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Destreaming in Ontario: History, Evidence and Educator Reflections

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Executive Summary

Ontario is the only Canadian province that separates youth into academic and non-academic streams as early as Grade 9, a practice that prevents some students from accessing postsecondary education. In December 2019, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) and People for Education brought K-12 educators and administrators together to discuss barriers to accessing postsecondary in Ontario. Though the issue of streaming in high school (i.e., grouping students based on perceived ability) was not the sole focus of the discussion, it became the prevailing theme. Participants at the event, called *Student Success Pathways,* worried that Ontario secondary students were being asked to make life-altering decisions about their educational and career pathways when they are too young to do so — only 13 or 14 years old. They pointed to the individual and systemic biases that affect how students are separated into instructional groups, noting that racialized and lower-income students are disproportionately encouraged to pursue non-academic paths.

Since *Student Success Pathways* took place, a global anti-racism movement amplified the event's themes, stressing the urgency of addressing systemic inequalities everywhere, including in our education system. The Ontario government responded, committing to destream Grade 9 math starting in 2021. While this commitment is a positive and important step, it is just that — one step toward more equitable outcomes. Ontario has committed to destreaming before. Historically, destreaming policies have failed at implementation, continuing to produce gaps in outcomes such as high school graduation and postsecondary attainment.

Following and expanding upon the conversation threads at *Student Success Pathways*, this paper offers evidence and perspectives to inform Ontario's destreaming implementation plan and related policies. Participants at the event shared ideas and research about what successful destreaming in Ontario might look like and discussed the factors that support or hinder the success of destreaming initiatives. They noted leadership, courage to challenge individual biases and systems of oppression, and professional learning for educators are essential enabling factors. Meanwhile, a lack of stakeholder buy-in and resistance to changing the status quo threaten to hinder success.

The evidence discussed by participants at *Student Success Pathways* indicates that successful destreaming requires changes to both the configuration and culture of learning in Ontario secondary schools. Destreaming policies and plans should ensure all students have access to rigorous instruction alongside extra resources and/or bridging courses. And strategies like stakeholder engagement and professional development, including anti-racism training for teachers and administrators, should be embraced to address individual and systemic biases that affect expectations and depress achievement. Ongoing evaluation of destreaming efforts will also be essential.

If the government implements its destreaming policy with evidence in mind, we are optimistic that it will benefit all students, including those whom the education system has historically disadvantaged. But it should not stop there. The government should commit to destreaming all core subjects in Grades 9 and 10 so that every student can access the full range of Grade 11 course offerings. In the meantime, school boards should continue piloting initiatives and sharing lessons across the sector to support student success.

Introduction

Higher education is imagined to be a great equalizer, promising to improve social and economic prospects for students, including the most vulnerable. It is a bold promise, especially given that a higher education system can only deliver to the students who have access to it. Canada is a leader among the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries when it comes to educational attainment (OECD, 2019). And within Canada, Ontario has the highest proportion of adults aged 25 to 64 with a bachelor's degree or higher (Statistics Canada, 2017). Still, as evidenced by the roughly 30% of Ontarians between the ages of 25 and 34 who do not have a postsecondary credential (Deller & Tamburri, 2019), there is room for improvement.

The question of who is and who is not accessing postsecondary education has been a research focus for HEQCO since its inception. HEQCO has collaborated with the Ontario government and the province's colleges, universities, school boards and community groups to evaluate and support the educational attainment of Ontario students. In December 2019, HEQCO and partners at People for Education convened a group of Ontario's K-12 educators and administrators at an event called *Student Success Pathways* to draw on attendees' knowledge and experience about improving student outcomes. The goal of the event was to understand the factors affecting Ontario students' access to postsecondary education — what roadblocks exist, and what supports are in place to overcome them?

Student Success Pathways was a two-day event: The first day brought together stakeholders from across the education sector — researchers, educators, students, and government and community representatives — to share their experiences and perspectives, their research pertaining to student pathways, and ideas for policy change. The second day of the event involved a subset of stakeholders, primarily educators and administrators from Ontario's K-12 schools. This subgroup of about 30 participants engaged in a facilitated dialogue about initiatives taking place in Ontario classrooms, including those that: ensure pedagogy reflects the worldviews of diverse student populations; facilitate experiential learning opportunities; examine educator biases and privilege; and set consistently high expectations for all students.

