Collegiate Renewal
Report to the Board
June 2018

Purpose and Progress

Saskatoon Public Schools
Inspiring Learning
All collegiate students will be engaged in their learning so that they graduate as competent, active participants in lifelong learning and as responsible, caring, culturally responsive citizens in the community, nation, and world.

In pursuit of this goal, we will focus intensively on the engagement, achievement, and graduation rates of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students.
Introduction

Through Collegiate Renewal, Saskatoon Public Schools (SPS) grows student learning and engagement. Improvements occur through both professional learning to refine classroom practices and through direct intervention with students. This year, administrators and learning coordinators were the main leaders who helped teachers pursue the goals of student engagement and increased credit attainment. These leaders also led professional learning to strengthen understanding of curricular expectations for student outcomes. Particular attention to the results for Indigenous students, student attendance, and additional support for literacy and mathematics has provided heightened focus on meeting the needs of all students for each collegiate team.

Student Results

Student Engagement

The *Our School* student survey is completed in November each year. Compared with similar school divisions, 18% more SPS students reported being intellectually engaged. Students who experienced responsive instruction and outcomes-based instruction in 3 or more classes were more likely to report increased engagement than students who did not experience this. The main areas of focus for next year’s work on student engagement will be continued support for formative assessment and responsive instruction, with an emphasis on increasing the precision of assessments based on curriculum outcomes.

Transitions

Changing schools in the middle of the year reduces the likelihood of student belonging, engagement, and success in earning credits. This year, secondary vice principals sought to reduce the number of students transferring or quitting school. Our student population grew, but SPS had nearly 400 fewer student transitions mid-year in 2017-2018 than in 2016-2017; our transition rate dropped 5%. Next year, an attendance campaign and more supports for students with low attendance will be used to further reduce attendance-related transitions.

Credits

According to the most recent Ministry data, 82% of our known grade 10 students are on track to graduate on time and 74% of both our known grade 11s and grade 12s are projected to graduate on time.

Outcome Recovery

Sometimes, a student is close to achieving a credit but is missing some evidence that might allow successful completion of the course. In each collegiate, students in this situation are offered extra time and support to provide sufficient evidence of course outcomes. This is called Outcome Recovery and the majority of students who attempted to recover outcomes in first semester were able to complete their courses and gain credit with the extra time and support. Additional data about second semester results will be reported in the fall. A new administrative procedure for outcome recovery has been written and will ensure consistency of practice across collegiates in 2017-2018.
Professional Learning

**Outcomes-Based Assessment (OBA)**

The goal of the OBA (outcomes-based assessment) work was that all teachers organize their gradebook according to curriculum outcomes in at least one class, and use the new form of organization to drive their assessment practice. Teachers used course outlines to communicate about curricular outcomes to students. Administrators reported 44% of teachers could generate an outline and grade based on outcomes in September when we began learning about OBA. Thanks to their support and the professional learning led by learning coordinators, 70% of teachers could do so by the start of the next semester. In May, teachers completed a self-assessment of the new outcomes-based assessment strategies. 83% reported a grading process in their OBA class that was focused on reporting by outcome, and 36% had even reached the refinement or integration stages in the first year of professional learning.

Students observed OBA in action. Nearly 64% of students reported knowing the learning target in the *Our School* student survey. When students know the learning target, student anxiety is reduced and engagement is increased. Next year, teachers will be supported to strengthen their implementation of outcomes-based assessment, including planning and instructing based on curricular outcomes in one course per semester.

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**Leadership Curriculum**

This year, principals and vice principals focused on understanding the expected practice of outcomes-based assessment, observing for it in classrooms, and giving effective feedback. Teachers reported administrators observed teachers more often in 2017-2018, a practice that has steadily improved in high schools since 2013-2014. Teachers also said administrators provided useful feedback about teaching more frequently.

**First Nation, Inuit, and Métis Supports (FNIM)**

The 2017-2018 school year allowed for the continuation of existing initiatives to support FNIM students. The FNIM Student Achievement program continued in six SPS collegiates and contributed to increased credit attainment. In Semester 1 of the 2017-2018 school year, 467 students received support. Of these students, 76% successfully obtained the credit in question.

