



**Evaluation of the Ontario Ministry of Education's  
Student Success / Learning to 18 Strategy  
Stage 1 Report**

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(FINAL)**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

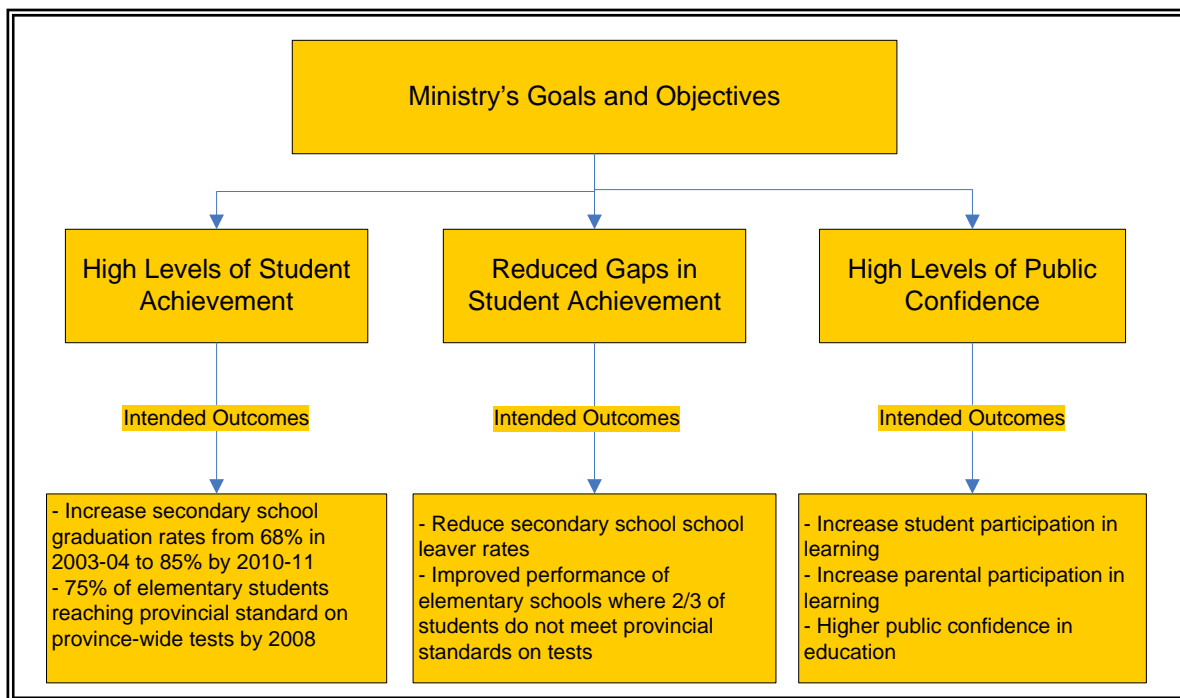
The Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) has been engaged through a competitive process by the Ontario Ministry of Education (hereafter “the Ministry”) to evaluate the extent to which the Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategy (hereafter “the SS/L18 Strategy”) as currently implemented is aligned with the Ministry’s three overarching goals and is producing the intended outcomes related to its specific five goals. The evaluation process is composed of two main phases. This Stage 1 report provides a description and chronology of the SS/L18 Strategy-related changes; a catalogue and preliminary analysis of source documents relevant to the initiative; the results of an analysis of interviews with 39 respondents identified for the initial stage of the evaluation; the results of four focus groups conducted with Student Success Leaders (SSLs); preliminary observations about the conduct of the SS/L18 Strategy, its strengths and vulnerabilities, as well as some preliminary recommendations for the future of the Strategy.

While the observations contained in this report are necessarily preliminary and subject to further verification in Stage 2, the evaluation team is of the view that Ontario has created a SS/L18 strategy that integrates a wide range of programs and encourages considerable programmatic innovation and professional autonomy on the part of educators. There appears to be considerable mutuality and complementarity among the elements in the strategy that, although in its early stages of development, appears to be succeeding in providing a more respectful and responsive school environment for students and increased opportunities for them to remain in and benefit from secondary schooling in ways that provide a foundation for work and study following high school. In particular, the SS/L18 Strategy provides more choices for students not bound for university, more chances to make up lost ground better recognizing the maturation process of adolescence, and more supportive and individualized attention through program and transition planning.

## CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The Ministry has identified three key goals upon which to develop and implement the Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategy, its large-scale multi-year public education reform (see Figure 1).

*Figure 1: Ministry's Key Goals and Intended Outcomes*



Within this context, the Ministry announced a number of initiatives directed at meeting these goals, including changes in and implementation of policy, resource allocation, and programs. The SS/L18 Strategy is one of these initiatives.

The SS/L18 Strategy is a broad, province-wide strategy designed to ensure that all students successfully complete their secondary schooling with the knowledge and dispositions required to pursue the work and learning opportunities available to them following secondary school graduation: (a) apprenticeship, (b) college, (c) university, and (d) employment. Designed to encourage innovative and flexible educational

opportunities that reflect regional, social, and cultural differences affecting students' learning experiences and outcomes, the SS/L18 Strategy aims to foster positive student engagement with education in a manner that respects their individual needs and circumstances. The SS/L18 Strategy addresses five major areas: elementary to high school transition support; individual student support; subject specialization programming; alternative programming; and school-employment transition support.

The SS/L18 Strategy was designed to meet five key goals focused on the secondary school system:

1. Increase graduation rate and decrease drop-out rate;
2. Support a good outcome for all students;
3. Provide students with new and relevant learning opportunities;
4. Build on students' strengths and interests; and
5. Provide students with an effective elementary to secondary school transition.

## **EVALUATION AND DESIGN METHODOLOGY**

### **Evaluation Framework**

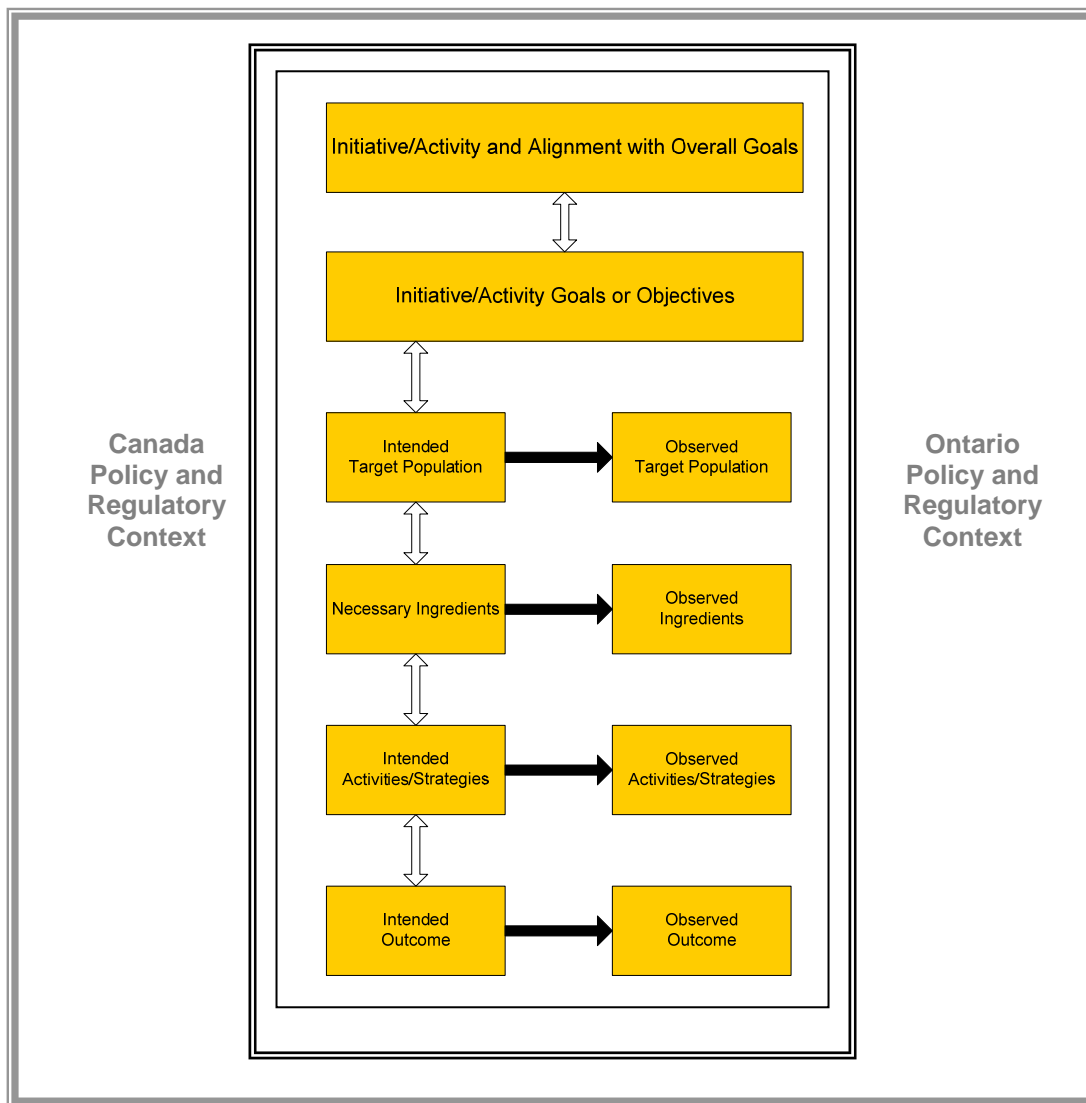
In gathering and interpreting evidence of the extent to which the SS/L18 Strategy is achieving its goals, CCL has followed a specific evaluation framework. Starting with each of the five key goals provided by the Ministry as part of Stage 1 of the evaluation, CCL identified some of the specific programs along with intended elements associated with each initiative. These elements included: (a) the specific goal of the initiative or activity and how it is associated to the SS/L18 Strategy's main goals, (b) the target population, (c) the necessary ingredients, (d) the activities, (e) and the outcomes.

This framework is useful to the evaluation team in three important ways: (a) in determining whether the goals and objectives of a program are sufficiently explicit and specific; (b) in determining whether the intended components of the program, including the target population, resource allocation, programs, and outcomes are logically related

to the goals and to each other; and (c) in evaluating the gap between the intended and observed components of the program.

Stage 1 focuses on identifying each element so that it is possible to determine whether they link each goal to its respective intended outcomes, and ultimately, in Stage 2 of the evaluation, to its observed outcomes.

*Figure 2: Diagram of the Evaluation Framework*



## **Standards and Values**

This evaluation adheres to the Program Evaluation Standards of the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation at Western Michigan University (<http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/jc/>). In keeping with those standards, the team has made every effort to maximize the values of: utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy.

## **STAGE 1: METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS**

CCL undertook a preliminary content analysis of Ministry source documents and reports (Appendix A), conducted interviews with persons identified as providing useful information for the initial stage of the evaluation, and conducted focus groups with Student Success Leaders for the purpose of producing a comprehensive inventory and description of the programs undertaken during Phases One, Two, and Three of the SS/L18 Strategy, and of exploring the perceptions of the Strategy.

In the material that follows CCL staff represent what they heard from interviewees. Unless otherwise clarified with modifiers such as “some”, “several”, or “a few” the statements are representative of the dominant view of those interviewed.

## **Methodology**

### ***Documents***

The Ministry and other key respondents have provided CCL with a number of documents related to the SS/L18 Strategy that CCL has catalogued (see Appendix A) and consulted as reference documents for the elaboration of the state of implementation of the SS/L18 Strategy. The chronology of the development and implementation of the SS/L18 Strategy is provided in the next section of this report.

### ***Semi-structured Interviews***

A total of 39 semi-structured interviews were conducted by CCL (see Appendix B for the interview schedule) to gain a better understanding of the intended programs within their



broader policy contexts. As a courtesy, interviewees were provided with a list of interview questions prior to the interview but were instructed that they were not expected to prepare for the interview. Interviews were conducted in English or in French. Each interview was digitally recorded (for a total of 2,822 minutes of audio recording) and transcribed for analysis. Interviewees were given the opportunity to view the transcript of their interviews to edit any inaccuracies or add any information they considered to be pertinent to the evaluation team.

Interviews were carried out with a variety of individuals who hold or have held positions in which they could be expected to be knowledgeable about the SS/L18 Strategy. Within the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, individuals were selected from areas with program and policy responsibilities for the strategy, as well as areas whose program and policy responsibilities intersect with those of the strategy. Participants included both head office and field staff. Among the interviewees were 17 current or former Senior Managers from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, seven Educations Officers with the Ministry of Education, and three consultants to the Ministry.

School board staff were interviewed as well, including four Directors of Education, two current or former SSLs, a Superintendent of Programs and the current or former Project Coordinator responsible for board-level implementation of the strategy. Among these interviewees, four board types were represented (English-language and French-language; Catholic and public) as were many of the geographic regions of Ontario.

Within the colleges sector, a college president and a vice-president of student services were interviewed.

Finally, at this stage in the evaluation, we did not plan to capture the ways in which students experience the Strategy even though the fundamental purpose of the Strategy is to benefit students. Ministry and school board interviewees pointed to numerous testimonials from students during the interviews, focus groups and in the documents they shared with the evaluation team. Below are examples of such testimonials:

"I wasn't focusing. I got behind and couldn't catch up. I'm so glad to have this (credit recovery) opportunity."<sup>1</sup> – Student

"Je réussis tous mes cours ce semestre grâce à l'appui de l'enseignante pour la réussite des élèves. Ce n'est pas comme le dernier semestre où j'ai échoué partout."<sup>2</sup> – Student

"When I told my parents about this (dual credit) course, they were extremely pleased to know that I was accepted to be in this course as one of the first students... I am proud of my grades in this program. They are at an all time high. The program has matured me greatly, gave me more confidence and left me with a feeling of success."<sup>3</sup> – A student enrolled in a dual credit course

In Stage 2 of this evaluation we look forward to learning from students themselves whether the sentiments expressed are the rule, the exception or somewhere in between.

### ***Focus Groups***

In addition to individual interviews, CCL organized four focus groups with SSLs (See Appendix C for focus group guide). A total of 38 SSLs were invited to participate in the focus groups. All eight SSLs from French-language school boards were invited. Thirty SSLs from English-language school boards were randomly selected to be invited to participate in one of three remaining focus groups by factoring region and dividing the groups by whether the school boards were located in a rural or urban area.

A total of 25 SSLs participated in the focus groups. One focus group was conducted with five SSLs from French-Language Public District School Boards and French-Language Catholic District School Boards. A second group was conducted with seven SSLs from Northern Ontario English-Language Public District School Boards and Northern Ontario

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<sup>1</sup> Quote retrieved from p. 46 of Armstrong, Desbiens, & Yeo (2006). Analytical Review of Phase 9 School/College/Work Initiative: Pilot B – Dual Credit/Dual Program 2005-2006.

<sup>2</sup> Quote retrieved from Ontario Ministry of Education (2007). Student Success. Presentation at the Student Success Symposium, January 15, 2007, in Toronto.

<sup>3</sup> Quote retrieved from Ontario Ministry of Education (2007). Student Success. Presentation at the Student Success Symposium, January 15, 2007, in Toronto.

English-Language Catholic District School Boards. Two focus groups were conducted with a total of 13 SSLs from Southern Ontario English-Language Public District School Boards and Southern Ontario English-Language Catholic District School Boards.

Being directly involved in the programs, these key respondents had valuable insights into the significance and the perceived success of the programs implemented as part of the SS/L18 Strategy, and were able to shed light on the actual resources available to school boards to aid in the implementation of the SS/L18 Strategy. Each focus group was digitally recorded (for a total of 425 minutes of audio recording) and transcribed for analysis.

### **Analysis of Interview and Focus Group Transcripts**

Transcripts were first read to get an overall sense of their content, and then read more specifically to look for statements pertaining to the following pre-determined analytical categories: (a) respondents' understanding of the SS/L18 Strategy and of its origins and chronology; (b) their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the Strategy; (c) their opinions about the factors of success and challenges facing the Strategy; (d) as well as their recommendations for the future of the Strategy. Analysts then each coded a number of transcripts for statements that pertained to the aforementioned categories. Following this initial coding, analytical summaries were developed based on the coded interview and focus group transcripts that reflected the salient items found in each transcript. The team of analysts met repeatedly during the coding process to discuss emergent findings and to agree on the coding of "hard to classify" statements. This process was further supported by email communication and the documentation of significant emerging issues. In refining the analysis, our research team held internal briefing sessions to identify and discuss the major themes yielded by the data from each analytical category listed above, and to identify patterns of responses across and between groups of respondents. Major themes and response patterns were compared and contrasted until a consensus was reached among our analysts that allowed them to identify two clearly distinguishable groups of respondents (Ministry-level respondents and school board respondents) and to integrate the results in terms of each group's: (a)

understanding of the SS/L18 Strategy; (b) perceptions of the accomplishments of the SS/L18 Strategy and of its related factors of success and enablers; and (c) beliefs about the past, present and future challenges faced by the SS/L18 Strategy. These findings are discussed in the section entitled *Findings from the Interviews and Focus Groups*.

## **STAGE 1: RESULTS**

### **Chronology**

The origins and unfolding of the SS/L18 Strategy are detailed in Appendix D. Phase One of the SS/L18 Strategy was launched in 2003. This first phase included, among other initiatives, a \$114-million investment, revised Grade 9 and 10 applied mathematics curricula, the development of new locally developed compulsory credit courses, and the appointment of Student Success Leaders in each board.

Phase Two of the SS/L18 Strategy was launched in May 2005, continuing the programs instigated in Phase One with an additional allocation of \$158 million for human resources, including Student Success Teachers in every secondary school, and to expand the Lighthouse projects initiative (started in the Fall of 2004).

Phase Three of the SS/L18 Strategy began in December 2005 with the introduction of the Learning to 18 Legislation (Bill 52) and additional funding for the continuing support of existing programs and professional development, as well as the development of the Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM), programs focused on facilitating Grade 8 to 9 transition, expanded cooperative education programs, and programs with a focus on student success in rural areas.

### **State of Implementation of the SS/L18 Strategy**

Information gathered through interviews, focus groups and source documents point to the following broad categories of school- or local-level programs as being pivotal to the SS/L18 Strategy:

1. Programs within the secondary school aimed at identifying students at risk of disengagement/failure, supporting all students to success, creating caring environments that value all students and support student engagement, creating more choices for students, and providing them with opportunities to succeed where they would otherwise have failed.
2. Programs within the community with parents, employers, community agencies and organizations to help inform decision-making, create opportunities for experiential learning, and support school-based efforts to improve success.
3. Programs to build better connections and bridges between secondary schools and colleges, employers, and the community.
4. Programs to improve transitions and success for students between elementary school and secondary school, including Grades 7 and 8, and programs designed to provide for greater success in post-secondary learning environments.

### Evaluation Framework and Program Components

The information gathered through the analysis of available source documents, interviews, and focus groups with key respondents was used to document the state of implementation of the SS/L18 Strategy. Using the evaluation framework depicted in Figure 2 (on p. 7), CCL has identified and described some of the major programs implemented during Phases One, Two, and Three of the SS/L18 Strategy. Others may be added to this initial set. Each program has been incorporated in the evaluation framework, relating it to the Strategy's goals, as well as to its specific goals, a target population, resource allocations, and desired outcomes (see Appendix E). The proposed focus of Stage 2 of the formative evaluation will be on populating the right-hand side of these charts, allowing for a gap analysis to be performed between intended outcomes and observed outcomes of each program.

### Findings from the Interviews and Focus Groups

*I'll just say that Student Success is a good thing. It's been paramount in the sense of really allowing people to champion the cause, setting direction and setting vision. I think people that are rolling up their sleeves every day can really share the testimonies and really help the Province. And the Province wants to do the right thing. And they need to be applauded on that. Recognizing that it's a lot of hard work. But why not? You know, it's certainly worth it for our kids too.*

– Student Success Leader

The interview and focus group transcripts provided a rich source of data from which to extract common themes pertaining to perceptions and beliefs about the SS/L18 Strategy. Although key respondents approached the SS/L18 Strategy from a variety of perspectives, there was, overall, a high level of enthusiasm about this Strategy and general agreement on its value to Ontario students, and in particular to the secondary student population. The findings reported in this section reflect the dominant themes that were produced by our analysis. Quotes by individual respondents that were deemed most representative or illustrative of the dominant themes are also provided throughout this section of our report.

***Understanding of the SS/L18 Strategy at the Ministry level: “Success for all”***

Interviews with individuals from the Ministry revealed an understanding of the Strategy as one with a fundamental focus on success for all students – on success for each student. This focus is viewed as a major policy change, one which emphasizes meeting the needs of all students, whether they are students in special education or students achieving below, at, or above average.

Origins of the SS/L18 Strategy

The origins and motivations of the Strategy were traced in part to reactions to a four-phased double-cohort longitudinal study by Alan King (King, 2002, 2003; King et al., 2004), which cited alarmingly low graduation rates within the province and identifying credit accumulation in Grade 9 and 10 as a key predictor of graduation. This research motivated the development of specific programs to help all students acquire the required number of secondary school credits and subsequently graduate from secondary school.

Subsequent research (Ferguson et al., 2005; Institut franco-ontarien, 2005) identified student disengagement as a critical component of students’ early departure from secondary schools.

### Policy Context

Key respondents from the Ministry viewed the SS/L18 Strategy as capitalizing on efforts that had been implemented prior to the formal establishment of the Strategy and embedding a greater level of accountability in the system. This greater accountability is seen as resting on increased reliance on evidence-informed decision making made possible by capacity building within the Ministry, the school boards, and schools for a

much improved  
system of data  
gathering, data  
monitoring  
(through Annual  
Action Plans  
submitted by

*[This is a] global policy effort to ensure students stay in school until 18 [years] and to allow for the development of programs that target the interests, abilities, and career ambitions of each student and to ensure a successful educational journey. [The Strategy] involves facilitating transition from elementary to secondary, providing support to ensure success at the secondary level and into post-secondary level, be that in college, university, apprenticeship, ongoing professional training of the workforce.*

– Ministry Respondent

each school board to the Ministry), and data interpretation (see Zegarac & Franz, 2007).

### The Pillars

A key element expressed on several occasions by respondents from the Ministry, one that was often described as being foundational, was the concept of pillars. The Literacy, Numeracy, Program Pathways, and Community, Caring and Culture pillars were widely seen as the basis for all the individual programs under the ambit of the SS/L18 Strategy. The specific objectives most often identified during the interviews were (a) increasing graduation rates to 85%; (b) providing greater learning opportunities in terms of diversifying and customizing program choices for students while ensuring students master basic competencies in literacy and numeracy; and (c) providing students with smooth transitions between each grade level, between elementary and secondary school, and between secondary school and post-secondary education, apprenticeships or work.

### Indicators

The Ministry has established a set of indicators aimed at monitoring each school board's performance with respect to the goals set by the Ministry. These indicators, identified by

some key ministry respondents and source documents, include credit accumulation, compulsory course pass rates, completion of literacy graduation requirements, workplace preparation course selections, college preparation course selection, locally-developed compulsory credit course selections, co-operative education credits, annual school leaver rate, and grade 7 and 8 students at risk. Two additional indicators address the student retention issues in French-language boards and include Grade 7 to 12 francophone students transferring into the English-language system and Grade 7 and 8 francophone at-risk students transferring into the English system.

#### Specific initiatives and programs

A number of initiatives and programs were described as being centrally important to the SS/L18 Strategy as means by which to reach its objectives. The legislative part of the Strategy – Bill 52 – is viewed as part of the broader student success agenda, one requiring students to stay in school or learn in an equivalent setting until they graduate or until they reach at least 18 years of age. Student Success teams were established and are composed of a Student Success Leader (SSL) at the school board level, a Student Success Teacher (SST) at the school level, and student success teams at the school level including a number of other school staff such as a school principal, school leads for special education teacher and guidance as well as any other teachers or staff from the school as deemed appropriate. These teams were established as a way of building capacity at different levels of the system while creating clear communication channels between the Ministry, the boards, and individual schools. Information is shared and transferred via regular symposia, training sessions, discussion groups and dialogue sessions, provincial- and local-level conferences, and implementation sessions. Ministry respondents reported that they considered these meetings as a way of encouraging the sharing of best practices and tools among school boards and schools and of helping to change the culture by creating learning communities and a sense of partnership among educators.

Students' basic skills in literacy and numeracy were targeted by building teacher capacity to teach these skills in their own subjects by providing them with training and a



number of teaching resources. In addition, a literacy course (OSSLC) was developed for students who did not pass the OSSLT, and a revised mathematics curriculum addressed many concerns with the previous curriculum for students in the applied courses.

In addition to the programs focusing on literacy and numeracy, funding was made available for a wide variety of locally-developed programs incorporating innovative programs that support students' learning interests (e.g., Lighthouse projects). Ministry respondents identified individual programs aimed at providing students with a variety of legitimate pathways to graduation as key elements for attaining the Strategy's goals. Such programs include a focus on differentiated instruction, individual timetabling, the SHSM, expanded cooperative education and apprenticeship opportunities, e-learning, locally-developed compulsory courses, credit recovery and credit rescue, and dual credit programs.

#### The French-Language Sector

The Francophone sector developed an umbrella strategy for its programs ("Destination Réussite") as a way to address the specific issues faced by French-language schools and school boards. This provides funding directed at implementing many of the above-mentioned programs in small and dispersed schools in a minority language setting, as well as support for schools that are performing below expectations.

#### ***Understanding of the SS/L18 Strategy at the school board level: "A shift from teaching to learning"***

School board respondents' understanding of the Strategy differed somewhat from individuals in the Ministry in that their first focus was not the pillars or the legislation. School board respondents converged on an understanding of the Strategy as representing a major culture shift in teaching practices from "teaching subjects to teaching students" or more generally from "teaching to learning". The Strategy was viewed as having a focus on the academic and professional success of all students irrespective of academic standing, challenges, or local contexts, while simultaneously

providing a platform to address the needs of particular groups of students (such as Aboriginal students and disengaged students).

The SS/L18 Strategy is perceived by individuals from school boards as facilitating and encouraging innovation in a flexible manner. It is seen as opening the door to parents and to the community to help students graduate and prepare for their post-secondary destination.

Respondents from both school boards and the Ministry spoke of the value of champions and strong political and board-based leadership for the Strategy. Both the Premier and the Ministers of Education have made clear the centrality of the SS/L18 Strategy among their priorities. Notably, among the many consequential leaders mentioned by respondents, the name of Barry O'Connor came up time and again, from practitioners in the field and from senior Ministry officials. Mr. O'Connor, former Director of Education for the Limestone DSB, was chair of the At Risk Working Group in 2003. He authored the Committee's report "*A Successful Pathway for All Students*": It is clear that Mr. O'Connor has played a pivotal role in capturing the imagination of both educators and civil servants, as well as gaining the trust of elected officials across political parties in inspiring, challenging, and nurturing the strategy from its inception.

### ***SS/L18 Strategy accomplishments, evidence of success, and enablers at the Ministry level***

#### Accomplishments

Interviewees from the Ministry who are connected with the SS/L18 Strategy identified many accomplishments of the Strategy. These accomplishments fell into three categories: (a) improved student attainment and program choices for students, (b) improvements in system effectiveness at both board and provincial levels, and (c) changes in relationships, attitudes, and professional cultures.

*Improved student attainment and improved program choices for students*

Evidence cited for accomplishments in this category included anecdotal stories, Student Success indicator data collected at the school board level, and EQAO results in Grade 9 Mathematics and on the OSSLT (see Figures 3 and 4). Respondents from the Ministry identified the following as accomplishments related to student attainment and program choices:

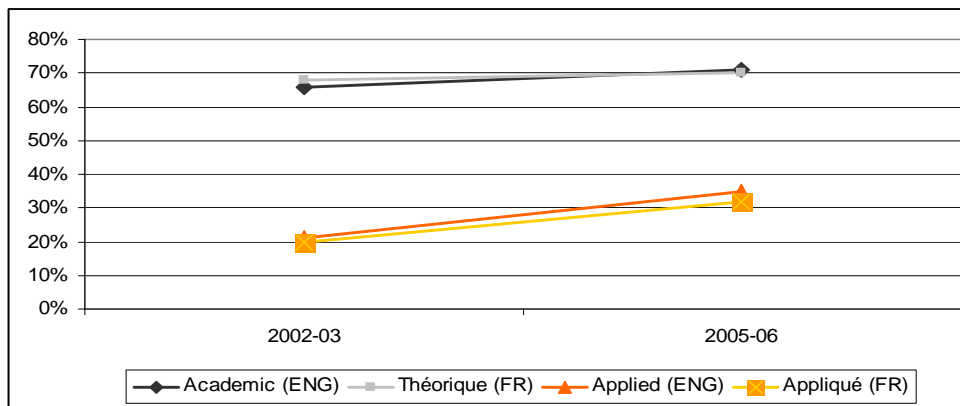
1. Increased number of students who have attained a critical mass of credits by the end of Grades 9 and 10, reportedly rising from 72% to 76.6% and 61% to 66% respectively.
2. Evidence of an increase in graduation rates from 68% in 2003/2004 to 73% in 2005/2006<sup>4</sup>.
3. Focus on the pillars of Literacy, Numeracy, Program Pathways, and Community, Culture and Caring.
4. Evidence of a greater breadth of courses being offered and running.
5. Individualized student timetables for Grade 9 students considered to be at risk.
6. Improvements in Grade 9 EQAO results for students in Applied Mathematics (see Figure 3).
7. Improvements in the Grade 10 EQAO pass rate on OSSLT (see Figure 4).
8. Increased attainment of the literacy standard required for graduation.
9. Introduction of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC).
10. The launch of Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) programs.
11. The increased interest in school–college programs of all kinds, including the various forms of dual credit programs.
12. Credit recovery programs that allow students to earn credit in a failed course by learning the missed curriculum expectations while not having to retake the courses or courses.
13. Credit rescue programs that offer extra assistance to a struggling student during the time the student is taking a course.

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<sup>4</sup> Some respondents suggested that graduation rate and school leaver data is not yet fully reliable but that significant improvements have been made in this regard. This issue is discussed in greater detail in the Challenges section.

14. The availability of courses through e-learning that might otherwise be difficult to offer, particularly in small and remote schools.
15. A clearer articulation of pathways options for students, parents, and teachers to consider.
16. A clear message about the value of all pathways, and all kinds of learning.

