Visible Learning for Literacy by Fisher, Frey and Hattie states that "every student deserves a great teacher, not by chance, but by design." It is through application of research with reflection on our teaching practice where we truly impact student learning and achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Saskatoon Public Schools supports the use of research based instructional practices to increase student learning and achievement. In 2017, the Saskatoon Public Schools Expected Practice document was created by central office staff, administrators, and teachers to highlight promising practices in reading, writing and mathematics. The practices outlined in this document focus on the interconnected and reciprocal relationship of reading and writing with a focus on setting students up for writing success.
**Introduction**

*Literacy for Life* inspires children to become independent and thoughtful readers, writers, and mathematicians and works to enhance teacher and leader competencies. Through the collaboration of literacy and mathematics communities, teachers work toward having all children reach grade-level success. Joyful and productive learning takes place in our classrooms, our libraries, in mathematician workshops, among students listening to authors at the university, during parent-engagement evenings and when students attend a performance in the community. Focused support for Indigenous learners, increasing achievement and engaging more students in a culturally competent way, targets improved student graduation results. Ensuring expected practices in all classrooms allows children to experience instructional consistency and learning success. This report highlights a year filled with a student-focused agenda, professional growth and the joy of learning in Saskatoon Public Schools.

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**Reading and Writing**

**Data from the Previous Year (September 2017)**

The annual review of reading data was presented in September 2017. By the end of grade 3, 78% of students were reading at or above grade level. Data from 2017-18 will be provided this September.

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Early Learning
Home visits and parent engagement played a central role in welcoming children into prekindergarten classrooms. Hanen language development strategies were embedded into play and learning. Parents attended family-day experiences and stayed connected to classroom events through communication apps. School teams honoured parent knowledge as an important aspect of student growth. Prekindergarten learning occurred in classrooms, outdoor spaces and in children’s homes.

Kindergarten Community
Kindergarten teachers were invited to join the joint literacy and numeracy learning community. Teachers worked on defining purposeful play, where curriculum lives in play and the role of the educator is to plan for learning through play and inquiry. Educators co-constructed examples of purposeful playful experiences that focused on literacy, mathematics, and cultural connections.

New to PWIM Teachers
Kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers developed skills to implement the Picture Word Inductive Model (PWIM) and visited model classrooms. Teachers continue to be instructed in the five phases of PWIM modelled on the pillars of literacy: phonics, phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Saskatchewan READS was a foundational supporting document to ensure that students participate in a balanced literacy program in all early learning classrooms. Every new to PWIM teacher is provided with a Year at a Glance Plan that highlights cross-curricular connections. Grade 3 teachers were provided with professional learning opportunities to broaden their understanding of how PWIM can be used as an effective tool of inquiry.

Literacy Community
An invitation was shared with all elementary schools to encourage teachers to form a Literacy Community. In support of a provincial focus on writing in 2018, teachers developed a foundational understanding of the grade 1 to grade 8 writing curriculum. Teachers explored tools and strategies to enhance responsive instruction and formative assessment practices in their classrooms and schools. The primary goal of the literacy community is to enhance instruction through a distributed leadership model to improve reading results for students in every school.

Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System
Additional Fountas and Pinnell kits were placed in all Saskatoon Public elementary schools to determine students’ independent and instructional reading levels on the F&P benchmarks. Grade 1, two, three and resource teachers were provided with professional development in administering the assessment and in differentiated responsive reading instruction. As well, many middle years teachers have chosen to assess students using the Fountas and Pinnell benchmark.

“I really appreciated the time to get into classrooms to watch PWIM. I learned so much!”
- New to PWIM teacher

“I appreciate the confirmation that MIMI (PWIM for French Immersion) can be a springboard for interdisciplinary teaching/ provocations and the ‘big questions.’ ”
- New to PWIM teacher

“I feel confident that I can share engaging mentor text in my classroom and scaffold impactful writing experiences for all my students”.
- Literacy Community Member
**Saskatoon Public Schools READS** is a companion document to the Saskatchewan English Language Arts Curriculum for grades four to eight adapted from Saskatchewan READS. It is based on sound research, specifically in reading, instructional approaches, assessment, and intervention. The document has been placed in all elementary schools. SPS READS was highlighted at the provincial reading gathering as a promising practice for middle years’ teachers.

**Additional Supports:**

*The 2018 Provincial Writing Assessment* review was offered to grade four, seven and nine teachers. An overview of the provincial writing curriculum, assessment rubric and a common writing assessment experience supported classroom teachers in assessing a portfolio of required forms of writing.

A *Primary French Immersion Reading* group gave teachers the opportunity to share resources, explore reading and writing strategies and learn how to teach phonics acquisition through the PWIM/MIMI framework. French Immersion teachers left each meeting with ready-to-use tools for the classroom.

*Primary Word Work* sessions were offered for teachers to deepen and extend their understanding of phonemic awareness and phonics. Teachers explored tools and strategies to facilitate effective word study, formative assessment and responsive instruction in their literacy block. Teachers received research-based materials to stimulate learning growth and enhance the joy of word study in their classrooms.

“The Primary Word Study sessions were fantastic! They were practical with easy to implement strategies that could be taken back and used in the classroom the next day!”

