



The Canadian Academy of
Travel & Tourism:

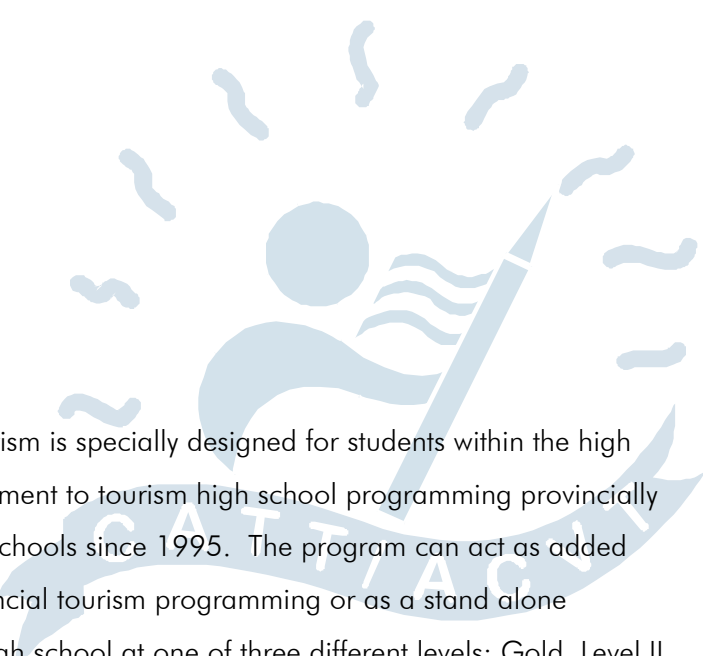
a focus on

Haliburton Highlands Secondary School

Haliburton, Ontario



CATT Background



The Canadian Academy of Travel & Tourism is specially designed for students within the high school system as an introduction and/or enrichment to tourism high school programming provincially and territorially. It has operated in Canadian schools since 1995. The program can act as added value or enrichment to existing local and provincial tourism programming or as a stand alone course/credit. CATT can be introduced in a high school at one of three different levels: Gold, Level II and Level I.

CATT aims to promote the national importance of tourism among young people, to highlight the career opportunities in tourism and to develop skills through national standardized learning outcomes associated with curriculum learning activity sets for educators to use academically and experientially in their high schools.

Its mission is to introduce and promote careers in the tourism industry while students pursue their high school studies. Students enrolled in the program follow regular high school curriculum with a “specialization” in tourism. Academy students demonstrate learning outcomes referenced to the National Occupational Standards for Transferable Skills established by the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council, the Employability Skills 2000+ assembled by the Conference Board of Canada and Human Resource and Social Development Essential Skills.

Canadian Academy of Travel & Tourism: A Case Study

The following is an in-depth look at the Academy Gold-level program independently run within a secondary school setting. With a commitment to tourism studies and exploring careers in the industry, each Academy program is a unique operation, flavoured by the culture and the spirit of the surrounding community.

The School and the Community

Haliburton Highlands Secondary School is located in the town of Haliburton at the centre of Haliburton County in south-central Ontario. With a student body of 600, the school draws its population from the towns of Haliburton and Minden, as well as many smaller communities and rural homes within a vast area of 4,500 square km. The town lies about 200 km north of the Greater Toronto Area. The scenic rolling landscape is largely made up of lakes and forests and due to its proximity to Toronto is one of the most popular tourism areas in eastern Canada.

Traditionally, the Haliburton County economy was based on logging, mining, and agriculture, but today it is dominated by tourism. Although there are year-round opportunities for tourism, summer cottagers make up the bulk of the visitors. The winter population of 17,000 grows to 65,000 during the summer months and almost 50% of the jobs available in the county are in the tourism sector. The seasonal employment profile has had a negative effect on the region's economy, with the unemployment rate rising to 35% in the winter months, and 41% of households earning less than \$29,000 per year.

Despite these economic challenges, the percentage of students graduating from high school in Haliburton County is nearly equal to the provincial average, the percentage graduating from post-secondary education lags the average by only 10%, and the percentage of graduates who complete a trade certificate is higher than the provincial average. The local school board, along with provincial and federal government agencies, recognizes the unique nature of the local economy and is working to develop programs that will give students the skills they need to succeed in the top tourism positions available in the area. The CATT Gold School Program is one of the key pieces of this plan.

Haliburton Highlands Secondary School became involved in the CATT Gold School Program in 2005, the same year it began to offer its own Hospitality and Tourism high school major. The program has quickly become popular, and today 110 of the 600 students in the school are enrolled.

Community and Industry Involvement

To accommodate the large number of visitors to the area, there are many tourist facilities including lodges, motels, bed and breakfasts, arenas, and conference centres. The area is popular not only for tourism, but also for competitions, conferences, and other major events. The area has attracted a large number of high profile events including the G-8 economic summit, the Ontario Seniors Winter Olympics, the National Whitewater

Canoe and Kayak Championships, and some events in the 2015 Pan American Games. These special events give students unique opportunities for work placements and part-time jobs, along with a chance to witness the impact of major events on their community. Current local tourism news and tracking the progress of major upcoming events are an important part of the curriculum.

The CATT Gold School program co-ordinator and local industry in Haliburton County are well aware of the challenges and opportunities linked to an economy based on tourism. They are working together to develop new strategies that will ensure that local young people will have the skills, certification, and hand-on experience needed to maximize their opportunities. Many local businesses recognize that young area residents with tourism knowledge and practical experience are a valuable source of potential employees for their facilities.

