

The Graduate Brantford Strategy

BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF LEARNING



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Background

With the formal approval of *Shaping Our Future: Brantford's Community Strategic Plan*, Brantford City Council endorsed the development of a *Graduate Brantford Strategy* with a goal of increasing education achievement rates within the City.

Both academic and community research demonstrates that increased educational attainment rates are linked to a number of positive economic, social, and health outcomes, such as improved physical and mental health, family stability, job security, and higher incomes. The labour market is rapidly changing, with most jobs now requiring a high-school diploma as well as specialized skills training or a completed post-secondary credential.

Educational achievement in Brantford is trending positively. Graduation rates are increasing, and Early Development Instrument (EDI) scores, a measure of how 'ready' a child is to begin school, are increasing in several key domains. While there is still much work to be done to bring Brantford on par with provincial averages, these trends demonstrate that *education sector solutions* coupled with *community-level supports* can be highly effective in changing historical trajectories within a community.

Within this shared work, the role of Graduate Brantford is to bring together community partners to create an environment where students can thrive outside the classroom, with both academic and social supports. This long-term planning has been combined with immediate action, with staff developing and supporting numerous projects with a focus on digital access, early learning, technology skills, homework supports, and neighbourhood-based learning opportunities.

Making a successful transition from Brantford's traditional industrial centre to a vibrant, knowledge-based economy requires investment from all levels of government and community partners in the social and human infrastructure of the community. Formal educational institutions are the foundation of these efforts, with both the expertise and the infrastructure to prepare students for higher learning and career success. However, addressing the persistent challenges in Brantford requires an integrated approach, and through this initiative the City aims to bring the community together to support that collaborative effort. The Strategy provides an overview of the current status of education in Brantford and highlights the opportunities and challenges that exist along the education and career spectrum. Initiatives that are currently underway are highlighted, as well as recommended improvements or initiatives that can be supported through municipal actions.

Types of Support



School



**Family &
Peers**



Community



Government



Developing the Strategy

The Graduate Brantford Strategy was developed through extensive consultation with community stakeholders and a comprehensive review of community-led practices for increasing educational attainment.

To develop the Strategy, the City conducted consultations as part of the *Economic Development Strategy Review and Update (2016)*, *Ontario Early Learning Transformation (2017-2018)*, *The Coordinated Youth Services Strategy (2017)*, and *Healthy Aging: The City of Brantford's Age-Friendly Strategy (2018)*.

The City of Brantford is also an active member on local committees with learning-focused mandates, such as the Best Start Network, Children and Youth Services Committee, Education Works Alliance, Skilled Trades Alliance, and the Chamber of Commerce Education Committee. Engagement with these diverse groups has enhanced the City's ability to support and pilot educational initiatives that target specific populations and are informed by the local context.

In addition to consultation, the Graduate Brantford Strategy was informed by a comprehensive review of planning, policy, and research documents from a broad range of academic, governmental, and non-profit organizations including the Grand Valley Education Society, Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie, Wilfrid Laurier University – Brantford, Wellesley Institute, and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

A Graduate Brantford Advisory was established to ensure the current initiatives and the resulting plan were guided by a group of community leaders. Going forward, the community is committed to supporting the recommendations of the strategy to increase educational attainment rates in Brantford.



The Graduate Brantford Advisors consist of members from the following organizations and committees:

- Brant Family and Children's Services
- Brantford/Brant Best Start Network
- Boys and Girls Club of Brantford
- Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board
- Brant Skills Centre
- Brantford Public Library
- CareerLink Employment Centre
- Chamber of Commerce Brantford-Brant
- City of Brantford
- Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
- Contact North
- Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
- EarlyON Child and Family Centre
- Education Works Alliance
- Grand Erie District School Board
- Grand Valley Educational Society
- Kids Can Fly
- Niagara Peninsula Aboriginal Area Management Board
- SC Johnson & Son, Inc.
- Skilled Trades Alliance
- St. Leonard's Community Services
- Six Nations Polytechnic

Strategy Development Timeline



June 2016

Graduate Brantford Call-to-Action held at the *June 2016 Mayor's Luncheon*.



December 2016

Consultation completed with residents, staff, and business owners as part of the *Economic Development Strategy (2016)*.



2016 - 2017

Consultation with stakeholders and service providers for the *Ontario Early Learning Transformation*.



August 2017

Ministry of Children and Youth Services selected Brantford to participate in the *Collective Impact for Disconnected Youth* research initiative.



January 2018

Wellesley Institute selected Brantford for the *Supports for Success* research project.



May 2018

Grand River Healthy Communities Collaborative completed two Education Forums.

February 2015

Social Innovation Research Group initiated research on secondary school educational attainment in Brantford.



September 2015

The development of a Graduate Brantford strategy was endorsed through the approval of *Shaping Our Future: Brantford's Community Strategic Plan*.



December 2016

Grand Valley Educational Society and the Skilled Trades Alliance researched local priority skilled trades.



May 2017

Consultation completed with youth, agencies, and young parents as part of *Together for Youth: The Coordinated Youth Services Strategy (2017)*.



August 2017

Graduate Brantford Advisory established to provide insight and guidance on the development of the Strategy.



August 2017

Applied Research, Innovation, and Evaluation Services led an innovation sprint with the Graduate Brantford Advisory.



March 2018

Consultation completed with older adults, caregivers, and service providers as part of *Healthy Aging: The City of Brantford's Age-Friendly Strategy (2018)*.



