

CREATING PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS



AN EDUCATION AND CAREER/LIFE PLANNING
PROGRAM FOR ONTARIO SCHOOLS

*POLICY AND
PROGRAM
REQUIREMENTS,
KINDERGARTEN
TO GRADE 12*

2 0 1 3



support every child
reach every student

 Ontario

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Une publication équivalente est disponible en français sous le titre suivant : *Tracer son itinéraire vers la réussite: Programme de planification d'apprentissage, de carrière et de vie pour les écoles de l'Ontario – Politique et programme de la maternelle à la 12^e année, 2013.*

This publication is available on the Ministry of Education website, at www.ontario.ca/education.

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Preface

This document, in combination with section 2.4 of *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements, 2011* (often referred to as OS), supersedes *Choices Into Action: Guidance and Career Education Program Policy for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1999*. The policy set out here complements the policies related to guidance and career education outlined in section 2.4 of OS and in the various Ontario elementary and secondary school curriculum policy documents.

Ontario schools will begin to implement the policy outlined in this document in September 2013. Full implementation will begin in September 2014.



Creating Pathways to Success sets out the new career development policy for Ontario schools, which involves the implementation of a comprehensive Kindergarten to Grade 12 education and career/life planning program designed to help students achieve their personal goals and become competent, successful, and contributing members of society. This is a whole-school program delivered through classroom instruction linked to the curriculum and through broader school programs and activities.

To promote success in school and life, it is essential for Ontario schools to provide opportunities and support for all students to plan their individual pathways through school and for each to make a successful transition to his or her initial postsecondary destination. As reflected in the ministry resource document *School Effectiveness Framework (SEF), K–12: A Support for School Improvement and Student Success*,¹ schools that adopt “pathways thinking” enhance every student’s outlook for success by:

- supporting students in identifying their personal interests, strengths, needs, and aspirations and in using this knowledge of themselves to inform their choices of programs and learning opportunities;
- providing a range of diverse and engaging learning opportunities, courses, and programs, both in and outside the classroom, that meet the interests,

1. The education and career/life planning program described in this document is congruent with, and supports, current board and school improvement planning processes. It is aligned with section 5, “Pathways Planning and Programming”, of the School Effectiveness Framework, the self-assessment tool currently being used by schools and school boards to promote school improvement and student success (see section 6.5 in this document, “Measuring Program Effectiveness to Ensure Student Success”).



strengths, needs, and aspirations of the students and honour all postsecondary destinations – apprenticeship training, college, community living, university, and the workplace.

The education and career/life planning program presented in this document succeeds when the entire school community is informed about it, engaged in it, and committed to it. In secondary schools, guidance staff play a strategic role in the development and implementation of the program, as part of the delivery of the school’s guidance and career education program.

Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, describes the three areas of learning that constitute the Ontario guidance and career education program, as follows:

- **student development** – the development of habits and skills necessary for learning
- **interpersonal development** – the development of the knowledge and skills needed in getting along with others
- **career development** – the development of the knowledge and skills needed to set short-term and long-term goals in planning for the future

Creating Pathways to Success: An Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Ontario Schools – Policy and Program Requirements, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013 is designed to support all three areas of learning as they relate to education and career/life planning.² The planning framework introduced in this document focuses on students’ self-discovery and self-knowledge and on their creative use of this knowledge in the exploration of opportunities and the planning of pathways for education, career, and life. The education and career/life planning framework provides a focus for much of the excellent work already being done in the context of schools’ guidance and career education programs, and facilitates the recognition of student learning gained through the programs.

The organization of this document

Users of this document will find the policy and program requirements for the education and career/life planning program set out in Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 4 deals with transition planning, which is a natural and essential focus of pathways planning.

2. Formerly, the document *Choices Into Action: Guidance and Career Education Program Policy for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1999* was the sole ministry policy document covering all three areas of learning. Now, the first two areas of learning – student development and interpersonal development – are addressed in connection with the learning skills and work habits described in *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools – First Edition, Covering Grades 1 to 12, 2010*. For each of the learning skills and work habits, *Growing Success* provides examples of associated behaviours, which are intended to serve as a guide for teachers in instruction, assessment, and evaluation related to the learning skills and work habits. Support for students in their development in these two areas of learning is provided both through classroom instruction and individual and small group counselling (see section 5 of *Growing Success*).



Chapter 5 describes the contexts for learning in the education and career/life planning program – from curriculum-related activities and programs, through school-wide activities and programs, to the activities in which students participate in their communities.

Chapter 6 outlines considerations for program development, implementation, and evaluation.

Policy requirements discussed in the text are provided in summary lists at the end of relevant chapters.



1

Career Development in the Twenty-first Century

In the late twentieth century, leading career development theories suggested that with access to accurate information and some guidance, individuals would independently acquire the skills they needed for effective career planning (Krumboltz & Worthington, 1999). More recently, research has indicated that to make sound career decisions people also need to develop tools for processing the information (Dietsche, 2010). Traditionally, career development practice has operated on yet another assumption – that only some students require support and that they will seek out assistance as they need it. *The reality is that the challenges and opportunities faced by students in this century are unlike those of any previous generation, and that all students today require specific knowledge and skills in education and career/life planning to support them in making sound choices throughout their lives.*

The term *career* has several meanings. It can refer strictly to a person's occupational history in a particular field or, more broadly, to the sum of a person's experiences in a variety of roles throughout life. In the second sense, every person has a career, which includes work, learning, community engagement, and relationships with family and friends. This document focuses on the second meaning of the term – and makes that meaning explicit by using the term *career/life*. Pursuits related to personal strengths and interests, whether in education or in volunteer or paid work, are all part of a person's career and are relevant at all ages and stages of life. *Education and career/life planning* refers to a process that assists in the development and application of the knowledge and skills needed to make informed education and career/life choices.

Creating Pathways to Success responds to the realities of a complex, rapidly changing world. It is based on the understanding that education and career/life planning is now a lifelong process that requires all learners to be flexible and able to adapt to changes in themselves and in the world around them. This policy document recognizes the need to place a greater emphasis on helping all students develop knowledge and skills in this area from an early age and throughout their school experience.



Ontario's education and career/life planning program has been designed to ensure that all students develop the capacity to achieve their personal goals for work and life, make successful transitions throughout life, and make positive contributions to their communities. In addition, the focused approach to planning will support students in selecting the courses and programs they need to complete secondary school in four years and move on to their initial postsecondary destination.

Current research identifies significant positive outcomes when clearly articulated education and career/life planning programs are implemented across an education system. Improvement is found in areas such as student engagement, the achievement of personal goals, and the development of independence/resilience (Lent, Hackett, & Brown, 1999). Although there is no universal model of a successful education and career/life planning program, there is agreement on fundamental principles and concepts, specific learning goals, and the need for a strong commitment to programming that responds to the interests, strengths, needs, and aspirations of all students.

Creating Pathways to Success puts students at the centre of their own learning, viewing them as the architects of their own lives. Students are encouraged to discover who they are, explore opportunities, pursue their passions, and design personal pathways to success. They are encouraged to express their insights in individual ways and to keep track of what they discover about themselves and their interests, passions, and opportunities over time. *When students are empowered to design and plan their own lives, they are engaged, they achieve, and they find themselves applying their learning in their daily lives. In an environment that encourages such learning, students develop confidence in knowing that their school programs are created with them in mind, that the world beyond school has something to offer them, and that they have something to offer the world.*

It takes the whole education community – teachers, administrators, students, and parents³ – as well as the broader community to support students in successful education and career/life planning. A comprehensive program – one that focuses on guiding students' development and not simply on transmitting information – can be transformational.

3. In this document, the word *parents* is used to refer to parent(s) and guardian(s).



2

An Education and Career/Life Planning Program to Support Student Success

2.1 The Vision

Creating Pathways to Success is founded on a vision in which all students leave secondary school with a clear plan for their initial postsecondary destination, whether in apprenticeship training, college, community living, university, or the workplace, and with confidence in their ability to implement, and revise or adapt, their plan throughout their lives as they and the world around them change. This vision sees students as the architects of their own lives.

