

Annapolis Valley Regional School Board
Student Assessment, Evaluation, and
Reporting Practices and Procedures

Table of Contents

Topic	Page
§ 1 General Background.....	5
1.1 Board Mission Statement.....	5
1.2 Introduction and Rationale.....	5
1.3 Definition of Terms.....	7
1.4 Alignment with Other Policies and Procedures.....	9
1.5 Mandate of Teachers, Principals, Superintendents, and School Boards to Develop and Implement Student Assessment Procedures.....	10
§ 2 Aspects of Student Assessment and Evaluation.....	11
2.1 Expected Learning Outcomes.....	11
2.2 Essential Characteristics of Assessment.....	11
2.3 Authentic Assessment Tools and Differentiated Instruction Assessment Activities.....	12
2.4 Questions that Help Support the Development of Sound Assessment Practices.....	15
§ 3 Adaptations and Individual Program Plans.....	15
3.1 Adaptations.....	15
3.2 Individual Program Plans (IPPs).....	16
3.3 Reporting Procedures for Individual Program Plans (IPPs).....	16
§ 4 Promotion, Placement, Retention, and Acceleration.....	16
4.1 Preamble.....	16
4.2 Promotion.....	18
4.3 Placement.....	18
4.4 Retention.....	19
4.5 Acceleration.....	20
§ 5 Reporting the Results of Student Assessment and Evaluation.....	20
5.1 Communication.....	20
5.2 Frequency of Reporting.....	21
5.3 Reporting Student Progress.....	21
5.4 Honours.....	22
§ 6 Examinations.....	23
6.1 Description of Examinations.....	23
6.2 Rationale for Examinations.....	23
6.3 Questions Relevant to the Development and Use of Examinations.....	24
6.4 Alternatives to and Adaptations of Examinations.....	24
6.5 Number of Days for Examinations.....	25

6.6	Examination Procedures.....	25
6.7	Examination Uses.....	26
6.8	Appealing an Examination Result.....	26
6.9	Examination Exemptions.....	28
§ 7	High School Graduation Criteria and Ranking of Students.....	29
7.1	High School Graduation Requirements (English Programs).....	29
7.2	French Second Language Programs Graduation Requirements.....	29
7.3	Ranking of High School Students.....	29
§ 8	Large Scale Assessments.....	30
8.1	Introduction.....	30
8.2	Mandated External Large-Scale Assessments.....	30
8.3	Internal Large-Scale Assessments.....	30
8.4	The Requirement that Schools Perform Large-Scale Assessments.....	30
8.5	Explanations to Parents.....	30
§ 9	Protecting the Privacy of Students.....	30
9.1	The <u>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</u>	30
9.2	Knowledge of the <u>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</u>	31
9.3	Procedures that Protect the Privacy of Students.....	31
§ 10	Appendices.....	32
	Appendix A: Reference to § 1.4 – Alignment with Relevant Policies and Administrative Procedures.....	32
	Appendix B: Selections from <u>The Education Act</u> (Consolidated 2002).....	33
	Appendix C: Selections from <u>Ministerial Regulations under The Education Act</u> (Consolidated 2002)	35
	Appendix D: Selections from the Nova Scotia <u>Public School Program</u>	36
	Appendix E: Guiding Principles for Authentic Assessment Adapted from <u>Assessing Student Performance</u> by Grant P. Wiggins (1993).....	39
	Appendix F-1: Varieties of Assessment Tools that Support Authentic Assessment.....	40
	Appendix F-2: Varieties of Assessment Tools that Support Differentiated Instruction.....	40
	Appendix G: Adaptations: Strategies and Resources [from Nova Scotia Department of Education].....	41
	Appendix H: Inclusion: Supporting All Students [from Nova Scotia Department of Education].....	42
	Appendix I: Enrichment: Challenge for Excellence [from Nova Scotia Department of Education].....	47
	Appendix J: Nova Scotia Department of Education <i>Reporting Policy Framework</i> Communicating Grade Primary Student Achievement and Progress.....	51

Appendix K: Nova Scotia Department of Education *Reporting Policy*
Framework Student Achievement Codes Chart, Grades 1 – 6..... 52

Appendix L: Nova Scotia Department of Education *Reporting Policy*
Framework Learner Profile Grades Primary – 6.....53

Appendix M: Nova Scotia Department of Education *Reporting Policy*
Framework Student Achievement Codes Chart, Grades 7 & 8..... 54

Appendix N: Nova Scotia Department of Education *Reporting Policy*
Framework Elements of Learner Profile, Grades 7 – 9..... 55

Appendix O: Nova Scotia Department of Education *Reporting Policy*
Framework Student Achievement Codes Chart, Grades 9..... 56

Appendix P: Nova Scotia Department of Education *Reporting Policy*
Framework Student Achievement Codes Chart, Grades 10 – 12..... 57

Appendix Q: Nova Scotia Department of Education *Reporting Policy*
Framework Elements of Learner Profile Grades 10 – 12..... 58

Appendix R: Program Plan Timeline Chart.....59

Appendix S: Program Plan for Success..... 60

Appendix T: Nova Scotia Department of Education *Reporting Policy*
Framework High School Graduation Requirements Chart.....64

§11 References..... 65

Annapolis Valley Regional School Board Student Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting Practices and Procedures

§1 General Background

1.1 AVRSB Mission Statement

The mission statement of the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board states that

- Our schools are welcoming learning environments that reflect the nature and culture of our region.
- Our students excel in becoming life-long learners and contributors to society.
- Our competent, caring staff ensures equal opportunity, recognition of uniqueness and diversity, a dynamic curriculum, and open, responsive communication with all our partners.

“Student Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting Practices and Procedures” aligns with all elements of the board’s mission statement.

1.2 Introduction and Rationale

The purpose of schools is to help students acquire knowledge, develop skills, and build the capacities and personal growth they need to perform a variety of tasks. Schools exist to help students experience change. No one would expect that students, at the end of instruction, would be able to do **only** the same things, to the same level of proficiency, which they could perform prior to exposure to teaching/instruction. After teaching and learning have occurred, it is expected that students will experience improvement in their knowledge, skills, growth, and capacities to perform a variety of tasks. Regular monitoring and feedback are essential to improving student learning. Such improvement is the basis for the existence of publicly-funded education.

Assessment and evaluation are essential components of teaching and learning. Effective assessment and evaluation make it possible to know

- the extent to which students have learned,
- whether teaching has been effective,
- to what extent adaptations are required to address student learning needs, and
- the extent to which delivery of instruction might have to be altered or adapted.

Positive results from teacher-developed assessments and evaluation include:

- providing feedback to improve student learning,
- helping students to develop awareness of their own capabilities and what they must do to improve their own achievement (thus supporting metacognition),
- helping to determine if expected learning outcomes have been achieved,
- certifying that students have achieved certain levels of performance,
- setting goals for future student learning,

- communicating with parent(s)/guardian(s) and, as required, other members of the student's education community, and
- determining what instructional adaptations might be appropriate.

These results provide information to teachers that assists them to improve the effectiveness of their teaching, and consequently, the success experienced by their students.

Consistent with contemporary research that focuses on the progress of students as developing persons and learners, the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board recognizes that the assessment and evaluation of students, and the practices and procedures of reporting student progress and achievement, are essential components of learning and teaching. Frequent, fair, and accurate assessment of student achievement supports the growth, development, and success experienced by students. Clearly communicated, comprehensive, regular reporting practices and procedures support student achievement; this, in turn, motivates a diversity of students to continue to learn and to develop their knowledge, skills, and social growth.

Effective assessment and evaluation practices, combined with clear and frequent reporting procedures, contribute to student success, growth, and development by assisting students, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and school principals and vice-principals determine the extent to which

- student learning indicates achievement with respect to expected learning outcomes,
- appropriate adaptations have been made, or need to be made, to help students achieve expected learning outcomes, and
- teaching has been effective.

By helping teachers recognize which teaching strategies need to be revised in order for learners to succeed, *effective assessment and evaluation practices inform instruction*.

The Student Evaluation Standards, a publication endorsed by the Nova Scotia Department of Education, notes that it is essential that “student evaluations are useful. Useful student evaluations are informative, timely, and influential.”¹ The Student Evaluation Standards goes on to make several fundamental observations.

- Student evaluations should be constructive, so that they result in educational decisions that are in the best interest of the student.
- The users and uses of a student evaluation should be specified, so that evaluation appropriately contributes to student learning and development.

¹ Gullickson, A., and the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. 2003. The Student Evaluation Standards. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Inc., p. 65.

- The information collected for student evaluations should be carefully focused and sufficiently comprehensive, so that evaluation questions can be fully answered and the needs of students addressed.
- Teachers and others who evaluate students should have the necessary knowledge and skills, so that evaluations are carried out competently and the results can be used with confidence.
- In planning and conducting evaluations, teachers and others who evaluate students should identify and justify the values used to judge student performance, so the bases for the evaluation are defensible.
- Student evaluation reports should be clear, timely, accurate, and relevant, so that they are useful to students, parents/guardians, and other legitimate users.
- Student evaluations should include procedures for follow-up, so that students, parents/guardians, and other legitimate users can understand the information and take appropriate follow-up actions.²

The AVRSB endorses these principles and the uses they imply for student assessment, evaluation and reporting policies, practices, and procedures. The AVRSB considers that these principles provide basis for improvement of teaching and learning, and such improvement leads to greater opportunities for success for all students.

1.3 Definition of Terms

In order to contribute to clear discussion and achieve a shared understanding of practices and procedures described here, a number of terms are defined. The terms that follow are provided not only in reference to this Annapolis Valley Regional School Board “Student Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting Practices and Procedures,” but also are provided with a view to helping all who work in the AVRSB to benefit from a common language when dealing with matters of student assessment and evaluation.

Achievement refers to “what a student has learned as a result of formal instruction, usually in school.”³

Assessment method refers to “a strategy or technique evaluators may use to acquire evaluation information. These [methods] include, but are not limited to, observations, text- and curriculum-embedded questions and tests, paper-and-pencil tests, oral questioning, benchmarks or reference sets, interviews, peer and self-assessments,

² Gullickson, A., and the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. 2003. The Student Evaluation Standards. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Inc., pp. 65 – 66.

³ Gullickson, A., and the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. 2003. The Student Evaluation Standards. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Inc., p. 225.

standardized criterion-referenced and norm-referenced tests, performance assessments, writing samples, exhibits, portfolio assessment, and project and product assessments.”⁴

Assessment (frequently seen as reflecting developmental and *formative* aspects) refers to “the process of collecting information about a student to aid in decision-making about the progress and development of the student.”⁵ Assessment is an on-going, frequent, and focussed gathering of information concerning each learner’s achievement and progress. Because they respect that the contemporary, inclusive classroom is home to a diversity of learners, teachers assess students by using a variety of strategies, techniques, and resources. Assessment is a fundamental component in the process of conveying to individual students their success in learning: “Learning, and the demonstration of that learning, is what’s important – not student performance on a single high-stakes test.”⁶ Assessment provides teachers with information to help them determine if their teaching strategies are effective, and as a result, informs instruction. The results of assessment can help teachers make decisions with regard to (but not limited to) communicating with parent(s)/guardian(s), educational consultants, the school principal, other education and community partners.

Other education and community partners is a phrase that refers to school board educational consultants, health professionals, and various social services personnel.

