

Divisional Assessments in the PRSD

Divisional assessments serve four interrelated, but distinct, purposes: they (a) communicate developmental expectations for learning, (b) guide curriculum and instruction, (c) allow the teacher to monitor and evaluate instructional and/or program effectiveness, and (d) predict future performance. Divisional assessments communicate a strong message to students, teachers, and parents about what knowledge and skills are important to learn. These assessments provide educators with information needed to adjust instruction to meet the learning needs of students. The assessment data can also be used for monitoring and evaluating purposes, by providing information to teachers, schools, and division-level staff regarding the effectiveness of programs, curriculum, or other resources in helping students achieve their learning goals. Lastly, assessment data can help to predict whether students, classes, schools, and the division are on track to meet specific year-end goals. (Adapted from: Benchmark Assessment for Improved Learning, AACC, Policy Brief, 2010, Page 3-4.)

Below is an overview of each of the Assessments we utilize for these purposes within the Peace River School Division.

Overview of Numeracy Assessments

Beginning of Year Diagnostic Assessments: MIPI/EICS MA

- The Math Intervention Planning Instrument (MIPI) is used with all grades 8 to 10 students. The Elk Island Catholic School Math Assessment (EICS MA) is used with grades 1 to 7 students. These assessments are given to students at the start of the year on concepts from the previous grade (i.e. a student in Grade 6 is assessed on concepts from Grade 5); therefore, providing teachers with a gauge of which aspects of the curriculum were retained and which aspects will need additional review to support student success. Student performance on the MIPI/EICS MA should not be counted towards a student's grade, but rather inform teachers about class and individual instructional needs.
- These assessments should be completed at the start of the school year (no later than the third week of instruction) or when a new student registers with the school to assist teachers in making data-informed instructional plans as early as possible. The EICS MA will be repeated in March to see growth and report to Alberta Education.

Progress Monitoring Assessment: NCAT

- The rationale behind the PRSD Numeracy Common Assessment Tool is that there are foundational grade-level numeracy skills that all students require to be successful throughout the mathematics curriculum and in higher-level problem-solving. Therefore, the questions included are lower complexity, skill-based, and focused on concepts in the Number, Patterns and Algebra strands. The NCAT is not meant to cover every concept, but rather those must-have concepts students will require in their current and future years of mathematics.

- The NCAT has been split into two main categories to facilitate its implementation and focus instructional priorities:
 - Number Sense
 - Operations
- The NCAT is a progress monitoring tool on key concepts. The January version of the NCAT is meant to inform teachers about the effectiveness of their instruction strategies on concepts covered so far.
- All NCAT assessments will be completed again at the end of May/first of June to assess the essential outcomes of grade-level curriculum concepts.

Final Exam for grades 7 & 8

- A common final for grades 7 and 8 is given at the end of the school year in the format of the Provincial Achievement Test

Overview of Literacy Assessments

Elk Island Catholic Schools Phonological Awareness Screener (EICS PA)

- The EICS PA is a screening tool that assesses students' knowledge in various areas of phonological awareness and phonics.
- It was adapted from various assessments, including Heggerty's Phonemic Awareness Skills Screener Assessments, the Letter Name-Sound (LeNS) and Castles and Coltheart 3 (CC3) assessments, the Reading Readiness Screening Tool (RRST), and Kilpatrick's Phonological Awareness Screening Test (PAST).

Reading Comprehension Assessment Tool (RCAT)

- The RCAT is an online tool for teachers that provides access to secure reading comprehension assessments for each grade level from grades 4 to 12 and is based on the Alberta Curriculum. (NOTE: It will be updated prior to the start of the 2023 school year to reflect any necessary changes to support the NEW Alberta Curriculum.)
- All teachers have access to all three levels of tests for each grade level, not just the grade level they are assigned to for that year.
- Teachers are able to set a date and time for the beginning and ending of the assessment, which provides a link they can share with their students to provide them access to their assessment.
- As soon as students complete the test, teachers get access to class reporting, individual reports, and reporting of each reading comprehension skill, which can enable teachers to identify goals and plan instruction that supports students' reading progress throughout the year.
- Reading Comprehension skills assessed include:
 - Associate Meaning
 - Evaluate
 - Identify and Interpret Ideas and Details
 - Interpret Text Organization
 - Make Connections

Fountas & Pinnell

- The Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) is a one-on-one assessment that helps identify a child's specific reading strengths and appropriate instructional reading level for small-group instruction.
- The data gained enables teachers to identify goals and plan instruction that supports students' reading progress throughout the year.

Writing Assessment

- Locally (within the Peace River School Division) developed
- Based on outcomes from the NEW Alberta Curriculum
- Assesses students' writing abilities in three areas:
 - Content
 - Organization
 - Mechanics
- Corresponds to report card marking scheme
- Administered to Grades 2-9