

# Supporting the Transition to High School

*A guide for parents & students*



**What students can expect when entering high school with an Individual Education Plan (IEP).**

## What is an Individual Education Plan?

An Individual Education Plan is a written plan that describes the special education program and/or services required by a particular student. It may identify **accommodations**, **modified** learning expectations and/or **alternative** learning expectations.



### What will your child's IEP look like in high school?

It will look very similar to the one that was developed for your child in Grade 8. Your child's strengths and areas of needs will be identified and this information will be used to develop your child's educational program.

### What are accommodations?

Accommodations may be made when the student is **able** to meet the learning expectations of the grade or course. Changes may be made to the classroom environment, teaching strategies, assessment strategies, or materials. Accommodations **do not alter** the learning expectations from the provincial curriculum.

### What are modified learning expectations?

Modified learning expectations may be written when the student is unable to meet current grade or course expectations. Modifications refer to the changes that are made to the grade level expectations for a subject or course to meet the needs of the student. They may include:

- expectations from a different grade level
- Significant changes to the number and/or complexity of the learning expectations

### What are alternative expectations?

Alternative expectations may be written for students who need an individualized program that is not based on *The Ontario Curriculum*.

### How will these affect high school credits?

A student who receives accommodations will be working towards achieving curriculum expectations at grade level and a credit will be granted if a passing grade is achieved.

A student who receives **modified learning expectations** will be working towards curriculum expectations that differ from grade level. The high school Principal will determine whether achievement of the modified expectations (depending on the degree of modification) will result in successful completion of the course, and will decide whether the student will be eligible to receive a credit for the course.

*Please note: modifications that leave out significant parts of the material, change the difficulty of the expectations or involve changes to the grade level will likely mean no credit will be granted. A different format from the provincial report card may be used to record achievement.*

A student who receives **alternative expectations** will be assessed in relation to the expectations set out in the IEP. The student will not be granted a credit for the successful completion of a course that consists of alternative expectations. A different format from the provincial report card may be used to record achievement.





## How will I know which education goal is right for my child?

If your child has been receiving accommodations only, and has been meeting learning expectations at grade level, an Ontario Secondary School diploma may be his or her education goal.

If your child has been receiving modified expectations, a Certificate of Accomplishment may be his or her educational goal.

## What if my child changes his or her mind and wants to pursue another educational goal?

Whether your child is looking at achieving a diploma or certificate, any credits that are obtained can be used toward both goals. For example, if your child achieves a Grade 9 English credit, this could be used as a requirement for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma or the Ontario Secondary School Certificate.

## What should your child consider when choosing the level of Grade 9 courses: Locally Developed Compulsory, Applied or Academic?

If your child is currently receiving accommodations only and is meeting grade level expectations, he or she will likely take either applied or academic level courses. Which one he or she takes will depend on his or her individual learning style. If your child is a hands-on learner and benefits from more direct support he or she may want to consider applied level courses. If your child is an abstract thinker and an independent learner, academic courses may fit your child's needs.

If your child is receiving modified learning expectations and/or alternative learning expectations in his or her current program he or she may consider Locally Developed Compulsory credit courses. Locally Developed Compulsory courses can be offered in Grade 9 English, Mathematics and Science. They are recommended for students who have significant gaps in their learning and are behind grade level. Locally Developed Compulsory courses provide students with an opportunity to obtain sufficient background and skills development to prepare them for Grade 9 Applied or Grade 11 Workplace courses.



## What support will be given when my child writes the Ontario Secondary school Literacy Test?

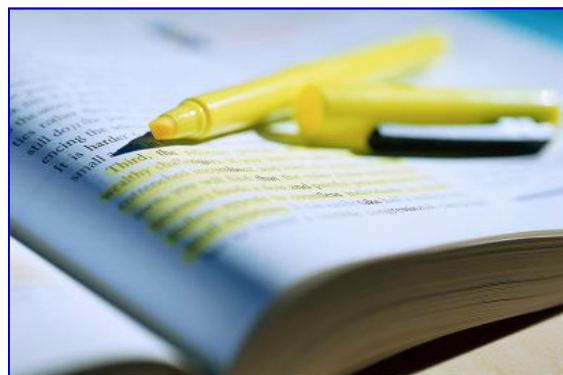
Accommodations that are available for your child during their daily work, may be provided when writing the literacy test. These accommodations will be outlined in the IEP. Possible accommodations may include, but are not limited to: additional time, use of a word processor to record answers, and a small group setting to write the test.

Please note: students who are trying to achieve an Ontario Secondary School Certificate or Certificate of Accomplishment may be exempt from writing the literacy test.

