

1. **In the new TB reporting format, (Benchmark reporting) – how do you “mark” assignments and exams? Is this assessment of the student become subjective?**

Marking of assignments and tests will be done using objective rubrics and criteria that are specific to the subject area and the desired outcomes related to the Program of Studies of Alberta Education, just as it always has been and/or should have been done. At no point does benchmark reporting mean subjectivity. In fact, the marking may in essence become more objective. Assessment has not changed; it is the reporting format of the assessment that is being upgraded to match that of the global learning community.

2. **Subjects such as math and sciences tend to be exact (you are either right or wrong). How does the benchmark reporting assign a “grade’ to those students who may get a wrong answer on a math test, but got the right approach to the question?**

In some aspects, yes, when dealing with just specific skills and concepts in regards to math and science it may be considered black or white. However, with 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, students are expected to develop and demonstrate the ability to take those skills and concepts learned and be able to apply them to new situations as well as analyze situations to contrast and compare (Reasoning); they will also need to be able to utilize many skills, concepts, experiences and processes to evaluate new situations and problems and create solutions (Problem Solving). Already many math and science projects and tests take into account this “approach or process” utilized in deriving the answer when being assessed.

3. **Is benchmark reporting removing the competitiveness aspect in the classroom?**

**Competition in the outside world is real!** That is true that competition exists in the real world. It has positive and negative ramifications. There is distress in any situation that may motivate, inspire or impede. It has been presented to us, through student surveys conducted by the Alberta government, regular on going discussions with students, that negative stress and pressure they feel in regards to marks is overwhelming. For many of the students it does not become self-actualizing and the fear being developed over time undermines their learning and development. Some students thrive in a

competitive environment, but from the surveys, it has been derived that the majority do not. It has been said by many of our students as well as observed by teachers, that no matter how much work and effort they put in it is never good enough as they will never be the best in the class, so “why try”? If we can focus on intrinsic motivational factors then students will focus on the process of improvement and learning will occur, they will not shut down due to stress and anxiety. It has also been observed in classes that often competition and comparison leads to stagnancy, or that standards are actually lowered depending upon where the comparison is made. As long as “I am better than others than I am doing good”. What if all the others are below standard, than is it really good enough? Where is the motivation for improvement when all I have to do is be better than the worst? In conjunction with Personalized Learning initiative, the learner focuses on where they are at with their learning and utilize strategies that will most improve their learning to be most successful.

4. **Beyond high school, entrance into post secondary education will ultimately depend on numbers. My concern is that kids will find this transition difficult.** Benchmark reporting can allow for providing numbers for post-secondary enrollment. This initiative is a province wide initiative as well as national and international. These initiatives are being made in conjunction with conversations from post secondary institutions worldwide to better prepare students for success.
  
5. **It seem this new system is more personalized to the child, however, I wonder if this will require more time commitment from already stretched resources. Can it be executed properly given an increased time commitment?** In many cases personalized learning is already, and should be, occurring in many classrooms. Transformative assessment is being implemented systematically to transform teaching and learning. All of these things should be occurring in all classrooms regardless of the choice of Summative Reporting Format chosen. Our access to technological resources is very significant and enhances our ability to provide personalized learning. However, the class sizes and loss of assistive support due to funding shortfalls does stretch teachers and

resources significantly. Time, is the biggest factor in that school board and province wide initiatives including ESL benchmarks and Ends reporting does stretch teachers time significantly, not to mention class sizes. However, personalized learning will happen regardless of the resources and regardless of the type of reporting format we use. But this is happening regardless of the type of Reporting we will use.

6. **I'm not convinced competition and stress should be totally eliminated. Too much is certainly unhealthy, however, they may be ill prepared in the working world if they are taught it should not exist. For example my first point about post-secondary education. There will have to compete for positions there, and in the workforce.**

Very True. Future success beyond grade school is very dependent upon an individual's growth in self-concept, self-esteem and confidence. To develop a strong self-concept and have true confidence an individual needs to self-actualize. Self-actualization comes from the realization of one's ability to over come numerous challenges and stresses including competition. It is important for students to continue to be presented with these challenges and even competition and not to be completely protected from it. What must occur though, is to discriminately choose when competition and other challenges are detrimental and when it is essential for self-actualization to occur.

