

More ways to succeed in high school

A guide for parents and students



What's inside?

- New programs for all students
- New ways to earn credits, inside and outside the classroom
- New ways to learn
- Real students tell their real stories
- How to get the help or support you need

www.Ontario.ca/MoreStudentSuccess



reach every student

 Ontario

INTRODUCTION

How to help your child

Every high school student is different. Your child may be ready and eager to explore a career path now, rather than wait for university or college. Perhaps he or she has a passion for hands-on learning that goes beyond traditional classroom teaching. Or maybe your child needs help focussing on graduating and building a future.

Ontario's high schools are changing to meet the individual needs of students and to help more of them succeed.

Read on for real-life stories of high school students who are more engaged in learning and better prepared for graduation and beyond – all thanks to new learning opportunities being rolled out across Ontario.

For more information about what's available in your community, contact your local high school or school board, or visit www.Ontario.ca/MoreStudentSuccess.

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SPECIALIST HIGH SKILLS MAJORS

Courses focussed towards a career



“The agriculture course opened a lot of doors for my future.”

– Adrien, expanding his horizons

What they are

Specialist High Skills Majors let students focus on a career path that matches their skills and interests. Each major is a bundle of 8–10 courses in the student’s selected field.

Who they’re for

Students who are heading for university, college, apprenticeship or the workplace.

How they help

Students have the opportunity to:

- Gain important skills on the job with actual employers, at skills training centres and at school
- Earn valuable industry certifications, including first aid and C.P.R. qualifications.

More information

Specialist High Skills Majors are now available in:

- Health and Wellness
- Business
- Construction
- Arts and Culture
- Horticulture and Landscaping
- Forestry
- The Environment
- Transportation
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture
- Mining

How to get started

To find out if your school board offers any Specialist High Skills Majors, visit www.Ontario.ca/MoreStudentSuccess and click on **Specialist High Skills Majors**.

Students can build their strengths and develop their interests.

Adrien always wanted to go into agriculture. Having grown up on the family farm, he thought he knew a lot about it too. He was about to discover that there was more to farming than he had ever imagined.

He learned this first-hand when he took the Specialist High Skills Major in agriculture at his high school.

“I’m gaining experience while studying,” Adrien explains. “I’m making lots of contacts that will help with a job search.”

Adrien worked half days on the job with local companies. He experienced a variety of farming practices and got to meet successful employers in the community. The rest of his day was spent in classes that were adapted to match his major. For example, in his marketing class, a local seed company gave them a new product to sell. Adrien researched it thoroughly and then made a presentation to sell the product to area farmers.

The Specialist High Skills Major is opening Adrien’s eyes to the broader world of agriculture and is preparing him for success in a field he loves.

“It’s a real experience, in the real world.”

– Vincent, artist in training



Specialist High Skills Majors shine the spotlight on a future career.

Vincent loves the arts. He acts, sings and dreams of being a TV entertainer. So his teachers encouraged him to sign up for a Specialist High Skills Major in the arts.

Now Vincent meets face-to-face with people who live his dreams. He meets guest speakers and learns first-hand from people working in the arts community. He takes field trips to visit local theatres and production facilities. Even his research projects demand that he approach working artists.

“We put on a play that we wrote ourselves and that we invented – so it really came from us.”

The program has opened his eyes to new career possibilities. “I found out that I was able to create something – to write, to create scenery, to put together a project,” Vincent explains. “Now I know that I am more than just a good actor.”

Earning more credits through workplace experience



“I think if I’d had that chance in high school, I would have jumped right in there, full-blown.”

– Mike Holmes, Co-op Employer

Co-op helps employers discover and train future employees.

When Mike Holmes, well-known contractor and star of *Holmes on Homes*, was approached to take on a co-op student, he was interested right away. “I’m high on the skilled trades industry,” he explains. “The idea of tempting the kids in school into the skilled trades ... it was just fabulous.”

Students who choose co-op are looking for alternatives or enhancements to learning in a regular classroom. Sometimes they know exactly what they want to do. Sometimes they don’t. Mike understands this and the important role employers play.

“I want students to get the experience of real work, not just the thought of working. Giving them the chance to say, ‘Hey, you know what? I like this.’”

So what would Mike say to other employers about taking a co-op student?

“It was easy and it doesn’t cost any money, so let’s be serious; it’s a very smart move.”

As for Mike’s co-op student, he earned four credits in one semester.

“This placement has allowed me to use my talents.”

