

## *How Parents Can Help with Learning Conversations*

*Tell me the best part of your day.*

*What was the hardest thing you had to do today?*

*Tell me what you read in class.*

*Can you show me something you learned (or did) today?*

*From doing this work, what do you know about how you learn?*

*What else do you want to learn more about?*

*Can you tell me one thing you would do differently next time you were working on this assignment?*

## **REPORTING TO INFORMING**

Outcomes-based reporting provides the opportunity to provide a more comprehensive picture of students' academic progress than traditional reporting methods, as it is intended to identify specific areas of strength, as well as areas where additional work may be needed. However, as is true with any change process, a challenge is making the shift from one system to another. People are generally more comfortable with what is familiar. Report cards that look much like the ones they received when they were students two or three decades ago, may not fully reflect the current reforms in teaching and learning. Therefore, a paradigm shift and a level of understanding needs to be realized by all stakeholders as we continue with this transition.

It is important to bear in mind that the report card is only one piece of a comprehensive reporting process that is intended to report student progress in terms of achievement and growth. It provides a snapshot of a student's progress towards learning at a specific point in time. The Report Card serves as a communication tool – a conversation starter, combined with additional evidence of learning such as work samples, goal setting information, observations and conversations that guide the discussion regarding a student's current and future learning.

In addition to the report card, teachers and schools communicate with parents about student progress on an ongoing basis in a variety of ways. Some other ways to learn how your child is doing is through informal conversations with your child and your child's teachers by way of e-mails, blogs, agenda books, or phone calls.

As has been outlined in this information series, assessing student learning is multi-faceted which cannot be drilled down to a numerical representation that clearly articulates the depth and breadth of a student's level of achievement. As well, there is no single reporting form which can adequately provide an adequate picture of the student as a learner. As a result, we must capture a picture of the student learner using supplemental information such as goal setting, self-assessment, samples or work, rubrics, paper or digital portfolio, I Can Statements, Student Involved Conference/ Celebration of Learning.

We can certainly see the similarity of a multi-faceted approach to assessment when we look at the work environments in which many of us work. As adults, there are similar examples where much of what we do as employees is based on performance appraisals, based on specific criteria as to how we do our job and the expected level of performance.

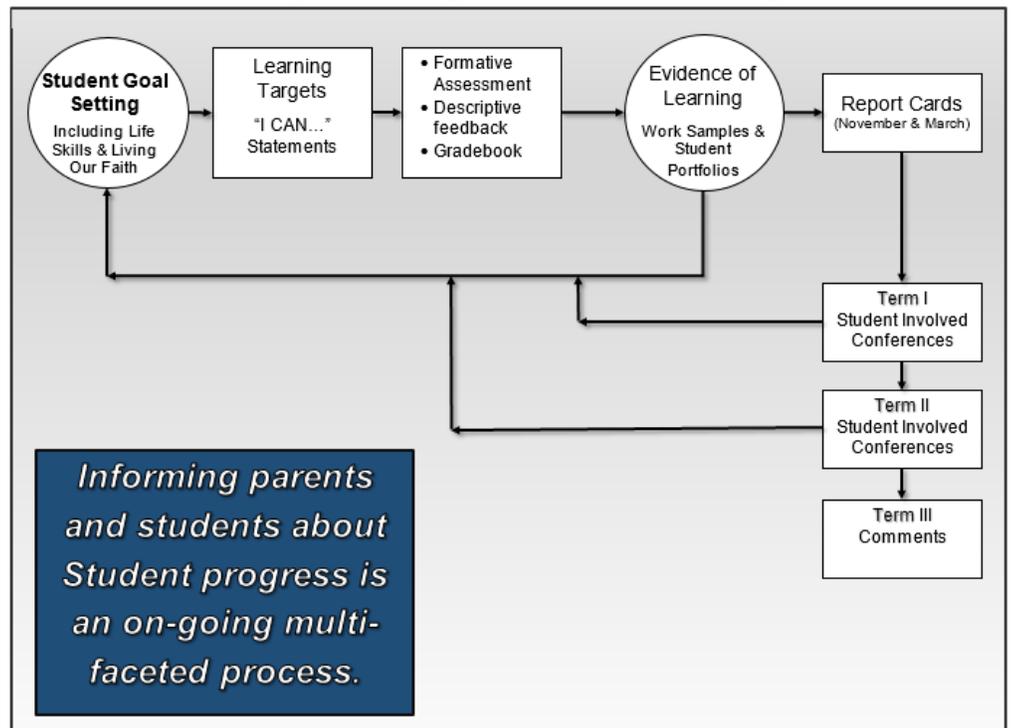
## Ways Parents Can Be Involved

The research is very clear about the benefits and the necessity of parent engagement. In Coleman's (1998) study of schools in two districts, he calls this the "power of three" where the parent, student and teacher collaborate. Based on his interviews and surveys of parents, students and teachers, Coleman cites that:

*Parents through the "curriculum of the home" primarily shape student's commitment to schooling or engagement in learning; but this parent's involvement is an alterable variable which can be influenced by school and teacher practices. (pg. 11)*

### REPORTING STUDENT LEARNING.....MOVING FROM REPORTING TO INFORMING

The Student Involved Conference or Celebration of Learning provides an opportunity for the students to take an active role in their learning. Students are able to show what and how they are learning, and where improvement is required for growth, setting clear learning goals and targets. Students, parents and teachers become partners in the education process (see Volume 6).



### Other Ways to Stay Informed:

- Read school and class Newsletters.
- Access classroom/school and divisional web-pages
- Attend Catholic School Community Council Meetings.
- Attend special events at the school.
- Regularly check your child's agenda and backpack for notices and information.
- Contact your child's teacher and/or administrator whenever you have concerns or questions about your child's learning.