7. **We think the new assessment is better for many children; better than an arbitrary number (context and comparison between 83% vs. 84%).**

8. **Specific points for children are better than general score.**

9. **We recognize a certain level of stress can motivate children's performance BUT it can be harmful if taken too far. See response to comment 3 and 6.**

10. **The rankings won't be eliminated.** In what aspect? In terms of benchmarks, there may be comparison between levels, but ranking of students based on marks will not occur by teachers. The focus is on the students' level of learning in relation to the expected outcomes and not where he is in relation to others. We are very aware that some parents

and students will find ways to rank and compare to others as opposed to use the reporting to look at where their learning is.

11. **Will the honor roll still exist? How will this be handled?** While aware that the change in reporting format may have implications on our current system of awards, including honors, the Assessment Committee made an active choice to focus on the best possible assessment-reporting format based on the needs of the students for their success in the future related back to the mandate of Alberta Education and not awards. However the awards committee will then take a look to determine the best method of recognizing remarkable student achievement.
12. **This looks like a lot of work for teachers and will require quite an intimate knowledge of each student.** This is supposed to be occurring now regardless of the reporting format. Many teachers are doing these things already; this is just a way of reporting where the learning is really at (Summative) with feedback to assist with further development and strategies (Formative). **Please see response to comment 5.**
13. **We like more feedback given to each student with his or her progress.**
14. **Will the report card comments be personalized or the bland ones we get now?** Even now they should be personalized giving detail of progress, achievement and limitation of learning for each individual student.
15. **Need a clear roadmap of how will this be rolled out to the students.** Agreed. Many teachers have already been teaching with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner in mind for years. Others will be expected to catch up. The big difference will be how students' performance and learning will be reported back to the students and parents. Departments and teacher's will ensure information and method of reporting format will be clearly presented in course outlines and introductions.

- 16. For those who find it hard to adjust, what is the plan for them?** In essence the change in format of assessment reporting should be the start of assisting these students. With identifying and providing feedback on limitations and difficulties with where they are now, where their strengths and weaknesses are and strategies in moving forward will help these students adjust. It is expected that many students will find it initially difficult in learning to think as opposed to regurgitating. Basically learning how to learn. The processes of learning to think have been happening in some classrooms for years, with very positive results.
- 17. Will the “kind of homework” be detailed on D2L?** As like now, homework should be detailed on teachers’ blogs including D2L.
- 18. My biggest concern is the ability of a teacher to effectively assess 35+; students on an ongoing basis, especially students that are consistently quiet and reserved? Its unfortunate that this system is being implemented now when classroom size initiatives are removed. A good idea, but would be much more effective if funding was available to reduce pupil-teacher ratios?** Absolutely agree, you are in essence preaching to the choir. However, classroom size and pupil-teacher ratio is an issue out of our hands, and regardless of classroom size, assessment will continue to occur. For most teachers this will not be very much of a change in their assessment practices, for other it may be. The biggest change is not the assessment itself but in the format of assessment reporting.
- 19. Is there a fall back system in place for these students (coded students on IPPs for social anxiety?)** Not sure what you mean by fallback system. The change in reporting format and focus on personalized learning should assist all students with IPP’s, including helping students reduce in experiencing anxiety.
- 20. Will there be a system in place to track if students fall significantly in “marks’ from 2010/2011 to 2011/2012. Ie: an honor roll student who, with the new assessment system, is now getting “Satisfactory”? Will there be a way to catch these students**

**before they lose their motivation and potentially fall through the cracks?** As mentioned in the presentation, being on or off honors is not a very reliable way of determining a child's level in regards to the expected outcomes. In fact, history has shown that many of our students in the past that were on honors in junior high were no longer honor students in high school. Honors are an indirect recognition of academic achievement and not an official indicator of level of learning. There have been many professional discussions at Tom Baines in regards to number of students on honor roll that present satisfactory work levels. It has not yet been determined, but it is expected that honoring remarkable student achievement will continue. It is hoped that motivation is based on enjoyment of learning, improving and doing the best they can for it and rewarded according and not on placing importance on extrinsic award factors.

**21. How will this support different learning styles?** Students learn in many different methods, some are more visual, or more auditory, or supporting different learning styles with variety of strategies.

