

# Council to Improve Classroom Conditions

## Status of Recommendations on Legislated Priorities:

March – December 2017

Recommendations	Status
<b><i>Assessment and Evaluation: Provincial and Board Assessments</i></b>	
Institute a five-year moratorium on new board- or EECD-initiated assessments, unless proposals are approved by council.	<b>Complete, ongoing</b>
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.	<b>In progress</b>
Ask boards for more information on: how they would access and use data elementary teachers already collect in a way that doesn't increase teacher workload; what individual boards were doing or planning to do before assessments were suspended; and what differences exist between board and provincial assessments.	<b>In progress</b>
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.	<b>Complete</b>
Maintain remaining provincial assessments, but: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ share and interpret assessment data clearly and concisely</li> <li>▪ build PD modules on assessment scoring,</li> <li>▪ use provincial results to eliminate or streamline board- or school-based data collection in student success planning.</li> </ul>	<b>In progress</b>
Move Grade 6 Reading, Writing and Math, previously before Thanksgiving, to after Thanksgiving.	<b>Complete</b>
Combine the Grade 3 Reading and Writing Assessment and Grade 4 Math Assessment into one assessment. Reschedule the new, combined assessment, from early fall to spring and administer in Grade 3.	<b>In progress, effective Spring 2019 (Field tested in 2017-18)</b>
Ask Grade 3 and 4 language arts and math teachers and principals if they want to continue the assessments this year, or suspend them and restart with the combined assessment in 2018–19.	<b>Complete</b> 86.6% of respondents asked to suspend until Spring 2019
Introduce breaks in the Grade 8 Reading, Writing and Mathematics Assessments as necessary, similar to those for elementary.	<b>In progress, effective Spring 2018</b>
Streamline documentation around adaptations as they relate to assessments.	<b>In progress</b> Awaiting recommendations from Commission on Inclusive Education, March 2018.
Share Early Development Instrument (EDI) data with all early elementary teachers, and provide supports for schools.	<b>In progress</b> Next EDI in 2018.
<b><i>Assessment and Evaluation: Policy</i></b>	
Ask EECD to draft policy on assessment. Policy must support students' best interests, respect teachers' professional judgment, and address concerns around deadlines, use of zeros, and "no fail" practices.	<b>In progress</b>
Develop a research base, including data and professional advice, to guide the Student Assessment Policy development.	<b>In progress</b>
Develop a consultation plan, including focus groups of teachers, school advisory councils, parents, students and employers. Present the anticipated Student Assessment Policy structure and outline.	<b>In progress</b>
Ensure the Student Assessment Policy is supported by an operational guide that includes supports for vulnerable students.	<b>In progress</b>
Dedicate Council meeting time every month to the Student Assessment Policy to monitor the work.	<b>Complete, ongoing</b>

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March – December 2017 Recommendations: Status Report

Recommendations	Status
<b>Assessment and Evaluation: Report Cards</b>	
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.	<b>In progress</b>
Finalize a survey for Grades 4 – 6 teachers on their interest in an integrated report card, like that used in early elementary. Identify a way to consult parents and students.	<b>In progress.</b> Survey complete, plan for other consultation in progress.
Distribute the report card survey to Grades 4 – 6 teachers by the end of October. Bring results back to Council in December. Communicate decision on changes by early spring.	<b>In progress</b>
Align any changes to junior high/middle school report cards with curriculum renewal.	<b>In progress</b> Curriculum renewal underway.
Identify additional, practical report card changes and streamlining at all grades, including learner profiles, as required.	<b>In progress</b>
Develop a clear, one-page information sheet on comment writing, including tips, examples, and corrections of misinformation on what teachers believe they can and cannot write.	<b>Complete</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	
Meet with the Nova Scotia School Athletics Federation (NSSAF), others about scheduling school activities outside of the regular school day.	<b>Complete</b>
Move forward with pilot projects that involve community partners to work with the schools in providing outreach and services to families who need support in improving student attendance.	<b>Complete</b>
Develop a job description that makes it clear what the attendance support worker (pilot project) would do, what would be the necessary qualifications, and what would be the relationship with the school principal, other school staff, and SchoolsPlus staff.	<b>Complete</b>
Require that the attendance support worker be a teacher or a professional eligible to be certified as a teacher, such as a social worker or school psychologist.	<b>Complete</b>
Invest \$1.9 million over the next two years to implement 14 pilot projects across the province aimed at improving student attendance. Use funding to hire 14 attendance support workers assigned to families of schools, or feeder schools and to support each pilot with attendance programming and supports.	<b>Complete</b>
Ask school boards to nominate pilot schools for review by EECD and the NSTU, based on general criteria provided by council.	<b>Complete</b>
Conduct an evaluation of the pilots to inform next steps on expanding the pilots to more school sites.	<b>In progress</b>
Develop a template that boards can use to provide to parents and students to complete the educational plan, described in the operational plan for the attendance policy.	<b>Complete</b>
Develop a common exemption certificate, consistent with what is described in the Education Act, that enables boards to consider excusing a student (15 or older) from school for employment reasons.	<b>Complete</b>
Promote the value of regular attendance for all students. Provide template letters that schools can use to communicate with parents.	<b>In progress</b>
Seek ongoing feedback on the policy and operational guide, with a policy review at the end of the school year.	<b>In progress</b> Feedback can be provided at <a href="mailto:attendance@novascotia.ca">attendance@novascotia.ca</a>
Release the attendance policy and operational guide without delay. Make the policy effective no later than October 1.	<b>Complete</b>
Ask EECD, in consultation with a council working group, to develop and share an implementation plan to support the attendance policy.	<b>Complete</b>

