

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 21, 2000

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Revisions to Administrative Regulation HK.AR - Communicating Student Achievement and Growth

ORIGINATOR: G. Reynolds, Department Head

RESOURCE

STAFF: Sandra Carl Townsend, Anne Louise Charette, Carol Anne Inglis, Anne Mulgrew, Lorie Welk

INFORMATION

The current administrative regulation Communicating Student Achievement and Growth (Appendix I) which has been in effect since May 1995, has been reviewed and revised. The revised version of the administrative regulation Communicating Student Achievement and Growth (Progress Reports and Individual Program Plans) will be implemented for the 2000-2001 school year (Appendix II). A major addition to the regulation is a section which includes the requirements for Individual Program Plans (IPP's).

An extensive review process examined all the elements of HK.AR, and examined the desirability of a common progress report. Support for a common progress report was expressed by all stakeholder groups, and a requirement to this effect has been included in the revisions to Board Policy Student Achievement and Growth (HK.BP).

The provision of support and assistance to schools as they implement the revised HK.AR will be a major component of the work of Student Assessment in the 2000-2001 school year. As the district develops common progress report templates over the next two years, there will be continued consultation with representatives of all stakeholder groups. The board will be kept informed of progress towards the implementation of the policy and regulation on an annual basis.

**Review Process**

Following is the chronology of key dates in the review process:

- As part of the spring 1998 budget process, three trustee initiatives were put forward with respect to the feasibility of a common progress report, and one trustee initiative was put forward with respect to a plan for monitoring the implementation of HK.AR.
- During the 1998-99 school year, input with respect to these initiatives was gathered by Student Assessment from the Technology for Learning school representatives and from the progress report sub-committee of the SIMS 2000 project. Input was forwarded to

Student Assessment from the Teacher's Advisory Group regarding the desirability of a common progress report.

- On June 9, 1999, a report recommending revisions to HK.AR, and a recommendation that a common progress report not be prescribed for all schools was sent to Superintendent's Council.
- At this time, Superintendent's Council suggested that further input on the recommendations should be sought from all principals and other stakeholders before a final decision be made by the superintendent.
- September 29, 1999, a report was presented to Superintendent's Council detailing a process for gathering additional input from all principals, and a representative sample of teachers and parents. Superintendent's Council also suggested that input be gathered from students.
- November 3, 1999, input was gathered from all principals at Vertical Group meetings.
- November 17, 1999, input was gathered from the members of the Teacher Advisory Group (TAG). In addition, TAG representatives had the opportunity to take one copy of the survey back to their school to collect a staff response.
- November 17, 1999, input was gathered from parents at the Key Communicators meeting.
- December 1, 1999, input was gathered from the members of the Student Advisory Team.
- During the months of December 1999 and January 2000, input from the stakeholder groups was analyzed to determine the desirability of a common progress report, and to determine support for the proposed revisions to HK.AR.
- On March 1, 2000, a report including recommendations and proposed revisions to HK.AR was taken to Vertical Group Principal meetings for final input.
- On March 8, 2000, a summary of Vertical Group comments and concerns was presented to Superintendent's Council.

### **Background to the Decision for a Common Progress Report**

In response to the survey question "Do you want the district to mandate a common progress report?", two-thirds to three quarters of each of the groups responded positively (Appendix III). However, there was little agreement as to what a common progress report would look like.

At the current time, 176 of the 206 district schools are using the progress report function of School SIS. Therefore, the decision was made that by 2002, all schools will use the progress report function of School SIS. The timeline specified was designed to allow sufficient time for schools who are not currently using this progress report function to get the infrastructure, hardware, and staff training in place.

Presently within SIS, schools have several progress report templates from which to choose. Within each template, there are some features that are hard coded (cannot be altered by schools) and there are many other elements that the user can select or deselect to create a progress report that serves the unique needs of the school community. By 2002, the number of templates will be reduced to four, and the number of hard coded elements will be increased to promote consistency of reporting across the district.

## **Input to the Administrative Regulation Communicating Student Achievement and Growth (HK.AR)**

The survey to which stakeholder groups responded contained suggested revisions based on work done in 1998-99. In the analysis, most of the elements of the regulation were strongly supported (greater than 80 per cent support) by all stakeholder groups (Appendix IV). When support fell below 80 per cent for any of the stakeholder groups, an indepth analysis of comments was undertaken to determine the issues surrounding the dissatisfaction. Of the thirty-eight elements presented in the survey, only five received less than 80 per cent support from one or more of the stakeholder groups. These five elements are discussed below.

### **Element B.3**

<b>On Survey</b>
Each school shall provide to students and parents a written plan that describes the school's procedures to assess, evaluate, and communicate student achievement, and outlines the school's recognition programs available to students.

A substantial percentage of principals and teachers felt that "recognition programs" should not be included as part of HK.AR, especially at the elementary level. As well, principals and teachers felt that the communication of the school's procedures to assess, evaluate, and communicate student achievement was important, but did not want the method to be prescribed. Element B.3 has been re-written to reflect this input.

<b>Revised</b>
Each school shall provide to students and parents a written description of the school procedures to assess, evaluate, and communicate student achievement and performance.

### **Element B.6**

<b>On Survey</b>
Each school shall establish at least three regular reporting periods per school year. A written progress report shall be provided for each reporting period.

