



OTTAWA-CARLETON  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

# BOARD IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND WELL-BEING

2018–2019





# INTRODUCTION

The Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and Well-Being 2018-2019 is a theory of action anchored in Ontario’s Education Equity Action Plan (Ministry of Education, 2017, p.3 — [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/education\\_equity\\_plan\\_en.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/education_equity_plan_en.pdf)), which asserts “that every student should have the opportunity to succeed personally and academically regardless of background, identity or personal circumstances.” It is aligned in both content and process with the School Learning Plans for Student Achievement and Well-being and supports the OCDSB Exit Outcomes.

Use of the professional learning cycle (reflect, plan, act, observe) aligns the work at all levels and provides a vehicle to work collaboratively, and with greater personalization and precision in service of equitable outcomes for all students’ learning and well-being. It situates the Board Improvement Planning process as an iterative one, where learning is ongoing at all levels of the organization.

The School Effectiveness Framework (Ministry of Education, 2013 — <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/sef2013.pdf>) includes indicators of effective practices which support this cycle.

## ELEMENTS OF THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CYCLE

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Reflect</b></p> <p>Use systematically collected data and information about student learning and well-being to inform decision-making and actions for the district, schools and classrooms.</p> | <p><b>Plan</b></p> <p>Establish and support comprehensive literacy and numeracy strategies to equip students for success.</p> |
| <p><b>Act</b></p> <p>Promote and support a collaborative learning culture.</p>   | <p><b>Observe</b></p> <p>Review student progress and support improvements in instructional practice.</p>                      |

## REFLECT

### The Story of our Data

The Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and Well-Being 2018-2019 has been informed by quantitative data and qualitative evidence of student learning and well-being taken from provincial, district and school sources of data.

### Provincial Data

OCDSB students have performed as well as or better than the province in eight of 10 areas assessed by EQAO, including all three assessments in the junior division. With the exception of grade 3 writing, OCDSB results are higher than the province across all literacy assessments.

OCDSB student performance has improved on the primary and both applied and academic grade 9 assessments of mathematics, and have remained stable in grade 6. Although scores in grade 9 applied-level mathematics were below provincial performance, there was an increase of 6% of students achieving the provincial standard. Although this information suggests that we are beginning to reverse the trend in mathematics performance, it continues to be a priority area of need.

## **Specific Groups of Students**

Achievement gaps in literacy persist for all groups of students but tend to be largest for English Language Learners, students with special education needs (excluding gifted), and students who self-identify as Indigenous (FNMI). Achievement gaps for English Language Learners in the OCDSB are larger than those observed provincially and have widened in comparison to the previous three year average gap in the District.

Substantive gaps persist across the assessments of mathematics for English Language Learners, students with special education needs (excluding gifted), students who self-identify as Indigenous (FNMI), and students residing in lower income neighbourhoods (SES). Of particular concern are the widening gaps for our English Language Learners across all assessments and the observation that gaps are wider in the OCDSB than they are in the province.

There has been a significant increase in the proportion of students on the primary and junior assessments reporting a home language that is other than English, a reflection of the newcomers who attend school in the District. The number of newcomers in 2017-2018 has nearly doubled over the previous year and the arrival of newcomers over the past five years has been increasing such that close to 10% of our student population is comprised of newcomers.

Detailed information regarding EQAO assessments can be found in the OCDSB Annual Student Achievement Report, 2018-2019.

## **District Data**

Evidence gathered from the implementation of the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and Well-Being 2017-2018 indicates that we achieved the goal of improving student achievement in math for our grade 3 students and for students in grade 9 applied mathematics courses through the precise focus on mathematics in School Learning Plans, Professional Activity Days and networked professional learning. Schools reported in their School Learning Plans for Student Achievement that students' engagement in mathematics has increased, with students being more willing to take risks and to identify mental math strategies they are using.

