

Winter 2018-2019

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Association of School System Administrators

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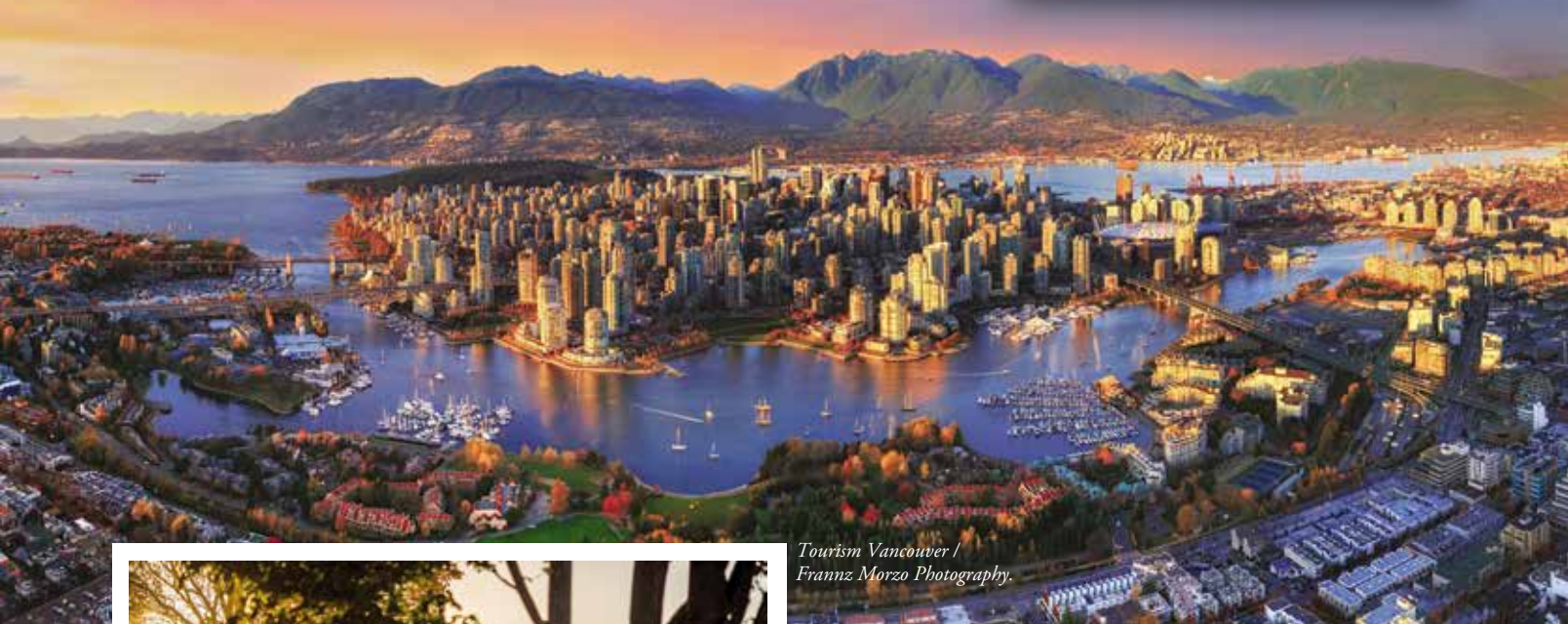
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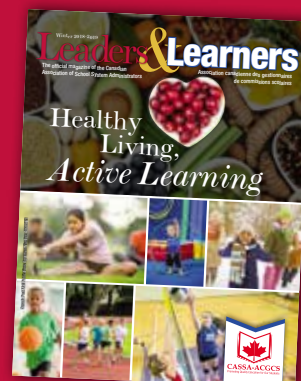
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T

his past summer, my wife and I went to Kenya's Maasai Mara region and witnessed, firsthand, the work that was occurring because of the WE Movement's involvement in the community. We had the opportunity to visit elementary schools, high schools, the new college under construction, and the hospital, and we saw wells with safe drinking water. My wife also works as an educator, so it was exciting to share this experience together, separate from our professional responsibilities at home—an opportunity not often afforded us.

The schedule was very busy, and the week flew by. In no time, we were back on the short flight from the Maasai Mara region to Nairobi, and the next day we were off to Frankfurt and then home to Canada.

The first school we visited was Grades 1 to 8, and along with some other members of our group, we had the privilege of visiting Joseph's Grade 5 classroom. Earlier, we had visited one of the old classrooms that was made of sticks that served as re-bar to hold the mud and cow-dung walls in place, which held the tin roof. Window panes were nonexistent, the door was difficult to hang, and the floor was dirt.

In Joseph's new classroom, the walls were made of concrete block with windows that could be opened and closed, and the door worked. The tin roof was held up by wooden trusses and the floor was concrete. The long-term durability of this structure, as you can imagine, was far superior.

I counted over 40 students in Joseph's classroom, with four children to a desk—the kind of desk we had back in the rural, one-room schoolhouses. There was one blackboard in the room and Joseph had one piece of chalk, and when he taught, he wrote on the board and students copied everything he wrote into their workbooks. I was working with a group of boys on math problems, and when I asked for a pencil, they looked at each other, concerned. I realized in that moment that an extra pen or pencil would be a luxury. One boy got up and, in his bag, he found an extra pencil that I was able to use as we solved our math questions.

Later, when Joseph gave me an opportunity to speak to the class, I tried to explain winter in northern Manitoba and what happens to our lakes. I used Joseph's sweaty little piece of chalk and drew a side view of a lake on the blackboard where I proceeded to tell them that the top of the water in the lake freezes so thick



**Reg Klassen**  
CASSA/ACGCS President

that we can drive vehicles on the ice. It was here that I believe I lost them. Joseph explained it to them in Swahili, but the look on their faces did not change to one of understanding.

What I found so powerful in the Maasai Mara area was that with the existence of a strategically placed well, mamas do not have far to go for water, and girls do not have to help carry that water. This makes school an option for those girls, and that is the difference for them. This difference is education, which creates options, and options are choices, and for young woman in the Maasai Mara region, that is a shift from the past, when options and choices were not often available.

Finally, what we respected most about our time in Kenya was that we never observed North American values or beliefs pushed or forced on any community. It was about providing healthy drinking water and buildings for education, an education that consisted of a Kenyan curriculum taught by Kenyan trained teachers.

In reflecting on this observation, I wondered how different our current situation in Canada would be if we had provided education, as outlined in our treaties, for our Indigenous people. An education in which culture and language were honoured and respected, and Indigenous teachers were involved in the education.

Instead of spending almost two centuries destroying a people, we would have embraced them and worked to build this nation together. How different our country would look at this point in history. I dare say, we would be a stronger nation.



*This summer, Reg (right) and his wife, Karyn, were welcomed by Joseph (middle) and his Grade 5 class in Kenya's Maasai Mara region to witness the work being done as a result of WE's involvement with different elementary schools, high schools, and colleges in the community.*

# Share Your Success Stories!



Write for the  
Summer 2019 issue of  
*Leaders & Learners!*

**We are looking for features and success stories from each region of Canada: Eastern Canada, Quebec, Ontario, Western Canada and Northern Canada.**

## **THEME: HEALTHY LIVING, ACTIVE LEARNING, PART 2**

We are looking for articles about how schools, school districts and community partners are **supporting every student** through programs, community partnerships, professional development for principals/teachers, etc, that promote *Healthy Living, Active Learning*.