September 2018

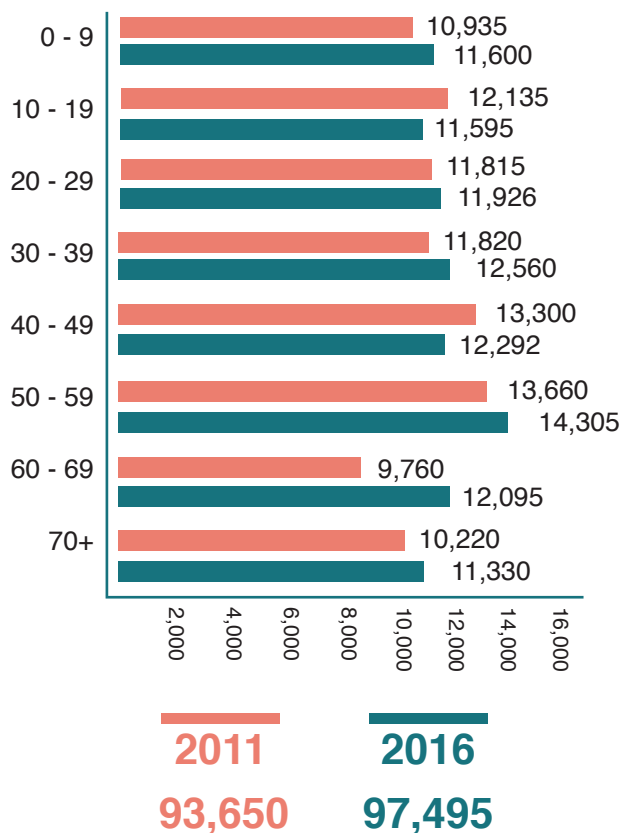
Graduate Brantford Strategy presented to Council and officially launched.





Snapshot of Brantford

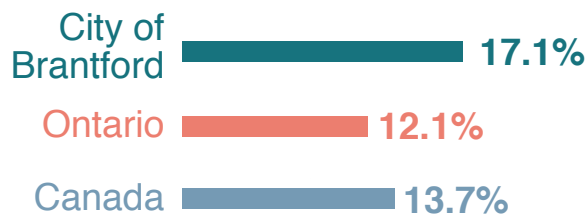
The population of the City of Brantford is growing and changing. ⁱ



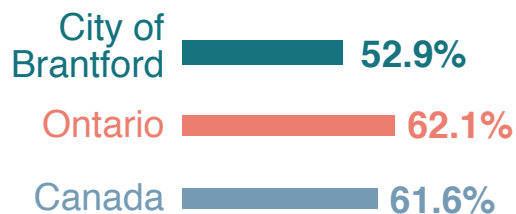
Educational Attainment

Educational attainment in Brantford is trending in the right direction; however, the City still lags behind provincial achievement in several areas:

Adults age 25 - 64 without high school certificate ⁱⁱ



Adults age 25 - 64 with post-secondary education

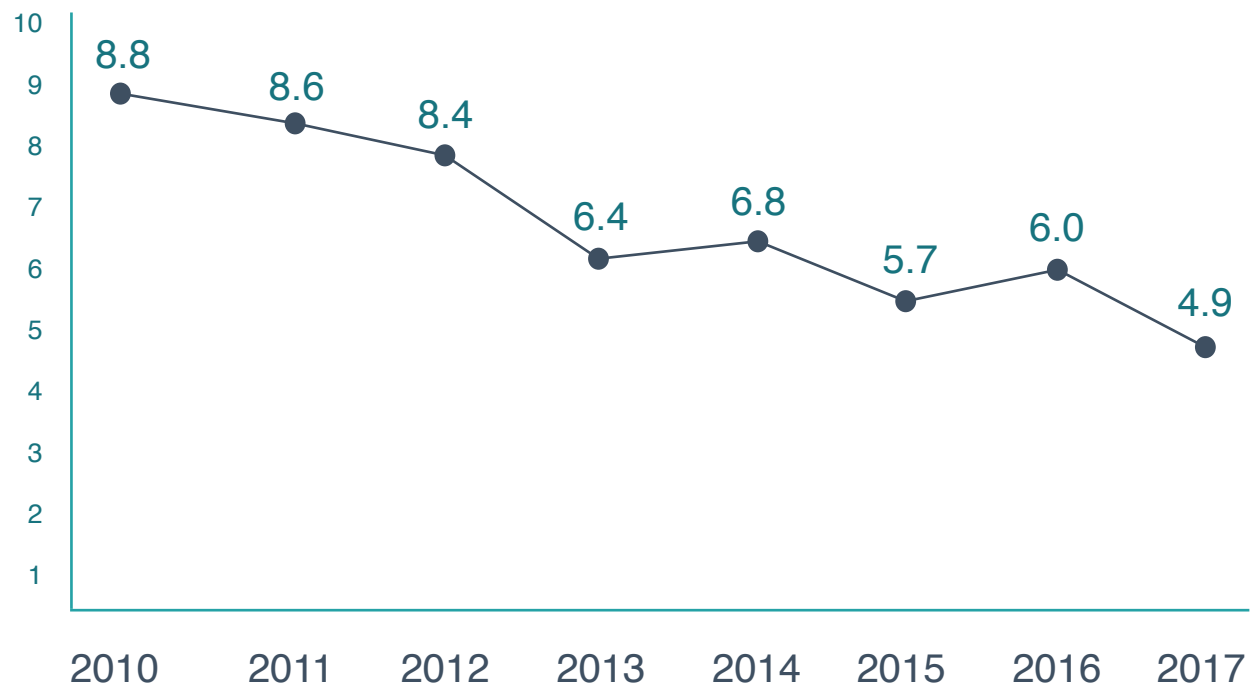


Educational Attainment

Graduation Rates ⁱⁱⁱ	Four-Year Graduation Rate	Five-Year Graduation Rate
Provincial Graduation Rate	79.60 %	86.50 %
Brant Haldimand Norfolk CDSB	86.10 %	89.00 %
Grand Erie DSB	66.00 %	77.60 %

