



Provincial Reading and Mathematics Assessment (PRMA)

Handbook for Schools





General Information

Educators use assessment data to support and improve student learning. In Newfoundland and Labrador student achievement is assessed at many levels: individual, classroom, school, district, provincial, national, and international. Assessment at each of these levels provides information about student achievement at differing intervals of time and for different purposes. Each level of assessment plays an important role in informing educational decisions. The Provincial Reading and Mathematics Assessment (PRMA) is a system level assessment that will yield provincial level results. Collaboration amongst all educators is essential for ensuring that assessment information is used effectively to improve outcomes for individual students and for the education system as a whole.

- The PRMA is administered to Grade 3, 6 and 9 students during the two-week period from the last week in May to the end of the first week in June.
- Reading and mathematics are administered in alternating years.
- Grade 3 French Immersion students do not complete the PRMA reading assessment.
- Each student completes a subset of the entire assessment. There will be different booklets containing questions from each subset. As a result, not all students have the same booklet.
- The PRMA is comprised of selected response (multiple-choice) and constructed response items.
- The PRMA is administered to an entire class on a day and time chosen by the school during the two-week period.
- Students absent during the school's administration day should make up the assessment during this two-week period.
- Each student has 60 minutes to complete the assessment, with extra time being made available to complete the assessment.
- Students must read and respond to reading assessments independently. No reading or discussion of questions is permitted. For mathematics questions, teachers may read the questions if students make that request, however, numbers must be read as digits. There is no discussion on how to answer the question.
- All assessment materials are kept by administration, distributed to the classroom teacher on the day of the assessment, and returned to administration after the assessment.



- Students in the English as an Additional Language (EAL) program may be eligible for assessment supports or exemptions (see pages 12-15).
- Students in the EAL program whose programming is also advised by one or more Enrichment and Skill Development areas may also be eligible for accommodations.
- Only students whose programming is advised by one or more Enrichment and Skill Development areas may be eligible for accommodations or exemptions.
- Documentation is required to request any accommodations or exemptions. Please refer to the **Guidelines for Exemption and Accommodation/EAL Assessment Supports** section of this document on pages 12-15.
- Teachers may use their professional judgement to discontinue the assessment with any student who experiences distress during the administration. A note can be written in the comments section of the student's bubble sheet as to the circumstances.



Confidentiality/Data Integrity

Provincial Assessments are the property of the Department of Education. They are confidential, secure documents, and all student booklets and related materials are to be returned to the Department.

Please remember that there can be no:

- revealing of assessment items before the administration;
- copying of assessment items or any student work;
- reproducing or photographing assessments;
- taking notes, sharing or discussing the assessment;
- changing or interfering with student responses or assessment items; or
- using student responses for school-based evaluation.



School Administrator Roles and Responsibilities

Before the PRMA Administration

- Review the **Provincial Reading and Mathematics Assessment Framework**.
- Ensure teachers have access to the **PRMA Framework**, have reviewed the **PRMA Handbook for Schools** and the **Overview of Assessment in Newfoundland and Labrador** video, and have viewed the appropriate student video (Grade 3 or Grades 6 and 9) with students.
- Ensure that all PRMA package components are present per the checklist provided.
- Submit a request for accommodations, exemptions, and assessment supports related to the English as an Additional Language (EAL) program through the Accommodation, Exemption and EAL Assessment Supports Form to the Department of Education by **April 1**.
- Assist teachers in selecting a time to administer the assessment during the two-week period.
- Ensure that all necessary accommodations are in place for students who require them.
- Inform families at least two weeks before the assessment using the Provincial Reading and Mathematics Poster, videos, and other resources on the Department of Education website (see list and links below).
 - [Provincial Reading and Mathematics Poster](#)
 - [PRMA Q and As for Parents and Teachers](#)
 - [Video overview of EDU's assessment program](#)
 - [Video for Grade 3 students](#)
 - [Video for Grade 6 and 9 students](#)
 - [PRMA Framework](#)



After the PRMA Administration

- Ensure all paper copies are in your possession.
- Ensure all students, other than those with approved exemptions, have completed the assessment.
- Ensure all bubble sheets have been placed inside the front cover of each student booklet.
- Repackage all assessments and materials according to the guidelines on page 11.
- Compile the data submitted by teachers on the Class Data Forms in order to complete the Administrator's Verification List.
- Complete the Administrator's Verification List and place it with the Class Data Forms. Place the Administrator's Verification List and the Class Data Forms together in the envelope provided.
- Complete the PRMA Shipping and Return Slip form and place it on top of all the items within the box.



