



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: Hamilton – Wentworth District School Board

Contact Person and Email Address: Glenn Cooke – Principal - System Alternative Education
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Name of Program/Initiative/Strategy: Grace Haven

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

<https://www.facebook.com/grace.haven.921>

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.?

Grace Haven supports young mothers/mothers-to-be who also may require emotional/behavioural supports. Students are in the general age range of 13-21 and usually remain with the program for 1-2 academic years. The program is located in the downtown core of Hamilton. Clients benefit from pre and postnatal education and support in such areas as nutrition, child development and parenting in a setting integrated with their educational needs. The program works to support young mothers in continuing their education while developing their parenting skills and emotional readiness in an environment that is different than their home/community school. The community partner is the Salvation Army who provides guidance and direction for new mothers as they support their newborns.

The program is financially supported by the Ministry of Education through the Care Treatment Custody and Corrections envelope. Staffing includes three full time teachers and child minding and school liaison support through the Salvation Army partner. The partner agency will also support students with housing and nutritional needs for both mother and child. Success is measured by credit accumulation rates and graduation. The program supports 30 students and our yearly graduation rate averages 25% as students work towards their Ontario Secondary School Diploma at their own pace. Many students continue their education into post – secondary.

What has been the impact on Student Learning?

Educational strategies, based on academic strengths, weaknesses, and performance levels are developed and implemented for each student. Students work toward earning credits with the goal of the OSSD, and participate in EQAO assessments as appropriate. Most years 7-10 students earn their OSSD and some qualify for post-secondary. The program is delivered in person. Students who were unable to complete their education in a traditional composite school setting are able to reengage in an academic setting with personalized supports. Life pathways and support for both parent and child creates a foundation for students accessing community support and success in the world beyond school. The greatest impact is on the well-being of these students because of the strong triad partnership between the alternative program, the community partner, and the supporting family members.