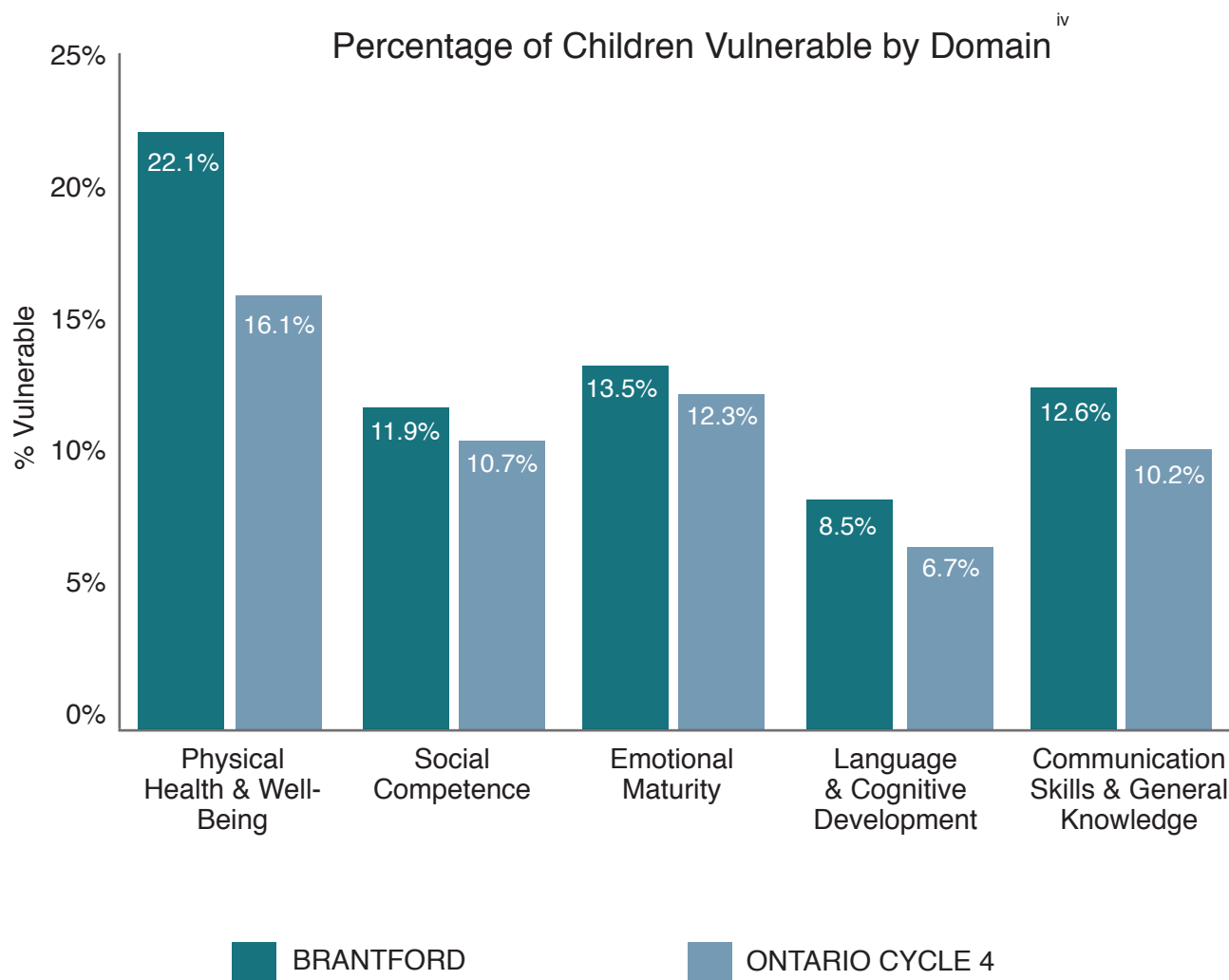
Brantford Unemployment Rate

The City of Brantford unemployment rate is declining. ^{vi}
Unemployment rate % Brantford CMA 2010 - 2017




Early Development Instrument

Brantford children are generally prepared for kindergarten, but are still less prepared than most children in Ontario in five key areas.



In Brantford, 35.3 % of five year old children are vulnerable in at least one area of development.^{iv} The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a teacher-completed instrument that was developed by the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University to measure children's ability to meet age-appropriate developmental expectations at school entry. The EDI measures children's developmental health by asking questions related to five different domains. The EDI instrument will identify how many children fall below the 10th percentile in each domain, indicating those who are more vulnerable.^v



Youth Not in Employment or Education (NEET Youth)

In 2015, Brantford had over **1,300 NEET youth**, aged 15-24. NEET youth refers to youth who are not in employment, education, or training. One of the most impactful and immediate ways the community can increase overall education rates is to re-engage with youth who are disconnected from education or employment opportunities. In 2017, as a result of advocacy efforts to engage other levels of government, the City of Brantford was chosen by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services as one of five pilot regions within the Ministry's *Collective Impact for Disconnected Youth Initiative*. The City of Brantford was fundamental in connecting the Province with local stakeholders to conduct research to better understand (1) why youth are disconnected, (2) how they can be better supported to reengage with education and training, and (3) how they can be inspired to explore alternative education pathways, such as online learning, adult-dual credit programs, and credit recovery.



