



Program Committee

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

Virtual Meeting

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

20 Education Court, P.O. Box 2558

Hamilton, ON L8N 3L1

AGENDA: 5:30-8:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Land Acknowledgement
3. Approval of the Agenda
4. [Student Learning and Achievement Report](#)
5. Adjournment

We acknowledge our presence on ancestral Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Confederacy land as determined by the Dish with One Spoon treaty.

The intent of this agreement is for all nations sharing this territory to do so responsibly, respectfully and sustainably in perpetuity.

We respect the longstanding relationships with the local Indigenous communities, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Six Nations of the Grand River.

Executive Summary

Topic: Student Learning and Achievement Report

Context

HWDSB's Board of Trustees have approved a new Strategic Directions for 2016-20 and staff has developed a Student Learning and Achievement Annual Plan for 2022-23. The five priorities are positive culture and well-being, *student learning and achievement*, effective communication, school renewal and partnerships.

Mission: We empower students to learn and grow to their full potential in a diverse world.

Commitment: We are committed to learning, equity, engagement, and innovation

Priority: Student Learning and Achievement: We will improve student learning and achievement through effective instructional strategies

The Student Learning and Achievement Annual Plan has two goals:

- 1) Improving the graduation outcome for all students and closing the gap for those currently and historically underserved.
- 2) Improving the reading achievement of all students and closing the gap for those current and historically underserved.

Three strategies guide staff's effort to attain of these goals:

- 1) Investing in People -Providing professional development regarding effective practice
- 2) Leveraging Effective Practice- Using effective instructional practices to improve student learning and achievement
- 3) Refining Measures of Progress – Monitoring impact of effective instruction on student learning and achievement

Background

2021-22 was the second full school year impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The year included heightened public health measures, a shift to remote learning for all students in January 2022, and on-going concern for the pandemic's impact on the achievement and well-being of all students, but especially those who are currently and historically underserved. In response, the HWDSB created Pandemic Recovery Commitments, for 2022-23, to support an equitable post-pandemic recovery and recognize the importance of well-being, safety, and inclusion for students and staff. The Pandemic Recovery Commitments are:

We acknowledge the impact of the pandemic and its disproportionate impact on marginalized communities.

- *We commit to learning and creating safe and inclusive work and learning environments for all*
- *We commit to supportive learning environments that demonstrate excellent instruction and the interrelationship between achievement, well-being, and equity*
- *We commit to recovery and co-construction of new practices and processes that reflect the post-pandemic community and learning environments*
- *We commit to supporting opportunities including existing and new partnerships and to respond to the evolving needs of students, caregivers, and community members as we engage diverse voices*
- *We commit to continued engagement with staff and the acknowledgement of the contributions of all employees in supporting pandemic recovery.*

The impact of the pandemic is evident in the student learning and achievement data from 2021-22. For example, credit accumulation data indicates that the 2020-21 cohort, who entered Grade Nine with reduced transition supports, continues to lag behind other cohorts. In Reading overall, Grade One and Two Reading achievement is lower than the last full year before the pandemic (2018-19) and the gap between High Priority Schools and the board has not decreased. Please see *Appendix A: 2021-22 Student Learning and Achievement Data* for detailed data sets.

HWDSB's response to the pandemic acknowledges that some instructional or assessment practices do not serve all students. Further, annual plan strategies need to be based on a belief in learners and high expectations of success for all learners. Key instructional approaches for 2022-23 are Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP), Indigenous Cultural Safety (ICS), and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). These strategies foster inclusion and reduce marginalization, and they use student identities, cultures, interests, and lived experiences as resources and not barriers for learning.

The following report includes:

- The review of the current implementation of the 2021-22 HWDSB Annual Plan and an overview of the 2022-23 HWDSB Annual Plan, *Student Learning and Achievement*
- *Appendix A: Student Learning and Achievement Data*



HWDSB Annual Plan Report

Name of Report: Student Learning and Achievement Report (Annual Plan Year 2022-23)

Date: October 25th, 2022

Priority: Student Learning and Achievement: We will improve student learning and achievement through effective instructional strategies

Grades Seven to Twelve+

Goal #1: Improving the graduation outcome for all students and closing the gap for those currently and historically underserved.

Target: At least 80 per cent of students within each cohort making progress towards graduation/graduating*.

*Graduation includes obtaining an Ontario Secondary School Diploma, Certificate of Achievement and/or Certificate of Accomplishment

Strategy: Investing in People: Provide differentiated professional learning on culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy, blended learning and personalized learning with a particular focus on engaging currently and historically underserved students.

2021-22 In Review

Supporting the implementation of de-streamed Grade Nine Mathematics (MTHIW) was a priority in 2021-22. In the summer of 2021 Learning Services staff created *Learning Math Together: Grade Nine*, a resource for MTHIW educators that included effective instructional strategies in Mathematics, assessment tools and resources for the classroom, and recommendations on creating inclusive classrooms that include and value students' voices, experiences, identities, interests, and learning profiles. A team of Learning Services consultants co-learned with MTHIW teachers, gathering feedback from staff and students and responding to the professional learning needs that emerged. The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario partnered with the HWDSB in collecting student and teacher feedback on the experience of MTHIW and will share their findings in the fall of 2022.

With more than 2000 elementary students learning remotely and secondary students in more than 170 eLearning courses, professional learning focused on effective instruction in remote learning: using consistent procedures so that students could develop a fluency in navigating the digital classroom; building community in the class through whole class, small group, and one-to-one learning opportunities; and continuing to use instructional and assessment practices from the physical classroom in the digital classroom. For example, learning in digital classrooms need to respond to student voice, experiences, identities, interests, and learning profiles.

