

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 25, 2021

From: David Moore, Senior Manager, Secondary Teaching

To: All Secondary Principals and Vice Principals

Cc: Leslie Wolfe, President, Toronto Teachers’ Bargaining Unit
(District 12 – OSSTF)

Re: *Academic Pathways – Grades 9 and 10* – Class Size Guidelines and Teacher Supports for 2021-2022

The Toronto District School Board is committed to ensuring that all students have the tools, resources, supports and opportunities they need to thrive and succeed.

Evidence-based data indicates that genuine access to appropriate learning opportunities is essential if students are to realize their academic potential. Notably, research has shown that students in Academic courses generally experience:

- Higher achievement in courses beyond Grade 10;
- Increased post-secondary pathway options;
- Greater success in post-secondary programs.

Mindful of these realities, the Board will undertake to facilitate the implementation of *Academic Pathways* for our students in Grades 9 and 10, system-wide. The goal of the TDSB is for the majority of Grade 9 and 10 students to be successful in all Academic level compulsory courses, where there is an Applied, Academic or Locally Developed program of study.

As smaller class sizes are one component in the successful bridging of achievement, opportunity and learning gaps, the Board will continue to examine class size to better meet the needs of students and work with all stakeholders to determine how to best realign resources to provide support for smaller class sizes.

The Board and OSSTF are currently negotiating changes to class size for *Academic Pathways* and at this time, and until such changes are effective in the Workload Accord, this memo is to provide a guideline as to how to proceed during spring staffing.

For the 2021-2022 school year, as a part of an evolving transition plan, those guidelines are as follows:

- In some schools, where the number of students historically taking Applied level programming is a much higher proportion of the overall school program, the

Board understands that teachers of Academic classes will potentially be required to accommodate a more diverse group of learners. In recognition of the desire of teachers to ensure that students succeed, and the potential challenges of delivering program to previously streamed students, the Board, in consultation with OSSTF, asks School Staffing Committees to target (up to) **26** as the class size guideline for each class designated as an *Academic Pathways* class (i.e. for each Grade 9 or 10 course where there is no longer an Applied Level option being offered as a separate class). To assist in this regard, the Academic divisor used for staffing purposes will be modified for the purpose of supplementing the teacher allocation(s) of schools with demonstrated transformational or transitional support requirements.

- Principals can reasonably expect that the staffing supplement for 2021-2022 will be commensurate with the degree to which *Academic Pathways*-focused programming adjustments have been implemented at their school relative to the historical proportion of Applied credit offerings prior to the system's formal commitment to a more inclusive approach to program delivery at the Academic level of instruction (i.e. 2013-2014 to 2015-2016, inclusive). Please note that additional sections identified in the staff allocation sheet as specific to the application of the modified Academic divisor must be used for Academic programming that is consistent with the implementation of *Academic Pathways* for students in Grades 9 and 10.
- In instances where staff allocation and program distribution are making it difficult to abide by this guideline, Principals will consider a variety of strategies in order to meet this guideline (e.g. review viability of program offerings being considered; examine growth and attrition data in all courses and possible realignment of staff in the staffing model; seek additional staffing via the Holdback request process.) Please note that Holdback requests will be assessed on a case by case basis and evaluated relative to the school's overall allocation of teaching resources and, more generally, the allocation of limited financial resources from a system perspective.
- To enhance student success, School Staffing Committees will also consider directing part of the school's allocation of Student Success Teachers to support teachers and students in *Academic Pathways* classes.
- It is also expected that School-based Student Success Teams will provide teachers of *Academic Pathways* classes access to both appropriate system supports—e.g. Learning Coaches—and in-school supports—e.g. Curriculum Leaders and Assistant Curriculum Leaders.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the particulars of this memo, please do not hesitate to contact your Staffing Officer. Of course, Alisa Cashore (Centrally Assigned Principal, Secondary Teaching) and I are also at your disposal to provide clarification as the need presents.

Many thanks for your assistance and cooperation.

David