

6/10/2011 e-mail

Please distribute to all Members as soon as possible

Dear members,

## RE: Early Letters of Concern/Reports, Assessment, Annual Learning Plans Issues

We have had several queries regarding **Early Letters of Concern, Assessment** and the Reporting of **Marks**. This issue of assessment and evaluation has been raising more questions in the last few years. These issues are often considered to be issues with Webmarks but they are in fact an issue that is separate from Webmarks. We hope that we can help clarify this issue. As always we encourage local advocacy that is professional yet persistent. TSU is available for further questions or support. Please pass this on to your staff.

### Early Letters of Concern

The only 'reporting' that is mandated is the mid semester mark and final mark at the end of a semester. A teacher should not feel pressured by local administration to add "reporting" periods. This is an increase in workload at a time when the demands on a teacher's time and energy are already onerous. A teacher is responsible for communicating with parents. If local administrators offer to support the parental communication through early letters of concern this is appreciated but, there should not be an expectation that these letters are mandatory or that assessment or a grade mark must be included. As well, a letter of concern should only be considered necessary for students who are having difficulties; however, a teacher may also choose other means of communication. We appreciate when teachers are supported with options in exercising their professional discretion around assessment and communications but if such options are made mandatory ask for that direction in writing and notify TSU immediately.

### Assessment

As stated in the Ministry's "Growing Success" Assessment and Evaluation policy, assessment is also based on the **professional judgment** of teachers. This provincial policy mandates the use of four categories of knowledge and skills (KTCA) and members have many ways to include this in their formative or summative evaluation. As always teachers must be able to provide marks upon request and within a reasonable time. If administration asks to see a copy of your marks, please ask for this request in writing and forward it to the TSU office.

### WebMarks

As TSU has stated earlier, we are in agreement with the Board: the teacher is responsible for making sure she/he records the marks according to the Ministry's "Growing Success" assessment and evaluation policy in effect. The teacher is expected to use Webmarks for formal reporting at report card time.

### ALP / TPA (Annual Learning Plan/Teacher Performance Appraisal)

The ALP and TPA has also been the subject of a number of calls. ALP driven professional development under the Collective Agreement reflects a respect for the role of the teacher in determining professional learning. The ALP can be "**informed by**" but NOT "directed by" the board policy, administration, professional colleagues or other factors.

The TPA is also teacher authored and directed. It belongs to the teacher. In both the case of the ALP and TPA, the principal's signature acknowledges completion of the TPA but does not represent "approval". We caution teachers to avoid overbuilding the plan. In other words, keep it simple. One goal per school year is fine if in your professional judgment it fits your growth needs and plan. ALPs are living documents and as such, there are no deadlines for submission although they do need to be renewed in each year and may be revised at any point in the school year. ALPs also inform your administrator of your professional growth plans and this is another form of consultation for future staffing assignments.

If you are advised you are being added to the TPA out of cycle, notify TSU immediately.

### Respectful Workplace

Remember TSU members have a right to consultation on **all** workload issues and new initiatives. We are also concerned that some members have expressed feeling harassed on issues related to those mentioned in this memo. Principals' may provide direction but they must respect the professional autonomy and sense of collaborative community in their relations with teachers. The common goal is to build respectful relations. If you feel harassed, it is usually best to speak with the person directly or you may contact your staff rep or TSU for support. Most cases can be resolved locally.

TSU wants to ensure that respect for teachers' professionalism and right to work in a respectful workplace are practiced in a meaningful and authentic way.

Do not hesitate to contact TSU if you have any questions..

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TPA and NTIP resources can be found at: [http://tsuoecta.org/ntip\\_tpa.php](http://tsuoecta.org/ntip_tpa.php)

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