

Update

Presented by the Curriculum Implementation Partnership in cooperation with the Ontario Ministry of Education

WHAT'S INSIDE...



Our cover story provides an overview of the Student Success Strategy and the Learning to 18 initiative, including an interview with one of the new Student Success Teachers, Ellen Petrovits, from the

Toronto District School Board and a profile of an innovative pilot program developed by the Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'Est ontarien.

Also in this issue is an overview of the new Daily Physical Activity initiative, a summary of new supports for teachers of English language learners, and a review of software that can be used to support students in the new Locally Developed Compulsory Credit (LDCC) courses.

This edition also contains the 2nd annual reader survey provided as an insert in the publication. If the survey insert is missing from your copy or you prefer to respond online, please visit www.curriculum-update.info to complete an electronic version. In response to your feedback last December, we have made significant changes to Curriculum Update. Please take a few moments to provide input that will further improve your publication.

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Don't miss the 2nd
annual reader survey!

Navigating for success

**How the Student Success
Strategy is building new
pathways to the future**



DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: HEALTHY STUDENTS, HEALTHY PLACES TO LEARN

Research shows that regular physical activity has a positive impact on childrens' physical, mental and social development – improving their readiness to learn as well as their behaviour, self-esteem and achievement.

Acknowledging the critical role schools play in helping students lead a healthy, active life, a new initiative to increase students' physical activity levels during the school day has been launched. Through the initiative, students in Grades 1 to 8 will have a minimum of 20 minutes of activity each day during instructional time.

The Daily Physical Activity (DPA) initiative is linked with the Health and Physical Education Curriculum, Grades 1 to 8, which promotes healthy living, and has been updated to reflect the new 20-minute requirement. Daily physical activity can also be incorporated across the curriculum.

A detailed resource guide entitled *Daily Physical Activity in Schools, Sample Activities for Students, Grades 1 to 8*, has been developed to provide educators with customized information and activities suited to Grades 1 to 3, Grades 4 to 6, and Grades 7 to 8 students. The guide is available on the ministry website at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/dpa.html.

While the initiative applies only to elementary students from Grades 1 to 8, school boards and principals are encouraged to ensure that Kindergarten students have an opportunity to be physically active every day. The Kindergarten program will be revised soon to include information on daily physical activities.

DPA: An implementation checklist

The following checklist is excerpted from the resource guide *Daily Physical Activity in Schools, Sample Activities for Students, Grades 1 to 8*, which is available on the ministry website.

Before the activity

- Discuss the purpose and benefits of daily physical activity with students.
- Ensure that students become familiar with safety rules and procedures.
- Involve students in the planning and implementation of the daily physical activity program.
- Plan opportunities to integrate physical activity into other subject areas.
- Help students develop the skills necessary to participate fully in daily physical activity and, potentially, to lead activities in the class.
- Establish a safe and motivating environment for physical activity.
- Ensure that the equipment to be used is easily accessible and appropriate.
- Ensure that all activities and facilities enable every student to participate.
- Ensure that all activities and activity areas are safe.

During the activity

- Ensure that students have a proper warm-up.
- Ensure that students are engaged in moderate to vigorous activity throughout the activity time.
- Ensure that students have a proper cool-down.

After the activity

- Reflect on the physical activity, and make notes on ways to modify the activity for later use.
- Talk about ways in which students can incorporate physical activity into their daily lives on a lifelong basis.

What does the policy require?

The Daily Physical Activity policy is designed to ensure that every student has access to daily physical activities that are safe and of high quality, and promote positive health behaviours that can adopt throughout life. The policy indicates that:

- DPA must include at least 20 minutes of sustained moderate to vigorous activity daily;
- DPA must be scheduled during instructional time; and
- DPA can occur in a variety of locations, including classrooms, the outdoors, the gymnasium, and multipurpose rooms.

Insight: the issue of children's health

Physical inactivity has become a serious health and social issue for Canadian children and youth.

According to a 2004 report by the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health, activity levels for the majority of children and youth are not sufficient for healthy growth and development, and many young people do not have an opportunity to be physically active every day.

Reports from the World Health Organization also indicate that during the past twenty-five years, obesity rates among children have increased substantially, resulting in a large number of children facing the risk of developing serious illnesses such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, stroke, and some cancers.

DPA IN ACTION:

BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS

Mark Seaton

Principal, Harris Heights Public School
Thames Valley District School Board

“...‘effective’ does not necessary mean ‘complex’ or ‘sophisticated’...Keep it simple and fun.”

The Thames Valley District School Board has been developing and refining a board-wide approach to daily physical activity for elementary students since the late 1990s. Mark Seaton, who has been involved since the inception of the program, discusses the initiative.

“Our daily physical activity program has been evolving for some time, but we began initially working with teachers and administrators, doing some research, discovering what works and what doesn’t, and learning how to effectively implement in the classroom.

One of the things we’ve learned is that ‘effective’ does not necessary mean ‘complex’ or ‘sophisticated’. In fact, daily physical activity can be implemented very effectively through simple, low-organizational activities in any classroom. Keep it simple and fun. That’s the first advice I’d give any teacher.

Another learning for us has been how easily daily physical activity can be integrated into the curriculum. How do you add 20 minutes of physical activity to 300 minutes of instruction per day? The answer is, by incorporating it into your traditional classroom work.

