

Caledonia Junior High School

Plan for Communicating Student Learning

Introduction

At Caledonia Junior High we know that it is important for students to have the best opportunities to succeed and believe that student success depends in part upon the collaborative efforts of all those involved in the education of the child. Collaboration requires that teachers, children, parents/guardians share a common understanding of what children are expected to achieve through their educational experiences, as well as a clear idea of where the child is in his/ her learning. An effective plan will focus on academic success while also acknowledging the importance of social and emotional development, particularly during these “Middle Years” of adolescence.

Background

The educational programs at Caledonia follow the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) outcomes for each subject area. These educational outcomes describe the knowledge, skills and attitudes the student will demonstrate by the end of each grade level. The assessment and evaluation of students is based on the guidelines provided by the Department of Education.

To help parents/ guardians understand the process of assessment and evaluation of learning, an overview of the structure within which we work at the school includes:

- Public School Program (NS Department of Education)
- Essential Graduation Learnings
- Learning Outcomes Framework
- Principles of Learning

Public School Program

Caledonia Junior High School’s Plan follows the Nova Scotia Department of Education Public School Program, with commitment to supporting students in the achievement of the Essential Graduation Learnings (EGLs).

Essential Graduation Learnings (EGLs)

The EGLs are statements describing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes not limited to particular courses expected of all students who graduate from high school in Nova Scotia, and are the consequences of the total educational experience:

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| Aesthetic Expression | Graduates will be able to respond with critical awareness to various forms of the arts and be able to express themselves through the arts. |
| Citizenship | Graduates will be able to assess social, cultural, economic, and environmental interdependence in a local and global context. |
| Communication | Graduates will be able to use the listening, viewing, speaking, reading and writing modes of language, as well as mathematical and scientific concepts and symbols to think, learn, and communicate effectively. |
| Personal Development | Graduates will be able to continue to learn and to pursue an active, healthy lifestyle. |
| Problem Solving | Graduates will be able to use the strategies and processes needed to solve a wide variety of problems, including those requiring language, mathematical and scientific concepts. |
| Technological Competence | Graduates will be able to use a variety of technologies, demonstrate an understanding of technological applications and apply appropriate technologies for problem solving. |

Learning Outcomes Framework

This framework, together with a set of statements that describe what we know about how students learn, forms the basis for the school program in Nova Scotia for all students from primary to grade twelve. The outcomes framework tells us what children will learn and the Principles of Learning tell us how children will learn.

The NS Department of Education provides curriculum guides that describe the learning outcomes for each curriculum area, and teachers at Caledonia use them in planning, delivering, and assessing the outcomes for the learning activities they set up for the class, for groups of children and for individuals.

Teachers understand that each student is unique and work to ensure that all children are challenged at the appropriate level to experience meaningful success.

Principles of Learning – How Students Learn

The Department of Education outlines how students learn as the following:

| Principles of Learning |
|--|
| Students construct knowledge and make it meaningful in terms of their prior knowledge and experiences. |
| Learning is a process of actively constructing knowledge. |
| Learning is enhanced when it takes place in a social and collaborative environment. |
| Students need to continue to view learning as an integrated whole. |
| Learners must see themselves as capable and successful. |
| Learners have different ways of knowing and representing knowledge. |
| Reflection is an integral part of learning. |

Assessment, Evaluation and Communication

By *assessment*, we mean the systematic process of gathering information on student learning. This includes information about what students know and can do. Teachers gather student information that relates to what children are expected to learn as indicated by the curriculum guides. Teachers will establish tasks and routines that actively involve students in assessing, evaluating and communicating their learning. Students will work toward accepting responsibility for and ownership of their learning.

At Caledonia Junior High there are many ways our students show us what they have learned, which may include the following:

- Class presentations
- Tests, quizzes, questionnaires
- Written responses (journals, portfolios, stories, explanations, charting)
- Research projects
- Essays
- Demonstrations (performance of a task, experiments, explanations to others, games)
- Modelling
- Conferencing
- Interviews with students (both formal and informal)
- Debating
- Multimedia presentations (computers, videos, live performance)
- Teacher observations
- Students teaching students
- Dramatic presentations (role playing, song and dance)
- Peer and self-evaluation
- Anecdotal records

Teachers design these assessment activities to collect evidence on students' progress towards achieving the Department of Education outcomes. By using a variety of assessment tools, teachers give students different opportunities to demonstrate their achievement of the outcomes. This accommodates the many different learning styles of our students.

