

Summary of Progress

By 2019, the District will enhance the use of resources and supports to improve the well-being of all learners and staff.

Strategies and Actions

Strategy #1- Build capacity to improve mental health supports

- Developed a new 3-yr Mental Health Strategy;
- Supported student mental health programs (e.g., Sources of Strength; Kids Have Stress Too, Healthy Transitions; Mindmasters 2);
- Provided staff training in mental health awareness and mental health literacy (e.g., attachment, self-regulation, collaborative problem solving) as well as suicide and violence prevention
- Designated a District Mental Health Lead;
- Conducted Autism Spectrum Disorder Pilots;
- Provided training on welcoming newcomer students.

Strategy #2-Increase opportunities to support and encourage creative expression, physical health and physical literacy

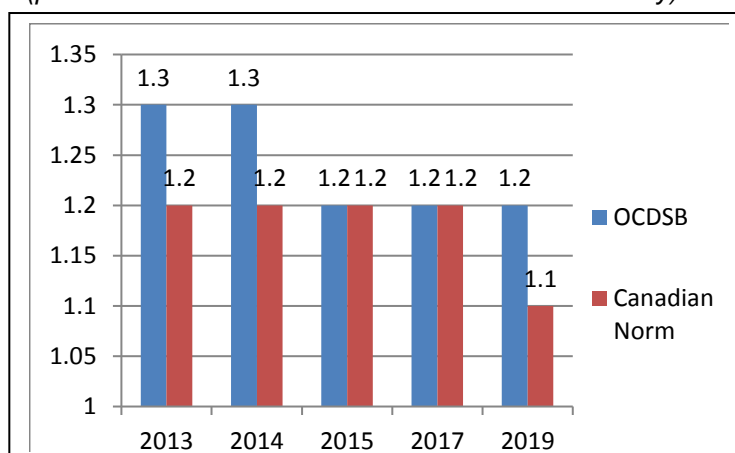
- Promoted teaching games for understanding as part of the continuous promotion of daily physical activity;
- Promoted awareness of concussion management for students and staff;
- Implemented Daily Physical Activity;
- Increased funding for after-school sports;
- Targeted funding for the arts.

Strategy #3- Develop and implement the Well-Being Framework and School Well-Being Plans to enhance school climate.

- Focused well-being goals in SLPs on socio-emotional skills in early years: attachment, self-regulation, and resilience;
- Developed awareness and revised policies/procedures for legalization of cannabis;
- Implemented Workplace Mental Health Leadership Certificate Program;
- Distributed well-being kits and decision-making tool to all principals.

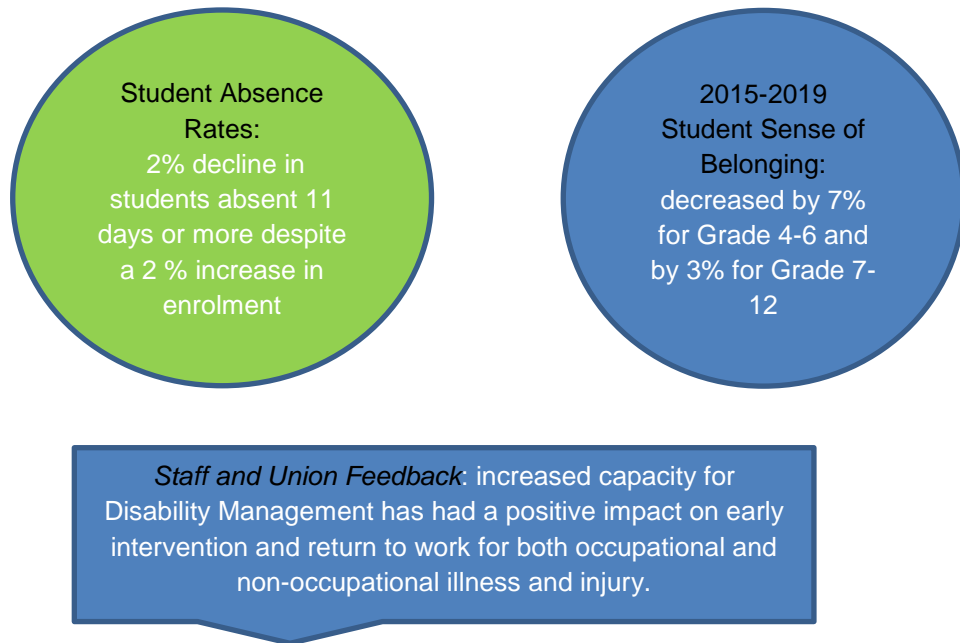
Evidence of Progress

*School Climate Survey 2019: OCDSB's Grade 4-6
(performed above the Canadian norm at 1.2 hours/day)*



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Observations

Capacity building for mental health supports and well-being interventions did not translate into large positive changes for overall student and staff well-being. However, the actions taken to address well-being needs seemed to have had the most impact on student and staff attendance. Increased emphasis on daily physical activity allowed the OCDSB to maintain consistency in this area over the last 4 years, and even performing above the Canadian norm in 2019 in the grade 4-6 category.

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The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board promotes “a culture which supports and respects the well-being of every individual in safe and caring, learning and working environments. The Well-Being objective states: “By 2019, the District will enhance the use of resources and supports to improve the well-being of all learners and staff.”

This report outlines the actions, initiatives, programs and projects that helped to advance well-being at the OCDSB over the past year. For the purposes of this report, the OCDSB's progress on the well-being objective will be presented in three sections:

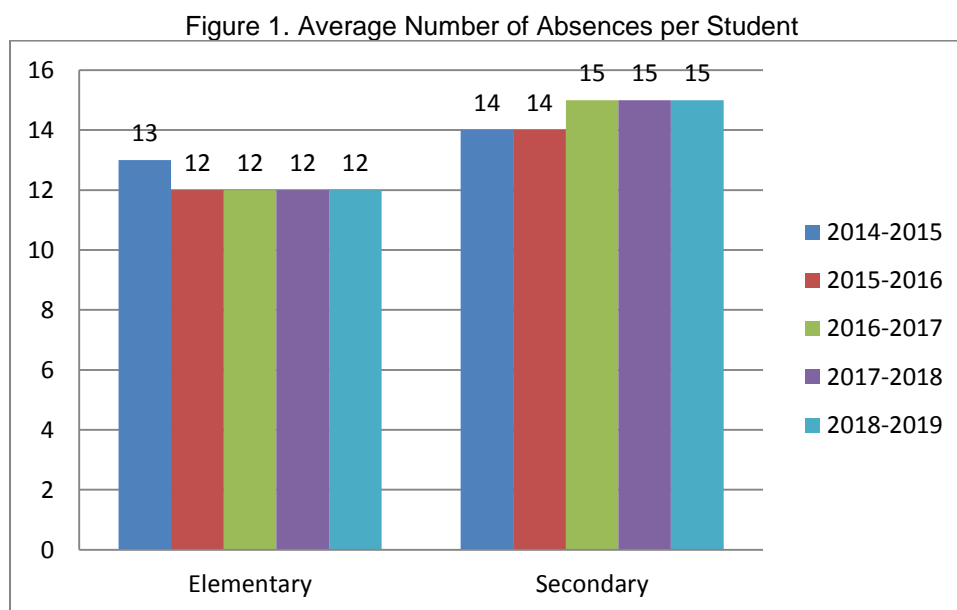
- 1) measures of overall student well-being;
- 2) a summary of evidence specifically linked to the strategies as identified in the strategic plan; and
- 3) indicators of staff well-being, which has a direct impact on the well-being of our students.

Measures of Overall Student Well-Being

To measure student well-being more broadly, three key measures have been identified: *absence rates, suspension rates, and student reports of self-efficacy*. Another useful data source for measurement of student well-being is the *Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (2017)*. These measures/indicators vary based on multiple aspects of well-being and provide important metrics for assessing our progress in this area.

Student Absence Rates

The figure below shows the number of absences per student enrolled (by panel) for each school year.



*Note: Numbers are based on full day absences and do not include Continuing Education.
Data labels are rounded to the nearest whole number.*

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At the elementary level the average absences per student has been stable while at the secondary level an increase in absences was observed in 2016-2017 and has been stable since then. Student absenteeism was further explored by disaggregating the data for students who were frequently absent (11 days or more). Approximately 46% of students were identified as being absent for 11 days or more in 2018-2019 (compared to 47% in 2017-2018). Students absent for 11 days or more (34,111) accounted for 79% of all absences compared to last year's figure of 81% (34,331), representing a 2% decline.

Suspension Rates

In the last four years, the District has seen a trend of increased levels of students suspended as well as the number of suspensions issued. A total of 3,753 suspensions were issued in 2017-2018: 2,310 at the elementary level and 1,443 at the secondary level, which represents an overall increase of 12.4% from the previous year. The overall suspension rate, based on a student population of 73,571 was 5.1% (compared to 4.6% in 2016-2017). Over a five-year period, it is worth noting that student suspensions at the elementary level have continued to increase at a higher rate than elementary enrolment, while there has been a decrease in the overall suspension rate at secondary. The table below captures an overview of enrolment and suspension data.