The Summer 2019 edition will be mailed to readers in Spring 2019, and will be available to attendees at our Conference, which will be held July 3-5, in Vancouver, British Columbia, and is focused on the same theme.

If you have an article idea that fits into this theme, please send a short abstract (50 to 100 words) to Shannon Savory, editor of the magazine, at [ssavory@matrixgroupinc.net](mailto:ssavory@matrixgroupinc.net), and copy [ken\\_bain@cassa-acgcs.ca](mailto:ken_bain@cassa-acgcs.ca).

**Proposals are due: January 25, 2019**

**Final articles are due: June 2019**

**Photos are welcome (must be high resolution)**

**You will be notified if your abstract is selected.**



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**R**ecently, I attended the Lawson Foundation Outdoor Play and Early Learning Policy Research Symposium as a guest of the foundation. The symposium brought together outdoor play and early learning researchers and practitioners from Canada, Finland, Sweden, Netherlands, Scotland, Ireland, and the United States. CASSA was invited so that the voice of school system leaders could be included given that early learners arrive at our doorsteps every morning.

The Lawson Foundation provided participants with a Position Statement on active outdoor play, saying: “Access to active play in nature and outdoors—with its risks—is essential for healthy child development. We recommend increasing children’s opportunities for self-directed play outdoors in all settings—at home, at school, in child care, the community and nature.”

Not only were the benefits of play being advanced but the notion of “risky outdoor play” was an important theme for the symposium. I heard from researchers and early childhood educators about the physical and mental health benefits of outdoor play.

According to Outdoor Play Canada,<sup>1</sup> “risky play is a thrilling and exciting form of play that involves the possibility of physical injury and can include play with great heights, play with high speed, play with dangerous tools, play with dangerous objects, play near dangerous elements, rough-and-tumble play and play where children can ‘disappear’/get lost. Risky play provides opportunities for challenge, testing limits, exploring boundaries, and learning about injury risk.”

While the notion of encouraging children to engage in dangerous play may be difficult to fully embrace, the research is very clear on the many physical and mental health benefits that result when children play outdoors.

This issue of *Leaders & Learners* highlights promising examples of schools and districts that promote active learning through healthy active living from engaging physical education programs in Northwest Territories to a model nutrition program in Alberta to an Edmonton Kindergarten Forest School program to viewing students’ health and well-being as a shared responsibility in Quebec.

New in this issue is a Leadership Learning section that includes articles on



**Ken Bain**  
CASSA/ACGCS Executive Director

topics of interest to school system leaders. We welcome future articles on the topic of system leadership!

My thanks to the authors of the articles in this issue and most importantly, thank you to those of you who provide healthy active learning experiences for our students each day.

#### Reference

1. Outdoor Play Canada is a new network of leaders and organizations working together to galvanize an outdoor play movement across Canada.

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# Student Wellness at PWK High School

By Al Karasiuk and Sarah Pruys, South Slave Divisional Education Council

**L**ike many high schools across the country, Paul W. Kaeser High School (PWK) in Fort Smith, a small Grades 7 to 12 school of approximately 250 Indigenous students in the Northwest Territories, used to follow a more traditional model when it came to its junior high physical education (PE) program: classes were not scheduled daily, and when classes were scheduled, they were confined to the gym, where students engaged in the typical sports and games such as floor hockey, badminton, and dodgeball.

It was apparent that a significant segment of junior high students was not engaged in meaningful, daily physical activity.

But all this began to change five years ago. In addition to its school gym, PWK now has a state-of-the-art fitness centre at the heart of the school and offers a comprehensive daily PE, fitness, nutrition and related goal setting program tailored more to student needs and interests.

PWK had already successfully experimented with incorporating workout equipment into an alternative program classroom, and Principal Al Karasiuk wondered about the benefits of expanding the concept to include all regular junior high classes. He also thought that the program should have an increased focus on goal-setting and nutrition in order to positively impact health over the long-term.



*Paul W. Kaeser High School's state-of-the-art fitness centre sits at the heart of the school in a repurposed 1,800-square-foot space that students got to help design and choose equipment for. Photo credit: Al Karasiuk*

Reviewing the research, Karasiuk found a number of studies to support the premise that daily physical activity and nutrition improved students' ability to stay on-task for extended periods, coordinate multiple tasks, enhance cognitive control (concentration and attention), and decrease off-task behaviour.

PWK is one of eight schools in the South Slave Divisional Education Council, where over the last decade, academic results have increased 15 to 20 per cent, but where many students are still not meeting Canadian norms. Across the region, schools are expected and encouraged to implement innovative and research-based best practices that will help elevate students to the same academic level as their peers across the country.

With all of this in mind, Karasiuk developed a proposal that would increase time for student engagement in physical fitness to 50 to 60 minutes per day. He explained he would accomplish this by restructuring the day as well as the PE program. The new plan was for PE to focus primarily on personal fitness, which meant students would spend more time on developing healthy lifestyle routines and related goal setting.

For students not naturally athletic, competitive sports can be intimidating and lead to low engagement and participation. Through this new approach, every student was supported and engaged in personal goal-setting and related fitness activity that suited them and their abilities.

"I loved fitness class. It was a great experience learning to work out on the machines. It was the highlight of the school day when I was in junior high," says Krizzia Conception, a Grade 12 student reflecting back.

Isaiah Wiltzen, another graduating student, concurred: "The fitness program benefited me by allowing me to exercise on such high-quality machines and giving me a good start to my day, every day."

The second part of the proposal included coordinating a snack program designed so that students had access to free and healthy nutritious food at the beginning of each day. This also fed into the idea that developing healthy nutritional habits at a young age would build lifestyle habits students would carry with them throughout the rest of their lives.

After developing a proposal, the next step was presenting the idea to the locally-appointed District Education Authority, which governs the planning of education in each community. The nine-member team strongly supported the idea and gave its consent to proceed during the 2013-14 school year. By the beginning of the 2014-15 school year, the program was up and running.

Key to the proposal was the repurposing of an existing 1,800-square-foot space, turning it into a state-of-the-art fitness room at the hub of the school. Karasiuk made sure to involve the students in the design and outfitting of the space. Students were involved in everything, from choosing the equipment they wanted to use, to the selection of the flooring. They chose red flooring—one of the school's colours.

The creation of this space was accomplished on a budget of \$170,000. An integral part of keeping the costs down was the tremendous support PWK High School received from community organizations, businesses, and other government departments. At the time, they received several generous in-kind contributions: The Department of Public Works & Services (now Infrastructure) donated the electrical work, installation of equipment and new windows, the local branch of the Royal Canadian Legion donated a rock-climbing wall, and the flooring contractor and fitness equipment supplier provided discount prices.

The school continues to receive ongoing support from Public Health through the Health Cafe partnership; the Legion continues to support the snack and breakfast program; and the

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs supports the after-school fitness program.