Evaluation (frequently used in ways that suggest *summative* characteristics) may be described as the “systematic investigation of the worth or merit of a student’s performance in relation to a set of learner expectations or standards of performance.”⁷ Evaluation refers to the process of analyzing, reflecting upon, and summarizing the information gathered during the process of on-going assessment. Evaluation serves as the basis of a) judgements of how well students have learned and b) decisions concerning the “worth” assigned to student work. Evaluation of a learner’s level of achievement often results in recommendations for next steps (for example, programming, promotion, scholarships, and the like).

Evaluator means “anyone who accepts and executes responsibility for planning, conducting, and reporting student evaluations.”⁸

Expected learning outcomes refers to sets of skills, knowledge, and performance that learners must demonstrate to achieve curriculum goals. *Expected learning outcomes* are

⁴ Gullickson, A., and the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. 2003. The Student Evaluation Standards. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Inc., p. 226.

⁵ Gullickson, A., and the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. 2003. The Student Evaluation Standards. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Inc., p. 225.

⁶ Danielson, C. 2002. Enhancing Student Achievement: A Framework for School Improvement. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, p. 57.

⁷ Gullickson, A., and the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. 2003. The Student Evaluation Standards. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Inc., p. 226.

⁸ Gullickson, A., and the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. 2003. The Student Evaluation Standards. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Inc., p. 228.

the essential curriculum goals set forth by the Nova Scotia Department of Education in its various curriculum guides.

Alignment refers to ensuring that two or more different items or processes make sense in reference to, and in the context of, each other. For example, the following should be aligned:

- classroom instructional activities, Department of Education curriculum guideline statements, and essential graduation learnings,
- student needs and diversities, and teaching strategies,
- expected learning outcomes and teacher-made assessments, and
- board policies and each school’s student assessment practices and communication plan.

Goals of instruction must be aligned with expected learning outcomes. When assessment experiences are aligned with outcomes and instructional strategies, those assessments are relevant for students, and significantly, “can serve as the ‘operational definition’ of the school’s curriculum.”⁹

Public School Program refers to the course of studies and expectations set forth for the public schools of Nova Scotia by the Department of Education.

Reporting refers to the processes of compiling assessments of student achievement and making arrangements to share the results of those assessments with students and parent(s)/guardian(s) as a part of the teacher’s and school’s communication plans.

Adaptations refers, as per Department of Education guidelines, to “strategies and/or resources to accommodate the learning needs of an individual student. They are planned, implemented, and evaluated to enable a student to achieve the public school curriculum outcomes. **Adaptations strategies and/or resources are documented in the student’s cumulative record folder but are not indicated on a student’s high school transcript.**”¹⁰

1.4 Alignment of this Document with AVRSB Policies and Procedures and Other Sources

School principals are responsible for being familiar with the policies, procedures, and practices specified in Section 1.5 of this document and for ensuring that teachers are also made aware of them. This document is congruent with these policies, procedures, and practices. In particular, this document, “Student Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting Practices and Procedures,” is a component of Annapolis Valley Regional School Board Administrative Procedures AP 402.6 – Assessment and Evaluation of Student Progress. This document aligns with other AVRSB policies and administrative procedures. A list of

⁹ Danielson, C. 2002. Enhancing Student Achievement: A Framework for School Improvement. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, p. 35.

¹⁰ Nova Scotia Department of Education, Student Services Division and Evaluation Services Division, available at http://ednet.ns.ca/index.php?sid=130522539&t=sub_pages&cat=83 click on “Adaptations - Strategies and Resources.”

AVRSB policies and administrative procedures with which this document aligns may be found in Appendix A.

In addition, “Student Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting Practices and Procedures” is congruent with a number of other provincial, national and international sources, and these sources are also listed in the Appendices Section.

1.5 Mandate of Teachers, Principals, Superintendents, and School Boards to Develop and Implement Student Assessment Procedures

“Student Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting Practices and Procedures” is based on mandated requirements.

In The Education Act and Ministerial Regulations under the Education Act, consolidated 2002, the Nova Scotia Department of Education stipulates that,

- It is the right of students to be informed of their educational progress on a regular basis (§24 (4)).

- It is the duty of a teacher in a public school to
 - implement teaching strategies that foster a positive learning environment aimed at helping students achieve learning outcomes (§26 (1) (c)),
 - monitor the effectiveness of teaching strategies by analyzing outcomes achieved (§26 (1) (e)),
 - acknowledge and to the extent reasonable, accommodate differences in learning styles (§26 (1) (f)),
 - participate in individual-program planning and implement individual program plans, as required, for students with special needs (§26 (1) (g)),
 - review regularly with students their learning expectations and progress (§26 (1) (h)),
 - conduct such assessments and evaluations as are necessary to document student progress (§26 (1) (i)), and
 - communicate regularly with parents in accordance with policies established by the school board (§26 (1) (r)).

- It is the duty of a principal to
 - ensure that the public school program and curricula are implemented (§38 (2) (a)), and
 - communicate regularly with the parents of the students (§38 (2) (d)).

- It is the duty of a superintendent to work with principals to
 - ensure that students and schools meet the expectations of the school program (§39 (2) (j)).

- A school board shall, in accordance with The Education Act and Ministerial Regulations under the Act, establish policies respecting the communication by teachers to students and parents of learning expectations and progress (§64 (2) (o)).¹¹

The Nova Scotia Department of Education’s Reporting Policy Framework states that school boards are responsible “to ensure that comprehensive communication policies, procedures, and practices are in place to provide information about the expected learning outcomes of the provincial program, timely and meaningful information about student progress and achievement in relation to expected outcomes, and opportunities for parents and students to engage actively in the communication process.”¹²

The purpose of the Reporting Policy Framework is to assist boards, schools, and teachers in ensuring that “reporting procedures and practices provide a clear picture of student progress and achievement.”¹³ Specific use is made of Reporting Policy Framework in this document.

§2 Aspects of Student Assessment and Evaluation

2.1 Expected Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes that students are expected to achieve form the framework of goals of the province’s Public School Program and of Department of Education curriculum guides. With the exception of students who have an Individual Program Plan (IPP – see Appendix G, “Adaptations,” herein) in a curriculum area or areas, expected learning outcomes constitute the basis for

- curriculum focus,
- planning for instruction,
- selection of materials and resources,
- teaching techniques and strategies,
- student learning, and
- assessment of student knowledge, skills, performance, and attitude.

All teacher-constructed assessments of student performance must keep the Department of Education’s expected learning outcomes in the forefront of organizing for teaching, student learning, and assessment and reporting of student achievement.

2.2 Essential Characteristics of Assessment

Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices in Canada emphasizes that assessment methods should:

¹¹ Department of Education. 2002. The Education Act and Ministerial Regulations under the Education Act, Consolidated 2002. Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia pp. 16, 17, 20, 21, 29. For fuller coverage of requirements under the Act and Ministerial Regulations, see Appendix B, herein.

¹² Department of Education. 2004. Reporting Policy Framework. Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia, p. 2.

¹³ Department of Education. 2004. Reporting Policy Framework. Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia, p. 1.

- directly evaluate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours of students,
- be clearly related to the learning outcomes and be compatible with teaching/learning experiences,
- be comprehensive and an integral part of teaching and learning,
- include a wide variety of methods,
- be suited to the background, prior experiences, and special needs of students, and
- always be open to review and scrutiny.¹⁴

Since all learners are different and teaching/learning environments vary, **the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board expects that the assessment of students will occur frequently, employing a variety of strategies and techniques.**

2.3 Authentic Assessment Tools and Differentiated Instruction Assessment Activities

Assessment *for* learning makes use of a wide variety of tools. Appendix F-1 proposes a variety of assessment tools; the list is suggestive, not exhaustive. Furthermore, authentic assessment, in both theory and practice, is associated with that set of pedagogical practices known as differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction involves “attending to the learning needs of a particular student or small group of students rather than the more typical pattern of teaching the class as though all individuals in it were basically alike.”¹⁵ A number of differentiated assessment activities suggested by Tomlinson and Allan are listed in Appendix F-2.

It should be noted that in addition to authentic assessments *for* learning, students will encounter “traditional,” pencil and paper tests during their years in public school and beyond. The AVRSB expects teachers to provide their students with opportunities to experience such assessment tools and to provide students with the study skills they require to approach such tests successfully. The AVRSB recognizes that such tests, though not typically considered to be authentic, are nevertheless a reality for which students require coaching and preparation.

It is crucial that teachers and school administrators make the time to discuss and plan for student assessment. **Because the results obtained from student assessments have such an enormous impact on the lives of learners, student assessment is one of the most important features of the teaching-learning dynamic. Therefore, student assessment needs to be viewed as a priority for every school community, every year.**

- “First, teachers in a given grade level and discipline must agree on the content of their course, [determining] what students should know and be able to do . . .

¹⁴ These points are summarized from Centre for Research in Applied Measurement and Evaluation. 1993. Principals of Fair Assessment in Canada. Edmonton: University of Alberta.

¹⁵ Tomlinson, C. A., and Allan, S. D. 2000. Leadership for Differentiating Schools and Classrooms. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, p. 4.

educators . . . should ask themselves: What is *learning*? What do we want our students to be able to do?

- “Educators must arrive at a consensus about what assessment methods to use and about what the students will actually be asked to do to demonstrate their knowledge and skill.
- [Teachers need to determine] “the respective characteristics of poor, adequate, and exemplary performances . . . these rubrics must be shared with students . . . students who are involved in developing or using scoring rubrics internalize the standards of excellence and know how to achieve them.
- “Teachers must agree on what constitutes acceptable student performance on an assessment.”¹⁶

When assessments prepared by teachers reflect the goals of the curriculum, then “assessments go a long way towards ensuring student success in that curriculum.”¹⁷ For guiding principles of authentic assessment, refer to Appendix E.

Authentic assessment, often referred to as “assessment for learning” or “assessment for students,” takes an approach that is different from “assessment of learning” or “assessment of students.” The following chart highlights the differences.¹⁸

Key Differences	<i>Assessment of Learning</i>	<i>Assessment for Learning</i>
Reasons for Assessing	Document individual or group achievement or mastery of standards; measure achievement status at a point in time for purposes of reporting	Increase achievement; to help students meet more standards; support ongoing student growth
To Inform	Others about students	Students about themselves
Focus of Assessment	Achievement standards for which schools, teachers, and students are held accountable	Specific achievement targets selected by teachers that enable students to build toward standards
Driving Force	Accountability	Improvement
Place in Time	Event after learning is supposed to have happened	Process during learning

¹⁶ Danielson, C. 2002. Enhancing Student Achievement: A Framework for School Improvement. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, pp. 89-90.

¹⁷ Danielson, C. 2002. Enhancing Student Achievement: A Framework for School Improvement. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, p. 90.

¹⁸ Chappuis, J., and Chappuis, S. 2002. Understanding School Assessment. Portland, OR: Assessment Training Institute Inc., p. 17.

Assessment for learning is an approach to instruction that helps generate motivation among students towards their own achievement. “Assessment for learning is about far more than testing more frequently or providing teachers with evidence so they can revise instruction, although these are part of it.”¹⁹ Assessment for learning provides a continuous flow of information about student achievement. Using assessment for learning, teachers can advance student learning “by

- understanding and articulating *in advance of teaching* the achievement targets that their students are to hit,
- informing their students about those learning goals *in terms that students understand* from the very beginning,
- becoming assessment literate so they can transform those expectations into assessment exercises and scoring procedures that *accurately reflect student achievement*,
- using classroom assessments *to build student confidence* in themselves as learners, helping them take responsibility for their own learning so as to lay a foundation for lifelong learning,
- translating classroom assessment results into *frequent, descriptive (versus judgmental) feedback* for students, providing them with specific insights regarding their strengths as well as how to improve,
- continuously *adjusting instruction* based on the results of classroom assessments,
- engaging students in *regular self-assessment* with standards held constant so they can watch themselves grow over time and thus learn to become in charge of their own success,
- actively *involving students in communicating* with their teachers and their families about their achievement status and improvement,
- making sure that students understand *how the achievement targets* that they strive to hit *now relate to those that will come after*.

