

Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board: 2014 - 2015

Project Title	Blended Learning: The 21st Century Inclusive Model
Description	<p>Our blended learning implementation plan has been extremely successful in supporting increased levels of communication, collaboration, and differentiation in the classroom. At the anecdotal level, we have received feedback from teachers that students with SEA equipment have been positively impacted by the addition of community devices in the classroom. As a result, teachers have reported that students with SEA equipment are actually using their devices more consistently (or the community devices) resulting in an increase in work produced and time on task which will lead to improved achievement. This reflection warrants additional research as the 21st Century classroom that has many different devices in it may be the best way to support students with an LD.</p>
Context	<p><i>Number of students: 2500</i></p> <p><i>Number of teachers: 20</i></p> <p><i>Number of schools: 18</i></p> <p><i>Grades/Program: Grades 4-8, 10</i></p>
Impact on Students	<p><i>Our Summit Series</i></p> <p>The Blended Learning strategy promotes the use of technology to become a better communicator and collaborator. The student summit series reached approximately 650 students and our staff summit had over 35 teachers. The goal of these summits was to create a culture of “sharing” of innovation so all students would embrace innovation as a strategic approach to learning. We focused on how each student has a “digital pencil case” that is filled with innovative 21st century tools to help students connect, collaborate, and feel empowered in an inclusive classroom. We feel we succeed in “normalizing” technology use for students....a mindset shift has begun to occur where students hopefully no longer feel isolated or singled out for using SEA equipment.</p> <p><i>Comparison of Data</i></p> <p>A comparison between the pre and post data strongly indicated that collaboration and inquiry learning is more accessible to all students; that it allowed students to learn at their own pace, increased student engagement, and increased assignment completion. Students’ feedback also made it very clear that they want more Chromebooks and expect a stable WiFi connection in the classroom. The data also suggests that by teaching all students, not just students with SEA equipment, the technology became a part of the learning process and assignments rather than just a means to an end (process to do the work). This indicates that the “normalization” of technology use for students with SEA equipment becomes entrenched in community practices. In fact, the trained inclusive educator who led the summits reflected, “I never knew or could tell who the students with learning disabilities were...I just saw a community of highly engaged students.”</p> <p>The themes that emerged in the student voice were that about 75% of the</p>

	<p>students indicated the technology made a big difference to their learning. “Having enough devices in our classroom on a daily basis permitted students to work at their own pace, giving each child an equal opportunity to complete his/her best work. Students who are reluctant writers are now able to complete paragraphs on their own.”</p> <p><i>Case Study</i></p> <p>A member of our research team worked in three schools to support and study the project. This invaluable aspect of the project highlights that technology transforms the learning environment for students with a learning disability. A teacher reflected, “Now students are choosing new partners and are no longer overlooking the students with learning disabilities.” Another said “When all students are working on different forms of technology, no one necessarily realizes that they may be working a task that is different than his/her peers.”</p>
<p>Impact on Instruction</p>	<p><i>Our Summit Series</i></p> <p>Teacher voice suggested that the Classroom Learning Summits allowed teachers to learn the technology (i.e. Chromebooks, Google Drive, Google Read and Write) with students and to master its use as they were able to go through the summit process twice. This was carried into the classroom as teachers were given examples of how to use the platform for their own activities.</p> <p>In addition to the summit series, teachers in the blended learning project had opportunities of additional professional development to help implement aspects of the project. We created a “coaching program” where highly effective and experienced blended learning teachers received additional training so they could offer more support at their respective schools.</p> <p><i>Comparison of Data</i></p> <p>Teachers in the focus group indicated that the focus on communication, collaboration and differentiation supported their pedagogy and increased their ability to be effective in these areas. A comparison between the pre and post data strongly indicated that the available technology offered many opportunities for differentiation and repurposing of time, learning was more student-driven, encouraged student independence, allowed for more time to work directly one-on-one with students who needed more assistance, allowed for feedback to be given immediately, allowed more opportunities to meet with small groups as all students were engaged. This data suggests that it was easier to follow through on delivering great pedagogy at the point of instruction in the classroom. The teacher survey demonstrated most teachers felt it is easier to give feedback and support small group instruction when technology is in the classroom.</p> <p><i>Case Study</i></p> <p>The data also suggests that teachers feel that they are better able to meet the needs of all of their students in their classroom through the natural effects of differentiation that using tools such as Google Read and Write affords. They also feel that students with specific learning needs were now feeling part of their classroom community as their learning strengths could be used to support their challenges.</p>

<p>Impact on System</p>	<p>Through this initiative we have determined that providing training and technology for ALL students aids in normalizing the use of technology. In light of this, we have seen positive results when aligning this initiative to others in the board.</p> <p>HPCDSB has provided support, professional development, and training to various groups across the system including Principals, EA's, and SERT's. Other board initiatives, such as Cross Panel Math, Student Success, school-based PLC's, SWST work, and our Curriculum support teacher have also been supported by this Blended Learning initiative this school year. This alignment of initiatives and programming ensures coherence, consistent support, and deep, authentic implementation across the district. As we move forward in planning for next year (BIPSA development, portfolio distribution of personnel, professional learning opportunities etc.), we look to build on our successes by continuing to focus on these pedagogical and technological-enabled practices.</p> <p>To that end, we are again dedicating financial resources to ensure that there are enough devices at the point of instruction and that the pedagogical development of teachers matches the technology-enabled learning and teaching goals we have laid out. We will strive to ensure our students requiring technology to access the curriculum and demonstrate their learning will do so most willingly and with confidence given the efforts put forth into normalizing the use of technology for all students.</p> <p>In terms of building capacity and sustaining change, we have added blended learning to our board improvement plan. Moreover, we have identified blended learning as a main enabler to support our cross-panel math and junior math initiatives and our learning disability goal.</p> <p>We have also committed to building principals' capacity of blended learning by offering a webinar series, a "looks-for" tip sheet (on what blended learning looks like in the classroom), and other professional development support at principal meetings.</p>
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NOTE: Information in the summary is taken directly from the data contained in the final project report.