

Ministry of Education

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Ministère de l'Éducation

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**MEMORANDUM
TO:**

Directors of Education
School Authorities
Centre Jules-Léger Consortium
Executive Director, Provincial and
Demonstration Schools
Principals of Inspected Private Schools
Principals of Inspected First Nation/federally
Operated Schools

FROM:

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Student Achievement Division

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DATE:

October 2, 2020

SUBJECT:

**Guidance on Assessment, Evaluation and
Reporting**

In follow-up to the [Guide to reopening Ontario schools](#) shared in July 2020, we are writing to offer further information on assessment, evaluation and reporting, including adjustments for the 2020-21 school year, as described below, to *Growing Success*.

The ministry acknowledges that in these exceptional circumstances, school boards can best support the unique needs and situations of students and their families by responding with flexibility and understanding. It is important to recognize and support the various ways in which students have been, and will continue to, engage in learning in the current environment. Reintegration into the school environment may take some time, and the early part of the school year may focus on mental health, well-being and the development of a safe, inviting and inclusive learning community.

Elementary

Reporting for Kindergarten

The Communication of Learning: Initial Observations provides parents/guardians with an overview of initial observations of their child's learning and early evidence of growth in learning related to the overall expectations of the Kindergarten Program. This formal communication with parents/guardians also provides information about appropriate next steps to further the child's learning. It serves as a basis for discussion with parents/guardians and as a support for parents'/guardians' ongoing participation in their child's learning.

For the 2020-21 school year, the Initial Observations – issued between October 20 to November 20 – may also describe the child's transition to the new school year, including new health and safety measures.

School boards may wish to include the following statement on the Kindergarten Communication of Learning: Initial Observations:

This reporting period reflects learning that has occurred in a modified learning environment as required by the provincial public health guidelines. Ongoing communication with your child's educator will provide additional information pertaining to progress throughout the term.

Elementary Progress Report Card

As in previous years, the information included on the 2020-21 Elementary Progress Report should show a student's general progress in working towards the achievement of the curriculum expectations in all subject areas.

School boards are reminded that *Growing Success* (2010) allows for flexibility to issue the Elementary Progress Report any time between October 20 and November 20.

School boards may wish to include the following statement on the Elementary Progress Report:

This reporting period reflects learning that has occurred in a modified learning environment as required by the provincial public health guidelines. As a result, the rate of progress described on this report card may differ from previous years due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on student learning. Ongoing communication with your child's teacher will provide additional information pertaining to student progress throughout the term.

Reporting Expectations for the Revised Elementary Mathematics Curriculum

Teachers will now report one overall mark for the subject of mathematics, along with comments that reflect learning across the strands taught during that reporting period. This change fosters a more integrated approach to both instruction and assessment across the revised mathematics strands and reflects current mathematics research. It also provides parents/guardians with an overall assessment of how their child is progressing.

To reflect this new direction, the ministry is issuing [*Growing Success: The Mathematics Addendum, Grades 1 to 8, 2020*](#). This will supersede the instructions on completing the provincial report card for mathematics in Grades 1 to 8, currently found on page 58 of *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools, 2010*.

Report Card Templates

The provincial report card templates for Grades 1 to 6 and Grades 7 and 8 have been updated for the 2020-21 school year to align with the new mathematics curriculum. Samples of the revised report card templates will be posted on the ministry website. Boards are requested to work with their vendors to make the appropriate changes.

Secondary

Exam Days and 30% Final Evaluation

School boards continue to have the option of removing designated exam days from their school year calendar and using them for in-class instructional time. Such changes to school year calendars should be communicated to Regional Offices and impacted school community members.

The ministry will not require secondary courses to include a 30% final evaluation for the 2020-21 school year. School boards can determine whether they require a final evaluation and its value in the determination of a final grade of up to 30%.

As outlined in *Growing Success*, a final evaluation does not need to be an examination. It could include one or a combination of the following: a performance, an essay or another method of evaluation suitable to the course content. Culminating activities are administered at or towards the end of the course to allow the student an opportunity to demonstrate comprehensive achievement of the overall expectations for the course (*Growing Success*, p. 41). Teachers can provide a broad range of culminating activities to allow students to more effectively demonstrate their learning.

Determining a report card grade will continue to rely on “teachers’ professional judgement and interpretation of evidence and should reflect the student’s most consistent level of achievement, with special consideration given to more recent evidence” as stated in *Growing Success* (p. 39).

