

The PPC Leads with Vision and Commitment

The Provincial Partnership Council (PPC) is comprised of key leaders from the private, public and voluntary sectors. Through its province-wide campaign, *Passport to Prosperity*, the PPC works together with the Ontario Business Education Partnership, local business-education councils and training boards, school boards, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities to find more employers willing to offer work experience opportunities to high school students.



Tom Flanagan and Jon Hamovitch, Co-Chairs, Provincial Partnership Council issue a challenge for employers to get involved.

"The Council was formed in 1999 with Donald Jackson as Chair. We thank Don for his vision and long-term commitment and also recognize the work of the many dedicated PPC members and association partners who have helped build momentum for *Passport to Prosperity*," says Grant Clarke, Director, Secondary School Policy and Programs Branch, Ministry of Education.

Tom Flanagan, President and COO of BMO Investorline and Jon Hamovitch, Vice President Human Resources for AOL Canada, have assumed leadership of the PPC as Co-Chairs. They have been actively involved in the *Passport to Prosperity* campaign for several years.

The goals of the Council are two-fold. One: to help ensure that every interested Ontario student has a work experience. Two: to encourage all employers across the province to consider offering work experience opportunities to students.

Educator Profile: Laura Crane

Laura Crane is always on the go and spends a lot of time traveling across the city in her portable "office." Laura transports students' files, their curriculum, prizes and a hard hat for her visits to construction sites. Just in case an interview opportunity arises, she also has extra clothes to lend a student.

Laura is one of several co-op teachers leading a new continuous intake program at the Toronto District School Board. The program is a pilot of the Learning to 18 and Student Success initiative, launched in January 2005 by the Ministry of Education, to support successful outcomes for all students, towards their destinations of choice: work, apprenticeship, college and university. Learning to 18 and Student Success aims to go beyond traditional academic achievement and incorporate excellence in alternative high school programs.

"Co-op is phenomenal," says Laura. "It is a way for the students to gain work experience many of them have not had before. The students are treated as equals and this goes a long way with them. I can see that they all grow from the experience and witnessing that transformation is what I appreciate most about the job."

Laura has watched the students benefit from the program, developing goals and earning workplace credits that are getting them that much closer to graduation.

As with other co-op programs, Laura covers the pre-placement curriculum with the students, teaching them about workplace standards and etiquette, and the Health and Safety Act. The students also learn how to write résumés and cover letters, and must actively participate in their job search. This helps the students take ownership of their jobs and ensures they fully understand the job search process.

One of the students from the continuous intake co-op program says, "This program gives you many opportunities to achieve your goals and gain real-life experience. It will allow you to figure out what you want to be in life."



Laura Crane, continuous intake co-op teacher, Toronto District School Board, loads her portable "office."

Laura loves her job. What's more she says, "When I get excited, the students get excited and that's what I like to see."



"Bringing students onboard is helping Landscape Ontario bridge the acute labour gap we're facing."

-Terry Murphy, Manager, Education, Training and Safety, Landscape Ontario

Merit Award Winners Recognized

Last Spring, the Provincial Partnership Council recognized five Employer Champions and five Merit Award winners. While there are thousands of employers in Ontario training the workforce of tomorrow, these ten employers were recognized for their long term commitment to providing work experiences for students. The 2005 Employer Champions were featured in the Spring Update. The 2005 Merit Award winners are highlighted here.

Aramark Canada, Mississauga

Aramark Canada, has been offering rewarding school-work opportunities to students from Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf for ten years. Aramark operates facilities at both RBC and GE Canada in Mississauga. Students gain experience in food preparation and set up; restocking and inventory management; and facility maintenance. For many of the students, this is the first time they have ever been in a working situation.

Dr. Bruce Gibson, Lakefield

Dr. Gibson has opened his dentistry office to co-op students for the past 20 years. Several of the students who have worked with Dr. Gibson over the years, discovered their career paths and have become dental hygienists and assistants. Dr. Gibson has also employed a few of the co-op students. In fact his first student, who started in 1984, is still working with him today.