For example, a good deal of the work we do in elementary schools revolves around patterns. There are patterns in mathematics. There are patterns in literacy. There’s cadence, and rhythm. These provide ideal opportunities to combine movement with learning. You could combine drill work in spelling with a simple game involving tossing a ball. I think teachers will find, when they review the ministry materials, that it’s simpler to incorporate physical activity than they might have imagined.

At the same time, I’d encourage teachers to take it one step at a time. Try an exercise; see what works for you, and your students. Incorporate games a few times a week, in the beginning, and become more comfortable. Experiment and have fun with it.

One of the things teachers can begin to do is to use daily physical activity strategically during the day. All teachers know when students are tuning out. It happens to adults too. We need physical activity. That’s an ideal time to use a favourite game, or put on some music. Get some levity in the classroom, have some fun, and you find that the kids are right back into the groove. I think we have to remember that the students are children, and children like to play. We can use that knowledge to our advantage, and make sure that play is a part of learning.

One interesting thing we’ve discovered, as well, is that there are marked long-term benefits of daily physical activity that are quite noticeable. Students begin to do better academically, and they are less lethargic.

You also begin to see connections to the whole realm of wellness and self-esteem. Poor self-esteem can often be associated with poor physical fitness and health. We’ve found that over

time, there are fewer students exhibiting negative behaviours that extend into the playground, into social interaction in the hallways, and so on. So, it’s not just about the classroom, but across the whole school. That’s been our observation, and there is lots of research that backs up the connection between positive behaviours, self-esteem and health.

Students benefit from daily physical activity whether they’re in Grade 1 or Grade 8. They’re more alert, easier to manage, and more ready to learn. That’s good for students and good for teachers.”



Integrating daily physical activity

The following sample schedule illustrates one of many ways daily physical activity could be incorporated into the instructional day.

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	Language Arts/DPA	Language Arts	Language Arts	Language Arts	Language Arts
2	Language Arts	Language Arts	Language Arts	Language Arts	Language Arts
RECESS					
3	Math	Math/DPA	Math	Math	Math
4	Math	Math	Phys Ed/DPA	Health	Phys Ed
LUNCH					
5	Phys Ed Social studies	Science/ Social studies	Science/ Social studies	Science/ Social studies/ DPA	Art
6	Science/ Social studies	Drama/Dance	Music	Science/ Social studies	Art
RECESS					
7	French	French	French	French	French/DPA

STUDENT SUCCESS STRATEGY

Through innovative programs developed as part of the Student Success Strategy, success for students who are struggling with the curriculum or are disengaged is a growing reality in Ontario schools. Across the province, educators have introduced new approaches to engaging these students, improving the transition from elementary school to high school, and increasing graduation rates, as part of a three-phase initiative that began in 2004 (see 'Student Success: putting the pieces together').

In its early stages, the initiative is already yielding results, with an estimated 72 percent of students graduating after five years of high school in 2004-05, compared to approximately 68 percent in 2003-2004. Equally important, the initiative has created a growing range of learning options and opportunities for students, designed to prepare them effectively for workplace, apprenticeship, college and university destinations of their choice.

In this issue, we provide an overview of the Student Success Strategy, including: background on the purpose and key components of the initiative, key issues the initiative is designed to address, and a review of new supports for teachers and school leaders. Two articles, an interview with Ellen Petrovits, a Student Success Teacher at Toronto's Emery Collegiate Institute, and a profile of L'Académie des métiers et de la technologie de l'Est ontarien, one of the board-based pilot programs, show how the strategy is making a difference for students.

“...opportunities for students... prepare them effectively for workplace, apprenticeship, college and university...”

INSIGHT:

Why a Student Success Strategy?

While the role of secondary schools in preparing students for college and university has always been clear, the Student Success Strategy focuses on how Ontario schools should be serving all students, including those who do not pursue these two forms of post-secondary education.

Changes in the workplace have raised the stakes considerably for students. Education has become a requirement for more occupations – particularly in an information-rich, technology-driven global economy – and fewer occupations exist for those who do not complete, or proceed beyond, high school.

The consequences for students are becoming increasingly clear:

- In 2004, only two-thirds of students who dropped out with some high school education were employed.
- Students who drop out are almost twice as likely to be unemployed as high school graduates, and almost three times as likely to be unemployed as university graduates.
- Individual earnings for high school graduates are considerably more than for students who drop out, as much as 70 per cent more, according to one study.
- Differences in earnings increase with further education. According to the 2001 Census, high school graduates earn an average of \$36,278 compared to \$61,823 for university graduates.
- Since 1990, annual growth in employment in Ontario for those without a high school diploma has actually decreased by 3.1 per cent, compared with an increase of just under 1 per cent for those with a high school diploma and 3.6 per cent for those with a post-secondary certificate or diploma.
- The incarceration rate for high school dropouts is 15 times what it is for those with some post-secondary education. Social assistance and unemployment payments to each dropout are estimated at twice that of high school graduates.

In responding to these new realities, the Student Success Strategy initiative was designed to ensure that the education system prepares every student for a successful future, whether a work placement with skills, an apprenticeship, or post-secondary education such as college or university. In particular, the initiative is focused on a long-term re-balancing of the system so that, over time, workplace preparation and pre-apprenticeship opportunities become as common as college and university preparation courses, and schools better reflect the needs of the entire student population.

