

*Passport to Prosperity* is an Ontario-wide initiative to promote the benefits of school-work partnerships, recruit employers to partner with schools, and provide resources to facilitate these partnerships, for the benefit of employers and high school students.

# Update

Spring 2007

## PASSPORT to Prosperity

### *Why Employers Offer School-Work Programs*

*Changing demographics are straining Ontario's supply of skilled resources. As a result, businesses are searching for new ways to attract, train and retain new employees. Smart employers across industries are turning to Ontario's youth as a source of educated and skilled employees. From arts and culture to health sciences, hospitality and tourism, construction, manufacturing and the primary industries, employers in every industry are using school-work programs to attract high school students to their sectors or businesses.*

"Employers can help the next generation of workers make the transition into the labour market and develop essential workplace skills," says Jon Hamovitch, Vice President of Human Resources at AOL, and Co-Chair of the Provincial Partnership Council.

"Connecting the right high school student with the right employer can help focus a student's postsecondary education and work plans based on real-life experience," says Tom Flanagan, Co-Chair of the Provincial Partnership Council.

School-work programs vary in the commitment of time and resources required. There are many options for employers to start small and increase their interaction with students. Employers can start by making in-class presentations, exhibiting at career fairs, or offering workplace tours. Some medium-term options include mentoring a student or offering job shadowing at work. Finally, offering cooperative education programs and participating in the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program are longer term commitments with higher resource needs but provide profound learning experiences for students and the employer.

The Provincial Partnership Council gives five reasons to support a business case for engaging high school students in school-work programs:

1. School-work programs are a cost-effective tool for recruiting, training and retaining young workers.
2. Students bring positive, youthful energy and new skills into the workplace.
3. School-work programs are great additions to a company's corporate social responsibility program, enhancing public image and consumer loyalty.
4. Providing students with work experience opportunities can help retain potential employees in your community after they graduate from high school or when they're finished their postsecondary education or training.
5. Having students in the workplace improves supervisors' multi-generational workforce management skills, which they'll continue to need as new employees fill positions vacated by aging baby boomers.

To learn more about a school-work program that is right for your business, contact your local business-education council or local training board through [www.obep.on.ca](http://www.obep.on.ca).



A student hones her customer service skills at a salon during her high school co-op placement.

### *Passport to Prosperity and the Provincial Partnership Council*

*Passport to Prosperity* is an Ontario-wide, employer-led initiative to increase employer participation in school-work programs, such as cooperative education, job shadowing, mentoring, the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, classroom talks, career fairs and workplace visits. The campaign is sponsored by the Provincial Partnership Council (PPC), a volunteer advisory committee of leaders from the private, public, and voluntary sectors. The PPC's goal is to ensure that every employer in Ontario sees the value of engaging high school students in meaningful work experiences. *Passport to Prosperity* is about encouraging employers to engage young people in school-work opportunities while they're still in high school, as a cost-effective solution to recruiting, training and retaining young workers. School-work programs also help students explore career options and develop workplace skills and experience. The campaign is supported by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and is implemented in local communities by business-education councils and local training boards.

# 2006 Employer Champion Profiles

Now in its third year, the Passport to Prosperity Employer Champion Award was created by the Provincial Partnership Council (PPC) to recognize Ontario employers who have exhibited an outstanding commitment to providing school-work experiences to high school students in their communities. Below are profiles of two of last year's award recipients. The 2007 Employer Champion Awards will be announced at the Passport to Prosperity Employer Resource Forum on April 26, 2007.

## Sayer's Home Hardware

Sector: Retail      Years Involved: 13

Sayer's Home Hardware is a community fixture in Hagersville. As a husband and wife team, David and Cheryl Sayer are passionate about encouraging students to stay in school by offering experiential learning opportunities. They work mostly with students who are at risk of leaving the school system prematurely. The Sayers also provide part-time employment to successful students when they've completed their work placements.



David and Cheryl Sayer of Sayer's Home Hardware receive a 2006 Employer Champion Award from Ian Cunningham of the Provincial Partnership Council.

Sayer's Home Hardware offers high school students several programs including:

- Job Shadowing - Students can shadow employees at the store.
- Mentoring - David and Cheryl have encouraged students to return to school, stay in school, and look for ways to earn credits towards their diplomas.
- Cooperative Education - Sayer's Home Hardware offers full-day cooperative education placements at their store, giving students valuable experience in customer service and stock management, industry knowledge, and insight into running a small business.

## Waterloo Regional Police Service

Sector: Policing      Years Involved: 22

The Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS) is committed to active community involvement that includes working with students as a critical element of their work. Engaging with students keeps the police service in touch with youth and gives students a better understanding of WRPS' efforts to serve and protect. The program is also a successful recruitment tool. With hands-on experience in the Service, students can make better choices about working in law enforcement, human resources,



Sgt. Kathryn Emms of the Waterloo Regional Police Service receives a 2006 Employer Champion Award from Ian Cunningham of the Provincial Partnership Council.

administration, community relations, and other functions in the sector.

