

Bluewater District School Board: 2015 - 2016

Project Title	Scaling Up the Potential of Technology Through Strong Pedagogy
Description	<p>One key area of our project has been ensuring that all students can send and receive work electronically. This is essential for students with special needs to access the learning and achieve at a high level. Students and teachers use the Office 365 interface to communicate and collaborate electronically. The use of OneNote Class Notebook provides a mechanism for teachers and students to monitor all stages of the learning process (assessment as/for/of) through their individual digital student notebooks. This allows for timely and effective feedback (since it is electronic), and supports student reflection on their own learning (increasing metacognitive skills).</p> <p>The use of a variety of devices has provided students and teachers opportunities for “just in time” learning as they are able to quickly and easily find answers to rich questions through the Internet. The balance of the classroom time can then be spent on deeper cognitive learning and discussion, and not on recall of facts. The choice of device has become less relevant as students are able to use Office 365 tools on all devices. It is more about the learning platform, not the device. This also honours student choice to pick the right device and tool for the specific task. To support this learning, we have struck a Bring Your Own Device committee to ensure that we have the infrastructure, policies, and procedures in place.</p> <p>Some staff are beginning to seek ways to bring real-world experts into the classroom through Skype in the Classroom, and the Digital Human Library allowing for digital experiential opportunities. This is occurring in JK-12+ classrooms.</p> <p>Ongoing school-based inquiries have been supported by Board central staff, and have allowed for collaboration between staff within and across other schools. This allows for building capacity in school-based staff around students with special needs (LD), specifically how technology can support higher-level learning. This is promoting a growth mindset within our schools around the understanding that ALL students can achieve at a high level. Explicitly teaching self-advocacy skills to students with special needs is increasing their confidence, and empowering them with their own understanding of who they are as a learner.</p>
Context	<p><i>Number of students: 2,515</i></p> <p><i>Number of teachers: 191</i></p> <p><i>Number of schools: 51</i></p> <p><i>Grades/Program: K-12, specifically students with special needs</i></p>
Impact on Students	<p><b>Office 365 and Outlook:</b> As students have been using Office 365 as an interface to communicate and collaborate with their peers and teachers, they have been able</p>

to move toward a more paperless environment. One teacher reports that students who previously would allow others to complete group work are far more conscientious knowing that the teacher can see who is responsible for specific work. “The kids are far more motivated when they know that there are others also working on their project.” As Office 365 is a device agnostic platform, students have been free to pick the right device and/or tool that best meets their learning needs. Students have commented that OneNote Class has allowed them to easily keep track of all their work in one location. The use of the OneNote Class Notebook tool has allowed teachers to monitor all stages of the learning process, and to provide timely and effective feedback. This tool has been particularly beneficial for students with learning disabilities as they use accessibility features such as a PDF reader and voice-to-text.

**Equipment Refresh:** Students have identified that the arrival of additional updated technology in the classroom (iPad and laptops) has allowed for greater equity. This has greatly impacted student engagement at all grades. Teachers report increased achievement and engagement by all students, but particularly for those with learning disabilities.

**Ongoing iPad Use:** Children as young as Junior Kindergarten conduct research on their own using Siri. It has taught them to be succinct in their queries. They are building their independent learning skills utilizing this method as they research, record the information using the Explain Everything app, and make inferences to support their findings. The children are independently using the iPads to capture their learning (photos and writing/typing) and then share their learning with the rest of the class.

**Parent/Guardian Engagement and Home Connections:** Use of the Office 365 suite has provided teachers with a means of communication with parents/guardians. Some classes have also created Blogs or Sways as a vehicle to share their learning with each other and their families. This has helped the students realize that there is a wider audience beyond their classroom. Further, they are seeking feedback and assistance from their peers (assessment as learning).

**Evidence of growth** was reported through school-based inquiry projects. One study that included 7 students with learning disabilities found that 60% of students went up two levels in reading and writing (level 2-4) and 40% went up one level in reading and writing (level 2-3) when they were given the opportunity to complete work electronically on iPads and Lenovo Yoga laptops. A second project demonstrated significant improvements over the school year in reading, writing, and mathematics. Teacher surveys of students and parents demonstrated 80% of students having an improved attitude toward writing, and 70% attributed improved attitudes toward school due to technology.

<p><b>Impact on Instruction</b></p>	<p>The position of Specialized Technology and Learning Teacher was created to support teachers in providing and receiving electronic student work, and how to incorporate technology as a learning tool into the classroom setting. The Specialized Technology and Learning Teacher (STLT) and Technology Enabled Learning and Teaching Contact (TELT) have supported teachers across the district to enhance technology-enabled instruction. The STLT had a targeted approach of supporting the teachers of students with special needs to assist them in developing responsive supports for their students through the use of technology. The TELT worked with teachers of all students to upscale the use of Office 365 tools and the vLE learning system. Teachers report increased collaboration with their students.</p> <p>As a result of the system wide implementation of Office 365 and Outlook as a communication tool, teachers have begun exploring best practices for the variety of tools available. Communication with students is available through Sharing of Files, email via Outlook, and using OneNote Class Notebooks. Three different high school co-op departments have implemented OneNote Class Notebooks as a means of monitoring student achievement and streamlining communication with students at their placements. Other teachers use OneNote for pedagogical documentation of student learning.</p> <p>Survey results indicated that after 3 months of system wide implementation of Outlook, over 80% of teachers are confident using Outlook as a communication tool. Further to this, 67% of respondents indicate that Office 365 online apps, such as Word Online have had a positive impact on student literacy. Additional capacity building will be required.</p> <p><b>Digital Citizenship and Global Competencies</b></p> <p>An independent presentation of My Life Online was provided to all schools being refreshed with new technology this year. This presentation was given to students in Grades 4-8 to encourage them to approach the internet, “positively, productively, and powerfully.” All teachers indicated that they could easily integrate the learning into future class lessons, and 60% reported that even 3 weeks afterwards students still wished to discuss Digital Citizenship.</p>
<p><b>Impact on System</b></p>	<p><b>Office 365 and Outlook District Wide:</b> As of May 4, 2016 all BWDSB staff are communicating via the Office 365 environment. All schools with students in Grades 4-12 received some form of direct instruction provided by the Specialized Technology and Learning Teacher (STLT) or the Technology Enabled Learning and Teaching (TELT), although not all classes were individually visited. BWDSB has also begun to use the Office 365 tool- Skype for Business. As a long term strategy, it is anticipated that the board can reduce funding for travel expenses as staff can attend meetings remotely.</p>

	<p><b>New Specialized Equipment Board Process:</b> System Staff (e.g., Speech and Language Pathologists, Psychologists,) work with school staff to build capacity specific to their students’ needs. A new process utilized Office 365 Group OneNote Notebooks for ongoing tracking of visits to schools. All support staff connected to the students have access to these notebooks, which has helped streamline targeted instruction from teachers to students and monitor ongoing visits and regular classroom assessments. One school reported that 100% of students with learning disabilities used technology to write Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test.</p> <p><b>Open Access</b></p> <p>The Open Access committee (Bring Your Own Device) has met throughout this year to investigate the impact of Open Access on the Board. This team has analyzed the current board policies, and is developing suggestions for revision. The Information Communication Technology department has been working to improve firewall.</p>
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