Table 1: Historical Overview of Enrolment and Suspension Data

| Student Enrolment | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <i>Elementary</i> | 48,126 | 48,176 | 47,685 | 48,702 | 49,106 |
| <i>Secondary</i> | 24,252 | 23,978 | 23,886 | 23,790 | 24,465 |
| Total | 72,378 | 72,154 | 71,571 | 72,492 | 73,571 |
| Number of Suspensions Issued | | | | | |
| <i>Elementary</i> | 1,597 | 1,613 | 1,635 | 1,943 | 2,310 |
| <i>Secondary</i> | 1,686 | 1,573 | 1,315 | 1,397 | 1,443 |
| Total | 3,283 | 3,186 | 2,950 | 3,340 | 3,753 |
| Number of Students Suspended | | | | | |
| <i>Elementary</i> | 944 | 936 | 942 | 1,086 | 1,308 |
| <i>Secondary</i> | 1,025 | 983 | 880 | 937 | 1,098 |
| Total | 1,969 | 1,919 | 1,822 | 2,023 | 2,406 |

General Trends Continue to Show:

- male students are more likely to engage in behaviors leading to suspension;
- students who are identified with special education needs (particularly those with a behavioral exceptionality) and who reside in lower income neighborhoods are the most disproportionately represented in the data;
- incidents that result in a suspension typically occur in the classroom, on the school grounds, or in the hallway and for reasons associated with conduct that is injurious to the physical or mental well-being of others in the school, conduct that is injurious to the moral tone of the school, and persistent opposition to authority; and

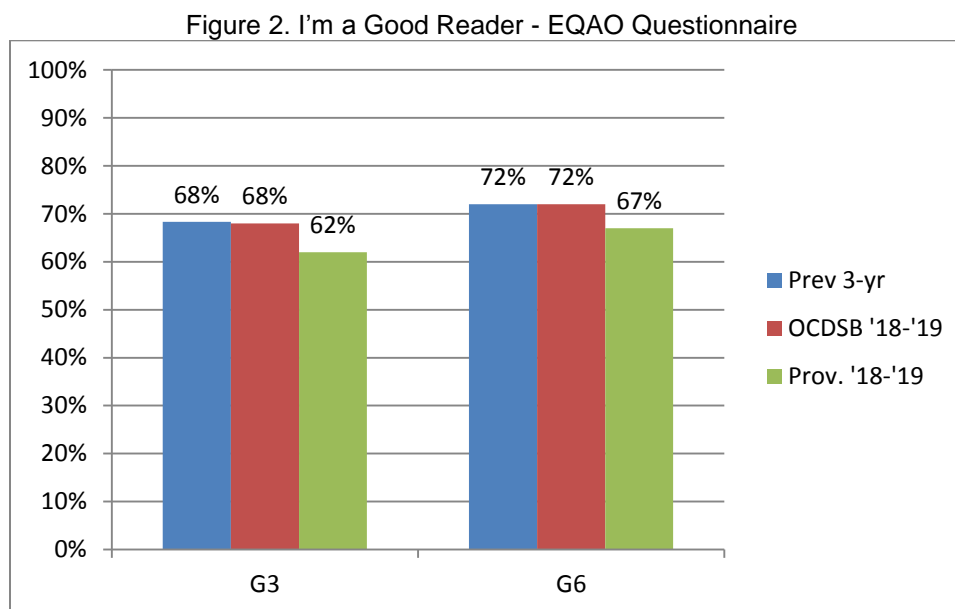
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- the majority of students suspended in 2017-2018 were suspended only once, and most suspensions lasted for a single day.

Student Reports of Self-Efficacy

In the EQAO Contextual Questionnaire, students respond to questions about self-efficacy: “I’m a good reader”; “I’m a good writer”; and “I’m good at mathematics”. Results from 2018-2019 show comparable self-efficacy scores in reading in relation to the previous three-year average score. However, differences were noted across the grades in Math and Writing. This data provides useful insights to the cognitive well-being of OCDSB students. The results are presented in the figures below, with the proportion of students who responded ‘most of the time’ depicted in the middle bar, with the previous three-year average to the left and the provincial average to the right.



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Figure 3. I'm a Good Writer – EQAO Questionnaire

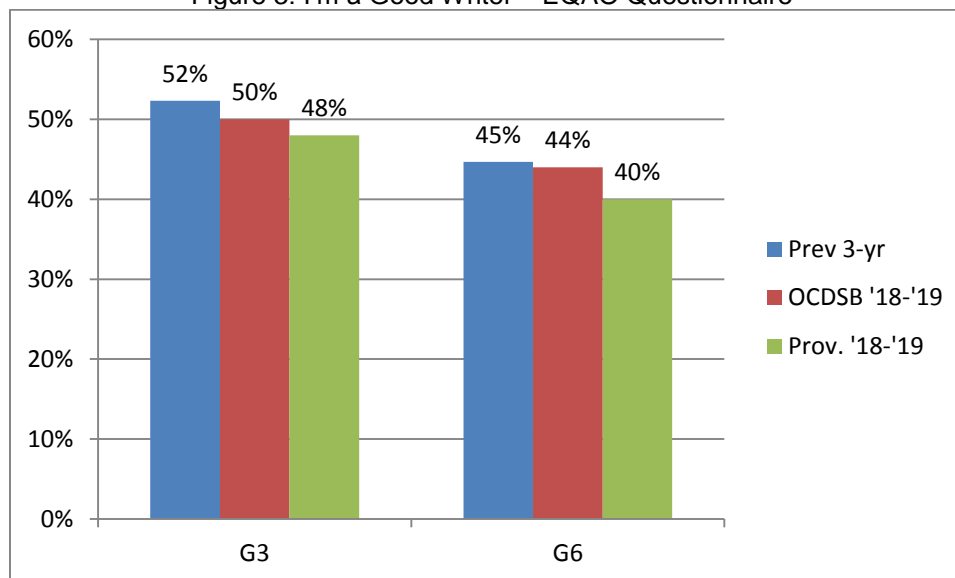
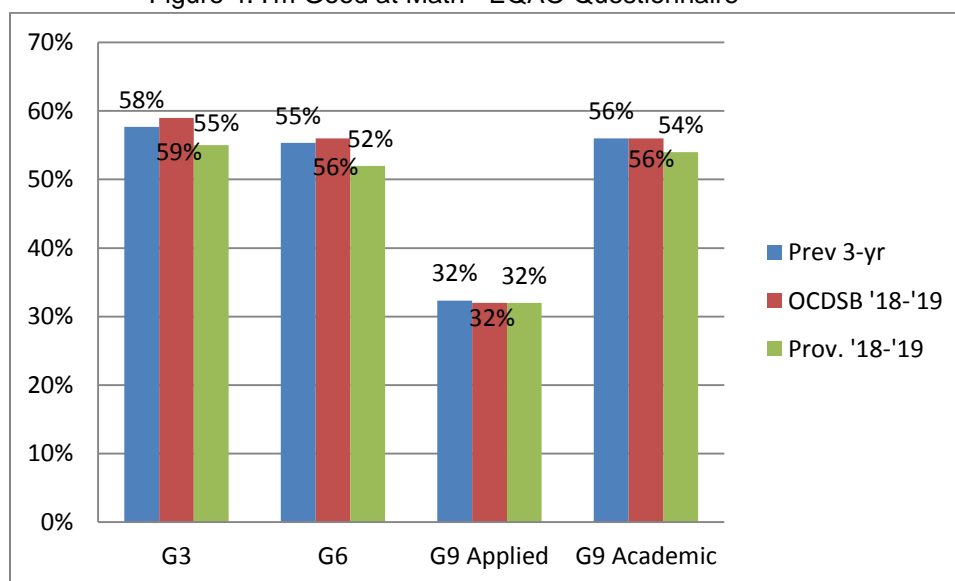


Figure 4. I'm Good at Math - EQAO Questionnaire



2017 Ontario Student Drug Use & Health Survey (OSDUHS)

The Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS) is the longest ongoing school survey in Canada and one of the longest in the world. It is an ongoing epidemiological study of Ontario students, conducted every two years since 1977 by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). CAMH uses the OSDUHS to collect anonymous data from approximately 14,000 students in grades 7 through 12 every two years.

The OSDUHS survey serves as a significant measure of student well-being. Providing an accurate description of problems and behaviors, as well as identifying emerging issues, it equips health, education and governmental bodies in setting priorities and facilitating preventative policies, programs and services to improve the well-being of youth. In 2017, a representative sample of 1,430 Ottawa students in grade 7 to 12 participated in the study, 689 of whom were students of the OCDSB. There were no statistically significant differences between estimates for OCDSB compared to Ottawa as a whole on any of the measures assessed in 2017. The OCDSB results on two main indicators from the 2017 cycle are captured in the table below.

