

# Inclusive Student Services Impact Update

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## Work Education

The purpose of Work Education is to build a wide range of skills while gaining a deepened understanding of personal interests and skill sets. As a student's confidence increases and they demonstrate employability skills, the focus of their work education shifts to finding experiences aligned with their individual goals and interests.

Work Education is the supported learning and practical application of employability skills through experiences working in schools and community. As an integral part of transitioning to life beyond high school, students have the opportunity to gain skills navigating different social settings and navigating the workplace within a safe and supportive environment. Students hone their skills in areas such as communication, navigating environments outside of the classroom, as well as additional opportunities to practice following instructions and time management. The focused aim of this program is to instill, within each student, the confidence and skills for independence while preparing them for paid employment.

Most students who participate in Work Education are accessing learning through special education placement in a [Practical Learning Program \(PLP\)](#) or [Transition to Work Program](#). Students have the opportunity to gain workplace experience within our schools and in community. Depending on the skill level of students, the types of placements may include in-school placements like recycling programs or creating their own school store, to accessing our centralized placements like the shredding site at Rosemary Brown P.S. and the DDSB Media Centre, as well as working in the community at local businesses in areas of retail, service, and hospitality.

Currently, there are 39 students attending a work placement from the PLP, and 50 students from the Transition to Work Program accessing work experiences.

*"This program helps us get work experience. It helps some of us get part time jobs. Also, it has really helped me to be independent and even take the city bus on my own."*

*-Student*



Examples of how students' progress from in-class opportunities through to community-based work placements:

Work Education Continuum Examples			
Employment Industries	Stage 1: In-Class	Stage 2: In-School	Stage 3: Community Based Placements
<b>Retail</b>	Create learning scenarios to practice skills such as stocking shelves, hanging and folding clothes, preparing items for sale, and social scenarios.	Example: Creating a school store	Example: Retail experience at clothing stores, hobby stores, hardware stores, food banks and grocery stores
<b>Food Service</b>	Create learning activities related to food preparation, table setting, serving, social scenarios, and may access specialized training such as the Safe Food Handling Course.	Example: Working in the school cafeteria, participating in the school's culinary program	Example: Fast food and dine-in restaurants, grocery store bakeries and deli counters
<b>Caretaking</b>	Create learning opportunities for sweeping, dusting, cleaning tables, disposal of recycling, maintaining public spaces and social scenarios.	Example: Working with the custodial team at school	Example: Custodial work at community centres, schools, and malls
<b>Office</b>	Create learning experiences through document filing, answering phones, sorting classroom supplies, inputting spreadsheet data, shredding, creating presentations, photocopying and social scenarios.	Example: Supporting school secretaries in the office, creating a photocopying business for teachers	Example: Office spaces such as dentist and doctors offices, corporate office spaces

*"Work education is both inspiring and rewarding seeing the progress of the students as they become more self-confident and independent. This program is vital because it introduces the students to professional relationships outside of the classroom that closely resemble the real world of work. The skills that are nurtured in the program include workplace safety, goal setting, job expectations, independence through work and navigating public transit."*

*-Educational Assistant*



## Skill Highlight: Transit Training

The Work Education Program as a whole for students in Practical Learning Programs as well as the Transition to Work Program, also receive a special opportunity to build an integral life skill through transit training. As participants within the Work Education Program, when appropriate, students will have the opportunity to gain experience taking public transit. Emphasis is placed on utilization of Durham Regional Transit to get to and from placements building the opportunity for schools to incorporate transit training as a part of students' learning goals. Students are encouraged to be involved in the route planning process as well as gain understanding of accessibility features and proper protocols when riding public transit.

Over the course of the Work Education Program students have transitioned into paid and or volunteer employment, as well as using the program as a stepping stone for readiness before entering into a post-secondary program.

For example, pathways for students who graduated in June 2024 included:

- 13 students achieved paid employment positions.
- 2 students went on to post-secondary education.
- 2 students moved on to community supports.

Currently, within the 2024-2025 school year, two students have been hired for paid employment as a direct result of their work education placement and demonstration of skills to their employer.



*"This program has helped me to get a great work placement, it has helped me with bus training and this program has helped me to gain responsibility and experience. This program has also helped me with getting a part time job, because of all my experience and help making a portfolio."*

*-Student*

*"My favourite part of having students participating within the Work Education Program is working with the students to see how they grow and mature while providing them with the tools to achieve their goals."*

*-Educator*



For more information about the DDSB Inclusive Student Services Impact Update, please visit [DDSB Inclusive Student Services](#).