



News Release

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Delivery of the Ontario School Curriculum Not Monitored: Auditor General

(TORONTO) Ontario's education system does not collect information to confirm that its curriculum is being properly followed across Ontario, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk reports in her office's *2020 Annual Report*.

"Our audit concluded the Ministry of Education and school boards do not have formal processes to enable them to gain assurance the curricula are being delivered consistently to a high standard across the province," stated Lysyk. "Nor does the Ministry have assurance or processes to determine that students are being consistently assessed against curriculum-learning expectations."

The audit concludes that although Ontario has performed well on international and national tests, in some areas (e.g., reading, math and science), results have been stagnating and even declining in recent years.

The audit also found the curricula are aging, with many not revised in at least 10 years. The Ministry does not have a formal process to determine when and what should be updated to ensure that Ontario students are learning the most current and relevant material in a world of quickly changing technology and cultural diversity.

"During COVID-19, we have noted that the Ministry is making advancements in digital learning, including digitization of the new math curriculum and online content for various subjects, training for teachers on remote learning, and provisions for technology for students," said Lysyk.

The audit noted that in most cases the Ministry followed appropriate steps in its review and revision process when revising or developing curricula. However, recent curricula were released without sufficient time for school boards and schools to review them and for teachers to prepare instructional materials and resources to properly implement them.

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Read the report at www.auditor.on.ca

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Background and Other Findings:

- Ontario has 72 publicly funded school boards and about 5,000 schools, with 126,000 full-time equivalent teachers and 2 million students.
- In Ontario, the Ministry is responsible for developing the curriculum to be taught to students and assessment policies to be used by teachers and educators.
- School boards are responsible for ensuring their staff comply with implementing all curriculum expectations and helping teachers to improve their teaching practices so that they can deliver the curriculum effectively.
- For the five most recently released curricula, the Ministry did not provide training to school boards and school staff for two curricula: Grade 10 Career Studies 2019 and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Studies Secondary 2019.
- The Ministry and school boards rarely solicited teacher feedback on teaching resources to identify which resources most educators found not to be useful.
- Ministry policy on student assessment does not clearly define the levels of achievement students are to be evaluated upon, leading to the risk of inconsistent assessment of students.
- Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessment results are declining, particularly in math, but the reasons remain unknown to the ministry. Over the last five years, provincial EQAO results for most assessments have either declined or stagnated.
- Many textbooks are old and not relevant. Several Ontario curricula have not been revised for over a decade and many of the corresponding textbooks on the Ministry's list of approved books are just as old.
- Since curriculum leads are also teachers, under their collective bargaining agreement they cannot direct another teacher to take a certain action, evaluate a colleague in any way or make sure that teachers in their departments are implementing the curriculum and assessing students appropriately.