

Quigley Elementary Assessment Philosophy

At Quigley Elementary, we believe it is important to embed the core competencies (communication, creative and critical thinking, personal and social awareness) into our daily work, to instill a growth mindset in our learners (never give up, make the most of their mistakes, embrace challenges), and to communicate learner growth in meaningful ways.

When it comes to communicating student learning, teachers determine where a child is at and develop a game plan for learning. Each student does not necessarily do the same thing because we recognize that students are unique individuals who start at different places, progress at different rates, and learn in different ways.

Rather than using a traditional mastery scale (not yet meeting, approaching, meeting, exceeding), we use strengths-based evaluation criteria that highlights the level of effort and independence displayed by the learner:

Acquiring: Student requires teacher direction and support to acquire skills. (*I am just getting started. I learn best with help.*)

Developing: Student is learning to practice and apply skills with some teacher guidance. (*I get some of it. I am beginning to do more and more on my own.*)

Refining: Student is refining skills with increasing consistency and independence. (*I get most of it. I can do most of it on my own.*)

Mastering: Student consistently and independently demonstrates competency in applying skills. (*I get it. I can do it on my own every time.*)

Extending: Student takes ownership and self-initiates innovative use of skills. (*I use what I know to create something new or that impacts others.*)

This scale is not an equivalent to traditional letter grades.

More importantly, our assessment focus is on providing descriptive feedback that supports growth. Descriptive feedback guides learners to improving outcomes by developing next steps in the learning journey. Research indicates descriptive feedback raises student achievement, while letter grades do not. Further, experts suggest grades tend to diminish students' interest in whatever they are learning, reduce the quality of student's' thinking, and create a preference for the easiest possible task. This is why we do not focus on letter grades or numerical marks. Our mid-year Interim and June Final reports will continue to use strengths-based language that our community values. We want our students to be intrinsically motivated, not measuring themselves by percentages but by their growth as learners. We will not issue letter grades, unless specifically requested by a parent of an intermediate student at the end of the year or when a student leaves our school community.

Classroom teachers will formally welcome parents into the learning partnership between student-teacher-parent during the first quarter of the school year through an Open House for communicating student learning. At the Open House parents will get a chance to meet the teacher, learn about classroom routines and expectations, explore the curriculum and core competencies, and work collaboratively with the student and teacher to develop personalized learning goals for their child. These goals will play a part in guiding the learning journey for their child throughout the school year.

Portfolios play a significant role in highlighting student growth. Each portfolio is a purposeful collection of a child's work showcasing their learning. It is not a display of random work, but rather a carefully chosen selection documenting the learning journey and highlighting the growth of each

child as a learner. The portfolio is utilized as a communication tool between student-teacher-parent, and the reflective nature of self-assessment is an integral component of the portfolio and learning journey for each student. The portfolio will include student goals established by the student-teacher-parent team, samples of student work demonstrating both growth and mastery over the course of the school year, and self-assessments with respect to the goals, student growth, and core competencies. The actual format of the portfolio (digital or paper-based) and sharing of the portfolio through student-led conferences will vary depending upon the grade and teacher. Student-led conferences will occur once in the first half of the year and once in the latter half of the year.

The mid-year Interim report card will include anecdotal feedback concerning the student's strengths, contributions, and relationships with others, and outline how the child approaches the learning process; strengths-based feedback on the curricular competencies for literacy, numeracy; and a student generated reflection on progress towards goals and learning growth.

The end of year Final report card will include anecdotal feedback concerning the student's strengths, areas for further growth, and ways to support further learning; strengths-based feedback on the curricular competencies for all subjects; and a student generated reflection on progress towards goals and learning growth.

Our teachers encourage communication between home and school throughout the year and are available to discuss a child's learning progress as needed. In addition to the formal reporting periods outlined above, our teachers try to communicate on a regular and ongoing basis through email, newsletters, or social media platforms. We believe it truly takes a village to raise a child and only by working together can we help every child develop to their full potential.

*adapted from Norma Rose Point Elementary and KLO Middle School