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High School and Beyond: *A Family Perspective*



Windsor-Essex Family Network

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INCLUSION ACTION IN ONTARIO



Foreword



High School and Beyond: A Family Perspective - Windsor-Essex Family Network, 2024

In her article, *Changing the Way We Think**, Janice Fialka talks about working from ‘the least dangerous assumption’ when it comes to students with disabilities. Such an assumption starts with the belief that students can learn, communicate and grow, just in different ways. We assume competence and teach students with disabilities knowing they can and will learn.

When we plan for the future with our sons and daughters, we realize that high school is an important bridge to a meaningful and productive life in the community. High school years are a crucial time for our sons/daughters as they move into adulthood. It is the time to discover interests, to build relationships, develop networks in the community and/or find their niche in order to prepare for the future. The perfect opportunity or learning environment may or may not be out there. We may have to get creative in finding what works best for our sons and daughters keeping in mind that they are going to learn in their own unique way.

This high school resource was created from a family perspective. A complimentary booklet, called *Student & Family Stories*, shows different pathways students have taken in high school and post-secondary. We have tried to inform, simplify and provide clarifications on Ministry of Education guidelines as well as high school information from the two English school boards in our community**.

We have added information and resources for after high school including options for mature students, post-secondary learning, and job training as high school is not the end. Families have found that having this type of information is helpful when high school preparation and planning begins. We are hopeful that students and their families will be encouraged as they see possibilities for inclusion in both learning and living their life.

As you go through this document, you will find family tips highlighted and information families find important to note. We hope this resource will be informative and inspirational during this overwhelming, yet important time of life.

“The time is right to make sure ‘All children - including those with disabilities - are our future.’”

Revolutionary Common Sense, by Kathie Snow

Windsor-Essex Family Network Team

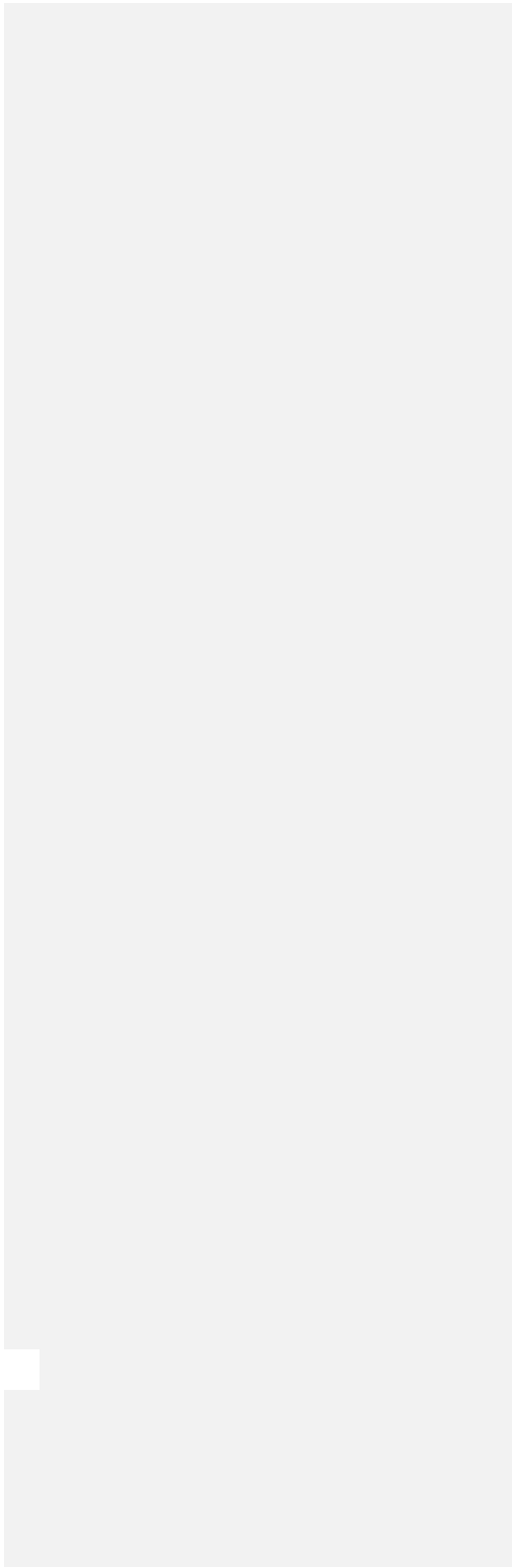
* *Changing the Way We Think*, <https://www.danceofpartnership.com/ChangingtheWayWeThink011907.pdf>
* *Beyond High School: College and More!* <https://www.disabilityisnatural.com/beyond-high-school.html>



Section One

Preparation and Planning for High School





Getting Ready for High School: Ideas from Families

Starting Early

Families have found that it helps to start thinking about high school when their son/daughter is in Grade 7 – especially if they will be changing school boards. Deciding which school board will best meet the needs of your child is an important first step. Meetings with your team and a Special Education Coordinator sometimes begin in December. Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meetings for high school transition are generally held by January/February of the Grade 8 year. There are factors to consider when deciding on a school, these are a few:

- Different schools offer different electives
- Transportation

TIP!

Start early to ensure you have all the information you need.

Visiting Your Neighbourhood School

Open houses are typically held in November and December. Check your board/school websites for dates. Open houses are an opportunity to tour the schools you are interested in with your child, meet with the staff and get an idea of how courses are laid out. Be sure you check out the supports that are available. If for any reason you miss the open house, call the school to arrange a way for your child to learn about the school. Once a school is chosen, you will want to know when they have their Grade Nine Orientation. Your home school may also offer a day where students can shadow a senior to see a typical school day or call to arrange this.

TIP!

At general tours or open houses, you may not get answers to the specific questions you have. It is a good idea to make an appointment with the Guidance Department or Learning Support Teachers at your local high school to have your questions answered and to plan pathways that will be best for your child. Some specific programs, (e.g., Creative Arts or STEM), have additional and earlier open houses. Please check your student's high school website for more information and specifics.



Connecting with Other Families

It helps to connect with other families whose child is already at the school you are considering. They can provide insight into how their child is supported in the school, how they solve problems and how they communicate. When families share strategies and tips for success, it helps others find clarity when making decisions. Sometimes families contact Windsor-Essex Family Network to connect with a family that can share information about high school.

Links to Local High School Transition Information

Below you will find links to information about transitioning to high school for students in Grade 8, from the two English school Boards

- Grade 8 to 9 Transition (information)
Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB)
<https://www.publicboard.ca/en/our-schools/grade-8-to-9-transition.aspx>
- *Getting Ready for Grade 9* (guide)
Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board
Check out the [Getting Ready for Grade 9 Booklet here](#)

https://www.wecdsb.on.ca/students/getting_ready_for_high_school/special_education_in_high_school

Things to Keep in Mind

Choosing School Boards

In high school, students have a choice attending the Greater Essex County District School Board (Public) or the Windsor Essex Catholic District School Board (Catholic) regardless of:

- where the student attended elementary school;
- which high school a sibling or siblings are attending;
- which elementary school a sibling(s) is attending; or
- where your taxes are directed.

For example, it is possible for a family to have one child in a Public elementary school, one child in a Catholic high school and another child in a Public high school.



How Long Can a Student Stay in School?

Your son/daughter can start high school the year they turn 14 years of age. Students who have a developmental/intellectual disability can stay in high school until the year they reach 21 years of age as set out by the Ministry of Education in *Special Education: A Guide for Educators*, under Section A11. (“A person is qualified to be a resident pupil of a board for elementary school purposes from the ages specified in the Education Act (sections 33 and 34) until the age of 21.”)

It is important to remember that the date your son/daughter must complete high school is based on the calendar year they turn 21. If the student is 20 years old in September and their 21st birthday is between September and December, they may not register and are no longer eligible to attend high school. However, if the student is 20 years old in September and their 21st birthday is after January 1, they can complete that school year.

Example:

It is June 1, 2024. John and Sarah are 20 years old and attending high school.