2.2 Program Goals

The goals of the education and career/life planning program are to:

- ensure that students develop the knowledge and skills they need to make informed education and career/life choices through the effective application of a four-step inquiry process;
- provide opportunities for this learning both in and outside the classroom;
- engage parents and the broader community in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the program, to support students in their learning.

To achieve these goals, every elementary and secondary school, under the direction of the principal and with the assistance of key staff and students, will develop, document, implement, and evaluate an education and career/life planning program based on the policies outlined in this document.

2.3 Guiding Beliefs and Principles

The following beliefs and principles underpin the education and career/life planning program outlined in this document.



2.3.1 Beliefs about Student Success

What students believe about themselves and their opportunities, and what their peers and the adults in their lives believe about them, significantly influence the choices students make and the degree to which they achieve their goals. The education and career/life planning program policy for Ontario schools is based on three core beliefs, namely, that;

- all students can be successful;
- success comes in many forms;
- there are many pathways to success.

2.3.2 The Importance of a Comprehensive Education and Career/Life Planning Program

In this document, the term *comprehensive* is used to describe the education and career/life planning program envisioned for all publicly funded Ontario schools. *A comprehensive program creates an engaging education and career/life planning culture within the school that supports the achievement of the program goals.*

A comprehensive education and career/life planning program is:

- **knowledge- and skills-based:** Program-related learning activities focus on helping students acquire knowledge and skills in education and career/life planning.
- **inquiry-based:** Program-related learning is structured around the four questions of the education and career/life planning inquiry process (*Who am I? What are my opportunities? Who do I want to become? What is my plan for achieving my goals?*) (see Chapter 3).
- **developmentally appropriate:** Teaching and learning activities are appropriate to the interests, strengths, needs, and aspirations of students at every stage of development.
- **holistic:** Programming takes the whole student into account, recognizing that, for every student, success is influenced by many factors (e.g., cognitive, emotional, social, physical).
- **transformational:** The program moves beyond the transmission of information to focus on helping students grow and reach their potential.
- **inclusive:** The program is designed to engage all students, consistent with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles.⁴
- **differentiated:** Teaching and learning activities are personalized to meet students' particular learning and motivational needs.⁵

4. UDL and differentiated instruction are discussed in Ontario curriculum policy documents for all subjects and disciplines (see the section "Considerations for Program Planning") and in *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12*.

5. See note 4, above.



- **varied in its methods of delivery:** The program employs a wide range of delivery methods in the context of curriculum-related activities and programs, school-wide activities, and activities in the community (see Chapter 5).
- **deeply embedded or “infused”:** School and community stakeholders work collaboratively to embed education and career/life planning across all subjects, courses, and daily learning activities.
- **based on a whole-school approach:** School staff, students, parents, and the community are involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the program.
- **well-documented:** Information about the program is shared on an ongoing basis, in written form, with parents and other stakeholders (see Chapter 6).
- **accountable:** Program goals are included in school board⁶ and school improvement plans (e.g., the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement [BIPSA], the School Improvement Plan for Student Achievement [SIPSA]), and are related to the School Effectiveness Framework (SEF).

6. The terms *school board* and *board* are used in this document to refer to district school boards and to those school authorities that offer elementary and/or secondary school programs.



3

Program Components and Processes

3.1 Program Structure: The What, Where, and How of Learning

Student learning in the education and career/life planning program takes place through:

- a variety of developmentally appropriate learning activities and programs related to the curriculum (see section 5.1);
- school-wide activities and processes (see section 5.2);
- activities in the community (see section 5.3).

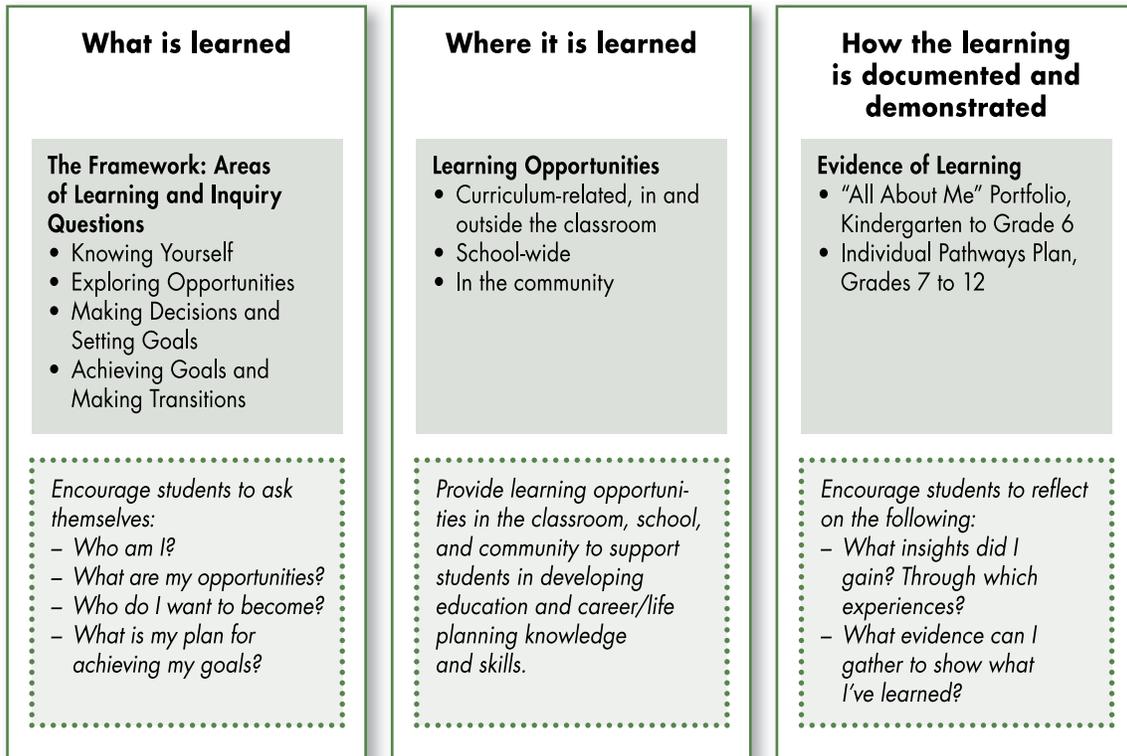
The knowledge and skills that students acquire through the program are organized in a conceptual framework that includes four areas of learning, as outlined in section 3.3, table 1. Students from Kindergarten to Grade 6 will reflect on and capture evidence of their developing knowledge and skills in the four areas of learning in a portfolio called “All About Me” (see section 3.4.1). In Grades 7 to 12, students will document evidence of their learning in an Individual Pathways Plan (IPP) (see section 3.4.2).

Figure 1 provides an overview of what is learned in the program, where it is learned, and how evidence of student learning is gathered.





Figure 1. Structure of the Education and Career/Life Planning Program



3.2 Framework for a Four-Step Inquiry Process

Creating Pathways to Success outlines an inquiry-based conceptual framework and supporting policies and processes to guide schools in developing a comprehensive Kindergarten to Grade 12 education and career/life planning program. The program framework is a four-step inquiry process built on four questions linked to the four areas of learning in education and career/life planning – Knowing Yourself; Exploring Opportunities; Making Decisions and Setting Goals; and Achieving Goals and Making Transitions (see figure 2).

The four questions in the framework – Who am I? What are my opportunities? Who do I want to become? and What is my plan for achieving my goals? – are relevant at any age or stage of development; only context and emphasis change as a student progresses through school, from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

The education and career/life planning process is ongoing and cyclical, with students regularly returning to the four questions, equipped with a greater knowledge of themselves and their opportunities and a growing understanding of how they can successfully shape their future. Details of the knowledge and skills students acquire through the application of the framework are provided in section 3.3.



Figure 2. Education and Career/Life Planning Framework: A Four-Step Inquiry Process



The program framework provides a starting point and a process for ongoing program development and student learning. In order for the program to succeed, students, teachers and guidance teachers/counsellors, administrators, parents, and community partners need to be familiar with the framework. Educators should be encouraged to draw on it when developing learning activities and communicating with students and others about these activities. The inquiry process and the related knowledge and skills must be taught explicitly before students learn to apply it habitually.

