

Stepping

Up!

**Your Guide to Ontario's
New Standards for
High School**



 Ontario

Ministry of Education
and Training



Looking

STARTING HIGH SCHOOL IS AN exciting time — you'll have many new opportunities and new challenges. And beginning in 1999, new standards for education will be introduced in high schools across Ontario. There will be another big change as well: like students in other provinces, students in Ontario will complete high school in four years instead of five.

The new high school program will be introduced in Grade 9 in September 1999 and will be phased in over the following three years in the higher grades. This guide will help you and your parents¹ prepare for the new four-year program and the new curriculum. It provides an overview of how courses in each grade will build towards the next, preparing you for your postsecondary goal, whether it be college, university, apprenticeship, or the workplace.

The new program recognizes that students enter high school with different strengths, interests, and goals. Now, you'll be able to select courses that suit your needs and that take you gradually towards your goal through an increasingly specialized four-year program.

¹ Throughout this booklet, the word *parents* is used to stand for "parent(s) and guardian(s)".

In addition to the challenging new curriculum, Ontario's new standards for high school will now provide greater opportunities for cooperative education, work experience, and apprenticeship training. There will also be a new requirement for community involvement to help you explore and expand your interests, and to prepare you for responsible citizenship.

Ontario's new standards for high school have been developed in consultation with teachers, parents, employers, and representatives from colleges and universities to ensure that your education is relevant to today's changing world.

Throughout high school, you will be working with your parents and a teacher to help you make your course selections and to develop an annual education plan. Preparing the plan will help you develop your interests and identify future educational and career opportunities. It will ensure that you are taking the courses you need to progress smoothly through high school and towards your goal.

The new standards for high school are designed to ensure that you receive an excellent education. An Ontario education will be your passport to jobs, hope, opportunity, and growth in the twenty-first century.



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Please Note:

Information in this guide applies to students starting Grade 9 in the 1999–2000 school year or later.



Choosing Courses and Planning for the Future



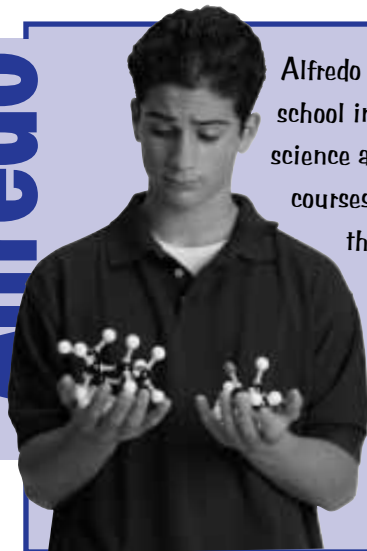
Making Choices in Grades 9 and 10

As you prepare for Grade 9, you will have some interesting choices to make. You will have the opportunity to explore your interests and think about your future goals while keeping as many options as possible open for the future. All Grade 9 courses build on the Grade 8 curriculum, and all will require you to meet rigorous standards as they prepare

you for studies in the senior grades.

In disciplines such as the arts, health and physical education, and business studies, all students will take the same type of course, called an *open* course. In the core subjects, however, students will now be able to choose

Alfredo



Alfredo is interested in radio, television, and music, and has done well at school in the arts. Because he also enjoyed concrete learning activities such as science and technology projects in Grades 7 and 8, he decides that the applied courses might be best for him in Grade 9. He is happy with his results in these courses, and enjoyed his job-shadowing experience at a recording studio in Grade 9 as well. After discussing his options with his teacher-adviser and his parents, Alfredo once again chooses applied courses in Grade 10, including the prerequisites for the college preparation courses. Alfredo has discovered that there are a variety of college programs in broadcasting that appeal to him, and is looking forward to being accepted into one of them.

Academic Courses

In an academic course, you will learn the essential concepts of a subject and explore related material as well. Although your knowledge and skills in the subject will be developed through both theory and practical applications, the emphasis will be on theory and abstract thinking as a basis for future learning and problem solving.

between two different types of courses — *academic* and *applied*. Academic and applied courses will give students the opportunity to experience two different ways of learning: academic courses draw more heavily on theory and abstract examples and problems, while applied courses focus more on practical applications and concrete examples.

For Grade 9, you will choose between academic and applied courses in math, English, science, geography, and French. (History is offered in Grade 10.) You are free to take the academic course in some subjects and the applied course in others.