To achieve equitable outcomes for English Language Learners, current assessments of all English Language Learners using the Steps to English Proficiency (STEP) tool were completed, as a means of supporting educators to plan and assess literacy development with precision. Educators in all schools were supported on an ongoing basis by instructional coaches, and new and occasional teachers were provided with training on the use of the STEP tool and appropriate instructional strategies for English Language Learners.

Data from the School Learning Plans for Student Well-being indicate that schools are implementing a wide range of evidence-informed supports and programs to improve socio-emotional well-being and school climate, and current evidence shows a need for a specific focus on self-regulation and attachment. Further, schools develop Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans to proactively address the issue of bullying specifically.

## **KEY LEARNINGS, CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS**

### **Key Learnings**

Focusing on mathematics in all School Learning Plans, resulted in increased precision in terms of identifying areas of student learning need. Concepts of number and problem solving emerged as priorities for our District. The Ministry has also introduced more precision by identifying a Focus on the Fundamentals of Math as a provincial priority, aligning clearly with the District priorities. The data also identifies grades 4-6 as an area in need of more focused support.

Our data indicates a widening of achievement gaps for our English Language Learners. There are more newcomers entering our District and more students reporting a language other than English spoken at home. A large number of these students have been assessed at levels 1 through 3 of the STEP tool, and are at the Junior/Intermediate level. Our data also indicates that ongoing support in the use of the STEP tool for planning and assessment is required.

A positive impact in Early Years classrooms was observed when collaborative, multi-departmental teams provided consultation and classroom support. These teams surfaced the importance of creating positive physical and social classroom environments to support children's learning and well-being. Professional learning about self-regulation provided by Learning Support Services received positive feedback. MindMasters 2 is an evidence-based program that has shown promise in the classrooms in which it is being implemented.

### **Challenges**

While good work has been done to integrate achievement and well-being into a single School Learning Plan template, the task ahead is determining where the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan fits into the school improvement process as support.

The platform used for the School Learning Plans is limited in its capacity to provide flexible features, accessibility thresholds, and expansion opportunities.

Ensuring current and accurate STEP data of our English Language Learners was a challenge. The importance of this data is in determining student and staff learning needs. That data is now up to date and additional staffing has been provided through the budget process to support these students.

Developing consistent and effective monitoring strategies has been a general challenge in the District. For example, gathering student voice in alternating years through the OurSCHOOL survey is a systems methodology for monitoring progress for the well-being component of the School Learning Plan. A challenge has been to identify other sources of data to use as ongoing measures of progress.

### **Next Steps**

- Having noted a positive impact on student achievement by focusing on math in the School Learning Plans, adopt a similar approach to the SLP for Well-being.
- Connect the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plans with the School Learning Planning process as an important element of creating safe, inclusive and welcoming environments.
- Develop a web-based application to support the School Learning Plan.
- Implement and monitor the STEP assessments to ensure data remains current.
- Identify additional sources of data to support the measuring of progress towards goals in the School Learning Plans for Well-Being.

## PLAN

### Identified Priorities

Based on the data from last year’s Board Improvement Plan, the Annual Student Achievement Report and OurSCHOOL data and the Ministry direction of Focusing on the Fundamentals of Math, the following have surfaced as areas of priority for student achievement for the District. The OCDSB has a Framework for Student Well-being which highlights three key domains: physical, cognitive and socio-emotional. The priority for the District this year will be socio-emotional well-being.

| IDENTIFIED PRIORITIES   |   |
|---|---|
| ACHIEVEMENT   | WELL-BEING  |
| <p>Develop Fundamental Mathematical Concepts and Skills, specifically in grades 4-6.</p> <p>Develop literacy skills for English Language Learners, STEPs 1-3 in grades 4-8.</p> | <p>Build socio-emotional skills in the Early Years, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attachment</li> <li>• Self-regulation</li> <li>• Resilience</li> </ul> <p>Develop an increased sense of belonging in grades 4-6 and decrease the number of reported incidents of bullying.</p> |

Equity is situated at the centre of our collective work, both in system-level professional learning, and through the School Learning Plan process. Weaving together equity with achievement and well-being will support us in developing literate and numerate students who are critical thinkers, resilient and who will have multiple pathways to academic and personal success: all in the context of inclusive and collaborative environments where every student’s voice belongs, is heard and where differences are expected and accepted.

