

March 23, 2023

Samra Dervic, Senior Policy Advisor
Curriculum, Assessment and Student Success Policy Branch
Ministry of Education
315 Front St. W, 13th floor
Toronto, ON M5V 3A4

Sent by email: Samra.Dervic@ontario.ca

Re: Language Grades 1-8 and English Grade 9 Curriculum Revisions

Dear Ms. Dervic,

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the review of the draft revisions to the elementary Language curriculum and English Grade 9 course.

This letter builds upon the recommendations submitted by the Ontario School Library Association (OSLA) earlier in this process¹ (April 2022). As we shared, the school library learning commons and the teacher-librarian play a critical role in enabling teachers and students to successfully meet and exceed the curriculum objectives of the Language Grades 1-8 and English Grade 9 course.

Adequately funded school libraries and trained library staff are essential for achieving the following aspects of the revised elementary Language curriculum and English Grade 9 course:

- **Strand A: Literacy Connections and Applications**
 - A2. Digital Media Literacy
 - *School libraries are sometimes the only way for students to access technological tools (e.g., computers, Internet, etc.) and the directed instruction connected to their use, which is essential for developing digital media literacy skills.*
 - A3. Applications, Connections, and Contributions
 - *Library professionals are trained in the selection of culturally responsive and diverse materials needed to support curricular goals.*
- **Strand B: Foundations in Language**
 - B2.9 Vocabulary & B2.10 Reading Fluency
 - *Libraries offer additional textual support to foster a love for reading in children that further develops their vocabulary and reading fluency.*

¹ [OSLA and TALCO response: Ministry of Education Language, Grades 1-8/English, Grades 9-12](#)

- B3. use knowledge and skills related to punctuation and grammar (as outlined in Schedule 2, Grades 1–9 grammar continuum) to support their understanding of a variety of texts and to communicate meaning
 - *As a hub for recreational reading, school libraries support the development of language development (syntax, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and word processing).*
- **Strand C: Comprehension (Understanding and Responding to Texts)**
 - C1. Reading, Listening, and Viewing for Meaning
 - C3. Critical Literacy
 - *The selection of appropriate materials is a part of the professional practice of school library professionals. This includes modeling collection development practices that follow established procedures, and processes, align with the role of the school library and respond to the library community. Library professionals provide guidance to educators for the use and selection of authentic resources.*
- **Strand D: Composition (Expressing Ideas and Creating Texts)**
 - D1. Developing Ideas and Organizing Content
 - D2. Creating Texts
 - D3. Publishing, Presenting and Reflecting
 - *School libraries offer a variety of resources and media that allow students to develop their research and critical thinking skills.*

As of the 2022-23 school year, the Ministry of Education has implemented a new accountability directive as part of the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) process to gather further information on how school boards are ensuring that they are providing library resources in accordance with the Ministry funding formula. We are eager to see the outcome of this information gathering effort, and we believe it is imperative to ensure that curriculum objectives are aligned with the importance of ensuring that students across Ontario have a fully resourced school library program to support these objectives.

We welcome the opportunity for further engagement and discussion with your team on ways in which we can work together to harmonize best practices and help student success throughout Ontario.

Sincerely,

Shelagh Paterson, Executive Director
Ontario Library Association

Johanna Gibson-Lawler, President
Ontario School Library Association

Cc: Christine Gardner, Senior Manager, Curriculum and Learning Resources Policy Unit

About our organization:

Founded in 1900, the **Ontario Library Association** (OLA) is the oldest continually operating non-profit library association in Canada. With more than 5,000 members, the OLA is the largest library association in the country. We offer opportunities for learning, networking, and providing input into public policy. The **Ontario School Library Association** (OSLA) is a division of OLA consisting of 1,000 members who work in Ontario's school libraries.

Contact: **Shelagh Paterson, Executive Director**
Ontario Library Association
spaterson@accessola.com

Appendix: Email from Ministry of Education (March 9, 2023)

Subject: Ministry of Education - Request for stakeholder feedback- Language, English curriculum

Thank you for confirming your availability and signing a Non-Disclosure Agreement to participate in the review of the draft revisions to the elementary Language curriculum and English Grade 9 course. The Français Grades 1-9 curriculum is also being reviewed in a parallel process.

The curriculum is being revised to align with evidence-based approaches that emphasize direct, explicit and systematic instruction. This draft curriculum has been guided by research and by subject-matter experts and contributors who have provided input on various aspects of the curriculum, including Dr. Robert Savage (York University) and Dr. Shelley Stagg Peterson (University of Toronto). As well, members of the International Dyslexia Association/Dyslexia Canada and MediaSmarts have provided extensive feedback as part of the review process. Additionally, the ministry has been working with more than 60 English- and French-language educators and other subject-matter experts to revise the curriculum.

At this time, we are gathering feedback from education stakeholders and partners on the overall and specific learning expectations for the four strands of the draft curriculum, Grades 1 to 9. In addition, Strand B also includes two Schedules that provide an elaboration of the learning in the expectations and specific examples of the learning. All of the learning is considered mandatory for each grade.

Your feedback will be reviewed and considered to inform further curriculum revisions and adjustments. Please note that the draft curriculum documents that we are sharing with you at this time are confidential and are not final. As well, the charts will be formatted by a graphic designer to ensure that they are user-friendly and accessible. As such, please excuse the current draft state.

Please find attached the following materials for your review and feedback:

- Strand A: Literacy Connections and Applications
- Strand B: Foundations in Language
 - Strand B Schedule 1: Language Foundations Skills Progression Grades 1-4
 - Strand B Schedule 2: Grammar, Syntax, Punctuation, and Capitalization Grades 1-9
- Strand C: Comprehension (Understanding and Responding to Texts)
- Strand D: Composition (Expressing Ideas and Creating Texts)

(The documents are password protected. Password: [redacted])

We ask that you please review and provide your feedback on the shared materials using the online survey link below:

[Elementary Language and Grade 9 English curriculum revisions – Survey](#)

Please submit your feedback no later than March 23, 2023. For any questions and concerns, please contact Samra Dervic at samra.dervic@ontario.ca.

We thank you for your time and consideration in supporting this curriculum revision and we look forward to receiving your feedback.