In 2021-22, Specialized Services staff designed and developed self-directed professional development courses. The focus was on educator resources to map curriculum and plan program for students with disabilities and how to use specific technology tools in the classroom. Staff continue to strengthen and extend educator knowledge to create precise and personalized Individual Education Plans (IEP) for students. In addition, staff from the Centre for Success, a program that supports students with Learning Disabilities to use assistive technology, created a HUB Course for teachers. This self-paced course described how they can support students using a tablet or laptop as an assistive device.

2022-23 Overview

The professional learning priority for 2022-23 is to support teachers with the de-streamed Grade Nine Program. An *Inclusive Classroom Practices Kindergarten to Grade Twelve* resource is available to all educators of Grade Nine courses. Like

curiosity • creativity • possibility

Learning Math Together: Grade Nine, this resource provides resources and suggestions to educators in their work to support all students through Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP), Indigenous Cultural Safety (ICS), and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This year, elementary and secondary combined learning teams will meet with a focus on Mathematics instruction, high-yield instructional strategies, and inclusive education practices. Teams will consist of secondary and Grade Seven and Eight teachers from associated schools. These teams will also support the transition of students from Grade Eight to Grade Nine. Another support for the Grade Nine Program is the Grade Nine Lead Teachers. Each secondary school has a teacher who acts as an in-school coach and student success support for a period a day.

In 2022-23, Specialized Services will provide professional learning about UDL using the HUB course *Planning for Success: Universal Design for Learning*. UDL is a comprehensive approach to supporting students requiring special education supports and services. The aim of UDL is to provide access to the curriculum for all students and to assist educators in designing products and environments to make them accessible to everyone, regardless of age, skills, or situation. As well, the Specialized Services Division continues to provide professional learning and support regarding the development and implementation of IEPs to meet the needs of students requiring special education services and supports.

Executive Council monitors this strategy through learning session attendance and feedback from both system and school-based educators, principals, and vice principals.

Strategy: Leveraging Effective Practices: Implement instructional, assessment and engagement practices focused on improving the outcomes for all students in Grades 7 to 12.

2021-22 In Review

At Ministry of Education direction, secondary schools began the year in a quadmester model for semester one but shifted to a semester model for semester two. In addition, there was a brief shift to remote learning in January 2022. To support students in managing the demands of the quadmester, a “flex day” was added each quadmester immediately following the distribution of preliminary reports. On a flex day, students attended school to receive additional support and complete outstanding assignments. This practice continued in semester two. Another practice adopted early in the pandemic that continued in 2021-22 was Student Success Days. Rather than sit for an exam, students could complete incomplete assessments (test, projects, etc.) to improve their mark. Exams continued to be an option at the end of a course, but the recommendation was to limit exams to Grade Twelve college, university, or mixed courses. As well, Specialized Services staff offered a new eLearning course, GLE 10/20/30/40, as a student success strategy for students with Individual Education Plans. This past summer, it was offered as a reach ahead credit and students attained approximately ninety credits. The impact of these practices is evident in increased credit attainment rates with 94% in semester one (quadmester one and two) and 93% in semester two.

Secondary teachers began to adopt CRRP, ICS, and UDL approaches for instruction, as well as best practices from their subject areas. Notably, teachers in de-streamed Grade Nine Math (MTHIW) classrooms adopted strategies such as using non-permanent vertical surfaces in the classroom to enable students to collaborate, co-construct solutions to tasks, and collaboratively problem-solve. They also created tasks with a variety of entry points and levels of complexity that enable all students to complete the task and to acquire mathematical knowledge and skills. In terms of assessment and evaluation, an emphasis on teaching and then evaluating the “big ideas” in the curriculum continued. Teachers reduced the number of tasks needed for students to demonstrate their achievement of a curriculum expectation.

Creating new course selection and pathway practices to reflect a de-streamed program was a focus in 2021-22. Staff increased student and family voice and choice in the course selection process by removing the need for the Grade Eight teacher to approve an option sheet, removing locally developed courses from course selection sheets, and implementing a new set of guidelines for transitions meetings between elementary and secondary staff. The guidelines ensure that discussions focus on a student’s strengths, interests, and aspirations and that student and family voice and choice is honored in the course selection to promote greater student engagement in learning. We also communicated high expectations (a key component of CRRP) for student abilities by encouraging all MTHIW students to select academic Grade Ten Math. This will keep student pathways open to college and university.

2022-23 Overview

Instructional practices (CRRP, ICS, and UDL) that respond to student learning need and create supportive and inclusive classrooms are a focus this year, especially in Grade Nine classrooms. Practices include providing voice and choice of learning tasks; using students' cultures and experiences as resources for learning; and having learning materials that reflect students' lived experiences. UDL practices remove barriers to learning for students in a proactive manner. Students feel included, respected, and valued when educators build supports into the classroom program and make those supports available to all students in the classroom.

The Ministry of Education has signalled a return to the pre-pandemic practice of secondary final evaluations being worth 30% of the final grade. Therefore, staff is working to maintain the practices that supported student learning and achievement by creating guidelines that maintain the benefits of practices such as Student Success Days and using a variety of final evaluation tasks, not just exams to determine the final 30% of a student's grade.