Evaluation is the process of analyzing, summarizing and making decisions based upon the assessment information gathered. The decisions teachers make in evaluating student learning reflect where each child is in relation to learning outcomes, and also where the child needs to go next in their learning. Teachers will give students a variety of samples of work to help students understand what good quality looks like and what is required to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

Once teachers have gathered this information, we must make sense of it by evaluating student learning. Evaluation involves weighing and balancing all available information and using a high level of professional judgment in making decisions based upon that information. It is important for teachers to share this information with students and parents so that we can collaborate in supporting your child's learning.

Communication

As parents/guardians, you can expect to receive information from teachers about your child's learning in relation to the expected learning outcomes. It is important for teachers to share this information with students and parents so that we can collaborate in supporting your child's learning. Reporting on student learning should be clear, accurate and of practical value to you as the parent/guardian. If at any time, the standard forms for communication are inappropriate for you, the staff/administration will endeavor to assist you in better understanding your child's achievement. The principal will seek the support of system and community resources to communicate with parents in languages other than French or English and in other areas of specific needs.

Tools for Communication

At Caledonia, parents/guardians will be informed of student learning in a variety of ways; some on a school wide basis and others particular to individual classes and teachers. These include but are not limited to:

- Curriculum sessions and workshops for parents/guardians
- PowerSchool Parent and Student Portal
- Collaborative goal setting
- Informal progress reports
- Home/school communication: journals, e-mail, school and teacher websites, phone calls, conferences, school newsletters
- Work samples: published stories, book reports, journals, projects, investigations, displays, recordings, writing folders, portfolios, tests
- Homework: student work, projects, interactive activities for the student/parent/guardian
- Special events: performances, concerts, contests, guest speakers and assemblies

Report Cards

Parents/guardians will also receive three report cards, one at the end of each term. Just as in all assessment and evaluation strategies, the student will be evaluated in relation to the expected learning outcomes for the grade level. All students will receive a percentage grade and comment for each course/strand. This information will indicate the degree of competence the student has demonstrated in relation to the outcomes, and not in comparison to other students in the class.

90-100% - Demonstrates excellent understanding and application of concepts and skills in relation to the learning outcomes.

80-89% - Demonstrates very good understanding and application of concepts and skills in relation to the learning outcomes.

70-79% - Demonstrates good understanding and application of concepts and skills in relation to the learning outcomes.

60-69% - Demonstrates satisfactory understanding and application of concepts and skills in relation to the learning outcomes.

50-59% - Demonstrates minimal understanding and application of concepts and skills in relation to the learning outcomes.

Below 50% - Has not met minimum requirements of the course

INS - Insufficient evidence to determine a grade

IP - In progress until all components of the course are completed.

NA- Not applicable at this time. (Used only for reporting in strands in Mathematics grades 7 & 8)

Percentage grades are calculated from the Achievement Levels demonstrated on each course outcome throughout the term. This information will be made available to parents/caregivers on PowerSchool in a timely fashion and will be kept up-to-date. The Achievement Levels are as follows:

Level 4: In-depth knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Able to extend the application of related skills.

Level 3 and 3+: Competent knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Appropriate application of the related skills.

Level 2 and 2+: Developing knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Developing in the application of the related skills.

Level 1 and 1+: Limited knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Limited application of related skills.

Communication Concerns with Parents/Guardians

In addition to our regular reporting system, teachers may contact the parent(s)/guardians when there is concern about a student's progress. Parents are often invited into the school to meet with teachers regarding any concerns. If a solution is not immediately forthcoming then recommendations for further intervention may be made.

Many teachers send home more regular reports on students' achievements. This might include summaries of homework, class-work and assignments completed. We do this in an effort to keep parents up to date on their child's progress. Provisions will be made for any parent who requires assistance with the reporting of their child's progress.

Parent/Guardian Concerns with Student Assessment and Evaluation

While teachers make efforts to assist parents/guardians and students in understanding assessments and evaluations, there may be an occasion when parents/guardians have concerns. The school has established the following procedure:

- The parent/guardian should first raise the concern with the teacher. The teacher will respond appropriately within a reasonable time frame.
- If the teacher, parent/guardian, or both feel that the participation of the principal will help bring about a satisfactory resolution, the principal will meet with all involved, separately or together as seems appropriate.

In all cases when disagreements arise, it is expected that parents and school staff will work together in the spirit of mutual respect to resolve the situation, having in mind as the first priority the best interests of the student.

Children Requiring Additional Support

Caledonia Junior High School is committed to supporting the learning of all students. As part of this commitment, the school has established a process for the identification, assessment and program planning for students with special needs. This process follows the guidelines set out by the Provincial Department of Education and the Halifax Regional School Board.

Identification of students with special needs: Classroom teachers, resource teachers, parents/guardians and students may initiate and/or assist in identifying students and providing relevant assessment information. When formal individual assessments are required, they will be conducted by qualified personnel and will be undertaken only after parents/guardians have given written, informed consent.