The idea of setting unbiased, consistently high expectations and ensuring all students access rigorous curriculum dominated the conversation. High school students in Ontario are currently separated into two instructional groups: academic and non-academic. Non-academic courses may also be referred to as applied or open/locally developed courses). Students are separated based on perceived ability and career goals in Grade 9. Event participants noted that individual and systemic biases often affect decisions about which students end up in each group.

As part of an ongoing evidence-building process, this paper follows and expands upon the conversation about (de)streaming that took place at the *Student Success Pathways* event. It also situates the conversation in the context of Ontario's policy evolution and international research.

Historical Context

Ontario's current practice of streaming has evolved through decades of policy change. The idea of differentiated instruction was formally introduced in Ontario by the Robarts Plan of 1962, named after John Robarts who was Minister of Education at the time. The Robarts Plan, which created three streams (Arts and Science, Business and Commerce, and Science Technology and Trades), was intended to increase high school graduation rates and orient education to employment (Pinto, 2012; Curtis, 2014).

Under the Robarts Plan, only students in the Arts and Science stream were bound for university. The other two streams consisted of commercial, technical and vocational programs and included more rural students and those from working-class families. Following heavy criticism, the plan was officially discarded in 1969, replaced with a credit system where courses were organized by level of difficulty: advanced, general or basic. Though the credit system initially appeared more progressive than the Robarts Plan, it ultimately relied on school guidance departments to ensure students' course selections were "appropriate." Biases within these departments led students from working-class families to be streamed into general or basic courses (Curtis, 2014).

The practice of streaming entered the limelight again in 1985, when the Ontario government commissioned George Radwanski to lead an inquiry into the province's secondary school dropout rate. The resulting Radwanski Report, published in 1987, commented on an economic shift from manufacturing to services and argued students were not graduating with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the modern economy. Among other things, the report recommended "standardized testing, destreaming, outcomes-based curriculum, and a common core curriculum to replace the credit system" (Pinto, 2012).

Taking cues from the Radwanski Report, the subsequent provincial government announced it would destream Ontario's Grade 9 curriculum. The Ministry of Education provided a three-year window for schools to implement the change, beginning in September 1993 (Anderson & Jaafar, 2003). A study on the impact of this change in the Toronto found "moderately positive" results including higher credit accumulation in Grade 9, which did not slip when students completed Grade 10 (Brown, 1996). But when a new government with a different agenda was elected in 1995 "any hopes of destreaming were squashed" (Smaller, 2014). The government made the decision to restream Grade 9, based in part on "negative reaction from the education community" (Anderson & Jaafar, 2003).

Four years later, in 1999, the Ministry of Education took up the issue again with the Ontario Secondary Schools policy or OSS:99. This policy was intended to create more choice and flexibility for students in Grades 9 and 10, before they chose pathways in Grades 11 and 12. As Smaller (2014) describes,

The earlier labels of "Advanced," "General," and "Basic" courses were replaced with "Academic," "Applied," "Locally Developed," and "Open" levels, which would now apply to Grade 9 and 10 courses. At the senior Grades 11 and 12, these levels were expanded in number and directed to more explicit post secondary futures. These senior levels are now described as "University Preparation" "University/College Preparation" "College Preparation" "Workplace Preparation" and "Transfer" courses (p. 94).

The paths introduced in the OSS:99 policy, which are still in place, were intended to end the overt practice of streaming based on perceived ability. Despite the intention, the underlying structure and biases that thwarted previous attempts to destream remain in place. Under the current structure, course selections made in Grade 8 for Grade 9, affect those made in later in high school, and in turn affect the postsecondary options available to students. Many students end up selecting most or all of their courses at the same level, resulting in what are essentially academic and non-academic "streams." Students are permitted to change streams in theory, but it is rare in practice: when asked in a survey how often students transfer from applied to academic streams, 47% of high-school principals responded "never" or "not very often" (People for Education, 2019). The sole prerequisite for Grade 10 academic math is Grade 9 academic math. The only way a student can transition from Grade 9 applied math to Grade 10 academic math is to take a designated transfer course or repeat Grade 9 math in the academic version (Ministry of Education, 2016; Deller & Tamburri, 2019).

