



**Board Report No. 20-018**

**28 January 2020**

## **Evidence of Practice**

**Key Contact: Shawn Lehman, Superintendent of Instruction,  
613-596-8211 ext. 8391**

### **PURPOSE:**

1. To present information to the board of trustees on a school's experience in demonstrating evidence of practice in the areas of the Culture of Innovation and the Culture of Social Responsibility.

### **CONTEXT:**

2. In February 2019, John McCrae Secondary School (JMSS) initiated a program that saw students enrol in both TOJ4C (Child Development and Gerontology) and IDC4O (Interdisciplinary Studies). The courses were run consecutively each afternoon.

The students engaged in project-based learning that focused on a particular area of interest connected to the learning expectations and big ideas in each course. Students were asked to answer the following questions:

- Which issue would you like to help solve?
  - Are you passionate about the issue?
  - Will you acquire new skills as you work on it?
  - How are you connecting the project to the learning expectations in the course?
3. This model of learning engages students' voice as they learn about topics and problems they are passionate about and empowered to make a difference in the lives of others.

Students in the program also participated in different community activities through pre-arranged co-operative learning and work experience placements. These placements were connected to the particular learning experiences associated with the course.

### **KEY CONSIDERATIONS:**

4. The students enrolled in the program worked with a teacher who used a project-based approach to learning that enabled students to select topics they were interested in learning more about that were connected to the learning expectations and big ideas within the above courses.

This opportunity provided students in the program with a great deal of flexibility in their learning, as they learned collaboratively in the same program for over 2 hours each day for one semester. Specifically, it supported guests who came to the program to talk about their experiences that assisted students in learning more about their passion connected to the courses and in problems the students were trying to solve. For instance, guest speakers shared information about:

- Students with Autism;
- Elder Abuse;
- Group Homes;
- Salvation Army;
- Play Therapy;
- Family and Children Services;
- Advocacy of Citizens; and
- Art Therapy.

The flexibility of the structure of the learning enabled students to visit locations outside of JMSS to support the goals in their learning. This included scheduled visits to the following co-operative learning environments:

- Woodroffe HS to work with students in the General Learning Program to develop a healthy lifestyle;
- A retirement home where students learned about history through the eyes of a variety of residents with rich experiences to share;
- Barrhaven PS where students learned the sport of curling; and
- Cedarview MS to assist girls with the concept of body image.

These opportunities provided students with the ability to engage in experiential learning related to their project that incorporated many of the following experiential learning components:

- knowledge and skills: to allow students to acquire knowledge and skills related to education and life outside school;
- community connected: an authentic and meaningful connection to community that may be local, national, and global;
- inquiry-based: learning prioritizes students' questions, ideas, and observations in the experience;
- differentiation: activities reflect the students' interests, strengths, needs, and aspirations;
- student directed co-constructed learning: students have a significant role in the design of the learning opportunities, in collaboration with teachers and community members; and
- assessed and evaluated in relation to learning goals and success criteria: experiential learning opportunities include structures to assess and

evaluate student achievement, based on learning goals and success criteria determined in collaboration with the students.

The program was structured to provide opportunities for students to receive a balanced approach to learning through direct and guided instruction, shared and individual learning opportunities. Students used a variety of tools to demonstrate their learning. They leveraged technology through social media, podcasts, reflections, weekly vlogs, one to one conversations with the teacher and community partners.

Student success varied from student to student. It ranged from the successful completion of a project like [Our Stories Are Ageless](#), initiating the A.N.D. (Abilities Not Disabilities) program connected to students with disabilities, lending a hand in their placements with the elderly and children. Regardless of what determined student success for students, the one thing that was consistent was the engagement of students.

5. As part of the learning process, students reflected on the OCDSB Exit Outcomes (Appendix A) and how they were used as a self and peer assessment tool to grow their learning. As a culminating activity to the program, students participated in a fair where they demonstrated their learning to peers, staff, parents, community partners, politicians and members of the school board using a variety of different mediums.
6. Some challenges that were faced:
  - student space in their timetable to take a double course;
  - transportation to and from the co-operative learning experiences;
  - student pathways can impact which courses they take; and
  - students being more active participants in their learning and relying less on the teacher to provide resources and answers.

## **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

7. Students arranged their own transportation to their placements. Otherwise, this cost would have been borne by the school.

## **STRATEGIC LINKS:**

8. This initiative linked with the strategies objectives in the areas of Innovation, Caring and Social Responsibility.

For the Culture of Innovation, students networked with members of the community to solve local and global issues by coming up with creative products and initiatives that they marketed using technology and the community connections they established.

For the Culture of Caring, students explored a number of equity issues in the local and global communities and problem solved solutions. Accessing the curriculum in new and innovative ways allowed for authentic engagement for all

learners and provided multiple entry points for students of all educational and cultural backgrounds.

For the Culture of Social Responsibility, students took a leadership role in advocating for ethical issues and responsible stewardship by using the UN sustainable goals as the foundation for social justice. Through inquiry and problem solving, students came up with solutions to problems and issues.

## **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**

- How might this practice be expanded to other schools in the District?
- What supports or professional learning would be required?

---

Camille Williams-Taylor,  
Director of Education and  
Secretary of the Board

---

Shawn Lehman,  
Superintendent of Instruction

## **Appendix A - OCDSB Exit Outcomes**