

Limestone District School Board

Parent/Family Guide to Assessment and Evaluation

September 2025

Our Intention: To make a positive difference in the lives of every student, in every classroom, in every school.

See Yourself in Limestone

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Limestone
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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Limestone District School Board

Limestone District School Board is situated on traditional territories of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee.

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1. LDSB's Intention, Mission, Vision, and Values

Our Intention:

To make a positive difference in the lives of every student, in every classroom, in every school.

Our Mission:

To make a positive difference in the lives of the students we serve by empowering every student with the essential skills to shape their future, be lifelong learners, and contribute meaningfully to an interconnected, inclusive, and evolving world.

Our Vision:

For all students, families, and staff to feel they belong within Limestone: a system that understands and supports learners' strengths, needs, and preferences; inspires their hearts and minds; and nurtures hope for the future success of every student, in every classroom, in every school.

Our Values:

Effective school boards have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all students at high levels. Our core values are critical to achieving our priorities as outlined in our mission and vision.

Adaptability
Community
Creativity
Empathy
Equity
Integrity
Respect

2. We Value Partnership with Families

A respectful and collaborative partnership between families and their students’ schools is a significant factor in ensuring student success. This guide is intended to provide families with useful information about how student learning is supported through assessment and evaluation. The guide is designed to answer common questions from families, and to provide starting points for conversations with students, teachers and administrators.

3. Attendance

Regular attendance is essential for success. Valuable learning opportunities take place in collaboration with the teacher and other students during class time. Being present every day will help students deepen their understanding and strengthen skills. In addition, feedback given during learning is known to be the most effective way to move students forward.

Every School Day Counts



Regular attendance is directly related to academic success, personal growth, and future opportunities.

Together, let’s make school attendance a priority.



If a student misses:	That equals:	Which is:	Over 4 years of high school:
1 day every 2 weeks	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	4 months of school
1 day per week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	8 months of school
2 days per week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over a year and half of school
3 days per week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	24 weeks per year OVER 2 YEARS of school

4. Fundamental Principles and Key Beliefs

The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning.

There are **seven fundamental principles** identified in the guiding document for Assessment and Evaluation, *Growing Success* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 6). These seven principles inform the **professional judgement** of teachers by guiding the collection of meaningful information that helps inform instructional decisions, promote student engagement, and improve student learning.

Seven Fundamental Principles

Teachers use practices and procedures that:

- Are fair, transparent, and equitable for all students;
- Support all students, including those with special education needs, those who are learning the language of instruction (English or French), and those who are First Nation, Métis, or Inuit;
- Are carefully planned to relate to the curriculum expectations and learning goals and, as much as possible, to the interests, needs, and experiences of all students;
- Are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or course and at other appropriate points throughout the school year or course;
- Are ongoing, varied in nature, and administered over a period of time to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning;
- Provide ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement;
- Develop students' self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning.

Professional Judgement

Professional Judgement as defined in *Growing Success*: Judgement that is informed by professional knowledge of curriculum expectations, context, evidence of learning, methods of instruction and assessment, and the criteria and standards that indicate success in student learning. In professional practice, judgement involves a purposeful and systematic thinking process that evolves in terms of accuracy and insight with ongoing reflection and self-correction. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 152)

5. Understanding Assessment and Evaluation

What is Assessment?

Assessment is how teachers gather information to understand how well students are learning. It includes looking at their knowledge, skills, and work habits. There are three main types of assessment:

1. Assessment for Learning

This happens during learning. Teachers and students use it to check how things are going and what needs to happen next.

- Students try different tasks to show what they know.
- Teachers give helpful feedback so students can improve.
- It can include class discussions, group work, quizzes, hands-on activities, projects, and portfolios.

2. Assessment as Learning

This helps students think about their own learning. They learn how to set goals, track their progress, and choose strategies that help them learn best.

- Students reflect on what they've learned and what they still need to work on.
- Students use tools like checklists, charts, or learning strategies.

3. Assessment of Learning

This happens after a learning cycle and shows what students have learned at the end of a unit or course.

- Teachers use this to evaluate student achievement.
- It is based on learning goals and success criteria.
- It can include tests, projects, or final assignments.

What is Evaluation?

Evaluation is when teachers use their professional judgement to give a grade or mark, based on assessment results which can include observations, conversations, and products. It shows how well a student has met the learning goals and success criteria at a certain point in time. Evaluation is based on the Achievement Chart found within Ministry of Education curriculum documents.