STUDENT SUCCESS: PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

The Student Success Strategy is a multi-faceted initiative involving every level of the education system. The initiative is being implemented in three distinct phases, the first of which began in 2003.

Phase I

The initial phase focused on addressing the needs of at-risk students and building system-wide capacity. It included:

- A designated Student Success Leader in every school board, responsible for board-wide implementation of student success programs
- New Locally Developed Compulsory Credit Courses, designed to provide greater choice to students in Grades 9 and 10, and help them advance to Grade 11 and 12 workplace courses
- Increased capacity for delivering technological education in Ontario high schools
- A revised Grade 9 and 10 applied math curriculum, which was undertaken as part of the larger curriculum review process
- Launch of 105 Learning to 18 pilot projects in boards and schools, designed to establish successful practices to increase the number of students graduating from high school (See Pilot Projects on page 10).

Phase II

The second phase, which began in fall 2005 includes:

- Continuation of the Learning to 18 pilot project funding with the renewal and expansion of 99 of the 2004-05 projects, and the establishment of 26 new pilots, ensuring that all 72 boards have a funded project
- A designated Student Success Teacher (SST) in each secondary school in the province.

Phase III

Phase III was announced this month and includes:

- A new Specialist High-Skills Major within the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) bundling six to 12 courses in areas of interest with 18 compulsory credits including math, history, English and science, and the community involvement and literacy components of the OSSD graduation requirements. The course bundles, which allow students more opportunities for experiential learning, are focused on specific sectors including business, the arts, manufacturing, health care, construction, hospitality, and information technology and lead to employment, apprenticeships and postsecondary destinations. (See the insert for examples of the specialist high-skills major credit requirements)
- Creation of dual credit programs that allow students to earn credits toward their high school diploma that also count toward a postsecondary diploma or degree.
- Increasing the number of co-operative education programs and job placement opportunities through more partnerships with business and community organizations. Students will be able to count up to two co-operative education credits and one career education or learning strategies credit towards their compulsory credits
- Introduction of legislation which, if passed, will require students to keep learning, in a classroom, apprenticeship or workplace training program, until the age of 18 or graduation.

For the first time, the government is setting a graduation target as a key part of its strategy to support student success. By 2010, Ontario will graduate 85% of its students, up from 71% in 2004-05.

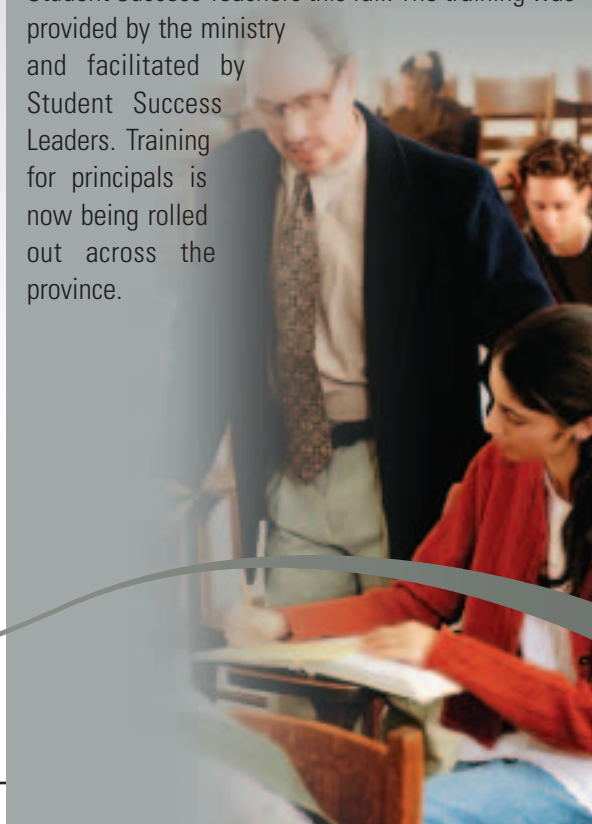
THE STUDENT SUCCESS TEACHER: WORKING ONE-ON-ONE

As a critical component of the Learning to 18 initiative, Student Success Teachers were established within all Ontario secondary schools in the fall of 2005. Working with school staff, students, parents and the community – in collaboration with Student Success Leaders – these teachers play a key role in supporting struggling students and enhancing student outcomes.

The work of the Student Success Teacher may include:

- tracking the progress of students at risk of not graduating;
- supporting school-wide efforts to improve student outcomes;
- re-engaging early school leavers;
- providing direct support and instruction to struggling students; and
- working with parents and the community to support student success.

A series of training sessions were provided to Student Success Teachers this fall. The training was provided by the ministry and facilitated by Student Success Leaders. Training for principals is now being rolled out across the province.





STUDENT SUCCESS: “WHATEVER IT TAKES”

Ellen Petrovits • Student Success Teacher • Emery Collegiate Institute, Toronto District School Board

A Student Success Teacher at Toronto's Emery Collegiate Institute, Ellen Petrovits exemplifies the kind of passion and commitment that make a real difference in the lives of students. Speaking enthusiastically about the 'Stay Connected' program she helped develop at Emery Collegiate, and continues to implement with her colleagues, Ellen reflects on what students need to re-engage, and how teachers can exert a powerful influence on their success.

What is the 'Stay Connected' program?

