



ONTARIO PUBLIC
SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION

Leading Education's Advocates

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR SKILLED TRADES AND APPRENTICESHIPS

The program/strategy/initiative must have been in operation for a minimum of one year

School Board: York Region District School Board

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Description of Program/Initiative/Strategy

The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) offers students the opportunity to explore and work in apprenticeship trades while completing their secondary school diploma. Every secondary school in YRDSB offers OYAP for grade 11 and grade 12 students through the Cooperative Education program. Currently, there are approximately 600 students throughout YRDSB participating in the OYAP program. Students can earn up to 4 credits per semester through the program while exploring a career in the trades and developing the skills leading to a full apprenticeship upon graduation.

Accelerated OYAP combines the Co-operative Education experience with the Level 1 apprenticeship instruction at a college/training institute. Our community partners include Seneca College, Humber College, Centennial College, George Brown College, and the College of Carpenters and Allied Trades. This program is offered in Semester 2 and is open to students in their graduating year. Accelerated OYAP students can earn their Level 1 Apprenticeship Training while still in secondary school. YRDSB offers the following Accelerated OYAP Level 1 programs: Carpentry, Plumbing, Electrical, Cook, Bake, Child Development Practitioner, Automotive Service Technician, Truck and Coach Technician, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic.

Our OYAP students, including those with special education needs, are earning 97% of the credits offered each year. In terms of our accelerated OYAP program, we have students earning 94% of the credits offered this school year. Our program gives students an opportunity to embark on their apprenticeship journey as 41 of the 45 students enrolled in the accelerated OYAP program earned their Level 1 Apprenticeship. YRDSB Students, engaged in either the OYAP or accelerated OYAP Programs, report finding a pathway they may not have considered, a greater awareness of career opportunities and an appreciation of the opportunity to work in the field they love with like-minded people.

What has been the impact on Student Learning Student Retention and Pathway Decision Making?

Below are two of our students voices regarding the program:

1st Student Voice:

A few months ago, I began a co-op placement in the automotive field in hopes of finding a career I would enjoy every day for the rest of my life. What started out as a learning experience quickly became a turning point in my life—both personally and career wise. Learning within a skilled trade environment opened my eyes to the kind of workplace that I would not only enjoy, but also prosper in. Though there were challenges, physically and mentally, I knew right away that I loved the thrill. The position I hope to fill is an automotive service technician; which, is to no one's surprise, is typically a male-dominated role.

When people ask me what I am doing next year, I proudly tell them I will be beginning my journey as a full apprentice. *In my life, I have never been more sure of a decision which is somewhat funny since I am, guiltily, quite indecisive. This experience has not only guaranteed me a fulfilling career, but also a fulfilling passion for life. I have gained an immense amount of respect for workers in the skilled trades, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to learn and participate as an OYAP student. The skilled trades incorporate such a wide range of career opportunities and they deserve to be discovered and explored by all students. This exploration can lead to a gratifying journey of self-discovery and happiness—something I can confidently vouch for.*

2nd Student Voice:

In Grade 11, I took a two credit Co-op and worked at a furniture design and build company (Credible Upholstery) building prototypes or small numbers of units of customized furniture, primarily for the hotel and restaurant industries. I took Co-op to try and gain more experience and knowledge in what I would choose to do for the rest of my working life. In Grade 12, I signed up for Co-op again, opting for the Carpentry Accelerated OYAP (Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program). Joining this program was the best decision I have ever made through all my years in high school!

I really encourage others to consider grabbing hold of the amazing opportunity of Accelerated OYAP because it gives you a chance to explore your passion as you pursue your career. I believe that by taking this program your chances of reaching your career dreams will significantly increase. Soon you will be working in the job you love. I feel extremely fortunate to have participated in this program!