Report of the OSSTF District 20 Growing Success Work Group

Below, you will find the full report of the OSSTF District 20 *Growing Success* Workgroup. The Workgroup was formed as part of OSSTF's effort to provide teachers with the opportunity to influence the development of Board policy related to assessment, evaluation, and reporting.

The Workgroup consisted of 25 teachers from 15 Halton secondary schools, representing a broad spectrum of teaching experience and subject-area expertise. Meeting weekly throughout September and October, the Workgroup hammered out a set of policy recommendations that it believed would work well for teachers, students, administrators, and parents.

The final report contains the Workgroup's recommendations for policy and practice in the areas of **cheating and plagiarism, late and missed assignments, marks lower than 50%, and credit recovery**. It was presented to the Halton Board's *Growing Success* Steering Committee on October 27, 2010.

Since that time, the Board's Steering Committee has been engaged in preparing its own policy documents, which it plans to release in final form in the early spring of 2011. It is OSSTF's hope that the Board's final policy will clearly reflect the recommendations of our teachers.

You are invited to peruse the overview of the Teachers' report below and, when the time comes, compare its recommendations with the Board's new policy. The full report of the OSSTF Growing Success Work Group can be found on the District website.

Jim Young
Chair, OSSTF Growing Success Work Group
TBU Chief Negotiator
OSSTF District 20

Recommendations Overview

1. Plagiarism and Cheating:

The classroom teacher will determine the consequences for students who do not meet Board expectations of academic honesty. When a student has been found to be academically dishonest, consequences may include, but are not limited to, the following:
- giving the student a warning;
- contacting parents
- adding the student to a school log of academic dishonesty
- requiring the student to do supplementary work
- **assigning a grade penalty up to the full value of the assignment**
- placing a letter in the OSR at the discretion of the administrator
- meeting with administrator
- suspending the student

The determination of consequences will take into consideration any of the following factors that are relevant:
  i) grade level,
  ii) maturity,
  iii) the number and frequency of incidents
  iv) individual circumstances of the student. (43)

2. Late and Missed Evaluation

It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher, preferably in collaboration with students, to establish **due dates** for the submission of assignments for evaluation and clearly communicate those dates to students, and where appropriate, to parents.

The due date for 'summative tasks' and examinations is understood to be the final deadline, except in cases where the absence is deemed by the classroom teacher to be legitimate.

Teachers may set a final deadline for a late assignment or classroom evaluation.

When a student fails to submit an assignment or complete an evaluation by the final deadline as determined by the teacher, **a zero may be recorded and used for determining the student's mark on the report card.**

3. Marks Lower Than 50%

The marks recorded on the Provincial Report Card for students represent the ongoing efforts of all stakeholders to help achieve success and thus for grades 9 – 12 **the actual mark earned at that reporting period will be recorded.**

The lower limit of recorded marks will be 0 (zero).

4. CREDIT RECOVERY POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION CONCERNS:

Aside from our policy recommendations, we have some concerns about implementation:

1. **Our first concern is the lack of transparency of the Recovery programs and communication with other staff members about the program**. We feel that for Credit Recovery to be an option recommended by classroom teachers, they need to understand more of what happens in Recovery and how the program is administered. (GS p. 86 … the subject teacher is the primary impetus for a credit recovery program…). While the CR team can also make the recommendation and final decision, if teachers are more informed, they will more likely recommend Recovery as an option.

2. **Our bigger concern is implementation – it is inconsistent across the Board and in many schools, the complaints are credit integrity, attendance and course codes.**
   How can we address the integrity? Our suggestions are as follows:
   a. Use the Halton Credit Recovery Manual to help develop or adjust current practices.
   b. Experienced and purposeful staffing. In many schools, new teachers are given the sections and there is a revolving door of teachers in and out. This takes away from the consistency that a student at risk needs. It undermines the entire program and its integrity as well as the needs of the students who are in Recovery as a last resort.
   c. Proper use of Recovery course codes. There have been many complaints of Guidance or Admin not entering a Recovery code but just changing the previous course's mark.

3. Students are eligible for Credit Recovery only if they have been registered in and earned a failing grade for the course they are recovering.

