ROCKY VIEW SCHOOLS

Instruction and Assessment
## Practice Guide

July, 2023

Table of Contents

Introduction

Rocky View Schools (RVS) develops practice guides to inform and invite teachers and parents into how teaching and learning happen within RVS. The Inclusive Education Practice Guide and the Professional Learning Practice Guide provide guidance to teachers in those two specific areas. The Instruction and Assessment Practice Guide sets the criteria for instruction and assessment practices that are expected of RVS teachers. In using the practices within this guide, as well as those within the Inclusive Education Practice Guide and the Professional Learning Guide, RVS can make progress toward the goals of the Education Plan. Through this interwoven work, teachers in RVS ensure that students from pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 have the greatest opportunity for success. All educators within RVS are expected to implement the practices within this guide and the other guides developed within RVS.
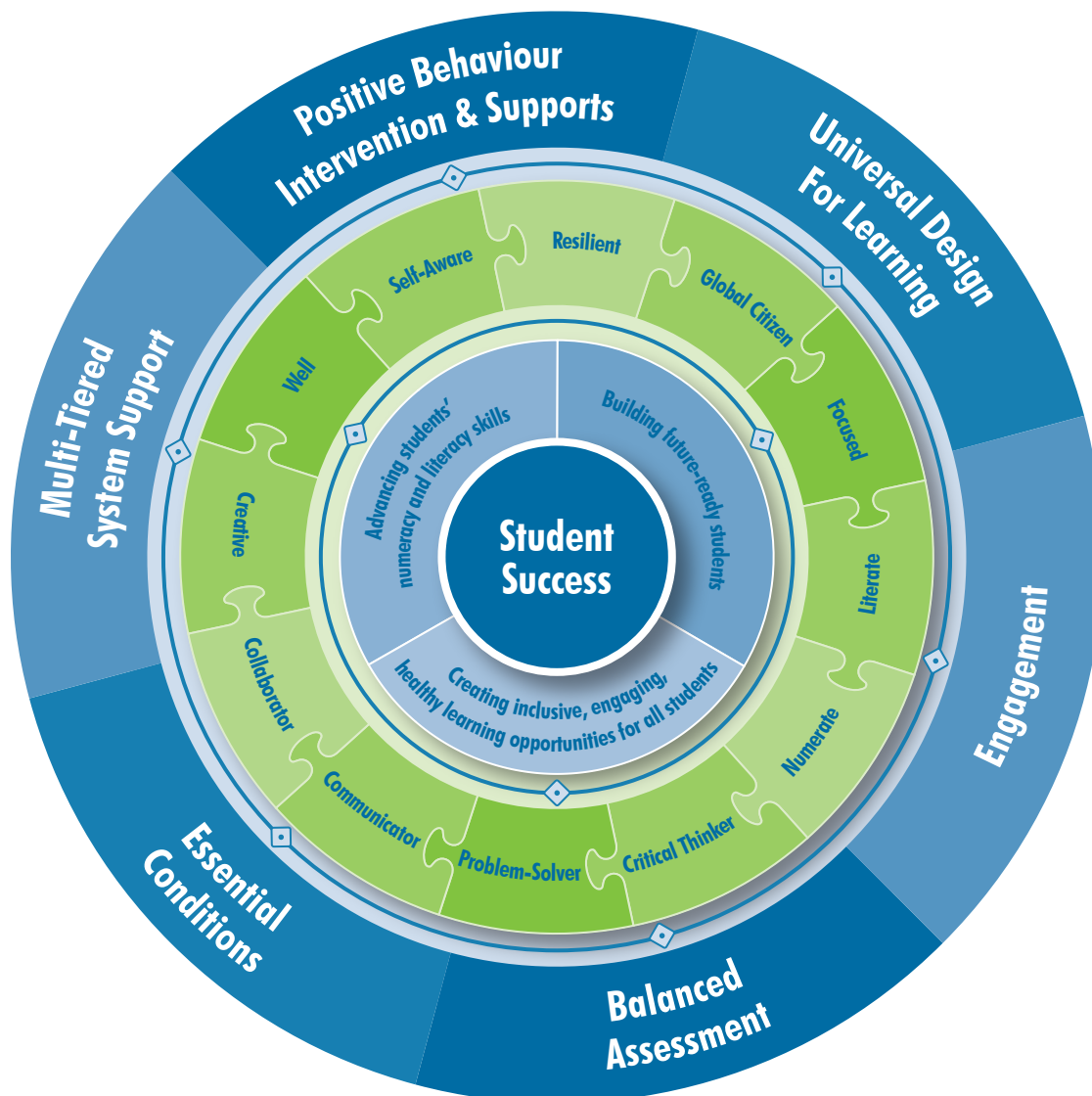
In line with the Education Plan in RVS, students remain at the centre of our work and how instruction and assessment are delivered, promote student agency, and empower students to be innovators as they connect, achieve and navigate.
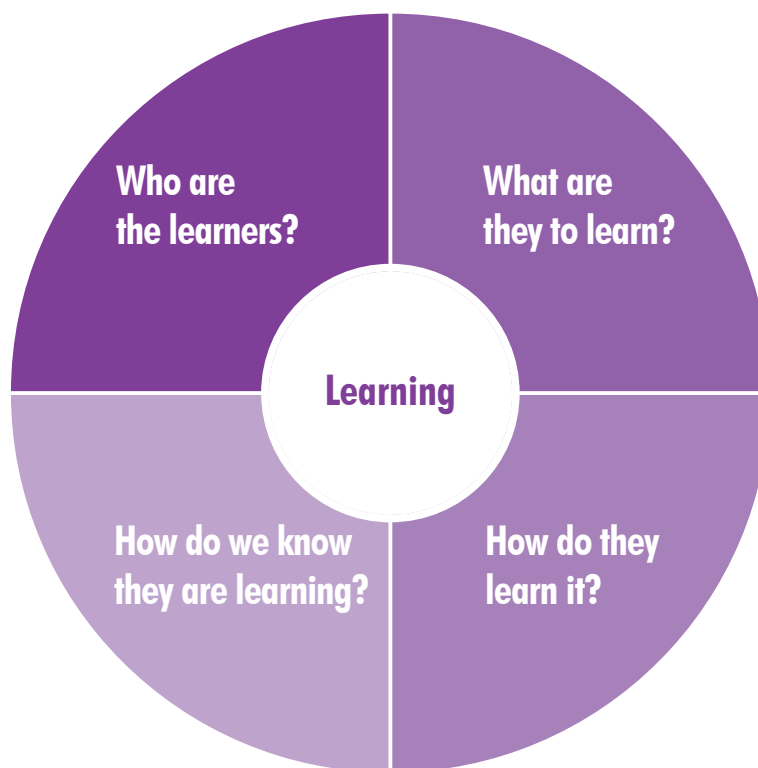
Relationships