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March – December 2017 Recommendations: Status Report

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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.	<b>Complete</b>
Request that EECD release the draft policy immediately to gather and return feedback to the council before the May 17 meetings.	<b>Complete</b>
<b>Class Size</b>	
Set a class cap of 28 (+2) for junior high/middle school, 30 (+2) for high school.	<b>Complete</b>
<b>Complex Classrooms</b>	
<i>Note: These are interim recommendations until the Commission on Inclusive Education reports.</i>	
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 IPPs or adaptations.	<b>Complete</b>
Create a \$2M fund to enable up to 40 priority schools to receive \$50,000. Ask schools to share their results and experiences with other schools and the council.	<b>Complete</b>
Direct registrars or others responsible for scheduling classes to avoid scheduling a lot of students on IPPs within one class, when possible.	<b>Complete</b>
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 primary responsibility for more than one IPP are granted more release time.	<b>In progress</b> Recommendation to be reviewed following the release of Commission on Inclusive Education Report.
Direct boards to allocate half of the fall PD day for teacher self-directed IPP and adaptation development.	<b>Complete</b>
<b>Data Collection and Reporting</b>	
Form a working group to recommend ways to streamline data collection and reporting. Complete the inventory of paperwork, data entry and administrative tasks by asking teachers about the specific demands on them. Finalize the inventory with school board superintendents and directors. Based on the inventory, identify ways to streamline the administrative burden, based on the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the purpose of the work clear?</li> <li>• Is the work redundant or unnecessary?</li> <li>• Can the work be streamlined?</li> <li>• Could others in the school play a role in completing the work?</li> </ul>	<b>In progress</b>
Provide boards with consistent criteria to minimize the number of requests made on school administrators and teachers by outside agencies to participate in research studies. Criteria should generally: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exclude the following months for research studies (September and June in all schools; September, January, February and June for high schools)</li> <li>• give all schools the opportunity to decline participation</li> <li>• require that a research report go back to the participating school.</li> </ul>	<b>In progress</b>
Broadly and effectively communicate the Student Success Planning changes to principals and teachers immediately, so time is not wasted again this year.	<b>Complete, ongoing</b>
<b>Pupil Evaluation, Classification, and Administrative Days</b>	
Require school boards to schedule: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 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.</li> <li>▪ for high school, one administration day after January semester exams but before the report card due date, and two following the June semester exams.</li> </ul>	<b>Complete for 2017-18</b> The NSTU Identified this issue in negotiations and government identified it as a legislated priority for council. Council continues to gather feedback on this issue.

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<b><i>Technology and Work Processes</i></b>	
Engage Service Nova Scotia to work with teachers and other TIENET/PowerSchool users to recommend changes, beginning with TIENET. Identify practical changes to TIENET that can save teachers time, to take effect this year.	<b>In progress</b>
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.	<b>In progress</b>
Create and promote short videos and user guides on key PowerSchool activities. Make them available on well-known, accessible sites.	<b>Complete, ongoing</b>
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.	<b>Complete, ongoing</b>
End the requirement to record assessments in two places: in the annual student program log as well as at the top of the IPP.	<b>In progress</b> Being considered as part of Ask the User.
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.	<b>In progress</b> Referred to the Commission on Inclusive Education.
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 monthly.	<b>Complete</b>
End any practice that requires teachers at any grade to assign a mark to every individual outcome in PowerSchool.	<b>Complete</b>
Confirm with boards and principals that teachers can have up to two business days to respond to emails.	<b>Complete</b>
Issue a provincial directive so high school teachers may wait to enter attendance into PowerSchool until the end of the school day.	<b>Complete</b>
Advise elementary teachers that they are only required to use GradeBook for report cards. Additional use is at their discretion.	<b>Complete</b>
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.	<b>Complete</b>