

UPDATE ON THE STRATEGIC PLANNING & RENEWAL PROCESS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report, the first of a series of three which will come before the Board, provides an overview of the processes which have successfully engaged the system, the population results consistent with the Vision which will guide our strategies, and the work in identifying a data development agenda to support the meaningful use of data in the adoption of a Results Based Accountability framework. Sample templates, using available baseline data, will be used to highlight the approach used.

The second report in the series will provide outcome measures identified to support the population results, and will identify anticipated targets, and projections, where sufficient data permits, and describe the broad strategic directions that have been identified by staff, supported by the guidance and contribution of trustees, and other HCDSB stakeholders.

The culminating report, to come before the Board prior to the end of June, 2010, will identify the strategies proposed that will enable the system to make progress towards our identified long-term results guided by our mission and Vision. While the strategic plan adopts a multi-year approach, and the outcome measures identified will present long-term targets, a detailed plan of action will be presented for the 2010-2011 school year.

PURPOSE:

To provide Trustees with an update on the progress to date of the Strategic Planning and Renewal Process.

BACKGROUND:

On September 15, 2009, the Board of Trustees approved a renewed Vision, and further directed by resolution, *“that staff communicate this Vision to all system stakeholders, and engage all our partners in dialogue that will lead to a process of active renewal and strategic planning guided by our Mission and Vision.”*

Subsequently, staff presented Trustees with Staff Report 9.1, Strategic Planning Renewal Process, at the Regular Board Meeting of October 6, 2009, which described, in some detail, a process for communication and community engagement, culminating in a multi-year strategic plan.

A follow up Information Report 10.3, Strategic Planning Renewal Process, provided an update regarding initiatives undertaken as part of Phase One of the consultative process, a summary of the common threads emerging, and an overview of the Results and Accountability (RBA) Framework, and indicating that a comprehensive framework outlining a multi-year strategic plan will be brought forward for the approval of the Board in June, 2010.

In order to move from Vision to action, the strategic planning process has involved ongoing opportunities to engage system stakeholders, through consultative sessions and surveys.

Simultaneously, developmental work has been undertaken by four staff working committees, each exploring a priority area of focus, to develop solid, reliable indicators and measures which can be used to support system priorities. Such indicators and measures are intended to ensure that our effectiveness is defined not only by efforts, activities, and initiatives (performance measures), but also by results (outcome measures).

At the meeting of the Board on February 2, 2010 a second Information Report on the status of the SPRP was presented to trustees. The key highlights of that report included the following:

- A summary of the results of the “Visioning I” Activity that was completed by over 60 internal and external groups. The results demonstrated common themes that had emerged from responses related to each of 4 key statements selected from the Board’s new Vision Statement
- The establishment of a Board SPRP steering committee and the role of this committee in leading the 4 key priority focus areas in the SPRP
- The presentation of a Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework which would govern the identification of:
 - Outcomes that clearly articulate the results we are trying to achieve;
 - Indicators to measure whether or not population results have been achieved;
 - Data collection instruments to regularly obtain indicator data;
 - Periodic collection and analysis of data for internal decision making and public reporting.

The adoption of the RBA framework is critical to the process that has been established to engage the system in developing a broadly shared picture of what system wide results are important, and what strategies are required to achieve them. The use of evidence to inform decision making has become increasingly prevalent in the context of Board improvement planning and in supporting student learning and professional practice.

The working assumption throughout the strategic planning process has been that evidence-informed decision making is to be the standard approach in all aspects of organizational planning and systemic improvement efforts, and that the focus on measurable outcomes will both increase accountability for results, and also support the development of operational strategies that are targeted and effective. While rich data sources are available to support results and outcomes linked to student achievement, objective measures for other areas have not necessarily been available. Proxy measures (based on experience) have been identified as place holders; while we work to collect data that will help us track our progress. An important aspect or consequence of selecting indicators is the creation of a Data Development Agenda, a prioritized list of where we need new or improved data. A data development agenda will be constructed to ensure that our Board’s approach to strategic planning and goal setting is consistent with the Results Based Accountability.