- John will turn 21 in October 2024. Since his birthday falls between September and December of 2024, he cannot register for the school year commencing in September 2024. He must leave in June 2024.
- Sarah turns 21 in January 2025. Since her 21st birthday is in the following calendar year, she can return to school in September of 2024 and leave in June 2025.
- Even though John and Sarah are only 3 months apart in age, the date they would finish high school varies because they will turn 21 in different calendar years (*as per Ministry guidelines students must have completed high school in the year they turn 21 – see above*).

TIP!

Talk to your Guidance Counsellor so that you have a clear understanding as to which year your son or daughter will be finished high school.



What about the '34 Credit Threshold'?

The Ministry of Education encourages students to complete their 30 credits in four years whenever possible. After a student achieves 34 credits, the school boards will receive reduced funding for that student. If a student still wishes to return to school after achieving 34 credits, it is best to check with the guidance counsellor to ensure the student will be permitted to do so.

NOTE: The Ministry of Education will make exemptions to the 34-credit threshold for students who need to take more credits. Funding for schools will not change for:

- Students with special education needs who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Students enrolled in their first four years of secondary school who earn more than 34 credits. If these students return for a fifth year, boards will receive funding at the continuing education rate for courses above the threshold.
- Credit courses in English as a Second Language, English Literacy Development, *Actualisation linguistique en français* and *Programme d'appui aux nouveaux arrivants*. The other credit courses a student successfully completes will count toward the 34-credit threshold.

See the Ministry of Education website for more information:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/students/faqs.html>



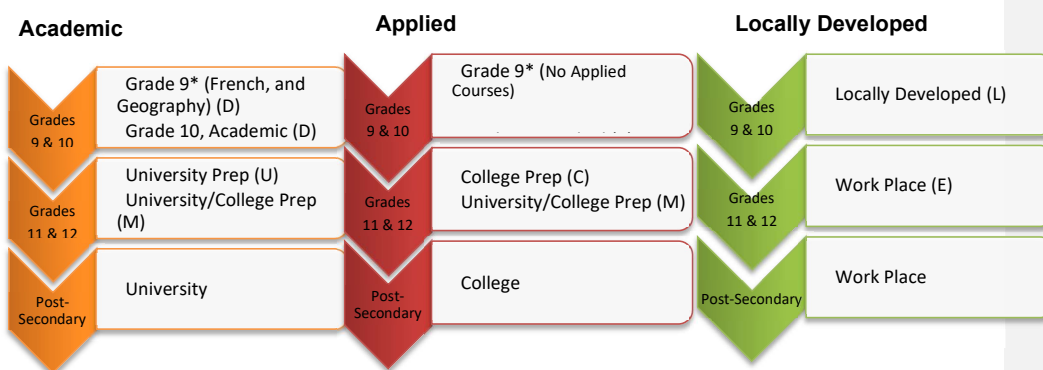
Ministry of Education Course Options

Families often express difficulty with understanding what course codes and options mean. We have tried to put this information in plain language as a starting point for planning your son/daughter's high school education. We would strongly encourage all families to get assistance from the learning support teachers (LST or LSST) from the high school at their student's Grade 8 to 9 transition meeting in order to truly understand the differences between the pathways.

Ministry of Education Pathways

The Ministry has historically defined three main streams for students in high school: Academic, Applied and Locally Developed. Over the last 3 years De-streamed courses have been put in place for Grade 9 Math, Science and ~~just this year, for~~ English. De-streaming means that students are no longer separated into Academic and Applied courses in Grade 9.

De-streamed - Grade 9 Math, Science, English (W)



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Commented [2R1]: yes still correct to my knowledge

More about De-streaming Grade 9 courses in 2023:

- **Grade 9 Math, Science and English are De-streamed Courses** (code W).
- The purpose of de-streaming is to provide all students with the same learning experience and help prepare students for a wide variety of career pathways.
- French and Geography are still offered as Academic Courses.
- Grade 9 courses are listed as either Academic, De-streamed or Locally Developed for the 2023-24 year, (and there are also Open courses).



If your student has a goal in mind, seek the help of guidance and/or talk to the teachers. Choosing and taking courses can be more fluid than it appears. For example, students taking some Locally Developed courses have gone to college. Students doing some Applied courses have gone to university in the past. Working to your student's goal and communicating with the school is very important.

TIP!

Families have worked with their schools to tailor their son or daughter's pathway. Students have taken courses in different streams when it has been appropriate for them. For example, if a student is well versed in Language but is behind a couple of grades in Math, they can ask to take an Academic or Applied course in Language and Locally Developed course in Math. Students can change a great deal from year to year. Parents say connecting at the end of the school year with the high school is critical to choosing courses as strengths, needs and interests change.

Understanding Ministry Course Codes

The first 3 letters of the course code refer to the subject. For example:

ENL - English
SNC - Science

The numbers in the middle of course codes (1-4) refer to the year of study:

1 - Grade 9
2 - Grade 10
3 - Grade 11
4 - Grade 12

Course types are identified by the letter at the end.

- *Grade 9 courses fall under these types:*
 - W - De-streamed (Math, Science, English)
 - D - Academic (French, Geography)
 - L - Locally developed (English, Geography, etc.)
 - O - Open
- *Grade 10 courses fall under these types*
 - D - Academic
 - P - Applied
 - L - Locally developed
 - O - Open



- *Grade 11 and 12 courses are generally offered as:*

U - University Prep
M - University/College Prep
C - College Prep
E - Work Place

Interpreting Course Codes

Using the definitions above, one can interpret the course codes. For example:

MTH1W - Grade 9 Math De-streamed course
SNC1W - Grade 9 Science De-streamed course
ENL1W - Grade 9 English De-streamed course
AVI2O - Grade 10 Visual Arts Open course
MDM4U - Grade 12 Math Data Management University prep course

Making Sense of the Course Codes

Core courses such as English, French, Math, Science, Canadian Geography and Canadian History have been historically offered in the Academic and Applied streams. For the De-streamed courses introduced in Grade 9, the Academic and Applied will be combined with a goal to modernize the education curriculum to ensure all students have the foundational and transferable skills they need in a rapidly changing world.

'Locally Developed' courses (LD) are sometimes referred to as 'Locally Developed Compulsory Credit' courses (LDCC). These are offered for students who are on a modified curriculum in elementary grades. They are typically offered in English and Math. Some schools offer them for Science as well.

Open courses 'O' are courses such as art, technology, music and physical education. These are often referred to as 'Elective' courses.

What are Credit and Non-Credit Courses?

Credit courses are courses that a student can take to earn credits toward a diploma or certificate. 'Knowledge' courses or 'K courses' are courses that do not earn credits.



TIPS!

Some families tell us that their sons or daughters have tried 'LD' (Locally Developed) courses even though they were recommended for 'K' (Knowledge) courses. This has given them the opportunity to earn a credit, and at times they have successfully done so.

About the MAPS Program

The MAPS program, *My Achievement Pathway to Success*, is currently offered at: North Star High School (Amherstburg), Westview Freedom Academy (Windsor) and Leamington District Secondary School (Leamington) in the Greater Essex County District School Board.

The course codes for these courses end in the letter 'X'. They are for credit and are at a lower grade level than Locally Developed (L) courses. Students who take courses in the MAPS program generally earn a Certificate. Some families and their students have been told that they can apply these credits toward a diploma if a student is taking a majority of Locally Developed courses. Some students discover they would like to work toward their diploma once they are finished the MAPS program.

To learn more about this program, you can download the *Parent Guide to MAPS* at this link: <https://www.publicboard.ca/en/programs-and-learning/resources/Documents/Special-Education-Resource-Documents/Parent-Guide-to-MAPS.pdf>

Communication with your high school

Families registered with the public board can log in to Edsby daily to see assignments, due dates, announcements, etc. Almost all communication to parents now goes through Edsby or cynervoice (voice recording home).

Families with the catholic board can use 'mytools2go' to get their information and communicate with their student's school.

