



ONTARIO PUBLIC
SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION

Leading Education's Advocates

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

(For the purposes of this survey alternative education is defined as any program/approach that supports students who are not successfully engaged in school and require an alternate delivery model)

School Board: Greater Essex County District School Board

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Name of Program/Initiative/Strategy: Alternative Education

Description of Program/Initiative/Strategy

The focus is on programs/initiatives/strategies that increase student engagement, confidence, achievement and well-being. In the brief description please provide answers to the following questions: Where the program/initiative/strategy is delivered (school/board locations)? Who is responsible for delivering and monitoring the program/initiative/strategy? Who is the target audience? Are there any community partnerships involved? Are there any staffing or budget implications? Are there any special resources required? What are your indicators of success, etc.?

As part of the revised work in Alternative Education at GECDsBs' Public Alternative Secondary School we are exploring how to improve a flexible approach to Alternative education to provide support to our learners.

1. Provision and Partnerships:

- a. Through our Alternative and Re-engagement consultant we have developed pathway programs to support our learners. This includes a partnership with the Unemployment Help Center, providing students with credit opportunities and certification in safe food handling within the commercial "Community Kitchen". The "Community Kitchen" creates meals for our local meals on wheel service. The board works with the UHC's executive Chef and employees a full time Culinary Arts teacher to supervise and provide supports for up to 28 students per semester. Students find the alternative "real life" setting a plus and we have evidence of improved attendance, retention and credit accumulation through the program.
- b. Our continued partnership with St. Clair College reaps benefits of improved attendance and success for our student engaged in the School within a College program. We have increased this program to include Adults this year and it has received positive feedback and some success. Again alternative setting, provision of a full time teacher to support student success and wellbeing have been crucial in the program.
- c. Moving from our previous homebuilder course The Greater Essex County District School Board has nailed down a unique cooperative education partnership with the Carpenters' District Council of Ontario, Local 494 intended to provide career

preparation for students with an interest in the various sectors of the construction industry, with an emphasis on carpentry, acoustic and drywall and resilient floor workers.

"In the past, it has sometimes been challenging for us to be able to find placements for the students who were interested in the construction trades," says Superintendent of Education for Student Success Vicki Houston. The unique aspect of this cooperative education program is that the students will be placed with Local 494 where they will receive their basic skills and health and safety training. Local 494 will then work with contractors to put students in work placements at construction sites throughout Windsor and Essex County.

"We are committed to having our members work with and mentor the next generation of workers," stated Local 494 Coordinator Tomi Hulkkonen during the official announcement. "Experience is something that just cannot be taught in a classroom environment."

GECSB Director of Education Erin Kelly (*pictured, above*) says, "Public education is evolving rapidly. We have moved from a system that fits students into the options offered to one where many programs are developed to meet the needs and desires of the students.

"We hear, quite often, about the shortage of and demand for skilled trades professionals in construction and manufacturing but the voices we really need to listen to are those of our students. They are equally aware of what's happening in the community and they know that the future looks promising for careers in the skilled trades. So they are looking for programs that will give them a strong foundation and a competitive edge in the job market such as OYAP or a co-op placements."

This program provides a 4 credit coop placement and students will commit to an entire day for a semester. It is open to high school students who are 16 years of age or older.

- d. We have connected and continue to support an outreach group within a local Drug Rehabilitation center called "Brentwood" Students are supported with course work and provided instruction and support by a teacher 2 nights per week to develop success and improve credit accumulation for those in treatment during school time.

2. Programming

- a. Reviewing programming we have moved our school to a hybrid model over the last 6 months with full implementation as we move into the new year. This has improved accessibility, enabled students from other areas to access services previously requiring distances to be travelled and supported greater instruction based learning within the Public Alternative Secondary School with virtual classrooms and face to face sessions utilizing technology to support groups in different locations. The model is proving popular with students across the board as it supports their needs more effectively than the previous paper based model
- b. Sequential programming has also been implemented over the last few months with full implementation in Sept 2018. Student are now required to work on single courses at a time full day, rather than multiple courses in a day. It has supported students uptake in the program and helped improved credit accumulation in the trials completed so far.