## What does it mean to graduate?

Your child may graduate with either the:

- Ontario Secondary School diploma
- Ontario Secondary School Certificate
- Certificate of Accomplishment



## Diploma & Certificates

In order to earn an **Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSS)**, a student must earn a minimum of 30 credits accumulated as follows:

### Compulsory Credits

- 4 credits in English
- 3 credits in Mathematics
- 2 credits in Science
- 1 credit in Canadian History
- 1 credit in Canadian Geography
- 1 credit in the Arts
- 1 credit in Health and Physical Education
- 1 credit in French as a second language
- 0.5 credit in Career Studies
- 0.5 credit in Civics

### Plus one credit from the following groups:

1 additional credit in English, FSL, NSL or an international language or a Social Sciences and Humanities, or Canadian and World Studies, or Guidance and Career Education, or Cooperative Education\*

1 additional credit in Health and Physical Education, or the Arts, or Business Studies, or Cooperative Education\*

1 additional credit in Science, or Technological Education, or Cooperative Education\*

\*A maximum of 2 credits in Cooperative Education can count as compulsory credits (2006).

### Plus—Elective Credits

12 credits selected from available courses

### Plus

Students must successfully complete the **Ontario Secondary School Literacy Requirement**

### Plus

40 hours of Community Service

In order to earn an **Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC)**, a student must achieve 14 credits distributed as follows:

### Compulsory Credits

- 2 credits in English
- 1 credit in Canadian Geography or Canadian History
- 1 credit in Mathematics
- 1 credit in Science
- 1 credit in Health & Physical Education
- 1 credit in the Arts or Technological Education

### Elective Credits

7 credits selected by the student from available courses

### Certificate of Accomplishment

Students who leave school before fulfilling the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma or the Ontario Secondary School Certificate may be granted a Certificate of Accomplishment.

The Certificate of Accomplishment may be a useful means of recognizing achievement for students who plan to take certain vocational programs (i.e., March of Dimes) or other kinds of further training, or who plan to find employment after leaving school.



## What are Transfer or Transition Meetings?

Transition and Transfer Meetings are held in the spring between every grade 8 feeder school and high school in order to share information and plan specifically for students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Special Education staff and Student Success Teachers from the high school meet with grade 8 teachers, parents and students to discuss course selections, levels, timetables, as well as answer any questions the parent(s) or student may have.

## Can I take my child to visit the school prior to the start date?

A tour of the school and specific areas where your child may be spending the most time can definitely be arranged through the Special Education department at the school your child will be attending. These tours can occur prior to the end of the school year or during the summer before school starts. Tours are encouraged and provide you with an opportunity to ask further questions.

## Should my child and I attend the Grade 8 Parents' Night?

All parents are encouraged to attend this informative evening session as it will provide important information relating to all aspects of your child's experience at high school.

## Who should I contact if I have further questions regarding the transition of my child to high school?

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the Special Education department or the school Principal at the high school your child will be attending.



## Definitions of Terms

**academic course:** greater emphasis on theory rather than practical applications; focus on abstract thinking; more suitable for students who demonstrate initiative and independence in learning;

destination courses after grade 10 include university, college, or workplace

**applied course:** greater emphasis on practical applications rather than theory; will use real-life situations and hands-on application; more suitable for students who benefit from more direct support; destination courses after grade 10 include college or workplace

**locally developed compulsory course:** available for students who have experienced significant difficulties in Grade 8 in English, Math and/or Science; focus on essential skills; will count as compulsory credits towards a diploma; available in both Grade 9 and Grade 10; destination courses after Grade 10 include Grade 11 workplace

**Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC):** this course is designed to help students acquire and demonstrate the literacy skills that are evaluated by the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). Students who complete the course successfully will meet the provincial literacy requirement for graduation. There are specific eligibility requirements to take the course. Please see your high school Guidance Counsellor.

**credit:** successful completion of 110 hours of a government recognized credit course that follows the policy documents; expectations must be at grade level

**compulsory credits:** courses a student must take to receive a diploma (18)

**elective credits:** courses a student is free to select

**substitution:** up to 3 courses may be substituted for compulsory credit courses

**expectations:** what the student is expected to know and be able to do by the end of the year for each subject in each grade level







## *Processes in Place to Support Your Child's Transition to High School*

- **Regular communication** between High School staff and Grade 8 feeder schools ensures that information regarding programs and services is shared.
- **Guidance staff** from each high school travels to each elementary school and provides a **presentation** to all Grade 8 students and parents on the "Transition to High School".
- **Grade 8 Student Day** is held at each High School where students are provided with the opportunity to sit in on classes, have a tour of the school, meet other grade 8 students and listen to presentations from various departments.
- **Grade 8 Parents' Night** is held at each High School in order to provide parents and prospective students with an opportunity to tour the school, hear presentations from each department and ask questions relating to any aspect of the transition to high school.
- **Grade 8 Teachers' Day** is held in order to provide grade 8 teachers with the opportunity to collaborate with Student Success staff and special education staff regarding the transition of students that may require additional support or monitoring.
- **Grade 8 Transition and Transfer Meetings** are held in the spring between every grade 8 feeder school and high school in order to share information and plan specifically for students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Parents are encouraged to attend these meetings as well.
- **Special Education and Student Success "Open House Day"** is held at the beginning of each semester so teachers of grade 9 and 10 students can further discuss the Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Student Success services that may be in place for specific students.



**Successful Transition to High School**