Since the OSS:99 policy was introduced, Ontario researchers and journalists have called attention to the inequities it perpetuates. In 2014, People for Education released a report titled *Choosing Courses for Success in High School* (Gallagher-Mackay, 2014), which the *Toronto Star* reported on, saying, "the reality on the ground is that almost everyone involved in the school system — parents, students and teachers — still perceives this as an academic hierarchy" (Maharaj, 2014). Both People for Education and the *Toronto Star* article noted how low-income and racialized youth are disproportionately streamed into applied courses.

Seeing a need for change, some school boards have opted to break with the practice themselves. In 2017, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) — the largest school board in Canada — proposed a three-year plan to phase out streaming in Grades 9 and 10. The plan was called *Enhanced Pathways* and included 16 pilot projects across the TDSB. Around the same time, other provincial school boards (e.g., Limestone District School Board and Durham District School Board) began implementing destreaming pilots and evaluating their potential to improve student outcomes.

According to EQAO (2018), about 26% of Ontario students taking Grade 9 math took the applied version in 2017-18. This is down slightly from previous years – perhaps a result of media attention to the issue of streaming and schoolboard efforts to encourage academic pathways. It is also important to note that this percentage is province-wide, masking regional disparities in the distribution of students taking academic and applied.

In July of 2020, with the Black Lives Matter movement drawing international attention to issues of racial inequality and injustice, the Ontario government announced that it would end streaming in Grade 9, starting with the math curriculum in 2021 (Rushowy, 2020; Canadian Press, 2020). Until Ontario's destreaming policy is implemented in 2021, Ontario continues to be the only province in Canada to separate youth into academic and non-academic streams as early as Grade 9. Most others do so in Grade 10 or 11 (Ministry of Education, 2017).

Destreaming Research

Multiple Ontario governments have promised to destream secondary education and all have failed to deliver a more equitable solution in practice. With this in mind, this section briefly outlines international and local research to inform implementation planning and ongoing policy development.

International Research and Evidence

Researchers and practitioners around the world have long critiqued the practice of streaming on the grounds that it perpetuates inequities along race and class lines, as students placed in lower-ability streams encounter lower expectations and simplified curriculum (Rubin & Noguera, 2004; Oakes, 1985; Oakes, 2015). The OECD has advised member countries against streaming, given evidence that the practice negatively effects those from already disadvantaged backgrounds, stating "early student selection has a negative impact on students assigned to lower tracks and exacerbates inequities, without raising average performance" (OECD, 2012, p. 56). Speaking about the United States' version of the practice (called "tracking"), a professor at the University of California–San Diego explains: "once students are placed into low-ability groups, they get stuck there and are seldom promoted to high-ability groups. Such placement in vocational and nonacademic classes can trap ethnic- and linguistic-minority students, despite their achievements in school" (Mehan, 2015, pp. 75–76). Further, the achievement gap between students placed in higher-ability versus lower-ability courses widens over time in tracked settings (Gamoran & Mare, 1989), and students in lower-ability tracks fall further and further behind.

Researchers have also pointed to a "self-fulfilling prophecy," or the idea that as a result of being streamed into applied courses, students may internalize the idea that they are "an applied student," leading them to put less effort into their schoolwork and underperform. At the same time, teachers are also more likely to label students in the academic stream as "smarter, more capable, and more successful" (Kinnon, 2016; Tsuchida, 2016). The OECD has described this as a vicious cycle in the expectations of teachers and students, saying "[T]eachers can have lower expectations for some students, especially disadvantaged and/or low-performing ones, and assign them slower-paced and more fragmented instruction; and students adjust their expectations and efforts, which results in lower performance" (OECD, 2012). Ultimately, streaming practices often result in fundamentally different learning experiences for students, including lower-quality instruction (Bush, 2019).

Many schools and educators have explored alternatives to streaming or tracking, providing rigorous instruction for all students. Most successful examples have gone further than technical or structural adjustments (Mehan, 2015). As Oakes and Lipton (1992) note, "efforts to change a practice as deeply embedded as tracking necessarily address a broad array of normative and political concerns" (p. 454). Mehan (2015) adds: "detracking… involves a cultural change in educators' beliefs, attitudes, and values as well as changes in the curriculum and the organization of instruction" (p. 76). Detracking efforts must also reflect the unique circumstances of local communities. (Oakes & Lipton, 1992).