As with any program, PWK High School's student wellness initiative has evolved over time to better serve the needs of the students and the school. They have experimented with moving the PE period to the afternoon time block, but, following this experiment, determined it was better-suited for the morning, as it incentivized students to attend in the morning and better set-up students for success for the rest of the day.

In 2014-15, there was only one class at each of the Grade 7 to 9 levels, so scheduling was relatively easy. Now, there are two Grade 7 and two Grade 8 classes, with two Grade 9 classes being planned for next year. The solution? To schedule both classes at the same time, blocking both the gym and fitness rooms, enabling more flexible groupings between two classes and giving students the choice of participating in sports or fitness as well as allowing for groupings based on gender or choice. PWK High School will continue to explore minor scheduling tweaks but will always keep in mind the basic tenet: daily physical activity for all junior high students.

The school's wellness programming does not end with the junior high PE program. It offers daily intramurals at lunch, open to all students, and an after-school program during which the fitness room is open to all at the end of the day. The wellness programming also offers a daily breakfast program, provides healthy snacks during the morning, and offers a subsidized hot lunch. ○

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*Al Karasiuk is the Principal of Paul W. Kaeser High School, as well as Division Principal with the South Slave Divisional Education Council. He was honoured as one of Canada's Outstanding Principals (The Learning Partnership – 2012).*

*Sarah Pruys is the Public Affairs Coordinator with the South Slave Divisional Education Council.*



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# Bringing the Vision of Alberta Education's Nutrition Program to Life

By Courtney Lawrance and Trevor Mitchell, Living Waters Catholic Regional Division

**L**iving Waters Catholic Schools Regional Division's goal is that every child who enters our doors will graduate from a faith-filled, safe, and caring environment prepared for future success. As a result, we were excited to participate in Alberta Education's school nutrition program. Each day, 95 students at St. Mary of the Lake School (K-6) in Slave Lake, Alberta, are served by an innovative and model nutrition program that goes beyond a traditional breakfast or lunch program. Students are taught about the food groups, they try new foods, they learn about portion sizes, they are provided healthy food choices, and efforts are made to meaningfully include cultural components.

Permeation of cultural components is one of the elements that sets the program at St. Mary of the Lake apart. For instance, when Premier Rachel Notley visited in April 2018, the menu included bison goulash, blueberries, and bannock. This is part of a sincere effort to reflect the cultural diversity of our students. St. Mary of the Lake has a significant number of First Nations and Métis students (46 per cent of the school population). The meal choice for the Premier's visit highlights a way to honour First Nations and Métis traditions within the larger fabric of the school environment.

Moreover, a key part of the program is for students to try new foods. This creates a great platform to explore and learn about other cultures. For example, students have tried homemade hummus and tortilla chips as well as Chinese-style stir fry and Spanish bean dip, among others. St. Mary of the Lake also has a significant number of Filipino students. To encourage further exploration of other cultures, the search has begun to find low-sodium and / or non deep-fried Filipino recipes. We believe that actions speak louder than words. While a meal is a small component of daily life in a school, the choice to consciously include cultural diversity in the offerings of the nutrition program speaks volumes, as food is a necessity of life and a simple way of bringing people together.

Education is a central component of the nutrition program and this is what separates Alberta's nutrition initiative from a traditional breakfast or lunch program. The purpose is to build capacity, innovation, and sustainability. Our nutrition program facilitator, Sarah Cross, works in partnership with the teachers at the school to bring the program to life. Teachers implement the educational portion of the program, while Sarah plans, budgets, and prepares the meals. Sarah understands the importance of sustainability. She models budgeting and strategic choices using the weekly flyers to plan nutritious and

cost-effective meals to stretch the program dollars further. The average cost of a meal is \$1.03, compared to the allowable amount of \$3.90 set by the province. Having the right person in the facilitator role makes a critical difference between meeting and exceeding expectations.

In Living Waters, listening to the student voice and providing opportunities for choice are fundamental values we encourage to be used in our schools. With this in mind, students were asked as part of a contest for the nutrition program to design a menu. The students asked for Kentucky Fried Chicken. This choice presented a great teachable moment, as the students were taught how to make a healthy baked chicken as an alternative.

Similarly, making informed choices is part of the larger goal of creating critical thinkers. The format of nutrition program is one-way students are learning to make these informed choices. Students are presented with a prepared meal each day. In addition, two fridges with glass doors are located in the hallways to allow students to access food all day. In this way, students are able to make choices and demonstrate their ability to discern portion sizes. Students are building their own capacity to make good food choices that align with the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth. In addition, St. Mary of the Lake was chosen as the primary location for





*When Premier Rachel Notley visited in April 2018, the menu included bison goulash, blueberries, and bannock.*



the nutrition program, as it was the school with the greatest need. For some students, the nutrition program provides their only reliable access to food for breakfast and lunch. Childhood poverty is often hidden, as Canadian society is largely affluent when compared to the rest of the

world. In this way, the nutrition program is providing for a variety of diverse needs within the school, whether it is access to food, making healthy choices, or exposure to different cultural traditions.

How do we know the nutrition program is successful? The student response. For

instance, one Grade 1 student stopped the program facilitator to offer her a quarter. When asked why, the students replied that she “did not ever want the program to end.” The quarter is framed and posted in the kitchen as a reminder of the impact the program is making on the daily lives of students.

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St. Mary of the Lake School is culturally diverse and located in rural northern Alberta, but it is the little school that could and does make a difference in the lives of its students daily. The nutrition program has taken on a life of its own and garnered attention from both Alberta Education and the Premier.

Like all successful initiatives, it is the passion of your people that makes the critical difference. Having the right person in the role is essential. Our program facilitator, Sarah Cross, has worked tirelessly to provide an exemplary example of how to bring the nutrition program to life. How did she do it? Sarah is not driven by the quest for accolades, she is instead motivated by her desire to help all of the students in her school. With a population of 95, we are provided with the luxury of being able to know each and every student on a personal level. Sarah's work as an educational assistant for the past 15 years at St. Mary of the Lake provides her with a unique insight into how to make the nutrition program culturally relevant to her students.

St. Mary of the Lake is very proud of the work done to date and now serves as the exemplar as the nutrition program expands to additional schools within our division. ○

*Courtney Lawrance is in her second year as Associate Superintendent of Learning for Living Waters Catholic Regional Division, which serves Whitecourt, Edson, and Slave Lake.*

*Trevor Mitchell is in his third year as Deputy Superintendent for Living Waters Catholic Regional Division, which serves Whitecourt, Edson, and Slave Lake.*

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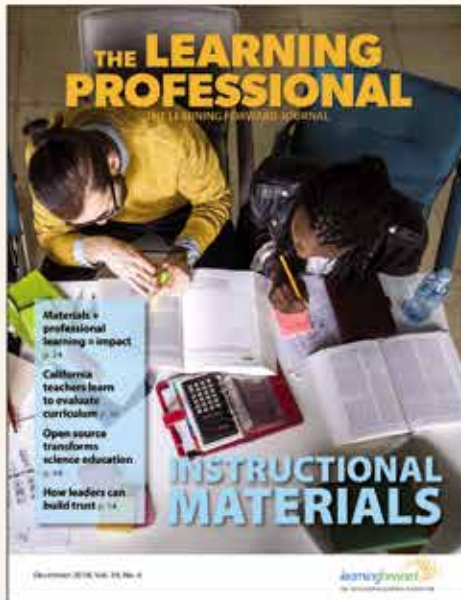
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# Play-Based Learning in Nature...For All!