A central goal of the program is for students to learn how to use the model and make a habit of applying it, so that they can become confident, independent, and effective education and career/life planners throughout their lives.

Regular use of the framework across the curriculum and throughout the school experience helps students see the connections between their learning in school and their lives beyond school, and creates a culture supportive of education and career/life planning within the school.

3.2.1 Using the Framework from Kindergarten to Grade 12

The framework is flexible in terms of both the emphasis that may be placed on different areas of learning at different stages of development and the activities involved. For example, in the early grades, students are actively learning about themselves and exploring their world. At this stage of development, the question “Who am I?” offers a natural point of entry into the cycle of education and career/life planning. Teachers can encourage young students to become conscious of what they most love to do, what they do best, and how they feel when they are engaged in various activities. Teachers can pose questions and guide students towards opportunities for exploring their passions and talents further, taking them into the second area of learning in the framework – Exploring Opportunities. The various activities that engage students in the early grades offer myriad opportunities for



the kind of reflection that can give them a good start on the cycle of planning rooted in self-knowledge.

Students in Kindergarten through Grade 6 are encouraged to “document” what they are discovering about themselves and their opportunities – in pictures, comments, letters to parents or peers, or in any other way they might choose – in a portfolio called “All About Me” (see section 3.4.1).

As students progress through the grades, the emphasis of their planning shifts more formally to the third and fourth areas of learning, as they address the questions “Who do I want to become?” and “What is my plan for achieving my goals?”. Students, now in the habit of recognizing their preferences and exploring opportunities to act on them, consider where in the world of education, work, leisure, and community life they can look to engage their interests, skills, and passions. In Grades 7 to 12, students build on the learning reflected in their portfolio as they develop their Individual Pathways Plan, which has a particular focus on making successful transitions to secondary school and their initial postsecondary destination.

The development of knowledge and skills in education and career/life planning is influenced by the interaction of a variety of factors. These factors change as students change and as the contexts in which they learn and live change. The framework is designed to assist all students in their education and career/life planning in a way that suits their particular stage of development and their particular strengths, needs, and circumstances.

Although every student is unique, some broad developmental stages are common to the majority of students. The document *Stepping Stones: Ontario’s Youth Policy Framework, 2012* (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/stepStones.html>) explores young people’s development through these stages in four interdependent domains – the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical. Recognizing that students’ interests, strengths, needs, and aspirations evolve as they proceed through school from Kindergarten to Grade 12, effective education and career/life planning programs provide learning opportunities that are relevant, challenging, and engaging to students at every stage of development. Effective programming also recognizes the complex, integrated nature of human development and takes a holistic view of students. A comprehensive program provides learning opportunities in a variety of ways in the classroom, through school-wide activities, and in the community.

3.3 Knowledge and Skills in the Four Areas of Learning

Through the education and career/life planning program, students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 acquire knowledge and skills in four areas of learning – Knowing Yourself, Exploring Opportunities, Making Decisions and Setting Goals, and Achieving Goals and Making Transitions. The following chart represents the conceptual framework, which sets out what students will know and be able to do relative to each area of learning.



Table 1. Conceptual Framework: Knowledge and Skills in the Four Areas of Learning in Education and Career/Life Planning

Inquiry Question	Area of Learning (Knowledge and Skills)
<p>Who am I?</p>	<p>Knowing Yourself</p> <p>To help answer the question “Who am I?”, students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the characteristics that describe who they are (e.g., interests, strengths, intelligences, accomplishments, values, and skills, which include the learning skills and work habits evaluated on the provincial report cards and may include the Essential Skills described in the Ontario Skills Passport); • identify factors that have shaped who they are and that are likely to shape who they become over time; • reflect on how these characteristics influence their thoughts and actions, and how those thoughts and actions may in turn affect their development as learners, their relationships, and their education and career/life choices.
<p>What are my opportunities?</p>	<p>Exploring Opportunities</p> <p>To help answer the question “What are my opportunities?”, students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore the concept of “opportunity” and how the choices they make can open pathways for them; • expand awareness of school- and community-based opportunities (e.g., recreational, social, leadership, volunteer, part-time employment) and how these programs/activities help develop skills and relationships; • explore a variety of fields of work, occupations, and careers, and develop awareness of the impact of local and global trends (e.g., demographic, technological, economic, social) on the opportunities available to them; • investigate the preparation required for a variety of school- and community-based opportunities, occupations, and jobs (i.e., acquiring the necessary experience, education/training, and specific skills, including the Essential Skills and work habits documented in the OSP) and how this preparation can be obtained.
<p>Who do I want to become?</p>	<p>Making Decisions and Setting Goals</p> <p>To help answer the question “Who do I want to become?”, students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the demands, rewards, and other features of the various opportunities they have explored, and reflect on the fit between those features and their personal characteristics; • based on the connections they identify, use a decision-making process to determine personal and interpersonal goals as well as education and career/life goals; • review and revise their goals in light of changes that they recognize in themselves and in the opportunities that are available to them.
<p>What is my plan for achieving my goals?</p>	<p>Achieving Goals and Making Transitions</p> <p>To help answer the question “What is my plan for achieving my goals?”, students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a plan that identifies in detail the steps required to achieve the goals they have set; • identify the resources required to implement their plan; • identify potential obstacles and challenges they may encounter in implementing their plan, and devise possible solutions.



3.4 Gathering Evidence of Learning in Education and Career/Life Planning

The experiences students have as they actively develop answers to the four key inquiry questions allow them to gather information about themselves and their opportunities; consider feedback from their teachers, parents, and peers; make decisions and set goals; and develop plans for achieving their goals. As students document and reflect on their experiences and learning, discuss what they are learning, and weigh their options for next steps, their competence in education and career/life planning grows. The “**All About Me**” portfolio in Kindergarten to Grade 6 and the **Individual Pathways Plan (IPP)** in Grades 7 to 12 provide a structure for, and serve as a record of, this learning process. Students capture evidence related to the four areas of learning for their portfolio or IPP in all their subjects or courses at school and in various endeavours and activities at home and in the community.

A process must be in place at every school to support students in documenting their learning in education and career/life planning in a portfolio or IPP. This process must include the opportunity for students to review and share evidence of their learning with their teacher(s) and, where possible, their parents at least twice a year.

Both the portfolio and the IPP could inform parent interviews and student-led conferences at which students share and reflect on their learning. Both these tools can also help students manage key transitions (see Chapter 4).

The portfolio and IPP also serve as a vehicle through which students can provide valuable feedback about the kinds of school experiences and learning activities that have been most helpful to them in acquiring knowledge and skills in education and career/life planning. This feedback can be considered a source of student opinion – the “student voice” – with respect to the effectiveness of the program, and should be taken into account in evaluations of the school’s education and career/life planning program (see section 6.5).

Teachers should bear in mind that the information a student shares from his or her portfolio or IPP can provide them with additional insight into the student’s particular learning strengths, needs, interests, and aspirations. This understanding can inform the teacher’s work in developing the student profile and/or the class profile, as described in *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12; Draft Version, 2011* (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/LearningforAll2011.pdf>).

A Note about Confidentiality: The issue of confidentiality of the information transmitted between a teacher or guidance teacher/counsellor and a student is governed by several pieces of legislation in addition to professional codes of conduct. Personal information collected by the teacher or counsellor is governed by freedom of information legislation.



Students should be informed that any information they give to teachers or guidance teachers/counsellors will be kept confidential except in circumstances in which freedom of information legislation or other legislation requires or permits school staff to release information to specified individuals. Teachers and guidance teachers/counsellors should seek further clarification in this area from their professional organizations and school boards.

3.4.1 The “All About Me” Portfolio, Kindergarten to Grade 6

The “All About Me” portfolio contains evidence of a student’s learning in education and career/life planning (e.g., materials, information, and personal reflections). It is compiled by the student, with the support of the teacher, in a format that is appropriate to the age of the student and that is transferable from grade to grade. (The portfolio can be electronic, but this is not a requirement.) Students use the four inquiry questions to structure their portfolio and document their learning.