Waterloo Regional Police Service offers high school students several programs including:

- Cooperative Education - Students earn credits toward their diploma by completing placements in various WRPS divisions and departments, including: human resources, traffic, fraud, domestic violence, records management, quality assurance and identification. Students also help staff the Children's Village, a small-scale city replica that teaches young children road and bicycle safety.
- Information Sessions - WRPS delivers information sessions to high school students considering a cooperative education placement at the WRPS or a career in policing.
- Promotional Video - The WRPS co-developed a cooperative education video with the Waterloo Region District School Board, profiling the benefits of experiential learning for students.

## Calendar of Events

### Simcoe County Training Board Breakfast with the Mayor Series:

#### Health Care Symposium

Mariposa Inn, Orillia, Ontario  
May 4, 2007 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

#### Tourism & Hospitality Symposium

Midland, Ontario  
May 8, 2007 8:00 a.m.- 10:00 a.m.

#### Manufacturing Symposium

Lions Gate Banquet Hall,  
Barrie, Ontario  
May 14, 2007 8:00 a.m.- 10:00 a.m.

To register visit:

[www.sctb.on.ca/registration\\_form.htm](http://www.sctb.on.ca/registration_form.htm)



The 2006 Passport to Prosperity Employer Resource Forum, Toronto, Ontario.

Adam is a 17 year-old, Grade 12 student participating in a Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) pilot program in agriculture at Chesley District High School. The SHSM offers students bundles of courses (developed with industry) that count for credit toward their high school diploma. This year, the Specialist High Skills Major is being piloted in five sectors: arts and culture, construction, manufacturing, hospitality and tourism, and primary industries (agriculture, forestry, landscaping and mining). Specialist High Skills Majors in more industries will be available next year.

## Specialist High Skills Major in Agribusiness: A Student's Story

For my entire life, I have lived and worked on my family's turkey farm, just outside Chesley. While working and living on the farm, I have had many opportunities to learn about the agricultural industry and how it benefits and affects everyone, as well as its importance within communities. Even in these short 17 years, I have discovered that although agriculture appears to be a simplistic, low-tech industry, it in fact never stops advancing.

I am enrolled in both the Animal Science course and the Horticulture course, which are two of the four 'major' courses in the Specialist High Skills Major in Agriculture. In semester one in Animal Science, our daily schedule was



Adam is a grade 12 student participating in a Specialist High Skills Major pilot project in agriculture.

comprised of both in-class and in-barn learning. In class, we learned and researched the anatomy of various animals, special adaptations, animal nutrition, breeding, and health. During the in-barn portion of the class, the students did daily chores and had a chance to apply what we learned in class. Prior to being enrolled in the program, I was one of the volunteers who helped to upgrade the facilities.

In the beginning of the semester we took a trip to the livestock auction in Keady and purchased several pigs, cattle, and goats. This was an excellent experience for everyone, and even I, having grown up on a farm, had not before had the opportunity to buy livestock. Although it was exciting having animals, we also took responsibility for these animals. We took turns and every weekend a different person did chores at the barn.

The future of agriculture relies on the students becoming interested and involved in the industry. With programs like these, students can explore and realize how many career opportunities there are and how new developing technologies such as genetic engineering and GPS will provide endless career opportunities. Specialty programs like this give a way for local businesses to contribute to their school community and also act as a direct link between businesses in the area and the students.

I am graduating from high school this year and am glad that I was able to be involved in this pilot project. It has been a great experience.

## Frequently Asked Questions About School-Work Programs

### What are school-work opportunities?

Opportunities vary in length, depending on the type of program that students select and the amount of time and effort employers are willing to provide. School-work opportunities include workplace tours, job shadowing, mentoring, cooperative education, school-work transitions, and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program.

### What are employers expected to do?

Employers help demonstrate the work ethic expected of a successful and responsible employee, while providing a safe and healthy environment for the student. Some of the functions the workplace supervisor may perform include: training, mentoring, supervising and coaching.



A student watches veterinary surgery during her co-op placement.

### What are the students expected to learn in work experiences?

Work experiences help students develop good work habits and behaviours, and essential and citizenship skills. Students also gain experience in managing resources, working with others and working with technologies. The work experience is an opportunity for students to see how their in-school learning is applied in the workplace.

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.obep.on.ca](http://www.obep.on.ca).

# Join The Campaign

## Share Your Success Stories

Are you an employer, educator or student who wants to share your story about a school-work program? We want to hear about it! Send your school-work stories to [chrystal.boudreau@avantsc.ca](mailto:chrystal.boudreau@avantsc.ca) to be considered for one of our upcoming *Passport to Prosperity* newsletters.

## Subscribe to the Update

To subscribe to this newsletter, email [passport@avantsc.ca](mailto:passport@avantsc.ca).

## A New Look

The *Passport to Prosperity* Update Newsletter has a new look. Contact [passport@avantsc.ca](mailto:passport@avantsc.ca) to tell us what you think!

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

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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, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Toronto Board of Trade, Landscape Ontario, and TVOntario.

*In your community, contact:*

**PASSPORT**  
*to Prosperity*

c/o 33 Bloor Street East, Suite 1500 Toronto, Ontario M4W 3H1