



Saskatoon Public Schools'
Collegiate Renewal:
Purpose & Progress
Report to the Board
June 21, 2011



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This report is best viewed digitally, as background information, definitions, and additional evidence are often included as links. All links show as blue underlined text. The digital copy can be found at:
<http://schools.spsd.sk.ca/collegiaterenewal/>

Introduction

"It all comes back to belonging: creating a place for all children at school, whatever their skills and gifts."

Feedback from
Okiciyapi Partnership
Meeting

Each year of Collegiate Renewal is about moving closer to our goal of **"all collegiate students will be engaged in their learning so that they will graduate as active participants in lifelong learning and as responsible and caring citizens in the community, nation and world."** During this past school year, our students, parents/care-givers, staff members, community and business partners re-affirmed at [community stakeholder meetings](#) that this goal was compelling and worthy of remaining as a Division priority for the coming years. As an ongoing, consistent, and supported initiative, we are well positioned to move closer to the stated goal in the years ahead.

The commitment to remain on the path of and toward engaged learning is based not only on a compelling, community created and research-based vision, but on the evidence that Collegiate

"I applaud Saskatoon Public Schools for having the foresight to recognize that engagement is the perquisite of and reason for student achievement."

Karen Hume, author of
Start Where They Are

Goal:

All collegiate students will be engaged in their learning so they will graduate as active participants in lifelong learning and as responsible and caring citizens in the community, nation, and world.

Renewal has made a significant positive impact on student learning. Since its inception in 2007, Collegiate Renewal has been gathering data that demonstrates we are transforming learning environments so that more students are engaged in their learning. A key resource showing the learning progress made over the years in collegiates has been the Annual Board Report. The report shares multiple data sources (conversations, observations, products) from the classroom, school, and Division levels to show evidence of improved learner engagement.

Throughout the 2010/2011 school year we have been highlighting data from last year's report plus other "emerging data" (e.g. course grades in Mathematics and English Language Arts) to further celebrate our work and to spur us on to greater results. None of the data points in isolation is proof of authentic engagement, but when combined and then added to other school-based and Division data shared in the Annual Report, there is evidence that a positive progression in learner engagement is occurring. Some of the quantifiable Division-wide data we have shared in various public forums to show progress in our work are:

Retention Rates

Since the inception of Collegiate Renewal, retention rates in our high schools have been at historically high levels. For example, when comparing retention rates in our schools from Fall to Fall during the last three years compared to the three years before Collegiate Renewal, even considering Division enrolment growth, we have retained 178 more students per year on average.

Provincial Assessment For Learning Results

Grade 10 reading results after the first two years of Collegiate Renewal showed an increase in students' reading at an adequate or higher level in all areas reported: reading competency, explicit composition, implicit composition, critical composition, and reader response. In addition, Grade 11 writing results saw improved results for students in: product, messaging, organization, and language use.

Student Perception of Skills vs. Challenge

Tell Them From Me (TTFM) (formerly What Did You Do In School Today) data from the last couple of years saw students reporting a greater congruence ("flow") between their academic skill and appropriate level of challenge. Saskatoon Public Schools students were 7% over the national average when reporting on their state of "flow."

Grades in English Language Arts and Mathematics

Since the beginning of Collegiate Renewal there has been an increase in the grade performance of students in the two subject areas that have received the highest level of learning support - English Language Arts and Mathematics. Over the last four years there has been a 3% increase in the number of students passing English Language Arts classes in Grades 10, 11, and 12 and over a 5% increase in marks over 80%. In Grade 10, 11, and 12 Mathematics, there has been a 5% increase in the average grades.

A Guide to Reading our Stories

Like last year, each collegiate's story regarding learner engagement provides important evidence of progress in our work. The stories on the succeeding pages are written under three main areas of focus:

- Where were we headed (and its connection to learner engagement)?
- What progress have we made (and how do we know)?
- What is the evidence telling us about next steps? What are our commitments for learning and leading next year?

While each school is pursuing the goals of Collegiate Renewal in ways that best fit with its particular context, two themes have emerged:

- ***Quality feedback to students.*** External consultants Anne Davies, Dylan Williams, and Karen Hume have all told us that quality feedback is essential to student learning and our schools are responding. Look for examples of improvement in report card and classroom feedback, which provides descriptive feedback.
- ***Quality feedback from students.*** Schools and teachers are using feedback *from* students to be more responsive to their learning needs. In this way, teachers are getting better at attending to the readiness, interests, and learning styles of all learners from diverse backgrounds.

Feedback "from" and "to" students
Feedback "to" students is actionable information for students, where the teachers' intent is to improve, rather than only judge learning. Feedback "from" students is actionable information for teachers that helps them to identify where students are in relation to learning goals.

In the following pages, you will find stories about school-based teams, such as our Learning Councils, which are making decisions using feedback from a variety of sources like: TTFM, student forums, and provincial, Division, and school assessments. School-based teams are using this feedback to develop compelling goals, and benchmarks for success. They have begun to collect evidence that shows progress towards their goals.

The electronic version of this report includes many links within it. Some of these links provide evidence of progress and include: students/teachers sharing their experiences, and classroom/school artifacts. Other links allow you to read more in-depth about important background information, or more about complex ideas. In either case, these links allow you to view evidence and understand context for yourself.

For those components of Renewal, where the Division has been primarily responsible for leadership, separate stories follow the school stories in the Promises to the Board section (see page 27). These stories include targeted work in Literacy and Mathematics 9, and Technology. Regardless of the particular story, we hope the storyline of the narrative is the same: Purpose and Progress.

Aden Bowman Collegiate

Collegiate Renewal continues to grow and evolve at Aden Bowman Collegiate. The focus of our professional learning has been quality assessment practices that help students in their learning. Building on our progress from previous years, our focus has expanded to include an increased awareness of and responsiveness to the variety of learning styles represented in each classroom. We continue to grow practices that are responsive to students' understandings, interests, and learning styles to truly inform students and teachers about their progress. Our students are telling us their learning environments are changing. *For the 2010-2011 school year, our goal was to continue to increase student engagement by enhancing the learning opportunities for all students through quality assessment practices and responsiveness to students' learning styles.*

Department Inquiries at Aden Bowman Collegiate

In order to understand student engagement in their subject area, the school's departments embarked on subject-alike inquiries. Even though the inquiries were initiated after the school year was well underway, the progress made in some of the departments has indicated that the process can have significant effects on student engagement and teacher learning. **Expect us to continue and enhance our professional inquiry process next year.**

What progress have we made (and how do we know)?

English Language Arts Inquiry:

- Developing common assessment practices that support and accurately report on curricular outcomes
- [Using common assessment data](#) to inform teacher practice

Quality assessment practices, specifically feedback, continue to be a priority. Quality assessment provides opportunities for students to make sense of their progress, for teachers to adapt their instruction, and for parents to receive accurate information about their sons' and daughters' learning. Our [teachers' course outlines](#) reflect our teachers' commitments to providing students with the information they need to make targeted improvements to their work *before*

they are required to show what they know. Our course outlines also indicate our commitment to ensuring that report card marks are accurate representations of student understanding of the curricular outcomes.

[Feedback](#) is essential for students to make necessary adjustments to their work. For students at Aden Bowman, that has meant more effective formal written feedback on assignments and tests, and informal descriptive feedback from teachers and peers. Further, report card comments

"I like that many teachers include specific comments about what my daughter is doing well and in what areas she needs improvement. I find that there are concrete suggestions so that I can have meaningful conversations with my daughter about her learning."

Parent

have been reviewed and refined to provide students with feedback that grows learning. Teachers continue to refine their knowledge of quality assessment practices as a powerful way to engage students in their learning.

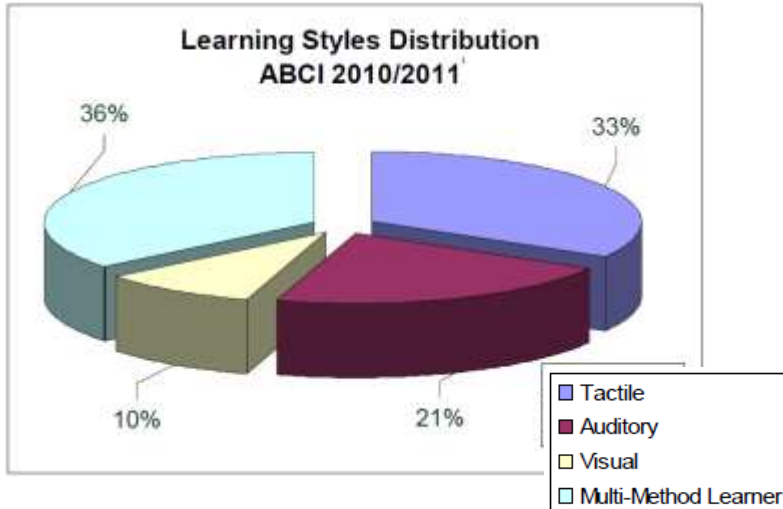


Figure 1: Learning Styles Distribution at Aden Bowman Collegiate in 2010-2011

Responsive instruction has emerged as an extension to our work in assessment. Many sources of data tell us that our students are diverse and have diverse learning needs. The diverse learning styles of our students initiated professional learning about responsive instruction. We provide students with a variety of more powerful learning opportunities. Teachers have been provided with a [guide](#) that helps them identify students' learning styles. The guide also indicated teachers' predominate teaching style and provides

instructional and assessment suggestions for engaging students depending on their learning style. Students report greater engagement and enjoyment in their learning when they have opportunities to learn in a variety of ways (Click here to see videos of students talking about our innovative programs: [Collective Voice](#) and [Global Citizenship](#)).

"There could be a selection of projects that use all of the different learning styles. In this way, everyone in the class could do their best in different projects."
Student

What is the evidence telling us about next steps? What are our commitments for learning and leading next year?

We will work to increase our opportunities to be responsive to our students and their learning needs.

Expect us to enhance teaching and assessment strategies informed by an awareness of our students' learning styles. Expect us to support differentiated instruction and assessment through department inquiries.

