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## **School Partnership Survey**

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May 2000

Ontario Association of Youth Employment Centres

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## Introduction

A survey was conducted to describe the number and nature of partnerships OAYEC member agencies have with local schools and school boards. The information was initially gathered for a presentation at the International Conference "School-to-Work Transitions 2000," held May 2000 in Toronto. The results will also be disseminated to OAYEC member agencies, the Provincial Partnership Council, the federal and provincial governments and other interested parties.

## Findings

48 out of 55 agencies (87%) responded to the survey. Of those, 42% or 20 agencies had current partnerships with their local schools or school boards. It should be noted that this survey seems to have only captured the formal partnerships that exist through the OAYEC network and thus underestimates the extent to which agencies work collaboratively but informally with local schools. The total number of programs run in partnership with schools / school boards by the 20 agencies was approximately 30. Most agencies run one or two programs in partnership with the schools. Youth Opportunities Unlimited in London ran the most programs (about 6 different programs). A couple of programs are run by more than one member agency (ACCESS includes Lutherwood CODA and Cambridge Youth Services in its partnership arrangement; the Career Resource Centres includes Fanshaw College and Brantford YEC).

Region	Number of agencies	Responded to survey	Without school partnerships	With school partnerships	Number of school partnership programs
Central	17	14 (82%)	10	4 (29%)	7
East	12	11 (92%)	7	4 (36%)	6
North	9	8 (89%)	4	4 (50%)	5
South-West	17	15 (88%)	7	8 (53%)	12
Total	55	48 (87%)	28	20 (42%)	30

## Target Groups

Most programs were targeted towards students about to graduate or leave high school. Young women and Aboriginal youth were targeted by two programs each. Two programs had youth with disabilities as its client target. About 11 programs targeted youth at-risk.

## Description of Programs

OAYEC member agencies manage a wide variety of programs in partnership with schools and school boards. Some initiatives are summarized below.

- Student or Youth Resource Centres, where students and youth have access to job search information, computer labs, computerized career exploration tools, career information, employment counselling, training and wage subsidy programs.
  - Two resource centres, the "Career Connection" program of the Youth Employment Services -Windsor and the Greater Essex County District School Board, and the "Career Resource Centres" of Brantford Youth Employment Centre (YEC) with the Grand Erie District School Board and other community partners are actually located in the secondary school.
  - "Youthinc." is a youth information centre in North York with a partnership between the Toronto District School Board, Jewish Vocational Services and the North York YMCA. They provide information and referral.
  - The "Student Services Centre" in Cornwall offers a wide range of employment and career services to educators and student in the counties of Stormont Dundas and Glengarry.
  - The "2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Resource Centre for Students and Youth" is operated by the Owen Sound Family YMCA with the Bluewater District School Board

*"This program [Career Resource Centres] has raised awareness of the YEC [youth employment centre] and is a valuable marketing tool for future clients."  
Brantford YEC*

- The YMCA in Etobicoke coordinates two multi-agency, multi-partnered resource centres, Etobicoke Youth Centre and Rexdale Youth Resource Centre, where youth have access to employment, education, recreation, health and social services. These centres aim to address the needs of youth holistically in a “one-stop shopping” environment.
- Workshops presented at schools or community agency on topics such as employability skills, career planning, employment preparation, resume writing and interview skills.
  - The YMCA in Scarborough provides a 2-day job search workshop at two local high schools.
  - Woodgreen Youth Job Centre co-conducts a 2-day workshop called “Under Construction: Pathways to Work” for youth leaving high school using a “constructivist counselling” approach. The first day, the students are at the school and the second day, they are at Woodgreen.
  - Centre for Advancement in Work and Living (CAWL) with the Toronto District School Board organized “Moving on to Work”, a two day information session for graduating students.
- One agency organized a special event:
  - The Employment and Education Resource Centre of Cornwall with the Upper Canada District School Boards hosted “Opportunity 2000”, a one day workshop for female secondary school students in the rural area to provide information on career opportunities in skilled trades and entrepreneurship.
- Three agencies in the Northern region provided workshops, referrals and assistance to help prepare students for co-op education programs. Students could gain work experience in co-op placements arranged by the agencies while gaining school credits.
- Five agencies, AYCE in Toronto, YES Employment Services Inc in Nipissing, Elgin/St. Thomas YECC in St. Thomas, YEAH Inc. in Brockville and Victoria County Career Services Inc. in Lindsay, are participating with their respective school board

in the Volunteer Youth in the Millennium project where agencies help school aged youth and students find volunteer opportunities.