While there is no simple formula, some researchers in the United States have documented successful efforts to detrack. Mehan (2015) describes two such approaches tried in California, both at institutions which serve low-income and underserved students. The first is the Preuss School, which provides intensive college preparation for students in Grades 6–12. With a school year extended by 18 days, students have more time to meet the academic demands of the rigorous curriculum. Wraparound academic and social supports — e.g., local university students providing tutoring in class and after school, and advisory teachers acting as advocates/counsellors — ensure students succeed. Between 2004 and 2015, 82% of Preuss graduates enrolled at a four-year college. California College Preparatory Academy (or CAL Prep), is another example. CAL Prep's teachers engage in continuous professional learning with the aim of fostering a supportive professional community that embraces evidence-based interventions. Between 2005 and 2015, all graduates of CAL Prep were accepted to four-year colleges or universities.

Ending the practice of streaming not only pays off for individual students, the OECD argues, it benefits society as well. International evidence shows that the highest-performing educational systems are those that successfully combine quality and equity (OECD, 2012).

Ontario Research and Evidence

Evidence from the Ontario context supports the findings outlined above. According to data from the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), Ontario students in applied courses have historically demonstrated lower results on provincial assessments than their peers in academic courses. This is especially problematic given evidence that being in the applied stream can depress achievement: "Students with comparable academic backgrounds (i.e., similar scores, even poor scores on Grade 6 tests) are far more likely to do better in academic than applied courses" (People for Education, 2019, p. 9).

Data published for the 2017–18 school year shows that only 45% of students enrolled in the Grade 9 applied math course achieved a score at or above the provincial standard, compared with 84% of students in the academic course. And 90% of students in academic courses passed the Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (a prerequisite for a high-school diploma) compared with 39% of students in applied courses (EQAO, 2018).[1] Data from the Ontario School Information System, spanning 2010 to 2015, reveals about one-quarter (26%) of students who were enrolled in Grade 9 applied math or English/Français failed to graduate from high school within five years, as compared with 5% of students enrolled in academic courses. And Ontario's postsecondary application centre data reveals students in academic courses are more likely to attend postsecondary programs than those in applied courses. Even though applied courses are intended to lead to college as well as university, between 2010 and 2016, just 33% of students who took applied math and language courses in Grade 9 attended postsecondary directly after graduation, compared to 73% of students who took academic courses (Ministry of Education, 2017).

1 These percentages based on "students for whom there is work for both sessions of the administration of the OSSLT and who were assigned an achievement result (successful, not successful). Students who are not working toward an OSSD, those who were absent and those who were deferred are excluded" (EQAO, 2018).

TDSB data has consistently shown that racialized students, especially Black males and students from lower-income families, are more likely to enrol in applied courses, and students from wealthier families are more likely to enrol in the academic stream (Robson et al., 2019). A 2020 review of the Peel District School Board found many students felt they were "being mis-tracked by teachers because of teachers' perceptions about their ability based on their race." (Chadha et al., 2020, p. 12). Another Toronto study found that students in low-income, racialized neighbourhoods were not only more likely to be in applied courses, they were also unable to describe the difference between applied and academic courses. Students in wealthier neighbourhoods reported having access to more supports and information when making decisions about which courses to take (Polanyi et al., 2017). A study led by Social Planning Toronto, a non-profit community organization suggests that, even with complete information, Grade 8 is too early for students to make decisions that will affect their access to postsecondary education. The study explored families' perceptions of the course selection process. In interviews with students and parents, researchers found "students felt they didn't have the maturity in Grade 8 to make these decisions" (Social Planning Toronto, 2017).

The TDSB has argued that Ontario's system of academic and applied courses effectively establishes lower expectations for some students, particularly disadvantaged ones (TDSB, 2017). The board's research has shown that students in applied courses are less likely to graduate from high school than students in academic courses (Brown & Tam, 2017a). Of students who entered Grade 9 in 2006, 88% of those in academic programs graduated from high school by 2011 compared with 59% of those in applied courses; of students who entered Grade 9 in 2011, 93% of those in the academic stream graduated on time compared with 69% in the applied stream (Robson et al., 2019).