Bedford Road Collegiate

We want our students to feel a sense of belonging to both the school community in general, and to their learning specifically. During interviews and surveys, our students have been telling us that they do feel a sense of belonging to our school community. Our *TTFM* survey data shows that students at Bedford Road are above the Canadian norm when it comes to participation in school sports and clubs. However, the data from school and provincial assessments supports our desire to help our students develop a deeper and more committed relationship to their learning. *As a result, we focused on inspiring students to belong to their own learning through our use of feedback and our Cultural Responsiveness initiatives.*

What progress have we made (and how do we know)?

We are offering our students more opportunities to grow from descriptive feedback. Research tells us that quality, descriptive feedback is one of the most important things to

focus on to help students improve their learning. If our students are going to feel a sense of belonging to their learning, then they need to see improvement in it. Last year, we promised to continue our focus on providing quality feedback and we are seeing progress in the way teachers are providing feedback to students.

On report cards, for example, teachers are providing [more quality descriptive feedback](#).

"Involving students in assessment and increasing the amount of descriptive feedback, while decreasing evaluative feedback, increases student learning significantly. While all students show gains, students who usually achieve the least show the largest gains overall."

Black and Wiliam,
Education Researchers

We used feedback from our students to help our instruction be more

responsive to student need. Our Grade 9 Teacher Advisory Groups (TAG) teachers used the feedback they received from students through the system-wide writing assessment, completed in October, as well their own classroom assessments, to determine their students' needs as writers. They also provided their students with samples of quality writing that students could learn from. These forms of feedback have helped our Grade 9s improve as writers. After our instructional changes, our results in the system-wide writing assessment improved in all four areas measured (content, style, organization, and mechanics).

"The new report card is really helpful - shows how you are actually doing - where you need to improve."

Grade 11 Student

Our students are making a greater commitment to learning Mathematics. The teachers of Grade 9 Mathematics were concerned with how quickly students would give up when confronted with mathematics problems for which the solutions were not immediately obvious. By focussing on students' persistence in problem solving, our teachers found that students began to spend more time working on problems they initially found difficult. The Mathematics 9 Common Assessment results confirm our observations: by the end of the year, grade 9 students at Bedford Road were more likely to persist in the learning of Mathematics. ([Click here to see the results.](#))

We are increasing our exposure to culturally responsive teachings. Cultural background plays an important role in a student's learning. Since the number of our students who self-identify as First Nations or Métis has doubled in the last two years and is now one third of our student body, we are keenly aware of our responsibility to be responsive. One way we have been building a more inclusive and accepting school climate is through the powwows we have held in our building to celebrate and highlight First Nations cultural ways. In professional learning sessions, we have partnered with the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (FNIM) Unit to help us learn more about Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding the world, so that we can be more responsive to the needs of our First Nations, Inuit and Métis students in the classroom.



What is the evidence telling us about next steps? What are our commitments for learning and leading next year?

Next year you can expect us to continue to work on inspiring our students to belong to their learning. To reach this goal we will continue to improve on our use of quality feedback, both on report cards and in the classroom. We will also get better at using data to determine our students readiness, interests, and learning styles. In this way, we will be able to be more responsive to the learning needs of all our students.

Centennial Collegiate

Centennial Collegiate's [promise to the Board](#) was to build healthy student relationships through learning with peers and teachers. Healthy student relationships are a primary condition necessary for learner engagement. The way we have elected to accomplish this is through better feedback ["from" and "to" students](#).

- Feedback "to" students is actionable information for students, where the teacher's intent is to improve learning.
- Feedback "from" students is actionable information for teachers that helps them to ascertain where students are in relation to the learning goals. It helps guide teacher actions in support of student learning.

What progress have we made (and how do we know)?

Report Card Comments are improving understanding of next steps.

Comment banks are used twice a semester by our teachers to inform students and parents about progress and next steps. [New comments](#) are generated by teams of teachers and are directly focused on curricular outcomes.

"Many teachers now personalize the feedback to address specific learner needs."

Guidance Counsellor

70% of course outlines go beyond providing the required information - they now empower ongoing learning.

A teacher's course outline acts

as a guide for the student and sets the "tone" for the learning environment. We critically evaluated our current [course outlines](#). These outlines have evolved to provide the students with a framework so that they may be informed and empowered in their learning.

"I have noticed the change in the report card comments and find the new comments much more specific and helpful in understanding where my child is in her achievement."

Parent

Our professional learning conversations are improving our feedback.

Professional development has centered on supporting teachers in finding strategies that would aid them in providing students with quality feedback. Assortments of [strategies](#) were selected from [Karen Hume's](#) "50 Tools and Techniques" (Hume, 2009). We believe that if we want to improve, we need to provide time for sharing and experimenting, and help teachers with a support system that encourages them to share their successes and their challenges. Our teachers now report trying a variety of feedback strategies including peer evaluation in Art ([view video](#)), English Language Arts ([view video](#)) and Mathematics. Timelines of feedback ([view video](#)) and the use of portfolio have also improved student learning.

"I have had some of the best professional conversations I've ever had over the past year or two and it has had an impact on my teaching and reflective practice."

Teacher

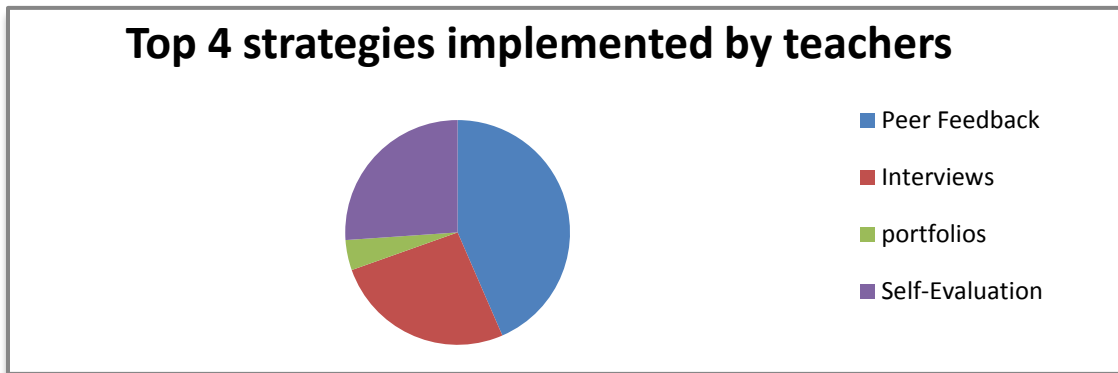


Figure 2: Top 4 Strategies Implemented by Teachers at Centennial Collegiate

We used feedback from students to assess our progress.
 School-wide feedback from students was gathered through *Tell Them From Me (TTFM)* and a student forum. At the start of the year, 9% of our students indicated they did not receive adequate feedback, but by the end year, this number had been reduced to less than 1%. Examples of [student observations](#) demonstrate the difference from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. The feedback also helped us give our students appropriate challenge, or "flow". **In a dramatic increase, 12% more students reported they experienced the appropriate level of challenge.** Our students also built [shared criteria for good feedback](#) in our student forum ([see video](#)) and published their [poster](#) throughout the school and in the student handbook.

What is the evidence telling us about next steps? What are our commitments for learning and leading next year?

The feedback we have received from students and [staff](#) will be instrumental in forming our goals for next year as we look at our data together.

Expect us to continue to focus on feedback to grow learning. Expect us to work to reach the 22% of students who are finding the challenge is high and their skills are low. Expect us to find ways to gather the voice of our educational assistants, our counselors, and our parents.



Teacher feedback on focus for 2011-12

City Park Collegiate

This year we chose to focus on the idea of providing students with an appropriate learning challenge as a means to increase student engagement at City Park, while continuing our efforts to develop student belonging. We were inspired and guided by Dr. Martin Brokenleg's [Circle of Courage model](#), which includes student belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. If our students are to reach mastery, then we need to start by challenging them appropriately.

What progress have we made (and how do we know)?

We learned more about creating appropriate challenge.

"The goal of a differentiated classroom is to plan actively and consistently to help each learner move as far and as fast as possible along a learning continuum."

Carol Ann Tomlinson, author of *Leadership for Differentiating*

In our professional learning journey this year we gradually built consensus toward appropriate challenge as the main focus for our staff development. To help us in our learning, [Karen Hume](#) came to our school to work with our teachers. She helped us understand how to use evidence to identify learner readiness, interests and learning styles and respond with instruction that appropriately challenges and supports them. We also continued to improve our use of quality feedback so students know what they need to do more or less of in order to move toward mastery. ([See report card comments.](#))

We increased the level of challenge in a variety of subject areas.

Our Mathematics teachers worked together to meet the hands-on learning style of the majority of our students in a challenging way. Focusing on the numeracy and spatial outcomes of the renewed curriculum, Mathematics teachers used analytical games and measurement activities to challenge students. In Social Studies, we have continued to develop and implement critical thinking challenges for our students using the criteria provided by [The Critical Thinking Consortium](#). In our literacy initiative, which includes all subjects, our participation rates in our book clubs have held steady at 39 to 42% of our students. The books chosen by students have become increasingly challenging.

Our students have an increased interest in post-secondary training.

Our Practical and Applied Arts programming continues to be a strong and important part of the learning experiences for our students. 35% of City Park students now plan to pursue trade or apprenticeship programs after high school, up



from 24% last spring; the Canadian norm is 19%. ([Students speak about City Park](#)). Another indicator that our students are feeling appropriately challenged is that more of our students plan on graduating; 74% of City Park students report that they plan to finish high school, up from 62% last spring.

Our students feel like they belong.

According to our TTFM data, 73% of our students believe their teachers are responsive to their needs, significantly higher than the Canadian average of 59%.



To help deepen our students' sense of belonging and pride in our school, we adopted new school colours, a new team name, and athletics returned to City Park for the first time in 26 years! The Eagles were proudly represented in basketball, badminton and track and field. Through sport students had the opportunity to increase their connectedness to City Park, build self-esteem, and

experience and develop valuable physical and life time skills. The sense of pride and spirit shown by students, staff and community reflects the success of these changes.

