

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/Caregiver(s):

**Re: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Challenge for Adolescents 2014-2015**

Through a formal evaluation and accreditation process known as Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), students enrolled in TDSB secondary schools and Continuing Education programs may have their skills and knowledge evaluated against the overall expectations outlined in provincial curriculum policy documents in order to earn credits towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (O.S.S.D.).

Students' prior learning is assessed for the purpose of granting a credit for a Grade 10, 11 or 12 course developed from a provincial curriculum policy document published in 1999 or later. Students in Grades 9, 10, 11, or 12 may apply to challenge for credit for certain Grade 10, 11 or 12 courses.

*Please note the following rules which govern the challenge process:*

- Students may challenge and earn a maximum of four credits for prior learning, including a maximum of two credits in any one discipline.
- The PLAR challenge process requires students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through assessment procedures that will include formal tests (70%) and other assessment activities (30%).
- Students can only challenge for courses that are currently taught in TDSB schools.
- There are some courses that cannot be challenged. (Please refer to the PLAR Fact Sheet available through Guidance).
- Students must be registered with a Toronto District School Board school and will not be charged a fee.
- Only successful challenges will be recorded as credits granted on the student's OSR; however full disclosure will apply to attempts made at the Grade 11 and 12 levels.
- A complete challenge application and accompanying supportive documents, materials, proof, evidence to show knowledge and skills which meet all curriculum expectations for a course must be submitted by the set deadline.

Students are responsible for initiating the challenge process. There are no school-based supports involved with the process of the challenge.

**As the first step in preparation for this process, all interested students and parents/guardians/caregivers must attend a mandatory Information/Orientation session on:**

**Wednesday, February 11, 2015**

**6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

**(Registration from 6:00 – 6:30 p.m.)**

**Earl Haig Secondary School, Auditorium**

**100 Princess Avenue, Toronto,**

**(Yonge and Sheppard area)**

Registration is from 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and the presentation is from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The challenge process will be clarified and curriculum specialists will answer questions with regard to the expectations of the challenge process.

Application forms will be available from the school Guidance office from Thursday, February 12, 2015. Students in Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 who wish to challenge for a Grade 10, 11 or 12 course must complete an application and return it to the school Guidance office by March 6, 2015, at 4:00 p.m. Applications will be initially checked for completion by school Administrator or Guidance Counsellor. Those deemed to be complete and appropriate will be assessed by central curriculum staff to determine if the challenge application is approved to proceed to the final evaluation. All applicants will be notified in writing of the status of their challenge application by April 7, 2015. The challenge process of assessment and evaluation will be conducted during the month of May.

If you have any questions about PLAR or the challenge process, please contact your school's Guidance office.

### What is PLAR?

- PLAR is a process whereby active TDSB secondary or Continuing Education students may obtain credits toward the Ontario Secondary School Diploma for knowledge and skills that they have acquired outside of the classroom. This is referred to as the “challenge process”.
- Students may “challenge” and earn a maximum of four credits for prior learning, including a maximum of two credits in any one discipline.
- Students' prior learning is assessed and evaluated to determine whether they have met the provincial curriculum expectations in a specific course.

### What you can challenge:

- Current TDSB day school and Continuing Education students may challenge only Grades 10, 11 or 12 subjects that are currently being taught in TDSB secondary schools.

### What you cannot challenge:

- Credits granted through the International Baccalaureate Program as a result of the specialized nature of the additional curriculum and certification process
- A Transfer course
- Locally Developed courses
- Gifted option and course types
- Cooperative Education courses
- A subject where a higher level of credit has already been granted i.e. you have Grade 11 Science but not Grade 10, you may not challenge for the Grade 10 Science.
- You cannot challenge between course types for the same course for example: when a student earns Grade 10 English Applied he/she cannot challenge the Grade 10 English Academic
- Multi-credit Technology courses
- English as a Second Language or English courses
- French as a Second Language courses (core, extended, Immersion) if the student has earned one or more credits in Français (French as a First Language) from Français Policy Document 9-12, OSS.

NB: Extended/Immersion French students who challenge Core French will be removed from the Extended/Immersion Program.

### How do I apply for the PLAR challenge?

1. Students are responsible for initiating the challenge process, and for independently satisfying all of the performance requirements associated with the specific course challenged.
2. Attend the mandatory Information/Orientation session in February.
3. Students must submit reasonable evidence of successfully meeting the provincial subject curriculum expectations, along with the challenge application, as proof that they are qualified to challenge for credit in a specific course, including a course pre-requisite.

**What is considered reasonable evidence for the challenge application?**

- Samples of relevant work, in keeping with Ministry curriculum expectations
- Proof of successful relevant experience or independent learning
- Videotape, audiotape, or CD with samples of relevant work

**What if I take the challenge and am not successful?**

- If the application package is approved in April for the student to go through the challenge, chances are excellent that they will be successful in the challenge at the end of May.
- Unsuccessful challenges will not be reported for Grade 10 courses. The policy for full disclosure that applies to all Grades 11 and 12 courses taken during the day also applies to Grades 11 and 12 courses challenged under PLAR.

**Key dates in the 2014-2015 PLAR challenge process:**

- Wednesday, February 11, 2015 - Orientation session for all potential applicants, parents, and community.
- Thursday, February 12, 2015 - PLAR Challenge applications available in secondary school Guidance Offices from this date.
- Friday, March 6, 2015 - Applications, with appropriate documentation, must be submitted by 4:00 pm to the school Guidance Office.
- Monday, March 23, 2015, by 4:00 p.m. – First and second page of PLAR Challenge Application Form will be faxed to 6-6018 Attention: Bernadette Shaw or Roberta Gray, Teaching and Learning
- By Friday, March 27, 2015 schools will deliver completed student packages to Teaching and Learning Department, East Education office, 140 Borough Dr., 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl.: Att: Roberta Gray
- By Tuesday, April 7, 2015 - Principal or school designate notifies successful and unsuccessful applicants. Unsuccessful applicants must file an appeal within 5 days.
- By Thursday, April 16, 2015 - Final date for successful students to confirm, in writing, that they are committed to undertake the challenge process. Final date for unsuccessful students to file an appeal with their Family of Schools Superintendent.
- Between Thursday, April 23 and Friday, May 1, 2015 – PLAR Assessor contacts student for assessments.
- Monday, May 4 – Friday, May 22, 2015 - Students complete PLAR Assessments
- Friday, May 15, 2015 - Last date for students to withdraw from Challenge without a mark appearing on transcript.

**The PLAR challenge process requires students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through assessment procedures that include formal tests, group work, and other activities. The challenge will take up to 20 hours of classroom/assessment time. There is no teaching component to this process and only one PLAR challenge is permitted at a time.**