Table 2. Results from the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (2017)

| <i>Results from the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey¹ (2017)</i> | |
|--|--|
| ❖ Sample size | Ontario students: 11,000 Ottawa students: 1430 OCDSB students: 689 |
| ❖ Grades | 7-12 |
| ❖ Poor mental health | 2013: 10% reporting poor mental health 2017: 20% reporting poor mental health 2013 -2017: Increased by 10% |
| ❖ Screen time exceeding 2hrs/day | 2013: 66% reporting screen time >2hrs/day 2017: 55% reporting screen time >2hrs/day 2013 -2017: Decreased by 11% |

Comparing OCDSB data from 2013 to 2017, on two areas (1) poor mental health, and (2) screen time exceeding 2hrs/day, estimates for students reporting poor mental health significantly increased (10% vs. 20%), and estimates for those reporting screen time exceeding

¹ A confidence interval of 95% was used for this survey. Schools have been randomly selected by CAMH for participation. Schools that have agreed to participate are asked for a list of all classes by grade, from which a random selection is made by staff at the Institute for Social Research (ISR). Once classes are selected, ISR staff negotiates a convenient date to visit the school and administers the survey during regular class time.

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two hours/day significantly decreased (66% vs. 55%). Figure 6 and 7 below shows 2017 results of student's feedback on school climate for OCDSB in comparison to Ottawa. In both cases, OCDSB students responded more favorable to school climate overall than all Ottawa students.

Figure 5. Grade 7-8 School Climate Results (OSDUHS)

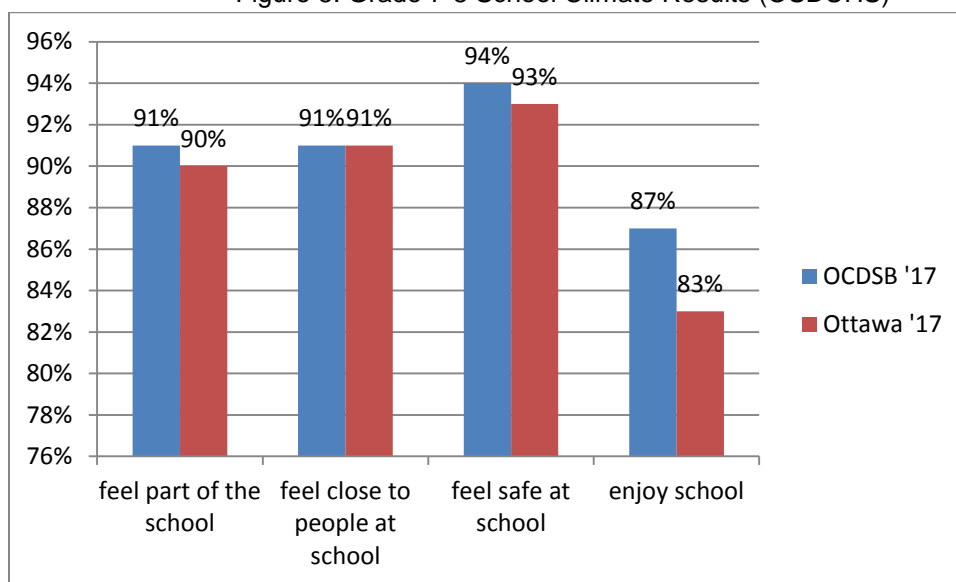
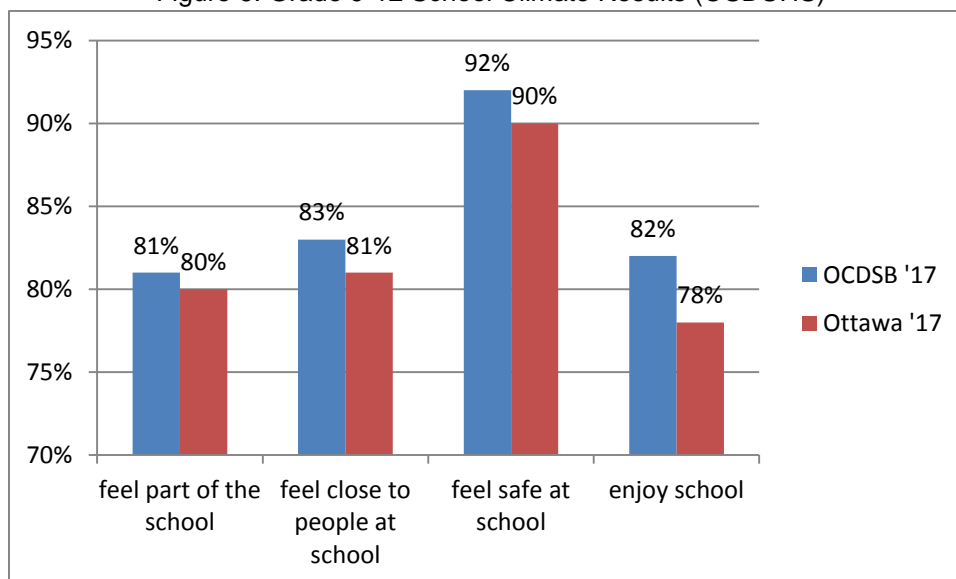


Figure 6. Grade 9-12 School Climate Results (OSDUHS)



Build capacity to improve mental health supports

Mental Health Strategy

The OCDSB develops a 3-year mental health strategy. The Annual Action Plan/Work-Plan for Learning and Support Services is derived from the mental health strategy. In 2018-2019, the final year action plan of the mental health strategy was implemented. The focus of the work this past year was in the areas of capacity building for staff, especially in self-regulation with continuation and expansion of a focus on early years. Additionally, work commenced to develop the new strategy to be launched in fall 2019.

Staff Capacity: Training in Mental Health Support

A key strategy for well-being is to build capacity to improve mental health supports. During the 2018-2019 school year progress was made through employee training in a variety of areas. Although this training aimed to provide employees with the knowledge and skills to help students, the experience gained from the training sessions is expected to equip staff with strategies that have a positive impact on their own well-being. This training focused on a number of areas captured in the table below:

Table 3- Mental Health Supports

| Activities | Output |
|---|--|
| <u>ASIST</u> – a two-day course designed to help caregivers recognize and estimate risk, and intervene to prevent the immediate risk of suicide. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 44 trained |
| <u>SafeTALK</u> – a three-hour (3hr) workshop that prepares staff to identify people with thoughts of suicide and connect them to suicide first aid resources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 133 staff trained and 54 students trained in 2 secondary schools |
| <u>Enhancing Student Well-Being:</u> This presentation provides an overview of the three (3) areas of focus of the OCDSB's mental health initiative: i) Attachment, ii) Self-Regulation, and iii) Collaborative Problem Solving. These areas of focus provide a congruent and effective approach to working with our students across the system. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered to 40 schools |
| <u>Building Resilience Through Attachment Relationships:</u> Research has demonstrated that the number one resiliency factor for children is attachment. This workshop explores the foundations of attachment, how attachment relationships impact brain development, and what we as educators can do to develop secure attachment relationships with our students. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered to 34 schools and 10 School Council parent meetings |

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|---|---|
| <u>Self-Regulation</u> : This presentation provides participants with an introduction to self-regulation in students. The focus is on understanding self-regulation and developing strategies to help students build self-regulation skills in the classroom. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Delivered to 34 schools and 10 School Council parent meetings |
| <u>Collaborative Problem Solving</u> : CPS is an evidence-based approach for helping children and youth with behavioral challenges. This presentation provides a brief introduction into the CPS approach and explores the understanding that challenging kids lack the skill, not the will to behave well. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Delivered in 16 schools |
| <u>Compassion Fatigue</u> : Compassion fatigue is defined as the "cost of caring". This topic is discussed in relation to self-care and strategies for preventing compassion fatigue are highlighted. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Delivered to 21 schools |

Other Activities

❖ Training

In September 2018, Behaviour Management Systems (BMS) Training, which replaces non-violent crisis intervention (NVCi), was offered to educational assistants and early childhood staff.

❖ Staff engagement

In January 2019, a Mental Health Strategy Staff Survey was distributed to randomly-selected staff across the District to obtain feedback to be used to inform the development of the strategy.

Student Capacity

In addition to building staff capacity to improve mental health supports, the OCDSB has been working to build student capacity. Students were also supported through various programs, some of which include:

❖ Youth Connections Ottawa (formerly Sources of Strength)

Sources of Strength was canceled in 2018-2019 and replaced with *Youth Connections Ottawa* - locally developed peer to peer resiliency program. It was piloted in seven (7) schools, with a plan to scale up in fall 2019.

❖ Kids Have Stress Too

Implemented as a pilot last year, *The Kids Have Stress Too* program was continued for 2018-2019. It is designed to help young people develop stress-management skills. The program was implemented on a pilot basis in 2017- 2018 in five (5) OCDSB schools (four secondary and one elementary). Over an eight 8-week period, students took part in weekly session facilitated by an Itinerant Education Assistant (IEA) and/or classroom teachers. The sessions aimed to help students understand what "normal" stress levels are, and when to seek help for stress they may be experiencing in or out of school.

❖ Mindmasters2

Mindmasters2 is a bilingual, evidence-informed mental health promotion resource designed for children ages 4 to 9 years. The resource uses fun activities to teach positive living skills, including relaxation and stress control, positive thinking and imagery, and mindfulness. For students aged 9-12, there are additional videos and activities. Training was provided to ECEs, and the resources have been used in many kindergarten and primary classrooms across the District.