By Shamala Manilall,  
Kailey Edgelow, and  
Katrina Maximchuk,  
Edmonton Catholic  
School District

Outdoor play provides opportunities for kids to be intrinsically-motivated, explore freely, and engage with nature without being bound by prescriptive transitions or adult interruption.

A growing body of research suggests that increased time outdoors supports mental health and well-being, which is a key priority for the Edmonton Catholic School District (ECSD).

To this end, under the guidance of Assistant Superintendent Corine Gannon, the district implemented a Forest School program for children in full-day Kindergarten classrooms. Forest School is a program based on free, active, outdoor play for children. These guiding principles are not only a child's right, but are essential for physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development.

"Unlike television, nature does not steal time; it amplifies it. Nature offers healing," says Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods* and *The Nature Principle* and co-founder of the Children & Nature Network.

Full-day Kindergarten classrooms were purposefully chosen, as these programs typically reflect lower socio-economic status and other challenging circumstances. These children

*Continued on page 20*

*Forest School offers exciting adventures within children's comfort zones. Whether it's crossing the river on a footbridge higher than many have been on, finding a hill to run up and roll or slide down, or challenging themselves with the "impossible cliff" to climb, students are given opportunities to discover something new about their world and themselves.*



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## At Forest School, children are encouraged to try within their comfort zone. Allowing children to take smaller, manageable risks builds their confidence, motor skills, social skills, and their self-perceived capabilities.

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are potentially at risk for increased sedentary activity, such as increased screen time and less physical activity. Reasons may include a lack of safe play spaces, or limited time for free outdoor play.

Forest School is unique in how it invites exploration and creativity, opportunity for experimentation, and failure, and offers the space and time to pursue individual interests for all children. The program is a four-day experience, with three days in an urban river valley site a short distance from the school and one day at the school site. This encourages the teacher to continue programming outdoors and bridges the gap between outdoor play across environments. Children feel a sense of satisfaction when they are engaged in purposeful activities without the typical restrictions that are often dependent on level of ability and skill.

Day one at Forest School starts with a meeting in the middle of a pre-established Base Camp. The focus is on being safe and establishing natural boundaries where children can explore freely. When the children are asked about what they are allowed to do in the Forest, the answer is always a resounding “No” to questions such as, “Are you allowed to climb a tree, run, shout, or fall?” Students believe they will be injured if they happen to take a tumble in the dirt. These responses speak to the attitude society currently adopts toward risky play, which applies limitations to a child’s play.

Often, free play is boisterous, loud, and can be a bit rough and tumble. Adults perceive this type of play to be dangerous and will discourage its occurrence when, if given the opportunity, children can provide their own “just right challenge” as they test their limits. At Forest School, children are encouraged to try within their comfort zone. Allowing children to take smaller, manageable risks builds their confidence, motor skills, social skills, and their self-perceived capabilities.

Once children arrive at Base Camp, there are a variety of seasonal items for them to engage with. A kitchen area with pots, pans, muffin tins, sifters, and lots of garden tools are

often housed in a tipi or lean-to made from deadfall that children add to each week. A bucket with a rope and a pulley attached to a tree branch with a bungee cord can be filled with dirt, sticks, leaves, or even snow and then hoisted high into the air.

When it’s warm enough to have bare hands, there are tarps with forest journals and pastels, binoculars, magnifying glasses, and bug collectors. A building tarp houses lumber, hammers and nails, screwdrivers and screws, an old hand drill and other loose parts. A slack line can be found at sites where the trees aren’t appropriate for climbing. In the winter, most often shovels, buckets, and toboggans for pulling friends around offer the most enticing things to do.

At Forest school, the adults are the students’ shadows, rather than their guides, and they take a few steps back from typical classroom management practices, allowing children to explore freely. When a student is inclined to stay at one spot at Base Camp, they are not directed to try something new, but are encouraged to explore their chosen activity more deeply.

Time for adventuring beyond camp is always met with excitement. Whether it’s crossing the river on a footbridge higher than many have ever been on, finding a hill to run up and roll or slide down, or challenging themselves with the “impossible cliff” that they might want to climb, the students are given many unique opportunities to discover something new about their world and themselves.

Many outdoor environments are not accessible to children who experience disabilities. Physical and environmental barriers, attitudes, and perceived abilities often hinder participation. The potential is limited for children with needs to experience the benefits of recreation outdoors. Just the simple act of transportation can be challenging. Mobility devices such as walkers and crutches are difficult to secure safely in a bus, and accessible buses for children who use wheelchairs often need to be booked

months in advance. The outdoors poses its own difficulty with parking barricades, or loose gravel or tall grass inhibiting rolling wheels.

At ECSD, the Physical Education Advisor and the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) work collaboratively with the school team and family to address challenges with mobility, communication, or emotional regulation prior to the children being on-site. This includes Physical Education Advisors, Adapted Physical Education Specialists, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Pathologists, Emotional Behaviour Specialists, Family School Liaison Workers, Psychologists, and Therapeutic Assistants to support classrooms with increasingly diverse needs. The MDT works with the school team to address a child’s social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and spiritual well-being across environments.

For some children, the following considerations are critical to a successful and fun-filled day:

- Parental concerns;
- Length of time spent outdoors;
- Changing temperatures; and
- Pre-coaching adults to assist children with challenges.

Teachers have a chance to reflect daily on their experiences at Forest School and review the week’s adventures in a digital summary provided by the team. This year, we have created an online space, which acts as a community of practice for teachers, where they can add their comments, thoughts, ideas, or questions. Forest School is a program that gives children a space to grow and teachers the tools to use nature in student learning. ○

---

*Shamala Manilall is the Manager for Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy. She leads a team of professionals who provide services to children and students who are eligible for specialized supports.*

*Kailey Edgelow is a Physical Education Advisor and manages the Forest School Program. She also provides professional development to teachers and educational assistants, and she recently achieved a master’s degree in education.*

*Katrina Maximchuk is the Adapted Physical Education Specialist on the team and supports teachers and students with disabilities in the acquisition of gross motor skills and physical literacy.*



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# Quality Daily Physical Education:

## A Career in Physical Education and Physical Literacy

By Reg Leidl, Retired School Administrator, Physical Educator and Coach

**I**n June of 2018, I retired from the teaching profession after 36 years of service; 23 years as an in-school administrator, two years as the provincial physical education consultant, and 36 years as a physical educator and coach. I was emotionally tired, and I simply knew it was time to step away.

Over the past summer, I have had the time to reflect on my career, and I was recently asked by a colleague what the most influential educational initiative that impacted students most over the past 36 years was. My answer was immediate: Quality Daily Physical Education (QDPE). In my broad scope as a Principal and Physical Educator, QDPE was the single most influential educational initiative that impacted and defined my teaching career and the lives of the children and youth I was entrusted to care for. This article explains what QDPE is and why it is so important to the growth and development of children within the school and learning environment.

