

Toronto District School Board

Policy P038

Title: **TRANSFORMING STUDENT LEARNING IN LITERACY AND MATHEMATICS**

Adopted: February 24, 1999

Effectuated: February 24, 1999

Revised: **October 30, 2019**

Reviewed: October 30, 2019

Authorization: Board of Trustees

1. RATIONALE

The Transforming Student Learning in Literacy and Mathematics Policy (the “Policy”) supports the Board’s commitment to providing all students with enriching learning opportunities in literacy and mathematics, and to supporting all students in reaching high standards of achievement.

2. OBJECTIVE

To affirm the Board’s commitment to improve outcomes for all students and to develop and deliver strong, effective literacy and mathematics programs in all TDSB schools.

3. DEFINITIONS

Board is the Toronto District School Board, which is also referred to as the “TDSB”.

Barrier, refers to an obstacle to Equity that may be overt or subtle, intended or unintended, and systemic or specific to an individual or group, and that prevents or limits access to opportunities, benefits, services or advantages that are available to other members of society.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is underpinned by three tenets: (1) holding high expectations for all students, (2) assisting students in the development of cultural competence and (3) guiding students to develop a critical cultural consciousness.

Deep Learning through Technology refers to instructional practices that immerse students in innovative pedagogies and authentic learning experiences, supported by technology. These practices stimulate meaningful engagement, facilitate mastery of transferable knowledge and cultivate the attainment of Global

Competencies. Student achievement, equity and well-being, are supported by deep learning practices and rich technology integration in the classroom. Deep learning reflects the active presence of the TDSB Global Competencies in all classrooms.

Digital Fluency is the knowledge and skills required to assess, select and utilize a variety of technological tools responsibly, ethically and effectively based on particular situations, challenges, problems and contexts, for the purposes of communicating, collaborating, creating knowledge, thinking critically, and achieving teaching and learning outcomes in a digitally interconnected world.

Global Competencies are the knowledge, skills and characteristics that students need to be engaged and productive global citizens. The five areas of focus for TDSB are Collaboration and Leadership; Communication; Creativity, Inquiry and Entrepreneurship; Global Citizenship and Character; Critical Thinking and Problem Solving.

Gradual Release of Responsibility refers to when during explicit teaching of new information, strategies, and skills, and while modelling strategies, skills, and behaviours, the teacher provides students with maximum support. As students begin to apply the new learning, the teacher provides guidance and offers feedback as necessary. As students internalize the learning, skills, strategies, and behaviours (e.g., during shared and then guided reading sessions), the teacher gradually provides less and less support and students assume more and more responsibility. Finally, the release or transfer of responsibility is complete and the student is able to work independently (Guide to Effective Instruction Reading, Kindergarten to Grade 3, GL5, 6).

Literacy is the ability to use and apply language and images in rich and varied forms to read, write, listen, speak, view, represent, discuss and think critically about ideas.

Mathematical understanding includes learning facts, skills, and conceptual understanding; the ability to apply the processes of mathematics (problem solving, reasoning and proving, reflecting, selecting tools and computational strategies, connecting, representing, and communicating); and acquiring a positive attitude towards mathematics.

Perceptual Data refers to the voices of the stakeholders reflecting their perspectives, attitudes, beliefs, thoughts and feelings- information that is important to consider for responsive planning and decision-making. The TDSB collects perceptual or perception data on a regular basis from different stakeholder groups mainly through surveys (e.g., Student and Parent Census, School Climate Surveys), and occasionally via focus groups. The purpose is to gather information on how stakeholders (e.g., students) perceive (including think or feel about) certain topics (e.g., relationships with school adults).

TDSB is the Toronto District School Board, also referred to as the “Board”.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

The Director of Education holds the primary responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Policy.

Within the Director’s Office, the responsibility for the day-to-day management and coordination of the Policy is assigned to the Associate Director: Leadership, Learning, and School Improvement.

5. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This Policy applies to all TDSB staff, including teachers, administrators, supervisory officers and support staff working in schools.

6. POLICY

6.1. To achieve outcomes for students that that transforms student learning in literacy and mathematics, TDSB affirms its commitment to:

- a) Create an equitable school system where the achievement and well-being of every student is fostered through rich, culturally-authentic and relevant learning experiences in diverse and accepting environments where all are included, every voice is heard and every experience is honoured;
- b) Support schools to align their literacy and mathematics programs with current Ministry of Education curriculum and policy documents, TDSB resource and research documents, and the TDSB commitment to anti-oppression, anti-racism, and inclusive education;
- c) Support schools in setting goals in student achievement, equity, and well-being with a focus on literacy and mathematics including professional learning plans as part of the school improvement planning process;
- d) Identify and address barriers to access and learning;
- e) Support the development of high-quality early learning programs, where literacy and mathematical thinking and behaviours are fostered through play, inquiry and daily experiences;
- f) Set and uphold high expectations, while providing early and effective interventions, for all students based on the fundamental belief that all students can learn and meet or surpass curriculum expectations;

- g) Support educators to develop appropriate instructional strategies to meet the learning needs of students;
- h) Adapt and deliver a curriculum that is culturally relevant, responsive, and uses resources that are inclusive and reflect the diversity of TDSB students;
- i) Implement comprehensive programs that utilize gradual release of responsibility and provide multiple entry points for students to access the curriculum;
- j) Strengthen the partnership between home and school to support literacy and mathematics learning;
- k) Recognize the importance of creating opportunities to bring students' first languages, including sign language, into the classroom;
- l) Support supervisory officers to engage with schools to improve student achievement in literacy and mathematics and to promote well-being through the school improvement planning process;
- m) Support principals in their role as curriculum and instructional leaders; and
- n) Monitor instructional programming and interventions for effectiveness.