Commented [3]: Is it offered anywhere else? Just want to make sure no additions since last year

Commented [4R3]: I believe they have added more.....Jen would know....want me to keep a list of stuff to ask her or has she already checked it?



Finishing High School: Learning Recognition and Graduation

To officially “graduate” by the Ministry of Education standards, secondary students will need to achieve an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).



Other students may obtain learning recognition with either an Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC) or a Certificate of Accomplishment (COA).

About the Ontario Secondary School Certificate and the Certificate of Accomplishment

The following excerpts were taken from a document entitled *Questions and Answers Parents May Have Regarding Special Education*, intended to provide general information regarding special education programs and services. Other types of learning recognition besides a diploma are described below:

1/ “The Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC) will be granted upon request by the student or their parent in the event that the student leaves school before achieving an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). The condition of granting the OSSC requires a student to have earned a minimum of 14 credits; 7 of which are compulsory credits and 7 of which are optional.”

2/ “Students who leave school before fulfilling the requirements for the OSSD or the OSSC may be granted a Certificate of Accomplishment (COA). The Principal may grant the COA upon request from the parent or student. The Certificate of Accomplishment may be a useful means of recognizing achievement for students who plan to take certain vocational programs, further training, or for those who plan to seek employment after leaving school.”



About the Ontario Secondary School Diploma

To earn a high school diploma in Ontario, students must:

- earn a minimum of 30 credits,
 - 18 compulsory credits
 - 12 optional credits
- pass the secondary school literacy requirement*,
- earn at least 2 on-line learning credits, and
- complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement activities.



*The literacy requirement means passing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) or the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC).

Here is a link to the Ministry of Education's high school graduation requirements
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/high-school-graduation-requirements>

TIP!

The Ministry of Education states in the *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Program Requirements K-12* document, that the Principal can authorize substitutions for compulsory credit courses to meet the needs and learning interests for students with exceptionalities.

For example, families have found that French exempt students are able to take Guidance courses such as General Learning Strategies/General Learning Expectations (GLE/GLS) courses to enhance their learning and organizational skills, and to get additional learning supports. This course can replace the compulsory French credit.

Completing 40 Hours of Community Involvement

In order to graduate with a diploma, students are required to complete 40 hours of volunteering in the community. This is a great opportunity to get creative with your son/daughter and look for ideas for them to get involved in the community. It is also a natural learning opportunity as they start taking responsibility, learn the discipline of starting and finishing work that is assigned to them, connect with people outside their familiar circle, and adapt to new surroundings. Students, families, and community organizations can contact their secondary school's Guidance department for more information on community involvement opportunities.



Note: Principals have discretion with eligible community involvement hours which could include, as examples: walking a younger neighbour or sibling to and from school, helping younger siblings with their homework; activities that include up to 10 hours of paid work, with the requirement to complete a reflection exercise indicating how their work contributed to service for others; activities that consist of duties normally performed at home - students helping an elderly relative with errands, or providing after-school care for a sibling

Ideas for Volunteering & Community Involvement

Below are some ideas for obtaining volunteer hours and getting involved in the community that have been shared by different families in the past (prior to the pandemic.) Your high school guidance office may also know of opportunities that have come forward from the community for volunteering. Your child's school may say that they do not need volunteer hours if they are not working towards a diploma but volunteering is a great experience for everyone and families have shared how much their child has gained from doing so. Family ideas follow:

- Helping seniors in the neighbourhood with yard work, recycling, cleaning, shopping, or taking care of their pet is a great option. It is also a chance to build relationships in your own neighbourhood.
- Non-profit organizations are great places to get volunteer hours. Students can help with office work like putting packages together, shredding, and cleaning.
- Contacting your elementary school may be another option as your son/daughter is already familiar with the environment. They may be able to help in the school library, after school sports activities and other events.
- Getting involved in high school clubs and charity events as a volunteer is another great way to make friends and accumulate hours.
- Local churches or your religious organization may have volunteer opportunities.
- If students have particular interests or passions, consider helping them pursue fresh ideas. If your son loves animals, contact your local humane society. If your daughter loves Lego, perhaps she could make a Lego display at the

Commented [5]: I think we need more focus on volunteering & activities outside the regular school day



library. If your child likes music, see if he/she can help at concerts in the local high school or elementary school.

- Community centres are good places to volunteer as they run summer camps and after school activities.



Volunteer Opportunities in Windsor and Essex County

Workforce WindsorEssex has a webpage that provides good information about various volunteer opportunities. Workforce WindsorEssex is a skills, database and employment resource for Windsor and Essex County. It contributes to the community by posting volunteer opportunities on their site.

Go to the link below, once on the page keep scrolling down to see the different organizations and opportunities for volunteering in Windsor and Essex County. Whether you are looking to obtain your necessary community service hours for school, want to get more involved in the community, or are looking to gain some experience while looking for a job, check this link for local volunteer opportunities.

<https://www.workforcewindsor-essex.com/volunteer/>

TIPS!

Some students and their families have found putting up a flyer in the neighbourhood which highlights skills and talents can lead to opportunities.

Students looking to volunteer can also create a resume and/or make some business cards that show their interests and strengths.

If your son or daughter needs extra assistance, perhaps a support worker could help facilitate their involvement in the community as a volunteer. He/she could help with applying for positions, accompanying the student to a new environment, learning the role and supporting them with their volunteer work.



Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)

To obtain an Ontario Secondary School Diploma, one of the compulsory requirements is to pass the Grade 10 literacy test (Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test - OSSLT) or the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC).

The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) website is a good resource for preparing for the test. This website has practice tests and sample answers to help prepare for the test: www.eqao.com



Below is a link from this site to frequently asked questions:
<https://www.eqao.com/frequently-asked-questions/>

Below is the link to the 2023 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test Framework
<https://www.eqao.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/framework-osslt.pdf>

Permitted accommodations for the OSSLT (from EQAO site)
<https://eqao-kb-osslt.lswp.vretta.com/knowledge-base/accommodations-and-exemptions/#permitted-accommodations-for-the-osslt>

Questions from Families about the 'Literacy Test'

Below you will find questions families have asked Windsor-Essex Family Network about the 'literacy test'. We have answered with information taken directly from Ministry documents like: *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Program Requirements*, 2016. A hard copy of this document is available from the lending library at Family Network. It is also available on-line at the following link:

<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-ontario-schools-policy-programs-2016-en-2022-01-19.pdf>

Please note there is up-to-date information on the EQAO and Ministry of Education websites which should be considered as well. See the EQAO links above.

1. What grade level is the literacy test?

"The requirement is based on the expectations for reading and writing throughout the Ontario curriculum up to and including Grade 9 . . . To meet this requirement, students are expected to take and successfully complete the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) in Grade 10 . . ."

(Section 6.1.3 – Ontario Program & Policy Requirements K-12, 2016)



2. Can students retake the test if they do not succeed? How many times are they allowed to write it?

“Students who do not successfully complete the literacy test will have opportunities to retake the test in subsequent years, on dates scheduled by the EQAO.”
(Section 6.1.3.1 – Ontario Program & Policy Requirements K-12, 2016)

3. What happens if my son/daughter does not pass the test?

“School boards are required to provide remedial assistance for students who do not complete the test successfully. This remedial assistance should be designed to help students improve their skills so that they are better prepared to retake the literacy test.”
(Section 6.1.3.1 – Ontario Program & Policy Requirements K-12, 2016)

4. Can assistive technology be used for the test? What other accommodations are allowed for the test?

“For students with special education needs, accommodations specified in the student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be available on the day of the test.”
(Section 6.1.3.1 – Ontario Program & Policy Requirements K-12, 2016)

5. Will the literacy test be modified for students with exceptional needs?

“Accommodations change only the way in which the OSSLT is administered or the OSSLC is taught, or the way in which the student responds to the components of the test or the course. They do not alter the content of the test or the expectations of the course or affect the validity or reliability of the test or the evaluation of student learning in the course.”
(Appendix 3, Section 1 – Ontario Program & Policy Requirements K-12, 2016)

6. What is the Ontario Secondary School Literacy course? (OSSLC)

“The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course has been developed to provide students who have been unsuccessful on the test with intensive support in achieving the required reading and writing competencies, and with an alternative means of demonstrating their literacy skills.”

