

# Choices Into Action

**GUIDANCE AND CAREER  
EDUCATION PROGRAM  
POLICY FOR ONTARIO  
ELEMENTARY AND  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**1999**

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Une publication équivalente est disponible en français sous le titre suivant : *Des choix qui mènent à l'action – Politique régissant le programme d'orientation et de formation au cheminement de carrière dans les écoles élémentaires et secondaires de l'Ontario, 1999.*

This publication is available on the Ministry of Education and Training's World Wide Web site at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>.



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# Preface

*Choices Into Action* describes the purpose and importance of Ontario's guidance and career education program, its content, and its unique approach to teaching and learning. It describes the approaches that principals and teachers are expected to take when teaching students how to develop their learning skills, interpersonal skills, and knowledge and skills in the area of career planning. It also outlines program planning strategies, accountability measures, and the roles and responsibilities of all involved – principals, teachers, students, parents,<sup>1</sup> and community partners.

The policies outlined in this document complement related provincial policies outlined in *Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9–12: Program and Diploma Requirements, 1999* and in the elementary and secondary school curriculum policy documents.

This document replaces sections 1.8 and 2.3 of *Transition Years, Grades 7, 8, and 9: Policies and Program Requirements, 1992* and all sections of *Guidance, Intermediate and Senior Divisions, 1984*, except for references to credit course development and delivery.

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1. Throughout this document, *parents* is used to refer to both parent(s) and guardian(s).



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# Introduction

## **RATIONALE**

For their educational, social, and career success in the twenty-first century, students will require effective work habits and the ability to make sound decisions, solve problems, plan effectively, work independently, communicate well, research, evaluate themselves realistically, and explore new educational and career opportunities. A carefully planned guidance and career education program, beginning in the elementary grades and continuing through secondary school, will help students acquire these skills.

Students must learn and develop skills at school that will help them become more independent and responsible individuals. They must be able to apply what they learn in school to other areas of their lives. They must learn to work cooperatively and productively with a wide range of people, to set and pursue education and career goals, to evaluate their achievement of these goals, and to assume their roles as responsible citizens. A comprehensive guidance and career education program will provide students with an understanding of the concepts in the three areas of learning in the program (student development, interpersonal development, and career development) and with many opportunities to practise new skills in structured and supportive settings. It will allow them to learn from their experiences and accomplishments, and to apply their skills and knowledge in the classroom, in the school with their peers and teachers, and in the community. It will also involve parents, community partners, teachers, teacher-advisers, guidance counsellors, and community mentors in the program.

The guidance and career education program will help students relate what they learn in school to the community, understand and value education, recognize the learning opportunities available to them, make choices from among those opportunities, and adapt to changing circumstances. It will help them make transitions throughout their lives – from family to school, from school to school, from school to work, and from school to lifelong learning. Through learning activities that emphasize managing time, completing tasks,

setting goals, resolving conflicts, volunteering, collaborating, and cooperating, students will learn self-discipline, personal and social responsibility, and respect for others from diverse cultures.

## KEY FEATURES OF THE PROGRAM

Building on the good practices currently in place in many Ontario schools and classrooms, an effective guidance and career education program includes the following important key features:

- clearly stated competencies for students in Grades 1 to 6, Grades 7 and 8, and Grades 9 to 12
- a range of career exploration activities in the community
- completion of the compulsory half-credit Career Studies course as a secondary school graduation requirement
- preparation of an annual education plan for each student, beginning in Grade 7 and continuing to the end of secondary school
- a teacher-adviser for students in Grades 7 to 11
- individual assistance and short-term counselling
- a program advisory team
- a program-effectiveness survey, conducted every three years, with recommendations for revising the program

As already noted, teaching and learning in the guidance and career education program involves a variety of instructional settings and roles, as well as the involvement of community partners. Students acquire knowledge and skills not only through the provincial curriculum, but also

through the teacher-adviser program, their development of annual education plans, events such as job-shadow days, work experience opportunities, and cooperative education. Students learn from the active involvement of and direction from teachers, teacher-advisers, and guidance counsellors. The program's structured teaching and learning approach systematically builds each year on the previous year's learning.

## GOALS

The goals of the guidance and career education program are that students:

- *understand* the concepts related to lifelong learning, interpersonal relationships (including responsible citizenship), and career planning;
- *develop* learning skills, social skills, a sense of social responsibility, and the ability to formulate and pursue educational and career goals;
- *apply* this learning to their lives and work in the school and the community.

The goals have been organized into three areas of knowledge and skills: *student development*, *interpersonal development*, and *career development*. In each area, the knowledge and skills required will change as students proceed through elementary and secondary school. Although sometimes distinct, these areas of learning and their interconnectedness should be reflected in each school's guidance and career education program.

**Student development.** Students will learn to set and achieve learning goals both inside and outside school, manage their own learning, and acquire the habits and skills necessary for success both inside and outside school. As students

develop the ability to understand how they learn, recognize areas that need improvement, set goals for improvement, monitor their own learning, and become independent learners, they are acquiring the basic habits and skills they will require for lifelong learning.

**Interpersonal development.** Students will learn to demonstrate self-discipline, take responsibility for their own behaviour, acquire the knowledge and skills required for getting along with others both within and beyond the school, and choose ways of interacting positively with others in a variety of situations. They will also learn about thoughtful and non-violent problem resolution, social responsibility, working cooperatively with others, and caring about others.

**Career development.** Students will learn how to make informed and appropriate choices to ensure their successful transition from elementary to secondary school and from secondary school to further education, training, and work. This involves the acquisition of the knowledge and skills required to make informed and responsible decisions at key transition points throughout elementary and secondary school and in preparation for leaving secondary school. Students will also assess their interests, competencies, and achievements; explore and evaluate education and career opportunities; make appropriate choices from among those opportunities; collect and interpret information; set goals; and create and evaluate plans for the future.

