

making the **TRANSITION**



Finding Your Way From Grade 8 to Grade 9

A Guide for Students and Parents/Guardians

Your future begins here!

This publication was produced by the Rainbow District School Board Parent Involvement Committee with funding from the Ministry of Education Parent Engagement Office.

Chelmsford Valley District Composite School (EP & FI)
3594 Highway 144, Chelmsford
705.675.0225

Confederation Secondary School (EP & FI)
1918 Main Street West, Val Caron
705.671.5948

Espanola High School (EP)
147 Spruce Avenue, Espanola
705.869.1590

Lasalle Secondary School (EP & FI)
1545 Kennedy Street, Sudbury
705.566.2280

Lively District Secondary School (EP)
Integrated Technology Program
265 Fifth Avenue, Lively
705.692.3671

Lockerby Composite School (EP & FI)
Science Technology Education Program
1391 Ramsey View Court, Sudbury
705.522.1750

Lo-Ellen Park Secondary School (EP & FI)
275 Loach's Road, Sudbury
705.522.2320

Manitoulin Secondary School (EP)
107 Bay Street, M'Chigeeng
705.368.7000

Sudbury Secondary School (EP & FI)
Arts Education Program
154 College Street, Sudbury
705.674.7551

EP – English Program
FI – French Immersion



Welcome to secondary school,

a new and exciting time in your life where endless opportunities and pathways are yours to discover.

Throughout this journey, caring teachers and supportive school administrators will work with you to help you maximize your potential and fulfill your aspirations.

As a secondary school student, you will have important choices to make that will open doors for your future. You will also be given opportunities to gain hands-on experience and explore careers of interest.

This guide will help you along the way. It contains information about course codes, pathways, timetables and tips.

This guide will also be of benefit to parents/guardians, our partners in the learning process. Parental involvement improves student achievement and we thank parents/guardians for supporting their children as they make the transition into secondary school.

In Rainbow Schools, we are committed to giving students every opportunity to achieve success in learning and life.

Your future begins here.

Enjoy the journey!

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Secondary School Terms and Definitions

Community Service Hours

Students must complete 40 community service hours, at any time in secondary school, as part of their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) requirements.

Compulsory Course

This is a specific course students must take that fulfills part of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) requirements.

Course Code

This six-character code describes the subject, grade level and stream or destination of a secondary school course.

Credit

A credit value of 1.0 is granted upon successfully completing a 110-hour course with a minimum of 50%.

Culminating Activity

Students may be asked to complete a course culminating activity, which is a major project for each course. There are a variety of assessment practices that teachers may use to address the individual learning styles of all students.

Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO)

Literacy Test

The literacy test is written in Grade 10. A student must pass the literacy requirement to earn an OSSD. The purpose of this test is to ensure that students have acquired the essential reading and writing skills that apply to all subject areas in and up to the end of Grade 9.

Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics

The Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics provides individual and system data on student knowledge and skills based on the curriculum expectations in Grade 9 applied and academic programs. All students in these programs are required to participate.

Exams

Students may write an exam, which tests their knowledge on the entire course work, at or near the end of the semester.

Optional Courses

Students will select 12 courses that are of specific interest to them and which will count towards the 30-credit OSSD requirement.

Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)

The Ontario Secondary School Diploma is granted after fulfilling all necessary credit, literacy and community hour requirements.

Prerequisite Course

This is a specific course students must successfully complete before taking another course at the next grade level.

Semester

The school year is divided into two semesters. A student will take four courses in each semester.

Student Success

Secondary schools have staff and programs in place to support and improve student learning.

Timetable

A timetable outlines the course, time, room number, lunch period, teacher and semester in which students will take all of their courses.



Which one do I choose?

Q & A

Academic, Applied or Locally Developed

You will be asked to select a course type for Grade 9 compulsory courses (English, French, geography, math and science). Read the information below to get a better idea of what course type is best for you. If you are uncertain, get help from your teacher or the guidance department. They will be able to advise you.

Course Types

Academic "D"

Students will learn the essential concepts of a subject and explore related materials. Emphasis will be on theory and abstract thinking as a basis for future learning. Students should be working consistently at or above Level 2+, 3 or 4 in Grade 8. Students should be independent learners with learning skills at the "good" to "excellent" level.

Applied "P"

Students will learn the essential concepts of a subject. Emphasis will be on the practical and hands-on applications of the concepts. Students should be working consistently at Level 1+, 2- or 2 in Grade 8. Students are generally more dependent learners and require greater teacher direction and instruction.