The course selection and pathways processes continue to evolve with the creation of the de-streamed Grade Nine Program. Now decisions regarding future pathways in secondary and post-secondary move from Grade Eight to Grade Nine. For example, when Grade Nine students select their courses for 2023-24, they will need to understand the implications of choosing academic or applied courses. Schools need to support students in making this choice, and promote their programs, like Specialist High Skills Majors or International Baccalaureate, to their current students. Staff will continue to encourage Grade Nine students to take academic courses in Grade Ten to communicate high expectations and to leave pathways open.

Executive Council monitors this strategy through observational data and data gathered by principals, vice principals and superintendents during school and classroom visits.

Strategy: Refining Measures of Progress: Develop and implement the tools required to monitor the progress students make towards graduation on a regular basis, from Grade Seven onwards at the classroom, school, and system levels.

2021-22 In Review

In 2021-22, we primarily used credit accumulation to measure whether a student is on-track to graduate. Community Involvement Hours and completion of the Literacy Graduate Requirement through the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) or course (OSSLC) were also considered. For example, students in Grades Nine to Eleven who have earned all their credits and completed at least 10 Community Involvement Hours, are considered on track because they are able to graduate at the end of their Grade Twelve year. For Grade Seven and Eight students, meeting the provincial standard in Mathematics and Language was the primary measure of being on track to graduation.

2022-23 Overview

We continue to refine the measures and the tools needed to monitor progress. With the resumption of EQAO in Primary, Junior, Grade Nine Mathematics, and Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test, staff is considering how the student learning data provided by these assessments will assist in identify students who making the expected progress toward graduation and those students that need extra support to progress towards graduation.

Executive Council monitors this strategy through Board Annual Plan Quarterly Reviews.

In 2021-22, we measured each cohort's progress towards graduation using credit accumulation data. The following data represents the current students and those students who have already graduated.

81% of the 2021-22 cohort (this year's Grade Ten students) are on track to graduate
70 % of the 2020-21 cohort (this year's Grade Eleven students) are on track to graduate
73 % of the 2019-20 cohort (this year's Grade Twelve students) are on track to graduate
70 % of the 2018-19 cohort (this year's Grade Twelve Plus students) have graduated already

The Ministry of Education has reported the 5-year graduation rate for the 2016-17 cohort at 81.6%. Ministry confirmation of the results for the 2017-18 cohort is expected in the spring of 2023. As Grade Eleven students in 2019-20, Staff is working to understand their progress, as cohort, towards graduation.

Kindergarten to Grade Six

Goal #2: Improving the reading achievement of all students and closing the gap for those currently and historically underserved.

Target: At least 75 per cent of students within each cohort on track as an effective reader.

Strategy: Investing in People: Provide differentiated professional learning on comprehensive literacy instruction, assessment, and interventions with a particular focus on engaging currently and historically underserved student.

2021-22 In Review

The [Ontario Human Rights Commission's Right to Read Report](#) and the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the professional learning provided to educators in 2021-22. The *Right to Read Report* recommends, in part, a focus on teaching early readers how to decode (read) words based on their knowledge of sounds (phonological awareness) and the relationship between letters and sounds (phonics). Phonological awareness and phonics are core components of effective Reading instruction, along with skills in fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Structured and intentional instruction in these five components is essential for students to become effective readers.

HWDSB has focused its professional learning work in Reading on phonics and small group instruction since 2019-20. Reading Specialists have received intensive training on phonics for their role in supporting classroom educators. Learning included the importance of having an intentional and structured program that explicitly teaches phonics and how decodable texts rather than levelled texts are vital in teaching early reading. Teachers in the Phonics Academy tutoring program and Camp Power Summer Learning Program also received this learning.

Another priority for professional learning in 2021-22 was using Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP) approaches in a literacy program. Every teacher must have the expectation that every student can learn how to read. An understanding of bias and how an educator's identity and experience can influence their practice was also critical learning. CRRP also supports student engagement in reading. Students connect and are interested in reading texts that include their experiences and where they can see themselves and their interests. Having students enjoy Reading and inspiring students to read for pleasure is an important goal for any reading program.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of effective Reading instruction in closing learning gaps. Staff provided professional learning in targeted small group instruction based on student learning need. Often called "guided reading" this practice is vital to closing gaps in student learning and skills. Based on assessments, the teacher brings a small group of students together to work on a common learning need. The teacher provides explicit instruction and then guides the students in practicing the skill, providing on-going feedback. Reading Specialists worked alongside Kindergarten to Grade Two educators and the Program Division provided after-school in-services open to all educators.

2022-23 Overview

The Right to Read and the impact of COVID-19 continue to influence professional learning in 2022-23. Principals and Vice-principals are learning about the importance of Reading in the context of Human Rights and how their leadership is vital in the identification and removal of barriers to accessing effective reading instruction and interventions. Understanding the Ministry of Education's expectations for early Reading, as communicated in [Effective Early Reading Instruction: A Educator's Guide](#), is part of the learning provided to Principals and Vice-principals. Reading Specialists began the year supporting Grade Two teachers to identify learning needs and develop programming, and they will move to facilitate job-embedded learning with Kindergarten and Grade One educators in November. This approach will use intentional and structured early Reading instruction based on Ministry expectations.

The professional learning related to addressing the impact of COVID-19 continues in 2022-23. Small group targeted instruction and CRRP are a focus for professional learning and is vital in engaging older students in Reading. Program staff created a resource called the *Junior Reading Strategy* to support teachers in Grades Three to Six. Based on the Ministry guides for *Effective Instruction in Literacy, Grades 4 to 6*, the document outlines how teachers support older students to develop their reading skills. As with the Early Reading Strategy, a “Milestones” document that charts a progression of observable reading behaviours is part of the *Junior Reading Strategy*.

