

## **Tracking Success (2017-2018)**

### **Final Report**

#### **Project Description**

The Lord Aylmer Data team has worked towards the goal laid out by the initial project proposal, with a more specific focus.

After our initial examination of all available data, our team concentrated its effort on reading success. Identifying the needs of our students as readers, and the related best practices to support them, could potentially have a large overall impact on their learning in all subject areas. Skills such comprehension strategies, fluency and vocabulary development are essential not only in ELA and French, but are transferable and are applied when reading in areas of math, social studies and sciences.

BAS, GB+, and final ELA and French exams were determined to be measurable indicators of student literacy. Our initial analysis of these provided a partial picture of where in reading our students were succeeding, and which skills presented more challenges. It was apparent students needed support in commonly challenging areas, such as thinking beyond a text, as well as increased fluency.

In order to get a more accurate snapshot, gathering additional data was required. A successful tool was a simple anecdotal survey, asking teachers to describe their students' strengths and challenges. This helped us create a baseline of current student work. Specifics were given about readers in all quadrants, from "proficient" (85%+) to those classified as "intervention required" (0-49%). In addition, teachers provided details on what teaching strategies were currently being applied in reading instruction, as well as areas they'd like further professional development. Comments were compiled, and commonalities were found by cycle. This proved an effective way to gauge what actions could be next taken to most effectively move our readers forward. A professional development plan was then created. Several key areas and topics for our staff to explore were identified; some are applicable to all levels, while some are specific to individual cycles. In addition, a list of suggested materials for purchase was made. The areas best addressed by a WQSB ELA or French consultant were also identified.

After the suggested Professional development's implementation, scores as well as anecdotal data will be recollected to judge its effect.

## **Project Goals**

The goals of this project were partially met, particularly in scope. The initial project included broader subject areas, including writing and mathematics. A narrower focus enabled our team to make the most effective use of our time, as well as target what we consider an essential area of student learning.

Timing of the project has also been modified. Additional time will be required to assess the benefits of our work. It will be after our professional development's implementation that potential gains can be assessed. While the overall time line is longer than initially suggested, this longer view is important in order to assess any potential student improvement.

While less data was tracked than initially planned, we feel these changes helped us ensure the data we did track and actions taken were both manageable and meaningful.

## **Project Outcomes for the participating teachers**

The analysis of our student's reading allowed the teachers involved to develop an understanding of students across the spectrum of levels, from cycle one to three. The importance of understanding the larger progression of reading development is often mentioned, as well as the link between each consecutive grade. We know as a staff we can pick the most effective approaches in reading instruction, and set more precise student goals, if we understand a student's previous development and future expectations. This project helped us continue on towards that goal.

In more specific terms, the teachers involved in this project got to hear specific needs and interests of their colleagues. This information can help us maximize professional discussions, and help in informal and structured co-planning.

## **Reinvestment and the benefit to the educational community at large**

Wide benefit could be drawn from the structure of our PD plan. Identifying whole school and level specific needs, (though quantitative data and teacher feedback), was an efficient way to establish priorities. Because our topics for PD were chosen by looking at both teacher feedback *and* student data, they encourage professional dialogue on meaningful areas. This promotes a culture of professional sharing, where teachers have ownership over the areas explored.