Graduate Brantford Strategy

The goal of the Graduate Brantford Strategy is to support education and inspire lifelong learning for Brantford residents.

Strategies

1. Enriching
Early Learning

2. Supporting
Success in School

3. Preparing
for Careers and
Lifelong Learning



Strategy 1.

Enriching Early Learning

Early childhood represents a critical time in human brain development.^{vii} Children who come to kindergarten unprepared to learn may experience barriers to academic achievements and this achievement gap will continue to grow.^{viii} A growing body of research shows that high quality interventions targeted at families with children 0-6 can improve their school readiness regardless of family background or personal characteristics.^{ix}

Return On Investment

According to the Ministry of Education, for every dollar spent on a child's early years, there is an immediate \$2 return on investment. Over the life of the child, this can grow to a return of up to \$7.^x In the Perry Preschool Longitudinal Study (1962-2005), disadvantaged children who received two years of preschool education outperformed a similar group of disadvantaged children who did not receive preschool education. By age 21, the return on investment was more than \$7 for each dollar spent on the program. By age 40, the return grew to \$16 for each \$1 of investment.^{xi}



Getting ‘Classroom Ready’

In a report developed by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), children who participated in Parent and Family Literacy programs at least 10 days per year prior to enrollment in school demonstrated lower levels of vulnerability, including stronger communication skills, improved cognitive development and emotional knowledge, and higher levels of academic performance than their classmates.^{xii}

Kindergarten teachers further noted that children from the Parent and Family Literacy programs entered into the classroom with skills already in place, creating a better learning environment for all students. These programs also created opportunities for early identification of special education needs prior to school entry and served as a welcoming point of entry into the school for parents. This was especially important for newcomers, providing them a safe space and sense of belonging.

Social and Health Benefits

Investing during the critical window of early childhood brain development can have a wide variety of long-term benefits for children and families. Positive early childhood experiences strengthen biological systems and improve health outcomes across the lifespan. As the Center of the Developing Child (2010) notes, **“Health is more than merely the absence of disease—it is an evolving human resource that helps children and adults adapt to the challenges of everyday life, resist infections, cope with adversity, feel a sense of personal well-being, and interact with their surroundings in ways that promote successful development.”**^{xiii}

Enriching Early Learning Focus Areas

1

Enhanced access
to early learning
supports

2

Support families in
preparing children
for school success

3

Integrate early
learning into the
spectrum of service
delivery

Enriching Early Learning Milestones

The City of Brantford has supported and led several initiatives that aim to enhance early learning and school readiness.

In 2017, the Ontario EarlyON Child and Family Centre Community **Needs Assessment and Initial Plan** were released.

The **Indigenous Early Learning Needs Assessment & Feasibility Study** Final Report was released in summer 2017

In January, 2018, all Ministry-funded child and family programs were integrated under the service management of municipalities and became known as the **Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres**.

Throughout 2018, ongoing **transformation and expansion** of the EarlyON service system continued.

EarlyON Pop-Up locations were launched to bring services to families in summer 2018.

In 2018, the Ministry of Education provided approval for funding of both an **Indigenous Led Child Care Centre** and Indigenous Led EarlyON in the Brantford/Brant community.

The **Every Kid Camps Pilot Program** was developed to support children with special needs.

There are currently:

2

EarlyON
providers

25

Sites
Served



8 main centres
and 21 satellite
locations

71 EarlyON
Pop-Up Sites in
the summer of 2018



Enriching Early Learning Recommendations

- 1.1 Increase outreach** to targeted population groups (such as newcomers/immigrants, Indigenous families, and young parents) to connect these populations to services.
- 1.2 Increase availability of online information** (such as EarlyON schedules and resources) provided through the locally managed website www.earlyonbrantfordbrant.com.
- 1.3 Increase local telephone support** available through the Brant County Health Unit, Contact Brant and the City of Brantford Customer Contact Centre.
- 1.4 Expand EarlyON sites**, growing to include additional Pop-Up sites, evening and weekend hours, and new locations.
- 1.5 Launch Indigenous-led EarlyON** to provide cultural programming at one dedicated site and throughout all EarlyON Child and Family Centres.

Enriching Early Learning Indicators

Measurement Area	Indicator	Current Status
EarlyON access	Increase number of children visiting EarlyON Child and Family Centres	1578 (Q1 2018)
School preparedness	Reduced percentage of children at risk in two or more Early Development Index domain areas	17.5% (2014/2015) ^{xiv}





Strategy 2.

Supporting Success in School

Leaving secondary school early has a significant impact on the life of the individual as well as social and economic consequences for the entire community. In Brantford, 17.1% of adults ages 25-64 have not completed high school, compared to 12.1% of adults ages 25-64 in Ontario. Having a high school diploma is associated with better employment outcomes^{xv xvi}, greater income^{xvii}, improved health outcomes^{xviii}, reduced criminal activity^{xixxx}, and fewer residents on social assistance^{xxi}.

While graduation rates are improving, some Brantford residents still face significant barriers to school success. To increase educational attainment, it is critical to understand the factors that contribute to early school leaving and investigate the impact of community-led interventions and initiatives.

