Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board: 2015 - 2016

Project Title	The HPCDSB Summit Series: Professional Development for both Staff and Students
Description	Our board's innovation research project is contributing to improve student achievement and well-being as we are ensuring all students receive access and training on our suite 21st digital tools. We have created "The Digital Certified Student Program," the "Classroom Summit Series", and "Expanded Blended Learning Training Program" and a "Teacher Coaching Program." For example:
	The Digital Student Certification Program
	This program will be a staged approach with multiple levels of certification that will help initially provide equitable access to all students with opportunities to grow technical competencies. To aid the implementation, modules will be created in the provincial Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). All students will receive implementation information to get them started via an icon on the D2L landing page.
	The Classroom Summit Series
	Inquiry question for 2015-16: How does providing technology for all learners build and support metacognition in students, especially students with an LD?
	Theory of Action:
	If we provide students with training on inclusive technologies, then students (especially students with an LD) will feel empowered to use technology to support their own learning.
	If we support teachers understanding and implementation of blended learning, learning profiles, and metacognition then teachers will be able to differentiate to meet the needs of all students.
	If we provide additional devices (Chromebooks/iPads) with training support in the classroom, then students will be able choose the best technology to support their learning.
	If we host a Learning Summit, then students will be able to develop leadership strategies to help organize their own workshops in their respective schools/classrooms (Level 2 and 3 DSP certification).
Context	*Number of students:* 2,000
	Number of teachers: 85
	Number of schools: 17
	Grades/Program: K-12
Impact on Students	A year ago, our project attempted to normalize technology use in the classroom, especially for students with an LD. Our research indicated that students and classrooms in general lacked both introductory training for powerful collaborative and inclusive technologies as well as structures to promote innovation and digital leadership among the student population. This project focused on offering both

professional development for students/classrooms and attempted to provide a formal structure for student digital leadership by promoting three levels of digital benchmarks that could be achieved throughout this project. The three benchmarks are: digital student, digital expert, and digital leader.

The project reached a significant number of students in our system compared to our baseline data from a year ago. Last year, only 14 classes received the training/support where this year over 100 classrooms were directly involved. In fact, from K-12, over 2200 students achieved "Digital Student" status. Previous rounds exposed that many students did not have access to the tools (was mostly teacher dependant) and, if they did have access, the students were mostly self-taught. This project has helped ensure that all students can have access and training to these powerful, 21st Century digital tools.

Teachers reported that this level of support coupled with blended learning professional development had a significant impact on both student engagement and achievement. A clear trend that arose is that students with learning difficulties now have better access to the curriculum and that reluctant learners are more willing and able to share their ideas. Teachers also reported that because of the student training that allowed students to show their thinking in additional ways. In addition, almost every teacher in the project reported how collaboration improved and that new peer-to-peer partnerships emerged as students were learning and supporting each other. What is unclear at this point, is how this interplay of engagement and productivity relate to student achievement.

The project last year also exposed that the classroom summit may have not offered enough support for some students, especially students with an LD. To better understand this and the level of support needed to fully support students with an LD, additional support was offered. This research indicated that small technical glitches and issues can and did impede implementation. Without a structure to support these students, the smallest technical glitch (no mouse, a voice command setting, or a simple accessory feature adjustment) will deter both the student and teacher from moving from the first training session to sustained, independent daily use. In conclusion, when supported, it appears that most LD students in the focus group became independent and benefited from the technology use.

In order to promote the development of digital expertise in the classroom, every school had the opportunity to identify 8 student digital experts to attend our System Technology Summit. These students received training with the goal that they would lead a project back at their respective schools. The result of the summit demonstrated how 21st Century Competencies and learning partnerships

	can work together to transform how students can demonstrate their learning in the classroom while providing leadership opportunities in their school.

From the System Summit and Classroom Summit Series, 47 students either lead or co-lead a project at their school and were recognized as "Digital Leaders." Interestingly, students who participated as digital leaders reported that they were surprised they could "be experts and leaders to students, teachers, and parents." This theme was consistent at many locations where a digital project was implemented. Students also reported that they viewed the leadership opportunity not as "extra work" but, rather, a new and fun opportunity that made them "feel better about learning." In conclusion, this strongly indicates that student expertise and leadership is being underutilized in schools as a mechanism to promote 21st Century fluencies. |
| Impact on Instruction | This initiative has impacted teacher practice as it has allowed a shift to occur where "blended learning" is no longer viewed as "just about devices." The qualitative data demonstrates overwhelmingly that our teachers now view blended learning as a way to improve instructional aspects such as differentiation, improved assessment, and parent communication. For example:

"Blended Learning has helped in meeting the needs of all students. It has also improved student engagement. Blended Learning has allowed for more small group instruction."

"It has allowed differentiation of instruction to be able to reach all students. Google Classroom is an effective way to provide instructional activities and benefits the students. It allows flexibility in the method of instruction and delivery of curriculum."

This project has had a positive impact on the participating teachers as the "coaching model" provided significant supports that aided classroom implementation. This level of scaffolded supports was missing from previous projects and allowed us to reach teachers who may have been too reluctant join the project in earlier rounds. This scaffolded approach and site-based team emphasis also directly impacted the success of teachers implementing blended learning in the classroom by allowing for a greater focus on the "pedagogy" rather than "just learning the technology." For example, one teacher reflected "It has allowed me to consistently differentiate my teaching practices. I have become a facilitator of learning. I guide, and I steer, but the students are searching, striving towards knowledge, collaborating, and sharing." Another teacher reflected how this project helped them understand that they "perhaps lead the students too much during the self-reflection / success criteria phase of learning."

During the focus groups, teachers reflected on how far both they and the students improved using technology. For example, one teacher said "Having |

	devices as the point of instruction has been a game changer! When I reflect back on previous years and even September, I am astounded at how far my students have moved learning into the 21st Century. ...I have more opportunity to differentiate learning and provide small group and individual instruction to my students." Another teacher commented, "The classroom looks different now...students are now becoming experts on subjects and teach each other." Moreover, teachers reported that the physical classroom environment has changed and students are working on different things at different times. This leap of practice has resulted in teachers giving more feedback and supported more students with strategies like small group instruction ... allows for greater reflection and increased opportunities to adapt or refine classroom practices.
Impact on System	In accordance with the strategic plan for the HPCDSB, our investments and commitments for innovation are rooted in monitoring the following indicators: • Achievement of benchmarks and standards for reading and mathematics. • Conversations with educators about the implementation of full inclusion to celebrate successes and identify opportunities. • Frequency of the use of didactic instructional strategies as compared to small group instruction and guided practice. • Conversations with educators about the successes and opportunities for the consistent use of assessment, evaluation and feedback. • Frequency and quality of the use of blended learning and global classroom collaborations. The project increased the number of "trained blended learning teachers" by almost 50 percent. We were able to train and support approximately 100 teachers. This year 45 teachers joined the project as we continue to support existing teachers and blended learning coaches. The district experienced a 12 percent increase in secondary teacher participation. In terms of sustained use of the digital tools that we monitor, a sharp increase has occurred which strongly suggests that technology is fully embedded into the learning and teaching practices of participating students and teachers. Our inclusive technology tool that is designed to support all students, but especially students with an LD, rose by 266 percent from this time last year. As we continue to scale-up, a new focus on monitoring and sustaining our promising practices needs to be put into place. In particular, it was discussed how assessment is the next great area of work, with an emphasis on the type of tasks teachers are asking students to complete. In addition, our focus on rotational blending learning and responsive classroom instruction is a key element of our current and future commitments.