

Information Guide

...to the
Department of Education
Student Assessment
Plan

The Department of Education Student Assessment Plan

Yukon schools will be implementing a new assessment plan in the 1999-2000 school year. This plan represents a coherent and comprehensive testing strategy that will provide a good check of our educational system in terms of students' learning in the two key areas of education: numeracy and literacy. Students will be assessed at important transition points in their school career - the completion of primary, intermediate, junior and secondary years. Testing will refer to the Yukon curriculum and therefore be based on what should have been taught and learned.

An important element of the plan is its do-ability for teachers and students. The previous plan was very labour intensive and time consuming for teachers as it required extensive cyclical development of testing instruments and annual marking sessions. This had the effect of taking many teachers away from their classrooms for considerable periods of time. The new plan solves this problem by purchasing, where practical, high quality assessment instruments and marking services.

For the 1999-2000 school year, all mandatory assessments, with the exception of grade 9 Language Arts, will be purchased from various educational jurisdictions. For students in grades 3 through 9, the burden of externally mandated assessments will be limited to a maximum of 4 hours over the course of one academic year. Students in grades 11 will have about 6 hours of external testing. Students in grade 12, depending on the number of examinable subjects they take, will have on average about 10 hours of external testing.

In addition to requiring a certain number of assessments at key grades, the Department, in response to teachers' ongoing requests for high quality assessment materials to use in their

classroom, is making available an optional assessment resource: the CAMP. The CAMP materials are curriculum-referenced and therefore provide teachers with information on how well their students are learning what they are being taught according to the curriculum.

This plan will make it possible for the Department of Education to meet its public accountability obligations by monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the curriculum and student learning. The information provided by the plan's comprehensive package of testing also enables the Department to guide curricular renewal and adaptation.

The information that follows outlines the mandatory and optional assessments that make up the plan.

Mandatory Assessments

| | Assessment | | | |
|-------|------------|------|-----|------|
| Grade | YAT | SAIP | LPI | BCPE |
| 3 | X | | | |
| 4 | | | | |
| 5 | | | | |
| 6 | X | | | |
| 7 | | | | |
| 8 | | X | | |
| 9 | X | | | |
| 10 | | | | |
| 11 | | X | X* | |
| 12 | | | X | X |

* The LPI assessment is mandatory for grade 11 students outside of Whitehorse

Yukon Achievement Tests (YAT)

The Yukon Achievement Tests are curriculum-referenced instruments based on the Western Canada Protocol common curriculum frameworks in Mathematics and Language Arts. The key purposes of the assessment of student learning against curriculum based standards are:

- to ensure that all students in Yukon public schools are provided instruction consistent with meeting the expectations of the mandated curriculum;
- to improve the quality of instruction in Yukon public schools;
- to provide parents and the public an objective and credible basis to assess student progress across the Yukon; and
- to assist in fulfilling the departmental obligation for public accountability.

School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP)

In the past few years, in Canada as well as in many other countries, increasing attention has been given to education systems and their performance. Parents, members of the business and industrial communities, concerned taxpayers, and others have asked the question: “How well are our schools preparing students for a global economy and for lifelong learning?”

In 1989, the Council of Ministers of Education Canada, initiated the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP). In the SAIP, the achievement of individual students is not identified, and no attempt is made to relate an individual’s achievement to that of other students. The SAIP is essentially a measure of how well each province’s education system is doing; it does not replace individual student assessment, which is the responsibility of teachers, schools, boards, and ministries of education. Similarly, no attempt is made to compare schools or school districts. The results are reported at the provincial/territorial level only.

Language Proficiency Index (LPI)

The Language Proficiency Index, developed by the Applied Research and Evaluation Services of the University of British Columbia, is offered twice-yearly to grade 11 and 12 students. It provides post-secondary institutions with information on an individual student’s competency in English. This information is one factor used by most post-secondary institutions to register students in appropriate courses. For example, universities usually require a score of 5 or better and colleges usually require a 4 or better on the essay component (based on a six-point scale) for direct entrance to first-year English courses. Students with lower scores are generally required to take an introductory or “catch-up” course before they can take the regular first-year English course.

British Columbia Provincial Exams (BCPE)

The British Columbia Provincial Examinations Program, created in 1983:

- ensures that Grade 12 students meet consistent provincial standards of achievement in academic subjects;
- ensures graduating students from all schools in the province will be treated equitably when applying for admission to universities and other post-secondary institutions; and
- responds to strong public concerns for improved standards of education.

The Yukon participates in the British Columbia Provincial Examinations Program for the following reasons:

- Yukon follows the BC curriculum;
- Yukon & BC share similar graduation requirements; and
- Yukon’s desire to assess its students upon completion of their high school years.

Optional Assessment Resources

| | Assessment |
|--------------|-------------------|
| Grade | CAMP |
| 3 | |
| 4 | X |
| 5 | X |
| 6 | |
| 7 | X |
| 8 | X |
| 9 | |
| 10 | |
| 11 | |
| 12 | |

*** The CAT is available only for grade 3*

Classroom Assessment Materials Program (CAMP)

The Classroom Assessment Materials Program package is a set of mini-assessments that mirror the YAT in Math and Language Arts for grades 4, 5, 7 and 8. These materials allow teachers and schools to continue to evaluate the progress of their students and the effectiveness of programs relative to the curriculum.

For more information...

about the Department of Education Student Assessment Plan, please contact the Student Information and Assessment Unit (867) 667-3707.