Young Adults Who Were At-Risk But Had a Mentor Are:

55% more likely to enroll in college

78% more likely to volunteer regularly

90% are interested in becoming a mentor

130% more likely to hold leadership positions

xxix

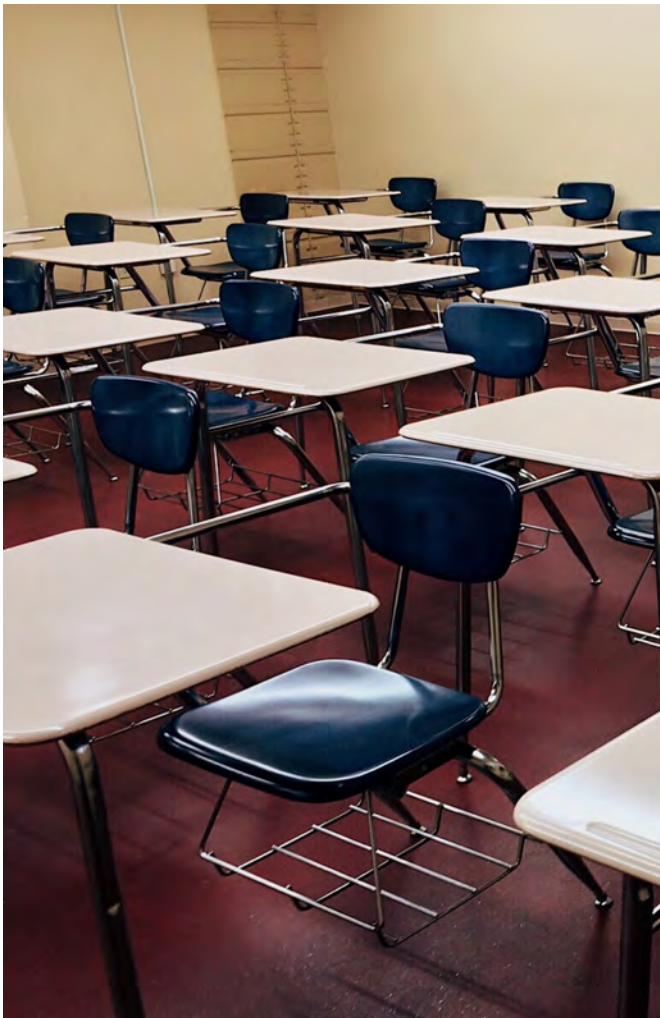
Poverty

Poverty is the most significant factor associated with early school leaving. ^{xxii}

Those living in the lowest income quartile are three times more likely to drop out by the age of 19 in comparison to students living in families in the highest quartile. ^{xxiii} In Brantford, adults living in low-income, priority neighbourhoods are less likely to have completed high school. ^{xxiv} Additionally, parental income is strongly associated with lower levels educational attainment in children, ^{xxv} as well as reduced access to technology and internet, which is increasingly imperative for school success. Therefore, in order to break the cycle of poverty, the community must support interventions that target low-income neighbourhoods and digital access.

“Only 38% of youth aged 18–21 from families with an annual income of \$20,000–\$30,000 attend postsecondary studies. 77% of students from families with an annual income of over \$180,000 attend post-secondary studies.”

*The Province of Ontario's
Poverty Reduction Strategy
Annual Report (2016)*



Support

In addition to socioeconomic status, **lack of supports inside and outside of the classroom are contributing factors to leaving school early.** In one study, 45% of early school leavers reported that their school environment contributed to their decision to leave school early. ^{xxvi} In Brantford, disconnected youth stated that decisions to leave school early were due bullying, pregnancy/parenthood, and conflict at home. ^{xxvii xxviii} Research demonstrates that programs that focus on building relationships, such as peer mentorship and parental engagement, significantly increase educational attainment; Pathways to Education is a community based mentorship and tutoring model that has demonstrated this success. ^{xxix xxx} Training service-providers in building **developmental assets** of clients – including both internal assets like ‘bonding at school’ and external assets like ‘strong adult relationships’ – also significantly increases high school graduation rates. ^{xxxi} Additional supports, such as access to **local and affordable child care**, particularly for young mothers, has also been identified as a successful intervention. ^{xxxii xxxiii}



System Navigation

Brantford youth have also stated that **lack of information** and **challenges with system navigation** create barriers to graduation.^{xi} Academics and Graduate Brantford Advisors explain similar concerns.^{xli} Local partners have expressed challenges with marketing their programs, and agencies have stated that there seems to be a lack of understanding of available programs amongst referral agencies.

In order to better support individuals in school, it is imperative that interventions focus on eliminating barriers, building relationships, providing culturally relevant programming, and supporting individuals with system navigation.

Indigenous Students

Indigenous students may face barriers to academic success due to social inequity, racism and higher levels of poverty.^{xxxiv}

Brantford has a large population of Indigenous students. **It is imperative that Indigenous student have access to culturally relevant programming, role models, and post-secondary financing options.**^{xxxv xxxvi}

Community initiatives that respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action have been identified as a priority in Brantford by Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents and service providers.^{xxxvii}

Newcomers to Canada

Students new to Canada may also experience significant challenges with accessing education and in academic success due to language and cultural barriers.^{xxxiv}

Brantford has a growing newcomer population, and there is a significant increase in international students attending post-secondary locally.

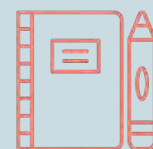
Research demonstrates that more first generation immigrants would have increased graduation rates if community and academic interventions addressed language barriers, social isolation, and introduce more cultural relevant programming.^{xxxviii}

The City of Brantford has:



**39 licensed
child care
sites**

**25 before
and after
school
programs**



Supporting Success in School Focus Areas

1

Connect families to resources and programs that support educational success

2

Develop pathways for first-in family post-secondary students

3

Develop innovative placed-based programs that support learning

Supporting Success in School Milestones

The City of Brantford has supported and led a number of initiatives that aim to support individuals in school.