6.2. All teachers, administrators and superintendents share in the responsibility to provide all students with enriching learning opportunities in literacy and mathematics and to support all students in meeting high standards of achievement.

To improve student learning and skill development in both literacy and mathematics, the Board will:

- a) Develop an understanding amongst all staff that teaching practices, interactions with students, and their own ideas about identity influence the academic success and social development of students;
- b) Ensure professional learning addresses the existing systemic bias and barriers to student achievement and the development of strategies to address the bias and eliminate the barriers;
- c) Incorporate Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) by holding high expectations for all students, knowing learners well, considering the classroom practices which lead to culturally responsive classrooms, and designing learning experiences that are relevant, authentic and

enable students to see themselves in the daily learning of the classroom while developing the knowledge and skills for global competence;

- d) Collect and share qualitative, quantitative and perceptual data from a variety of sources which are used to shape system direction and school improvement plans in literacy and mathematics;
- e) Ensure that educators understand the stages in the process of learning literacy and mathematics in the early years and provide classroom experiences that build on a student's strengths and on what the student is already able to do;
- f) Ensure that schools promote digital fluency in literacy and mathematics by integrating deep learning experiences supported by technology in all strands in literacy and mathematics as part of balanced literacy and numeracy programming;
- g) Provide professional learning on evidence-based instructional and assessment strategies that articulate high expectations for all students and align with TDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan and TDSB resources;
- h) Provide a range of options and opportunities for students to demonstrate the full extent of their learning, congruent with TDSB's Global Competencies;
- i) Provide professional learning that is responsive to the identities, abilities and lived experiences of students and staff, and is job-embedded with opportunity for socially constructed and formal learning experiences;
- j) Strengthen the focus on student voice in the learning process so that students can effectively describe their learning and identify their further learning needs, while engaging in real-life applications, and respecting a diversity of perspectives;
- k) Assist schools to identify, acquire and utilize appropriate resources to address diverse student needs including levelled texts and other culturally relevant and responsive resources for instruction;
- l) Schools will develop a communication plan that will communicate fully with parents/guardians and communities about school literacy and mathematics programs including strategies for parents/guardians to support their child's learning and growth along literacy and numeracy continua; and

- m) Where applicable, encourage families to continue to use dual languages at home as a foundation of literacy and language development in English.

7. SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

The Director of Education is authorized to issue operational procedures to implement this Policy.

8. EVALUATION

This Policy will be reviewed at a minimum of every four (4) years.

9. APPENDICES

Not Applicable.

10. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

TDSB Documents:

- TDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan Action Plans, October 2018
- TDSB A Vision for Learning
- Early Learning and Care Policy (P022)
- French-as-a-Second Language Policy (P080)
- TDSB Expected Practices in English
- TDSB Expected Practices in Mathematics
- TDSB Math Plan 2019

Curriculum Documents - Literacy

- The Kindergarten Program, 2016
- The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Language, 2006 (revised)
- The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 and 10: English, 2007 (revised)
- The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: English, 2007 (revised)
- Supporting English Language Learners: A practical guide for Ontario educators Grades 1 to 8, 2008
- Many Roots, Many Voices. Supporting English language learners in every classroom. A practical guide for Ontario educators, 2005
- Adolescent Literacy Guide: A Professional Learning Resource for Literacy, Grades 7-12 (Revised 2016)

Curriculum Documents - Mathematics

- The Kindergarten Program, 2016
- The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8: Mathematics, 2005 (revised)
- The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 and 10: Mathematics, 2005 (revised)
- The Ontario Curriculum, Grade 9: Mathematics – Mathematics Transfer Course, Applied to Academic, 2006

- The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: Mathematics, 2007 (revised)

Curriculum Documents – French as a Second Language

- The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: French as a Second Language, 2013 (revised)
- The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9-12: French as a Second Language, 2014 (revised)
- Welcoming English Language Learners into French as a Second Language Programs (2016)
- Including Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Language Programs: A Guide for Ontario Schools (2015)

Ontario Ministry of Education Policy Documents

- Learning for All. A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013
- Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario's Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12
- Special Education in Ontario Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Resource Guide, 2017
- Paying Attention to Mathematics Education: Seven Foundational Principles for Improvement in Mathematics, K – 12, 2011
- Focusing on the Fundamentals of Math: A Teacher's Guide, 2018

Additional Documents

- 21st Century Competencies: Foundation Document for Discussion: Phase 1 Towards Defining 21st Century Competencies for Ontario at <https://oce.on.ca/resource/towards-defining-21st-century-competencies-for-ontario/>
- Ministry of Education, Capacity Building Series, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Towards Equity and Inclusivity in Ontario Schools, November 2013. Retrieved at: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_ResponsivePedagogy.pdf
- Transforming FSL - Prologue: A Publication for Professional Conversations (2015) <https://transformingfsl.ca/en/resources/prologue-a-publication-for-professional-conversations/>