Stay Connected is a Learning to 18 pilot project that was developed to identify at-risk students, to assess their needs as individuals, and to provide them with new avenues for success. Every student is capable of succeeding, but students need the right path; they need self-confidence and self-esteem to succeed; they often need extra support, and most of all they need to know someone cares about their success. Stay Connected is designed to provide all of these.

Who are the students you work with?

They may be 15 years old, or they may be 19. They are not meeting their potential: they are at risk of failing or dropping out, or they may have failed many courses in the past. The reasons they're failing may be linked to poor attendance or problems outside of school. But whatever the reason, they're simply not engaged.

There is no typical student profile?

Absolutely not. In fact, that's the key to the entire Stay Connected program. You'll find struggling students in any high school in Ontario and none are the same. Each one is an individual, with individual challenges and individual needs. Not all students learn the same way, or at the same time, or at the same pace for that matter. Two students who failed the same course may have had difficulties with different aspects of the curriculum. And while all of these students have failed courses, the real question is 'why'? The answers in each case will be different, and so will the help each student needs to succeed.

So you work with students one-on-one?

Yes. Students receive individualized attention in a group setting, of course, during the program itself. But the intake process is a case management

model that looks at each student individually. It's also very much a holistic approach, and I'm a big believer in the holistic model of education. You're educating a whole child and you need to understand that whole child. That's the foundation of success, particularly for these students.

“Every student is capable of succeeding, but students need the right path.”

How do you identify potential students?

The school administration are essentially gatekeepers for the program. This September, our principal, Louie Papathanasakis, created a school-wide support team that includes representatives from administration, guidance, special education, our social worker, the student success teacher and so on. Teachers use special referral forms and submit these to the team for review at its bi-weekly meetings. If the team sees that a particular student is having consistent problems, then it will identify that an intervention is needed.

So the principal has a hands-on role?

Definitely. School leadership is very important to the success of this kind of program. Our principal has supported me a thousand and ten percent, and he's been a very powerful role model for the entire school. He always puts kids first. He's taken a very creative approach to helping at-risk students and it's really through him that we've built a 'whatever it takes' culture in the school. That's been critical, as has the support of the ministry, which has allowed us to reach more students.

How is student intake handled?

That's where my role begins, with a case management model for every student. We begin by looking at the student's credit counselling summary. I'm very fortunate because I have two years of guidance. I'll look through the summary with the student and say 'okay, you're 16 years old, how many credits should you have?' The student will do the math, and say '16'. I'll say, 'you know what, you have 4, and that's a problem'.

And so we begin. We'll go through the courses the student has failed, and we'll talk about the reasons, because the focus is on the whole student. This isn't solely about recovering a credit. It's about understanding the real reasons the student hasn't been successful and looking at why the student isn't engaged.

Maybe the student was misplaced. Maybe it's an attendance problem. Maybe the parents are divorcing. Maybe the student isn't motivated. Maybe there are drug problems. Regardless of the reasons, the starting point is asking why isn't the student succeeding?

So you're building on some genuine understanding.

Exactly. And with that understanding, we start exploring what the student's strengths and interests are. Emery is a very strong community school. We have co-op. We have the steps program to university where students get a university credit. We have a Cyberscience program. We have cosmetology. We have construction. We have auto. We offer many opportunities.

We take a disconnected student and connect them to the right pathway, one that has meaning for them. We then put a program in place, creating a timetable for them, which very often involves recovering credits, and giving them the extra time and support they need.

This happens at the end of each semester?

No, it's continuous intake, which is a critical program component. The program responds to the student, not the other way around. Maybe a student has failed Geography with a 48 and is taking Geography over again for the whole semester. It's my job to say 'why are we doing this?', and design an alternative approach. The goal is to create flexibility in the student's timetable so that we're focusing on the student's strengths and working with that.

It might mean the student is taken out of Geography in period 3, and is put in Stay Connected for that period. He can recover what he needs for Geography and his other credits during the same period as well. If a student has failed, say, English, Math and Science with a 40, a 38 and a 45, he or she might well be able to recover all three in one period and one semester. Or the student can focus on a new credit, a GLD "Discovering the Workplace" credit for example, and move toward his or her goals.

The program is offered in a dedicated classroom?

Actually it's offered in the library's seminar rooms, which is great because at-risk kids may not typically use the library. But it's also much more than a classroom. I have a refrigerator. I have cupboards of goodies. I feed them. I nurture them. It's a very special environment. There may be 10 or 15 students at any given time, but they'll all be working on different courses. Three are working on 9, 10 and 11 math, another is working on history, and so on.

We also focus on life skills, and helping students receive various types of certification. Last semester, for example, my students went through CPR training and also visited a food bank. These kinds of experiences not only make students more marketable, but also help them to understand that there are people in society who are less fortunate; furthermore, it helps them develop empathy and instills values of volunteerism.

So you can see that it's a very active room where different things are happening every day!

What I've worked hard to do is create an environment for students where they can have fun, where they can learn, where they're loved. The program is not frowned upon in the school. In fact, we have parents calling from the community – and some from outside the community – asking if their children can be in the program. I even had a student ask me if she could get into the program by failing a course on purpose. Needless to say, we found a better option for her. But that's a good indication of how valued the program is.

That's interesting from a re-culturing point of view.

You know, re-culturing is important, and it cuts both ways. It's extremely important not to stereotype the kinds of kids who are suited to this type of program. It comes down to 'whatever it takes' for every student, and every student is unique.