The content of the guidance and career education program is represented by the three areas of learning and defined by the competencies that students acquire over a period of time. Teachers, teacher-advisers, and guidance counsellors play an important role in monitoring and evaluating students' progress in acquiring the competencies described for Grades 1 to 6, Grades 7 and 8, and Grades 9 to 12. The three areas of learning and the competencies that students acquire provide a guide for program development and evaluation.



## Areas of Learning

Student development	<i>In Grades 1 to 6, students will learn to:</i>	<i>In Grades 7 and 8, students will learn to:</i>	<i>In Grades 9 to 12, students will learn to:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>learning skills, preferences, and strategies (e.g., memorizing, working independently, assessing themselves, managing their time)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate their understanding of and use learning skills and strategies in their classroom learning</li> <li>demonstrate the ability to follow school and classroom rules and routines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate their understanding of and apply learning skills and strategies to their own learning</li> <li>recognize their own learning preferences</li> <li>demonstrate their understanding of the importance of the school's code of behaviour and of acting according to that code</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>apply a variety of learning skills and strategies to a variety of situations</li> <li>demonstrate the ability to respond appropriately and thoughtfully to directions from teachers, administrators, and employers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>setting goals and monitoring progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use goal-setting skills to improve their school work</li> <li>identify improvement in their work resulting from goal setting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explain their progress in meeting long- and short-term goals related to education plans and improving their school work</li> <li>use goal-setting skills appropriately to revise their goals in response to changing circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use goal-setting and self-management skills in a variety of situations both inside and outside school</li> <li>develop their own up-to-date annual education plans</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adapting to change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify the skills required for making transitions to new situations (e.g., a new school or class)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>apply transition knowledge and skills (e.g., identifying resources for assistance) to making the transition to secondary school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>apply transition knowledge and skills to making transitions and to adapting to postsecondary destinations (e.g., financial planning, completing applications, selecting programs)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lifelong learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>understand and apply lifelong learning skills (e.g., communicating, organizing, researching) to all of their subjects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use school and community resources to support their learning needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>apply lifelong learning skills (e.g., communication, research, and employability skills) to their personal education and career plans</li> </ul>

## Areas of Learning

	<i>In Grades 1 to 6, students will learn to:</i>	<i>In Grades 7 and 8, students will learn to:</i>	<i>In Grades 9 to 12, students will learn to:</i>
<b>Interpersonal development</b>			
• self-management	– demonstrate their understanding of socially acceptable responses to a variety of situations in school	– demonstrate the skills and knowledge necessary to manage their own behaviour (e.g., self-control, the role of emotions, anger management) – demonstrate appropriate behaviour at school and in the community (e.g., respect for self, family, others, property)	– use personal skills appropriately to encourage responsible behaviour in others in a wide range of situations – demonstrate appropriate behaviour at school, in the community, and with employers
• getting along with others	– identify the variety of characteristics, skills, competencies, qualities, and talents of others – demonstrate their understanding of using skills to build positive relationships at school (e.g., cooperating with others)	– describe the many aspects of relationships, and explain and demonstrate how skills (e.g., conflict-resolution, peer helping, and leadership skills) are used to interact positively with others in diverse settings at school and in the community – demonstrate the ability to accept and respond to the direction of teachers and administrators	– apply skills (e.g., mediating, peer helping, leadership skills) to build positive relationships in diverse settings at school, in the community, and in the workplace
• social responsibility	– demonstrate their understanding of “being a responsible citizen” in the classroom and the school	– demonstrate social responsibility both at school and in the community (e.g., participating in student elections; acting as reading buddies)	– demonstrate social responsibility in the community (e.g., canvassing for the Cancer Society)
<b>Career development</b>	<i>In Grades 1 to 6, students will learn to:</i>	<i>In Grades 7 and 8, students will learn to:</i>	<i>In Grades 9 to 12, students will learn to:</i>
• self-assessment	– identify their personal interests, strengths, competencies, and accomplishments	– apply their knowledge of their personal interests, strengths, abilities, and accomplishments to planning and decision making	– apply their knowledge of their personal interests, strengths, abilities, and accomplishments to choosing and planning a postsecondary education or career path

## Areas of Learning

Career development (cont.)	<i>In Grades 1 to 6, students will learn to:</i>	<i>In Grades 7 and 8, students will learn to:</i>	<i>In Grades 9 to 12, students will learn to:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>exploring and obtaining information about education, training, and careers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify jobs and occupations in the community related to school subjects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify sources of educational and career information (e.g., the Internet, employment centres, the community)</li> <li>investigate and compare a variety of jobs, occupations, and career opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate how to locate, interpret, evaluate, and use various sources of education and career information</li> <li>demonstrate understanding of how to use education and career exploration skills to develop personal, educational, or career plans</li> <li>demonstrate understanding of the workplace (e.g., health and safety issues)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work, society, and the economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe the connections between individuals and work (e.g., employees work for companies, which pay them a salary)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe sectors of the economy in the local, provincial, and global economies (e.g., the volunteer sector, the manufacturing sector)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe how changes taking place in the economy, the environment, and society affect the job market</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>awareness of opportunities</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe opportunities in secondary school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe the variety of volunteer, employment, educational, and career opportunities, including self-employment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>education and career decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>learn and apply decision-making and problem-solving skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use decision-making and problem-solving skills appropriately to complete their annual education plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>apply decision-making and problem-solving skills to their postsecondary education or career paths</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>employability</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use in-school and out-of-school experiences, activities, and interests to learn more about their potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate their understanding of employability skills (e.g., job search, interview, job readiness, employment sustainability, and entrepreneurial skills)</li> <li>evaluate their personal, educational, or career plans in light of their community or workplace experiences</li> </ul>