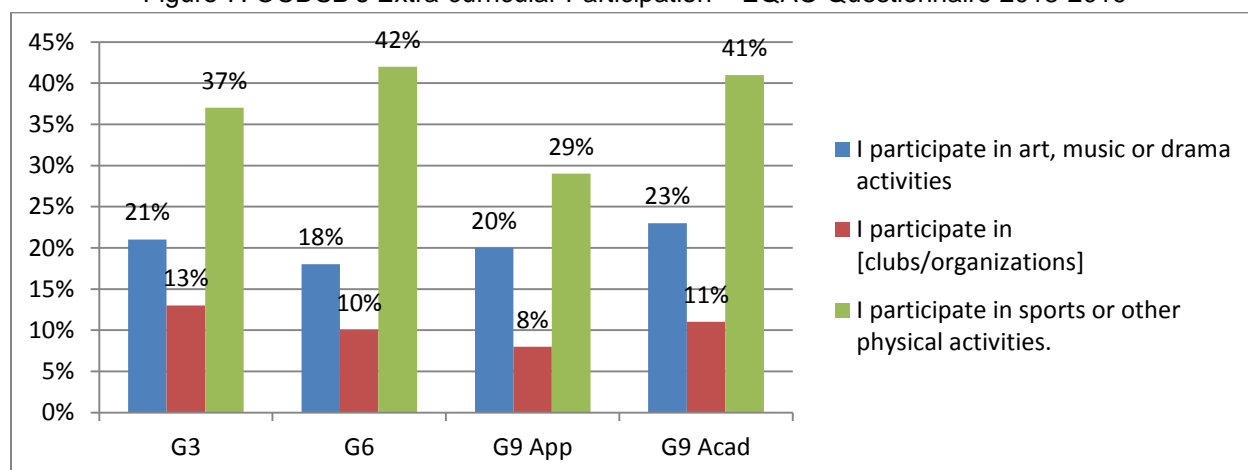
❖ Healthy Transitions

The Healthy Transitions program is run by Ottawa Public Health to promote resilience and mental health in young adolescents at school. The program was adapted so that it can also be offered to grade 6 classes this year. In 2018-2019, the program served 157 grade 6 classes in 63 schools.

Increase opportunities to support and encourage creative expression, physical health and physical literacy

This strategy for promoting student well-being links to both the arts and physical education. Extracurricular activities have a positive impact on student well-being, and therefore data collected on an annual basis through the EQAO student questionnaire is useful in helping us monitor the physical health of students. The figure below highlights the proportion of students who responded most of the time (every day or almost every day) in response to questions about extra-curricular participation in the 2018-2019 school year.

Figure 7. OCDSB's Extra-curricular Participation – EQAO Questionnaire 2018-2019



Student participation in extra-curricular activities is most commonly in the form of sports or other physical activities, followed by participation in art, music or drama. Previous year's measurement reports on well-being highlighted gender differences in extracurricular participation. Males participated in physical activities at a much higher rate than their female counterparts, and females participated at a higher rate in arts, music, or drama. This difference was explored again this year to find minimal change from last year; boys participate in sports 11-18% more than girls, while girls participate in arts, music, or drama, 9-11% more (See figure 8 and 9).

Figure 8. Physical Activity (2018-2019)

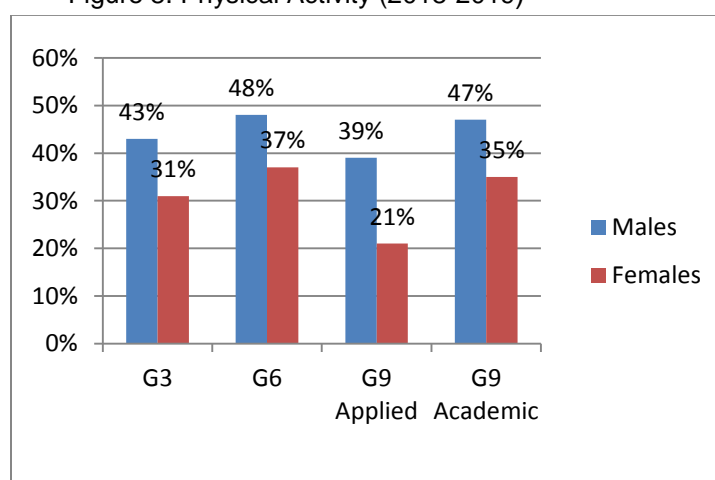
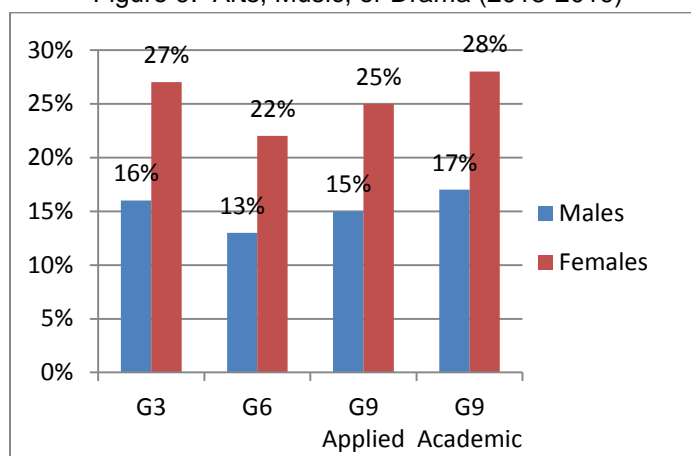


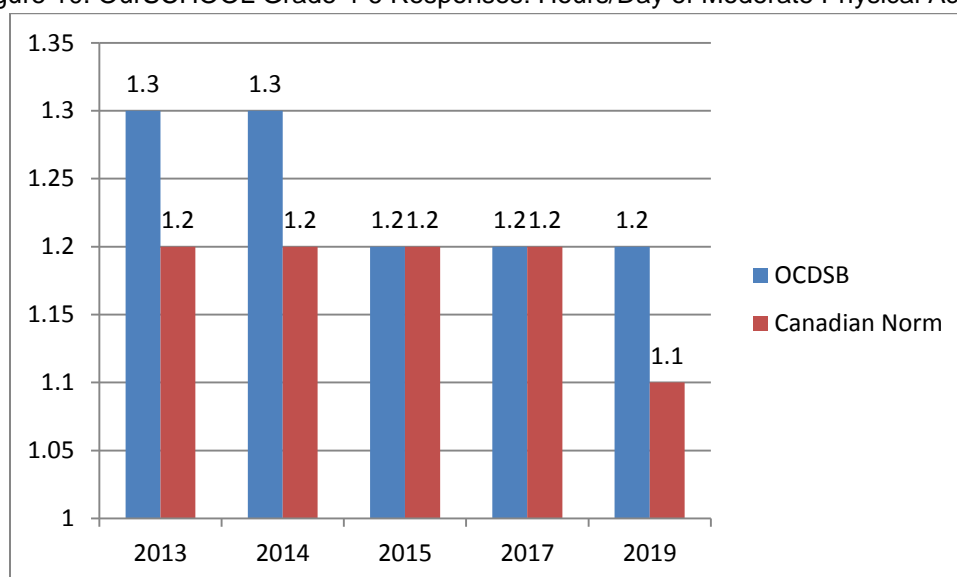
Figure 9. Arts, Music, or Drama (2018-2019)



These findings indicate that boys and girls may be engaged in different kinds of activities, which have different benefits for well-being. These findings are important in planning our future work, as it highlights the need for differentiated strategies in these areas.

Additional data on the physical activity of OCDSB students is collected through the Student School Climate Survey. Results from the survey, administered in 2018-2019, show that students in grade 4-6 spent slightly more time than their Canadian peers doing moderate physical activity. For intense physical activity, OCDSB students reported the same as their Canadian peers at 1.3 hours per day. For grades 7-12, OCDSB students reported equal levels of moderate and intense physical activity to their Canadian counterparts.

