

Change from letter grades to performance descriptions in Grades 4-9

- There are different learning standards in the new curriculum than in the old one. Teachers need to assess students in a different way so that they can give students and parents the right information about how a student is doing, based on the new learning standards and the skills and competencies they are expected to develop.
- The goal is to give parents and students more helpful information about where they are doing well and how they could improve.
- Both letter grades and performance descriptions are ways to summarize a student's achievement based on their work in class, such as tests, assignments and projects. However, letter grades only reflect a student's current achievement. Performance descriptions provide information about both their current achievement and their progress. We are providing a chart to show parents how the performance reports correlate with the previous letter grades.
- Research has shown that when young students receive letter grades, it tends to lower their motivation and interest in learning. "When schools cling to letter and number ratings, students get stuck in a system that undermines learning." (Kohn, 2011). Kohn's extensive research shows that grades tend to decrease students' interest in whatever they're learning, creates a preference for the easiest possible task and reduces the quality of students' thinking.
- Performance reports informally in class and formally in report cards tell parents and students where the student is at in terms of expectations for their grade level. Performance reports also provide comments and descriptions of the student's strengths and areas for improvement.
- We want students to understand learning as an ongoing process and activity, and not just an accomplishment, because they will need to know how to organize and manage their learning throughout their lives, including in post-secondary studies and their careers.
- Canada and B.C. are leaders in education, so we are in good company. These changes to B.C. and Yukon's curriculum are based on international research and extensive consultations with educators. For more information on this research, please visit <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/references.pdf>
- Many Yukon students go on to post-secondary studies and training, and they will continue to be prepared to do so under the new curriculum. Students in grades 10-12 still receive letter grades and percent scores on their report cards and for their final transcripts for postsecondary program applications. Entrance requirements for universities and colleges usually focus on Grade 11 and Grade 12 course marks.