QDPE, the program initiative, was launched by Physical and Health Education Canada in 1988. It simply is a purposely **planned** program of **quality** physical education and physical activity instruction delivered on a **daily** basis to students throughout the whole school year. It fully supports all provincial physical education from Kindergarten to Grade 12 curricula and its foundational premise is to support and enhance lifelong active living and learning.



It also includes encouraging interscholastic sport opportunities, intramurals, and school-wide physical activity events open to all students within the school.

QDPE supports the philosophical and practical implications of helping students to become physically literate. Physical literacy is “the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life,” (ParticipACTION, 2015). QDPE provides the platform for physical literacy to become the gateway to lifelong physical activity (Kriellaars, 2013). It is holistic in its

approach and lends itself to the opportunity for physical educators to adjust their instruction by using formative assessment practices to help teachers be responsive to the learning needs of their students.

Based on my years of experience as both a Principal and Physical Educator, here are the main benefits that QDPE afforded the children involved. Academic performance within the school improved. Teachers reported that the students’ focus to learn was enhanced and, therefore, they did better in their academic studies. Students were more engaged with their studies and with each other, especially following their

physical education classes. Physically active students also have increased blood flow to the brain and increased neurological activity, which also supports their ability to think and learn (Ratey, 2005).

QDPE programs provide students with a variety of physical activity opportunities within the school, home, and community. This leads to enhanced fundamental movement skill development and improved levels of fitness. It is multi-disciplinary and cross-curricular in its instructional approach. This lends itself to more students playing a variety of sports and trying various physical

activity pursuits before they decide to stream into one sport later in their athletic development.

When skill and fitness levels improve, students feel more confident and competent in their ability to move and play. Ultimately, this improves their motivation to learn, move, and participate in physical activities. Students play more vigorously and are more prone to playing outdoors and outside of the school day.

Over an extended period of time during their youth, QDPE helps to offset obesity, Type II diabetes, and decrease the

prevalence of other childhood illnesses. Healthy children are happy children and are therefore more engaged in their learning and less likely to be absent or truant from school and their classes.

Healthy, happy children who are engaged daily in physical education also have the opportunity to learn how to play with others. QDPE supports the work of Hellison (2003) and his philosophy of teaching personal and social responsibility. Physical education opportunities allow children to participate in social situations in which they can practice leadership, cooperation, respect, fair play, sportsmanship, and social skills that transcend more than just physical activity time.

QDPE allows teachers to provide a setting in which personal and social skills can be taught, practiced, and reinforced. For adolescents, daily physical education and physical activity time also supports and enhances their mental health. It is a prescription for helping students feel better about themselves and increases self-esteem. The combination is truly holistic in its approach to supporting all avenues of a developing child's health and wellness.

The outcome of QDPE is to create an active learning environment that helps foster the creation of lifelong healthy active learners. It is not a program as much as it is an **inclusive culture** in which children can play, learn, and develop as holistic individuals. My experience has been that this culture permeates the school and creates an

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environment of advocacy for active living that spreads into the home and throughout the community.

The benefit of the QDPE model is that it is instrumental in supporting children throughout their formative developmental educational years. QDPE is fun! Learning should be fun. It allows for real-life situations to be simulated at the school level. It prepares children and youth for the physical literacy journey they will undertake throughout their lives.

QDPE provides the foundational platform upon which physical literacy can develop and thrive. Physical educators understand that this daily, quality, holistic approach to teaching provides students with the skills, knowledge, competence, confidence, and

motivation to become physically literate. Since physical literacy is a lifelong journey, rather than a destination, a strong QDPE program can help children to value physical activity now and, ultimately, into the future.

Childhood should not be a race to see who grows up the fastest. QDPE allows for children and youth to have the opportunity to learn and play in a school environment that fosters and promotes quality physical education, physical activity, and health practices on a daily basis. If children and youth are not happy and healthy, the ability to learn will not be a priority. QDPE can give children that chance to understand the importance of physical education and that a life time of physical activity pursuits awaits them in the future!

As a physical educator, I always encouraged my students to play with their parents, siblings, and other family members. If the students of today can grow up understanding the importance of physical activity and play, they may just play and encourage physical activity with their own children in the future. This is something I have seen throughout my career in education, and it is truly what QDPE is all about! ○

*Reg Leidl has been a physical educator for the past 36 years. Although retired from the teaching profession, he is still active in Saskatchewan as an advocate for quality, daily physical education, physical literacy, outdoor play, and inclusion. He recently completed his doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Phoenix.*



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*In 2018, Phase III of the SBCSS, "Heart of the Community" project experienced the formal ribbon cutting celebration of the Healthy Living and Learning Hub, as access to programming and services becomes available for all.*



*In the fall of 2016, Phase II of the SBCSS "Heart of the Community" project, launched its outdoor facility alongside its community partners and the City of Cambridge.*

# Bringing Together the Best of our Community



*In January 2015, Phase I of the SBCSS "Heart of the Community" project, was awarded the \$100,000 AVIVA Community Fund Grand Prize as they went live on Canada AM with host Jeff Hutchinson.*



*Students take advantage of the outdoor facility that was part of Phase II.*

By Dan Witt and Sally Reis-Power, St. Benedict Catholic Secondary School

**T**he Heart of the Community Project, initiated by St. Benedict Catholic Secondary School (CSS) in Cambridge, Ontario, brought together educational leaders, neighbourhood associations, and municipal groups to build a healthy active living space that nurtures connections within the community. With an emphasis on developing the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth of students and citizens, St. Benedict CSS wanted to design a space that promoted success for each and a place for all.

St. Benedict CSS, along with its partners, Region of Waterloo Public Health, Idea Exchange (the local public library system), Waterloo Region Catholic Schools Foundation, Active Cambridge, Fiddlesticks Neighbourhood Association, other local supporters, and parent champions, have been successful in securing substantial funding to augment their shared facilities.

Over the past four years, the partnership has mobilized a sustained, collective effort and a phased-planning process to secure funding to augment facilities and services provided to students, staff, and the community.

In Phase 1, which was completed in October 2015, the school installed a multi-station outdoor fitness centre and scoreboard to enhance community and school use of the football field and track with the financial support of the Aviva Community Fund.

Informed by community consultations and discussions with partners, Phase 2 saw the community partnership install a basketball court, saucer swing and climbing walls for children, games tables, and a shade pavilion. Completed in November 2016, this part of the project received financial support from the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation, a local philanthropic organization.

Reflecting on the success of the project at the time, St. Benedict CSS and its partners recognized that if they wanted to strengthen their role as a community hub, they would need to remove existing barriers to community use of indoor and outdoor spaces. The direction began to have greater meaning and purpose, that as a school community, there is a responsibility, not only to the well-being of students and staff, but that if they are to truly be the Heart of the Community, they are called to be a transformative agent for good in the greater community. This has been a foundational belief that has guided the leadership through their work. In addition, the community needed an access point for health and social services, along with cultural, recreational, and outdoor space to nourish community life.