Figure 10. OurSCHOOL Grade 4-6 Responses: Hours/Day of Moderate Physical Activity



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Figure 11. OurSCHOOL Grade 4-6 Responses: Hours/Day of Intense Physical Activity

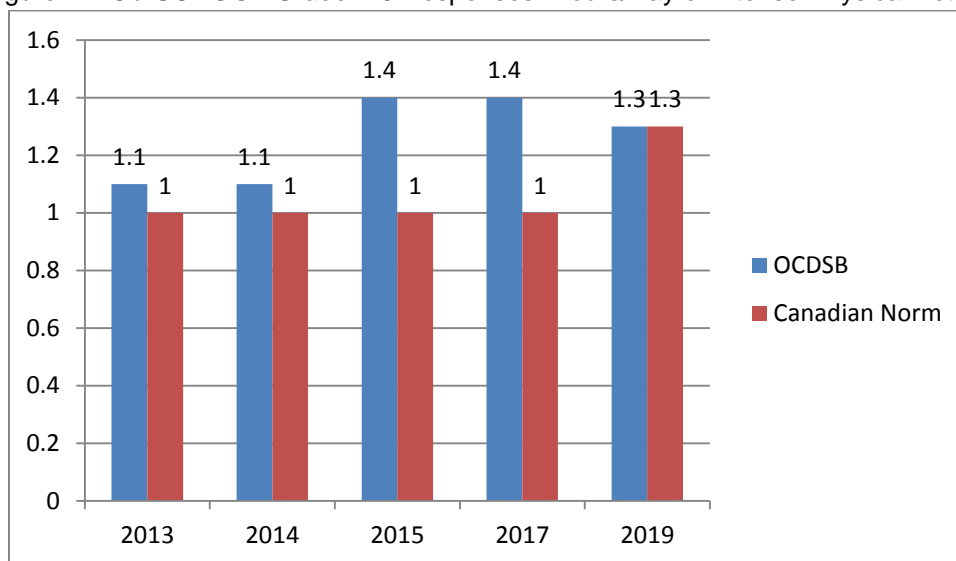


Figure 12. OurSCHOOL Grade 7-12 Responses: Hours/Day of Moderate Physical Activity

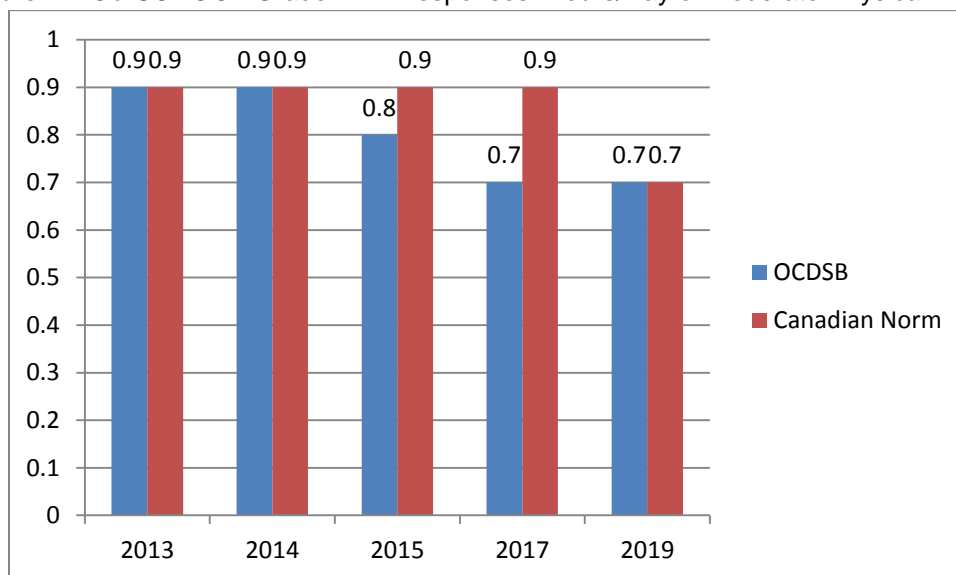
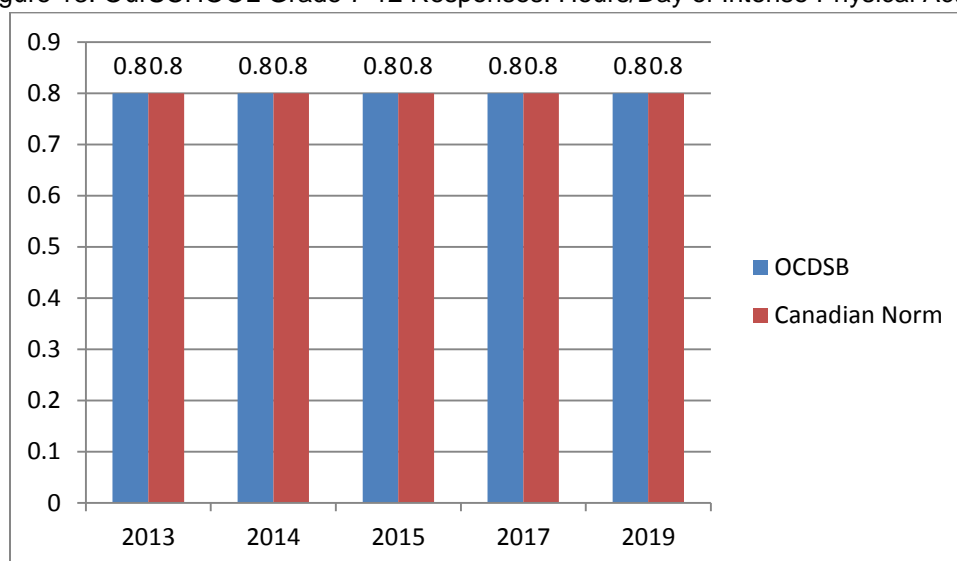


Figure 13. OurSCHOOL Grade 7-12 Responses: Hours/Day of Intense Physical Activity



Teaching Games for Understanding, as Part of DPA

During 2018-2019 school year staff continued to promote daily physical activity. However, staff has also recognized the existence of a measurement gap with teaching games for understanding. A tool to determine compliance is needed as currently there is no standard tool for measurement and for accountability.

Concussion Management

The OCDSB hosted a speaker series on Rowan's Law Day, September 26, 2018 to promote awareness of concussion management for students and staff. The event was held at Sir Robert Borden High School. The speakers at this event were Gordon Stringer, Kathleen Stringer and Dr. Michael Vassilyadi (CHEO). Rowan's Law Day was established in 2018 and will be observed across Ontario on the last Wednesday in September each year in honor of Rowan Stringer, 17, who died on May 8, 2013 after suffering multiple concussions during rugby games.²

Develop and implement the Well-Being Framework and School Well-being Plans to enhance school climate.

Integrating Achievement and Well-Being Goals in School Learning Plans (SLP's)

All SLP's included both achievement and well-being goals last year. Well-being goals focused on socio-emotional skills in early years: attachment, self-regulation, and resilience, as well as increasing sense of belonging in grade 4-6, and decreasing bullying. Through the spring reflections of (19) instructional coaches, the following themes/ areas of focus from school well-being plans were gathered:

² OCDSB Communications; Gills M., Ottawa Citizen (2018) <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/concussion-awareness-events-mark-first-rowans-law-day>

Table 4. Reflections of Instructional Coaches on School Well-Being Plans

| Student Well-Being | |
|---|---|
| <u>Impacts to students:</u> The top five impacts to student well-being identified by schools | 1.sense of belonging, cultural awareness, feelings of safety 2.self-regulation strategies and awareness 3.engagement 4.confidence 5.perseverance and resilience |
| <u>Measurement Methods:</u> The five most common methods of measuring impact on student well-being | 1.student survey 2.observations 3.conversations 4.tracking records (office referrals, incident reports) 5.staff surveys |
| <u>Impacts to educator learning:</u> The top five impacts to educator learning identified by schools | 1.learning about growth mindset and self-regulation 2.strategies, e.g. WITS, mindfulness routines 3.learning about own well-being 4.more cohesion with managing self- regulation between parents and school 5.collaborative problem solving, CRRP and Indigenous learning |
| <u>Measurement Methods:</u> The five most common methods of measuring impact on educator learning | 1.surveys 2.observations 3.conversations 4.anecdotal records 5.informal feedback |

Our School: School Climate Student Survey

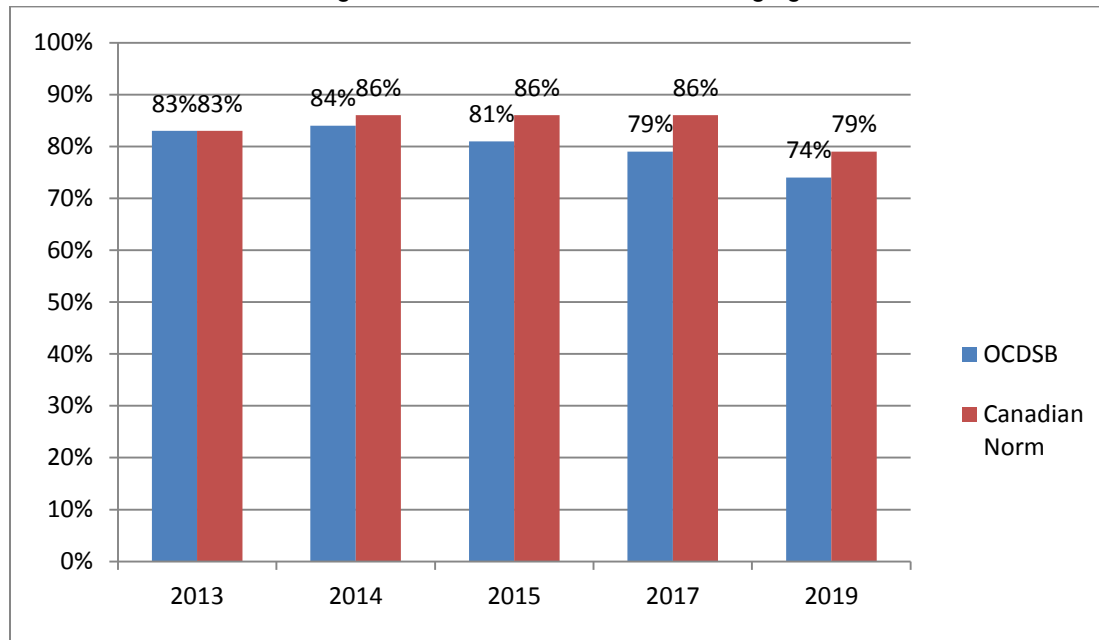
The school climate student survey report provides highlights based on data from 13,871 elementary students in 104 schools that participated in the survey between 23 April, 2019 and 14 May, 2019, and 24,407 secondary students in 71 schools that participated in the survey between 8 April 2019 and 14 May, 2019.