4. Decisions regarding placement in Credit Recovery must consider all factors (not just the final grade in the course). **This is where communication between the SST and the subject teacher must be clear and open AND happen at the end of the course, not in the following two-year period that allows for Recovery.**

5. Finally – please continue to work on and finalize the Halton Credit Recovery Manual as it will work wonders for consistency, transparency and integrity, as well as a provide a great tool for collaborating with classroom teachers in order to help our students achieve success.

OSSTF WORK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS – DETAILED REPORT

PART A: CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

OUTCOME/EXPECTATION:
- Provide Policy Recommendation
- Align recommendations to evidence in Growing Success
- Identify Fundamental Principles that influence recommendations

Recommendation	Growing Success Principles.	Rationale/Evidence to Support Recommendation
1. Schools will put in place practices to support academic honesty. These practices may include, but are not limited to, the following: • Defining and explaining plagiarism • Defining and explaining the policy • Using examples to demonstrate plagiarism • Discussing the ethics of plagiarism • Defining plagiarism on the course outline • Teaching students how to cite work properly • Communicating board policy and school practices to all stakeholders • Publishing information in agendas, school/class websites etc. • Structuring tasks in ways that are plagiarism resistant	"are fair, transparent, and equitable for all students" "are carefully planned to relate to the curriculum expectations and learning goals and whenever possible , to the…needs and experiences of all students" "Are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or course and at other times throughout the school year or course"	"Teachers need to...share learning goals and success criteria with students at the outset of learning to ensure that students and teachers have a common and shared understanding of these goals and criteria as learning progresses" (28) "Teachers need to...use assessment to inform instruction, guide next steps, and help students monitor their progress…" (28) "The teacher acts as a "lead learner", providing support while gradually releasing more and more responsibility to the student, as the student develops the knowledge and skills needed to become an independent learner" (30)
2. Schools will put practices in place to detect incidents of cheating and plagiarism. These practices may include, but are not limited to, the following: • Finding some or all of the student's work previously published in another forum • Using plagiarism detection software • Having student orally read and explain aloud • Comparing to previous work the student has submitted during the course • Consulting with colleagues • Observing the act of copying • Monitoring student work	"are fair, transparent, and equitable for all students" "are ongoing, varied in nature, and administered over a period of time…"	"Teachers need to...gather information about student learning before, during and at or near the end of a period of instruction, using a variety of assessment strategies and tools" (28) "Teachers need to…analyse and interpret evidence of learning" (29)

Recommendation	Growing Success Principles.	Rationale/Evidence to Support Recommendation
3. The classroom teacher will determine the consequences for students who do not meet Board expectations of academic honesty. When a student has been found to be academically dishonest, consequences may include, but are not limited to, the following: • giving the student a warning; • contacting parents • adding the student to a school log of academic dishonesty • requiring the student to do supplementary work • assigning a grade penalty up to the full value of the assignment • placing a letter in the OSR at the discretion of the administrator • meeting with administrator • suspending the student The determination of consequences will take into consideration any of the following factors that are relevant: v) grade level, vi) maturity, vii) the number and frequency of incidents viii) individual circumstances of the student. (43)	"are fair, transparent, and equitable for all students" "Are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or course and at other times throughout the school year or course" "Provide ongoing feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement" "develop students' self assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning"	"The evaluation of student learning is the responsibility of the teacher" (39) "Teachers will weigh all evidence of student achievement…and will use their professional judgement to determine the student's…grade" (39) "It must be made clear to students that they are responsible for providing evidence of their learning within established timelines, and that there are consequences for cheating [and] plagiarizing..." (42) RESPOND KNOWING THE LEARNER

PART B: LATE AND MISSED ASSIGNMENTS

OUTCOME/EXPECTATION:

- Provide Policy Recommendation
- Align recommendations to evidence in Growing Success
- Identify Fundamental Principles that influence recommendations