Professional development related to evidence-based interventions such as Empower™ Reading and Lexia Core 5™ Reading will continue. Students who need support in addition to core classroom instruction to become effective readers may benefit from these interventions. A core element of this work will be creating a Multi-Tier System of Support Framework. Specialized Services will also collaborate with Program to implement the recommendations from the *Right to Read* report.

Executive Council monitors this strategy through learning session attendance and feedback from both central office and school-based educators, principals, and vice principals.

Strategy: Leveraging Effective Practices: Implement effective reading instruction and assessment practices from Kindergarten to Grade Six.

2021-22 In Review

Effective Phonics instruction was a focus in 2021-22. As noted above, phonological awareness and phonics are two of the core components of effective Reading instruction. Teachers implemented effective phonics instruction during the daily 100-minute literacy block in Grades One to Three. Students needing additional support in decoding may have participated in Empower™ Reading. A small number of students were provided with Lexia Core 5™ reading program. Older students who are proficient decoders use these skills to read fluently, acquire vocabulary (word study), and comprehend and make meaning from challenging texts. From Kindergarten to Grade Six, educators have *Milestones* documents available to monitor student progress towards becoming an effective reader.

Creating inclusive and responsive classroom environments was another focus in 2021-22. Effective reading practices included approaches and practices from CRRP, ICS, and UDL to enable students to see themselves and their lived experiences in the texts they read. Students’ first languages, cultures, and lived experiences are used as a resource in acquiring reading skills. Students with an Individual Education Plan have the supports they needed to read in their classroom (e.g., assistive technology to support students in Reading and Writing). Program will continue to provide digital reading resources for remote students.

22-23 Overview

In addition to continued work to create inclusive classrooms that foster Reading and literacy, staff is working towards implementation of instructional practices highlighted in the *Right to Read* and close achievement gaps related to COVID-19 in 2022-23. Systematic and direct instruction in phonics continues to be a priority, especially in the kindergarten program. Responding to student learning need through small group targeted instruction or through interventions, like Empower™ Reading. Expansion of Lexia Core 5™ continues, and we will offer parents of children and youth involved training on home use of the program. Staff is exploring reading resources, programs, assessment, and intervention tools recommended by the Ministry of Education to identify board standard tools and resources for teaching phonological awareness or phonics.

Effective Reading instruction to close achievement gaps is a key feature of three tutoring programs this fall. The Phonics Academy provides students with focused, explicit phonics instruction to build their phonics skills. Home Reading with a Heart for Grade Two students focuses on fluency and comprehension skills. The Junior Phonics Academy provides older students with explicit phonics instruction.

Executive Council monitors this strategy through observational data gathered by principals, vice principals and superintendents during school and classroom visits.

Strategy: Refining Measures of Progress: Develop and implement the tools required to regularly monitor the progress students make towards becoming proficient readers from Kindergarten to Grade Six at the classroom, school, and system levels.

2021-22 In Review

In 2021-22, the classroom-based *Milestones to Reading Kindergarten to Grade One* was supplemented with versions that extend to Grade Six. The *Milestones* enable educators to document observable reading behaviours to determine if a student was on-track to achieve the provincial standard. As well, staff developed a phonics assessment tool to support educators in assessing students' phonics skills and plan for phonics instruction. The Kindergarten - Grade One Reading Tracker continued to be used to monitor students at the class and school level. The French Immersion and English as a Second Language *Milestones* continued to be used in classrooms to track student progress.

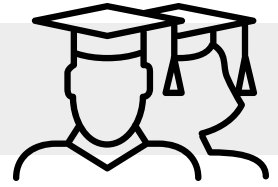
At the system level, report card data is used after term one is used to monitor progress and after term two to determine if the target has been met.

In 2022-23, staff will continue to use the *Milestones*. Additional classroom-based assessment tools, recommended by the Ministry of Education, may be selected as well. Principals will monitor student progress at the school level.

Executive Council monitors this strategy through Family of Schools Superintendent's visits and Board Annual Plan Quarterly Reviews.

In 2021-22, at least 75% of HWDSB students in Grades 3-6 were on track to be an effective reader. (See Appendix A: 2021-22 Student Learning and Achievement Data)

