

September 2, 2022

Memorandum to: Chairs of District School Boards
Directors of Education
School Authorities

From: Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education

Subject: **Back to School: Normal, Stable & Enjoyable**

Students, families, teachers and education workers have been through so much in the last two years, and we would like to thank you, our education partners, for your incredible work, resilience and dedication to supporting students and staff.

Students deserve a full return to normalcy in the classroom, for the entire school year. Child and youth experts, including the Children's Health Coalition, recognize the importance of in-person schooling to students' physical and mental well-being. To this end, on July 25, 2022, I released Ontario's *Plan to Catch-Up*, a plan to help students catch-up on learning, to better prepare them for the jobs of the future and support their physical and mental health.

A key priority in our *Plan* is ensuring students return to in-person learning uninterrupted for the entirety of the school year, with the full school experience, in alignment with advice from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health.

To support learning recovery and with particular focus on literacy and numeracy, we made a historic \$175 million investment in province-wide school-based tutoring supports, in addition to \$15 million to deliver expanded summer learning opportunities.

As we look ahead to the 2022-23 school year, Ontario is investing over \$26.6 billion – the highest investment in public education in Ontario's history. This includes over \$90 million in total mental health investments, a \$93 million increase in Special Education Grant funding, and \$304 million in time-limited additional staffing supports to hire up to 3,000 front line staff.

The government also recently announced \$225 million in additional funding for parents to help with extra supports their children may need to catch up. More details will be forthcoming on how families can access this new support funding.

We continue to move forward with initiatives that will help Ontario's students. This memo follows the release of the *Plan to Catch-Up* and provides information and updates to school boards that aim to provide students with a safe, uninterrupted, enjoyable and enriching learning experience as they start the 2022-23 school year.

Tutoring Supports

Thank you for your ongoing commitment and efforts to provide tutoring programs for students who would benefit from additional academic supports.

Final reports, including financials for the first half of the \$175M Tutoring Supports Program (April – August 2022), are due on October 21, 2022. The second half of the funding for the \$175 million Tutoring Supports Program will be available with the second Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) in September.

This program is expanding access to tutoring in small groups, after school, during school, and/or on weekends, to ensure students get the supports they need. School boards are asked to share information about their local tutoring programs with parents and Members of Provincial Parliament to help spread the word about these important supports.

In addition to the \$175 million tutoring supports program and \$683.9 million in increased funding through the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) over 2021-22 that we provided through local school boards, the government is investing \$225 million directly into the pockets of parents to best support their children. More details will be forthcoming on how families can access this new support funding.

School boards are also asked to share with students and families information regarding the availability of virtual tutoring. Supported by our increased investments, Mathify English-language online math tutoring services have been expanded and are now available to students in Grades 4-11 (previously Grades 6-10), along with expanded hours on weekends. Eurêka! French-language online tutoring services are offered to all students in Grades 1-12 in all subjects and have recently expanded French supports for students in Grades 1-2, and for Math, Grades 7-9 and 11-12.

Graduation Requirements

Community Involvement Hours

The ministry is working to motivate service, active citizenship and volunteering in local communities. As the ministry communicated in the [Planning for the 2021-22 School Year](#) memo, the community involvement graduation requirement of 40 hours is restored for students graduating in the 2022-23 school year and beyond.

For the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years, the ministry provided flexible ways for students to obtain community involvement hours. At the principal's discretion, students could earn hours during the time allotted for the instructional program on a school day, and through duties normally performed in the home. This can include helping an elderly relative with an errand or a sibling with homework. Additionally, students could count a maximum of 10 hours from paid employment for students aged 14 years and older.

These flexible measures will continue to be available for the 2022-23 school year for all students.

In addition, school boards continue to be permitted to develop their own electronic processes for collecting, recording and validating community involvement hours, including allowing electronic signatures that validate students' hours.

Literacy Requirements

As communicated in the [Planning for the 2021-22 School Year](#) memo, the literacy graduation requirement is restored beginning with students graduating in the 2022-23 school year. Students in Grades 10 and 11 and non-graduating students, including those who are learning remotely, are required to work towards the literacy graduation requirement, through participating in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) or completing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC). To provide maximum flexibility for students to acquire the literacy graduation requirement, particularly for students enrolled in remote learning, students can be enrolled in the OSSLC without having attempted the OSSLT in 2022-23. As of the 2022-23 school year, the eligibility criteria for the adjudication process for the literacy graduation requirement will revert to the policy as outlined in [Ontario Schools, 2016](#) (p.65-66). Procedural information about the adjudication process in the 2022-23 school year will be communicated in Fall 2022.

