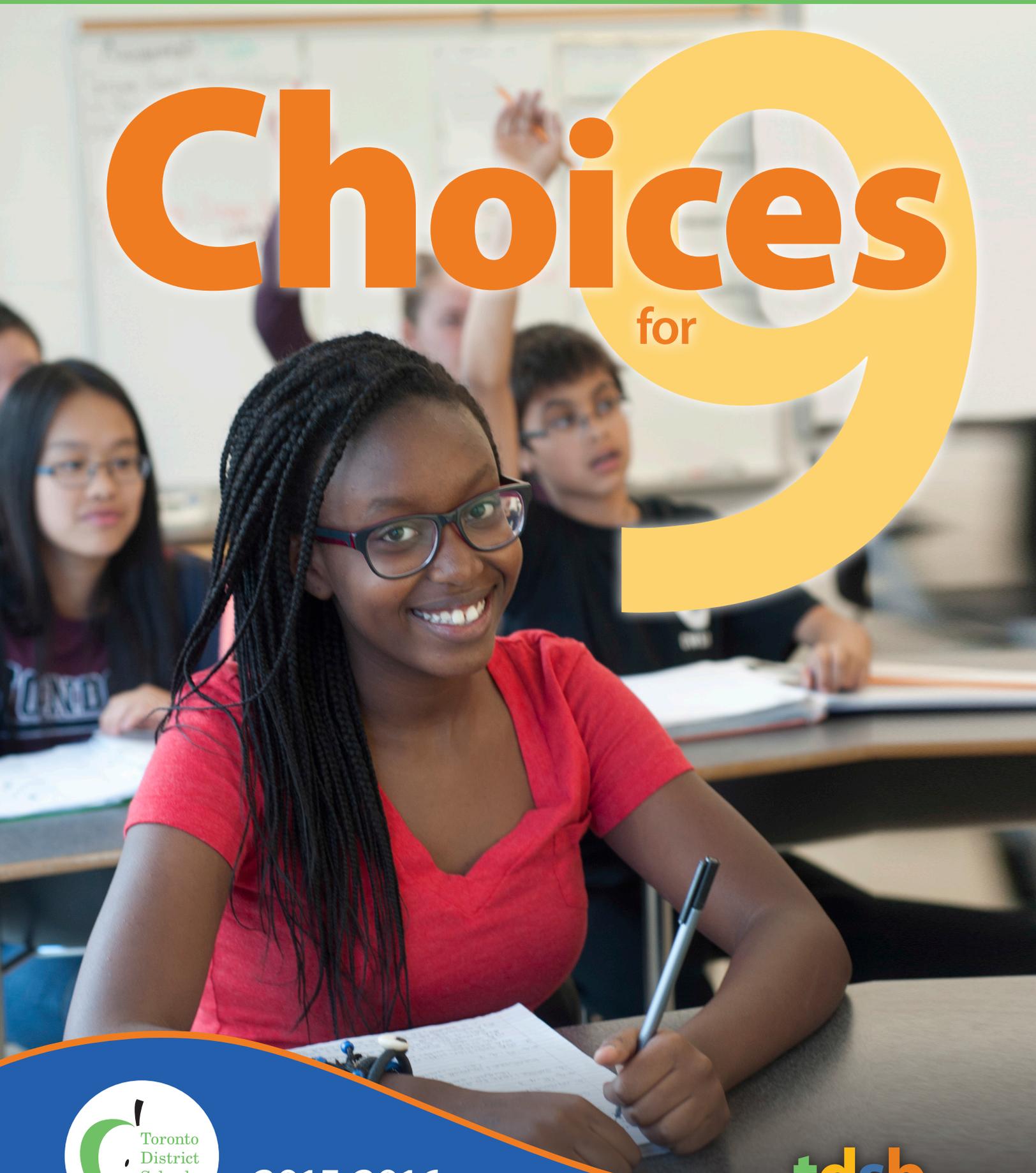


A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS, PARENTS and GUARDIANS

# Choices

for



2015-2016

[tdsb.on.ca](http://tdsb.on.ca)

# From the Director

Dear Student,

Grade 8 is a pivotal year for you as a student. It is the year you start to think about your future, and the steps you will take to get there. The decisions you make this year will influence your journey through high school and beyond.



It is important to explore all the opportunities available to you next year. Classroom instruction and other school programs and activities will teach you about career planning that will help you achieve your personal goals and become a successful member of society. There are five main pathways after high school available for you to consider: apprenticeship training, college, community living, university and the workplace. Good planning, combined with interest and awareness, will ensure you have the right tools and flexibility you need for a successful future.

This guide – Choices for 9 – is full of information about the wide range of learning opportunities available to you at the Toronto District School Board. Talk about these options with your parents/guardians, teachers and guidance counsellors who are all there to help you plan an exciting and rewarding future.

Have a wonderful year and enjoy the journey.

