

2022-23 Annual School Development Report



It is the vision of St. James' Elementary that all students entrusted to our care will develop as well-rounded individuals who are able to connect with themselves, their world and others to become respectful citizens.

Strategic Issue: Instructional Practice

How did you know this was a Strategic Issue? What evidence did you have?

Using our internal data collection for reading, writing and spelling we noticed:

- Concerns with reading levels across the grades, which will affect spelling and writing, we had 76 students in Grades 1-6 who were reading significantly below grade level and required RTLs or IEPs for Literacy
- Comprehension is a concern across the grades, especially higher grades...we have changed the “cheat sheet” to address that concern, part of the reason the 46 students have RTLs is attributed to inadequate comprehension of reading material/assessments
- Issues with spelling across the grades reported anecdotally and with a spelling inventory completed in September and May
- Teachers, mainly Grades 1-6, sought out the RS’s support, searching for ways to best meet the needs of their learners re literacy
- Student responses to various learning activities showed a deficiency in their ability to be creative and think critically when we applied the 6 Global Competencies For Deep Learning; some are able to venture beyond basic knowledge and seek knowledge beyond the curriculum but most either can’t or do not want to
- Students need to understand how they can impact the world locally and more widely - they need deeper and more varied background knowledge because they are not representing this in their work and discussions to the degree we imagine they should

Year End Summary of Progress. What evidence do you have to support this progress?

- Improvements noted in spelling inventory at year end at all grade levels, especially in Grades 1-3 where we implemented the Heggerty Approach to Phonemic Awareness.
- Students’ reading levels improved especially in Grades 1-3 where we implemented the Heggerty Approach to Phonemic Awareness and in Grades 4-6 because of the intensive reading strategies that were taught by Ms. Parsons, IRT, in the small group reading programs; Ms. Parsons worked with 72 students this year where the final results saw 70 of them

move anywhere from 2-10 levels in their reading fluency and comprehension.

- RS mentored Grade 6 teachers in CRAFT and they continued without her once their time with her was up. Others that she mentored didn't continue the practice without her.
- The majority of our teachers profess they are more comfortable and confident in teaching spelling strategies; time is used more efficiently in teaching word work *in small guided groups*.
- Students developed stronger comprehension of what was read, indicated by increased reading scores.
- Some higher order cognitive processes were evident within our classrooms' discussions and work products; Grade 3s, 5s and 6s completed some in depth projects that they presented to the school/families.
- Teachers collaborated to prepare and execute a cross-disciplinary approach for Social Sciences in Grades 2,3 & 6
- Gradual release of responsibility was noted in some areas but there is much work to do for this to become a reality overall; this is a teacher focus rather than a student focus.
- Students reported increased engagement (PMR data in September)
- Review 360 reports indicated a decrease in relationship skills at a glance (264 incidents in June 2023 vs. 60 in June 2022). Further investigation revealed 10 students with more than 1 incident in 2022 vs. 19 students with more than 1 in 2023.
- The 7 staff members involved in the staff book club discussed the ideas and reflected on practices related to David Trantor's The Third Path. Four of the members saw Trantor in person at the LIFT Conference in September and were intrigued by his presentation and theories.
- Several teachers were mentored by their peers in ways to innovate or change practices to become more effective and to improve learning opportunities for students (craft, cafe, afternoon block, sharing students for interventions on specific learning goals)

Next Steps:

- **Continue focus on School Development Action Plan in this same area**
- **Seek further strategies for improving reading skills vis a vis comprehension especially (Using ReadWorks in elementary classes; focus on thematic topics for Primary; Heggerty Phonemic Awareness strategies/program)**
- **RS continues to mentor teachers in CAFE and CRAFT strategies for Literacy Blocks**

