Ministry of Education

Ⓥ Ontario

The Ontario Curriculum
Grades 9 to 12

Program Planning
and Assessment

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Contents

Introduction

The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12: Program Planning and Assessment, 2000 provides essential information on aspects of policy relating to program planning and the assessment, evaluation, and reporting of student achievement that pertain to all disciplines in the Ontario curriculum. It is designed as a companion piece to the curriculum policy documents for the individual disciplines, which identify the knowledge and skills students are expected to acquire in their secondary school courses. This document provides teachers and others interested in secondary education in Ontario with a summary and discussion of relevant policies set out in *Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12: Program and Diploma Requirements, 1999* (OSS).

The new curriculum is being implemented in Ontario secondary schools starting in September 1999 for students in Grade 9, in September 2000 for students in Grade 10, in September 2001 for students in Grade 11, and in September 2002 for students in Grade 12.

This document replaces *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 and 10: Program Planning and Assessment, 1999.*

Important Features of the New Curriculum

The new Ontario curriculum establishes high, internationally competitive standards of education for secondary school students across the province. The curriculum has been designed with the goal of ensuring that graduates from Ontario secondary schools are well prepared to lead satisfying and productive lives as both citizens and individuals, and to compete successfully in a global economy and a rapidly changing world.

For every course offered at the secondary level, the new curriculum outlines clear and detailed *curriculum expectations* – that is, the particular knowledge and skills that students are expected to demonstrate by the end of each course. In addition, for every discipline, it provides detailed descriptions of *achievement levels*, which will assist teachers in their assessment and evaluation of students' work and will promote consistency in these practices in schools across Ontario.

In all disciplines, the new curriculum integrates material pertaining to violence prevention, antidiscrimination education, and Native education where relevant in the expectations for every course.

Considerations for Program Planning

The following discussions pertain to considerations for program planning that must be taken into account by teachers in all disciplines. For additional comments that relate to the areas discussed here but that apply to a particular discipline, please refer to the curriculum policy document for that discipline.

Types of Secondary School Courses

The new curriculum for secondary school is organized into several types of courses. The new system of courses is intended to enable students to choose courses that are suited to their strengths, interests, and goals. In Grades 9 and 10, three types of courses are offered: academic, applied, and open. Courses in Grades 11 and 12 are designed to prepare students for a post-secondary destination – that is, for university, college, apprenticeship training, or the workplace.

Types of Courses in Grades 9 and 10

The three types of courses in Grades 9 and 10 are defined as follows:

Academic courses develop students' knowledge and skills through the study of theory and abstract problems. These courses focus on the essential concepts of a subject and explore related concepts as well. They incorporate practical applications as appropriate.

Applied courses focus on the essential concepts of a subject, and develop students' knowledge and skills through practical applications and concrete examples. Familiar situations are used to illustrate ideas, and students are given more opportunities to experience hands-on applications of the concepts and theories they study.

Students must choose between academic and applied courses in each of the core subjects – English, French as a second language, mathematics, science, geography, and history. Both types of courses set high expectations for students while preparing them for studies in the senior grades. The two types of courses differ in the balance between essential concepts and additional material, and in the balance between theory and application. In planning courses of study, teachers should take into account the need to adapt instructional approaches and materials to reflect the differences between the two course types.

Open courses are the only type of course offered in most subjects other than those listed above. They are designed to prepare students for further study in a subject, and to enrich their education generally. Open courses comprise a set of expectations that are appropriate for all students.

Students in Grades 9 and 10 will make the choice between academic and applied courses primarily on the basis of their strengths, interests, and needs. Their parents[1] and teachers, including their teacher-adviser, will help them make their choices, which will be reflected in their annual education plan. The selection of courses for exceptional students should also be guided by information in the student's Individual Education Plan (see page 8).

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1. The word *parents* is used throughout this document to stand for *parent(s)* and *guardian(s)*.