In short, the effect of assessment *for* learning as it plays out in the classroom is that students succeed, and they remain confident that they can continue to learn at productive levels if they keep trying.”²⁰ Consequently, the assessment for learning approach is one that all AVRSB teachers are urged to apply to their instructional practice; research makes clear that “students learn a lot more when teachers apply the principles of assessment *for* learning as a matter of routine in their classrooms.”²¹

¹⁹ Chappuis, S., Stiggins, R., Arter, J., & Chappuis, J. 2004. Assessment for Learning: An Action Guide for School Leaders. Portland, OR: Assessment Training Institute, p. 35.

²⁰ Chappuis, S., Stiggins, R., Arter, J., & Chappuis, J. 2004. Assessment for Learning: An Action Guide for School Leaders. Portland, OR: Assessment Training Institute, pp. 35-36.

²¹ Chappuis, S., Stiggins, R., Arter, J., & Chappuis, J. 2004. Assessment for Learning: An Action Guide for School Leaders. Portland, OR: Assessment Training Institute, p. 38.

2.4 Questions that Help Support the Development of Sound Assessment Practices

1. Has instruction leading to the assessment, made direct (explicit) reference to the expected learning outcomes of the program of studies (the curriculum)?
2. Does the assessment relate meaningfully and specifically to the expected learning outcomes?
3. Does the assessment reflect the instruction that has preceded it? In other words, when students encounter the assessment, have they experienced instruction that prepares them for the appearance, style, and approach to the assessment in addition to the content of the assessment? (For example, if the assessment is in the form of multiple-choice questions, have the students experienced practice with the multiple-choice format prior to the assessment?)
4. Have students been given the rationale for outcomes covered and the reason for the assessment that follows?
5. Is the assessment tool and level of challenge fair in format and substance? (For example, is there an appropriate amount of reading involved for students or is so much reading required by the assessment that most students will not be able to respond to the questions/problems posed by the assessment?)
6. Does the assessment process provide sufficient time for most students to make clear what they have learned?
7. Does the assessment offer opportunities for students with varying aptitudes and capabilities to achieve and build from their own capacities?
8. Does the assessment provide students with an opportunity to learn?

§ 3 Adaptations and Individual Program Plans

3.1 Adaptations

The Department of Education's Reporting Policy Framework, Section 2.5, "Communicating with Parents about Adaptations/Accommodations,"²² observes that

- it is expected that teachers routinely make adaptations to instruction and assessment to support students in achieving learning outcomes;
- adaptations may be necessary to support student progress and achievement;
- adaptations do not change the expected learning outcomes or program expectations;
- parents are to be informed of significant adaptations in instruction and assessment;
- significant adaptations to instruction and assessment are to be recorded in the student cumulative record; and

²² Department of Education. 2004. Reporting Policy Framework. Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia, p. 8.

- since adaptations do not change expected learning outcomes or program expectations, report cards will not include information on adaptations.

3.2 Individual Program Plans (IPPs)

At the site, http://ednet.ns.ca/index.php?sid=130522539&t=sub_pages&cat=83 – click on “Adaptations - Strategies and Resources,” (see Appendix G, herein) the Department of Education asks and answers, “What if a student is unable to meet the public school curriculum outcomes even though documented adaptations have been put in place? An Individual Program Plan (IPP), based on the student’s specific strengths and needs, is developed and implemented for the student for whom the public school curriculum outcomes are not attainable and or applicable. For some students with exceptional abilities, additional learning outcomes may need to be developed in the form of an IPP.”

The process of preparing an Individual Program Plan must follow the requirements set forth in Annapolis Valley Regional School Board Policy 403.5, AVRSB Administrative Procedure 403.5, the AVRSB Student Services Policies, Practices, and Procedures Manual, and the Department of Education’s Special Education Policy Manual – Policy 2.6. Specifically, schools are responsible for

- putting into place procedures for evaluation of programs and services for students with special needs,
- the identification, referral, and assessment processes,
- review and discussion of the plan with parent(s)/guardian(s), and
- making use of appropriate procedures for reporting the progress and achievement of students with Individual Program Plans.

3.3 Reporting Procedures for Individual Program Plans (IPPs)

The AVRSB requires all schools to abide by the guidelines given in the Department of Education’s *Special Education Manual* and the AVRSB Policy 403.5 and Administrative Procedure 403.5 when reporting the achievement of students on Individual Program Plans.

§4 Promotion, Placement, Retention, and Acceleration

4.1 Preamble

The promotion, placement, retention, and acceleration of students are actions that are directly related to the assessment of students’ success in achieving expected learning outcomes.

Fundamental beliefs centered on promotion, placement, retention, and acceleration follow:

- The Annapolis Valley Regional School Board and its schools subscribe to the belief that, in conformity with The Education Act and the Public School Program, AVRSB schools are expected to implement assessment policies and practices that encourage each student to make maximum progress according to his/her abilities.
- School assessment policies must align with Department of Education and AVRSB requirements and recommendations.
- The AVRSB and its schools are committed to communicating and effecting practices and procedures that encourage every student to make maximum progress in school according to his/her needs and abilities.
- Learners exhibit a variety of intelligences, and they learn in a variety of ways; consequently, rates of learning vary from learner to learner.
- The evaluation of student progress is based on the assessment of achievement carried out in a manner that is congruent with teaching and learning experiences designed by the teacher, clearly communicated school and school board policies, and Department of Education programs and expected outcomes.
- Students are expected to demonstrate a willingness to
 - learn,
 - achieve, and
 - make an individual effort to succeed.
- The Public School Program mandates what courses/subjects students must take, grades primary to 9. The PSP does not state what courses/subjects students must “pass” in order to be promoted.
- Students in grades 10 through 12 must successfully complete all mandated requirements in order to achieve a High School Graduation Certificate.
- Some students may be eligible to apply for “Challenge for Credit,” “Independent Study,” and similar alternatives under terms and criteria established by the Public School Program; for additional suggestions, see Appendix I, herein.
- It is recognized that student success is related to student development and maturation.
- Students for whom placement or retention is being considered will not be placed or retained without a Program Plan being developed and put into effect.
- **The decision to place, retain, or accelerate a student is not recommended by the AVRSB; instead, an Individual Program Plan is recommended for the student. In those rare instances when such a decision is made, the decision rests with the**

school/site; in the case of students proceeding from one site to another (for example from grade 6 in one school to grade 7 in the next school), the decision rests with the originating school.

4.2 Promotion

Student success is tied to the idea and experience of promotion from one level of learning to the next. Promotion occurs when learners meet or exceed explicitly stated learning outcomes associated within a certain grade, level, course, or program of learning. As a result of meeting or exceeding expected learning outcomes, learners proceed to the next grade, level, course, or program of learning. For students who regularly meet or exceed outcomes, promotion becomes part of a cycle in which learning successfully motivates them to continue to experience new learning and achievement – this results in a cycle of life-long learning. Typically, promotion takes place at the end of one grade, level, course, or program with the student advancing to the next grade, level, course, or program.

4.3 Placement

A student’s teachers and principal may decide to “place” a student in next grade, level, course, or program when that student has not met the majority of the expected learning outcomes associated with his/her grade, level, course, or program of learning. In such an instance, the student nevertheless is placed with his or her age-appropriate peers because circumstances indicate, and the student’s teachers and principal determine, that it is in the best interests of the student for such a decision to be taken. Such a decision is accompanied by a number of factors:

- When a student’s teachers and principal decide to place the student, they are required to support the student with the development and implementation of a Program Plan.
- Placement involves clear, ongoing communication with the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s).
- As soon as it is recognized that a student is in jeopardy of not successfully completing a program of study, a program planning team to support the student will be organized. This will occur early in the school year.
- The program planning team will consist of the student’s teachers, principal or vice-principal or designate, and, where appropriate, the student’s resource teacher and parent(s)/guardian(s).
- The program planning team will develop a Program Plan to support the student in those areas where the student is in jeopardy of not meeting the expected learning outcomes for the course/program of study. For a template that outlines the Program Plan timeline, see Appendix R, herein.
- The Program Plan will be monitored on a regular basis and the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will receive frequent feedback with regard to his/her success.

- In conjunction with cognitive aspects of learning, the AVRSB recognizes the importance of the emotional, social, and physical components of the well-being and development of all students. All of these factors contribute to the continual assessment of learners and play a role in the decision-making process when consideration is being given to developing the student's Program Plan and placement.

4.4 Retention

The AVRSB and the Department of Education believe that most students in grades P-6 and most middle level/junior high students (grades 6-9) benefit from being in class with their peers in age-appropriate settings. Retention, therefore, is a rare exception.

In the context of available assets, the AVRSB will provide staff, support, pedagogical resources, and planning opportunities required to assist schools to be effective in helping students reach their full potential as learners.

With regard to students who are at risk of not meeting expected outcomes, the AVRSB expects that teachers and school administrators will:

- encourage all students to make maximum progress in school according to students' strengths, abilities, learnings, levels of maturity and efforts,
- take action during the first four weeks of the school year, or as soon as possible thereafter, to address the needs of students who are identified as struggling with the expected learning outcomes of the Public School Program.
- make arrangements to coordinate the creation of, and meet with, a student's Program Plan Team,
- participate in the development of a plan for the student's success, including the preparation of the learner's profile (see Appendix S, herein),
- take into account the cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and environmental dimensions that are documented in/conveyed by the learner's profile,
- communicate regularly and clearly with the student, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), and other members of the student's Program Plan Team, and
- within the scope of resources available from the AVRSB, utilize staff, support, pedagogical resources, and organizational structures that are effective in helping students reach their full potential.

In those rare cases where retention is viewed as an option for the student, full and comprehensive communication with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) must be an integral part of the process. The AVRSB expects, in those rare instances when it is

considered to be an option, that retention will be experienced by a student no more than once during grades primary to nine.

When a student is proceeding from one school in the AVRSB to another, the originating school has the responsibility of providing the receiving school with a framework for the student's Program Plan.

4.5 Acceleration

Acceleration may be defined as the promotion of students beyond age-appropriate grade/level groupings. Acceleration is not a practice recommended by the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board. Rather, schools and teachers are expected to work with students and parent(s)/guardian(s) to provide purposeful programming, rewarding learning activities, and challenging assessment opportunities that address the full range of interests and abilities of all students so that they may enjoy growth and acquire capacities in the company of their age-appropriate peers. Consequently, in most cases, students will remain with their age-appropriate peers, but will be supported with a Program Plan. For suggestions and assistance with providing enrichment for highly capable students, please refer to the Department of Education's "Enrichment: Challenge for Excellence" (see Appendix I, herein) and the Department's Challenge for Excellence: Enrichment and Gifted Education Resource Guide; also contact the AVRSB's Student Services Section for direction to resources housed at the AVRSB office.

§5 Reporting the Results of Student Assessment and Evaluation

5.1 Communication

The Department of Education's Reporting Policy Framework²³ clearly outlines that comprehensive and effective communication between the school and the home is essential. It makes reference to the communication mandates of school boards, schools, and teachers in meeting parents'/guardians' information needs, specifically describing

- formal and informal communication,
- interim written reports,
- parent/teacher conferences,
- student-led conferences,
- portfolios of student work, and
- home/school log.