## ACT

As a learning organization, all levels of the organization are involved in professional learning in service of student learning. Superintendents provide coordinated, strategic and differentiated support for principals in leading program and developing people. Central departments provide coordinated and strategic support for superintendents, school principals and school teams. Job-embedded professional learning at all levels of the organization will be focused on equity, student achievement and well-being outcomes.

## LEADING PROGRAM AND DEVELOPING PEOPLE

Monthly superintendency meetings engage principals in job-embedded professional learning, as led by Superintendents of Instruction. This assists schools in the deliberate and consistent use of multiple sources of evidence to improve student achievement and well-being. Professional learning is led by school administrators in collaboration with their school teams through their School Learning Plans.

Job-embedded professional learning for supervisory officers, system leaders, school administrators, teachers, and other professional staff through authentic engagement in school and district improvement processes is a characteristic of strong school districts and is practiced intentionally in the OCDSB. Support for this type of professional learning at all levels of the organization is provided by the central program departments.

## A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Collaboration across the system, consistency in priorities and expectations, and increases in support by system leaders contribute to a coherent instructional guidance system within the school district. (Strong Districts and Their Leadership; Leithwood, 2013). As such, and with all educators supporting the development of literate and numerate students, both the central program departments and school teams will be working and collaborating intentionally as cross-departmental teams in service of student learning. This work is led by Superintendents at the system level and supported by Principals and Vice-Principals at the school level. This ensures the system is supported with the vision and implementation strategies to support the work of educators in our schools.

### System-level and School-based Cross-departmental Collaborative teams

|   | <b>Business and Learning Technologies</b>   | <b>Curriculum Services</b>   | <b>Learning Support Services</b>   | <b>Research, Evaluation and Analytics Division (READ)</b> |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Program Department Collaborators Led by Superintendents</b>          | System Vice-Principal<br><br>Consultants for Integration of Technology<br><br>Instructional Coach | System Principals and Vice-Principals<br><br>Instructional Coaches | System Principal and Vice-Principal<br><br>Learning Support Consultants<br><br>Itinerant Educational Assistants<br><br>Itinerant Teachers for Assistive Technology | Research Analysts<br><br>Research Officers                |
| <b>School-based Collaborators Led by Principals and Vice-Principals</b> | Digital Lead Learners   | Math Leads<br><br>Math Heads<br><br>ESL/ELD Leads                  | Learning Resource Teachers<br><br>Learning Support Teachers  |   |

System supports also include School Operations, Superintendent Meetings, Principal/Vice-Principal Learning Sessions.

## OBSERVE

Ongoing monitoring of progress towards the goals identified in the Board Improvement Plan takes place at all levels of the organization and at regular intervals using multiple data sources.

Sources of evidence include:

| <b>Provincial</b>               | <b>District</b>                                      | <b>School-Based</b>  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| EQAO achievement data           | OurSCHOOL school climate survey results              | Classroom Assessments: Conversations, Observations and Products  |
| EQAO student questionnaire data | School Learning Plans for Achievement and Well-being | Student surveys and questionnaires                               |
|                                 | Student feedback from organized events               | Documentation from job-embedded professional learning at schools |

“Ontario schools need to be places where everyone can succeed in a culture of high expectations. They need to be places where educators and students value diversity, respect each other, and see themselves reflected in their learning. It is particularly important to provide the best possible learning opportunities and supports for students who may be at risk of not succeeding.”