– Kevin, apprentice machinist

Expanded Co-op gives students who need workplace accommodations practical opportunities to succeed.

Kevin, who is deaf, was looking for a way to pursue his goal of becoming a machinist. He found it through the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program. As an apprentice machinist, he quickly discovered he had the right mix of skills and talent to be successful, and his employer saw him as a valuable part of the team.

“I really enjoy lathe work and milling. The work has to be exactly right.”





“In the hospital, everything goes on really fast – and I think I can handle it!”

– Mbalia, aspiring medical student

Expanded Co-op gives students both work experience and credits.

Growing up in Gambia, Mbalia always knew she wanted to be a doctor. When this “A” student heard about Expanded Co-op, she decided to get real work experience. Her co-op teacher arranged a placement in the Endoscopy Clinic at Toronto General Hospital.

“I got a first-hand look at a doctor giving a patient a gastroscopy – it was pretty fascinating.”

She also gets to work with nurses, talk to medical students and reassure nervous patients. “That’s the best part of my day – when the patients come in,” Mbalia says.

Mbalia has applied to several universities and still plans to go to medical school. “Talk to your guidance counsellor,” she advises other students. “Think about where you want to work and what you would like to do. Then go for it.”



“The classroom wasn’t the best place for me to learn.”

– Parminder, finding his vocation

A chance to learn in new ways, and build confidence.

Parminder couldn’t speak English when he came to Canada. His co-op supervisor recognized his interest in cars and used it to get Parminder talking.

“My English improved in co-op. I learned about engines and all those parts.”

Parminder excelled in his co-op placement at Oakland Ford. He got more than just two credits – he succeeded at school and his teachers noticed his new self-confidence.

“I want to be a car mechanic for my future ... everyone loves cars.”

The hours he’s spent in co-op have counted towards the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program. This will make it easier for him to become a mechanic in an environment where he learns best.

More information

Calling all employers. Interested in taking on a co-op student? Please contact the principal at your local high school. You can find the phone number at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/sbinfo or call 1-800-387-5514.

How to get started

Visit www.Ontario.ca/MoreStudentSuccess and click on **Expanded Co-op**.



**“It changed my thinking.
I work harder now, and
I am passing everything.”**

– Meaghan, learning in her own way

What they are

Innovative local programs that help students who need extra support and attention to stay in school.

Who they're for

Students who are struggling in a regular classroom or who have left high school and want to return.

How they help

Students have the opportunity to:

- Accumulate credits
- Return to school after leaving.

More information

Schools have a variety of locally developed projects available.

How to get started

Visit

www.Ontario.ca/MoreStudentSuccess
and click on **Lighthouse Projects** or
contact your school.

Lighthouse Projects are flexible.
Schools can create programs that
meet students' needs.

Meaghan was struggling in school. She was falling behind and was having a lot of trouble with math.

Her teachers and principal recognized that the regular classroom didn't interest Meaghan. But they thought a Lighthouse Project that included judo classes might engage her. They convinced her to join this new program where she could get more personal attention, recover lost credits – and take judo. Almost immediately, her performance in school improved.

“It was a lot better than regular classes 'cause I got to talk to people ... I could either do work, or I could help other people do their work.”

Meaghan's teachers tied math to her passion for hands-on learning. Now Meaghan's taking a trade-focussed math program where she learns math by taking measurements.

Meaghan gained lost credits and is now planning an apprenticeship in carpentry.



“I need this credit to graduate this year. It’s ... the credit that I need for university.”

– Genevieve, aspiring English teacher

What they are

Students can take advantage of over 50 online courses.

Schools also offer new technological education courses and have added new modules to existing technological education courses.

Who they’re for

Students in Grades 9 through 12 who want more choice in their courses.

How they help

Students have the opportunity to:

- Accumulate credits in subjects they find interesting but that may not be available at their school
- Study by e-learning, on computers at home or at school
- Choose from courses in business, sciences, history, technology, tourism, marketing and more.

More information

Courses are written and graded by Ontario teachers and are available in a wide range of subjects.

How to get started

For more information about technological education courses, contact your school.

To find out more about online education opportunities for your child, visit www.elearningontario.ca or **contact your school.**

Online and other new courses give students more choice.

Genevieve wants to be an English teacher. But when she moved to a new school for Grade 12, she couldn’t find the course she needed.

Fortunately, her guidance counsellor understood. “We’ve tried to open things up, so kids can take something that interests them,” says Cairin Nelson.