(Ministry of Education curriculum document
Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC), Grade 12 – 2003, Page 3)

Note: Full text of the Ministry’s curriculum document can be found at the link below.

Please note that new English curriculum for 2023 has led to some changes.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/english12curr.pdf>



7. Does the literacy test have to be written again after completing the course to meet literacy requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)?

“Students who pass the course are considered to have met the literacy requirement.” (Section 6.1.3.2 – Ontario Program & Policy Requirements K-12, 2016)

8. When can the literacy course be taken?

“If a student has had two opportunities to take the OSSLT and has failed it at least once, the student is eligible to enrol in the OSSLC. Principals have the discretion to allow a student to enrol in the OSSLC before he or she has had a second opportunity to take the OSSLT” . . . if deemed in the student’s best interest.

(Section 6.1.3.2 – Ontario Program & Policy requirements K-12, 2016)

9. Can a student earn credits for passing the literacy course?

“The credit earned for successful completion of the OSSLC may be used to meet either the Grade 12 English compulsory credit requirement or the Group 1 additional compulsory credit requirement . . .”

(Ministry of Education curriculum document
Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC), Grade 12 – 2003, Page 3)

10. What option do we have if our son/daughter attains all the graduation requirements but does not pass the literacy test?

“School boards may establish adjudication panels at the end of the school year to provide students with an additional opportunity to meet the literacy graduation requirement . . .”

Students who are otherwise eligible to graduate in June of a given school year are eligible for adjudication to obtain their graduation literacy requirement if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- *The student was never able to write the test because of illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstances.*
- *The student was eligible to enroll in the OSSLC, but the student’s school did not offer it or make arrangements for the student to take it in another school.*
- *The student was enrolled in the literacy course but, as a result of illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstances, was not able to complete the course.*
- *The student was receiving special education programs and/or services and had an IEP documenting required accommodations when taking the OSSLT.*

(Accommodations must be in accordance with those outlined in Appendix 3,



Section 1, under subheading “Permitted Accommodations”.) In that school year or in the previous school year, the student was present to take the test, but, because of unforeseen circumstances, the required accommodations, or a reasonable alternative to them, were not available to the student on the day the OSSLT was administered during the whole test or part of the test.”

(Section 6.1.3.3 – Ontario Program & Policy requirements K-12, 2016)

TIP!

The school may ask your son or daughter to defer writing the literacy test in Grade 10. When the test can be the cause of great anxiety, your student’s teacher may talk to you about the best way to be supportive and avoid writing the test more than once.

Some families have found, however, that it may be best for their student to write the OSSLT in Grade 10, even if they don’t appear ready, and *not* get a deferral. This way, if they are unable to pass the first time, they can request for remediation assistance as per the Ministry guidelines and write it again.

Knowing your student and communicating with the school are important factors in these decisions – all very individual.

Note: If, by graduation, the student does not pass the literacy test or the literacy course, they cannot fulfill the literacy requirement for the diploma.



Section Two

Family Tips and Resources





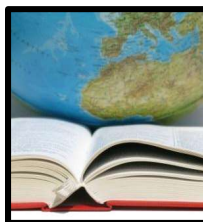
What Families Want You to Know

Educational Information - While in High School

Common Questions from Families

What if we don't agree with my child's placement in high school?

Under Regulation 181/98, at the end of the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process if a family is in disagreement with the exceptionality and/or the placement, they can give written notification of their intention to appeal the decision to the secretary of the board. Bear in mind though, while you can appeal for changing the placement, you cannot appeal to change the programming that has been recommended.



Does a student's elementary Individual Education Plan (IEP) affect what could happen in high school?

It is important to remember that your son/daughter's Individual Education Plan (IEP) expectations in elementary school (meaning, their individual program) often dictates high school placement. Therefore, if you have questions about your son/daughter's program in elementary school, get back to the table with your school team and work on the IEP expectations. For example: if your son/daughter is working on *alternate expectations* on their IEP in elementary school, be aware that those are not from the Ontario curriculum. This may lead to your son/daughter not being able to take credit courses in high school.

How can we apply for my child to attend high school outside of our boundaries?

The Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB) provides services and supports using the home school model. "Home school is defined as the school within the boundaries of the district in which the Student resides" (from *GECDSB Special Education Plan 2020*). There is an 'out of boundary' application process but families have been told that acceptance is not guaranteed. The application is generally available early January. Contact your elementary school in December to let them



know that you will be applying for a high school out of district and to receive the application form.

The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board has an out of boundary request form through which you can request to attend an out of boundary school. They generally ask for valid reasons to support your request. The application form is available online on their website or you can contact your school to get one. It also involves the question, “Does your child have any special needs?” and to explain. Start this process early as it takes time to get the decision.

Notes: Keep in mind that transportation will not be provided for a school that is out of boundary in either school board. Families have found that they have to actively follow-up on the out of boundary application status to get an answer in a timely fashion.

Online Learning is Available to Earn Credits

High School Students are required to earn at least two credits through online learning to graduate.

Some may want to do more. This type of learning can benefit students who: need courses that are not offered at their high school; want to get extra credits during summer or after school hours; are tactile defensive and may benefit

from virtual labs; or may be on a modified school day. Prior to the pandemic there were always some ‘E-learning courses’ available for the tech-savvy high school student. There are more such courses available now. To find out about current online learning courses you could speak with your Guidance Department.

TIPS!

Students should connect with the school to get approval to get a credit for completing an online course. Work with the Guidance Department at your school to sign up.
Note: There may be costs for registering for an online course.



Co-operative Education (Co-op), What is it?

- Co-op is a work placement arranged by your school so your son/daughter can explore careers. Students can earn credits while completing their co-op placement. There is no limit to the number of credits earned through co-op, but a student must have earned the first 16 credits before application. This means all Grade 9 and 10 Compulsory credits plus electives must be completed first. More



TIP!

'Co-op' programs are designed to help student earn credits. 'Work experience' programs do not usually result in a credit. Check with the Guidance Department to be clear which program your son or daughter is enrolled in.

information can be found on the *Cooperative Education* fact sheet and on the website link below:

<https://windsor-essexfamilynet.files.wordpress.com/2022/11/cooperative-education-fact-sheet.pdf>

What is Cooperative Education for High School Students? (Website)

<https://settlement.org/ontario/education/elementary-and-secondary-school/school-systems-in-ontario/what-is-cooperative-education-for-high-school-students/>

Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)

Through OYAP, full-time students who are 16 years of age and who have completed 16 credits towards their Ontario Secondary School Diploma have an opportunity to get on-the-job-training (apprenticeship) in a skilled trade of their choice. While they train, they can earn credits for their diploma.

- For information about opportunities in high school, go to <https://oyap.com/>
- For frequently asked questions go to: <https://oyap.com/myths-faq/>

Take a look at this great poster called *Apprenticeship in Ontario*:

<https://oyap.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Trades-Posters.pdf>

For trades available at your school board, contact the Guidance Department at your high school. Below are examples of some apprenticeship programs offered locally.

Construction Academy – Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board (WECDSB)

An example of an OYAP program: The WECDSB offers a Construction Academy in partnership with Habitat for Humanity and other community partners. This is a unique program that provides students with apprenticeship and employment opportunities in the construction industry while providing employers with a new



source of workers to address skills shortages. Participating students are given the opportunity to start their apprenticeship while in high school through the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) and gain real on the job experience. This two-year program is available to all WECDSB students but delivered at three WECDSB schools: F. J. Brennan Catholic High School (Masonry), Catholic Central High School (Electrical) and St. Joseph's Catholic High School (Carpentry & Plumbing).

Check out the link below to learn more:

<https://www.wecdsb.on.ca/programs/skilledtrades/construction>

Opportunities at the Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB)

The Greater Essex County District School Board offers a variety of different opportunities for students interested in the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) at different schools. Some examples: Auto Service, Auto Body, Cook/Assistant Cook, Hairstyling, and Precision Metal Cutting. Students can check this out ahead on-line and/or to talk with their High School Guidance Counsellor.