The Annapolis Valley Regional School Board recommends that all schools, teachers, and principals make use of Reporting Policy Framework as a guide when developing and

²³ Department of Education. 2004. Reporting Policy Framework. Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia, pp. 4-5.

implementing plans to communicate with families. Two features of communicating student achievement and progress are of central importance:

- the teacher's communication plan, and
- the school's communication plan.

The AVRSB views that communication with students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) with regard to student achievement and progress is a central feature of any educational plan. Each school year, communication plans should be provided to students and parent(s)/guardian(s) during the first month of school in non-semestered schools and during the first three weeks of the semester in semestered schools. Furthermore, it is expected that parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted whenever circumstances indicate that students would benefit from additional support at home.

5.2 Frequency of Reporting

The Department of Education's Reporting Policy Framework states that schools shall provide parents with accurate and regular information on student progress and achievement through report cards and scheduled conferences.²⁴ Non-semestered schools shall provide parents with a minimum of three (3) report cards (November, March, and June). Schools organized on a semester system shall provide parents with four (4) report cards (November, February, April, and June). There shall be a minimum of two (2) opportunities for scheduled conferences. Conferences may be parent-teacher, parent-student-teacher, or student-led. The AVRSB encourages all schools to hold conferences in which students play a key role.

The dates of the reports and opportunities during the year for parent-teacher, student-parent-teacher, and/or student-led conferences shall be communicated to parents at the beginning of the year in the School's Communication Plan.

Students on Individual Program Plans will receive reports at the same times as students following the public school program and at other times as appropriate.

5.3 Reporting Student Progress

The Annapolis Valley Regional School Board believes that student progress is just that – achievement that results over time involving numerous assessments. The AVRSB stipulates that **student evaluation will not be based on any one single assessment event**; nor will it be based on one or a few heavily weighted assessments.

²⁴ Department of Education. 2004. Reporting Policy Framework. Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia, p. 8.

The Department of Education's Reporting Policy Framework²⁵ takes a comprehensive approach to reporting student progress at the elementary, middle/junior high school, and high school levels.

- It is essential that report cards focus on the individual student's progress and achievement in comparison with the expectations of the provincial program.
- Report cards shall provide information on an individual student's progress and achievement and shall not include comparisons to the progress and achievement of other students (e. g., class averages, medians, percentiles).
- [Because of their importance and impact on student learning,] social development and work habits . . . shall be reported as separate and distinct aspects of student learning.

The document, Reporting Policy Framework, provides specific guidelines for

- preparing report cards,
- reporting on achievement,
- developing learner profiles,
- preparing anecdotal teacher comments,
- the requirement of a subject specific rubric,
- the use of a parent/guardian response sheet, and
- preparing high school statements of credits.

Reporting Policy Framework's "reporting on achievement" sections offer descriptions that explain letter and numerical grades that reflect the student's level of "achievement in relation to the expected learning outcomes" for the various school/grade levels. The Department of Education's Reporting Policy Framework also provides indicators for reporting social development and work habits in relation to expected learning outcomes in order to augment communication with parents. These indicators constitute the **learner's profile**. For coding systems and elements of learner profiles and achievement indicators at the various levels, see herein, Appendices K, L, M, N, O, P, and Q.

5.4 Honours

At the end of term or the end of year, students at the middle, junior high, and senior high levels may have the term "Honours" or "Honours with Distinction" applied to the description of their achievement when they have consistently demonstrated exceptionally high levels of success in achieving or exceeding expected learning outcomes.

"Honours" or "Honours with Distinction" standing is earned by students AVRSB schools according to the criteria that follow:

²⁵ Department of Education. 2004. Reporting Policy Framework. Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia, pp. 8-16.

- Honours or Honours with Distinction is based on an average of final or term marks/grades in Department of Education approved courses.
- Department of Education approved courses may include correspondence, independent study, and challenge for credit courses.
- Any correspondence course grades/marks shall be included in the calculation of the average for the academic year in which the correspondence course was completed.
- With the exception of grade 12 courses, courses must be taken during the current term or year.
- The number of courses required for the average depends on grade level.
 - *Grades 7 and 8:* all courses are to be used in computing the average.
 - *Grades 9, 10, and 11:* any six (6) courses may be used to compute the average.
 - *Grade 12:* any five (5) courses may be used to compute the average.
 - Note: Students who are enrolled for only one semester in an academic year may qualify for honours by taking and meeting the criteria described here in a minimum of three (3) courses in the semester.
- Students will receive Honours standing for achieving an average of 80% to 89%, as long as all other criteria described here are met.
- Students will receive Honours with Distinction standing for achieving an average of 90% or higher as long as all other criteria described here are met.
- To receive Honours or Honours with Distinction standing, the student may not have a final failing grade or mark in any subject taken during the term or year.

§ 6 Examinations

6.1 Description of Examinations

Typically pen/pencil and paper in format, examinations are summarizing assessment events that are used in conjunction with other types of assessments. Examinations occur at the end of a term of teaching and learning. They provide students with an opportunity to present an overview of knowledge, skills, and growth in reference to a specific set of learnings.

6.2 Rationale for Examinations

Examinations are to be viewed as one type of assessment among many, and the value assigned to examinations will vary according to grade level. It is not the purpose of examinations to intimidate students or to discover what they do not know.

Examinations have value for learners if they give students an opportunity to provide a collection of indicators of what knowledge, skills, and proficiencies they have learned and developed. In such instances, examinations can offer students an opportunity to consolidate their learning and can help students have the experience of making progress as learners.

6.3 Questions Fundamental to the Development and Use of Examinations

- How will students benefit from writing the exam?
- Is there a direct correlation between the exam and the expected learning outcomes established for the course?
- Have all the topics and questions covered on the exam been emphasized in the learning experiences organized for students leading up to the exam?
- Is there a direct correlation between the values assigned to various exam questions/topics and the amount of time and emphasis placed on topics with learners during teacher-designed instruction?
- Does the exam offer challenge and depth appropriate to student capabilities, program requirements, and teacher expectations?
- Does the exam reflect fairly the activities, strategies, and problem-solving modeling that occurred during instruction?
- Have students been taught how to approach and effectively respond to the examination experience, and have they been taught the style, format, and process of writing the exam?

6.4 Alternatives to, and Adaptations of, Examinations

Alternatives to typical pen/pencil and paper examinations might be necessary, especially in cases where students require adaptations. Such alternatives and adaptations, among other possibilities, can include:

- oral testing,
- scribing,
- process assessments,
- assistive technology,
- different setting (e. g. resource room),
- use of manipulatives,
- performance assessments, and
- creating a product.

6.5 Number of Days for Examinations

In annual Policy and Information Releases (“P & I Release”), the Department of Education identifies the starting dates for examinations, and the permissible length of examination schedules by regulation. The AVRSB requires that schools under its jurisdiction abide by departmental regulations. Specifically, “no more than nine (9) days in the school year may be allocated for examination purposes. Final examinations for grades 10-12 shall not begin prior to the five (5) days immediately preceding the end of the first semester, and not prior to the 187th day” (“P & I Release,” Department of Education).

6.6 Examination Procedures

- No examinations may be written by AVRSB students in grades P to 6.
- In situations where AVRSB schools decide to have examinations in grades 7 and 8, such examinations must be viewed as tests that provide an opportunity for teachers to teach a) study skills and b) strategies that help students learn how to write exams successfully. Processes of reviewing, studying, thinking, and expressing, rather than the memorization and regurgitation of content, must be emphasized. If exams are written at these grade levels, they must not exceed 90 minutes in length and will have a maximum value of **not more than 15 %** of the total final grade for a course/subject.
- Grade 9 examinations will have a maximum value of **not more than 20%** of the total final grade for a course.
- Grade 10 examinations will have a maximum value of **not more than 25%** of the total final grade for a course.
- Grades 11 and 12 examinations will have a maximum value of **not more than 30%** of the total final grade for a course.
- Grade 12 students will write Nova Scotia Exams in accordance with Department of Education directives and requirements.
- Grade 9 examinations’ time allocation will not exceed two hours.
- Grade 10 examinations’ time allocation will not exceed two and a half hours.
- Grades 11 and 12 examinations’ time allocation will not exceed three hours unless required by a Nova Scotia Exam.
- Students who receive resource support on a regular basis are to receive similar support when they write examinations, including adaptations with which the student has become familiar.

- Teachers are required to turn in final edition copies of their examinations to the administrator (principal, vice-principal, or department head) supervising their curriculum area at least four work days prior to the day the exam is scheduled to be written.
- A scoring guide, table, or rubric must accompany examinations when they are turned into the curriculum area supervisor (principal, vice-principal, or department head). This guide, table, or rubric is to be available to anyone who requests or requires it after the exam has been written.
- The curriculum area supervisor (principal, vice-principal, or department head) is to advise the teacher of any concerns he or she has with any examination within two working days of receiving the exam and scoring rubric.
- Should a disagreement develop between the curriculum area supervisor (principal, vice-principal, or department head) and the teacher with regard to a required examination revision, the disagreement is to be resolved by the school principal in conjunction with the Coordinator of Programs and/or the Coordinator of Student Services without delay.

6.7 Examination Uses

The following aspects are to be kept in focus when examinations are prepared, written, and assessed. Exams are to be

- used to help students understand what they have learned with regard to the expected learning outcomes of a course or program of study,
- designed to help students further their learning,
- reviewed with students whenever possible, for example, at the end of the first semester, with the intention of helping students improve their exam-writing skills,
- securely stored by the teacher, with the knowledge of the school principal and school secretary regarding location, for nine school months, and
- disposed of in October, when written the previous January, and disposed of in March when written the previous June, in a secure manner (that is, burned or shredded).

6.8 Appealing an Examination Result

The procedure outlined here is to be followed in the event that a student wishes formally to appeal an examination result.

- Teachers are expected to discuss and resolve informal appeals from students.

- Formal appeals of Nova Scotia Exams (NSE) must follow regulations established by the Department of Education.
- Formal appeals of non-NSE results are available to courses at the Grade 11 and Grade 12 levels, only.
- Students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) have three calendar days from the time an examination result is made available to students for review to formally appeal a non-NSE exam mark or grade. Without a physician's note, this three-day timeframe applies whether or not the student is present the day that examinations were made available to students.
- In the event a student and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) appeal(s) a non-NSE exam result, the school principal or vice-principal is to meet within two working days with the student, teacher, and parent(s)/guardian(s) to review the exam, and the exam's original scoring rubric is to be available and referred to during the appeal.
- With the knowledge of the Director of Programs and Services (or designate), the school principal will make the final decision as to whether an appeal is or is not upheld with regard to a non-NSE exam result.
- When an appeal comes to the attention of the principal, the principal is required to notify the Director of Programs and Services (or designate) that an appeal has been received. Information required by the Director includes the subject and grade level of the exam, Public School Program course code, teacher's name, student's name, and the name(s) of the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). The principal may at any time request the Director to assign a person from Programs and Services to participate in the appeal process. The Director may assign such a person at his/her discretion at any time during the process.
- After the appeal, the principal, will notify the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) whether the exam mark stays the same, **or** is raised, **or** if the student is to be offered an opportunity to write a new exam making use of a similar but not identical rubric. Students and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified of the principal's decision within three working days of receiving the appeal.
- In the event of a successful appeal, should the school principal, with the agreement of the teacher, allow a student an opportunity to rewrite a non-NSE exam, the exam will be written within three calendar days of notification that the appeal was upheld.
- The re-write exam will be marked within two working days. The teacher will mark the exam using a rubric and explain the exam's final grade to the principal. The principal will then notify the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the result.