Students who are successful in any academic or applied course in Grade 9 will be able to proceed to either the academic or the applied course in the same subject in Grade 10. When a student plans to switch from one course type in Grade 9 to the other in Grade 10, the principal must inform the student and his or her parents that the student will be strongly encouraged to successfully complete additional course work, as defined by the ministry, of up to 30 hours, in order to demonstrate achievement of the learning expectations that are included in the one Grade 9 course but not the other. This additional course work will be referred to as ***crossover material.***

Grade 10 academic and applied courses will prepare students for particular Grade 11 courses, for which prerequisites are specified in the curriculum policy documents for Grades 11 and 12.

Types of Courses in Grades 11 and 12

In Grades 11 and 12, students will choose from among four destination-related course types: *university preparation, university/college preparation, college preparation,* and *workplace preparation.* Open courses are also offered in Grades 11 and 12. Students will make their choices on the basis of their interests, achievement, and career goals. All university preparation courses, university/college preparation courses, college preparation courses, and workplace preparation courses have been developed in collaboration with representatives of universities, colleges, apprenticeship programs, or the business community, as appropriate, and are designed to enable students to meet the entrance requirements of postsecondary institutions or apprenticeship or other training programs, or the expectations of employers in the workplace.

The following is a brief description of the types of courses that are available in the various disciplines of the Ontario curriculum in Grades 11 and 12:

University preparation courses are designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to meet the entrance requirements for university programs.

University/college preparation courses are designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to meet the entrance requirements for specific programs offered at universities and colleges.

College preparation courses are designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to meet the requirements for entrance to most college programs or for admission to apprenticeship or other training programs.

Workplace preparation courses are designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to meet the expectations of employers, if they plan to enter the workplace directly after graduation, or the requirements for admission to certain apprenticeship or other training programs.

Open courses are designed to broaden students' knowledge and skills in subjects that reflect their interests and to prepare them for active and rewarding participation in society. They are not designed with the specific requirements of universities, colleges, or the workplace in mind.

Prerequisites are specified for many of the courses offered in Grades 11 and 12. They are identified in the curriculum policy documents.

Transfer Courses

A transfer course is a partial-credit course that bridges the gap between courses of two different types in the same subject and grade. Students who revise their educational and career goals and who wish to change from one destination-related stream to another in a particular subject may often do so by taking a transfer course. Transfer courses enable students to achieve the expectations not covered in one course type but required for entry into a course in the next grade. For example, the prerequisite for the Grade 11 university preparation course in English is the Grade 10 academic course in English. A student who is taking the applied English course in Grade 10 but who decides to enter the university preparation course in Grade 11 may do so by taking a transfer course. Transfer courses will be offered for students who wish to change from one course type to another in the same subject between Grade 10 and Grade 11 or between Grade 11 and Grade 12. A transfer course can be taken as a summer course or as an independent-study or partial-credit course within school hours. (For additional information on changing from one course type to another, see OSS, section 5.6.)

Some Considerations Relating to Credits and Course Delivery

Courses With Similar Expectations

As stated in OSS, section 6.1, a credit is granted by a principal on behalf of the Ministry of Education in recognition of the successful completion of a 110-hour course that has been developed or approved by the ministry. However, if the principal determines that two courses share a significant number of similar learning expectations, credit will not be granted for the successful completion of both courses. For example, credit would not be granted for both the Grade 9 applied course and the Grade 9 academic course in the same discipline. When courses are announced for selection by students, the principal will inform parents and students about any two courses that contain many of the same learning expectations and will stipulate that students may not take both courses for credit. (Courses in the arts, classical studies and international languages, and Native languages that focus on a particular area of the course subject, or on a particular language, are not subject to the restriction described above. See page 7 for further information on courses with a particular focus.)

Half-Credit Courses

Courses in Grades 11 and 12 are designed to be offered as full-credit courses. However, half-credit courses may be developed for specialized programs, such as school–work transition and apprenticeship programs, as long as the original course is not designated as a requirement for entry into a university program. Individual universities will identify the courses that are prerequisites for admission to specific programs. Such courses must be offered as full-credit courses, to ensure that students meet admission requirements.