To get connected and learn more use the following link:

<https://www.publicboard.ca/Programs/Student-Success/Programs/Apprenticeship-OYAP/Pages/default.aspx>

Dual Credits:

Earning credits at high school and college at the same time

This is a Ministry of Education program by which a secondary school student can take a college course and have it count toward both their high school diploma and a college credit. Contact the Guidance Department at your school to find out about dual credit courses that can be taken at St. Clair College and to check student eligibility. Below are helpful resources with excellent information:

Dual Credit Programs (Fact Sheet)

<https://windsor-essexfamilynet.files.wordpress.com/2022/11/dualcredits.pdf>

Dual Credit School College Work Initiative (Website)

<http://www.gotocollege.ca/index.html>



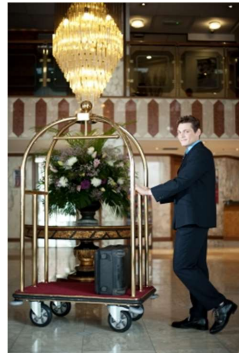
Dual Credit Programs (Government Webpage)
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/dual-credit-programs>

Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM)

Students can choose a bundle of 8-10 courses in their chosen field and earn a Specialist High Skills Major seal in their Diploma. For example, Business, Agriculture, Health & Wellness, Non-Profit, and Hospitality & Tourism are some of the fields that can be chosen.

Further information can be found at this government webpage:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/specialist-high-skills-major>



Specialist High School Major (Fact Sheet)

<https://windsorsexfamilynet.files.wordpress.com/2022/11/specialist-high-skills-major-fact-sheet.pdf>

Supervised Alternative Learning Program (SAL)

According to the Ministry of Education, *Supervised Alternative Learning Program (SAL)* consists of programs that are intended to re-engage young people between the ages of 14-17 years old who are not attending school and are, therefore, at risk for not graduating. For more information regarding the SAL program offered through your local school board, contact your school Principal or Guidance Counsellor.

The *Supervised Alternative Learning Policy and Implementation* document can be found on the Ministry of Education's website at:

<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-supervised-alternative-learning-policy-implementation-2010-en-2022-01-04.pdf>



Other Information and Planning: Life is more than School

Part-time Work for High School Students - Where to Get Help

At age 16, students who have a disability may be able to receive assistance obtaining a part-time job through the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)-Employment Supports. This requires filling out an application in advance to determine eligibility. Call the local office (Windsor) of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services at 519-254-1651 to ask for an application package.

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Be specific that you are requesting an application for Employment Supports so that your teenager can receive assistance to obtain a part-time job. This program is not commonly used for 16- and 17-year-old youth with disabilities, so it will be important to be specific about what you are requesting. (Please be aware that youth with disabilities cannot apply for the regular Ontario Disability Support Program for Income supports until they are approaching 18). There is a 'Verification of Disability' form that is a part of the application that has to be filled out by a medical professional. For more information check out the following website:

http://www.mcscs.gov.on.ca/en/mcscs/programs/social/odsp/employment_support/

Note: One family shared they were asked to provide a psychological assessment along with their application, but it did not have to be recent. Be ready and have the assessment handy.

Disability Specific Support Organizations

You may want to connect with local support organizations specific to your student's disability. They may be able to provide you with resources, ideas and/or support for high school and beyond.



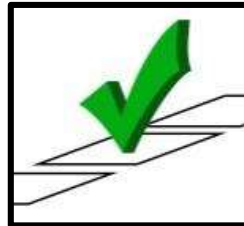
A few disability-specific organizations in Windsor and Essex County include:

- Autism Ontario, W-E Chapter: www.autismontario.com/chapters/windsor-essex



- Autism Services Inc.: <https://autismservicesinc.com/>
- Brain Injury Association of Windsor & Essex County: <http://www.biawe.com/>
- Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex County: www.ldawe.ca
- Parents for Children's Mental Health (PCMH), Email: Windsor@pcmh.ca
- Up About Down: www.upaboutdown.org

Transition Planning Protocols for Youth with Developmental Disabilities



The Ministries of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), and Education have partnered with agencies and others in Windsor and Essex County to develop ways to assist youth who have developmental disabilities with planning.

Various approaches to support planning during the high school years have been developed:

- **Transition Information:** Information identified to assist students (from the age of 14) and their families is contained in a resource package/transition Binder that is available at each of the secondary schools in Windsor-Essex. Contact the Resource Teacher/Learning Support Teacher at your local high school to ask for a binder or contact Windsor-Essex Brokerage for Personal Supports.
- **Website:** A website is available to assist students and their families with planning. This site called: *Transition Planning Windsor-Essex for Youths with Developmental Disabilities* can be found at the following address: <http://transitionplanningwindsor-essex.ca/>
- **Planning Steps** to prepare ahead for supports as an adult have been outlined for students under the age of 17 and at 17.5 years of age. These steps for applying are explained on the transition planning website at the following web address: <https://planyourtransition.com/planning-steps/>
- **Youth Transition Planning and Facilitation:** Windsor-Essex Brokerage for Personal Supports (Brokerage) leads a local initiative in Windsor-Essex that involves working with up to 10 youth/families each school year. High school students between the ages of 13 & 18, along with their families, interested in



doing some additional planning to work toward a meaningful life of inclusion, involvement and contribution can call 'Brokerage' at 519-966-8094. For more information, visit: <https://webps.ca/youth-transition-planning/>

What Families Want You to Know about Special Services at Home Funding

At 18 years of age students living with a developmental disability will be abruptly cut off Special Services at Home (SSAH) funding. Understanding the process of applying for adult support funding from a family perspective has been helpful to families. Below are a few things to consider:

- **Be proactive:** One of the first things families can do once their student turns 16 years of age is provide the Developmental Services Ontario (DSO)-South West Region office with a psychological assessment. This is to find out whether the eligibility criteria required for having a developmental disability under current legislation is met. If you get told that a new psychological assessment is needed, there will be time to do this.
- **Make an appointment at 17.5 years of age:** Once your student is 17.5 years old, if deemed eligible for adult developmental services through the DSO, the application process for support funding like Passport can begin. Schedule an appointment ahead of time with the DSO. Call the DSO-South West Region toll free: 1-855-437-6797.
- **Learn about independent facilitation & planning:** Paid supports/support workers are important for many people who needs this, but it is not always enough. Students/young adults and their families who have experienced *independent facilitation and planning*, say this support has been invaluable. It has helped to: strengthen the voice and choices of their student/adult, build relationships and networks of support*, explore community connections, and personal interests. Independent facilitation/person-directed planning for adults must be requested during the DSO application process. The person would then go on a wait list. Independent facilitation for students 18-21, and beyond, is provided through Windsor-Essex Brokerage for Personal Supports (Brokerage). <https://webps.ca/>

**Networks of Support are about the presence of friends, family and others in our lives, the important relationships we have built in our neighbourhood and community; those who care about our well-being, happiness and the quality of our lives."*

Quote adapted from *Relationships, Support Circles, Networks of Support*, a My Home My Choice Resource document.



- **Passport Program:** This program provides direct funding to help adults living with a developmental disability participate more fully in their communities. Starting in 2018-2019 the government announced that every eligible adult with a developmental disability would receive \$5,000 a year of direct funding through the Passport program. This was increased to \$5,500 in 2022/2023. Many people and families have said this has not been enough funding for support, and that they are on a waiting list to receive the additional funds. Most say the wait is very long.
 - Applying for Passport funding: <https://www.dsontario.ca/how-to-access-services>
 - More about Passport: <https://passportfunding.ca/>

Transition to Adulthood, John McGivney Children’s Centre

JMCC offers a variety of supports to youth and their families transitioning from paediatric rehabilitation services and supports to adult services. Youth and families wanting information on what services are available at age 18 are encouraged to speak with their child’s clinician OR contact the Centre to speak with a social worker. For more information go to: <https://jmccentre.ca/transition-to-adulthood>.

