

# Helping Students Plan Their Education

The teacher-adviser program and the annual education plan help students develop the goal-setting and planning skills they need to succeed at school and to make a successful transition to work, apprenticeship, college, or university.

## The Teacher-Adviser Program

The teacher-adviser program is being phased in over three years. Teacher-advisers are working with students in Grades 7, 8, and 9 this school year, and will be available to students in Grade 10 by September 2000 and to students in Grade 11 by September 2001.

### Who are teacher-advisers and what do they do?

Teacher-advisers are teachers who also act as advisers for students. They have three main functions: to help students with their annual education plan, to keep track of students' academic progress on a regular basis, and to act as a key school contact for parents.

### How and when do teacher-advisers meet with students?

Teacher-advisers meet with students at regularly scheduled times, working with the same group of students for at least one year. Each school organizes its own teacher-adviser program. Your school principal will have all the details about the program in your child's school.

### What happens at teacher-adviser meetings?

In September, the teacher-adviser will explain school policies and programs to help students understand what is expected of them. Throughout the year, students will

meet with the teacher-adviser and take part in activities that will help them develop the skills and habits they need to succeed in school, including good study habits, time-management skills, and goal-setting skills. The teacher-adviser will also help students work on their annual education plan.

### What role do parents have in this program?

The program provides parents with an opportunity to participate more closely in their children's education.

Parents know their children best, and they can provide important information about students' talents, interests, and skills. This information will be useful to the teacher-adviser in helping students set goals and develop and review their annual education plan. Parents can also help students work towards the goals they set in their plan.

### Why are teacher-advisers the key school contact for parents?

Teacher-advisers have regular contact with their students and are familiar with their progress in all their courses. They can answer many of the questions parents may have. Of course, parents are always free to contact their child's subject teachers or guidance counsellor, or the school principal.

## What do teacher-advisers and guidance counsellors have in common?

Teacher-advisers and guidance counsellors work together by keeping an eye on the overall progress of students. They are there to help each child achieve his or her goals. If a student needs additional help in a particular area, the teacher-adviser may refer that student to a guidance counsellor.

### Can a student ask for a different teacher-adviser?

Yes. If there is a problem, the student and his or her parents should contact the principal.

## The Annual Education Plan

The annual education plan is designed to teach students how to make informed decisions about their education. Students will learn how to set goals and how to go about achieving them. The plan will help them focus on their academic achievement, as well as on career and educational opportunities, extracurricular activities, leadership skills, and community involvement activities. What students learn in these areas will help them decide on and work towards their postsecondary destination – whether it be university, college, apprenticeship training, or the workplace.

Students will complete an annual education plan every school year from Grade 7 through Grade 12. They will work with

their teacher-adviser in Grades 7–11, and with their guidance counsellor in Grade 12. The focus of planning will change from year to year to meet the needs of students as they progress through the grades. In Grade 8, students will focus on preparing for high school, and in Grade 9, on making the transition to high school. In Grade 10, they will begin to consider possible post-secondary destinations, and in Grade 11, they will focus on selecting their destination. In Grade 12, they will prepare for the destination they have selected.

Over the four years of high school, goal setting and planning will become familiar tools for students – tools that will help them succeed in school and achieve their goals throughout their lives.

### **The Four Steps in the Annual Education Plan Process**

In preparing their annual education plan, students will complete the following four steps:

1. Set goals and plan for action
2. Review their progress and revise their plan
3. Prepare for next year
4. Do a year-end review

Each September, students will identify specific goals for the year and make an action plan showing the steps they will take to reach their goals. Throughout the year, they will review their progress and, if necessary, revise their plan. In January or February, starting in Grade 8, students

will prepare for the following year by selecting the secondary school courses that best suit their strengths, interests, and needs and that meet both their diploma requirements and, in Grades 11 and 12, the entrance requirements of their post-secondary destination. At the end of the year, students will review the plan to see how well they did, what they learned in the process, and what they would do differently next year.

Students will work through the four steps during their meetings with their teacher-adviser and in discussions with their parents. Then they will record the results of their work in a booklet called the “Annual Education Plan, Grades 7 to 12”.

### **Why should students spend school time setting goals?**

Success in school is closely linked to future opportunities for education and employment. Young people need to be encouraged to think about what they want for their lives, what they can achieve, and how they can reach their goals. Spending time planning their secondary school career will encourage them to be responsible for their learning.

### **How do students set goals and develop an action plan?**

Students start by reviewing their marks in their courses and on their report cards, and considering what they are good at and what they have accomplished recently.

Then they identify where they need to improve and what career and educational areas they want to explore.

The teacher-adviser will help students decide on the steps they need to take to reach their goals. Students will learn to identify the people and the technological or other resources that can help them along the way. For example, a student who wants to improve his or her marks in science might plan to participate in a peer-tutoring program. A student who wants to find out about the entrance requirements for college programs in journalism might plan, in Grade 10, to conduct an Internet search and review college calendars. In Grade 11, that student might decide on a cooperative education program to gain some first-hand experience in the field.

### **How does the review process work?**

Throughout the year, students will review the goals and action plans they developed in September. They will look at their report cards to review their academic achievement and consider what they have learned from their exploration of career and educational opportunities. Then they will revise their action plans to reflect their progress. If things are going well, they may continue as planned or they may add new goals and action plans.

### **Do exceptional students have an annual education plan?**

Yes. The information in the exceptional student’s Individual Education Plan, including the transition plan, will guide the choices the student makes when developing his or her annual education plan.

### **What role do parents have in the annual education plan process?**

Parents will have at least two opportunities during the school year to provide feedback on their child’s annual education plan. They can help students by being supportive of their goals, pointing out their strengths and accomplishments, encouraging them to explore a range of alternatives for their future, and encouraging them to ask for help when they need it. Parents will be asked to sign the annual education plan form.

This brochure is available on the Ministry of Education’s website, at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>.



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