Not all of my students are 'workplace' oriented, for example. I have one student, who is in his last year of high school, and wants to go to university. And he can do it. We've reviewed all of the university options together, and he's decided on a program. But he's had some problems outside of school. So one way or another, something always gets in his way. He gets suspended or something happens in his personal life that makes his self-confidence go down the tubes, and he loses his motivation.

Right now, he's working on recovering a credit and on doing a learning strategies course. The job, as always, is to help the student 'stay connected'. For example, if a student experiences a suspension, I call every second day or so to make sure they have the work they need to do while they are away from school. We do whatever it takes for each student.

Another example is a student who was discouraged from taking auto, because someone told him he was bound for university, and shouldn't pursue that pathway. You really have to ask yourself 'what's wrong with this picture?'. If he

wants to follow his passion and it is a trade, why is that considered a negative?

Regardless of where the student wants to go, I say 'Yes you can!'. I think that's our job – helping students to pursue their dreams and at the same time to present them with reality.

One-to-one is obviously critical.

Very much so. And it goes beyond the time students spend in the Stay Connected room. I monitor all of my students very closely. Every two weeks, each of my students' subject teachers receives a progress report form from me. So I can see how each student is doing in every subject, and if problems arise, I'll provide some counselling right away.

“... I say 'Yes you can!'.
I think that's our job...”

This comes back to the notion that students know that someone cares deeply about how they're doing. They know that 'Miss Petrovits' is the nicest person on the face of the earth and they also know that, once they cross the line, it's going to be very hard for Miss Petrovits to trust them again.

So we take the work very seriously. On the other hand, we have celebrations. I had a student recently who did well on some test results. I took her and the results downstairs, knocked on the principal's door, and said 'look at this'. The student felt great being acknowledged for her accomplishment. I provide other tangible positive reinforcement such as certificates for the most improved. Recognition for a job well done is a powerful motivator. Whatever it takes.

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“...we have parents calling from the community – and some from outside the community – asking if their children can be in the program.”

How do parents respond to the program?

We've done a great deal to involve parents, and to involve the community as well. I stay in touch with parents, almost on a daily basis. I can tell you that I have never called a parent and not received a response, or had them fail to come on board with me. You hear all the time that some parents don't care. That's not true. I had a Stay Connected parents' night last spring, and every single parent showed up. I sent invitations, and I called each parent once or twice, before the event. I think what they are responding to is the sense that someone really cares about their child, and that someone wants to give their child another chance to be successful.

What do you ask of parents?

I think it's so important that communication between parents and schools is strong. If a student is having a problem, sometimes the parent can explain what's going on. Parents can help you keep track of attendance, explain why a class might have been missed. Again, I think

parents are motivated in the same way students are, when they know you're genuinely there to help their children.

You mentioned community involvement.

Yes. Community involvement is another very critical component of our success. We've reached into the community, and formed very strong bonds. For example, we had a breakfast with community agencies, last spring, so that we could make connections and take advantage of community resources.

We now have a YMCA career counsellor who comes to the school once a week to help with resumes, interview skills and job search strategies. The Griffin Centre sends someone once a week to counsel the students on drugs, gang violence and other issues. We're tapping into resources at Seneca and York, the Black Creek Community Health Centre, Conflict Mediation Services of Downsview, Justice for Children and Youth, and other organizations.

We have a social worker in the school once a

week and a full-time child and youth worker. We have academic tutors, some of whom are university students who want to become teachers, volunteering their time. The list goes on.

We say to the community 'in order for these students to be successful, we need you on board'. It has to be a symbiotic relationship. If the students don't do well, then the community cannot do well. So, the community component is very important.

You obviously find this work satisfying.

Teaching is the best profession in the world, and being able to teach these students is extremely fulfilling. This whole program is really about a paradigm shift in the way we look at at-risk kids. We need to take a different teaching and learning approach to help build and foster success. It's challenging, and it's certainly not the same thing every day. But you're molding minds and building futures. You're helping to keep students in school who might otherwise have dropped out. You're building self-confidence and self-esteem. You're helping young people to love and respect themselves. You're advocating for the most vulnerable students in the system. It can't get more gratifying than that.

“ I stay in touch with parents, almost on a daily basis. ”

NEW! WEB-BASED SUPPORTS FOR TEACHERS

The ministry has launched a new web-based library of resources for Grade 7 to 12 educators which includes practical teaching strategies, tools, and professional development opportunities in support of the Student Success Strategy and the Learning to 18 initiative.

The resource collection, which will grow over time, includes contributions from educators as well as materials developed by the ministry. The resources are organized into four key sections:

Learning to 18:

resources based on province-wide pilot projects including a series of how-to guides

Think Literacy:

resources to support cross-curricular literacy strategies in Grades 7-12

Think Pathways:

resources to facilitate the development of effective pathways programs in secondary schools

Leading Math Success:

resources, professional development opportunities and research to practice connections in grades 7-12 mathematics



L'ACADÉMIE DES MÉTIERS ET DE LA TECHNOLOGIE DE L'EST ONTARIEN: A DYNAMIC APPROACH TO PATHWAYS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

When all partners – schools, board and community – work together toward a common goal, the result can be a powerful force for change. This is the case at the Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'Est ontarien (CSDCEO), which created *L'Académie des métiers et de la technologie de l'Est ontarien* (AMTEO), a unique school-board-community partnership that offers students the opportunity to explore a wide variety of career opportunities, and pursue pathways that lead to success.