- At least two agencies in the East and one in Central region assign vocational counsellors to the local high schools to provide information and referral to youth and to act as a contact person.
- Three agencies (YMCA, CAWL and Youth Opportunities Unlimited) mentioned participation on SALEP (Supervised Alternative Learning for Excused Pupils) committees
- Grand River Employment Centre in the South-West conducts a social development program for Aboriginal youth
- A couple of agencies help register students with summer employment programs.
- A manual was produced based on the partnership program between Woodgreen youth Job Centre and the Toronto District School Board "Under Construction: Pathways to Work." There are plans to extend this model elsewhere within the TDSB.

### **About the Partnerships**

OAYEC agencies were asked to rate the overall quality of the partnership with the local school or school board. For 90% of the programs, the partnerships were rated as 'excellent' or 'good.' One agency in the North rated their relationship with the local school as more positive than that with the school board.

Almost all of the projects are ongoing programs. Four programs are project based.

*"The school boards have been co-locating and partnering with the YECs [youth employment centres] for many years. There is knowledge and respect for the work we do."  
Lutherwood Youth Employment Centre, Cambridge*

Half of the 30 programs have other community partners besides the school board. Six programs have more than one partner. Employers are partners in 8 programs; other youth agencies in 5 programs; and other community agencies in 8 programs.

### **Comments on the Partnerships**

According to OAYEC members, the major elements that lead to good school partnerships include:

- The school boards are receptive to using community resources and there is a mutual respect for the work done by school and agencies to assist youth in their school-to-work transitions.
- In many cases, there are key individuals such as school board officials, teachers, school guidance counsellors or school administrators, who are committed to the partnership and programs.
- A few agencies mentioned that their active involvement in multi-stakeholder community committees helped to strengthen their school partnerships.

### **Funding Arrangements**

Almost half (14 programs, 47%) are funded out of existing funds, while an equal number are funded through special project funding. One agency in the north, Centre de Consultation des Jeunes, runs a self-sustaining, non-profit, social enterprise.

A third of the programs (10 programs) have some HRDC funding. Eleven programs (37%) are funded through MTCU. School boards provide funds for 7 programs (23%). The Ontario Women's Directorate, the Trillium Foundation and the Ministry of Community and Social Services were mentioned as other funding sources.

### **Major Benefits of the Programs**

Most agencies with school partnerships agree that there are many benefits for the youth and program partners involved.

- The connection between the schools and the community agencies provides a "seamless service" for youth in their transition from school to work. Youth at-risk are able to access appropriate support immediately upon leaving school.
- Students find out about employment and support resources in their communities through their school.

- Some programs emphasize a holistic approach to service delivery having many resources available to the youth under one roof.
- Students have access to services and resource at the agencies not available at the school. They are introduced to the world of work.
- One member (JHS in Ottawa) suggested there was an advantage for students to have other adults, besides teachers, who will listen to them.
- An employment resource manual for conducting workshops with work bound youth documented effective strategies used in the partnership program between Woodgreen Youth Job Centre and the Toronto District School Board.
- One spin-off benefit for one agency (YEAH Inc.) was the opportunity to develop another project with the school board and community partners.
- Agencies are able to be involved as a partner and share their expertise in community planning.
- An agency in Cornwall suggested that the programs can assist educators to implement certain components of "Choices into Action" (secondary school reform).

*"[We provide] access to resources not otherwise available in the school."  
YMCA, Owen Sound*

## **Examples of Programs**

### **Central Region**

Organization: YMCA – Etobicoke

School Board/ School: Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic District School Boards

Program: Etobicoke Youth Centre

Description: EYC is a multi-agency youth services project coordinated by the YMCA of Greater Toronto. Other than the school boards, the partners are Toronto Parks and Recreation, Public Health and Social Services departments, George Hull Centre for Children and Families and Breakaway Youth and Family Services. Youth services include education, recreation, health, social services and employment counselling.

