

Ministry of Education Ministère de l'Éducation

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MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
 Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities
 Director of Provincial and Demonstration Schools
 Program Superintendents of Education
 Principals of Provincial and Demonstration Schools
 Principals of Inspected Private Schools
 Principal of the Independent Learning Centre

FROM: Kevin Costante
 Deputy Minister

DATE: March 30, 2011

SUBJECT: Revision to the Community Involvement Graduation Requirement,
 Section 3.1.3, *Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12,*
 Program and Diploma Requirements, 1999 (OSS)

The Ontario government is committed through our Student Success strategy to help strengthen student engagement in education and learning through its programs and policies such as cooperative education, the Specialist High Skills Major, and community involvement which attempt to increase the relevance of learning and encourage students to develop closer links to their community.

Since 1999, one of the requirements for all students in Ontario secondary schools has been to complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement activities in order to achieve their Ontario Secondary School Diploma. This requirement is designed to encourage students to develop awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and the role they can play in supporting and strengthening their communities. Although students are to be informed of the community involvement requirement while in Grades 7 and 8, they have not been able to start completing these hours until September of the year they officially registered in grade 9.

Acting on recommendations from students, through the Minister's Student Advisory Council, parents and research conducted since the introduction of this requirement in 1999, I am pleased to inform you that we are amending the community involvement graduation requirement. Effective July 1, 2011, students will be able to start accumulating community involvement hours in the summer before they enter grade 9. This change acknowledges the enthusiasm of some students, with support from their parents, to be involved in their community prior to entering secondary school. Research shows that early involvement in community service helps students build a spirit of civic responsibility which can then be expanded as they move through secondary school.

This policy change will be included in the revised *Ontario Secondary Schools Grades 9 to 12, Program and Diploma Requirements, 1999 (OSS)* policy document to be released later this spring and the details to support implementation of this change will be in a revised PPM 124a *Ontario Secondary School Diploma Requirement: Community Involvement Activities in English-Language Schools* to be released in the fall.

Please share this information with elementary and secondary principals, with grade 8 students and their parents as soon as it is appropriate. Please also refer grade 8 students and their parents to your boards' information on community involvement, the list of eligible activities and necessary documentation of their summer community involvement for their high school. If you have any questions, please contact the ministry office in your district.



Kevin Costante

- c. Mary Jean Gallagher, ADM, Student Achievement Division
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