Greater Essex County District School Board

Policy: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Challenge Process

Reference No: P-AD-22

OSS, Sections 6.6 and 8.2 state that all publicly funded boards must develop and implement policies and procedures related to the challenge process that are consistent with provincial policy. Boards must ensure that a clear statement is published in the school course calendars outlining when students can challenge for credit and what opportunities for challenge are available (OSS, section 5.3.1).

This policy outlines the requirements for implementing Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Challenge Process for regular day school students who are enrolled in the secondary schools in the Greater Essex County District School Board.

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Reference No: R-AD-22

1. **Definitions**

   See Appendix A. These definitions included in this Regulation apply only to the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Challenge Process.

2. **Challenge Credit**

2.1 In accordance with provincial Policy/Program memorandum (PPM No. 129) Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): Implementation in Ontario Secondary Schools, students may challenge for credit only for Grade 10, 11 and 12 courses in provincial curriculum policy documents. (See OSS, section 6.6). The implementation schedule for the PLAR challenge process is as follows:

a) For Grade 10 courses 2001-2002
b) For Grade 11 courses 2002-2003
c) For Grade 12 courses 2003-2004

The challenge process is an evaluation process and shall not be used as a way for students to improve their mark for a course for which they have already earned a credit, nor as a way to obtain credit for a course they have previously failed.

2.2 In accordance with the Education Act, publicly funded boards will not charge student fees for undergoing the challenge or equivalency process (Subsection 32(1))

2.3 Students may earn no more than four credits through the challenge process, including a maximum of two credits in any one discipline. (OSS, section 6.6) The term discipline refers to the subject area covered by any one curriculum policy document.

2.4 Students may challenge for credit for a course only if they can provide reasonable evidence to their principal that they would likely be successful in the challenge process.

2.5 Students who wish to earn credit for the course without taking the course, will be required to show reasonable evidence of eligibility to challenge for credit for a related course within the Ontario curriculum.

2.6 Students with music certificates that are accepted for credits in OSS, Appendix 4, Music Certificates Accepted for Credits, however, are not required to challenge for credit for the appropriate music courses but are granted credits in accordance with OSS Program and Diploma Requirements, Appendix 4, OSS.

2.7 Assessment and evaluation through the PLAR process will be based on the curriculum expectations and the achievement charts in the Ontario Curriculum. Assessment and evaluation strategies for the challenge process must include formal tests (70% of the

final mark) and a variety of other assessment strategies appropriate for the particular course (30% of the final mark.)

2.8 A record of all challenges for credit that were completed- that is, all challenges for which students earned a final percentage grade, whether a passing or failing grade shall be included in the board's September Report to the Ministry. For semester schools, this information shall also be submitted also be submitted in the school March Report.

2.9 The responsibility for PLAR shall be carried out under the direction of the school principal who grants credits in the school in which the student is registered.

2.10 In cases where a student who is an adult or the parent of a student who is not an adult disagrees with the decision of the principal about whether or not the student should challenge for credit, the parent or adult student may ask the appropriate supervisory officer to review the matter.

3. Responsibility

3.1 Principals are responsible for:

a) Ensuring that students are informed that the student is responsible for initiating the challenge process and for satisfying all of the requirements and ensure that students who are not adults (e.g. students who are under the age of eighteen) are informed that parental approval is required before applying to challenge for a credit for a course;
b) Ensuring that every prospective applicant and his or her parents, if he or she is not an adult, are informed about policies and procedures related to challenging for credit, and on the Ontario Student Transcript (OST);
c) Ensuring that every prospective applicant is referred to the Ministry of Education and the board web sites that indicates curriculum expectations for the course, as well as what is involved in the PLAR challenge process;
d) Assessing in consultation with the student's parents (or with the student if the student is an adult) and appropriate school staff (ie. Guidance counsellor and/or subject teacher) to determine whether reasonable evidence for success exists and whether the challenge process should continue.

3.2 The student is responsible for:

a) Applying for a PLAR challenge at the regular day school which they are registered. PLAR applications and challenges will be restricted to certain scheduled periods during the school academic year;
b) Completing the application process by gathering "reasonable evidence" to support the application;
c) Completing the formal tests and other assessments as determined by the board.