Reporting Schedules for the 2020-21 School Year

If boards are continuing with semestered or full-year non-semestered school year calendar models, no changes to the reporting schedules are required.

There are also no changes to the current reporting schedule for school boards using an alternative timetable model (e.g., quadmester or octomester). However, school boards should note the following considerations:

- The current four reporting periods identified in *Growing Success* continue to apply. Each reporting period will include final marks, comments and learning skills/work habits ratings for courses that students have completed during that period.
- Recognizing that students and families should have accurate information about a student's progress, teachers should share a "mark-to-date" at the midpoint of the course. Special consideration should be given to ensuring continuous communication with students, and their parents/guardians, who are not yet meeting minimum course expectations and are at risk of not earning a credit. There is no requirement for written mid-term reports for school boards using an alternative timetable model. (e.g., quadmester, octomester).
- While no formal mid-term report would be issued for courses in an alternative timetable model, "*communication with parents/guardians and students about student achievement should be continuous throughout the course, by means such as parent-teacher or parent-student-teacher conferences, portfolios of student work, student-led conferences, interviews, phone calls, checklists, and informal reports.*" (*Growing Success*, p. 54)
- A formal mid-term report (including a mid-term mark and comment), should be provided on the Provincial Report Card for any courses that are running for a full semester/year within an alternative model.

Course Withdrawal

Withdrawal dates typically occur within 5 days of the issuing of the first (mid-term) report card.

For the 2020-21 school year, course withdrawal dates should be determined based on the completion of approximately 75% of the total course hours. School boards should communicate the course withdrawal date to all students and parents/guardians.

For students that withdraw from a Grade 11 or 12 course after the posted deadline or "drop date," the course would be recorded on their Ontario Student Transcript (OST).

Credit Recovery

There has been no change to Credit Recovery for the 2020-21 school year. As per *Growing Success* (2010), boards and schools should make credit recovery programs available to students who have been unsuccessful in achieving the expectations of a course. School boards are reminded of the Credit Recovery Limitations as outlined in *Growing Success* (p.88). Additional information about credit recovery can be found in Chapter 10 of *Growing Success* (2010).

Community Involvement Graduation Requirement

For the 2020-21 school year, the ministry is revising the 40-hour community involvement graduation requirement so that students will not be adversely impacted by the ongoing challenges related to COVID-19.

For students graduating in the 2020-21 school year, the community involvement graduation requirement will be reduced to a minimum of **20 hours** of community involvement activities. This recognizes that graduating students have had barriers to earning their community involvement hours last school year and there may be continued barriers this school year.

Students may wish to consider virtual volunteering, such as connecting with seniors, organizing virtual fundraising events and facilitating discussions with newcomer youth. Outdoor volunteer opportunities could include, for example, picking up litter.

Volunteer opportunities, such as connecting young people to be technology mentors to seniors, can be found through agencies such as [Spark Ontario](#).

In addition, the ministry is providing increased flexibility in how all secondary students can earn hours in 2020-21, as follows:

1. At the principal's discretion, schools may waive the restrictions that do not allow students to earn hours during the time allotted for the instructional program on a school day, or duties normally performed in the home (e.g., walking a younger child to and from school, helping younger siblings with school work).
2. Students aged 14 years and older can count up to a maximum of 10 hours from paid employment towards their earned hours at the discretion of the principal. Students counting paid employment towards their graduation requirement will be required to complete a reflection exercise indicating how their work contributed to the service for others.

School boards and schools are permitted to develop their own processes for collecting, recording and validating hours, including allowing electronic signatures.

Students should continue to seek out and accumulate community involvement hours in accordance with school board policies and procedures, keeping in mind local public health unit recommendations.

Post-Secondary Applications

The ministry has been working closely with the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) and the Ontario College Application Service (OCAS) regarding students applying to university and college programs.

The Ontario universities recognize that students are experiencing an unusual year. In collaboration with OUAC and the Ministry of Education, universities are working to be as flexible as possible regarding admission processes given the various scheduling models schools are implementing across the province.

The currently posted [OUAC 2021 Schedule of Dates](#) is in effect, but with adjustments to the types of course/grade information expected during each collection period.

Most universities will make conditional offers of admission on a rolling basis using a combination of Grade 11 and available Grade 12 marks. This type of assessment depends on students being registered in all required Grade 12 courses. Therefore, for university-bound students, it is essential that boards send OUAC all currently registered and projected course enrollments for the entire school year, **regardless of the semester model**, by the November 5, 2020 deadline.