Donna Quan  
Director of Education



# Moving to Secondary School

## Welcome to your future!

What you can expect as you unfold the following pages are answers to a number of questions you may have about the Grade 9 program at the TDSB, course types, and earning a secondary school diploma. We have also provided website addresses for additional information you may be curious about. You will be introduced to **myBlueprint** and a course selection sheet all designed to assist in the educational planning that is required to make informed decisions about your Grade 9 program.

We hope this guide together with *Choices: Course Selection and Planning Guide 2015*, your teacher and your parents/guardians, will support you in making some important life decisions. You can expect to receive *Choices 2015* in January when you formally begin your course selection process.

## Where do I get information to prepare for secondary school?

### Your Grade 8 Year

#### September 2014

- Curriculum/Meet-the-Teacher nights

#### October / November 2014

- Secondary School information evenings start
- Information re: Promotion, Transfer, Retention (PTR) and *Choices for 9* reviewed

#### December 2014

- Parent/Teacher interviews
- Secondary School information evenings continue

#### January 2015

- Secondary School information evenings continue
- Choices 2015 received

#### February 2015

- Optional Attendance (OA) requests due
- Confirmation of OA requests received

#### March / April 2015

- Grade 9 course selection sheets submitted to secondary schools
- Parent/Teacher interviews

#### May / June 2015

- Promotion, Transfer, Retention (PTR) decisions made

#### August 2015

- Confirmation of registration received

#### September 2015

- Orientation Program information evenings for Grade 9 parents

This is a general overview for the academic year. Individual schools may vary.

# How do I earn a secondary school diploma?

## Diploma Requirements

An Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) requires the completion of:

- a minimum of 30 credits, including 18 compulsory and 12 optional
- 40 hours of community involvement activities
- the literacy requirement

The 18 compulsory credits are:

- 4 English, one per grade level
- 1 French as a Second Language
- 3 Mathematics, at least one in Grade 11 or 12
- 2 Science
  - 1 Canadian Geography
  - 1 Canadian History
- 1 Arts (dance, drama, media, music, visual arts)
- 1 Health and Physical Education
- 0.5 Civics
- 0.5 Career Studies

Plus one credit from each of the following groups:

**Group 1:** additional credit in English  
**or** a French as a Second Language\*  
**or** a third language  
**or** Social Sciences and the Humanities  
**or** Canadian and World Studies  
**or** Guidance and Career Education  
**or** Cooperative Education\*

**Group 2:** additional credit in Business Studies  
**or** a French as a Second Language\*  
**or** Health and Physical Education  
**or** the Arts  
**or** Cooperative Education\*

**Group 3:** a Grade 11 or 12 Science credit  
**or** a French as a Second Language\*  
**or** Technological Education  
**or** Computer Studies  
**or** Cooperative Education\*

*\* A maximum of two credits in Cooperative Education and two credits in French can count as compulsories*

## Did you know?

Toronto District School Board's **Promotion, Transfer and Retention** procedure provides schools with a consistent method for the transition of students from elementary school (Grade 8) to secondary school (Grade 9).

Read the full procedure at [www.tdsb.on.ca/aboutus](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/aboutus) under Policies, Procedures & Forms and select PR543.



# Volunteer Hours

**Students are required to complete a minimum of 40 hours of mandatory community involvement before graduation.**

- Secondary school staff will discuss appropriate types of community involvement activities and projects with students and may offer suggestions, but the selection and management of the involvement is to be directed by the student.
- The TDSB publishes a list of approved and non-approved activities. Students choosing an activity not on the approved list must apply for permission in writing to the school Principal.
- Activities may take place inside or outside the school. If inside, activities may not be part of a credit program.
- The student may not displace a worker who would normally have been paid to perform the same function or receive pay.
- Community involvement may begin in the summer after Grade 8.
- An indication of completion will be entered on the student's Ontario Student Transcript when the 40 hours have been submitted and approved.

Learn more about community involvement at [www.tdsb.on.ca/highschool](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/highschool)  
For volunteer opportunities visit [www.volunteertoronto.ca](http://www.volunteertoronto.ca)

## Community Involvement FAQs:

### What is community involvement?

- A volunteer activity – not for pay or credit
- A constructive contribution to the community

### Why does the Ministry of Education mandate it?

- Reinforces civic responsibility
- Strengthens the community
- Enhances self-confidence and self-image
- Offers networking for future employment
- Provides an experience for students to include in their portfolios

### When must students complete it?

- Any time during the secondary school program after the student has graduated Grade 8
- Outside class hours, for example:
  - During lunch breaks
  - In the evening
  - On weekends
  - During school breaks
  - During summer months



# Where can I find more information?

Valuable information is also available on the TDSB website on school profiles. Profiles include an overview of the school, special features, programs, and test results published by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). After school, access to computers is available through public libraries so you and your parents/guardians can research together. Hard copies of the course charts can also be requested from an individual school.