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# Program Considerations

## PROGRAM PLANNING

With the assistance of the school's guidance and career education program advisory team (see "Program Advisory Teams" on page 23) and school staff, the principal will ensure the development of a comprehensive written guidance and career education program plan, which will include the following:

- a description of the competencies that students acquire
- the combination of components (e.g., the Ontario curriculum and credit courses, annual education plans for each student, a teacher-adviser program) to be used and a description of how each component will be implemented, including delivery methods (by whom, for whom, by when), assessment strategies, and methods of reporting to parents
- a clearly defined process for referring students for individual assistance and short-term counselling, including follow-up procedures
- the projected date for the next program-effectiveness survey
- strategies for providing student access to up-to-date educational and labour market information and resources (human and material), which students require to make informed decisions
- an overview of the accommodations that may be made for exceptional students, students for whom English is a second language (ESL), and Native students

The plan ensures that teachers, students, parents, and community partners are aware of the goals of the guidance and career education program and how it is being delivered. Each school's guidance and career education program plan will be available on request and reviewed and updated annually based on ongoing feedback from students, parents, teachers, teacher-advisers, guidance counsellors, employers, community agencies, and the school council. The program will be revised every three years based on informal feedback as well as information from the program-effectiveness survey (see page 25).

## MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS

### Exceptional Students

Guidance and career education issues are very important to those students who have been identified as exceptional. These students may have to manage significant issues related to their exceptionalities. They may also face challenges related to their sense of identity, their development of self-confidence, their realistic self-assessment of their abilities, and the development of strategies for overcoming barriers and maximizing independence.

Some exceptional students may experience difficulty in making the transition from one grade level or course to another, from one school or school district to another, and from secondary school to postsecondary education, work, or community living. Detailed planning, including modifications to orientation and exit programs, that reflect the recommendations of students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs) will help these students progress more smoothly. Since September 1998, school boards are required to include a transition plan as part of the IEP for each exceptional student aged fourteen or over (except for students identified solely as gifted).

Schools are in the unique position of being able to provide a variety of coordinated activities to meet each exceptional student's strengths, needs, and interests, leading to further education, work, and/or community living opportunities. Each exceptional student's success in accessing postsecondary options and the necessary supports in the future depends on advanced planning, as well as linkages with other community agencies and other partners.

To help deal with the many challenges that exceptional students may face, starting in Grade 7, all exceptional students and their parents and teacher-advisers should take into consideration the students' IEP when they develop annual education plans (see page 16).

The annual education plan and the IEP (particularly the transition plan portion of the IEP) have similarities in that both:

- take into account the student's particular strengths, interests, and needs, as well as the expectations for the student's learning during the school year;
- are a tool to help teachers monitor and communicate student growth;
- are developed with reference to the same kinds of focus questions (e.g., What are the student's goals and aspirations? How effective are the strategies and resources selected to support the student's learning? Should changes be made?);
- are flexible, working documents that can be adjusted as necessary.

They are different in that the annual education plan is developed by the student with the assistance of parents and a teacher, while the IEP (including the transition plan) is developed under the direction of the principal, with the participation of parents, the student, and broader school board and community agency personnel as appropriate. The IEP therefore contains more detailed information that is not generally found in the annual education plan (e.g., the identification of modified or alternative learning expectations where appropriate; accommodations required; assessment and evaluation strategies).

In planning and providing for the guidance and career education needs of exceptional students, principals will ensure that there is a process to:

- correlate students' annual education plans (starting in Grade 7) with their IEPs (including transition plans);
- ensure that students have equitable access to career exploration opportunities that reflect the goals set out in their annual education plans and IEPs;
- ensure that teacher-advisers and guidance counsellors receive the information they need to provide the necessary and appropriate support for these students.

### **English As a Second Language (ESL) and English Literacy Development (ELD) Students**

Students for whom English is a second language or who require support in developing their English skills (ESL/ELD students) need time to acquire the language skills they require to participate fully in the guidance and career education program. They may also need additional support to become oriented to the Ontario school environment while learning a new language in a new culture. Special attention should be given to helping them with their course selections and choice of postsecondary destinations. Given that language acquisition follows a continuum, students' current level of language proficiency should be a factor, but not a barrier, in their choice of courses and postsecondary destinations. Annual education plans will allow for ongoing review and revision of course selections and education and career goals.

To help ESL/ELD students and their parents benefit from the guidance and career education program, it is recommended that, where appropriate, ESL/ELD teachers be part of the school guidance and career education advisory team and help ESL/ELD students develop their annual education plans.

### **Native Students**

Schools serving Native students should consider the range of these students' needs, particularly students from a remote First Nations community who need to become oriented to a different school environment in a new community. Schools with Native students should consider making Native counsellors or mentors available to help students adjust to a new setting, select appropriate courses, clarify their postsecondary destinations, and develop their annual education plans.

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## Program Delivery Components

Principals and teachers use a combination of the following program delivery components to deliver the guidance and career education program and provide students with opportunities to meet the program goals.

### **THE ONTARIO CURRICULUM – ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY**

The Ontario curriculum is one component through which students achieve the competencies of the guidance and career education program.

***Elementary schools.*** To align the guidance and career education program with the Ontario curriculum, teachers in elementary schools need to ensure that classroom learning across all the grades and subjects provides ample opportunity for students to learn how to work independently (including homework completion), to cooperate with others, to resolve conflicts with others, to participate in class, to solve problems, and to set goals to improve their work.

