



Formula for Success

In the waning days of the school year, Grade 11 student Hannah Fricker proudly declares that she's an A student.

That's a particularly significant accomplishment considering how the year began. Trouble at home led her to drop out of school for some time, jeopardizing her academic year. When she returned, the high school environment wasn't working for her.

Her path changed when she joined the PVNC Centre for Success program at Fleming College, which partners with Holy Cross and St. Peter Catholic secondary schools in Peterborough and St. Thomas Aquinas CSS in Lindsay at the college's Frost Campus. Durham College also hosts the program in partnership with St. Stephen CSS in Bowmanville.

Under the guidance of teacher Jeannie Heffernan, Hannah recouped the credits she was in jeopardy of losing and brought her grade average to above the 80% mark. Instead of looking at a future where graduation was in question, Hannah is now

planning what college courses she'd like to take after Grade 12.

"I'm on a much better path, that's for sure. This program has really helped out. If I hadn't got into this program, I probably would not have gone back to school," she said.

The Centre for Success program offers the most at-risk and disengaged students an alternative setting to complete their secondary school diploma requirements while getting a taste of college life and a chance to earn a dual credit.

Fricker said the college campus experience and the individualized course work appealed to her.

"You have a bit of freedom, but you also have more responsibility as well," she said. "It's teaching you how to do your own work in your own life. It's up to you to do it."

In late June, a completion ceremony was held at both Durham and Fleming colleges celebrating this year's batch of graduates from the program. The Board's 2014-2015 graduation rate for the Center for Success programs was 90%.

"What's that magic ingredient that seems to click in and make them think I can do this? I'm not sure what that is, but it seems to work," teacher Jeannie Heffernan said.

"Kids come out here and they have experienced some setbacks and hopefully they can see a renewed chance to achieve again. I think they feel more adult-like and they feel it's time to step up."

Fricker said she planned to attend the Fleming completion ceremony to support her classmates. She feels confident she'll be on the stage next year headed for post-secondary school, something that seemed so far out of the question earlier this year.

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- Graduation rate for the
PVNC Centre for Success
Programs