Teaching and learning is centered around the student. It is the responsibility of staff to build relationships with each student to understand them as learners, including knowing and understanding their interests, skills and abilities. Each student is to be treated as a unique individual. The Leadership Quality Standard (LQS), the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS), and the Support Staff Quality Standard (SSQS) all highlight the importance of relationships.

Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Implementing Indigenous Ways of Knowing provides all learners, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, access to high quality learning. Decolonizing and Indigenizing methodologies support all student learning and create safety in the learning environment. Educators are responsible to apply Foundational Knowledge of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit into their instructional design to support the learning experience of all students. The Leadership Quality Standard (LQS) and the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) both highlight the importance of implementing Indigenous Ways of Knowing.

Learning

This document is broken into four parts capturing the big ideas to support and guide student learning.

Learning

- Who are the learners?
- What are they to learn?
- How do we know they are learning?
- How do they learn it?

Growth Mindset

To move learning forward, students and staff take risks, persevere when things are difficult, and understand that mistakes are a part of the learning process. "In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work – brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment." (Dweck, 2015)

Who are the learners?

We are **ALL** learners. We accept responsibility for the education of our community by embracing diversity and differences and promoting equal academic and social learning opportunities for all. With a focus on diversity and differences, we ensure that students with **ALL** levels of need are fully engaged in our classrooms. Indigenous students are part of our communities and Indigenous Ways of Knowing are implemented in instructional design.

To know and understand our students, class reviews are completed to support planning for instruction. Foundational strategies for inclusion are found in the Inclusive Education Practice Guide and are used by staff.

We believe: (adapted from Inclusive Education Practice Guide)

- All students can and want to learn
- All students must feel accepted, valued and physically and emotionally safe to take the risks necessary for growth
- Students may come to school with exceptional academic and social/emotional needs, which must be addressed before meaningful learning can occur

Foundational documents for knowing your learners:

- RVS' 2023-2027 Education Plan
- Inclusive Education Practice Guide
- English Language Learners Practice Guide
- Leadership Quality Standard (LQS), Teaching Quality Standard (TQS), Support Staff Quality Standard (SSQS)
- Professional Learning Practice Guide

What are they to learn?

The outcomes provided by Alberta government within the program of studies direct what students are expected to know, understand and do. Teachers plan instruction and assessment based around the outcomes in the program of studies, and they do this with the skills and needs of their students in mind. Teachers offer a variety of ways that students can demonstrate their understanding of the outcomes and provide multiple assessment opportunities.

Teachers also provide instruction and assessment in the eight competencies related to knowledge, skills and attitudes developed for successful learning. The competencies apply across contexts and subject areas and assist students in meeting challenges and problem solving while building skills to create and innovate in all aspects of their lives. Teachers incorporate the eight competencies into their instruction and assessment plans — they're not instructed separately — and then report on student progress in the competencies in a similar manner as they report on student progress in the outcomes of the program of studies.

When teachers provide instruction and assessment based on the outcomes in the program of studies and the eight competencies, RVS takes steps closer to achieving the goals of the education plan.

Foundational documents for knowing what must be learned:

• Alberta Education Programs of Study

• Alberta Education Student Competencies

• RVS' 2023-2027 Education Plan

• Inclusive Education Practice Guide

• English Language Learners Practice Guide

• Leadership Quality Standard (LQS), Teaching Quality Standard (TQS), Support Staff Quality Standard (SSQS)

• Professional Learning Practice Guide

Learning

How do they learn it?

Designing Learning

Students learn through purposeful instructional design.

Keys to designing learning opportunities:

- engage students as co-designers of their learning, empowering them to follow their passions and challenging them to new heights;
- move beyond classroom walls;
- Indigenous Ways of Knowing are employed throughout each stage of instructional design planning and implementation;
- use of Indigenous methodologies is visible and explicitly communicated;
- student shares what they learn, so when one learns, we all learn;
- meet students where they are and support them in the journey to where they need to go and want to be;
- include the application of universal strategies; and,
- support and encourage teachers, administrators and support staff to be innovators themselves.

Designing learning also takes into consideration, but is not limited to, the following fundamental pieces, many of which are consistent with Indigenous methodologies:

Universal Design for Learning (UDL): Intentionally planning learning around the student, taking into consideration where each is on their learning journey, is critical for success. For details about UDL, visit UDL Guidelines.

Cross-curricular connections: Learning does not happen in a silo. The more connected subject matters are, the more students can make sense of their learning. Teachers in all disciplines can support students by making cross-curricular connections.

Circular Learning: Learning is an iterative process that occurs in a circular manner rather than a linear fashion. Learning should come back to what has been taught/learned. Working with, reflecting on and returning to learning outcomes helps students make connections to the purpose of learning and reminds them that everything is connected.

