

Halton Catholic District School Board: 2014 - 2015

Project Title	Professional Learning in the 21st Century: Sharing Responsibility Throughout the System
Description	<p>This year's project was an expansion and refinement of last year's focus on our need to expand and systematize 21st Century teaching and learning in our board. Our data to date indicated that the professional learning model - teacher-lead collaborative inquiry supported by research and professional learning provided by the board team - was successful in producing lasting changes in teacher practice and in student learning, and helped us to identify three key areas of continued investigation and support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building capacity through sharing the learning in the project schools • Building the capacities of leaders through system-wide sharing • Building system capacity by connecting other 21st c projects in the board to the CODE projects <p>We made five particular changes based on data from last year and our understanding of Chris Dede's five sources of leverage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including principals more explicitly in inquiry groups and in large group sessions • Expanding the number of teams • Changing the composition to include a combination of self-identified applicants and invited teams • Using last year's team leads as mentors to the new teams • Including an IT contact for technology purchases and distribution as well as acting as a resource in the large group sessions <p>We supported 18 inquiry projects this year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 self-identified • 10 were identified by us based on our data about student:tablet ratios • 3 were self-identified from last year but had substantial changes to their team's makeup (including the departure of the team lead) <p>Each project was asked to provide evidence of best practices of students' learning and demonstrating the board's 21st century outcomes.</p> <p>Teams developed an inquiry question, theory of action, and implementation plan for professional learning and for collecting evidence. Teams then met according to their implementation plans. Next, the focus was on identifying and collecting quality evidence, refining their learning plans, and reviewing the requirements for budgeting and reporting. The final meeting was an opportunity to analyse and present results/artefacts, invite friends, and allow for sharing within the district facilitated by our communications department Each team produced a final report. This information is part of the data analyzed and submitted for this report. It will also be used within the board to build capacity and share the learning.</p>

Context	<p><i>Number of students: 1525</i></p> <p><i>Number of teachers: 61</i></p> <p><i>Number of schools: 18</i></p> <p><i>Grades/Program: K-12</i></p>
Impact on Students	<p>While our project focused on educator learning, evidence of student learning has been reported from the project teams through open-ended items on the survey as well as through their individual project reports. In general, survey respondents noted an increase in student confidence in their use of technology and in engagement in activities. In some cases, survey respondents reported that students demonstrated the 21st century outcomes of deeper critical thinking and problem solving skills. The following sample response illustrates the findings:</p> <p><i>“My students have an increased level of confidence when accessing technology and feel a greater attachment to the work they produce as they have been a greater participant in the learning process.”</i></p>
Impact on Instruction	<p>Teachers were eager to share the impact of this work on their classroom practice. Many participants mentioned how their understanding of collaborative inquiry - and of student inquiry - had deepened. As well, teachers named particular tools and technological skills they had acquired during the sessions. Many of them connected those tools to specific learning outcomes.</p> <p>A comprehensive and thorough analysis of the data was completed. The following samples from the survey illustrate these changes:</p> <p><i>“As a result of my increased level of confidence in the inquiry based approach has allowed me to release control and allow my classroom practice to be student lead. This has consistently lead to enhanced curriculum delivery and increased student engagement.</i></p> <p><i>“The project has opened up my learning practices as far as intriguing me to want to know more about technology and how it works with inquiry in the classroom. There is still a lot for me to learn about inquiry and being a part of this project in the future will allow me to do that.”</i></p>
Impact on System	<p>This initiative, combined with the other parts of the TLF, has enabled us to deepen and spread the pockets of innovation where the board's vision, blueprint, and 21st c student outcomes were supporting student learning. The funding provided both professional learning and release time for teachers engaged in inquiry which helped them to feel empowered and excited by their learning.</p> <p>Our survey data, as well as our observations and exit tickets from the large group sessions, have helped us to identify some successes and challenges of our work in this round. We believe that one of the ways to achieve system scaling is to have school and system leaders more engaged in the work at both the school and system level. In the planning stages we asked the ten principals of the schools invited to participate to identify a project lead and to attend the launch session in April. Our analysis showed some similarities and differences between</p>

	<p>administrators’ and teachers’ responses that will help us to think about our next iteration of the project.</p> <p>Using Dede’s dimensions of scale and reflecting on both the sources of leverage and traps helped the board team to plan changes to the Round 3 project to have a larger impact on the system in Round 4. One of the changes to the consolidation session was having the project teams use Dede’s model to reflect on their own work as well as on the board team’s inquiry question, theory of action, and evidence in an effort to address Dede’s shift and move beyond brand. Continuing to make our learning transparent as a board team, and to include the teams in our thinking and planning, are other powerful ways to help the board project evolve on its way to scale.</p> <p>Emphasizing the connections among the parts of the TLF projects, the innovation project, the board’s blueprint, and the student outcomes helped provide coherence and direction for the system. Common themes of self-directed and collaborative learning for teachers and students, time to plan, implement, reflect, and innovate, and active participation from all roles in the school and board emerged from these initiatives and will need to be taken into consideration as the work evolves.</p> <p>Finally, the board will be engaging in renewing its vision and strategic plan. The 21st century blueprint is part of that vision and plan and will be revised accordingly. As well, the board has just released its BYOD policy and will be focusing on our student outcome of Catholic digital citizenship. We anticipate launching a new 21st Century website to share this work and to spread and sustain the work. This project data will support us in shaping and sharing our next steps as we continue to work to scale the learning.</p>
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NOTE: Information in the summary is taken directly from the data contained in the final project report.