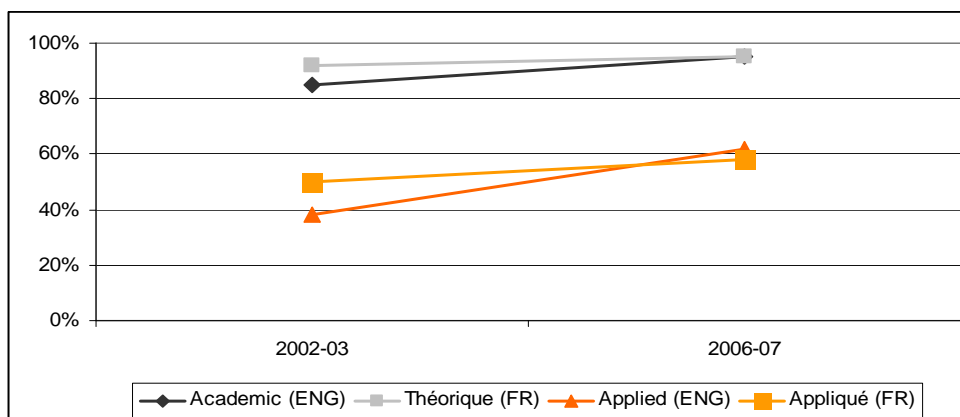
*Figure 3: Percent of students at or above provincial standards on EQAO Grade 9 Test of Mathematics in 2002-03 and 2005-06*



Source: EQAO school, board and provincial results

<http://www.eqao.com/results/results.aspx?grade=36&year=2004&Lang=E&submit=View+Results>

*Figure 4: Percent of students meeting EQAO Grade 10 OSSLT requirements in 2002-03 and 2006-07*



Source: EQAO school, board and provincial results

<http://www.eqao.com/results/results.aspx?grade=36&year=2004&Lang=E&submit=View+Results>

*Improvements in system effectiveness at both school board and provincial levels:*

Ministry respondents identified the following improvements system-wide:

1. The collection and use of data at the student, school, and school board level.
2. Greatly improved attention to elementary-secondary transitions for students.
3. An unprecedented sharing of resources among school boards and with the Ministry.
4. Improved access to professional learning opportunities for teachers and other staff, including the addition of two professional development days devoted to system goals.
5. Improved attention to building system capacity and supporting SSLs and others charged with implementation.
6. The encouragement of local problem solving and innovation through programs such as the Lighthouse projects and the School-College-Work Initiative (SCWI) project.
7. An improved provincial ability to respond to policies and programs that are not working well or are creating barriers.
8. Improved retention of students in French-language secondary schools.
9. Improved relationships between school boards, colleges of applied arts and technology, and community partners.
10. The creation of functional arenas for dialogue and problem-solving, such as the Student Success Commission and the provincial meetings of Student Success Leaders and Ministry staff.

Improvements in the collection and use of data were deemed particularly critical. The indicators have provided the substance for a productive professional conversation about how the system is doing, and the improvements in the collection and management of data appear to be welcome by Ministry respondents.

*We're better at collecting information. We're better therefore at proving to the nay-sayers that there's an issue. Therefore we're better at solutions.*

– Ministry Respondent

Data is now seen as information (not judgement), that can assist in the analysis of issues and can be used with purpose to inform professional dialogue and test solutions.

### *Changes in relationships, attitudes, and professional cultures*

According to provincial level respondents who were involved at the onset of the SS/L18 Strategy, there was an understanding that the system, schools, and teachers were being asked to make a major shift in the professional culture and expectations of the secondary school. Both Ministry and school board respondents cited

*When I first started as a Student Success Teacher, the others used to stop talking when I walked into the work room or the staff room. And the good news is they've started talking again when I walk in. And people have started approaching us and saying, 'Sam... I'm just not sure what to do with Sam. I've tried everything I know how and I can't figure it out. Can you help me? What might work with Sam?'"*

– Former Student Success Teacher

improved relationships between Ministry personnel and school board personnel as an accomplishment of the SS/L18 Strategy. It was clear from the interviews with Ministry respondents that the Ministry of Education sees the grassroots knowledge and understanding of the SSLs as essential to building a successful strategy. Meetings and symposia are designed to generate and test ideas, to listen and respond as much as inform and guide. There is a tangible sense of excitement and engagement on the part of the professionals working in both the Ministry and in school boards.

*Teachers are saying, "This is the best thing that's happened to me... Student Success is the best thing that's happened in secondary schools in 20 years." Some Student Success Leaders and teachers have told us that they're not going to retire yet. They were planning to, but they're not, because they're having more fun than they've had for many years. And they like being in schools now as teachers.*

– Ministry Respondent

### Factors that enable SS/L18

Interviewees from the Ministry, like their school board level counterparts, identified people, money, attention to relationships, and infrastructure as key enablers of the Strategy's accomplishments. Specifically, respondents identified the factors listed below.

#### *People*

1. Champions at the provincial level who are passionate about the strategy and whose involvement is sustained.
2. Provincial-level leaders who can respond to identified needs and concerns, and who model successful relationship-building skills.

3. SSLs at the local school board level who are committed and interested in collaborating with others.
4. Engagement of school board directors, superintendents, and principals is critical and developing.
5. Significant educator presence among ministry staff.

#### *Funding*

1. Allocation of funds to support the SSL role in each school board.
2. Lighthouse project and SCWI funds.
3. Funding for symposia and regional dialogue meetings.
4. Funding for SSTs.
5. Funding for resources, transportation.
6. Funding for personnel needed at the Ministry.
7. Funding for professional development.

*It was important to have financial (and other) resources that provided enough support that implementation of the strategy doesn't become an additional task that schools must undertake with pre-existing resources. Not a simple "you can run harder, faster – why aren't you?", but "what do you need to make it happen?"*  
– Ministry Respondent

#### *Relationships*

1. Recognizing and celebrating the successes of students, teachers, administrators, Student Success Leaders and Ministry staff.
2. The Ministry has transformed itself into being a much more trusted partner.
3. Avenues for dialogue have been developed (e.g., Student Success Commission, Learning to 18 Working Table, the Dual Credit sub-group). For example, their involvement at the Student Success Commission enabled the teachers' unions to debate, influence and then support the Commission's endorsements of credit recovery and the principles for dual credit programs.

#### *Infrastructure*

1. The symposia, regional meetings of SSLs, and regional dialogues with school board teams.
2. Time for professional development.

3. The cooperation between people working on the Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA) initiative and Student Success;
4. The alignment of related programs.
5. Intraministerial cooperation (e.g., Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch, French-Language Education Policy and Programs Branch, Special Education Policy and Programs Branch, and the SS/L18 Branches) and interministerial cooperation between the Ministry, the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and University on SCWI and SHSM programs.
6. Research and curriculum support.

***SS/L18 Strategy accomplishments, evidence of success and enablers at the school board level***

In general, the views of both school board and Ministry respondents were very closely aligned. Both groups identified the same major accomplishments and challenges of the strategy.

School board interviewees and focus group participants placed a greater emphasis on their local experiences when asked about accomplishments and evidence. Ministry interviewees placed a larger emphasis on the overall strategy, the policy, and coordination issues and shared anecdotes about positive student experiences. Ministry staff spoke a great deal about the role of data and evidence. This is not surprising given the government's investment in OnSIS, MISA and interest in having educators use locally-generated data with professional purpose. There is a real sense of a culture shift with regard to the use of data, at both local and provincial levels. A sense of excitement and energy connected with the strategy, a sense that there was a renewed sense of purpose for public education and teaching was expressed by most of our respondents.

Accomplishments

School board interviewees and focus group participants identified many accomplishments for the SS/L18 Strategy. The accomplishments fall into three categories: (a) improved student attainment, (b) improved program choices for students, and (c) attitude and culture shifts within the system.



### *Improved student attainment*

1. Increasing graduation rates.
2. Dropping failure rates in Grade 9 and 10 compulsory courses.
3. Significantly higher credit accumulation rates than before the Strategy was implemented.
4. Improved literacy attainment, as measured by the OSSLT and the literacy achievement indicator.
5. Additional learning pathways being offered by schools and taken by students.

*Now there are mechanisms for those kids that just didn't want to show up to school for whatever reason – because of their home life, they had to work, or they couldn't feel successful. We are providing pathways for students who were just never attended to – there is a greater emphasis on experiential learning, career planning, seeing a future.*  
– School Board Respondent

### *Improved program choices for students*

Respondents described a number of specific local programs perceived to be having a positive impact on students. Examples include:

1. A Later Literacy program in several Northern Ontario boards that provided intensive literacy support to students in Grades 7 and 8, who were considered to be at risk of not completing high school.
2. A Northern Studies program in a small Northern Ontario high school that is being turned into a SHSM, and which involves partnerships with local forestry and mining industries, tourism, and the local economic development office. All 12 (at risk) students in the program were certified in the use of Global Positioning Systems (GPS), that often surpass common industry-standard systems.
3. A program in which students from two small Aboriginal communities who commute to high school were put into smaller, self-contained classes and experienced 90% success, where previously most Aboriginal students had not been successful.
4. Achievement Centres (a room and a teacher to support credit recovery, co-op, or independent learning) not only in schools, but in a shelter for homeless youth, a residence for pregnant teens, and other community-based locations.

Many respondents identified programs<sup>5</sup> that enable students to see a future powered by on-going learning, whether apprenticeship, college, or work. These programs included extended visits to colleges to experience sampler programs, career fairs, and a camp on a Northern college campus for students from an Aboriginal community at some distance from the college. These programs were reported as being more personalized and planned with greater attention to the needs of the learners.

#### *Attitude and culture shifts within the system*

School board respondents and focus group participants identified several changes in attitude and culture within the education system. There is a shift to greater collaboration between and

*Teachers' talk is shifting from "I give a student credit for doing x, y and z" to "How can I help him/her earn a credit?"*

– School Board Respondent

among schools to enable programs that would not have operated previously because no one school had sufficient students to justify a stand alone program. Several respondents reported an emphasis on improved communication with parents about programs and pathways, involving personalized invitations and mailings, workshops, and accessible information.

#### *Additional evidence of success*

Respondents and focus group participants reported that school board level indicator data showed improvement in credit accumulation, pass rates, graduation rates, and achievement of the literacy requirements. In the case of the Later Literacy program in Northern Ontario, students gained an average of 1.5 grade levels in their reading, and all students improved their reading by at least one grade level.

#### Factors that enable the SS/L18 Strategy

According to school board respondents and focus group participants, the overall success of the Strategy as well as that of specific programs and initiatives has been enabled by people, money, attention to relationships and infrastructure.

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<sup>5</sup> Some but not all of which were supported by the School-College-Work Initiative.

### *People*

The importance of the dedicated role of the SSLs and the SSTs was repeatedly emphasized by those interviewed. School board respondents also identified the importance of the support they received from Ministry of Education personnel working with the SS/L18 Strategy and the collaborative relationships developed.

### *Funding*

Funding has allowed additional staff to be deployed in ways dedicated to improving student outcomes. The flexibility of the funding (such as that allocated to Lighthouse and SCWI projects) has permitted creativity and innovation, and has allowed programs to be tailored locally. The fact that SSLs and SSTs were being funded through the allocation of “new” money within the Learning Opportunities Grant and the Grants for Student Needs has given schools and boards the ability to maintain their existing staffing while dedicating resources to the new mandate. The funding has been tied to the Strategy in ways that ensure there is a real, dedicated human resource commitment to support its implementation.

### *Relationships*

Several respondents reported that they had found locally meaningful and rewarding ways to celebrate the success and achievement of students who are being served by the various programs. Some SSLs also reported highlighting the leadership and achievements of those professionals who have played a prominent role in literacy, numeracy, pathways, and community, culture and caring. Such celebrations evidently provided recognition for students and professionals that promoted further success and buy-in, particular among more reticent colleagues.

Emphasis was also placed by some SSLs on the development of relationships with key leaders within the school boards who believe in the SS/L18 Strategy and who have become champions within their schools and the system for the Strategy. Several leaders emphasized the need for the development of personal relationships with their school contacts and the need for direct, personal communication rather than generally targeted

memoranda to school principals, guidance departments, and SSTs. That same attention to relationship and communication is found in the improved communication with parents that some cited as an accomplishment.

### *Infrastructure*

Some school board respondents identified the importance of research support within their own boards in assisting them with their understanding and use of the data. Support from school board curriculum and program staff was identified as essential to engaging teachers at the school level by providing relevant workshops and professional development. The commitment of the Director of Education, superintendents, and principals was also described as critical to the success of the various programs implemented under the SS/L18 Strategy.

Another essential infrastructure element identified as important for many of the SS/L18 Strategy programs (such as the SHSM, dual credit programs, and coop programs) was access to transportation to take students to and from the home school to other learning environments. Moreover, SSLs whose schools and programs have access to and established relationships with social workers, outreach workers, and other professional and para-professional support personnel believed that these non-school agents play a very important role in the success of the SS/L18 Strategy, particularly in connecting with disengaged students.

### ***Challenges to the success of the SS/L18 Strategy: Past obstacles and future hurdles***

Interviews conducted with key respondents during Stage 1 revealed considerable agreement between Ministry and school board respondents regarding the obstacles encountered in implementing the SS/L18 Strategy. The feedback provided by respondents also suggested broad consensus about the major challenges that have yet to be tackled. However, although there was considerable overlap across respondents about the most important issues requiring attention, our analysis revealed that different dimensions of each issue were emphasized by respondents. The perceived challenges

to the success of the SS/L18 Strategy are discussed below, and reflect the major issues, or themes, identified by the respondents: funding; planning, evidence and capacity building; culture change, stakeholder involvement and communication; pedagogy and curriculum; and group-specific needs.

Ministry respondents' perceptions: "Living up to our potential"

*Funding*

Ministry respondents expressed concern that the Strategy's elements could be influenced more by the funding mechanisms and decisions than by its policy objectives. Perceived obstacles and challenges related to funding choices in a context of finite resources comprised:

1. When programs ought to be funded through extraordinary rather than ongoing base funding.
2. The adequacy of investment in support systems and capacity-building, chiefly around data collection, management and use.
3. Continued capital and infrastructure investment to support necessary changes in instructional practices and school organization in order to fulfil the Strategy's goals.

*Planning, evidence & capacity building*

A number of senior Ministry staff identified concerns related to effective planning at this juncture of the Strategy's implementation. Chief among these was data of sufficient quality and granularity to support planning and decision-making, despite the stated goal of using data to support evidence-based decision-making and performance management. Ministry

*We've run to a point where the Student Success Leaders are telling us, "Yeah, it's a lot of work (The Student Success Action Plan). But please don't change it again. This way, if we know what the infrastructure is in terms of planning we can anticipate and begin our planning for next year."*  
– Ministry Respondent

respondents identified uneven capacity-building as an ongoing challenge—although they made note of the important sums that had been allocated to developing data collection systems both at the board and provincial levels and of the emergence of a positive data culture at the field level as significant evidence of progress. System-wide ability to collect

and use data, however, was identified as a key area for action by respondents, as reflected in our observations that although many respondents asserted that the SS/L18 Strategy was having positive impacts, many said that they relied on anecdotal evidence and few said that they relied on concrete, numerical evidence that spoke convincingly of the impacts of the Strategy. Moreover, respondents identified insufficient data collection and use as challenges impacting the ability to evaluate and understand the effectiveness of the Strategy, as well as an obstacle to properly communicate with key “external” stakeholders such as students, parents, media, and community-based interveners.

*[T]here's so much to do, and people in the field can become overwhelmed and exhausted. So I think the obstacle is how much learning, how much responsibility can we expect classroom teachers to acquire, to take on, to own? How much can we expect our principals and our SO's to do to lead it, when there are many competing priorities, when the government has other issues that it also wants its educators to deal with*

– Ministry Respondent

As illustrated in some of the quotes provided here, respondents also pointed to the overloading of front-line staff tasked with the Strategy's implementation as a major challenge to be tackled. Mirroring statements

made by school board respondents, a number of Ministry interviewees indicated that they were observing mounting “reform fatigue” among its field staff, as well as a growing sense of being overwhelmed by planning and reporting demands, at the expense of time to enact and carefully evaluate the large number of programs promoted to date under the SS/L18 Strategy.

#### *Culture change, stakeholder involvement and communication*

Central to the process of school and system culture change that are deemed necessary to the long-term success of the SS/L18 Strategy are issues of communication and perception. While the evaluation team found considerable consistency of the SS/L18 Strategy among Ministry and board leaders, a majority of respondents from the Ministry and school boards felt that consistent communication of

*On est rendu au point où on a tout le monde à la même table, tout le monde comprend, mais ça nous a pris un bon six à huit mois pour arriver à amener tout le monde au même niveau de compréhension face à ce dossier là parce que la double reconnaissance de crédit, c'est excessivement complexe, les enjeux qu'il y a là dedans. Puis les façons de le faire, qu'est ce que ça veut dire un niveau 1 d'apprentissage, qu'est ce que ça veut dire un cours postsecondaire?*

– Ministry Respondent

the Strategy's intentions and principles had been inadequately delivered through the board level to school. Indeed, a number of them indicated that significant obstacles had been the persistence of misperceptions about the SS/L18 Strategy and the difficulties involved in bringing together key personnel who were accustomed to working in isolation from each other. Respondents viewed this challenge as representing two major areas in need of attention:

1. The need to support better understanding of the SS/L18 Strategy among community stakeholders, particularly parents, post-secondary institutions, and community-based employers.
2. The need to pay particular attention to communication within secondary schools, the predominant culture of which was seen as more detached from system-led initiatives and reluctant to change, and therefore as an environment in which it is more difficult to foster the adoption of new practices, beliefs, and values.

Some respondents also noted that concerns about the nature and intent of some innovative programs implemented under the SS/L18 Strategy had occasionally slowed the implementation of these programs. It was suggested that some teacher federations, for example, initially believed that dual credit programs were a veiled attempt on the part of the Ministry to contract out educational services to other organizations. Others noted that the reluctance of some post-secondary institutions to recognize the value of so-called integrated courses meant that desirable change in educational practices and options was blocked by agents outside the Strategy's immediate sphere of influence. Moreover, a number of respondents noted the ongoing challenge of convincing both students and parents of the value of educational and career paths that did not necessarily include university and pointed specifically to a persistent and common warning that any real or perceived "watering down" of standards and expectations would

*I believe that educators, just like most civil servants, just like most miners, just like, you know, the majority of workers in all walks of life, want to be successful at what they're doing. It's important for us to have the flexibility to allow them to have input into how all this gets done.*

– Ministry Respondent

undermine the effectiveness and progress of the SS/L18 Strategy. Finally, some of our interviewees indicated that established discussion fora, such as the Student Success Commission, were not proving as effective as expected in garnering information about the



challenges and successes experienced by those involved in the SS/L18 Strategy.

The consensus among respondents, in short, was that the effectiveness of past Ministry interventions in terms of communicating their purpose and reaching their audience about their value needed to be carefully evaluated. New approaches would likely be needed to foster greater understanding about the SS/L18 Strategy and supportive stakeholder engagement.

#### *Pedagogy and curriculum*

Ministry respondents saw the SS/L18 Strategy as posing new challenges and opportunities for teachers in terms of pedagogical practices. The Strategy incorporates powerful beliefs and values

*Le risque, c'est qu'on retourne à nos vieilles pratiques. C'est facile les vieilles pratiques. C'est déroutant ce qui se passe, puis ça demande de l'énergie, puis ça demande de se redéfinir comme prof, puis ça demande de redéfinir comment on va travailler avec les élèves dans les écoles secondaires, puis qui ils sont, puis comment on les accueille, puis c'est quoi leur rôle d'apprenants*

– Ministry Respondent

about the roles of teachers and their responsibilities that often contrast with established practices, particularly at the secondary school level. A number of respondents argued that, again particularly at the secondary school level, teachers have generally not been trained in a manner that would allow them to easily adapt their teaching to individual student's needs. This problem was perceived by our respondents as particularly acute in the areas of basic literacy and numeracy instruction, and it was reported that many secondary school teachers see their responsibility as teaching a subject rather than teaching students. Respondents also suggested that teacher federations can and have played a significant role in providing professional development opportunities. A number of respondents highlighted the urgency of working collaboratively with university-based Faculties of Education and teacher preparation programs to adequately prepare their students in the philosophical principles and practical approaches embodied in the SS/L18 Strategy.

#### *Group-specific needs*

There is no doubt that the spirit of the SS/L18 Strategy, as embodied in the idea of success for all irrespective of need, location, past performance, or circumstance has become the driving force behind the work of the respondents we interviewed. It is,



according to them, an idea that has also gained significant ground at the field level and one that was providing the motivation and engagement essential to the Strategy's effectiveness to date. That being said, it was also evident from comments made by interviewees that the promises of the SS/L18 Strategy will only be realized if the challenges posed by the dynamics and factors specific to particular groups of students are surmounted.

Based on Ministry respondent input, we were able to identify the following student populations as having needs that merit particular attention in the implementation of the SS/L18 Strategy. This list is by no means exhaustive, and the issues noted for each group are but a sample of those most frequently mentioned by respondents as requiring attention.

*[Q]uand je pense en termes des conseils scolaires de langue française, vraiment les obstacles, c'est au niveau des ressources humaines [et] au niveau des ressources pour les profs en salle de classe, parce qu'on n'a juste pas les moyens de les publier, de les élaborer à la vitesse nécessaire pour mettre ces choses-là en place.*

– Ministry Respondent

1. *Challenges for Aboriginal students and rural students and schools*

- Geographical dispersal and isolation
- Small number of students
- Limited access to programs
- Limited number of available programs
- Difficulty in securing sufficient placements for coop programs
- Availability of specialized and/or appropriately trained teaching personnel
- Student engagement regarding need for education
- Student perceptions of economic and career prospects

2. *Challenges for students in French-language schools*

- Geographical dispersal and isolation
- Small number of students
- Attraction of Anglophone schools
- Parental perceptions about the value of a Francophone education, particularly with respect to educational prospects

- Availability of Francophone teaching personnel
- Availability of pedagogical resources in French
- Collaboration with Francophone educational institutions outside K-12

3. *Challenges for special education students*

- Broad scope and variety of student needs
- Funding for specific student services (staffing, transportation, support outside classroom)
- Difficulty in securing coop placements
- Provision of meaningful recognitions of student progress and growth, given scope of ability and varying levels of functioning
- Timely recognition and identification of students at risk, even if receiving special education services
- Parental expectations

4. *Challenges for students with other unmet needs*

- Addressing the needs of students living in poverty
- Addressing the needs of students living with mental health issues
- Addressing the needs of previously disengaged, older students wanting to return to school
- Addressing the needs of students living with substance use issues
- Addressing the needs of students new to Canada and English language learners

Respondents also identified a number of challenges common to the success of these student populations under the SS/L18 Strategy: a) maintaining flexibility in programming; b) ensuring continuity of funding and improving communication about funding availability for focused program planning; c) reducing the compartmentalization of responsibilities and resources that impede access to services for and by students; and d) promoting timely and efficient sharing of information about promising practices and successful programs. In Stage 2 of the evaluation, we will attempt to further clarify which

dynamics and influences are significant determinants for the educational success of particular student populations.

School board respondents' perceptions: "Life in the trenches":

*Funding*

Interviews with school board respondents highlighted the importance of continued and predictable funding for the remainder the SS/L18 Strategy. In spite of year after year increases to SS/L18 funding to school boards and increased discretion delegated for its use to boards, many respondents expressed apprehension about the sustainability of the SS/L18 Strategy given a perception that boards "*are already short of funds even for basic services.*" Concern was expressed with regard to the Ministry's continued commitment to support the programs and their logistics, such as student transportation costs, as well as staff. In particular, continued support for principals and teachers – "*the people in the trenches*" – was identified as a major concern in recognition of new and changing responsibilities.

*Planning, Evidence and Capacity Building*

Discrepancies in the planning and budgetary cycles between school boards and the Ministry were identified as major obstacles. Individuals underscored that asking boards

*C'est comme essayer de déplacer un paquebot dans un lac.*

– School Board Respondent

to modify staffing allocations at the beginning of the school year severely undermined the work of school administrators and teachers and made effective planning an even greater challenge. The confusion that resulted was seen as greatly disruptive and was seen to be further compounded by the difficulties associated with making changes in a large and complex system involving multiple levels of actors and decision-makers. Equally significant was the impact that discrepant planning cycles were seen to have on the motivation and creativity of front-line staff tasked with developing new programs to meet individual students needs. That said, the 2007-08 school year funding allocation was announced on March 19, 2007.

The pace at which the SS/L18 Strategy was implemented is viewed as a major accomplishment. But pride in this achievement is tempered by the sense that the large number of programs put in place is overwhelming school personnel. Respondents expressed an “overload of new programs” since the SS/L18 Strategy has been in effect and suggested that school personnel were increasingly put in the position of submitting applications for project-specific funding without having adequate time to properly assess the need for such projects or even to evaluate the effectiveness of similar, previously implemented programs.

*Déjà on avait beaucoup de plans mais on n'avait pas de fonds. Là, maintenant on a des fonds mais on manque de temps.*

– School Board Respondent

The need for building capacity in administrative leadership was identified as another factor affecting the implementation of the SS/L18 Strategy in the field. Strong local administrative leadership was also identified as an urgent need by school board respondents due to uneven capacity building with respect to data collection, management, and analysis. Specifically, respondents felt many schools need a better understanding of student assessment and evaluation. There was considerable consensus that while many administrators could collect the data, they were not yet confident in the analysis and use of data to support student and school performance.

School board respondents noted widespread confusion and lack of consensus about the meaning and definitions used in collecting data, thus identifying a significant challenge to data reliability and ultimately to program and policy accountability. Respondents noted that, for example, an unambiguous definition of what constitutes a “graduate” is needed. As one respondent put it, “Do you count a graduate as a fourth year with 30 credits or can you include the fifth year kid ... as a graduate? It's not clear.” Similarly, the definition of “at-risk” was identified as needing clarification.

Inconsistent definitions present an extremely important challenge to the accuracy and comparability of the data collected, and stand to undermine evidence-informed decision-

making. School board respondents expressed concern that the Ministry is too quick to draw conclusions based on data that is not yet comparable across boards.

Finally, interviewees expressed concern that the Ministry does not require every school board to have the same data retrieval and/or data analysis system. The Ontario School Information System (OnSIS)<sup>6</sup> system itself has been identified as a challenge as some school boards have their own data management systems that are not necessarily compatible with OnSIS requirements. In addition to these basic data collection and analysis problems, the reportedly growing and unpredictable number of reports required by the Ministry and the time and resources dedicated to producing these was seen as distracting attention from the proper implementation of the Strategy. Those responsible for implementation in the field expressed concern over not knowing what products were expected of them.

#### *Culture change, stakeholder involvement & communication*

The re-culturing, or culture change, in teaching practices from “teaching subjects” to “teaching students” is seen as a slow process and one which presents an ongoing challenge. School board respondents expressed the need for greater change in perceptions and beliefs among secondary school teachers, whom they identified as still largely believing that the primary role of secondary school teachers is to prepare students for university. They identified as a major challenge for teachers to begin to recognize that there are options for non-university bound students and to accommodate such students by preparing them for college, apprenticeships, or the workforce. While respondents recognized that the views of many teachers were gradually changing to reflect the values espoused by the SS/L18 Strategy, there was broad consensus that, by and large, the change had not yet translated into new practices at the classroom level.

In the view of school board respondents, unions and parents present major challenges. Negotiations with unions present challenges around teachers’ roles, responsibilities, and

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<sup>6</sup> The Ontario School Information System (OnSIS) is a web-based application, which integrates and collects board, school, student, educator as well as course and class data.

working rules. Some Lighthouse projects<sup>7</sup> also present challenges as these have been uniquely designed and are “*so different from what the norm is, that a lot of collective agreements just don’t take that into account.*” School board individuals expressed concern about the unions’ perceptions of the SS/L18 Strategy programs.

*[Some people in the unions consider that the initiatives] are just watering down the curriculum so all those kids that really shouldn’t, ... can’t make it, will make it. Our own local teachers’ union defines credit recovery...[as] credit giveaway.*

– School Board Respondent

Parents were seen to represent a different set of challenges. School board respondents identified a number of barriers to the greater involvement of parents. The majority of parents, it was suggested, do not attend parent council meetings unless their children are directly involved or affected. Convincing parents that there are destinations other than university was deemed as an ongoing difficulty. Parental perceptions about the value and desirability of education and career options appear to remain largely biased toward university.

The issue of the challenges faced by SSLs was raised specifically by school board respondents. A great deal of frustration was expressed because a fully defined role for the SSLs has not yet been articulated. There is a range of opinion about the kind and extent of authority that SSLs should have.<sup>8</sup>

SSLs expressed a concern that some of them might also be carrying other responsibilities (e.g., Human Resources, Families of Schools)—responsibilities that are in addition to the SS/L18 Strategy. A major challenge identified is how to maintain individuals as SSLs on a continuing basis. It has been averred that there has been a significant turnover in SSLs during the life of the Strategy so far though this is contrary to reports by Ministry respondents pointing to a turnover of only four out of 72 SSLs at the end of the 2005/06 school year.

<sup>7</sup> Projects to help students having difficulty in the regular classroom who require extra support, guidance, or a different learning environment.

<sup>8</sup> The Ministry funds the SSL position at the Supervisory Officer level and has stated its expectation that the SSL participate as a member of boards’ executive team.

Another important challenge needing to be addressed has to do with the role of the guidance counsellor. A disconnect has been observed between the SSTs and guidance counsellors. Respondents expressed concern over who is the primary “advocate” for a child. One respondent expressed this as follows: *“Some schools required that the Student Success Teacher be a guidance counsellor and some don’t. So, who owns the kid -- who’s the kid’s manager?”*

#### *Pedagogy & curriculum*

Significant needs identified by school board respondents were as follows:

1. The intensity of some co-op programs did not correspond to the staffing resources provided.
2. Schools and school boards all have student information management systems, but they weren’t properly “set up to do what we wanted to do. So some of it we had to do a lot of hand counting.”
3. With respect to the initial online system for reporting to the Ministry about student success, “there were still so many glitches around it, and you would be typing in and if you didn’t remember to save, you would lose it. Or there wasn’t enough space to actually finish writing and you had to stay within a certain number of words. There were so many restrictions placed on it and it was so frustrating.”

Many respondents identified the following as obstacles affecting many initiatives in the SS/L18 Strategy:

1. The small size of many communities
2. Geographical dispersion/distance
3. Jurisdictional gaps or discontinuities
4. Stakeholder resistance, though infrequent, with respect to the perception that the SS/L18 Strategy could erode standards.

The SCWIs present a specific set of preparation and logistical challenges to participating colleges. Some of these include finding a classroom with the required spaces, faculty

involvement (in having the high-school students attend their course), engaging college student mentors (to shepherd the high-school students around), and holding additional career workshops targeted to high-school students (thus increasing college staff workload). In order to offer these programs, dedicated college staff members – working full-time – are crucial. The opinion is that SCWIs could not take place without the relevant funding to support these positions.