- The re-write non-NSE exam result, will contribute to the course final grade, even if the re-write non-NSE exam result is lower than the original exam result.
- The result achieved on the re-write exam is not eligible for appeal.

6.9 Examination Exemptions

When a student has an exam exemption in a certain subject or course, the student does not have to write the exam for that subject or course. **In schools where exams are written, students must write at least one set of exams per year unless they are on Individual Program Plans.**

The AVRSB recommends that schools not make exemptions available to students who excel academically; however, exemptions are appropriate for many students who have diagnosed difficulties with learning and are on Individual Program Plans.

Some schools in the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board offer exemptions from writing exams in certain courses or subjects to students who achieve at an above-average level. The following exemption guidelines are strongly recommended. It is recommended that, in those instances where exemptions are a part of a school's evaluation system,

- students have an-end-of-course result of 80% or higher in a particular course to be eligible for an exemption in that course,
- students have passing results in all courses to be eligible for an exemption in any particular course,
- students be notified by the subject teacher no sooner than two days prior to the end of an instructional term of their eligibility of an exemption, and
- students be permitted to write exams even in those courses for which they have qualified for an exemption, with the understanding that the exam results must count towards the final result for any course in which an exam is written.

The students most likely to benefit from writing exams are those students who do well in them. Furthermore, students who struggle to meet expected learning outcomes are not likely to excel at writing examinations; for such students to write exams while others receive exemptions, is a form of discrimination that can artificially widen achievement gaps among students. Moreover, academically adept students are likely to be presented with examinations during their working lifetimes; for these reasons, it is recommended that schools not make exemptions available to students who excel academically.

§ 7 High School Graduation Criteria and Ranking of Students

7.1 High School Graduation Requirements (English Programs)

In order to graduate with a Nova Scotia High School Graduation Certificate (English Programs), students at the grades 10, 11, and 12 levels are required to achieve a minimum of 50% in 18 courses, 13 required courses, and 5 electives. A student must have a minimum of five (5) grade 12 credits to graduate, and not more than seven (7) credits will be counted from the grade ten level. The AVRSB recommends that a template similar to the one in Appendix T be used and issued to every high school student/parent/guardian to ensure that the required credits are obtained.

7.2 French Second Language Programs Graduation Requirements

Note: *Students (and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of such students) who are intending to graduate with a **French Second Language Programs Certificate** are expected to consult with their school guidance counsellors and/or the appropriate AVRSB programs personnel.*

School administrators and guidance counsellors are expected to communicate to students (and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of such students) that specific graduation requirements apply to French Second Language Programs. French Second Language Programs Certificates apply only to French Extended Core and French Immersion Programs.

7.3 Ranking of High School Students

Students at the Grades 11 and 12 levels may be ranked for purposes of competing for scholarships, bursaries, and other distinctions associated with graduation and proceeding towards post-secondary opportunities. **Only academic or advanced courses approved by the Department of Education will be considered.**

Student ranking shall be calculated using the average of eight (8) full courses as follows:

- 1) The three (3) Grade 12 level approved courses in which the student achieved the top grades/results shall be used, each full credit given equal weight.
- 2) The next five (5) Grades 12 or 11 approved courses in which the student achieved top grades/results shall be used, each full credit given equal weight.

In exceptional cases, where a ranking is required but a student has not yet completed courses as outlined in #1 above, schools may implement a fair adjustment to these guidelines to prevent a student from being disadvantaged.

§ 8 Large-Scale Assessments

8.1 Introduction

From time to time, large-scale assessments of students are performed. Such assessments take place as a result of various international, national, provincial, or regional initiatives.

8.2 Mandated External Large-Scale Assessments

Mandated external large-scale assessments refer to national and international tests and assessments that are authorized by the Department of Education and the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board.

8.3 Internal Large-Scale Assessments

Internal large-scale assessments refer to tests and assessments that are part of a Board or school initiative to gather information to be used to evaluate the results of delivery of curricula and/or contribute to school success planning.

8.4 The Requirement that Schools Perform Large-Scale Assessments

The Education Act, § 26 (1) (j) states that “It is the duty of a teacher in a public school to administer such evaluation and assessment instruments as are required by the board or the Minister.”

8.5 Explanations to Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

It is the responsibility of schools to send to parent(s)/guardian(s) all explanatory materials that are made available by the Department or the Board with regard to large-scale assessments.

§ 9 Protecting the Privacy of Students

9.1 The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

The AVRSB and its schools acknowledge their responsibilities under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOI/POP) Act*.

9.2 Knowledge of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

The AVRSB requires teachers who have questions/concerns with regard to their responsibilities under *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to inquire of their principal or designate. In addition, the AVRSB directs school administrators who have questions/concerns under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to contact the Director of Programs and Services or the Superintendent of Schools for clarification.

9.3 Protecting the Privacy of Students

When evaluation and assessment instruments are mandated by the Department of Education, by the AVRSB, and/or developed and implemented by teachers and administrators, all persons involved with the administration of such instruments and the handling of information pertaining to student participation, achievement, and records are required to take all necessary steps to protect the privacy of students.

§ 10 Appendices

Appendix A

Reference to § 1.4 – Alignment of this Document with AVRSB Policies and Procedures and Other Sources

- A This document is based on BP/AP 402.6 – Assessment and Evaluation of Student Progress.
- B In addition this document aligns with other AVRSB policies and administrative procedures.
- BP/AP 100.1 – Development and Implementation of Policy and Administrative Procedures
 - BP/AP 100.2 – Communication with Parent/Guardian Organizations and School Advisory Councils
 - BP/AP 100.3 – (SAC) School Advisory Council – School Improvement Plan & Annual Report
 - BP/AP 100.4 – Monitoring of Board Policies and Administrative Procedures
 - BP/AP 102.1 – RCH Foundation Statements
 - BP/AP 402.10 – Use and Distribution of Assessment Results
 - BP/AP 403.3 – Program Planning and Evaluation
 - BP/AP 403.4 – Student Identification and Assessment
 - BP/AP 403.5 – Individual Program Plan (IPP) Development
 - BP/AP 403.14 – Enrichment
 - BP/AP 403.15 – Homebound Tutoring
- C “Student Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting Practices and Procedures” also aligns with another number of sources, including,
- An Act Respecting Education, Nova Scotia (see Appendix B),
 - Ministerial Regulations under the Act (see Appendix C),
 - The Public School Programs of the province of Nova Scotia (see Appendix D),
 - The Nova Scotia Department of Education’s Reporting Policy Framework (see Appendix F),
 - The Nova Scotia Department of Education’s policy statement entitled, “Adaptations: Strategies and Resources” (see Appendix G),
 - Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1993, available at <http://www.bctf.ca/education/assessment/FairStudentAssessment.pdf>), and
 - The Student Evaluation Standards, 2003, edited by Arlen R. Gullickson, Chair, and the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation.

Appendix B

Selections from Province of Nova Scotia, An Act Respecting Education (Chapter 1 of the Acts of 1995-1996 as amended 1998, 2000, 2002)

Reference to § 1.5 – Mandate of Teachers, Principals, Superintendents, and School Boards to Develop and Implement Student Assessment Procedures

- § 24 (2) Students are accountable to their teachers while under their teachers' supervision.
- § 24 (4) It is the right of students to be informed of their educational progress on a regular basis.
- § 25 (1) (e) It is the duty of parents to support their children's teachers in their efforts to provide an education for their children.
- § 26 (1) It is the duty of a teacher in a public school to
 - a) respect the rights of students;
 - b) teach diligently the subjects and courses of study prescribed by the regulations that are assigned to the teacher by the school board;
 - c) implement teaching strategies that foster a positive learning environment aimed at helping students achieve learning outcomes;
 - d) encourage students in the pursuit of learning;
 - e) monitor the effectiveness of teaching strategies by analyzing outcomes achieved;
 - f) acknowledge and, to the extent reasonable, accommodate differences in learning styles;
 - g) participate in individual-program planning and implement individual program plans, as required, for students with special needs;
 - h) review regularly with students their learning expectations and progress;
 - i) conduct such assessments and evaluations as are necessary to document student progress;
 - j) administer such evaluation and assessment instruments as are required by the board or by the Minister.
 - r) communicate regularly with parents in accordance with policies established by the school board.
 - t) assist in the development and implementation of the school improvement plan;
 - u) maintain their professional competence;
 - v) serve, to the extent reasonable, on committees established within the school to improve student achievement and success;
 - w) implement programs and courses as prescribed by the public school program.

- § 38 (2) It is the duty of a principal to
 - d) communicate regularly with the parents of the students;
 - f) ensure that provincial and school board policies are followed.
- § 39 (2) (j) It is the duty of a superintendent to work with principals to ensure that students and schools meet the expectations of the school program.
- § 64 (2) (o) A school board shall, in accordance with the Act and the Regulations, establish policies respecting the communication by teachers to students and parents of learning expectations and progress.

Appendix C

Ministerial Regulations under Section 145 of the Education Act (amended October 2000)

Reference to § 1.5 – Mandate of Teachers, Principals, Superintendents, and School Boards to Develop and Implement Student Assessment Procedures

- Citation 5 – Administration of Evaluation and Assessment Programs
A school board shall be responsible for causing the administration of evaluation and assessment programs established by the school board or required by the Minister.
- Citation 6 – Placement of Students
 - 1) Subject to subsection (2), a school board shall determine the appropriate placement of students.
 - 2) The obligation of a school board pursuant to subsection (1) is, in the case of the placement of a student with special needs, subject to
 - a) any appeal procedure established by the board; and
 - b) the appeal procedure prescribed in Section 53.
- Citation 48 – Public School Program
The Minister may publish a description of the courses of study, textbooks, and related material prescribed by the Minister, and such administrative instructions and orders as the Minister considers necessary for the effective use of such courses, textbooks, and related material.
- Citation 49 – Public School Program
This section describes what programs school boards shall or may provide at what grade levels in each school under its jurisdiction.
- Citation 52 – Review of a Student's Progress Policy
A school board shall establish a policy setting out the terms and conditions under which a review of a student's progress in the student's school program, including academic performance, shall be conducted.

Appendix D

Selections from the Nova Scotia Public School Program

Reference to § 1.5 – Public School Program: Policies and Procedures

- Assessment of Student Learning (p. C-3)
 - *Assessment* is the systematic process of gathering information on student learning.
 - Assessment policies and procedures should support the curriculum, instructional practices, and assessment strategies described in current curriculum documents.
 - Practices should reflect current knowledge about how students learn and be flexible enough to meet the diverse needs of learners.

- Purposes of Assessment (p. C-4)
 - The primary purpose of assessments is to provide information to improve student achievement and instructional programs, and to produce a basis for evaluation.
 - Assessments help students reflect on how well they have learned, to redirect their efforts, and to set goals for their learning.
 - Assessments enhance teachers' insights and knowledge about students' learning needs and styles. Teachers use information gathered through assessments to describe what students know, are able to do, and are working toward. They use this information to provide students with useful feedback on a regular, ongoing basis, guiding their efforts toward improvement.
 - Reflection on this information helps teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of their instructional approaches and to consider how they might adapt them to address learners' needs.
 - *Evaluation* is the process of analyzing, reflecting upon, and summarizing assessment information and making judgments or decisions based upon the information gathered.