***Secondary schools.*** Ontario curriculum policy documents include expectations for secondary school students related to the program goals of guidance and career education. In helping students meet these curriculum expectations, teachers will help them make connections among the knowledge and skills acquired in all disciplines. Students will also learn to make connections between the knowledge and skills they are acquiring at school and the knowledge and skills required by postsecondary educational institutions, apprenticeship programs, and employers.

The curriculum document for guidance and career education outlines expectations for students in credit courses such as Career Studies, which is a compulsory course.

## **ORIENTATION AND EXIT PROGRAMS**

### **Orientation Programs**

To help students who are new to a school to adjust and to provide them with information about the programs and services available, the principal of each school is responsible for developing an orientation program. Such programs will be designed to help students adjust to school at key transition points, such as entry into a new school and the move from elementary to secondary school. Students who change schools in midyear, as well as students enrolled for the first time in schools operated by Ontario school boards, also need such programs.

Both the student and his or her parents will require information about the programs and services offered by the school and the local board and the name of the teacher who will be the student's main contact. In Grades 1 to 6, this will be a classroom teacher; in Grades 7 to 11, the teacher-adviser; and in Grade 12, the guidance counsellor. A tour of the school facility would also benefit all new students.

Students' introduction to the school's programs must include the school's code of student behaviour and information about relevant school services and programs, including the academic program, the library resource centre, the special education program, the availability of remedial support, the guidance and career education program, peer helpers, the student council, and opportunities for extracurricular activities. In secondary schools, information about diploma requirements, work experience, cooperative education, and community involvement must also be provided. Each secondary school student and his or her parents will receive a copy of the secondary school's course calendar and a copy of the student's timetable.

While most students will make a successful transition from one school to another, some will require additional assistance adjusting to new situations. To integrate successfully into a new school, those students who are recent arrivals to Ontario may require specialized, planned, ongoing orientation programs. Students who have been identified as exceptional and those who are entering school in midyear or mid-semester may require extra help in making an effective transition to a new school and regaining their focus on academic achievement.

### **Exit Programs**

Students leave school for a variety of reasons – they may move to a different town, transfer to a new school, graduate, or choose to pursue goals outside of school. The goal of an exit program is to help all these students make a successful transition to the next stage of their lives. Principals are encouraged to prepare exit programs that include a review of students' annual education plans and future goals.

The exit programs for graduates should include the following:

- a review of each student's plans for postsecondary education, training, apprenticeship, independent living, or work
- information on university and college programs, application and admission procedures, visits to campuses, and so on
- information on apprenticeship programs
- information on procedures for applying for employment
- financial planning information



The exit program for secondary students leaving school before graduation should include the following:

- a review of their achievements to date and the issuing of a copy of the Ontario Student Transcript as well as an Ontario Secondary School Certificate or a Certificate of Accomplishment where appropriate
- discussion and clarification of their plans for the immediate future (e.g., plans for independent living)
- information about education and training opportunities (e.g., evening courses, correspondence courses, readmission to secondary school)
- information on postsecondary education options
- information about the community services and community contacts available to help them
- information on procedures for applying for employment
- financial planning information
- information on apprenticeship programs

All students leaving school should be encouraged to participate in an exit program.

## THE ANNUAL EDUCATION PLAN

Developing an annual education plan will help students take responsibility for their education, make informed decisions, and plan for the future with the help of parents, teacher-advisers, and guidance counsellors. The plan will include the student's goals for academic achievement and for learning both inside and outside school. While the annual education plan is compulsory only for students in Grades 7 to 12, teachers in

Grades 1 to 6 should encourage their students to set goals to improve their work and to review the success of their personal efforts and choices.

Students in Grades 7 and 8 will research and consider the broad range of opportunities at the secondary school level. Starting in Grade 8, students' annual education plans should include the courses they intend to select and the extracurricular activities in which they may be interested. From Grade 10, students' plans should also include their tentative postsecondary destinations. When making plans for postsecondary activities, students should research and consider their options: continued study at university, college, or a vocational school; industry- or sector-based training such as apprenticeships and internships; or direct entry into the work force. Students should consider the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program and school-work transition programs. They should also consider related activities such as participation in career exploration activities, financial planning, and preparation for independent living.

In the process of completing their annual education plan, students will learn about their options and choices, and of the impact of their decisions on their educational and career goals. In the planning process students will set short- and long-term goals, evaluate the achievement of those goals, and review their academic progress. They will come to understand the relevance of their studies to their personal goals and recognize the importance of having learning experiences beyond the classroom (e.g., community service, community involvement, volunteer experience, part-time and summer work, personal interests such as hobbies) and how those experiences contribute to their overall development. Students in Grade 12 will be encouraged

to develop and monitor their annual education plan independently, set educational and career goal, and access information required to make education and career decisions with the support of guidance counsellors.

Learning and using the process involved in developing an education plan is as important to students as are the actual plans themselves. The steps of this process include the following:

- reviewing any previous educational plans and IEPs where appropriate
- assessing their interests, achievements, strengths, and needs
- evaluating the achievement of previously set goals
- identifying new short- and long-term goals
- identifying the resources (information and people) and strategies needed to reach these goals
- developing an educational or career plan

The planning process helps parents and teachers become aware of the goals students set for themselves and the education programs they are considering. Provincial Report Cards encourage communication among students, their teachers, and their parents and are important to the review and revision of the annual education plan.

Because students benefit from constructive feedback and encouragement, they will review their annual education plan at least twice a year.

Students in Grades 7 to 11 will review their plan with their parents and their teacher-adviser. In Grade 12, students should review their annual education plan with their guidance counsellors

and parents. It is important that students' annual education plan from year to year be available to the student and the teacher-adviser for reference. Where possible, copies of plans can be retained in students' academic and career portfolios.