#### *Group-specific needs*

Inner-city schools present specific challenges to the SSLs. Reportedly, these schools often do not measure up academically to the others in a school board, and serve more students who may present with specific challenges such as poverty, mental health, or delinquency. Though the SSTs in these schools are intended to have dedicated roles, they tend to be given additional responsibilities due to staff shortages and specific needs of the schools.

According to a respondent from a small Northern community, particular challenges are faced by Aboriginal, rural, or smaller communities, such as the lower educational experience and thus expectations of community members. Many adults did not graduate high-school and few have post-secondary education. In some Aboriginal communities, many of which have schools on reserves, students lack exposure to what a college education can offer them. Some local SCWIs-funded projects have been targeted at Aboriginal youth; however, concern was expressed about the funding source for these programs as schools on reserves are not provincially funded and thus Aboriginal communities should not be taking part in SCWI programs. Nevertheless, colleges are provincially funded and if Aboriginal youth are going to be encouraged to pursue post-secondary education, funding issue needs to be addressed.



***Recommendations from Ministry and board-level respondents: “The school is the centre of the community”***

Funding and resources

Both Ministry and board respondents strongly recommended continued financial support for the SS/L18 Strategy programs as the overall impression at both the school boards and Ministry is that the SS/L18 Strategy programs are a great success. A number of Ministry interviewees reported that boards and SSLs were concerned about the continuity of resources. Respondents suggested that loss of or decreases in funding at this point in time would put an end to the creativity and success witnessed thus far. A long-term commitment to continued funding would allow schools to plan appropriately, staff programs, and develop programs from year-to-year.

Funding is specifically recommended for building sustainable capacity throughout the system, such as ongoing teacher training and administrative support and, in particular, for the sustainability of dedicated positions of SSLs and SSTs. It should be noted that funding for SSLs and SSTs are currently enveloped in the base budgets, which provides insurance against future declines in funding. Additionally, school board respondents recommended specific funding for the building or improvement of space and facilities in order to offer some programs, e.g., technology courses, that seemed locally or regionally relevant but that had not been offered due to infrastructure limitations.

School board respondents recommended flexibility with regard to how funding is to be used by a particular board. Respondents felt they needed the option for board-level funding decisions to be made based on specific student, teacher, curricular, or school needs, as this would better contribute to the success of all students, even if some of these decisions might not fit with Ministry-prescribed funding rules. It was noted that the SS/L18 funding allocations to boards came with increased latitude for boards to use funds in pursuit of the Strategy's goals.

Ministry respondents expressed the need for the Grants for Student Needs (i.e., the provincial funding model for elementary and secondary schools) and the college funding

model to match program innovations associated with dual credits. Current models, it was argued, do not anticipate the development, implementation, and delivery of the various opportunities newly opened up to students under the SS/L18 Strategy.

School board respondents expressed the need for funding for so-called para-academic resources, such as counsellors, social workers, lunch programs, and so on that would address the physical, emotional, and social-psychological needs of the students. These resources would help put the Community, Culture, & Caring pillar in place and thereby enable the recommendation made by board-level respondents that the “school become the centre of the community.”

#### Evidence-based decision making

Data collection, management, and evidence-based decision making require continued sustainability and ongoing capacity building in order to be translated into practice. Respondents recommended improvements in the definition of some data variables, such as “at-risk,” “graduate,” “school leaver,” as well as the unification and compatibility of all data management systems. It was also suggested that the Ministry establish standardized practices, specific targets, and clear indicators for the assessment of individual programs, as well as having common and consistent templates for reporting on programs. Clearly, data collection and analysis would not be possible without also providing pre- or in-service training to support and prepare teachers in becoming part of a healthy data management culture. Building sustained capacity in data collection, management, and analysis would in turn support another recommendation made for ongoing research and knowledge exchange activities.

#### Curriculum and pedagogy

Both school board and Ministry respondents expressed the following recommendations with respect to curriculum and pedagogy:

1. Most importantly, the philosophy behind “teaching and learning” requires a culture change from time- and age-based teaching and learning to a more

holistic form of teaching and learning, from early childhood learning up through to post-secondary education and onward to the labour market.

2. It is recommended that SSLs continue to take on a more prominent leadership role while the Ministry takes on more of a support or facilitator role.
3. Coherence or the “knitting together” of the various programs under the SS/L18 Strategy was identified as needing attention, as well as putting all these pieces together within an equity perspective. One respondent suggested that the Ministry should produce a “strategy map of how all of these pieces fit together.”
4. A major recommendation was made for training and support for high-school teachers working with students who do not have the required basic skills in reading or math. Indeed, the literacy programs were identified as needing to be improved upon and, more importantly, accepted and implemented by all teachers, not just English teachers. Literacy programs specifically targeted to boys and Aboriginal students were also recommended.
5. Respondents recommended providing Grade 7 and 8 teachers with the needed pedagogical and instructional skills to support students in their transition to high-school as this transition has been identified as the next piece needing improvement. Experiential learning and career orientation were deemed two areas needing development for Grades 7 and 8. Perhaps not coincidentally, the focus of Ministry-led training next fall is differentiated instruction for Grade 7 and 8 teachers.
6. Recognizing the diversity of needs of different sub-groups of students, in particular special education students, was also deemed important. These students need to be provided with every opportunity to be successful in and out of the classroom. Moreover, the process and implementation of transition plans for special education students who complete high-school need improvement. One respondent suggested that the employability of special education, and particularly learning disabled, students could be improved upon by expanding co-op opportunities.
7. Teachers should be encouraged to include the use of learning technology as a pedagogical strategy and schools and school boards should provide the

- necessary support for training and infrastructure. In turn, the pedagogical implication of teaching the “net generation” was seen to need addressing.
8. The French-language education sector should be provided with more online resources (e.g., for distance education courses) and needs improvement in implementing with the Community, Culture and Caring pillar.
  9. Schools that are not doing well should be identified and helped to acquire the necessary supports and resources. Regular classroom teachers should be encouraged to “take ownership of the students in their classrooms.”
  10. Career development for teachers is another important stage to focus on. Ministry respondents suggested re-structuring teacher career development into a more holistic approach, for example on a K-12 continuum. One recommendation was for the Ministry to work more closely with Faculties of Education in order to ensure that future teachers are better equipped and better prepared to meet the needs of students.
  11. Secondary schools should be encouraged and enabled to offer certain vocations and job skills training opportunities to the whole community. This would promote and nurture the relationship between the school and community.

#### Communication and Sharing

Communication and the sharing of ideas were identified as important factors in the sustainability of the SS/L18 strategy. Teachers, schools, and school boards have already been engaged in sharing information and effective practices, and the Ministry should continue to encourage and support this. For instance, the re-culturing from “teaching subjects to teaching students” could greatly benefit by recognizing and promoting innovative and successful practices.

#### Stakeholder involvement

Continued community support and engagement is recommended, in particular to support co-op placements. One suggestion for increasing community engagement was to improve public communication.

School board respondents recommended improving and increasing the communication efforts specifically targeted at parents in order to promote parental involvement and to continue their efforts in getting parents to recognize that there exist fulfilling and rewarding destinations other than university after high-school graduation.

Collaborations between the Ministry and those responsible for apprenticeships, colleges, and universities on specific programs such as the SCWI and the SHSM initiatives must continue as well as local partnerships between institutions. The nature and effectiveness of these relationships will be explored further in Stage 2 of the evaluation.

Finally, in order for the ideal of the school as the centre of the community to become a reality, partnerships are required with community stakeholders such as hospitals, mental health agencies, and law enforcement authorities, as students' social, emotional, or economic situations influence their educational trajectories. Teachers, schools, school boards, as well as the Ministry of Education, need to be prepared to deal with these students and their families in order to continue to sustain the mandate of success for *all* students.

## **PRELIMINARY EVALUATIVE OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The purpose of Stage 1 of the evaluation is to provide a high-level analysis of the SS/L18 Strategy by providing preliminary observations of the state of implementation of the Strategy as well as initial recommendations concerning the future of the Strategy.

The six overarching questions posed for this evaluation by the Ministry were:

1. What has changed in the last four years in Ontario's secondary schools to help students to succeed?
2. What have been the main benefits arising from these changes to date?
3. Which elements of the strategy and actions that have been implemented appear to be yielding student success?
4. How have changes within Ontario's secondary schools aimed at increasing student success been supported?

5. What barriers to increased student success have been encountered? And how have these been address addressed?
6. What further strategies and actions, if any, are suggested to further increase secondary student success?

This section contains preliminary observations and recommendations of the evaluation team based upon its interpretation of the interview and documentary data gathered during Stage 1 of the evaluation and its understanding of the educational system in general and the Ontario educational system in particular. The observations and recommendations that follow are organized under the following headings: (a) strengths, (b) vulnerabilities, and (c) preliminary recommendations. Though the above-mentioned six overarching questions will be pursued in greater depth in Stage 2 of the evaluation, their relevance to each preliminary observation is highlighted at the end of each statement below.

### **Strengths of the SS/L18 Strategy**

The SS/L18 Strategy has integrated a variety of educational initiatives, bringing them to bear with a common focus of enabling all students to succeed in secondary school. It draws on a number of strengths, including:

#### ***Innovation and Cultural Change***

- The SS/L18 Strategy appears to be a remarkably coherent strategy given that (a) it integrates a wide range of programs and encourages considerable (b) programmatic innovation and (c) professional autonomy. There is considerable mutuality and complementarity among the elements of the Strategy. The legislative and regulatory framework provides jurisdiction for, and is enabling of, the programs being pursued. The fiscal environment appears appropriate to ensuring that the programs contemplated thus far can be carried out. We are somewhat less confident about the adequacy and continuity of resources in the long run, but we will have a better appraisal of this in Stage 2. Concern has been

expressed about the possible impact of contract negotiations with teachers when existing agreements expire in August 2008 (relevant to question 4).

- Although the SS/L18 Strategy is in its early stages of development, indications are that it is succeeding in providing significantly greater opportunities for students to remain in and benefit from secondary schooling (relevant to question 1).
- The SS/L18 Strategy has expanded the number and range of opportunities for students to remain engaged in their schooling while they acquire the knowledge they need to graduate and pursue employment, further education or a combination of employment and education. Such opportunities include alternative education programs designed to engender the engagement of students who found the traditional school and classroom environments inhospitable; apprenticeships and opportunities to combine work with learning; programs to help students earn credits that they had previously failed; and opportunities to combine secondary school study with study at the post-secondary level (relevant to question 1).
- In the past, educators have rarely been celebrated for their success with students who are disengaged or who struggle to find success. The successes of those students have been even more rarely celebrated. One of the great strengths of the SS/L18 Strategy is that it is making a conscious attempt to celebrate success in its many forms (relevant to question 2).
- The SS/L18 Strategy is challenging Ontario's traditional secondary school culture in a number of positive ways (relevant to question 2):
  - a. All pathways are valued;
  - b. A new focus on student engagement, and those who leave school because they are disengaged;
  - a. Focus is now on the students and the subject matter, not just on the subject matter;
  - b. The importance of getting students off to a good start in secondary school, including individualized timetables;

- c. Recognition that students who struggle to learn may need the best/most experienced teachers;
  - d. Credit recovery and other opportunities to gain credits while focusing on what needs to be learned to be successful; and
  - e. SSTs with responsibility for tracking.
- A further strength of the SS/L18 Strategy is that it is very non-traditional: it is grass-roots engaged, it encourages innovation at the local level, and it places great emphasis on collaboration, networking, and sharing (relevant to question 2).

### ***Effective and Flexible Capacity Building***

- Senior Ministry management have crafted a strategy in pursuit of the government's goals that is informed by the evidence gathered in reports by Alan King (King, 2002, 2003; King et al., 2004) and Bruce Ferguson (Ferguson et al., 2005) and l'Institut franco-ontarien (2005) and in consultation with experienced field educators (relevant to questions 3 and 4).
- The SS/L18 Strategy was able to capitalize on programs underway before it was formally begun. The SS/L18 Strategy was thus able to build upon attempts to address students who had been identified as "at risk" of leaving school prior to graduation, transformed its orientation from attention to deficits and failure to a focus on success, and expanded the purview to include all students ("success for all"). In doing so, the SS/L18 Strategy communicated that it was not only concerned about the gap between graduates and school leavers, but about the welfare of all students by committing itself to ensuring that all students would be able to pursue learning opportunities that would enable them to enter the labour force or pursue post-secondary opportunities, or both. In effect, the message changed from "you are at risk" to "we will enable you to succeed." While primarily symbolic, this change should make it easier to sustain the efforts required to address what are enduring goals. Emotionally and intellectually, it is much easier to devote energies to an inclusive initiative that is framed positively than one that



- was focused on the avoidance of failure for a minority of students (relevant to question 4).
- While the SS/L18 Strategy is committed to success for all students, it has allowed for sufficient flexibility to meet the unique circumstances of specific student populations including those living in rural settings, Aboriginal students, and minority French-language students (relevant to question 1).
  - By linking the SS/L18 Strategy to previous initiatives, the Ministry avoided a problem that typically plagues changes in government: policy discontinuities that breed cynicism and resistance (relevant to question 1).
  - The Ministry has pursued initiatives that, while not explicitly part of the SS/L18 Strategy, are complementary and critical to the goals of the strategy. For example, the emphasis on improvements in literacy and numeracy across both the elementary and secondary years is, of course, consistent with the literacy and numeracy pillars at the secondary level and, through its pursuit of those capacities among students in the elementary years, complementary to the secondary school efforts in the same domain. The Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA) initiative, the development of the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS), and the use of the Ontario Education Number (OEN) to track student progress through the education system contribute to the development of the capacity for monitoring student progress, which is essential for ensuring that such progress occurs. Such complementary and consistent initiatives are necessary conditions, but insufficient on their own for the realization of the objectives of increasing the rate of graduation and ensuring that students leaving school are equipped for the workforce, post-secondary opportunities, or both (relevant to questions 1 and 4).
  - The focus on establishing clear goals and objectives and the efforts to build system capacity under the ambit of the SS/L18 Strategy have avoided one of the major pitfalls of Ministry-led initiatives; namely prescribing the means that system actors must use to accomplish the goals. When ministries prescribe the means that must be used to achieve the established educational objectives, it assumes, consciously or not, responsibility for the outcomes achieved and denies agency

- to those in the system who should assume such responsibility by virtue of their preparation, obligations and location (relevant to questions 4 and 5).
- The SS/L18 Strategy has made provision for system actors to use their professional knowledge, experience and judgment in developing and pursuing a variety of means to common ends. In its provision for SSLs and SSTs and in its support for Lighthouse projects, for instance, the government and the Ministry have communicated their respect for the professionalism of system actors and its recognition that it is necessary to take risks, innovate, and modify one's practice to achieve success. In turn, this has helped foster change of deep-seated beliefs about pedagogical practices, roles, and responsibilities that are likely to provide momentum for the ongoing implementation of the SS/L18 Strategy (relevant to question 4).
  - In addition to enhancing capacity through the development of infrastructure such as MISA, OnSiS, and OEN, the Ministry has made significant investment in professional development (relevant to question 4).
  - No meaningful educational improvement can occur without the support and effort of educators – especially classroom teachers. As part of its SS/L18 Strategy and independent of it as well, the Ministry has pursued policies to improve relationships with the organizations representing educators and to express respect for the work that educators perform. The evaluation team heard repeatedly about the excitement and enthusiasm that the SS/L18 Strategy has engendered among educators, reaffirming for many their initial decision to enter a profession that contributes materially to the next generation and to the society (relevant to question 4).
  - The Ministry of Education has made a substantial investment of new resources in support of the programs undertaken in connection with the SS/L18 Strategy (relevant to question 4).
  - The Ministry leadership actively engages school board leadership about their progress, holding them accountable for the results achieved and working with them to explore responses to the challenges they are facing (relevant to question 4).

- Finally, schools, school boards, and the Ministry are working to improve their ability to monitor and report student progress supported by the use of the OEN, the development of OnSIS, and the deployment of the MISA initiative. Acknowledged by all concerned, these efforts are in early stages and moving in the right direction. The integrated information systems hold promise but are only now beginning to yield data, the accuracy of which will merit close inspection. Our preliminary impression is that there has been improvement in a variety of areas, something that we shall probe more fully in Stage 2 of the evaluation (relevant to questions 1 and 4).

### ***Strong, Effective, and Committed Leadership***

- The SS/L18 Strategy has benefited from having highly visible champions, starting with the Premier, his Ministers of Education, and respected education leaders. It is doubtful that, in the absence of such visible leadership, the SS/L18 Strategy could have engendered such enthusiasm. Moreover, that high-level leadership has leveraged an estimated \$1.3 Billion commitment associated with the Strategy for the period 2003/04 to 2010/11 (relevant to question 4).
- Senior Ministry management have articulated clearly and consistently the government's goals for the SS/L18 Strategy, providing a focus for the attention and energies of others in the system. This enables others in the Ministry and in school jurisdictions to set priorities and apportion their energies accordingly (relevant to questions 3 and 4).
- The evaluation team heard repeatedly about a changed relationship between Ministry and school board staff in which there was greater willingness on the part of the former to listen to the latter and to provide both service and policy direction. This has resulted in a new level of trust and cooperation among system agents (relevant to questions 3 and 4).
- Changes in personnel have the capacity to delay or disrupt programs for a variety of reasons, including the need to learn about one's new position and the responsibilities and programs associated with it or because the newly appointed

person does not value the goals and objectives being sought. Staffing continuity has contributed to the maintenance of clarity, consistency and focus. Where changes in Ministry staff have occurred, the new staff have been quickly acculturated without negative consequences for the SS/L18 strategy (relevant to question 4).

- The SS/L18 Strategy benefits from the Ministry, school board and secondary school staff members dedicated to its implementation (relevant to question 4).
- There is value in having a mix of personnel at the senior Ministry level that includes experienced educators with a good knowledge of the culture and operations of schools and others who come from outside of elementary and secondary education, but have experience of large scale change in other sectors, like Health. Experienced educators can assist in keeping a practical focus and bring a knowledge of the institutional and cultural barriers; those with experience across a number of sectors can challenge some of the deeply held assumptions internal to the system (relevant to question 4).

### **Vulnerabilities of the SS/L18 Strategy**

Notwithstanding the strengths that have been identified thus far, the SS/L18 Strategy is vulnerable and faces challenges on a number of fronts.

#### ***Innovation and Cultural Change***

- To sustain the SS/L18 Strategy and make it a permanent feature (part of the culture) of Ontario education, it will be necessary to ensure that all educators are imbued with the spirit that animates the SS/L18 Strategy: continuing success for all students. Efforts in the immediate future need to balance maintenance and support for Ministry and system leadership with attention to the spread and penetration of the strategy to every school, principal and teacher in the province, and, eventually, to all students (relevant to question 6). To that end, the Ministry might consider:

- a. Whether and to what extent it is feasible to ensure that the recruitment and mentoring of beginning teachers establish the importance of the SS/L18 Strategy and provide experiences conducive to the acquisition of the dispositions and knowledge upon which the Strategy depends<sup>9</sup>, and
  - b. How it might use social marketing to reach parents and the wider community to create a climate of support and positive expectations for the goals of the SS/L18 Strategy.
- Several of the specific strands of the SS/L18 Strategy demand new notions of teachers' professional responsibilities, and are at odds with traditional timetabling, planning and staffing routines that are often engrained in traditional or contractual relations to the detriment of students (relevant to question 5).
  - While it is clear that the Student Success Commission has brought some clarity to credit recovery programs and to the deployment of SSTs, the implementation of these programs remains contentious (relevant to questions 4 and 5).
  - We found considerable overlap among elements of the Strategy listed by respondents as both achievements or factors of success, and as obstacles or challenges. For example, issues of funding, data collection, analysis and use, communication, and staffing were identified by respondents as having progressed under the Strategy while also challenging the Strategy's implementation. We believe that this discrepancy reflects the state of implementation of the Strategy combined with high expectations, indicating that, although significant progress has been made on a number of fronts, not all elements of the Strategy have delivered what they had promised or what the respondents had expected; and others have been inconsistently implemented or have faced unexpected challenges. These findings are inherently significant. However, they also highlight the importance of addressing the documented problems as soon as possible in order to ensure the long-term success of the Strategy. Those responsible for the SS/L18 Strategy are cognizant of this and

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<sup>9</sup> It was noted that the Ministry's New Teacher Induction Program includes an orientation to the SS/L18 Strategy and that staff from the SS/L18 Implementation, Training and Evaluation Branch staff have addressed prospective teachers at all Faculties of Education in Ontario for the past several years.

are working toward eliminating the challenges and integrating the Strategy more deeply in schools and classrooms (relevant to questions 4 and 5).

### ***Effective and Flexible Capacity Building***

- System improvement and the improvement of student success are enduring goals of education because both students and staff are transient. Each year brings change to the student composition and staff complement of schools. It is too often the case that regimes lose interest in the enduring goals and redirect system energies to exigencies that appear urgent, but are less central to the mission of the enterprise. In education it is too easy for the urgent to displace the important and often too tempting to regimes uncertain about the values to which they subscribe to introduce changes for their own sake or for visibility. *Signal continuity* (the consistency and duration of the core message) is essential for achieving any goal, but especially important in large, diverse human systems. In its absence, practitioners lose sight of the enduring goals and objectives, often becoming cynical that the initiative(s) being pursued are the “flavour of the month” – something that will pass and can be passively resisted in the interim (relevant to question 6).
- Another vulnerability that efforts – especially ones directed at enduring goals – can suffer is fatigue. Progress of the sort toward which the SS/L18 Strategy is directed is inevitably slow, involving as it does changes in human beings. Feedback about progress, support, and reinforcement are important for people in order to avoid fatigue and an unwillingness to sustain their efforts (relevant to questions 5 and 6).
- To the extent that continuing progress depends upon the intensification of the work that educators perform, it will be necessary to reflect such additional demands in the contractual relations with affected employee groups. Thus, a prudent course of action for the Ministry and Government is to contemplate whether the SS/L18 Strategy entails any additional demands on educators prior to the implementation of those additional demands and in advance of impending

contractual negotiations so they may be taken into account (relevant to questions 5 and 6).

- There are limits to the amount of time that educators are willing to devote to professional development that takes them away from their classrooms. The Ministry might consider (as it has with its publications and streamed video materials) how it can provide support to teachers in a wide variety of ways (relevant to question 5).
- The SS/L18 Strategy may not realize its full promise without a careful consideration of the nature of both initial and continuing professional education of teachers and principals (relevant to question 6).
- Attention must be directed to fidelity of implementation in endeavours such as the SS/L18 Strategy in which professionals are appropriately expected to exercise considerable professional judgement. The peril is that, in the exercise of their professional judgment, educators will introduce modifications that will compromise the effectiveness of the practice (relevant to questions 5 and 6).
- Complex strategies such as the SS/L18 Strategy are especially vulnerable to infidelity of implementation as are strategies and programs conducted over long periods of time as is typically the case with educational strategies and programs. If, for example, high motivation is contributing to the success of the SS/L18 Strategy – as it appears to be – motivation is likely to diminish over time, thus also diminishing the long term effectiveness of the Strategy (relevant to questions 5 and 6).
- There is a danger that the system will become unbalanced with successful schools, projects, or programs becoming magnets for students and staff from schools facing particular challenges, leading to a loss of resources and enrolment from units that are struggling to address challenges (relevant to question 6).
- The building of effective partnerships between secondary schools and colleges and with other community agencies and organizations requires considerable time and money. Human resources are required to organize appropriate events to introduce students to the college environment. There are logistic issues

(transportation, meals, and accommodation) and contact must be made department by department with appropriate facilitators of the event – requiring both the commitment of skilled staff and the financial resources for the necessary transportation and accommodation. While these requirements exist all over the province, there are particular requirements in northern Ontario for transportation and accommodation (relevant to question 5).

- Re-engaging disaffected students in the secondary system is a very positive goal that will inevitably bring back to school individuals with behavioural issues which can be a disruptive influence. While inevitable, the consequences of this need not be negative if there are sufficient supports in place to help students manage their behaviour, and provision for excluding those who are unable or unwilling to manage their behaviour to accommodate the school environment. Student Success teachers are well positioned to ensure the reintegration of students who have been out of school. The regulatory structure for education in Ontario makes sufficient provision for the exclusion of students from schools who are unable or unwilling to modify anti-social behaviour. Addressing the challenge posed by the relatively small number of students who suffer from mental health issues will require cooperation among the ministries of health, education and child and youth services (relevant to question 6).
- Many respondents indicated that four of five of the SS/L18 Strategy goals are addressed by a range of initiatives. The fifth goal – providing students with an effective transition from elementary to secondary school – was identified as a priority for attention in the coming year(s) (relevant to questions 5 and 6).

### ***Strong, Effective, and Committed Leadership***

- It is a cliché to say that leadership plays an important part in change efforts; nonetheless, attention to the selection, preparation, and support of leaders – especially at the school board and school levels is important and deserves consideration over the next phase in the development of the SS/L18 Strategy. Failure to identify leaders with the qualities required for the SS/L18 Strategy or



selecting the wrong person for a leadership role would impede progress.

Similarly, failure to monitor and plan for staff and leader turnover and to evaluate the overall level of familiarity of Ministry and school staff could undermine the future of the SS/L18 Strategy (relevant to question 6).

- There is a danger that, in a desire to ensure success for all learners, standards will be relaxed or will be perceived to have been, which would undermine key stakeholder commitment. The challenge for the SS/L18 Strategy is, therefore, to remain vigilant about maintaining standards as it increases the opportunities for learners and their success (relevant to questions 5 and 6).
- The SS/L18 Strategy has profile among senior and middle-management Ministry officials, Directors of Education, SSLs and SSTs. Trustees are, for the most part, conspicuous primarily for their absence in discussions about the SS/L18 Strategy among the aforementioned groups. While Stage 2 will probe the issue of trustee engagement more fully, we note that, on the very few occasions that trustees are mentioned, the comments refer to trustee indifference to the SS/L18 Strategy or trustee concerns about the adequacy and continuity of resources provided under its ambit. While it is too soon to say much about trustee engagement at this point, we wonder how the SS/L18 Strategy is perceived by trustees in relation to other school board priorities (relevant to question 6).

### ***Monitoring and Evaluation***

- Continuing formative evaluation is helpful in assessing the fidelity with which the SS/L18 Strategy and its constituent elements were implemented. This is important in determining whether a promising intervention proven to work in one situation was faithfully implemented in other similar situations to which it was applied. It is also helpful in determining whether an intervention that has failed to produce a desired outcome has failed because it was poorly implemented or was simply an ineffective intervention. The Ministry should make provision for continuing formative evaluation of the SS/L18 Strategy to provide continuous feedback about the progress of the initiative that will enable modification to the

strategy and tactical adjustments to the various programs carried out under its auspices (relevant to question 6).

- A related challenge for the SS/L18 Strategy, and hence a vulnerability, is identifying the core components of a strategy or initiative that are critical to success. What one thinks are the core components are not necessarily the same as what the core components are. Continuing formative evaluation can help to identify core elements – especially when pilots are carefully designed, implemented and studied (relevant to question 6).
- Programs of the sort being pursued under the ambit of the SS/L18 Strategy necessarily entail extraordinary data collection. The challenge for the Ministry is to ensure that the effort required for such data collection is kept to a minimum and is perceived to be offset by the benefits that such data provide. For example, it is noted that steps have been taken to reduce reporting requirements for the 2007-08 Lighthouse projects (relevant to questions 5 and 6).

### **Preliminary Recommendations for the SS/L18 Strategy**

Based on the numerous conversations carried out with key respondents at the Ministry and school boards and on the source document analysis, a number of preliminary recommendations have been formulated and listed below.

#### ***Innovation and Cultural Change***

- Fundamentally, the SS/L18 Strategy is building a new vision for secondary education that pays attention to individual needs. In order to continue building and implementing this vision, the Strategy must continue to be multi-faceted and complex. The target audience for the SS/L18 Strategy are first and foremost adolescents. Some students will thrive with support inside the secondary school; others may need experiences outside the traditional model.

#### ***Effective and Flexible Capacity Building***

- The Ministry has used the provision of resources for programs undertaken under the ambit of the SS/L18 Strategy to strategic advantage. Resources enable the

conduct of programs that would not be possible in their absence. They also express priorities and draw attention to desired actions and programs. To be maximally effective, the resources should remain special allocations to school boards made in response to approved plans and demonstrated results. To facilitate the planning and reporting processes that accompany the provision of such resources, the Ministry must inform and assure boards of continuity of resources so long as the plans and demonstrated outcomes meet approved standards (relevant to question 4).

- Transportation and other resources that enable technology, apprenticeship, and cooperative education programs to flourish are limited. Preliminary indications are that school boards with coterminous or primarily contiguous boundaries often pursue parallel relationships with local post secondary institutions rather than forging collaborative and productively efficient relationships among the institutions. Stage 2 of this formative evaluation study will seek to determine how widespread such parallel practices are. Nevertheless, collaboration to avoid missing opportunities to maximize the use of scarce resources should be encouraged (relevant to questions 5 and 6).
- The Ministry should devise a formula for the allocation of SSLs and SSTs that reflects the student populations served in and particular circumstances of each region. The design of the leadership structure for the SS/L18 Strategy had been built on a model of one school board, one SSL, regardless of the size of the school board. The extremes include a small Catholic school board in Northwestern Ontario with five elementary schools (K-8) and 1482 students and the Toronto District School Board with 451 elementary schools, 104 secondary schools and 284,000 students (relevant to question 5).

### ***Strong, Effective, and Committed Leadership***

- The Ministry should provide educators with information about the implementation of the Learning to 18 legislation, about what the Ministry's expectations are of schools in regard to the attendance of 16- and 17-year-olds, and what resources

and mechanisms will be required and/or made available to track and support students (relevant to question 6).

### ***Monitoring and Evaluation***

- Some attention should be given to a continued adjustment of the key indicators of student success, as illustrated in the following examples (relevant to question 6).
  - a. The SS/L18 Strategy makes provision for gathering a wide range of information pertinent to the indicators identified with the initiative. One dimension that is not addressed in the indicators and, thus, not subject to data collection as part of the SS/L18 Strategy is students who may have left school early and have decided to return to pursue further schooling.
  - b. Credit accumulation is an appropriate indicator at the individual level, however, there are concerns that the achievement of 16 credits by the end of Grade 10 is not necessarily an appropriate standard for every student. In the case of some students, taking only six or seven credits per year may be appropriate and may need to be reflected in the indicators of success.
- There is a need to reach a common understanding of joint school-college programs. The concept of dual credit programs in particular would benefit from some precision. There is a tendency to refer to dual credits (all models) and the rest of the SCWIs interchangeably. Answers to the following questions would be helpful and will be sought in Stage 2 of the evaluation (relevant to question 6):
  - a. How many programs are operating under each of the dual credit models?
  - b. How many students are in each program from each board?
  - c. What is the age distribution of the students?
  - d. What is the proportion of students who are identified as high risk, or have been out of school?
  - e. How many secondary school credits were earned in Semester 1 (06-07) and how many in Semester 2 (06-07)?