The City of Brantford's Neighbourhood Hubs provide a wide range of educational and recreational programs to school families and neighbourhood residents. **Major Ballachey School Hub** became the first school-based hub in June 2016 and was followed by Central Public School in December 2017.

Rogers Communications and the City of Brantford partnered to provide more than 1,300 low-income households in the City of Brantford and County of Brant low-cost, high-speed internet with **Rogers' Connected for Success** program.

The **Brantford-Brant Youth Collective Impact Collaborative** consists of members from frontline youth services, such as mental health agencies, housing agencies, and Indigenous organizations, as well as municipalities, libraries, the health unit, and schools. There are currently over 30 members representing 22 agencies working towards a common goal of increasing youth outcomes by training youth service providers in developmental assets.

Homework Help Programs were delivered through the Neighbourhood Hubs in priority neighbourhoods and provided access to computers, internet access, and homework mentors.

Higher Education for Youth Day (HEY Day) is a partnership with the City, Brant Family and Children's Services, and Wilfrid Laurier University to decrease barriers to education for youth. HEY Day provides youth from underserved populations a full day campus experience with Laurier student mentors and a post-secondary and skilled trades resource fair.

Supports for Success aims to improve educational, economic, and social outcomes for children and youth. Wellesley Institute and Woodview Mental Health & Autism Services lead this initiative in partnership local organizations, including the City of Brantford, and they are currently conducting research to build on and support initiatives in Brantford.

Collective Impact for Disconnected Youth is led by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and is working with the City of Brantford and community partners to investigate why youth are disconnected and how they can be reengaged with school, employment, and/or training.

Access to licensed childcare spaces has increased significantly. The number of licensed child care spaces increased from 2,762 spaces in 2014 to 3,822 spaces in 2018.

Ontario Works Brant currently delivers specialized programs to increase the educational achievement of single mothers with young families, including the Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) Program. These programs have proven successful in transitioning young families to positive educational and employment outcomes, with over 150 Ontario Works clients receiving their Grade 12 Diploma annually, and 25-30 students transitioning to post-secondary education each year.

Supporting Success in School

Recommendations

- 2.1 Focus interventions in **priority neighbourhoods** to target low-income youth and early school leavers.
- 2.2 Increase **quality mentorship** opportunities for youth that focus on relationship building and tutoring, such as Pathways to Education and Developmental Assets.
- 2.3 Respond to the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action** to provide more culturally relevant programming, address discrimination, and build relationships.
- 2.4 Increase community supports and programming for **newcomer youth**.
- 2.5 **Enhance licensed childcare** by increasing spaces, increasing supports for children and families with special needs, making registration for spaces and subsidies available online, launching Indigenous-led childcare programming, and exploring school-based childcare options.
- 2.6 **Increase partnerships** between community agencies, businesses, and schools.
- 2.7 Develop a **social media and communication strategy** directed to students, graduates, parents, and the general population that promotes a positive image of local opportunities where people can find information and support about education and training, as outlined in the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie's local labour report *Help Wanted, Growing the Talent Pool*.

Did you know the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie manages the website www.educationworks.ca? This site is an interactive tool that connects local individuals with organizations that can help them reach their education goals.

Supporting Success in School Indicators

Measurement Area	Indicator	Current Status
Literacy	Increased percentage of students who were successful on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test	GEDSB 70% BHNCD SB 84% ^{xliii}
Graduation	Increased percentage of students who graduate in 4 years	GEDSB 66% BHNCD SB 77.60%
	Increased percentage of students who graduate in 5 years	GEDSB 86.1% BHNCD SB 89%
Youth Engagement	Reduced number of youth not engaged or employed	1300





Strategy 3.

Preparing for Careers and Lifelong Learning

While most jobs require at least a high school diploma ^{xlii}, **skilled trades training, post-secondary education, and experiential learning** are becoming increasingly important to secure higher-paying and less precarious jobs today, ^{xlii} particularly within Brantford's local labour market. ^{xlii} While labour force development normally falls outside the scope of the municipal role, the City of Brantford recognizes the importance of supporting education and training due to its direct impact on individual outcomes and on the economic development of a city.

Skilled Trades Training

The City of Brantford faces a significant skilled trades gap. ^{xlii} The Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie has projected the following occupations are expected to experience growth by 2021: automotive service technicians, welders, construction millwrights and industrial mechanics, construction trade labourer, plumbers, refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics, steamfitter and pipefitters, electricians, carpenters, cooks, and hairstylists. ^{xlii} However, local employers state challenges with recruitment and retention because applicants lack experience, technical skills, and soft skills. ^{xlii} Therefore, it is imperative that local residents understand the opportunities in skilled trades and have access to relevant training opportunities.

Careers in the trades can be financially rewarding. In Canada, individuals with an apprenticeship certificate in the skilled trades earn a median income of \$72,955, which is 31% more than those with only a high school diploma. ^{li} Additionally, the vast majority of skilled trade workers work full time and very few tradespeople hold multiple jobs. ^{lii} Local Brantford stakeholders state that people are often unaware of the possibilities and benefits of pursuing a career in the skilled trades. Brantford has several institutions that offer skilled trade training, literacy upgrading, and apprenticeship support, including Six Nations Polytechnic, Conestoga College, Brant Skills Centre, and Niagara Peninsula Aboriginal Area Management Board.

Post-Secondary Education

Post-secondary education is also linked with increased employment opportunities.