Recommendation	Growing Success Principles.	Rationale/Evidence to Support Recommendation
1. Schools and teachers will inform students and their parents about the importance of submitting assignments for evaluation when they are due and about the possible responses and consequences for students who submit assignments late or fail to submit assignments	Principle #1 Are fair, transparent & equitable for all students Principle #4 Are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or course and at other appropriate points throughout the school year or course.	**p.29 "Principals…fostering a school-wide collaborative learning culture based on the sharing of knowledge and on a sense of collective responsibility for outcomes."** Pg. 43 It must be made clear to students early in the school year that they are responsible not only for their behaviour in the classroom and the school but also for providing evidence of their achievement of the overall expectations within the time frame specified by the teacher… Students must understand that there will be consequences for not completing assignments for evaluation or for submitting those assignments late Pg. 44 School board policies relating to late and missed assignments for evaluation will: - Describe how schools will inform students and their parents about the importance of submitting assignments for evaluation when they are due and about the consequences for students who submit assignments late of fail to submit assignments
2. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher, preferably in collaboration with students, to establish **due dates** for the submission of assignments for evaluation and clearly communicate those dates to students, and where appropriate, to parents. **The due date for 'summative tasks' and examinations is understood to be the final deadline, except in cases where the absence is deemed by the classroom teacher to be legitimate.**	Principle #1 Are fair, transparent & equitable for all students Principle #4 **Are communicated to clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or** course and at other appropriate points throughout the school year or course.	**p. 12 Canadian agencies recognize the importance of employability skills including responsibility, reliability, organization** **Pg. 39 "The teacher will consider evidence for all the tests/exams and assignments for evaluation that the student has completed or submitted, the number of tests/exams or assignments for evaluation that were not completed or submitted, and the evidence of achievement that is available for each overall expectation for a subject in a particular grade or course."** **p. 39 "Teachers will weigh all evidence of student achievement in light of these considerations and will use their professional judgment to determine the student's report card grade. "**

Recommendation	Growing Success Principles.	Rationale/Evidence to Support Recommendation
Teachers may set a final deadline for a late assignment or classroom evaluation. **When a student fails to submit an assignment or complete an evaluation by the final deadline as determined by the teacher, a zero may be recorded and used for determining the student's mark on the report card.**	Principle #5 Are ongoing, varied in nature, and administered over a period of time to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning	**p. 39 "Determining a report card grade will involve teachers' professional judgment and interpretation of evidence and should reflect the student's most consistent level of achievement, with special consideration given to more recent evidence."** Pg. 44 School board policies relating to late and missed assignments for evaluation will: - recognize that it is the responsibility of the classroom teacher, preferably in collaboration with students, to establish deadlines for the submission of assignments for evaluation and clearly communicate those deadlines to students and, where appropriate, to parents **Pg. 44 "Policy will provide clear procedures for determining a percentage mark for the report card for a student who has failed to submit one or more assignments for evaluation on time or at all."** **p. 45 acknowledges, and anecdotal evidence supports the conclusion that students appreciate the certainty of a fixed due date. Likewise, students without deadlines struggle to resist the procrastination impulse.**
4. **Where in the teacher's professional judgment it is appropriate to deduct marks for late assignments or late classroom evaluations, the mark deduction will be limited to a maximum of 10% of the value of the assignment/evaluation per day.**	Principle #1 **Are fair, transparent & equitable for all students** Principle #4 **Are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or course and at other appropriate points throughout the school year or course.**	**p.8 "Teachers' professional judgments are at the heart of effective assessment, evaluation and reporting of student achievement."** **p. 43 Refer to list of strategies including "deducting marks for late assignments up to and including the full value of the assignment"** **The ongoing and interactive nature of the 'Assessment Cycle for Learning' is disabled when work is not completed. For students to engage in assessment 'for learning', 'of learning' and 'as learning', the student must produce work in a timely fashion.**

Recommendation	Growing Success Principles.	Rationale/Evidence to Support Recommendation
5. A zero affecting the student's mark on a report card cannot be changed, unless in the teacher's professional judgment it is appropriate to do so.	Principle #1 **Are fair, transparent & equitable for all students** Principle #4 **Are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or course and at other appropriate points throughout the school year or course.**	**p. 44 "…provide clear procedures for determining a percentage mark for the report card for a student who has failed to submit one or more assignments for evaluation on time or at all."**

PART C: MARKS LOWER THAN 50%

OUTCOME/EXPECTATION:

- Provide Policy Recommendation
- Align recommendations to evidence in Growing Success
- Identify Fundamental Principles that influence recommendations

POLICY CONCERNS AND POLICY STATEMENT:

The policy of mark reporting hinges not on the singular idea of presenting a number but on the synergy of a school community to ensure that a variety of strategies and interventions happen before a reporting period is reached.

Therefore, mark generation, supported by a uniform late and missing assignment policy, will ensure that students will have opportunity to remediate missing work in a timely, fair and equitable manner throughout the semester and expressed at the mid-term and final reporting periods.

