

SKILLED TRADES / JOBS / APPRENTICESHIPS April 23, 2019

- 2017- INSIDE OTTAWA VALLEY in an article related to encouraging women to enter skilled trades a shortage of 350,000 skilled trades people was identified.
- 2019- Ontario Public School Board's Association(OPSBA) in its submission to the Ministry of Education identified that:
 - ❖ By 2025 there will be a skilled labour shortage of 1.2 million positions
 - ❖ 40% of all occupations will be in skilled trades (Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program - OYAP)
 - ❖ 48% of the current work force will be eligible to retire in the next 5 years (OYAP)
 - ❖ Skilled trades are career pathways that need... "to be part of a comprehensive and intentional career exploration strategy from Kindergarten to Grade 12." (OPSBA)
 - ❖ This strategy, to be successful, must include a post-secondary option for students to complete the program initiated in secondary schools.
- This option would be a post-secondary institution that accepts tuition from students (apprentices) to implement the programs developed by the Province, completely on one site (campus), over a defined and finite length of time.
- Upon graduation from this Multi-Trade School the apprentice will be ready to meet the expectations of their trade.
- The Resolute Forest Products Fort Frances pulp and paper mill, would be the ideal site for this post-secondary Trade School.
- An operator/owner like Rainy River Packaging could incorporate this apprenticeship model into its proposed business plan for the operation of the Fort Frances mill.
- The students enrolled in this Multi-Trade School would acquire their skills under the supervision of qualified Journey Persons while re-habilitating the Kraft mill and paper machines.

- Once the re-habilitation of the facility is complete the Multi-Trade School would be financially self-sustaining and ready to meet the educational needs of the skilled trades throughout the 21st Century.
- This opportunity exists now as there is an operator that wants to purchase the Fort Frances mill. This new model of a Multi-Trade School once engaged would ensure the success of their business plan.

A win for the Province, the Town, our students, our future.

- OPSBA SUBMISSION pages 1-3

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OPSBA Submission to *Consultation: Education in Ontario*

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) believes the participation of all education partners in the Ministry of Education's *Consultation: Education in Ontario* is of vital importance.

OPSBA encouraged and regularly promoted participation in the consultation to its membership. We also prepared an evidence-based resource document to support those who wanted to take part in one or all of the various options available to the public to provide input.

While we appreciate the consultation was open to the public, we do have concerns about how the input will be analyzed, weighted and evaluated. We support the validity of the viewpoints from all education stakeholders however, any curricular changes or modifications should be guided by informed and evidence-based practice.

It is with this expressed concern in mind that we now share our formal responses to the questions included in the government's consultation below.

If you are a member of a stakeholder group interested in Ontario's education system, please describe:

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) represents 31 public school boards and 10 school authorities across Ontario, which together serve more than 1.3 million public elementary and secondary students. The Association advocates on behalf of the best interests and needs of the public school system in Ontario. OPSBA believes that the role of public education is to provide universally accessible education opportunities for all students regardless of their ethnic, racial or cultural backgrounds, social or economic status, individual exceptionality, or religious affiliation.

How should we improve student performance in the disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)?

OPSBA strongly recommends that the acronym STEM be changed to STEAM to include the Arts as a key curricular area of focus. Fundamental competencies can be strengthened, expanded and reinforced through a strong Arts curriculum in addition to science, technology, engineering and mathematics to include the creative process, critical thinking, problem solving and empathy. (See PISA 2018 Global Competence)

In an increasingly complex, integrated and globalized context we must prepare students for jobs/careers and technologies that may not yet exist. It is not just about recalling content knowledge, but applying that knowledge in relevant, engaging ways through the intentional development and integrated application of a range of competencies and skills. (See Schleicher 2018)

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international study that measures trends in learning outcomes in science, reading, and mathematics for students at 15 years old. Ontario has consistently scored significantly above the OECD average and at or above the Canadian average on this assessment. In order to make informed suggestions for improvement, it is important to ensure the validity of EQAO assessments (i.e. questions, cultural bias implications, etc.) and why the results are so different than other assessments. As such, the government should inventory all evidence-based approaches in school boards to go deeper and replicate effective strategies provincially. It is important to build on effective instructional strategies and ensure adequate resources and professional learning opportunities for teachers.

Improving achievement in mathematics is complex and requires a multi-pronged approach, including, but not limited to, adequate resources, professional development, differentiated instruction to meet individual student learning needs, and time on task.

It is timely to revise and streamline the "crowded curriculum" and reduce the overall curricular expectations to allow for sufficient time for intentional and integrated competency/skill development and application related to mathematics, science, engineering and technology. Research identifies that project-based learning is an important instructional strategy to support STEAM curricular areas.

How should our schools prepare students with needed job skills, such as skilled trades and coding?

Skilled trades need to be universally recognized as a viable and respected pathway for all students. By 2025, there will be a skilled labour shortage of 1.2 million positions and 40 per cent of all occupations will be in the skilled trades.

This will occur with a backdrop of 48 per cent of the current workforce being eligible to retire in the next five years (OYAP, 2018). A targeted marketing and communications plan, specifically directed at parents, students and educators, is needed to elevate skilled trades to an accepted, respected pathway. This should include the evidence-based research and data that shows there are and will continue to be many opportunities for well-paid jobs in the future.

This is a career pathway that needs to be part of a comprehensive and intentional career exploration strategy from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The earlier students and parents are made aware of these types of career opportunities, the more likely there will be an actual increase in the supply pipeline for apprenticeships in the skilled trades. Waiting until students graduate is too late and negatively implies that these are careers that should be considered only if other pathways are not attainable. As a result, promotion and awareness of career options in the area of skilled trades should begin in elementary school. Opportunities for commencing various elements of an apprenticeship and the opportunity to earn hours towards an apprenticeship should begin in secondary school.

OPSBA urges the government to strongly consider providing relevant opportunities for students, beyond the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), to begin to earn apprenticeship hours while in secondary school, which can then be continued upon graduation with an employer or at the community college level. This will provide an early incentive for students to develop positive attitudes toward the trades, pursue an interest, develop a passion, and begin in a very practical way to learn about safety in the workplace. An apprenticeship focus can easily be expanded and integrated into existing vocational school programs and through secondary school experiential and co-operative education programs, as well as Specialist High Skills Majors. This will involve balancing and/or shifting funding levels for commencing an apprenticeship in secondary schools rather than only in post-secondary and employment settings.

OPSBA supported the amendments to the *Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009* contained in Bill 47 to remove any barriers for secondary and post-secondary students to secure apprenticeship positions in the various skilled trades upon graduation (e.g. issues related to ratios and staffing levels). Changing the ratio per journeyperson has been an excellent start.

Aligned with a competency/skills-based approach, instead of adding more discreet elements to an already crowded curriculum (e.g. coding), educators are continually looking for ways to integrate these types of topics into existing subject areas such as mathematics, science, etc., to make learning more current, relevant and applicable. In this way students are able to explore a variety of areas within existing curricula to identify and further explore and develop their interests and strengths. (Monograph #69, 2017)