

From: "Minister (EDU)" <Minister.edu@ontario.ca>

Date: August 28, 2018 at 4:12:41 PM EDT

To: "Minister (EDU)" <Minister.edu@ontario.ca>

Subject: **Focusing on the Fundamentals of Math\Mettre l'accent sur les éléments fondamentaux en mathématiques**

To: Board Chairs

Copy : Bruce Rodrigues, Deputy Minister of Education, Cathy Abraham, Ontario Public School Boards' Association, Beverley Eckensweiler, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association, Jean Lemay, Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques and Denis Chartrand, Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario

Dear colleagues,

Ontarians have told us that we must do better with respect to student math performance, and that we must ensure all students have the math skills they need to succeed.

For the past five years, we have seen an overall decline in Education Quality and Accountability Office math scores. This trend cannot continue, and we must all work hard to help reverse it. Therefore, the government is asking that all educators focus on math fundamentals and is providing a number of supports to help.

Making sure that students have a strong understanding of important math concepts and that they have fundamental skills is one of the best ways to prepare them for success, now and in the future. Fundamental math skills help students connect what they are learning in school to real life and to solve everyday problems.

To support this work, I am pleased to announce the release of a [teacher's guide](#) and a [parent fact sheet](#) that highlight some of the fundamental math concepts and skills in the current curriculum. These resources do not introduce new content, but rather, they help focus student learning and connect specific expectations of key math concepts and skills for students in Grades 1 to 8. Some of these concepts and skills include working with numbers, recognizing number properties, mastering math facts, developing mental math skills and developing proficiency with operations. The [teacher's guide](#) will also help Grade 9 and 10 math teachers support students moving from elementary to secondary school math courses.

The ministry will be hosting a virtual provincial training session in fall 2018 for mathematics facilitators and leads focused on fundamental math concepts and skills. Additional details regarding this session have been shared with Directors of Education.

As communicated in the education funding memo on August 24, 2018, the ministry is also refocusing \$55 million in existing math investments to District School Boards. This funding will support math facilitators and leads at the board and school levels, as well as provide release-time for educators to participate in training and learning focused on the fundamentals of math.

All board improvement plans are also required to identify student needs and include actions to improve fundamental math skills, as well as monitor progress and measure impact. These plans are due back to the ministry by November 30, 2018.

Finally, the ministry is requesting boards focus their numeracy professional activity (PA) day, which is one of three mandatory PA days, on fundamental math skills. To maximize impact, all boards are asked to schedule this PA day before the 2018 December break begins.

By focusing on the fundamentals, Ontario is positioned to once again become a leader in math education. Going forward, our government will be engaging in one of the most robust consultation processes in the history of Ontario's education system. We are committed to a comprehensive consultation to help inform changes to mathematics, the health and physical education curriculum and other policies, such as distraction-free learning environments. More information about the consultation process and opportunities for input will be provided once available.

We look forward to building strong partnerships as we work together to improve student math performance across Ontario. I want to thank you for your commitment to Ontario's students and for your ongoing efforts to help strengthen the education system.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Lisa Thompson
Minister of Education