Organizing for the PRMA Administration

Teachers will receive:

- Bubble sheets. Teachers use the bubble sheets to:
 - ◆ record booklet letter;
 - ◆ indicate whether a student is present, absent, or exempt;
 - ◆ indicate if a student used an approved reading accommodation by shading AR (Accommodation for Reading);
 - ◆ indicate if a student used an approved math accommodation by shading AM (Accommodation for Mathematics); and
 - ◆ record any notes regarding a student and their assessment. The Comments section **does not** need to be completed for all students. It is only for additional information you feel is worth noting.
- A class set of booklets. Booklets will be labelled with a letter. The booklet letter must be shaded in on the student Bubble Sheet. Please distribute booklets so that an equal amount of each booklet is given to the students.
- A Class Data Form to track the total number of students, exemptions, absences, and accommodations



Teacher Roles and Responsibilities

Before the PRMA Administration

- Let students know that, although the PRMA does not affect report cards, the information gathered assists in decisions made about our education system. Encourage students to do their best as always.
- Prepare for all necessary accommodations as needed (e.g., Assistive technology).
- Assemble materials (e.g., HB pencils, erasers, working paper).
- Ensure a calculator is available for Grade 9.
- Ensure manipulatives are available and accessible to students for mathematics.
- Remind students to have a quiet activity for when they are done so as not to disturb others.

Introducing the PRMA on the Day of Administration

There is no verbatim script but teachers may wish to communicate a message to their students that includes the following points:

- Students are participating in an important activity called the Provincial Reading and Mathematics Assessment (PRMA). It helps school districts and the department know how Newfoundland and Labrador students in Grades 3, 6, and 9 are doing with reading or mathematics.
- It is important that students give their best effort so that the best possible information is gathered from this assessment.
- There are different versions of this assessment. Students may not have the same booklet as their classmate.
- The assessment consists of multiple-choice and short-response or constructed-response questions.
- Teachers can only answer questions about the directions, but not about what is being tested. Students can request to have a question read to them in the mathematics assessment.



During the PRMA Administration

- Review **Tips for Answering Selected Response and Constructed Response Items** with students (see page 10).
- Remind students that the assessment is done independently, without peer or teacher assistance.
- Ensure that all necessary accommodations are in place for students who require them.
- Ensure that students:
 - ◆ write their name and school on the booklet (note: names are used to track booklets and not for reporting purposes). Bubble sheets have been pre-populated with school name and number, student name, grade, and subject;
 - ◆ answer the questions in the booklet and shade in the corresponding bubbles on the bubble sheet;
 - ◆ place completed bubble sheets inside the front cover of the student booklet; and
 - ◆ shade in the booklet letter on the bubble sheet.

After the PRMA Administration

- Within the two-week administration time, students absent on the assessment day should have an opportunity to complete the assessment once they return to school.
- Before sending the assessment and materials back to the school administration:
 - ◆ print and attach any student work to the student booklets in cases where students may have used assistive technology for responses;
 - ◆ ensure that AR (accommodation for reading) is shaded on the student bubble sheet for those who used an approved accommodation to read text through technology or reading of text by a teacher on either the Reading or Mathematics Assessment;
 - ◆ ensure that AM (accommodation for mathematics) is shaded on the student bubble sheet for those who used an approved accommodation in mathematics on the Mathematics Assessment (Please note that AM is only to be shaded if the student used an approved accommodation for mathematics. It is **not** to be shaded if the student used an approved accommodation for reading during the math PRMA);



- ◆ ensure that the correct booklet letter has been shaded in on the student booklets;
- ◆ shade in the present, absent, or exempt bubble on each student bubble sheet. The absent bubble should be shaded for any student who is absent throughout the entire two-week administration time. Any special circumstances such as illness or bereavement can be noted in the comment section on the student bubble sheet;
- ◆ ensure that all bubble sheets are placed inside the front cover of the assessment booklets;
- ◆ complete a Class Data Form indicating the number of students in your class who participated in the assessment and those who received accommodations;
- ◆ place the Class Data Form on top of the student booklets; and
- ◆ delete any PRMA PDFs on devices.