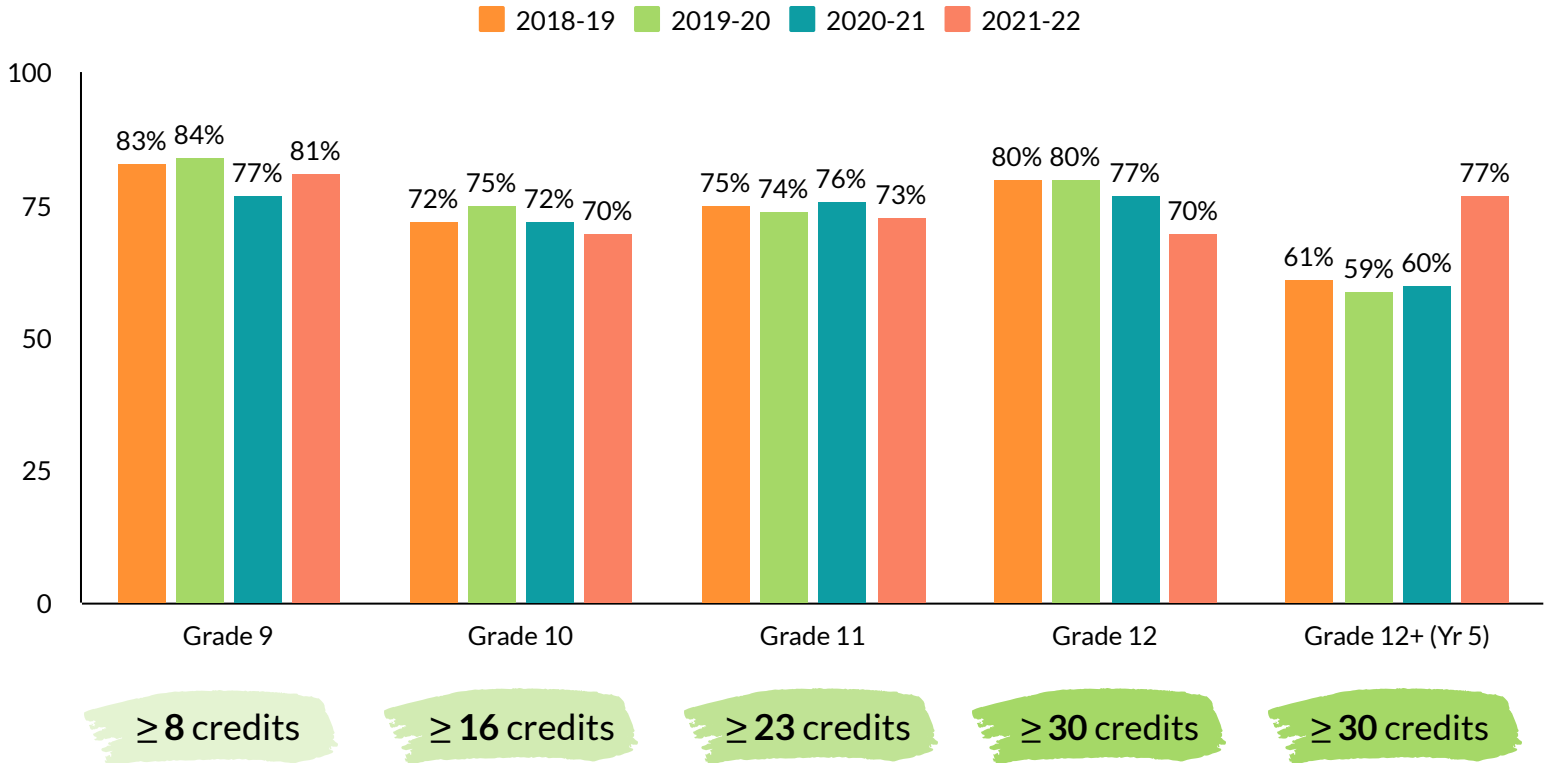
Appendix A: 2021-22 Student Learning and Achievement Data



ALL STUDENTS GRADUATING

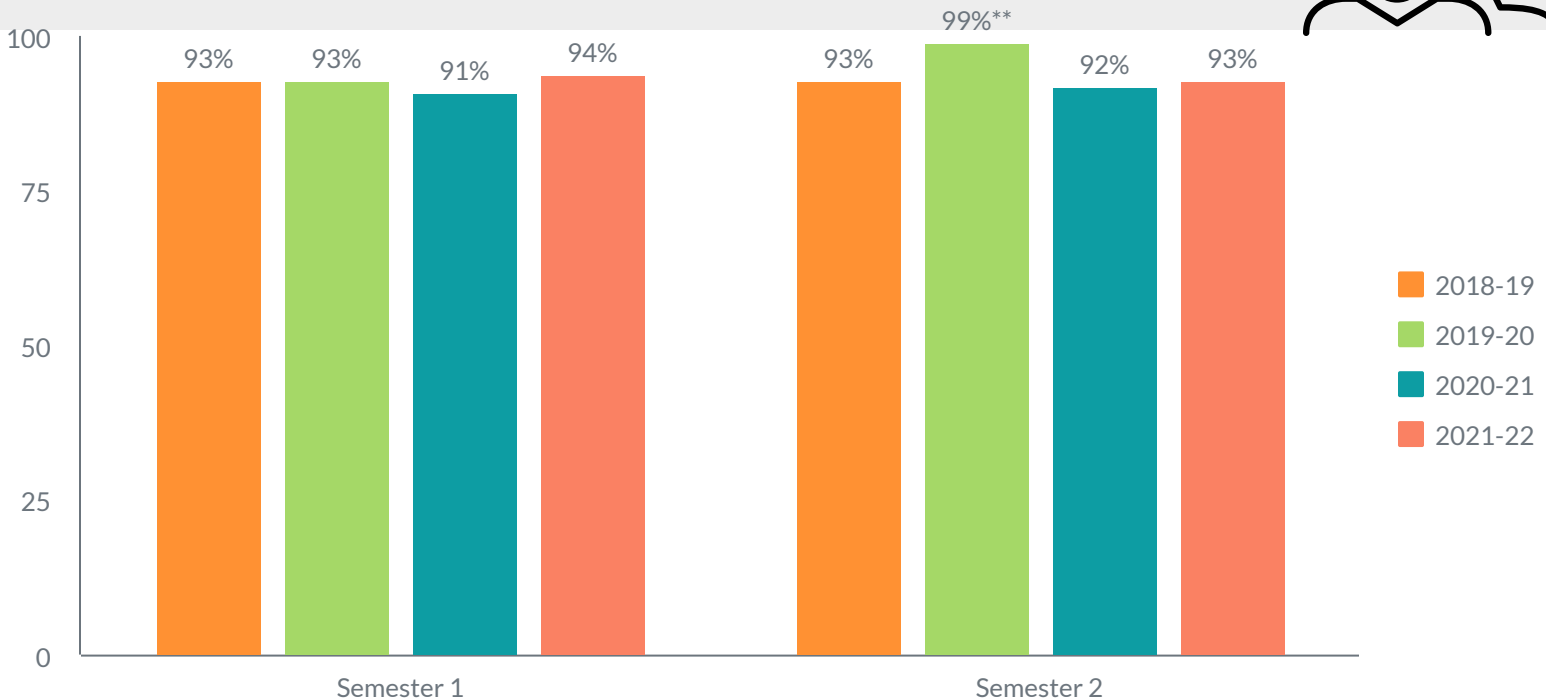
TARGET: At least 80 per cent of students within each cohort making progress towards graduation/graduating.