Students may wish to share their portfolio, or information selected from it, regularly with parents for input and feedback that will support their planning of next steps for learning in the classroom, school, and community. As noted above, students must be given the opportunity to review and share evidence of their developing knowledge and skills at least twice a year with their teacher and, where possible, their parents. The twice-yearly review can be conducted in a variety of ways, including individual interviews or presentations or student-led teacher/parent conferences or, if the student wishes, small-group presentations that may involve peers as well. Consideration should be given to linking this review process to existing school processes for reviewing student progress and for student planning.

In each area of learning, students reflect on what they did during the learning activity, the skills and knowledge they used, what they learned, and how they have applied or plan to apply what they learned. Teachers provide opportunities for students to use the inquiry process to explore all four areas of learning, and then encourage them to record what they learned in their “All About Me” portfolio. Teachers should ensure that all students have a clear understanding of portfolio development as a tool for reflection and planning. Students should understand that they are meant to summarize their answers to the inquiry questions in their portfolio, and that the contents of the portfolio will then help them plan for their new learning in the classroom, school, and community.

Introducing students early in their school career to the process of developing a personal portfolio helps them reflect on their strengths and interests as learners as they prepare for transitions from grade to grade. School boards must ensure that processes are in place in every school to assist students, as they move from Grade 6 to Grade 7, in summarizing and transferring the key learning from their “All About Me” portfolio to their Individual Pathways Plan.



3.4.2 The Individual Pathways Plan (IPP), Grades 7 to 12

Starting in Grade 7 and building on their K–6 portfolio, students will document their learning in education and career/life planning in a *web-based* Individual Pathways Plan (IPP).⁷ The IPP becomes the primary planning tool for students as they move through the grades towards their initial postsecondary destination. Ongoing development of the IPP also provides students with a valuable archive of their learning and a record of the resources that can assist them in planning.

Although students are responsible for establishing and maintaining their Individual Pathways Plans, the school board must ensure that all schools with students in Grades 7 to 12 have a web-based IPP and a clearly delineated process in place to support students in establishing their plan and reviewing and revising it at least twice a year.

The IPP provides the structure for students to document evidence of their ongoing inquiry and development in the four areas of learning. For each area of learning, students report and reflect on what they did during various learning activities, the knowledge and skills they used, what they learned, and how they have applied or plan to apply what they learned. By developing their Individual Pathways Plan, students take responsibility for their learning and for planning their future. Developing their IPP increases students' awareness of their strengths and interests and of the related opportunities for learning and work. It also enables them, in collaboration with their teachers and parents, to make decisions, set goals, and develop and implement the steps needed to successfully complete elementary and secondary school and proceed to their initial postsecondary destination.

Students must be given the opportunity to review evidence of their learning in education and career/life planning, based on their IPP, at least twice a year in collaboration with a teacher and/or guidance teacher/counsellor and, where possible, their parents (see also sections 6.1 and 6.2). The twice-yearly review can be conducted in a variety of ways, including an individual interview or presentation or a student-led teacher/parent conference or, if the student wishes, a small-group presentation or seminar that may also involve peers. Through this collaborative process, parents and teachers gain insight into the options students are considering, the challenges they face, the learning opportunities they have identified, and the plans they have started to develop. The review process also gives parents and teachers an opportunity to actively support the student and to contribute ideas about learning opportunities that are available (or could be made available) to the student.

7. Many boards currently use the ministry-licensed software Career Cruising, which provides a template for pathways planning that accommodates the requirements outlined in this document. The software also provides transition-planning templates. Boards are also free to purchase other commercially available software that provides similar templates.



In Grades 7 and 8, the IPP process will emphasize planning for the transition from elementary to secondary school; in Grades 10 to 12, it will emphasize planning for the student's initial postsecondary destination.

In Grades 10 to 12, one of the two required IPP reviews must be made part of the annual course selection process and, hence, part of the students' planning for the transition to his or her initial postsecondary destination (see section 4.2). Schools are encouraged to link one of the two required IPP reviews to the course selection process for students in Grades 8 and 9 as well. Linking the IPP review to course selection will help students choose courses and programs that support their education and career/life planning goals. In general, schools may find it both efficient and effective to coordinate IPP reviews with other student progress reviews and planning processes.

Web-based IPP programs allow schools to electronically track certain minimum requirements, identified by the board, with respect to the activities students are to record in every grade (e.g., in Grade 10, students might be required to identify two possible postsecondary opportunities and identify the courses that might be required for each). Such tracking helps to ensure that students will experience the core activities that enable them to achieve the knowledge and skills they need in the four learning areas of education and career/life planning. It also offers schools a way to evaluate program implementation (see sections 6.1 and 6.5).

The IPP serves as a record of student learning and an effective resource for facilitating parent interviews and student-led conferences, illustrating where students have been and where they are going. In addition, the IPP helps students develop a fuller understanding of the education and career/life planning inquiry process and the value the process will have for them in their postsecondary planning and throughout their lives.

3.4.3 Tracking the Development of Learning Skills and Work Habits

The development of learning skills and work habits, described in *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools, 2010* and reported in provincial report cards, is also a critical element in education and career/life planning. With the support of their teachers, students can reflect on their development of the learning skills and work habits in connection with the "Knowing Yourself" area of learning. Students should be encouraged to document their insights in their "All About Me" portfolio or their IPP.



Key Program Requirements

- Students will reflect on and capture evidence of learning in a portfolio called “All About Me” for Kindergarten to Grade 6, and in the Individual Pathways Plan (IPP) for Grades 7 to 12. A process must be in place at every elementary school to help students summarize and transfer the key learning from their “All About Me” portfolio to their IPP as they move from Grade 6 to Grade 7.
- A process must be in place at every school to support students in documenting their learning in education and career/life planning in their portfolio or IPP. The process must enable them to review and share evidence of their learning with their teacher(s) and/or guidance teacher/counsellor and, where possible, their parents at least twice a year.
- In Grades 10 to 12, one of the two required IPP reviews must be made part of the annual course selection process.



4

Transition Planning

From Kindergarten to Grade 12, as students develop their knowledge and skills in education and career/life planning, they document and reflect on their experiences and learning and weigh their options for next steps. Supporting students in this process assists them in making a smooth transition from grade to grade and from school to school as they progress through elementary and secondary school.

In Grades 7 through 12, education and career/life planning involves preparation for key transitions, including the transition from elementary to secondary school, from Grade 10 to Grade 11, and from secondary school to the student's initial postsecondary destination.

4.1 Elementary to Secondary Transition Planning

The transition from elementary to secondary school is among the most challenging periods of adolescence. This transition is a complex process, characterized by a constant tension between “being and becoming” (Tilleczek, 2010a). At this stage of their lives, students are struggling to establish their identities every day, through interactions with friends, at school, at home, and in the community. Immersed in uncertainty on several fronts, they need to feel safe and to experience a sense of belonging. They also need to take courses that align with their strengths, interests, and aspirations (Tilleczek, 2010b). Effective transition planning to secondary school begins for all students in Grade 7 and continues into and sometimes beyond Grade 9. A smooth transition contributes to a strong foundation for success in secondary school and beyond.

The IPP supports students in Grade 8 in the planning they need to do in order to make a successful transition from elementary to secondary school. They record



evidence of their investigations and reflection, in the four areas of learning, to support them in:

- selecting secondary school courses;
- setting goals for community involvement (which can begin during the summer before Grade 9);
- identifying areas of interest for extracurricular activities and leadership opportunities.

Their investigations can include gathering information and relevant materials through activities such as secondary school visits, classroom presentations by secondary school students and/or guidance staff, and reach-ahead opportunities (see OS, section 2.5.2.1).