Moved by this evidence, several Ontario schools have piloted destreaming initiatives over the last decade. A team from the TDSB, led by Ramon San Vicente, reported on some of these initiatives in a 2015 report called *Sifting, Sorting, Selecting.* The following examples are paraphrased from that report.

Limestone District School Board, Kingston

Limestone's initiative offered only academic math to all Grade 9 students in the 2012–2013 school year. The academic math curriculum was delivered on alternate days, while students identified as requiring additional support took a math-focused general learning strategies course on opposite days. All students took an additional program teaching a growth mindset. After a period of five months, students and their families were given the option of continuing in the academic course or switching to applied. None chose to switch to the applied course. EQAO data revealed 89% of students involved met or exceeded the provincial standard; many of whom had not done so in Grade 6.

Winston Churchill Collegiate Institute, Toronto

Winston Churchill CI's initiative, introduced in 2013–2014, taught the academic level curriculum to a cohort of 17 students — most of whom were identified as having struggled or faced barriers with education in the past — in Grade 9 English, math, geography, science and French. The curriculum was adapted to an Africentric perspective. In total, 14 of the 17 students earned the academic English credit, and an average of eight students per course earned the academic credit in the remaining subjects. Teachers connected to the program stressed that success was tied to having a teacher with high expectations for all students, complemented with wraparound supports including a committed educational assistant.

C.W. Jefferys Collegiate Institute, Toronto

In the 2014–2015 school year, a cohort of 56 students was enrolled in academic Grade 9 English — 33 of the students had selected Grade 9 academic English on their Grade 8 course selection sheet, while the remaining 23 had selected Grade 9 applied English. All students were taught the academic curriculum, adapted to an Africentric perspective, in smaller-than-average classes and with extra supports (e.g., tutoring) provided. In the end, 54 out of the 56 students received the academic credit.

These pilots illustrate that with adequate structures and expectations in place, most students can achieve high academic standards.

Lessons from the Student Success Pathways Event

Over the course of the two-day *Student Success Pathways* event in December 2019, participants reflected on the history of destreaming efforts in Ontario, international and local evidence, and the urgent need to ensure more equitable opportunities for all students — something participants agreed is imminently doable.

While the Ontario government's recent policy announcement commits only to destreaming Grade 9 math beginning in the 2021–2022 school year, the conversation among practitioners at the *Pathways* event focused on destreaming both Grades 9 and 10. Participants also discussed other instances where students are separated based on perceived ability, for example, special education programming or French Immersion — instances which, if not carefully monitored and managed, could risk becoming new "streams" and undoing progress towards more equitable outcomes.

This section details some of the themes that emerged during the facilitated conversation between educators and administrators who attended the second day of the event. All participants were involved with student success initiatives, including: destreaming pilot projects; revising curriculum to be anti-racist, Afrocentric or

Indigenous; engaging teachers to examine their biases and privilege; and creating experiential learning opportunities.[2]

Inhibiting Factors

Event participants discussed challenges or factors that inhibited the success of their initiatives. A number of participants noted the difficulty of challenging a status quo supported by privileged perspectives and oppressive systems. Sustained systemic change, they argued, requires buy-in and often a shift in attitudes among leadership, educators and even students themselves.

Participants expressed concerns that destreaming in Ontario schools can seem stressful and unnecessary to some stakeholders, particularly teachers. Some participants shared anecdotes about teachers who, prior to seeing data from pilot initiatives, did not realize that the practice of streaming was actually depressing student outcomes — they were upset (if not resentful) to learn they were involved in perpetuating systemic inequities. In cases where teachers were not involved in discussions regarding local initiatives, strong resistance threatened to negatively affect the initiative's results. Teacher professional development and involvement, participants said, are essential to the success of any student success initiative, destreaming in particular.