Job seekers without a high school diploma are 2.5 times more likely to be unemployed than those with a bachelor's degree.^{liii} Indigenous job seekers without a high school diploma are 3.5 times more likely to be unemployed than Indigenous job seekers with a bachelor's degree. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reported that Canadians with a university degree earned \$165 for every \$100 earned by high school graduates. Therefore, meeting the growing demand for post-secondary education remains an important part of the City's community strategic plan and a primary objective of the Graduate Brantford initiative.



Experiential learning

Placements, co-operative education, and apprenticeships can also further career prospects as employers seek out employees who have occupationally relevant skills, rather than general skills. Experiential learning can be particularly valuable for newcomers, job seekers, and students who are making decisions about their education and employment pathway. Experiential learning opportunities can also be valuable for employers, as it can bring in new perspectives and allow for interdisciplinary collaboration.^{liv} **Soft skills – such as communication, punctuality, and teamwork – are required in most fields and local employers are looking for a mix of soft skills and technical skills during recruitment.**^{iv} Therefore, exposing students and job-seekers to career opportunities is imperative to build interest and experience in local opportunities, as well as increase soft-skills.

Connecting Education and Training to Local Demand

The importance of linking education with local opportunities and inspiring a culture of lifelong learning is consistent across all education pathways – whether skilled trades or post-secondary education. The City of Brantford's Economic Development Strategy Review and Update (2016) outlined that the main issue affecting labour force development is coordination and ensuring the appropriate education and skills training are available to develop the labour force that businesses and investors require. Post-secondary institutions should be encouraged to promote programming in technology and sciences. The report recommends establishing a Graduate Brantford Task Force; increasing communication with educators, trainers, and industry; and supporting the work of local initiatives that expose students to high quality employment opportunities.^{iv}



Targeting Education Interventions to Specific Demographics

Research demonstrates that education interventions that aim to increase one's employability must recognize unique barriers that specific populations face. For example, **single mothers often experience additional barriers to education and employment due to childcare responsibilities.** Indigenous students may face challenges accessing post-secondary education due to a lack of financing, lack of awareness of Indigenous culture on campus, few role models who have succeeded in post-secondary, distrust of Canadian education system due to historical and continued discrimination, and/or lack of self-confidence.^{lviii} Youth require unique education interventions that focus on experiential learning, connections to employers, and increased knowledge about the local job market.^{lix} Residents of all ages require additional opportunities for digital access and skills development, entrepreneurial mentorship, and exposure to lifelong learning opportunities to increase their employability and secure meaningful employment within the local labour market.

Preparing for Careers and Lifelong Learning

1

Increase digital skills and access to technology

2

Create awareness and pathways to skilled trades and high skill positions

3

Support lifelong learning to improve personal outcomes and economic competitiveness

Preparing for Careers and Lifelong Learning Milestones

The City of Brantford has supported and led several education initiatives that aim to connect individuals to careers and inspire lifelong learning.

In 1999, **Wilfrid Laurier University** opened its second campus in Brantford, with a total of only 39 students in its inaugural year. Since then, 5,430 students have graduated from the Laurier Brantford campus.^{lx}

Since 2012, **Conestoga College** has continued to grow its presence downtown and expand programming. In 2018, the College purchased municipal properties at 50 Wellington Street, 39 Nelson Street, and 220 Clarence Street which has enhanced the City's offering of post-secondary education opportunities in the downtown.

In 2017, **Six Nations Polytechnic** opened its Brantford campus, and in 2018 the institution was congratulated by the Government of Canada for its innovative STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) Academy. City Council actively supported the establishment of an Indigenous-led post-secondary institution.

Since 2017, through the annual event **Epic Jobs**, secondary students from Grand Erie District School Board and Brant Halidmand Norfolk Catholic District School Board gain exposure to the skilled trades through hands-on, interactive activities and inspirational speakers.

In 2016, the City of Brantford supported the **Grand Valley Education Society** and the **Skilled Trades Alliance** to address the skilled trades gap and identify which skilled trades were in the greatest demand in the construction, industrial, and motive power sectors.

The **Code Mobile pilot**, a computer lab on wheels, inspired youth to become builders of technology, providing computer and technical skills. The Code Mobile visited affordable housing sites and elementary schools in priority neighbourhoods in 2017.

The **City Building Workshop** is a partnership with Grand Erie District School Board and the Grand River Conservation Authority to bring secondary students together to participate in an experimental learning design session. In 2017, approximately 200 students participated in a design session to pitch ideas for the Greenwich-Mohawk Brownfield Site to municipal staff and community leaders.



Preparing for Careers and Lifelong Learning Milestones

continued from page 30

CityStudio Brantford is an experiential learning partnership between the City and Laurier Brantford to support students in designing and launching projects that support the City's Community Strategic Plan.

In partnership with Health and Human Services, Conestoga College has developed customized courses including Academic Upgrading, Digital Skills Training, Warehouse Essentials, and Security Guard Certification as part of the **Conestoga College Partnership Programs** to directly link education with employment opportunities.

The **Junior Achievement** program provides students with the opportunity to participate in financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship programs.

Neighbourhood Changemakers, an innovative program led by the City and Wilfrid Laurier University's Schlegel Centre for Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation, is a free program for community champions to develop, implement, and evaluate a project that creates positive change in their neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood Learning Series programs are provided free of charge at Neighbourhood Hubs in priority neighbourhoods and include courses related to employment, educational support, digital literacy, and personal safety.

Little Free Libraries is a public art project aimed at inspiring a love of reading, building community, and sparking creativity in Brantford. This is a collaborative project between the City of Brantford, Brant Skills Centre, and Jono & Laynie Photo + Film.

