



Pathways to Success

The Perfect Storm

*Protect me oh Lord for
my boat is so small
Protect me oh Lord for
my boat is so small
My boat is so small and
your sea is so wide
Protect me oh Lord*

—Breton Fisherman’s Prayer

The lines from the Breton Fisherman’s Prayer which have been sung by the Girl Guides and Scouts for countless years, generate an evocative image of vulnerability for those who may not be adequately prepared for a challenging environment.

Student Success has done a great deal over the past 5 years to expose the “nautical convoy” that exists in our schools and classrooms. Some students are like boats that are large, well built and able to ride out the heaviest of turbulent seas. Other students

are like smaller, but still quite sturdy boats, and able to survive. But many are fragile, meagrely equipped and easily swamped in rough waters.

The level of literacy and numeracy needed to function effectively in an increasingly competitive work environment is now greater than ever. Today there are critical differences in academic achievement and educational attainment among groups defined by race/ethnicity, nativity, and socioeconomic status.

Ontario students today are now in the midst of a “perfect storm”, which is the result of three powerful forces: a seismic shift in demographics, economic change and conflicting skills distributions. Immigration patterns, coupled with differences in birth rates, will result in substantial increases in the racial/ethnic diversity

of Ontario’s population over the next 20 to 25 years and beyond.

An important consequence of technological change and globalization is increasing economic returns to higher levels of education and skills. For workers who possess these characteristics, opportunities abound. But for those who lack them, the economic future can be quite dismal.



*The passage may be rough on
the sea of life
Be with us Lord through waves
of strife.*

Parents and teens need help

Parents and teens need help in making better post-secondary decisions. Many teens and their parents don’t know the variety of jobs available or the skills need to succeed. According to John Winter, CEO of the B.C. Chamber of Commerce, “the business

community has been guilty of not being good communicators in terms of their needs.”

Lack of career direction predicts failure for good students as much as it does for weak ones. The goal should be post-secondary success regardless of the destination. Many options are largely

ignored because many teens and their parents do not consider any other alternative to university. In fact many teens do not plan at all. For them, university is a default decision, not knowing what to do they

For at-risk students, parent involvement in learning has been identified as the single most important determinant of success.

—Sheryl Mills (1994)

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Special points of interest:

- 97% of HWCDSD grade 10 students have a computer at home
- 93% of HWCDSD grade 10 students report they use website, email and chat messages outside of school
- Stats Canada reports that the number of Canadian cell phone subscribers rose 8.4 per cent to 18 million people in the final quarter of 2006

Developing Skills for a Global Economy

Around the world, countries seeking to compete in the global marketplace are facing severe shortages of technicians, coupled with high rates of underemployment of college and university graduates, says Kenneth Gray, a professor of workforce education and development at Penn State University, in his report, *Skills Shortages, Underemployment and Youth: The Quiet International Dilemma*.

Gray argues that few involved want to talk about the worldwide growing numbers of underemployed four-year university graduates. He maintains that this is an embarrassment to public policymakers, government officials, universities and university graduates. Interestingly, college graduates with weak literacy and numeracy proficiencies were much more likely than their more highly skilled peers to be underemployed—holding jobs that did not require a college degree and paid con-

siderably less than their more highly skilled counterparts.

Post-secondary enrollment has dramatically increased in developed countries. In 2003, 44 % of Canadians in their early 20s graduated from post-secondary programs, up from 7% in 1999, according to Stats Canada. This has created a surplus of people with degrees, but a shortage of university graduates with the skills needed by employers. Estimates are that 30% of Canadian university graduates are working in jobs that do not require a university degree. Stats Canada reports that the Arts, Humanities and Business grads are most at-risk of underemployment.

Gray maintains that there is a widespread misconception of education requirements for the global high tech industry. Most people believe a 4 year computer science university degree is needed; however, this assumption is incorrect. Most jobs, 57% are blue-

collar technical jobs with skills associated with a vocational education and 25% are technicians. It is generally recognized that the existence of technically trained workers, those trained through community colleges are critical to a company's ability to expand and grow. Less than 20% of the jobs in this industry require a university degree.



