

SCDSB Secondary School Handbook

Land Acknowledgement

Simcoe County District School Board acknowledges that we are situated on the traditional land of the Anishnaabeg people. We acknowledge the enduring presence of First Nation, Métis and Inuit people on this land and are committed to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and respect.

Mission and Vision

Our mission and vision outline what we do and what we want to achieve and provide direction for the board's strategic plan. For more information, visit www.scdsb.on.ca and select 'About', then 'Goals and Reporting', then 'Strategic Plan'.

Mission Statement

We inspire and empower learning for life.

Vision Statement

A community of learners achieving full potential.

Strategic Priorities

The SCDSB strategic plan provides a framework to direct our programs, initiatives and daily operations to achieve our overall goal of student success. The SCDSB is committed to creating a culture of belonging, engagement and success for all through deliberate actions in four key areas that form the Strategic Priorities: Well-being, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Community, and Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

Rooted in the Strategic Plan are ten universal themes that reflect the voices and values of the SCDSB. These ten themes will be woven throughout our operational plans and will provide guidance and intentionality to the learning and work we do as a system: Accountability, Identity, Safety, Collaboration, Innovation, Respect, Support, Trust, Transparency and Celebration.

[Learn more about the SCDSB's strategic priorities.](#)

Supporting diversity, equity and inclusion

The SCDSB is committed to an equitable education system that upholds and reflects the principles of fair and inclusive education which permeates policies, programs, practices and operations. The board recognizes that equity of opportunity and equity of access to the full range of programs, the delivery of services and resources are critical to the achievement of successful educational and social outcomes for those served by our school system as well as for those who serve our system.

[Learn more about diversity, equity and inclusion in the SCDSB.](#)

Indigenous education

The SCDSB's Indigenous Education department supports the achievement and well-being of self-identified First Nation, Métis and Inuit students. The department provides direct support to students while also providing opportunities for all SCDSB students and staff to develop a greater understanding of the history, culture and contributions of Indigenous peoples in our communities and across Canada.

Self-identification of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students

First Nation, Métis and Inuit students are invited to participate in the SCDSB's voluntary, confidential self-identification process. The SCDSB collects First Nation, Métis and Inuit self-identification data to support student success, reduce gaps in student achievement and support a sense of belonging. Information that is collected is used to inform program planning and services that are relevant for First Nation, Métis and Inuit learners. Disclosing First Nation, Métis and Inuit ancestry is completely voluntary and confidential. No proof of ancestry is required. Students and families are asked to contact their school office if they wish their child to self-identify.

[Learn more about Indigenous education in the SCDSB.](#)

Special education

Students learn in many different ways. Students may need different supports and programs beyond the accommodations regularly provided in the classroom to reach their full potential.

These may include any or all of the following:

- additional support provided by specialized and qualified staff and may include a special education resource teacher (SERT) and/or an educational assistant, as required
- an Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- assistive technology
- a special education class placement

[Learn more about special education in the SCDSB.](#)

Graduation coaches

The SCDSB has graduation coaches for Black, Indigenous, and LGBTQ students. Graduation coaches engage in high school graduation assistance activities and work with students, school faculty and staff and parents/guardians. Graduation coaches provide assistance to secondary school students, individually and in groups, regarding high school graduation and completion. They support students in a variety of areas, including:

- analyzing data to identify students or subgroups with potential high school graduation issues
- planning, implementing, and tracking individual high school graduation plans
- identifying and resolving barriers to graduation
- facilitating career choices and planning.

Supporting mental health and well-being

The SCDSB recognizes the importance of positive mental health as it is linked to overall well-being, achievement and positive outcomes for youth. We are committed to improving the quality of mental health supports available to our students. We provide training for school staff to help them recognize signs that a student may need additional support. We also rely on the help of community agencies.

The SCDSB focuses on mental health and well-being promotion, prevention and early intervention for all students, prioritizing it as a key condition for learning and flourishing. This is incorporated through curriculum and teaching practices that focus on social-emotional skill building and resilience, and school and classroom environments that are welcoming, inclusive and understanding.

Students requiring additional support due to emerging mental health concerns are able to access group and individual interventions provided by child and youth workers in some elementary schools and by social workers in elementary and secondary schools.

Community supports

24 hour mental health crisis line 1-888-893-8333 or 705-728-5044

Canadian Mental Health Association 1-800-461-4319

Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868

Kinark Child and Family Services 1-888-454-6275

Mobile Crisis Line 1-888-893-8333 or 1-855-310-COPE (2673)

New Path Youth and Family Services 705-725-7656

Access the 211 directory by phone (dial 2-1-1) or at www.211ontario.ca for information on community resources related to a specific concern.