Schools should monitor the [OUAC Guidance website](#) and Ontario university websites for updates throughout the school year.

Ontario's colleges also recognize the need for flexibility, and in collaboration with the OCAS and the Ministry of Education, will be working to accommodate the various scheduling models implemented at school boards province-wide.

To provide schools and boards with greater flexibility for transmitting marks throughout the school year, OCAS has adjusted the data transmission schedule posted in the [Fall 2021 Important Dates](#) document. The updated schedule includes the introduction of target dates for data transmission, allowing numerous opportunities for schools / boards to submit marks as they become available.

Colleges make conditional offers of admission using final Grade 11 marks, as well as the Grade 12 enrollment data received in the fall. Regardless of the semester model, it is important that schools provide projected course enrollments for the entire school year for graduating Grade 12 students no later than **November 20, 2020**. Boards should work with their vendors to ensure any changes to timetables and reporting can be sent to OCAS.

As circumstances evolve, the colleges and OCAS will continue to adjust as necessary and will keep schools and boards informed of any changes. Further updates will be shared on the OCAS website at <https://www.ocas.ca>.

Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Assessments

Grade 3 and 6 Assessments

As announced on June 23, 2020, Grade 3 and 6 EQAO assessments have been cancelled for the 2020-21 school year.

Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics

For the 2020-21 school year, EQAO will be field testing a new online and adaptive assessment for Grade 9 Academic and Applied mathematics courses. This field test will provide an opportunity for students to try this new format and will support the continued development of the assessment platform. Given that the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics will be

administered as a field test in the 2020-21 school year, the results shall not be used in the determination of a student's final mark, unless agreed to by the teacher and student, in support of the student's success.

The first field test is planned for students taking in-person courses for later this Fall. As a result, students completing a Grade 9 Academic or Applied mathematics course by October 31 will not be writing the Grade 9 EQAO Assessment of Mathematics.

Further information about the assessment, including the timing of assessments, information for students who are fully remote, board upload processes, and preparation materials will be shared by EQAO in the near future.

Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)

For students who are otherwise eligible to graduate before February 2021, but have not yet met the literacy requirement:

- Principals have the discretion to directly enrol students in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC). Alternatively, schools (including private and First Nation schools) could offer these students an adjudication process in order to complete the literacy graduation requirement.
- Adjudications can be conducted on an ongoing basis at any time before February 2021, and can be conducted virtually or by mail, as needed.

For students graduating in June 2021, the Ministry currently plans to proceed with the graduation requirement and students may satisfy the literacy graduation requirement, as per regular practice by:

- Writing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) in Spring 2021;
- Enrolling directly in the OSSLC in the 2020-21 school year; or
- Participating in an adjudication process.

More information regarding the Spring administration of the OSSLT will be available in the future.

Additional Considerations

Alternative Report Cards:

For the instances where the student's program is not based on expectations from the Ontario curriculum for Grades 1 to 8, or where there is an alternative program being used for Grades 9-12 and an alternative format is being used to report the student's progress/achievement, the guidance in this document will apply, where applicable. As per *Growing Success* (p. 62), when an alternative format is used, it should accompany the Provincial Report Card at the regular reporting times.

Students with Special Education Needs and English Language Learners

The policies stated in Chapters 7 and 8 of Growing Success continue to apply for the 2020-21 school year:

- For a student with special education needs who requires modified or alternative expectations, assessment and evaluation of his or her achievement will be based on the modified curriculum expectations or alternative expectations outlined in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- Teachers will check the ESL/ELD box on the progress report cards and the provincial report cards to indicate that modifications have been made to curriculum expectations to address the language learning needs of English language learners.

Report Cards for Students Attending School Remotely

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 and advice from their counsel. School boards will determine whether the home school principal or remote school principal will sign the report card based on local models.

School boards should determine the appropriate means for sending the report card to students and families, either in paper or electronic copy, at the end of each reporting period, giving consideration to issues such as privacy, security, and safety.

Paper copies should be provided at the parent's/guardian's request. The completed report card, or an exact copy, must be filed in the Ontario Student Record (OSR), as required by the OSR Guideline.

The ministry wants to acknowledge that *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools, 2010* is the province's assessment, evaluation and reporting policy. In recognition of current circumstances, elements of this policy have been adjusted to support educators and students, as outlined in this memo.

In closing, we would like to express our thanks and appreciation for your continued efforts to support the best interest of students during this very different school year.

Sincerely,

Yael Ginsler and Denys Giguère

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