AMTEO, originally the vision of Program Coordinator Gilles Surprenant, is a Learning to 18 pilot program which brings together four specialized program options – ranging from early career exploration to advanced career-specific training – into a single, unified package. The programs are offered in the community, in schools, community colleges, private colleges and workplaces in cooperation with partner organizations.

According to Student Success Leader Céline Cadieux, the program is tailored to students who plan to enter the workforce, pursue on-the-job training in an apprenticeship trade, or enrol in a technical program at a community college.

"What we are trying to accomplish through *L'Académie* is to have students understand that they have many choices, and many opportunities for success," she explained. "For some who may have become disengaged from school, the program can often be a fresh start, a chance to see options for themselves, another path to graduation, and the opportunity to pursue a meaningful career path."

Student Success and Learning to 18 Coordinator Lynn Charbonneau stresses the importance of community partners to the success of the program.

"A project of this size and scope is only possible when the entire community is involved," she said. "There are many dedicated people and organizations contributing to the success of the program, and to the success of our students."

The programs are offered through the Ottawa and Hawkesbury campuses of La Cité collégiale, the Alfred campus of the University of Guelph, and the Cornwall campus of St. Lawrence College. They are also delivered in partnership with the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), the Job Connect program at five local employment centres, the Eastern Ontario Training

Board, and a several public and private agencies specializing in labour training, as well as employers in Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry, Prescott and Russell, and seven high schools.

L'Académie currently provides four core programs, each geared to a specific student population and learning need:

Sensibilisation aux carrières (Career Awareness)

Career awareness sessions are organized throughout the year by elementary and secondary teachers for students in Grades 7 to 10, and range from one to four days in length. The sessions, designed to introduce students to the basics of a trade or occupation, often help students discover new interests and begin thinking about school and career choices that can support their future success.

Students are assessed on completion of the program, and receive a certificate of completion.

Voie express (Fast Track)

Voie express provides Grade 11 or 12 students with more in-depth exposure to a trade or occupation over an entire semester. In addition to providing workplace experience, this full-time program gives students an opportunity to learn more about the kinds of training available at the post-secondary level, in on-the-job training, and in apprenticeship programs.

Prior to work placements, training sessions are offered at participating community colleges for a period of three to five weeks. Students then proceed to 13-week to 15-week placements, and earn four cooperative education credits.

Formation sur mesure (Customized Training)

Formation sur mesure enables Grade 11 and 12 students to complete core curriculum training in one or more fields of technology. The training is offered on a full-time basis throughout an entire semester, and is tied to the technology curriculum.

This program familiarizes students with the various trades within an industry, helps them acquire basic skills, and enables them to refine their choices for future schooling. The program includes 220 hours of courses and workshops over nine weeks, and a workplace training placement of 180 to 200 hours, over nine weeks. Students earn two credits for the academic portion of the program, and two credits for the workplace component.

Formation professionnelle (Occupational Training)

This program is designed for Grade 11 or 12 students who enrol as apprentices in the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship (OYAP) program. Training is provided on a full-time basis for a full semester.

During the program, students take a Level 1 (Basic) course in the academic component of a specialized trade for 240 hours over 8 weeks, followed by a workplace training placement of 180 to 220 hours over 10 weeks. Students earn 2 credits for the academic component and 2 credits for the workplace component, applicable to graduation and completion of an Ontario Apprenticeship Certificate.



Communication is a critical component of the program's success, and was built into the original design of *L'Académie*. A high-profile communications campaign in support of the program is led by Communications Director, Simon Vinet.

"Our communications program is designed to build awareness and understanding of *L'Académie*," he says. "Programs like these are only effective when teachers, students and parents know about them, and use them."

The campaign includes a variety of media including advertising, web-based materials, printed literature and other information tools, as well as an innovative 'grassroots' style campaign centred on the distribution of blue wristbands which signify that the wearer is aware of the program. As the message builds in the board and community, the wristbands become an increasingly visible demonstration of support and involvement.

The program, which involved a total of 250 students in its first year, has received an enthusiastic response from parents, students, teachers and community partners, according to Céline Cadieux.

"Our teachers have demonstrated a real commitment to student success," she says, "and our students have also responded to the program in a very gratifying way. We've designed *L'Académie* in such a way that it's targeted to the student, and driven by the student and his or her own desire to succeed. Students are expected to enter these programs in much the same way they would a job, or a career, taking responsibility for themselves. And that's certainly been our experience. It has been a huge collective effort, and I think everyone involved should be justifiably proud of having accomplished so much in such a short period of time."

Left to right: Simon Vinet, Communications Director, Céline Cadieux, Student Success Leader and Superintendent of Education, Lynn Charbonneau, Student Success and Learning to 18 Coordinator.



PILOT PROJECTS DELIVERING RESULTS

In the April and September, 2005, issues of Curriculum Update we reported on 105 pilot projects launched in 2004-05 as part of the Learning to 18 initiative, and a series of continuing and new pilot projects launched in 2005-06 (visit www.curriculum-update.info for past issues).

The projects, which vary widely in approach, are designed to support at-risk students with particular emphasis on reducing the dropout rate, improving students' credit accumulation, re-engaging students who have recently left school and encouraging them to complete diplomas, and increasing graduation rates.