Cultural Responsiveness programming continues to be an essential element of the City Park experience, and remains one of our most powerful strategies for promoting student and community belonging. Our Fourth Annual Round Dance on March 25th was a great success, with more than 400 participants, including 95% of CP students and staff.



"The creation of the "EAGLES" and new extracurricular programs have brought a new sense of belonging into our building. This has greatly improved our school climate and culture!"

Staff Member

What is the evidence telling us about next steps? What are our commitments for learning and leading next year?

Appropriate Challenge will continue to be our focus for next year. **Expect our course outlines to reflect appropriate challenge through the [criteria](#) established by teachers this year.**

Expect us to restructure our day to provide more opportunities to differentiate instruction. To better meet the needs of our students, we have altered our daily and semester schedules for next year. The learning focus will include team teaching, integration of classes and block (quarter) classes in the afternoon, particularly in the hands-on learning areas.

Evan Hardy Collegiate

At Evan Hardy Collegiate, we believe that all students and teachers can learn in an engaging, supportive, and responsive environment where all members are actively moving learning forward. Our learning journey at Evan Hardy was focused on becoming more responsive to student learning needs. Classroom-level Assessment for Learning (AFL) has been the main focus of our learning agenda at Evan Hardy Collegiate. We believe in the powerful benefits of the AFL strategies in student learning and engagement. AFL is a mindset and provides us with tools for the classroom, but it became clear this year that this is not a destination. It is a method to get to a destination. We needed to ask ourselves where we were going within the focus of student learning and student engagement. What we realized is that the evidence we were seeing, the conversations we were having, and the work we were doing needed to be articulated through a set of belief statements. By doing this, we were able to gain clarity about where our journey would take us next, and the value of becoming a *responsive school*.

"We are all on the same page, we own this work. It is not just being led top down... we truly are directing the path and walking the path together."

Learning Council, May, 2011

What progress have we made (and how do we know)?

Our Learning Council is leading the learning.

Learning Coordinators are seeing themselves as leaders of the learning agenda, in addition to the administrators and Learning Leaders. At the department level, student success is at the centre of the conversation. We have moved past which equipment to order and which resources are needed. The conversations are moving to discussions of classroom practice, strategies, and assessment. We are looking at curricular outcomes, how we teach, and how students are learning.

"Co-teaching has changed the way I view my own practice. By working with colleagues and sharing in the planning, delivery and assessment, my own practice has grown and I have begun to question and change the way I teach."

Teacher

Teachers value the process of co-teaching.

Co-teaching has been more successful than we anticipated. Teachers have been willing to embrace the notion of working together to plan for student success, and have continued to seek opportunities to work collaboratively within the classroom, departments, and cross-departmentally. Initially, co-teaching came to Evan Hardy as an intensive supports initiative to allow special education teachers to be proactive, rather than reactive, in providing services to students and working

with teachers to meet the needs of students within the classroom setting. With our current growth, we are able to better meet the needs of instruction and assessment of

students. [Our teachers are examining their practice and their beliefs in a supportive environment.](#)

We are working to address our cultural diversity.

Our Cultural Responsiveness committee was formed in response to our changing student demographic. In the last four years our English as an Additional Language (EAL) population has grown to approximately 15% of our student population, and includes over 55 different cultural groups. The socio-economic reality of a typical student has also changed. We have also been responsive to the responsibility to incorporate treaty education and First Nations, Inuit, and Metis (FNIM) perspectives in our classrooms. The committee not only focuses on the curricular ties, but is looking carefully at how [our school community](#) can create an environment of acceptance, awareness and belonging for all students.

"Evan Hardy is on the road to being a culturally responsive school. When I walk the hallways, I believe that the diversity you see is one of our strengths...we are doing a good job of making ALL students belong, feel respected and feel valued. We need to reflect who we are as a student body in our main foyer area ... we need to celebrate in more ways than Culturescape... We need to learn from each other in more than just a few classes."
Grade 12 student

What is the evidence telling us about next steps? What are our commitments for learning and leading next year?

Our learning council is ready to lead. **Expect us to continue to support our Learning Council in developing leadership skills as they take on greater responsibility for the learning agenda.**

Our teachers are asking for more collaborative opportunities. **Expect us to structure our timetable and learning time to allow for an increase in teacher collaboration time.**

Our school is increasingly culturally diverse. **Expect us to enhance our understandings of student diversity and enrich the cross-cultural competency for all learners (students and teachers).**

We still have work to do on making AFL seamless in our everyday work. **Expect us to be consistent in creating the 'AFL mindset' so this becomes who we are and what we do in our planning and working with our school community.**

Stakeholders are increasingly interested in evidence that supports continuing our learning agenda. **Expect us to examine the relationship between AFL teacher practice and its impact on student learning.** We see the value of blended assessment practices in promoting student learning and we will utilize a variety of assessment tools to explicitly inform the teaching-learning relationship.

Marion M. Graham Collegiate

Meaningful change rarely occurs in dramatic fashion. That is, transformation is often realized with a series of progressive steps rather than a single, great turn. For Marion M. Graham, this story is our celebration of those very important steps for students and staff.

The priority within our work has been to enhance learning through feedback. Better information to students and gathering, examining, and acting on better information from students, have meant improvement in learning, teaching and leading at Marion M. Graham Collegiate.

What progress have we made (and how do we know)?

We improved the quality of feedback to students to enhance learning.

Using criteria for effective feedback, our comments on report cards are more helpful to students. See [before and after examples of report card comments](#). The example also illustrates more teachers are also now opting to create specific comments for individual students during formal reporting periods. Our students are noticing and appreciating that teachers are "giving extra feedback", "giving more explanation", and "now helping us know how to get better" (Tell Them From Me (TTFM), open-ended responses, 2011). Additionally, students are noticing even more teachers "help[ing] at any time if needed", with dozens of Falcons routinely seeking more extensive feedback at noon and after school from their teachers. But better information to students is also evident in course outlines. Guided by criteria for effective course outlines, professionals have revised these documents to be clearer with students about learning goals, about how to access learning support, and about why what is offered as learning in any course is potentially relevant, if not exciting. In sum, improved comments banks, more individual teacher comments, student access to significant additional outside of class support, and clearer statements of learning goals are efforts by Marion M. Graham Collegiate staff to support student learning.

"I feel teachers are explaining things better now. Lots of times in the past, I didn't always get what they were saying. It was like teacher-talk not student-talk."

Grade 11 Student

We gathered, examined, and acted on better information from students. Better information means considering multiple sources to understand more accurately student strengths and needs. In addition to classroom observations, conversations and products—we are making better use of TTFM, Opportunities To Learn (OTL), school-created surveys, [student interviews](#), and [student forums](#) in staff learning and acting. Part of that

emerging understanding is hearing and seeing the connection between some highly engaged MGCI students and the presence of choice and relevance in their school learning. Seeing

the connection and having its importance reinforced through student responses to our additional [probing questions](#), [staff adjusted actions](#) to provide more choice and to frame learning in more relevant ways. For many students, choice and relevance became invitations and opportunities. See student responses to teacher actions ([History](#), [Band](#), and [Woods](#) examples). Student impact of teacher actions is also gauged through the response to the [TTFM question](#) we created around choice. In that, nearly half the 470 students asked have noticed increased choice in our classrooms. [school-leader interviews](#)

"Choice is important. Teachers gave us a chance to share this and we did. I think they are trying to make this better for all of us."

Grade 12 Student

We strengthen leadership and professional learning through attention to evidence, expertise of lead researchers and writers, and a shared commitment to something worthy. Our staff has worked together to clearly define what we need to do in order to deliver appropriate challenge for all students. See [school-based interviews](#) about this common purpose. Provincial PISA results patterns, Provincial OTL data, TTFM indicators related to challenge, classroom observations, and student forums highlight a genuine need for our students. This feedback, from multiple sources over time, provided a leadership direction and a staff learning focus.

As part of the process, leadership and staff began to draw on current [research](#), to have [teacher-leaders sharing learning with colleagues](#), to learn with and from [Karen Hume](#), to [build shared language and understandings](#), and to build lessons and [classroom assignments](#) that allow for difference. Interviews, video examples, and artifacts related to student learning are evidence of a strengthening of professional learning.

What is the evidence telling us about next steps? What are our commitments for learning and leading next year?

Expect us to continue to learn with and from students (as well as from lead researcher and writers). Expect us to establish benchmarks and baseline information about appropriate challenge, monitor progress, and adjust actions. Expect us to identify and foster key conditions for appropriate challenge. Expect us to continue to widen the circle of leadership.

Mount Royal Collegiate

Our school's story is about purpose and progress. Our promise to ourselves, and to the Board, was to improve the quality of feedback offered to all students. We also committed to using quality feedback from students to inform our practice. This year, feedback was our way to improve learning, teaching, and leading.

What progress have we made (and how do we know)?

Our students are receiving better information from teachers about how to improve and what has and still needs to be learned. We have moved away from report card comments like "good job" and "satisfactory progress" to comments that support all learners in how to improve. Report cards reflect our efforts to change. Now comments are drawn from a revised comment bank or written by the teacher to improve each individual student's learning. What we know from research about the criteria for effective feedback is now guiding our work with students. See [samples of before and after report card comments](#). Course outlines have also improved. Using [criteria for effective course outlines](#), these [new course outlines](#) provide students with clearer learning targets (outcomes) as well as explain how student will be assessed, evaluated, and graded. Changing teacher practices have been noticed and are now impacting the learning.

Our classroom learning time is valuable.

In the Tell Them From Me (TTFM) survey, the "rigor" indicator assesses the degree to which "students find the classroom instruction . . . well-organized, with a clear purpose,

and with immediate and appropriate feedback that helps them learn." Over the course of the year, we saw growth from 6.2 to 6.9, an improvement at the school level and a result well above the national norm. (see [rigor graphs](#)).