The newest initiative is the role of the Indigenous Student Advocate, which was created in three SPS collegiates. The Indigenous Student Advocate’s priority is to support Indigenous students, academically and socially, to successfully transition through and out of school. These teacher leaders work with Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students and staff to develop individual Indigenous students’ sense of identity and belonging through supports such as culture, extra-curricular activities and events.

**Mathematics**

In 2017-18, secondary mathematics teachers engaged in professional learning at the school and division level to support the focus on OBA. To support OBA in schools, math learning coordinators worked collaboratively to support their colleagues understanding of mathematics curriculum and assessment. Through this focus teachers reported that:

- they engaged in professional conversations that improved their understanding of mathematics curriculum,
- they assessed more frequently and explored different ways to measure outcome proficiency.

Math learning coordinators also organized and facilitated common department meetings that focused on specific questions of OBA based on school need. Topics included: “Rethinking final assessments in the Foundations pathway”, “Cultural Competence in Mathematics”, “Asking and assessing tasks that require higher level thinking in Pre-Calculus”, and “Creating
tasks and projects in the Workplace Pathway”. Teachers stated that these opportunities to dig deeper into course specific conversations supported their learning and instructional practice.

Alongside the work in OBA, Math 9+ was an area of focus in 2017-2018. A working group was formed to revise our previous model and the goals for the course. The work of this group has led to the creation of a more holistic model, which includes a focus on student disposition and engagement, gap filling, and the grade 9 mathematics curriculum. Moving into 2018-2019, implementation of the model and its impact on student learners will be the focus.

Secondary Literacy

During this year, select teachers of ELA, History, and Science from all collegiates offering grade 10 implemented two intensive cycles of literacy instruction which focused on students whose literacy skills posed a barrier to outcome completion (focus group). Teachers reported that the repeated use of a strategy in a short period of time provided a basis for ongoing formative assessment and responsive instruction, as well as strengthening student-teacher and student-subject relationships. 67% of focus group students improved one level or more on the SLAM literacy rubric. In 2018-2019, as part of a provincial initiative, all grade 9 English and French Immersion teachers will focus on student literacy through writing skills. Next year, we will be able to compare pre- and post-writing skills data based on a 4-point provincial rubric to determine the percentage of students writing at grade level.

Attendance

Each collegiate has activated an intervention plan to address student attendance. While the plan in each school has unique elements designed in response to the needs of their students, there are elements that are consistent across all schools. In each collegiate, student attendance is monitored by administrators. When student absences reach certain levels, specific interventions are enacted. As the number of absences rises, these interventions become more intensive and gradually involve more people in support of the student. This year we saw modest improvements in student attendance with most of the gains coming in two schools that piloted a more intensive attendance emphasis: at Tommy Douglas, there was a 6% increase in the number of students in grades 10–12 that attended regularly, and at Bedford Road, where the emphasis was on grade 12 students, they saw a 13% increase in grade 12 students attending regularly. In each school, additional supports to encourage regular attendance were implemented.

For 2018-2019 the emphasis on attendance will be strengthened with professional learning about effective ways to support students and engage families as well as a campaign to promote the importance of regular attendance.

Conclusion

We have continued the work toward responding effectively to student need, and these efforts are yielding steady progress toward our goals of increased engagement and credit attainment. SPS collegiate teachers and administrators are continuously seeking innovative ways to adapt instruction to meet students’ needs. This work will continue incrementally in 2018-2019 with an expansion of professional learning and leadership development focused on outcomes-based assessment, attendance support, and reducing transitions.
The core of OBA is the practice of assessing based on curricular outcomes. In 2017-18, teachers reorganized their gradebooks in at least one class and it’s positively affecting our students.

MOMENTUM IS BUILDING... Administrators reported a 26% increase of strong OBA understanding through course outlines.

CLEAR LEARNING TARGETS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**SEE**
Students reported clear learning targets in 2/3 of their classes.

**FEEL**
When all classes have clear learning targets, fewer students reported anxiety.

**REACT**
Where all classes have clearly indicated learning targets, students' intellectual engagement increased.

Learning and assessment is connected back to outcomes and then clarified for students, providing a better grasp of their knowledge, understanding, or skills based on curricular expectations.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?
- Grade & assess based on outcomes
- Backwards plan starting with outcomes
- Instruct according to outcomes & needs

REFERENCES:
- Our school’s admin course outlines 2017-18