The annual education plan of exceptional students must complement their Individual Education Plan (IEP). The IEP will also include transition plans for exceptional students aged fourteen years and older, unless they are identified only as gifted. (See "Meeting the Needs of All Students" on page 12.)

## **ACADEMIC AND CAREER PORTFOLIOS**

Every elementary and secondary school student should be encouraged to develop and maintain an academic and career portfolio. The purpose of the portfolio is to demonstrate the student's personal accomplishments inside and outside of school. The encouragement of classroom teachers and parents is important to the development of useful academic and career portfolios.

If students continue to maintain their portfolios from year to year by adding pieces of their best work each year, they will be able to see their growth and progress over time and to become increasingly aware of their own interests, strengths, needs, and aspirations. Selecting pieces of work that demonstrate their best efforts, progress, and achievement, both inside and outside school, will help them make informed and realistic decisions about their personal goals, future learning activities, immediate educational goals, and long-term educational and career goals. The evidence collected in an up-to-date portfolio provides a focus for parents,

the teacher-adviser, and the guidance counsellor when discussing with students the preparation and revision of their annual education plan.

As students progress to secondary school, they may also choose to assemble portfolios with particular audiences in mind, such as the faculty of a college or university program or a potential employer. Their portfolios can also be used to develop résumés. Students should have easy access to their portfolios so that they can regularly update their contents.

### **THE TEACHER-ADVISER PROGRAM**

To help students as they move from elementary to secondary school and as they make decisions about secondary school courses and future goals, a teacher-adviser program will be established in schools for students in Grades 7 to 11. Each principal will assign teachers to act as teacher-advisers, who will each have regularly scheduled contact with students for a minimum of one academic year. Although a teacher-adviser program is required for students in Grades 7 to 11, schools may also establish such a program for students in Grades 1 to 6 and Grade 12.

Through participation in a teacher-adviser program, students will demonstrate:

- goal-setting, planning, and decision-making skills;
- research and information management skills (including locating and accessing human and information resources) required for education and career planning;
- the skills and knowledge needed to monitor their academic progress.

Meetings of students and teacher-advisers will foster a sense of community, collaboration, and cooperation among students and staff. They will provide each student with personal attention and positive encouragement – from both a teacher and peers – and help students make connections among the subjects taught in school and the learning that takes place in the community. The meetings might include reviewing report cards, career-exploration activities, and the discussion of such topics as the development of annual education plans, time management, study skills, and understanding and accepting other students' differences. Teacher-advisers should be encouraged to enlist the help of community experts (e.g., engineers, accountants, health care professionals).

Teachers assigned teacher-adviser duties are responsible for:

- helping students complete and review their annual education plan;
- monitoring students' academic progress and the achievement of their goals in their annual education plan;
- communicating with parents and keeping them informed about student progress.

Teacher-advisers will have regular contact with students and will be knowledgeable about students' progress in all subject areas and in other aspects of school life. Through this one contact, parents can obtain an overview of their children's progress at school, which does not preclude their communicating with other teachers if they wish. The teacher-adviser program complements the work of guidance counsellors and other teachers. When necessary, teacher-advisers will refer students who require additional assistance to guidance counsellors or the principal.

Schools have the flexibility to choose the organizational model for a teacher-adviser program that best meets the needs of their students and the school community, while reflecting provincial and board policy. Principals should consult with their school councils, program advisory teams, teachers, and students before designing the school's teacher-adviser program and throughout the design process. House systems, enhanced home rooms, or "schools within schools" are examples of models for schools to consider.

### **CAREER EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES**

Schools must offer a range of career exploration activities and regularly invite partners from the community to design, participate in, and deliver these activities. Career exploration activities provide students with practical applications of classroom experiences, as well as opportunities to make connections between what happens in school and what happens in the workplace or the community. Career exploration activities identify relevant applications of students' academic studies and provide information about how people are contributing to society and the economy (role models). Career Gateway, a Ministry of Education and Training website, is an important information source for elementary and secondary school students.

Students in Grades 1 to 6 are becoming aware of the people in their community and the work they do (at home, on the job, and as volunteers). Teachers should encourage this growing interest by teaching students to observe and ask questions such as the following: Who is involved? What skills do they need to perform this task or carry out this job?

Students in Grades 7 to 12 are more concerned about their futures and how they will fit in at high school, university, or college, during apprenticeship, or in the world of work. Principals and teachers must ensure that students in these grades have access to a broad range of career exploration opportunities, including opportunities in areas not known to students. Teachers and students should take advantage of opportunities that exist in the local and, where possible, the wider community. Teachers should be sure to include activities that are both for-profit and non-profit and in both the private and public sectors, including business, industry, government agencies, arts and culture, and volunteer organizations. Students who are investigating a particular career in a specific sector (e.g., the construction industry) may require a longer and more focused activity in that sector, such as a cooperative education placement.

Career exploration activities can take many forms: visits from guest speakers, contacts with career mentors, involvement in simulation programs (e.g., Junior Achievement programs), and attendance at career conferences (e.g., Women in Science and Engineering). Work-site tours or field trips, job shadowing, volunteer work, work experience and cooperative education, the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), and school-work transition programs are some of the possible out-of-school activities or programs.

Work experience and cooperative education placements give students opportunities to combine their academic studies with a "real world" experience. Work experience is part of a secondary school credit course and provides students with a learning opportunity in a workplace for a

prescribed period of time, usually from one to four weeks. Cooperative education is a planned secondary school learning experience in the community that enhances secondary school credit courses and provides students with opportunities to learn and to apply their knowledge and skills in practical situations. Credits are earned when the curriculum expectations have been met.

