

**#840250**

**New  Brunswick**

**School-Career Transitions:  
A Framework for New Brunswick  
High Schools**

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Educational Programs & Services Branch  
Department of Education  
PO Box 6000  
Fredericton, NB, E3B 5H1

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## Preface

Programs that provide opportunities for youth to engage in activities in the workplace and explore their areas of interest reinforce the relevance of learning not only in school but in all contexts. School-career transition programs and initiatives provide these opportunities and create links among school, learning, the community, and the future.

The New Brunswick Department of Education recognizes the critical importance of providing a range of programming that will allow our youth the opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to become contributing and productive members of society. Central to this process are the realization of learning potential and a commitment to learning throughout life. Opportunities for career exploration play an integral part in the personal development of students, their career and post-secondary education planning (university, community college, apprenticeship and private learning institutions) and their future life roles.

## 1.0 A Framework for School-Career Transitions

### 1.1 Introduction

One of the underlying purposes of our public education system is to enable students to make a successful transition to adult life roles. Whether for purpose of earning income or doing community service, engagement in the world of work is a central activity for most adults. Youth should have the opportunity to engage in work that is important to others and thus experience the rewards that such work produces. Efforts that expose youth to the workplace and seek to connect in-school learning with the world beyond the classroom are critical to student understanding of both their present and their future life roles.

School-career transition programming is viewed as an essential component of the New Brunswick high school experience for all students. Experiential in nature and design, transition programming provides career exploration activities, skills development and acquisition opportunities, and exposures to the world of work. All high schools are expected to provide school-career transition programming.

The *Atlantic Canada Education Foundation Essential Graduation Learnings* represent the knowledge, skills and attitudes that students are expected to demonstrate upon the completion of high school. School-career transition programming supports the acquisition and demonstration of essential learnings in the six strands of Aesthetic Expression, Citizenship, Communication, Personal Development, Problem Solving and Technological Competence.

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The school-career transition process, once the norm and characterized by going to school, going to work and then retiring, can no longer be relied upon by Canadian youth. Much has changed. Today, the school-career transition process has become increasingly complex, more difficult, and one that spans a much greater proportion of time than ever in the past. Moving through the education system and into adult life roles is neither a simple or linear process. Working and learning, as a continuum of activity, has become and will increasingly be necessary to realize one's career and life aspirations.

Over the past decade, school-to-work transitions have become an area of concern and attention for discussion of government policy, a focus for educational reform and a reflection of the expectations of society across Canada and North America. Research has documented a number of trends and has prompted considered study of both the nature and the implications of delayed, arrested or compromised transitions. Social stability, economic growth and the development of a critical citizenship base are increasingly being linked to the ability of our youth to successfully engage in effective school-career transitions.

## **1.2 Purpose**

This document provides a context, framework and future directions for school-career transition programs and initiatives for New Brunswick high schools and is complimented by *School-Career Transitions: Guidelines and Procedures for N.B. High Schools*; *Cooperative Education Curriculum*; *Youth Apprenticeship Program Operations and Curriculum*; and other related New Brunswick Education policy and curriculum documents.

## **2.0 School-Career Transitions is for All Students**

All students can benefit from participation in school-career transition programs and initiatives. Regardless of specific or diverse learning needs, all students are to be provided a full range of learning opportunities within the context of regular school offerings and programs. Learning needs are addressed in the classroom by the use of differentiated curriculum that recognizes individual differences, multiple intelligences and learning styles. Students operating under the provisions of a special education plan that includes a transition plan component should participate in established programming and engage in programming specifically designed to meet their needs.

## **3.0 Programs/Courses**

### **Career/Work Exposure Programs**

Career/Work exposure programs provide students with short-term, observational experiences in the workplace. These programs allow students to observe the application of skills and gain an appreciation of the tasks, responsibilities, educational requirements and workplace

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environment of various occupations/careers. Length of exposure normally ranges from one-half day to three days, and the programs are coordinated by school-based personnel with the support of the community. Job Shadowing, Co-op Shadowing, Take Our Kids To Work and Applications of Working and Learning (AWAL) are examples of such opportunities for career/work exposure. See *School-Career Transitions: Guidelines and Procedures for N.B. High Schools*.

### **3.1 Job Shadowing**

Job shadowing allows a student to observe a worker in her/his occupational environment. The duration of a job-shadow experience may vary from one-half to one day and may extend up to three days. Multiple job-shadowing experiences may be engaged in to allow additional exposures to different work environments and a broadening of career information. Job shadowing may be a planned experience as part of a high school course or one undertaken as part of a student's transition planning and preparation.

### **3.2 Co-op Shadowing**

Co-op shadowing allows a student to accompany a cooperative education student to her/his work placement and observe the co-op student within her/his work environment. The duration of a co-op shadow may vary from one to three half-day experiences. Multiple co-op shadowing experiences may be engaged in to allow additional exposures to different work environments and a broadening of career information. Co-op shadowing may be a planned experience as part of a high school course or one undertaken as part of a student's transition planning and preparation.

### **3.3 Applications of Working and Learning (AWAL)**

Applications of Working and Learning (AWAL) offers the opportunity to identify how the skills learned in the classroom have actual application in the workplace. Originally developed for use as professional development for teachers, AWAL offers students a similar experience. Using a structured process, students visit a worksite and interview a worker to determine the skills used in a particular occupational area. This half-day experience culminates in the development of a relevant classroom activity designed to support the development and use of the skills observed.