In Grades 9–12, half-credit courses, which require a minimum of fifty-five hours of scheduled instructional time, must adhere to the following conditions:

– The two half-credit courses created from a full course must together contain all of the expectations of the full course, drawn from all of the strands of that course and divided in a manner that best enables students to achieve the required knowledge and skills in the allotted time.

– A course that is a prerequisite for another course in the secondary curriculum may be offered as two half-credit courses, but students must successfully complete both parts of the course to fulfil the prerequisite. (Students are not required to complete both parts unless the course is a prerequisite for another course that they wish to take.)

– The title of each half-credit course must include the designation Part 1 or Part 2. A half-credit (0.5) will be recorded in the credit-value column of both the report card and the Ontario Student Transcript.

Schools may choose to offer only one part of a course in any given year or semester, as long as it has been developed in accordance with the conditions outlined above.

Students may take any two half-credit courses in the same discipline,[2] regardless of grade, to meet a compulsory credit requirement. For example, a student who successfully completes a half-credit course in music in Grade 9 and a half-credit course in dance in Grade 10 will meet the compulsory credit requirement in the arts. (For the list of compulsory credit requirements, see OSS, section 3.1.)

Boards will ensure that all half-credit courses comply with the conditions described above, and will report all half-credit courses to the ministry annually in the School September Report.

Courses With a Particular Focus or Emphasis

The curriculum policy documents in the arts, classical studies and international languages, health and physical education, and Native languages describe courses that schools may develop to focus on a particular area of the subject of a course outlined in the documents (e.g., jazz dance in a dance course, or a particular language in an international language course). The curriculum document for technological education describes courses that may be developed to *emphasize* a particular area of a course subject (but not to the exclusion of other areas within the subject). It is important to note that any course that focuses on or emphasizes a particular area must give students the opportunity to achieve all of the expectations of a course outlined in the curriculum policy document for the discipline. The course descriptions given in the curriculum policy documents will be used in school calendars and other relevant materials to describe courses with a particular focus or emphasis. The addition of one or two sentences to identify the area on which the course focuses, or which it emphasizes, is recommended.

The course codes for all recognized focus courses are provided in the list of common course codes posted on the ministry's website, at http://www.edu.gov.on.ca. For courses in health and physical education and in Native languages, the relevant course codes are also listed in the respective curriculum policy documents. In technological education, every course, regardless of the area it emphasizes, will be assigned the five-character code for a course outlined in the curriculum policy document, modified to indicate the area of emphasis by the addition of a sixth character determined by the school.

For further information about courses with a particular focus or emphasis, please refer to the curriculum policy document for each of the disciplines listed above.

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2. For the purposes of the Ontario curriculum, the word *discipline* is used to designate the subject or grouping of subjects included in any one curriculum policy document.

Locally Developed Courses

Locally developed courses are courses developed by school boards to meet educational needs that are not met by courses outlined in the curriculum policy documents. Such courses may be developed to accommodate the educational or career preparation needs of students in a particular school or region, or the special needs of exceptional students. Locally developed courses can be designed to meet compulsory or optional credit requirements. Optional credit courses may be developed locally in any discipline. One compulsory credit course may be developed locally in each of English, mathematics, and science. (Locally developed courses may not replace compulsory credit courses in any other discipline.) In the case of a student who successfully completes both a locally developed compulsory credit course in Grade 9 or 10 and a provincially developed course in the same discipline and grade, the principal may grant a compulsory credit for each course.

Locally developed courses may be offered as full- or partial-credit courses. All locally developed courses, with the exception of religious education courses developed by Roman Catholic school boards, require the approval of the ministry. The criteria for the development and approval of locally developed courses are outlined in the *Guide to Locally Developed Courses, Grades 9 to 12: Approval Requirements and Procedures, 2000.*

Education for Exceptional Students

Recognizing the needs of exceptional students and designing programs that meet those needs are important and challenging aspects of program planning. A regulation made under the Education Act requires that school boards establish a committee, called an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), to identify and place exceptional students. When an IPRC identifies a student as exceptional, it must, in its statement of decision, provide a description of the student's strengths and needs and a decision on appropriate placement for the student. If the decision is to place the student in a special education class, the IPRC must state the reasons for that decision. The IPRC can also make recommendations for suitable special education programs and services.