These criteria will include the ongoing steps below:

1) The criteria for late and missing assignment are clearly explained on course outlines, to students directly and before each opportunity for a drop dead date or assignment closing.

2) Departments will use a series of steps to remediate missing assignments in accordance with the teacher's professional judgment (possibly including student conversation, additional negotiated due date, calls home, study hall etc.). (GS Pg 43)

3) Additional intervention strategies can include the use of school team, credit rescue/student success programs, Learning Resource teachers, administrators and others listed on Pg. 43 of Growing Success.

4) The teacher will use his or her professional judgment when considering additional evaluation strategies when a student fails to meet the expectations of the current assignment.

O.S.S.T.F. WORK GROUP - Marks Lower than 50%

Benefits of the ongoing remediation as stated in the Growing Success document:
- Students have a transparent set of definitions and expectations for assignment completion (academic honesty policy) and late and missing assignments.

- Students are clearly communicated to and have a connection with a variety of adults on a consistent basis.

- School programs provide many opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.

- Parents are consulted regularly

This process is ongoing throughout the semester so students, teachers and other stakeholders will be part of the paradigm shift to help maintain a sense of hope and belief that everything is being done to help the student succeed throughout the semester.

This process will become the norm and then the policy should read:

The marks recorded on the Provincial Report Card for students represent the ongoing efforts of all stakeholders to help achieve success and thus for grades 9 – 12 the actual mark earned at that reporting period will be recorded.

The lower limit of recorded marks will be 0 (zero).

Recommendation	Growing Success Principles.	Rationale/Evidence to Support Recommendation
Reported grades will be the actual cumulative marks that are generated at the midterm and at the end of the semester.	#1 – Are fair transparent, and equitable for all students	Pg 41 – "For grades 9 to 12, teachers will use percentage marks to indicate achievement below 50 percent. … marks below 50 percent signal that additional learning is required before the student begins to achieve success in meeting…course expectations." Pg 52 – "The first report card…. reflects student achievement of the overall curriculum expectations during the first reporting period….On report cards for the second and/or final reporting periods, the achievement on the previous report(s) is also shown to provide parents with an overview of the student's achievement in each course " Pg 66 –"…the provincial report cards ensure that all students attending publicly funded elementary and secondary schools…receive standard, clear, detailed and straightforward information about student progress and achievement based on the expectations and standards outlined in the Ontario curriculum for Grades 1 to 12: It is essential for the reported information to be valid, fair and determined and recorded in a consistent way across the province."
Reporting actual grades is a reflection of the ongoing support a student receives and will continue to receive throughout the semester.	#6 – ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear…	Pg 29 –"Students interest in learning and their belief that they can learn are critical to their success. After reviewing the impact of testing on students' motivation to learn… developing a students 'ability to self-assess - as a way of increasing students' engagement in and commitment to learning."
The course level, age and potential pathway of the student should guide the professional judgment of teachers, service workers and administrators	#5 – are ongoing, varied in nature and administered over a period of time…	Pg 44 – "Provide clear procedures for determining a percentage mark for the report card for a student who has failed to submit one or more assignments for evaluation on time or at all."

PART D: CREDIT RECOVERY RECOMMENDATIONS

OUTCOME EXPECTATIONS:
- Provide policy recommendations
- Align recommendations to evidence in Growing Success
- Identify the Fundamental Principals that influence the recommendations

PRIOR READING AND DISCUSSION BEFORE WE FINALIZED OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Since Growing Success is the policy document, many questions and concerns that were raised, were already addressed between Growing Success and the draft version of the Halton Credit Recovery Manual. Both have done a very good job addressing the concerns raised by many teachers. As a group, we met, brainstormed, discussed and compromised for 23 hours in order to arrive at these recommendations.

