

REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON REPORT CARDS

The CBE has moved to the creation and implementation of a uniform, consistent report card for grades K-9, which is currently in its third year of implementation. Notwithstanding the purported uniformity of these report cards and the stated intention of reducing teacher workload, the topic of report cards and the associated workload, continues to be a concern for teachers.

This topic is one that is frequently raised by teachers at the Council of School Representatives (CSR) meetings and also has been the subject of more than two-dozen phone calls to the local office from teachers who have expressed their frustration with the new report cards. Frequent comments about the lack of consistency despite assertions from the CBE that there is now great consistency across the system dispute those claims. The issue that is often brought forward surrounds not only the length but also the style of writing comments on student report cards. This has in turn lead to perceptions from teachers that this new report card format has not reduced their workload but rather has increased workload at a time when according to the framework settlement should be resulting in reduced workload.

Additionally, concerns have been raised by teachers about the nature and number of “stems” that teachers are expected to complete in filling out report cards for each student. Many teachers expressed concerns that these stems are too complex and subjective for teachers to be able to justify the mark provided for each student.

Due to the consistent concerns expressed by teachers about the new report card, at the December 2 meeting of Executive, a motion was passed creating an Ad Hoc Committee to review the report card.

The motion authorizing the creation of the committee and providing its mandate was:

“That Executive Committee authorizes the creation of an Ad-Hoc Committee on Reporting, Comprised of the President, two members of Executive and four members-at-large, for the purposes of:

- 1) refining the common report card template,*
- 2) clarifying Local 38 teachers’ values on
 - a) report card comment volume,*
 - b) reporting frequency, and*
 - c) parent-teacher conference frequency, and clarifying all supporting documents**
- 3) to report to Executive on or before May 25, 2016,*
- 4) to report to CSR on or before June 1, 2016 and*
- 5) that the final report be presented to the Chief Superintendent before the end of the current school year.”*

Part of the rationale for the timelines expressed in the motion to create the committee was that if the CBE accepts some or all of the recommendations of this report then they would need to have the report prior to the end of this school year in order to be able to implement changes for the 2016/17 school year.

With the passage of the above motion, the two members of executive who were selected to be on this committee in addition to the president were:

Linda Lalonde, (Glamorgan)
Donnella Perkins, (Elboya)

Following that selection a notice was sent to the membership indicating that this ad hoc committee had been struck and the Local was seeking volunteers to meet and serve on this committee. There was considerable interest in serving on this committee and the four members at large selected for this committee were:

Valerie Brewis, (MacKenzie Lake)
Michelle Ryskamp (Valley Creek)
Rudy Stein (Sir John Franklin)
Nicole Sundset, (Collingwood).

An organizational meeting of the ad hoc committee was held on February 1, 2016. At that meeting there was an overview of the role and mandate of the committee resulting from the motion of executive, which has been reported above. In addition, the following documents were distributed to the committee members:

- 1) CBE K-9 Indicator Scale
- 2) Indicator Scale: Expanded Reading 2014-15
- 3) CBE Companion Guide to the CBE Visions for Assessment and Reporting
- 4) Update Assessment and Reporting 2015-16 Kindergarten to Grade 12
- 5) CBE Vision for Assessment and Reporting: Guiding Principles (August 2015)
- 6) CBE Criteria for Report Card Comments, Comment Examples and Guiding Questions for Collaborative Analysis (Undated)
- 7) Report Card Courses and Report Card Outcomes K-9 (2015 - 2016)

With this information in hand and the guidance provided through the mandate created by the Executive Committee, the Ad Hoc Committee on Report Cards began their work. In addition to the organizational meeting on February 1, 2016, additional meetings were held on February 22, March 10, April 18 (which was an afternoon long meeting), May 2 (which was an all-day long meeting) and May 16, 2016.

The findings and recommendations of the committee are attached in the appendices at the end of this report.

The committee began their work with an analysis of the current report cards. Although concerns have been expressed regarding this report card they did agree that there have been a number of improvements that have resulted.

Positive Features

- a) Alignment of IPP dates with report card reporting
- b) A city wide report card
- c) Two report cards
- d) 1-4 indicator scale has enabled to teachers to assess students holistically and not as a number
- e) More freedom to give a “1” to show students need support
- f) Supporting documents provide some clarification
- g) Results indicators for both report cards
- h) Option to embed Results comments
- i) Exemplars provided for comments are diverse
- j) Flexibility of timing when report cards go out
- k) Stems focus on the outcomes of the Program of Studies
- l) Changes in the report card resulted in school based professional development and good discussion
- m) Flexibility of using sentences or bullets for comments
- n) Move towards using IRIS is a positive change when writing IPPs
- o) Addressing length of comments in the Guiding Principle of Assessment: Criteria For Report Card Comments
- p) No interim reports
- q) Student voice

There were however many reasons why this committee was created and those concerns are included in the items on the following list.

