

2013

# School Effectiveness Framework

A support for school improvement and student success



# K-12

support every child  
reach every student

 Ontario



Ministry of Education

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August, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

At the time of the release of the *K-12 School Effectiveness Framework, 2010*, we promised that the resource would be reviewed and refined, following a two year implementation period and based on feedback from educators across the province. We have been listening to you. You will find that this revised version supports a clear focus on implementation in schools and boards.

During the updating of the resource, many voices and effective practices have been incorporated into the content. As you know, the 2010 resource was intended to identify evidence-based indicators of successful practices in effective schools. The *K-12 SEF, 2013* provides opportunities for schools to continue to examine their practices, to engage in deep and purposeful conversations and to take collaborative action – for the benefit of our students and educators. School self-assessments and district processes are collaborative, collegial, equitable, and inclusive interactions. Their purpose is to continue to support strategic planning, allocation of resources and board improvement planning for student achievement.

In response to your input, the *K-12 School Effectiveness Framework (SEF), 2013* updates terminology and references and includes new learnings, policies and current research. It incorporates recommendations from an external review, and provides an expanded glossary.

Our collective success over the past ten years has taught us that we can give our students a better future when we examine our assumptions and actions deeply, and when our work is carefully aligned with research and evidence. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to improving professional practice and student learning.

We know this updated resource will support your work in schools and your board.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Jean Gallagher".

Mary Jean Gallagher  
Chief Student Achievement Officer of Ontario  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Student Achievement Division

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janine Griffore".

Janine Griffore  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
French Language, Aboriginal  
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# K–12 School Effectiveness Framework

## A support for school improvement and student success

### Assessment for, as and of Learning

- 1.1 Assessment is connected to the curriculum, collaboratively developed by educators and used to inform next steps in learning and instruction.
- 1.2 A variety of relevant and meaningful assessment data is used by students and educators to continuously monitor learning, to inform instruction and determine next steps.
- 1.3 Students and educators build a common understanding of what students are learning by identifying, sharing, and clarifying the learning goals and success criteria.
- 1.4 During learning, timely, ongoing, descriptive feedback about student progress is provided based on student actions and co-constructed success criteria.
- 1.5 Students are explicitly taught and regularly use self-assessment skills to monitor, improve and communicate their learning within the context of the Ontario curriculum and/or Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- 1.6 Assessment of learning provides relevant and meaningful evidence to evaluate the quality of student achievement at or near the end of a cycle of learning and to determine next steps.
- 1.7 Ongoing communication about learning is in place to allow students, educators and parents to monitor and support student learning.

### School and Classroom Leadership

- 2.1 Collaborative instructional leadership builds capacity to strengthen and enhance teaching and learning.
- 2.2 Processes and practices are designed to deepen understanding of the curriculum and refine instruction to improve student learning and achievement.
- 2.3 Organizational structures are coherent, flexible and respond to the needs of students.
- 2.4 Job-embedded and inquiry-based professional learning builds capacity, informs instructional practice and contributes to a culture of learning.
- 2.5 Staff, students, parents and school community promote and sustain student wellbeing and positive student behaviour in a safe, accepting, inclusive and healthy learning environment.

### Student Engagement

- 3.1 The teaching and learning environment is inclusive, promotes the intellectual engagement of all students and reflects individual student strengths, needs, learning preferences and cultural perspectives.
- 3.2 Students' stated priorities that reflect the diversity, needs and interests of the student population are embedded in School Improvement Plans (SIPs).
- 3.3 Students are partners in dialogue and discussions to inform programs and activities in the classroom and school that represent the diversity, needs and interests of the student population.
- 3.4 Students demonstrate a wide range of transferable skills such as teamwork, advocacy, leadership and global citizenship.

### Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

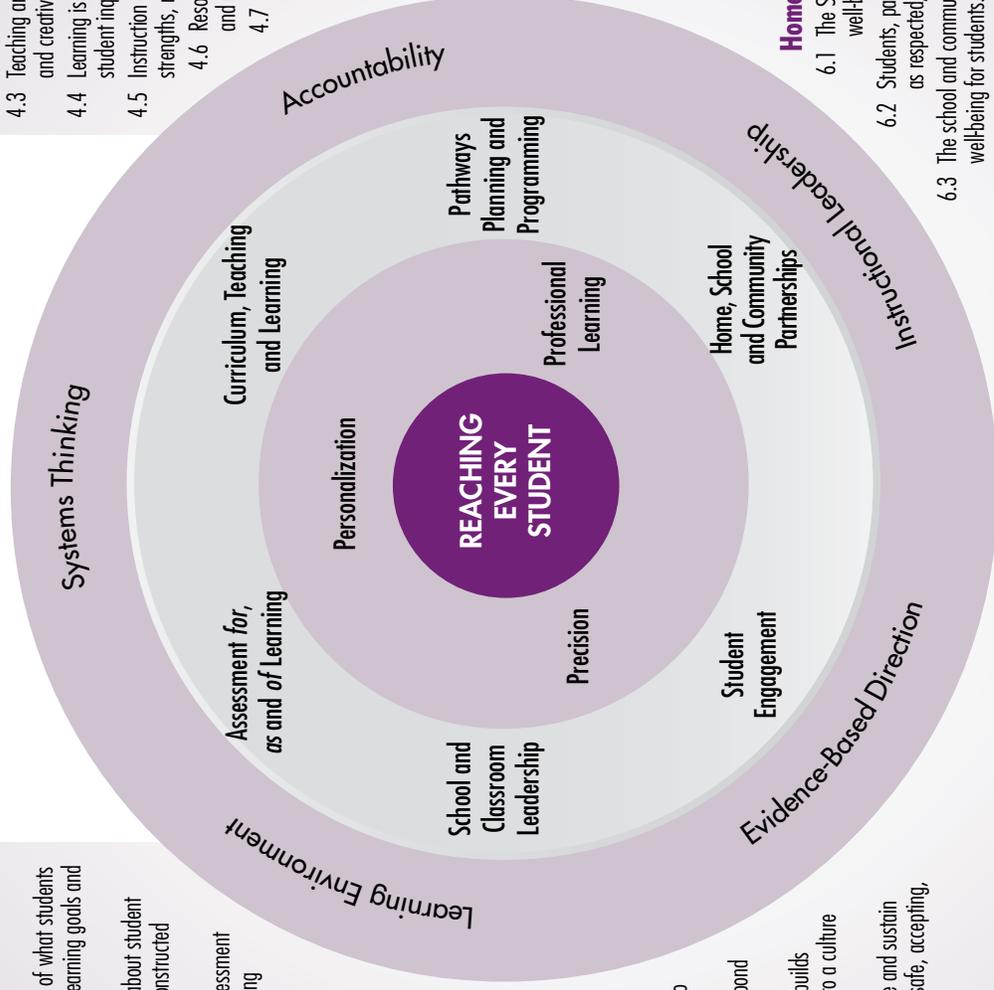
- 4.1 A culture of high expectations supports the belief that all students can learn, progress and achieve.
- 4.2 A clear emphasis on high levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy is evident throughout the school.
- 4.3 Teaching and learning in the 21st Century is collaborative, innovative and creative within a global context.
- 4.4 Learning is deepened through authentic, relevant and meaningful student inquiry.
- 4.5 Instruction and assessment are differentiated in response to student strengths, needs and prior learning.
- 4.6 Resources for students are relevant, current, accessible, inclusive and monitored for bias.
- 4.7 Timely and tiered interventions, supported by a team approach, respond to individual student learning needs, and well-being.

### Pathways Planning and Programming

- 5.1 Comprehensive education and career/life planning programs meet the learning needs, interests and aspirations of all students.
- 5.2 Opportunities for authentic learning experiences and experiential learning exist in all classrooms, schools and community programs.
- 5.3 Students, parents, families, and educators understand the full range of pathways, programs, options and supports that are available.
- 5.4 Students build on in-school and out-of-school experiences to further explore and reflect upon their interests, strengths, skills and education and career/life aspirations.

### Home, School and Community Partnerships

- 6.1 The School Council has a meaningful role in supporting learning, well-being and achievement for students.
- 6.2 Students, parents and community members are engaged and welcomed as respected, valued partners in student learning.
- 6.3 The school and community build partnerships to enhance learning opportunities and wellbeing for students.
- 6.4 Learning opportunities, resources and supports are provided to help parents support student learning and have productive ongoing parent-teacher-student conversations.



# Part 1

## Context

The School Effectiveness Framework (SEF K-12) supports the core priorities of the Ontario Ministry of Education:

- ❖ high levels of student achievement
- ❖ reduced gaps in student achievement
- ❖ increased public confidence in publicly funded education.

The SEF K-12 has been used across Ontario for the past 5 years as a key part of the school self-assessment process. The SEF K-12 is a dynamic framework that is grounded in evidence-informed practice and research. The tool supports educators in their ongoing pursuit of improved student achievement and well-being. In addition, the SEF K-12 is a tool for reflective and informed pedagogy and school improvement planning within a safe, accepting and inclusive learning environment.

This update of the 2010 School Effectiveness Framework (K-12) is a refinement that reflects feedback from educators across the province and includes references to recent research, the external evaluation of the SEF, as well as input related to current Ministry of Education initiatives, policies, processes and practices.