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be developed and maintained for every student who is identified as exceptional. An IEP may also be prepared for students who are receiving special education programs and services but who have not been identified as exceptional by an IPRC. The IEP identifies the student's learning expectations; outlines how the school will help the student achieve the expectations through appropriate special education programs and services; and identifies the methods by which the student's progress will be reviewed. The IEP of exceptional students who are fourteen years of age or older and who are not identified solely as gifted must also contain a plan to help them make the transition to postsecondary education, apprenticeship programs, or the workplace, and to live as independently as possible in the community.

For most exceptional students, the learning expectations will be the same as or similar to the expectations outlined in the relevant curriculum policy documents. Accommodations such as specialized supports and services will be provided to help the student achieve the expectations. For some exceptional students, the expectations in the curriculum policy documents will be modified to meet the student's needs, and a small number of students may require alternative expectations, which are not derived from those in the curriculum policy documents. In either

case, accommodations will also be provided as needed to facilitate the student's learning. The assessment of student achievement of modified and alternative expectations is discussed in *Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12: Program and Diploma Requirements, 1999*, section 7.12.[3]

The IPRC's recommendations for suitable special education programs and services will be taken into account when developing the student's IEP. The IEP must be developed in consultation with the student's parents, and with the student, if he or she is sixteen years of age or older. Planning should also involve individuals who are familiar with the student and with the programs and services that have served him or her well in the past, as well as staff members who will play a role in providing support to the student in the future, including the principal, the student's teachers and teacher-adviser, the guidance counsellor, and appropriate special education staff and support personnel. Once the IEP has been developed, the student's parents (and the student, if sixteen or older) must be provided with a copy. The programs and services described in the IEP must be reviewed regularly.

Special education staff should ensure that teachers know where to find information on meeting the needs of exceptional students in specific subject areas. In planning instruction and activities and developing course materials, teachers must take into account the strengths, needs, learning expectations, and accommodations identified in the student's IEP. It is essential that teachers use the most appropriate methods and provide the most appropriate materials to help exceptional students achieve the expectations outlined in their IEP. Teachers may find it necessary to make changes in their style of presentation, their methods of organization, the amount and type of material covered, their use of technology and multimedia, and their assessment and evaluation strategies (for example, some students may need to be given additional time to complete tests, or the opportunity to take tests orally or in other forms). The assistance of professional and paraprofessional staff and the use of specialized equipment may also be required to accommodate the exceptional student's needs.

The Role of Technology in the Curriculum

Increasing reliance on computers, telecommunication networks, and information technologies in society and the workplace makes it essential for students to become computer literate and to develop "information literacy" skills. Information literacy is the ability to access, select, gather, critically evaluate, create, and communicate information, and to use the information obtained to solve problems and make decisions. In preparation for further education, employment, citizenship, and lifelong learning, students must be capable of deriving meaning from information by using a wide variety of information literacy skills.

As part of their training in computer and information literacy, students should become familiar with a range of available software programs. Among the applications that can aid student learning are simulations, multimedia resources, databases, and computer-assisted learning modules, many of which have been developed for use in particular disciplines. Students will also be expected to use software applications that help them develop general skills in such areas as

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3. Courses that consist of alternative expectations, which are set out in the student's IEP, are non-credit courses. Students' achievement in such courses will be evaluated and their grades recorded on the Provincial Report Card, Grades 9–12, and on the Ontario Student Transcript. Course codes starting with the letter *K* will be assigned to such courses. These codes, along with sample course titles, can be found in the list of common course codes posted on the ministry's website, at http://www.edu.gov.on.ca.

writing, problem solving, research, and communication. Through e-mail, students can communicate with other students and with experts in various fields across Ontario and around the world. It is important that students learn to critically evaluate the accuracy, validity, currency, comprehensiveness, and depth of the information they access using information technology, particularly the Internet. In general, teachers must try to ensure that students acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will allow them to use computer and information technology safely, effectively, confidently, and ethically.