[www.tdsb.on.ca/findyourschool](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/findyourschool)

# How do I apply for optional attendance?

Provided you meet the criteria and the school has space, you may decide to apply to attend a specialized program or school of your choice. Some schools require a supplementary application and some have highly specific requirements for admission. You may apply to two regular schools beyond your home school and two specialized schools or programs. Your counsellor and your parents/guardians can help you determine if your choice is in line with the educational plans that you have been working towards.

**Optional Attendance Forms** are available from your current school. Details about this policy are available at [www.tdsb.on.ca/findyourschool/optionalattendance](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/findyourschool/optionalattendance)

If you choose to apply for optional attendance you should know:

- You will be responsible for your own transportation;
- You may only apply to two regular and two specialized schools or programs;
- You may not apply to a school deemed closed. A list of closed schools is produced by mid-January;
- A school deemed limited that receives more applications than it has space will run a lottery to determine who can attend; and,
- Once you accept an offer of admission to a specialized school or program it becomes your home school and you are expected to remain there until graduation.

## Remember!

If you accept an offer of admission and you change your mind, you may not be able to access your local/home school, especially if it is deemed a closed or limited school.

If you change your mind and wish to return to your local/home school, you will need to apply through optional attendance procedures.

***This is an important consideration!***

## Important Dates:

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>January 30</b>  | Optional attendance forms due at secondary school.                                      |
| <b>February 13</b> | Deadline for parents/guardians to be informed of the status of the application request. |
| <b>February 25</b> | Course selection sheets due at elementary schools.                                      |
| <b>February 27</b> | Course selection sheets due at secondary schools.                                       |

# What else do I need to know?

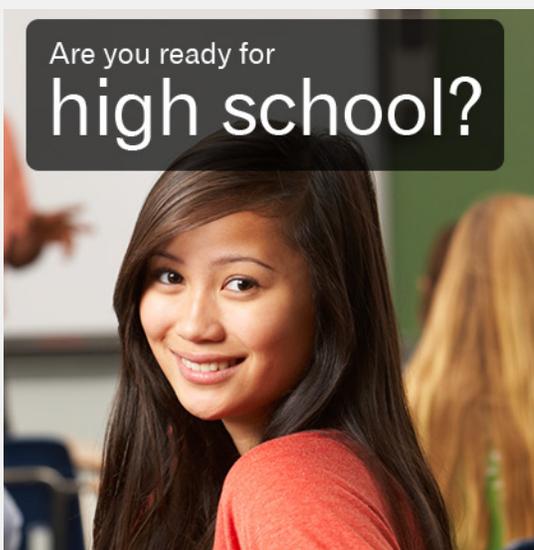
Information from your Individual Pathways Plan (IPP), recommendations from an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) if it applies to you, your learning style, where your friends go, and your interests outside of school — all play a part in your academic future. Explore your options, become informed and follow your heart. To get the most from your high school experience, commit to your learning, try new things, be open to making mistakes and embrace them as opportunities to learn.

It is especially important for parents/guardians of Grade 8 students deemed exceptional to attend the IPRC review meeting in order to make appropriate decisions about Grade 9 and to obtain information about special school programs that may be available. Special Education staff work together with families to advise them on the most appropriate program to meet the needs of students and to plan a pathway towards the successful completion of secondary school.

**and finally...** You are engaged when your courses provide learning experiences that are clearly aligned with your strengths, interests, needs, preferred learning style and aspirations. When this occurs, you have increased chances for success. You will know if you have made appropriate course and program selections when:

- You are also able to participate in a range of extra-curricular programs in addition to your courses and studies
- You attend school consistently and regularly
- You have a generally positive disposition to learning and the school experience.

You can maximize engagement, build confidence and plan for success by personalizing your school program to include courses from all disciplines, particularly in Grades 9 and 10 because you are not required to make binding decisions about a particular education or career/life path.



Are you ready for  
**high school?**

Signup with **my Blueprint** and get prepared.

CREATE YOUR INDIVIDUAL PATHWAYS PLAN (IPP)

- 1 Visit [www.myBlueprint.ca/tdsb](http://www.myBlueprint.ca/tdsb)
- 2 Select your high school or login

You may require your Ontario Education Number (OEN)

- ✓ Plan your **courses** for high school
- ✓ Discover your **learning style** and **interests**
- ✓ Set **S.M.A.R.T. goals** and **action plans**
- ✓ Create a visual **resume** and **cover letter**
- ✓ Compare **college** and **university programs**
- ✓ Explore **skilled trades/apprenticeships**
- ✓ Research **occupations** and **jobs**
- ✓ Learn to **budget** your money

my **Blueprint**

THE EASIEST WAY TO PLAN  
YOUR EDUCATION AND CAREER

# Your Future at the TDSB



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[www.tdsb.on.ca/goingtohighschool](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/goingtohighschool)