Locally Developed Courses "L"

Students will learn the most essential concepts of a subject. School staff generally recommend these courses for students with specific learning needs. Students should be working consistently at Level 1 or below in Grade 8. Students require greater teacher direction and instruction to accommodate learning needs.

Open Courses "O"

Students will learn concepts and skills designed to prepare for further study in the subject area. Expectations are designed and appropriate for all students. Generally, the optional courses (such as physical education, art, etc.) are offered in the open courses. Students can have a variety of learning skills.

Am I locked into a course or can I switch if I need to?

Yes. You can change course types. In math, if you wish to move into Grade 10 academic, you must successfully complete a half credit transfer course. In all other courses, changes can be made without compulsory course work. If the academic course proves to be too challenging, it is possible to switch to the applied or locally developed courses.

Is there somewhere or someone I can go to for help if I have questions about course selection?

Yes. Your classroom teacher can assist you with selecting courses. You can also attend the Rainbow secondary school information evenings for assistance or call a Rainbow secondary school for more information. Don't forget that your parents/guardians will also be helpful in providing advice and assisting you with your planning.

Do all the courses I select have to be the same - academic, applied or locally developed?

No. You are encouraged to take the one that best suits your needs and/or abilities. You can select a variety of courses.

I have been studying in a French Immersion Program throughout elementary school. Can I continue to take French Immersion courses in secondary school?

Yes. A variety of French Immersion courses are offered at select secondary schools. Students may obtain a French Immersion Certificate upon graduation by completing a minimum of ten courses taught in French.

How do I know if my child is at risk?

Definition of "at risk"

According to the Ministry of Education, the following students may be considered **at risk** of not being successful in their courses, which significantly reduces their chances of graduating:

- Elementary students who are performing at level 1 or below grade expectation.
- Students who are disengaged from classes for a variety of reasons, which tend to be reflected in poor attendance.
- Students who are skipping classes.
- Students who are performing poorly on assessments.
- Secondary students who are performing significantly below the provincial standard, earning marks in the 50s or low 60s, and who do not have the foundations to be successful in the new curriculum.

Did you know?

- Students who fail one course in Grade 9 significantly decrease their chances of graduating.
- Students who miss three or more days a month are considered at risk of not being successful.

Who to talk to:

- Teachers
- Guidance Counsellors
- Student Success Teachers
- Principals
- Vice-Principals

How schools can help students

Secondary schools have a variety of programs and resources available to students to ensure their success:

- Homework clubs that take place at lunch and/or after school
- Homework websites posted by individual teachers for students to access daily homework assignments and due dates
- Peer helper programs
- Additional one-on-one assistance from classroom teachers
- Summer School programs
- Summer Co-operative Education
- Credit Recovery
- Student Success Teacher support
- Guidance Counsellor support
- Attendance Counsellor support
- Social Workers
- Mental Health and Addiction Nurses



First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education

First Nation, Métis and Inuit Support Workers

- Promote a welcoming environment for students and their families
- Support student, family and school connections
- Work within the framework of the Seven Grandfathers' Teachings

Native Studies Courses

- Expressions of First Nation, Métis and Inuit Cultures, Grade 9 (Art Focus)
- First Nation, Métis and Inuit Peoples in Canada, Grade 10 (History and Contemporary Issues)
- English: Contemporary First Nation, Métis and Inuit Voices, Grade 11
- The Grade 9 Native Studies course is considered an art credit and can fulfill this requirement in Grade 9.

Ask the school guidance staff when these courses are offered.

First Nation, Métis and Inuit Centres

- Designed for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and their families
- Students can connect with students from similar backgrounds and students from different backgrounds
- Meet with the First Nation, Métis and Inuit Support Worker, hold meetings or possibly have a quiet place to work
- Each school has its own set of protocols for its centre.

Additional learning opportunities ...

Find out what is available to you and your child to ensure success in secondary school.