[Effective learning time](#) is efficient use of class time, strong teaching and value of homework and evaluations in support of course goals. Our students rate effective learning time well above the national average. Our [student interviews](#) also reinforce that improving quality feedback can influence our

students' learning and confidence. They also support that teachers are adopting various types of feedback and the dividend for students is engagement.

We are using feedback from students and staff to inform our professional work. Feedback is a kind of evidence that reveals strengths and areas needing improvement.

"Royal staff believe in strong teacher-student relationships. It's evident in the way we speak to kids, and environment we try to create here. Stand in the entrance and just listen and look around."

MRCI Teacher

"I'm new to Canada and this school. I felt scared because many things are different to me. But the teachers [at MRCI] have made me feel like I belong. They care."

Grade 11 Student

Feedback from students (e.g. [TTFM indicators](#), student forum, and student/teacher observations) builds a picture of Mount Royal as a place with strong positive teacher-student relations and a positive learning climate. Our students are 10% more likely to feel their "teachers are responsive to their needs, and encourage independence with a democratic approach" than the average Canadian student.

Our Learning Council has a shared purpose that is based on feedback, evidence and research. We moved away from treating symptoms to investigating and acting on root causes of learning barriers. Learning Council members carefully examine student and staff feedback. This process, reflected in agendas, extended beyond Learning Council to department meetings and staff meetings. This new approach of Learning Council had an impact on different types of staff. For our students, the root cause for lack of academic success is a lack of resilience, so we looked to [research](#) to build a shared understanding and develop a plan for action. Our staff will use baseline information and our own benchmarks for resilient behaviours. We ended the year in a different place: with a shared learning purpose, new ways of working deeply with quality feedback and current research, and team planning that includes, from the beginning, clarity of both the goal and ways to gauge our progress toward it.

"The Mount Royal Learning Council and Professional Development Committee came together to work on a common goal and lead the rest of the staff, all staff, in a shared vision for and practice of "healthy school culture."

Learning Council Member

What is the evidence telling us about next steps? What are our commitments for learning and leading next year?

We know students love Mount Royal Collegiate and so do we. But we want more than belonging for our students, we want them to be competent and to believe in themselves.

"My goal is to create...life-long learners who believe in themselves and their power to achieve their dreams."

Teacher

Expect us to continue to develop benchmarks in resiliency. Expect us to systematically employ strategies, track progress, and make adjustments. Expect us to involve students and parents as genuine members of renewal.

Royal West

At Royal West, our staff focused on increasing student engagement through reducing barrier to learning for our young adult learners .

What progress have we made (and how do we know)?

We provided flexible programming to a growing number of students. We continued to improve our competency with individualized instruction. We encouraged students to

"This allows me and many other students to finish our schooling. We would otherwise drop out because of life's problems that get in the way."

Student

negotiate their way through their courses of study with the teacher's guidance. Teachers viewed their role as giving as much direct instruction as students needed, mentoring their students, assessing their learning and helping to set an appropriate pace of studies. We wanted to enable our students to be independent learners, while at the same time

fostering interdependent relationships with them.

We have seen our enrolment grow from approximately 250 students three years ago to 350 at any given time this year. Over the last two years, the number of Adult 12 students enrolled with us has almost doubled. We have grown from having a morning block of classes for these students to offering both morning and afternoon blocks.

"If I have trouble with anything, I can spend a little more time getting help with it and fly through the easier stuff."

Student

What is the evidence telling us about next steps? What are our commitments for learning and leading next year?

Expect us to provide students with greater flexibility to support credit completion.

The next step for us is a non-semestered school year. We will be using a more flexible student information system next year that will help to sustain continuous intake from the end of August through to the beginning of April. Another advantage to students with this flexible system will be that as they finish their courses, their final marks will be submitted and they can be re-timetabled to begin new courses right away. We are committed to providing **Evening Classes** to students who cannot attend during the day time.

Expect us to do more to support Smooth Transitions. We are committed to programming (Bridging/Transition) that will help to meet the needs of students who have struggled in high school. We have built both morning and afternoon blocks into the schedule that will help these students become more proficient in their English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science skills. We are committed to programming (**EAL LIFE Program**) that helps meet the special needs of recently arrived EAL students whose education in their first language was interrupted and who have low or no English Language Arts skills. These are students who would otherwise experience great difficulty in mainstream EAL classes.

Expect us to provide equal access to technology. We plan to add networked computers to the classrooms and student lounges. We witness every day how teaching computer literacy really helps to engage students in their own learning, which in turn will help make them independent, lifelong learners.

Nutana Collegiate

At Nutana Collegiate, our focus for the year was to ensure more relevant tasks were provided for our students. Relevant tasks help students see the connection between their education and the world, and the value of school in their lives.

This year, we continued our commitment to Differentiated Instruction (DI). Teaching staff and Educational Assistants (EAs) chose from three acclaimed DI-focused book studies to help support this work. DI expert [Karen Hume](#) also addressed Nutana staff, and some members had the opportunity to see international DI scholar [Carol Ann Tomlinson](#) speak at the *Safe Schools Conference* in February.

We also formed inquiry-based focus groups. [Daniel Pink's](#) motivational theories informed the framework planning process for these groups. Teaching staff, EAs, and [Integrated School-Linked Services \(ISLS\)](#) staff all collaborated with the common goal of increasing learner engagement through these groups. Through this process we began to broaden our focus to three main areas:

- engaged learning
- caring citizenship (resilience)
- responsible citizenship

What progress have we made (and how do we know)?



Our students had greater opportunities to participate in engaging partnerships to meet real needs.

To provide relevant tasks connected to the curriculum, we formed a Kamiskamow partnership with the University of Saskatchewan, where university students led hands-on projects and experiments with our Biology students. Our Tourism 30A class spent many hours planning a [Pasta Night](#) dinner to raise money for a homeless shelter in Saskatoon. Many teachers have been making meaningful use of technology in the classroom, especially through digital storytelling ([Teacher Interview](#) and [Student Interview](#)).

Students had increased opportunity to participate in activities that promote caring and responsible citizenship.

Resilience is a key ingredient in caring citizenship, so staff worked with students to overcome various barriers to success. Grade 12 ELA students staged a school-wide anti-racism day ([Photo](#)) to commemorate the *International Day for the Elimination of Racial*

Discrimination in March. Staff and students have also been exploring the issue of Family and Intimate Partner Violence. This longstanding initiative has seen the infusion of **Healthy Relationship groups** into some classes. As well, the Jacoby Centre, which is a student-parent centre at Nutana, is leading its own Healthy Relationships groups which are open to all students. Youth Launch has trained and supported Nutana students in their involvement with a Youth Action for Prevention project around Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness.



Experts from Family Service Saskatoon and Mental Health work with classroom teachers to provide curriculum-embedded programming with a focus on prevention. Results compiled by Brock University have confirmed the effectiveness of the programming. With the support of the Saskatoon Health Region, staff and students at Nutana participated in an [Equine Assisted Psychotherapy](#) pilot as a means of determining how this approach might be used to support students.

Relevant tasks, such as the **Individual Development Account (IDA)** program, helped Nutana students stay in school, learn to manage their finances, save money, and set meaningful goals. Students were encouraged to see the connection between education and potential career opportunities available to them through quarterly **Career Awareness Weeks**, noon hour presentations, and the Career Fair.

"I joined the IDA program after I enrolled at Nutana Collegiate to upgrade my high school marks and to figure out what I wanted to do next. There I also learned financial management skills while working part-time and saving money."

Student

Our whole school has been actively pursuing the issue of homelessness in Saskatoon. Some students partnered with Passion for Action to produce a video chronicling the problem. School staff had the opportunity to learn from Nutana students and their firsthand accounts of the impacts of homelessness on youth.

What is the evidence telling us about next steps? What are our commitments for learning and leading next year?

Expect the entire Nutana staff plan to continue to collaborate effectively to engage students in a way that is relevant and ultimately responsive to the unique needs of its diverse student population. Expect our staff will continue to model the Collegiate Renewal values of engaged learning, caring, and responsibility, with a specific emphasis on resilience.

Tommy Douglas Collegiate

In the spirit of Collegiate Renewal, our professional learning has sought to make specific improvements in the learning environment in response to our students in our school and in our classrooms. It is important for us to know our students as individuals, and to support their engagement as active participants in our school's learning community. The focus for Tommy Douglas Collegiate has been:

- to improve feedback for student learning.
- to enhance the cultural responsiveness of our school.
- to build students' ownership of learning.

What progress have we made (and how do we know)?

Our teachers are providing more feedback that grows learning.

Tommy Douglas staff is using a new report card with expanded comment spaces. The goal of the new report card is to provide students and parents with strategies to meet learning outcomes. Using [descriptive feedback](#), teachers have made significant progress in the clarity of information provided to students and parents. All of our feedback indicates an area of strength, an area for improvement and specific steps needed to achieve the learning outcomes.

Example of report card feedback:

(Student name), you have demonstrated a clear understanding of both genetics and matter through our lab projects and your portfolio writings, which always include examples as well as technical scientific terms. To continue your success in this class, please follow the guidelines given for projects such as lab diagrams in order to improve your scientific skills with instruments like microscopes.

Our school community is working to become more inclusive, accepting, affirming and respectful of all people in order to increase student achievement. Tommy Douglas is working to improve the understanding and implementation of cultural responsiveness in the school and community. [Cultural responsiveness is growing](#) in our classrooms as well. We seek to create a culturally responsive climate through the teaching of treaty education. The Tommy Douglas School Community Council purchased the *Treaty Essential Learnings* kit for the staff as resources for incorporating treaty education into our lessons. Professional learning opportunities developed by staff have ensured that the teaching of treaty education becomes an important part of the classroom experience for students. Tommy Douglas was also chosen to pilot the *Learning Leader: Student Transitions* program with the aim of improving success



rates for First Nation, Inuit, and Metis (FNIM) students. School level investigation into promising practices for supporting FNIM students revealed multiple connections to the “throughs” of Collegiate Renewal including AFL, differentiated instruction, and inquiry. Staff members are learning strategies to engage FNIM students and to support a culturally responsive learning environment.