So Genevieve enrolled in a Writer’s Craft course online. “I usually do it at home; it’s easier, it’s calmer and quiet,” she says. She writes the assignments on her computer and emails them to the teacher. She also gets to work at her own pace.

“It’s a more flexible schedule ... because I don’t have certain dates to get stuff in,” explains Genevieve. “So if something comes up, it’s not a big deal.”

What else does she like about the course? “I like doing it by myself because you’re not comparing marks to your peers and you’re not comparing assignments.”

And Genevieve is doing well. Taking an online course in a subject that interests her helps keep her marks high – which will help her get into university.



“It’s like magic, what you can get the kids to do for themselves.”

– Deborah Scully, teacher

Student success gives kids confidence to be who they are.

Deborah Scully is one of hundreds of passionate teachers working in Student Success programs across Ontario. She leads a class for Grade 12 students who need extra support. With only 12 kids, the class is small enough that she can build an environment of trust and mutual respect.

One student said: “I can’t believe how much you listen to us.”

Most of her students earn three to six credits each semester. Each week, they spend two days with Deborah and three days at a co-op placement. In the classroom, Deborah shares her infectious love of learning, while co-op helps students experience success outside the classroom. “I see these students come back to my class with a renewed confidence – with a sense that they can do it.”

Before entering Deborah’s class, Connor’s grades were dropping steadily. A combination of an enhanced classroom environment plus co-op study turned him around. His co-op placement at Home Depot introduced him to a group of skilled tradespeople. It gave him a goal – he decided to finish high school and become a plumber.

Before joining Deborah Scully’s class, Rob was on the verge of dropping out. As he describes it, “People knew that I wasn’t super-interested in staying in school, so they were trying to find different alternatives for me and most of the alternatives weren’t working.”

What was so different about this program?

Part of it was Deborah Scully herself. Rob explains, “She’s always full of encouraging words and helpful advice and ready to sit down and take as much time as you need to help you understand and do what you need to do.”

Connor and Rob, finding new confidence and interests



What it is

Training for principals and teachers that includes new ideas and innovative approaches to helping students graduate from high school. It builds upon a culture of high expectations and individualized attention and caring.

Who it’s for

Students, teachers, principals, guidance counsellors and parents.

How it helps

Students have the opportunity to:

- Achieve more because their teachers are better able to give them choices
- Be matched with appropriate alternatives to regular classroom learning.

More information

Training is being rolled out across the province, introducing teachers and principals to new opportunities that are becoming available to their students.

How to get started

Visit

www.Ontario.ca/MoreStudentSuccess and click on **Student Success Teams**.

DUAL CREDIT PROGRAM

Earning high school and postsecondary credits



“I’m going to college and finishing high school at the same time.”

– Chris, on the path to success

What it is

Students participate in apprenticeship training and postsecondary courses, earning dual credits that count towards both their high school diploma and their postsecondary diploma, degree or apprenticeship certification.

Who it’s for

Students who need learning opportunities outside of high school and who would benefit from a college or apprenticeship experience.

How it helps

Students have the opportunity to:

- Earn high school credits while studying at a local college or taking apprenticeship training
- Gain experience that will help them with their postsecondary education or apprenticeship
- Get a head start on learning and training for their future careers.

More information

The Dual Credit Program may provide a more stimulating environment for some students, helping them to succeed.

How to get started

Visit www.Ontario.ca/MoreStudentSuccess and click on **Dual Credit Program** or talk to your school’s **Student Success Team**.

Dual credits let students “try on” college courses while still in high school.

Chris never liked high school. “I was a bit of a slacker,” he admits. “I didn’t hand in assignments and didn’t bother writing tests.”

That was before he found out about a special program that let him earn high school credits while studying at a local college. Chris began taking construction manufacturing in the morning with a college instructor. Then in the afternoon, he took an English and sociology credit with a high school teacher.

The courses were dual credits – they counted as high school credits and as college prep courses. The prep courses would give him an advantage when applying to college.

His parents are proud of the change they’ve witnessed in their son. As Chris explains, “They were really excited about it when I could tell them, ‘Hey, I’m going to college and I’m going to finish high school’... it’s really exciting for them.” The fact that his marks are a lot higher also makes his parents happy.

College also felt different from high school. “There’s a lot of respect and freedom,” Chris says.

“I felt like it was just holding my future in front of me. It made me reach out and grab it. It was really motivating that way.”

Chris’ plan: graduate from high school and return to college to get an apprenticeship in the skilled trades.