Elementary and secondary schools should work collaboratively to develop strategies that support student planning for successful transitions from elementary to secondary school. All students need information about:

- the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) requirements;
- types of courses offered, and how best to design their personal secondary school program based on their interests, strength, needs, and aspirations;
- specialized programs and board-wide programs, extracurricular activities, and additional support programs;
- strategies for completing the community involvement requirement;
- the full range of postsecondary opportunities (apprenticeship training, college, community living, university, and the workplace);
- the education and career/life planning process and strategies for the effective use of education and career/life planning resources.

All secondary schools are required to provide orientation programs for students and their parents to help students make a smooth transition from Grade 8 to Grade 9 (see OS, section 2.4.1). Orientation programs should be tailored to meet the needs of the student and parent population. Some students will require additional time and support to make a successful transition. Section 3.2.1 of *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12* provides direction regarding the provision of additional support to students deemed to be at risk.

4.2 Secondary to Postsecondary Transition Planning

As students move into the senior grades, they enter an exciting yet challenging period of transition that calls for special consideration and support. Planning for the transition from secondary school to postsecondary endeavours must be included as part of student learning in the compulsory Grade 10 Career Studies course. It must also be made part of the school's established process for course selection by students, in consultation with their parents, for Grade 11 and Grade 12.



To ensure that all students are prepared to make a successful transition, the IPP, starting in Grade 10, requires them to record:

- their initial postsecondary destination (e.g., with respect to education, training, the workplace, or community living);
- their other postsecondary goals or plans (e.g., for part-time work, volunteer activities, hobbies, or social or other activities);
- a detailed plan to complete the courses and experiences required to achieve these goals;
- strategies to support the plan, overcome obstacles and challenges, and access the resources and assistance needed.

The IPP must include evidence of the student's investigations that addresses the four areas of learning and supports the student's choices, plans, and strategies. The evidence will have been gained through a variety of opportunities related to the curriculum, school-wide activities, and activities in the community. These opportunities may include, for example, special projects; experiential learning; presentations about postsecondary education and training by experts, postsecondary students, and workplace representatives; and information interviews. Schools are expected to provide multiple and varied opportunities and resources to inform the planning process.

To ensure that all students make a smooth transition to their initial postsecondary destination, schools are required to put in place a process that enables students to:

- review their achievement to date;
- review information on postsecondary opportunities (apprenticeship training, college, community living, university, and the workplace), including information on securing ongoing planning support;
- investigate information and strategies to support effective financial planning;
- explore employment opportunities and develop job search skills and employment retention skills;
- participate in career exploration and experiential learning opportunities.

4.3 Planning Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs

A transition plan must be developed for *all* students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), whether or not they have been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) and including those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness.⁸ At the discretion of the board, a transition plan may also be developed for students who receive special education programs and/or services but do not have an IEP and have not been identified as exceptional.

8. As required by Policy/Program Memorandum No. 156, "Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs", February 1, 2013.



An individualized transition plan that reflects a student’s strengths and needs provides the foundation for a successful transitional experience to the next appropriate pathway for the student. These transitions may include entry to school; transitions between various activities and settings or between classrooms; transitions between grades; moving from school to school or from an outside agency to a school; the transition from elementary to secondary school; and the transition from secondary school to a postsecondary destination. The principal is responsible for ensuring the coordination and development of any transition plan required for students with special education needs. In the case of the transition from secondary school to work, further education, and/or community living, this could include making provisions to help the student connect with postsecondary educational institutions, community agencies, and/or the workplace, as appropriate.

“All About Me” portfolios and Individual Pathways Plans, which are required for all students, may be used as a source of information, among various others, when developing the Individual Education Plan and Transition Plan, which are required for all students who receive special education programs and services.

The requirements for transition planning for students with special education needs are set out in the following regulation and policies:

- Ontario Regulation 181/98, “Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils” (which requires a plan for the transition from secondary school to a postsecondary destination as part of the IEP of a student who is 14 years of age or older)
- Policy/Program Memorandum No. 156, “Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs”, February 1, 2013
- Policy/Program Memorandum No. 140, “Transition Planning for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)”, May 17, 2007
- “Integrated Transition Planning for Young People with Developmental Disabilities”, memorandum dated January 28, 2013, issued by the Ministries of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), Community and Social Services (MCSS), and Education (EDU)



Key Program Requirements

- Students in Grade 8 record evidence in their IPP of their investigations in the four areas of learning to support them in: selecting secondary school courses, setting goals for community involvement (which can begin during the summer before Grade 9), and identifying areas of interest for extracurricular activities and leadership opportunities.
- Planning for the transition from secondary school to postsecondary endeavours must be included as part of student learning in the compulsory Grade 10 Career Studies course and must also be made part of the school's established process for course selection by students, in consultation with their parents, for Grades 11 and 12.
- To ensure that all students make a smooth transition to their initial postsecondary destination, they are required, starting in Grade 10, to record: their initial postsecondary destination, other postsecondary goals or plans, a detailed plan to achieve these goals, strategies to support the plan, and evidence of investigations that address the four areas of learning and support the student's choices, plans, and strategies.
- Schools are required to put in place a process that enables students to review their achievement to date, review information on postsecondary opportunities, investigate information and strategies to support effective financial planning, explore employment opportunities and develop job search skills and employment retention skills, and participate in career exploration and experiential learning opportunities.



5

Supporting Education and Career/Life Planning: The “Where” of Learning

Chapter 3 of this document described the structure of the education and career/life planning program – the “what, where, and how” of learning. The present chapter focuses on the “where”.

Students acquire the knowledge and skills of education and career/life planning through activities and programs related to the curriculum, both in and outside the classroom; through school-wide activities; and through activities in the community. In these contexts, students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 require instruction and support as they apply the four-step inquiry process to gain knowledge of themselves and their opportunities and an understanding of how they can successfully shape their future. Teachers, guidance teachers/counsellors, peers, and mentors provide this instruction and/or support. Parents and community partners also play a key role in supporting students in this process.

As noted earlier in this document, teachers support students in elementary schools in their investigations and goal setting as they acquire knowledge and skills in the various subjects in the Ontario curriculum both in and outside the classroom and through school-wide curricular and extracurricular activities. In secondary school, students are supported by classroom teachers in developing their knowledge and skills in education and career/life planning as part of every course they take in the various disciplines of the Ontario curriculum. Secondary school students also receive support in building and reflecting on their Individual Pathways Plan from the school guidance staff and, as required, from the Student Success team (which consists of the Student Success teacher, a school administrator, a guidance teacher/counsellor, and, where applicable, a special education teacher – see OS, section 3.2.1).

Courses with a particular focus on education and career/life planning – in particular, the compulsory half-credit Grade 10 Career Studies course – are available to students through the guidance and career education curriculum. In addition, various programs are offered in Ontario secondary schools that enable students to apply their particular interests and skills outside the classroom, and to explore and gain experience related to their planned initial postsecondary destination. These



programs include various forms of experiential learning and programs such as the cooperative education, dual credit, Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM), Ontario Youth Apprenticeship (OYAP), and school-work transition programs. Finally, students' activities and experiences in the community, including their required community involvement activities, volunteering activities, and part-time work experiences, can provide important information for students as they apply the four-step inquiry process.

The comprehensive education and career/life planning program can be implemented in a variety of ways, to ensure that all students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 have multiple and varied opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills, to demonstrate the full range of their learning, to gather evidence of that learning in their “All About Me” portfolio or Individual Pathways Plan, and to share their learning with teachers and parents as they plan their next steps for learning, work, and life.

5.1 Education and Career/Life Planning through Activities and Programs Related to the Curriculum

The Ontario curriculum provides students with a wide range of opportunities in and outside the classroom to practise education and career/life planning.

5.1.1 Opportunities for Learning through the Ontario Curriculum, Kindergarten to Grade 12

Early learning programs in Ontario schools encourage children to discover who they are and to reach their full potential, and so provide an underpinning for the development of knowledge and skills related to the four areas of learning in education and career/life planning. Children begin their personal and social development by learning not only about themselves but also about themselves in relation to others and in relation to the world. The Kindergarten classroom creates an environment where children are affirmed as individuals and as members of a diverse community of learners. The program provides opportunities for them to discover their strengths and abilities, to inquire about things that pique their interest, and to develop their relationships with others.