Credit Accumulation by End of School Year



ALL STUDENTS COURSE SUCCESS

TARGET: At least 90 per cent of courses are successfully passed by students



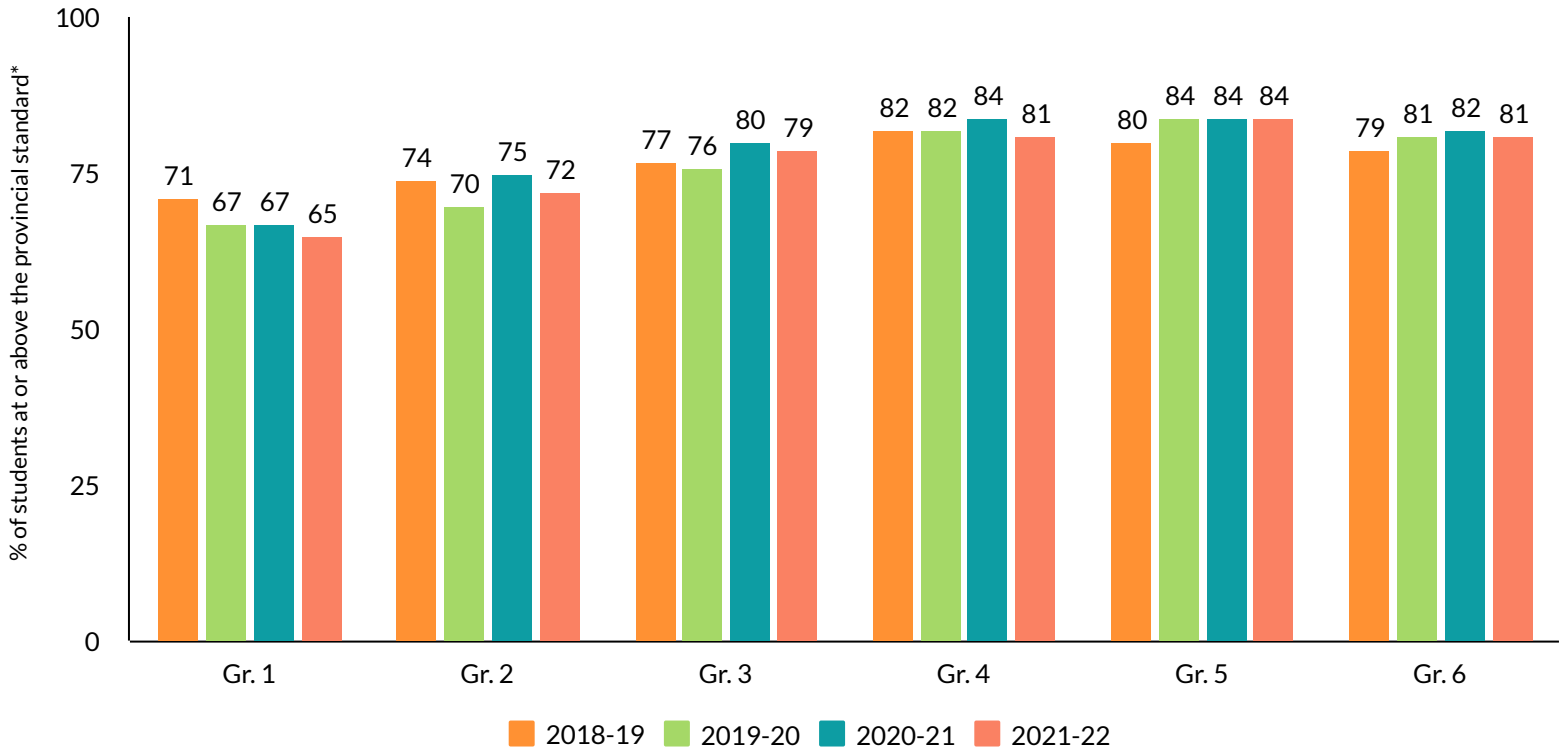
** COVID19 school closure



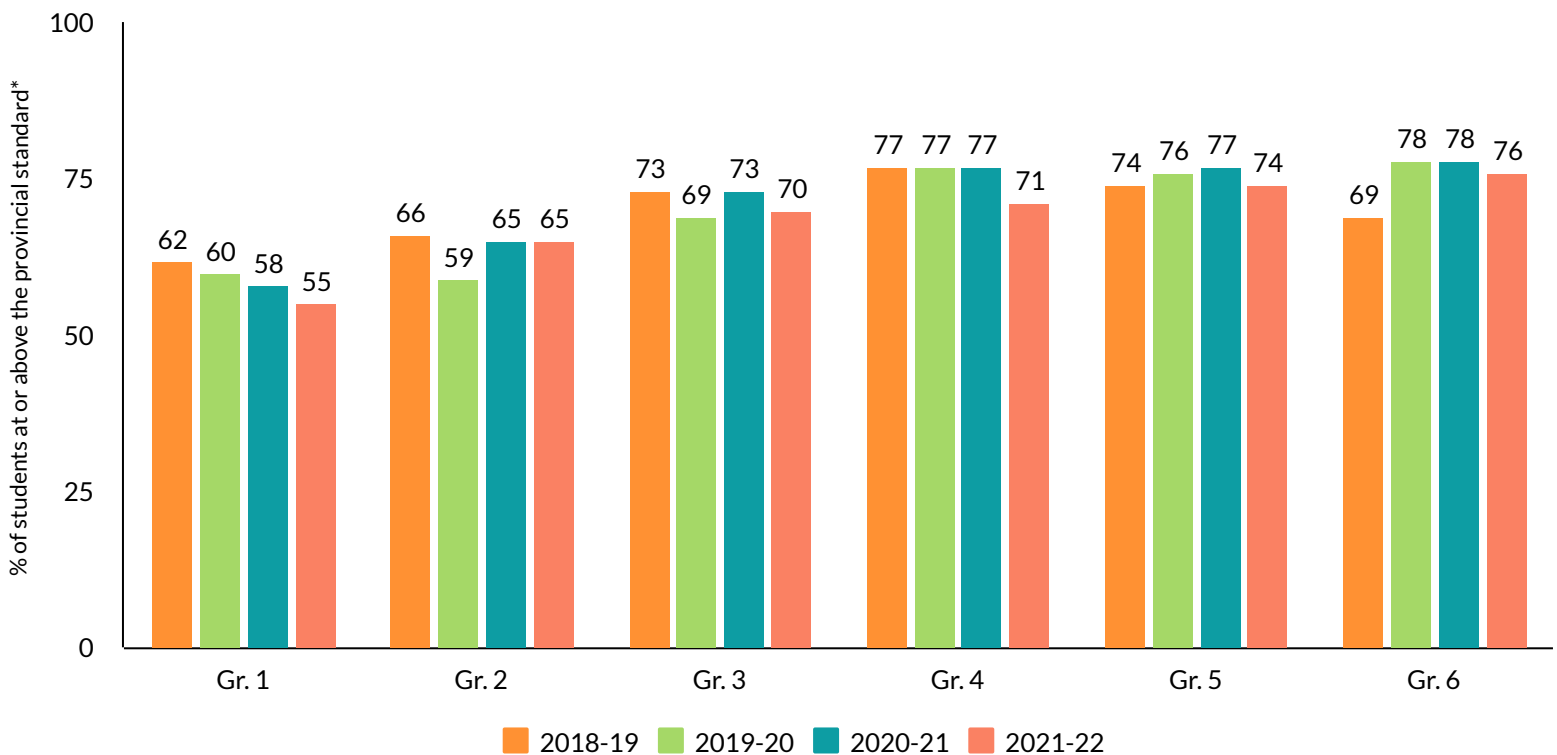
ALL STUDENTS READING