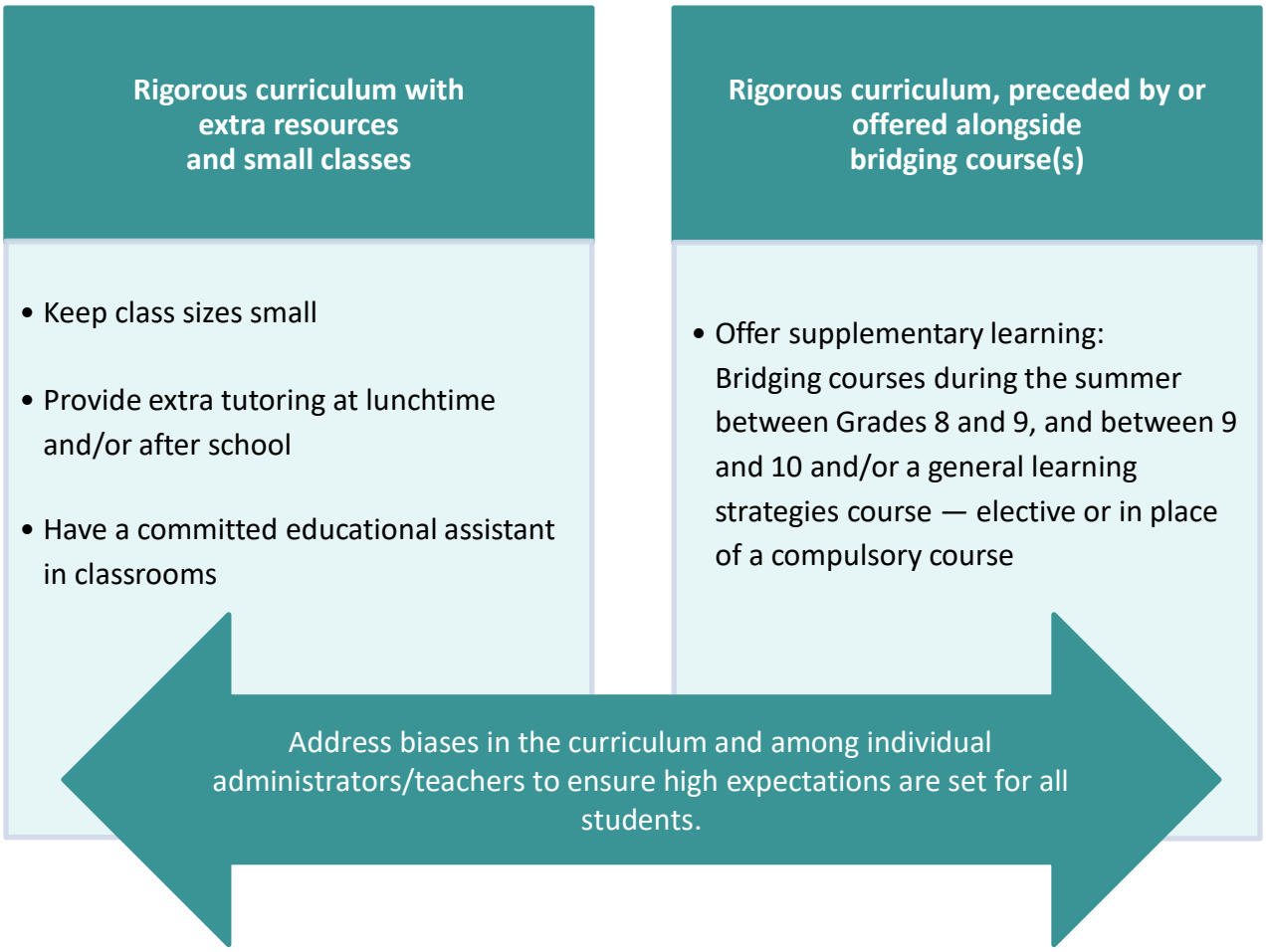
Enabling Factors

When asked about the factors enabling success for their initiatives, participants pointed to a commitment from leadership (at both the provincial and board level) to improve the status quo, with clearly articulated, ambitious goals, and the funding required to achieve them. They stressed the importance of reporting on progress toward goals — drawing on reliable data, including EQAO results, to measure and demonstrate effects, which helps build buy-in among stakeholders like educators and parents. Though most of their initiatives were aimed at supporting students who had historically been disadvantaged by the education system, all students ended up benefiting. Participants highlighted how important it is to share these results to win over potential detractors. They also called for professional development for teachers (including anti-racism and anti-oppression training) and consistent communication about implementation plans.

Some participants spoke about the importance of having models that they can learn from and replicate. With that in mind, the models below reflect the *Student Success Pathways* discussion and the research cited in the previous sections. In addition to informing local pilot initiatives, the models are intended to provide government with an idea of what successfully destreaming Grade 9 math and other subjects could look like. Both approaches set high expectations and provide rigorous instruction for all students. These two models do not represent the only options for Ontario students and schools; others may emerge as destreaming plans are established.