- f. How many college credits in each semester?
- g. What is the split between secondary school credit only, college “credit” for advanced standing, and actual college credit toward a diploma or certificate for students still enrolled in secondary school?

### **CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

While the observations contained in this report are necessarily preliminary and subject to further verification in Stage 2 (see Appendix F for the preliminary plan for Stage 2), the evaluation team is of the view that Ontario has created a strategy that integrates a wide range of programs and encourages considerable programmatic innovation and professional autonomy on the part of educators. There appears to be considerable mutuality and complementarity among the elements in the strategy that, although in its early stages of implementation, appears to be succeeding in providing a more respectful and responsive school environment for students and increased opportunities for them to remain in and benefit from secondary schooling in ways that provide a foundation for work and study following high school. In particular, the SS/L18 Strategy provides more choices for students not bound for university, more chances to make up lost ground better recognizing the maturation process of adolescence, and more supportive and individualized attention through program and transition planning.

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## **APPENDIX B: Interview Schedule – Key Respondents**

1. Please describe briefly the nature of your responsibilities and your connection with the Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategy.
2. When you think about Student Success/Learning to 18 in Ontario Strategy, what initiatives, practices, or programs come to mind?
3. For each of the aforementioned initiatives ask: What is the connection between [name the initiative on the list] and Student Success/Learning to 18?
4. Was that a new initiative or an extension of an initiative that was already underway in Ontario?
5. What is the purpose of [name the initiative on the list]?
6. Who is the main audience for [name the initiative on the list]?
7. How does [name the initiative on the list] accomplish that purpose?
8. What factors (human and material resources, time, and political support) do you think are essential for ensuring that [name the initiative on the list] is successful?
9. To what extent are those factors present?
10. Are there particular obstacles that stand in the way of [name the initiative on the list] being successful?
11. What has been accomplished by [name the initiative on the list] thus far?

12. When you think of the purpose(s) you mentioned earlier, would you say that it/they have been achieved?
13. In making that judgment, what evidence are you thinking about?
14. The next question tries to capture the unexpected. What has been particularly surprising or disappointing about [name the initiative on the list] or worked in ways other than you might have anticipated?
15. One last question, is there something we should have asked and did not? In other words, is there a question that you would have liked us to ask that we did not? If so, please feel free to ask that question and to provide the answer that you think most appropriate?

## **APPENDIX C: Focus Group Moderator Guide**

### **(Prepared by Catherine Fournier, Moderator)**

While they are convening, group participants will reflect upon the following questions:

- a. *What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of the Student Success / Learning to 18 Strategy?*
- b. *If someone moved here from another country and you had to provide them with a definition of the Student Success / Learning to 18 Strategy (SS/L18), what would you tell them?*
- c. *What would you say are the 3 best things about SS/L18?*
- d. *What are the 3 worst things?*
- e. *What preparation did you have in order to help you fulfil your SS/L18 responsibilities? By preparation, please include anything you did on your own as well as any other orientation or planning that you received.*
- f. *What should the future be of SS/L18?*

#### **1. Introduction and General Learning (10 Min.)**

*Moderator will introduce herself, explain the process, then ask participants to put aside the written exercise for later discussion and to introduce themselves (mostly for the moderator's benefit). As part of this introduction, they will include something that no one else here is likely to know about them (an ice breaker).*

- Now, let's review some of the questionnaire. What was the first thing that came to your mind about the *Student Success / Learning to 18 Strategy*?
- How would you define SS/L18 for someone who has never heard of it?

#### **2. Focus on Origins (10 Min.)**

- When did you first hear about the idea behind SS/L18?

- How did things get started for you regarding it? How did you first get involved?
- How prepared did you feel in terms of fulfilling your SS/L18 responsibilities?
  - How did you prepare? Did you have an agenda?
  - Did you do the preparatory work on our own, were you given a plan, or just what?
- Who were the key people to whom you related? Why were they pivotal?

**3. Focus on Processes/Activities, then Consequences/ Outcomes (15 Min.)**

- What are your responsibilities as a Success Leader?  
*Probe data collection, advocating those higher up to buy into the initiative, monitoring student engagement*
- And what is everything that you considered to get the job done (steps, approaches, etc.), whether you actually did this or not? *List on flipchart marking whether the task was pursued or not*
  - *Of each pursued:* Why did you choose to pursue this? Did you get it done? And what were the consequences/ outcomes?
  - *Of each not pursued:* Why did you choose not to do this?
  - Are there still other things you wanted to do but didn't or couldn't for whatever reason? If so, what and why?
- What skills does one need to develop to do what your doing? What skills need to be taught at the school level? as a Success Leader? What other capacities does a good Success Leader have that contribute to the success of SS/L18?

**4. Focus on Strengths and Weaknesses (20 Min.)**

- What are the main strengths of SS/L18?

- What are its main weaknesses? How can these weaknesses be overcome? e.g. *interventions needed if a student is falling flat*

## 10 MINUTE BREAK

### 5. Review of Goals and Objectives (30 Min.)

*As a reference, hand respondents a list of the following objectives broken down into single points.*

#### Goal 1

- How well would you say SS/L18 has increased high school graduation rates? Why do you say that (what evidence do you have of this)?

#### Goal 2

- How well would you say SS/L18 supports a good outcome for all students? Why do you say that (what evidence do you have of this)?

#### Goal 3

- How well would you say SS/L18 provides students with new and relevant learning opportunities? Why do you say that (what evidence do you have of this)?

#### Goal 4

- And how well would you say SS/L18 builds on student strengths and interests? Why do you say that (what evidence do you have of this)?

#### Goal 5

- And how well would you say SS/L18 provides students with an effective elementary to secondary school transition? Why do you say that (what evidence do you have of this)?

6. **Focus on the Future (10 Min.)**

- What more could be done to make SS/L18 a success?
- How would you like to see it develop in the future?

7. **Closing Comments**

- Looking back, what have been some of the most special moments for you in your SS/L18 involvement?
- Is there anything else that you would like me to pass along on your behalf regarding SS/L18?
- Do you have any other advice for the people working on this initiative?

Thank you for your cooperation.



### APPENDIX D: Student Success / Learning to 18 and Related Events Timeline

Date	Initiative/Event	Description
1997	New elementary language and mathematics curriculum introduced - remainder to follow	Outlines curricular expectations for each grade.
1997-1998	School-College-Work Initiative	Initiative launched with funding from Ministry of Education and Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities
1999	New Ontario Secondary Schools Policy	<p>New graduation requirements become effective for students entering Grade 9 in September, 1999 along with new Grade 9 curriculum requirements: 18 compulsory credits, plus 12 credits of elective courses, 40 hours of community service and passing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test.</p> <p>Changed compulsory course requirements include an additional course in Mathematics (from 2 to 3), 1 arts course and 1 business/technology course.</p>
1999	Introduction of new Grade 9 Curriculum	<p>Builds on elementary language and math curricula introduced in 1997. Curricula designed to enable completion by most students in four years. Grade 9 and 10 has two streams: applied and academic</p> <p>Content in mathematics of applied and academic has less than 30% variance. Many curriculum topics previously in Grade 10 advanced are moved into Grade 9 in mathematics.</p>
October 2000	First cohort of students under new secondary program requirements takes the pilot Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test	Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test pass rate ranges between 61 and 68%.
2001	PPM 129 outlines prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) for day school students. <a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/129.html">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/129.html</a> / <a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/fre/ppm/129f.html">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/fre/ppm/129f.html</a>	Students in grades ten to twelve may have their knowledge and skills evaluated against the expectations outlined in provincial curriculum policy documents in order to earn credits towards the secondary school diploma.
2001-2002	Math TIPS published by Ministry	Targeted Implementation and Planning Supports- this is a teacher resource offering ways of thinking about mathematics education, and connections to current research. The resource also includes grade-level support materials.

Date	Initiative/Event	Description
2002	King, (2002). Double Cohort Study: Phase 2 Report for the Ontario Ministry of Education, <a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/cohortph2.pdf">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/cohortph2.pdf</a> / <a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/document/reports/dcohortp2.html">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/document/reports/dcohortp2.html</a>	The report of a second phase of a study by Alan King examining the impact of the provincial high school change from a five-year program to a four-year program on graduation rates and post-secondary enrolments in subsequent years.
November, 2002	Working Group on Students At Risk	Barry O'Connor, Director of Limestone District School Board is asked to chair a working group to consider concerns about students at risk.  Working group examines OSSLT, program opportunities for non-academic students, and the capacity of the educational system to deliver the new curriculum effectively to all students.
January 2003	Final Report of At-Risk Working Group The Program Pathways for Students at Risk Work Group	Recommends Expert Panel on Literacy Grades 7-12.  Report makes many suggestions regarding alternative means to measure literacy achievement, and identifies areas where program offerings do not meet student needs.  Provides advice on successful school to work program pathways, effective remediation programs and effective tracking and monitoring of students at risk.
April 29, 2003	Funding announced for a leader at each school board to be responsible for students at risk and later literacy	\$10 million/\$138,900 per school board to address the cost of having a full time person at the supervisory officer level be responsible for students at risk and later literacy
April 29, 2003	\$25 million for remediation classes outside of the regular school day for Grades 11 and 12.	Extension of program established earlier for students in Grades 7-10 in 2002
April 29, 2003	Ministry announces the creation of locally developed credits (essentials) for English, Math and Science, Grades 9 & 10	These courses are allowed to count as two credits for funding purposes, but one academically. Not yet recognized as meeting the compulsory course requirements of the diploma.
May 7, 2003	Government announces that there will be a new literacy course (OSSLC) available to Grade 12 students who have tried and failed the OSSLT.	OSS policy to be modified to allow the successful completion of the OSSLC to meet the literacy requirement.  Only students who have tried and failed the literacy test twice are permitted to take the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course.

Date	Initiative/Event	Description
October, 2003	King, (2003). Double Cohort Study: Phase 3 Report for the Ontario Ministry of Education, <a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/phase3/report3.pdf">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/phase3/report3.pdf</a> / <a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/document/reports/phase3/">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/document/reports/phase3/</a>	The report of a third phase of a study by Alan King examining the impact of the provincial high school change from a five-year program to a four-year program on graduation rates and post-secondary enrolments in subsequent years.
November, 2003	Hon. J. K. Bartleman, Strengthening the Foundation for Change. Speech from the Throne on the opening of the First Session of the Thirty-Eighth Parliament of the Province of Ontario. <a href="http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/documents/ThroneSpeech112003En.pdf">http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/documents/ThroneSpeech112003En.pdf</a> / <a href="http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/documents/ThroneSpeech112003Fr.pdf">http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/documents/ThroneSpeech112003Fr.pdf</a>	Government explains that “the path to a better society, and a more prosperous economy, runs through our public schools” and announces its intention to ensure among other things “excellence for all in public education,” “bring stability and peace to a system that has been racked by turmoil,” “make improvements in children’s reading, writing and math skills,” “strike a task force immediately to ensure that all Ontario children receive an excellent education.”
2003	<b>SS/L18 phase one (immediate and remedial assistance)</b>	<p>Ministry of Education establishes phase one of its SS/L18 Strategy which is designed to ensure that every student deserves a good outcome, provide new and relevant learning opportunities, build on students interests and strengths, effective transitions from elementary to secondary school, increase graduation and reduce drop out rates.</p> <p>Ministry provides 45 million to support delivery of technological education through new and upgraded facilities, and 51 million to fund an SSL in every school.</p> <p>Curricular revisions include Grade 9 and 10 applied math curriculum, six new locally developed compulsory credit courses (designed to support struggling students in Grades 9 and 10). Applies to courses offered in 2004-2005 school year.</p>
October 2003	Think Literacy Success Grades 7 – 12: The Report of the Expert Panel on Students at Risk. 2003 <a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/literacyreport.pdf">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/literacyreport.pdf</a> / <a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/document/reports/literacyreport.pdf">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/document/reports/literacyreport.pdf</a>	Report establishes priorities for improving literacy in at risk students Grades 7-12.

Date	Initiative/Event	Description
January 23, 2004	Message from Education Minister (Gerard Kennedy) to struggling Ontario high school students	You are not alone, hang on, a new Grade 12 literacy course, and student success program on its way.
March 25, 2004	PPM 53	Extends Ontario Scholar recognition to include students earning Grade 12 credits in workplace preparation, open and cooperative education courses.
May, 2004	Leading Math Success Mathematical Literacy Grades 7-12: the report of the expert panel on student success in Ontario <a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/numeracy/numeracyreport.pdf">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/numeracy/numeracyreport.pdf</a> / <a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/document/reports/numeracy/index.html">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/document/reports/numeracy/index.html</a>	Report establishes priorities for improving mathematical literacy in at risk students Grades 7-12.
September 13, 2004	PPM 134	Increases in the number of locally developed compulsory credit courses to provide greater choice for students in Grades 9 and 10.  LDCs for compulsory credits increased from 5 to 6 for English-Language school boards, and from 6 to 7 for French-Language school boards; development of new locally-developed courses: 7 for English-Language school boards and 8 for French-Language school boards.
October 13 2004	Secondary School Literacy Graduation Requirement PPM 127	Students who have failed OSSLT once have opportunity to take the OSSLC. /Adjudication process established for students for whom opportunities or accommodations for special needs not available.
2004	King, A. J. C., Warren, W. K., Boyer, J. C., & Chin, P. (2004). Double Cohort Study: Phase 4 to the Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005. <a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/phase4/report4.pdf">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/phase4/report4.pdf</a> / <a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/document/reports/phase4/index.html">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/document/reports/phase4/index.html</a>	The phase four report of a study by Alan King examining the impact of the provincial high school change from a five-year program to a four-year program on graduation rates and post-secondary enrolments in subsequent years.

Date	Initiative/Event	Description
Fall 2004	Lighthouse Project Initiative (part of phase one)	Ministry of Education devotes \$18 million to Lighthouse projects in six areas:: credit recovery; Alternative programs designed to re-engage students (on-line learning, coop), Program Pathways (26 projects such as apprenticeship programs which prepare students for the workplace - may include industry certification), Strategies directed specifically for Grade 8 and 9 students struggling in their first 2 years of HS, Links to College, and finally, Targeted Populations.
March 9, 2005	Royal Assent of Bill 167, 2005 Education Amendment Act	Revisions /alterations to the terms of collective agreements between school boards and teachers' unions. Four year agreements will expire in August 2008.
01-May-05	<b>SS/L18 phase two (resource and program development):</b>	<p>Ministry allocates 158 million to the student success program: 89 million for 1,300 high school teachers (expected to grow to 143 million for 1900 teachers by 2007-08), including 800 SSTs, 23 million in special projects to support struggling students and students with English as a second language, 14.5 million for textbooks for secondary schools. 31 million was also allocated for one time funding to support student success (An additional 25 million, for a total of \$45 million, for technological education programs, new equipment, expanded programs and increased opportunities for students; 6 million to purchase new resource materials for secondary school libraries).</p> <p>Minimum one SST per high school (announced in PPM 137 - implemented Sept 2005)</p> <p>Follows the establishment of provincial framework agreement with school boards and teachers' federation.</p>
May-05	Ministry provides \$18 million for a 2nd round of Light House projects (part of phase two).	Money used to expand the existing 99 projects and add an additional 26 new lighthouse programs.
June 27, 2005	PPM 137	Use of additional teacher resources to support student success in Ontario secondary schools and the elimination of the teacher advisor program.

Date	Initiative/Event	Description
October 12, 2005	Hon. J. K. Bartleman, Strengthening the Foundation for Change. Speech from the Throne on the opening of the Second Session of the Thirty-Eighth Parliament of the Province of Ontario. <a href="http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/documents/ThroneSpeech112003En.pdf">http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/documents/ThroneSpeech112003En.pdf</a> <a href="http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/documents/ThroneSpeech112003Fr.pdf">http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/documents/ThroneSpeech112003Fr.pdf</a>	Government affirms importance of “learning to 18;” the importance of “opportunities to learn beyond high school in a university, college, apprenticeship or skills program that is of the highest quality,” “the dedication of partners in education,” achieving “peace and stability for students” as a consequence of reaching agreements with teachers; emphasizing that “Ontario won’t give up on its youth,” and will “challenge youth by making learning more relevant,” introducing an alternative secondary school diploma . . . that gives prominence to the ability to develop a skill or trade,” hiring 1,300 Student Success Teachers “devoted to ensuring students have the support, programs and experience they need to be successful”, announcing the formation of a permanent francophone educational task force “to promote French culture, reduce assimilation and help retain francophone students,” increasing “the number of co-op and job placement opportunities,” “setting benchmarks for increasing the percentage of high school students who achieve their diploma,” etc.
December 2005	<b>SS/L18 phase three (coordination and legislation):</b>	Introduction of the Learning to 18 Legislation (Bill 52) which would require students to continue education within the classroom, apprenticeship, or workplace program until 18 years of age. Also committed to a provincial skills certificate and credits for external credentials. For the first time a graduation target was also set.  <b>Target:</b> to have 85% of Ontario high school students graduate in 2010 (includes special education students)  Draft legislation enables policy for external credits; ties driver’s license to attendance, and provides fines for parents and employers of students out of school.
2005	Strategies for Student Success Brochure	
Dec 13, 2005 first reading of Bill 52	A Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) was added to the OSSD (part of phase three).	Designed to create pathways to employment, apprenticeship, or post secondary education. Initial five areas included: arts and culture, construction, hospitality and tourism, manufacturing and agriculture. Three additional areas were added later: health care, information technology and retail.
2005-2007	Dual Credit expansion (part of phase three)	Ministry encourages the expansion of the School-College-Work Initiative (1997-1998) where credits count toward high school and post secondary or apprenticeship.
Jan 31, 2006	Memo (Sue Durst, Ginette Plourde, Kit Rankin) Supporting Student Success in Rural Secondary Schools-one time investment of 10 million for rural education.	Call for program applications, notification of chosen projects.

Date	Initiative/Event	Description
February 1, 2006	Memo (Gerard Kennedy, Minister of Education and Ben Levin, Deputy Minister of Education) PPM 139: Revisions to Ontario Secondary Schools (OSS) to support student success and learning to 18 (Effective September 1, 2005)	Co op expansion (part of phase three): New strategies for credit accumulation (how to manuals for pathways program). Up to two credits of Cooperative Education and one additional course from the Guidance and Career Education curriculum can be applied towards the compulsory 18 credits.
February - March, 2006	Series of MISA Memos 16, 17, 18, 19 Notice of implementation of OnSIS.	MISA progress and financial reporting and planning. The Student Success indicators: 1. Credit accumulation 2. Pass rates in compulsory courses 3. Completion of the literacy graduation requirement 4. Workplace preparation course selections 5. College preparation course selections 6. Locally-developed compulsory credit course selections 7. Guidance and career education; "co-op related" courses 8. Annual school leaver rate 9. Grades 7 and 8 students at risk 10. Grades 7 – 12 francophone students leaving to go to English language schools 11. Grades 7 and 8 francophone students leaving to go to English language schools
March 2006	Boys Literacy Initiative - Including the development of resources, symposia, in-service and action research. Me read...no way / Moi lire? Tu blagues! booklet <a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/meread/meread.pdf">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/meread/meread.pdf</a> / <a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/document/brochure/meread/mereadf.pdf">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/document/brochure/meread/mereadf.pdf</a>	Ministry allocated \$5.04 million to Boys Literacy (\$2.3 million followed by a second allocation of \$2.74 million). Use of additional teacher resources to support student success in Ontario secondary schools. External evaluation of Teacher Advisor program (TAP) results in its elimination due to a lack of impact on student education and career planning.
March 2, 2006	Bill 78: Education Statute Law Amendment Act (Student Performance) introduced	Legislation provides jurisdiction for the Ontario Education Number and enables school boards to be held accountable for the outcomes of educational programs
March 3, 2006	Memo (Aryeh Gitterman, Dominic Giroux) Implementation of New Teacher Induction Program (Letter of intent: March 9, 2006; Funding Agreement: Mar. 29, 2006; Final report: July 31, 2006).	Number of new teachers hired and accounting of expenditures for the purpose of supporting new teachers to be submitted.
March 14, 2006	Ministry announces 3.5 million for e-learning as part of the SS/L18 rural initiative (media release, part of phase three).	



Date	Initiative/Event	Description
March, 30 2006	Memo (Grant Clarke, Director, Student Success/Learning to 18, Strategic Policy Branch; Barry O'Connor, Director (Acting), Student Success/Learning to 18, Implementation, Training and Evaluation Branch; Kit Rankin, Director, Field Services Branch)	2005-2006 Annual Action Plans and school board visits
April 3, 2006	Second Reading of Bill 78: Education Statute Law Amendment Act (Student Performance)	Legislation provides jurisdiction for the Ontario Education Number and enables school boards to be held accountable for the outcomes of educational programs
April 6, 2006	Memo (Sue Durst, Director (Acting), Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch; Ginette Plourde, Director, French Language Education Policy and Programs Branch)	To Student Success Leaders regarding Graduation Literacy Requirement adjudication process for 2006.
April 7, 2006	Student Success Commission first meeting.	The commission was established to provide advice to the ministry on student success initiatives with a focus on addressing labour issues (AERA).
April 7, 2006	Memo (Gerry Townsend, Regional Manager, London Regional Office) to Directors of Education, Student Success Initiative Leaders	London Regional Training Sessions for Superintendents of Schools and Student Success Leaders for the Delivery of the Grade 8 to 9 Transitions Program.
	Memo (Sue Durst, Director (Acting), Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch)	Lighthouse Program Funding to Support Student Success in Rural Secondary Schools: Interim Financial and Status Report
April 12, 2006	Memo (Gerry Townsend, Regional Manager, London Regional Office) to Directors of Education, Student Success Initiative Leaders	Visits with Directors of Education and Student Success Initiative Leaders to Review Student Success Action Plans for 2005-2006 and Learning to 18 Initiative Projects.
April 20, 2006	Memo (Barry O'Connor, Director (Acting), Student Success/Learning to 18, Implementation, Training and Evaluation Branch) to Student Success Leaders	Regional Training Sessions for Supervisory Officers and Student Success Leaders Includes dates, locations and agenda for provincial sessions.
	Memo (Gerry Townsend, Regional Manager, London Regional Office) to Directors of Education, Student Success Initiative Leaders	REVISED: London Regional Training Sessions for Superintendents of Schools and Student Success Leaders for the Delivery of the Grade 8 to 9 Transitions Program



Date	Initiative/Event	Description
May 15, 2006	Memo (George Zegarac, ADM, Strategic Planning and Elementary/Secondary Programs Division, Dominic Giroux, ADM, French-Language Education and Educational Operations Division)	Student Success Leader Funding: Position of full time Student Success Leader will continue to be funded for 2006-07 school year at the same level as 2005-06.
May 30, 2006	Announcement of a transition plan for students in Grades 8 and 9.	Includes more teachers, intensive professional development and improved tracking of students and their progress, a process for sharing student information between elementary and secondary schools, defined transition plans that include orientation activities and interventions, and a first semester timetable that reflects students' interests and strengths.
June 3, 2006	Third Reading and Royal Assent Bill 78: Education Statute Law Amendment Act (Student Performance)	Legislation provides jurisdiction for the Ontario Education Number and enables school boards to be held accountable for the outcomes of educational programs
June 23, 2006	Royal Assent of Bill 78 Education Statute Law Amendment Act (student performance)	The act provides the legal support necessary to allow for public reporting of provincial data and the ability to set clear provincial goals and require school boards to adhere to them. This includes reporting on the new teacher induction program.
	Memo (Nancy Naylor, ADM, Elementary/Secondary Business and Finance Division; Aryeh Gitterman, ADM, Instruction and Leadership Development Division)	The Ministry will retire the Legacy system at the end of the 2005-2006 school year. OnSIS will be the sole authoritative data sources for 2006-07.
June 12, 2006	An additional 19 million (on top of the 89 million) for 300 new student success teachers (Media release).	

Date	Initiative/Event	Description
June 21, 2006	OPS Learn and Work Pilot Project (Ministry of Education Backgrounder)	<p>The program is designed for youth (age 16 to 19) who left high school without a diploma. Upon completion of the program, participants will have earned up to 10 academic credits toward their high school diploma and up to 27 weeks of meaningful work experience in the Ontario Public Service and its Crown agencies.</p> <p>Work placements for the pilot program included 10 government ministries. The initial pilot was an 18-week program at Lester B. Pearson Collegiate Institute in Scarborough's Malvern community. The expanded program is being delivered at:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lester B. Pearson Collegiate Institute in Scarborough</li> <li>2. Father Henry Carr Catholic Secondary School in the northwest area of Toronto</li> <li>3. L. Forster Secondary School in Windsor and</li> <li>4. St. Pius X Catholic Secondary School in Ottawa.</li> </ol> <p>As of September 2006 each facility will be able to accommodate 20 students</p>
June 28, 2006	Memo (Ben Levin, Deputy Minister) to Directors of Education	Student Success Commission recommendation for Credit Recovery program.
June 30, 2006	Memo (Ben Levin, Deputy Minister) to Directors of Education	Student Success Commission Report on Student Success Teachers- outlines the role of student success teachers.
August 15, 2006	Memo (Kirsten Parker, Director, Student Success/Learning to 18 Implementation, Training and Evaluation Branch)	Provincial Symposium for Student Success Leaders January 15 to 17, 2006.
September 7, 2006	Memo (George Zegarac, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Planning and Elementary/Secondary Programs Division; Dominic Giroux, Assistant Deputy Minister, French Language Education and Educational Operations Division)	Student Success Strategy 2006-2007 Resources: \$54.3 million for Student Success in the Learning Opportunities Grant, \$108 million for the hiring of 1,600 additional secondary school teachers, \$6 million for the hiring of an additional teacher per French language secondary school to expand unique course offerings and an additional \$38.3 million (non-GSN) for ministry-directed special projects including Lighthouse, SHSM and dual credits; professional development for Student Success Leaders, Transition Teams and Student Success teachers; OSS implementation and resources; research and data collection.
2006	Ontario Prospects: Ontario's guide to Career Planning (news letter)	
September 27, 2006	Memo (Kirsten Parker, Director, Student Success/Learning to 18 Implementation, Training and Evaluation Branch) Memo Regional Manager	Regional Training Sessions for Student Success Teachers Dates and Locations Draft Agenda

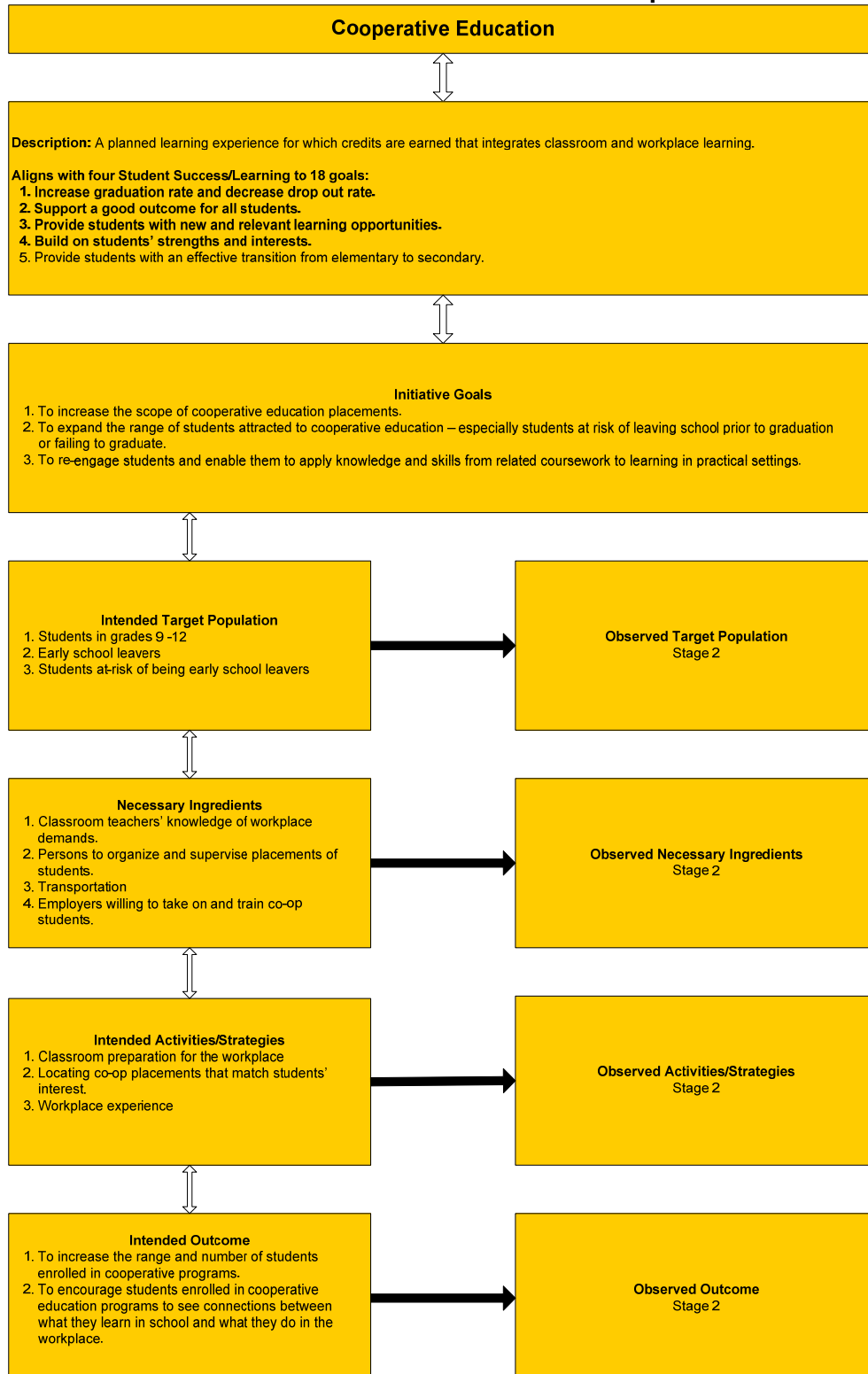
Date	Initiative/Event	Description
December, 2006	Royal Assent of Bill 52 (Learning to 18).	Students are required to attend school until 18 years of age. Enforcement of school attendance tied to student drivers licences.
December 15, 2006	159 lighthouse projects (up from 125 in 2005-2006), 12 million in 2006-2007.	
December 20, 2006	Rural school programs (part of phase three), 10 million dollars for lighthouse program and 3.5 million for new e-learning projects.	Aim is to put rural schools on equal ground as urban schools. A new farming and rural major as part of the SHSM diploma.
2006-2007	Four targeted student success priorities (outlined in September 7 memo):	1. Increase Grade 9 and 10 credit accumulation. 2. Ensure the total student population does better. 3. Supporting the cultural shift in secondary schools. 4. Introducing greater student access to more choice.
	Student success lighthouse evaluation projects (159 lighthouse projects).	Conducted by Curriculum Services Canada
January 11, 2007	Memo (Ben Levin, Deputy Minister)	Interim Guidelines for Dual Credits Earned by Students in 2006-07 in Approved Dual Credit Pilot Projects.
January 12, 2007	Memo (Sue Durst, Director, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch; Kirsten Parker, Director, Student Success/Learning to 18 Implementation, Training and Evaluation Branch)	Supports for Student Success in Mathematics, Grades 7 to 12: 1. Provincial Conference, Connecting Practice and Research in Mathematics Education Action Engagement, February 19-20, 2007 2. Local/Regional Professional development Opportunities for Teachers of Mathematics, Grades 7 to 12 3. Regional Training on Revised Senior Mathematics for School Board PD Providers
	School-College-Work initiative (newsletter)	Aligning curriculum and building pathways to college and apprenticeship programs.
January 11, 2007	Memo (Kirsten Parker, Director, Student Success/Learning to 18 Implementation, Training, and Evaluation Branch; Ginette Plourde, Director, French-Language Policy and Program Branch)	Student Success Teacher Allocation Guidelines
March 2, 2007	Memo (Kirsten Parker, Director, Student Success/Learning to 18 Implementation, Training and Evaluation Branch)	Gr.7-9 - Student Success Credit Tracker in schools soon.
Mar-07	Student Success Credit Tracker	Allows students to keep track of their credits.