Tips for Answering Selected Response and Constructed Response Items

Selected Response Questions:

- Reread the question and/or any parts of the reading passage as often as necessary.
- Select the best answer for each question and circle the answer in the booklet.
- If you are not sure about the answer, eliminate incorrect alternatives.
- Answer all questions.
- Use any extra time to check your answers.
- Completely shade one circle on the bubble sheet for each answer you circled in the booklet.
- Relax and do your best!

Constructed Response:

- Reread the question and/or any parts of the reading passage as often as necessary.
- Answer in complete sentences.
- Explain your thinking clearly. Provide details and examples to support your thinking.
- Write what you think and why you think that. There are not always right or wrong answers. Some questions have many possible answers.
- Answer every question.
- Use any extra time to check your answers.
- Relax and do your best!



Repackaging Guidelines for Administrators

When packaging the assessments, administrators will:

- ensure all booklets and materials are placed in the boxes;
- complete the Administrator's Verification List that was sent with the Provincial Reading and Mathematics Assessment;
- put Class Data Forms and the Administrator's Verification List in the envelope provided and put the school name and number on the outside of the envelope;
- put the PRMA Shipping and Return Slip form on top of all the items within the box; and
- clearly indicate the school name, school number, level of assessments included (primary, elementary, and/or intermediate), and the number of boxes being sent on the outside of each box. (e.g., Sunshine Elementary, 400123, Primary, Box 1/3). If there is more than one level of assessment in a box, please separate the booklets.

The Department of Education will provide prepaid mailing labels for the return of the assessment and materials. This label is to be attached to the repackaged PRMAs and then the box(es) are to be brought to a postal office. A tracking number is a part of the mailing label and needs to be retained in case it is needed. Please email this tracking number with your school name to PRMA@gov.nl.ca.



Guidelines for Exemption and Accommodation/EAL Assessment Supports

The Department recognizes its responsibility to provide exemptions and accommodations for students whose programming is advised by one or more Enrichment and Skill Development areas and supports for students in the English as an Additional Language (EAL) program, including exemptions for some students. The PRMA Exemptions and Accommodations Guidelines, outlined below, specify criteria for accommodations/supports and exemptions.

Exemptions

Students who have:

- an alternate (functional) curriculum
- alternate courses in language arts or mathematics (below grade level)

All other students whose programming is advised by one or more Enrichment and Skill Development areas should be able to participate with their routine accommodations as needed.

Students in the English as an Additional Language (EAL) program who have:

- been in Canada for less than two years and are at a beginner proficiency level in English
- missed years of schooling before arrival and have been in Canada for less than three years.

Students in the EAL program who have been in Canada for less than two years have the option of an exemption from the PRMA if the student's level of English proficiency is at the beginner level (see Chapter 5 in the [Guidelines for the Delivery of ESL Services in K-6](#) or [Guidelines for the Delivery of ESL Services in the Intermediate School](#)). After two years, students should be encouraged to write the assessments. All students should participate in the PRMA within three years.

Students in the EAL program who have also missed two or more years of school prior to arrival due to war or displacement can be automatically exempt from the PRMA for the



first two years in Canada. Students who have missed years of schooling can be identified by the EAL teacher or the teacher for Literacy Enrichment and Academic Readiness for Newcomers (LEARN), if available.

Students who have missed years of school should have the option of writing after two years. In cases where the EAL and/or LEARN teacher deems a student ready to attempt the assessment in less than two years, the option of writing should be made available. After three years, students with gaps in schooling should be encouraged to write the assessments. All students in the EAL program with gaps in schooling should participate in the PRMA within four years.

Accommodations

Enrichment and Skill Development Programming

Students whose programming is advised by one or more Enrichment and Skill Development areas may be provided accommodations.

