

Pathways to Education  
Program Status Report  
January 2009

Pathways to Education™ has moved ahead strongly in advancing our mission to reduce poverty and its effects by helping youth in low-income communities to graduate from high school and move on to post-secondary education. The dropout rate is a major cause of poverty in society. Pathways is successfully demonstrating that the cycle of poverty can be broken in families and in communities by the application of Pathways' comprehensive, community-based, and results-focused approach.

Five new Pathways sites were launched in the fall of 2007. We now have the initial results from the first year of the new sites showing significant improvement in all key performance measures. There is also significant new data from the Regent Park program.

In the new Pathways sites, initial results (detailed below) show:

- A significant reduction in the proportion of students academically at-risk of dropping out.
- A significant reduction in students with high rates of absenteeism.
- A significant increase in both the number of students enrolled and in the number enrolled as a percentage of the total number of eligible students.

### Part I. First Year Results from New Pathways Programs

In September 2007, Pathways expanded the program which had begun in Toronto's Regent Park community. Five new sites were launched. Below are the initial results from the first year of the new sites.

#### A. Significant Reduction in the Proportion of Grade 9 Students at the New Pathways Sites Who Are Academically At-Risk

Grade 9 students are considered to be academically 'at risk' when the number of credits earned is 6 or fewer. Credits compared to the pre-Pathways rate is a key success metric.

**First year results:** There was a significant reduction in 'at risk' students who are in the Pathways program compared to Grade 9 students from the same community in the year immediately prior to Pathways.

Pathways Program Location	% of Grade 9 Students Academically 'At Risk' <u>Before</u> Pathways (Baseline Historical)	% of Grade 9 Students Academically "At Risk" <u>After</u> Year One in the Pathways Program	% Reduction in Grade 9 Students Academically "At Risk"
Toronto (Lawrence Heights)	38.5	18.5	-52%
Toronto (Rexdale)	35	20.8	-41%
Kitchener	29.5	22.8	-23%
Ottawa	35.6	25	-30%
Toronto (Regent Park)	42	21.2	-50%
Montreal	In Quebec, "Secondary 1" high school begins in Grade 7 and no credits are given. Pathways cannot quantify and compare credits earned until Grade 8.		

\*The results from the Regent Park program are included here as a comparison for the new sites.

**Comments on the Results:**

- *The number of students in these communities deemed 'at-risk' has been dramatically reduced. This demonstrates that Pathways' outstanding results of Regent Park can be replicated in other communities.*
- *With the help of Pathways, hundreds of young people are making measurable progress toward lifting themselves and their families out of poverty by doing well in high school.*
- *These students are also paving the way for their future success in college or university.*

**B. Significant Reduction in Students at the New Pathways Sites with High Rates of Absenteeism**

A high rate of absenteeism is a major risk factor for a student becoming a dropout. Research indicates that students who are absent 15% or more of the time are at especially high risk of dropping out. Therefore, the reduction in high rates of absenteeism compared to pre-Pathways data is a key metric of success.

**First year results:** There was a significant reduction in Grade 9 students with high rates of absenteeism (>15%) who are in Pathways compared to Grade 9 students from the same community in the year immediately prior to Pathways.

Percentage of Grade 9 Students with High Rates of Absenteeism (>15%)			
Pathways Program Location	<u>Before</u> Pathways (Baseline Historical)	<u>After</u> Year One in the Pathways Program	% Reduction
Toronto (Lawrence Heights)	14.3	8.1	-43%
Toronto (Rexdale)	13.0	8.3	-36%
Kitchener	13.2	10.1	-23%
Ottawa	10.0	4.2	-58%
Toronto (Regent Park) *	24.4	15.3	-37%

\*The results from the Regent Park program are included here as a comparison for the new sites.

**Comments on the Results:**

- *High absenteeism is a major factor in failure in school and relegates many young people to lives of low-income and poverty.*
- *By making such improvements in attendance, these low-income students are proving that they are just as eager to learn as anyone else.*
- *All they need are supports such as those provided by Pathways.*

### C. Significant Increase in Student Enrollment in the New Pathways Sites

The new Pathways sites are meeting their growth goals for participation. Together they have enrolled 81% of the geographically eligible youth. This is a clear demonstration of community buy-in from students and parents. The table below provides data on the numbers of eligible young people in each community and the number enrolled in Pathways.

Pathways Program Location	Number of Students in 2007/08 School Year	Number of Students Presently Enrolled (as of October 31, 2008)	% Increase	Enrollment as a % of total number of eligible students <sup>1</sup>
Toronto (Lawrence Heights)	66	173	+162%	91%
Toronto (Rexdale)	72	165	+129%	81%
Kitchener	100	265	+165%	87%
Ottawa	77	150	+95%	79%
Montreal	66	115	+74%	65%
<b>Total for New Sites</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>868</b>	<b>+128% (for new sites)</b>	<b>81% (for the new programs)</b>
Toronto (Regent Park)	850	852	Now at Full Capacity	Regent Park has enrolled 92% of eligible students

<sup>1</sup> Eligible students are those who reside in the geographical catchment area established by Pathways at each site.

Note: In the new Ontario sites (Toronto, Ottawa, Kitchener), only Grade 9 students participated in the 2007/08 school year, and Grade 9 & 10 in the 2008/09 school year. In the new Montreal site, only Grade 7 students participated in the 2007/08 school year, and Grades 7 & 8 in the 2008/09 school year. The Regent Park program is fully operating with students in Grades 9-12.

#### Comments on the Results:

- *Young people and their families are responding to the opportunity that Pathways offers.*
- *In the next 4 years Pathways programs will grow to over 5,000 students.*
- *That's 5,000 citizens, and 5,000 future families, who will be lifted out of poverty because they had the opportunity for a solid education.*
- *Most of those 5,000 young people will go on to university, college, or skills training programs and will contribute significantly to Canada's labour force.*
- *Most of the 5,000 young people are from visible minority communities, and are the first generation in their family to attend post-secondary education. This contributes tremendously to social equality in Canada.*

## Part II. Continued Success in the Regent Park Program

**Significant New Regent Park Data.** The Pathways program in Regent Park is now in its 8<sup>th</sup> year. It continues to be remarkably successful.

- 8 years ago the dropout rate in Regent Park was 56%. It is now below 10%.
- 462 young people in Regent Park have now gone through the Pathways program and completed high school.
- 367 of those high school graduates (80%) have gone on to post-secondary education. These young people will have the education they need to succeed in our society and lift themselves and their families out of poverty.
- Over 80% of those going on to post-secondary are the first in their family to do so.
- The attrition rate for Pathways students in university is 1.8%—well below the 16% average.<sup>1</sup>
- The attrition rate for Pathways students in college is 9.3%—well below the 25% average.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Attrition rates as reported by Statistics Canada in November 2008

### **About Pathways for Education – [www.pathwaystoeducation.ca](http://www.pathwaystoeducation.ca)**

Pathways to Education Canada is a community-based charitable organization that is reducing poverty and its effects by lowering the dropout rate and increasing access to post-secondary education among disadvantaged youth.

Pathways was developed by the Regent Park Community Health Centre which launched the initial program in 2001 and now operates in six communities, with programs in Toronto (Regent Park, Lawrence Heights, and Jamestown), as well as Kitchener, Ottawa and Montreal.

### **For more information, please contact:**

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