The charts below show a trend of decreasing 'sense of belonging' for both groups of students, grades 4-6 and grades 7-12. However, grade 7-12 students remain above the Canadian norm despite the decline in 2019 compared to previous years.

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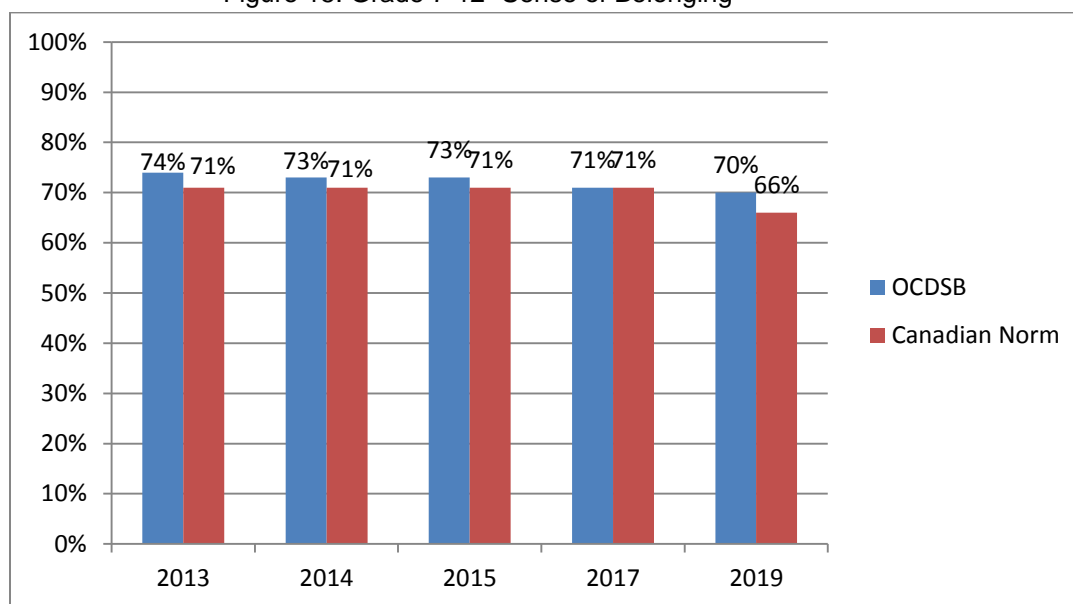
Figure 14. Grade 4-6-Sense of Belonging



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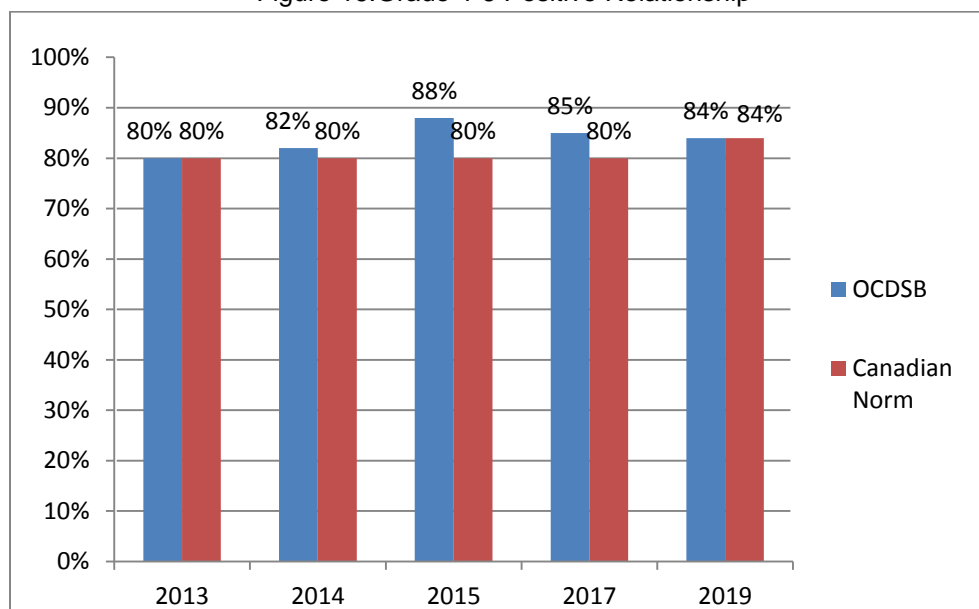
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Figure 15. Grade 7-12- Sense of Belonging



Students' ratings of positive relationships are based on whether they report having friends at school they can trust and who encourage them to make positive choices. The diagram below shows OCDSB's grade 4-6 students on par with the Canadian norm for positive relationships, whilst students in grade 7-12 have maintained positive relationship at a 5-year average score of 78%, above the Canadian norm.

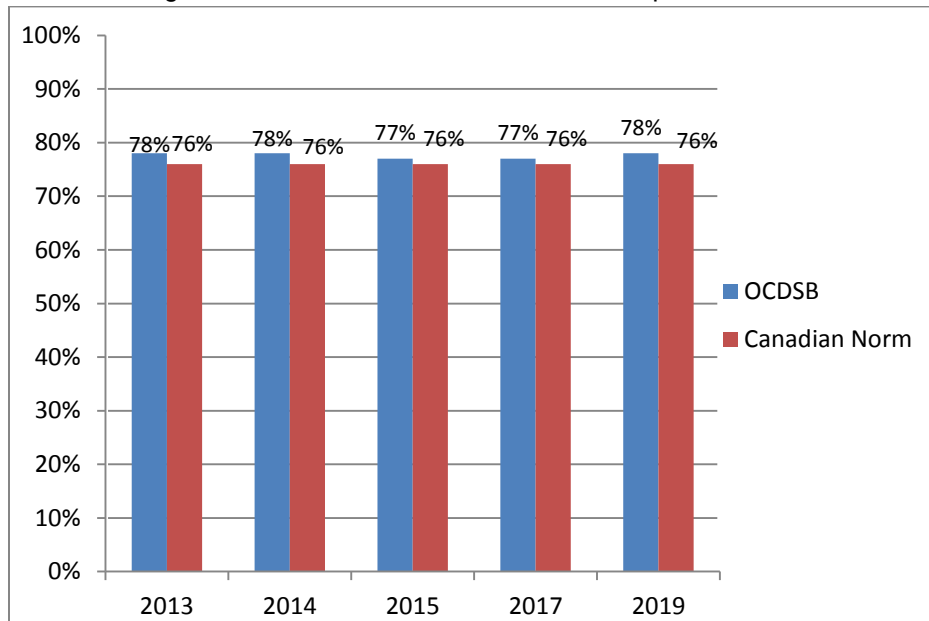
Figure 16. Grade 4-6 Positive Relationship



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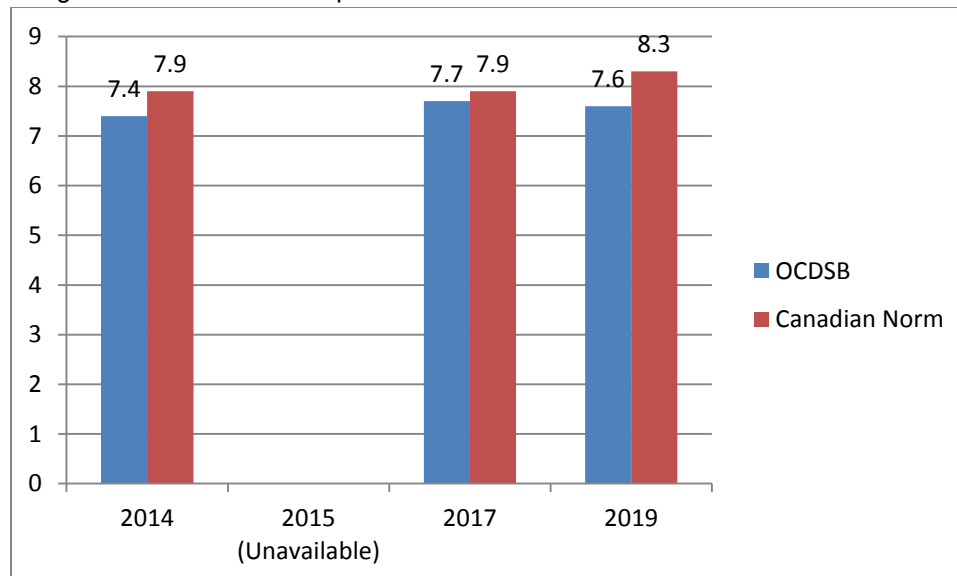
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Figure 17. Grade 7-12- Positive Relationship



Students were also asked a series of questions about whether they feel teachers are responsive to their needs and encourage independence with a democratic approach. Based on their responses, we see a decrease in reports of positive teacher-student relationships for students in grade 4-6 and in grade 7-12. For all students the gap is widening when compared to the Canadian norm.

