

Council to Improve Classroom Conditions Implementation of April 2017 Recommendations

The Council to Improve Classroom Conditions issued its report on April 28, 2017, including 40 recommendations. The recommendations, along with their status and timelines for implementation, are listed below.

Recommendations	Status
Broader Engagement	
1. Establish a province-wide Google group for teacher representatives to seek input and share information.	Complete, launch May 23
2. Share council agenda with all teachers and administrators at least one week in advance of council meetings.	Effective now, ongoing
3. Ask all who work in schools to put their names forward to be part of issue-specific working groups.	In progress All working in schools have been asked to submit their names by May 26.
4. Ask schools to identify their top concerns.	In progress Request sent to principals on March 19.
5. Invite teachers, other experts, and stakeholders to present to council on key issues.	Effective now, ongoing
6. Prepare and share a summary of discussions and record of actions following each council meeting.	Effective now, ongoing
7. Share information with principals and seek their direct input on key issues.	Effective now, ongoing
8. Engage parents, students, school boards, and advocacy groups on issues directly affecting them through school advisory councils, home and school associations, and student councils, and communicate directly with organizations and associations.	Effective now, ongoing
Assessment and Evaluation	
9. Require EECD and school boards to share Early Development Instrument data with all early elementary teachers, and provide supports for schools which have a high concentration of children with vulnerabilities.	Effective now, ongoing EECD staff have begun discussions with school boards and will report back at the June council meeting.
10. End three provincially-mandated assessments and exams: Grade 1 Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement; Grade 2 Common Math Assessment; and Math at Work 10 provincial exam.	Complete
11. Continue the suspension for this year (2016–17) of: Grade 8 Reading, Writing and Mathematics assessment and Grade 10 exams.	Complete
12. Direct EECD and school boards to present rationale for any assessments they wish to continue, eliminate, or streamline so council can make recommendations before any assessments are re-initiated next year.	Effective now, ongoing Remaining provincial assessments were presented to council in May. Board assessments will be presented in September, and will remain suspended until council receives these presentations and decisions are made.
13. Institute a five-year moratorium on new board- or EECD-initiated assessments, unless proposals are approved by council.	Effective now, ongoing

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<p>14. Ask EECD to develop draft policies that support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ assessment and evaluation ▪ promotion, retention, and acceleration <p>The draft policies must support students’ best interests, respect teachers’ professional judgment, and address concerns around deadlines, use of zeros, and “no fail” practices.</p>	In progress
<p>15. Ask EECD to explain the rationale for report card changes made over the past several years and present options to simplify report cards, including the option of paperless report cards.</p>	In progress
Attendance	
<p>16. Request that EECD release the draft policy immediately to gather and return feedback to the council before the May 17 meetings, to communicate the policy to schools in June, and to take effect in September.</p>	In progress
<p>17. Ask principals to share the policy with staff and school advisory councils and encourage feedback.</p>	Complete
<p>18. Request that EECD and school boards bring forward research and best practices on outreach to families or other supports and accountability measures to increase attendance.</p>	In progress
Class Sizes	
<p>19. Set a class cap of 28 (+2) for junior high/middle school and 30 (+2) for high school.</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Boards received funding to implement caps and hire staff. Principals can decide to exceed caps due to lack of space in the school, to avoid combined classes, or to respond to other exceptional circumstances with the agreement of the teachers involved and the School Advisory Council.</p>
<p>20. Provide funding to hire 40 teachers for a junior high/middle school pilot project to support math and literacy in classrooms that have high numbers of students with special needs.</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Boards received funding to hire staff.</p>
<p>21. Create a \$2M fund to enable up to 40 priority schools to receive \$50,000.</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>School boards have identified their priority schools. Decisions will be communicated in mid-June.</p>
<p>22. Direct registrars or others responsible for scheduling classes to avoid scheduling a large number of students on IPPs within one class.</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>School boards have been asked to encourage registrars and others responsible for scheduling classes to do so when possible.</p>
<p>23. Open courses offered by Nova Scotia Virtual School (NSVS) in French to both CSAP and French immersion students.</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>EECD is discussing this with NSVS and school boards.</p>