Instructional Interventions are offering opportunities for students to own their learning.

Part way through the year, staff formed collaboration groups across various disciplines.

Their objective was to address the most immediate learning challenges that our students are experiencing. By identifying and addressing learning challenges, the staff is working to improve student learning outcomes. Our staff identified several key areas that are currently challenging student’s learning:

- Finding ways to motivate students to become lifelong learners.
- Receiving evidence of learning in both quantity and quality and making daily activities relevant.

"Students are more willing to express personal points of view during brainstorming activities."

Teacher

The overriding theme of the work was to help students to feel ownership of their learning. Staff has used instructional interventions to address a variety of challenges and their efforts have had direct impact on student learning.

What is the evidence telling us about next steps? What are our commitments for learning and leading next year?

Feedback for Learning

Expect teachers to improve the descriptive feedback they provide to students about curricular outcomes. Additionally, we will use expanded space in the report card comment box to communicate behavioral considerations and their impact on students' learning.

Cultural Responsiveness

Expect us to use the transition strategies we have learned that have proven successful for FNIM students. Tommy Douglas staff and students will also complete a survey to illustrate Treaty understandings as a baseline for further education in this area.

Ownership of Learning

Teachers will become informed about the successes and challenges met by teachers involved in the Collaboration Groups. **Expect us to work to expand the collaboration groups and have teachers work to employ more successful strategies that meet the needs of students.**

Walter Murray Collegiate

This year, we built upon our previous year's goal of students clearly understanding learning outcomes. We used two main strategies:

- Creating meaningful and relevant learning opportunities for students.
- Providing responsive feedback to better guide students to success.

Throughout the year, we worked with students to develop relevant and compelling learning destinations. Much of our professional learning work centered on renewed Grade 9 curricula. We were also mindful of "renewing" teaching practices across all grades and curricula to ensure greater engagement for all students.

What progress have we made (and how do we know)?

Our teachers see the value of working to improve feedback, comments, and course outlines to guide success.

In an effort to invite students into relevant, clear learning destinations, staff members collaborated to improve the quality of course outlines. In addition, professional learning targeted improvements to report cards so that the feedback and comments assist students achieving learning outcomes. Our teachers valued the time spent improving both course outlines and report cards. Staff have also developed rubrics to guide in the development of course outlines and report card comments. This will continue next year to guide teachers' feedback to students.

"Department time and evaluating feedback and report card comments was useful and practical. Concrete examples and sessions with direct instruction components have been most useful to me."

Teacher

We connected relevance, competence, and renewed curricula to improve engagement and smooth transitions.

ELA 9 teachers worked with students to develop viewing and representing literacy skills by producing booktrailers. An authentic audience was found by featuring the stories at this year's literacy conference.

The renewed Grade 9 curricula and the importance of a successful transition into the learning in Grade 9 compelled us to make a concerted effort to build on the relevancy of the learning and to enhance key student competencies. Examples of key work focused on during the year included infusing critical thinking activities in Grade 9 Social Studies and working on developing viewing and representing skills in English Language Arts (ELA) through the creation of book trailers.

The work in ELA at the school level helped lead Division-wide Grade 9 writing results, as referenced in the Literacy section of this document.

As a result of student and staff feedback this year, expect us to restructure the Grade 9 day to create smoother transitions and deeper engagement. This [new Grade 9 program](#), which is the focus of a McDowell Foundation grant, is meant to increase student

connection to the learning and to provide additional opportunities for teachers to collaborate in order to improve student learning through enhanced instructional practices.

"I really enjoy how diverse the student population is. Nobody has any trouble making friends."

Student

In addition to having greater opportunity to speak to their learning, our students are more intellectually engaged and connected to their teachers.

Our TTFM data has consistently told us that Walter Murray students feel like they belong, specifically because of the diversity of the school.

Importantly, this year we noted an improvement in what our students say about intellectual engagement. Students reported increases in rigor, relevance, effective learning time, and positive teacher-student relations. Student representatives met twice this

year in a student forum. The forums focused on climate, culture and improving learning opportunities in the classroom. Out

of the first forum, we created a formal student advisory group that meets monthly. For us, diversity, student voice and intellectual engagement are inseparable, and they have been at the heart of our work since Collegiate Renewal

began.

What is the evidence telling us about next steps? What are our commitments for learning and leading next year?

We will continue to use TTFM surveys, AFL results, student demographic data, student work, and feedback from both our students and staff to see how learning can be more relevant and meaningful. We are committed to an evidence-based culture, where our findings shape our planning and decision-making.

Expect us to continue supporting student learning outcomes by ensuring learning destinations are compelling and relevant. The nature of responsive, quality feedback for both students and teachers will be explored and developed. **Expect us to create deliberate structures where we use data to guide our collaborative work.** The work of Learning Council will be central to this commitment. **Expect us to support and monitor the new Grade 9 program as we work to improve transitions and engagement.** In order to increase relevance for students, **expect us to provide professional learning that emphasizes collaboration, integration of curricula, effective uses of technology, and curriculum renewal.**

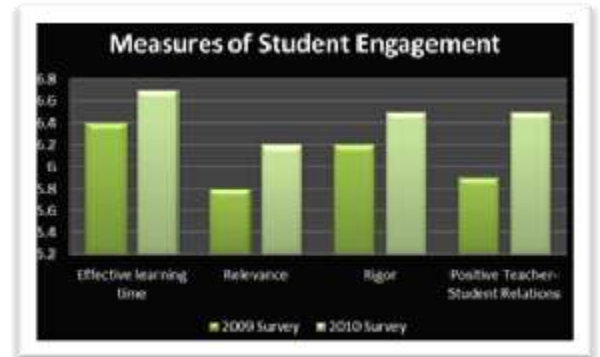


Figure 3: Measures of Student Engagement (Click Chart to Enlarge)



Remembering Promises Made to the Board and Future Steps

Mathematics

"Mathematics is about problems, and problems must be made the focus of a student's mathematical life. Painful and creatively frustrating as it may be, students and their teachers should at all times be engaged in the process - having ideas, not having ideas, discovering patterns, making conjectures, constructing examples and counterexamples, devising arguments, and critiquing each other's work."

Paul Lockhart in *A Mathematician's Lament: How School Cheats Us Out of Our Most Fascinating and Imaginative Art Form*

Many people have described their mathematical education as painful and frustrating. For most, it is not because of the exhilarating pursuit of problems that Paul Lockhart described in his book. For most, school mathematics was painful and frustrating because they struggled with the development of basic skills disconnected from the problems and the ideas that make the skills meaningful and compelling. Because competence in mathematics requires skills, understandings and dispositions that are specific to each student, Collegiate Renewal has continued to support teachers in creating the conditions for each student to actively engage in developing mathematical competence. There have been two critical steps: helping teachers understand how to engage their specific students and supporting collegiate Mathematics departments in pursuing their own inquiry.

Our teachers worked to meet the needs of their specific students in school-based inquiries.

Each collegiate Mathematics Department initiated an inquiry that targeted the specific conceptual and engagement needs of their students. The inquiry process was designed to respect and honour the teacher learning that needs to occur in our classrooms and in our collegiates for mathematics instruction to be proactive and engaging.

The topics were shaped by a vision of an engaging mathematics classroom developed in a workshop facilitated by [Karen Hume](#) in September, and informed by the knowledge of the unique needs of the students in their school. Division wide professional learning sessions were kept to a minimum in order to give teachers the time and space to meet on their own and to put into action plans designed to have significant impact on the growth of their students' mathematical competence. [Teachers reported the value](#) of the time to focus on the needs of their specific students.

All departments pursued increased competence and engagement for grade 9 students through a focus on:

- Manipulatives.
- Technology.
- Student Self-reflection.

In May 2011, all grade 9 students completed a common assessment consisting of an outcomes based multiple-choice exam and a student questionnaire intended to capture students' perceptions of their opportunities to learn. The results from the assessment completed this May (2011) were compared to the Grade 9 assessment completed in May 2010.

Bedford Road's student persistence increased 10%, while overall engagement in Mathematics is up 13%. Focused teacher inquiry makes a dramatic difference for students.

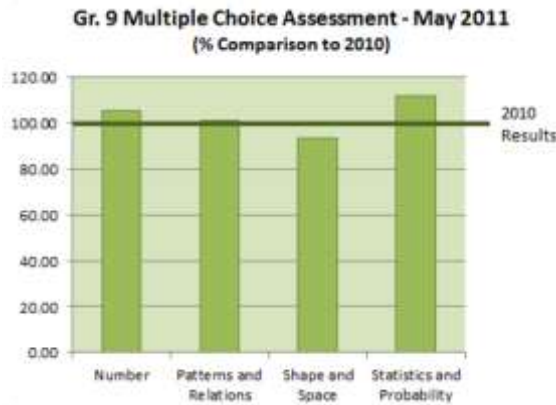


Figure 4: Grade 9 Mathematics Multiple Choice Assessment

Students exhibited growing Mathematical competence in Statistics and Probability

On the curricular portion of the assessment, the greatest increase was associated with the Statistics and Probability strand of the curriculum, with a 12% relative increase in correct responses. Many other students' scores remained relatively stable. The most significant decrease occurred in the Shape and Space strand, but many teachers had not planned to teach this strand until after the assessment.

Student sense of belonging increased.

The student questionnaire suggests that student engagement has remained relatively stable, but the dimension of belonging, often the precursor to engagement, saw a 7% year-to-year increase across the Division.

A specific, dedicated inquiry increased the likelihood of positive results for students in both the curricular portion of the assessment and the student questionnaire.