With the RBA framework, the starting point of the process is the identification of broad result statements, tied to specific populations. This was the primary focus of the second phase of public consultation. As reported earlier, the process focused on the aspirational elements of the Vision. While the first phase provided an environmental scan of our current strengths and challenges, the second phase was an invitation to both internal and external community stakeholders to engage in activities that would assist with the Board’s preferred future for our students, staff, and schools. The process would begin to identify the individual contributions that each group could make to support and sustain our progress in attaining our Vision statement.

Visioning II Activity

In total, 118 groups were invited to participate in what was known as the “Visioning II activity- Where do we want to be?” (See attached, Appendix A). The groups invited to participate included:

- All 50 elementary and secondary school staff
- All 50 elementary and secondary Catholic school Councils
- 8 Secondary school Student councils
- All 7 of the Board’s Collective Bargaining Units
- Halton Deanery
- CPIC
- SEAC
- 3 Open Public regional Sessions
- 115 of the 118 invited participant groups engaged in and submitted responses for the “Visioning II” activity.

Results of the Visioning II Activity

In total 728 result statements were collected via the “Visioning II” activity. In many cases the result statements submitted contained numerous suggested results. Through a thematic analysis of all result statements 18 banner statements were identified (*listed in left-hand column in Appendix A*).

Each of the banner statements identified below reflects the essence of a collection of result statements submitted through the Vision activity. In each case we used a minimum cut point of at least 50 references to a particular term (or synonym) before a theme was identified. In some cases, the actual banner statements reflect the suggested result statement in its entirety. In other cases, through discussions with the Strategic Planning subcommittee members the banner statements were developed and refined to reflect a common understanding.

In keeping with the RBA framework, the result statements are crafted as conditions of well-being for students, staff and families of the Halton Catholic Community.

In each case, the broad result statements are linked to theoretical or experiential indicators that represent general “look fors” that would be visible and recognizable if the result is achieved (*listed in right-hand column in Appendix A*). The language used here is drawn from the submissions provided through the trustee consultation process and the Visioning II Activity. It is worthy to note that across literally hundreds of submissions, reflecting the sentiment and reflection of thousands of members of the HCDSB community, there is a very high level of consistency regarding the way in which we see ourselves in the future, and the language that is used to describe it. In short, this process confirms that while individuals inevitably vary in detail, the desired results as we pursue our Vision were expressed very consistently by all members of our community, regardless of group. This reinforces the fact that the Vision has aptly captured the common aspirations of the community, and lays a solid foundation as we move the system from Vision to action.

Linking Results to Outcome Measures to Targets

The discernment of result statements and the identification of indicators are necessary process steps in the development of outcome and performance measures to provide a basis for assessing whether or not results are being achieved and having their intended impact. Our Research and Development department has been working with these result statements, identifying existing and potential data sources that serve to accurately reflect a baseline in terms of our current status. For each outcome measure we need to create a baseline. Baselines ideally have two parts: a historical part that tells us where we have been (provided data is readily available); and a forecast part that identifies a projected target. Baselines enable us to define success as turning the curve towards defined targets that are both realistic yet ambitious to move the system forward.

As strategies to address specific results are developed, and implemented, the measures will also provide a structure for meaningful reporting to the Board, and to the community regarding our progress, and will support purposeful discussion regarding necessary adjustments in strategy and approach in response to changing circumstances or information. Attached is a sample of the kind of summary reporting, consistent with RBA methodology, that are being developed to support each strand within the strategic plan

Next Steps

- Staff will continue to identify measurable indicators – for each result, there needs to be a set of indicators that reflect the extent to which the result is being achieved. Ideally, we are looking to identify 3 to 5 measurable indicators for each of the 18 result statements. *The proposed measurable indicators, either performance measures or outcome measures, will be addressed as part of the Staff Report for June 1st regular board meeting.*
- Staff will continue to create the Data Development Agenda – a detailed prioritized list of where we need new or improved data. This will enable us to move toward more objective measures of all our result statements. *The Data Development Agenda will be addressed as part of the Staff Report for June 1st regular board meeting.*
- Staff will continue to map out and develop individual summary “Turning the Curve” report cards for each of the result statements. Refer to attached template (Appendix B) as an example of the components to be included in each report card: Outcome statement, Indicators, Baseline data available, Stories behind the baseline (analysis of trend data), Partners with a role to play, What works to turn the curve, what does the research tell us?, Monitoring and Evaluation – How will we know we are making a difference? *This will be addressed as part of the Action Report for the June 15th regular board meeting.*
- Most importantly, staff will continue to develop strategies and approaches to support the achievement of the desired results identified, reflective of the Board’s Vision.