- Principles of Assessment and Evaluation (p. C-4)
 - Assessment strategies and tasks should be appropriate for and compatible with the purpose and context of the assessment.
 - Students should be provided with sufficient opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviours being assessed.
 - Procedures for judging or scoring student performance should be appropriate for the assessment method used and be consistently applied and monitored.
 - Procedures for summarizing and interpreting results should yield accurate and informative representations of a student's performance in relation to the curriculum outcomes for the reporting period.
 - Assessment reports should be clear, accurate, and of practical value to the audience for whom they are intended.
 - While assessments may be used for different purposes and audiences, all assessments must give each student optimal opportunity to demonstrate what he/she knows and can do.

- Classroom Assessment (pp. C-4, C-5)
 - Classroom assessment
 - provides information about students' progress in achieving expected learning outcomes.
 - focuses on the significant aspects of learning that the student must demonstrate.
 - Teachers determine
 - the aspects of learning on which to focus the assessment.
 - the most appropriate assessment strategies and tasks to use for that purpose.
 - Teachers use a broad range of assessment strategies in order to provide students with multiple opportunities and a variety of ways to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
 - Sources for teachers' assessments of students may include:
 - the teacher's anecdotal records and teacher journals or log books.
 - conferences with the student.
 - observations.
 - peer assessment.
 - pencil and paper procedures (quizzes, tests, examinations).
 - performance assessments.
 - the student's self-assessment.
 - student journals or log books.
 - students' work samples.
 - Students benefit when they
 - clearly understand the expectations for their learning.
 - are aware of the outcomes for which they are responsible.
 - know the criteria by which their work will be assessed or evaluated.
 - have enough information to make informed decisions about the most effective ways to demonstrate what they know, are able to do, value.
 - are given an opportunity to negotiate assessment and evaluation procedures.
 - are empowered to assess their own progress.
 - Assessment strategies should provide the feedback teachers need to determine areas requiring intervention and support and to tailor instruction to the individual learning needs and styles of their students.
 - Teachers have a special responsibility to ensure that assessment and evaluation procedures are clearly communicated to students and parents, to explain accurately what progress students are making in their learning, and to respond to student and parent inquiries about learning.

- Progress of Students (pp. C-6, C-7)
 - The Department of Education expects school boards to implement policies and practices that will encourage each student to make maximum progress according to his/her abilities.
 - From elementary through senior high school, instruction must be adapted to meet the varying rates and patterns of learning of all students and to satisfy students' individual needs.
 - The assessment of progress should be based on
 - the department's programs and course descriptions.
 - statements of expected learning outcomes.
 - Schools are responsible for creating learning environments that will encourage students to make maximum progress.
 - A school board's policies on assessment and on the placement of students may differ for elementary, junior, and senior high levels but should be applied consistently at each level across the region.
 - School boards
 - should review their policies regularly to ensure that they reflect the department's expectations.
 - should ensure that procedures for formal and informal appraisals are in place for the continuous assessment of each student's emotional, social, physical, and intellectual development.
 - are responsible for students' placement within schools.
 - should base their decisions on the assessments they have conducted.
 - Teachers' reports on a student's progress, either oral or written, should focus on the individual student's development and achievement in comparison with the expected learning outcomes and program expectations.
 - It is of the utmost importance that reporting practices and procedures reflect expected learning outcomes of the program, and that from the report, students and parents can readily understand the individual's progress and achievement in relation to the provincial program or individualized program plan's expected learning outcomes.
 - Appropriate reporting of student progress recognizes
 - the right of students to be informed of their progress on a regular basis.
 - the right of parents to be provided with the information they require to assess their children's progress and achievement in school.
 - that it is essential that parents be informed as soon as possible when their children are experiencing serious problems related to progress and achievement.

Appendix E

Guiding Principles for Authentic Assessment

Adapted from Assessing Student Performance by Grant P. Wiggins (1993)

- Students are entitled to authentic, engaging, educative assessment experiences.
- Authentic assessment involves developing a system of appraising student work in ways that are based on known, public, non-arbitrary standards and criteria.
- Authentic assessment involves response-contingent challenges where the *effect* of both process and product/performance (sensitivity to audience, situation, and context) determine the quality of the result.
- Opportunities for self-assessment are central to the practice of authentic assessment.
- Students are entitled to numerous opportunities to produce work that they can be proud of.
- Students are entitled to genuine, frequent, unequivocal feedback that provides them with useable information concerning their strengths and weaknesses.
- Students are entitled to accurate assessment of their long-term progress towards exit-level goals that have been established as standards of performance.

Appendix F-1

Varieties of Assessment Tools that Support Authentic Assessment

Assessment *for* learning makes use of a wide variety of tools. The following list provides an indication of varieties of assessment tools; the list is suggestive, not exhaustive.

anecdotal records	group collaborations	questionnaires
artefacts	graphic organizers	rating scales
audiotapes/CDs	homework checks	reflection sheets
blogs (web logs)	interviews	research papers
case studies	inventories	reviews
checklists	investigations	replications
compare/contrast	learning logs	rubrics
computer simulations	Likert scales	running records
concept maps	multi-media products	self-assessments
conferences	observation lists/surveys	simulations
debates	oral reports	surveys
demonstrations	peer assessments	tests (oral, written)
displays	performance tasks	video/CD
drama/role plays	portfolios	web mapping
essays	presentations	web page development
examinations	projects	word problems
exhibits	questioning	written analyses

Appendix F-2

Varieties of Assessment Tools that Support Differentiated Instruction²⁶

Choreograph a dance.
 Conduct a panel.
 Create a flow chart.
 Create a magazine.
 Create a puppet play.
 Create a talk show.
 Create costumes.
 Design a bulletin board.
 Design a survey and interview.

Design a video.
 Develop a computer time-line.
 Develop a display.
 Draw a comic strip.
 Illustrate a story.
 Make a mural.
 Plan a trip.
 Teach a lesson.
 Write a song.

²⁶ Appendix F-2 offers a separate list from a specific source, namely, Gregory, G. 2003. Differentiated Instructional Strategies in Practice: Training, Implementation, and Supervision. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press Inc., p. 67.

Appendix G

Adaptations: Strategies and Resources

[from] Nova Scotia Department of Education
(http://ednet.ns.ca/index.php?sid=130522539&t=sub_pages&cat=83)
[click on Adaptations]

Reference § 3 – Adaptations

Note: Adaptations are strategies and/or resources to accommodate the learning of an individual student. They are planned, implemented, and evaluated to enable a student to achieve the public school curriculum outcomes. Adaptations strategies and/or resources are documented in the student's cumulative record folder but are not indicated on a student's high school transcript.

Note: Refer to Policy 2.2 of the Special Education Policy Manual and Options in Programming from Challenge for Excellence: Enrichment and Gifted Education Resource Guide, Department of Education.

Note: For assessments administered by the Department of Education (e. g., Provincial, National Assessments), a request for adaptations must be supported by documentation and submitted to the Department of Education.

Note: Curriculum outcomes are statements of what students are expected to know and be able to do.

Note: Adaptations do not change the public school curriculum outcomes; they enable students to achieve them.

Note: Information about adaptations may be found in Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services, Nova Scotia Department of Education.

Adaptations may include one or more of the following strategies or resources.

Organizational Strategies

Consideration of classroom support structures, such as

- buddy systems/paired reading/peer tutors
- learning contracts/independent study
- management techniques (e. g., behaviour support plan)
- notes in advance

Environmental Strategies

Consideration of changes to the environment, such as

- specific seating arrangements (e. g., class seating, study carrels)
- varying lighting conditions
- organizing space
- using a variety of locations in the school

Presentation/Instructional Strategies

Using a variety of presentation strategies, such as

- providing multiple texts on related topics
- highlighting key concepts/vocabulary
- providing supplementary materials (e. g., tapes, CDs)
- organizing learning experiences around a theme or topic

Assessment Strategies

Providing options for students to demonstrate what they know, such as

- administering assessments in alternate formats (e. g., oral, audio)
- varying time/location during testing
- scribing of student responses
- offering students choices in assessment formats (e. g., portfolios, individual contracts)

Resources

Providing a variety of learning supports to access or extend the curriculum, such as

- assistive technology
- various print formats (e. g., large print, high contrast, Braille)
- teacher- and student-made manipulatives and models
- mentors

Questions and Answers

Q: How do we know when a student requires adaptations?

A: A student requires documented adaptations when he/she demonstrates a need for specific strategies and/or resources in order to meet the outcomes of the curriculum or to meet the enhanced capacities of the learner.

Q: Does a student have to be formally identified with a special need before being considered for support through adaptations?

A: No, formal identification of a disability is not required.

Q: Who decides that a student requires documented instructional and/or assessment adaptations?

A: Teachers, guidance counsellors, parents/guardians, students, and other professionals supporting the student, can all be initiators and/or participants in discussions relating to the exploration of potential documented adaptations. If it is deemed that further supports are necessary, a referral should be made to the program planning team. The team includes those who have responsibility for the student's learning.

Q: What are the procedures for documenting and reviewing adaptations?

A: Adaptations required by a student must be documented and placed in the student cumulative record folder (Policy 2.2 of the Special Education Policy Manual, Department of Education).

Adaptations require monitoring and evaluation throughout the school year to determine if they are assisting the student in achieving the curriculum outcomes. When monitoring and evaluating adaptations, the teacher or team should consider the possibility of reducing the dependency upon and/or eliminating the adaptation(s).

Q: Will adaptations to instructional or evaluation strategies be listed or indicated on the report card transcript?

A: No, adaptations to instructional or assessment strategies are not listed or indicated on the report card/transcript because the outcomes of the course have not been changed. Students who are transitioning to post-secondary options should be taught to self-advocate to obtain the support they will need to successfully pursue their endeavours.

Q: What is the connection between instructional adaptations and assessment adaptations?

A: Adaptations used to support the student during instruction should be provided during assessment, if such adaptations do not compromise or alter its validity. If a scribe (note taker) is required, the scribe writes exactly what the student dictates. Scribes do not edit or proof read student responses, nor do they advise, suggest, or imply that changes are required. Assessment content is not to be interpreted, summarized, or paraphrased by the scribe. Questions are read verbatim. No explanations are permitted.

Q: What if a student is unable to meet the public school curriculum outcomes even though documented adaptations have been put in place?

A: An Individual Program Plan (IPP), based on the student's specific strengths and needs, is developed and implemented for the student for whom the public school curriculum outcomes are not attainable and/or applicable. For some students with exceptional abilities, additional learning outcomes may need to be developed in the form of an IPP.

Appendix H

Inclusion: Supporting All Students

[from] Nova Scotia Department of Education
http://ednet.ns.ca/index.php?sid=130522539&t=sub_pages&cat=83
[click on Inclusion]

Reference: § 4 Promotion, Placement, Retention, and Acceleration

Note: Inclusion facilitates the membership, participation, and learning of all students in school programs and activities.

Note: Differentiated instruction provides a range of strategies based on a teacher's response to individual learners' needs.

Note: Transition planning supports passage from one stage in a student's life to another – from home to school, grade to grade, school to school, community to school, and school to community.

Note: Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability." *Charter of Rights and Freedoms [Section 15 (1)]*

Inclusion is an attitude and a value system that promotes the basic right of all students to receive appropriate and quality educational programming and services in the company of their peers.

Questions and Answers

Q: What are the elements of inclusion?