Your experience in academic and applied courses in Grade 9 will give you the information you need to select the type of course in Grade 10 that will best suit your strengths, interests, and goals. As long as you successfully meet the expectations in a Grade 9 applied or academic course, you can go on to take either type of course in Grade 10.

When you are part way through Grade 9, you will choose your courses for Grade 10. Your Grade 10 courses will prepare you in specific ways for Grades 11 and 12 and

for what you want to do when you *finish* high school — go to college or university, become an apprentice, or find a job. You can think of your Grade 11 and 12 courses as the pathways to your postsecondary destination. Many of these courses will require you to have successfully completed a particular course in Grade 10 (a “prerequisite”), so you’ll have to make sure that the Grade 10 courses you *want* will get you into the senior courses you *need*.

Applied Courses

An applied course covers the essential concepts of a subject. Knowledge and skills will be developed through both theory and practical applications, but the focus will be on practical applications. In applied courses, familiar, real-life situations will be used to illustrate ideas, and you will be given more opportunities to experience hands-on applications of the concepts you study.

applied



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Grade 11 and 12 Courses: Pathways to Your Destination

In Grades 11 and 12, you will be able to choose from among *workplace preparation*, *university/college preparation*, *college preparation*, and *university preparation courses*.

WORKPLACE

Workplace preparation courses prepare you to move directly into the workplace after high school or to be admitted into apprenticeship programs or other training programs in the community. Courses focus on employment skills and on practical workplace applications of the subject content. Many workplace preparation courses involve cooperative education and work experience placements (*see page 17*), which allow students to get first-hand experience in a workplace.

UNIVERSITY/ COLLEGE

University/college preparation courses are offered to prepare you to meet the entrance requirements of certain university and college programs. They focus on both theory and practical applications. Information about the programs for which these courses are designed to prepare you will be available from the guidance or student services staff at your high school.



pathways to

COLLEGE

College preparation courses provide you with the knowledge and skills you need to meet the entrance requirements for most college programs. Courses focus on practical applications and also examine underlying theories.

UNIVERSITY

University preparation courses provide you with the knowledge and skills you need to meet university entrance requirements. Courses emphasize theoretical aspects of the subject and also consider related applications.



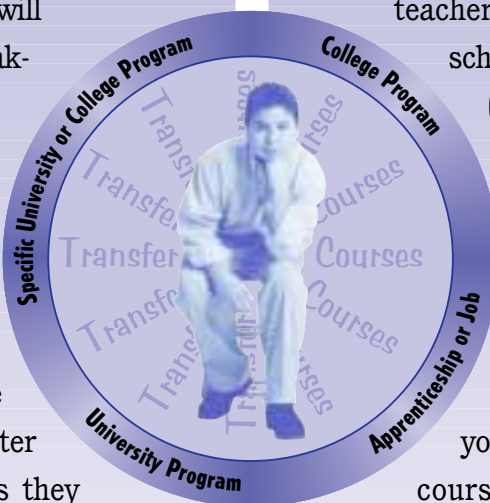
your destination

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What if my interests change?

Over the course of your four years in high school, your interests and goals might change as you gain experience and learn about new career options. If this should happen, you will be able to change pathways by taking a transfer course. Transfer courses will allow students who are taking one type of course in Grade 10 or 11 to switch to another type in the same subject in the next grade.

Transfer courses are more focused and shorter than regular courses, as they are designed to cover only the additional course content that bridges the gap between two course types. Transfer courses will be delivered in a variety of ways. Students will receive a partial credit for a successfully completed transfer course. Credits earned through transfer courses will qualify as optional credits towards the diploma requirements.



Where can I get help in making decisions?

For help in deciding on the courses that are best for you, you can talk to teachers, principals, and guidance counselors, or to your teacher-adviser. Another new feature of the Ontario high school program is the introduction of the teacher-adviser program in all schools across the province (see page 14). Your teacher-adviser will work closely with you and your parents to help you plan your courses, set goals, and keep track of your progress. Remember, until you reach the age of 18, your course selections must be approved by a parent or guardian.

Now that you've learned about some of the features of the new high school program, read on. The following sections provide important additional information that you'll need in order to plan ahead...

High School Diploma Requirements



The high school program is based on a credit system. Students must earn a total of 30 credits (one for every 110-hour course successfully completed) to obtain a high school diploma. Eighteen of the credits are compulsory, earned in a specified number of courses from a list of subjects that every student must take. The remaining 12 credits are optional, earned in courses that the student may select

from the full range of courses offered by the school.