The curriculum policy documents for Grades 1 to 12 support the development of the knowledge and skills related to the four areas of learning in education and career/life planning in various ways, depending on the subject or discipline. In some, relevant knowledge and skills are outlined in the overall expectations (e.g., in the elementary Language curriculum, an overall expectation requires students to “reflect on and identify their strengths as listeners and speakers ...”). In many disciplines at the secondary level, specific expectations and examples detail learning related directly to career planning (e.g., a specific expectation from a Grade 11 Construction Technology course in the technological education document reads



“identify careers in the construction industry [e.g., construction craft worker, labourer, tradesperson, estimator, entrepreneur, interior designer, artisan], and describe the education and training required for these careers”). The “teacher prompts” in various subjects and disciplines also communicate relevant learning opportunities (e.g., a teacher prompt from the Grade 7 music curriculum in the elementary arts document states: “Write a résumé highlighting your achievements as a musician. What careers related to music would best suit your interests and areas of strength?”).

In addition, all curriculum policy documents in the current review cycle have a chapter entitled “Some Considerations for Program Planning”. In documents for Grades 1 to 8, this chapter contains a section on guidance or “building career awareness”, which focuses on students’ exploration of their strengths and skills and on career exploration opportunities. In the Grade 9 to 12 documents, there is a section that focuses on career education. Curriculum documents released in 2013 or later contain a section on education and career/life planning that aligns with the present document.

Providing learning opportunities in Kindergarten to Grade 8

Classroom educators in all subjects and disciplines provide students with learning opportunities that allow them to apply their knowledge and skills to real-life and work-related situations, to explore education and career/life options, and to become self-directed planners. Educators can help students identify ways in which their knowledge and skills in a particular curriculum area enhance their suitability for a wide range of occupations and, through the lens of the inquiry questions, help students make thoughtful and informed education and career/life decisions. In Kindergarten, children may wonder and ask questions about the work people do in and around the community. In Grades 1 to 6, students become increasingly aware of the people in their community and the work they do on the job, at home, and as volunteers. Educators should recognize and promote this growing interest by encouraging students to observe and ask questions – questions such as: *What does this work involve? Who is doing the work? What skills do they need in order to perform the task or carry out the work?* Teachers support students in relating this knowledge to their learning at school, to their own strengths and interests, and to their goals for involvement in the classroom, school, home, or community.

In Grades 7 and 8, students are thinking about the opportunities available to them in secondary school and beyond (apprenticeship, college, community living, university, or the world of work). Educators help students see the connections between what they are learning in school and its relevance and application beyond the classroom. These connections help raise students’ awareness of how learning and work opportunities relate to their strengths and interests. Educators should also provide students with curriculum-linked information (e.g., about courses and secondary/postsecondary pathways) and experiences (e.g., guest speakers, worksite tours related to their learning) that will assist students in developing, and documenting their learning in, their IPPs.



Providing learning opportunities in Grades 9 to 12

In Grades 9 to 12, curriculum expectations in many disciplines focus directly on education and career/life planning. In addition, there are opportunities within the secondary school curriculum for students to focus on self-awareness and on decision making and goal setting. In a number of disciplines (e.g., health and physical education, the arts, English) students develop personal and interpersonal skills and metacognitive skills. Students also have opportunities to make connections across various subjects and disciplines and to relate their learning to their lives beyond school. Such learning helps make their school experience more relevant for students, increases their engagement with school, and so promotes higher levels of achievement and prepares students for success in their initial postsecondary destinations.

5.1.2 Guidance and Career Education Courses

All of the courses in the guidance and career education curriculum⁹ policy document support students in acquiring knowledge and skills related to education and career/life planning. Topics covered are reflected in the strand titles of the various courses, as follows:

- learning skills (GLS1O/GLE1O, GLS4O/GLE4O)
- essential skills for working and learning (GLD2O, GLN4O)
- personal knowledge and management skills (GLS1O/GLE1O, GWL3O, GPP3O)
- interpersonal knowledge and skills (GLS1O/GLE1O, GWL3O, GPP3O)
- exploration of opportunities (all courses)
- personal management (GLC2O, GLD2O, GLN4O, GLS4O/GLE4O)
- preparation for transitions and change (GLC2O, GLD2O, GWL3O, GLN4O, GLS4O/GLE4O)

The compulsory half-credit Career Studies course in Grade 10 is a pivotal course for all students. In this course students reflect on and further develop their IPP by consolidating what they have learned in the four areas of learning – developing self-knowledge, exploring a range of education and career/life opportunities, setting initial postsecondary goals, and developing a plan for achieving those goals.

Students may choose to count a course from the guidance and career education curriculum as an additional Group 1 compulsory credit towards their OSSD.

9. The courses and course codes are as follows: Learning Strategies 1: Skills for Success in Secondary School (GLS1O/GLE1O/GLE2O); Discovering the Workplace (GLD2O); Career Studies (compulsory) (GLC2O); Designing Your Future (GWL3O); Leadership and Peer Support (GPP3O); Advanced Learning Strategies: Skills for Success After Secondary School (GLE3O); Navigating the Workplace (GLN4O); Advanced Learning Strategies: Skills for Success After Secondary School (GLS4O/GLE4O).



5.1.3 Education and Career/Life Exploration Activities¹⁰

Education and career/life exploration activities give students an opportunity to connect what they learn in school with the world beyond school.

Such activities should be planned in ways that best meet the learning interests, strengths, needs, and aspirations of the students. Learning activities can be planned for the classroom (e.g., guest speakers, simulations) or for the whole school (e.g., career fairs, postsecondary opportunity fairs); or they can take place in the community (e.g., workplace visits, meetings with career mentors in their work environments).

Community partners play a critical role in supporting schools in the planning and delivery of effective, ongoing education and career/life planning programs. Schools will benefit by building on existing links with their local communities and by creating new partnerships, consistent with ministry and school board policies on partnership development.

5.1.4 Experiential Learning¹¹

Experiential learning programs provide students with rich opportunities to see how their classroom learning applies in a workplace setting. In Kindergarten to Grade 6, teachers help students make connections between their learning in school and opportunities outside school through field trips, simulations, and authentic tasks. In Grades 7 and 8, students can deepen their understanding of a particular occupational area of interest by participating in a job-shadowing/job-twinning opportunity, which allows them to spend anywhere from half a day to several days observing an employee or a cooperative education student in a specific occupation. In secondary school, students can participate in job shadowing/job twinning and also get hands-on experience in a particular area of interest through “work experience”, which can be a component of any course and which provides students with a learning opportunity in the workplace for a limited period of time (usually one to four weeks). They can also participate in a cooperative education program (see section 5.1.5).

Experiential learning is particularly helpful in developing self-knowledge and awareness of opportunities – two areas of learning in the education and career/life planning framework – which are critical steps that precede setting goals and making plans. Teachers support students in reflecting on their experiential learning activities and capturing their learning in their “All About Me” portfolio or Individual Pathways Plan. For information and requirements concerning experiential learning programs see *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12*, section 8, and *Cooperative*

10. Education and career/life exploration activities and experiential learning are delivered in connection with the Ontario curriculum, but they may also be organized and delivered on a school-wide basis, as part of the school’s guidance and career education program.

11. See note 10, above.



Education and Other Forms of Experiential Learning: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Secondary Schools, 2000. (Additional career-focused programs that include an experiential learning component are described in section 5.1.6.)

5.1.5 Cooperative Education Programs

Cooperative education programs provide students with the opportunity to earn a secondary school credit (or credits) while completing a work placement in the community that is related to the learning expectations of a secondary school course in the Ontario curriculum, which must be completed before the placement or simultaneously with the placement. Cooperative education complements a student's academic programming and is a valuable component of a school's comprehensive education and career/life planning program for all students, whatever their initial postsecondary destination.