*Achieving Excellence, 2014, p.8 — <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/excellent.html>*

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**

### **LEARNING**

#### **KEY DATA OBSERVATIONS:**

**School-level data analysis shows:** the concept of number (fundamental concepts and skills of mathematics) is the content area of greatest need, and problem solving is the mathematical process of greatest need for our students. Instructional strategies related to assessment and discourse and to the development of the concept of number are the most commonly identified educator learning needs.

**Annual Student Achievement Report shows:** increases in primary (up 3% within the District and on par with province) and grade 9 applied-level (up 6% within the District and 2% below the province) mathematics, and no change in junior mathematics (2% above the province). Substantive gaps persist across the assessments of mathematics. Of particular concern are the widening gaps for our English language learners and that gaps are wider in the OCDSB than they are in the province. EQAO student questionnaires show that students who did not meet the provincial standard in mathematics had less positive beliefs in their ability in math and their efforts towards math activities (ASAR)

**GOAL:** Develop Fundamental Mathematical Concepts and Skills, specifically in grades 4-6. Develop literacy skills for English Language Learners, STEPs 1-3 in grades 4-8.



## Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and Well-being 2018-2019

| Strategies   | Actions  | Indicators of Success  | Sources of Evidence   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <p>1. Improve student achievement in mathematics, particularly as it relates to fundamental concepts and skills and the concept of number;</p> <p>2. Increase leader and educator knowledge of fundamental mathematical concepts and skills and effective mathematics pedagogy;</p> <p>3. Increase students' reported efficacy and confidence in mathematics.</p> <p>4. Increase leader and educator knowledge of effective instruction for English Language Learners and use of the STEP tool;</p> <p>5. Use updated STEP data to continue to monitor ELLs progress;</p> <p>6. Examine STEP levels and compare with provincial assessment data to determine areas for targeted support;</p> <p>7. Investigate targeted literacy resources for ELLs.</p> | <p>Map the fundamental mathematical concepts and skills directly to the Ontario Curriculum (all math strands, other curricular areas);</p> <p>Identify where the fundamentals of mathematics are found in a variety of mathematical tasks and connect them directly to the continuum of learning from counting principles to algebraic thinking;</p> <p>Develop virtual learning materials to support understanding of the fundamentals of mathematics and related instructional strategies in schools in staff meetings, professional learning teams and on professional activity days;</p> <p>Provide superintendency-based numeracy instructional coach, Learning Support Consultant and READ personnel support for school leaders at :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monthly superintendency meetings,</li> <li>• lunch and learn drop-in sessions at monthly operations meetings, and</li> <li>• schools upon request through system principals.</li> </ul> <p>Provide training and support for new ESL/ELD leads;</p> <p>Provide focused support through instructional coaches in all schools;</p> <p>Support teachers in identifying observable language behaviours (from the STEP document) in order to effectively plan for and assess student learning;</p> <p>Provide resources to support effective instruction for English Language Learners; and</p> <p>Ensure STEP data is accurate and regularly updated.</p> | <p>» Numeracy specific concepts are explicitly used to deepen student learning and understanding in all subjects. SEF 4.2;</p> <p>» [Students] have access to and select appropriate technologies based on the task. SEF 4.3;</p> <p>» All students and educators form a learning community where mathematics inquiry is framed positively and risk-taking is the norm. SEF 4.2;</p> <p>» School leaders are engaged in professional learning with staff. SEF 2.4;</p> <p>» Student assessments and achievement data inform the focus of professional learning and provide insight to its impact on student learning. SEF 1.1;</p> <p>» Student achievement information is collected through common assessment tools identified by the district and/or school, analyzed and shared as part of the assessment for learning process. SEF 1.2;</p> <p>» Students whose culture/ first language differs from the culture/ language of instruction are intentionally supported in order to be able to access the intended learning. SEF 4.5; and</p> <p>» Instruction is differentiated and curriculum materials, digital tools, human and a range of other resources are provided to support student strengths and needs. SEF 3.1.</p> | <p>EQAO Provincial achievement data;</p> <p>EQAO Student Questionnaire;</p> <p>Report Card Data;</p> <p>PRISA and AEAC data;</p> <p>Reflections and Impact statements from the School Learning Plans;</p> <p>Feedback from monthly superintendency meetings and professional learning sessions with principals and vice-principals;</p> <p>EQAO Provincial achievement data;</p> <p>Report Card data;</p> <p>Reflections and Impact statements from the School Learning Plans;</p> <p>Numbers of educators trained in STEP; and</p> <p>Feedback from collaborative inquiries.</p> |