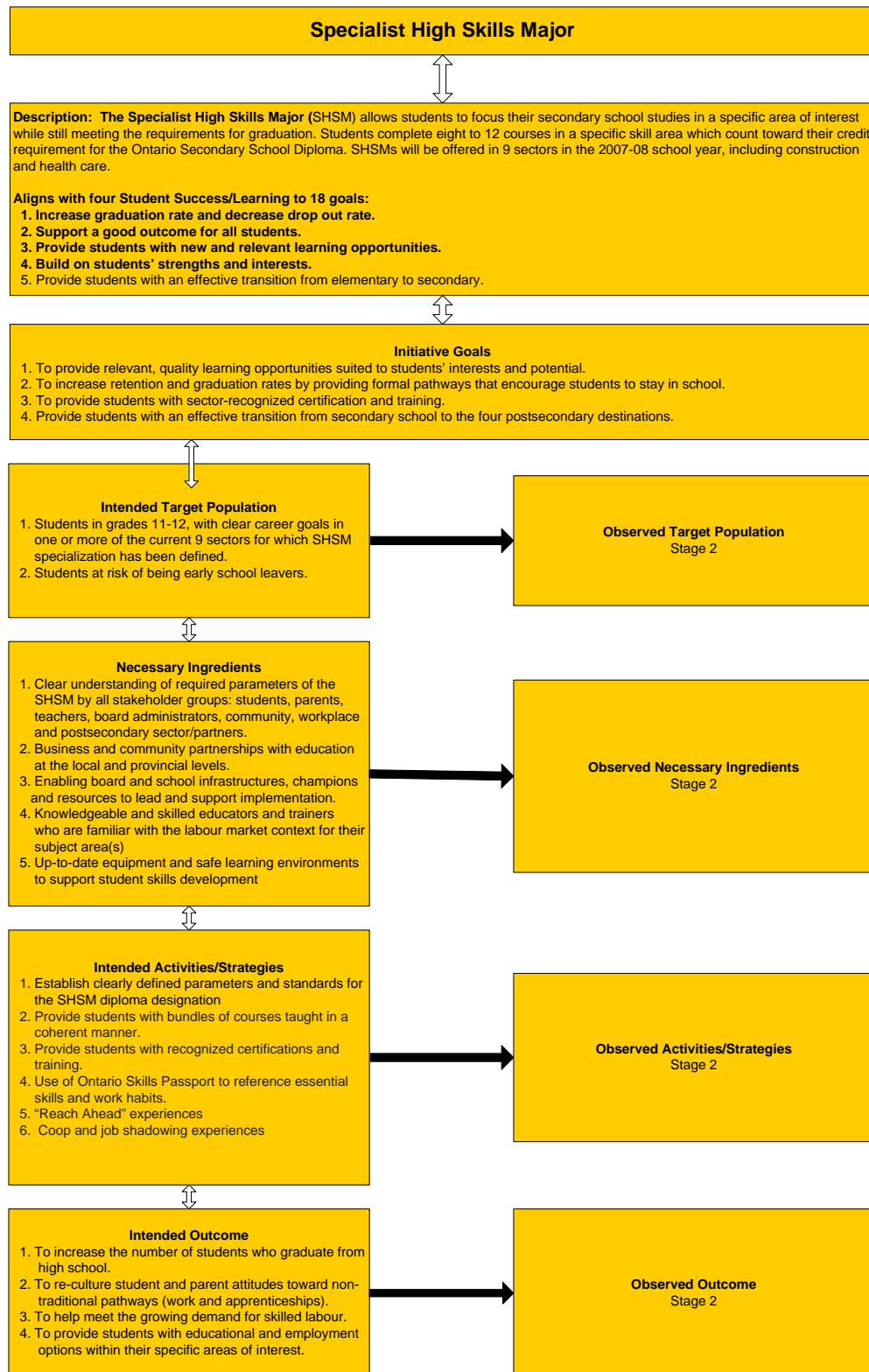
Date	Initiative/Event	Description
March 19, 2007	Memo (Sue Durst, Director, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch; Kirsten Parker, Director, Student Success/Learning to 18 Implementation, Training and Evaluation Branch) to Student Success Leaders	Credit Recovery and the Provincial E-learning Strategy: 1. Access to online secondary school credit courses 2. Access to additional online educational resources for K-12 3. Policies and guidelines for school boards and schools 4. Specifications regarding infrastructure and technical issues 5. Provincial standards for e-learning content 6. Professional development for teachers E-learning is currently being piloted in 11 Ontario school boards and uses the learning management system.
March 19, 2007	Memo (Nancy Naylor, Assistant Deputy Minister)	Educational Funding for 2007-2008: 21 million for an additional 320 secondary Student Success Teachers.
March 29, 2007	Memo (George Zegarac, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Planning and Elementary/Secondary Programs Division; Dominic Giroux, Assistant Deputy Minister, French-Language Education and Educational Operations Division)	Student Success Lighthouse Projects Evaluation Site Visits. Currently 155 lighthouse projects funded by the ministry and 70 rural projects. The evaluations will be conducted by the Ministry and Curriculum Services Canada (38 will be selected for visits).
	Memo (Kirsten Parker, Director, Student Success/Learning to 18, Implementation, Training and Evaluation Branch; Ginette Plourde, Director, French-language Education Policy and Programs Branch)	Grades 7 and 8 Reach Every Student through Differentiated Instruction Brochure (notice of distribution).
April 4, 2007	Two Memos (Kirsten Parker, Director, Student Success/Learning to 18 Implementation, Training and Evaluation Branch; Ginette Plourde, Director, French-Language Education Policy and Programs Branch)	1. Credit Recovery Program - Common Questions and Answers 2. Reach Every Student in Grades 7 & 8 Through Differentiated Instruction- May 15, 2007 Symposium.
April 4, 2007	Memo (Kirsten Parker, Director, Student Success/Learning to 18 Implementation, Training and Evaluation Branch)	Regional Dialogue on Student Success Teams
April 5, 2007	Memo (George Zegarac, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Planning & Elementary/Secondary Programs Division; Dominic Giroux, Assistant Deputy Minister, French-Language Education & Educational Operations Division)	Notice of the implementation of Bill 52 and the implications for schools.

Date	Initiative/Event	Description
April 11, 2007	Memo (Philip Steenkamp, Deputy Minister (A))	SHSM 2007-2008 priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new pilots in the 43 school boards plus one school authority and provincial schools currently without an SHSM pilot</li> <li>• partnership pilots</li> <li>• continued support for the 27 pilot school boards to expand their current SHSM and/or add new SHSMs</li> <li>• an increased number of pilots with an approved dual credit component and</li> <li>• development of SHSMs in 3-5 new sectors, in addition to the five sectors launched in 2006-07.</li> </ul>
April 12, 2007	Memo (Kirsten Parker, Director, Student Success/Learning to 18 Implementation, Training and Evaluation Branch)	Notice of Grades 7 and 8 Differentiated Instruction brochure in English and in French (À l'écoute de chaque élève grâce à la différenciation pédagogique).
April 20, 2007	Memo (Andrew Davis, Director, Transfer Payments and Financial Reporting)	Notice that the Credit Recovery Program is now part of summer school program.
April 2007	Publication of French-language brochure: Lire, c'est conquérir le monde! <a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/studentssuccess/thinkliteracy/files/bulletin_avril07.pdf">http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/fre/studentssuccess/thinkliteracy/files/bulletin_avril07.pdf</a>	Additional teacher resource to support Boys' Literacy initiatives through the "Pratiques réflexives" in 40 French-language schools.
May 23, 2007	Memo (George Zegarac, Assistant Deputy Minister Strategic Planning and Elementary/Secondary Programs Division)	General goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improving student achievement by providing more pedagogical supports to our teachers</li> <li>• increasing the offerings of activities such as SHSM, dual credits, co-operative education, and credit recovery</li> <li>• enhancing capacity to analyze data</li> <li>• supporting better communication and engagement strategies with our students, parents, business and postsecondary education and training partners</li> <li>• encouraging and supporting regional collaboration among co-terminus boards (e.g. SHSM).</li> </ul>

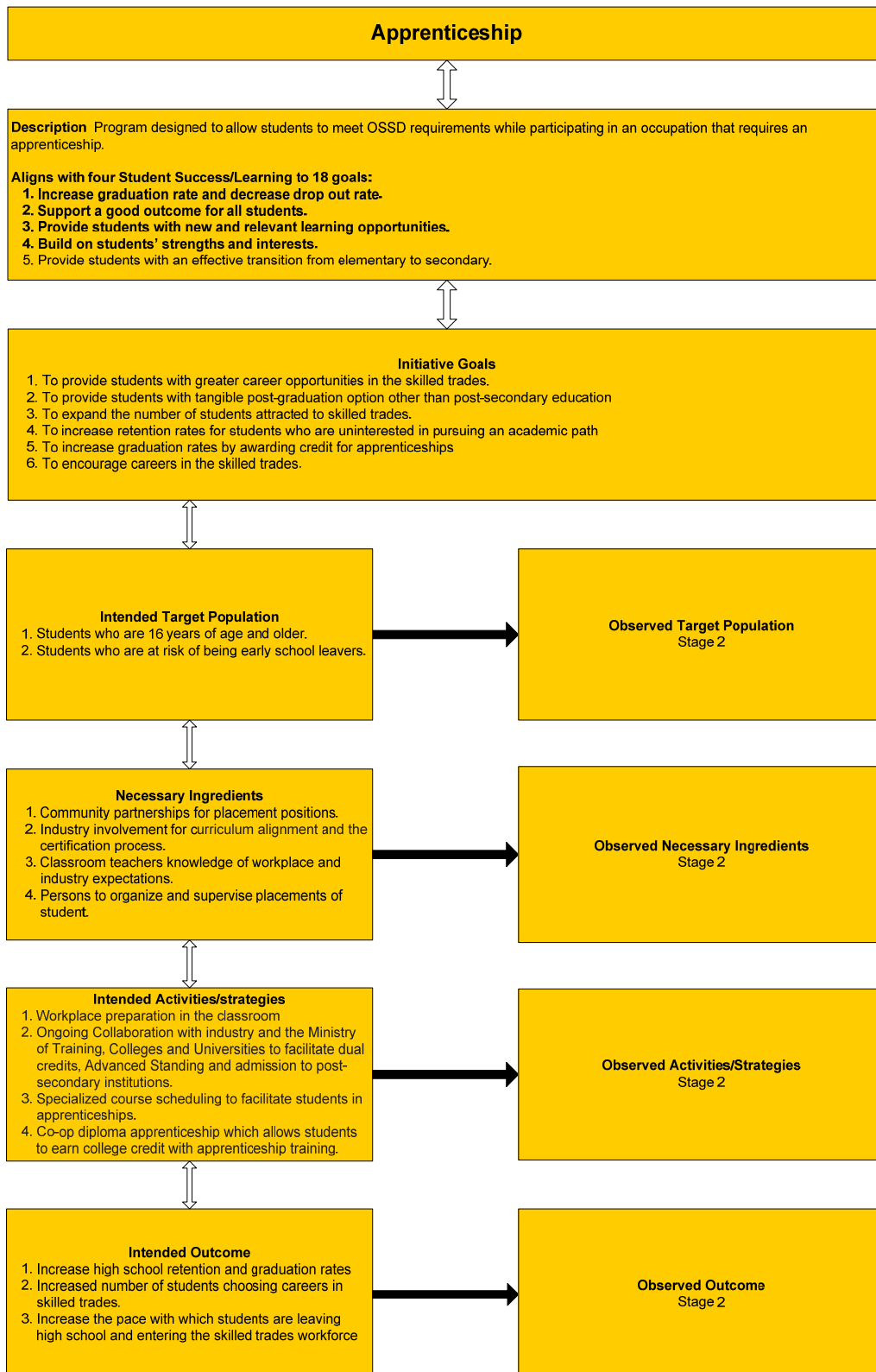
Date	Initiative/Event	Description
May 23, 2007		<p>SS/L18 goals: More attention will be devoted to students in Grades 7 and 8, a greater focus on effective pedagogical practices, a continued focus on supporting the Student Success Teams (focus on the four pillars and a focus on differentiated instruction, assessment and evaluation), continue to highlight effective practices and to link boards, expand the SHSM offerings both in terms of more boards (currently 27) and more sectors (currently five), expand the dual credit program from 2500 students to 4500 students, more co-operative education and credit recovery, continue to offer funding for local innovative practices through Lighthouse program targeted more to Grades 7-12.</p> <p>This year, \$154 M is allocated to completing the commitment to hire 1,900 additional secondary school teachers. For 2007/-08, all secondary schools must have a Student Success Teacher with no less that half of every school's allocation used for direct student engagement. The Student Success portion of the Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG) is \$55.7 M, up from \$54.3 M last year. Funding outside the GSN and LOG for ministry-led professional development, resources and special projects is up slightly to \$39.5 M from last year's \$38.3 M</p>
May 15, 2007	Memo (Sue Durst, Director (Acting), Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch, Ginette Plourde, Director, French-Language Policy and Program Branch)	<p>Revision to Provincial Report Card, Grades 9-12: The Expansion of Eligible Courses recognized as Compulsory for the OSSD.</p> <p>As a result of PPM 139, changes must be made to the Provincial Report Card.</p>
Summer 2007	Passport to Prosperity Update	Employer forum to recruit employers and connect them with students.

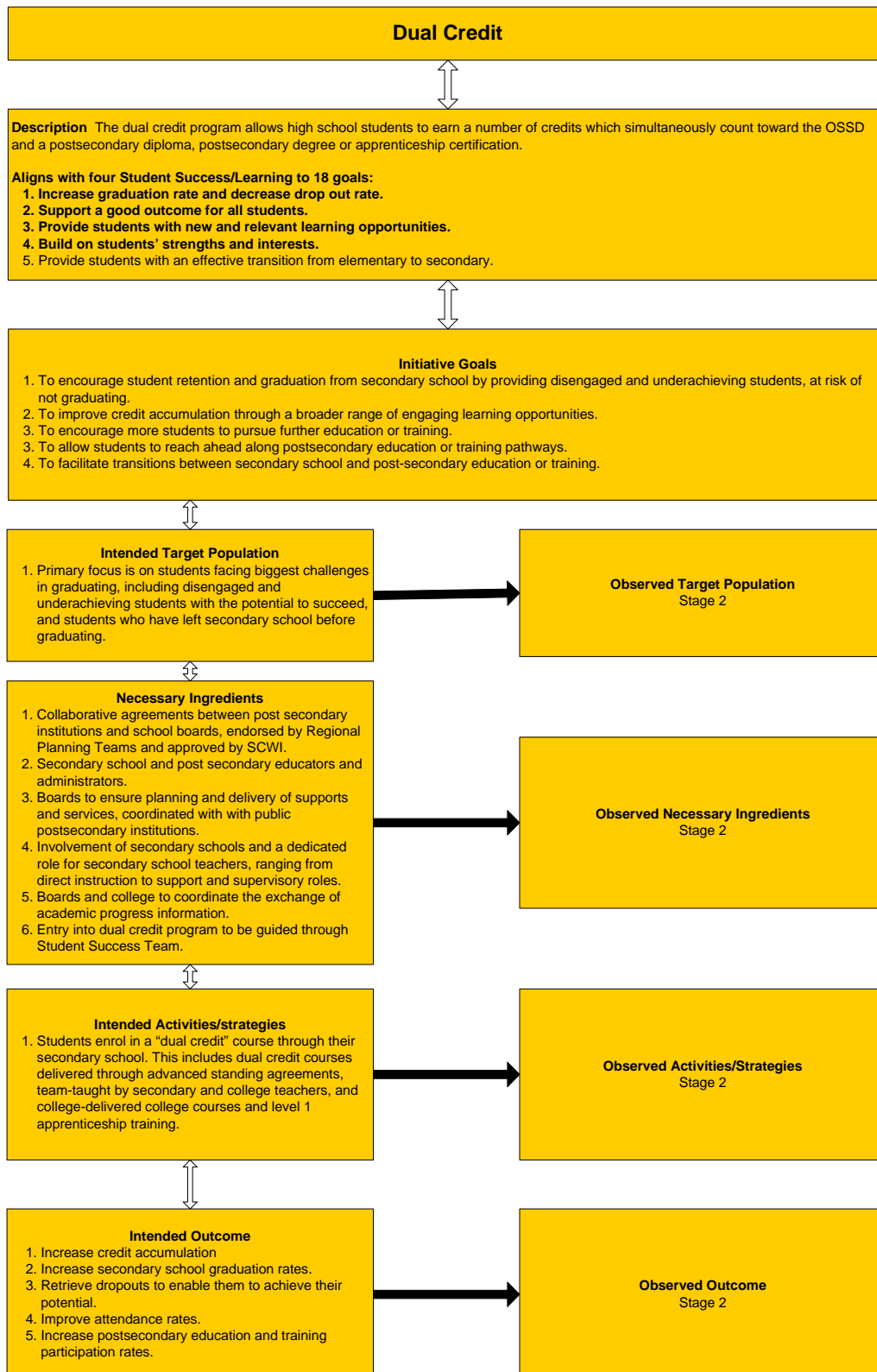
## APPENDIX F: Evaluation Framework Components

