

**October 20, 2022**

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

**From:** Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education

Nancy Naylor  
Deputy Minister

**Subject:** **Release of 2021-22 EQAO Provincial Results and Next Steps in Plan to Catch Up**

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Today, the Ontario government announced next steps on Ontario's Plan to Catch Up. The purpose of this letter is to share the details of this announcement, including a range of supports for students, parents and school boards to support student achievement.

### **Catch Up Payments**

Today, the Ontario government launched Catch Up Payments, offering families direct financial support to support their children as they catch up. This money can be used to help to offset costs, whether that be for educational supplies, additional tutoring supports or other items to help their children address learning needs resulting from the pandemic. This new initiative commits a total of \$365 million in direct financial relief for parents.

Families of students in publicly funded, private, First Nation/federally-operated or home-school settings will receive financial support. Students (up to 18 years old) can receive \$200 per child, while students with special education needs (up to 21 years old) can receive \$250. Families can apply for Catch Up Payments through a [secure website](#) where they can create a unique profile for each eligible student and check the status of their application throughout the process. Applications for Catch Up Payments are now open and will remain open until March 31, 2023.

### **Extension of Tutoring Supports Program**

In addition to direct supports for families, school-based supports are an important part of the Learning Recovery Action Plan. As such, school boards are now able to deliver the

\$175M Tutoring Supports Program until March 31, 2023 and are able to use any unspent funds from the first half of the program to this extended timeline. Amendments to the consolidated school board 2022-23 Priorities and Partnerships Funding (PPF) Transfer Payment Agreement will be made in the near future to reflect these changes.

## **EQAO Results**

Earlier today, EQAO released provincial highlights from the 2021-22 school year Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics, and the Assessment of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Primary and Junior Divisions. While results reveal stable performance in the OSSLT and relative stability in Grade 6 reading and writing results, there is weaker performance in math across all grades and reading and writing in Grade 3. The impact of the pandemic is being observed in reading and math achievement, and these results are in line with what we are observing in other jurisdictions, both across Canada and internationally. These results signal the areas that students need support in to ensure they catch up and are set up for success, and the importance of staying in school for the entirety of the school year.

EQAO will be releasing embargoed board results by October 26<sup>th</sup> through their e-system. Results will be made public on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. It is expected that board results remain confidential until that time. The ministry will schedule a meeting with boards to discuss provincial results. A separate invitation will follow.

## **Math Supports**

Over the last three years, important investments have been made in math through our \$200 million four-year math strategy to support students and educators with the math skills and resources to succeed in the classroom and beyond. These investments include school-based math coaches, board math leads, subsidies for Additional Qualifications in math, digital math tools in classrooms and more one-on-one virtual math tutoring through Mathify and Eurêka!. We also introduced a new elementary math curriculum and a new de-streamed Grade 9 math course. With the return to normalcy, it is expected that these investments will be fully leveraged this year.

Building on the work to date and to support students to recover learning in math, a new Math Recovery Plan is in development.

Beginning this school year, students will have access to even more digital math resources, including elementary math course packs provided by TVO and TFO Idello's Missions d'Élo, and access to the Grade 9 online math course for additional review and practice.

The ministry is also providing an additional \$15 million for school boards to offer a digital tool aligned with the Ontario curriculum to support students, parents, and educators.

The OECM is supporting boards in making informed choices about effective tools aligned with the Ontario curriculum.

This year, the ministry will also work directly with school boards through new Math Action Teams that will have expertise in promoting the use of high-impact math teaching practices in Ontario classrooms, with a focus on early interventions.

The ministry will work directly with school boards through the Math Action Teams, including board and school-based math coaches. The ministry is also considering options to strengthen *Policy/Program Memorandum 160: Protected Time for Daily Mathematics Instruction, Grades 1 to 8*, to promote the use of high-impact math teaching practices in Ontario classrooms.

## **Literacy Supports**

In February 2022, the ministry committed to taking immediate action to improve student literacy as part of its response to the Ontario Human Rights Commission's (OHRC) *Right to Read Report*, including commitments to revising the elementary Language and Français curriculum and issuing new de-streamed Grade 9 English and Français courses for implementation in September 2023.

These commitments also include a focus on helping educators reach young students sooner to support the development of reading skills, including the release of [Effective Early Reading Instruction: A Teacher's Guide](#) in English and French last Spring, to support evidence-based effective instruction in early reading.

In addition, beginning in 2023-24, the ministry will require all students in publicly-funded schools in year 2 of Kindergarten to Grade 2 to be screened for reading twice a year using evidence-based early screening tools. The second screening would be optional for students meeting or exceeding the benchmark. The ministry intends to work with school boards and partners on recommended screening tools in the current 2022-23 school year, for use in the 2023-24 school year.

## **Modern Curriculum**

The ministry is also continuing to modernize curriculum to ensure learning is current, evidence-informed and prepares students for the job and life skills they need to thrive. This includes a focus on math, science, computer studies, business studies, technological education and pathways for the skilled trades, in addition to the new

mandatory Indigenous-focused learning to be added to the Social Studies, Grades 1-3 curriculum for implementation in September 2023.

Recognizing the need to be transparent and inform students, families and educators on curriculum, the ministry will develop and release a Curriculum Review Guide that includes a regular curriculum review cycle that ensures curriculum is up to date and relevant to important job and life skills.

### **Pathways for the Skilled Trades**

We will continue our work to ensure that students have more opportunities to be exposed to skilled trades early and more easily transition into these high-demand careers.

### **Attendance Supports**

We will also be working with school boards to create provincial expectations for how boards help students with attendance difficulties and enable more students to benefit from consistent classroom learning.

The ministry is committed to working with schools and boards over the coming months to support your board's efforts to enable student learning, beginning more immediately with math. Ministry teams will be reaching out directly.

Our collective efforts and strategic investments will help Ontario students get back on track and prepare them for success.

Sincerely,

Stephen Lecce  
Minister

Nancy Naylor  
Deputy Minister

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