

Dixie Chrysler



Dominic Salvatore, the Service Manager at Brennan's Dixie Chrysler, remembers what it was like when he tried to get training as an automotive service technician. "It wasn't easy then, and it isn't easy today," he said. Today, Dominic is in a position to offer training opportunities to young people in his own shop, and he provides co-operative education placements to Bramalea Secondary School students every semester.

Peel students have worked at Dixie Chrysler for over 15 years, and during that time almost every student has had a positive experience. "Most of the students we've had were serious about learning and anxious to get right into it," Dominic said. "They arrive on time in the morning ready to work, and we're happy to have them."

For the first few weeks of a student placement, Dixie Chrysler exposes each young person to all of its automotive service departments, including transmission, tune-up, alignment, and air conditioning. Once a student indicates a specific area of interest, he or she (one of their best high school secondary students ever was female) receives an opportunity to spend more time in that particular department.

This business – school board partnership benefits all parties. Students get a chance to register as apprentices under the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program and stay engaged in learning. Schools can offer a meaningful pathway to the workplace, and the employer gets immediate assistance and a source of committed long-term employees. Dominic reports that Dixie Chrysler has kept on at least 10 secondary school students as apprentices after high school graduation. Three of his current 19 technicians are past OYAP students, and he has recommended several other students to other dealerships.

"It's our belief that if you treat people right, and provide a safe and supportive work environment, they will become loyal workers and good employees," said Dominic, and the proof is clear to see at Dixie Chrysler.