Assessment Policy

As of the 2022-23 school year, district school boards will resume following the policy on final evaluations outlined in [Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools](#). For Grades 9 to 12, a final grade (percentage mark) is recorded for every course. Final grades will be determined as follows:

- Seventy per cent of the grade will be based on evaluation conducted throughout the course. This portion of the grade should reflect the student's most consistent level of achievement throughout the course, although special consideration should be given to more recent evidence of achievement.
- Thirty per cent of the grade will be based on a final evaluation administered at or towards the end of the course. This evaluation will be based on evidence from one or a combination of the following: an examination, a performance, an essay, and/or another method of evaluation suitable to the course content. The final evaluation allows the student an opportunity to demonstrate comprehensive achievement of the overall expectations for the course (*Growing Success*, p.41).

Report Cards and Digital Signatures

Educators provide a valuable, thorough and detailed reporting of student achievement to parents and guardians, with a focus on fundamental skills like reading, writing and

math. The provincial report card is a helpful tool to assist parents and guardians with information on their child's progress and learning recovery, following years of disruption. The government expects report cards to be completed fully.

Elementary report card templates have been updated to reflect the new strand names for the revised elementary Science and Technology curriculum. Samples of these updated templates are available at [Ontario.ca/Education](https://www.ontario.ca/education). Please work with your vendor to ensure updates to report cards are made in time for the 2022-23 school year.

School boards may allow for electronic signatures to be used by school principals (or their delegate) on the Communication of Learning and report cards, in accordance with their own policies. School boards should determine the appropriate means for sending the report cards to students and families, either in paper or electronic copy, considering issues such as privacy, security, and safety. Paper copies should be provided at the parent's request. Schools continue to be required to file a signed copy of all report cards in the student's Ontario Student Record.

Cooperative Education

In-person or virtual community placements can be arranged in alignment with the safety and curriculum requirements of the Cooperative Education curriculum.

If public health guidance changes during a placement and the student cannot complete their placement in-person or virtually, educators should work with the student to modify their co-op learning plans to allow the student to achieve the curriculum expectations and earn the credit(s).

New Curriculum

New curriculum that will be implemented for September 2022 include:

- Revised Science and Technology, Grades 1 to 8
- New de-streamed Grade 9 Science course
- Revised Grade 10 Civics and Citizenship course
- Grade 10 Math addenda

To support the new curriculum, resources, such as overview videos and key changes documents, are available on the ministry's [Curriculum and Resources website](#). Educators can also [register](#) for the webinars as they become available throughout the school year.

The ministry has partnered with several third-party organizations including [Science North](#) and the [Ontario Science Centre](#), the [Ontario Principals' Council](#), [Science](#) and [Civics subject associations](#), as well as Indigenous organizations to support the implementation of new curriculum. Resources will continue to become available through these partners' websites during the school year.

Early Reading

On February 28, 2022, in response to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's (OHRC) *Right to Read* report, the ministry committed to revising the elementary Language and Français curriculum and Grade 9 English and Français courses to align with scientific, evidence-based approaches that emphasize direct, explicit and systematic instruction.

In preparation for the implementation of these new curricula in September 2023, school boards are encouraged to take a proactive approach to ensure that teachers are supported in this transition during the upcoming school year.

In Spring 2022, as part of its response to the OHRC's *Right to Read* report, the ministry released *Effective Early Reading Instruction: A Teacher's Guide*, which can be accessed or downloaded as a PDF on the [Curriculum and Resources website](#). The guide provides support on evidence-based approaches to early reading instruction.

The ministry also hosted a webinar for board leads to support the implementation of this guide. The slide deck and webinar recording can be accessed in the Supports for Learning eCommunity in the [Virtual Learning Environment](#). Educators can also register for webinars as they become available throughout the school year.

De-Streaming

As of September 2022, all Grade 9 subjects will be offered in one stream. De-streaming Grade 9 will help create the conditions for every student to be prepared for the senior program in secondary school, and to pursue any postsecondary pathway they choose.