Recommendations	Status
Complex Classrooms	
<i>Note: These are initial recommendations until the Commission on Inclusive Education reports.</i>	
24. Request that school boards re-examine how they allocate their share of the \$750,000 currently provided, and manage these funds to ensure that teachers with more than one IPP are granted more release time.	In progress Boards have been asked to share more information with principals and teachers on how this funding is spent now. Based on feedback since the report was issued, council was asked if this recommendation was intended to address teachers with primary responsibility for the IPP. Council agreed.
25. Direct boards to allocate half of the fall PD day for teacher self-directed IPP and adaptation development.	Complete This recommendation refers to the PD day in late September.
Data Collection and Reporting	
26. Form a working group to recommend ways to streamline data collection and reporting. Identify recommendations related to Student Success Planning as a first priority.	In progress Council will form a working group with members from outside of council to act on this as a priority in the fall.
Pupil Evaluation, Classification, and Administrative Days	
27. Require school boards to schedule: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ for elementary and junior high, two out of three evaluation days prior to report card due dates, and the third at the end of the year for year-end duties. ▪ for high school, one administration day after January semester exams but before the report card due date, and two following the June semester exams. 	In progress School boards have been directed to implement this recommendation for the 2017–18 school year.
Technology and Work Processes	
28. Engage Service Nova Scotia to work with teachers and other TIENET/PowerSchool users to recommend changes, beginning with TIENET.	In progress The Ask the User team is on track to complete its interviews in schools in early June.
29. Issue a provincial directive permitting teachers to publish marks less frequently on PowerSchool at their discretion. Allow the school to determine when the in-progress mark is displayed, at least once a month.	In progress Quick reference guides have been developed on in-progress marks and publishing grades. They should be available by May 26. User guides and videos are also under development. Council has asked that superintendents be informed that this recommendation will be implemented for the first of the school year, to allow for appropriate communications with schools, parents, and students (refer to April report).
30. Issue a provincial directive to end any practice that requires teachers at any grade to assign a mark to every individual outcome in PowerSchool.	Complete
31. Confirm with boards and principals that teachers can have up to two business days to respond to emails.	Effective now, ongoing EECD and school boards are working on a communications plan to help teachers communicate this expectation to parents.

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32. Issue a provincial directive so high school teachers may wait to enter attendance into PowerSchool until the end of the school day.	Complete
33. Create and promote short videos and user guides on key PowerSchool activities. Make them available on well-known, accessible sites.	In progress The first quick reference guide—on publishing in-progress marks—will be available by May 26. Videos and a user guide on this topic are under development.
34. Advise elementary teachers that they are only required to use GradeBook for report cards. Additional use of GradeBook is at their discretion.	Effective now School boards were directed on May 16 to advise elementary principals immediately.
35. Give administrative assistants access to TIENET to facilitate uploading of documents and reduce administrative tasks of teachers in a shared, collaborative way at the school level.	Effective June 1 The goal is to give principals more flexibility to share the workload in schools where it is possible. EECD has identified documents that administrative assistants can access. Changes will be made in PowerSchool to permit access by June 1.
36. Explore options for replacing the Stage 2 adaptations form in TIENET with a more streamlined form or checklist, either in TIENET or in another form that is practical for teachers.	In progress Referred to the Ask the User research team.
37. Share a user guide and short video with teachers and administrators on how to copy adaptations, IPPs, and other documents year-to-year in TIENET.	In progress Quick reference guides have been developed on how to copy IPPs and adaptations. They should be available by May 26.
38. End the requirement to record assessments in two places: in the annual student program log as well as at the top of the IPP.	In progress Practices differ among school boards. EECD will discuss how to implement this recommendation with board TIENET leads at May 17, 18 meetings.
39. Support teachers, other school professionals, and parents with the process of transitioning students from IPPs to public school program outcomes through the program planning process.	In progress This recommendation has been referred to the Commission on Inclusive Education.
40. Request that the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development explore ways to increase the readiness of children to learn and succeed when they enter grade primary.	In progress Council will receive a report on this in the fall.