- Word Work session teacher

*Middle Years Word Cents* provided educators the opportunity to engage with theory and practice related to purposeful practice in vocabulary instruction. Over a series of events educators engaged in research, implemented strategies in their classroom and reflected in teams on their experience. To date, more than 150 educators have taken part in Middle Years Word Cents.

**Mathematics**

**Mathematics Community**

During the 2017-2018 school year professional learning in mathematics focused on the support for implementation of Expected Practices in kindergarten to grade 8 classrooms. Our expected practices for mathematics include the use of strategies designed to improve students’ computational fluency and the implementation of instruction consistent with our Mathematician’s Workshop framework. To support our teachers with the Expected Practices we utilized our *Mathematics Leadership Communities*. These communities focused on deepening professional understanding and leadership in the expected practices and worked collaboratively to:

- create resources and provide examples for colleagues in both French and English,
- strengthen our collective understanding of the expected practices in mathematics,
- increase our students learning, confidence, mathematical mindset and computational fluency,
- support distributed (teacher led) leadership of professional learning through school based PD and after school Leading from the Classroom sessions.
Schools have reported that students are understanding and reflecting on their own mathematical mindset and are more likely to engage in mathematics, classrooms are implementing the Mathematician’s Workshop Framework successfully, and that Mathematics Community members are leading professional learning in schools successfully.

Leading from the Classroom
Our mathematics leadership community understands that effective professional learning features colleague to colleague support that includes shared ownership of the process and learning with others. To facilitate this sharing community members created and led many after school sessions. In these professional learning opportunities community members opened up their classrooms and practice to colleagues from across the division. Topics included: Building Number Sense with Low-Tech Dynamic Number Lines; Purposeful Practice: Which Games do I use?, Number Talk; Finding Math Throughout the Day; Mathematician’s Workshop in Grade 9; and Powerful Math Centres to Support Computational Fluency. Participating teachers reported that these sessions provided them with timely and relevant support for implementation of expected practices; they found the insights provided to be practical and authentically connected to the realities of the classroom.

Mathematics Leadership Team
New for the 2017-2018 school year was the creation of a Mathematics Leadership Team. This team included three classroom teachers and six vice-principals who were given additional release time to support mathematics learning in both their schools and the division. The goals of the team were to:

- Provide direction and leadership in the areas of mathematics curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional learning in Saskatoon Public Schools.
- Provide advice and feedback on mathematics professional learning to ensure alignment to schools’ needs.
- Maximize opportunities for students to learn mathematics in their schools.
- Maximize the instructional capacity of teachers through collaboration, co-teaching and co-planning.

This team of educators and leaders proved to be invaluable to mathematics professional learning and supports in our division. Collectively they created not only opportunities for aligned professional learning but also resources for teachers. New French Immersion resources, additional versions of the SPS Mathematics Quick Screeners, classroom demonstration videos and cumulative review supports were created by this team and shared across our entire division.

All three of our key mathematics initiatives have one important commonality: teacher leadership. In Saskatoon Public schools mathematics, professional learning is directed by the needs of our students. Through our collective professional learning and the implementation of strong mathematical practices, teachers are reporting that students are more engaged in mathematics, and that their skills and understanding are improving. Teachers also report that they themselves are more aware of student needs and how to respond in their classrooms. We are encouraged by the significant and meaningful improvements in our Grade 4 CAT data this past year and will continue to build on this improvement as we strive to ensure that all SPS Mathematicians experience success.

“Our school has a strong Mathematical Leadership Community and it has been a pleasure for me to learn from and contribute to the group”
- Mathematics Community Member
Collaborative

Cultural Competence

Saskatoon Public Schools First Nation, Inuit & Métis Education Unit works closely with our division priorities. The goal is to provide support to teachers and leaders with culturally competent instruction and assessment in reading, writing, and mathematics. This is accomplished by providing guidance around delivery and facilitation of professional learning.

Literacy Numeracy Hub

The Hub is an online resource for all teachers to access instructional supports to grow and deepen understanding of SPS Expected Practices. The Literacy Numeracy Hub consists of blog posts, grade-specific strategies in reading, writing and mathematics, culturally competent practices and professional development supports.

Data Leadership Teams

Data leadership teams met four times in 2017/18. The outcomes focused on:
- developing leadership skills in the Expected Practices that will help support teachers to analyze individual student learning profiles and respond,
- applying leadership skills through leadership teams to improve learning and teaching,
- increasing cultural competence.

Technology

An online technology hub has been created to provide similar “just in time” supports for staff that they can use at their own pace. These resources have largely taken the form of instructional videos with accompanying blog posts that are intended to lift the learning of all of our learners. They have been highly successful and are increasing the use of technology in our schools.

In partnership with the Saskatoon Industry Education Council, teachers have received professional learning opportunities in the areas of coding and robotics so they may bring this exciting new area to their classrooms, while ensuring the work is grounded in current Saskatchewan curriculum. This will continue into next year with support from the Saskatoon Public Schools Foundation and generous support from Cameco to provide additional resources. Through the same grant, Caroline Robins Community School has created a Design Lab for students to be creative while achieving curricular outcomes.

Next Steps to Enhance Student Learning

- Continue to infuse culturally competent ways of knowing through professional development and leadership.
- Continue to develop competencies with the Expected Practices in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Continue learning opportunities offered through the kindergarten, literacy, and mathematics communities.