**22. How will assignments and tests be graded?** Same as now, with objective rubrics and criteria based on the expected learning outcomes of the program of studies. It will just be the reporting of assessment that will be different. **See response to comment 1.**

**23. Does it become the responsibility of the parent to review D2L and confer with teachers on any learning issues and achievements? Without a mark on tests and assignments how will we know where our child is at with learning?** Currently student marks in regards to various projects, assignments and tests are to be available for viewing on D2L. There should be no change in this practice. What should occur is an improved level of feedback for student improvement.

**24. I agree with this change and believe it will reduce stress both from the parent and child and to a degree the teacher. I know from my son that if the number doesn't match what we/he thinks the mark should be it causes upset. I think it is more important that they learn HOW to learn and apply the subject rather than the**

**number.** In essence we all want that. We want our children to have the best possible resources to be successful in their lives.

**25. I am totally agree to the new reporting format for the future. It really help we to understand how my children are doing in school, and what re they learning. Percentage doesn't help, we understand, only a comparison between the classmates.** Yes, that is the main premise of the change in reporting format.

**26. We grew up with traditional markings (ie a, b, c, f, etc) and it worked! Why change now? I believe this type of grading is just a psycho aspect of child/students way of grading. I think the student should be well aware that if s/he got 83% then its 83% and missed by one to get 84%! Stop the nonsense, re: you're satisfactory/proficient, lets stop watering the grade/marks and get back to basics!**

Missed one what? A rote answer? Memory? Again what does that 83% mean other 83 out of 100. Why did they get that one wrong, what concept(s) are they not understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating or creating that they missed by one?

The majority of us grew up with percentages or letter grades, including teachers.

However, that does not mean that this is the best method for what is required now and in the future for our children to be most successful when they complete school. There will be very limited success for those that just have excellent basic skills and knowledge. To be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, skilled workers, professionals, leaders and entrepreneurs will need to be able to understand, apply, analyze, evaluate and create.

What needs to be really understood is that this change in reporting format and structure around the 21<sup>st</sup> Century learner is not a local school initiative, nor is it a school board initiative, but an Alberta Education initiative. It is also a global initiative. It is recommended that you may wish to read some of the literature listed in the presentation as well as other articles provided on our web. The Mckinsey Report on Education reports on the transformations that school systems world-wide, including China are making to face the challenges of education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

27. **How do the PATs fit with this type of assessment/learning? When the focus of PATs is to assess how well a student “remembers” information?** A very good point that we are all aware of. There have been significant discussions with the Ministry and Alberta Education in regards to PAT's, whether to continue with them at the grade 3, 6 and 9 level. At this time the focus appears to be to diminish the importance of them and utilize the assessment in the classroom to determine a child's level of development, if funding is not available to produce and mark exams that will assess the learning the province is requiring. The main reason existing PAT's are written the way they are is due to the ease of marking. However, test producing skills and methods are improving to assess beyond remembering. Regardless of what is decided, until then there will be PAT's. There is an initial interpretation that moving from the rote classroom to the 21st century classroom will in effect hurt the PAT scores. That is furthest from the truth. Studies are showing that, in fact, scores will actually increase. In most grade 9 core subjects, only 20% of their year comes from the final PAT.
28. **We would like to know more about the learning approach changes associated with this new grading style. This new reporting format must be just part of a the grander picture of supporting 21<sup>st</sup> century learning?** That is 100% true. The learning approach will encompass many learning styles possessed by students. Various tasks, projects, lectures etc will be used to direct student through their learning. Movement towards personalized learning will assist in more regular feedback to students to provide a better plan of development in order to move towards higher level and creative thinking. Skills will always be a necessity, but the ability to apply them and analyze with them and problem solve with them is the movement for the 21st century learner.
29. **Personally I am concerned with the benchmark marking and how it translates into a numerical mark for university entrance. If the children are assessed on descriptive assessment and this ultimately is translated into a numerical mark by the high schools, there is a huge disconnect between how the child has been**



**assessed throughout middle and high school and ultimate mark (numerical) required for university entrance.** It is not Benchmark marking, but benchmark reporting. Numerical values may be involved in determining the student's benchmark- where they are at with their level of development and learning. This should provide a better understanding in what they need to do to improve. Now there is not one university in the world that looks at a student's middle school percentage mark. In fact they don't look at any marks other than the senior courses they are graduating high school with.