The **Brantford Public Library** offers a wide range of programs for residents of all ages. Programs include sandbox science, Little Picassos, seniors speaker series, genealogy clubs, knitting, urban farming, English Conversation Circles, drop in youth café, navigating social media, Maker Fest and many more.



Preparing for Careers and Lifelong Learning Recommendations

- 3.1** Establish a **Graduate Brantford Task Force**, as outlined in the City of Brantford's Economic Development Strategy Review and Update (2016).
- 3.2** Actively support the **Skilled Trades Alliance** in engaging employers to better market and promote specific skill deficits and requirements to residents who may not be familiar with pathways to skilled trades.
- 3.3** Support the **growing demand for post-secondary education** locally.
- 3.4** Increase **internship** and **experiential learning** opportunities within the City to build interest in local opportunities and increase soft skills.
- 3.5** Support initiatives that inspire **lifelong learning** and **entrepreneurship**, such as supporting a Lifelong Learning Week.
- 3.6** Implement interventions that **target individuals with barriers to higher education and employment**, such as the Homeward Bound Program.



Preparing for Careers and Lifelong Learning Indicators

Measurement Area	Indicator	Current Status
Post-secondary enrollment	Increased number of students enrolled at Conestoga College	Conestoga 150 in 2017 (f/t)
	Increased number of students enrolled at Wilfrid Laurier University	WLU 3,000 (2017 all students)
	Increased number of students enrolled at Six Nations Polytechnic	SNP 150 for post-secondary (2017) and 34 in STEAM Academy
Post-secondary attainment	Increased percentage of the population aged 25-64 who have a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree	28.5 % (28,015 people from a 98,179 population)
Skilled Trades	Increased percentage of certificates of apprenticeships issued	177 (2016)

Local Programs

Brantford benefits from numerous programs and supports that complement the goals of Graduate Brantford and aim to increase educational attainment in Brantford. A full list of educational institutions, programs, and support services can be found online in the Community Information Brant, Haldimand & Norfolk Database managed by Contact Brant at www.info-bhn.ca. Innovative programs include the following:

Kids Can Fly & Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Kids Can Fly is an organization that promotes early childhood development in Brantford and Brant. Kids Can Fly is an affiliate of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program. This program supports early literacy and language development by mailing free books to children from 0-5 every month. The program promotes one-on-one reading time, which is the most effective activity parents and guardians can do to prepare their children for school.



Six Nations Polytechnic



Six Nations Polytechnic is a unique postsecondary organization, recognized by community, government, and institutions of higher learning as a Centre of Excellence for Indigenous Knowledge. The values of Ga'nigohi:yo:/Kanikoriio (Respect and the Good Mind) are at the root of the school and upheld by students and staff. Secondary, post-secondary, and training programs are open to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Epic Jobs

The Workforce Planning Board of the Grand Erie District School Board, the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School board, and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program host Epic Jobs with the support of local partners – including Graduate Brantford. Epic Jobs is an annual experiential learning event for grade eight and ten students to get an opportunity to try hands-on, interactive, and fun activities – and hear from inspirational speakers – to give them a taste of working in skilled trades.



ADVANCE YOUR SKILLS | CREATE YOUR FUTURE

Local Programs

Wilfrid Laurier University Creativity Hub

Staff at Laurier are currently exploring the development of a local creativity hub to engage students, faculty, and Brantford residents of all ages and backgrounds. The vision of the creativity hub is to become “a makerspace for storytelling” which will allow students, faculty, and community members to explore ways of telling their stories through creative means such as podcasting, film, and other digital mediums. The goals of the space include: increased experiential learning opportunities for all Laurier students; increased opportunities for faculty, staff, and community members to gain digital media skills; and increased engagement between the broader community and the Laurier community with learning opportunities, access to talent, project development, and entrepreneurship.



Contact North | Contact Nord



The Contact North online learning centre in Brantford is newly co-located within the Six Nations Polytechnic- Brantford Campus. Contact North | Contact Nord recruits and provides local support to underserved Ontario residents taking online programs and courses from Ontario's 24 public colleges, 22 public universities, 9 Indigenous institutes, 76 district school boards, 200 literacy and basic skills providers, and 50 skills development training providers.

Conestoga College - Discover Your Future

The Discover Your Future Program is a new-to-Brantford, free, six week, full time program that guides participants to explore their personal strengths and value and supports them in establishing academic and career goals. The program is appropriate for individuals with barriers to post-secondary, who want to explore their career options and go back to school in a supportive environment. Students will gain confidence through personal planning, self- management, and exposure to the post-secondary environment.



Conclusion

Municipalities can support education attainment by (1) focusing on early learning and school readiness, (2) supporting community-led initiatives that foster school success, and (3) collaborating with community partners to ensure education and training is linked to local employment opportunities. Over the coming years, the City of Brantford is committed to supporting the recommendations of Graduate Brantford. With the establishment of a Graduate Brantford Task Force, the City will continue to provide leadership, resources, and coordination to improve educational attainment for Brantford.

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Customer Journey.

Today

Frustrated
not enough options
no time

OPT-IN
-Emails
-Calls
-Webinars

Avatar

- Parent
- Works F/T
- Has FaceBook
- Smartphone

OPT-out

Choose competitor Survey/Feedback

Becomes A Customer

<Complete Profile>
Avatar
Up level

<Assigns Backup>
Up level

<Connects Api>
-Social
-Backup
-Cloud

Avatar

<Repeat Cycle>

<Feature Customer Story>

<Connects to Family Friends>

<Shares>
Up level to Premium

