

# Group Work

## Essential Question:

What does Prairie Spirit believe about group work?

### Big Idea #1\*

#### Practices that Promote Achievement

- d. Use only individual academic achievement evidence. Understand that working in a group is a social skill, not an assessment tool. Reasons to learn do not come from extrinsic motivators.

*\*Prairie Spirit School Division  
Quality Assessment Practices  
[website](#)*

## PSSD Recommended Practice: “earning to learning”

**Key Message** – Group scores may not accurately reflect the achievement of each student against curricular expectations and therefore may be unfair to some. If group marks were given, two students that attained the same knowledge and skills but were in different groups could receive different marks. Group projects convey getting the project done is more important than the learning that results from the project. Some students in a group feel unwarranted pressure to compensate for fellow group members who either won't or can't do good work.

## Research

“No student’s grade should depend on the achievement (or behavior) of other students.”

*(Glasser, 2005)*

“Cooperative learning is an effective instructional method for a wide variety of learning goals...”

*(Johnson & Johnson, 2009)*

“No matter what kind of cooperative learning or group work you employ, it is important not to give group grades.”

*(Brookhart, 2011; Kagan, 1995; O’Connor, 2009; Wormeli, 2006)*

## Effective Teacher and Student Practices

- Activities that occur in groups are learning activities and any assessment of them should be formative for practice and should not be used for grades.
  - Don’t give up on group projects; figure out how to assess what individual group members have learned from doing the projects. Ask yourself what it is you want students to learn by engaging in a group project. The answer should relate to one or more curricular goals.
  - Plan ways to assess individual content knowledge and skill. These assessments can be graded.
    - Have an individual student teach what they learned to another student.
    - Assign individual written work along the way (critique an article, point of view, explain a chart).
    - After a group meeting have individuals complete a separate task.
    - Students fill out short daily forms of reflection on their personal learning and participation.
- (Harvey & Daniels, 2009)*

Resource:

Brookhart (2013), *Grading and Group Work How do I assess individual learning when students work together?* ASCD, ARIAS

## Contact your Assessment Learning Team

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