

## Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Policy

### 1. Intent

- 1.1. Thames Valley District School Board will support students and Mature Students in efficiently achieving their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) using PLAR to move to sustainable employment, postsecondary education, or apprenticeship.
- 1.2. This policy and TVDSB's Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition process have been developed to meet the expectations of the Ontario Ministry of Education Policy and Program Memoranda (PPM) 129 and 132.

### 2. Definitions

- 2.1. **Challenge Process** refers to a process of evaluation and assessment in PPM 129 and 132 to grant credits.
- 2.2. **Discipline** refers to the subject area covered by any one curriculum. All courses in that curriculum are considered to belong to that discipline.
- 2.3. **Equivalency Process** refers to a process of assessing prior learning and life experiences to award equivalency credits, including the Senior Equivalent Credit Application (SECA).
- 2.4. **Indigenous** refers to First Nations, Métis, or Inuit
- 2.5. **Mature Student** refers to a student who is at least 18 years of age on or after January 1 of the current school year and is enrolled in a program to obtain an OSSD.
- 2.6. **OSIS** refers to the Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions program released in 1989 that sets out the diploma requirements for Ontario Secondary School students enrolling in that same year and until September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1999.
- 2.7. **Prior Learning** refers to the knowledge and skills that students have acquired, in both formal and informal ways.
- 2.8. **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)** refers to the formal evaluation and credit-granting process as outlined in PPM 129 and 132 whereby students may obtain credits for Prior Learning. Students may have their knowledge

and skills assessed to earn credits.

- 2.9. **PLAR Individual Assessment** refers to subject-specific assessment materials used to evaluate a mature student's knowledge and skills against the overall expectations of the compulsory Grade 9 and 10 courses.

### 3. Objective of Policy

- 3.1. This policy will outline the principles TVDSB will follow as it uses the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Equivalency and Challenge processes to support students to complete their OSSD, including the following:
- 3.1.1. Ensuring the learning outcomes demonstrated by students and diploma requirements are the same as those of students pursuing their OSSD in a traditional classroom setting.
  - 3.1.2. Adhering to the principles and statements included in Growing Success and Ontario Schools.
  - 3.1.3. Providing supports that ensure equitable access to the PLAR process and opportunities to succeed.
  - 3.1.4. Records of students completing PLAR are maintained and reported to the Ministry.

### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1. This policy and corresponding procedure apply to all **students, educators, and administrators** of TVDSB.
- 4.2. Following PPM 129 and 132, the **principal** at their discretion, may grant credits towards the Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC) or Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) to a student.
- 4.2.1. Provide leadership and coaching to staff regarding the PLAR process that is committed to identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to learning.
- 4.3. The **Director of Education or designate** is authorized to issue operational procedures and guidelines to implement this policy and related procedures consistent

with legislation or regulations.

## **5. PLAR Eligibility as Outlined in PPM 129 Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): Implementation in Ontario Secondary Schools**

### **5.1. Equivalency Process:**

5.1.1. Applies only to students transferring from outside of Ontario.

### **5.2. Challenge Process:**

5.2.1. Must be enrolled in a regular day school program.

5.2.2. Must be seeking credit for a Grade 10–12 course not previously attempted or completed.

5.2.3. Must demonstrate prior learning through formal assessment.

## **6. PLAR Eligibility as Outlined in PPM 132 Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students: Implementation in Ontario Secondary Schools**

