

**Ministry of Education**

Deputy Minister

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**Ministère de l'Éducation**

Sous-ministre

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**Memorandum To:**

Martyn Beckett  
Director, Durham District School Board

Norm Blaseg  
Director, Rainbow District School Board

Tony Pontes  
Director, Peel District School Board

**From:**

George Zegarac  
Deputy Minister

**Date:**

May 27, 2015

**Subject:**

Supporting Students in the 2014-2015 Year

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In preparing for the school year resuming, the Minister has asked me to write to you today to encourage your boards to maximize the remaining instructional and learning time for students that have been impacted by the local strike action.

This memo is to provide you with assistance in planning for the remainder of the 2014 – 2015 school year around the policy and program areas set out below. This assistance includes the modifications also identified in this memo, for your three boards for the 2014-2015 school year only, that the Minister is making to *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools, 2010 (GS)* and *Ontario Schools: Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements 2011 (OS)*.

***Adjustments to School Year Calendar: Professional Activity Days and Examination Days***

As you know, Regulation 304 (School Year Calendar, Professional Activity Days) under the *Education Act* establishes certain requirements relating to Professional Activity (PA) and examination days, and provides some flexibility to modify published calendars.

Your board may alter the **date** of a scheduled Professional Activity (PA) day subject to notifying the parents concerned and the Minister as soon as possible. You may wish to consider replacing remaining scheduled PA day(s) with instructional days and rescheduling the PA day(s) for a later date. This is subject, of course, to your board confirming that the requirement of a minimum of two PA days that address the provincial education priorities set out in PPM 151 has been met. Your board may also change the **number** of PA days or examination days remaining with the approval of the Minister in order to increase the number of instructional days available. Your board may request approval from the Minister to reduce the number of examination days remaining, e.g., to zero. You may also request approval from the Minister to reduce the remaining PA days to the minimum number you deem necessary to complete the procedures (such as promotion meetings) and student support required at this time of year.

Requests for the Minister's approval of such changes to the school year calendars should be submitted electronically through the appropriate Regional Office of the Field Services Branch. The Regional Office will provide confirmation to the board that the notification has been received and whether the Minister has approved the request, as quickly as possible.

### ***Assessment and Evaluation Policy***

As you are aware, *GS* states that final grades for students in courses in Grades 9 to 12 will be determined as follows:

- 70% of the final grade will be based on evaluation conducted throughout the course;
- 30% of the final grade will be based on a final evaluation administered at or towards the end of the course, composed of evidence from one or more elements suitable to the course content.

For the 2014-2015 school year only and for your boards only, the Minister directs that boards shall inform teachers that they should determine 100% of final marks by considering all evidence collected and assessed through observations, student performances, projects, tests and assignments throughout the period of learning to the end of the school year.

### ***Secondary School Credits***

As efforts are made to maximize instructional time and learning opportunities for students, the focus of instruction should remain on student achievement of overall expectations. Accordingly, the Minister directs that the 110 hours of instructional time as outlined in the *Ontario Schools: Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements 2011* will not apply in this school 2014-15 year for your three boards.

## ***Specialized Programs***

### **Co-op Education**

Where possible, students should continue in their cooperative education placements. If it is not possible for students to continue in their original placements teachers will provide alternative placements. A one-time exception to the *Cooperative Education and Other Forms of Experiential Learning: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Secondary Schools, 2000* may be granted to include placements within the home school for students, to focus on their learning and achieve their credits. Teachers will determine final marks by considering all evidence collected and assessed through observations, conversations and student products throughout the period of learning to the end of the school year.

Where possible, students should continue in their cooperative education placements. A one-time exception may include placements within the home school for students, to focus on student learning and achievement of credits. Teachers will determine final marks by considering all evidence collected and assessed through observations, conversations, and student products throughout the period of learning to the end of the school year.

### **Dual Credits**

College-delivered Level 1 dual credit courses are continuing on the college campus with board staff acting in the role of dual credit teachers. Therefore, there has been no interruption to student learning.

### **Specialist High Skills Major**

The Ministry will implement a one-time override in the student management system to permit reduced non-credit requirements (certifications earned) for Grade 12 students graduating in June in order to for the SHSM designation to appear on their diplomas. The credit earning requirements for SHSM follows all the same policies as for other courses offered in school. The board lead should contact the ministry SHSM education officers to facilitate the exemption for identified graduating students.

### ***The Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)***

We recognize that graduating students are particularly concerned that their graduation requirements be completed and that their diplomas are issued in order to move forward with post-secondary study and employment. The ministry has been in communication with representatives of colleges and universities and is confident that they will exercise flexibility so as not to disadvantage students who have been subject to circumstances beyond their control. As noted above with respect to secondary school credits, students should be evaluated in each course based on all evidence collected throughout the period of learning to the end of the school year. The Minister is further directing that for the 2014 – 2015 school year and for your boards only, that the OSSD be issued based on the teachers' evaluation as noted above.

### ***The Ontario Literacy Requirement***

Boards are asked to verify the status of all graduating students in terms of completion of the literacy requirement for the OSSD, and if a student is not able to complete the course requirements by the end of the school year, to ensure that they have been provided the opportunity to participate in the Adjudication Process, as set out in the annual memo to Directors of Education from the Director of Curriculum and Assessment Branch on May 19, 2015.

### ***EQAO Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics***

The EQAO will *not* proceed with the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics for full year courses and for semester 2 courses in your boards in spring 2015. The focus of Grade 9 mathematics courses will be on addressing the curriculum expectations in the remaining instructional days in 2014 - 2015.

### ***Supports for Student Learning***

The Ministry recognizes that secondary school student learning has been interrupted for a period of time in each of your school boards and students and parents share your concern about the preparation of students to be successful in the next steps in their academic careers in secondary school and in post-secondary study. With this in mind, the ministry encourages you to communicate the following supports to your students, parents and community:

- **Summer School** – Students may register in summer school to improve their marks or to complete full courses in either face-to-face or eLearning formats, as available. Boards are encouraged to work collaboratively with other district school boards to provide increased summer school availability in these formats and to inform students and parents of this availability.
- **Credit Rescue** – Boards are encouraged to engage students in credit rescue activities for the remainder of the school year.
- **Independent Learning Centre (ILC)** – Your boards are reminded of opportunities that may be available through the ILC for students to earn credits. Information about the ILC, course availability and registration procedures continue to be available on the ILC website at [www.ilc.org](http://www.ilc.org)

- **Non-credit Supports** – Individual colleges and universities, and the websites for the Ontario College Admission Service (OCAS) [www.ocas.ca/home.html](http://www.ocas.ca/home.html) and the Ontario University Application Centre (OUAC) [www.ouac.on.ca](http://www.ouac.on.ca) identify non-credit supports for all students entering post-secondary study. In addition, the ILC is providing non-credit course packages in Grade 12 English, math and science courses, to supplement learning in courses in which graduating students were enrolled to support successful transition to the post-secondary sector. These courses will be available free of charge to students graduating from your boards. Further information about these Grade 12 courses will be posted on the ILC website at [www.ilc.org](http://www.ilc.org).

If you have questions, please contact Karen Gill, Director, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch at 416-325-2576 or [karen.gill@ontario.ca](mailto:karen.gill@ontario.ca).

Thank you for your ongoing support of our students as we all work to support their success in this school year.



George Zegarac  
Deputy Minister