In Grade 9, most students will take a total of eight courses for eight credits.

Students must also complete 40 hours of community involvement activities and must pass the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test, which is taken in Grade 10.



Dita has always been interested in the way buildings are designed, and enjoys sketching them. In Grade 9, she takes an art course and tries the academic courses in her core subjects. Building on her success in these courses, she continues with academic courses in Grade 10. In talking with her parents and the teacher-adviser, Dita thinks that she may be interested in engineering and architecture. In Grades 11 and 12, Dita takes university preparation courses, hoping that she will do well enough to be accepted in university, and knowing that if she changes her mind, there will be other options open to her.

The Credit System

Compulsory Credits (total of 18)

- 4 credits in English (1 credit per grade)
 - 1 credit in French as a second language
 - 3 credits in mathematics (at least 1 credit in Grade 11 or 12)
 - 2 credits in science
 - 1 credit in Canadian history
 - 1 credit in Canadian geography
 - 1 credit in the arts (music, art, drama, or dance)
 - 1 credit in health and physical education
 - 1/2 credit in civics and 1/2 credit in career studies
- PLUS:**
- 1 additional credit in English, *or* a third language, *or* a social science, *or* Canadian and world studies
 - 1 additional credit in health and physical education, *or* business studies, *or* the arts (music, art, drama, or dance)
 - 1 additional credit in science (Grade 11 or 12) *or* technological education (Grades 9–12)

Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

Students will take the Secondary School Literacy Test in Grade 10. Students must pass the test in order to graduate, and their result is recorded on their student transcript. Students who do not complete the test successfully will receive remedial help to prepare them for retesting. The literacy test requirement is additional to the 30 credits needed for a high school diploma.

The literacy test evaluates students' reading and writing skills based on curriculum expectations in language and communications up to and including Grade 9. ESL students will take the test only when they have reached this level in their language studies. Accommodations will be made for students in special education programs.



Optional Credits (total of 12)

In addition to the 18 compulsory credits, students have to earn 12 optional credits in courses of their choice, selected from the full list of courses available in the school. Optional credits allow students to build an educational program that suits their individual interests and meets university, college, apprenticeship, or work requirements.

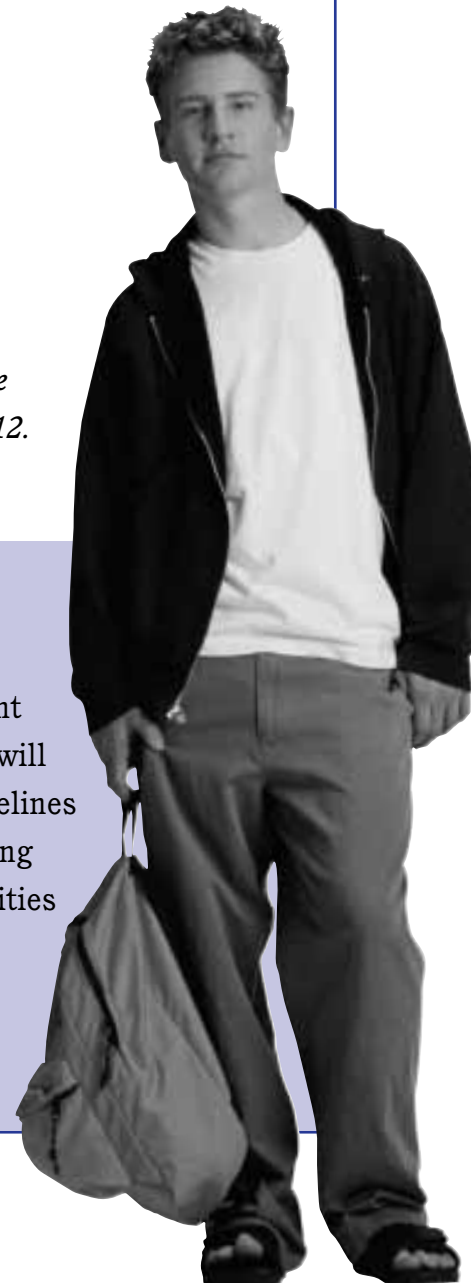
Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

Students may receive a credit without taking a course if they can demonstrate that they have the skills and knowledge from prior learning to meet the expectations for the course set out in the provincial curriculum. To receive a credit through the PLAR process, students are assessed through a formal test, along with other methods of evaluation appropriate to the subject.

