the first two days of the course. This will highlight the topics and units that students will be learning and explain how student grades are determined for the course. Please contact your child's teacher(s) if you do not receive one.

### Reluctant Zeroes:

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Students are expected to take ownership of their own learning. If they fail to complete a daily task or assignment, they must talk to their teacher about catching up on the assignment. If students do not take the opportunity to complete the assignment, they may receive a zero.

### Parameters:

1. A reluctant zero policy will apply to daily tasks and assignments. Major projects and evaluations are expected to be completed by all students in a timely manner. Parent and grade advisor communication will be utilized for students who do not complete major evaluative tasks that greatly affect their marks.
2. Students can access their marks through PowerSchool or printouts from their teacher to keep track of their incomplete assignments.
3. Students may only work to complete tasks in the current reporting period. Once report cards are issued, marks are locked, and zeros will be reluctantly awarded.
4. Teachers will consider the reasons for absences before awarding a zero. Excused absences may be considered as a reason to take in work beyond a scheduled due date. If a teacher feels that a student is overusing the reluctant zero policy, he/she will contact a parent to discuss work ethic and homework habits of the student.
5. If a teacher determines that a student is abusing the policy, the privilege can be rescinded by the teacher.

"Would we ever give a zero? Absolutely," said Michael Hauptman, superintendent of EICS. "But we call them reluctant zeros. What that means is, we give them because we've done everything possible to support that student to be successful, and it really is about assessment, where giving a zero on the first time a child fails could be considered to be — let's just say, would we be doing our job?"

"We recognize that there does come a point in time where, yup, we have to give a zero because the student is just not responding to intervention or choosing to accept assistance, so we can't leave it blank," Hauptman said.

"It's a policy of supporting students first and reluctant zeros second, not first," Hauptman added.

“To say that you’d never give a zero would be incorrect, but to say that the first time a child fails, you’d give a zero, is also not appropriate, either. It’s a balanced approach between assessment versus consequence.”

“Where do zeros start? That’s a lengthy conversation. Do we give zeros in Grade 1? Do we give zeros in Grade 12?” he asked.

### **Academic Integrity:**

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Cheating is not acceptable. This includes plagiarism (copying someone else’s work and passing it off as your own), copying, taking work from a source without citing the source (including electronic sources), stealing tests or assignments and getting answers for a test or assignment in advance. Cheating also includes giving answers or work to others to claim as their own. If your child is suspected of plagiarism or cheating, school administration will meet with them and discuss the seriousness of this sort of offence. Parents will be contacted and made aware.

### **Grades/Marks Appeal Process:**

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To appeal a mark (assignment, test or final mark), students/parents/guardians are encouraged to talk to the teacher within 10 school days of receiving the grade. If they can’t resolve the appeal with the teacher, they should contact the principal who will make the final decision. The principal’s decision is final.

## **Exams**

### **Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs):**

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Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) measure how well students are learning what they are expected to learn. Results are shared publicly to show how Alberta students are doing, compared to provincial standards. Results from PATs help schools, school authorities and the province monitor and improve student learning.

Students in Grades 6 in English language arts, math, science, and social studies write PATs. The PATs will be administered on the following dates:

May 15<sup>th</sup> – English Language Arts Part A  
June 17<sup>th</sup> – English Language Arts Part B  
June 18<sup>th</sup> – Math Part A  
June 19<sup>th</sup> – Math Part B  
June 20<sup>th</sup> – Social Studies

While PATs are an important part of determining student growth and achievement, they address only those learning outcomes that can be readily assessed by a paper-and-pencil test. The

clearest picture of students' growth and development is gained when a wide variety of assessment information is considered. The achievement tests provide part of the picture.

### **How do PAT scores affect student marks?**

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Student final marks will be determined by the classroom teacher and approved by the principal. The weightings and grade calculations will be consistent with what was shared with parents/guardians and students prior to the beginning of the course on the course outline.

In Grade 6, the final mark may include the PAT and/or a teacher developed final exam at the discretion of the principal.

The Alberta government requires that we report the raw scores from Grade 6 PATs. Unofficial results will be reported on the final formal report in June. Official results will be available when released from Alberta Education according to their timeline.