After High School: Continuing Life & Learning

For students wanting to get credits after leaving high school

Alternative and Adult Learning: School boards offer continuing education options for adult students and mature students (students who have been out of school for a year and are over age 18). The Ministry of Education has stipulated that school boards must also have a process to recognize any learning that has taken place independent of the Ontario school system; this process is called PLAR.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students, offers adult learners an opportunity to earn secondary school credit equivalencies for their relevant education, employment and life experience. This is also a way to obtain credits for independent learning and or any workplace related learning. This process allows students to earn high school credits and bridge any gaps before heading to post-secondary education or the workplace. Check this website out to learn more: <https://cesba.com/programs/plar-for-mature-students/>



For information and or links to learn what some of the local school boards offer:

- <https://www.publicboard.ca/en/programs-and-learning/prior-learning-assessment-and-recognition.aspx>
- <https://www.wecdsb.on.ca/schools/stmichaels>

For students with a developmental disability who have achieved the Ontario Secondary School Diploma, the Ontario Secondary School Certificate (or equivalent), or who have Mature Student Status

Community Integration through Co-operative Education (CICE)

CICE is a two-year Ontario College Certificate program designed to provide students with developmental disabilities and other significant learning challenges with the opportunity to experience college life, pursue a post-secondary education and develop skills which will help them prepare for employment. To learn more about the program go to:



<https://www.stclaircollege.ca/programs/community-integration-through-cooperative-education>

For students leaving high school with their Ontario Secondary School Diploma who are needing to upgrade

Academic and Career Entrance (A.C.E.)

This program is perfect for people who need the admission requirements to apply to a college program, to upgrade their workplace skills, or begin apprenticeship training. These courses are at a high school level of difficulty and are used for entry to a college program. If you do not have a high school diploma or you completed high school some time ago and need to refresh your skills, this free program can help you achieve your career goals. There are no tuition or text book costs. For more information, visit:

<https://www.stclaircollege.ca/programs/ace-academic-career-entrance>



For students who are planning to attend College or University and who need accommodations to support their education

Accessibility Services

All post-secondary schools in Ontario (colleges and universities) are funded to have offices/services for students with disabilities. These offices provide a range of services that support students with disabilities. Services and accommodations are established on an individual basis and are based on the documentation of the student's disability. Some common requirements for documentation are:

- **Learning disabilities:** a recent psychoeducational assessment (conducted within the last 3-5 years)
- **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):** a diagnosis by a psychologist, psychiatrist, or physician with appropriate training in neuropsychological disorders
- **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD):** a medical form or letter from a qualified specialist or a psycho-educational assessment
- **Physical and medical disabilities, and mental health disorders:** a medical form or letter from a qualified specialist indicating the student's diagnosis, limitations, and recommendations for academic accommodations
- **Deaf or hard-of-hearing:** an audiologist report
- **Blind or low vision:** CNIB registration number

The information above and much more is available online at the following address:
<https://www.transitionresourceguide.ca/learn-about-accessibility/accessibility-services>

St. Clair College of Applied Arts and Technology

Support and services to all students with disabilities (physical, medical, learning and/ or psychological) **who provide appropriate documentation** is provided through Accessibility Services at St. Clair College. Students with disabilities may be eligible for accommodations when taking tests/exams. Accommodations could include extended time and use of assistive technology, as examples. Provisions may be made for assistive technology including hardware and software for students to be successful. To receive services, you would book an appointment with a college counsellor by calling (519) 972-2727 ext. 4226 or emailing: studentservices@stclaircollege.ca



More information can be found at:

<https://www.stclaircollege.ca/student-services/accessibility-services>

University of Windsor

The Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at the University of Windsor assists students with disabilities in a variety of ways. They can be reached at disability@uwindsor.ca or by phone at 519-253-3000 ext. 3288.

One of their programs called the BUILD program (*Bridge to University for Individuals with Learning Disabilities*) is held the end of August each year. It helps students with the transition from high school.

TIP!

At both the College and University, students are urged to advocate for themselves and meet with a Counsellor/Student Advisor to share their strengths and needs, and to develop an accommodation plan. While in high school, opportunities where your son/daughter can practice advocating for themselves will be important for the future.

More information about Student Accessibility Services can be found at:

<https://www.uwindsor.ca/studentaccessibility/>

Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP)

Grants may be available for eligible full-time or part-time students with disabilities, who are planning to apply for funding with OSAP. Use this link to learn more:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/osap-for-under-represented-learners#section-3>

Additional financial information is also available in the *Transition Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities* document on-line, check out the following link:

<https://www.transitionresourceguide.ca/plan-your-journey/financial-aid>

For students who are interested in apprenticeship pathways or other employment training options

Apprenticeship in Ontario - Prepare for Apprenticeship

There are many different ways people can get apprenticeship training and prepare for a new career in Ontario. Students who are interested in apprenticeships and job training after high school can check out how to *Prepare for Apprenticeship* at:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/prepare-apprenticeship>



For additional information about apprenticeships in Ontario:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/apprenticeship-ontario>

Windsor Essex Employment Group (WEEG)

This group offers employment services, support and training for persons with disabilities living in Windsor and Essex County. The Windsor Essex Employment Group is committed to working together to maximize local employment services through networking by identifying, creating and promoting accessible employment pathways for persons with disabilities throughout Windsor and Essex County. Members provide various types of employment services/supports and training opportunities.

Check out their website for good information about how they assist employers and job seekers: <http://www.weeg.ca/home>

Ontario Disability Support Program – Employment Supports

If you have a disability, ODSP employment supports can assist people living with disabilities to find and keep a job, or advance their career. Community-based service providers across Ontario deliver ODSP employment supports. There are a number of organizations in the Windsor-Essex area that provide these supports. Contact your ODSP case worker to find out one that is near you. Please note that some organizations which provide these supports will help with filling out forms.

The criteria and application can be found at:

https://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/social/odsp/employment_support/ES_Eligibility.aspx

Useful Links and Resources

Education/Government Resources Relevant to High School

Creating Pathways to Success: An Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Ontario Schools, Policy and Program Requirements, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/cps/CreatingPathwaysSuccess.pdf>



Education and Career/Life Planning Program

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/education-and-career-planning>

Identifying Students with Special Education Needs, Information about the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/identifying-students-special-education-needs>

Special Education in Ontario, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Resource Guide (2017)

<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-special-education-policy-resource-guide-en-2022-05-30.pdf>

Note: This 'newer' document supersedes 'Special Education: A Resource Guide (2001)

Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Program Requirements, Ministry of Education

<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-ontario-schools-policy-programs-2016-en-2022-01-19.pdf>

Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), Information: Sample Test Materials, and more on the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) website: <https://www.eqao.com/the-assessments/osslt/>

Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) – A school to work program for students to explore and work in apprenticeship occupations starting in Grade 11 or Grade 12. Website contains information for students, parents and educators:

<http://www.oyap.com>

Questions and Answers Parents May Have Regarding Special Education

<https://www.probonoontario.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Questions-and-Answers-Parents-May-Have-Regarding-Special-Education-1.pdf>

Resources Related to Post-Secondary

Dance of Partnership Website: Publications/resources by Janice Fialka.