Technicians are often referred to as the "gold collar" workers because of the high salaries they earn.

Take Control of Your Future, Today

my
Blueprint
education planner



The information revolution is liberating individuals as never before and changing the way we work and learn.

In a 24x7, customer-service culture, delays cause dissatisfaction and disengagement. Boards are finding ways to eliminate delays in processes such as registration and option sheet preparation, annual education planning and post-secondary program selection. For our students and their parents, customer service is an expectation, not an exception.

This year the HWCDSB has purchased a license for all grade 7 through 12 students to use a unique online education planner available through www.pathtosuccess.ca

Students can use myBlueprint to create a personal pro-

file and record their educational progress, plan their high school courses, ensure that they are on track to graduate and instantly identify every post-secondary opportunity available across Canada.

Every destination is at the user's fingertips. Student and parents can discover apprenticeships, college programs, workplace opportunities, university programs and occupations that reflect their personal interests and aspirations. Students can now complete their Annual Education Plan online.

Today more than ever before there is a need to provide a clear picture of the variety of post-secondary programs available at the colleges and universities, as well as the economic and personal benefits with them.

Technology is assumed to be a natural part of the environment. The younger the age group, the higher is the percentage who use the Internet for school, work, and leisure.

Go to: www.pathtosuccess.ca

Select: Build Pathway

Click: myblueprint

Set up an account using the school's activation key code :

bishopryan
bishoptonnos
cardinalnewman
cathedral
stjean
stmarycs
stthomas

HWCDSD's On-line Calendar



Pathways to Success—Yours to Choose, is an integrated, webpage that brings together many career planning links for students, teachers, parents and community partners. This website provides easy access to the information needed for students to make informed course selection and career related decisions.

It's your one-stop source for pathway planning. ...

Students can assess their skills and interests to match potential career opportunities. Explore opportunities in all 4 destinations, build and develop an annual education plan with Career Matters and find out how they can get experience in fields of work they may be interested in. Profiles of students in each of the 4 destinations have also been included.

All students are encouraged to access the **NEW** on-line HWCDSD Course Calendar under **Secondary Courses**. Information about the secondary school program, graduation requirements, types of courses and descriptors and specific courses offered at each of the seven secondary schools is just a point and click away.

For parents, information around helping their children understand, who they are, and how to build a pathway is also provided. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the high school course selection and post-secondary preparation process because of the role they play is destination planning for their children.

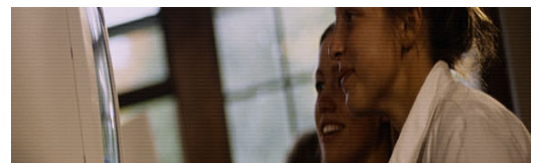
For teachers links to resources for career assessment, exploration, pathway building and experiential learn-

ing have also been provided.

For community partners information is available on this webpage as well. It includes links for employers on how to get involved in cooperative education and experiential learning as well as community ser-



Preparing an Option Sheet On-line



Pathway planning should begin early. Successful career development is a life-long process. The courses chosen in high school are critical in laying the foundation for a career and represent a positive step along the path to a

rewarding future.

Creating a *backpack* of possible courses is the first step. Understanding the difference between applied, academic and locally developed is necessary. Knowing what courses lay ahead and how these courses can lead to a future post-secondary destination will prepare students to make the best possible course selections for them.

Preparing an option sheet working paper can be easily done following the steps listed below:

- Step 1:** Select Secondary Courses
- Step 2:** Select Schools and Your School
- Step 3:** Select Option Sheet
- Step 4:** Follow the instructions for course selection

A Business of One

Today's world is vastly different than it was even a few years ago, for today's students, the world that awaits them presents a set of unprecedented challenges. By the second decade of the 21st Century those who hold a stable job with salary and benefits will be the minority. Futurists predict that

goal setting, self management, and achieving balance will become more and more critical in a world which leaves individuals far more responsible for themselves than people grew accustomed to in the 20th Century world of industry.

