

Chris Spence's Speaking Notes - Education Sector Council Partnerships Project

Thursday May 14 at 5 p.m. - Courtyard Marriott Hotel, Courtyard Ballroom (475 Yonge Street)

Thank you, Penny.

On behalf of the Toronto District School Board, I am pleased to welcome everyone to this National Symposium, which marks the conclusion of the Education Sector Council Partnership Project.

Much has been accomplished over the past four years and we're all here to celebrate our successes!

The visionary, innovative, challenging and complex work of this partnership is so critical and timely as we move education into the 21st century.

Over the course of this project, the work has undoubtedly taken many of you out of your traditional roles. You have gained a better understanding of the work of our partners and seen first-hand how these partnerships help to engage students in new and different ways. In fact, it entirely changes the notion of schooling and is truly about shaping the future of learning.

The ESCPP began as a way to increase our focus toward the 50% of students who do not go immediately to post-secondary education. However, the project has progressed in a way that all pathways can benefit.

The developments in ESCPP not only complement our Board priorities of Learning to age 18, Student Success and the Specialist High School Major but its outcomes are in alignment with the priorities of our TDSB Vision of Hope: student achievement and community engagement.

During this symposium, you will hear many stories of change and the kinds of processes that have moved teachers and schools beyond their classrooms and regular boundaries and into the world of work and industry. You will better understand what these shifts and experiences mean for educational change and the reengagement of students.

It is critical that you share what has been learned within the TDSB, but also with our partners, governments and those from Ministries and Departments of Education as well as other Boards throughout Canada who have joined us at this Symposium in Toronto.

While we are here to celebrate our successes to date, I am hopeful that we will also gain some insight into the challenges encountered along the way. This valuable information can be used to inform our next steps as we move along this pathway of discovery and change.

More than 400 people have participated in the ESCPP and I would like to specifically recognize a few groups.

Thank you to all of the administrators, project leaders and teachers who have created innovative new programs and opportunities for their students through ESCPP. I am pleased that many of

you who are implementing Specialist High Skills Majors into your schools have joined us here today, as you stand to gain much from the experience.

The strength of the partnerships with Sector Councils has been remarkable and on behalf of the TDSB I thank them for identifying the more than 120 workplaces that have served as industry partners for schools.

Our funding partners at Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Education have contributed significantly to the project in the area of the sector council initiative and student success. I thank them through their representatives here, and look forward to your insights.

This has been an important initiative for TDSB and I look forward to hearing more about it this evening and following the symposium.

Thank you to everyone for your contributions and for your attendance here this evening. I wish you the best over the next day and in your work building on this initiative in the years to come.