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September 19, 2017

Dear Ronnie Miller,

Thank you for your correspondence dated June 23, 2017 and July 7, 2017 in which you have raised several questions about [English Language Learners / ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007](#) and STEP, as pertaining to private schools in Ontario.

The Ministry of Education is mandated to deliver a high quality public education system. As such, ministry policy documents consistently reflect a focus on provincially funded schools. Your correspondence speaks to that focus, suggesting that a document such as [English Language Learners / ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007](#) is written for publicly funded schools, thereby excluding private schools. In fact, the ministry makes policy documents and supporting resources publicly available in recognition of their relevance to a broad and diverse audience, including parents, teachers, principals, private schools, other education professionals, researchers, community organizations, etc.

In the private school sector, schools that wish to offer credit courses towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma must comply with ministry requirements in several policy documents. The structure of the courses, the delivery of the curriculum expectations, the assessment and evaluation strategies and the work of the students must be congruent with: *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Program Requirements (OS K-12) 2016*; *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools, 2010*; *Ontario Student Record (OPSR) Guideline, 2000*; *Ontario Student Transcript (OST) Manual, 2013*; curriculum documents (including the *Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9-12: English As a Second Language and English Literacy Development, 2007*) and applicable Policy/Program Memoranda.

Ministry-developed resources, which complement the above-noted policy documents, are designed to support and help teachers, principals, private schools, and other education professionals work effectively in promoting student achievement. Such documents provide a rich source of practical techniques, research findings, and strategies that can be put to immediate use in the classroom and in the school, whether in publicly funded schools or the private school sector.

To increase capacity to address the learning needs of English language learners, the ministry has made the following resources publicly available at www.edu.gov.on.ca:

- [Supporting English language learners: A practical guide for Ontario educators Grades 1 to 8, 2008](#)
- [Supporting English Language Learners with Limited Prior Schooling: A practical guide for Ontario educators \(Grades 3 to 12\), 2008](#)
- [Supporting English Language Learners in Kindergarten: A practical guide for Ontario educators, 2007](#)
- [English Language Learners / ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007](#)
- [Tips for English Language Learners in Mathematics: Grades 7, 8, 9 Applied, 10 Applied, 2005](#)
- [Many Roots, Many Voices: Supporting English Language Learners in Every Classroom, 2005](#)

Additional ministry resources, intended to promote the success of English language learners, are publicly available on www.edugains.ca/newsite/ell/index.html#. These additional resources include STEP, which you specifically noted in your July 7 correspondence as being of interest, and more listed immediately below:

- STEP- Ongoing Assessment (e.g. [Flow Chart](#), [Steps to English Proficiency](#))
- STEP- [Initial Assessment for Language](#) (e.g. [User Guide](#), Continua for [Oral](#), [Reading](#), [Writing](#))
- Monographs (e.g. [A World of Words: Enhancing Vocabulary Development for English Language Learners](#); [ELL Voices in the Classroom: Oral Language Strategies for English Language Learners](#))
- Webcasts (e.g. Dr. Jim Cummins; Dr. Eunice Jang)
- [Practice and Research Connections – Adolescent Literacy](#)
- [Adolescent Literacy Guide](#)

While the ministry systematically makes policies and resources publicly available, in some circumstances, materials produced exclusively by or for the public education system are password-protected and the links to those materials on www.edugains.ca will reflect their limited accessibility.

The document [English Language Learners / ESL and ELD Programs and Services: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2007](#), as you have noted, sets out mandated policy requirements and recommendations for provincially funded school boards and schools. While the document does not set out mandated policy requirements for private schools, like STEP and the other resources that we have highlighted above, it is recommended as a guide and resource for private schools. Their use will lead to an increased capacity for compliance with ministry requirements in applicable policy documents regarding the

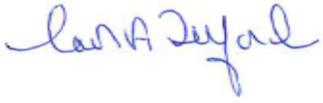
structure of courses, the delivery of curriculum expectations, the assessment and evaluation strategies and the work of the students.

You have raised a question about an inspection report for one of your member schools that included a requirement to use STEP. As stated above, the use of STEP by private schools is recommended, however, it is not presently a ministry requirement. We trust this resolves the discrepancy in question, as the ministry continues to promote the use of STEP and other ministry-developed resources in support of student success.

Your correspondence also raises the question of whether the ministry requires ongoing assessment of English language learners. We would like to remind you of the ministry's requirement that inspected private schools comply with [Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario's Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2010](#) in which ongoing assessment is integral to one of the "Seven Fundamental Principles" to guide assessment, evaluation, and reporting in Ontario's schools. In particular, we would like to remind you of the following criteria included in the 2016-17 inspection report for private schools: "Assessment, evaluation and reporting are ongoing, varied in nature, administered over a period of time to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning."

In response to your question about filing assessment reports for English language Learners, while it is not a ministry requirement of inspected private schools that they file language acquisition information for English language learners in their respective Ontario Student Records (OSRs), the ministry requires evidence for the inspection process that a school is indeed conducting assessments (ongoing, etc.) that are congruent with *Growing Success* and the *Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9-12: English As a Second Language and English Literacy Development, 2007*. Another function of the ongoing assessment for English language learners is to facilitate decisions regarding possible deferrals of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). All students are required to meet the secondary school literacy graduation requirements in order to earn an Ontario Secondary school Diploma (OSSD). To meet this requirement, a student must successfully complete the OSSLT, and the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC). Special provisions for English language learners pertaining to the OSSLT are available and can be found in Appendix 3 in *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Program Requirements (OS K-12) 2016*, and in the [How to Administer the OSSLT, March 30, 2017](#) guide, along with the most recently updated *Guide for Accommodations, Special Provisions, Deferrals and Exemptions, OSSLT For English Language Learners and Students with Special Education Needs*. Decisions regarding deferrals are to be made on an individual basis according to students' level of English language level proficiency found on pg. 24, *How to Administer the OSSLT, March 2017*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carol Telford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Carol Telford
Manager, Private Schools and International Education Unit