When you are a "business of one" there is no time clock to tell you when to stop working, no human

resource department to manage your benefits, and no manager to tell you it is time for advancement or change. There is only you. This change is liberating, but also unsettling and even frightening. Managing yourself in a world of uncertainty, opportunity, and rapid change will be the greatest challenge of the next 10 years.

Oh Guiding light, my steps may falter today. Lift me up Lord so I may steadily follow Your way, for I am but a weak vessel. Steer me from danger and away from strife. Your light is eternal, but I sometimes cannot see, that only You Lord is gently steering me.



Achieving, Believing, Serving

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A message from the Director

*"All students can learn." "Striving for excellence."
"Education is the ladder to success." "We educate all stu-
dents". "Barriers to high levels of achievement can be
mitigated." "We educate the whole person".*

These phrases are routinely verbalized and repeated by educators in our schools and across the province. Are they simply nice-sounding words or are they statements of beliefs that motivate our actions? As Catholic educators in Hamilton-Wentworth we are striving to be true to our mission "to enable all students to realize the fullness of humanity".

The Student Success Initiative, with its various components, is a call to action through which concrete strategies are formulated and energized to ensure that our mission and the phrases above are more than mere words.

Countless staff with a variety of roles at numerous locations are actively supporting actions intended to "mitigate barriers to achievement" and encourage "all students to realize high levels of achievement", especially for students at risk.

Strategies focusing on Grade 8 to Grade 9 Transition, Pathways, Mathematical Literacy, cross-curricular Literacy, and experiential learning enable students to identify their strengths and, with support from schools, enable them to move successfully into post-secondary life, whatever pathway that may be.

Identifying the needs of each student and providing that student with appropriate information and support will increase student success and improve the likelihood of high school graduation for those who face the greatest barriers. I applaud all staff for their focused efforts in this initiative and encourage all stakeholders, including students, parents and community partners, to avail themselves of the exceptional resources and information available to support effective decision-making and pathway planning for the future of all students.



www.pathtosuccess.ca

Ministry recognizes Religious Studies as a critical course in the Specialist High Skills Major

Recently the Ministry of Education granted the HWCDSB the right to include the Grade 11 World Religion courses in the Specialist High Skills Major Health and Wellness pathway.

In our appeal to include these courses as Majors, the HWCSB maintained that all students, but particularly those studying a SHSM Health and Wellness need to better understand the diverse cultural and religious values that make up our region's diverse population.

The World Religion courses introduce students to an exploration of religions around the world, and provide them with an awareness of the nature, place, and function of religion in multicultural societies like Ontario. The character of religious communities; traditions of religious belief and practice; the role of religion in society and culture are examined. Students study how systems of belief affect individual lives and social

relationships.

The promotion of pluralism and diversity; strengthening of anti-discrimination policies; protection of immigrants human rights; and respect for cultural, ethnic and religious differences are addressed in these courses. The expectations in the World Religion courses counter intolerant stereotypes through an understanding and appreciation of religious diversity and the promotion of respect for others.

In the Ministry's response they wrote:

"The four major credits in the SHSM bundle are meant to intensify the students' knowledge, skills and experiences in the sector that they are pursuing. There is a balance here between technical skills and "soft skills" that relate to relationship building, conflict resolution and problem solving. World Religion HRT3M or HRF30 are acceptable

credits to offer as one of the major credits in the Health and Wellness S H S M b u n d l e . Students who will be working with people of diverse backgrounds will have an advantage if they have had some exposure to the values and belief systems of their clients. These courses will support the acquisition of knowledge and relationship-based skills. They are a part of the Ontario curriculum, and they will be a part of a 4 course bundle that gives a balanced experience to students in the Health and Wellness SHSM."

The Ministry's decision to accept these courses has had a significant impact provincially. Now all Catholic Boards can use these courses in the SHSM Health and Wellness.

For more information on the Specialist High Skills Major Program contact your school's Student Services Department.