STUDENT SUCCESS TEAMS

Helping students succeed in high school



“Sometimes high school is too much to handle on your own.”

– Ashley, getting the support she needs

Student Success Teams focus on the individual.

In Grade 10, Ashley moved away for a year. Her new school tracked credits differently, and when she returned, Ashley discovered she was almost a year behind.

Ashley attends a small school, and she was determined to graduate with her friends. “That’s the only reason I came back,” she says. So her school’s Student Success Team set to work to make it possible.

“They rearranged everything to help me get my credits.”

Her teachers knew they had to help Ashley create a timetable that kept her motivated, so she could catch up. So they focussed on her interests and included a co-op course in auto mechanics. She loves the program, and it gives her two compulsory credits.

As Ashley’s teacher puts it, “When you know someone is going to fight the odds, you’ve got to do what you can to help them.”

Ashley is well on her way to earning all her high school credits. With more hard work and the help of her teachers, principal and guidance counsellor, she will graduate with her friends.

What they are

At each school, a dedicated team of a principal, teachers and a guidance counsellor provides extra attention and support for individual students.

Who they’re for

Students who are struggling, who need extra attention to help them graduate or who are looking for new challenges in high school.

How they help

Students have the opportunity to:

- Benefit from individualized attention and support
- Choose from more options for learning, including more challenging studies
- Seek help in solving problems they previously may have faced alone.

More information

Student Success Teams are available to every student who needs more attention or motivation.

How to get started

Visit

www.Ontario.ca/MoreStudentSuccess
and click on **Student Success Teams**.



“I had difficulty adjusting to high school.”

– Devan, benefiting from one-on-one help

New programs help students prepare for high school.

Devan found the transition difficult. With all the new people and pressures in high school, this sensitive and shy student wasn't getting the attention he needed in a regular class.

Then he heard about a new class that could ease his transition into Grade 9 and help him adjust to the stress of high school.

“I think I've come a long way,” Devan explains. “Now I can present and talk in front of a class ... and it's easier to make friends.”

The class has two teachers and two educational assistants for 20 students. As Devan describes it, “They see you, and they'll just come and help you one-on-one with your work.”

He spends the first three periods of the day in this environment. Now Devan is confident enough to succeed in his regular classes.

What they are

A group of orientation programs, strategies and interventions that help students as they move from elementary to secondary school.

Who they're for

Students adjusting to high school.

How they help

Students have the opportunity to:

- Receive individual attention and support
- Benefit from programming tailored to fit their situation.

More information

The program can include:

- An educator or other caring adult assigned to provide support during transition years
- A profile that highlights student strengths, needs and interests
- A customized timetable based on the student's profile.

How to get started

Visit

www.Ontario.ca/MoreStudentSuccess and click on **Grades 7,8,9 Transition** or talk to a member of the **Student Success Team** at your school.

Student success means graduation and more

You can see for yourself how students are meeting personal success as they move toward high school graduation and beyond.

They're getting there with the help of flexible programs and the support of caring teachers and adults.

They're building self-esteem, developing new skills, finding new interests and facing the future with confidence.

They're finding optimism and options in high school.

**Call the Student Success Team
at your school.**



Parents

For more information about programs, resources and what's happening in Ontario's high schools, visit www.Ontario.ca/MoreStudentSuccess

Students

Get real-time help with your homework online! Discover more course options and get tools for planning your education, training and career: visit www.ilc.org

Train as a registered apprentice while you finish high school: visit www.oyap.com

Get clear descriptions of the "Essential Skills and Work Habits" employers are seeking and land your placement: visit skills.edu.gov.on.ca

Teachers

Find the latest e-learning course information: visit www.elearningontario.ca

Get strategies, tools, resources and professional development opportunities: visit www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/studentsuccess

Want to teach or set up a co-op program at your school?

For information, tools and resources, visit www.ocea.on.ca

Employers

Build your talent pool by giving students more work experience!

Make the connection and get involved: visit www.edu.gov.on.ca/passport

For more information about programs in your community, call the Ontario Business Education Partnership at 1-888-672-7996

Get help hiring, evaluating and tracking student workplace performance: visit skills.edu.gov.on.ca

Finding financial and other assistance

Are you:

- A parent looking for information and programs to help your child?

- A student looking for financial help with apprenticeship?

- An employer who wants help with apprenticeship training costs?

Visit www.ontario.ca/employmentontario or call 1-800-387-5656

Contact your school principal or a member of your school's Student Success Team.