

INNOVATIVE BOARD PROGRAM ADDRESSES STAFF SHORTAGE

Our Board (SMCDSB) has a unique plan to address the current overwhelming shortage of qualified Educational Assistants. In partnership with the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skill Development, we are pleased to announce the first ever Educational Assistant Apprenticeship program.

On Tuesday, November 1, the board signed on its first apprentice for the new program. Stacey Hoggarth, who has been an important part of the emergency supply team at St. Peter's Catholic Secondary School and St. Joan of Arc Catholic High School for a number of years, is excited to start the process to become a fully qualified Educational Assistant (EA). There are 27 other current unqualified emergency EAs who will sign on in the next few days.

Emergency unqualified EA supply staff have been working in our schools for many years. For various reasons, they have been unable to earn the qualifications that would allow them to apply for Educational Assistant job postings. Now these employees can become fully qualified while remaining available to work in our schools.

Trained and qualified EAs can receive more board training and work with a greater variety of students, including students with Safety Plans. At the end of their apprenticeship, our newly qualified EAs will have received:

- 2,268 hours of on-the-job training
- 432 hours of in-class technical instruction
- Additionally, a person with at least 2,700 hours of work experience may be eligible to complete the apprenticeship more quickly.

The SMCDSB is very excited to support and train our new Educational Assistants as they journey through their apprenticeships! The goal of our EA Apprenticeship program is to offer a viable career pathway for many people and to support the staffing shortages in our schools.



Pictured from left to right, is Christine Mink-Hiles, Continuing and Community Education Coordinator, Krista Barban, Secondary Curriculum Consultant, Stacey Hoggarth, Educational Assistant Apprentice, Brad Shoreman, Continuing and Community Education Principal, and Steacy Hinton, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program Consultant.