

New Competency-Based Report Cards

Parents of Middle School students throughout Abbotsford will see a different sort of report card come home at the end of first term. Like many districts across British Columbia, and, increasingly, the country, Abbotsford schools are switching to a competency-based system of instruction that focuses more on proficiency than grades.

Broadly, the idea behind a competency-based education is that students get credit for what they demonstrate they know and are able to do. It is an approach to instruction that allows for multiple pathways to the same outcome. We believe this differentiation increases student engagement and intrinsic motivation. Students receive meaningful feedback and opportunities to relearn, revise, and reassess. Feedback should help students understand their strengths and areas in need of improvement.

There are four essential components of a competency-based reporting system:

1. *Curricular Competencies* describe what a student should know and be able to do at a given grade level.
2. *Content Standards* help guide instruction for competency-based curriculum.
3. The *assessments* that a teacher uses along the way measure the extent to which a student has met the curricular competencies.
4. The reporting tool (*new report card*) allows a teacher to communicate accurately a student's progress toward meeting competencies throughout the school year.

For more on BC's redesigned curriculum, please visit this website:

<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca>

In the new report card these Competencies will be assessed using the following scale:

- **Not Yet Meeting (NYM)** – Work does not meet grade level expectations. May be evidence of progress toward relevant learning standards. Requires ongoing support.
- **Minimally Meeting (MM)** - Work may be inconsistent, but meets grade level expectations at a minimal level. Evidence of progress toward relevant learning standards. Needs support in some areas.
- **Fully Meeting (FM)** - Work meets grade level expectations. Evidence that relevant learning standards are met. Demonstrates proficient academic performance.
- **Exceeding (E)** - Work exceeds grade level expectations. Demonstrates superior performance and in depth understanding of learning standards.

When parents see the Term 1 Report Card, we ask that you take a longer read of the report card and that you talk to your child about what it means to them and ask them to explain it to you to help you understand.

For parents, confusion and questions will be a normal part of the transition to competency-based reporting. Teachers and Administrators too have had, and continue to have, questions as

we learn the ins and out of the redesigned curriculum and how to report on it. Please be patient and understand that you, your child and your child's teacher are all in this change together.

In the end, we predict that students and parents will see the benefit of competency-based report cards and view learning and development differently.

FAQ

What is the goal of competency-based learning?

The primary goal of competency-based learning is to increase transparency for students, parents, teachers and administrators. It no longer averages “the hodgepodge” of accumulated points. Instead, it clearly communicates what each student knows and is able to do according to content standards. Habits of learning are reported separately.

How is feedback different in competency-based learning?

Traditional grading averages all of the work and other subjective factors (extra credit, effort, participation, behavior, homework completion, etc.). Competency-based learning removes these factors and focuses on student learning. Competency-based learning assesses a student’s overall work, using the most recent evidence. What this really tells us is what a student has learned, rather than an average of accumulated points.

Why are grades not averaged in competency-based learning?

Students are to be assessed on the content standards in a variety of ways and have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their level of mastery. This allows for a clear picture of current student achievement. An averaged grade doesn’t give an authentic representation of what a student has learned and is currently able to do.

J. Singh
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