- **Pinestone Resort and Conference Centre** A large number of Academy students complete work placements at the Pinestone. Management at the resort have worked with program administrators to maximize this experience. Resort staff takes students on orientation tours and provide regular seminars on the workings of the resort and conference centre. Rather than spending their entire placement in one position, CATT Gold students at the Pinestone rotate through all of the departments, working in food and beverage, front desk, housekeeping, and conference planning.
- **Service Groups** Service groups including the Rotary Club and Lions Club have been very receptive to the CATT program and recently provided a subsidy to help a small group of Academy students attend the International Students Conference in Winnipeg.
- **Charitable Events** Academy coordinators work closely with a number of local organizations in planning, promoting, and running charitable events. Event organizers welcome the students' involvement because of their skill and enthusiasm, and Academy students are given an opportunity to see the community support network in action while completing the volunteer requirements of the CATT Gold School Program.

Government Involvement and Support

The CATT program has benefited from a number of provincial and federal government initiatives aimed at promoting travel and tourism training and improving the local economy.

Haliburton County Development Corporation (HCDC)

The Haliburton County Development Corporation is a not-for-profit organization funded in part by the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario. The HCDC mandate is to promote and develop a stronger economy in the community by supporting businesses and creating full-time jobs. Tourism is one of the most important sectors supported by the HCDC. The group was instrumental in assisting Haliburton Highlands Secondary School in preparing their initial application for the CATT Gold School program and they continue to provide support in locating and filling work placements.

The CATT Gold School Program was introduced into Haliburton Highlands Secondary School at a time when the Ontario Ministry of Education was introducing two new initiatives that have given the program a major boost, the Dual Credit Program and the Specialist High Major Program.

Dual Credit Program

The Dual Credit program gives secondary school students an opportunity to begin a community college education while they are still in Grade 12. Under the program, students from selected courses complete one of their Grade 12 credits through a community college. When students have completed the course, they receive their high school credit plus half a credit from the participating college. The Ontario Ministry of Education picks up the cost of the college half credit.

Not only do students have the opportunity to apply what they have learned in the CATT program, they also develop a new appreciation for the value of the program and for the skills and experience they have gained. Once they have spent some time on campus, the high school students overcome any doubts they may have had about college life.

The Haliburton Highlands Secondary School CATT Gold School Program works along with the Hospitality Program at Fleming College in Peterborough, and students complete a half course in Culinary Arts, along with one of their Academy credits. Since Peterborough is approximately one and a half hours away from Haliburton, the college and school have worked out an arrangement where the first week of the course is spent in classes on campus in Peterborough. College life is introduced through tours and seminars and working along with full-time college students. After the first week, the culinary arts professor travels to Haliburton and holds classes in the commercial kitchen at the school. The final week of classes and exams are held back at the main college campus in Peterborough.

The Specialist High School Major Program

Over the past few years, educators in Ontario have moved away from strictly academic studies and toward essential skills outcomes that give students hands-on experience and transferable skills. Specialist courses include bundles of eight to ten courses completed in Grades 11 and 12. Hospitality and Tourism is one of the 19 careers included in the program. The CATT Gold School program at Haliburton High School has received full support from the local board of education since it fits in perfectly with this Ministry of Education initiative.

Ontario Tourism Education Training – OTEC

Haliburton teachers in the CATT Gold School rely on the expertise and materials provided by the CTHRC and OTEC, Ontario's connection to the federal agency and industry representatives. OTEC Super Host and Service Excellence training are both included in the Haliburton Program.

School Staff Involvement

Because of the high percentage of students involved in the CATT / Hospitality and Tourism program, six teachers teach travel and tourism full-time and nearly the entire staff of 40 takes part in the program in some way. School administrators, teachers and guidance counsellors all recognize the importance of the program and readily incorporate Academy learning modules into their curricula. The school is well equipped with shops and a

commercial kitchen and Academy students have the opportunity to work and complete certificate requirements in a familiar but realistic setting.

CATT Gold School Programming and the Curriculum

Haliburton Highlands staff are experts at developing curriculum and projects that fulfill CATT Gold School requirements and strengthen essential skills while bringing academic subjects to life.

There are tourism components to almost every course in the school, from culinary arts to geography units on careers in tourism, to writing a brochure on a local bed and breakfast in Grade 11 English and a magazine-style travel article in Grade 12 English. Many of the projects completed include important aspects of several subjects and essential skills. These projects and their topics often increase in complexity as students build skills and experience.

Event Planning

To complete the CATT Gold requirements in Event Planning, Grade 11 and 12 students plan two-week vacations. In Grade 11, they plan a vacation in Ontario including deciding on a destination and route, working out an itinerary, researching and choosing historical, environmental, and recreational stops along the way, and selecting hotels and restaurants.

Working on the skills base developed in Grade 11, Grade 12 students are required to plan a two-week vacation in Europe. With this project, the teacher presents the students with a scenario including budget, a destination country, and a description of the group travelling: a family of four, two seniors, three young friends, etc. The students are required to plan a trip, but this time working within a budget. Once completed, students select a format to present their plan. The plan may be presented as an oral presentation, PowerPoint presentation, brochure, or written report.

The main focus of the project is completion of the CATT requirements in Event Planning, in a format that is challenging but rewarding. Students participating in the project come away with greater knowledge of their province and the world. The Event Planning project strengthens academic skills in a number of areas including Geography, English, Computer use, and Mathematics. At the same time, Academy students bolster a number of essential skills that are necessary for a successful tourism career, from time management to budgeting, through problem solving and scheduling skills.

This type of project is typical of the Haliburton Highlands Secondary School approach to tourism education. It reflects the goals of the CATT Gold School Program — to provide the focused skills and hands-on experience necessary in a tourism career while strengthening the essential skills that the program graduate will need to succeed in other careers and in life.