3.3 Students cannot be granted credits through the challenge process for any of the following courses:

a) A course in any subject if a credit has already been granted for a course in that subject in a later grade either as a single credit or as part of a block equivalency;
b) A course for which credit has already been granted or for which there is a significant overlap with a course for which credit has been granted (e.g., a student cannot challenge for credit an academic course if he or she has already earned a credit for the applied course at the same grade level and vice versa);
c) A transfer course;
d) A locally developed course;
e) A cop-operative education course;
f) A course in English as a second language (ESL), English Literacy Development (ELD), or Anglais pour debutantes (APD), if the student has one or more credits in English from the curriculum policy documents for English for Grade 9 to 12 under OSS (e.g., the documents for English Language or the documents for French-language schools) or from the curriculum guidelines for English or Anglais/English for Grade 9 to OAC's under OSIS;

3.4 A student will be permitted to challenge for credit for a specific course a second time after a reasonable interval, if the student can provide reasonable evidence to the principal that he or she is likely to be successful after having benefitted from additional study and experience during the interval.

3.5 If a secondary school student challenges for credit for a Grade 10, 11, or 12 course through the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) challenge process, a record of all credits earned and attempted will be established and will be maintained in the student's OSR. This record will be kept on the form entitled "PLAR Challenge for Credit: Cumulative Tracking Record" (see Appendix K, OSR Guideline, 2000.) The student's passing percentage grade, failing percentage grade, or withdrawal from the challenge process must be entered on this form. If a student earns a credit through the challenge process in a school outside his/her regular school, the principal of that school will use the "Interim Tracking Record" form (provided in PPM 129) to communicate the results of the student's challenges for credit to the school that maintains the OSR. The principal of the student's regular school will enter the information on the "Cumulative Tracking Record" form in the student's OSR.

Appendix A:
Glossary of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Terminology

Achievement Categories – the board categories of knowledge and skills that enable teachers to make consistent judgments about the quality of students' work.

Adult Student- student registered at the secondary school who are eighteen years of age or older.

Annual Education Plan (AEP) – a plan that students develop starting in grade 7 and continuing through grade 12 that includes that student's goals for academic achievement and for learning both inside and outside school.

Assessment Task- a description of specific assessment method(s) that students will use to demonstrate prior learning of course expectations.

Challenge Assessment- includes formal tests (70%) and a variety of other assessment strategies appropriate for the particular course (30%).

Challenge Process- the process whereby students' prior learning is assessed for the purpose of granting credit for a Grade 10,11 or 12 course developed from a provincial curriculum policy document published in 1999 or later.

Credit- a means of recognition of the successful completion of a course for which a minimum of 110 hours has been scheduled. A credit is granted upon successful completion of a challenge assessment.

Demonstration- a means by which students show that they have achieved the knowledge and skills of the course expectations.

Discipline – refers to the subject areas covered by any one curriculum policy document. All subjects in that document are considered to belong to that discipline (e.g.; English, Technological Education, Social Sciences and the Humanities).

Equivalency Process – the process of assessing credentials from other jurisdictions outside Ontario.

Evaluation – Provides information (a percentage grade) about student achievement of the course expectations.

Expectations- the knowledge and skills that students are expected to develop and demonstrate in their class work, on tests, and in various other activities on which their achievement is assessed is assessed and evaluated.

Individual Education Plan (IEP) – identifies the student's specific learning expectations and outlines how the school will address these expectations through appropriate special education programs and services.

Locally Developed Course- a ministry approved course that is not described in a ministry curriculum policy document.

Mature Student – for the purpose of determining further credits required for a diploma, a mature student is at least eighteen years of age and has not attended regular day school for a period of at least one year.

Ontario Student Record – the official record that contains the student's overall achievement results, credits earned, diploma requirements completed, and other information important to the education of the student.

Ontario Student Transcript – a comprehensive record of a student's overall achievement in high school. It included all grade 9 to 12 credits earned by a student, and grade 11 or 12 failures and withdrawals.

Reasonable Evidence – the evidence a student produces to substantiate his or her prior learning of the course expectations (e.g.; written documents, work samples, demonstrations, reference letters, etc.)

Regular Day School Student – regular day school students are students, other than mature students, who are enrolled in a regular day school program.

Transfer Course- A course offered to students who wish to move to another type of course in the same subject.