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Office of the Minister

AR117091

NOV 30 2021

Ms. Catherine Wilson  
Board Chair  
Medicine Hat Public School Division  
601 - 1 Avenue SW  
Medicine Hat AB T1A 4Y7

Dear Ms. Wilson:

Thank you for your October 21, 2021 letter on behalf of the Medicine Hat Public School Division Board of Trustees requesting that Provincial Achievement Tests and diploma exams be cancelled for the balance of the 2021/22 school year. I am pleased to have this opportunity to congratulate you on your election victory, and on being selected as Board Chair for a second term.

COVID-19 has significantly impacted student learning in Alberta and around the world, creating unique challenges for the entire education community.

In response to feedback from students, parents and education partners about stress and anxiety related to academic achievement, Alberta's government is temporarily changing the weighting of diploma exams to 10 per cent from 30 per cent for the 2021/22 school year. This will help ensure provincial standards are maintained while taking into account the learning disruptions that have occurred since March 2020. The weighting of diploma exams will return to 30 per cent effective September 1, 2022. More information is available at [alberta.ca/k-12-learning-during-covid-19.aspx](https://alberta.ca/k-12-learning-during-covid-19.aspx).

To further support Grade 12 students whose learning has been impacted by COVID-19, the Honourable Demetrios Nicolaides, Minister of Advanced Education, and I have sent a letter to the presidents of Alberta's post-secondary institutions, asking them to consider this unprecedented experience when admitting students. You can read the letter at [alberta.ca/assets/documents/edu-ministers-letter-diploma-exams.pdf](https://alberta.ca/assets/documents/edu-ministers-letter-diploma-exams.pdf).

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In order to help students feel more prepared for writing diploma exams, Alberta Education has made a number of resources available on the Government of Alberta website at [alberta.ca/k-12-provincial-assessment.aspx](https://www.alberta.ca/k-12-provincial-assessment.aspx), including examples of questions that were on previous diploma exams.

Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) will continue this school year, consistent with the 2021/22 school plan and as they would in any other school year. Like diploma exams, PATs provide a consistent measure that allows students to demonstrate their achievement. However, unlike with diploma exams, teachers are not required to factor PAT results into their student's final grades. Also, while diploma exams are scheduled on a specific date, the PAT schedule gives school authorities flexibility to administer them within a fixed period of time.

Alberta's government appreciates that the pandemic is contributing to stress and mental health issues among some students. Alberta Education's Specialized Learning Support Grant provides funding for school authorities to support student wellness, including psychological and social-emotional support and access to mental health workers and behavioural consultants. School authorities can reach out to health partners to ensure supports are in place for students. Mental health resources are also available online at [alberta.ca/covid](https://www.alberta.ca/covid), including important phone numbers that Albertans can call for additional support.

We are grateful to school authority leaders, teachers, administrators and other staff, parents and students for their patience during this challenging time. We will continue to work with our education stakeholders, including school authorities across Alberta, and keep them apprised of any changes as we move through the school year.

I hope this information is helpful, and I appreciate you taking the time to share your board's concerns.

Sincerely,



Adriana LaGrange  
Minister