30. **The children will not reduce their desire to compete with each other. This is human nature. They will simply find another way to compete based on the new assessment so why change?** Competition is not a bad thing, as long as competition creates positive self-actualization, and acts in the form of positive motivation. For many students it is the exact opposite that occurs. What is being observed more often than not, in this day and age compared to the past, is that competition amongst each other is actually lowering the bar or standard to the lowest common denominator and not increasing it. Therefore maximum development of all students seems to be minimized. However, competition within ourselves to strive to improve and overcome personal challenges is most highly regarded. It provides the greatest amount of self-actualization and leads to true self-esteem and confidence that will assist in the future success of the student in academia and life.

31. **I also do not believe that this reduces stress levels based on numerical marking - university marking is numerical- this is what we should be preparing our children for -all professional entrance requirements are numerical (medical school, law school, dentistry) - why would we not prepared the children for this ultimate end goal?** I would like you to read the following article please...

<http://www.universityaffairs.ca/has-ontario-taught-its-high-school-students-not-to-think.aspx>

The move is to better prepare the students to be able to think. That is what Universities are looking for in their students. Benchmark reporting will assist students in determining what areas to better improve in or what that mark actually means to them. You will also

find that University entrance requirements go beyond just marks as well. Although University is an ultimate goal for many of us and we focus our education system including the new direction towards this goal, for those of our students that want to go to University we want them to have that opportunity, but more importantly to really succeed in University and life. Again this is a mandate coming from various levels including Alberta Education who are working with Universities in determining what is required.

32. **How will a teacher having 36 children in the classroom do a quality job of assessing 36 children based benchmarking – how does a teacher teaching how many # of classes keep track of all of this?** See response to question 1. Well it is no different now. It is not benchmark assessing but benchmark reporting. Some assessment will involve numerical totals that are transferred into benchmark reporting. The only way rubrics are changing is that it will ensure it is related back to the programs of study and work with the hierarchy of level of thinking, otherwise assessment is the same. The reporting of the assessment is the big difference. Which will provide better feedback to what is being assessed. The fact there are 36 in the classroom is a political issue and a non-educational issue.
33. **Would have appreciated more representation from parents – only a handful are here at the session – parents should have been given details in the e-mail and then given the ability to vote on the proposal – seems that this was not the desire of administration to really get parents feedback.** We too would have liked to have seen more parents out as well. There was significant communication going out about the proposed changes, in the newsletter plus emails. The essence of the presentation was to present to you the direction we are required to move. People need to understand that this is not a Tom Baines initiative but a school board wide, province wide and global movement. This is going to happen whether we like it or not.

34. **The form of reporting is too teacher depend. In a class of 32-35 students, the probability of the teacher providing accurate, subjective assessment is very low.**

How do you think things are assessed now? We will be using the same if not better objective rubrics for assessment. In fact assessment will become even more objective towards the Programs of Study including validity and reliability. See response to question

35. **Parameters such as consistently, frequently, most, wide variety- are too vague and subjective. They offer little to no guidance to the student nor parent.**

What are kind of information are numerical marks providing you? Each department and individual teacher will be required to tweak the reporting format to give precise feedback in regards to achievement for each subject area and level.

36. **Parents whose first language is NOT English will be at a loss with this kind of reporting.**

Parents are more than welcome to make arrangements and speak with teachers regarding student's progress at any time. Tools such as Google Translate may help with written correspondence between teachers and parents, such as blogs, email, and newsletters; in the case of any face to face time, CBE translators are available to help facilitate communication provided ample time [at least more than 48 hours] is given to the school to request a translator.

37. **At Jr. High level, kids to not want their parent to be involved. This new system is not in favor of that.**

That is far from the truth. In essence most pre-adolescents want their parents to take an interest in what they are doing. It shows that they are cared for. However, for some it is fear of reprisals in how situations are being handled at home. It is also the time of their growth and development that they are pushing for independence and this is one way to do it. This system just provides a better reporting format on your child's progress. What parents choose to do with or what type of involvement they wish to have with their child is up to them.