Students may obtain a maximum of four credits through the PLAR process, but no more than two in one subject area. The PLAR process applies only to courses in Grades 10–12.

Community Involvement Activities

All students must complete a minimum of 40 hours of unpaid community involvement activities before graduating from high school. This requirement is additional to the 30 credits needed for a high school diploma. Students will be able to choose their own community involvement activities, within guidelines that will be provided by the school. Students will be responsible for fulfilling this requirement on their own time, and for keeping a record of their activities on a form supplied by the school.



Getting Help Along the Way

The Teacher-Adviser

As of September 1999, all students in Grade 9 will have a teacher-adviser. (The teacher-adviser program, already in place in Grades 7, 8, and 9 in some schools, will be available in those grades in all schools by September 1999, and will be phased in over the following two years in Grades 10 and 11.) The teacher-adviser will help students make the transition from elemen-

tary to high school and will assist them and their parents in making decisions about courses and future goals.

The teacher-adviser will maintain regular contact with students throughout the school year in order to monitor their progress in their course work and in other aspects of school life as well, and to help

Jean-Claude



Jean-Claude has always been a very independent person and is not sure what he would like to do in the future. He has many ideas, his interests change frequently, and he usually does well at whatever he is interested in and likes to do. In Grades 9 and 10, Jean-Claude takes applied courses. In Grade 11, he takes college preparation courses and participates in a Junior Achievement company. During his Grade 11 year, Jean-Claude discovers his interest in economics and entrepreneurship and focuses in on business as his goal. He realizes that the postsecondary possibilities he is interested in are offered primarily at the university level, and decides to change his program from college preparation to university preparation. Together with his guidance counsellor, he identifies the transfer courses that he will have to take in order to change pathways. Jean-Claude hopes to be accepted into a business program at a university.

them complete their annual education plan. The teacher-adviser will serve as a key school contact for parents.

If a student needs additional assistance in order to succeed in high school or in planning short- or long-term goals, the teacher-adviser will refer him or her to a guidance counsellor and/or other staff.

The Annual Education Plan

Every student in Grades 9–12 will prepare an annual education plan with assistance from parents and the teacher-adviser. (The program will be in place in Grades 7–9 by September 1999, and will be phased in over the following three years in Grades 10–12.) The planning process will help students set goals and review and assess their achievements and progress along the way. The plan will identify:

- the student's goals for academic achievement,
- course selections for the following year,
- co-curricular activities and ways of exploring careers that are of interest to the student (including cooperative education and work experience programs),
- possible postsecondary education or work goals.

Guidance and Career Education

All Ontario high schools have guidance or student services staff. Guidance counsellors can provide students with detailed information about various careers and about the course selections that will prepare them for entry into those careers. In addition, students will be required to take a half-year or half-semester career studies course in order to graduate.

Visits to the high school by guest speakers and representatives from colleges and universities, student tours of colleges and universities, visits to workplaces, and conferences and workshops on career opportunities arranged by the school board will provide students with additional career information.

Special Education

A student who participates in special education programs and services in Grade 8 can continue to do so in high school. As in elementary school, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed and maintained, based on a thorough assessment of the student's strengths, needs, and interests. It will

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identify what the student is expected to learn and will explain how the special education program and services will help him or her achieve the learning goals and expectations set out in the plan. The student's annual education plan will be developed on the basis of the IEP. For students with disabilities who are fourteen years of age or older, the IEP will include a coordinated plan to help prepare the student for living independently in the community and to facilitate the transition to postsecondary education or the workplace.

Remedial Help

Students in Grade 8 who are not receiving special education services but need additional help to meet curriculum expectations will continue to receive remedial help in high school. It is very important for students and their parents to review all the programs and services offered through the board and, with the help of their elementary and high school principals, to arrange to participate in the ones that best suit their needs. Students who are not achieving at a reasonably high level in their high school courses may also need remedial help to be successful in the next grade, especially if they want

to move from one course type to another. Students in this group should talk to their teacher-adviser about the programs and services offered in the school. Peer tutoring services or a mentoring program may be available, and some schools may offer a course in learning strategies.

Parents of students who continue to find course work too difficult can ask for a review to determine whether special education services are needed. If they are, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed. The teacher-adviser and the special education teacher can help students choose courses and will work with them and their parents to develop an annual education plan.



