



The STAATION: Strategies for Teaching Academics, Advance Transitions, Independence and Organizational Needs project at Sherbrooke Elementary School was carried out as planned during the 2018-19 school year. This project has been extremely successful and has been recognized as a necessary service in our school worth investing in. Our STAATION now provides support to roughly 70 students (from Kindergarten to grade 6) at various times of the school day during a 5-day cycle. There is a multitude of teachers, HSAs and SETs involved in the STAATION and the students who frequent this resource. Most of these professionals have been invested team members with the PDIG, however, many others have been added to assist in the continued success of the STAATION's operations due to the increasing number of students receiving services.

There were very ambitious goals that were set in order to meet the needs of extremely diverse and specific students experiencing serious difficulties in our school. These students struggle to find success and appropriate resources due to their individual needs and the limited resources/services in the school. This is an issue that most inclusive schools in our English Educational Community also struggle with for diverse reasons.

The STAATION was created in a very centralized but vacant location in our elementary school. It is located across a hallway from our existing resource rooms and near a school entrance to facilitate students getting off the bus in the morning and entering the school. This entrance is easily accessible, but rarely used, so it provided a quieter check-in for certain students who used the STAATION as a home base. This entry into the school in the morning allowed these students to avoid the busy hallways, start the morning with a calming routine, look at visual schedules for the day, etc.. These accommodations were identified and organized for specific students with distinct learning profiles. Our project began with creating a tool that could be used by teachers and staff members to identify at-risk and struggling students who might benefit from various services that had previously been offered in our school's *Boxcar room*. This service was set up during the 2017-18 school year to offer independent work centers with individualized work systems. The objectives initiated by this service were to build autonomy in students who often relied heavily on one-to-one aid support and students who lacked the ability to remain full time in a classroom setting throughout the day. There were numerous activities that were initiated to provide opportunities in English, French, Math, fine motor development, science, art, cooperative turn-taking games, etc. The Boxcar room would remain an important service for numerous students but would move into the STAATION in order to centralize our resources and better support the students and support staff/teachers.

The STAATION was initially set up after uncounted hours moving furniture, designing/printing and laminating initial basic work systems and organizational supports. As our team members and teaching staff met, we identified individual and large scale needs. We were able to build structured routines and develop individualized work systems to support students during their assigned time in the STAATION. This goal was extremely ambitious and proved very time-consuming. The creation of a bank of objects, pictograms, and words to support students' individual communication needs for schedules and work systems took much longer than anticipated, but are a valuable resource for our entire school. These visual resources and work systems can also be used to support the classroom. This allows students to transfer many of the organizational, academic and independent work skills targetted in the STAATION. This arduous task will hopefully prevent other teachers and support staff from recreating tedious planning. The use of these visuals would also provide more consistency for these students who need this support from year to year, and from one teacher to another.

The STAATION is set up to provide diverse learning opportunities to numerous students in one location through flexible seating and personalized academic/sensory centers. Our project's team members spent the majority of our time creating literacy, math, art, and technology activities/tasks to support student learning. There were also countless hours spent creating choice break activities, yoga directives, carpet games, sensory bins, and light table tasks (to name only a few). Small groups also use the STAATION throughout the cycle week, to meet with students and target needs such as social-emotional learning, self-regulation discussions, self-regulation strategy building, basic reading skills, AAC communication, expressive/receptive oral language development, and more. Sensory breaks are also scheduled in the STAATION for some students that need additional support (or particular awareness) throughout their day. Several students are also supported by a check-out routine. This allows these students to avoid the busy hallways at the end of the day, provide a sensory break before buses/daycare, and support students with visuals and additional tools for end of day transitions.

Overall, the project has exceeded our expectations. We have seen a decrease in individual crisis' and outbursts and we have been able to better meet the needs of various students while also supporting their teachers. Students that attend the STAATION look forward to this time in their day. When introducing students to the STAATION and Boxcar room (within the STAATION) there were set instructions with pictos and word descriptions to support each student and their transitions throughout their work system. It was crucial that there were enough assigned teachers and/or support staff in place at specific times to help students follow their schedules and allow for support to practice; so that students could learn their routines and successfully transition between activities. Teachers and support staff were encouraged to use ABC tracking sheets (Antecedent/Behavior/Consequence) to note individual (undesirable/changeable) behaviors that might have been the result of a specific or recurrent activity/antecedent that could be adapted or modified to cause a more favorable outcome. Timers were always used to announce the indication of transition, pictos were almost always

used to visually show what was next and zones of regulation were promoted every time students entered and left the STAATION. Students with high needs are expressing their emotions and using self-regulation strategies more often.

We have created a safe space where students can work on their strengths and receive explicit support related to their needs. Students that have been known to run away from the classroom setting now run to the STAATION. We have seen an increase in motivation to complete work and a decrease in office referrals. We also recognize that the STAATION has been very beneficial in supporting students who are experiencing difficulties due to outside factors, emotional distress or fatigue. We became increasingly aware that by adding STAATION time to at-risk students' regular schedule would allow them to experience an increase in success during these unforeseen times due to the stability that their routines had already established and practiced throughout the year. Furthermore many students now see the STAATION as a safe space to discuss important issues with trusted adults.

There were challenges of course throughout the project. One of our first was scheduling students to best meet their needs with respect to the classroom schedules. We feel that this will always be a difficult task due to the changing natures of their schedules as they progress throughout the grade levels. However, we can recognize problematic or critical times for our students and provide an alternative area for them. We have been able to show teachers in our school the importance of having visible schedules (for all students) and that sensory breaks are necessary preventatives in order to avoid certain interventions with so many students. These students often struggle to be productive or cooperative in their classroom setting for one reason or another but have shown growth and motivation due to their time in the STAATION. There were also challenges in ensuring that students (who do not function well together) are not in the STAATION at the same time. There were a few changes to students' schedules throughout the year, to avoid conflicts or difficulties with behaviors. Finding ways to safely include gross motor activities has also been challenging due to the limited space and structure of the room. We recognize that our goals for our STAATION are very ambitious and that there will always be individual needs that might not be met within the structure of our services.

We believe that there have been many gains in our own understanding of meeting varying student needs and the structures used to support our students who have ASD and other high needs. We are able to better recognize their areas of need, provide them with sustained support and offer tasks/activities to the practice of necessary skills. Furthermore, we are better able to track their behavior and progress. The STAATION has helped to centralize many of the resources available to teachers and support staff. We have created valuable tools and materials that specifically target objectives set for Individual Education Plans. Teachers and support staff are welcome to use or borrow any of the resources we have developed to further support intervention activities and classroom instruction.

We strongly believe that every school would benefit from the creation of a STAATION or their own version of a "caring support center". While each school will have specific and

individual needs, the systems and support services we have organized or developed can be universally established in any educational setting. It is important to recognize that extra funds, time and materials are essential to the set up of a project like this. We were very lucky to have had the release time and school-wide support to generate, gather and purchase the materials that are used in the STAATION. We look forward to continuing the development of resources, and we remain committed to this project in the 2019-2020 school year in order to extend even more support to Sherbrooke Elementary School students.