- Students are equal members of their neighbourhood schools.
- There is a collaborative culture within schools, and between schools and communities and other agencies, to address the diverse needs of students.
- There is early and ongoing involvement of parents and guardians in their children's education.
- *A process of identification, assessment, planning, and evaluation for students with special needs is in place and documented.*
- An Individual Program Plan (IPP), based on a student's strengths and needs, is developed and implemented for a student for whom the provincial curriculum outcomes are not applicable and/or attainable.

- *Differentiated instruction addresses the needs of every student and accommodates the learning styles of all students.*
- Supportive and collaborative school leadership is evident.
- Research identifying effective programming and services is used to enhance student learning.
- Transition planning is part of the individual planning process for each student with special needs.

Q: What should I look for in schools that practice inclusion?

- early and ongoing involvement of parents and guardians in their children's education
- an understanding of, and commitment to, inclusion at all levels of the school community
- leadership supporting a collaborative culture within the school, and between the school and school community, to address the needs of students
- the provision and creative use of supports for teachers and students
- creative use of human resources to assist and support students (such as peer helping, tutoring, and mentoring programs)
- a focus on outcomes for all students that students work toward in a variety of ways
- a range of classroom teaching and management strategies
- school teams meeting regularly to discuss student progress
- ongoing staff training and development
- showcasing of exemplary teaching practices and their results
- strong links between the school and outside agencies

Q: How can we all support inclusion?

Students can support inclusion by

- valuing the contributions of the diversity within the school community
- encouraging a sense of belonging to the school community among all peers
- contributing to an orderly and safe learning environment

Parents can support inclusion by

- working with their children and the school to support learning
- becoming involved in program planning as a member of the program planning team to share their understanding of their children's strengths and needs

School staff can support inclusion by

- using a variety of instructional and assessment strategies to meet student needs

- referring to the program planning team when further support is required to meet the needs of a student
- communicating regularly with parents
- co-operating and collaborating with parents, the program planning team members, and board personnel
- demonstrating acceptance of and sensitivity to the diversity in classrooms

Principals can support inclusion by

- providing leadership to support a collaborative culture that meets the needs of all students
- encouraging sharing of effective practices
- supporting a safe, orderly, positive, and effective learning environment
- communicating and monitoring school process of identification, assessment, program planning and reporting student progress, and achievement
- supporting vision building as a collective exercise for long range, continuous improvement and growth

Community members can support inclusion by:

- supporting inclusive schooling through school improvement planning with school advisory councils, home and school associations, etc.
- collaborating as service delivery agencies to meet the needs of children and youth in the public school system

Information about inclusion may be found in the Special Education Policy Manual, Nova Scotia Department of Education (1996).

Appendix I

Enrichment: Challenge for Excellence

[from] Nova Scotia Department of Education
http://ednet.ns.ca/index.php?sid=130522539&t=sub_pages&cat=83
[click on Enrichment: Challenge for Excellence]

Reference § 2 – Aspects of Student Assessment and Evaluation
§ 4 – Promotion, Placement, Retention, Acceleration

Note: *Challenge for Excellence: Enrichment and Gifted education Resource Guide* (Nova Scotia Department of Education, 1999) provides a framework for developing enrichment experiences to enhance student learning.

Note: Resources: *The School-Wide Enrichment Model: A How-To Guide for Educational Excellence* by J.S. Renzulli and S.M. Reis (1997)

Note: *Enrichment Clusters: A Practical Plan for Real-World, Student-Driven Learning* by J. S. Renzulli, M. Gentry, and S. M. Reis

Note: Learning centres are areas arranged in the classroom or school that invite students to explore and examine particular concepts, issues, or themes.

Note: Program planning team members should be those who have responsibility for the student's learning and should always include the principal or vice-principal, teachers involved, and parents, and may include the student. (Special Education Policy Manual, Policy 2.2)

Note: Additional information can be obtained from *Challenge for Excellence: Enrichment and Gifted Education Resource Guide* and the “Challenge for Excellence Video Series” available from

- Nova Scotia Department of Education website www.EDnet.ns.ca
- Nova Scotia School Book Bureau Authorized Learning Resources List
- School Board Programs and Services Divisions

School-wide enrichment identifies, develops, and supports the gifts and talents of all students through a broad range of opportunities and experiences. As a result of enrichment opportunities and experiences some students will be identified as requiring additional program options in response to their demonstrated gifts and talents.

Enrichment Teaching and Learning

The concept of enrichment teaching and learning follows these basic principles:
(Renzulli, Gentry, & Reis, 2003)

1. Each learner is unique.
2. Learning is more effective when students enjoy what they are doing.
3. Student learning is more meaningful and enjoyable when:
 - content and process are learned within the context of a real and present problem
 - knowledge and thinking skill acquisition is enhanced

School-Wide Enrichment

School-wide enrichment is comprised of a systematic set of specific strategies that may include a combination of the following components:

- **Enrichment Clusters:** groups of students across grades with self-identified similar interests working together in a specially designated time block (6-8 weeks) to produce a product, performance, or targeted service for an appropriate audience
- **Academies of Inquiry and Talent Development:** secondary school level enrichment clusters that focus on advanced content and processes within an identified discipline for an extended period of time
- **School-Wide Enrichment Model: Enrichment Triad** (Renzulli & Reis, 1997):
 - Type I: exploratory activities that are introductory and event-oriented
 - Type II: skill-building activities that are methods – and materials-oriented (including research, thinking, problem-solving, and how-to skills)
 - Type III: independent study of authentic problems that are product – and audience-oriented (advanced, investigative project based on student interests and strengths)
- **Total Talent Portfolios:** a method for gathering and recording information about students' abilities, interests, and preferred learning styles (A variety of portfolios may be used, such as the Nova Scotia Student Life / Work Portfolio.)
- **Enrichment Events and Activities for Students:** seminars, school-wide challenges, guest speakers, learning centres, workshops, science fairs, and knowledge festivals

Characteristics and Behaviours of Gifted and Talented Learners

Although no single criterion can be used to determine giftedness, students who demonstrate above average ability, creativity, and high levels of task commitment are considered to exhibit gifted behaviours.

Some characteristics of gifted learners may include: rapid learning, easily bored by repetition, independent and/or abstract thinking, desire to solve “real” problems, and a wide range of sophisticated interests. These characteristics are not all inclusive and students with gifts and talents may not exhibit all of these characteristics at any given time.

Identification of Gifted and Talented Learners

To identify gifted and talented learners for an individual program plan, the program planning team takes into consideration multiple areas and sources of data, such as

- academic achievement (student products, previous report cards, informal and formal classroom assessment, psycho-educational testing, and personal learning logs)
- learning styles, strengths, interests, and special abilities (inventories, rating scales, conferencing, portfolios, co- and extra-curricular involvement, hobbies, and information from parents)
- visions and goals for the future (journals, career inventories, community interests, secondary and post-secondary education planning)

Gifted Education Strategies and Programming

For those students identified as requiring extended challenges in order to meet their unique intellectual, artistic, creative, or leadership needs, a combination of strategies and programming options should be considered. These may include

- differentiated curriculum and instruction – recognizing differences in students has an impact on what students need to learn, the pace at which students need to learn, and the support they need
- flexible grouping (such as varying group compositions and duration)
- curriculum compacting (streamlining curriculum to reduce repetition and provide time for students to work on Type III research projects)
- broad-based themes and multidisciplinary units of study
- alternative program and course options such as Challenge for Credit, Independent Study, distance education, weekend/summer programs, co-operative education, university/college courses, International Baccalaureate)
- advanced Public School Program (PSP) courses

- acceleration – enabling students to meet curriculum outcomes at a faster pace based on their needs and abilities in accordance with individual school board guidelines
- mentoring – professionals and experts who strengthen students’ interests and level of understanding

Appendix J

Nova Scotia Department of Education Reporting Policy Framework

Communicating Grade Primary Student Achievement and Progress

The Department of Education's Reporting Policy Framework provides a set of descriptors that is to be used for students in grade primary to communicate student achievement and progress in relation to expected learning outcomes and program expectations. The Department of Education's Reporting Policy Framework notes that

An initial informal report shall be provided to parents of students in grade primary by the end of September to report on the child's transition to school life. Expectations during the first few weeks of grade primary are largely social and procedural, so this initial informal report will focus on the child's social adjustment and understanding of classroom routines and procedures.

The primary report cards will comprise three components:

- the learner profile,
- a narrative report written by the teacher, and
- a response sheet.

These components collectively will

- describe the child's interests, strengths, and accomplishments,
- describe the child's progress and achievement in relation to expected learning outcomes,
- identify the child's learning needs, and
- suggest ways in which parents can support the child's learning at home.

The learner profile will report on the student's social development and work habits using the checklist.

The narrative report will describe the child's interests, strengths, and accomplishments, identify the child's learning needs (including, when appropriate, specific areas which require further attention or development), suggest ways in which students can improve their learning, and identify ways in which parents can best support the child's learning at home.

These descriptors and areas of focus will form the core of reporting on the development and progress of grade primary students.

Appendix K

Nova Scotia Department of Education Reporting Policy Framework

The Department of Education’s Reporting Policy Framework provides a coding system that is to be used in Grades 1 – 6 to communicate student achievement and progress in relation to expected learning outcomes and program expectations.

Chart in Reference to § 5 – Reporting the Results of Student Assessment and Evaluation Student Achievement Chart, Grades 1 – 6

Grade/Code	Relationship of Code to Expected Learning Outcomes and Program Expectations
A	The student consistently demonstrates achievement of the expected learning outcomes addressed during the current reporting period. The student’s work sometimes exceeds program expectations.
B	The student demonstrates achievement of most of the expected learning outcomes addressed during the current reporting period. The student’s work meets program expectations.
C	The student demonstrates achievement of some of the expected learning outcomes addressed during the current reporting period. The student’s work approaches expectations.
D	The student rarely demonstrates achievement of the expected learning outcomes addressed during the current reporting period. The student’s work does not meet program expectations.

Appendix L

The Department of Education’s Reporting Policy Framework provides indicators for reporting social development and work habits in relation to expected learning outcomes in order to augment communication with parents. These indicators constitute the **learner’s profile**.

Chart in Reference to § 5 – Reporting the Results of Student Assessment and Evaluation
Elements of Learner Profile Grades Primary-6

Social Development/Work Habits The student . . .	√ consistently demonstrates	√ usually demonstrates	√ demonstrates with encouragement or prompts	√ rarely demonstrates/needs attention
interacts positively with others.				
accepts responsibility for his/her own actions.				
resolves conflicts appropriately.				
works independently.				
uses time effectively.				
follows rules and routines.				
follows instructions/directions.				
completes class work.				
completes homework.				
takes pride in quality of work.				
demonstrates organizational skills.				
takes care of own materials and belongings.				
respects school property and the property of others.				

Appendix M

Nova Scotia Department of Education Reporting Policy Framework

The Department of Education’s Reporting Policy Framework provides a coding system that is to be used in grades 7 and 8 to communicate student achievement and progress in relation to expected learning outcomes and program expectations.

Chart in Reference to § 5 – Reporting the Results of Student Assessment and Evaluation
 Student Achievement Codes Chart, Grades 7 and 8

Grade/Code	Relationship of Code to Expected Learning Outcomes and Program Expectations
A	The student consistently demonstrates achievement of the expected learning outcomes addressed during the current reporting period. The student’s work sometimes exceeds program expectations.
B	The student demonstrates achievement of most of the expected learning outcomes addressed during the current reporting period. The student’s work meets program expectations.
C	The student demonstrates achievement of some of the expected learning outcomes addressed during the current reporting period. The student’s work approaches expectations.
D	The student rarely demonstrates achievement of the expected learning outcomes addressed during the current reporting period. The student’s work does not meet program expectations.