Target group: Youth who face barriers preventing them from attending regular school or maintaining employment.

Special features: Computerized career inventory, counselling and health services, flexible time tabling, individual tutoring, learner-centred programs, life skills training, recreation activities, welcoming environment, small group cooperative learning

Benefits: Academic and cooperative education credits towards high school diploma, career planning, skills development and work experience.

*"It's important for youth to hear about our services in school, so if they decide to leave or are 'de-mitted' they know where to go for employment help."*  
*Centre for Advancement in Work and Living (CAWL),  
Toronto*

**Eastern Region**

Organization: YEAH Inc., Brockville

School Board/ School: Upper Canada District School Board and Eastern Ontario  
Catholic District School Board (2 secondary schools)

Program: Career Development Program and Interest Inventories and  
Career Choices

Description: Employment counsellor conducts workshops and provides  
individual counselling on employability skills, interest  
inventories and career development strategies. With the  
guidance counsellor, he assists youth with post-secondary  
course selection, summer job options and career  
development

Target group: Youth at-risk and senior high school students

Benefits: This program led to development of another career  
development program, "Do jobs grow on trees?" for grade 10  
students.

*"Student feedback has been very positive.  
[The counsellor] brought an excellent fresh  
opportunity for self-discovery to these  
students."  
Guidance Counsellor, St. Mary High School,  
Brockville*

**Northern Region**

Organization: Youth Employment Services – North Bay

School Board/School: Near North District and Nipissing District Catholic School  
Boards

Program: Bridges

Description: Workshops and seminars on career planning and employment preparation. Individual and group vocational testing for students using GATB, Myers-Briggs, True Colors. Funding for this program is provided by the Ministry of Education.  
Students

Target group: YES is also involved in the Volunteer Youth in the Millennium

Special features: project and seminars for co-op students.

Students have access to services not usually available

Benefits: through the schools.

*“Partnering results in better programming options for the at-risk youth population.”  
YES Employment Services, Thunder Bay*

**South-West Region**

Organization: Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU)

School Board/ School: Thames Valley District School Board and London District Catholic School Board

Program: What's the Point?

Description: Operating since 1996, this program offers pre-employment training on a monthly basis. Youth participants set goals and develop action plans leading towards employment. A four-day program is geared to youth still in school and an eight day format prepares youth for work using a work simulation curriculum called "Wondertech." Students are strongly encouraged to continue or return to school to obtain at least a grade 12 diploma.

Target group: Students at risk of leaving or have already left secondary school (approximately 100 –120 youth per year)

Special features: Staff from school boards attend steering committee meetings to offer input in the development of the program. Marketing of the program to the school is led through key personnel in each of the two school boards.

Benefits: Program participants explore the world of work and may receive guidance in their re-entry to formal education. The program provides an avenue back into school.

*"Students can get on-site, individual job search support which supplements support from guidance counsellors and co-op teachers. The students also learn about other programs in the community."  
Youth Employment Services, Windsor*

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

The programs offered in partnership between OAYEC community-based agencies and schools and school boards to assist work-bound youth appear to have multiple benefits for the community employment agencies, and schools involved. These partnership programs have assisted many youth, including early school leavers or work-bound graduates, in their transition from school to work. Collaborative efforts between the community and education sectors should continue to ensure that outreach strategies target youth before or at the earliest point after they leave school.

The community sector has had a history of providing supportive employment programs for youth, especially those with employment barriers. Through new strategies of the Job Connect program, the Ontario provincial government's program for promoting training and employment services for young people, community-based agencies are even better equipped than in the past to address the employment issues of youth at risk of unemployment.

This report seems to have only captured the formal school partnerships in the OAYEC network and may underestimate the extent to which more informal community - school collaborations exist. There is evidence of many innovative and effective programs in place. It is recommended that the education system and community sector continue to draw on their strengths to work together to improve and provide more options for youth in their school-to-work transitions.

