

Graduation rate of HDSB students exceeds provincial average

By Tim Whitnell
Metroland Media Group

The graduation rate of students within the Halton District School Board exceeds the provincial average.

The Halton District School Board's graduation rate for students in 2014 (Grade 9 students who enrolled in 2009-10) is 88 per cent compared to the Ontario average of 84 per cent.

The board says its grad rate has increased annually over the last four years.

When considering students that graduated or were still enrolled in a fifth year of high school, the percentage rises to 96.2 for the 2009-10 Grade 9 cohort.

"It is gratifying to Halton District School Board staff and our school communities that the graduation rate of our students continues on an upward trajectory," Stuart Miller, associate director of education for the Halton public board, said in a press release.

"Students deserve credit for their response to increased demands and accessing enhanced supports. Concerted efforts by teachers and, in par-

ticular, specific actions such as the board's re-engagement strategy have helped students achieve success," he added.

Last week, for the first time, the Ontario government published school board graduation rates from across the province.

The ministry's method for calculating the grad rate is based on a cohort approach, which measures the percentage of students who graduated within five years after starting Grade 9.

Graduates are defined as students who have successfully completed all requirements to earn a secondary school diploma.

Students require 30 credits (18 compulsory and 12 optional), success in a mandatory literacy test and a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement activities in order to graduate.

Overall in Ontario, the rate of students graduating within five years of starting high school is 16 percentage points higher than in 2004. The Halton board says approximately 163,000 more students have graduated in Ontario than would have if the graduation rate had remained at the 2004 level.



Beginning May 1 the Town, in partnership with ActiVan, will launch a Youth Taxi Scrip Pilot Project that allows registered youths to take cabs in Halton Hills from participating taxi companies for half price. The Town will pick up the tab for the other half of the fare. On hand to announce the program Wednesday were from left: Lisa Leblanc and John McKee of McKab Taxi, Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette, Arshad Muhammad of G-Town Taxi, Rick Wood of E-Z Taxi and ActiVan co-ordinator Deanna Hoffman. Photo by Lisa Tallyn

Town, local taxi services to launch Youth Taxi Scrip Pilot Project

By Lisa Tallyn
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Starting next month, area youth (aged 13 to 19) will be able to take a taxi within Halton Hills at a 50 per cent savings.

The discounted rate is made possible through the Town's Youth Taxi Scrip Pilot Program in partnership with ActiVan, which launches May 1 as part of Recreation and Parks Youth Week Celebrations. Youth must be registered with the program to get the discounted rate.

Registered youths will be able to purchase a Youth Taxi Scrip Coupon Book at either the Acton or Georgetown Library or Gellert Community Centre. They will pay only \$10 for the book that has a \$20 face value and be allowed to buy four books a month. Each book contains 20 \$1 coupons.

When the youths want to take a taxi somewhere in town they call

one of the participating taxi companies— E-Z Taxi, G-Town Taxi or McKab Taxi. The youths must provide the taxi driver with their registration card when they are picked up.

Half of each ride under the Youth Taxi Scrip program will be billed to the Town. The youth rider will pay the full fare showing on the meter with the coupons. Just like any taxi ride, youths will be able to share cabs and the fee will only be charged for the trip, not the number of riders.

In announcing the program yesterday (Wednesday), Mayor Rick Bonnette said hopefully it will help area youths get to dances, work and various other locations in the community, and also help parents who drive their kids.

"I think this program will meet the required transportation needs of our town's youth," said Bonnette.

He added through the Mayor's

Youth Action Committee he has heard area youth complain they don't have a way to get around in the community and the need for a program like this was identified in the Halton Hills Youth Study. Bonnette said offering the program is one more stepping stone to demonstrate it's a youth friendly community. Last year the Town received the platinum Youth Friendly Community Builder award from Play Works.

The Town has set aside \$10,000 for the pilot program.

A monthly review of the program will be emailed to the mayor and councillors outlining monthly registration, sales and ridership usage, and at the completion of the project staff will report back to Council.

Youth can pre-register for the program starting Monday (April 20) at www.haltonhills.ca/transit/youthTaxiScrip.php

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