Bedford and Forsyth Education Centres (BFEC) Plan for Communicating Student Learning

Introduction

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

Background

The educational programs at BFEC follow the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) 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.

Link for Curriculum Outcomes: http://www.ednet.ns.ca/families.shtml

To help parents/ guardians/students 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 (Nova Scotia EECD)
- Essential Graduation Learnings
- Learning Outcomes Framework
- Principles of Learning

Public School Program

BFEC's School Plan follows the NS 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.

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(s), 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 students will learn and the Principles of Learning tell us how students will learn.

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

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

Principles of Learning – How Students Learn

The Department of Education outlines how students learn in the following principles of

learning:

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 students 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 BFEC 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 student is in relation to learning outcomes, and also where the student 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 student's learning.

Communication

As parents/guardians, you can expect to receive information from teachers about your student'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 student'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 student'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 need.

Tools for Communication

At BFEC, 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
- Home/school communication: e-mail, school and teacher websites, phone calls, conferences, school newsletters, google classroom and google sites, School Messenger.
- 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, guest speakers and assemblies

Report Cards

Parents/guardians will also receive a report card each quarter. 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.

Percentage grades are calculated from the Achievement Levels demonstrated on each course outcome throughout the semester. 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	Level 4	Level 3+	Level 3	Level 2+	Level 2	Level 1+	Level 1
Descriptor	In-Depth knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Able to extend application of related skills	Competent knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Appropriate application of related skills		Developing knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Developing application of related skills		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 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. Power School is updated every two weeks and students and parents can check on achievement at that time.

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 vice principal will help bring about a satisfactory resolution, the vice 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.

Students requiring Additional Support

BFEC 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 Centre for Education.

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.

Student Planning Team:
If the classroom teacher(s) require(s) further support to meet the needs of a student, the teacher(s) will contact the Student Planning Team. Parents/Guardians participation is essential at this stage..

Who are the members of Student Planning Team (SPT)?
- Parents/Guardians
- Student (when appropriate)
- Classroom Teachers, Learning Support Teachers, and School Counsellors as appropriate
- School Administrators
- Other professional staff who can be involved if/as required (Equity Consultant, Schools Plus, Student Support Workers, Speech Language Pathologist, SHP nurse, Autism Specialist etc)

Why is Student Program Planning (SPT) Important?
The SPT falls within the program planning process and the Special Education policy. Students with specific needs may require support to be successful in school and achieve outcomes (learning outcomes and otherwise).

At the individual student level, programming decisions are made by the Student Planning Team. Team members are those who have responsibility for the student's learning and to collectively "take on" the responsibility for supporting the student and their family.

The SPT works with parents/guardians to understand their preferred ways of working with teachers, principals, and other staff, and honours and affirms those preferences through a culturally responsive lens.

Student well-being and achievement vary in many ways. To accommodate these variations, schools, teachers, staff and Student Planning Teams use a continuum of programming and services to address the specific strengths, challenges, interests, aspirations, cultural influences, etc, of all learners.

The SPT co-develops evidence-informed assessment and instructional practices, strategies, supports, and interventions based on the student's identified strengths and areas for growth through the Program Planning Process.

Teacher Support Team:
Who are the members of the Teaching Support Team (TST)?
- School administrators – Principal leads the TST

Other members *may* include:
- Classroom teacher(s) who have a variety of expertise and experiences
- Specialist staff who can be involved if / as required (CRP, Psychologists, Speech Language Pathologists, Social Workers etc)
- Learning Support Teachers (literacy, math, coaches, EAL, resource and learning centre teachers etc)
- School Counsellor
- Schools Plus
- Student Support workers

What is the Teaching Support Team (TST) and how is this team used in your school to support teachers and students?

TST is a collaborative team established at each school to support high-leverage teaching and learning practices, to build collective efficacy, and to strengthen the school's capacity to support student well-being and achievement by assisting teachers in developing strategies to meet the needs of all students.

The TST supports equity and inclusive education through the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework and supports school staff in supporting students' and families' cultural and linguistic identities and knowledge systems.

The TST encourages and enhances collaboration among peers, and creates a culture where teachers feel comfortable seeking advice around best practice from their peers and specialists available within the school.

The TST meets frequently to address immediate issues facing teachers and to identify where additional interventions, professional learning, and/or resources may be needed to support student well-being and achievement.

The team will focus on proactively building capacity among teaching staff, as well as supporting changes in teaching practices to meet students' needs and on identifying other needed supports as required.

This team organizes supports throughout the school, including schedules, referrals, priorities for service, and caseloads

The team identifies opportunities for interventions, professional learning, and/or resources to assist teachers in providing rich Tier 1 instruction and assessment prior to the Program Planning Process

The TST will also work with teachers to determine when individual student support is required (ie. Referrals/consent for services) and when Student Planning Teams (SPT) need to be formed to better support the strengths and areas for growth of individual students.

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

Parents and guardians have an important role in assisting the school in the development and review of their school's approach to homework through parent/guardian feedback and the School Advisory Council (SAC). This role has the potential to affirm the partnership in learning between parents and teachers. Full consideration will be given to the purpose of homework. Homework should be educationally beneficial to students and should meet the realistic expectations of students, teachers, parents and caregivers.

Why is homework important?

Homework bridges the gap between learning at school and learning at home. It reinforces work done in class. It can help develop important skills including research and time management.

Homework helps to establish the habits of study, concentration and self-discipline. Parents and guardians have the opportunity to see the progress of their student and the types of learning and activities undertaken at school. Homework can provide challenges and stimulus for students.

What is expected of students?

- Students take responsibility for their homework, supported by their parents/guardians.
- Set aside a specific time and place to work quietly at home and be consistent.
- Read regularly – successful readers need consistent, positive, daily reading experiences with an adult.
- Complete homework and pass it in when it is due.
- Negotiate an extension prior to the due date is required
- Seek assistance from teachers and parents when difficulties arise.

What is expected of parents?

- Take an active interest in homework by encouraging and supporting.
- Assist teachers in monitoring homework by signing completed homework if requested and being aware of the amount of homework set.
- Follow the guidelines for a homework assignment as set out by the classroom teacher

in terms of support and corrections (i.e. the parent/guardian role in a particular assignment).

- Establish a routine of home study.

What is expected of teachers?

- It is well coordinated and teacher expectations are well communicated.
- Set suitable amounts of homework which are varied and at an appropriate level considering the age, stage of schooling and capabilities of students.
- Consideration given to activities or events that may be taking place on a particular night or week that the homework is given when deciding on the amount of homework.
- Feedback and follow-up are provided regularly to students.
- Have regard for equity issues when setting homework assignment activities that rely upon the use of technology. Students who do not have access to such technology at home should not be disadvantaged.

Conclusion

At BFEC 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.

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.

IPP Individual Program Plan - 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.