[Learn more about mental health and well-being in the SCDSB.](#)

High school diploma requirements

Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)

Students need to earn 30 credits and complete additional requirements as determined by the Ministry of Education, to graduate from high school. To earn their OSSD, student must complete the following:

- 18 compulsory credits
- 12 optional credits
- 40 hours community involvement
- Provincial literacy requirement (OSSLT)
- Two online learning credits

Credit requirements

Students must earn the following compulsory credits to obtain the OSSD:

- 4 credits in English
- 3 credits in mathematics

- 2 credits in science
- 1 credit in Canadian history
- 1 credit in Canadian geography
- 1 credit in the arts
- 1 credit in health and physical education
- 1 credit in French as a second language
- 0.5 credit in career studies
- 0.5 credit in civics

Students must also complete one compulsory credit from each of the following groups:

- Group 1: English or French as a second language, a Native language, a classical or an international language, social sciences and the humanities, Canadian and world studies, guidance and career education or cooperative education
- Group 2: Health and physical education, the arts, business studies, French as a second language or cooperative education
- Group 3: French as a second language, science (Grade 11 or 12), computer studies, technological education or cooperative education

[Learn more about graduation requirements on the Ministry of Education website.](#)

Community involvement

Students must complete 40 hours of community involvement to receive their high school diploma. The aim of this requirement is to encourage students to develop both civic responsibility and a desire to play a role in strengthening their community. Students may begin to accumulate community involvement hours in the summer before they enter Grade 9.

[More information, including a downloadable form to track hours, is available on the SCDSB website.](#)

Literacy requirement

Students write the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) in Grade 10. The test measures if they are meeting the minimum standard for literacy across all subjects up to the end of Grade 9. If students are unsuccessful the first time the test is written, they will have another opportunity to write, or to take the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course in place of the test.

For more information about provincial testing, visit www.eqao.com.

Ontario Secondary School Certificate

The Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC) will be granted on request to students who leave school before earning the OSSD and who have earned a minimum of 14 credits, seven of which satisfy the compulsory credit requirements.

Compulsory credits (total of 7)

- 2 credits in English
- 1 credit in Canadian Geography or history
- 1 credit in mathematics
- 1 credit in science
- 1 credit in health and physical education
- 1 credit in the arts, technological education or computer studies

Optional Credits (total of 7)

- 7 credits selected by the student from available courses

Certificate of accomplishment

Students who leave school before fulfilling the requirements for the OSSD or the OSSC may be granted a Certificate of Accomplishment. This certificate may be a useful means of recognizing achievement for students who plan to take certain adaptive programs, or other kinds of additional training, or who plan to find employment after leaving school.

Program and course selection

Parents/guardians have an important role to play in helping students research and select program and course options. Decisions made in high school lead to the achievement of future life goals. Students can create course plans using [myBlueprint](#).

Talk with your teen about what they're interested in. There are many opportunities to explore options while in high school. Transitions also exist between post-secondary destinations. For example, a college diploma can provide advance standing for a university degree program. Your child may not know what their post-secondary goals are at this point—that's okay.

Course calendar and course selection process

Course selection begins in January every year. There are certain courses students are required to take (compulsory), and others that they can choose (optional). Specific school course calendars can be found under the Secondary Planning for High School section of the board's website: www.scdsb.on.ca/secondary/planning_for_high_school.

Pathways and learning for all**Future planning**

School staff work together with students and parents/guardians to help them create an individual pathway plan (IPP) for students. Encouraging your teen to try a range of programs and courses, and valuing all post-secondary pathways (apprenticeship, college, workplace and university), will help keep options open for your teen. Students will be more driven and motivated if they're encouraged to pursue a pathway and discipline that aligns with their own interests.

Pathways

There are five post-secondary pathways that students may choose: apprenticeship, college, community, university and work. The SCDSB offers programs and resources to support students in achieving their goals, no matter what pathway they choose.

It is important to keep in mind that pathways are individual, flexible and dynamic. Pathways may be straight and direct, or they may also take some turns or bends along the way. There is always more than one way to reach the final destination, and every student's pathway is unique to that student.

- Apprenticeship
- College
- Community
- University
- Work

Programs and resources to support student pathways

Our schools offer a range of programs and courses that cater to individual needs and interests. Find out what's available at your school in the course calendar. Course calendars are posted at www.scdsb.on.ca under 'Secondary' and 'Planning for High School'.

Advanced placement

Grade 11 and 12 students at SCDSB high schools have the option to take Advanced Placement (AP) courses. The courses are designed to cover the Ontario curriculum, while providing accelerated and advanced level programming to prepare students to write American College Board examinations. Students can earn a university credit while still in high school, gain admission to university or both, depending on the university.

[Learn more about AP opportunities.](#)

Cooperative education (co-op)

Cooperative education (co-op) is a course that allows Grade 11 and 12 students to earn high school credits while completing a work placement in the community. Co-op credits provide students with an opportunity to build on their skills, gain practical work experience and prepare for their future. Together, the employer, student and teacher work together to provide students with challenging growth and learning opportunities.