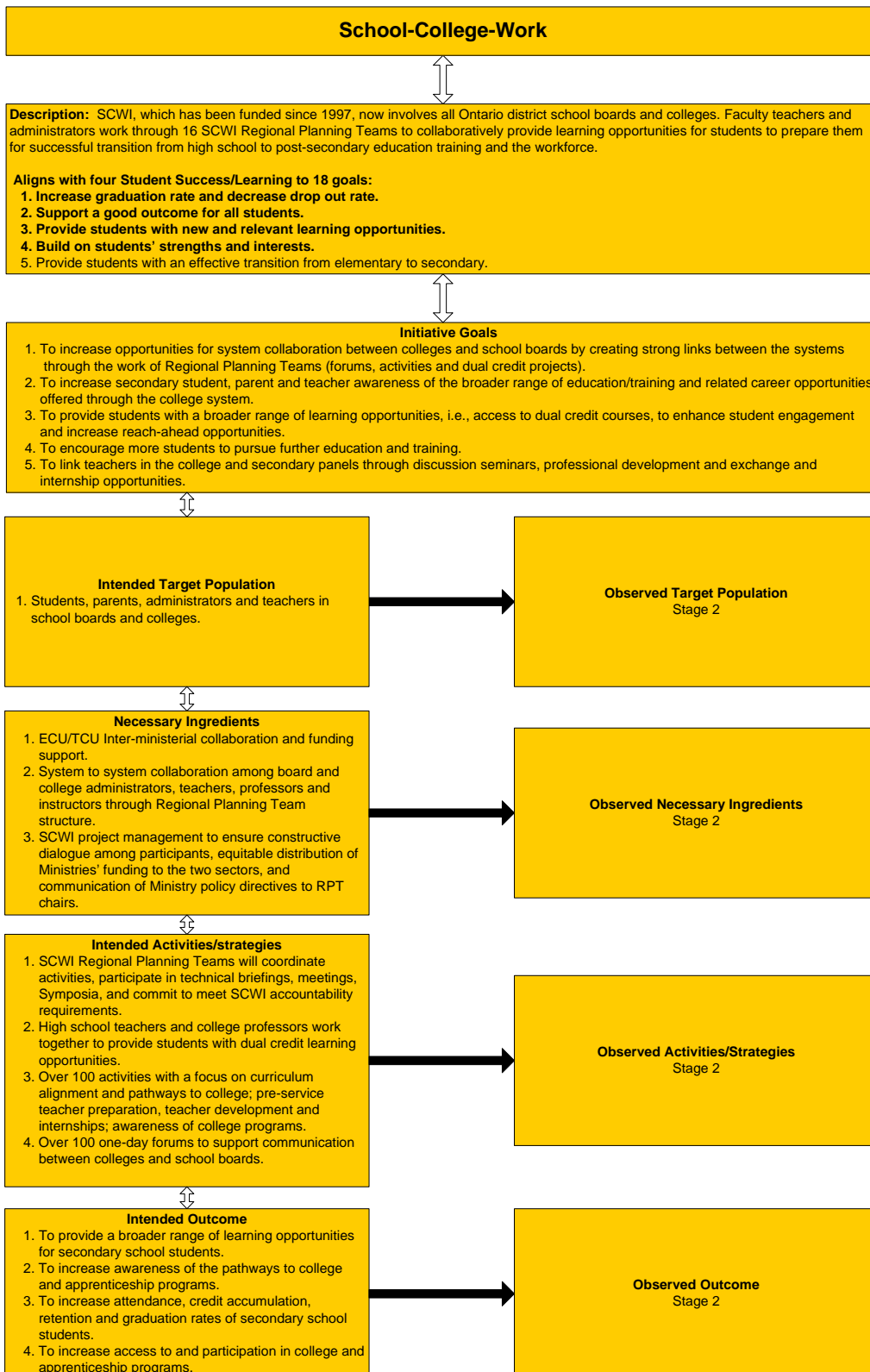


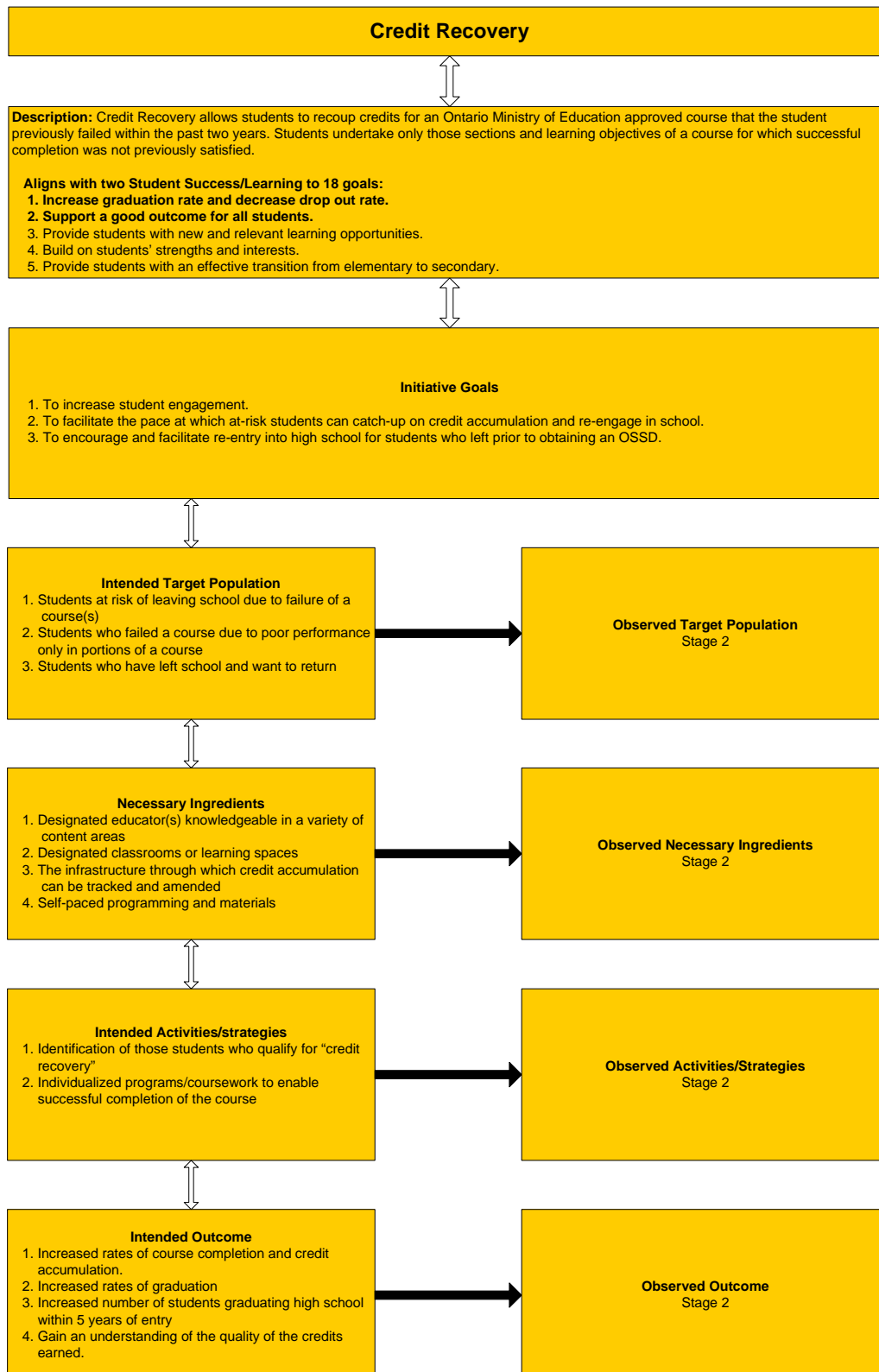


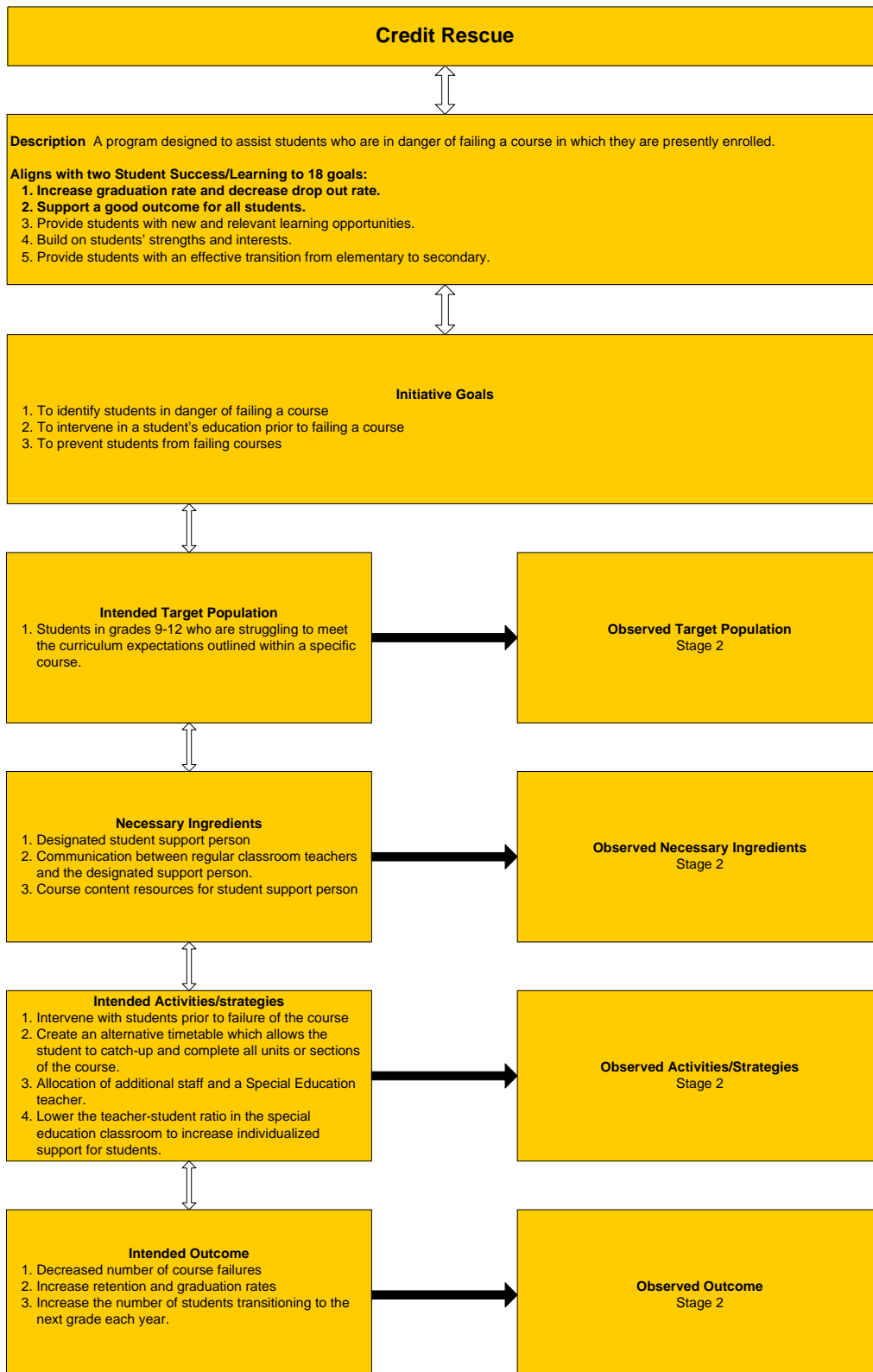


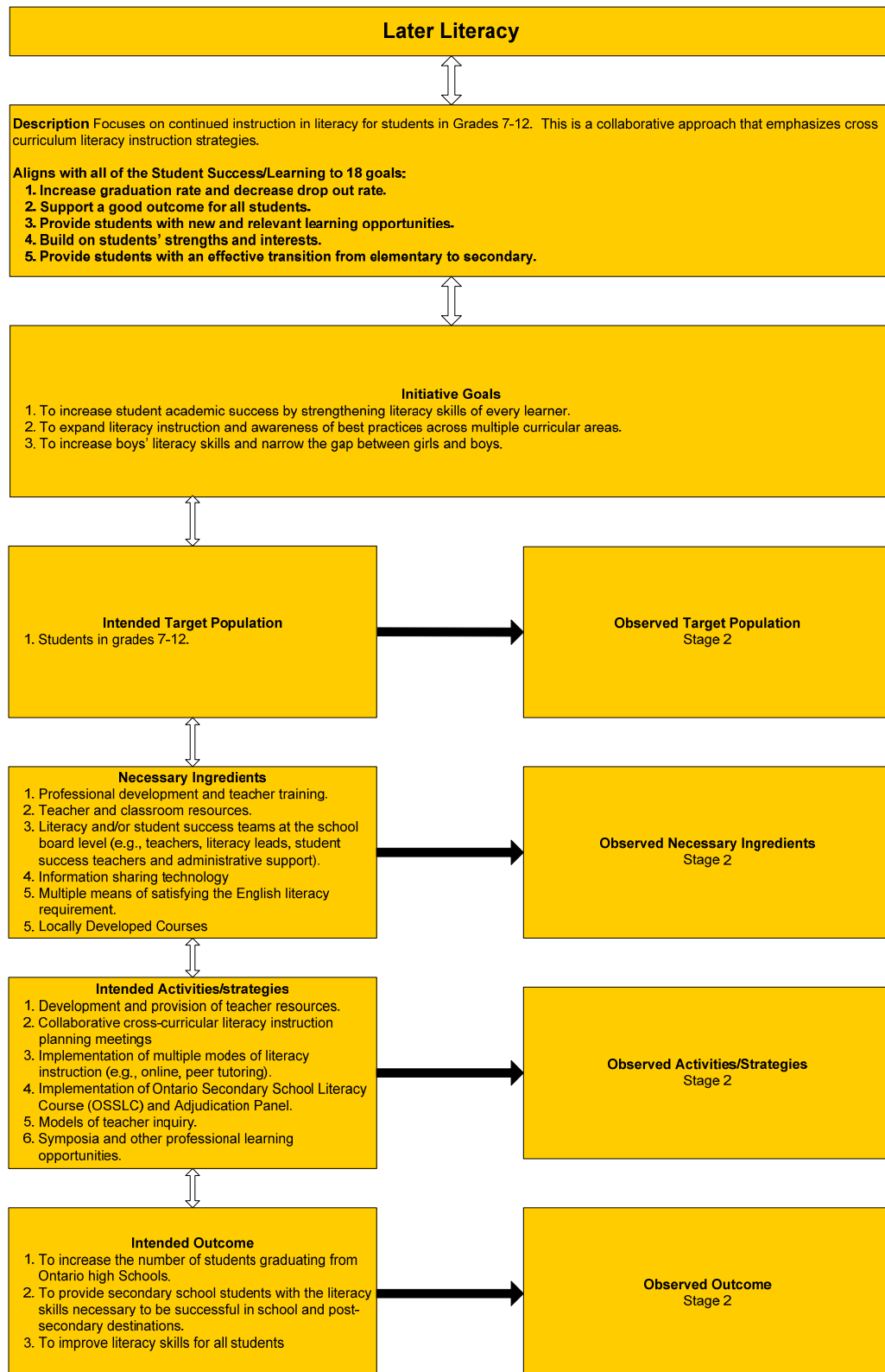


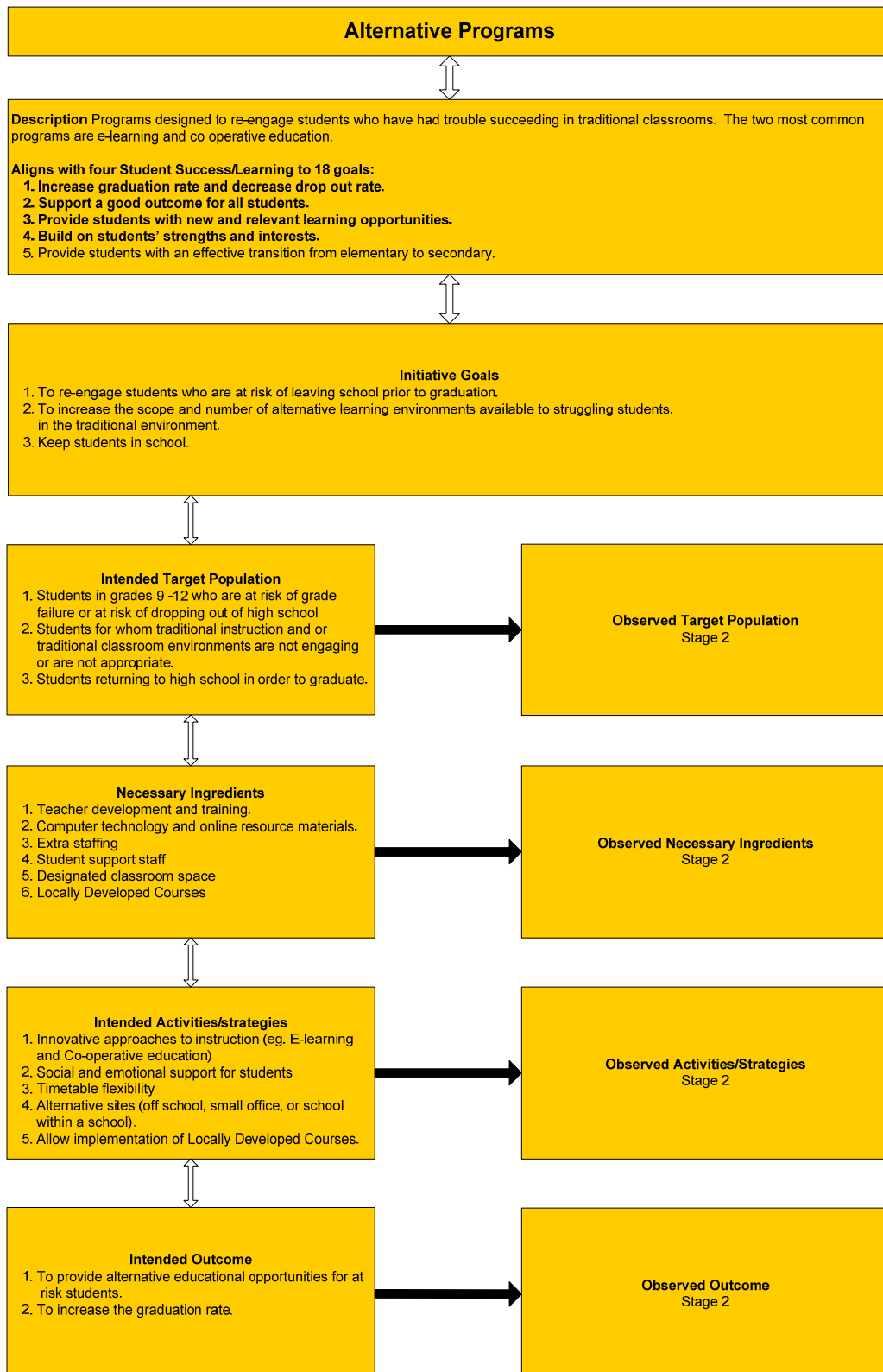


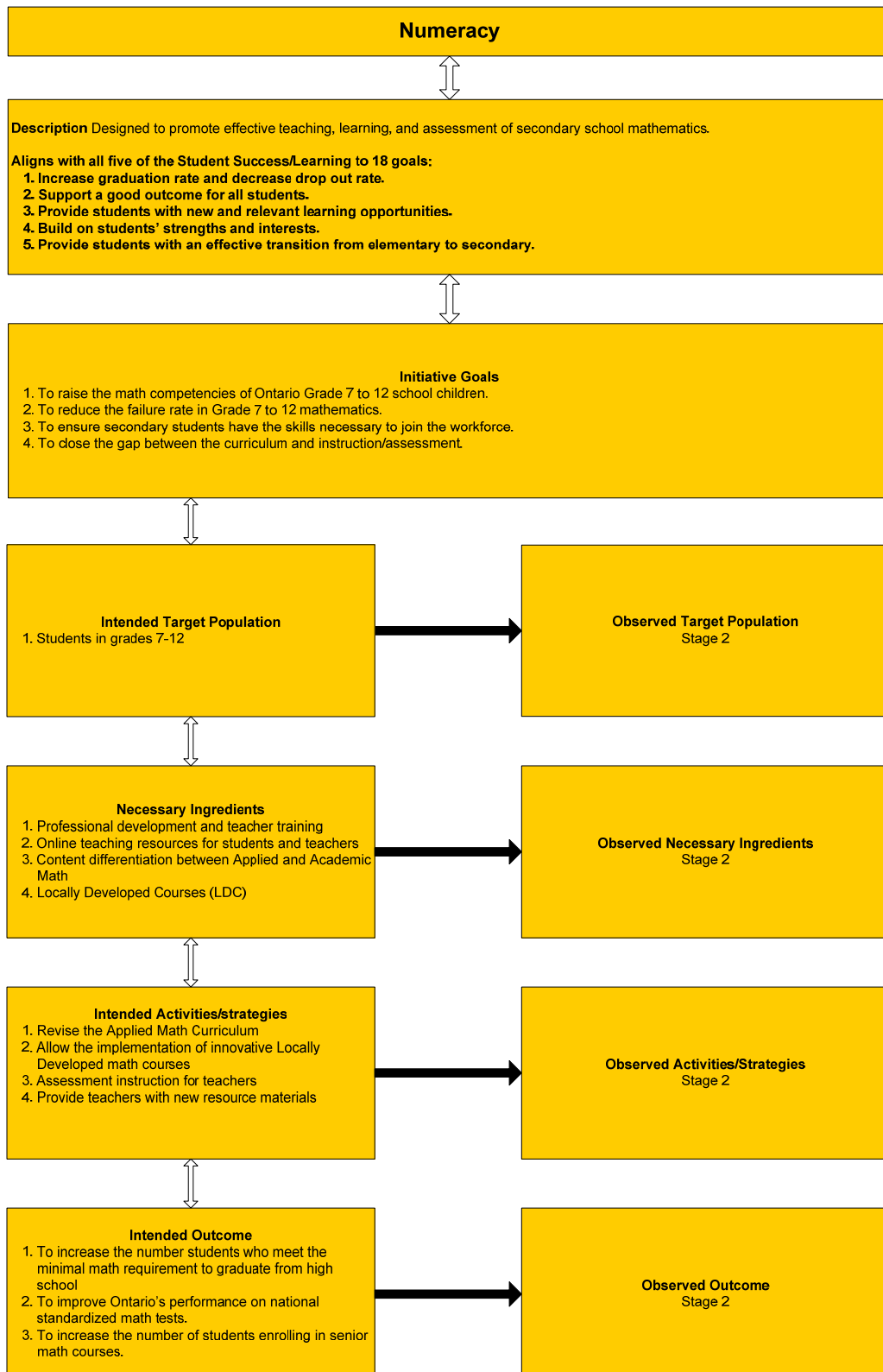




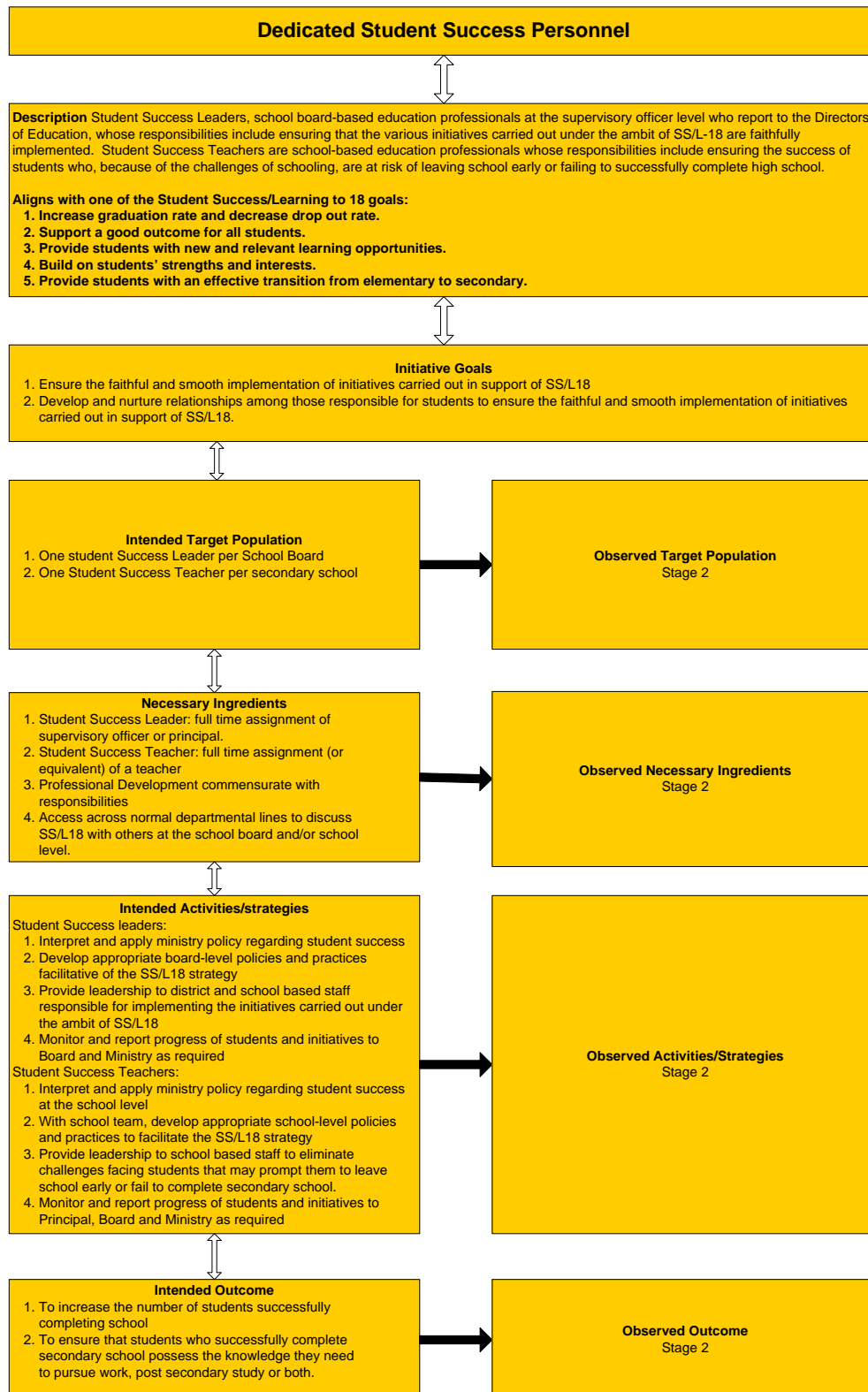


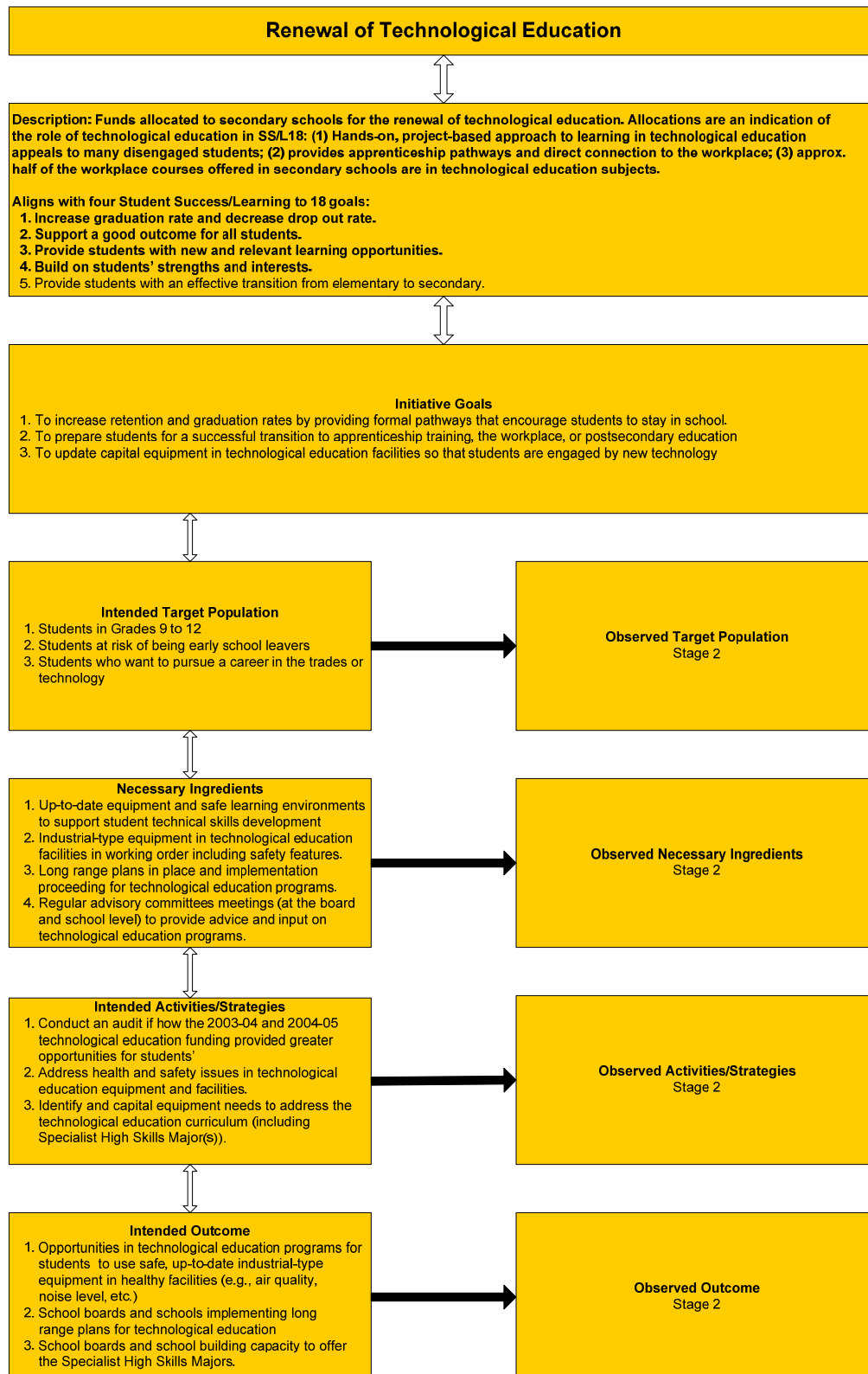


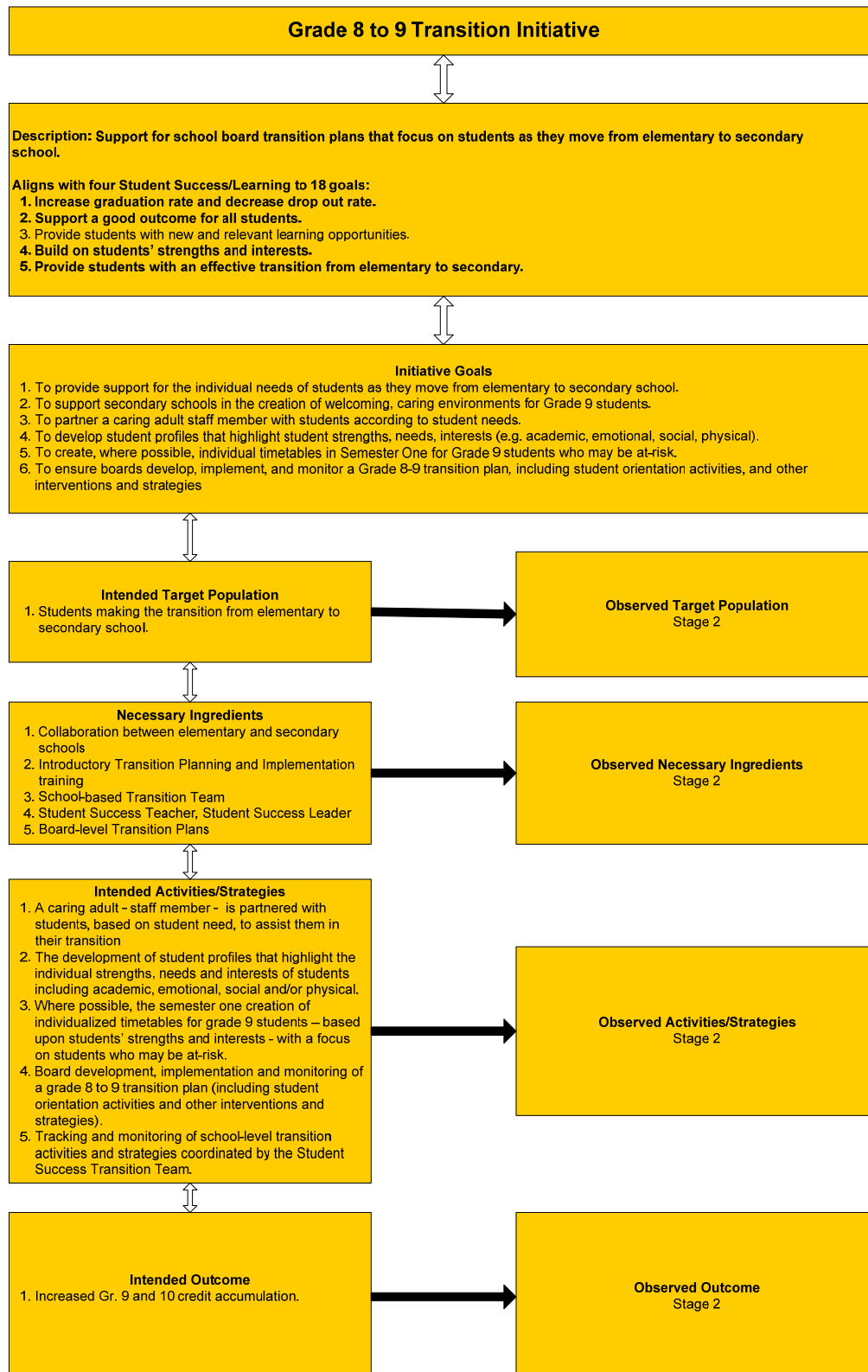


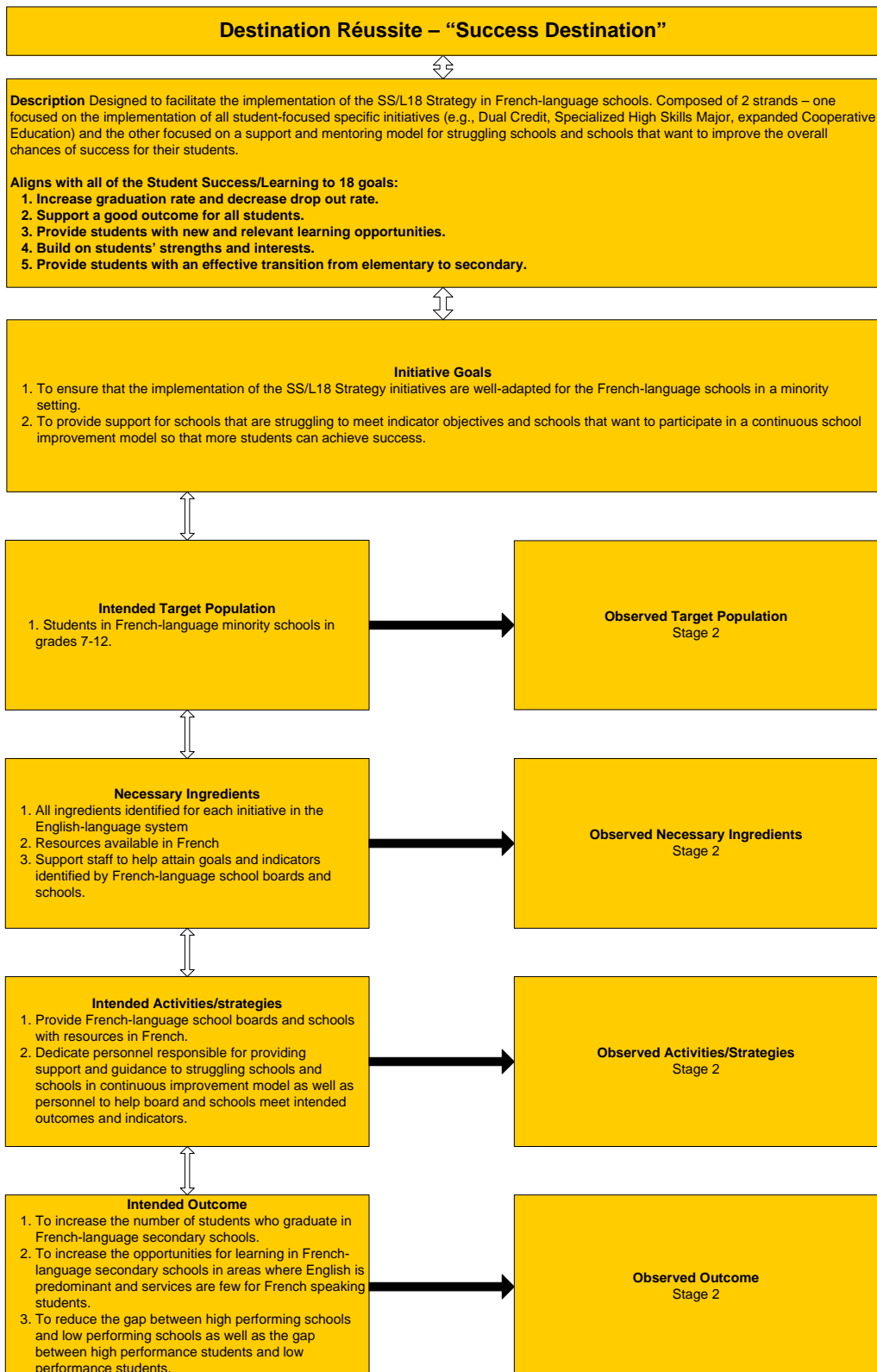












## APPENDIX F: Stage 2 Plan

### Introduction

In gathering and interpreting evidence of the extent to which the SS/L18 Strategy is achieving its goals, CCL is following a specific evaluation framework based on widely accepted evaluation procedures (e.g., Popham, 1971; Stake, 1972; Stufflebeam, 2000). For initiatives as complex as the Student Success / Learning to 18 (SS/L18) Strategy, it is important to triangulate data by gathering evidence from a wide variety of sources and perspectives, as well as through a variety of data collection methods, in order to maximize the validity and reliability of the evaluation findings (see Berg, 2007; Sands & Roer-Strier, 2006). In Stage 2 of the project, CCL will perform in-depth quantitative and qualitative analyses of a variety of data sources regarding student outcomes related to the SS/L18 Strategy's five key goals.

### Methodology and Analyses

#### *Quantitative analyses framework*

CCL will perform analyses of a variety of data sources to evaluate changes in student outcomes since the implementation of the SS/L18 Strategy. These analyses will focus on graduation rate outcomes, as well as on outcomes related to Student Success indicators developed by the Ministry. Student Success indicators are:

- Credit accumulation, Grades 9 and 10
- Compulsory credit pass rates, Grades 9 and 10
- Literacy Success Rate
- Workplace credit offerings, Grades 11 and 12
- College credit offerings, Grades 11 and 12
- Locally develop course offerings
- Co-op related course offerings
- Annual school leaver rate
- Grade 7 and 8 students at risk
- French-language student retention rate in Grade 7 to 12
- French-language at-risk student transfer rate

Wherever possible, socio-economic information, language and cultural background and student mobility data will be integrated with student outcome data in these analyses. These data will be acquired through Ministry and school board reports and data sources, and will be linked to other quantitative data sets when possible. The integration of these different sources of data provide for a better understanding of student outcomes in relation to the SS/L18 Strategy by allowing for an exploration of the relationship between student outcomes and other indicator variables within the context of school, school board, or Ministry policies (e.g., see the Achievement-Indicators-Policy model: Nagy, Demeris, & van Barneveld, 2000).

#### Outcomes on Graduation Rates

CCL will gather information on graduation rates from the following data sources:

Table 1: Quantitative Data Sources on Student Graduation

<b>Data Sources<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Baseline measures (prior to SS/L18)</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Ministry of Education Data	Yes (2000-2003)	yes	yes	yes	yes
LFS	yes	yes	yes	n/a	n/a

<sup>1</sup> See data source description below

#### *Data sources description and proposed analyses:*

- Ontario Ministry of Education Data: Student-level data on secondary school credit accumulation and school-level data on graduation rates will be examined to determine changes from 2003 to 2007. Where available, data for a representative group of schools will be examined.
- Labour Force Survey (LFS): This survey involving approximately 54,000 respondents and conducted monthly by Statistics Canada provides detailed information concerning the labour market in Canada. For our present purposes, it contains data on secondary school graduation for the entire period of interest. Specifically, it is possible to obtain a proportion of 15 to 24 year-olds in Ontario

who have not completed secondary school and who are not currently students. CCL will extract provincial level data for 2003 to 2007 by age, gender, labour force status, and family type.

#### Credit Accumulation

Previous research suggests that credit accumulation (especially in Grades 9 and 10) is an important predictor of later graduation (King, 2002, 2003; King et al., 2004). Credit accumulation information for Grades 9 and 10 will be obtained through the Ministry's Information Management Branch (IMB) database.

#### Academic Achievement Outcomes:

CCL will gather and analyze data from a variety of provincial, national, and international achievement tests (see Table 2). The analysis framework used for the proposed evaluation will establish a foundation for further evaluation of the programs in subsequent years. A particular focus will be given to literacy success rate as per students results on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test and Course (OSSLT and OSSLC).

Table 2: Quantitative Data Sources on Student Academic Achievement Available to CCL

<b>Data Sources<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Baseline measures (prior to SS/L18)</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
EQAO math examination (Grade 9) – Provincial	yes	yes	yes	yes
EQAO OSSLT (Grade 10) – Provincial	yes	yes	yes	yes
PISA (Grade 9) – International	yes	n/a	n/a	upcoming
NLSCY – National	Cycle 5	Cycle 6	n/a	n/a

<sup>1</sup> See data source descriptions below

#### *Data sources description and proposed analyses:*

- **EQAO Math Examination:** The provincial mathematics evaluation is administered to Grade 9 students each year. Data are available for the entire period of interest at the school and school board levels. These data will be linked with school and

school board variables provided by the Ministry and school boards. This linkage will allow for an examination of the change in scores between the baseline measures and each phase of the SS/L18 Strategy while taking into account other variables that may also be influencing student achievement differences during the time frame of interest.

