



ONTARIO PUBLIC
SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION

Leading Education's Advocates

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR SKILLED TRADES AND APPRENTICESHIPS

The program/strategy/initiative must have been in operation for a minimum of one year

School Board: Limestone

Contact Person and Email Address: Scot Gillam – Associate Superintendent of Safe and Caring Schools and Program – gillams@limestone.on.ca

Name of Program/Initiative/Strategy: SWAC (School Within a College) WITTS (Women in the Trades)

Hyperlinks to Documents or Website(s) Describing this Program/Initiative/Strategy:

<https://www.stlawrencecollege.ca/programs-and-courses/prepare-for-college/dual-credit-program-for-hs-students/dual-credit/k-dual-c/>

Description of Program/Initiative/Strategy

SWAC WITTS was developed as a program designed specifically to both re-engage young females who were struggling at their home schools, as well as provide a doorway to multiple trades, in the hope that we could provide the trades as a potential pathway to more females in Limestone. The environment is hands-on and supportive and provides insight into the trades that are offered at St. Lawrence College. Students also receive their senior credits in Math and English. The course also provides other experiential opportunities such as certifications in Working at Heights and Chainsaw Safety. Students will also experience the Young Women's Conference at the Provincial Skills Competition. This program is coordinated by the Associate Superintendent of Safe and Caring Schools and Program, along with the Expanded Opportunities Consultant and Dual Credit Coordinator. The target audience is females in Grade 10 who are struggling with attendance and/or other issues and graduation is at risk if an intervention plan is not completed. This course has been oversubscribed since its inception and its retention and graduation rates are quite high. Recently, five females graduated from SWAC WITTS at their home site after completing this program – prior to this, their ability to graduate was extremely compromised. In both SWAC and SWAC WITTS this year, over 190 credits were granted to 36 students, including 18 females solely in WITTS. The program is staffed through central staffing and Student Success. The program relies on trade instructors at St. Lawrence agreeing to take on new students without any compensation. We are indebted to the staff at St. Lawrence and their leadership in supporting this endeavor.

What has been the impact on Student Learning Student Retention and Pathway Decision Making?

The impact is significant beyond credit accumulation, increased attendance and improved graduation potential. Many of the SWAC WITTS students are either returning to the mainstream SWAC class to complete secondary school, returning to their home school with renewed confidence, or are attending post-secondary school. A few of the SWAC WITTS graduates have selected to remain in a trade at St. Lawrence – one in electrical and the other in hairstyling. The confidence along with the doors that this program has opened for young females in Limestone is immeasurable. It really is changing lives.