TARGET: At least 75 per cent of students within each cohort on track as an effective reader.

All Schools: Grades 1-6 Reading at Report 2



HPS: Grades 1-6 Reading at Report 2



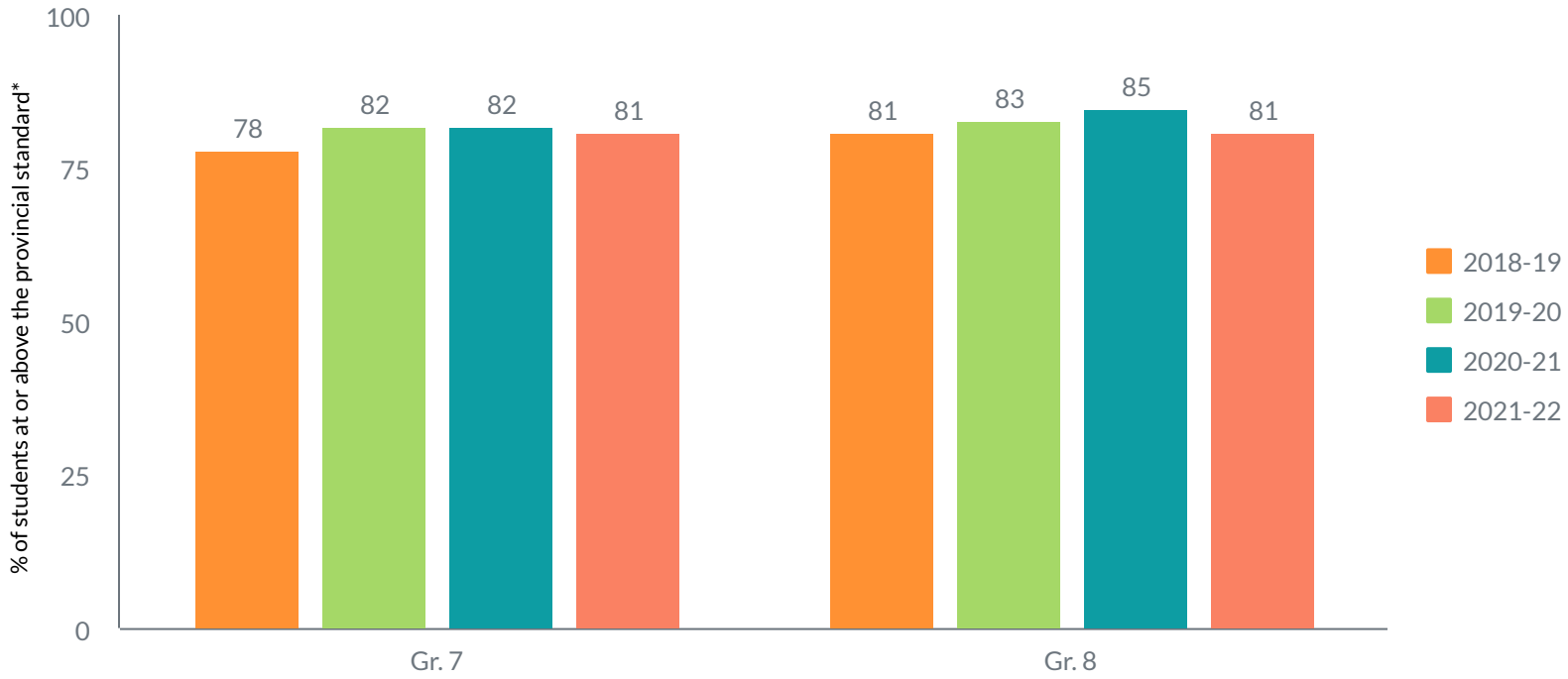
The provincial standard is a Level 3, which is at least a B- (Grades 1-6).