Teachers should work collaboratively within and across disciplines to effectively plan for the integration of computers and information technologies into the teaching/learning process. As the technology capable of enhancing student learning becomes available, teachers should, within a reasonable period of time, incorporate that technology into their planning of instruction and learning activities in individual disciplines and, collaboratively, across disciplines. Effective school library programs can also help to promote the development of information literacy skills among all students by supporting and coordinating the collaborative planning and implementation of reading programs, inquiry and research tasks, and independent study.

English As a Second Language and English Literacy Development (ESL/ELD)

As the linguistic diversity of Ontario's student population continues to increase, many students in our schools require support in learning English to enable them to achieve the curriculum expectations in all subjects and at all grade levels. Programs must be flexible in order to accommodate the needs of students who require instruction in English as a second language or English literacy development, and teachers of all subjects are responsible for helping students develop their ability to use English.

Appropriate modifications to teaching, learning, and evaluation strategies must be made to help students gain proficiency in English, since students taking English as a second language at the secondary level have limited time in which to develop this proficiency. (Teachers should bear in mind that it may take up to seven years for a student to acquire a level of proficiency in reading, writing, and abstract thinking in a second language that is on a par with the level mastered by speakers of a first language.)

Career Education

As students progress through secondary school, they continue to learn about their interests, strengths, and aspirations. With the help of the teacher-adviser program and through their annual education plans, students will learn to set and achieve goals and will gain experience in making decisions. The skills and competencies that students acquire through the guidance and career education program outlined in *Choices Into Action, 1999* will not only help them succeed in school, but will also contribute to their success in the workplace. Throughout their secondary school education, students will learn about the educational and career opportunities that are available to them; explore and evaluate a variety of those opportunities; relate what they learn in their courses to potential careers in a variety of fields; and learn to make appropriate educational and career choices.

Cooperative Education and Other Workplace Experiences

Students in Ontario secondary schools have the opportunity to apply what they learn in their courses through participation in various planned learning activities outside the classroom. Such learning activities increase students' awareness of educational and career opportunities and provide them with first-hand experience. This practical experience will help them decide what they would like to do in the future and will assist them in making a successful transition to postsecondary education, apprenticeship programs, or the workplace. Several types of planned learning experiences in the community may be arranged for students:

– *Job shadowing* gives students an opportunity to spend time with and observe an employee in the workplace. Job shadowing allows students who do not yet have the skills or maturity necessary for hands-on experience to gain a better understanding of jobs that interest them.

– *Work experience* refers to learning activities outside the classroom that are undertaken as part of an in-school credit course. A work experience placement is a short-term (one- to four-week), subject-related placement.

– *Cooperative education* allows students to earn additional credits in a subject through a work placement in the community. The program involves the following elements: an individualized learning plan based on the curriculum expectations for a course and the job-specific expectations of the related placement; monitoring of students' progress by a teacher; opportunities for students to analyse their out-of-school experiences and to integrate them with in-school learning; and an evaluation process to determine whether course expectations have been met.

Although cooperative education and work experience are most appropriate for students in the higher grades, in some situations Grade 9 and 10 students may benefit from them as well. Job shadowing is appropriate for students in all grades.

For students who are intending to enter the work force directly after graduating from secondary school, school boards must provide school–work transition programs, developed in cooperation with local employers. School–work transition programs combine in-school and work-based education and training that allow students to complete graduation requirements, develop employability and industry-specific skills, and obtain experience in the workplace. School–work transition programs will be developed and implemented in accordance with ministry policies set out in *Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12: Program and Diploma Requirements, 1999,* section 7.4.3.

Students interested in apprenticeship can participate in the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), which allows them to begin an apprenticeship while they are enrolled in secondary school. Students in Grades 11 and 12 can earn credits towards their secondary school diploma while accumulating hours towards the completion of an apprenticeship through cooperative education.