Angela Marinas, co-op student from John Cabot Catholic Secondary School, talks about her experience at Credit Valley Hospital during a co-op fair.

Kruger International, Pembroke

The KI-Fellowes Program is a partnership between Kruger International Pembroke, a manufacturing facility, and the Renfrew County District School Board, to facilitate school-work transition for high school students. It has been running for ten years as part of the school board's Alternative School Program. The partners share the cost of a teacher. Half of the day the students work on individualized curriculum plans. Co-op placements and industrial training on the factory floor make up the other half of the day.

Niagara Health System, Niagara Region

Formed in 2000, the Niagara Health System is an amalgamation of eight hospitals. The organization has partnered with local school boards to raise awareness about health care career options. The successful local event called "Take CARE of Your Future," helps community team leaders communicate with students and employers. Each semester the Niagara Health System also accepts at least 30 co-op students who rotate through many different hospital departments.

Reko Tool and Mold, Windsor

For the past fifteen years, students from the Greater Essex County District School Board interested in exploring the tool and die industry have been welcomed at Reko Tool and Mold. A strong supporter of education, Reko provides experience for both high school and postsecondary students. Many of the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) students who trained with Reko have been hired by the company.

Canada Career Week: Get Involved!

"Choosing a career path is a challenge at any age. Work opportunities give students a glimpse of career options which they may not have considered, increasing awareness of new and traditional industries," comments Tom Flanagan, Co-Chair of the Provincial Partnership Council.

All Ontario school boards are required to offer school-work opportunities to interested high school students. To meet this obligation, school boards need the help and involvement of employers.

"There are more than 26,000 employers across the province already working with students through the *Passport to Prosperity* campaign. It is impressive to have so many committed employers." says Jon Hamovitch, PPC Co-Chair. "It is a great start but there is much work to be done. There are more than 700,000 high school students across Ontario, all potentially in need of a work experience. We have a big gap to fill. The PPC has taken up the challenge to spread the word with employers."



Students hone soft skills during their placements – skills not easily learned in the classroom.

The week of **October 30 to November 5** marks Canada Career Week, a great time for employers to take up the challenge. Employers can offer a range of school-work opportunities from one day job-shadowing such as "Take Our Kids to Work Day" to cooperative education placements of several months. For more information on providing work experience to high school students in your community, please contact the Ontario Business Education Partnership (OBEP) at 1-888-672-7996 or visit www.olpg.on.ca/en/home.htm.

What Next? Steps to Implementing a School-Work Program

Once you have decided which school-work opportunity is the best fit for your organization, there is some preparation required to ensure success for the organization and the students.

The preparation needed varies by school-work experience, within two general categories, off-site and on-site.

Off-Site

Off-site school-work experiences may include career talks, career fairs or career days, and mentoring.

Things to consider when planning any of these school-work activities:

- Who will be the point of contact at your organization?
- Who will be involved in the school-work activity? Will it be one designated team member or will there be a number of team members participating?
- What existing resources does the organization have that would be appropriate/useful for the work experience being offered?

Some tools and materials that may be helpful when participating in off-site school-work experiences:

- A brief presentation to guide the discussion
- Handouts describing your career and/or organization
- Promotional videos and materials
- An employer booth



High school students can explore their interests and start to chart their career path when offered school-work opportunities.

On-Site

On-site work experiences may include workplace tours, mentoring, job shadowing, school-work transitions, cooperative education and OYAP.

When bringing students into the workplace, we suggest the following preparation:

- Ensure all safety and union regulations are met.
- Ensure that you have the proper resources/equipment to accommodate students.
- Inform employees of your involvement in *Passport to Prosperity* and let them know that a student/students will be in the workplace.

If your organization plans to offer school-work transitions, cooperative education or OYAP, develop a plan to include:

- Designating a point of contact at your organization.
- Determining who will be involved in the work-experience, whether it will be one designated team member or a number of team members participating.
- An outline of the school-work activities and learning opportunities that the organization offers.
- The roles and responsibilities of the student/students and team members.
- Determining what existing resources/equipment the organization has and what resources you need to accommodate a student.
- An outline of any associated costs.