- Increase use of STEAM room and DREAM rooms as alternate learning environments and to enhance technology skills/ GAFE advancement, creative and critical thinking
- Establishment of a Learning Centre to help prepare students for learning via development of executive functioning skills and increasing background knowledge that addresses learning gaps
- SJE Staff Book Club continues with the book Shifting the Balance
- Students need to understand how they can impact the world locally and more widely - they need deeper and more varied background knowledge to carry out service projects in the community and beyond
- Increased implementation of guided word work across all grade levels to develop and improve spelling and writing skills
- The Heggerty program will be implemented in all primary classrooms K-3 to increase phonemic awareness; Heggerty program will also be introduced to Grade 4 classes and IRTs
- Afternoon Block in primary and curriculum integration 4-6 will be further developed and implemented to build on cross-curricular integration and compacting
- Promote more community involvement in the school (bring community into school).. ie career week, indigenous group presentations, musicians, Ocean's Day(DFO), CYN, MUN, Qualipu, etc
- Family Literacy day and Math night (Covid has taken this away from us, lets bring it back)

Strategic Issue/ Goal: Wellness & Positive Relationships

How did you know this was a Strategic Issue? What evidence did you have?

Our PMF data for 2021-22 indicated that a response is needed in these areas:

- representing diversity of students culturally and in their interests, abilities and needs
- responding appropriately to the aftermath/trauma of a student melt-down or severe physical outburst of behavior (perceived violence)
- providing opportunities for students to learn and practice social skills

- involving parents more in the day to day learning so they fully understand how/why we do what we do; defining their roles in learning
- developing strong partnerships with families and outside agencies to develop and promote resiliency

Year end Summary of Progress. What evidence do you have to support this progress?

- PMF data increased in satisfaction re diversity practices (September)
- The “Calming Spot” is frequented by students regularly
- Resumption of Book Buddies and other volunteer opportunities for students to learn and practice social skills
- PMF data reports that families see improvements in student supports and belonging
- Very successful Career Week with community partners
- Moose Hide campaign- Lockie and Shonna are investigating and have ordered the moose hide for the whole school
- Indigenous Week in June - activities that honor this culture and its traditions
- Pride Day Walk with SJRH
- Monthly school wide activity afternoon with cross-grade level groups (6 times this year since December)
- Greater attendance at morning/after school sports
- Students write persuasive letters asking for activities that interest them
- PMF data reports that families see improvements in student supports and belonging
- We see more families attending presentations during the school day more frequently
- The volunteer base for during the day is not numerous but has increased somewhat
- Admin and GC engaged in professional learning together to assist with Mental Health support via the Red Cross & Western Health partnership since Hurricane Fiona
- GC has had several opportunities for PL this year that deal with trauma and suicide prevention/recognition of signs, strategies, etc
- The 7 staff members involved in the Book Club are meeting to discuss the ideas and planning together to implement innovations to their current practices
- Other teachers become mentored by their peers in ways to innovate or change practices to become more effective and to improve social/emotional/academic learning opportunities for students
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Next Steps:

- Our students value learning and feel good about the learning strategies used here, therefore we will continue to deepen and expand our practices
- Continue the monthly school wide activities plan
- Invite staff to be members of the Book Club for Shifting the Balance
- Continue on with Heggerty and introduce it to Kindergarten, Grade 4 and IRTs
- Take the Difference Makers theme further with a return to Social and Restorative Justice Team
- Encourage teachers to build on math, science and technology standards as well as SEL in their UDL practices
- Book buddies for ALL grades

- **The families report that they are not engaged at the school level very much but do not report major barriers to that engagement.**
 - Enter a project that will contribute to the community and relational strength of the school and the families
 - We will continue to email, text and post on our school Facebook page any news, reminders, events, celebrations or other notable items
 - We returned to in-school conferences and other events such as Christmas concerts and curriculum presentations
 - We will try to re-introduce some of our more popular family evenings related to Literacy and Numeracy
 - Opportunities for our minority students to share their cultural practices
 - The families report positively that they support their students' learning so we will continue to promote this support by encouraging them to continue the Math take-home practice games, take home reading and access their child's Google Classroom often to stay aligned with current teacher expectations for achieving outcomes