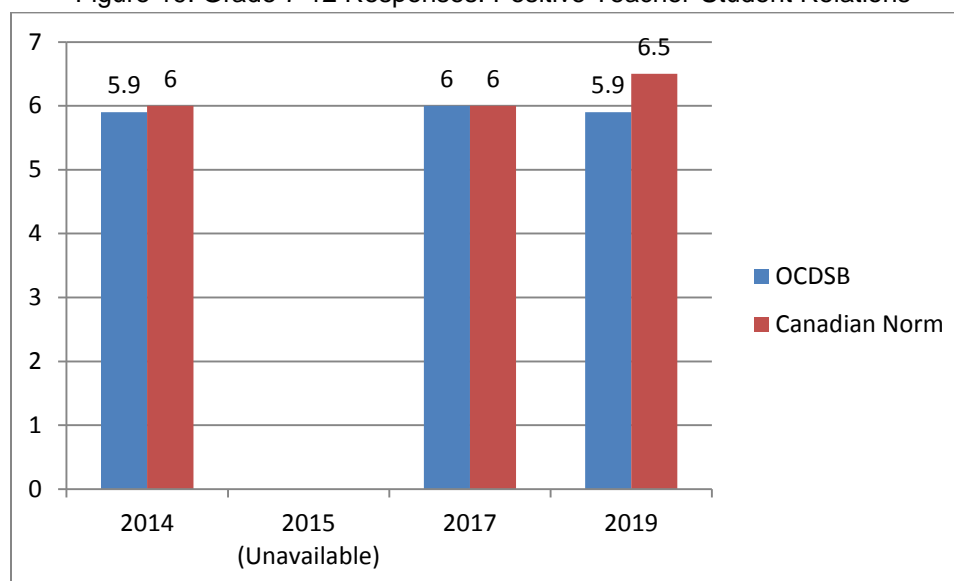
Figure 18. Grade 4-6 Responses: Positive Teacher-Student Relations



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Figure 19. Grade 7-12 Responses: Positive Teacher-Student Relations



Students also reported their perceptions of their learning climate. The learning climate was determined in response to questions about whether there were clear rules and expectations for classroom behavior and whether teachers maintain high expectations of behavior to be followed. The survey results show that student perceptions of the learning climate decreased for grade 4-6, with results lower than those reported for the Canadian norm. Ratings have been relatively consistent over time for grades 7-12, however with the 2019 increase in the Canadian norm, OCDSB's grade 7-12 students also scored (0.5 points) below it.

Figure 20. Grade 4-6 Responses: Positive Learning Climate

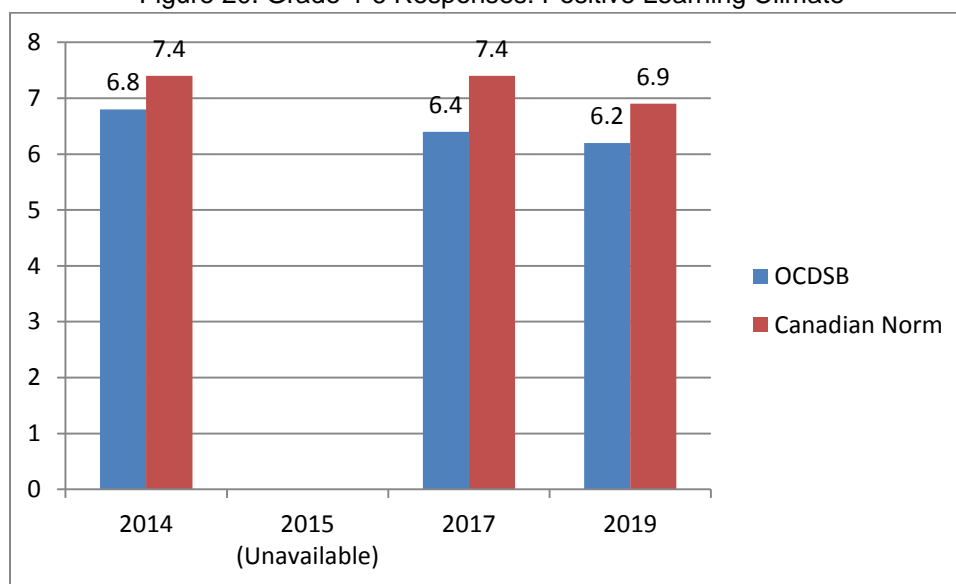
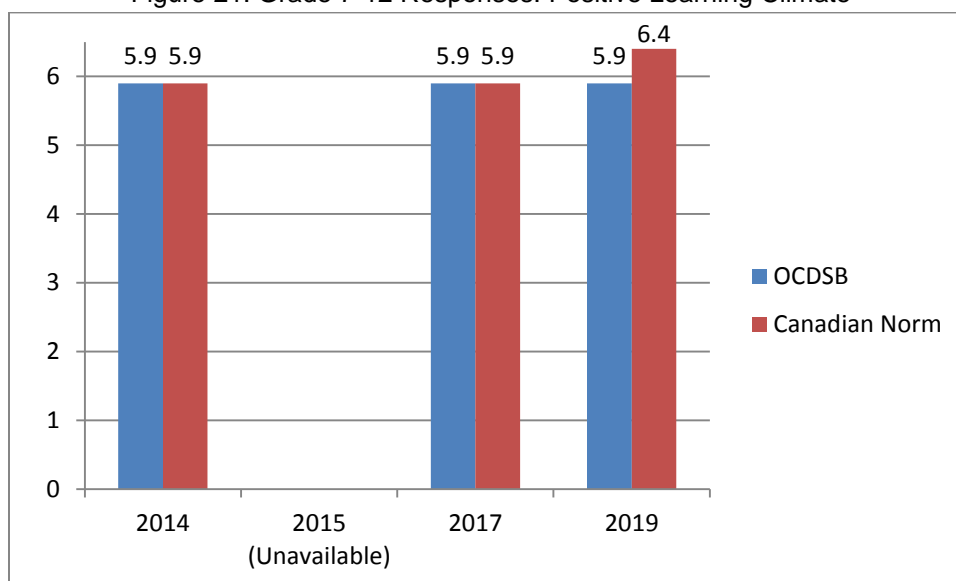


Figure 21. Grade 7-12 Responses: Positive Learning Climate



Student reports of expectations for success are based on whether they feel that school staff emphasize academic skills and hold high expectations for all students to succeed. Results for both panels have been relatively stable over time. However, students in grade 4-6 and grade 7-12 are rating expectations for success at a lower level than their Canadian peers.

Figure 22. Grade 4-6 Responses: Expectations for Success

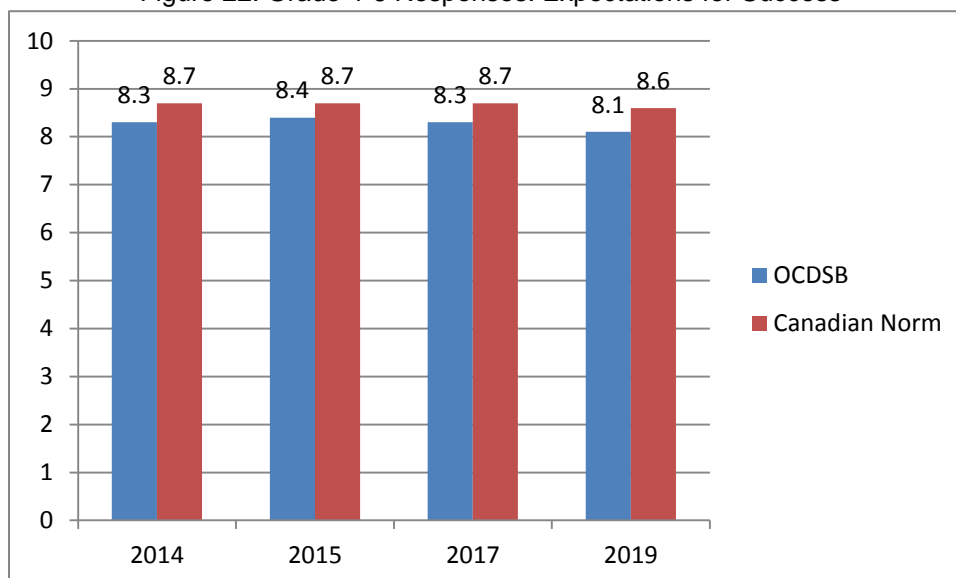
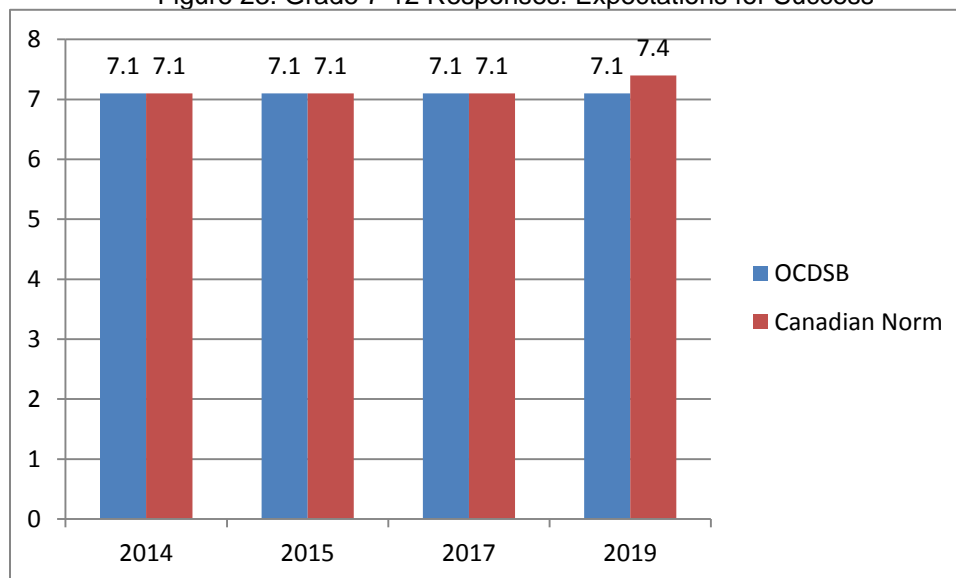