In the spring of 2017, St. Benedict CSS and its partners received another grant of \$525,000 from the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation to creatively optimize existing infrastructure within the school's indoor and outdoor facility. In designing a healthy living and learning community hub, the partnership group encouraged the opportunity for formal and informal

community engagement. This relational approach emphasizes the need for human connection as the foundation of building strong communities.


This Phase 3 of the Heart of the Community Project is a complete model of interconnection between adults, children, and youth to support a meaningful co-existence among all age groups. The project includes amenities, services, and programming provisions for children, adolescents and families, both in terms of the functionality and environmental concerns of the community space. The community now enjoys access to a makerspace, virtual reality lab, event areas, a meeting room, enhanced learning commons, universal bathrooms, improved outdoor lighting for access and safety, and playground equipment for youth.

These enhancements and reconfigurations to the existing facility have helped develop an experience of comfort and accessibility, as well as closer integration among youth and adults, strengthening partnerships established throughout the project and fostering the behaviours needed for positive social connections among all.

The community project's momentum continues to broaden its scope in several spin-out assets, as it continues to celebrate its provincial recognition for three consecutive years with a gold rating in its promotion and enhancement of the health of students, staff, and broader community through the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association.

St. Benedict CSS has also partnered with Community Justice Initiatives of Waterloo Region (CJI), a non-profit organization known worldwide for starting the first modern restorative justice program. The program offers a way of addressing conflict and crime that engages the person who caused the harm, people who were affected by the harm, and the community. Through staff training, mentoring support, and rolling out a four-year plan within several Waterloo Catholic District School Board's family of Secondary schools, the hope is to use restorative justice to nurture the capacity of the human heart to change and grow in an understanding relationship.

Current programming within the school has seen the initial implementation of the Umbrella Project, an interactive,



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inquiry-based program that teaches the skills of emotional well-being. Through classroom- and school-focused lessons, students learn real-life applications of well-being and gain deeper insight into why these skills are essential. It is clear, that over the past four years, St. Benedict CSS has experienced strings of success, one after another, and continued setting a direction that has triggered a cascade of collective rewards.

The Heart of the Community healthy living and learning hub project has brought youth, adolescents, and adults to an active lifestyle that has continued to a deeply intrinsic and meaningful lifestyle. By providing diverse, balanced, and accessible options to the community, we have witnessed a multi-generational role-modeling of active and social lifestyles, supporting all ages in building strong relationships, understanding, and respect for all.

Through the creation of a safe and welcoming centre of recreation and learning that attracts multi-generational use, as well as catering to the interests of differing cultures and abilities, they have generated a more robust experience for all persons to become healthy from a physical, emotional,

spiritual, and social perspective, learning, and playing together. ○

*Dan Witt is a Principal at St. Benedict Catholic Secondary School and an innovative leader within the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. He views a school culture as a*

*responsive and transformative agent to students, staff and the greater community.*

*Sally Reis-Power is a Healthy Active Living Teacher at St. Benedict Catholic Secondary School, where she inspires students and staff to enjoy the power and potential of their well-being.*



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# Lester B. Pearson School Board Daycares are Physically Active!

By Rena Walters, Lester B. Pearson School Board

**P**romoting healthy living and keeping children physically active requires communal effort.

The responsibility of encouraging children to be physically active during the day should not be shouldered by the physical educational teacher alone. By working together, various school personnel can give children the building blocks they need to build a healthy lifestyle.

Based on the recommendations of Canadian Public Health Association authorities, we know that children should be getting a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day and that there is a direct link between physical activity and academic success.

The 2018 *ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth* reports that children are still not as active as they should be. It reports that only 35 per cent of five- to 17-year-olds are reaching their recommended physical activity levels as outlined in the *Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth*. In addition, 51 per cent of five- to 17-year-olds are engaging in more screen time than is recommended by the *Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines* for recreational screen-based sedentary behaviours.

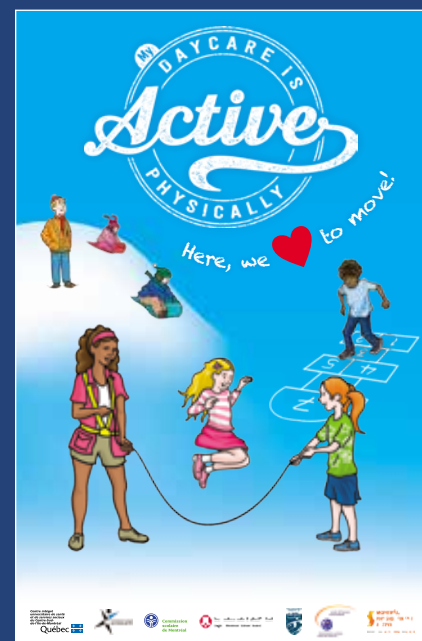
For many elementary children in Quebec, the school daycare is a part of their daily routine. On average, school-aged children spend about 20 to 25 hours per week in a daycare service. Lester B. Pearson School Board, through the use of the *My Daycare is Physically Active Project*, provides training to daycare technicians, educators and student supervisors, so they can do their part in helping children to become physically literate. The daycare staff participate in six workshops covering various topics related to physical activity. These workshops emphasize the importance of being physically active on a daily basis.

The first workshop introduces the project and stresses the importance of daily physical activity and the impact that daycare staff can

have in helping children adopt and maintain a physically active lifestyle. In this workshop, the consequences of screen time are presented, as well as the impact that physical activity has on the overall development of children. Reasons as to why children may not be physically active are also discussed. The daycare personnel are then asked to review their current practices and program to see where they can implement or increase the opportunities for more movement while the children are in their care.

Two of the six workshops, *Safely and Effectively Animating Physical Activities Part I and Part II*, are done in collaboration with physical education teachers. These workshops are presented in this manner based on the belief that the physical education teacher is the expert in his or her respective school when it comes to modelling appropriate physical movements to avoid accidents and incidents while being physically active.

Part I of the workshop sets the foundation of animating physical activities. This workshop covers planning, preparation, welcoming children, animating an activity, and how to evaluate an activity once it is done. Part II



Using the *My Daycare is Physically Active Project*, Lester B. Pearson School Board trains daycare technicians, educators, and student supervisors to do their part in helping children become physically literate.

The project was developed by five school boards on the island of Montreal, including Lester B. Pearson, in collaboration with the Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de service sociaux du Centre-Sud-de-l'île-de-Montreal.

covers animating physical activities in both large and limited spaces.

One of the workshops touches on the importance and the need for daycare educators to schedule physical activities in their monthly, weekly, and daily schedules. It focuses on how they can optimize the time spent on the practice of physical activities. It also encourages daycare educators to become familiar with the various resources that would assist them when scheduling physical activities.

Another workshop looks at implementing principles that ensure guided and adequate supervision of children during physical activities. The last workshop provides daycare educators with information and tools to better understand which steps to take to include children with special needs in physical activities.

The training that daycare staff receives helps them to move away from focusing on one specialized sport and toward offering a broad range of movement skills. The workshops are practical and hands-on. Participation in the activities is highly encouraged to ensure the information and knowledge they receive is transferred and applied. At the end of each workshop, the daycare staff receives tools they can use to

enhance the experience of children when being physically active.