These planned learning experiences also help students with their annual education plan and career planning. Students become familiar with workplace practices and employer expectations, possible career opportunities, and concrete applications of their in-school studies. Work experience and cooperative education are of interest to all students, whether they plan to go on to work, college, or university after high school. For those students whose first destination is the workplace, a cooperative education placement provides personal contact with employers. For those going on to college or university, cooperative education and work experience help them make informed decisions about future educational and career choices.

### **WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS, AND SMALL GROUPS**

The guidance and career education program should provide a variety of programs and services, including some that are not necessarily delivered through formal classroom instruction or individual assistance. Workshops, seminars, and small groups can provide timely assistance to students who share a common interest

(e.g., in a specific university or college program) or a common need (e.g., study skills). Topics could include summer-job search strategies, résumé writing, interview skills, conflict resolution skills, learning strategies, assertiveness training, study skills, time management skills, leadership development, peer assistance, self-awareness and assessment activities, and specific university and college programs and admission requirements. These focused programs and services can be delivered in collaboration with school board and community partners and are designed to help students achieve the guidance and career education program goals.

### **MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS**

Mentorship programs provide one-to-one support and role models for students. Mentors are different from teacher-advisers, who monitor the academic programs of the students in their groups.

In partnership with school councils and community leaders, principals may wish to establish mentorship programs that involve community volunteers as mentors. Successful mentorship programs require mutual effort and commitment from the school and the community, the screening and selection of mentors, training and support for the mentors, a process for matching students and mentors in accordance with school board policies (notably board policies regarding volunteers), and a process for involving parents in supporting the program and consenting to their children's participation.

There are many examples of successful mentorship programs. Older students mentor younger students (e.g., reading buddy programs, secondary students mentoring elementary students, university students mentoring secondary students). Adults also mentor students. For example, business people can act as career mentors for secondary school students. In some cases, retired people mentor elementary students.

### **PEER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

Students can help other students with their learning. Peer assistance or mediation programs provide supportive peer role models for students requiring individual assistance as well as a learning experience for the peer helpers involved. Individual assistance may be for academic skill development, improved school attendance, improved interpersonal skills, or education and career exploration. Students trained as peer helpers can act as reading buddies, peer tutors, peer mediators, student guides, career mentors, student mentors, and student volunteers.

In helping others, peer helpers have the opportunity to improve and refine their own interpersonal skills. They prepare for their peer assistance roles by taking an optional credit course from the guidance and career education curriculum policy document or non-credit workshops offered by their schools or school boards. The preparation will be carried out or coordinated by staff who are trained in peer assistance and peer mediation.

### **INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE AND SHORT-TERM COUNSELLING**

The individual assistance and short-term counselling program is designed for students who require additional help in achieving the goals of the guidance and career education program. Such help may be made available on an individual and/or small-group basis. This program can help students:

- assess their personal strengths as they relate to interests and goals;
- select secondary school courses;
- plan their education and career directions;
- assess their strengths, needs, aptitudes, and interests through information provided by the results of standardized measurement instruments;
- improve their personal management skills (work and study habits);
- solve problems in the three areas of learning (student development, interpersonal development, and career development);
- plan for postsecondary tuition and other costs by providing them with information about available scholarships, bursaries, and loans;
- deal with their individual social and emotional needs, including recommendations for appropriate follow-up;
- resolve conflicts both with their peers and with adults.

Students may be identified as needing individual assistance by teacher-advisers, teachers, support staff, administrators, or on the recommendation of parents. Students themselves should also be

able to request – and receive – individual assistance or short-term counselling. Principals must have a clearly identified process for providing individual assistance and short-term counselling and for referring students to guidance counsellors or to relevant board staff (e.g., attendance counsellors, career centre counsellors, psychologists). In elementary schools, the provision of individual assistance and short-term counselling is dependent on the number of guidance counsellors available. The process should also include procedures for follow-up.

The individual assistance and short-term counselling process involves several stages:

- a referral by a teacher, a parent, or an administrator, or a request from the student
- an assessment, including a discussion with the student and consultation with his or her parents, teachers, and others as appropriate
- problem solving and planning with the student
- intervention through individual or small group counselling
- monitoring and follow-up

Community and government agency workers who are involved with children and youth are crucial partners in the delivery of the guidance and career education program. When it is in the best interests of students, and in accordance with board policy, schools may establish small group or individual counselling interventions in partnership with community agencies. Parents and students are also able to directly seek individual assistance or short-term counselling from outside agencies, professionals, or community programs. Information about such programs and services should be available in the school.

Sometimes a student will require more than short-term counselling. In such a case, the principal will arrange a case conference for collaborative problem solving and developing plans to help the student. A case conference may include any or all of the following: the principal, guidance counsellor, special education teacher, ESL/ELD teacher, classroom teacher, teacher-adviser, support staff, social worker, psychologist, other school board or community personnel, parents, and the student. Parents will be informed of case conferences and kept up to date on any recommendations and action plans involving their children. Students who have received individual assistance and counselling will also require monitoring and follow-up by guidance counsellors, teacher-advisers, or other school board staff.

### **Ethics and Confidentiality**

The issue of confidentiality of the information transmitted between a guidance counsellor and a student is governed by several pieces of legislation in addition to professional codes of conduct. Personal information collected by the counsellor is governed by freedom of information legislation. Written information that is included in the Ontario Student Record (OSR) is governed by the Education Act, the *Ontario Student Record (OSR) Guideline, 1989*, and freedom of information legislation.

Students should be informed that any information they give to guidance counsellors will be kept confidential except in circumstances in which freedom of information legislation or other legislation requires or permits guidance counsellors to release information to specified individuals. Guidance counsellors should seek

further clarification in this area from their professional organizations and school boards. Ethical and legal handbooks offering advice and assistance in this area are also available from professional organizations such as the Ontario School Counsellors' Association and the Canadian Guidance and Counselling Association.