[Learn more about co-op.](#)

Credit recovery

Credit recovery is designed to help high school students meet the expectations of a course they have completed but for which they have received a failing grade. Students have the opportunity to earn a credit without having to repeat the entire course. Students are referred to the credit recovery program through the school's student success team.

Dual credits

Dual credits give secondary students the opportunity to sample post-secondary education, work in college labs, experience a new environment and build their confidence, while gaining credit in both secondary school and college. Students take a college credit from a college faculty member and must meet the requirements to pass. If successful, they are given an optional credit at secondary school and are issued a college transcript.

[Learn more about dual credits.](#)

French as a second language (FSL)

The SCDSB currently supports three FSL programs: Core French, Extended French and French Immersion. Participation in FSL programs reflects the diversity of the student population, including students with special education needs and English language learners.

[Learn more about FSL in the SCDSB.](#)

Guidance departments

The secondary school guidance department serves the school community in a variety of ways:

- provides information on post-secondary (workplace, college, apprenticeship, university) and career pathways
- helps individual students envision a plan for post-secondary and target short- and long-term goals
- helps students identify programs that support their learning styles, interests and needs
- coaches in career/life planning, including college and university scholarship application process
- provides personal support and referrals to community resources
- supports students in academic planning and course selection
- supports students in establishing effective study habits and exam preparation
- supports students with life skills like decision-making, problem solving, conflict resolution, stress and time management and relationship awareness

You or your student can make an appointment to visit the guidance office at any time during the school year. Drop-in appointments may be available.

Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)

OYAP is available to all full-time students who are at least 16 years old and have 16 high school credits. Students must be taking cooperative education and may be registered as an apprentice to their employer with the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development. All of the hours they work in co-op and any part-time work may then be credited towards their apprenticeship.

[Learn more about OYAP.](#)

Simcoe Shores Secondary School

The SCDSB has an alternative secondary school, with locations throughout Simcoe County. The program is designed for students who have difficulty coping with a large school setting, and who may benefit from the small class sizes, one-on-one assistance, flexibility and close relationships with the teachers.

[Find more information about Simcoe Shores Secondary School.](#)

Skilled trades and technological education

The SCDSB has invested in its technological education programs to ensure students have access to industry-standard equipment and current, relevant course content. Please note that not all courses are offered in every school. Refer to your school's course calendar to see the available courses.

Technological courses available in SCDSB schools

- Grade 9 integrated technologies
- communications technology
- computer technology
- construction technology
- green industries
- hairstyling and aesthetics
- health care technology
- hospitality and tourism
- manufacturing technology
- technological design
- transportation technology

Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM)

SHSM programs are sector-specific programs that start in Grade 11. Programs are made up of a bundle of eight to ten courses to suit students pursuing apprenticeship, college, university or workplace destinations. In a SHSM, students:

- Participate in field trip opportunities connected with a specific sector
- Earn valuable industry-related certifications and training related to the selected sector
- Develop important on-the-job skills and work habits through cooperative education placements

For more information about SHSM programs available at SCDSB schools, visit www.myshsm.ca.

Student success teams

Student success teams work together to ensure smooth transitions for students between grades, from elementary to secondary school, and after graduation. As students progress, they are encouraged to become the architects of their own learning.

Elementary and secondary student success teachers ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed, despite any potential obstacles that can otherwise affect learning. These teachers work with students in one-on-one, small group and classroom settings to provide the supports necessary for successful transitions in school and life. Student success teachers work in collaboration with classroom teachers, guidance, special education teachers, administration and community partners to create a wide circle of support for students who need extra attention or who struggle to remain engaged and motivated.

Additional ways to earn credits

eLearning

eLearning allows students to take courses online. eLearning courses offer the flexibility of choice and timing, as students manage their learning independently. Find more information about eLearning at www.scdsb.on.ca under 'Secondary'.

PLAR

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a formal evaluation and credit granting process whereby students may obtain credits for prior learning. This includes knowledge and skills that students have acquired in both formal and informal ways, outside of secondary school. Students should speak with a guidance counsellor for further information and to start the PLAR referral process.

Summer school, night school and travel credits

Students can complete credits outside of regular school hours. Summer school provides options for students who want to reach ahead or earn credits while travelling. Night school is great for students who need more flexibility in their schedule. Find out more about summer and night school at www.thelearningcentres.com.

Assessment, evaluation and reporting

The main purpose of assessment, evaluation and reporting is to improve student learning. Staff use their professional judgment to support students in meeting curriculum expectations and developing learning skills. Assessment information can be gathered over time in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to:

- observing students complete tasks and interact with others
- conversations with students about their learning
- projects and/or assignments
- presentations, performance tasks, portfolios, tests

Reporting to parents/guardians through report cards provides information about:

- student achievement of curriculum expectations
- student demonstration of specific learning skills and work habits
- student attendance including times late and days absent, if applicable

Reporting periods

Secondary mid-term reports are sent home in November (Semester One) and April (Semester Two). Secondary final reports are sent home in February and July.

Student/teacher/parent/guardian conferences take place in October and March.