Nine ways to succeed:

1. **Co-operative Education** - The Co-operative Education Program integrates classroom theory with practical experience. Students divide their time between the school and the workplace.
2. **Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)** - This Co-operative Education Program gives senior students an opportunity to begin a career in a skilled trade while attending high school.
3. **Dual Credit Programs** - Students can earn credits that can be applied towards both their secondary school diploma and their postsecondary diploma, degree or apprenticeship certification.
4. **Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM)** - The Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) is a specialized, Ministry of Education approved program that allows students to focus their learning on a specific economic sector while meeting the requirements of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). SHSMs assist students in their transition from secondary school to apprenticeship training, college, university or the workplace.
5. **Grade 8 to Grade 9 Transition** - Elementary and secondary teachers work together to ease the transition, through special information nights for students/parents/guardians, transition activities in secondary schools, more dialogue between teachers in both panels, increased professional learning to share best practices and improved tracking of students and their progress.
6. **Student Success Teams** - Each secondary school has a dedicated team that supports students to ensure they earn the credits they need to graduate.
7. **e-Learning** - Secondary students have the option of taking elective and compulsory courses online as they work towards their Ontario Secondary School Diploma. Taught by qualified Ontario teachers, online learning allows students to access their classroom and online learning resources anywhere, anytime. Guidance Counsellors can provide more details.
8. **Blended Learning** - Blended Learning combines classroom learning with e-Learning. Students benefit from face-to-face interactions with their teachers and enjoy the flexibility of online course materials. Online resources can help students review key concepts, stay organized, submit assignments, track achievement and interact with peers.
9. **Technological Education Courses** - Students can explore careers in the trades in Rainbow District School Board's updated state-of-the-art shops, which combine in-class studies and hands-on learning. Technological education courses include Construction, Automotive, Welding, and Design Technology. The philosophy that underlies technological education is that students learn best by doing. The curriculum, therefore, adopts an activity-based, project-driven approach that engages students in problem solving as they develop knowledge and skills, and gain experience in the technological subject area of their choice.

Rainbow Schools are committed to ongoing communication with parents/guardians regarding student progress.



my **Blueprint**
education planner

myBlueprint provides students in **Grades 7 to 12** with a simple step-by-step approach to career and life planning.

Students can build customized high school course plans, identify postsecondary options and explore valuable information about apprenticeships, college programs, university programs and workplace opportunities across Canada.

From their profile, students will be able to set goals, save unlimited plans, short-list programs and occupations of interest, record extra-curricular activities and more.

Visit www.myBlueprint.ca and learn about courses, graduation requirements and the endless options available for students.

With direct access from home, parents/guardians can also get more involved in their child's education.

For more information, contact your child's school.



What students can expect when entering secondary school with an Individual Education Plan (IEP)

What is an IEP?

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a written plan. It is a working document that describes the strengths, needs and the specific educational expectations of a student with special education needs. It outlines the special education program and services required to meet the student's needs, and how the program and services will be delivered. It also indicates how the student's progress will be monitored.

I already have an Individual Education Plan. Will it follow me to secondary school?

Your IEP will transition with you to secondary school. Transition meetings usually take place in the spring, to discuss your strengths, needs and programming at the secondary level. A Special Education Resource Teacher from your elementary school will attend this meeting at the secondary school to discuss the best placement for you. You and your parents/guardians will also be invited to attend.

What kind of supports are offered at secondary schools?

There are a number of supports that can be offered to secondary school students. Many of our secondary schools offer various help labs during the lunch hour. Students who feel that they could benefit from additional practice or support can attend these labs.

Students who have an Individual Education Plan are able to access the resource room for additional supports. Before writing a test or an assignment, a student will make arrangements with their subject teacher. Some of these arrangements may include writing in the resource room, accessing assistive technology, having extra time to complete assignments, verbatim reading, or scribing.

Can I use a computer in my classes?

All of our secondary schools are equipped with wireless Internet. If you would like to use your own personal computer you may choose to do so.

What is the Learning Strategies course (GLE)?

Learning Strategies is a credit bearing course that is offered to students who might benefit from extra support. General learning skills such as study habits, note-taking, organization, time management, etc. are explicitly taught and students are able to bring work from their other courses to receive support. Students can earn up to four learning strategies credits over their secondary school career.

How can parents/guardians support their child's transition to secondary school?

- Be knowledgeable about your child's current IEP and support
- Attend secondary school information nights
- Communicate with the Special Education Resource Teacher in the elementary school and the Program Leader of Special Education in the secondary school
- Discuss with your child and teachers secondary school pathways and goals
- Remain actively involved in your child's IEP development, IPRC, and transition planning

What assistive technology is available in secondary schools?