CONCLUSION

The strategic planning process was developed to accomplish multiple goals. The plan will serve to provide greater clarity and focus to system efforts and initiatives allowing the purposeful alignment of resources to support the key priorities identified by the Board. The development of outcome measures and the commitment to a Results Based Accountability approach provides discipline to our efforts, ensuring that we are able to engage in direct and courageous conversations as a community, regarding the efficacy of our efforts in the pursuit of the best interests of our students. The process of consultation, which has resulted in unprecedented levels of involvement has served the critical purpose of building knowledge, understanding and acceptance of our Vision, and will provide a solid foundation to support and sustain our efforts as we embark on the implementation of our plans for system improvement.

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PROPOSED RESULT STATEMENTS	INDICATORS
<i>We want students who are...</i>	
Achieving success by developing their full potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students achieving provincial standard • Standing at the top of provincial EQAO scores • Closing the Achievement Gap • Students developing life skills including the capacity to think critically and be resilient • Students achieving access to successful pathways after high school
Actively engaged in their faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students know the foundations/teaching of the Catholic Faith • Students model the faith and their actions reflect a Catholic world view • Students are discerning believers – integrate faith within their life • Students know, understand and live their faith
Capable, confident and socially responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are developing an orientation towards love and service for others • Students advocate for social justice • Students demonstrate leadership and discipleship • Students model the faith and their actions reflect a Catholic world view • Students developing life skills including the capacity to think critically and be resilient
<i>We want staff who are...</i>	
Lifelong Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff model the faith and their actions reflect a Catholic world view • Staff engage in Professional Development opportunities • Staff pursue personal and professional learning opportunities beyond the workplace • Staff, schools, departments engage in professional learning communities • Staff are responsive to the needs of all students
Positive role models of Catholic values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff know the teachings of the faith • Staff model the faith and their actions

PROPOSED RESULT STATEMENTS	INDICATORS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reflect a Catholic world view • Hold high expectations for themselves and their community • Passionate, enthusiastic in their work • Staff are responsive to the needs of all students • Participate in a variety of opportunities to affirm their faith
Motivated and Professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are engaged and motivated • Staff are empowered and encouraged to participate in work place improvement initiatives • Staff are competent and committed to working collaboratively together • Staff are responsive to the needs of all learners • Staff continuously improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the services they provide
<i>We want schools that are...</i>	
Communities of faith connected to home and parish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools are actively involved with their parish • Schools are welcoming to the community • Schools provide strong examples of Catholic values/role models • Schools are involved in social justice projects • Schools provide an active link between home and parish
Innovative learning Environments committed to excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools offer a breadth of programming options • Schools create teams to meet the needs of students in a variety of ways • Schools are responsive to the needs of all students • Students are taught the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for learning throughout their lifetime • Schools attract and retain enrolment at points of transition (i.e. retention rates)

PROPOSED RESULT STATEMENTS	INDICATORS
Safe and welcoming, inclusive and respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools are safe and inclusive • Schools are responsive to the needs of all students • Parents feel welcome in their child’s school • Staff promote and model language and practices that demonstrate equity, inclusion and collaboration • Schools are respectful and encouraging of parent input
<i>We want families that are...</i>	
Engaged in their child’s learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/guardians are informed, involved, supportive of their child’s education • Parents spend time learning with their children • Parents participate in parent-teacher interviews, attend school meetings, etc.
Active in their child’s faith development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged as partners with school and church • Roles models for community service and social justice • Knowledgeable about church teaching on faith and social justice issues
Involved in their school community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive and collaborative • Actively involved in school community • Engaged in the life of the school – attend events • Play an active role in school activities • Volunteer in the school
<i>We want to work in a school board that is...</i>	
Recognised for its innovation and leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External stakeholders have an interest in and recognition of the value of HCDSB initiatives • Practices reflect the needs of the 21st century learner • Responsible and Responsive • Committed to equity and diversity • Schools/departments plan for improvement and are proactive rather than reactive