Accommodations must:

- be consistent with the student's current IEP (Grade 3 and 6) or Record of Accommodations (Grade 9);
- have been effectively used by the student; and
- be supported by the student's comprehensive assessment results.

Accommodations include:

- Alternate Format Materials (AFM)
 - ◆ materials such as audio books, Braille, digital versions of books that can be read by text to voice software and large print versions of standard print educational materials
 - ◆ available for students who encounter barriers in accessing traditional print materials
- Assistive technology
 - ◆ equipment and software provided to students to increase, maintain, or improve their functional capabilities
 - ◆ includes low-tech items such as adaptive aids



- Scribing
 - ◆ an approved scribe records only what the student dictates, without prompting

- Transcribing
 - ◆ A student writes an answer/response to a question and a teacher reads the response back to the student. The student informs the teacher of any changes required and the teacher records the changes.
 - ◆ permitted when the use of assistive technology is not appropriate

- Reading of print material
 - ◆ permitted when the use of assistive technology is not appropriate
 - ◆ numbers must be read aloud as individual digits during the mathematics assessment

Supervised breaks and alternate setting may be provided at the school's discretion. Extra time is available for all students.

Students in the EAL program

All students in the EAL program (including students with missed schooling and/or students also in the LEARN program) may avail of assessment supports during the PRMA.

EAL Assessment supports include:

- Translation
 - ◆ A translator or bilingual dictionary (Note: Care should be taken to ensure that communication or internet capability on electronic devices used for translation is restricted during the PRMA).

- Clarification of questions and instructions
 - ◆ Designate an educator to assist with question comprehension. When available, an EAL or LEARN teacher may be able to assist.
 - ◆ Ensure that students understand the questions, for example:
 - Encourage them to ask if they are not sure
 - Ask them to reword the question before answering



- Reword the question in simple English or explain the question using visuals or other supports
- Have them translate words in the question
- Monitor their answers and check that they have understood the question, if needed
- Use strategies specific to additional language learning, such as translation, modeling and explanation in simple language. Strategies typical for first language speakers of English, such as reading a question aloud, may not be beneficial for students learning EAL, who may not know the vocabulary.

Note that students in the EAL program whose programming is advised by one or more Enrichment and Skill Development areas should receive the approved accommodations that they access for other evaluations, in addition to any relevant EAL assessment supports.

Requesting Exemptions, Accommodations, and EAL Assessment Supports

All requests regarding accommodations and exemptions are determined by the student's program planning team. In the case of a student in the EAL or LEARN program, the program planning team will include the EAL and/or LEARN teacher, who will make a recommendation in consultation with the classroom teacher, the student, and the family regarding exemption.

If a student requires an accommodation or exemption, schools must complete the PRMA Accommodation, Exemption and EAL Assessment Supports Form. Requests for accommodations, exemptions and EAL assessment supports must be submitted to the Department of Education by **April 1**.



PRMA at a Glance

Before Assessment

- In consultation with administration, set a date and time for assessment (two-week period from the last week of May to the first week of June).
- Gather materials:
 - ◆ PRMA booklets
 - ◆ Bubble sheets
 - ◆ Class Data Forms
 - ◆ Alternate Format Materials
 - ◆ Supplies (HB pencils, erasers, paper)
 - ◆ Ensure approved accommodations are in place.

During Assessment

- Distribute booklets and bubble sheets (refer to page 7 in the handbook).
- Review the **Tips for Answering Selected Response and Constructed Response Items** with the class (found in the student booklet and on page 10 in this handbook).
- Ensure students:
 - ◆ mark their answer choice in the booklet and shade the corresponding bubble on the bubble sheet,
 - ◆ complete the bubble sheets accurately, and
 - ◆ shade in the booklet letter on the bubble sheet.

After Assessment

- Review all bubble sheets to ensure they are completed accurately.
- Provide absent students with an opportunity to complete the assessment within the given two-week time frame.
- Print and attach any student work to the student booklets, where applicable (assistive technology).
- Ensure each student's bubble sheet is placed inside the front of their booklet.
- Complete a Class Data Form.
- Place the Class Data Form on top of the student booklets.
- Delete any PDFs from devices.

