

Comments from the members of the Executive Committee of the British Columbia Association of Teachers of Modern Languages (BCATML) regarding the draft K-12 Student Reporting Oder:

The BCATML’s concerns include:

* Lack of clarity surrounding reporting expectations;
* Lack of supports for teachers to implement the new Reporting Order;
* Lack of guidance from the Ministry to ensure consistent approaches across the province in implementing the new Reporting Order;
* Significant increase in teacher workload to meet the new reporting requirements without in-service and training; and
* Inability for MyEd BC to accommodate the new reporting order;

**General issues and concerns**:

* The use of percentages and letter grades does not align with the proficiency-scale used in the younger grades. Having two separate assessment systems also creates challenges and issues for teachers who teach multiple grade levels, as is often the case with secondary world language teachers. It is very probable that teachers will have to use letter grades for Grade 9 courses, but then switch to percentages for their Grade 10-12 classes. This is further compounded in rural areas where combined grade level classes are taught by the same teacher.
* There needs to be greater clarity about what is required to be reported five times a year. Do all subject areas need to be reported in each report?
* The need to provide reports within the first 25% of the instructional time does not mean the same time depending on the delivery model for the course. For instance, linear classes meet every other day, whereas semestered classes meet each day for 5 months of the year. How will teachers be able to report on the learning when some classes have had more instructional time in the calendar year than others?
* There continues to be significant concern regarding the wording attached to the four-point proficiency scale. Educators have said that many parents do not always understand what the levels really mean and that the interpretation of the proficiency terms can vary greatly between teachers, schools, and districts. Converting percentages and letter grades is not an exact science either. For example, a 10/10 on a vocabulary quiz does not necessarily equate that the student is “**extending”** his/her knowledge of vocabulary. There is a wide concern that converting traditional scores to a limited four-point scale will not translate accurately the true ability of students.
* There is widespread disagreement about the term “emerging” to describe students’ abilities. It is possible to apply the term “emerging” to students who are just beginning to develop a skill relating to one of the curricular competencies, but who have not yet minimally met expectations (eg: at a passing level). The term emerging is often used to describe students who traditionally scored a letter grade of C- for a particular task or competency. In the case of language acquisition, many students often find themselves at the emerging level when developing a brand-new language structure, and may take considerable time before they are able to consistently demonstrate the competency at the developing level. The four-point scale can be quite confusing to parents, students and teachers as the terms can be applied too broadly on a variety of competencies; thus, making their interpretation more difficult and less meaningful.
* The length of report cards will dramatically increase with the new reporting order. Many districts report using a KDU-styled report card commenting on the big ideas, students’ abilities relating to the curricular competencies in a subject area, and providing recommendations for next steps and areas of focus. The new Reporting Order will undoubtedly lengthen written report cards which can become too convoluted for students and parents to properly digest and comprehend. Secondary teachers with 120 to 160 students (or more) will face a dramatic and daunting increase in workload making the writing of report cards untenable and unmanageable especially when teaching a full load of classes in a given semester.
* It is unclear how the student-generated content will be collected and added to the student reports. Will teachers be required to collect, track, and comment on the student self-assessments and goal setting? Where will they be stored and how will they be maintained?
* Many Language teachers already use a proficiency scale called the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to assess students in the areas of spoken and written production, reading and listening comprehension. The CEFR is used internationally in many jurisdictions (including other Canadian provinces) and is consistently used to more accurately describe students’ abilities in the four areas of communication (speaking, reading, writing, and listening). The Ministry refused to incorporate the CEFR with the resources for the Languages curricula despite numerous calls made by B.C.’s Language teachers and several Language associations. The CEFR does not easily lend itself to the proposed four-point proficiency scale. The Ministry promised the Languages curricula writing teams seven years ago that it would develop a CEFR companion document for teachers to use when assessing students. After years of requests, the Ministry has not yet begun this important and much needed work.

**Concerns regarding implementation**:

* It does not seem appropriate to implement a significant change to the Reporting Order while students and teachers are still adapting and adjusting to in-class and hybrid learning models. It would make more sense and reduce stress and anxiety to implement a new reporting order when the education system re-stabilizes itself after the current pandemic subsides.
* The Reporting Order will mean a significant paradigm shift in assessment for teachers, students and parents. How will this shift occur and be sustained? All three stakeholder groups will need appropriate time, instruction, and understanding to ensure that the transition is done smoothly.
* As reported earlier, many Language teachers use the CEFR to assess students’ abilities in language acquisition, but the CEFR proficiency scale does not readily align to the four-point proficiency scale and may cause integration issues for many teachers and students.
* Middle School Second Language students receive instruction in some cases a maximum of two times per week. Reporting five times in a year would not allow time to accurately and meaningfully assess students in the first section of the school year. This is not enough time to gather evidence of learning that will inform students of their progress.
* During the reporting pilot, many districts had different interpretations of how to implement the pilot. As a result, this led to an increase in the duplication of work including significant variations in reporting across the province.

**Recommendations**:

* That the implementation of the new K-12 Reporting Order be delayed until it better reflects the feedback and insight provided by stakeholder groups and that it is ready for proper implementation with all the required supports in place. This would ideally occur after the pandemic has subsided in order to allow both teachers and students the ability to better implement and apply the Reporting Order as intended.
* That the Ministry create and curate exemplars and templates for both teachers and students to use in order to more accurately represent and understand the current four-point proficiency scale as it pertains to acquisition of an additional language. These templates should demonstrate how they translate speaking/writing/listening/reading skills in order to help parents/caregivers understand better how their children are doing in a particular grade level.
* That the Ministry release these exemplars and templates to the field well in advance of the implementation of the new Reporting Order so students and teachers are better equipped and prepared.
* That the Ministry create a language proficiency assessment portfolio for each grade level (and each skill assessed) that teachers can use and adapt to their own needs. This would lessen both the teachers’ workload and provide clarity for parents as well as students. This would further help students assess themselves better and create clearer goals for themselves.
* That the Ministry create templates to demonstrate how to translate proficiency scales into letter grades / percentage marks and vice versa.
* That the Ministry provide in-service release time for teachers to implement the new reporting order.