PROPOSED RESULT STATEMENTS	INDICATORS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School board of choice • Breadth of programme offerings • School board attracts and retains enrolment K-12
<p>Respectful and encouraging of the contributions of all partners in Catholic Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respectful of the balance between work and family • Partners and communicates with all employees • Strong contributions are recognized and encourages from all employees throughout the system • Understanding of the demands place on employees in the system • Respectful of parent input • A culture that nurtures and recognises the value of religious vocations • Have processes in place for people to suggest changes and improvements
<p>Committed to building and sustaining community partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses effective community communication • Actively pursues and participates in community partnerships • Collaborative and works with parents, teachers and the community to help students achieve success • Fosters a genuine sense of community within schools/ departments across the board • Commits to community involvement and contributing to social outreach •
<p><i>We want to live in a community that is...</i></p>	
<p>Prosperous, progressive and sustainable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High social cohesion in the community • Living and working within the community

PROPOSED RESULT STATEMENTS	INDICATORS
Supportive and Appreciative of Catholic Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaches out to others in need • Possesses a sense of identity and belonging • Embraces the contributions of Catholic schools • Aware of and responsive to the call for justice • Strong effective partnership between home, school and parish
Safe, inclusive and respectful of all its members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members feel safe • Environmentally friendly and responsive • Tolerant of difference • Globally aware • Governed by principles of dignity, equity and respect

Fulfilling the Promise 2010-2020

Vision

The Halton Catholic District School Board is a model learning community, widely recognized as distinctively Catholic, providing exceptional education, while nurturing the call to love and to serve as a people of faith, living out God's plan.

Population

K- 12 students within the Halton Catholic District School Board

Priority Focus

Enhancing School Effectiveness and Improving Student Achievement

Outcome

Students are achieving by developing their full potential

Indicators

- Narrowing of the gender gap in Primary and Junior Writing EQAO Assessments (Figure 1-2)
- Narrowing of the special education gap in Junior Reading and Writing EQAO Assessments (Figure 3-4)
- Percent of students achieving the provincial standard on grade 9 Applied Mathematics Assessment (Figure 5)
- Percent of students achieving 16 or more credits by the end of their second year (Figure 6)
- Percent of students achieving successful pathways after high school (Figure 7 -8)

Baseline (Trend Analysis)

Narrow the achievement gaps

Story behind the Baselines

The EQAO primary, junior and grade 9 Math Assessments are conducted annually in every publicly funded Ontario school. Assessment results indicate that more Halton Catholic District School Board students, compared to students in the province overall, achieve at or above the provincial standard. However, equity and excellence go hand in hand; and, not all of our students are achieving the provincial standard.

English as second language learners, boys and students with special education needs are some of our students who may be at risk of lower academic achievement.

HCDSB is committed to “raising the bar” for every student, regardless of their personal circumstances, and to “closing the gap” in student achievement and the development of life skills.

There is evidence of fluctuating achievement for both primary and junior girls and boys over the last five EQAO assessment years. The percentage of girls achieving at or above level 3 has been, and continues to be, higher than boys in the areas of reading and writing, at both the primary and junior division. The gender gap is most pronounced in writing.

Since 2004-2005, we have witnessed a narrowing of the gender gap on the primary Writing Assessment – a decrease from 18 percent to 11 percent. There have been more variable fluctuations on the junior assessment. As in 2004-2005, we continue to witness a 19% gender gap. Our projected target for 2014-2015 is to reduce the gender gap on the primary and junior Writing Assessment to 3 percent.