**List of School Partnership Programs by Region**

<b>OAYEC Member</b>	<b>School Board(s)</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Name of Initiative(s)</b>	<b>Program Description</b>
<b>Central Region</b>				
Centre for Advancement in Work and Living (CAWL)	Toronto District School Board	Silverthorn & Lakeshore Collegiate Institute	Moving on to Work	A two-day event for graduating students where they receive information about labor market trends, interview skills, employer expectations, resume writing and self-employment. Students also visit CAWL. CAWL is also involved in many networking and information sharing activities with other schools and community agencies including participation in SALC (supervised alternative learning centre) committee.
Etobicoke YMCA Employment and Community Services	Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic District School Board		Etobicoke Youth Centre	EYC is a multi-agency youth services project that provides education, recreation, health, social services and employment counselling; coordinated by the YMCA of Greater Toronto (see description in case studies section).
Etobicoke YMCA Employment and Community Services	Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic District School Board		Rexdale Youth Resource Centre	RYRC is a collaborative community partnership offering employment, education, health, recreation and personal development services. Sponsored by HRDC, coordinated by the YMCA with community partners including TDSB, TCDSB, Humber College, Rexdale Community Health Centre and Toronto Parks and Recreation

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<b>Central Region</b>				
Woodgreen Youth Job Centre	Toronto District School Board	Danforth Technical Institute	Under Construction	2-day workshop for youth leaving high school using a "constructivist counselling" approach. to explore career options, goal setting, resume preparation and interview skills
YMCA Career Development and Learning Centre	Halton District School Board		STEP (Secondary Teen Education Program)	The YMCA offers information and referral, pre-employment and job search assistance and support to students
YMCA Employment & Community Services – North York	Toronto District School Board		Youthinc.	Youth resource centre in North York with a partnership between the Toronto District School Board, Jewish Vocational Services and the YMCA
YMCA Employment & Community Services – Scarborough	Toronto District School Board	Bendale Technical Institute, Scarborough Centre for Alternative Studies		Two-day job-search and interview preparation for students during the school year. Counsellors attend school at lunch break to assist students to apply for summer employment.

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<b>Eastern Region</b>				
Employment and Education Resource Centre of Cornwall and District Inc.	Upper Canada District School Board, Catholic Board of Eastern Ontario, Conseil des Écoles Publique de l'est de l'Ontario	multiple secondary schools within the school board	Student Services Centre	Year-round, bilingual employment/ career services to educators and students including a computer lab, career planning materials, workshops, job search information, career library.
Employment and Education Resource Centre of Cornwall and District Inc.	Upper Canada District School Board	Itagwi Secondary School, Charlan District High School, Ruthwell Osnabruck School, Seaway District High School, North Dundas District High School (5 schools in total)	Opportunity 2000	A one-day workshop for female secondary school students in the rural area to provide information on career opportunities in skilled trades and entrepreneurship.
John Howard Society Youth Employment Resource Centre	Ottawa Carlton District	Frederick Banting and Elizabeth WynWood Alternative Schools		Provide half day per week of employment counselling with eligible youth. Meet with school staff to inform them about services for youth.

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<b>Eastern Region</b>				
Victoria County Career Services	Trillium Lakelands District School Board	T. E. Weldon Secondary School, Fenelon Falls SS, Lindsay Collegiate & Vocational Institute		One Job Connect Counsellor assigned per school as a contact. Running a student centre and VYM project.
YEAH Inc.	Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario	St. Mary High School, Brockville	Interest Inventories and Career Choices	Provides individual counselling and conduct workshops for senior high school students. Along with guidance counsellors, assist students with course selections for college or university, summer job options and career development.
YEAH Inc.	The Upper Canada District School Board	Thousand Island Secondary School	Career Development Program	Conduct workshops and provide individual counselling on employability skills, interest inventories and career development strategies.

