

## **Innovative High School Programs Help More Students Graduate**

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Transforming high school for all students is the focus of the government's Student Success Strategy. It gives Ontario students a greater opportunity to customize their high school experience to match their strengths, interests and career goals.

The government has been providing support and resources for students who struggle, and providing all high school students with more learning opportunities that match their aspirations for the future.

A direct result of these supports and resources has been a gradual increase in the number of students graduating from high school each year.

Year	Graduation Rate
2003-04	68 per cent
2004-05	71 per cent
2005-06	73 per cent
2006-07	75 per cent

Since 2003, the government's \$1.5 billion Student Success Strategy has provided additional resources to all students and helped 22,500 more graduate.

### **Target**

The government has set an 85 per cent graduation rate target by 2010-11 — a significant increase from 2003-04. This means that more than 90,000 additional students will have graduated when the target is met.

### **Student Success Programs**

The following high school programs create a more engaging learning environment for students and better prepares them to pursue the career that they want.

**Specialist High Skills Majors** allow students to focus on career paths that match their individual goals and interests.

There are twelve Specialist High Skills Majors being offered during the 2007-08 school year:

- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Arts and Culture
- Tourism and Hospitality
- Horticulture and Landscaping
- Mining
- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Health and Wellness
- Environment
- Transportation
- Business.
- There are a total of 153 Specialist High Skills Major programs in Ontario with most school boards (67) offering at least one of these majors.

**Dual Credit Programs** allow high school students to earn credits toward their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) by participating in apprenticeship training or college courses that count towards their high school diploma, as well as towards their postsecondary diploma or apprenticeship certification.

An estimated 4,300 students are enrolled in 150 dual credit programs this year.

**Lighthouse Pilot Projects** help students who need extra support and attention to stay in school. Locally-developed projects may include a combination of mentoring and intervention programs that improve student achievement.

There are 92 new or expanded Lighthouse pilot projects in 2007-08 to increase credit accumulation, reduce drop-out rates, link more programs with postsecondary institutions and encourage students who left school to return and complete their diploma.

**Expanded Cooperative Education** allows students to earn secondary school credits while completing a work placement in the community. Up to two credits may count towards the 18 compulsory credits required for the diploma. Any additional cooperative credits can count as optional credits.

Expansion of cooperative education is a key goal of the Student Success Strategy. There were more than 57,000 students enrolled in cooperative education in 2005-06 and the number of credits earned through cooperative education increased by 10% from 109,047 in 2004-05 to 119,900 in 2005-06.

**Student Success Culture** includes training for principals and teachers on new ideas and innovative approaches to helping kids graduate from high school. It builds upon a culture of high expectations and individualized attention and caring.

**Student Success Teams** include a Student Success Teacher, the principal, the guidance department head and the special education department head and/or other appointed staff. Together, they identify and support students who need extra help to succeed, provide more options for learning and monitor student progress.

**Grades 7,8,9 Transition** helps students as they move from elementary school to secondary school with increased individualized attention and programming tailored to fit their situation. Orientation programs, strategies and interventions are put in place to support the transition.