

6 Ways: Transforming High School in Ontario

Student Success Teams

What is the program?

Leadership is essential to the success of any high school program. That's the reason for **Student Success Teams**.

Every high school in Ontario now has a team comprising a principal, a Student Success Teacher or teachers, and a guidance counsellor. Together, they:

- Identify and support struggling students
- Provide more options for learning
- Monitor student progress

Plus, each Student Success Team works with school staff, students, parents, and the community to ensure more students earn the credits necessary to graduate.

What's the latest?

Now, each high school student in Ontario can access a Student Success Team.

These teams are made possible through the hiring of 1,600 high school teachers over the past two years, including 1,100 dedicated to Student Success programs.

Specialist High Skills Major

What is the program?

The Specialist High Skills Major allows students to focus on a career path that matches their individual skills and interests. Each major is a bundle of 6 to 12 courses in a selected field, such as hospitality and tourism, or construction.

Students who choose a major learn on the job with employers and at skills training centres, as well as in school. They can earn valuable industry certifications, including first aid and computer technology qualifications.

Students who complete a major can be confident that they leave high school prepared with the knowledge, skills, and industry-recognized qualifications desired by employers, and postsecondary education and training institutions.

What's the latest?

27 school boards are launching pilots this fall. The majors being offered are in construction, hospitality and tourism, manufacturing, primary industries, and arts and culture.

Lighthouse Projects

What is the program?

Losing credits can be a huge deterrent to graduating. Lighthouse projects help students who need extra support and attention stay in school, accumulate needed credits, and take programs linked to colleges, and they encourage youth who have left school to return.

These innovative programs focus on:

1. Credit recovery
2. Alternative education
3. Student success in Grades 9 and 10 (special focus on credit accumulation)
4. Program pathways to apprenticeship and the workplace
5. College connections
6. Success for targeted groups of students (e.g., English as a second language/French as a second language, special needs)

What's the latest?

In the first year of the initiative, more than 8,000 students earned over 14,000 credits through these innovative local projects.

There will be 159 new or expanded projects in 2006–07 to help students having difficulty in the regular classroom who require extra support, guidance, or a different learning environment.

Expanded Co-op Credit

What is this program?

Valuable education already happens in on-the-job placements. Now high school students in Ontario can apply two co-op credits towards their core graduation requirements.

This broadens opportunities for experiential learning and gives more students a chance to start working and “test-drive” career options.

What’s the latest?

Two co-op credits earned after September 2005 can now be applied to a student’s 18 compulsory credits required for graduation.

Along with this change comes a move to develop stronger partnerships between education, business, and community organizations—the goal is to increase the number of co-op and job placement opportunities for students.

Dual Credit Program

What is the program?

With the new Dual Credit Program, high school students can earn a number of credits by participating in apprenticeship training and postsecondary courses that count towards both their high school diploma and their postsecondary diploma, degree, or apprenticeship certification.

What’s the latest?

A number of school boards in Ontario are piloting the dual credit programs. Teachers and professors participating in the pilot report that students are more engaged in their studies and have dramatically improved their academic achievement with the dual credit model.

This initiative is now available in a number of school boards and colleges. An estimated 1,142 students will be enrolled in 21 dual credit pilot programs this fall.

Grade 8–9 Transition

What is the program?

Grade 8 and 9 students have a higher risk of dropping out during the difficult transition from elementary school to high school. This initiative includes more

teachers, intensive professional development, and improved tracking of struggling students and their progress.

What's the latest?

Regional professional development sessions about successful high school transitions were delivered by the Ontario government to superintendents and Student Success Leaders from all Ontario district school boards in the spring of 2006.

Subsequent board-directed training sessions are providing intensive instruction on best practices and instructional strategies targeted to 12,000 Student Success Teachers, principals, and other Grade 8 and 9 educators.

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