Authentic tasks: Connecting learning to real life experiences makes learning meaningful. Using authentic, hands-on experiences supports the transfer of learning so students can take what they have learned and apply it to solve a real-world problem. Authentic tasks create a bridge between what is learned in the classroom and why this knowledge is important to the world outside of the classroom.

Technology: Technology is used to ensure learning is accessible for all students. It is also used to increase engagement and support planning and assessment for/of/as learning.

Digital resources: A variety of tools are used to support students where they are and engage them in their learning to empower them to grow in their knowledge and skills.

Physical spaces: Space is often referred to as the third teacher. Classroom set up can help make a room more inviting and conducive for learning. Space does not need to be limited to the four walls of a classroom and can be extended beyond the building.

Physical resources: This includes learning tools that are accessible to all students. This could include and is not limited to: math manipulatives, books, calculators, white boards, noise cancelling headphones, etc.

Supporting Student Learning

Supporting student learning happens through a team approach. The team is comprised of classroom teachers, administrators, learning support teacher(s) and often support staff, using a collaborative support model.

Staff will use the Inclusive Education Practice Guide to ensure student needs are met.

Foundational documents for designing learning:

- Inclusive Education Practice Guide
- Administrative Procedure 360 – Assessment and Communication of Student Learning
- English Language Learners Practice Guide
- Our Words Our Ways: teaching First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learners
- Leadership Quality Standard (LQS), Teaching Quality Standard (TQS), Support Staff Quality Standard (SSQS)

Learning

How do we know they are learning?

Assessment

Teachers understand the primary goal of assessment and communication of student learning is to inform teaching, to promote student learning and to keep parents/guardians informed on their child's learning. Assessment is to be ongoing, meaningful, consistent, and accurate for all students, embracing multiple forms of assessment as significant processes for student success. Regular feedback to students and parents is expected. Further requirements are outlined in Administrative Procedure 360 – Assessment and Communication of Student Learning.

A comprehensive assessment program provides relevant information about a learner. This information facilitates understanding of what the student knows, how the student makes sense of that learning, and accurately measures the achievement of desired outcomes. The assessment cycle: assessment for learning, assessment as learning, and assessment of learning offers information to guide future programming and instructional differentiation. Assessment has the greatest impact when it is integrated into all learning activities and is aligned with the programs of study.

Real-Time Reporting

Goal-Setting

Triad Conferences

Portfolios

Teachers will use a variety of strategies and tools for assessment, including Indigenized assessment methods to give students a range of opportunities and a variety of ways to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and attitudes pertaining to expected outcomes. Teachers will balance gathering of evidence by triangulating their data using a blend of conversation, observation and product to assess learning.

Grades are always based on an individual's performance rather than group achievement grades. Learning tasks such as homework/practice activities are used as a source of formative assessment and are not factored into a student's achievement grade.

RVS has a comprehensive strategy to communicate student learning (CoSL) at Kindergarten to Grade 9. It is comprised of four pieces (goal-setting, triad conferences, portfolios, real-time reporting) that work in concert to report the learning journey.

Kindergarten to Grade 12 students use myBlueprint, an online portfolio, to make their learning visible and reflect on their learning process/progress.

When data indicates student learning is not moving forward, teachers engage in the collaborative problem solving process , communicate and engage parents, alter instruction, provide multiple ways for the student to demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes.

Teachers triangulate data from a variety of sources (observations, conversations, products) to determine grades. Data is collected, analyzed, reported, and used to guide instruction to support learning for all learners.

Foundational documents for assessment:

- K-12 Literacy & Numeracy Framework
- Inclusive Education Practice Guide
- English Language Learners Practice Guide
- Administrative Procedure 360 – Assessment and Communication of Student Learning
- Leadership Quality Standard (LQS), Teaching Quality Standard (TQS), Support Staff Quality Standard (SSQS)
- K9 Real-Time Reporting Teacher Practice Guide
- High School Real-Time Reporting (Outcomes-Based Assessment) Teacher Practice Guide