



MAKE *the* MOVE TO HIGH SCHOOL

Thursday, April 8, 2021

Dear Future Sir Winston Churchill Families:

Your student will be joining us at Sir Winston soon, and we can't wait to welcome a new Bulldog! Transitioning to secondary school is an important step in your student's education, and we want to set them up for success as they get ready to make the move from Grade 8 to Grade 9.

New for all DSBN Secondary Schools

Beginning this September, the DSBN will be de-streaming all Grade 9 compulsory subjects: English, French, geography, math, and science. This means these courses will no longer be offered in both applied and academic. The province is requiring every school board in Ontario to begin moving in this direction. This change does not apply to students who are registered in the Specialized School to Work (SSTW) or Specialized School to Community (SSTC) programs.

Grade 9 students who originally registered in applied or academic courses will now be studying in the same course, just like they're used to doing in their elementary school. By doing this, more students will be empowered to pursue the futures they want, with doors open to all post-secondary options, including apprenticeship, college, university, or into the workplace.

Why did the province make this decision?

Ontario is the last province left in Canada to implement this change. This decision will give students equal opportunities by keeping all post-secondary choices and options open to everyone. It will help remove post-secondary barriers, and will allow students to have more time to experience secondary school before making decisions about their future.

Why is this good for my student?

It's important that your student, and every student, can access any opportunity they need while they're in secondary school to pursue the path of their choice. When all students take academic courses in Grade 9, everyone is given the chance to better determine their futures.

What does this mean for my student starting Grade 9?

- **If your student chose applied courses:** they will be automatically enrolled into academic courses, including English, French, geography, science, as well as de-streamed math
- **If your student chose academic courses:** no changes will be made to their courses
- **If your student is registered in SSTW or SSTC programs:** they will continue in these programs with no changes to their courses

There is a helpful FAQ below, but if you have any concerns or additional questions, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Ann Gilmore, Principal
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Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will my academic level student continue to be challenged in their courses?

Yes! In fact, research is clear that **all** students benefit when they learn together with students of **all** achievement levels and interests. These courses will continue to enrich your student's thinking while promoting their critical thinking.

2. What if my child is at an applied level and is not ready to take academic level courses?

Don't worry! Our teachers understand that every student brings a different set of skills and knowledge, and they plan for these differences. We have supports in place to ensure that all students can be successful (*see question 7 below*).

3. Do I as a parent/guardian, or does my child, need to do anything?

We are taking care of it for you! If your child chose any applied courses, the DSBN will automatically enroll them into academic courses.

4. My child is in the Specialized School to Work (SSTW) or Specialized School to Community (SSTC) program. Will there be any changes for them?

If your child is enrolled in the SSTW or SSTC programs, there will be no changes to their learning.

5. What if my child learns best with different modes of learning?

The academic courses are developed to support all modes of learning. Additionally, many of the courses we offer are already designed to serve students of all learning pathways, including the arts, business studies, computer studies, family studies, healthy active living, and technology.

6. Will any courses be changed this year, or will they all be academic courses?

As part of the Ontario government's plan, they are introducing a new math course for all Grade 9 students; this course will have a new curriculum, and it will be the beginning of the de-streaming process in other areas. In the meantime, all other de-streamed courses will be academic.

Frequently Asked Questions

7. What supports will be in place to ensure my child can succeed in academic courses?

Your student's teacher will be a primary source of support. Parents/guardians are encouraged to communicate with the classroom teacher regularly to help support their student.

Additionally, all secondary schools at the DSNB have Student Success teachers and Special Education Resource Teachers, whose focus is to work with students who may need extra support or accommodations. Each school's Student Success Team monitors student progress and offers further support as needed by working with students and families. Guidance counsellors, principals, and vice-principals are always available to help students as well.

8. What if my child plans to attend college, or enroll in an apprenticeship program?

Students who take academic courses in Grade 9 will have the opportunity to pursue all post-secondary options after secondary school, including apprenticeship, college, university or the workplace.