- EQAO Ontario Secondary Student Literacy Test (OSSLT): This provincial literacy test is administered to Grade 10 students each year. Data are available for the entire period of interest at the school and school board levels. If possible, these data will be linked to school and school board variables provided by the Ministry and School Boards. This will allow for an examination of the change in scores between the baseline measures and each phase of the SS/L18 Strategy while taking into account other variables that may also be influencing student achievement differences during the time frame of interest.
- OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA): This programme assesses the reading, math, and science knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds in several industrialized countries every three years since 2000. The Canadian sample of 30,000 is large enough to produce reliable provincial estimates in both Francophone and Anglophone school systems in Ontario. The Programme also used surveys to provide indicator variables (such as socio-economic status information) at the individual and school level which CCL will use when interpreting student achievement scores.

#### Other Student Outcomes and Student Success Indicators

##### *Student outcomes on other Ministry indicators:*

Please see Appendix G for detailed analysis plan for the remaining Student Success indicators. Relevant information will be obtained through the Ministry's Information Management Branch (IMB) database regarding the following indicators:

- Compulsory credit pass rates (Grades 9 and 10). Workplace credit offerings (Grades 11 and 12).
- College credits offerings (Grades 9 and 10).
- Locally developed course offerings.



- Co-op related course offerings.
- Annual school leaver rate.
- Grade 7 and 8 students at risk.
- French-language student retention in Grades 7 to 12.
- French-language at-risk student transfer.

CCL will access existing survey data and develop a series of online surveys to gather evidence concerning other key student outcomes not measured by achievement tests, credit accumulation, and graduation rates.

*Data sources description:*

- National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY): Conducted by Statistics Canada, this longitudinal survey began data collection in 1994 and gathers information on factors associated with children's development over time. Cycle 1 started with children 0-11 years in each province, who are also followed longitudinally each year. For this research project, CCL will access data from Cycles 5 and 6 – first cohort (latest cycles currently available). Student, teacher, and school principal data are available on a number of student outcomes and other variables, including information about homework, literacy, student behaviour and absenteeism, parental involvement in education, class and teaching practices, perceptions of school, and school characteristics.
- Composite Learning Index (CLI): The Canadian Council on Learning has developed a Composite Learning Index capable of characterizing community learning conditions that are favourable to social and economic well-being. CCL will explore the feasibility of identifying secondary schools that are performing at a better than expected level based upon their community characteristics. CLI scores will be used to measure community characteristics and these will be compared with measures of student success. Schools can be described as outperforming expectations when the ratio of student success measures to CLI scores is above average. CCL will also attempt to identify particularly successful SS/L18 Strategy programs in high performing schools.

- Survey data: CCL has developed its own online survey capability that it will use for the purpose of administering a series of online surveys administered to students and school staff (see Appendix H). These surveys will complement the interviews and focus groups conducted during Stage 2 of the project and address key student outcomes identified in the evaluation framework in Stage 1 of the project. The purpose of conducting online surveys is to gather information from a wider population (the entire population can be targeted) than is possible by performing individual or group interviews, therefore allowing for a greater generalization of the findings. CCL will supplement the surveys' findings with data that will be gathered during semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

### ***Quantitative analysis methodologies***

The complexity of the associations in this evaluation can only be elucidated by using data analytic strategies capable of describing such associations and identifying mediating and moderating variables. Latent Curve Modeling, Growth Mixture Modeling, Structural Equation Modeling, and Multilevel Modeling will be used to evaluate the SS/L18 Strategy. These methodologies take into account measurement errors, resulting in increased reliability of measures and the accuracy of the structural relations. Latent Curve Modeling and Growth Mixture Modeling techniques are person-based methods of analysis and enable us to identify those who benefit most from these programs. With regard to the evaluation, these techniques have greater power to detect intervention effects compared to the traditional fixed-effect methods (Curran & Muthen, 1999). The Growth Mixture Modeling technique will be used to identify whether there are different trajectories of students' achievement constructs prior to and after implementation of the SS/L18 Strategy. This technique will enable us to identify clusters based on distinct developmental trajectories within the sample.

### ***Qualitative Analyses Framework***

Much of the analysis of the potential gap between intended and observed components of the evaluation framework will be conducted using qualitative data sources (i.e., in-depth field interviews and focus groups). The use of field interviews and focus groups as two of

the methods proposed in this research is essential to uncover the actual changes experienced by those directly involved in the SS/L18 programs, as well as to understand any hidden barriers or incentives to success that will not be revealed by relying solely on quantitative student achievement data (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). There is ample evidence in the education literature that qualitative research methods, when implemented judiciously and according to the highest standards, can reveal factors that are of fundamental importance in understanding the impact of a particular initiative, factors that are likely to remain undiscovered if only quantitative techniques are used (Berg, 2007; Creswell, 2005). It is therefore our belief that, in order to properly evaluate a major policy initiative such as the SS/L18 strategy and its impacts, attention will need to be directed to both the outputs and outcomes of this initiative as well as the processes, localized conditions, and contextual dynamics that have shaped its implementation.

CCL will build a team of eight interviewers (a minimum of three of whom are French-speaking) and provide them with training to ensure that the interview process is carried out in a uniform and consistent manner, while ensuring that they are sensitive to the local conditions present in their interview sites and prepared to capture and investigate these as they pertain to the implementation of the SS/L18 Strategy (e.g., Ferguson, Tilleczek, Boydell, Rummens, Cote, & Roth-Edney, 2005). CCL will ensure that the interview process is sufficiently piloted and that debriefing meetings with the interviewers occur regularly to identify any problems in the administration of the instrument and any emerging themes that may be of interest to the evaluation project.

Individual schools and school boards will be the primary units of analysis for the data collected through the field interviews because they are the locus of change and bear primary responsibility for educational programs. Qualitative analyses will therefore be performed at the school and school board levels. Key respondents will be recruited at each of these levels for semi-structured interviews or focus groups. Schools and school boards will be sampled according to a purposive method to ensure proportional representation of schools (and their corresponding school boards) in each of the six classification categories for school boards (i.e., Northern Ontario English-Language

Public District School Boards, Southern Ontario English-Language Public District School Boards, Northern Ontario English-Language Catholic District School Boards, Southern Ontario English-Language Catholic District School Boards, French-Language Public District School Boards, and French-Language Catholic District School Boards) while maximizing the number of school boards involved (Creswell, 2005). In addition, the schools sampled will include a representation of schools from remote, rural, and urban areas, and, in the case of schools from French-language school boards, will be selected in such a way to ensure that schools in high and low Francophone population areas are represented.

As per the Ministry's interest in an understanding of the impact at the school and classroom level as identified in the Request for Proposal, CCL will sample approximately 50 schools for site visits (along with their respective school board). Where feasible, a single visit will include schools from both Catholic and public systems in reasonable proximity. The proposed sample size allows for maximum variability in the responses as a first step toward ensuring data saturation and the validity of future analysis. See Appendix I for current site visit plan.

CCL will conduct individual semi-structured interviews and focus groups with respondents within each level of analysis who will be deemed most likely to provide responses from differing perspectives. CCL will request contact information for potential respondents from each individual school and school board and contact respondents by mail or email to give them the opportunity to participate in interviews. Participants' identity and contact information will be kept strictly confidential.

The interview instruments were developed to investigate:

- Key respondents' understanding of the SS/L18 Strategy, of the differences between the SS/L18 Strategy and previous large-scale initiatives, and of the latter's intended outcomes;
- The extent to which the programs have been implemented within the schools;

- The extent to which accountability measures are established at the school and school board levels, as well as the extent to which these are seen to contribute to the successful implementation of the SS/L18 Strategy;
- The extent to which schools and school boards are using data to guide student intervention, school and staff development, and educational practice;
- The extent to which schools and school boards are aligning their resources and practices with the goals of the SS/L18 Strategy.

Recent research investigating sampling issues in qualitative interview research suggests that data saturation (which occurs when further data collection leads to no new useful information for data analysis) can occur after six interviews within a unit of analysis (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Therefore, CCL has developed semi-structured interview and focus group instruments and protocols to be used with a variety of key respondents. See Appendix J for interview and focus group guides.

At the school level, at least one person from each of the following respondent categories will be selected:

- Principal
- Student Success Teacher
- Guidance Counsellor
- One or more teachers who are not designated as SSTs

In addition, focus groups (with 4 to 8 respondents per group) will be conducted with the following groups:

- Parents
- Students
- Students at risk

At the school board level, at least one person will be selected from each of the following categories for interviews:

- Director of education

- School trustees
- Superintendent
- Student Success Leader

CCL will endeavor to keep the interviews as brief as possible while addressing the above goals so as to minimize the impact on school and school board personnel. Respondents will be given the opportunity to communicate with interviewers after the completion of the interviews to add comments or raise concerns they may have about their responses.

### ***Qualitative Data Coding and Analysis***

Each interview and focus group will be digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim for further analysis. A team of qualitative data specialists from CCL will code and analyze each transcript according to the findings of interest identified in Stage 1 of the project. The coding process will involve a multi-stage process. During an initial exploratory analysis, the research team will identify a list of codes reflecting findings from Stages 1 and 2. These codes will be developed to assess the level of understanding of the SS/L18 Strategy among the interviewees, the degree of achievement of the Strategy's intended goals, as well as other recurring or emerging issues identified by the qualitative research team. Following completion of the initial coding phase, the codes will be collapsed into broader thematic categories that will speak to the impact and state of implementation of the SS/L18 Strategy. We will conduct random audits of the qualitative data at various stages of the coding process to maximize opportunities for inter-coder agreement and to ensure the integrity of the coding process.

### **Deliverables for Stage 2**

CCL will present a detailed final report to the Ministry containing all findings from Stages 1 and 2 as well as a list of recommendations based on these findings. The final report and executive summary will be completed in March 2008.

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## APPENDIX G: Student Success Indicators Analysis Plan

### Cohort Information

Source		SIS data stored in the data warehouse					OnSIS data		
Year		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Cohort	1	9	10	11	12				
	2		9	10	11	12			
	3			9	10	11	12		
	4				9	10	11	12	
	5					9	10	11	12
	6						9	10	11
	7							9	10

Indicator	Credit accumulation in Grade 9 and 10
Variables	COMPL_CREDITS; OPTIONL_CREDITS; EXTERNL_CREDITS; EQUIV_CREDITS
Cohort	1 through 7
Data Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total Credits = COMPL_CREDITS + OPTIONL_CREDITS + EXTERNL_CREDITS</li> <li>To verify: Compare Total Credits to EQUIV_CREDITS</li> </ul>
Expected Pattern	Mean credit accumulation in Grade 9 and 10 should not vary significantly until cohorts 5, 6, 7 at which time we should see an increase (5 < 6 < 7)
Sub-Analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use LANGUAGE_CD to determine if patterns differ for French and English schools</li> <li>Use SPOKEN_LANG_CD to determine if patterns vary for different linguistics groups</li> <li>Use postal code to determine rural/urban and calculate differences if any</li> <li>Use SIS_CLS_CD to determine whether patterns vary by catholic and public systems</li> <li>Use GENDER to determine whether there are different patterns for males and females</li> </ul>

Indicator	Compulsory Credit Pass Rate in Grade 9 and 10
Variables	COMPL_CREDITS; MARK; COMPULSORY_SW
Cohort	1 through 7
Data Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMPL_CREDITS / total number of Grade 9 10 students who were enrolled in those classes</li> <li>• Select compulsory courses only in variable COMPULSORY_SW and calculate average MARK for those courses.</li> </ul>
Expected Pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compulsory Credit Pass Rate in Grade 9 and 10 should not vary significantly until cohorts 5, 6, 7 at which time we should see an increase (<math>5 &lt; 6 &lt; 7</math>)</li> <li>• The above increase should not be accompanied by a decrease in marks in compulsory courses. We may see an increase in average marks.</li> </ul>
Sub-Analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use LANGUAGE_CD to determine if patterns differ for French and English schools</li> <li>• Use SPOKEN_LANG_CD to determine if patterns vary for different linguistics groups</li> <li>• Use postal code to determine rural/urban and calculate differences if any</li> <li>• Use SIS_CLS_CD to determine whether patterns vary by catholic and public systems</li> <li>• Use GENDER to determine whether there are different patterns for males and females</li> </ul>

Indicator	Literacy Success Rate in 3 <sup>rd</sup> year
Variables	OSSLT pass rate in year 3
Cohort	1 through 7
Data Handling	Overall year 3 success rate = OSSLT pass rate in year 3
Expected Pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OSSLT Pass Rate in 3<sup>rd</sup> year should not vary significantly until cohorts 5, 6, 7 at which time we should see an increase (<math>5 &lt; 6 &lt; 7</math>)</li> </ul>
Sub-Analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use LANGUAGE_CD to determine if patterns differ for French and English schools</li> <li>• Use SPOKEN_LANG_CD to determine if patterns vary for different linguistics groups</li> <li>• Use postal code to determine rural/urban and calculate differences if any</li> <li>• Use SIS_CLS_CD to determine whether patterns vary by catholic and public systems</li> <li>• Use GENDER to determine whether there are different patterns for males and females</li> </ul>

Indicator	4 <sup>th</sup> year and above
Variables	OSSLT pass rate in year 4 and 5; OSSLC registration rate; OSSLC pass rate if applicable
Cohort	1 through 7 (*OSSLC only after 2003)
Data Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall year 4 and 5 success rate = OSSLT pass rate in year 4 and 5 + OSSLC pass rate</li> <li>Overall success rate = Overall year 3 success rate + overall year 4 and 5 success rate</li> </ul>
Expected Pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OSSLT Pass Rate in 3<sup>rd</sup> year should not vary significantly until cohorts 5, 6, 7 at which time we should see an increase (<math>5 &lt; 6 &lt; 7</math>)</li> <li>OSSLC registration should decline</li> <li>Overall success rate should not vary significantly until cohorts 5, 6, 7 at which time we see an increase (<math>5 &lt; 6 &lt; 7</math>)</li> </ul>
Sub-Analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use LANGUAGE_CD to determine if patterns differ for French and English schools</li> <li>Use SPOKEN_LANG_CD to determine if patterns vary for different linguistics groups</li> <li>Use postal code to determine rural/urban and calculate differences if any</li> <li>Use SIS_CLS_CD to determine whether patterns vary by catholic and public systems</li> <li>Use GENDER to determine whether there are different patterns for males and females</li> </ul>

Indicator	Workplace Credit Offerings in Grades 11 and 12
Variables	Data source to be determined
Cohort	1 through 6
Data Handling	Data handling to be determined
Expected Pattern	We should see an increase in the number of workplace credit offerings starting in 2003 (cohort $2 < 3 < 4 < 5 < 6$ )
Sub-Analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use LANGUAGE_CD to determine if patterns differ for French and English schools</li> <li>Use SPOKEN_LANG_CD to determine if patterns vary for different linguistics groups</li> <li>Use postal code to determine rural/urban and calculate differences if any</li> <li>Use SIS_CLS_CD to determine whether patterns vary by catholic and public systems</li> <li>Use GENDER to determine whether there are different patterns for males and females</li> </ul>

Indicator	College Credits Offerings in Grades 11 and 12
Variables	CRS_TYPE_KEY
Cohort	1 through 6
Data Handling	Use only college credit course in variable CRS_TYPE_KEY, then divide by total number of students
Expected Pattern	College credits offerings in Grades 11 and 12 should increase after 2002 (cohort 2 < 3 < 4 < 5 < 6)
Sub-Analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use LANGUAGE_CD to determine if patterns differ for French and English schools</li> <li>• Use SPOKEN_LANG_CD to determine if patterns vary for different linguistics groups</li> <li>• Use postal code to determine rural/urban and calculate differences if any</li> <li>• Use SIS_CLS_CD to determine whether patterns vary by catholic and public systems</li> <li>• Use GENDER to determine whether there are different patterns for males and females</li> </ul>

Indicator	Locally Developed Course Offerings
Variables	Data source to be determined
Cohort	1 through 7
Data Handling	Data handling to be determined
Expected Pattern	We should see an increase in locally developed course offerings starting in 2003
Sub-Analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use LANGUAGE_CD to determine if patterns differ for French and English schools</li> <li>• Use SPOKEN_LANG_CD to determine if patterns vary for different linguistics groups</li> <li>• Use postal code to determine rural/urban and calculate differences if any</li> <li>• Use SIS_CLS_CD to determine whether patterns vary by catholic and public systems</li> <li>• Use GENDER to determine whether there are different patterns for males and females</li> </ul>

Indicator	Co-Op Related Course Offerings
Variables	DELIVERY_CD
Cohort	1 through 7
Data Handling	Freq co-op in DELIVERY_CD / total number courses
Expected Pattern	We should see an increase in the proportion of courses delivered as co-op starting in 2003
Sub-Analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use LANGUAGE_CD to determine if patterns differ for French and English schools</li> <li>• Use SPOKEN_LANG_CD to determine if patterns vary for different linguistics groups</li> <li>• Use postal code to determine rural/urban and calculate differences if any</li> <li>• Use SIS_CLS_CD to determine whether patterns vary by catholic and public systems</li> <li>• Use GENDER to determine whether there are different patterns for males and females</li> </ul>

Indicator	Annual School Leaver Rate
Variables	WITHDRAWAL_DATE; DESTINATION_CD
Cohort	1 through 7
Data Handling	Leaver Rate = Student who have withdrawn and whose destination is not another school / total number of students
Expected Pattern	We should see an decrease in the annual school leaver rate starting in 2003 (cohort 1 > 2 > 3 > 4 > 5 > 6 > 7)
Sub-Analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use LANGUAGE_CD to determine if patterns differ for French and English schools</li> <li>• Use SPOKEN_LANG_CD to determine if patterns vary for different linguistics groups</li> <li>• Use postal code to determine rural/urban and calculate differences if any</li> <li>• Use SIS_CLS_CD to determine whether patterns vary by catholic and public systems</li> <li>• Use GENDER to determine whether there are different patterns for males and females</li> </ul>

Indicator	Grade 7 and 8 students at risk in English and Math
Variables	CRS_CD; MARK
Cohort	Cohort to be determined
Data Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student at risk = student with failing mark in Grade 7/8 English or Math</li> <li>• Proportion student at risk = number of at risk students in Math &amp; English in Grades 7 and 8 / total number of students in Math &amp; English in Grades 7 &amp; 8</li> </ul>
Expected Pattern	We should see a decrease in the proportion of students at risk starting in 2003
Sub-Analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use LANGUAGE_CD to determine if patterns differ for French and English schools</li> <li>• Use SPOKEN_LANG_CD to determine if patterns vary for different linguistics groups</li> <li>• Use postal code to determine rural/urban and calculate differences if any</li> <li>• Use SIS_CLS_CD to determine whether patterns vary by catholic and public systems</li> <li>• Use GENDER to determine whether there are different patterns for males and females</li> </ul>

Indicator	Student Retention in French-Language schools in Grades 7 to 12
Variables	LANGUAGE_CD; WITHDRAWAL_DATE; DESTINATION_CD
Cohort	1 through 7 (for limited grades, as per cohort description)
Data Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• French Destination: Select French in LANGUAGE_CD for students who have a WITHDRAWAL_DATE. For this group select those with a school DESTINATION_CD. Divide resulting French-language destination school by English-language destination schools</li> <li>• Student Retention = All students who do not withdraw from school + students with French destination school</li> </ul>
Expected Pattern	We should see an increase in the French-language student retention starting in 2003.
Sub-Analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use postal code to determine rural/urban and calculate differences if any</li> <li>• Use SIS_CLS_CD to determine whether patterns vary by catholic and public systems</li> <li>• Use GENDER to determine whether there are different patterns for males and females</li> </ul>

Indicator	French-Language At-Risk Student Transfer
Variables	CRS_CD; MARK; LANGUAGE_CD; WITHDRAWAL_DATE; DESTINATION_CD
Cohort	1 through 7
Data Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>French Destination: Select French in LANGUAGE_CD for students who have a WITHDRAWAL_DATE. For this group select those with a school DESTINATION_CD. Divide resulting French-language destination school by English-language destination schools</li> <li>Student Retention = All students who do not withdraw from school + students with French destination school</li> <li>Student at risk = student with failing mark in Grade 7/8 English or Math</li> <li>Proportion student at risk = number of at risk students in Math &amp; English in Grades 7 and 8 / total number of students in Math &amp; English in Grades 7 &amp; 8</li> </ul>
Expected Pattern	We should see an decrease in the French-Language student transfer in the English system starting in 2003
Sub-Analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use postal code to determine rural/urban and calculate differences if any</li> <li>Use SIS_CLS_CD to determine whether patterns vary by catholic and public systems</li> <li>Use GENDER to determine whether there are different patterns for males and females</li> </ul>

#### Graduation Rate Improvement

Indicator	Graduation Rate
Variables	DIPLOMA_1_CD
Cohort	1 through 5
Data Handling	Track entering Grade 9 cohort for 5 years (or 4 years) to see if diploma was obtained. Complete % of Grade 9 cohort earning diploma
Expected Pattern	We should see an increase in the graduation rate (1 < 2 < 3 < 4 < 5)
Sub-Analyses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use LANGUAGE_CD to determine if patterns differ for French and English schools</li> <li>Use SPOKEN_LANG_CD to determine if patterns vary for different linguistics groups</li> <li>Use postal code to determine rural/urban and calculate differences if any</li> <li>Use SIS_CLS_CD to determine whether patterns vary by catholic and public systems</li> <li>Use GENDER to determine whether there are different patterns for males and females</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX H: Survey Instruments

### ONTARIO STUDENT SUCCESS/LEARNING TO 18 STRATEGY Student Survey

The following questions are about your experience with secondary school in Ontario.  
*Note: Questions 3 to 66 pertain to specific components of the SS/L18 Strategy. These could be randomized in a way that each respondent answers only a subset of the questions. Piloting of the questionnaire will be required to determine the optimal number of questions to retain.*

1. In your opinion, has anything changed in the last four years to help secondary school students succeed?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Don't know
2. Are you familiar with apprenticeship programs or initiatives? Apprenticeships give high school students the opportunity to learn a trade or craft under the supervision of an experienced trades or crafts person.
  - a. No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 3 to 6)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
3. Generally, which group of students participates in apprenticeship programs?
  - a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
4. Apprenticeship programs help students (choose as many as apply)
  - a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
5. Please check all the following that apply:
  - a. Students and/or parents know that apprenticeship programs exist
  - b. There are enough apprenticeship programs for all students who want them
  - c. The apprenticeship programs are conveniently located



- d. It is easy for students to travel to the apprenticeship programs that are available
  - e. This community supports apprenticeship programs
  - f. There are enough teachers/staff to support the apprenticeship programs
  - g. Apprenticeship programs take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - h. People value apprenticeship programs
  - i. Other (specify)
6. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement:  
Apprenticeship programs or initiatives help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
7. Are you familiar with cooperative education programs? Cooperative education is a planned learning experience for which credits are earned that integrates classroom and workplace learning.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of program (skip questions 8 to 11)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
8. Generally, which group of students participates in Cooperative education programs?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
9. Cooperative education programs help students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
10. Please check all the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that cooperative education programs exist
  - b. There are enough cooperative education programs for all students who want them
  - c. The cooperative education programs are conveniently located

- d. It is easy for students to travel to the cooperative education programs that are available
  - e. This community supports cooperative education programs
  - f. There are enough teachers/staff to support the cooperative education programs
  - g. Cooperative education programs take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - h. People value cooperative education programs
  - i. Other (specify)
11. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Cooperative education programs help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
12. Are you familiar with credit recovery programs or initiatives? Credit Recovery allows students to recoup credits for an Ontario Ministry of Education approved course that the student previously failed within the past two years. Students undertake only those sections and learning objectives of a course for which successful completion was not previously satisfied.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 13 to 16)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
13. Generally, which group of students participates in Credit recovery programs?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
14. Credit recovery programs help students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
15. Please check all the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that credit recovery programs exist
  - b. There are enough credit recovery programs for all students who want them

- c. This community supports credit recovery programs
  - d. There are enough teachers/staff to support the credit recovery programs
  - e. Credit recovery programs take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - f. People value credit recovery programs
  - g. Other (specify)
16. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Credit recovery programs help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
17. Are you familiar with credit rescue programs or initiatives? Credit rescue programs are designed to assist students who are in danger of failing a course in which they are presently enrolled.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 18 to 21)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
18. Generally, which group of students participates in Credit rescue programs?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
19. Credit rescue programs help students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
20. Please check all the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that credit rescue programs exists
  - b. There are enough credit rescue programs for all students who want them
  - c. This community supports credit rescue programs
  - d. There are enough teachers/staff to support the credit rescue programs
  - e. Credit rescue programs take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - f. People value credit rescue programs

- g. Other (specify)
- 21. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Credit rescue programs help students become more successful.
  - a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
- 22. Are you familiar with dual credit programs? The dual credit program allows high school students to earn a number of credits which simultaneously count toward the OSSD and a postsecondary diploma, postsecondary degree or apprenticeship certification.
  - a. No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 23 to 26)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
- 23. Generally, which group of students participates in Dual credit programs?
  - a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
- 24. Dual credit programs help students (choose as many as apply)
  - a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
- 25. Please check all the following that apply:
  - a. Students and/or parents know that dual credit programs exist
  - b. There are enough dual credit programs for all students who want them
  - c. The dual credit programs are conveniently located
  - d. It is easy for students to travel to the dual credit programs that are available
  - e. This community supports dual credit programs
  - f. There are enough teachers/staff to support the dual credit programs
  - g. Dual credit programs take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - h. People value dual credit programs
  - i. Other (specify)

26. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Dual credit programs help students become more successful.
- Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
27. Are you familiar with programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills? These programs focus on continued instruction in literacy for students in Grades 7-12. This is a collaborative approach that emphasizes cross curriculum literacy instruction strategies.
- No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 28 to 31)
  - Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
28. Generally, which group of students participates in programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills?
- Gifted students
  - Average students
  - Students who struggle in school
  - All students
  - Don't know
29. Programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills help students (choose as many as apply)
- Get course credits
  - Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - Better understand the material taught in class
  - Gain work-related skills
  - Gain self-confidence
  - Maintain their interest in school
  - Prepare for courses in the future
  - Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - Other (specify)
30. Please check all the following that apply:
- Students and/or parents know that programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills exist
  - There are enough programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills for all students who want them
  - The programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills are conveniently located
  - It is easy for students to travel to the programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills that are available
  - This community supports programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills

- f. There are enough teachers/staff to support the programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills
  - g. Programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - h. People value dual programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills
  - i. Other (specify)
31. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
32. Are you familiar with programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills? These are programs designed to promote effective teaching, learning, and assessment of secondary school mathematics.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 33 to 36)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
33. Generally, which group of students participates in programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
34. Programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills help students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
35. Please check all the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills exist
  - b. There are enough programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills for all students who want them

- c. The programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills are conveniently located
  - d. It is easy for students to travel to the programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills that are available
  - e. This community supports programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills
  - f. There are enough teachers/staff to support the programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills
  - g. Programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - h. People value dual programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills
  - i. Other (specify)
36. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
37. Are you familiar with School-College-Work programs or initiatives? In School-College-Work programs, faculty, teachers and administrators work to collaboratively provide learning opportunities for students to prepare them for successful transition from high school to post-secondary education training and the workforce.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 38 to 41)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
38. Generally, which group of students participates in School-College-Work programs?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
39. School-College-Work programs help students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school

- g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
40. Please check all the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that School-College-Work programs exist
  - b. There are enough School-College-Work programs for all students who want them
  - c. The School-College-Work programs are conveniently located
  - d. It is easy for students to travel to the School-College-Work programs that are available
  - e. This community supports School-College-Work programs
  - f. There are enough teachers/staff to support the School-College-Work programs
  - g. School-College-Work programs take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - h. People value School-College-Work programs
  - i. Other (specify)
41. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: School-College-Work programs help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
42. Are you familiar with Specialist High Skills Major programs or initiatives? These programs allow students to focus their secondary school studies in a specific area of interest while still meeting the requirements for graduation. Students complete eight to 12 courses in a specific skill area which count toward their credit requirement for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 43 to 46)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
43. Generally, which group of students participates in Specialist High Skills Major programs?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
44. Specialist High Skills Major programs help students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class



- d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
45. Please check all the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that Specialist High Skills Major programs exist
  - b. There are enough Specialist High Skills Major programs for all students who want them
  - c. The Specialist High Skills Major programs are conveniently located
  - d. It is easy for students to travel to the Specialist High Skills Major programs that are available
  - e. This community supports Specialist High Skills Major programs
  - f. There are enough teachers/staff to support the Specialist High Skills Major programs
  - g. Specialist High Skills Major programs take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - h. People value Specialist High Skills Major programs
  - i. Other (specify)
46. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Specialist High Skills Major programs help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
47. Are you familiar with dedicated student success personnel? These include Student Success Leaders, (school board-based education professionals at the supervisory officer level) and Student Success Teachers (school-based education professionals) whose responsibilities include ensuring the success of students who, because of the challenges of schooling, are at risk of leaving school early or failing to successfully complete high school.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of personnel (skip questions 48 to 51)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience with such personnel
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such personnel
48. Dedicated student success personnel are mainly responsible for?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
49. Dedicated student success personnel help students (choose as many as apply)

- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
50. Please check all the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that dedicated student success personnel exist
  - b. Dedicated student success personnel are available for all students who need them
  - c. This community supports dedicated student success personnel
  - d. There are enough teachers/staff to support dedicated student success personnel
  - e. People value dedicated student success personnel
  - f. Other (specify)
51. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Dedicated student success personnel help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
52. Are you familiar with programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition? These initiatives are designed to facilitate student's transition from elementary to secondary school.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 53 to 56)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
53. Generally, which group of students participates in programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
54. Programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition help students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school

- c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
55. Please check all the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition exist
  - b. There are enough programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition for all students who want them
  - c. The programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition are conveniently located
  - d. It is easy for students to travel to the programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition that are available
  - e. This community supports programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition
  - f. There are enough teachers/staff to support the programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition
  - g. Programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - h. People value programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition
  - i. Other (specify)
56. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
57. Are you familiar with alternative programs? Programs designed to re-engage students who have had trouble succeeding in traditional classrooms. The two most common programs are e-learning and co operative education.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of program (skip questions 58 to 61)
  - b. Yes, but I have never participated in such a program
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program
58. Generally, which group of students participates in alternative programs?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know

59. Alternative programs help students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
60. Please check all the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that alternative programs exist
  - b. There are enough alternative programs for all students who want them
  - c. The alternative programs are conveniently located
  - d. It is easy for students to travel to the alternative programs that are available
  - e. This community supports alternative programs
  - f. There are enough teachers/staff to support the alternative programs
  - g. Alternative programs take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - h. People value alternative programs
  - i. Other (specify)
61. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Alternative programs help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
62. Are you familiar with the program "Destination réussite"? This program is designed to facilitate student success in French-language schools. (*Note: This is for French-language students only*)
- a. No, I am not aware of this program (skip questions 63 to 66)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience with this program
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program
63. Generally, which group of students participates in Destination réussite?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
64. Destination réussite helps students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class

- d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
65. Please check all the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that destination réussite exists
  - b. The programs that are part of destination réussite are conveniently located
  - c. It is easy for students to travel to the programs that are part of destination réussite are available
  - d. This community supports destination réussite
  - e. There are enough teachers/staff to support Destination réussite
  - f. Destination réussite take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - g. People value destination réussite
  - h. Other (specify)
66. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Destination réussite helps students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
67. Are you familiar with the terms "Student Success Strategy" or "Learning to 18 Strategy"?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Don't know

The following questions are about your recent experience in secondary school. When answering these questions, think only about your current year in secondary school.