The same technology is available in both elementary and secondary school. All students can benefit from assistive technology. Kurzweil 3000, Premier and WordQ are all available for use at school and at home to help students reach their full potential. For more information and training, please visit <https://sites.google.com/a/rscloud.ca/at/>.



What Intensive Support Placements are offered in secondary schools?

Secondary courses are organized as Applied, Academic, Open or Locally Developed. Each offers a style of learning that meets the interests, strengths and needs of the student in a slightly different way. These courses are credit bearing and lead to a Secondary School Diploma or Certificate.

Our secondary schools also offer Intensive Support Placements (ISP). These differ from school to school.

These are non-credit bearing. There are three types of ISP:

1. The Life Skills placement is a non-credit bearing program that focuses on life skills training, social skills training, functional academic skills, communication skills, and vocational skills. Most life skills students remain in the program throughout the school day without integration.
2. The Transition placement is a non-credit bearing program with an academic focus tailored towards the strengths and needs of the students. Students will work on various subjects throughout the day and may be integrated into two credit bearing courses each semester.
3. The Autism Spectrum placement (ASD) is a non-credit bearing program. The program focuses on social skills training, behaviour intervention, functional academic skills development, and language development. Students who are in the ASD classroom may spend their school day with no integration into credit bearing classes while others may be integrated in credit bearing courses.

The school provided me with Special Equipment Amount (SEA) equipment. Will I be able to use it in secondary school?

Some students may receive additional board level supports throughout their educational career. These supports may come in the form of equipment (for example, a laptop, an iPad, classroom sound system, a braille, specialized desk and/or chairs, etc.) After your Grade 8 school year, over the summer, this equipment will be delivered to your secondary school and be ready for you to use in the first few days of Grade 9.

Transitioning to secondary school can be stressful. What resources and supports will be available to support mental wellness?

- Social Workers
- Mental Health and Addictions Nurses
- Various group-based programs (i.e., FRIENDS)
- A classroom strategies ring available in all classrooms which provides evidence-based suggestions for staff on how to support students struggling with various mental health concerns within the classroom
- Information pamphlets available for all staff, students and parents, covering a variety of mental health topics, including recognizing signs and symptoms, possible impact on educational achievement, and strategies for support
- Parents and students are encouraged to speak with the school's Principal for more information

What is the difference between elementary and secondary school?

Elementary	Secondary
Full year with the same timetable all year	Two semesters with a different timetable for each semester
Daily timetable changes	Daily timetable is the same
40 to 100 minute blocks of instructional time	60 to 76 minute periods
6-8 instructional blocks per day	4 courses per day
Same teacher for most of the school day	Different teacher for each course
All subjects are compulsory	Mix of compulsory and elective courses
Recess and nutrition breaks	Quick breaks to transition from class to class and lunch
No credits	Credit based, except ISP is non-credit bearing
Students grouped by grade	Students grouped by course type, level and pathway
No exam periods	Exam periods

How parents can help students

Parents can help students be successful in secondary school by doing the following:

- Be aware of your child's strengths and weaknesses. This will allow you to help your child choose the appropriate courses.
- Closely monitor your child's attendance. Continue to notify the school should your child be absent from school.
 - On a daily basis, parents will receive an automated phone call advising them of any classes their child may have missed. The phone calls can be password protected. Call your child's school for more information.
- Communicate with your child's teachers on a regular basis.
 - Call your child's school to find out how.
- Closely monitor your child's progress.
 - Report card cycle:
 - Interim reports are distributed in October and March.
 - Mid-term reports are distributed in November and April.
 - Final reports are distributed in February and July.
 - Parent/teacher interviews are typically held in October and March.
- Many schools now have monthly progress reports.
- Be aware that your child will typically have four teachers per semester.
- Know who to turn to for answers. Support for students in secondary school includes:
 - Student Success Teachers
 - Guidance Counsellors
 - Special Education Teachers / Educational Assistants
 - Vice-Principals and Principals
- There is a direct relationship between a student's attendance and marks.
- Get involved in your child's school through School Council, community coaching opportunities, and the Parent Involvement Committee. Attend school events.



Six important learning skills necessary for student success

Striving to be successful in each learning skill will ensure overall academic success.