6. Course Structure

Courses can be structured in a variety of ways. Courses are often structured in units of study, focusing on either a strand of the curriculum or a pulling specific expectations form throughout the curriculum based on a theme. These units usually number between four and six throughout the semester. Alternatively, courses can be spiraled, in which case students cover all strands of the course several times, with early spirals focused on foundational expectations and later spirals covering increasingly complex expectations. The structure of a course is provided to students at the beginning of course through a course outline. Course outlines contain valuable information about knowledge and skills that students will learn, course assessment and evaluation, and academic expectations of students.

7. Accommodations: Supporting All Learners

In every classroom, students learn in different ways. Some may need extra time, special tools, or a different setup to show what they know. These supports are called accommodations.

Using the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) means planning lessons and assessments that work for all students—no matter their background or learning needs. The goal is to remove barriers so every student has a fair chance to succeed.

What Accommodations Can Look Like

Accommodations help students show their learning without changing what they are expected to learn. Some examples include:

- Extra time to finish a test or assignment
- Flexible seating or group arrangements
- Access to technology (like speech-to-text tools or graphic organizers)
- Visual aids or checklists to stay organized

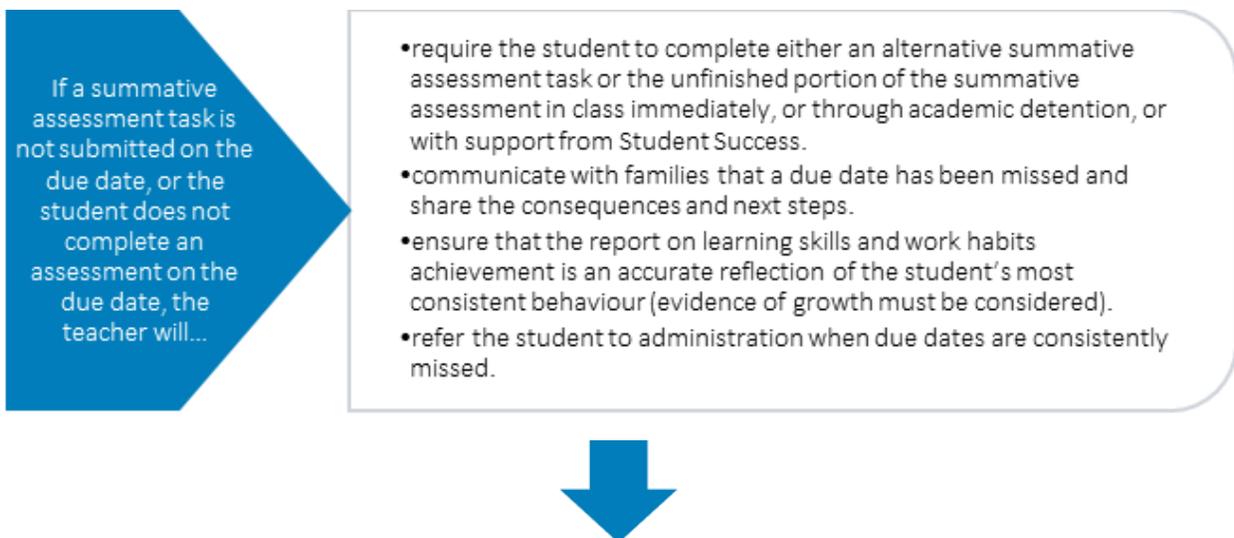
These supports are available to students who need them—even if they don't have an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Where Support Happens

Most accommodations happen right in the classroom with the teacher. Sometimes, depending on the need, other school supports may be used too.

8. The Importance of Meeting Due Dates

It is important that students meet due dates for assignments and class work. If a due date is missed, the following process will be used to ensure the timely submission of summative tasks.



Only in the case of non-compliance with the above process...

- the teacher will communicate with administration.
- the administration will meet with the student to determine the process for completion of the summative assessment task.
- ensure that the report on learning skills and work habits achievement is an accurate reflection of the student's most consistent behaviour (evidence of growth must be considered).

9. Promoting Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is a cornerstone of meaningful learning. Teachers will explicitly model and teach behaviours that support academic honesty. Breaches of academic honesty—such as intentionally submitting work that is not one's own—are considered serious and will be reported to school administration. A plan of action will follow to support student learning and accountability.

As technology evolves, so do the tools students use. The acceptable use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in assessments is guided by the Limestone District School Board's AI policy. Teachers will clearly communicate expectations for technology use during learning, assessment, and evaluation. Students are expected to follow academic honesty guidelines when using AI and should always refer to assignment instructions when unsure.