Figure 23. Grade 7-12 Responses: Expectations for Success



Awareness and Revision of Policies/Procedures for Legalization of Cannabis

OCDSB Speaker Series - Cannabis Information Session

The District in conjunction with Ottawa Public Health hosted public information sessions for parents to learn about Cannabis. The first session was held on October 23rd, 2018, at Earl of March Secondary School and a second information session took place on November 6th, 2018 at Longfields-Davidson Heights Secondary School. The discussions involved tackling the myths, what is known about the new laws, how to have that talk with your youth, protecting youth, and available services.

Updates to Policies and Procedures

Additionally, updates were made to four (4) OCDSB Safe School Policies in accordance with the legalization of recreational Cannabis. The policies and procedures which required revisions were P.026.SCO Student Suspension and Expulsion; P.033.SCO Smoking on Board Premises; P.034.SCO Substance Abuse; and P.125.SCO School Board Code of Conduct.

Staff Well-Being³

Absenteeism

Staff well-being can be measured by absence rates. According to the School Boards' Cooperative Inc. Absence Study, OCDSB employees' average number of sick days has increased from 8.61 in 2013-2014 to 12.00 in 2017-2018. Sick leave usage has increased by approximately 32% over the last five years.

Table 5. Average staff sick leave usage

| YEARS | 2013/2014 | 2014/2015 | 2015/2016 | 2016/2017 | 2017/2018 |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Elementary Teachers | 8.44 | 9.22 | 10.23 | 11.12 | 12.03 |
| Secondary Teachers | 7.50 | 8.27 | 8.79 | 8.37 | 9.86 |
| Educational Assistant's | 12.20 | 12.40 | 13.91 | 15.76 | 16.10 |
| Early Childhood Educator's | 8.45 | 10.42 | 11.48 | 14.41 | 15.65 |
| Custodians/Maintenance | 12.75 | 11.11 | 14.63 | 14.48 | 17.45 |
| Others | 6.20 | 6.80 | 6.63 | | |
| Others – Union | | | | 8.65 | 9.43 |
| Others – Non-Union | | | | 5.87 | 5.15 |
| All Employees | 8.61 | 9.16 | 10.16 | 10.87 | 12.00 |

SBCI Absence Study Report 2013-2014 to 2017-18

The increase in sick leave is a cause of concern for a number of reasons, including the impact on organizational effectiveness and the associated financial costs. The financial costs include the direct salary costs paid to absent employees, as well as the replacement costs for casual replacements given the large number of District staff who need to be replaced when they are absent from work. The latest estimate suggests that the annual financial cost associated with sick leave exceeds \$29 million in direct salary costs, which does not include the significant cost of replacement employees. For 2018-2019, the cost of supply teachers is expected to reach almost \$20 million. Absenteeism also has a potential adverse impact on the organization's effectiveness. Frequent absence among teachers and other front-line supports is disruptive to the classroom environment and can adversely impact student learning and well-being, and that of other staff in the building.

³ The information in this section extracted from Committee of the Whole Report of 2 April, 2019, Report 19-022 Employee Well-Being and Absenteeism.

Progress on Well-Being

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Potential Contributing Factors to Absenteeism:

- sick leave plan design
- workplace factors (challenging work)
 - increased aggressive student behavior in the classroom;
 - lack of consistency in student discipline;
 - erosion of professional judgment and professional autonomy; and
 - increased workload demands and general expectations on members.

At the District level, there is a workplace violence policy and program in place which includes an on-line reporting mechanism for staff to report incidents of aggressive behavior or violence as defined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act as actual physical contact, attempted physical contact or threats of physical contact. Within the OCDSB, there has been an increase in the number of reported incidents involving aggressive behaviors directed at staff. These incidents can certainly impact the well-being of the staff involved and lead to absences either as a result of an injury or stress.

Initiatives to Address Barriers to Employee Well-Being:

Addressing issues related to employee absenteeism and general wellness issues go beyond the design of the sick leave plan. A comprehensive approach means having programs in place, such as:

- an attendance support program
- a disability management program
- an employee wellness program

a) Attendance Support Program

The District has an attendance management program in place to identify and support employees with recurring (non-culpable) absences. Between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2018, approximately 25% of the District's workforce were absent for 11 days or more on sick leave. Of this number, approximately 90% were referred to, or were already being managed by Disability Management based on medical support. Since 1 September 2018, approximately 360 employees had met the threshold of 11 days of sick leave, and of that number, 33 employees were determined to meet the criteria for enrolment in the Attendance Support Program.

b) Disability & WSIB Management Program

The Disability Management Program includes early intervention and return to work strategies with some aspects of an employee wellness program. In 2017-2018, the number of cases being managed through the Disability Management Program continued to climb. Through the budget, two additional positions were provided to the Employee Wellness and Disability Management division beginning 1 September 2017. Early feedback from employees and unions has confirmed that the positions have increased capacity within the division to support absent employees and has had a positive impact in terms of early intervention and return to work for

both occupational and non-occupational illness and injury including planning and implementing accommodations. Mental health and musculoskeletal disorders continue to be leading causes for long term disability. As a result, employee mental health, including identifying organizational factors that may be contributing to mental ill health among employees, remains a priority of the District's wellness programs, as outlined below.

c) Employee Wellness Program

The OCDSB has had various initiatives in place to support wellness for a number of years, such as the Employee and Family Assistance Program, which is currently offered through a contract with Morneau Shepell, and the Short-term Emergency Childcare service, operated by Andrew Fleck. During the 2017-2018 school year, one of the areas of focus for professional learning was on promoting positive student behaviours. Promoting positive student behaviour, including strategies related to development self-regulation and resiliency and collaborative problem solving strategies, has been the focus of several professional learning opportunities for principals and vice-principals. Staff remained committed to increasing efforts directed at promoting a healthy workplace, fostering employee wellness and mitigating factors identified as having a negative impact on employee health and well-being. These initiatives include the following items in Table 6.

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Table 6. Initiatives to Address Barriers to Employee Well-Being

| | |
|---|--|
| I. Healthy and Engaging Workplace Committee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purpose: supporting the District's employee well-being and engagement initiatives; • continued to meet regularly through the 2018-2019 school year, with a focus on engagement and wellbeing through the lens of the CSA Standard - Psychologically Healthy and Safe Workplace; • developed a set of recommended actions in areas related to reward and recognition of staff and work/life balance, which have been taken to DEC for discussion and approval and will be actioned in consultation with the Committee; • continued to offer the Leading Mentally Healthy Workplaces Training for OCDSB principals, managers and supervisors. |
| II. Workplace Mental Health Leadership Certificate Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • over 100 participants have completed the training, and another session was planned for 2018-2019; • additional training was scheduled for spring 2019; • a plan to assess the impact of the training, on how principals, managers and supervisors approach their roles as leaders in dealing with potential mental health issues. |
| III. Psychological Health & Safety in the Workplace Standard (CSAZ1003) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Psychological Health & Safety in the Workplace Standard was commissioned by the Mental Health Commission of Canada; • launched in January 2013 as a voluntary standard for Canadian workplaces. |

Reflections

While there is evidence of progress in some areas of student well-being, such as increasing *self-efficacy in math*, and *physical activity* and *positive relationships*, on par or above the Canadian norm, there has also been a decline in performance on a number of other indicators, i.e. *sense of belonging*, *positive learning climate*, *expectations for success*, *student suspensions*, and *absence rates*. Further exploration of these indicators would be a useful first step in understanding the root causes to address these areas of challenge. Moreover, it will be important to engage with the entire OCDSB community, i.e. Parent Involvement Committee, Advisory Committees, and School Councils on the findings to develop actions to improve student well-being.

The District also needs a greater focus on developing opportunities for creative expression as a means to improved student well-being.

In terms of staff well-being, the District has been able to put a comprehensive plan in place to address barriers to employee well-being. However, rising sick leave usage demonstrates the importance of continuing to engage collaboratively with employees. Collaboration is needed to plan, develop and implement programs and initiatives that will support and promote employee engagement and personal well-being, as well as to mitigate against negative workplace factors.