Students learn lifelong skills through their workplace experiences.

Join the Campaign!

For more information about *Passport to Prosperity*, please call 1-800-387-5514 or visit the website at www.edu.gov.on.ca/passport/.

For information on providing a school-work opportunity to a high school student in your community, please contact the Ontario Business Education Partnership (OBEP) at 1-888-672-7996 or visit www.olpg.on.ca/en/home.htm. OBEP is a province-wide network of 26 business-education councils and local training boards facilitating partnerships with employers and schools in local communities.

The Provincial Partnership Council and the *Passport to Prosperity* campaign are supported by the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities. Partners include the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario, Junior Achievement, Landscape Ontario, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Toronto Board of Trade and TVOntario.

Tips for Success from the Experts

Often employers want some tips on creating a positive school-work experience. We gathered advice from four experts, two Employer Champions and two Merit Award Winners.

What makes a successful placement?

- *Someone who is interested enough in the work to find out more.*
– Anita Goodman, Food Services Director, Aramark – GE Canada
- *Students should be positive; try to understand what is expected of them; seek advice and feedback.*
– Peter Milojevic, Training Department Manager, Bruce Power
- *Students should also tell us what they hope to achieve and we will try our best to meet those goals.*
– Lorrie Forget, Volunteer Resources, Niagara Health System

What would you say to employers who are hesitant about taking on a student?

- *This is a great opportunity to see how a future employee adapts to your work environment. Create the same format as a pro hockey team by looking at your future draft picks through the co-op program. This format has been tried and proven.*
– Larry Girardi, Manager, Rector Machine Works
- *Having a co-op student gives you an opportunity to think about the process and how you train someone. You develop systems that make everyone's job easier, even after the student has gone.*
– Anita Goodman, Food Services Director, Aramark – GE Canada
- *Students have gone through safety training and their awareness is far greater than what the typical employers would expect.*
– Peter Milojevic, Training Department Manager, Bruce Power
- *It's a program that works on both ends. If employers are anxious about not knowing what to expect, speak with other participating employers and just be prepared.*
– Lorrie Forget, Volunteer Resources, Niagara Health System



"If we all think about our own upbringing and the people who made a big difference in our lives, that's what happens when young people come into your workplace. Lots of people are reached by these placements. There's a chance here to contribute to individual students. It makes stronger communities – connections being built between employers and employees; employers and students; employers and the students' parents, etc."
- Ben Levin, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education



Co-op students gain knowledge and skills in various industries, such as manufacturing.

Passport to Prosperity Seeks Employer Champions

Participating in a school-work program can have a big impact on a student's career and postsecondary destination choices. It is a valuable part of students' education and helps prepare them for the future by teaching them some "real world" know-how.

Across the province, countless organizations offer school-work experiences, benefiting thousands of Ontario's high school students. The *Passport to Prosperity* Employer Champion Award has been created to recognize and support Ontario employers who have shown dedication and commitment to providing school work experiences to high school students in their communities. The first awards were presented in April, 2005.

The deadline for 2006 nominations is February 15, 2006. To recommend an employer for this Award, please contact Ellen Kalis, *Passport to Prosperity* Champion Award coordinator, at 416-598-5777 or at ellen.kalis@avantsc.ca. You can also check the Ontario Business Education Partnership (OBEP) website at www.olpg.on.ca/en/home.htm for more information. Nominations must include two references to validate the employer's commitment to school-work program.



The 2004 *Passport to Prosperity* Employer Champions (from left to right: Kar Cheung, President, The Amazing Canadian Art Centre; Peter Milojevic, Training Manager, Bruce Power; Larry Girardi, Plant Manager, Rector Machine Works Ltd; Steve Georgopoulos, Manager, Les Suites Hotel, Ottawa and Bob Knox, Plant Manager, Shelley Machine and Marine Inc.) pose with their Inukshuks, symbols of leadership.