Figure 1

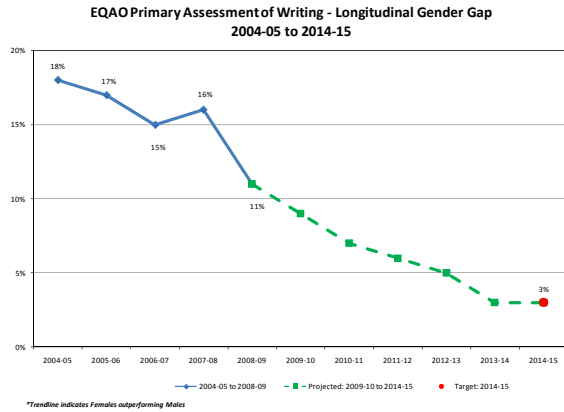
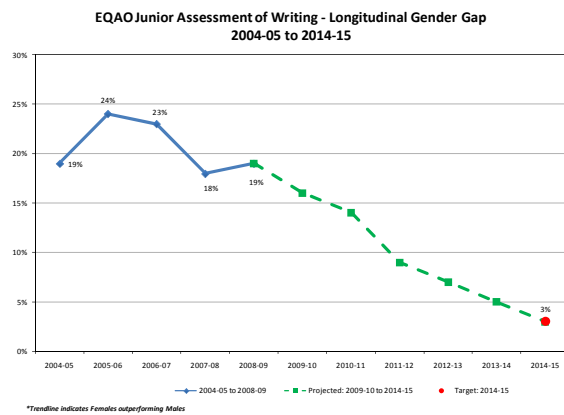


Figure 2



Since 2004-2005 we have also witnessed a closing of the achievement gap for students with special needs. In 2004-2005 there was a 57 percent achievement gap in junior Reading and Writing. Between the 2004-2005 and the 2008-2009 assessment periods, the gap in achievement between all students and students identified as receiving special education support closed to 46 percent in reading and 47 percent in writing. Our project target for 2014-2015 is to reduce the achievement gap for students with special needs to 36 percent in Reading and 35 percent in Writing.

Figure 3

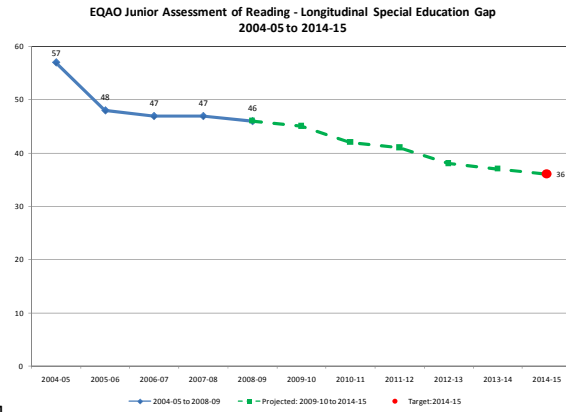
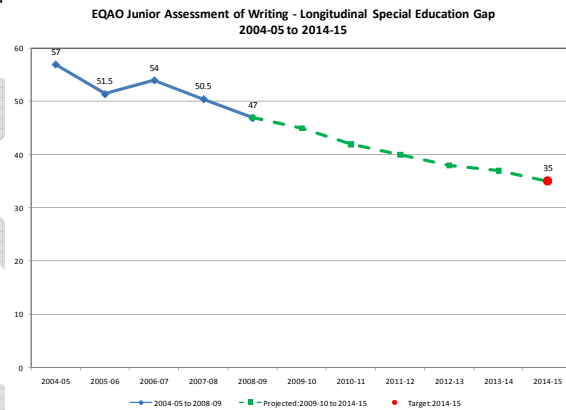


Figure 4



HCDSB achievement gaps reflect national and international research trends which show that male students do not do as well as girls in reading or writing. It is important to note that not *all* boys are less successful on the standardized tests. It is therefore important to ask, "Which boys?" (Are/ are not struggling in literacy).

For example, we know more boys appear in special education. Males are more likely to have a reading disability, and twice as likely to have a learning disability.

The most crucial factor in explaining the greater difficulty that some boys have in coping with the demands of learning and teaching in school is that fewer boys than girls acquire the level of literacy necessary to succeed. This is especially the case in relation to writing and, to a lesser extent, to reading.