OSSTF WORK GROUP: CREDIT RECOVERY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Growing Success Principles.	Rationale/Evidence to Support Recommendation
A consolidated Failure Referral Form and Credit Recovery Profile sheet to cut down on paper and provide the relevant information all at once. The form should also have room for anecdotal comments from teachers as this is transparent and gives a better picture of the students' obstacles to success. A Markbook printout could also be attached. The form and relevant information must be provided by the end of the semester and therefore cannot be required after that.	… are fair, transparent and equitable for all students	GS p. 86 "The Process for Determining Eligibility for Credit Recovery" GS p. 87 "Credit Recovery Profile GS. p. 88 "The Relationship Between the Credit Recovery Teacher and the Subject Teacher"
To successfully complete a Recovery course, the student must complete a 30% evaluation. It will take the form of a summative assignment and/or examination, as is required by the Ministry of Education for all courses.		GS p. 88/89 "Credit Recovery Programming, Assessment, and Evaluation": "*Thirty percent* of the grade will be based on a final evaluation administered at or towards the end of the course…" **Halton Credit Recovery Manual (draft)**: "Thirty per cent of the grade will be based on a final evaluation in the form of an examination, performance, essay, and/or other method of evaluation suitable to the course content and administered towards the end of the course *(The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12: Program Planning and Assessment, 2000)."*
Achievement can only be reflected using a Recovery course code.		*Halton Credit Recovery Manual (draft):* ***Any credit being attempted as part of Credit Recovery must be properly timetabled and have achievement recorded in order to satisfy transparency, accountability and OnSis*** reporting guidelines.

Recommendation	Growing Success Principles.	Rationale/Evidence to Support Recommendation
Purposeful staffing is important. The Credit Recovery teacher should be experienced in managing a busy classroom environment and be very familiar with the appropriate curriculum expectations.	… carefully planned to relate to curriculum and learning styles and needs of all students.	GS p. 84 "… must be taught by a qualified teacher" **Halton Credit Recovery Manual (draft):** "The most appropriate teacher will need to have exceptional communication skills, both with the students and parents as well as with other teachers and community members. A teacher with a wide variety of subject knowledge, especially Math and Science, as well as some Guidance background and Pathways knowledge, will have the most success with the various recovery materials."
The availability of Credit Recovery programs is subject to the school's capacity to deliver them.		Credit Recovery is available to all students but not all subjects are recoverable. (Example: Immersion) GS p. 84 "qualified teacher"
A student in Recovery need only meet those expectations not successfully met in the original course.		GS p. 88 "Credit Recovery Limitations"
Learning Plans should be developed by the Recovery Teacher and discussed at length with the student to allow the student to develop learning and learning skills goals. The original classroom teacher's involvement is "voluntary and dependent on the availability of time and resources." (GS p. 88)	… develop the student's self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning and set specific goals	GS p. 87 "Credit Recovery Learning plan"
A consistent and mandatory contract signed by parent/guardian and student that outlines the obligations and responsibilities of the student for all students in Credit Recovery (example attached)	… are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or course…	Credit Recovery Guiding principle six: "Access to credit recovery… the student and (where appropriate) parent/guardian, who must share some responsibility for the learning." GS p. 87 "Learning Plan" outlines and supports this

POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY CONCERNS:

Aside from our policy recommendations, we have some concerns about implementation:

1. **Our first concern is the lack of transparency of the Recovery programs and communication with other staff members about the program.** We feel that for Credit Recovery to be an option recommended by classroom teachers, they need to understand more of what happens in Recovery and how the program is administered. (GS p. 86 … the subject teacher is the primary impetus for a credit recovery program…). While the CR team can also make the recommendation and final decision, if teachers are more informed, they will more likely recommend Recovery as an option.

2. **<u>Our bigger concern is implementation – it is inconsistent across the Board and in many schools, the complaints are credit integrity, attendance and course codes</u>**.
   How can we address the integrity? Our suggestions are as follows:
   a. Use the Halton Credit Recovery Manual to help develop or adjust current practices.
   b. Experienced and purposeful staffing. In many schools, new teachers are given the sections and there is a revolving door of teachers in and out. This takes away from the consistency that a student at risk needs. It undermines the entire program and its integrity as well as the needs of the students who are in Recovery as a last resort.
   c. Proper use of Recovery course codes. There have been many complaints of Guidance or Admin not entering a Recovery code but just changing the previous course's mark.

3. **Students are eligible for Credit Recovery only if they have been registered in and earned a failing grade for the course they are recovering**.

4. Decisions regarding placement in Credit Recovery must consider all factors (not just the final grade in the course). This is where communication between the SST and the subject teacher must be clear and open AND happen at the end of the course, not in the following two-year period that allows for Recovery.

5. **Finally – please continue to work on and finalize the Halton Credit Recovery Manual as it will work wonders for consistency, transparency and integrity, as well as a provide a great tool for collaborating with classroom teachers in order to help our students achieve success.**