Areas for Further Consideration

- a) At some school sites workload has not decreased as reporting requirements are spread out with continual communication, which also requires documentation
- b) Students in K, 1-3 and 4-9 are very different developmentally and the stems need to reflect this diversity
- c) 1-4 indicators have created difficulty for some junior high teachers who are used to percentage grades
- d) Reporting materials have not been disseminated to all teachers. In addition, they can be difficult to locate in CBE Insite
- e) Report card exemplars are incredibly diverse and almost overwhelming
- f) Inconsistent timeline on review process –
 - i. Teachers should not be mandated to edit others work
 - ii. Teachers’ professional judgment needs to be respected
- g) Need to develop clarity and consistency with administrators’ expectations about report card comments across the system
- h) Time to complete report cards is still intense
- i) At some elementary schools, comments are expected in all subject areas while they are not at others
- j) Some outcome stems are too subjective, include multiple areas of learning and are difficult to assess
- k) Simplify the language so teachers, students and parents have a better understanding of what is being assessed

Underlying constructs as the committee reviewed the report card stems

Before the committee began their work they had a discussion about how they would approach the work. Their purpose in doing so was stimulated by the initial philosophy behind the development of a system wide K-9 report card.

Each of the committee members, with the exception of the chair, has used the new report card at their respective grade level and had expressed frustrations with the new format. In turn, each had in their own way expressed the idea of "I would have written them differently."

As the committee began its work they created a set of filters, which resulted in a consistent process that was applied to that work. Before they began their work, this ad hoc committee wanted to make it clear that they wished to honour the work of the original report card development group as there had clearly been considerable effort in the creation of the documents we were going to review.

Given the guiding principles, the committee developed the following filters:

- Removing duplications and redundancies in the stems/ outcomes
- Simplifying the language so teachers, students and parents have a better understanding of what is being assessed
- Maintaining consistencies between the subject areas eg. Languages, Social Studies, Science, and Math
- Providing clear assessment data for each stem by removing outcomes that could not be clearly assessed eg. develops, explores, analyzes
- Focusing on objectivity rather than subjectivity

The committee feels that with the implementation of their proposed changes three positive changes would result:

Win 1 - Teachers will feel they are on a solid ground

Win 2 - Parents will have a better understanding of their child's progress in learning

Win 3 - Students will have a better understanding of how they are being evaluated

With those filters in mind the committee proposes the following changes.

Key to the proposed changes:

Black - original stem

Green - proposed changes

Blue - reasoning behind the proposed change

Please refer to **Appendix A**

If these changes were accepted in their entirety, the revised report card would appear in **Appendix B**.

Further, as the committee discussed the stems, the conversation shifted to the indicators that are applied to each of the stems. Much of the conversation revolved once again around the concern that there is not a consistent understanding of the distinctions between each of the four indicators. Upon reviewing the supporting documentation there remained some ambiguity regarding the distinctions. With a desire to resolve such ambiguity the committee proposes some minor modifications to the Indicator Scale: Expanded Reading 2014-2015 document that they felt would provide clarity and assistance for teacher, students and parents.

These proposed changes are presented in **Appendix C**

Finally, in reviewing all of the proposed changes, the committee turned their attention to the *CBE Companion Guide to the CBE Vision for Assessment and Reporting: Requirements for K to 12, November 2015*

Based on feedback that the committee has received from other members there continues to be a perception that the purported goal of system wide consistency for reporting and assessing has yet to be achieved. Given that there appears to be continuing disparity between schools, the committee proposed a number of changes to this document that they felt would further that goal.

The areas highlighted in yellow are areas that the committee felt should be emphasized. The proposed changes and the rationales or explanations for the proposed changes follow in green type.

Please Refer to **Appendix D**

In conclusion, the ad hoc committee offers these proposed changes on reporting following two years of use in the field. Teachers continue to report considerable stress associated with the report card and the committee feels that with a reduction in ambiguity and improved clarity on the expectations of teachers this stress could be significantly reduced. In addition, with further clarity on the methods and outcomes of reporting, students and parents would both have a clearer understanding of the students' strengths and the areas that need further improvement.

The goal and mandate of the committee was not to complain about the report card but rather to offer constructive suggestions for improvement. Thus, it is with a spirit of cooperation and collaboration that this report is provided, with the hope that it will lead to a win for teachers, students, parents and the CBE.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Local 38 Report Card Ad Hoc Committee,
Frank Bruseker
President ATA Local 38