### **6.1. Equivalency Process:**

6.1.1. Must be 18 years or older on or after January 1 of the current school year.

6.1.2. Must be actively on-roll with TVDSB.

6.1.3. Cannot be on track to graduate in the current school year.

6.1.4. Eligible for credit based on:

6.1.4.1. Work experience.

6.1.4.2. Education from other jurisdictions.

6.1.4.3. Life learning (e.g., parenting, military service, training programs, other languages).

### **6.2. Challenge Process:**

6.2.1. Applies only to Grade 11 and 12 courses not previously attempted or completed.

6.2.2. Must demonstrate prior learning through formal assessment.

## **7. PLAR Policy Statements**

- 7.1. TVDSB believes that the PLAR process, including both the Equivalency and Challenge processes, shall be inclusive of all of the following principles:
  - 7.1.1. Students will be granted credits based on Prior Learning.
  - 7.1.2. A maximum number of credits will be granted via the processes as outlined in TVDSB Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Procedure (NEW).
  - 7.1.3. Students will be evaluated using the processes that will result in the most credits granted as permitted in PPM 129 and 132.
  - 7.1.4. Eligible students will be made aware of how to navigate the PLAR process in a timely manner, depending on the student's unique learning pathway.
  - 7.1.5. Students may be eligible for either or both the Challenge or Equivalency process depending on their age, enrolment status, and prior learning. Eligibility is determined in accordance with PPM 129 and PPM 132.
  - 7.1.6. Credit substitutions are permitted in certain circumstances.
  - 7.1.7. The processes must begin as soon as the student registers with TVDSB and/or is eligible for PLAR.
  - 7.1.8. The Challenge or Equivalency process will take no more than five months to complete.
  - 7.1.9. Students will not have to pay a fee to use these processes.
- 7.2. Mature Student undertaking the PLAR 132 PPM process must complete the four compulsory senior courses.
- 7.3. TVDSB will provide access to PLAR for students and grant credits and equivalent credits for Prior Learning based on the student's enrolment date and their preferred diploma requirements.
- 7.4. Any Mature Student who has partially completed the first two years of secondary school in the Ontario education system or an equivalent will be required to successfully complete an individual assessment in the remaining compulsory subject areas.

7.5. TVDSB acknowledges the varied lived experiences and abilities of students and supports alternative learning pathways through PLAR and culturally responsive approaches when supporting, recognizing, and assessing students' prior learning.

7.5.1. TVDSB will ensure all students receive the support and accommodations to access and successfully complete the PLAR processes and be awarded an OSSD.

7.6. Students engaging in the PLAR process may request assistance from TVSDB educators and staff in completing applications, forms, gathering evidence, and understanding assessment requirements.

## **8. The PLAR Challenge Process Policy Statements**

8.1. Upon the request of the student (for students under 18, parental consent is required as well), the Challenge Process will be initiated once the principal is satisfied that there is reasonable evidence that the student will likely be successful.

8.2. The Challenge Process is limited to a maximum of two attempts per course.

8.2.1. To qualify, eligible students must provide reasonable evidence that they are likely to succeed before re-challenging. Additionally, a sufficient amount of time must have elapsed between the first and second attempts.

8.3. TVDSB is not obligated to provide opportunities for students to challenge for credits for courses not taught in schools operated by the board.

8.4. Credit will only be granted for specific courses that the student has successfully challenged.

8.5. Students with music certificates that are accepted for credits in Ontario Schools (Music Certificates Accepted for credits) are not required to challenge for credit for the appropriate music courses, but are granted credits in accordance with Ontario Schools.

8.6. A student will not be granted credits through the challenge process for the following:

8.6.1. A course for which the student has already earned a credit but for which they wish to improve the mark.

- 8.6.2. A course in any subject if a credit has already been granted in a later grade.
- 8.6.3. A course for which there is significant overlap with a course for which credit has been granted.
- 8.6.4. A transfer course.
- 8.6.5. A locally developed course.
- 8.6.6. A cooperative education course.
- 8.6.7. A course in English as a second language (ESL), English literacy development (ELD), or Anglais pour débutants (APD), if the student has one or more credits in English from the curriculum for English for Grades 9 to 12 (such as, the documents for English-language schools or the documents for French-language schools) or from the curriculum guidelines.
- 8.6.8. The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course.
- 8.7. Students have the right to withdraw from the Challenge Process before completing the formal assessment, and this will not be recorded on their Ontario Student Transcript (OST).
- 8.8. Mature Students, or where applicable, a student's parents or caregiver must be informed of decisions made throughout the Challenge Process and may appeal decisions regarding eligibility or final marks.

## **9. Reporting**

- 9.1. Principals will track and report to TVDSB the number and types of PLAR processes completed.
- 9.2. TVDSB will track and report the data collected in 8.1 to the Ministry in September, October, and where appropriate, March each year.
- 9.3. Credits granted as a result of PLAR will be added to a student's OST and OSR.

## **10. List of Appendices**

- 10.1. Appendix A – Policy Administrative Information

## Appendix A – Policy Administrative Information

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| Policy Number:   | New                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Policy Owner:    | Learning Support Services                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Effective Date:  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Amendment Dates: |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Review Dates     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| EIE Review Date: |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Resources:       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Education Act</i>, RSO 1990, c E.2</li> <li>• Ontario Ministry of Education Policy and Program Memorandum 129 Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): Implementation in Ontario Secondary Schools</li> <li>• Ontario Ministry of Education Policy and Program Memorandum 132 Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students: Implementation in Ontario Secondary Schools</li> <li>• Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools 2010</li> <li>• Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements, 2024</li> <li>• TVDSB Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Procedure (New)</li> <li>• TVDSB PLAR: Prior Learning Assessment Recognition Guidelines</li> </ul> |