10. Learning Skills and Work Habits

Learning Skills and Work Habits (LSWH) are essential components of student development and are reported separately from academic achievement on the report card. These skills – Responsibility, Organization, Independent Work, Collaboration, Initiative, and Self-Regulation – are foundational for lifelong learning and success in school, work, and life.

Teachers assess and evaluate LSWH based on observations, conversations, and student products over time. These assessments are not factored into academic grades unless explicitly tied to curriculum expectations. Instead, they provide valuable insight into how students approach learning and contribute to their growth as self-directed learners.

Families play a vital role by reinforcing the importance of these skills at home. When students see that both teachers and families value LSWH, they are more likely to internalize their importance and apply them consistently.

11. Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why are assessment and evaluation practices different from those I experienced when I went to school?

A: Ontario's education system is one of the most inclusive in the world. It endeavors to offer a high-quality education system that values the strengths and abilities of all students. As we learn more from research about equitable assessment and evaluation practices, we provide professional learning for teachers and guidance on implementation of evidence-based strategies. In particular, the research is clear that having high expectations for students, using in-the-moment feedback related to visible success criteria, and teaching students how to self- and peer-assess will help move all students toward success.

Q: How do teachers gather evidence of student learning for evaluation?

A: Teachers collect evidence from three main sources: observations, conversations, and student products. In some courses—especially those focused on skills—teacher observation is essential. For example, listening and speaking in English or safe equipment handling in technology classes are assessed through direct observation. These observations are documented and included in the student's final evaluation.

Q: Why do summative tasks need to be completed under teacher supervision?

A: Summative assessments (like projects, essays, reports, or tests) are designed to reflect what a student knows and can do independently. Completing them under teacher supervision helps ensure the work is authentic and accurately reflects the student's learning.

Q: Why might summative tasks differ between classes of the same course?

A: While the number, type, and depth of summative tasks are consistent across classes, the specific tasks may vary. Teachers design assessments that reflect the learning needs of their students and the way the curriculum is delivered in their classroom. This flexibility supports meaningful and responsive assessment.

Q: What kinds of assessment strategies do teachers use?

A: Teachers use a variety of assessment and evaluation strategies to ensure fairness and responsiveness to student needs. This includes moving beyond traditional tests to include projects, practical tasks, portfolios, and more. The goal is to give all students multiple ways to show what they know and can do.

Q: How will students know what is expected on a summative task?

A: For every summative task, students receive written criteria that explain how their work will be evaluated. These criteria describe what is needed to achieve each level of achievement—from Level 1 (limited understanding) to Level 4 (thorough understanding). This helps students understand what quality work looks like and how to aim for their best.

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Q: My student is taking an online course with another school board. Why are assessment and evaluation practices different in e-learning courses from other school boards?

A: All Ontario school boards follow the Ministry of Education’s Growing Success policy for assessment, evaluation, and reporting. However, each board is also responsible for developing its own internal procedures that reflect local priorities and practices. This means that while the foundational principles are the same across the province, the specific expectations and processes may vary. Students taking e-learning courses from other boards are expected to follow the policies of the board offering the course.

Q: How can I support my student’s success in class?

A: Here are some simple ways you can help:

- Check in on attendance. If your student has been away due to illness or other reasons, most daily work is posted in Minds Online or another digital platform. Teachers are available to help students catch up and answer questions. In hands-on courses like the arts, tech, or physical education, some missed experiences may have been lost.
- Look at their notebook or online course. Are assignments being completed and submitted on time? This helps teachers know who might need extra support and is a way for the teacher to provide next steps for improvement.
- Ask to see the course outline. This document lists all major assignments and tests. It also explains what success looks like—so students know how to aim for strong achievement.
- Look for teacher feedback. Teachers often leave comments on assessments to help students understand what they did well and what they can improve. Encourage your student to read this feedback and reflect on their progress to see if they understand what they did well and what still needs work.
- Encourage communication. If your student has questions or concerns, suggest they speak with their teacher. You can also reach out directly to discuss how your student is doing, and what would be helpful to support them at home.

Q: Why are learning skills and work habits so important?

A: Learning skills and work habits are critical factors in the development of students as lifelong learners, and as contributors to society and the world of work. That is why they are reported separately on the Ontario report card. If teachers and families continue to stress the importance of learning skills and work habits, then it is more likely that students will also see their importance.