The 2004-05 pilots undertaken during the second semester of 2005 enabled 8,000 students to accumulate a total of more than 14,000 credits toward high school graduation. Overall, some 82 percent of students enrolled in the projects successfully acquired one or more credits.

The projects were focused in six key areas:

CREDIT RECOVERY:

17 projects to help students regain failed credits while building learning skills for future success

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS:

38 projects designed to re-engage students who struggle in traditional classroom environments. Projects included on-line learning, co-op education and connections to business and community agencies

PROGRAM PATHWAYS:

26 projects that provide learning experience to prepare students for apprenticeships, work-place destinations and industry certification

STRATEGIES FOR GRADES 9 AND 10:

8 projects that provide support and intervention for students struggling in their first two years of secondary school

LINKS TO COLLEGE:

5 projects aimed at re-engaging and motivating students by improving their understanding of potential college programs

TARGETED POPULATIONS:

11 projects designed to serve specific student populations with unique social or cultural needs including ESL students, youth from low-income backgrounds, aboriginal youth and homeless youth

During the 2005-06 school year, 99 of these programs were renewed and expanded into a second pilot year, and 26 new projects have been established in boards and schools. In addition, successful practices based on the pilots are being shared with educators through the ministry website (see 'New! Web-based supports for teachers').

SOFTWARE REVIEW

JOHN PALBOM

John Palbom is the computer consultant for Trillium Lakelands District School Board. He is also a member of the Ontario Software Acquisition Program Advisory Committee (OSAPAC) and has extensive experience in the use of educational software as a teaching and learning tool.



The December 2004 issue of Curriculum Update highlighted the introduction of new Locally Developed Compulsory Credit (LDCC) courses in Ontario schools (visit www.curriculum-update.info for past issues). These courses are designed to accommodate the educational or career preparation needs of students in a particular school or region or to provide students who have gaps in their knowledge and skills with the support they need to be successful in Grades 11 and 12 workplace preparation courses.

Many of the software titles licensed by the ministry can provide highly effective supports for students in LDCC courses. They provide students with an opportunity to learn using tools that are visual and dynamic and cater to the specific needs of visual and hands-on learners.

For all areas of the LDCC curriculum, software titles such as *Co:Writer*, *WriteOutloud*, and *SMART Ideas* can help students record their thoughts easily. *Co: Writer* uses word prediction to help students with spelling and meaning, while *Write: Outloud* reads text as it is written by the student. *Co: Writer* and *Write: Outloud* can be run at the same time, giving the student simultaneous access to multiple resources. *SMART Ideas* brainstorming software enables students, independently or collaboratively, to quickly record and link thoughts. When the resulting graphic organizer has been completed, it can be exported to any of the word processors licensed by the Ministry of Education.

English

Students can benefit from using a variety of word processor and presentation templates and blank documents from Corel's *Word Perfect*, Sun's *StarOffice 7*, and *Appleworks 6.22*. Students can also use the ministry licensed *Microsoft Publisher* to produce posters, brochures, and menus. Each of these applications enables students to create professional, effective media works while focusing on the creative aspects of writing and communicating.

Mathematics

LDCC Mathematics courses readily lend themselves to the use of software. Students can use the spreadsheets available in *StarOffice*, *Corel*, or *Appleworks* to analyze and publish data collected as part of their studies.

Geometer's Sketchpad (GSP) easily handles geometry expectations in LDCC math courses, and can also be applied to measurement and certain algebra concepts. Licensed access to online Geometer's Sketchpad tutorials through Atomic Learning Inc is available at <http://www.atomiclearning.com/sketchpad>. Students can work through a series of tutorials that go from very simple to extremely complex. Ask your computer consultant for the login and password.

History

Many of the software titles suggested for English can also be used effectively in the study of history. In addition, multimedia software such as *Photoshop*, *Macromedia Fireworks*, *Corel Draw*, and *Macromedia Flash* provide students with the tools they need to create original documents, collages, and other visual representations which demonstrate their understanding of expectations.

Science

Edison and *Tina Pro* help students to understand electricity and electronics. Students can use these simulation applications to build and test an array of analog and digital circuits. *Edison* provides lifelike batteries, bulbs, LEDs, meters, and wires which can be connected to make a circuit. As the student builds the circuit on the workbench, a schematic drawing of the circuit is also created. By choosing the correct components students are able to build digital logic gates. *Tina Pro* accomplishes the same results but at a higher level of sophistication. Both software packages include a teacher's guide and a large number of activities and problems that are consistent with the expectations in the LDCC science course.

More resources on the web

Students preparing for the workplace can access the Career Cruising website (in English or French) at <http://www.careercruising.com> to complete an interest inventory, build a portfolio and develop a resume. Ask your computer consultant for your school's user ID and password.

On the OSAPAC web site, www.osapac.org, course expectations and links to the software can be found. In addition, OSAPAC has developed a learning repository where teachers can download guides and lessons for many of the licensed titles. Resources in the repository are written by Ontario teachers, and are available at www.osapac.org/dbOESS/dbOESSe1.asp.