Attitudes and values towards inclusion and success for all students and classroom practices are not always aligned. The nature of traditional instructional approaches have not engaged all boys nor accurately assessed their achievement. It is often the case that boys are more literate than their Reading and Writing results indicate.

Boys are selective in what they read; they use reading strategies to help make sense of new literacies that appeal to them. Traditional forms of literacy are disconnected from these immediate interests.

As our overall achievement results indicate, as literacy achievement improves mathematics achievement also tends to increase.

Paradoxically, as literacy instruction improves, results for all students should increase, making closing the gap a complex goal.

Baseline (Trend Analysis)

Increased student achievement

Story behind the Baselines

Since 2004-2005 there has been a 17 percent increase in the percentage of students achieving the provincial standard on the grade 9 applied math assessment. In 2008-2009, 48 percent of students achieved the provincial standard. This is significantly lower than the 83 percent of students who achieved the provincial standard on the grade 9 academic assessment. Our project target for students achieving the provincial standard on the grade 9 applied math assessment is 72 percent in 2014-2015.

Over the past 4 years, we have witnessed a four percent increase in the number of students who achieve 16 or more credits by the end of their second year in high school. This still means, 17 percent of students in 2008-2009 failed to acquire the 16 credits needed by the end of

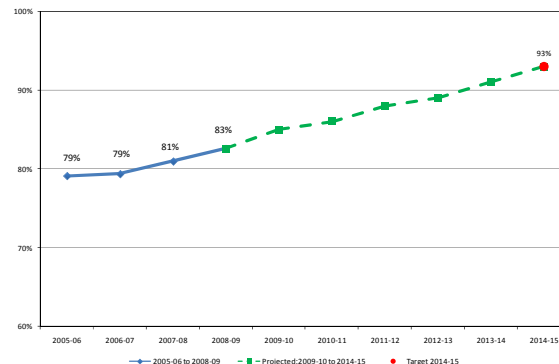
their second year of high school. A larger proportion of the students who do not acquire the 16 credits are taking applied level courses.

Credit accumulation in Grades 9 and 10 have been shown to be extremely strong predictors of student achievement. Students who achieve 14 or fewer credits by the end of Grade 10, have been shown to be at-risk of not graduating from high school within 5 years. Our projected target for 2014-2015 is for 93 percent of students acquiring the 16 or more requisite credits by the end of their second year of high school.

EQAO Grade 9 Applied Assessment of Math
2004-05 to 2014-15



Grade 10 Credit Accumulation
Percentage of Students with 16 or more Credits at the end of Grade 10



Baseline (Trend Analysis)

Successful Pathways

Story behind the Baselines

Figure 7 shows the five year trend of confirmation rates for age-appropriate students who applied to an Ontario University. While there has been an increase in the number of students applying to universities over the past four years, the proportion of students that confirm acceptance has decreased from 85 percent in 2005 to 77 percent in 2009.

Although the confirmation rate has declined, a large proportion of HCDSB students who apply, continue on to university. Of the 257 students in 2009 that did not confirm with a university, almost one quarter of these students (61, or 24%) confirmed their acceptance with an Ontario college.

Figure 8 shows the five year trend of confirmation rates for students who applied to an Ontario college. After remaining relatively static during the 2005 to 2007 application cycles (approximately 55%), there was an increase in the proportion of students who applied and continue on to college in 2009 (76%). Of the 107 students that did not confirm their application, 32 (30%) confirmed with an Ontario university.

Figure 7

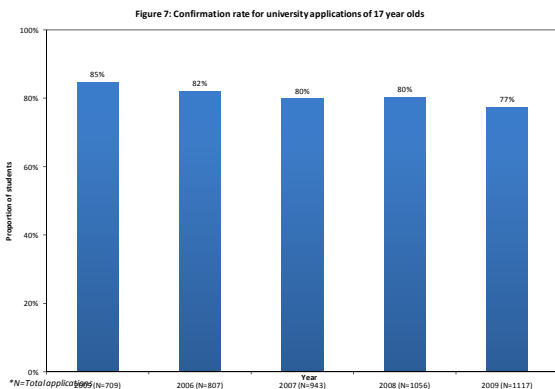
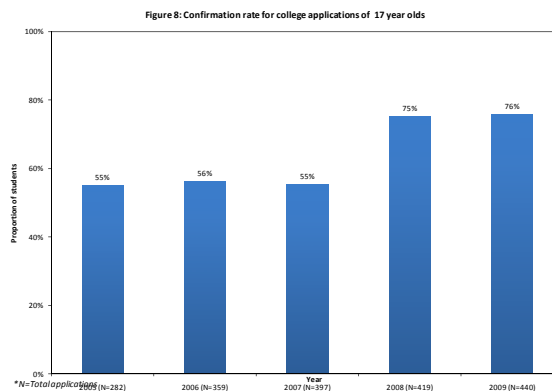