## WELL-BEING

### KEY DATA OBSERVATIONS:

**School-level data analysis shows:** Socio-emotional well-being is consistently identified by schools as the most urgent student learning need. Self-regulation and resilience are amongst the most commonly reported learning needs.

**District-level OurSCHOOL and Annual Student Achievement Report shows:** in 2016-2017 students in grades 4-6 reported incidents of bullying and feelings of being excluded are on the rise and higher than the Canadian norm. At the same time, the proportions of students reporting that they feel safe at school and/or a positive sense of belonging are declining, with rates being lower than the Canadian norm.

**GOAL:** Build socio-emotional skills in the Early Years, specifically: attachment, self-regulation, resilience; Develop an increased sense of belonging in grades 4-6 and decrease the number of reported incidents of bullying.

| <b>Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and Well-being 2018-2019</b>  |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Strategies</b>   | <b>Actions</b>  | <b>Indicators of Success</b>   | <b>Sources of Evidence</b>   |
| <p>1. Focus all School Learning Plans for Student Well-being on the socio-emotional domain of well-being;</p> <p>2. Increase leader and educator knowledge about socio-emotional development: attachment, self-regulation and resiliency.</p> <p>3. Identify additional sources of data and evidence to measure progress towards the goals of the School Learning Plans for Well-being.</p> | <p>Explore relevant professional learning materials at monthly superintendency meetings and apply them to the School Learning Plans for Well-being;</p> <p>Providing sample SLPs for Well-being with a focus on self-regulation, including professional learning resources;</p> <p>Develop professional learning modules on attachment, self-regulation and resiliency;</p> <p>Implement evidence-based programs related to socio-emotional development with a focus on Mindmasters 2 in Kindergarten;</p> <p>Increase integration of culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy;</p> <p>Facilitate student leadership planning in school-based mental health initiatives, Rainbow Youth Forum, Indigenous Youth Symposium, Black Youth Conference; and</p> <p>Continue the partnership between Curriculum Services and Learning Support Services - Early Learning Team.</p> | <p>» Students are aware of and access programs and services available to them in their school and community to support their social, emotional, cognitive and physical development. SEF 6.3;</p> <p>» Demonstrate confidence, resilience, self-regulation and self-efficacy in their capacity to learn and succeed. SEF 3.1;</p> <p>» The cultural and linguistic diversity of the school and community is recognized and respected. SEF 6.2;</p> <p>» Districts develop policies and allocate funding to help ensure that learning resources are current, culturally relevant, responsive and inclusive. SEF 4.1;</p> <p>» Students are supported in their role as advocates, school and community leaders and conscientious global citizens SEF 3.4; and</p> <p>Students:</p> <p>» Assume leadership roles when working on authentic problems/projects and incorporate the use of relevant data, tools and experts in and beyond the classroom. SEF 4.3.</p> | <p>Our SCHOOL student survey 2018-2019;</p> <p>Impact statements from School Learning Plans for Well-being, including multiple sources of data;</p> <p>Feedback from monthly superintendency meetings and professional learning sessions with principals and vice-principals;</p> <p>Number of Referrals to Early Learning Team and Itinerant Educational Assistant Team;</p> <p>Feedback from Kindergarten teams supported by the Early Learning Team;</p> <p>Observations from school visits by LSS;</p> <p>Educator feedback from professional learning modules and collaborative inquiries; and</p> <p>Attendance and feedback from Rainbow Youth Forum, Indigenous Youth Symposium, Black Youth Conference.</p> |





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