



## Curriculum Development, Implementation and Delivery

### 2020 Value-for-Money Audit

#### Why We Did This Audit

- There have been concerns recently regarding the consultation process when developing or revising curriculum, particularly regarding the Health and Physical Education curriculum and the First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Studies curriculum.
- Many of the curriculum documents were developed more than 10 years ago and some more than 15 years ago.

#### Why It Matters

- Student performance on standardized testing is declining or stagnating, particularly in math, demonstrating a potential need to change curriculum and/or its implementation.
- Many new or revised curricula have been released in the last five years, including a new Elementary Math curriculum in August 2020. However, the curriculum of many subjects is more than 10 years old.

#### What We Found

- There are no formal processes in place at the Ministry of Education (Ministry), school boards, or schools to provide assurance that all curriculum is being taught effectively across the entire school system.
- Ministry policy on student assessment does not clearly define the performance standards against which teachers are expected to evaluate their students, contributing to inconsistent grading.
- Province-wide student assessments (EQAO) occur at four intervals in the span of a student's 12- to 14-year public schooling, but no standardized testing is scheduled in the student's senior years, Grades 11 or 12. Therefore, the Ministry is unable to measure if students achieve a consistent foundation of knowledge before graduating. Other Canadian provinces conduct standardized provincial assessments in select subjects and grades in a student's senior high school year, and the result of a test counts to some degree toward the student's final mark.
- A substantial portion of current curricula in Ontario was developed many years ago: 15% was released 15 or more years ago, and another 51% released 10 to 14 years ago. Similarly, some approved textbooks were just as old.
- The Ministry did not always perform critical stages of its process for curriculum review; for example, obtaining stakeholder input or providing sufficient time to allow for proper fact-checking while revising the 2019 Health and Physical Education Elementary curriculum.
- Four of five recently released curriculum were released without sufficient time for school boards and schools to review it and for teachers to prepare instructional materials and resources to properly implement it.
- Fifty-seven percent of teachers we surveyed said they did not receive training for curricula released in the last five years; of those that did receive training, only 8% found it useful.
- The Ministry and school boards rarely solicited teacher feedback on teaching resources to identify which teaching resources most educators found were not useful.
- The Ministry did not provide clear expectations for the frequency or duration of teacher-led real-time instruction through remote learning during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to varying levels of student instruction. Forty-eight percent of school boards surveyed by the Ministry reported that only half or less of their teachers were offering their students live, real-time instruction, as of May 20, 2020.

## **Conclusions**

- The Ministry of Education does not have a formal process to determine when and what curricula should be updated to ensure that Ontario students are learning the most current and relevant material in a world of quickly changing technology and cultural diversity.
- In most cases, the Ministry followed the steps in its review and revision process when revising or developing curricula within the last three years, but there were instances where steps were fast-tracked or skipped.
- The Ministry has not released recent curricula documents with sufficient time in advance of implementation to allow for boards and teachers to be prepared to effectively deliver the new or revised curriculum.
- The Ministry and school boards do not have formal processes to enable them to gain assurance that the curricula are being delivered consistently to a high standard across the province.
- The Ministry does not have assurance or processes to determine that students are being consistently assessed against curriculum-learning expectations.

Read the report at [www.auditor.on.ca](http://www.auditor.on.ca)