Work experience and cooperative education are essential aspects of school–work transition programs and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program. Co-operative education and work experience will be developed and implemented in accordance with ministry policy outlined in *Co-operative Education: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Secondary Schools, 1989* (currently under revision).

Health and Safety

Health and safety considerations relate to the physical and personal well-being of students in class, in community-based learning activities, and in the workplace. Teachers must take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of students, helping them understand the importance of health and safety issues and the need to assume responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others. Teachers should be familiar with relevant sections of the provincial Education Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and the federal Hazardous Products Act, as well as with the safety procedures mandated by the ministry and by their school boards. Before taking part in community-based learning experiences, all students must acquire the knowledge and skills needed for safe participation. They may need instruction in any or all of the following: safe practices; the need for personal protective equipment (including goggles, gloves, and aprons); the use of safety equipment (including fire extinguishers and smoke and carbon monoxide detectors); the correct handling of materials and equipment; and the applicable provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, including those that relate to the reporting of unsafe practices and accidents.

Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting

A well-designed system of assessment, evaluation, and reporting based on clearly stated curriculum expectations and achievement criteria allows teachers to focus on high standards of achievement for all students and promotes consistency in these practices across Ontario.

Assessment and Evaluation of Student Achievement

The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning. Information gathered through assessment helps teachers to determine students' strengths and weaknesses in their achievement of the curriculum expectations in each course. This information also serves to guide teachers in adapting curriculum and instructional approaches to students' needs and in assessing the overall effectiveness of programs and classroom practices.

Assessment is the process of gathering information from a variety of sources (including assignments, demonstrations, projects, performances, and tests) that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the curriculum expectations in a course. As part of assessment, teachers provide students with descriptive feedback that guides their efforts towards improvement. Evaluation refers to the process of judging the quality of student work on the basis of established criteria, and assigning a value to represent that quality. In Ontario secondary schools, the value assigned will be in the form of a percentage grade.

Assessment and evaluation will be based on the provincial curriculum expectations and the achievement levels outlined in this document and in the curriculum policy document for each discipline.

In order to ensure that assessment and evaluation are valid and reliable, and that they lead to the improvement of student learning, teachers must use assessment and evaluation strategies that:

– address both what students learn and how well they learn;
– are based both on the categories of knowledge and skills and on the achievement level descriptions given in the achievement chart that appears in the curriculum policy document for each discipline;
– are varied in nature, administered over a period of time, and designed to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning;
– are appropriate for the learning activities used, the purposes of instruction, and the needs and experiences of the students;
– are fair to all students;
– accommodate the needs of exceptional students, consistent with the strategies outlined in their Individual Education Plan (see page 8);
– accommodate the needs of students who are learning the language of instruction (see page 10);
– ensure that each student is given clear directions for improvement;
– promote students' ability to assess their own learning and to set specific goals;
– include the use of samples of students' work that provide evidence of their achievement;
– are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the course and at other appropriate points throughout the course.

The Achievement Chart

The achievement chart for each discipline is included in the curriculum policy document for that discipline. The chart provides a reference point for all assessment practice and a framework within which to assess and evaluate student achievement.

Each chart is organized into four broad categories of knowledge and skills: Knowledge/ Understanding, Thinking/Inquiry, Communication, and Application/Making Connections. (The names of the categories differ slightly from one discipline to another, reflecting differences in the nature of the disciplines.) The achievement chart also describes the levels of achievement of the curriculum expectations within each category. The descriptions associated with each level serve as a guide for gathering assessment information and enable teachers to make consistent judgements about the quality of student work and to provide clear and specific feedback to students and parents.

The achievement chart provides a standard province-wide method for teachers to use in assessing and evaluating their students' achievement. A variety of materials is being made available to assist teachers in improving their assessment methods and strategies and, hence, their assessment of student achievement.