The overall objective is to train daycare educators to get involved with helping children create a love for movement, while having fun doing a wide range of activities. The message is clear: whether indoor or outdoor, in winter or summer, individually or in groups, all forms of activities are encouraged.

To date, over a dozen daycares are enrolled in the project. The impact has been successful: more children and daycare educators have increased their engagement and commitment to being physically active. The feedback from parents has been overwhelmingly positive. The collaboration and sharing of information between administrators, physical education teachers, and daycare staff has greatly increased.

Lester B. Pearson daycares are proud to be doing their part in providing children with opportunities to play games and to be physically active. The children are now engaged in activities that allow them to develop fundamental movement skills such as running, kicking, and throwing. The aim is that these skills will be transferred from physical activities to everyday life.

As the saying goes, "It takes a village to raise a child," and Lester B. Pearson

Daycares are doing their part to help children be physically active. ○

*Rena Walters is a Project Development Officer at Lester B. Pearson School Board in Quebec. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Child Studies.*

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# How Districts Influence Student Success and Well-Being



## Through a Quality Strategic Plan Process

By Catherine McCullough, CMCLeadership

A quality strategic plan in a school system provides a sense of direction for the organization. When a plan is established, it functions as a roadmap for trustees and senior staff and is a framework for the allocation of the boards' resources aligned to its strategic priorities and measurable goals. A quality strategic plan for a school district prioritizes student achievement and well-being.

This case study will describe how two large school systems in the province of Ontario, Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) and York Region District School Board (YRDSB), successfully set the direction for their organization through the creation of a Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP), leveraging the practices outlined in the *Strong Districts and Their Leadership* research.

### What is the Strong Districts research?

*Strong Districts & Their Leadership* (2013) is a paper that was commissioned by the Council of Ontario Directors of Education and the Institute for Education Leadership.

Written by Kenneth Leithwood, it outlines the nine characteristics of strong districts and the specific leadership practices necessary to develop these characteristics. The strategic planning process offers many opportunities for boards that are developing their plan to demonstrate these leadership practices and make these characteristics seen, felt, and heard.

### Strong District research in strategic planning

One particular focus in this case study was the emphasis on one of the nine strong districts characteristics defined in the research, "establishing a broadly shared mission, vision, and goals founded on ambitious images of the educated person."

This characteristic describes how strong districts:

- Consult extensively about district directions as part of the strategic plan process;
- Spend sufficient time to ensure the mission, vision, and goals of the system are widely known, understood, and shared by all members of their organizations;
- Articulate, demonstrate, and model the system goals, priorities, and values to staff when visiting schools; and

- Embed district directions in improvement plans, principal meetings, and other leader-initiated interactions.

### Thames Valley District School Board

The TVDSB serves an area over 7,000 square-kilometres and serves 77,000 students in rural and urban communities.

In the fall of 2017, TVDSB began the process to revise its strategic plan. A strategic planning committee was formed, and its first task was to advance the understanding about the *Strong District and Their Leadership* practices, and, more specifically, quality governance practices and characteristics of an effective strategic planning approach.

Through a facilitated process, strategic priorities were drafted and extensive consultation on how to best achieve these priorities was conducted in the rural and urban communities of the Board. Trustees and school teams took the lead at these events to ensure staff and stakeholders were invited, engaged, and consulted.

TVDSB priorities and goals were informed by what they heard through their consultation and through examining their achievement and student data. The committee then crafted



priorities and goals in language that is clear and specific to TVDSB. Their goals aligned to the three priorities of improving student achievement and well-being, building relationships, and providing equitable and inclusive learning and working environments:

**1. Relationships:** We build positive relationships with all members of our education community to foster an engaged and inclusive board culture.

» **Goals:**

- i. Students, families, and staff are welcomed, respected, and valued as partners;
- ii. Promote and build connections to foster mutually respectful communication among students, families, staff, and the broader community; and
- iii. Create opportunities for collaboration and partnerships.

**2. Equity and Diversity:** We provide an equitable and inclusive environment that champions learning opportunities for all.

» **Goals:**

- i. Create opportunities for equitable access to programs and services for students;
- ii. Students and all partners feel heard, valued, and supported; and
- iii. Programs and services embrace the culture and diversity of students and all partners.

**3. Achievement and Well-Being:** We engage in innovative learning experiences that promote excellence in student achievement and well-being.

» **Goals:**

- i. More students demonstrate growth and achieve student learning outcomes with a specific focus on numeracy and literacy;
- ii. Staff will demonstrate excellence in instructional practices; and
- iii. Enhance the safety and well-being of students and staff.

## York Region District School Board

York Region District School Board, with a population of over 123,000 students is one of the most diverse boards in the province. Approximately 48 per cent of students in this district have a first language other than English or French.

The need for a revised focus to meet the diverse needs of the region prompted the Board to revise the MYSP. The Board's process was

similar to TVDSB's approach; however, consultation was through Town Halls held across the region with translation services provided. Over 2,000 responses were received from families, staff, and community members in less than a two-month timeframe. In addition, the Board provided access to an online survey and specific focus groups were conducted using a process called consultation in a box.

The Board's focus was on raising the achievement of students who were underserved and underperforming. York Region's belief was when they focus on raising the achievement of students who are under-achieving at their potential, all students will benefit. This Board, however, added an additional priority and subsequent goals of *ethical leadership*. This came from the desire heard through their process to foster a collective understanding of ethical leadership and enhance student voice.

Similar to TVDSB, YRDSB honoured the input received and examined its own student achievement and well-being data. Over the next four years, the Board will focus on the following strategic priorities and goals:

## 1. Foster Well-Being and Mental Health:

We create safe, healthy, and inclusive learning and working environments.

» **Goal:**

- i. Build safe and inclusive learning and working environments where students and staff feel they matter and belong.

## 2. Champion Equity and Inclusivity:

We develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to remove barriers in support of all learners.

» **Goals:**

- i. Build a collective understanding of the ongoing impact of colonialism on Indigenous communities, anti-oppression, and culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy (CRRP); and
- ii. Provide comprehensive math programs that reflect students' identities and lived experiences, needs, and interests.

## 3. Build Collaborative Relationships:

We build trusting relationships based on respectful and responsive communication.



*In York Region District School Board's strategic plan, student success centres on fostering well-being and mental health, building collaborative relationships, championing equality and inclusivity, and empowering ethical leadership.*

» **Goal:**

- i. Build trust and collaborative relationships with students, families, and staff through respectful and responsive communication focused on shared solutions.

**4. Empower Ethical Leadership:** We lead ethically by focusing on students and upholding our values.

» **Goals:**

- i. Elevate student voice in learning, assessment, and decision-making; and
- ii. Build a collective understanding of ethical leadership.

**Evaluating and monitoring the plan is critical to the success of the process**

Both Directors of Education worked collaboratively with their Board research team and the senior team to develop an evaluation framework or operational plan that will focus on concrete plans of action. This is the most important step in the process. They did this by setting clear and specific parameters of what will be accomplished, along with metrics for monitoring and evaluating their progress in achieving these goals.