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<b>Northern Region</b>				
Centre de Consultation des Jeunes	Conseil Scolaire Catholique des Grandes Rivières.	École secondaire de Hearst	Co-op at the Train-a-Youth Enterprises	Train-a-Youth Enterprises is a non-profit organization that offers practical training to high risk youth. Youth get school credits by gaining work experience and credibility in the community.
Lake of the Woods Employment Action Project Inc.	Keewatin-Patricia District School Board	Beaver Brae Secondary School	Co-op workshops	Work with high schools in provision of co-op workshops; referrals from guidance.
YES Employment Services	Lakehead District School Board and Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board			Staff is contacting and meeting with guidance counsellors to make them aware of employment services at YES. Participation on SALEP (Supervised Alternative Learning for Excused Pupils) committee.
YES Employment Services Inc. (Nipissing)	Nipissing District RCSSB	Schollard Hall/ FJ McEllis	Bridges VYM (Volunteer Youth in the Millenium)	Workshops, seminars and presentations on career planning and employment preparation. Individual and group testing for students in GATB, Myers-Briggs, True Colours. Seminar for co-op students.
YES Employment Services Inc. (Nipissing)	Near North Public School Board	Northern Secondary School, FJ McElligott	Bridges VYM (Volunteer Youth in the Millenium)	Workshops, seminars, presentations on career planning and employment preparation. Individual and group testing for students in Myers-Biggs, GATB, True Colours.

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<b>South-Western Region</b>				
Cambridge Youth Services (JHS)  Lutherwood Youth Employment Centre	Waterloo Catholic School Board, Waterloo Region District School Board	all Secondary Schools	ACCESS Assisted Career Coaching through Employment Support Services	Program to help high-risk, special needs students with behavioural and/or learning disabilities gain employment experience. Intensive pre-employment training, job development and job coaching provided.
Grand River Employment Centre	Grand Erie District School Board/ Six Nations	HSS, CSC, McKinnon Park, PJ, BCI	Social Development	Social development program targeted at Six Nations Elementary School students.
Owen Sound Family YMCA	Bluewater District School Board	Numerous within the Board.	2nd Floor Resource Centre	Year-round, student and youth resource centre with computer lab and workshops in job search, resumes, interest testing, goal setting. Co-management of summer employment programs.
St. Leonard's Society of Brant (Brantford YEC)  Fanshawe College Job Connect	Grand Erie District School Board	All secondary schools	Career Resource Centres	Career resource centres located in secondary schools that provide resources to help students with career development and planning and to make a smooth transition from school to work.

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<b>South-Western Region</b>				
St. Clair College - YES	Greater Essex County District School Board	Forster Secondary School	The Career Connection  Windsor Employment Resource Centre	A career and resource centre in a school setting. An employment consultant is available on site (one afternoon/week) for job search and career support for students with a focus on connecting with workbound and/or graduating students. WERC, funded by HRDC provides students with job search/career assistance, workshops, job banks, summer jobs, odd jobs, etc.
Youth Opportunities Unlimited	Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) and London District Catholic School Board	Numerous schools throughout system and alternative school programs	What's The Point?	Workshops on career decision making, job search for at-risk youth to bridge transition from school to work
Youth Opportunities Unlimited	Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) and London District Catholic School Board	Numerous schools throughout system and alternative school programs	Student Employment Centre	Provides ongoing employability/job search workshops to students in secondary and senior elementary school.
Youth Opportunities Unlimited	Thames Valley District School Board and London District Catholic School Board	Numerous schools throughout system and alternative school programs	Peer Power	Trained peers mentoring at-risk peers in secondary schools.

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<b>South-Western Region</b>				
Youth Opportunities Unlimited	Thames Valley District School Board	Numerous schools throughout system and alternative school programs	Westmount Project	An alternative school program including an educational, life skills and exploration/pre-employment skills components.
Youth Opportunities Unlimited	Thames Valley District School Board	Numerous schools throughout system and alternative school programs	Ontrack Program	Provides life skills/pre-employment training for young teen mothers who are in the alternative school programs.
Youth Opportunities Unlimited	Thames Valley District School Board and London District Catholic School Board	Numerous schools throughout system and alternative school programs	SOLAR Student Options For Learning, Action and Responsibility	to reduce early school leaving