

## Choosing the Right level of Study

### Frequently Asked Questions, Common Concerns and What We Know.

#### 1. My child doesn't know what they want to do after high school

**You might be thinking** – You have to keep all the doors open.

**What we would like you to know.**

- It's normal to not know exactly what you want to do at this age
- Re-routing, re-designing and re-entering educational paths are all common occurrences.
- Studying at the wrong level has the potential to close more levels than it opens if achievement level is low.

#### 2. Shouldn't we try academic and then go to applied if it doesn't work out?

**You might be thinking** – Once you take an applied course, you can't move into the academic stream. **OR** Your child's work habits will change now that they are in grade 9 even though they struggled in grade 7/8

**What we would like you to know.**

- Students disengage if a level is not appropriate.
- Students behind in credits by grade 10 are at the highest risk of dropping out.
- Behaviour and attendance issues may arise if a student is placed at an incorrect level.
- Success at the applied level would allow students to attempt the academic level in Grade 10 in English, Science, French and History. Math requires a transfer credit to make the shift from applied to academic from grade 9 to grade 10
- Some students, who struggle in grade 8, do the applied level course as a stepping stone to the grade 9 academic course.
- Course level changes are not always possible once a semester has begun.

#### 3. Isn't an academic environment better for my son or daughter even though they are struggling?

**You might be thinking** – Applied is for students who are not going to a post-secondary destination.

**What we would like you to know.**

- College, apprenticeships and trades are increasing in demand and popularity
- Students wishing to move to academic after significant success in applied arrive confident and successful.

#### 4. Will my son or daughter be able to go to university if they take a course at the applied level?

**You might be thinking** – Students who study at the applied level will never go to university.

**What we would like you to know**

- Direct entry to university from high school is only one pathway to that destination.
- Interesting pathways/opportunities now exist between colleges and universities
- There are many university programs that do not require math or science at all. English 4U and 5 other U or M levels are the only prerequisites.
- College and university course marks are not differentiated when a student applies to a college program.

Finally,

Your child's grade 8 teachers have made recommendations on their option sheets regarding the level of study. If you have questions about their decisions, please discuss this with them now.

All students should be successful and challenged. Finding the right level of study can ensure a productive and positive high school experience.

Remember that it is not only okay but also fairly common that a student will be studying different subjects at different levels.

## The Right Fit is Really Important....



A student who is misplaced in a class may fail a credit in grade 9. We know that statistically, students who are unsuccessful in even just one grade 9 course are at a heightened risk of not graduating within four years (King, 2005). Often students who are struggling in an academic course are unable to switch to an applied course because of the schedule. Student success is greatly enhanced when appropriate course level choices are made.

The following information is presented in the form of a checklist primarily for students moving from grade 8 to grade 9. Place a checkmark beside each statement that best matches the learner's current achievement, work habits, direction, or preferred learning environment.

Please note: Students choosing the Immersion program must take the following courses at the academic level: Science, French, Geography.

### Academic Level is for students who:

- Have the ability to apply skills to familiar and unfamiliar situations
- Complete tasks with limited assistance and have excellent organizational skills
- Respond well to rigorous and demanding programs
- Demonstrate insightful responses
- Capable of independent inquiry
- Learns best through both theory and practical applications
- Achieved a level 3 in reading or writing in language-based courses

- Possess mastery of all basic math skills such as multiplication tables and fractions, as well as the ability to manage multi-step instructions
- Demonstrate strong skills in Patterning and Algebra in grade 8 math—level 3 or higher.
- Grade 6 EQAO results may also be a factor to consider (level 3 recommended).

### Applied Level is for students who:

- Benefit from repetition and a practical approach when encountering new concepts.
- Complete tasks with assistance and may require support with their organizational skills.
- Prefer practical and concrete hands-on assignments to those requiring abstract thought.
- Require encouragement to read independently or silently.
- Respond well to teacher-organized learning.
- Relies on a calculator or multiplication chart for basic math facts.
- Have achieved a mark lower than 70 in Patterning and Algebra in grade 8 math—level 2 or lower.
- Grade 6 EQAO results may also be a factor to consider.

### Locally Developed Courses are for students who:

- Currently benefit from a modified program.
- Require re-teaching of most concepts/skills.
- Are reluctant or struggling readers and writers who work best orally.
- Require “one-on-one” support to promote best learning.
- Prefer “hands-on” learning with continuous reinforcement.