If during the course of a counselling relationship a guidance counsellor or other board employee becomes aware that the student may be or may have been suffering abuse, the guidance counsellor or other board employee is required by the Child and Family Services Act to report the suspicion to the Children's Aid Society (CAS) if the student is under sixteen years of age. (Refer to Policy/Program Memorandum No. 9, "Child in Need of Protection/Child Abuse Reporting Requirements", December 15, 1986, for further information.)

## **PROGRAM ADVISORY TEAMS**

Each principal will establish a team to advise him or her on the development, implementation, and review of the school's guidance and career education program. Membership should include representatives from the school's administrative and teaching staff (e.g., guidance counsellors, teacher-advisers, special education teachers, cooperative education teachers), the school council, students, parents, and others, if appropriate, from the community (e.g., representatives of the Industry Education Council, local training boards, and social service agencies). Members of the team should be chosen for their knowledge of the wide range of learning opportunities available in the broader community as well as in the school. Principals should seek advice from their school councils regarding the range of membership from the community.

A school's program advisory team should have responsibility for:

- providing advice on the development and implementation of the school's guidance and career education program;
- reviewing the results of the program's effectiveness survey and making recommendations for program improvement;
- assisting the principal with the communication of the guidance and career education program plan to students, staff, parents, and the community.

Schools within a board may collaborate on the selection of an advisory team that could act on behalf of a number of schools.



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## Assessment and Evaluation

The guidance and career education program must be evaluated regularly to determine the effectiveness of the school's program plan. The program's effectiveness will be determined by students' achievement of competencies, ongoing communication with parents and community partners, and formal program evaluation through the program-effectiveness survey.

Teachers must continually observe, assess, and evaluate students' achievement of competencies in all components of the guidance and career education program. Information from assessment will help improve student learning and identify areas for program improvement. It will help teachers and guidance counsellors determine how well their planned career exploration activities, teacher-adviser activities, and teaching and counselling programs and other components of the guidance and career education program are working, and help them make any changes required to help students achieve the program goals.

The methods for assessing and evaluating students' learning must be clearly identified and based on the program goals. These methods must be appropriate for students' ages, strengths, and needs and for the particular activities being evaluated. Guidance and career education student competencies can be assessed using interviews with students, observation of students' behaviour, checklists, and surveys, as well as student profiles, performances, work samples, journals, and academic and career portfolios. It is important that teachers have students review their learning progress and plans for improvement. Observations by parents, and other teachers, will provide a teacher, teacher-adviser, guidance counsellor, and, in some instances, a school team with information or suggestions that are useful when modifying program components or referring students to those able to provide individual assistance or short-term counselling.

It is especially important that parents be involved in discussions regarding their children's progress. Teachers, including teacher-advisers and guidance counsellors, should gather information from parents and consult with them when assessing students' adjustment to school, achievement of program goals, and plans for future education.

## **REPORTING TO PARENTS**

For students in elementary schools, the Provincial Report Card, Grades 1–8, may be used to report student progress in achieving the goals of the guidance and career education program.

Alternative ways of reporting on a student's participation in the guidance and career education program include discussions with parents that focus on reviewing students' academic and career portfolios and annual education plans (in Grades 7 and 8).

For students in secondary schools, the Provincial Report Card, Grades 9–12, will be used to record students' progress in achieving guidance and career education credit course expectations. Discussion with guidance counsellors and teacher-advisers, and consultation among teacher-advisers, students, and parents using annual education plans and academic and career portfolios are other methods of reporting to students and to parents on students' progress in the guidance and career education program.

## **PROGRAM-EFFECTIVENESS SURVEYS**

Every three years, each principal will conduct a survey to gather information to determine the effectiveness of the school's guidance and career education program and to help improve the program. This survey may be conducted as part of other school-wide surveys.

The survey will ask students, their parents, teachers, and other partners (as appropriate) to evaluate the delivery and effectiveness of the school's guidance and career education program, including all its components (e.g., the teacher-adviser program, the annual education plan, and the orientation and exit programs). The survey will be based on the program goals and student competencies. It should also evaluate the program's impact on the students it serves by identifying areas needing improvement, as well as by soliciting suggestions for priorities and ways to improve the program and its implementation.

The results of each survey will be reviewed by the school's guidance and career education program advisory team; will be reported to students, parents, staff, and the school council; and will directly influence the collaborative planning and future delivery of the guidance and career education program. Once the program plan has been revised to incorporate the improvements indicated by the survey responses, the revised program will be communicated to parents, staff, students, and the school council. (See "Program Planning" on page 11.)

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# Roles and Responsibilities

Elementary and secondary schools, under the direction of their principals, will develop their own guidance and career education programs and make students, parents, teachers, and school councils aware of them. Schools will review and make adjustments to their guidance and career education programs annually and will evaluate their effectiveness and make revisions to their programs every three years. The descriptions that follow clarify the roles and responsibilities of those delivering and those supporting the program.

## **PRINCIPALS**

The principal's informed and active leadership is key to the success of the guidance and career education program in each elementary and secondary school. The principal needs to understand the program's goals and structure, as well as what an exemplary program is like. He or she needs to coordinate the guidance and career education program with the overall school program, assigning it suitable staff, communicating with parents and the larger community about the program.