## **Career/Work Exploration Programs**

Career/work exploration programs provide students with longer-term, planned exposures and experiences in career and occupational areas of interest. They incorporate and integrate an in-school curricular component and an out-of-school, work-based experiential component that takes place in the public, private or not-for-profit community. These programs serve as both career exploration and skills development opportunities and assist youth in identifying appropriate post-secondary education, training and/or work pathways.

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### **3.4 Cooperative Education**

Cooperative education courses offer career exploration and essential skills development through workplace learning as part of a student's high school experience, in cooperation with public, private and not-for-profit organizations and businesses. Cooperative education courses are normally scheduled, during the school day, as half-day experiences for a full semester. These high school credit courses contain an in-school component with identified learning outcomes that prepares students for their work placement and the on-going reflection and integration of workplace learning experiences. A workplace component reflecting outcomes identified in an individual skills learning plan, developed in consultation with workplace personnel, provides the student with specific exposures and experiences to support learning and skills development. Two cooperative education courses will be available for delivery by high schools: Career Exploration Cooperative Education (under development for piloting in 2003) and Career Focus Cooperative Education 120 (course revision available September 2002). See *Cooperative Education Curriculum; School-Career Transitions: Guidelines and Procedures for N.B. High*

### **3.5 Youth Apprenticeship Program**

The Youth Apprenticeship Program provides high school students with the opportunity to engage in long-term career and skills development experiences directly related to their career and occupational interests. Through the completion of an outcomes-based curriculum and two paid summer employment periods, students develop a knowledge base through applied learning, acquire essential employability skills and explore the career potentials offered within the employment sector experienced. All program components of YAP are placed outside of the regular school time frame. See *Youth Apprenticeship Program Operations and Curriculum*.

### **3.6 Workplace Experience**

A workplace experience is an application component of a high school course that provides students with a workplace learning opportunity for a limited period of time. Ranging from one to six weeks, a workplace experience provides a real-life context for learning, skills development and skills application that is directly related to the course of enrollment. A workplace experience, including virtual experience, may be included as part of any course, in any subject area, provided an individual skills learning plan containing curricular learning outcomes and reflection is developed and the experience is planned, supervised and documented in accordance with *School-Career Transitions: Guidelines and Procedures for N.B. High Schools*.

### **3.7 Virtual Workplace Experience**

Changes in information and communication technologies have created new opportunities for students to engage in workplace and workplace-like experiences. Virtual workplace experiences can enhance and expand the range of opportunity for students, including those in rural areas, without the necessity of leaving the school

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building. A virtual workplace experience may be offered as a workplace experience or as cooperative education.

#### **4.0 Other Programming and Initiatives**

Rapidly changing economic, social and political dynamics will present opportunities for future school-career transition programming and initiatives. Such opportunities may serve to better address local, regional or provincial circumstance; address future skills requirements; enhance post-secondary education pursuits; support self-directed workforce entry or promote engagement in community-based service. Local jurisdictions are encouraged to engage the community, establish partnerships and develop appropriate opportunities for youth that support the intent of this framework and conform to guidelines established in *School-Career Transitions: Guidelines and Procedures for N.B. High Schools*.

#### **5.0 Common Program Elements**

School-career transition programs and initiatives offer opportunities for workplace exposures and skill-development experiences to all high school students. Student preparation for these experiences is critical to the success of all school-career transition programs. All programs require adherence to *Work Education Policy 307* criteria and to specific implementation and supervision procedures to ensure adequate student and employer preparation; student safety and well-being, maintenance of program integrity, and the continued support of cooperating community businesses and organizations.

All students enrolled in a school-career transition program experience must participate in an in-school, pre-placement component prior to engaging in any workplace assignment. This pre-placement component will include responsibilities of program participation, learning expectations, work readiness skills, and health and safety orientation/training.

An individual skills learning plan must be developed, and students must also be provided the opportunity to reflect upon and integrate the transition program experience with personal career aspirations and curriculum expectations. See *School-Career Transitions: Guidelines and Procedures for N.B. High Schools*.

#### **6.0 Program Coordination**

School-career transition programming must be coordinated by personnel with the skills necessary to ensure overall success and sustainability. The range of offerings, extent of community support and overall integrity of transition programming will often be dependent upon the coordination and facilitation function exercised at the school level. The appropriate processes used to assist all youth in identifying program components of interest, the identification and maintenance of suitable workplace environments and cooperating organizations, and the frequent and consistent on-site monitoring of students all require specific assignment of responsibility that must be staffed, coordinated and facilitated by or

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through those responsible for other program components. *See School-Career Transitions: Guidelines and Procedures for N.B. High Schools.*

## **7.0 Conclusion**

High school youth are engaged in a developmental process that takes them from the world of childhood dependency to adult independence and self-reliance. The demands of the future are such that the transition from school into appropriate educational and career pathways represents a critical yet often confusing period for our youth. This transition is further affected by changing social and economic dynamics accompanied by an increasing demand for higher levels of skills and knowledge that are necessary for success in the workforce and engagement in the community. The knowledge and skills developed in high school form the basis upon which successful engagement in future life roles will depend.

Our youth face a future containing a horizon that in many ways will be unlike that seen by previous generations. Driven by the expansion of global trade, the growth of information and communications technologies and changing demographics, the future will hold challenges and opportunities that will require different skills and knowledge from those required in the past.

School-career transition programs and initiatives offer New Brunswick youth opportunities for the development of skills and knowledge, the exploration of personal potential, and the identification of appropriate educational and learning pathways to support the successful integration of future life and work roles.