Cooperative Education and Other Workplace Experiences

Cooperative education and work experience programs offer students another way of expanding their interests and exploring their career options.

Cooperative education is a planned learning experience in the community that complements and enhances school

courses and provides students with an opportunity to learn and to apply their skills and knowledge in practical situations. Courses in various disciplines may be offered through the cooperative education program, which can benefit all students, whatever their postsecondary

Sarah has always liked to fix and make things. She also enjoys and has done well in math and science. In Grade 9, Sarah takes a mix of applied and academic courses—academic in math and science and applied in English and geography. Uncertain as to whether she wants to go to college or get a job after high school, she continues with the same combination of academic and applied courses in Grade 10. After completing a work experience placement in her science course and talking with a guidance counsellor, Sarah decides to apply for an apprenticeship program and plans a combination of college and work preparation courses for Grades 11 and 12. She meets with her guidance counsellor regularly to ensure that she has the right combination of in-school courses, work experience, and cooperative education to meet both her diploma and her apprenticeship requirements. Upon graduation, Sarah will have the choice of continuing her apprenticeship training or entering a college program.

Sarah



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destination. Students receive credit based on evaluations of their performance in the work placement.

Work experience can also be gained through short-term work placements (from one to four weeks) that complement classroom instruction in a given course and are evaluated as part of the student's work in that course.

The **Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program** enables students in Grades 11 and 12 to complete their high school diploma while starting their apprenticeship training. Students earn credits for their workplace experience in the apprenticeship program, and the time they spend in the placement counts towards their apprenticeship training requirement.

More detailed information about work placements can be obtained from your local high school.



Some Terms You Should Know

Annual education plan (AEP):

A plan that students in Grades 7–12 will develop every year to identify their goals and their course choices. (See page 15.)

Course codes: Each course has a five-character identification code in which the first three characters refer to the subject, the fourth character refers to the grade or level, and the fifth character refers to the type of course. (Some schools may add a sixth character.) Course codes will be given in the school course calendar for all courses offered by the school.

Credit: A credit is granted when a course of at least 110 hours (that is, a regular full-year or full-semester course) is completed successfully. A partial credit may be granted for a shorter course.

Ontario Student Record (OSR):

Every Ontario school keeps an official record for each student. The OSR contains achievement results, credits earned and diploma requirements completed, and other information important to the education of the student. Students and their parents (if the student is not an adult) may examine the contents of the OSR. These records are protected by the Education Act and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Ontario Student Transcript

(OST): The OST is the student's official record of credits earned and other graduation requirements completed. It is part of the Ontario Student Record. Copies of the transcript are available to students and graduates.

In Grades 9 and 10, only successfully completed courses will be recorded on the student transcript. If a student withdraws from or fails to successfully complete a Grade 9 or 10 course, no entry will be made on the transcript.

In Grades 11 and 12, all courses taken by the student, whether successfully completed or not, will be recorded on the transcript. If a student withdraws from a Grade 11 or 12 course before a specified time, the withdrawal will not be recorded.

A student's final result on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (to be taken in Grade 10), as well as confirmation that the student has completed the community involvement requirement, will also be included in the student transcript.

Prerequisite courses: These are courses that students are required to take before they can enrol in certain courses in Grades 11 and 12. Prerequisite

courses are identified in school course calendars. When choosing courses in Grades 10 and 11, students should be careful to select the prerequisites that will allow them to pursue the courses they want to take in the higher grades.

School course calendar: Every high school in Ontario distributes an annual course calendar, which describes the courses offered by the school in the coming year. The calendar also provides information on school policies; sets out expectations about students' responsibilities, achievement, and attendance; and outlines the school's code of student behaviour.

Semestered and non-semestered

schools: *Semestered schools* are schools that offer courses on a half-year basis. Students normally earn four credits in the first semester, from September to January, and another four credits in the second semester, from February to June. *Non-semestered schools* are schools that offer courses on a full-year basis. Students normally earn eight credits during the school year, from September to June.