The principal is responsible for:

- establishing and consulting with a guidance and career education program advisory team;
- developing a comprehensive written guidance and career education program plan for the school;
- implementing and supervising the school's guidance and career education program;
- arranging for the necessary in-service development of staff members who are responsible for delivering the program;
- arranging for the availability of the physical facilities, resources, and staff necessary for delivering the program;

- ensuring that adequate time is scheduled in the school timetable to allow all students to participate in the total guidance and career education program;
- coordinating partnerships in the school community and in the broader local community;
- administering the school’s program-effectiveness survey every three years and analysing and reporting the results to the school’s students, staff, parents, and the school council;
- assigning responsibilities to guidance counsellors;
- assigning responsibilities to teacher-advisers.

### **GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS, TEACHER-ADVISERS, AND OTHER TEACHERS**

All teachers are essential to the effective delivery of the guidance and career education program. The responsibilities of teachers who are guidance counsellors or teacher-advisers are described in the first two columns in the chart on page 28. Responsibilities of all other teachers with regard to the program are described in the third column.

Administrative tasks closely linked to the guidance and career education program, such as working on the school timetable, maintaining Ontario Student Records, processing summer school applications, and completing registration procedures, should be carried out by administrative assistants, technicians, and other professionals, making full use of the technology available to schools. (It should be noted that maintenance of the Ontario Student Records must be carried out in accordance with the policies in *The Ontario Student Record (OSR) Guideline, 1989.*)

### **STUDENTS**

Students also have responsibilities, which increase as they proceed through the school system. These include:

- taking responsibility for their learning;
- taking responsibility for managing their behaviour;
- getting along with others in a variety of settings in the school;
- demonstrating social responsibility;
- completing their annual education plan;
- developing and setting educational and career goals.

### **PARENTS**

Parents have an important role to play in their children’s learning. They can encourage their children’s learning by:

- working collaboratively with the school to help students develop their annual education plan;
- supporting and helping students with critical decision making;
- supporting students’ goal-setting activities;
- monitoring students’ progress and reviewing their progress towards the completion of their annual education plan;
- maintaining contact with students’ teacher-advisers;
- supporting and taking an interest in all of their children’s assignments and activities, both inside and outside the school.

### Responsibilities of Guidance Counsellors

Guidance counsellors:

- assist the principal in developing, coordinating, and implementing the school's guidance and career education program
- provide instruction in guidance and career education through credit courses
- deliver workshops and seminars
- implement a process that will ensure that all students complete an annual education plan
- along with teacher-advisers, assist students in completing their annual education plan
- assist and support teacher-advisers
- assist in the IPRC process and correlate the IEP (including the transition plan) and the annual education plan for exceptional students
- maintain and establish links between elementary and secondary schools and with community partners to coordinate their involvement with the guidance and career education program
- deliver and monitor orientation and exit programs and peer assistance programs
- provide individual assistance and short-term counselling for individuals and small groups
- assist principals in arranging case conferences
- recommend appropriate school board staff and community agencies for the provision of individual assistance and short-term counselling beyond the school
- assist students with the transition to postsecondary education, training, and the workplace
- facilitate the ongoing review and evaluation of the school's guidance and career education program and, every three years, the program-effectiveness survey

### Responsibilities of Teacher-Advisers

Teacher-advisers:

- meet with their students on a regular basis
- monitor the academic progress of their students
- monitor the completion of students' annual education plan
- function as the key school contact for parents
- review annual education plans with parents and students twice each year
- refer students who require individual assistance or short-term counselling to a guidance counsellor or the principal in accordance with the school process
- work collaboratively with the guidance counsellor and other teachers in the school
- participate in case conferences
- participate in the ongoing review and evaluation of the school's guidance and career education program and, every three years, of the program-effectiveness survey

### Responsibilities of Other Teachers

Teachers:

- align the guidance and career education program with the subject expectations for which they are responsible
- consult with the guidance counsellor and other school and board support staff about the needs of individual students
- refer students who require additional assistance to the guidance counsellor or principal in accordance with the school process
- participate in the development and implementation of the school's guidance and career education program
- invite community partners to provide a variety of career exploration activities for their students
- participate in case conferences
- participate in the ongoing review and evaluation of the school's guidance and career education program and, every three years, of the program-effectiveness survey

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Community partners include employers and workers within the wider school community who participate in school-based curricular activities and facilitate educational visits; social and community agencies that might offer skilled staff to lead or support small-group instruction or counselling sessions; and staff from local and regional postsecondary educational and training institutions. These partners play critical roles in planning, supporting, and maintaining successful guidance and career education programs. Principals should invite them to participate on the guidance and career education program advisory team and also in the evaluation of the program.

In choosing community partners, schools should build on existing links with their local communities and create new partnerships in conjunction with ministry and school board policies on partnership development. In addition to those listed above, partners may be chosen from among the following individuals, agencies, and organizations: parents, former students, school council members, senior citizens, volunteer agencies, career centres, chambers of commerce, government agencies, service agencies, service clubs, faith communities, ethnocultural organizations, industry education councils, settlement services, and Native friendship centres.

Principals and teachers should work with their communities to facilitate collaboration and opportunities for involvement through such means as in-school visits by community representatives, community-based mentorship programs, consultations with employers to prepare students for employment, and placements for job shadowing, work experience, community service, cooperative education, and school-work transition programs.



# Implementation Schedule

Policy	Implementation Year	Grades
<i>Choices Into Action: Guidance and Career Education Program Policy for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1999</i>	1999–2000	All grades in elementary and secondary schools
Annual education plan	1999–2000	Grades 7–9
	2000–2001	Grade 10
	2001–2	Grade 11
	2002–3	Grade 12
Teacher-adviser program	1999–2000	Grades 7–9
	2000–2001	Grade 10
	2001–2	Grade 11
Guidance and career education program-effectiveness survey (elementary and secondary schools)	2001–2	—



ISBN 0-7778-8454-2

98-009

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Printed on recycled paper