38. **What about the alignments with the high school and university systems?** Its still back to marks? Those are starting to change as well. The direction is not a Tom Baines School initiative but also a school board and province wide initiative. Other Jr. High schools are also taking on initiatives such as this and our Sr. Highs are prepared for this transition.
39. **The use of marks may be a stress for some but a motivation for others. The use of vague descriptors will de-motivate students who are consistently high achievers.** How did that work in elementary for them? See response to question 6 and other stress related questions. How did that work in elementary for them?
40. **Meet halfway, have a balance between marks and descriptors. There is not need for complete elimination of marks.** Marks are not completely eliminated. We will just not be providing the Progress (Report) cards based on marks, we are still reporting on student progress and learning. You may still find on-line marks showing a number. Each department and even each teacher may have a specific breakdown of marks in how the Summative Benchmark was derived from.
41. **We hope that with increased class sizes, there will be opportunities for teacher to continuously assess the students learning process.** Class size is a political issue. This has nothing to do with the change in assessment reporting. Regardless of class size, the same authentic, reliable, valid and objective assessment will occur. Only the Summative reporting format is changed
42. **We are generally very much in favor of more student involvement and helping them to become independent thinkers**
43. **Are students allow to bring their own computer to school in ah day (so they can do their research in lessons).** Yes, during the 2010 and 2011 school year, we put forth a provision for use of personal computers, ipad...etc. Letters went home during the school

year explaining policy and expectation of personal computer use as well as we now include the policies in the 2011/2012 agenda.

44. **School computer system can it be updated to meet students demand? ( more research on their own and need more updated programs) I suggest to extend the library hours so students can make full use of computer to do research by themselves.** Currently the Learning Commons (Library) is available morning, noon and afterschool. Also the aspect in change of direction is not meant to be an increase in workload/homework for the students outside of the classroom. However, some students may need to make better use of their classroom time.
45. **Where is the time going to come from for teachers to write more on the report card and more reporting on the END Statements? This is more time consuming for the teachers. Parents and students will still translate the terms into numbers – still causing stress about why a “P” instead of an “E”?** It is our job to be adequately report on student progress and achievement in relation to Program of Study. End statement is a board only initiative that requires reporting as well. It is more than likely that some students and parents will find a way to convert a descriptor into number. If they want to focus on the product as opposed to the process improvement is expected to be limited.
46. **What will D2L reporting look like? Will all teachers be required to keep this program updated and current?** Yes, that should be happening now. Please talk to the teacher in regards to not being able to see marks on-line in a timely fashion. If your concerns are not met, please do not hesitate to contact school administration.
47. **Perhaps this may work for Humanities but not for Math and Science (Black and White)? The student may not “know” what their actual mark is and perhaps not work to achieve more.** Please read response to question 2.
48. **In University the mark system is used so how would a student know where they stand and adjust to that reality of rank and competitions?** They don't. And that is

common concern of true educators at the Universities. These concerns are being widely discussed within their faculties and they are working with Alberta learning to help offset what students require to be successful at the University level.

49. **How will the progress levels be measured except those descriptors? The judgments of descriptive words like “consistently”, “frequently”, “wide”, “acceptable”, etc are still need to be assessed based on the result of assignments, tests, exams, demonstration and projects, aren’t they? If yes, can I translate the progress levels as numbers, like exemplary is 95%-100%, or A, proficient is 85%-94%, or A- etc?** Yes, the levels will be a result of a pre-determined scale. Each scale may be different for each department and maybe even each teacher. Most departments will be putting together their own model that will be based entirely by what you are saying and the generic wording used in overall reporting will be replaced with specific wording by the departments and individual teachers. Some teachers will have these scales available for parents as part of course outlines and such.
50. **The current awards system, like honors of roll and honors of distinguish is based on the marks. Is this going to be changed accordingly? Or it will no longer exist anymore.** See response to question 11.
51. **There is no perfect system. More children are getting addictions to TV, games, computers nowadays. For those children born to be genius, very smart and enjoying in studying, they won’t get any affected whatever the system is. For lots of others, mark or grade is one of the motivations for them to study harder since at least they don’t want to look too bad. If no numerical feedback received, they would feel very relax in the middle school, and then they may feel much pressure fitting in to a high school, or university.** There are many perspectives theories and studies to this please read response to other Motivation questions especially questions 3, 6, 30 & 31.