Appendix N

Nova Scotia Department of Education Reporting Policy Framework

The Department of Education’s Reporting Policy Framework provides indicators for reporting social development and work habits in relation to expected learning outcomes in order to augment communication with parents. These indicators constitute the **learner’s profile**.

Chart in Reference to § 5 – Reporting the Results of Student Assessment and Evaluation

Elements of Learner Profile Grades 7-9

Social Development/Work Habits The student . . .	√ consistently demonstrates	√ usually demonstrates	√ demonstrates with encouragement or prompts	√ rarely demonstrates/needs attention
interacts positively with others.				
accepts responsibility for his/her own actions.				
resolves conflicts appropriately.				
works independently.				
uses time effectively.				
follows rules and routines.				
follows instructions/directions.				
completes class work.				
completes homework.				
takes pride in quality of work.				
demonstrates organizational skills.				
takes care of own materials and belongings.				
respects school property and the property of others.				

Appendix O

Nova Scotia Department of Education Reporting Policy Framework

The Department of Education’s Reporting Policy Framework provides a coding system that is to be used in grades 9 to communicate student achievement and progress in relation to expected learning outcomes and program expectations.

Chart in Reference to § 5 – Reporting the Results of Student Assessment and Evaluation
 Student Achievement Codes Chart, Grade 9

Grade/Code	Relationship of Code to Expected Learning Outcomes and Program Expectations
90%-100%	The student demonstrates excellent or outstanding achievement in relation to the expected learning outcomes for this course.
80%-89%	The student demonstrates very good achievement in relation to the expected learning outcomes for this course.
70%-79%	The student demonstrates good achievement in relation to the expected learning outcomes for this course.
60%-69%	The student demonstrates satisfactory achievement in relation to the expected learning outcomes for this course.
50%-59%	The student demonstrates minimally acceptable achievement in relation to the expected learning outcomes for this course.
<50%	The student has not met the requirements in relationship to the expected learning outcomes for this course.

Appendix P

Nova Scotia Department of Education Reporting Policy Framework

The Department of Education’s Reporting Policy Framework provides a coding system that is to be used in grades 10 – 12 to communicate student achievement and progress in relation to expected learning outcomes and program expectations.

Chart in Reference to § 5 – Reporting the Results of Student Assessment and Evaluation
 Student Achievement Codes Chart, Grades 10 – 12

Grade/Code	Relationship of Code to Expected Learning Outcomes and Program Expectations
90%-100%	The student demonstrates excellent or outstanding achievement in relation to the expected learning outcomes for this course.
80%-89%	The student demonstrates very good achievement in relation to the expected learning outcomes for this course.
70%-79%	The student demonstrates good achievement in relation to the expected learning outcomes for this course.
60%-69%	The student demonstrates satisfactory achievement in relation to the expected learning outcomes for this course.
50%-59%	The student demonstrates minimally acceptable achievement in relation to the expected learning outcomes for this course.
<50%	The student has not met the requirements in relationship to the expected learning outcomes for this course.

Appendix Q

Nova Scotia Department of Education Reporting Policy Framework

The Department of Education’s Reporting Policy Framework provides indicators for reporting social development and work habits in relation to expected learning outcomes in order to augment communication with parents. These indicators constitute the **learner’s profile**.

Chart in Reference to § 5 – Reporting the Results of Student Assessment and Evaluation

Elements of Learner Profile Grades 10 – 12

Report cards for senior high grades will communicate student achievement and progress in relation to work habits demonstrated in each course. The subject teacher will comment on the student’s progress in relation to the following areas of performance.

Work habits in each course The student demonstrates . . .	√ demonstrates consistently and satisfactorily	√ sometimes demonstrates satisfactorily	√ room for improvement
organizational skills (effective use of time, effective use of materials, readiness/preparedness for class).			
ability to work independently.			
ability to work collaboratively with others.			
ability to complete assigned work on time.			
respect for himself/herself, the instructional situation, his/her school.			

Appendix R

Program Plan Timeline Chart
 (a template for use by the Program Planning Team)

Chart in Reference to § 4 – Promotion, Placement, Retention, Acceleration

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ACTIONS</u>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After review of academic records of all students, identify students for whom evidence indicates specific academic needs. • Meet with colleagues/team teachers to identify required curriculum adaptation. • Identify Program Plan team members who will work with the student who has given indication of being unable to meet expected learning outcomes. • Team members are student’s teachers, parents, student, administrator, and/or other education and community partners.
Late – September Mid – October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Achievement Team meets to develop a Program Plan outline.
November- December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers monitor student’s progress and report to Student Achievement Team.
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Achievement Team meets to assess student’s progress and effect adaptations as required.
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers monitor student’s progress and report to Student Achievement Team.
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Achievement Team meets to assess student’s progress and effect adaptations as required.
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers monitor student’s progress and report to Student Achievement Team.
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Achievement Team reviews student progress in context of Program Plan. • Student Achievement Team makes recommendations for the following school year.
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and Student Achievement Team review progress and recommendations, and provide a transition plan for the following school year. • Plan is forwarded to the next year’s teachers.

Appendix S

Program Plan for Success

This Program Plan for Success document provides a planning format to assist teachers, students, and parent/guardians to address the academic needs of students in the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board. All sections of the Program Plan will be completed in conjunction with planning conversations that occur during team meetings with all parties participating.

This Program Plan for Success document must be used when determining whether or not students are candidates for placement or retention, and it must accompany the student in September. Make copies as required.

Student's Name	School
Parent's/Guardian's Names	Administrator
Other Team Members	School Staff
Request for Consultation http://www.avrsb.ednet.ns.ca/forms/AP403.c.pdf	

School-Based Assessment Information
Previous Years
Present Year

Classroom Support
Previous Years
Present Year

Support in Addition to Classroom Support (include both home and school support)
Previous Years
Present Year

Effective support addresses specifically identified needs. Collaboration among teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, and student, to identify and document areas where the student is struggling, will support the development of an effective Plan.

Student Needs

Strategies/Interventions to Meet Identified Needs	
Strategy	Person Responsible
Adaptations: Strategies and Resources, see Appendix G	
Suggested Possible Accommodations Form	http://www.avrsb.ednet.ns.ca/forms/AP_403.e.pdf
Minutes of Student Problem-Solving Meeting	http://www.avrsb.ednet.ns.ca/forms/AP_403.d.pdf

Action	
Student Transition Planning Report	http://www.avrsb.ednet.ns.ca/forms/AP_403.g.pdf
Student	_____
Parent/Guardian	_____
School/Administrator/Teacher	_____

Post Planning Report

Appendix T

Nova Scotia Department of Education Reporting Policy Framework

High School Graduation Requirements Chart (English Programs)

[In order to graduate with a Nova Scotia High School Graduation Certificate, students at the grades 10, 11, and 12 levels are required to achieve a minimum of 50% in 18 courses, 13 required courses, and 5 electives. The AVRSB recommends that a template similar to the one that follows be used and issued to every high school student/parent to ensure that the required credits are obtained.]

Student's Name: _____ Name of School: _____

Description of Credit	Number Required	Credit	Subject/Grade	Date Earned
English /French Language Arts	3	Credit 1→ Credit 2→ Credit 3→		
Fine Arts: Art, Drama, Dance, Music	1	Credit 1→		
Mathematics	2	Credit 1→ Credit 2→		
Science: one from Biology, Chemistry, Science 10 or Physics, and one other approved science course	2	Credit 1→ Credit 2→		
Mathematics, Science, or Technology	2	Credit 1→ Credit 2→		
Physically Active Lifestyles 11	0.5	Credit 0.5→	PAL 11	
Career and Life Management 11	0.5	Credit 0.5→	CLM 11	
Canadian Studies	1	Credit 1→	CAN STY 11	
Global Studies	1	Credit 1→		
Electives	5	Credit 1→		
		Credit 2→		
		Credit 3→		
		Credit 4→		
		Credit 5→		
Total	18			

NOTE: Requirements for graduating with a French Second Language Extended Core or Immersion Programs Certificate are available from school guidance counsellors and appropriate AVRSB personnel.

NOTE: In order to graduate, students must have a minimum of five (5) credits from grade 12 courses and a maximum of seven (7) credits from grade 10 courses.

§ 11 References

- Annapolis Valley Regional School Board. 2004. Annapolis Valley Regional School Board Policy Manual. Berwick, Nova Scotia: Annapolis Valley Regional School Board.
- Annapolis Valley Regional School Board. 2002. Student Services Policies, Practices, and Procedures. Berwick, Nova Scotia: Annapolis Valley Regional School Board.
- Centre for Research in Applied Measurement and Evaluation. 1993. Principals of Fair Assessment in Canada. Edmonton: University of Alberta.
- Chappuis, J., & Chappuis, S. 2002. Understanding School Assessment. Portland, OR: Assessment Training Institute Inc.
- Chappuis, S., Stiggins, R., Arter, J., & Chappuis, J. 2004. Assessment for Learning: An Action Guide for School Leaders. Portland, OR: Assessment Training Institute.
- Danielson, C. 2002. Enhancing Student Achievement: A Framework for School Improvement. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Gregory, G. 2003. Differentiated Instructional Strategies in Practice: Training, Implementation, and Supervision. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press Inc.
- Department of Education. 2002. The Education Act and Regulations under the Education Act, Consolidated 2002. Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia.
- Department of Education (Nova Scotia), Student Services Division and Evaluation Services Division. 2004. "Adaptations – Strategies and Resources," available at http://ednet.ns.ca/index.php?sid=130522539&t=sub_pages&cat=83 click on "Adaptations – Strategies and Resources"
- Department of Education, Student Services Division. 1999. Challenge for Excellence: Enrichment and Gifted Education Resource Guide. Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia.
- Department of Education (Nova Scotia), Student Services Division and Evaluation Services Division. 2004. "Enrichment: Challenge for Excellence," available at http://ednet.ns.ca/index.php?sid=130522539&t=sub_pages&cat=83 click on "Enrichment: Challenge for Excellence"

- Department of Education (Nova Scotia), Student Services Division and Evaluation Services Division. 2004. "Inclusion: Supporting All Students," available at http://ednet.ns.ca/index.php?sid=130522539&t=sub_pages&cat=83 click on "Inclusion: Supporting All Students"
- Department of Education. 2004. Public School Program: Policies and Procedures. Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia.
- Department of Education. 2002. Racial Equity Policy. Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia.
- Department of Education. 2004. Reporting Policy Framework. Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia.
- Department of Education. 2002. Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services (Special Education Policy Manual). Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia.
- Gay, J. 2002. "The gift of a year to grow: Blessing or curse," in Education, 123, 1, p. 63.
- Gullickson, A., and the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. 2003. The Student Evaluation Standards. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Jimerson, S. 1999. On the failure of failure: Examining the association between early grade retention and education and employment outcomes during late adolescence, in Journal of School Psychology, 37, 3, pp. 243-272.
- Jimerson, S., Anderson, G., and Whipple, A. 2002. Winning the battle and losing the war: Examining the relation between grade retention and dropping out of high school, in Psychology in Schools, 39, 4.
- McCoy, A., and Reynolds, A. 1999. Grade retention and school performance: An extended investigation, in Journal of School Psychology, 37, 3, pp. 273-298.
- Province of Nova Scotia. 2003. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Halifax: Province of Nova Scotia.
- Tomlinson, C. A., and Allan, S. D. 2000. Leadership for Differentiating Schools and Classrooms. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Wiggins, G. 1993. Assessing Student Performance. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.