The goals established by the districts were established based on the unique needs of their systems, however, both districts consistently identified that student achievement was not the only priority; student well-being was equally so.

Both districts began their process by examining the *Strong Districts and Their Leadership* research leadership practices. Both school districts spent considerable time and effort to ensure the mission, vision, and goals of the system were widely discussed during the consultation process, and it is their intent to keep this at the forefront throughout the implementation phase.

Both school districts are fully committed to monitoring their school districts goals with their board of trustees and are ensuring their resources and supports provided to schools are aligned to the priorities and goals established.

**Conclusion**

Thames Valley District School Board and York Region District School Board successfully engaged trustees and a dedicated leadership team who had a clear focus of putting student success and well-being at the forefront in their strategic plan process.

Creating a strong MYSP requires a thoughtful examination of the research,

careful planning at every step, and a framework of shared ownership by keeping the priority on making a difference to the students we serve. ○

*Catherine McCullough, MEd, ACC, is CEO of CMCLeadership. She is an expert in the use of emotional intelligence and change management strategies to achieve success in relationships that drive positive results. In addition to facilitating strategic planning and a range of leadership engagements, Catherine works with Dr. Kenneth Leithwood, leveraging research entitled Strong Districts and their Leadership.*

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# Leading Toward What Matters Most:

## Accompanying Principals on the Search for Their Moxie

By Julie Hobbs, Carol Marriott and Diane Wood, Assisting School Systems in Educational Transformation

**I**magine it is late August, and a school team, focusing on its vision to educate the whole child, takes stock of where they are in meeting the needs of the students in their school. Each staff member brainstorms on Post-it Notes, using the headings What Works Well (WWW), Even Better If (EBI) and Time to Change (TTC). What they find, once they sort and categorize their thoughts, is that most of what is working well has to do with the culture, the sports program, the activities of the school, and the peripherals.

There are fewer comments in the WWW category about the actual teaching and learning that goes on in the classroom. As is common to many schools across Quebec, the school team realizes their strengths do not always lie in teaching and learning in the classroom. They begin to reflect on their classroom practices and reconsider a fundamental truth: to bring about growth and school success, it is crucial to focus on the teacher-student connection and classroom practices that target student learning in a very visible way.<sup>4,9</sup>

To realize this vision, strong leadership is required.

That principals actually see themselves as pedagogical and learning leaders who work collaboratively with teachers in supporting student learning is not necessarily a foregone conclusion. School administrators face a myriad of management responsibilities and finding the time to learn together with their staff and give

support to their teachers beyond the evaluative role is challenging. Coupled with hesitancy on the part of some to take their place as learning leaders, this results in the important aspect of the principal's role being shunted to the bottom of the list.

Assuming this role becomes easier when there is support provided to school leaders in reflecting on the needs and practices in their schools. For Quebec's English schools, this support came in the form of a team of three retired school and school board

administrators, who didn't quite get the point of the memo on retirement.

For nine-and-a-half years, we three, under the acronym, ASSET (Assisting School Systems in Educational Transformation), were privileged to be engaged by the Directors General of the English school boards to coach and mentor school principals and vice-principals in the English school board network.

We, the ASSET team became "thinking partners" to these leaders<sup>7</sup> as they began to work with their school success plans and school

*"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." – John Quincy Adams*



*The ASSET team and a group of Principals exchange ideas and strategies for reaching more students through evidence-based approaches and discuss how to distribute leadership to other staff members.*

improvement initiatives. Helping principals reflect on their roles as pedagogical leaders took several forms. These included building professional learning opportunities that focused on practices such as active learning,<sup>3</sup> differentiation (Fogarty and Pete, 2005), visible learning,<sup>4</sup> response to intervention,<sup>1</sup> restorative justice,<sup>10</sup> and universal design for learning.<sup>6</sup> Exchanges between schools and boards were organized to enable principals and staff members to observe these promising practices and share ideas with colleagues from the host schools.

Book studies allowed school teams to reflect in depth on a particular topic, like Formative Classroom Walkthroughs.<sup>8</sup> As we lived the experience of learning together, principals began to ease into assuming the lead role, making time for teachers to meet, learn, and plan together. They began to take the lead in choosing a particular framework or approach to learning and school organization, and to working with staff members as a team in building the approach into classroom practice.

One principal said, “[ASSET] helped create more inclusive schools, stronger pedagogues, ultimately making the Anglophone

community schools stronger. This is something vital for many communities in our province to survive and thrive.”

Giving principals permission to be learners along with their staff members and students, instead of restricting their actions to the traditional roles of school authority and building manager, helped several principals muster their inner strength to take on the challenge of turning their schools into stronger and more positive learning environments.

Helping these leaders gather the evidence and the tools they needed to begin this journey went a long way in supporting them, as well. Exposing them to the ASSET members’ enthusiasm for the possibilities of reaching more students through evidence-based approaches helped ignite the fire. Being coached to distribute their leadership to other staff members built trust, made the task possible, and brought together teachers and other staff as part of a team with a mission. These were the roles ASSET played in working with ‘their’ principals. It didn’t really matter what the framework was, so long as it included building on the following elements:

- Clear pedagogical goals;
- Staff consensus around those goals;
- Tools for teachers to achieve the goals; and
- School principals immersing themselves as leaders in the professional development in reaching those goals.<sup>2</sup>

Most important was the change in thinking and mindset, which came about through principals developing sufficient self-confidence to take the first step and risk putting themselves out there in front of their staff. This is when the principals found their moxie!

When the focus shifted to what matters most—student learning and success—that was a huge step. The next step was understanding that trial and error and making mistakes were legitimate parts of the learning process and modeled learning for both teachers and students.

Above all, the ASSET teams believes the support we modelled to principals has been transferred to the principals themselves. There is evidence that principals, one by one, now see their role as “coach” to their teachers,<sup>5</sup> and they “carefully balance high expectations with robust supports,”



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directing resources to areas that most impact student learning and provide collaboration time and non-judgmental feedback. Most importantly, they are “supporting teachers as professionals and caring about them as individuals.”

If we can leave the ASSET project with this legacy to principals within the province, then we will finally be able to respond to that memo on retirement. ○

*Julie Hobbs is a retired Assistant Director General and Distinguished Member of the Order of Excellence in Education (Québec, 2018). She consults with several school boards in Quebec, including a First Nations community, on school improvement.*

*Carol Marriott is a retired high school principal and Reader's Digest Leadership in Education Awards National Leader. She is an Education Consultant, an animator of mentoring programs, and an Adjunct Professor in McGill University's Educational Leadership program.*

*Diane Wood is a retired school principal and Canadian Outstanding Principal 2005. She is currently an independent Education Consultant and Quebec's Manager for the Learning Partnership's Welcome to Kindergarten program.*

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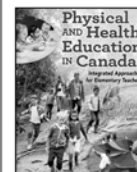
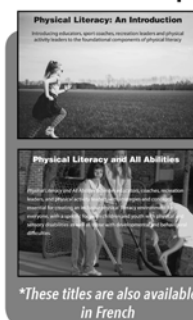


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### Teacher Professional Development

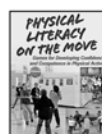
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\*These titles are also available in French

### Quality Classroom Resources



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