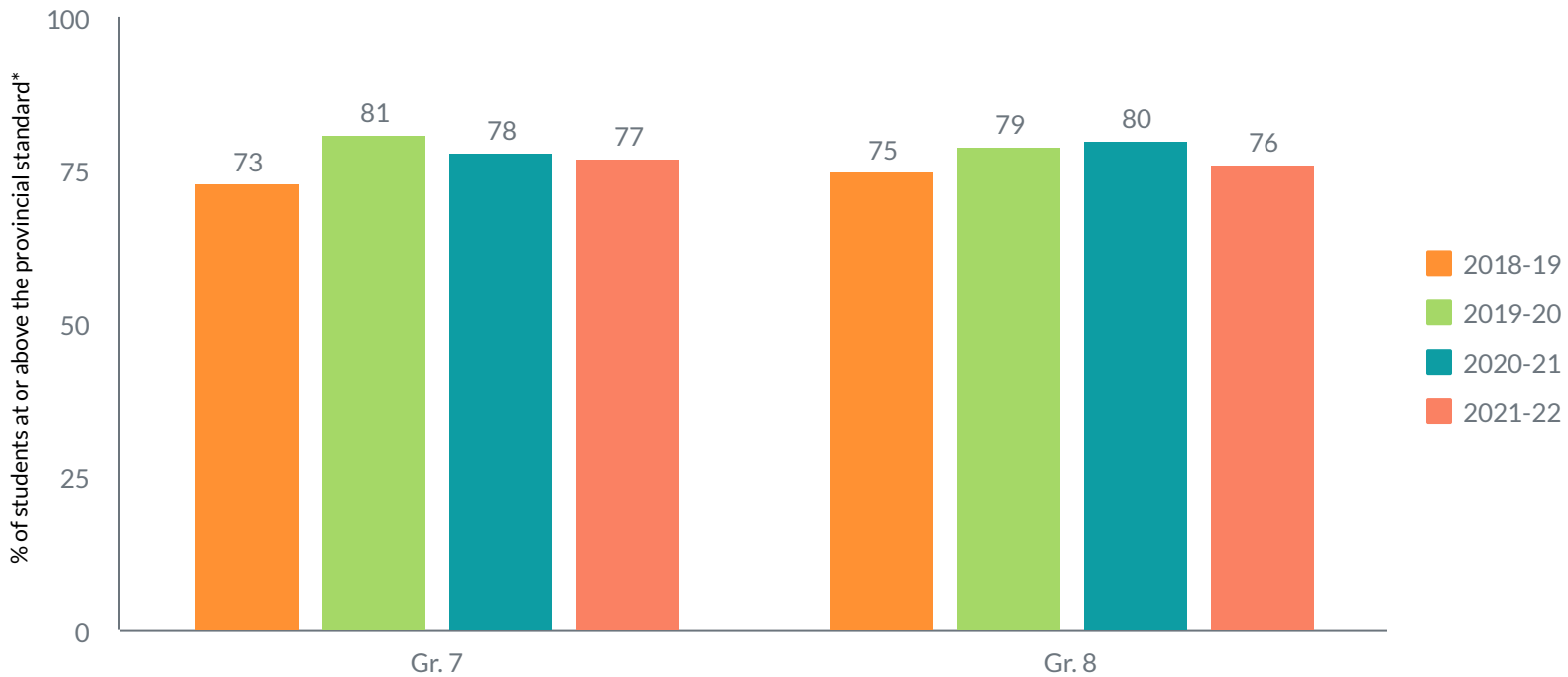
ALL STUDENTS GRADUATING

TARGET: At least 80 per cent of students within each cohort making progress towards graduation/graduating.

All Schools: Grades 7-8 Reading at Report 2



All Schools: Grades 7-8 Math at Report 2



Note: An average math mark per student was calculated across 5 math strands in 2018-19 and 2019-20. Reporting standards changed in 2020-21 and math is now reported as a single mark.

The provincial standard is a Level 3, which is at least a 70% (Grades 7-8).