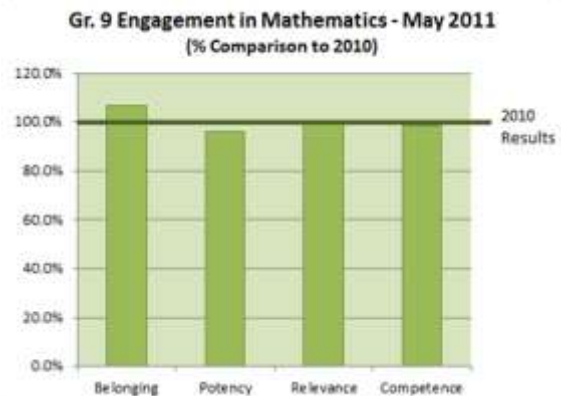


Figure 5: Engagement in Mathematics

There are two school stories, Bedford Road and Evan Hardy, that illustrate the power of this approach.

Bedford Road Collegiate's Mathematics Department inquiry into student persistence in learning had a positive impact on student engagement. Teachers paid careful attention to specific students in their classes to see if daily practice in problem solving helped these students persist in their learning, even when the learning was difficult for the students.

Other indicators of persistence at Bedford Road include:

- specific resistant students are now fully engaged in Mathematics class and help their classmates
- more students contributing to class discussions
- decreasing number of test questions left blank
- increased attempts on common assessment items that represent concepts not yet learned in grade 9
- increase of 3% on the curricular portion of the common assessment
- percent change of +13% in student engagement in Mathematics as indicated in the student questionnaire

At Evan Hardy Collegiate, the Mathematics Department members used common assessments to target instruction and see if they could improve competence in Mathematics 9. By identifying the specific reasons that students were having difficulty with the concept of equations using teacher created common assessments, teachers were able to tailor their instruction to meet the learning needs of students.

The indicators of increased competence at Evan Hardy:

- increased performance on unit exams.
- student reports of increased confidence.
- increase of 8% on items from the curricular portion of the common assessment related to solving equations.
- percent change of +3% in student engagement in mathematics as indicated in the student questionnaire.

Based on their success, the mathematics teachers at Evan Hardy Collegiate have plans to extend their work to other concepts that some students find difficult including fractions. The teacher inquiries taught us that an evidence-informed focus on the learning and engagement of specific students can make an important difference in Mathematics. **Expect us to deepen and extend the collegiate-based inquiry process to encourage further experimentation and increased collaboration between teachers to more effectively support students in growing their competence in Mathematics.**

Literacy

A student's smooth transition from Grade 8 to Grade 9 is an important consideration in all of our high schools because it marks a major change in the lives of our children. Also, research shows that students who fail just one class in Grade 9 are seven times more likely not to graduate from high school. Because reader and writer competence are strong indicators of a student's likelihood of success in our classrooms, and Grade 9 is the linchpin year, we have continued to focus on these competencies with our Grade 9 students. *Using multiple assessments to determine students' learning needs and working in small, school-based professional teams, we set out to help our students improve their reader/writer competence.*

What progress have we made?

Our students are improving as writers. Common writing assessments conducted with Grade 9's in October helped teachers determine where their students were as writers. A number of interviews were also conducted with Grade 9 students to learn about the role writing plays in the lives of these students. School-based teams of teachers were able to use data from the writing assessment, the interviews, and their own classroom observations to determine students' writer needs. They then collaboratively determine the best way to support them. Teachers said this process is an important reason for student improvement.

"The biggest difference for my own teaching practice is the focus on opportunities to improve a student's work. Students see the value in this process. The professional learning conversations have acted as a guide for areas to focus on with the students. The in-school approach seems to be very effective for setting goals with other grade 9 teachers and offers the students more consistency."

ELA 9 Teacher

[Click here for more comments.](#)

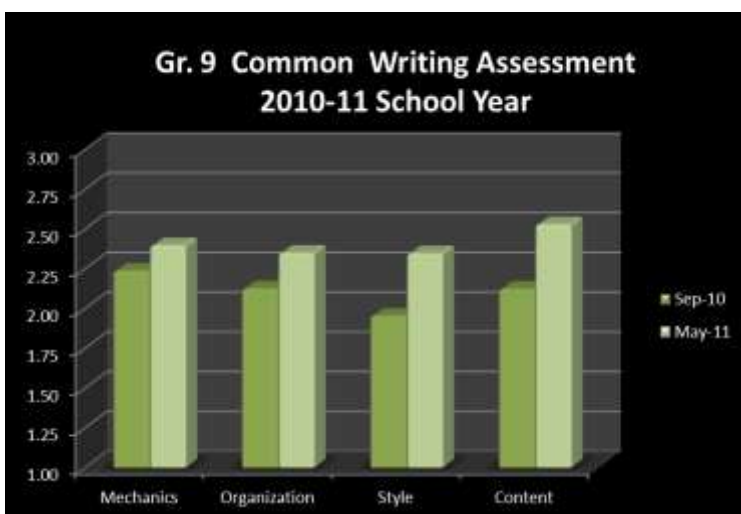


Figure 6: Grade 9 Common Assessment Results

The results from this year's common writing assessments suggest the work of these school-based teams made a difference. From September 2010 to May 2011 we saw gains in all four areas measured (mechanics, organization, style, and content) with the most significant gains in style and content.

From the 2009/10 assessment to the 2010/11 assessment we are also seeing improvement. While we want all students to at least meet the standard by the end of the school year, we also want to help students exceed the standard. In last year's assessment, we saw students show gains, but one area we did not see gains was in students exceeding the standard. ([Click here to see common writing rubric.](#)) This year, in specific areas of content and style, we did see growth in students who are exceeding the standard.

	October to May 2010 (% Growth)	October to May 2011 (% Growth)
Content		
- Arguments	0%	6%
- Details	1%	20%
Style		
- Writer's Voice	0%	6%
- Word Choice	1%	6%

While these improvements are encouraging and suggest teachers are more targeted in their teaching, more time will be needed to determine if these improvements represent a trend.

Expect us to continue to get better at using assessment data to learn the literacy needs of our students and respond appropriately.

Our READ teachers are building professional communities and using data to shape the learning opportunities for our most vulnerable learners.

Last year we promised we would widen the circle of teachers leading this shared work. Secondary Read teachers are building communities of teachers who are becoming more aware of the needs of our struggling readers. Through the use of data and collaboration, our teachers are designing learning opportunities

Reflections on the Year:

A Read teacher reflects on her learning and the learning of her students. ([Click here to view the video clip.](#))

that respond to student need. Assessments such as the Grey Silent Reading Test and the Reader-Thinking Interview helped READ teachers ([view video](#)) identify those students in greatest reading need and support them, often through co-teaching. **Expect us to continue to widen the circle of teachers who work collaboratively to support the reading needs of our struggling readers.**

"We are now more collaborative and data-based, so instead of guessing at what students need to work on we've got the Grey Silent, the San Diego Quick, classroom assessments, and collegial conversations about student work to find the common trends. The fact that we're collaborative and data-based definitely changes to our work because in the past there was some collaboration among staff, informally, but it wasn't directed at a particular goal or inquiry question, which really helped to narrow the work and have everyone working towards a common goal."

Teacher

Student Voice was an integral part of professional learning.

Last year we said we would continue to work on collaborative writing opportunities for our students because collaboration is significant in building writer competence. This year, our Division Opportunities to Learn data from the provincial Assessment for Learning protocol indicated that our students still generally write in isolation and we responded by creating communities of writers. Sessions like, *Growing Writers to Develop Readers* and *Growing as Writers*, helped our teachers and students understand the importance of writing

"Today has helped me grow by giving me new ideas of how to write. An example is the idea of picking a tiny detail and expanding on it, making it become alive. Just the idea of working with my teacher and listening to and reading his writing helped me find new ways of writing. Working outside also helped me think and let my ideas fly." (Student)

communities. In these sessions, teachers came with one or two of their students and together they experienced the day as co-learners and co-writers. In this way a community of writers was created. [Feedback](#) from both teachers and students established that both see the value and importance of writing as a part of a community.

Expect us to continue to

create professional learning opportunities where teachers and students can come together as co-learners and co-writers.



Connecting reading and writing with 21st Century methods of expressing our understanding is a critical piece of our work with the renewed Grade 10 curricula. **Next year as this curricula is taught in our schools expect us to establish clear benchmarks in the area of representing and to help our teachers become more proficient in the transformational use of technology.**

Technology

Technology should be used in transformative ways, meaning the technology should be in the hands of students as they work with higher order thinking skills such as analyzing, evaluating and creating. We focused on growing instructional leaders and taking more steps toward transformation in all of our technology work.

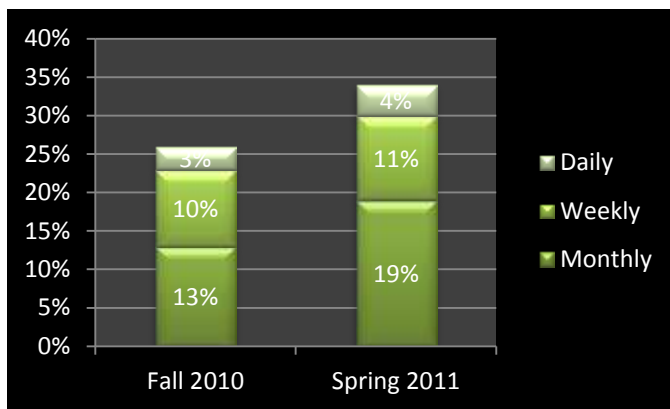


Figure 4: Survey Question: My students use technology to network and share resources with others (blogging, podcasting, wikis, chatrooms, discussion boards, and community websites).

We are growing instructional leaders to support student learning.

Last year we promised to provide a foundation for [Secondary Teacher Librarians \(TLs\)](#) and [Secondary Instructional Technology Leaders \(SITLs\)](#) as they engaged in the critical work of planning and instructional support for teachers using technology. We deepened that work and collaborated with an external consultant, [Bernajeau Porter](#), to help bring clarity to the concept of transformative uses of technology. Our teachers looked at the curricular outcomes and considered the ways technology could reach those goals. As a result, we have seen

an increase in the amount of opportunity for students to utilize the power of connection that technology offers. As the graph indicates, 8% more of our students have increasingly more transformational opportunities to communicate and collaborate online which offers the potential of an authentic audience and increased feedback for the student.

Our students are representing their learning in ways that are more transformational.