Responsibility

Fulfills responsibilities and commitments within the learning environment

Completes and submits class work, homework and assignments according to agreed-upon timelines

Takes responsibility for and manages own behaviour

Independent Work

Monitors, assesses and revises plans independently to complete tasks and meet goals

Uses class time appropriately to complete tasks

Follows instructions with minimal supervision

Collaboration

Accepts various roles and an equitable share of work in a group

Responds positively to the ideas, opinions, values and traditions of others

Builds healthy peer-to-peer relationships through personal and media-assisted interactions

Works with others to resolve conflicts and build consensus to achieve group goals

Shares information, resources and expertise and promotes critical thinking to solve problems and make decisions

Organization

Devises and follows a plan and process for completing work and tasks

Establishes priorities and manages time to complete tasks and achieve goals

Identifies, gathers, evaluates and uses information, technology and resources to complete tasks

Initiative

Looks for and acts on new ideas and opportunities for learning

Demonstrates the capacity for innovation and a willingness to take risks

Demonstrates curiosity and interest in learning

Approaches new tasks with a positive attitude

Recognizes and advocates appropriately for the rights of self and others

Self-Regulation

Sets own individual goals and monitors progress towards achieving them

Seeks clarification or assistance when needed

Assesses and reflects critically on own strengths, needs and interests

Identifies learning opportunities, choices and strategies to meet personal needs and achieve goals

Perseveres and makes an effort when responding to challenges

Ensure #SUCCESS

As parents, you can focus on a few key areas that can positively impact your child's opportunity for #success.

A few examples include:

#Attendance

Recommendations

- Students attend school each day.
- Students arrive to class on time.

Warning Signs

- Your child is missing school more than 10% of the time.
- Your child's report card shows more absences than you expected.

Strategies

- Discuss your child's attendance record with the school administration and plan to ensure regular attendance.
- If your child is absent, ensure missed work is completed and submitted.

#Organization and time management

Recommendations

- Students are taking accurate notes and keeping binders well organized.
- Students are using an agenda to plan for assignment completion and evaluations.

Warning Signs

- Your child does not have or use an agenda.
- Your child's notebooks are disorganized and appear incomplete.

Strategies

- Obtain an agenda for your child.
- Monitor the use of the agenda and notebooks.

#Homework and submission of assignments

Recommendations

- Grade 7-9 students should spend 45 to 90 minutes on daily homework.
- Grade 10-12 students should spend 1.5 to 3 hours on daily homework.

Warning Sign

- If you do not see your child doing homework regularly or your child says "I don't have any homework" on a regular basis.

Strategies

- Contact the school or teacher and get informed about the situation.
- A student should be reading and studying for the time recommended each day.

#tips from secondary school students

Get involved

There are many opportunities to participate in sports, bands, clubs, competitions and committees.

#tip: Listen to announcements to get more information.

Money

Each school will charge a voluntary student activity fee which covers many student activities planned throughout the year. Fees may also be charged for participation in some courses, clubs and school teams to cover extraordinary costs.

#tip: Keep extra change in your locker for unexpected purchases, such as a snack from the cafeteria or the need to use the pay phone.

Be prepared

Obtain general school supplies during the summer. Teachers will let you know if you need specific course supplies on the first day of class.

#tip: Exchange phone numbers with a class buddy who can pick up notes or homework for you if you are absent from school.

Getting good grades

Getting good grades is easier if you follow these tips from students.

- #tips:
- Attend and participate in all classes.
 - Plan a regular time to study each evening.
 - Balance recreational activities with school work.

Locks/lockers and books

You will be given your own lock and locker. Keep your lock combination a secret to protect the belongings you have in your locker.

#tip: You don't need to carry all your books for the day at all times. Store some in your locker and return to your locker during the day to exchange books.

Relationships

Building positive relationships with your teachers and classmates will make school a great place - one that is more than just books and classes.

- #tips:
- Build new friendships by joining clubs and teams. You will be happy you did.
 - Know when teachers offer extra help or ask them for help when needed.

Transportation

If you are eligible for busing, find out your travel arrangements prior to school by contacting the Sudbury Student Services Consortium at 705.521.1234 or 1.877.225.1196. Visit the Consortium website at businfo.ca.

#tip: Have a back up plan to get to and from school in case your regular travel arrangements fall through. If you participate in after school activities, you will need to make your own travel arrangements to get home.



Where you belong.

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 **Rainbow Schools**
Reaching minds. Touching hearts.
rainbowschools.ca

408 Wembley Drive
Sudbury, Ontario P3E 1P2

Tel: 705.674.3171
Fax: 705.674.3167
Toll Free: 1.888.421.2661

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