Each year a wide variety of software titles is licensed by the Ministry of Education for use in publicly funded Ontario schools. Information on these titles is available through Ontario Educational Software Service (OESS) representatives at each board. To search for the OESS representative in your board, go to www.tvo.org/oess. To keep up to date on licensed software resources, visit the Ontario Software Acquisition Program Advisory Committee (OSAPAC) website at www.osapac.org. It contains news on software releases, negotiations, an online survey and a complete database of licensed software titles with many links to the curriculum expectations and other resources. If you are interested in profiling a software title for Curriculum Update, write us at editor@curriculum-update.info.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS



Ontario is a diverse society in religion, race, ethnicity and language. This social diversity is expected to continue and grow in both urban and suburban communities as the nation and province address labour market, labour force and settlement matters.

Given the province's demographic make up, diversity has always been reflected in the students in Ontario's schools. Today, the province has some of the most multilingual schools in the world. According to EQAO data, approximately 20% of the students in Ontario's English-language schools have a first language other than English. Some of these students are Canadian-born and others are newcomers to the country. Many of these English language learners are learning English at the same time as they are learning the curriculum.

The term English language learner has come into increasing use internationally among educators and researchers because it distinguishes the students from the programs that support their language learning needs.

English language learners are students, in English-language schools, whose first language is other than English or is a variety of English that is significantly different from the variety used in Ontario's schools, and who may initially require educational interventions to assist them in attaining English language proficiency. They come from diverse backgrounds and school experiences, and have a variety of needs.

While some English language learners receive support in English as a Second Language (ESL) or English Literacy Development (ELD) programs, most students, including beginning learners of English, participate in the mainstream classroom.

The ministry is developing several projects to support Ontario teachers in their work to enhance educational success among English language learners and reduce the achievement gap among students. These projects, produced by the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch, include a variety of resources such as:

- A practical guide for Ontario educators : Many Roots, Many Voices: Supporting English language learners in every classroom, scheduled for distribution this winter.
- A webcast on December 7th with noted expert Jim Cummins, Teaching and Learning in Multilingual Ontario. The webcast, a variety of downloads and accompanying resource material are available at www.curriculum.org.
- TIPS for ESL- Mathematics, Grades, 7, 8, 9 Applied, and 10 Applied, a series of practical support documents to be released on the Leading Math Success website this winter.

Watch for these and a variety of resources over the coming months.

As communities grow, Ontario's classrooms will be further enriched by the diversity of their students. New and additional resources will support effective teaching and help teachers to assist all students to succeed and reach their individual potential.



CONTACT US

Address all correspondence to:

Curriculum Update
Programs Support Branch
Ontario Ministry of Education
16th Floor, Mowat Block, 900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1L2

Email us at:

editor@curriculum-update.info

Visit our website at:

www.curriculum-update.info



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Curriculum update

SECOND ANNUAL READER SURVEY HELP MAKE YOUR PUBLICATION BETTER!

Please complete this brief survey to help us ensure that Curriculum Update meets your needs.

Two easy ways to respond: Online www.curriculum-update.info By fax (416) 325-2879

The first 200 teachers to respond will win Ontario pins to distribute to their students. To be eligible, the survey must be received by **January 31st**.

Prize winners must be educators registered with the Ontario College of Teachers and employed in a publicly funded school in Ontario.

YOUR POSITION

Teacher ☐ Elementary ☐ Secondary

Principal ☐ Elementary ☐ Secondary

VP ☐ Elementary ☐ Secondary

☐ Supervisory Officer ☐ Board consultant

☐ Teacher candidate

Other (please specify) _____

Number of years working in education

☐ 0 – 5 years ☐ 5 to 10 years

☐ 10 to 20 years ☐ 20+ years

READING HABITS

How often do you read Curriculum Update?

☐ I read every edition (4 per year)

☐ I read it occasionally (2 or 3 per year)

☐ I rarely read it (1 per year)

How much of each edition do you read?

☐ The entire edition ☐ Selected articles

☐ Skim/read very little

Have you shared the newsletter or told others about it?

☐ Yes ☐ No

CONTENT

I find the articles

☐ Very useful ☐ Somewhat useful

☐ Useful ☐ Not useful

After reading an article, my understanding of the topic is

☐ Greatly improved ☐ Somewhat improved

☐ Improved ☐ Not at all improved

I find the articles are generally

☐ Too long ☐ Just about right ☐ Too short

The publication is

☐ Clearly laid out ☐ Poorly laid out

☐ No opinion

I see/receive Curriculum Update

☐ In my school

☐ From my association/organization

☐ I have an electronic subscription

Other (specify) _____

READER VALUE

Curriculum Update helps me stay current about ministry programs, policies, and initiatives

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Somewhat agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

Curriculum Update helps me understand the purpose/goal of education policies and programs

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Somewhat agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

Curriculum Update helps me to understand the 'big picture'/priorities in provincial education

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Somewhat agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

Curriculum Update helps me to be informed of resources and their availability

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Somewhat agree

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

I have used information in Curriculum Update to help:

Prepare for the classroom

☐ Yes ☐ No

Speak to or inform: colleagues

☐ Yes ☐ No

Staff

☐ Yes ☐ No

Students

☐ Yes ☐ No

Parents

☐ Yes ☐ No

Access resources or more detailed information

☐ Yes ☐ No

Apply an initiative in my classroom or school

☐ Yes ☐ No

GENERAL COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS

The feature I like most about Curriculum Update is:

The feature I like least about Curriculum Update is:

The single greatest improvement that could be made to Curriculum Update is:

The 3 topics/subject areas I would most like to read about are:

RESPONDENT INFORMATION:

Name: _____ Email: _____

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