2 Participants were identified in media sources as having been or being involved with student success initiatives, recommended by other invitees (i.e., through snowball sampling) or recommended by HEQCO's partners at People for Education.

Figure 1: Models for destreaming in Ontario



Choosing and adapting an appropriate model will depend on factors such as whether the school operates with a semester system or an alternating daily schedule. Regardless of the approach selected, success will hinge on students having adequate resources to support learning (e.g., tutors or educational assistants), curriculum that is inclusive, and educators having unbiased beliefs.

Strategies for Successful Implementation

The models outlined above focus on the technical and structural elements of destreaming. Successfully implementing these and other models will require cultural shifts as well. The following strategies can help enable the aforementioned cultural shifts and ensure success with destreaming efforts.

Gather evidence and advice

Gathering evidence will help build buy-in, determine the best approach for a specific context, and support continuous improvement. Participants at *Student Success Pathways* were clear that initiatives like destreaming can gain stakeholder support — and increase odds of success — when reliable data such as course grades, pass rates, and EQAO test results are used to contextualize the problem(s) being addressed. This data will be most powerful if it can be disaggregated by demographic factors, including race. Indeed, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2009) encourages organizations to collect data that identifies people on the basis of Ontario Human Rights Code grounds such as race and disability for improvement purposes.

In addition to being informed, stakeholders should be consulted in order to understand their perceptions of the problem and which solutions or approaches are viable. Once a new approach is identified and changes are implemented, evaluation is essential for continuous improvement. Robust evaluations with clear research questions and appropriate indicators and measures will help ensure that the implementation of policies and initiatives remains on track and any unintended consequences are addressed as they arise.

Offer professional development

Teachers and administrators who will be involved in implementing a destreaming plan should be well prepared. Professional learning opportunities are integral to the sustained engagement of these stakeholders during times of change. Destreaming pilots revealed that professional development sessions should:

- Make transparent why the government is enacting a destreaming policy, and explain how the practice of streaming has negatively affected students (provincially and locally).
- Make the benefits of destreaming transparent (i.e., explain how this will support improvements in student achievement).
- Create space for debate and informed dissent to help make sense of the changes and underlying assumptions.
- Explore instructional strategies, such as differentiated instruction and Universal Design for Learning.
- Provide resources that can be drawn upon/adapted for individual use (e.g., teaching plans).
- Examine biases (more details below).
- Provide opportunities for collaboration, discussion and reflection.

Examine biases

It is important that we acknowledge and address the biases and power influences that have historically translated into advantages or disadvantages for students. Professional development should include anti-racism/anti-oppression training for teachers and administrators. And, as the Grade 9 math curriculum undergoes changes for the purpose of destreaming, the Ministry of Education should explore opportunities to design a more inclusive curriculum, decentering the dominant culture. The same should be done for other subjects over time.

Conclusion

The current government's decision to end streaming in Grade 9, beginning with math, is a good first step. If informed by the wealth of research on destreaming and implemented to reflect the models and strategies described above, the decision will benefit all students, including those who have been historically disadvantaged by the education system. But Ontario should not stop there. The government should commit to destreaming all core subjects in Grades 9 and 10 so that all students have the full range of Grade 11 course offerings available to them. And, to ensure success, the province and school boards should commit to thoughtful and thorough evaluation. The participants at *Student Success Pathways* who were involved with pilot initiatives reinforce the point: they shared data to demonstrate how their initiatives were working, where improvements were being made, and unexpected outcomes (positive and negative) that would have gone undetected without an evaluation. Evaluations may also reveal other opportunities to support achievement and access to postsecondary education among underrepresented groups.

The participants at *Student Success Pathways* inspired us with their passion, dedication to students and willingness to challenge the status quo. With partners in the sector, HEQCO will continue creating space for schools and school boards to share learnings from their local experiences with destreaming and other student success initiatives; as experience and research suggests, equity initiatives require the long-term engagement of dedicated people. With a better understanding of past efforts and effective models, and with a commitment to working together, government, researchers, educators and administrators can help attain more equitable educational outcomes for all Ontario students.

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