Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board: 2014 - 2015

Project Title	The Transforming Learning Project
Description	The project builds upon the work of previous projects funded by CODE and aligns with the District's long-term work in improving the learning opportunities we provide. The overarching goal that the current project is helping staff shift from a focus on the teaching to a focus on the learning. Each principal selected a lead teacher to represent their school using the criteria of expertise with instructional pedagogy and leadership. The 29 lead teachers participated in 3 full-day workshops together to help develop the specific project goals, the success criteria, and the professional learning required to enable the achievement of the goals. The target group for the current work was our grade 4 to 8 teachers. Despite the tight timelines and competing activities across the district, 98 of the 108 grade 4 to 8 teachers received a full day of professional learning. The morning half of the professional learning activity saw them collaborating to explore innovative, technology-enabled teaching and learning practices to impact student learning and the acquisition of 21st Century competencies. The afternoon session saw staff collaborating on the student devices in the District's online Office 365 space to familiarize themselves with the tools and processes, to record their learning, and to share ideas for reimagined learning opportunities enabled by the technology. Staff also learned how to integrate the new laptops into the existing classroom technology. Guided by feedback from our schools, 2 additional sessions were offered and 44 additional staff were able to access the professional development. Once the pedagogical transformation and purposeful use of technology to facilitate it had been established, student devices were distributed to schools. The device selected for student use is a low-cost Windows-based device that has been designed to work with the Office 365 environment and other resources available via the Internet. The decision to use carts that held a small number of devices was intentional to maximize the likelihood that the vision established with the lead teachers (groups of students collaborating around a few devices to support their inquiry rather than students working in isolation in a 1 to 1 model) would be realized. The number of devices distributed to each school was based on population at a ratio of 12:1, adjusted to ensure no school received less than 2 carts (14 laptops).
Context	*Number of students*: 5500 *Number of teachers*: 221 *Number of schools*: 29 *Grades/Program*: Grades 4-8
Impact on Students	At this time we only have data from a limited number of sources - feedback gathered through professional learning session exit slips, artefacts posted by participating teachers, and observations and conversations during classroom learning visits.

	General Highlights: Observed students working in small groups using the technology to facilitate their inquiry rather than in 1 to 1 situations (1 student 1 device). The conversations led to more questions, to further inquiry, and then to greater understanding. Observed or have evidence of students collaborating to research a variety of topics, create newspapers, create pictographs on ecosystems and water systems, and research, write scripts, and then create movies to present their learning The work created had fewer errors in conventions, included graphical elements to help convey ideas, and the technology enabled students to work on it at different times, using different devices, and from different locations. Students reported excitement at the newer ways they could access learning and represent their learning. They also reported that they liked how the technology removed the barriers they had experienced previously (e.g. moving files from school to home).
Impact on Instruction	• Observed that students tend to take over the role of driving the use of the technology while staff facilitate the learning (this was one of our key staff development objectives, to take the responsibility of knowing how to use technology out of the teacher's hands) • Observed student-teacher collaboration: o Students sharing work via their OneDrive or in a class OneNote in Office 365 and teachers giving feedback both during and after the task o Teachers providing access to additional learning resources via D2L and class OneNote resources o Teachers enabling the students to drive the learning o Students choosing topics and tools to further their learning o Students using online tools to collaborate with peers o Students taking responsibility for their learning by choosing topics, dividing tasks, and coordinating resources
Impact on System	This initiative supports the shift in focus that we believe will support closing the gap and improving learning outcomes for all. The goal in our system is on changing the focus from the teaching to the learning. The professional development that took place this spring helps to move us further toward our goal. Not only are staff improving the learning opportunities they provide using the new approaches developed, but they are using some of those same strategies to transform how they access their own learning and collaborate with peers. In short, much of what we have done through this project is to try and change how we leverage the power of technology to improve how we work and learn at the BHNCDSB. The good news is that we are beginning to see evidence of change from our classrooms right up to senior administration.

NOTE: Information in the summary is taken directly from the data contained in the final project report.