The ministry is providing funding to school boards to support de-streaming in the 2022-23 school year, including \$3 million for the De-Streaming Implementation Supports Program and \$8.32 million to support early interventions in math for students with special education needs to help prepare them for a de-streamed curriculum. Additionally, the ministry is providing \$304 million in the GSN for temporary additional staffing supports to hire teachers, early childhood educators, educational assistants and other education workers, including to address the implementation of the first year of a fully de-streamed Grade 9.

The ministry will continue to engage De-streaming contacts to support the implementation of de-streaming across the system and provide an opportunity for contacts to collaborate with and learn from other school boards regarding the implementation of de-streaming. If the contact for de-streaming in your school board has changed, please provide updated contact information to Studentsuccess@ontario.ca.

Additional Qualifications in Math Transfer Payment Agreement Application

School boards were invited to apply for funding to provide subsidies for teachers completing math Additional Qualification (AQ) courses for the 2022-23 year. As funding is still available, school boards that have not yet submitted applications may apply for this funding by submitting an [application](#) by **September 30, 2022**.

Teachers who have completed any of the eligible courses between September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023, are eligible for this subsidy.

The subsidy will cover the cost of an AQ to a maximum of \$650. If the total funding requested from all school boards by the application deadline exceeds the total allocation of \$4 million, the ministry will consider the number of teachers in each school board to determine final funding amounts.

If you have any questions, please contact math@ontario.ca.

Policy/Program Memorandum 151 Supports

In April 2022, the ministry issued a revised [Policy/Program Memorandum 151](#) outlining key priority areas for school boards to focus on during mandatory Professional Activity Days.

The ministry is providing Key Messages and resources to support school boards to deliver training on these priority areas. The Key Messages are attached in Appendix A.

Reminders

Ontario College of Teachers' Sexual Abuse Prevention Program

As of January 1, 2022, current and reinstating Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) members are required to successfully complete the OCT's Sexual Abuse Prevention Program by September 15, 2022. The Program is one of the mandatory Professional Activity Days' topics for this school year, is offered entirely online and can be completed over multiple sessions.

Temporary Certificates for Teacher Candidates

Temporary certificates for teacher candidates, which are aimed at providing temporary staffing stabilization in schools, are still in place for the 2022-2023 school year. Temporary certificates issued in 2022 expire on December 31, 2022 for those expected to graduate in 2022, and on December 31, 2023 for those expected to graduate in 2023.

Mental Health and Well-Being Supports

Mental health supports in school boards include Mental Health Workers in secondary schools and Mental Health Leaders in each school board. Funding flexibility allows school boards to support mental health resources to meet the needs of identity affirming groups in a local context.

For the 2022-23 school year, we are allocating an additional \$10 million to support student mental health for a total \$90 million, which represents a 420 per cent increase from 2017-18. Special Education Grant funding is also projected to increase by \$93 million to over \$3.25 billion - the highest amount ever provided.

Indigenous Graduation Coaches

To support Indigenous students, Indigenous Graduation Coach positions will be funded in participating school boards. Indigenous Graduation Coaches will advocate for and mentor First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and facilitate access and referrals to academic supports and community resources according to student need.

Graduation Coach Program for Black Students

The Graduation Coach Program for Black Students provides intensive, culturally responsive supports for the well-being and academic achievement of Black students by hiring graduation coaches who have lived experience and connections to Ontario's diverse Black communities. For the 2022-23 school year, there will continue to be graduation coaches hired across school boards.

Next Steps

While we have made historic investments and introduced new supports, we will continue to support those students who need our help the most. We will monitor student achievement trends through the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessment results, in addition to other metrics of student success and well-being, and will explore new ways to provide support as we learn more about our students' needs.

As a first response to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's report on the *Right to Read*, we have made investments in evidence-based programs and professional assessments. We continue to review the report to determine additional appropriate supports.

We also recognize that student mental health and well-being will continue to play a critical role for students to be supported and have an enriching learning experience. Beginning this Fall, our government is launching consultations with mental health stakeholders on how to best support student mental health and well-being through educator and student learning opportunities and key supports. The ministry will also

continue to work with school boards on effective data and information sharing practices to leverage the best available evidence to support student mental health needs.

Together, we will continue to build up Ontario's education system and look with optimism to the 2022-23 school year and beyond, knowing that we are prepared to get every student on track and achieving their goals. Thank you again for your ongoing support to Ontario's students.

Sincerely,

Stephen Lecce
Minister

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