The ministry is providing the following materials to school boards for distribution to teachers:

- a standard provincial report card, with an accompanying guide
- instructional planning materials
- assessment videos
- curriculum and assessment training materials
- an electronic curriculum planner

The following table provides a summary description of achievement in each percentage grade range and corresponding level of achievement:

Percentage Grade Range	Achievement Level	Summary Description
80–100%	Level 4	A very high to outstanding level of achievement. Achievement is *above* the provincial standard.
70–79%	Level 3	A high level of achievement. Achievement is *at* the provincial standard.
60–69%	Level 2	A moderate level of achievement. Achievement is *below, but approaching,* the provincial standard.
50–59%	Level 1	A passable level of achievement. Achievement is *below* the provincial standard.
Below 50%		Insufficient achievement of curriculum expectations. A credit will not be granted.

Level 3 (70–79%) is the provincial standard. Teachers and parents can be confident that students who are achieving at level 3 are well prepared for work in the next grade or the next course.

It should be noted that an evaluation of achievement in the 80–100% range (level 4) does not suggest that the student is achieving expectations beyond those specified for the course, but rather that he or she demonstrates a very high to outstanding level of achievement of the specified expectations, and a greater command of the requisite knowledge and skills than a student achieving in the 70–79% range (level 3). A student whose achievement is below 50% at the end of the course will not obtain a credit for the course.

Reporting Student Achievement

Student achievement must be communicated formally to students and parents by means of the Provincial Report Card, Grades 9–12. The report card focuses on two distinct but related aspects of student achievement: the achievement of curriculum expectations and the development of learning skills. To more clearly reflect these two aspects of student achievement, the report card contains separate sections for reporting on achievement of the curriculum expectations and for reporting on demonstrated skills required for effective learning.

The report card also includes teachers' comments on the student's strengths, areas in which improvement is needed, and ways in which improvement might be achieved. Separate sections are provided for recording attendance and lateness in each course.

Reporting on Achievement of Curriculum Expectations

The report card provides a record of the student's achievement of the curriculum expectations in every course, at particular points in the school year or semester, in the form of a percentage grade. The percentage grade represents the quality of the student's overall achievement of the expectations for the course and reflects the corresponding level of achievement as described in the achievement chart for the discipline.

A final grade is recorded for every course, and a credit is granted and recorded for every course in which the student's grade is 50% or higher. The final grade for each course in Grades 9–12 will be determined as follows:

- Seventy per cent of the grade will be based on evaluations conducted throughout the course. This portion of the grade should reflect the student's most consistent level of achievement throughout the course, although special consideration should be given to more recent evidence of achievement.

- Thirty per cent of the grade will be based on a final evaluation in the form of an examination, performance, essay, and/or other method of evaluation suitable to the course content and administered towards the end of the course.

In all of their courses, students must be provided with numerous and varied opportunities to demonstrate the full extent of their achievement of the curriculum expectations, across all four categories of knowledge and skills.

Reporting on Demonstrated Learning Skills

The report card provides a record of the learning skills demonstrated by the student in every course, in the following five categories: Works Independently, Teamwork, Organization, Work Habits, and Initiative. The learning skills are evaluated using a four-point scale (E–Excellent, G–Good, S–Satisfactory, N–Needs Improvement). The separate evaluation and reporting of the learning skills in these five areas reflects their critical role in students' achievement of the curriculum expectations. To the extent possible, the evaluation of learning skills, apart from any that may be included as part of a curriculum expectation in a course, should not be considered in the determination of percentage grades.

Assessment and Evaluation of Programs

Assessment and evaluation of student achievement provide teachers with an opportunity to think critically about their methods of instruction and the overall effectiveness of their program. Teachers and principals should systematically review course content, instructional strategies, and assessment procedures and make the program changes needed to improve their students' achievement.

Analysis of the results of board- and province-wide assessments, as well as of national and international testing, provides additional information on student achievement and program effectiveness, complementing the program assessments conducted by teachers and principals. Where areas for improvement are identified through such analysis, schools and boards should work with parents and other representatives from the community to address these areas in their school and board action plans.