Janice is a parent, social worker, lecturer, author and advocate on issues related to disability, parent-professional partnerships, inclusion, and post-secondary education. Janice co-authored an excellent book about the transition process in high school for one teenager, her son. The book is called *Whose Life Is It Anyway?* She also co-produced a video about her son's experience entitled *Through the Same Door, Inclusion Includes College*. Both resources are available in the lending library at



Windsor-Essex Family Network. Here is the link to the website:

<http://www.danceofpartnership.com/books.htm>

Dual Credit Courses - Gotocollege.ca

This is a good site to get more information about this School-College-Work initiative funded by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

<http://www.gotocollege.ca/>

From Secondary School to the Workplace, Preparing Students with Learning Disabilities for Success:

For students with a learning disability (LD), this transition can be even more stressful. Support from educators can help reduce anxiety and prepare students for success in the workplace. Read this article, by Martin Smit, LD At School:

https://www.ldatschool.ca/secondary-school-workplace/?fbclid=IwAR0Vd8JcpdD2XFSFgjpZDqZfD3eP8km4njjSoPVXGSzYePJMx8aBZGo_VS8

Think College! College Options for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Think College is an organization dedicated to developing, expanding, and improving inclusive higher education options for people with intellectual disability. Think College supports evidence-based and student-centered research and practice by generating and sharing knowledge. This website shares options and lists colleges in the United States. www.thinkcollege.net

Through the Same Door

Articles & videos about Micah Fialka-Feldman's journey from high school to post-secondary. He is part of the first wave of adults with intellectual disabilities attending college and has been fully included in school and community.

<http://www.throughthesamedoor.com/>

Transition Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities,

Transition to Post-Secondary Education: This is an excellent transition guide, available on-line at the following address: <http://www.transitionresourceguide.ca/>

Other Resources for Moving into Adulthood

Developmental Services Ontario, DSO South West Region contact information

<http://www.dsontario.ca/agencies/dso-southwest>

Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP): Income and Employment Supports



<http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/en/mcss/programs/social/odsp/>

Student Links is an opportunity for students who have a developmental/intellectual disability to explore ideas for their future after high school. Students between the ages of 14 to 21 can learn more about their area of interest or be introduced to mentors in their community who have similar interests with whom they can volunteer. This is a provincially run program:

<https://communitylivingontario.ca/en/student-links/>

Windsor Essex Brokerage for Personal Supports (Brokerage) provides independent facilitation and planning support with individuals who have developmental disability and their families. <http://webps.ca/>



Glossary of Common Acronyms & Terminology

Acronyms

Co-op – Co-Operative Education

DSO – Developmental Services Ontario

GECDSB – Greater Essex County District School Board

IEP – Individual Education Plan

IPRC – Identification, Placement and Review Committee

LD/LDCC – Locally Developed/Locally Developed Compulsory Credit

Courses

LST/LSST – Learning Support Teacher/Learning Support Service Teacher

MAPS – My Achievement Pathway to Success

ODSP – Ontario Disability Support Program

OSR – Ontario Student Record

OSSC – Ontario Secondary School Certificate

OSSD – Ontario Secondary School Diploma

OSSLC – Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course

OSSLT – Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

OYAP – Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program

SSAH – Special Services at Home Program

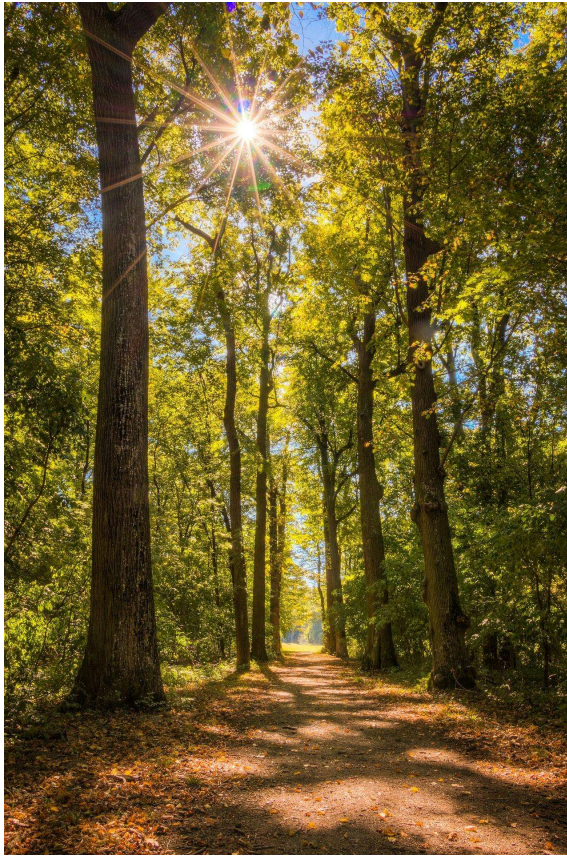
WECDSB – Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board



Terminology

Credit Courses - Courses students can take to earn credits toward a diploma or certificate.

Knowledge Courses or K Courses - Courses that do not earn credits.



Section Three

An Appendix of Additional Resources





An Appendix of Additional Resources

High School Resources Families Have Found Helpful

Ideas and Inspiration to Get us Thinking

Changing the Way We Think

This article by Janice Fialka, is referenced in the Foreword to this booklet. The article talks about working from 'the least dangerous assumption' when it comes to students with disabilities. *"When you have a child with a disability you enter a new world, filled with new people, new words, and new ways of thinking! One of the harder new lessons we, as parents learn about "this new life" is that people, even well-meaning people, frequently make dangerous assumptions about our children and say things to us like: You have to be realistic about his future. . . ."* The article continues with a great fishing metaphor that will inspire readers. Read the full article with this link to a pdf:

<https://www.danceofpartnership.com/ChangingtheWayWeThink011907.pdf>

Or go to Janice's site website, Dance of Partnership, to find this and other articles.

<https://www.danceofpartnership.com/>

The Power of Peer Support: Making Inclusion Work in High School

An inspiring story written by a mother, her son, an educational facilitator and recent high school graduate on the power of a "peer support" program in their high school. Although written in 2001, there are incredible lessons and learnings for families, schools and students that are more than relevant, and implementable today. Quote from the article: *"If you ask most parents who have a child with a disability, they will quickly and passionately tell you that what they want most for their child is to belong, to have friends and opportunities for fun."* This article outlines a clear path for making that happen while fully including students in the regular classroom. To read the full article:

<https://throughthesamedoor.com/2001/01/21/the-power-of-peer-support-making-inclusion-work-in-high-school/>

I Wanted to Go to College and My Dream Came True Micah was included in regular classrooms in high school. It was his dream to continue in regular classrooms after high school; he wanted to go to college. Micah shares how he achieved his dream in this article. It can be accessed from Micah's website, Through



the Same Door, with this link: <https://throughthesamedoor.com/2008/10/21/i-wanted-to-go-to-college-and-my-dream-came-true/>



Getting Ready for High School and Planning During High School

Career Navigation for Parents

Images in the Appendix are from Pixabay

The resources you will find on this website are ones that are created for you to complete independently or with your child so that you can explore what kind of interests align with career opportunities within the area of Windsor-Essex County. It will help you to support your student’s career exploration through the use of self-reflection strategies and labour market research. You and your student/young adult will gain valuable insight about employment opportunities in Windsor-Essex.

<https://www.workforcewindsor-essex.com/wenav-for-parents/>

Windsor-Essex Transition Planning for Youth with Developmental Disabilities

This website was designed for families of young people 14 to 18 years of age who live with a developmental disability. Siblings, extended families, and friends will also find the information helpful. The website offers practical information and resources to assist teenagers and their families with steps for getting ready, and with the transition to life as an adult.



A ‘transition’ binder with lots of good information is also available in the community. You can ask for a transition binder through your high school, a service providing agency like Family Respite Services, or Windsor-Essex Brokerage for Personal Supports. For planning information on the website go to:

<https://planyourtransition.com/>





Start Early: Connect with Developmental Services Ontario (DSO), Plan ahead for when your family member turns 18 years old

This one-pager was created by Windsor-Essex Family Network families and My

Home My Choice partners in Windsor-Essex. It offers tips for students who have a developmental disability and their families about preparing early, prior to the age of 18.

Different steps that can be taken in advance, starting at 16, are outlined in this flow chart: <https://windsor-essexfamilynet.files.wordpress.com/2023/11/dso-start-early-and-connect-mhmc-2023-final.pdf>

Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex County – LDAWE (Website)

This website has a variety of resources that are accessible and available to students with disabilities and their families. Many of these resources, on-line, are helpful to all students not only those with a learning disability. The website is clearly laid out and well-organized, we encourage you to explore it. Below are a few of our favourite links and resources on the site for high school students.