Cooperative education programs provide students with workplace experiences that contribute a wealth of information for students' reflection with respect to the four education and career/life planning inquiry questions. Students develop and come to recognize their own strengths, interests, and skills with respect to expectations in the workplace; deepen their understanding of educational and career/life opportunities available to them; explore the specific skills and education or training required to pursue these opportunities; and set goals, make plans to achieve their goals, and prepare for their transition from secondary school to their initial postsecondary destination. Workplace supervisors and the cooperative education teacher are mentors to students in cooperative education programs, providing guidance and support as students reflect on the inquiry questions. Teachers support students in reflecting on their workplace experiences and capturing their learning in their Individual Pathways Plan.

All cooperative education programs must be developed and implemented in accordance with ministry policy as outlined in *Cooperative Education and Other Forms of Experiential Learning: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Secondary Schools, 2000*.

5.1.6 Programs with a Pathways Focus

Many secondary schools and school boards offer programs that focus on students' preparation for postsecondary endeavours and address the particular interests, strengths, needs, or aspirations of students. Such programs assist students in making successful transitions to the initial postsecondary destination of their choice (apprenticeship training, college, university, or the workplace). Teachers involved in these programs should actively support students in reflecting on their experiences and capturing their learning in their Individual Pathways Plans.



Such ministry-approved programs include dual credit, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship (OYAP), Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM), and school-work transition programs:

1. Dual credit programs allow students who are still in secondary school to take college or apprenticeship courses that count towards both the Ontario Secondary School Diploma and a postsecondary certificate, diploma, degree, or apprenticeship certification. More information on dual credit programs is available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/morestudentsuccess/dualCredit.html>.
2. The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) is a specialized program that enables students who are 16 years of age or older to meet diploma requirements while participating in a cooperative education program in an apprenticeship occupation. More information on OYAP programs is available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/secondary/coop/cooped.pdf> and <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/programs/oyap.html>.
3. The Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program is a specialized program that allows students to acquire technical knowledge and skills related to a specific economic sector while meeting the requirements of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. More information is available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/morestudentsuccess/SHSMBinder.pdf>.
4. School-work transition programs give students the opportunity to complete secondary school diploma or certificate requirements; develop Essential Skills and work habits (as described in the Ontario Skills Passport), as well as industry-specific skills; and obtain experience in the workplace (see OS, section 9.1).

5.2 Education and Career/Life Planning through School-wide Activities

A comprehensive education and career/life planning program should provide a variety of school-wide opportunities for students to explore related topics outside formal classroom instruction. School-wide activities can help broaden students' awareness of opportunities for ongoing learning, involvement in the community, and future work. Such activities can include workshops, seminars, presentations, and field trips. In secondary schools, the activities described in sections 5.1.3 (Education and Career/Life Exploration Activities) and 5.1.4 (Experiential Learning) are often coordinated on a school-wide basis by guidance staff as part of the guidance and career education program.

Many students share common interests, concerns, and questions and benefit from the peer interaction that small group settings provide. Small group support can enhance student learning and connect students to others with similar needs and goals, and is an effective use of staff resources. In some cases, however, the nature of a student's needs makes focused individual counselling and support more appropriate.



5.2.1 Extracurricular Activities and Leadership Opportunities

Elementary and secondary schools offer a wide range of extracurricular activities and leadership opportunities that allow students to develop, refine, and apply knowledge and skills in their areas of interest and strength, while making a contribution to their school and the larger community. Such activities give students a chance to learn more about themselves and the world around them. Students should be encouraged to reflect on these experiences and to capture their insights in their “All About Me” portfolio or Individual Pathways Plan. Schools are encouraged to raise student and parent awareness of the education and career/life planning benefits that students can derive from participating in the school’s extracurricular program and taking on leadership roles in the school or the broader community.

5.3 Education and Career/Life Planning through Activities in the Community

Students’ activities in the community offer abundant opportunities for education and career/life planning. Students of all ages are involved in activities outside school that contribute to their development as learners. Students and their parents should be encouraged to reflect on the importance of these activities to the students’ development of knowledge and skills in education and career/life planning, and students should be encouraged to capture their learning in their “All About Me” portfolio or Individual Pathways Plan.

5.3.1 Community Involvement

The diploma requirement of forty hours of community involvement is intended to help students develop an awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and of the role they can have in supporting and strengthening their communities. Volunteering activities undertaken to meet this requirement can also be effective learning opportunities in education and career/life planning. Students should be encouraged to reflect on their community involvement experiences to enhance their knowledge of their skills, strengths, and interests, and to take advantage of the opportunity to gather information for their IPPs about different fields of work and different occupations that appeal to them, as well as various education and training opportunities.

5.3.2 Volunteering

Volunteering in the school and the broader community has the potential to be an effective learning activity with respect to education and career/life planning. Students of all ages should be encouraged to participate in volunteer activities,



and they should be supported in reflecting on their experiences to develop greater knowledge of their skills, strengths, and interests. Volunteer activities provide opportunities to gather information about fields of work, occupations, and education and training opportunities.

5.3.3 Part-time Employment

Most students have their initial employment experiences while they are in elementary or secondary school. These early experiences provide rich opportunities for students to develop self-awareness with respect to their skills, strengths, and interests and the kind of work they like to do, as well as an awareness of the world of work, education and training options, and community involvement opportunities.



6

Program Development, Implementation, and Evaluation

Every elementary and secondary school, under the direction of the principal and with the assistance of key staff and students, will develop, document, implement, and evaluate an education and career/life planning program based on the policies outlined in this document. Every effort should be made to engage parents and community partners in this collaborative process. The design and development, implementation, and evaluation of the program should involve all school staff, students, parents, and the community.

The conceptual framework of the program, outlined in section 3.2 of this document, provides the structure for student learning in education and career/life planning based on an inquiry approach. As noted earlier, students in Kindergarten to Grade 6 will record their learning in a portfolio called “All About Me”, and students in Grade 7 to 12 will use an Individual Pathways Plan (IPP).

Program evaluation, discussed in section 6.5, will involve monitoring of the implementation of components of the program as well as assessment of the program’s effectiveness in helping all students develop knowledge and skills in education and career/life planning.

6.1 A Process for Development, Implementation, and Evaluation

A purposefully designed and documented education and career/life planning program based on the four areas of learning and the related inquiry questions will ensure that students have opportunities to develop knowledge and skills through experiences in the classroom, the school, and the community.

In secondary schools, guidance staff may play a key role in coordinating the development and implementation process.



Development, Implementation, and Evaluation: Process Steps and Considerations

Laying the Groundwork

- Establish an Education and Career/Life Planning Program Advisory Committee (see section 6.2), which will be responsible for the process described in this list.
- Develop strategies to encourage broad parent and student engagement in the development of the program.
- Consider the prevalence or distribution of particular interests, strengths, needs, and aspirations, as they relate to education and career/life planning, among the students in the school.
- Ensure that all educators in the school are familiar with the education and career/life planning program policy, as outlined in this document.
- Provide professional learning focused on the inquiry-based program framework and on strategies for embedding education and career/life planning in curricular and extracurricular programs, school-wide activities, and student activities in the community.

Developing the Program

- Assess how effectively the school's existing career development program addresses students' interests, needs, abilities, and aspirations (see section 6.5) and identify areas where improvement is needed.
- Establish priorities for program development based on the assessment of the current program, and include these in school improvement planning.
- Review the school's curricular and extracurricular programs to identify active use of learning opportunities related to education and career/life planning, and determine what needs to be done to make the education and career/life planning program comprehensive (see section 2.3.2) and embedded in the life of the school.
- Create or reinforce structures and processes that support cross-panel collaboration related to education and career/life planning.
- Develop a communication plan that fosters support among all stakeholders for the implementation of the program in the school, at home, and in the community.
- Develop strategies for strengthening and expanding community partnerships.
- Ensure that the program and associated resources align with current ministry policies and initiatives, including the Equity and Inclusive Education strategy, the Aboriginal Education policy, and the Safe Schools strategy.

Implementing the Program

- Ensure that developmentally appropriate teaching and learning activities and resources are available to help students achieve specific learning goals.
- Articulate and promote the goal of embedding or "infusing" the program in all aspects of learning and school life and of embracing an inclusive approach, differentiated instruction, and a holistic view of individual students (i.e., taking account of students' developmental stage, life circumstances, and interests, strengths, needs, and aspirations).