The percentage of positive responses for this element was above 80 per cent for all stakeholder groups except parents, who were slightly below 80 per cent. On the basis of this response pattern, element B.6 was not revised. The comments made by parents with respect to this element indicated their desire for more frequent information about how well their children are doing in school. This concern will be communicated to school staff. Rather than requiring that an additional progress report be issued, schools can use a variety of methods to communicate information about student achievement to parents. Many schools indicated they were already doing this.

**Element B.7**

<b>On Survey</b>
The final performance mark awarded at the end of each course shall reflect all the curriculum outcomes for that course.

The vast majority of parents (91.8 per cent) and students (98.3 per cent) supported the element as it was written. A substantial percentage of principals and teachers expressed a need for clarification or revision of this element. On the basis of their input, element B.7 was revised to clarify its meaning.

Because of the importance of this information to parents and students, it is critical to ensure consistent practices across the district. The intent of the element is that the final mark reflect the teacher’s professional judgement of the child’s work over the duration of the course. It does not have to be an exercise in number-crunching, weighted averages, or comprehensive final examinations.

<b>Revised</b>
The final evaluation awarded for a course shall take into account what the student has demonstrated in relation to the range of curriculum outcomes for that course.

**Element B. 8**

<b>On Survey</b>
Information about effort and behaviour shall be reported separately from performance on curriculum and communicated either orally or in writing.

The percentage of positive responses fell below 80 per cent for all stakeholder groups for this element. Analysis of the comments revealed two major issues.

The first issue was whether or not information about effort and behaviour should be included on the progress report. Many principals, teachers, parents, and some students felt that effort and behaviour should always be reported in writing, while others expressed the point of view that it be done orally, not in writing. Revisions to this element underscore the importance of communicating this information but leave the choice of how it will be done to the school.

The second and more contentious issue was keeping effort and behaviour discrete from the evaluation of student performance on curriculum. The intent of this element is that the performance score awarded to a student be based on how well the student demonstrates grade level expectations for a course and not be contaminated by effort or behaviour. “For grades to have real meaning, they must be relatively pure measures of each student’s [performance] of the learning goals of each course.” O’Connor, 1999. Teacher comments indicated a wide range of practices across the district. Further revisions were made in order to clarify the intent of the element and to promote consistent practices across the district.

<b>Revised</b>
Information about effort and behaviour shall be reported, but shall not be included as part of the evaluation of the student’s performance on curriculum.

**Element C.10**

<b>On Survey</b>		
Information about quality of performance compared to curriculum standards and reported by letters, percentages, or descriptors as follows:		
Letters	Percentages	Descriptors
A	80-100	Work meets standard of excellence
B	65-79	Work exceeds acceptable standard
C	50-64	Work meets acceptable standard
D*	0-49	Work does not meet acceptable standard
(*F to be used at high school level)		

The percentage of positive responses fell below 80 percent for teachers, parents, and students for this element, but not for principals. Analysis of the comments indicated three areas of concern.

The first issue was a lack of understanding that only one of the ways of describing performance needs to be used to indicate the quality of a student’s performance relative to the graded curriculum. The choice of using either letters, percentages, or descriptors is to be made at the school level, except at senior high where percentages are required by Alberta Learning.

A second issue identified was the use of both “D” and “F” to describe work that does not meet the acceptable standard. Since percentages are required at senior high, “F” has been removed from the regulation.

The third issue which generated many comments, particularly from teachers, was the size of the intervals of the scale itself. Many different scale intervals were suggested. There may be merit in the other scales suggested, however, the real issue is not which scale to use, but rather that a common scale is used throughout the district. The reason this particular scale was selected is because Alberta Learning uses this scale and there are advantages to using a scale that is consistent with provincial practice.

<b>Revised</b>		
Information about quality of performance compared to graded curriculum standards and reported by either letters, percentages, or descriptors as follows:		
Letters	Percentages	Descriptors
A	80-100	Work meets standard of excellence
B	65-79	Work exceeds acceptable standard
C	50-64	Work meets acceptable standard
D	0-49	Work does not meet acceptable standard

**Other Elements**

One other major revision to HK.AR was the addition of Section D, Individual Program Plans (IPP’s). At the current time, the district does not have an administrative regulation dealing with IPP’s. IPP’s logically fall under the umbrella of communicating student learning. This

addition to the regulation will promote consistency across the district and ensure compliance with the Alberta Learning requirement for IPP's.

As well, in response to a 1998-99 trustee initiative, an element has been included in the regulation to provide for the monitoring of HK.AR. Other minor revisions to elements in the regulation have been made to add specificity and clarity.

To address the many issues which became apparent from responses to the survey, Student Assessment will prepare a resource to assist district staff in the common interpretation of HK.AR. As well, the existing parent brochure "*How Student Progress is Reported*" will be updated to reflect the revisions to HK.AR and be made available to parents.

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APPENDIX I - Current Administrative Regulation Communicating Student Achievement and Growth

APPENDIX II - Proposed Revision to Administrative Regulation Communicating Student Achievement and Growth (Progress Reports and Individual Program Plans)

APPENDIX III- Input Regarding Common Progress Report

APPENDIX IV- Input to Elements of the Administrative Regulation HK.AR