Students are expanding their ways of representing their learning to demonstrate their understanding of concepts with the support of technology. Compared to the beginning of this year, 4% more students are being provided with the opportunity to create digital products to this end.

Teacher librarians and English Language Arts teachers focused on book trailers which were developed by students. The trailers were more transformational because students used them to persuade their peers to read books they were recommending. These booktrailers were displayed on monitors within our collegiates and presented at our [annual Literacy Conference](#).

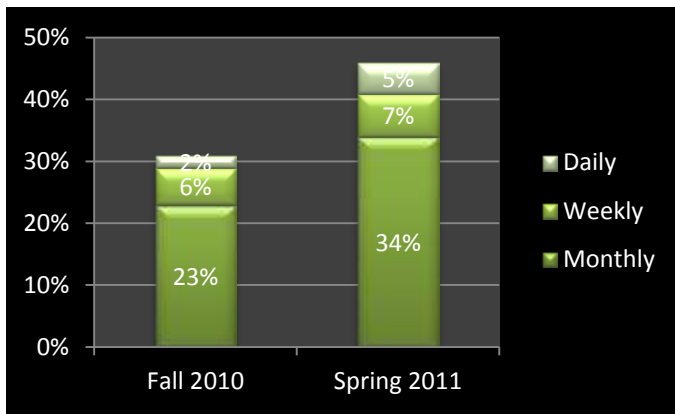


Figure 5: Survey Question: My students use technology to develop digital products to convince or persuade others outside my classroom

Because of work like this, we have seen a 7% increase in students developing digital products to convince or persuade the teacher and a dramatic 15% increase where it is a for real-world audience outside the students' classroom . In addition to the emphasis on writing, these multimedia representations allow us to attend to a variety of learning styles and preferences. To this end, we have seen an increase of 9% of students designing these type of supports for their written work. **Next year, expect us to have targeted efforts**

with SITLs, TLs and those teaching ELA 10 as we implement renewed curricula in this area. Research tells us that authentic audience and authentic tasks make the work more relevant to the students, deepening their commitment and, in turn, their learning. We have seen a dramatic increase of 17% in this area. **Next year, expect us to grow opportunities for students to publish information online to inform and to educate others.**

We have increased the focus on technologies that support student-driven inquiry.

We know that inquiry is one way to develop conditions for authentic learner engagement and a major component of all the renewed curricula. This problem-based approach to examining topics develops students' independence in making choices and assists in shaping their own learning. Technology continues to support inquiry, as 8% more students are using these resources to capitalize on student curiosity and 6% more of our students are using technology to showcase or conduct inquiry.

Next year, expect us to provide opportunity to consider the power of technology within inquiry in our Mathematics classrooms, as we continue to implement renewed curriculum in these courses.

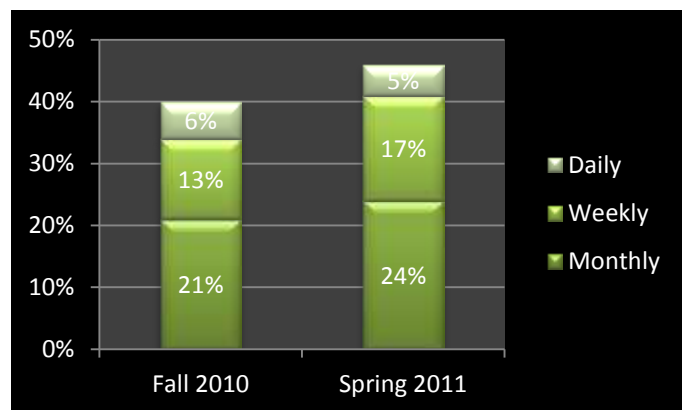


Figure 6: Survey Question: My students use technology to identify problems and strategize possible solutions.

Our students have a much greater opportunity for authentic tasks.

Research tells us that authentic audience and authentic tasks make the work more relevant to the student, deepening their commitment and, in turn, their learning. We have seen a dramatic increase of 17% in this area. **Next year, expect us to grow opportunities for students to publish information online to inform and to educate others.**

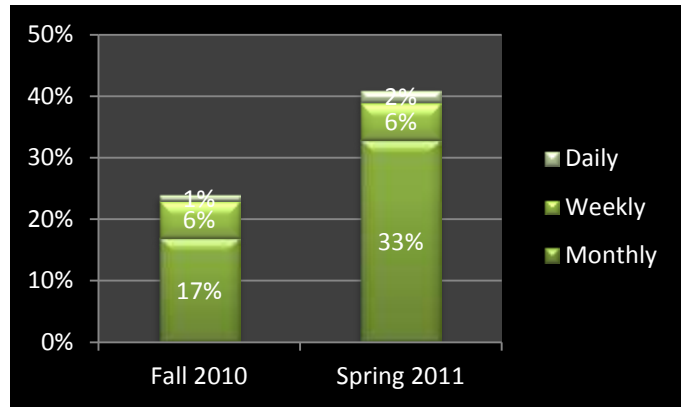


Figure 7: Survey Question: My students use technology to: Work with others outside the classroom to solve real life problems (e.g., collaborative or group projects).

Student voice to shape our practice.



Last year we committed to using student voice to shape our practice. This year, Saskatoon Public's students decided which eBooks the division would purchase in our first foray into digital titles. **Genuine student leadership through technology created relevant title selection and gave students the power to shape their schools' libraries.** In addition, our students increased their use of technology to collaborate with their peers while answering questions in ways not possible prior to using the technology available to them.

"Being included in the eBook selection made me feel like what the students want mattered."
Student

More of our teachers are seeing the value of technology to support learning.

"I found the experience to be deeply enriching and beneficial to my future practice, especially in terms of my approach to utilizing social media as a learning tool."

Teacher and Presenter

Last year we committed to extending professional learning opportunities. In our *Teachnology* conference, our teachers lead sessions on the value of technology. In addition, more Saskatoon Public teachers chose to attend the provincial IT Summit this year than ever before, and we presented more of the sessions than ever, indicating a growing interest in and commitment to teaching with technology.



[Click image to see full poster](#)

[Teachers also used technology in more transformational ways throughout the year.](#) **Next year, expect us to grow the opportunities for our teachers to learn about the transformational use of technology.**

Additional Promises

Student Voice

Incorporating student voice in our collegiates has been a practice for many years and the use of student forums pre-dates Collegiate Renewal in some collegiates. However, we have moved from discussing predominantly administrative issues to more discussion around topics that impact how teachers, students, and all staff support student learning. Student forums are now more focused and targeted. City-wide student forums also informed our Division and the Board about the effectiveness of the past three years of Collegiate Renewal, leading to the investment of another three years of the priority. **Expect us to make student representation an on-going part of shaping the strategic direction of Collegiate Renewal.**

Again this year, we have also seen student voice included in professional learning opportunities. Students and teachers have worked together to better understand what it means to be a writer and students have worked with teacher librarians to help shape our collection of eBooks. **Expect us to explore possibilities for students to deepen their understanding about engagement within curricular opportunities. In particular, students will be invited to work in authentic inquiry into Collegiate Renewal with a Learning Leader or administrator as a mentor.**

Widening the Circle

While learning coordinators have always played an important role within Collegiate Renewal, a greater emphasis was placed on working together to examine evidence from each school with learning councils. Through this process, individual schools' learning coordinators are coming to a shared understanding about the strategies that they will use to support the deepening of student learning. Learning councils are creating benchmarks based on current school data so they can monitor progress toward the school's strategic plan throughout the year. **Expect us to continue to support the work of Leadership Councils in using their student data to shape the direction of Collegiate Renewal in their collegiates.**

Reporting

Separating behaviours from academic performance is essential to fair and consistent grading practices. Our collegiates either focused their comments on growing achievement of curricular outcomes, or separated behaviours and academic performance using a *Learning Skills Rubric* on their reporting documents. The size of the comment boxes on all report cards was expanded to encourage more extensive teacher feedback around student progress toward learning outcomes. By the end of the school year, a series of comment banks and rubrics were created around three characteristics of engagement: persistence, democratic citizenship, and autonomy. This year, more teachers sought to comment on both engagement *and* achievement, and the work on reporting and feedback is central to many school stories as a result. **Expect us to continue to improve quality descriptive feedback on reporting documents.**

Curriculum Renewal and Provincial Assessment For Learning

We promised to connect curriculum renewal and [provincial Assessment for Learning](#) (AFL) protocols with Collegiate Renewal. We made a concerted effort to ensure that staff, and ultimately students, could see the powerful role that curricula can play in engaging learners. In an ongoing way, renewed Grade 9 curricula were addressed through subject-alike inquiries in English Language Arts and Mathematics. School teams of administrators, learning coordinators, and teachers met to look at Provincial AFL data in reading, Mathematics, and writing. They used the data to help to set the direction for departmental work in curricular areas. In addition, other Grade 9 subjects-alike groups met to connect student engagement and curriculum renewal. Arts Education teachers looked at authentic tasks, while Career Education, Physical Education and Health teachers looked for ways to integrate subject matter to increase relevance. Social Studies 9 teachers and teacher-librarians worked on critical thinking, competence, and cultural responsiveness in a year-long collaborative project. Teachers noted that unit planning and in-depth analysis of curricula and Treaty helped make the connections between renewed curricula and engagement explicit. **Expect us to continue demonstrating the focus on the engaged learner that exists in both Curriculum Renewal and Collegiate Renewal.**

Continuous Improvement Framework

The provincial Continuous Improvement Framework (CIF) lived within our school stories, as we promised. Schools targeted issues that revolved around subsets of the CIF's tenets of higher literacy and achievement, smooth transitions, and equitable opportunities. For example, higher literacy and achievement was addressed through work on AFL, work on challenge and flow, and through a focus on assessment, reporting and departmental work on curricular outcomes. Equitable opportunities work looked at relevance, responsiveness and belonging. As a part of smooth transitions and curriculum renewal, all collegiates restructured their Grade 9 programs. One collegiate, Walter Murray, was awarded a McDowell Foundation grant to extend the inquiry process into transitions, engagement, and Grade 9 programming.