E-Learning Resources: LDAWE has created a list of e-learning resources to support students, parents and educators. <https://www.ldawe.ca/resources/e-learning-technology-resources/>

Literacy & Math Resources that are excellent are also available on-line: <https://www.ldawe.ca/resources/educational-resources/>

SOAR – Transition to High School: This 4-week online program supports students with learning disabilities transition to high school more resiliently. ‘Learn how to advocate for your needs, better understand yourself as a learner and be more confident.’ Subsidies are available. For more information: <https://www.ldawe.ca/programs/soar-transition-to-high-school/>

Transition to Post-Secondary (Pilot): This free one-day in-person workshop supports students in grades 11 and 12 with **learning disabilities** to transition to post-secondary (college or university) with greater resiliency. ‘Learn how to advocate for your needs, better understand yourself as a learner and be more confident.’ For more information: <https://www.ldawe.ca/programs/tips-transition-to-post-secondary/>

Commented [8]: There are a couple of typos and we need to see if anything needs to be updated - when I tried to help someone apply for ODSP I was told they could not go in person

Commented [9R8]: This is the new wording for ODSP applications:
How to apply for ODSP
You can apply for ODSP:

online: Follow the steps below to apply for ODSP online. The application takes 20 to 30 minutes. Submit one application for you and your immediate family members who live with you. over the phone by contacting the Social Assistance Contact Centre Toll-free: 1-888-999-1142 or Toll-free TTY: 1-800-387-5559.
in-person by booking an appointment through your local ODSP office.
The application process may take a few months.

Commented [10R8]: **you can apply for an appointment in person at the office (you cannot apply in person, just book an appt



Scholarships: To learn what scholarships are available to students with a learning disability pursuing post-secondary education:

<https://www.ldawe.ca/services/scholarship/>

Relationship Building: Let's Start with Just One Thing (Power Point, 2021)

A power point presentation created by Windsor-Essex Family Network (WEFN) families and My Home My Choice partners. It is full of ideas that teenagers can embrace for taking a small first step to building relationships. This power point looks at how we might take on just one small manageable thing, and also look at going to the same time, same place for meeting others. Double click on the title above to get to the power point, or use the link below. You can also go to the tab Relationships, Circles, Networks on the WEFN website to see this and other resources. Power point link:

<https://windsor-essexfamilynet.files.wordpress.com/2021/11/relationship-building-june-16-2021-power-point.pdf> Link to website tab:

<https://windsor-essexfamnet.ca/support-networks/>

The Natural Authority of Families

Written by Dr. Michael Kendrick This article has become a mainstay of Windsor-Essex Family Network (WEFN) with a commitment to sharing the article with families across the ages and stages of their lives. The WEFN Board of Directors has readily embraced the concept of families having natural authority when it comes to their children/family members living with disabilities. To download a copy, click here: [the-natural-authority-of-families-mkendrick-ct06.pdf](#)



Resources and Inspiration for Beyond High School

Post-Secondary Information and Inspiration

Beyond High School: College and More!

Author Kathie Snow shares stories and examples of allowing students to explore their dreams for post high school, and the practical application of achieving their goals.

<https://www.disabilityisnatural.com/beyond-high-school.html>



Inclusive Post-Secondary Education in Alberta

Information to inspire you about what some families would like to see come to Ontario. Alberta has more post-secondary institutions providing fully inclusive post-secondary opportunities for students with developmental disabilities than any other jurisdiction in the world. Inclusion Alberta has been partnering with post-secondary institutions for more than 30 years to include students with developmental disabilities to participate in regular programs of study and campus life.

<https://inclusionalberta.org/what-we-do/inclusive-post-secondary/>

What's a Parent to Do? Micah's College Dream

Author Janice Fialka shares how she and her husband learned to listen and support their son's dream. She describes how parents must move from being 'protectors' to 'guides' of their children. Several practical principles that guide her family as they shift in their parenting role are shared.

https://www.danceofpartnership.com/ImpactArticle_Abbrev.pdf

Transition Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities, Transition to Post-Secondary Education (Website)

This on-line Transition Resource Guide contains everything you need to know about accessibility and other essential resources across all 44 publicly funded Ontario post-secondary schools.

- **Accessibility Services:** Helpful information about accessibility services office, registering with the accessibility services office, documentation requirements, academic accommodations. <https://www.transitionresourceguide.ca/learn-about-accessibility/accessibility-services>
- **Support Services available at Post Secondary:** Each post-secondary school will have a range of services to support students with disabilities and the wider student population. These services provide an excellent source of support for students. Students are highly encouraged to take advantage of these resources. A description of services that may be provided: <https://www.transitionresourceguide.ca/learn-about-accessibility/support-services-available-post-secondary>
- **Important Documents accessible and downloadable from the Transition Resource Guide:** Resources are meant to help you make a successful transition to post-secondary and beyond. <https://www.transitionresourceguide.ca/documents>. Here are 2 examples of important documents you can download from these links:

- [Chart of Differences between High School and College/University](#)
- [Tips for your intake meeting at the Accessibility Services Office](#)



Life Beyond School - Things to Consider

Relationships, Circles, Networks, 2021

This is a local My Home My Choice publication containing relevant information and descriptions of resources (Books and DVDs) to inspire and support individuals in Windsor-Essex along the journey to an everyday life as a citizen. All resources listed are available for borrowing from the lending libraries at Windsor-Essex Family Network (WEFN) and Windsor Essex Brokerage for Personal Supports. You can link to the document using the title above. For more resources about relationship building and support circles see the Relationship, Circles, Network tab on the WEFN website:



<https://windsoressexfamnet.ca/support-networks/>

Options for Thinking about My Home

What is 'Home'? 'Home' for the purposes of the My Home, My Choice initiative in Windsor and Essex County means whatever type of home-setting a person might choose. It could be about: renting or owning; living in a stand-alone house, secondary suite, townhouse, condominium, apartment, co-op arrangement or something else. It could be choosing to live alone, with a friend, beside or with your family. Various home options and examples of how one might choose to live are listed in this one-page document. These choices are often based on people's natural relationships, who they feel comfortable with, and their current stage of life. Keep in mind that the home-setting you first choose and plan for may change in a few years. Most important is being able to direct one's own path with the support of friends, family and others who care. Here is a link to the document:

<https://windsoressexfamilynet.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/1-options-for-thinking-about-my-home-2018.pdf>

Guide to Supported Decision Making, The Basic Legal Concepts

Persons with disabilities have the right to dignity and autonomy. Canada has recognized this by agreeing with the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ('CRPD'). Supported decision-making includes persons with disabilities in the decisions that affect them. It recognizes the autonomy, identity, and abilities of **every** person. However, the current laws of Ontario are not in line with supported decision-making. While some of the current laws around decision-making promote these rights, many of these rights are automatically stripped due to the law's focus on substitute decision-making, (i.e., guardianship). To learn more, download the whole brochure:

<https://windsoressexfamilynet.files.wordpress.com/2021/06/a-guide-to-supported-decision-making.pdf>



A Signature Resource by Windsor-Essex Family Network

High School and Beyond: A Family Perspective **Student & Family Stories**

In 2014, family leaders with Windsor-Essex Family Network began working on a series of stories about their family and student experiences at various stages of life: preparing for high school, during high school and beyond high school to post-secondary or work life.



This booklet, *Student & Family Stories*, is a unique collection of stories gathered over a decade

Each story written and each tool shared (For example: a vision, one-page profile, communication chart, etc.) stand on their own.

Families assisted each other with the writing and interviewing. Some families and students wrote their stories together. Others did their own. In more recent years, families and students have also shared wonderful examples of the tools* and templates they have used to provide valuable information to their schools and others in their lives.

Many of these families and students are also volunteers with Windsor-Essex Family Network. They have been generous to share their stories in-person, and also virtually, on zoom over the last few years. We are forever grateful at Windsor-Essex Family Network for their commitment to helping other families. To them we dedicate this booklet.

Below is the link to the stories booklet which is also available directly from the High School and Beyond webpage: [Student & Family Stories](#)