Program Adaptations: Classroom teachers will explore a variety of adaptations based on the characteristics of the learner and are appropriate to his/her needs, age, and level of educational achievement. These adaptations and their effectiveness in assisting students in meeting outcomes will be recorded and the information communicated to parents/guardians on the Programming Adaptations Form.

School Planning Team: If the classroom teacher(s) require(s) further support to meet the needs of a student, the teacher(s) will contact the School Planning Team. The team members include the Principal or Vice Principal, Learning Centre/Resource Teacher, Guidance Counsellor, Jr. High Support Teacher, Team Teachers, and the Parents/Guardians and Student when appropriate. Parents/Guardians participation is essential at this stage. It is also through the meeting of the Program Planning Team that a decision is made on whether an Individual Program Plan is needed for the student.

Individual Program Plan: The development and implementation of an Individual Program Plan (IPP) follows a process suggested by the Nova Scotia Department of Education. Parents/guardians will be involved in the process.

Homework

The Ministerial Policy on homework came into effect on September 1, 2015. This policy replaced provincial guides and school board policies regarding homework. In the new policy, homework is an expectation for all grades and in all classes and subjects.

The homework policy:

- applies to all grades (primary – 12)
- requires all teachers to assign homework, but provides teachers with flexibility to determine what to assign, and how much
- focuses on the quality of homework and its connection to what students are learning in their classes, not on the quantity - describes three purposes for homework: preparing for class, practicing new skills or knowledge, and enrichment of learning - makes a strong connection between what students are learning in class and the homework they receive
- requires teachers to assign homework that meets provincial standards for effective homework

- asks teachers to follow up and provide feedback on homework but not count it towards a student's grade, except in cases where it is a larger long-term project or assignment that is completed in class and at home; these longer-term projects and assignments will be evaluated to provide feedback and to contribute to a student's grade
- requires schools to ensure that homework is fair and equitable by assigning activities that match the needs and abilities of your child - describes roles and responsibilities for students, parents, teachers, and principals - encourages parents to contact their child's teacher if their child is struggling with homework

Conclusion

At Caledonia our School Plan for Communicating Student Learning is designed to meet the needs of our school community. Suggestions for revisions are welcome and should be directed to the principal. Our school plan will be reviewed annually and will be revised if needed in conjunction with our SSP (Student Success Plan) goals and strategies.

Additional Definitions

Formative Assessment – involves the ongoing process of gathering and interpreting evidence about student learning for the purpose of determining where students are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there. The information gathered is used by teachers to provide descriptive feedback and adjust instruction and by students to focus their learning. Assessment for learning is a high impact instructional strategy that takes place while the student is still learning and serves to promote learning.

Summative Assessment - is the process of collecting and interpreting evidence for the purpose of summarizing learning at a given point in time, to make judgments about the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria, and to assign a value to represent that quality. The information gathered may be used to communicate the student's achievement to parents/guardians, other teachers, students themselves, and others. It occurs at or near the end of a cycle of learning.

Balanced Assessment - using a variety of assessment strategies

Essential Graduation Learnings (EGL's) - statements describing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes expected of all students who graduate from high school which are cross-curricular and the foundation for all curriculum development.

General Curriculum Outcomes - statements identifying what students are expected to know and be able to do upon completion of study in each specific subject area.

Individual Program Plan (IPP) - requires extra planning with changes to the Public

School Program outcomes and/or the addition of individualized outcomes. It may include any of all of the following:

- deletion/modification of curriculum outcomes
- addition of new outcomes; may include behavioural, life skills and/or social outcomes

Key Stage Curriculum Outcomes - statements identifying what students are expected to know and be able to do by the end of Grades 3,6,9 and 12 as a result of cumulative learning experiences in specific subject areas.

Large Scale Assessment - Any provincial, national or international assessment, examination or test the Department of Education or Halifax Regional School Board directs schools to administer.

Program Adaptations - extra planning with no changes to Public School Program outcomes. They may include any or all of the following:

- * Changes to environment
- * Presentation strategies
- * Class organization
- * Evaluation strategies
- * Resources
- * Motivational strategies

PSP - Public School Program as agreed upon by the Nova Scotia Department of Education.

Communicating Student Learning 2018-2019

Meet-the-Teacher/Curriculum Night
September 20th 6:00-7:00 PM

TERMS

Term I: September 5 to November 20
Term II: November 22 to March 7
Term III: March 11 to June 27

PARENT-TEACHER MEETINGS

December 5 6:00-8:00 PM
December 6 1:00-3:00 PM
April 10 6:00-8:00 PM
April 11 1:00-3:00 PM

REPORT CARDS

Term I November 29
Term II March 14
Term III June 28