- Implement processes for students to track, document, and share the development of their knowledge and skills in education and career/life planning with teachers, parents, and peers – and in a scheduled review with a teacher and, where possible, their parents at least twice a year – using the “All About Me” portfolio or the Individual Pathways Plan (see sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2).
- Clearly articulate and document program goals and classroom, school-wide, and community implementation strategies that draw on the resources, expertise, and opportunities available in the school and the broader community.

Evaluating the Program

- Develop and implement strategies and procedures for measuring program effectiveness in terms that align with the indicators for pathways programming provided in board and school improvement planning resources (e.g., the School Effectiveness Framework) and that draw on both quantitative data (e.g., the number of students in Grade 9 who have completed the required components in their IPP, as established by the school board) and qualitative data (e.g., student feedback during biannual reviews and in Student Exit Surveys) (see section 6.5).

6.2 The Education and Career/Life Planning Program Advisory Committee

Every elementary and secondary school will establish an Education and Career/Life Planning Program Advisory Committee to coordinate the development, implementation, and evaluation of the school’s program.

The committee must include representatives of all members of the school community, including school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and members of the broader community. In secondary schools, the committee must also include guidance staff. Where appropriate, the committee’s mandate may be incorporated into the work of an existing school committee, such as the Student Success team in secondary schools.

One of the committee’s primary responsibilities is to establish communication with all stakeholders and to engage their support for and participation in the program.

The committee will be responsible for ensuring that the school’s program is comprehensive. The committee will articulate where and when students in each grade will have opportunities – within the classroom, the school, and the community – to explore and reflect on their learning in the four areas of learning, and to record their experiences and insights in their “All About Me” portfolio or IPP. For example, in an elementary school, the committee might identify opportunities for students to explore the question *Who am I?* through the health and physical education curriculum, and the question *What are my opportunities?* through the science



and arts curricula as well as through extracurricular and volunteer opportunities in the school. In a secondary school, it could identify opportunities to explore the four inquiry questions through compulsory courses such as English in Grade 9 and Career Studies and Civics and Citizenship in Grade 10; through more specialized programs such as cooperative education and the Specialist High Skills Major program in Grades 11 and 12; and through the graduation requirement of community involvement hours as well as through various leadership opportunities in the school or community.

The committee is also responsible for:

- planning and communicating to classroom and other educators in the school who will coordinate and conduct the two required annual reviews of student learning based on the “All About Me” portfolio or IPP;
- ensuring that processes are in place in every school to assist students, as they move from Grade 6 to Grade 7, in summarizing and transferring the key learning from their “All About Me” portfolio to their IPP;
- coordinating the implementation and review of the Student Exit Surveys required at the end of Grades 8 and 12 (see section 6.5).

The advisory committee must ensure that cross-panel and family-of-school linkages are established, where possible, in order to support students who are making a transition from one school to another or from one grade to the next.

6.3 Engaging Parents in the Program

Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools, 2010 describes the critical role that parents play in student achievement and success and the need for school boards and schools to develop plans for involving parents in their children’s learning and the life of the school.

Parents play a vital role in education. When parents are engaged and involved, everyone – students, parents and families, teachers, schools, and communities – benefits, and our schools become increasingly rich and positive places to teach, learn, and grow. (p. 5)

Research indicates that the majority of students view their parents as their primary source of support for career planning (King et al., 2009). In view of this, it is particularly important to provide opportunities for parents to engage in an ongoing dialogue with the school and their children about education and career/life planning. Schools and school boards are encouraged to develop programs that help parents acquire the competencies they need to effectively support their children in becoming competent and confident career/life planners. In addition to encouraging parents to become involved in activities at the school, these programs should focus on ways to support parents at home.



The “All About Me” portfolio (Kindergarten to Grade 6) and the Individual Pathways Plan (Grades 7 to 12), key components of the school’s education and career/life planning program, provide a structure for student/parent/teacher conferencing as well as evidence to support ongoing planning at home and at school.

6.4 Student Engagement

A variety of strategies and practices can be employed by schools and school boards to enable students to provide authentic input into the development, implementation, and assessment of the school’s comprehensive education and career/life planning program. Like parent engagement, “student voice” is an essential component of Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education strategy (see OS, section 1.4). Student representation on the advisory committee is important, but there are other ways of incorporating student input as well.

Information relevant to the assessment and design of the program can be gleaned from students’ reviews, with teachers and parents, of their “All About Me” portfolios and Individual Pathways Plans. During these discussions, students may provide feedback on the effectiveness of program components. This is one way of accessing the voice of *all* students, and it should be incorporated formally into the process of evaluating the program’s effectiveness.

As part of program implementation, schools are required to conduct Student Exit Surveys at the end of Grade 8 and Grade 12, at a minimum. Exit surveys could, however, be conducted at the end of *every* grade – a process facilitated through the web-based IPP system in Grades 7 to 12. Exit surveys provide another opportunity to obtain authentic student input that could shape the development, implementation, and evaluation of a school’s education and career/life planning program.

6.5 Measuring Program Effectiveness to Ensure Student Success

Evaluation of the school’s education and career/life planning program includes (1) monitoring the implementation of the program and (2) assessing how well the program is succeeding in helping students develop the knowledge and skills they need for effective education and career/life planning.

Schools are encouraged to align the strategies they use for measuring program effectiveness with school and board improvement planning processes related to Component 5 of the School Effectiveness Framework – the Programs and Pathways component (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013c). The indicators provided in the framework for that component can help schools identify areas of strength and areas requiring improvement with respect to education and career/life planning.



These indicators are as follows:

- Comprehensive education and career/life planning programs meet the learning interests, strengths, needs, and aspirations of all students.
- Opportunities for authentic learning experiences and experiential learning exist in all classrooms and programs.
- Students, parents, and educators understand the full range of pathways, programs, options, and supports that are available.
- Students build on in-school and out-of-school experiences to further explore and reflect on their interests, strengths, skills, and education and career/life aspirations.

Similarly, the list of characteristics of comprehensive programs provided in section 2.3.2 of this document, and the development and implementation process outlined in section 6.1, can be used to develop indicators to monitor implementation and measure effectiveness.

Strategies for monitoring the implementation of the program include:

- tracking of opportunities, in the classroom, the school, and the community, for students to develop their knowledge and skills in education and career/life planning;
- tracking students' opportunities to reflect on and document their learning in their "All About Me" portfolio or IPP;
- conducting surveys with parents, teachers, and students to gauge their awareness of the program and their level of involvement in it.

Strategies for finding evidence of the effectiveness of the program include:

- gathering evidence of student learning (e.g., goal setting based on awareness of self and opportunities; planning next steps based on research, as documented in students' portfolios or IPPs, especially at key transition points, such as at the end of Grades 3, 6, 8, and 11);
- gauging students' awareness of their personal strengths and needs as they reflect on their learning during parent/student/teacher conferences;
- tracking students' involvement in optional education and career/life planning activities (e.g., workplace field trips, presentations by postsecondary educational institutions, opportunity fairs);
- gathering evidence from exit surveys completed by students who are graduating from elementary and secondary schools.



Key Program Requirements

- Every elementary and secondary school, under the direction of the principal and with the assistance of key staff and students, will develop, document, implement, and evaluate an education and career/life planning program based on the policies outlined in this document.
- Every elementary and secondary school will establish an Education and Career/Life Planning Program Advisory Committee to coordinate the development, implementation, and evaluation of the school's program.
- The committee must include representatives of all members of the school community, including school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and members of the broader community. In secondary schools, the committee must also include guidance staff. Where appropriate, the committee's mandate may be incorporated into the work of an existing school committee.
- The advisory committee must ensure that cross-panel and family-of-school linkages are established, where possible, in order to support students who are making a transition from one school to another or from one grade to the next.
- Schools are required to introduce Student Exit Surveys at the end of Grade 8 and Grade 12, at a minimum, as part of their implementation of the program.



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