In addition to collegiate work, our division data indicates we have met our commitments for ongoing improvement. Division-wide, we improved our ability to give information to students about how they are meeting curricular goals. As we promised, course outlines and report card comments became more powerful in promoting learning. **Expect us to show how our progress is aligned with the Continuous Improvement Framework.**

Retention

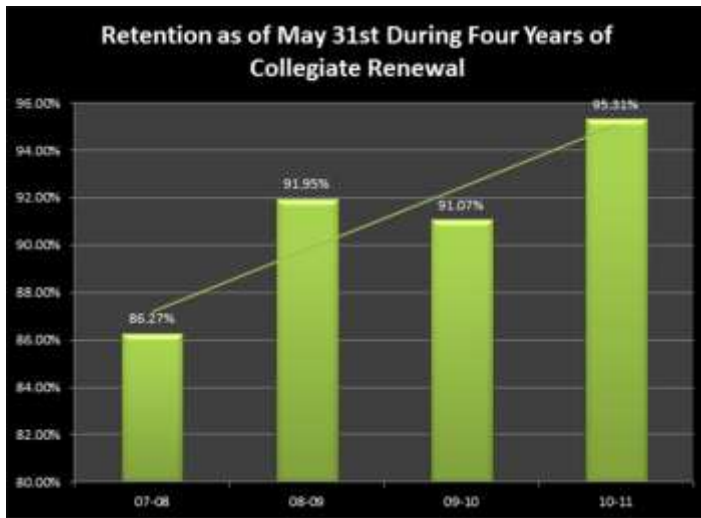


Figure 8: Retention in our Collegiates during Collegiate Renewal Years

We indicated last year that we would continue to monitor retention rates during the 2010/2011 school year. The chart below shows that retention rates during the years of Collegiate Renewal have been very positive. This year's improvement of over 4% in retention rates by the end of May shows positive progress as more and more students are staying connected to formal learning opportunities in our collegiates.

Another way of demonstrating the improvement in retention rates is to compare the rates in the four years before Collegiate Renewal began to the four years of Collegiate Renewal. **This comparison (see Figure 12) shows that, even with increases in Division enrolment, 178 more students are remaining in our collegiates each year compared to the years prior to Collegiate Renewal. Expect us to continue referencing our retention data.**

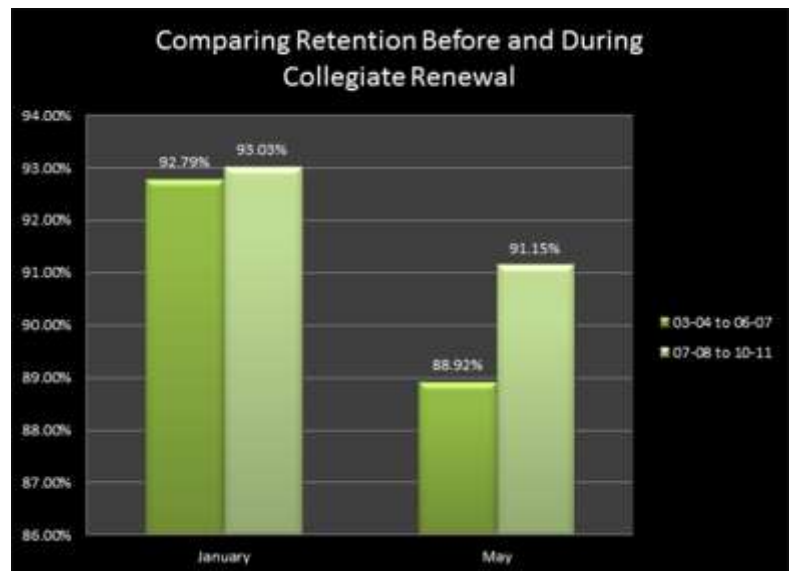


Figure 9: Comparing Retention Before and During Collegiate Renewal

Challenge

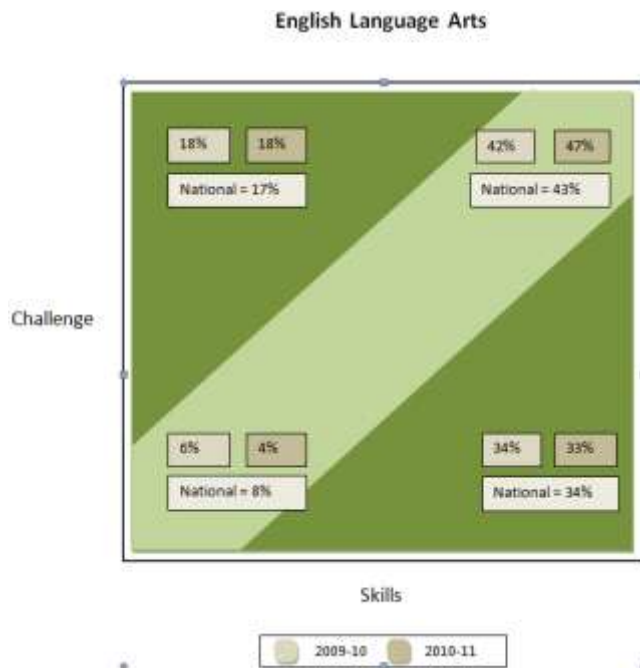


Figure 13: Tell Them From Me - Skills vs Challenge in English Language Arts

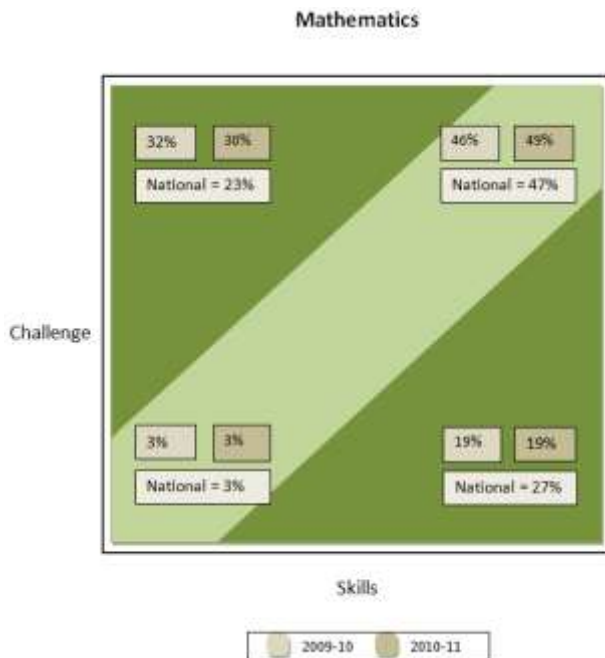


Figure 14: Tell Them From Me - Skills vs Challenge in Mathematics

We indicated last year that we would work on differentiating instruction in classrooms in the hope that students would have an appropriate balance of academic challenge and skill level. The TTFM student survey indicated an improvement in student perception of being in "flow" (high level balance of academic challenge and skill level) in both English Language Arts (ELA) and in Mathematics. In ELA, there was a 5% increase in students experiencing a high degree of challenge and skill level, placing us four percentage points above the national average, while in Mathematics there was a 3% increase, placing our Division two percentage points above the national average. **Expect us to continue improving our use of preassessment data in areas like student readiness, interest and learning styles so that we can be more responsive to student learning needs.**

Large Scale Assessment

In the coming years, we are committed to utilizing large scale assessment measures in concert with classroom level and school-based assessments to better determine the level of learner engagement in our collegiates. To assist in gauging our Division-wide progress toward our goal, we have identified areas of student performance, student perceptions, and instructional practice in both English Language Arts and Mathematics, two core subjects that are seen as cornerstones to school success. For most of these areas we have targeted goals for improvement.

In terms of student performance, the Canadian Achievement Test IV (C.A.T. IV) will be implemented in grade 10 so that we attain baseline data. In addition, we are hopeful that our work to build reader competency at the Division and school level will help and that we will see a 5% increase on the reader response section on the 2011 Provincial Assessment For Learning compared to the 2009 assessment.

In the area of student perceptions, our work will lead to ongoing improvements in the Skills vs. Challenge sections in both Mathematics and English Language Arts on the Tell Them From Me survey. Our goal is to see students perceiving at least a 2% increase in achieving `flow` (high challenge and high skill) in both subject areas. We also want to see student perceptions on the 2011 Opportunities to Learn Section of the [Provincial Assessment for Learning](#) improve by 5% in terms of preparation and commitment to learn compared to responses in 2009.

When it comes to instructional practice, our ongoing professional learning will hopefully result in the teacher questionnaire connected to the Provincial AFL showing a 5% increase in knowledge and use of instructional strategies.

In addition to continuing to seek improvement in the aforementioned large scale assessment areas, we will continue to report on student retention rates and will share graduation rate information.

Conclusion

Collegiate Renewal continues to be a learning journey where there is a clear purpose and ever increasing evidence of progress towards our destination. Year one of Renewal was about setting our destination and changing learning conversations, year two of Renewal focused largely on assessment for learning practices to improve learner engagement, and year three was about continuing to grow leadership in Renewal and deepening understanding about research based assessment practices and motivation to learn. Year four of Renewal has been about feedback. We have looked to improve the quality of feedback to support student learning and have taken the feedback from students to adjust teaching and learning so that more students find success. The stories shared in this Report show evidence that we made additional progress toward our goal "that all collegiate students will be engaged in their learning so that they will graduate as active participants in lifelong learning and as responsible and caring citizens in the community, nation and world."

As we consider our students' learning results and the feedback offered by multiple stakeholders, our ability to provide quality, ongoing feedback to students and to respond appropriately to the feedback they provide us will be enhanced. Connected to the latter form of feedback will be a deepened understanding of how to gather, examine and act upon data. In order to improve our students' learning outcomes we will continue our efforts to genuinely involve students and parents/guardians in our work.

We are excited about Collegiate Renewal continuing as a learning priority in the coming years. Our community forums confirmed that "we are on the right track", but we know there is important work ahead as we steer toward authentic engagement for all.