How often are the following statements true for you?

68. I paid attention to the teacher.
- a. Never
  - b. Rarely
  - c. Sometimes
  - d. Often
  - e. Always
69. I did as little work as possible, I just wanted to get by.
- a. Never
  - b. Rarely
  - c. Sometimes

- d. Often
  - e. Always
70. I got along with teachers.
- a. Never
  - b. Rarely
  - c. Sometimes
  - d. Often
  - e. Always
71. I was interested in what I was learning in class.
- a. Never
  - b. Rarely
  - c. Sometimes
  - d. Often
  - e. Always
72. I complete my homework on time.
- a. Never
  - b. Rarely
  - c. Sometimes
  - d. Often
  - e. Always

Do you “Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, or Strongly agree” with the following statements?

73. At my school, it is difficult to make new friends.
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
74. I like to participate in many school activities (for example, sports, clubs, plays).
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
75. Most of my teachers don't really care about me.
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
76. There are teachers or other adults in my school whom I could take to if I had a problem.
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree

- c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
77. School is often a waste of time.
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
78. I have friends at school whom I could talk to about personal things.
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
79. Most of my teachers really listen to what I have to say.
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
80. If I need extra help, I receive it from my teachers.
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
81. My school is a place where I feel like an outsider or like I am left out of things.
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree

The following questions are about you and your family.

82. Are you male or female?
- a. Male
  - b. Female
83. How old are you (in years)?
84. What type of school do you attend?
- a. Catholic
  - b. Public
85. What grade are you in?
- a. Grade 9
  - b. Grade 10
  - c. Grade 11
  - d. Grade 12
86. How many credits have you earned in secondary school?

87. The courses and programs that I am interested in are
- a. always available
  - b. sometimes available
  - c. rarely available
  - d. never available
88. Have you successfully completed the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) or course (OSSLC)?
89. Have you attended a secondary school outside of Ontario?
- a. Yes (skip the next question)
  - b. No
90. In what grade did you start secondary school in Ontario?
- a. Grade 9
  - b. Grade 10
  - c. Grade 11
  - d. Grade 12
  - e. Other (specify)
91. In which country were you born?
- a. Canada
  - b. Other (specify)
  - c. Don't know
92. In which country was your mother born?
- a. Canada
  - b. Other (specify)
  - c. Don't know
93. In which country was your father born?
- a. Canada
  - b. Other (specify)
  - c. Don't know
94. What language do you most often speak at home?
- a. English
  - b. French
  - c. Other (specify)

Thank you for participating in the survey!



**ONTARIO STUDENT SUCCESS/LEARNING TO 18 STRATEGY**

Teacher Survey

The following questions are about your experience with secondary schools in Ontario.  
*Note: Questions 3 to 66 pertain to specific components of the SS/L18 Strategy. These could be randomized in a way that each respondent answers only a subset of the questions. Piloting of the questionnaire will be required to determine the optimal number of questions to retain.*

1. In your opinion, has anything changed in the last four years to help secondary school students succeed?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Don't know
2. Are you familiar with apprenticeship programs or initiatives? Apprenticeships give high school students the opportunity to learn a trade or craft under the supervision of an experienced trades or crafts person.
  - a. No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 3 to 6)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
3. Generally, which group of students participates in apprenticeship programs?
  - a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
4. Apprenticeship programs help students (choose as many as apply)
  - a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
5. Please check all of the following that apply:
  - a. Students and/or parents know that apprenticeship programs exist
  - b. There are enough apprenticeship programs for all students who want them
  - c. The apprenticeship programs are conveniently located
  - d. It is easy for students to travel to the apprenticeship programs that are available

- e. This community supports apprenticeship programs
  - f. There are enough teachers/staff to support the apprenticeship programs
  - g. Apprenticeship programs take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - h. People value apprenticeship programs
  - i. Other (specify)
6. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement:  
Apprenticeship programs or initiatives help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
7. Are you familiar with cooperative education programs? Cooperative education is a planned learning experience for which credits are earned that integrates classroom and workplace learning.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of program (skip questions 8 to 11)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
8. Generally, which group of students participates in Cooperative education programs?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
9. Cooperative education programs help students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
10. Please check all of the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that cooperative education programs exist
  - b. There are enough cooperative education programs for all students who want them
  - c. The cooperative education programs are conveniently located
  - d. It is easy for students to travel to the cooperative education programs that are available
  - e. This community supports cooperative education programs

- f. There are enough teachers/staff to support the cooperative education programs
  - g. Cooperative education programs take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - h. People value cooperative education programs
  - i. Other (specify)
11. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Cooperative education programs help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
12. Are you familiar with credit recovery programs or initiatives? Credit Recovery allows students to recoup credits for an Ontario Ministry of Education approved course that the student previously failed within the past two years. Students undertake only those sections and learning objectives of a course for which successful completion was not previously satisfied.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 13 to 16)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
13. Generally, which group of students participates in Credit recovery programs?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
14. Credit recovery programs help students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
15. Please check all of the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that credit recovery programs exist
  - b. There are enough credit recovery programs for all students who want them
  - c. This community supports credit recovery programs
  - d. There are enough teachers/staff to support the credit recovery programs

- e. Credit recovery programs take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - f. People value credit recovery programs
  - g. Other (specify)
16. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Credit recovery programs help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
17. Are you familiar with credit rescue programs or initiatives? Credit rescue programs are designed to assist students who are in danger of failing a course in which they are presently enrolled.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 18 to 21)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
18. Generally, which group of students participates in Credit rescue programs?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
19. Credit rescue programs help students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
20. Please check all of the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that credit rescue programs exists
  - b. There are enough credit rescue programs for all students who want them
  - c. This community supports credit rescue programs
  - d. There are enough teachers/staff to support the credit rescue programs
  - e. Credit rescue programs take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - f. People value credit rescue programs
  - g. Other (specify)

21. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Credit rescue programs help students become more successful.
- Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
22. Are you familiar with dual credit programs? The dual credit program allows high school students to earn a number of credits which simultaneously count toward the OSSD and a postsecondary diploma, postsecondary degree or apprenticeship certification.
- No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 23 to 26)
  - Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
23. Generally, which group of students participates in Dual credit programs?
- Gifted students
  - Average students
  - Students who struggle in school
  - All students
  - Don't know
24. Dual credit programs help students (choose as many as apply)
- Get course credits
  - Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - Better understand the material taught in class
  - Gain work-related skills
  - Gain self-confidence
  - Maintain their interest in school
  - Prepare for courses in the future
  - Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - Other (specify)
25. Please check all of the following that apply:
- Students and/or parents know that dual credit programs exist
  - There are enough dual credit programs for all students who want them
  - The dual credit programs are conveniently located
  - It is easy for students to travel to the dual credit programs that are available
  - This community supports dual credit programs
  - There are enough teachers/staff to support the dual credit programs
  - Dual credit programs take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - People value dual credit programs
  - Other (specify)
26. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Dual credit programs help students become more successful.

- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
27. Are you familiar with programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills? These programs focus on continued instruction in literacy for students in Grades 7-12. This is a collaborative approach that emphasizes cross curriculum literacy instruction strategies.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 28 to 31)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
28. Generally, which group of students participates programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
29. Programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills help students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
30. Please check all of the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills exist
  - b. There are enough programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills for all students who want them
  - c. The programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills are conveniently located
  - d. It is easy for students to travel to the programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills that are available
  - e. This community supports programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills
  - f. There are enough teachers/staff to support the programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills

- g. Programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - h. People value dual programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills
  - i. Other (specify)
31. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Programs or initiatives to improve literacy skills help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
32. Are you familiar with programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills? These are programs designed to promote effective teaching, learning, and assessment of secondary school mathematics.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 33 to 36)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
33. Generally, which group of students participates in programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
34. Programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills help students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
35. Please check all of the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills exist
  - b. There are enough programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills for all students who want them
  - c. The programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills are conveniently located

- d. It is easy for students to travel to the programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills that are available
  - e. This community supports programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills
  - f. There are enough teachers/staff to support the programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills
  - g. Programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - h. People value dual programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills
  - i. Other (specify)
36. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Programs or initiatives to improve numeracy (math) skills help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
37. Are you familiar with School-College-Work programs or initiatives? In School-College-Work programs, faculty, teachers and administrators work to collaboratively provide learning opportunities for students to prepare them for successful transition from high school to post-secondary education training and the workforce.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 38 to 41)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
38. Generally, which group of students participates in School-College-Work programs?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
39. School-College-Work programs help students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training



- i. Other (specify)
- 40. Please check all of the following that apply:
  - a. Students and/or parents know that School-College-Work programs exist
  - b. There are enough School-College-Work programs for all students who want them
  - c. The School-College-Work programs are conveniently located
  - d. It is easy for students to travel to the School-College-Work programs that are available
  - e. This community supports School-College-Work programs
  - f. There are enough teachers/staff to support the School-College-Work programs
  - g. School-College-Work programs take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - h. People value School-College-Work programs
  - i. Other (specify)
- 41. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: School-College-Work programs help students become more successful.
  - a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
- 42. Are you familiar with Specialist High Skills Major programs or initiatives? These programs allow students to focus their secondary school studies in a specific area of interest while still meeting the requirements for graduation. Students complete eight to 12 courses in a specific skill area which count toward their credit requirement for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma.
  - a. No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 43 to 46)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
- 43. Generally, which group of students participates in Specialist High Skills Major programs?
  - a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
- 44. Specialist High Skills Major programs help students (choose as many as apply)
  - a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence

- f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
45. Please check all of the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that Specialist High Skills Major programs exist
  - b. There are enough Specialist High Skills Major programs for all students who want them
  - c. The Specialist High Skills Major programs are conveniently located
  - d. It is easy for students to travel to the Specialist High Skills Major programs that are available
  - e. This community supports Specialist High Skills Major programs
  - f. There are enough teachers/staff to support the Specialist High Skills Major programs
  - g. Specialist High Skills Major programs take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - h. People value Specialist High Skills Major programs
  - i. Other (specify)
46. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Specialist High Skills Major programs help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
47. Are you familiar with dedicated student success personnel? These include Student Success Leaders, (school board-based education professionals at the supervisory officer level) and Student Success Teachers (school-based education professionals) whose responsibilities include ensuring the success of students who, because of the challenges of schooling, are at risk of leaving school early or failing to successfully complete high school.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of personnel (skip questions 48 to 51)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience with such personnel
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such personnel
48. Dedicated student success personnel are mainly responsible for?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
49. Dedicated student success personnel help students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school

- c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
50. Please check all of the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that dedicated student success personnel exist
  - b. Dedicated student success personnel are available for all students who need them
  - c. This community supports dedicated student success personnel
  - d. There are enough teachers/staff to support dedicated student success personnel
  - e. People value dedicated student success personnel
  - f. Other (specify)
51. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Dedicated student success personnel help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
52. Are you familiar with programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition? These initiatives are designed to facilitate student's transition from elementary to secondary school.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of program or initiative (skip questions 53 to 56)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience in such a program or initiative
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program or initiative
53. Generally, which group of students participates in programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
54. Programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition help students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills

- e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
55. Please check all of the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition exist
  - b. There are enough programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition for all students who want them
  - c. The programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition are conveniently located
  - d. It is easy for students to travel to the programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition that are available
  - e. This community supports programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition
  - f. There are enough teachers/staff to support the programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition
  - g. Programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - h. People value programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition
  - i. Other (specify)
56. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Programs or initiatives to help the Grade 8 to 9 transition help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
57. Are you familiar with alternative programs? Programs designed to re-engage students who have had trouble succeeding in traditional classrooms. The two most common programs are e-learning and co operative education.
- a. No, I am not aware of this type of program (skip questions 58 to 61)
  - b. Yes, but I have never participated in such a program
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program
58. Generally, which group of students participates in alternative programs?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
59. Alternative programs help students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits

- b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence
  - f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
60. Please check all of the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that alternative programs exist
  - b. There are enough alternative programs for all students who want them
  - c. The alternative programs are conveniently located
  - d. It is easy for students to travel to the alternative programs that are available
  - e. This community supports alternative programs
  - f. There are enough teachers/staff to support the alternative programs
  - g. Alternative programs take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - h. People value alternative programs
  - i. Other (specify)
61. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Alternative programs help students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
62. Are you familiar with the program "Destination réussite"? This program is designed to facilitate student success in French-language schools. (*Note: This is for French-language teachers only*)
- a. No, I am not aware of this program (skip questions 63 to 66)
  - b. Yes, but I have no direct experience with this program
  - c. Yes, I have direct experience with such a program
63. Generally, which group of students participates in Destination réussite?
- a. Gifted students
  - b. Average students
  - c. Students who struggle in school
  - d. All students
  - e. Don't know
64. Destination réussite helps students (choose as many as apply)
- a. Get course credits
  - b. Improve their chances of graduate from secondary school
  - c. Better understand the material taught in class
  - d. Gain work-related skills
  - e. Gain self-confidence

- f. Maintain their interest in school
  - g. Prepare for courses in the future
  - h. Prepare students for post-secondary education and training
  - i. Other (specify)
65. Please check all of the following that apply:
- a. Students and/or parents know that destination réussite exists
  - b. The programs that are part of destination réussite are conveniently located
  - c. It is easy for students to travel to the programs that are part of destination réussite are available
  - d. This community supports destination réussite
  - e. There are enough teachers/staff to support Destination réussite
  - f. Destination réussite take up the right amount of a student's valuable time
  - g. People value destination réussite
  - h. Other (specify)
66. To what extent do you agree or disagree in the following statement: Destination réussite helps students become more successful.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
67. Are you familiar with the terms "Student Success Strategy" or "Learning to 18 Strategy"?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Don't know
68. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Accountability measures (such as monitoring, tracking, reporting, and planning) are in place in the school.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
69. To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statement: Accountability measures (such as monitoring, tracking, reporting, and planning) are being used by the school in order to drive improvement.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
70. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Capacity to implement the Student Success / Learning to 18 Strategy is build into the school.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree

- c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
71. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Does your school act upon student-level data and information to intervene with and support students?
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
72. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Your school is making efforts to align resources and practices to the goals of the Student Success / Learning to 18 Strategy.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
73. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Initiatives that are having little impact on student success are being replaced by other initiatives having more impact.
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Disagree
  - d. Strongly disagree
74. Are you familiar with the terms “Student Success Strategy” or “Learning to 18 Strategy”?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Don’t know

The following questions are about you.

75. Are you male or female?
- a. Male
  - b. Female
76. How old are you (in years)?
77. In which country were you born?
- a. Canada
  - b. Other (specify)
  - c. Don’t know
78. What language do you most often speak at home?
- a. English
  - b. French
  - c. Other (specify)

79. In what type of school are you employed?
- a. Catholic
  - b. Public
80. What is your position in the school?
- a. Teacher
  - b. Student Success Teacher
  - c. Guidance and/or career counselor (skip next 2 questions)
  - d. Vice-principal (skip next 2 questions)
  - e. Principal (skip next 2 questions)
  - f. Other (specify) (skip next 2 questions)
81. Which subject do you teach (choose all that apply)?
- a. Languages (including English, French and other languages)
  - b. Social sciences (including History, Geography, Family Studies, Politics, Religion, Humanities, Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology, etc)
  - c. Sciences & Technology (including Biology, Health, Physics, Chemistry, Computer sciences, Nutrition, etc.)
  - d. Math
  - e. Art (including Music, Drama, Dance, Visual Arts, Design, Fashion, etc.)
  - f. Physical education
  - g. Law
  - h. Administration (including Business, Accounting, Economics, etc.)
  - i. Marketing & Retailing
  - j. Trades
  - k. Career planning
82. Which grade do you teach (choose all that apply)?
- a. Grade 9
  - b. Grade 10
  - c. Grade 11
  - d. Grade 12
83. How many years experience do you have in the Ontario secondary school system?

Thank you for participating in the survey!



### APPENDIX I: Site visits plan for interviews and focus groups

Geographic region	School Board	School	Located in	size
<b>Southwest and Central</b>	Waterloo Region District School Board	Preston High School	Cambridge	1338
	Greater Essex District School Board	Leamington District Secondary School	Leamington	905
	Thames Valley District School Board	H. B. Beal Secondary School	London	1908
	Thames Valley District School Board	Ingersoll District Collegiate Institute	Ingersoll	995
	Catholic District School Board #38 (London)	Catholic Central High School	London	1204
	Bluewater DSB	Saugeen District Secondary School	Port Elgin	871
	Bruce Grey Catholic DSB	Sacred Heart High School	Walkerton	763
	Grand Erie DSB	Simcoe Composite School	Simcoe	982
	Simcoe DSB	Twin Lakes Secondary School	Orillia	1113
	Simcoe Muskoka DSB	Patrick Fogarty Secondary School	Orillia	823
<b>Northern Ontario</b>	Keewatin Patricia DSB	Beaver Brae Secondary School	Kenora	929
	Keewatin Patricia	Ignace	Ignace	77
	Kenora Catholic DSB	St. Thomas Aquinas High School	Kenora	359
	Lakehead DSB	Hammarkjold High School	Thunder Bay	1261
	DSB Ontario Northeast	Timiskaming District Secondary School	New Liskeard	885
	Rainbow DSB	Lasalle Secondary School	Sudbury	1121
	Limestone DSB	Loyalist Collegiate and Vocational Institute	Kingston	742
<b>Eastern Ontario</b>	Algonquin and Lakeshore CDSB	Regiopolis/Notre-Dame Catholic High School	Kingston	1073
	Kawartha-Pine Ridge DSB	Peterborough Collegiate and Vocational School	Peterborough	981
	Ottawa-Carleton DSB	Ottawa Technical Learning Centre	Ottawa	620
		Earl of March S.S.	Kanata	1202
	Ottawa Catholic DSB	Notre Dame High School	Ottawa	669
	Renfrew DSB	Renfrew Collegiate Institute	Renfrew	642
	Trillium Lakelands DSB	Haliburton Highlands Secondary School	Haliburton	762
	Upper Canada DSB	Brockville Collegiate Institute	Brockville	520
	Peterborough Northumberland Victoria and Clarington CDSB	St. Mary's Secondary School	Cobourg	1074
<b>GTA and Niagara</b>				
Group 1	Toronto DSB	Central Technical School	Toronto	1971
		York Memorial Collegiate Institute	Toronto	1035
		Sir Robert Borden Business and	Toronto	751

		Technical Institute		
		Westview Centennial Secondary School	Toronto	1276
		Central Etobicoke H. S.	Toronto	396
	Toronto Catholic	Bishop Marrocco/Thomas Merton Catholic Secondary School	Toronto	729
		Mary Ward Catholic S.S.	Toronto	1171
Group 2	Peel DSB	Central Peel S. S.	Brampton	1372
		Port Credit S. S.	Mississauga	1077
	Dufferin Peel CDSB	Loyola Catholic Secondary School	Mississauga	1488
	DSB Niagara	Port Colborne High School	Port Colborne	626
	Hamilton Wentworth DSB	Delta Secondary School	Hamilton	1128
	Halton DSB	E.C. Drury High School	Milton	736
	Halton CDSB	St. Thomas Aquinas	Oakville	856
Group 3	York Region DSB	Huron Heights Secondary School	Newmarket	1874
		Keswick High School	Keswick	1586
	York Catholic DSB	Brother Andre Catholic H.S.	Markham	1256
	Durham DSB	Ajax High School	Ajax	1412
	Durham Catholic DSB	Msgr. Paul Dwyer Catholic S.S.	Oshawa	1301
<b>French-language school boards</b>	<b>School Board</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Located in</b>	<b>size</b>
<b>Northern Ontario</b>	CSD du Grand Nord del'Ontario	École secondaire Macdonald-Cartier	Sudbury	357
	CSDC des Grandes Rivières	École secondaire Theriault	Timmins	957
	CSDC des Aoures boréales	École secondaire catholique de La Vérendrye	Thunder Bay	67
	CSD des écoles catholiques du Sud-Ouest	École secondaire catholique Monseigneur-Bruyère	London	150
	CSD du Centre Sud-Ouest	École secondaire Étienne Brulé	North York (Toronto)	370
	CSDC du Centre-Est de l'Ontario	École secondaire catholique Garneau	Gloucester	751

## APPENDIX J: Interview and Focus Group Guides

### ONTARIO STUDENT SUCCESS/LEARNING TO 18 STRATEGY

#### Interview Schedule – Key School Board and School Informants

*Notes for Interviewers: CCL employs semi-structured interviews to collect information from a variety of respondents. Semi-structured interviews are conversational, two-way communications. Semi-structured interviews are guided by a set of questions prepared in advance that provide a framework for the interview. The interview guide does not contain all of the questions. Some questions are created during the interview, allowing both the interviewer the flexibility to probe for details or discuss issues. The annotations below are designed to alert you to various issues that are likely to arise or that we would like you to consider, if the circumstances warrant. Thank you.*

1. Please describe briefly the nature of your responsibilities.
2. Please describe what the term *Student Success* or *Learning to 18?* means to you.
3. Please describe the changes that have been made during the last four years to help secondary school students (in this school or school board) succeed.

*While the following statements are likely to characterize the responses, please be alert to other formulations:*

- *The changes are primarily about paying attention to what is happening to individual students, and making sure they don't fall between the cracks*
- *The changes are primarily about new program opportunities like the specialist high skills major and dual credit programs*
- *The changes are primarily about ensuring that students have appropriate and relevant learning opportunities, from differentiated instruction in traditional subjects to cooperative education and other learning opportunities*
- *The changes are about making secondary schools better places to learn for a wider range of students*
- *The changes are just another example of government policy change, and won't make much difference at the school level.*

4. Please describe how these changes have been received.

*Respondents are likely to describe changes from the frame of reference of one particular audience (staff, students, parents, community partners such as employers and cooperative education placements). You might probe to ask them if there have been any other reactions to the proposed changes.*

5. Describe the main benefits of these changes.

*Probe for concrete examples of benefits.*

6. Please describe those practices, elements or changes that have proven to be most successful in promoting student success.

7. Please describe any barriers to increased student success that have been encountered during the past four years and how these barriers been addressed.

*If the respondent is a person working at the School Board level personnel, please be attentive to their comments about the engagement of the trustees, and of key partners such as the teachers' federations and principals' associations.*

8. Describe the accountability measures (such as monitoring, tracking, reporting and planning) have been established in this school (or this school boards) and how they are being used by this school (or this school board) to facilitate improvement.

8. Describe how the capacity to implement changes aimed at helping secondary school students succeed has been developed in this school (or this school board)?

9. Describe how this school (or school board) uses student (or school-level) data and information to intervene with and support students.

Probe: Are data available for your school on such questions as graduation rate and credit accumulation?

10. Describe how this school (or this school board) aligns resources and practices to the goals of the Ministry's Student Success Learning to 18 Strategy.

Probe: Is there any initiative or strategy that you think has been particularly successful? If so, for which students has it been successful? Do you have any thoughts about why?

11. Please describe any instances where an initiative that was having little impact on student success was replaced by other initiatives that had greater impact.

12. Depending upon whether the respondent is school board or school based, ask:

- (School Board) Describe the contributions of student success leaders to student success in this school board?
- (School Based) Describe the contributions of student success teachers to student success in this school?

Describe the role of professional development.

Please be attentive to the groups of persons to whom the professional development has been provided: Student success teachers; Principals; Guidance counsellors; Teachers who are not members of the student success team; Other school level staff; Other board level staff

14. How effective was the professional development that you received?
15. Describe the necessary ingredients to ensure the delivery of technological education in secondary schools.
16. Describe the impact of the SS/L18 strategy on student timetabling.
17. For French-language respondents: Describe the contribution of SS/L18 to student retention and recruitment in the French-language system.
18. Describe anything that has been particularly surprising, or disappointing about initiatives implemented in the last four years.
19. Describe any improvements that you would suggest be made to ensure greater secondary student success.
20. One last question, is there something we should have asked and did not? In other words, is there a question that you would have liked us to ask that we did not? If so, please feel free to ask that question and to provide the answer that you think most appropriate?

Thank you for your cooperation!

## **ONTARIO STUDENT SUCCESS/LEARNING TO 18 STRATEGY:** **STAGE 2 EVALUATION**

### Focus Group Guide – Students

#### Introduction

*Moderator will introduce herself or himself, explain the process and ask the participants to introduce themselves (mostly for moderator's and transcribers' benefit). As part of this introduction and to break the ice, the participants will be asked to say something that no one else there is likely to know about them.*

*Moderator will provide participants with the list of initiatives.*

1. We would like to get your impressions of some programs and initiatives that schools are using to help students succeed.

- First, could you please describe the changes that have been made during the last four years to help secondary school students succeed in your school?
  - Please refer to the list of initiatives in front of you. Which of these initiatives are you familiar with? Please put a mark next to the name of the initiative on your list.
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Apprenticeship programs</li> <li>▪ Cooperative Education</li> <li>▪ Credit Recovery</li> <li>▪ Credit Rescue</li> <li>▪ Dual Credit programs with colleges or apprenticeships</li> <li>▪ Programs for literacy improvements</li> <li>▪ Programs for math improvements</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School-College-Work*</li> <li>▪ Specialist High Skills Major programs</li> <li>▪ Student Success Teachers &amp; Teams</li> <li>▪ Grade 8-9 transition initiatives</li> <li>▪ Alternative programs</li> <li>▪ Renewal of Technology Education</li> <li>▪ Destination réussite (<i>French only</i>)</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

\* In School-College-Work programs, faculty, teachers and administrators work to collaboratively provide learning opportunities for students to prepare them for successful transition from high school to post-secondary education, training and the workforce.

For each initiatives, ask the following questions:

- How did you become familiar with this initiative?

*Moderator can probe things such as advertisements (TV, flyers, posters etc), own child participated, other known child participated, etc.*

- Describe the purpose of [name the initiative on the list].
- What kinds of students take part in [name the initiative on the list]?
- Describe how [name the initiative on the list] work.

- Describe how [name the initiative on the list] is working well for students in your secondary school.
- Describe how [name the initiative on the list] could been improved to increase student success in your secondary school.
- Describe what has been particularly surprising, or disappointing about [name the initiative on the list] or worked in ways other than you might have anticipated.

2. We would like to get your impressions about student success.

*Moderator will provide each participant with a piece of paper.*

- Please write your description of what the terms *student success* or *learning to 18* mean to you.

When participants are done writing their definitions, the moderator will encourage them to share their definitions with the group.

- Could you describe what more could be done to improve student success in your secondary school?

#### Closing comments

- One last question, is there something you would like us to know about your child's school experience that we haven't asked?
- Do you have any other comments?

Thank you for your cooperation!

## ONTARIO STUDENT SUCCESS/LEARNING TO 18 STRATEGY: STAGE 2 EVALUATION

### Focus Group Guide – Parents

#### Introduction

*Moderator will introduce herself or himself, explain the process and ask the participants to introduce themselves (mostly for moderator's and transcribers' benefit). As part of this introduction and to break the ice, the participants will be asked to say something that no one else there is likely to know about them.*

*Moderator will ask the following background questions about parent's children in secondary school:*

1. How long has your child been in secondary school?
2. How many secondary schools has your child attended?
3. Are there teachers/counsellors/other adults in the school who notice how well your child is doing or who take an active interest in the success of your child?

*Moderator can probe for specific examples.*

*Moderator will provide participants with the list of initiatives.*

4. We would like to get your impressions of some programs and initiatives that schools are using to help students succeed.

- First, could you please describe the changes that have been made during the last four years to help secondary school students succeed in your child's school?
  - Please refer to the list of initiatives in front of you. Which of these initiatives are you familiar with? Please put a mark next to the name of the initiative on your list.
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Apprenticeship programs</li> <li>▪ Cooperative Education</li> <li>▪ Credit Recovery</li> <li>▪ Credit Rescue</li> <li>▪ Dual Credit programs with colleges or apprenticeships</li> <li>▪ Programs for literacy improvements</li> <li>▪ Programs for math improvements</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School-College-Work*</li> <li>▪ Specialist High Skills Major programs</li> <li>▪ Student Success Teachers &amp; Teams</li> <li>▪ Grade 8-9 transition initiatives</li> <li>▪ Alternative programs</li> <li>▪ Renewal of Technology Education</li> <li>▪ Destination réussite (<i>French only</i>)</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

\* In School-College-Work programs, faculty, teachers and administrators work to collaboratively provide learning opportunities for students to prepare them for successful transition from high school to post-secondary education, training and the workforce.

For each initiatives, ask the following questions:



- How did you become familiar with this initiative?

*Moderator can probe things such as advertisements (TV, flyers, posters etc), own child participated, other known child participated, etc.*

- Describe the purpose of [name the initiative on the list].
- What kinds of students take part in [name the initiative on the list]?
- Describe how [name the initiative on the list] work.
- Describe how [name the initiative on the list] is working well for students in this secondary school.
- Describe how [name the initiative on the list] could be improved to increase student success in your child's secondary school.
- Describe what has been particularly surprising, or disappointing about [name the initiative on the list] or worked in ways other than you might have anticipated.

5. We would like to get your impressions about student success.

*Moderator will provide each participant with a piece of paper.*

- Please write your description of what the terms *student success* or *learning to 18* mean to you.

When participants are done writing their definitions, the moderator will encourage them to share their definitions with the group.

- Could you describe what more could be done to improve student success in your child's secondary school?

#### Closing comments

- One last question, is there something you would like us to know about your child's school experience that we haven't asked?
- Do you have any other comments?

Thank you for your cooperation!