Diploma Requirements and Course Types

- To be granted a high school diploma, you must:
 - earn **18 compulsory credits**;
 - earn **12 optional credits**;
 - complete **40 hours of community involvement** activities;
 - pass the **Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test**.
- Most Grade 9 students will take 8 subjects for 8 credits.
- You will earn one credit for each 110-hour course that you complete successfully.
- Your 12 optional credits will be earned in courses of your choice. They will reflect your particular interests and goals.
- In Grades 9 and 10, there are three types of courses: academic, applied, and open. In Grades 11 and 12, there are five types of courses: university preparation, university/college preparation, college preparation, workplace preparation, and open. Think of your Grade 11 and 12 courses as pathways to your postsecondary destination.
- Every course that your high school offers is described in the school's course calendar.

Preparing for High School: A "TO DO" LIST

- Carefully review the information in this booklet with your parents.
- Find out what courses are offered for Grade 9 students in the high school you are planning to attend.
- Consider which of the Grade 9 courses offered can be taken as compulsory credits.
- Think about the subjects that interest you and that you might want to pursue in high school.
- Reflect on your study habits and your educational strengths.
- Understand the difference between academic and applied courses.
- Keep in mind the requirements for a high school diploma.
- Ask questions and get information and advice from your teachers and guidance counsellors.
- Make your course choices for Grade 9.

Your Work Habits: A Self-Assessment

Understanding the way you learn and the kinds of work habits you have is an important part of preparing for high school. Good work habits will help you succeed in Grade 9. Do this quick self-assessment and see where there is room for improvement.

Work habits that will help me succeed:	I already do this	I could do better
<i>I do homework every night.</i>		
<i>I complete projects on time.</i>		
<i>I participate in class discussions.</i>		
<i>I ask questions when I don't understand.</i>		
<i>I study for tests.</i>		
<i>I get extra help when I need it.</i>		
<i>I cooperate with teachers.</i>		
<i>I work well with classmates.</i>		



Choosing Your Courses

What are the subjects in which you have a choice between academic and applied courses?

Applied and academic courses are offered in mathematics, English, science, French as a second language, geography, and history.

How will you decide which type of course—academic or applied—is best for you?

Your choice will depend on your strengths, your interests, and the way you learn best. Remember

that you can choose different course types in different subjects—or the same type in all subjects.

Your parents, teachers, guidance counsellor, and principal can provide you with more information, strategies for making decisions, and an opportunity to discuss your ideas about the choices you have to make.

The new system is designed to keep as many doors to postsecondary destinations open as possible, for as long as possible. Academic and applied courses in Grade 9 will prepare you for both academic and applied courses in Grade 10. The courses you choose for Grade 10 will be linked to your future goals.



Here is a chart to help you keep track of your choices. The smaller chart, below, has been completed to give you an example of one student's Grade 9 course selections. Your choices may be very different. To complete your own chart, you will need the course descriptions for the courses your high school offers for Grade 9 students. These can be found in the high school's course calendar, or may be available from the principal of your elementary school.

My Grade 9 subjects	Course type: academic, applied, or open?	Is it a compulsory credit or an optional credit?
1. English	academic	compulsory
2. math	applied	compulsory
3. science	applied	compulsory
4. French	academic	compulsory
5. geography	academic	compulsory
6. Native studies	open	optional
7. technological education	open	compulsory
8. health and physical education	open	compulsory
9.		

My Grade 9 subjects	Course type: academic, applied, or open?	Is it a compulsory credit or an optional credit?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		

Where to Go for Help

Your parents or guardians:

Your parents or guardians are your best allies. They've known you longer than anyone and want the best for you.

Your Grade 8 teachers:

Your Grade 8 teachers know your educational strengths and how you learn best. Interview them!

Your guidance counsellor:

Guidance counsellors (at your elementary school or your secondary school) can answer your questions about high school and help you make choices that are right for you. Make an appointment!

Attend an information night:

Most high schools and elementary schools will host an information night about the Grade 9 program. You will learn about what is expected from you as a high school student, as well as about the many opportunities that will be available to you during the next four years.

Tour your local high school:

A tour is a great way to see education in action. Many schools offer planned tours for new students, which may include sitting in on Grade 9 classes.

Check out the high school's website:

Find out if the high school has its own website. If it does, you can find out about the school's program, the staff, important dates and events at the school, and school policies and procedures. An e-mail address for the school is usually posted and offers a handy way for you to get answers to your questions.



Cette publication est également offerte en français sous le titre suivant : *Passer au secondaire. Guide sur les nouveaux standards des écoles secondaires de l'Ontario.*

This publication is available on the Ministry of Education and Training's World Wide Web Site at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>

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