Figure 8



It is important to note, college and university confirmations are only two of the four successful pathways open to students. Currently we do not have readily available data on students pursuing workplace or apprenticeship pathways after high school. Based on research, we do know that at risk student groups are more likely to pursue these other pathways.

Partners

Classroom teachers, students, Consultants, Family of School Superintendents, Programme Superintendents, Student Success Teachers, SERTs, itinerants and parents all have a role to play in doing better.

What Works – What would it take to do better? What does research tell us?

Narrow the Achievement Gaps by:

- Ongoing analysis of literacy achievement of boys and students identified as LD is integral to the work of the professional learning community (PLC) and informs instructional decisions
- Job-embedded professional learning around boys literacy for all staff/ teachers

- Involve boys in assessing, tracking and setting goals for their own learning
- Broaden the boundaries of literacy instruction to provide classroom experiences that respond to the diverse interest, needs and learning styles of all students
- Enhance teacher and administrator knowledge, understanding, and consistent implementation of differentiated instructional practices from K – grade 12
- Enhanced use of assistive technology with LD learners who are predominantly male will support diverse learning needs and also increase access to the curriculum

Improving Student Achievement by:

- Use manipulatives and technology to set the context for solving lesson problems, to make plans to solve problems and to carry out the solutions to problems as a way to differentiate instruction
- Emphasizing critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration throughout the curriculum
- Applied level students need to be supported by their classroom teachers to use math journals, peer assessment and student portfolios
- Ensure authentic learning experiences and experiential learning are built into all subject areas and programs
- Through Grade 8 to 9 Transition supports – identifying a caring adult to partner and assist students in their transition to secondary schools to create a welcoming and caring

environment for Grade 9 students, in which students’ emotional, social and academic needs are supported

- Help students in developing individualized timetables for Grade 9 students, basing them on students’ strengths and interests supports students in achieving success
- Provide credit recovery and credit rescue opportunities for students who are struggling in achieving the appropriate credits necessary for each grade

Supporting Successful Pathways by:

- Development of elementary/secondary program pathways teams to support student and teacher professional learning of program pathways
- Support students in creating an annual education plan to support their learning goals and pathway planning
- Career awareness/ exploration should be addressed in ever subject and course
- Provide Specialist High Skills Majors to provide students the opportunity to focus on a future career through a bundle of classroom courses, workplace experiences and sector certifications
- Provide Cooperative Education which enables students to experience hands-on learning and the possibility of earning two compulsory high school credits
- Dual credit courses provides students with an opportunity to experience college / apprenticeship course and gain credit towards a student’s high school diploma as well as a college certificate, diploma or apprenticeship certification

Action Plan

See Board Improvement Plan 2010-2013 for a complete description of student achievement: Needs Assessment – SMART Goals – Improvement Targets – Targeted, Evidence-Based Strategies and Actions

Monitoring and Evaluation

As seen above, limited local baseline data is available for some of the identified priorities. The Board Improvement Planning team has identified a number of proxy indicators from existing measures. Additional data collection and data tracking will be identified in future report cards.

Summary of Performance Measures

How much did we do?

Types of Activities, program interventions and services provided during the reporting period

How well did we do it?

For each of the activities in the upper left quadrant, there will be one or more measures that tell how well that particular activity is performed.

Is anyone better off?

Number of individuals better off

Percentage of individuals better off

This quadrant will report on one of four dimensions of being better off:

- skills/ knowledge
- attitude/ opinion
- behaviour
- circumstance