### **Key Purposes of the School Effectiveness Framework (K-12)**

The School Effectiveness Framework (K-12) is a self-assessment tool for schools. It serves to:

- ❖ help educators identify areas of strength, areas requiring improvement and next steps.
- ❖ act as a catalyst for shared instructional leadership through collaborative conversations focused on high levels of student learning and achievement.
- ❖ promote inquiry focused on student learning, achievement and well-being that informs goals and effective teaching and learning practices/strategies.
- ❖ support educators in determining explicit, intentional and precise improvement planning decisions which inform monitoring and feedback for continuous improvement and future planning in relation to enhanced student learning, achievement and well-being.
- ❖ maintain communication with stakeholders to foster increased public confidence about school effectiveness.
- ❖ build coherence in and across schools and districts.

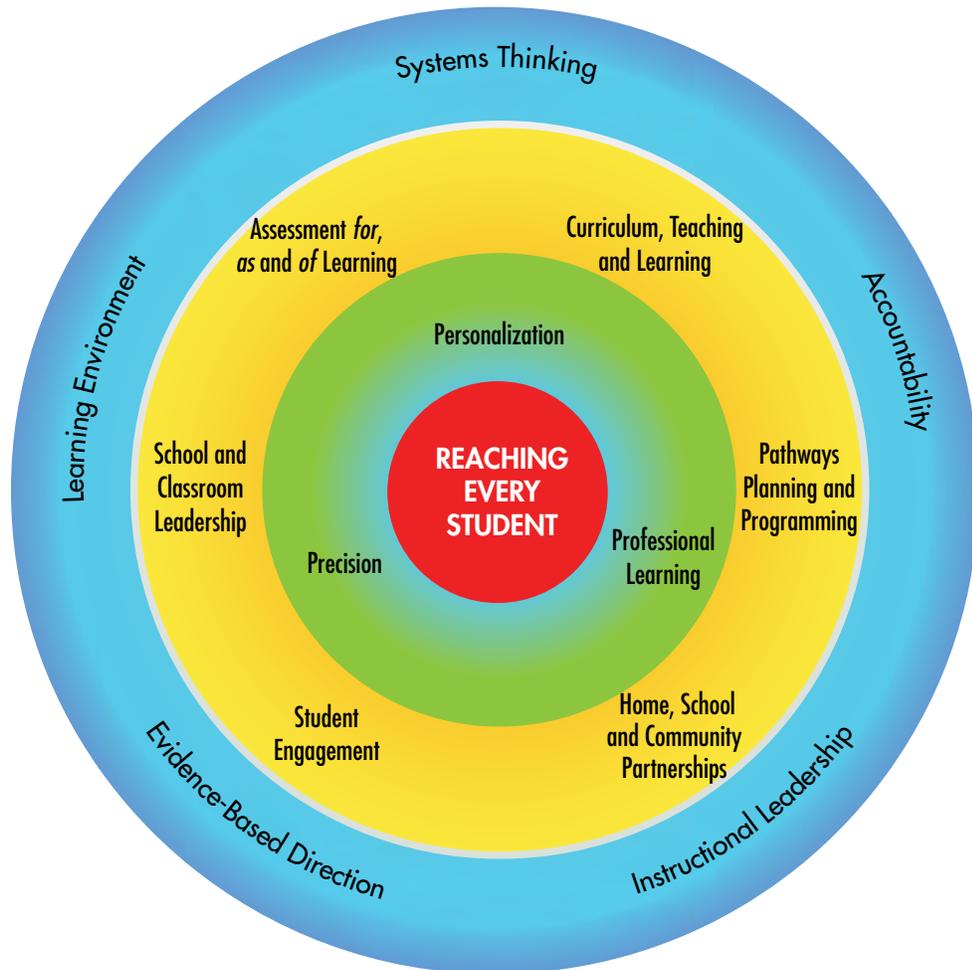
## Design of the Framework

The School Effectiveness Framework (SEF K-12) graphic outlines interdependent relationships that need to be considered if improvement for students is to happen in and through schools. It brings coherence – consistency of practice and common understandings – to the work of all educators.

Use of the SEF K-12 as a tool to support reflective practice and improvement planning enables school teams to integrate ministry initiatives and policies, enhance teaching and learning and impact growth in student achievement, engagement and well-being.

Students are the central focus of the framework. High expectations for their learning and achievement are paramount. This framework identifies practices to support educators in reaching every student and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers.

The first of the concentric circles of the SEF graphic reflects what occurs in the school. Personalization puts the student at the centre, providing assessment and instruction that are tailored to students' particular learning needs. Precision links assessment *for* and *as* learning to evidence-based instruction in order to respond to the learning needs of each student. Focused, ongoing job-embedded professional learning for educators supports the seamless weaving together of instruction and assessment.

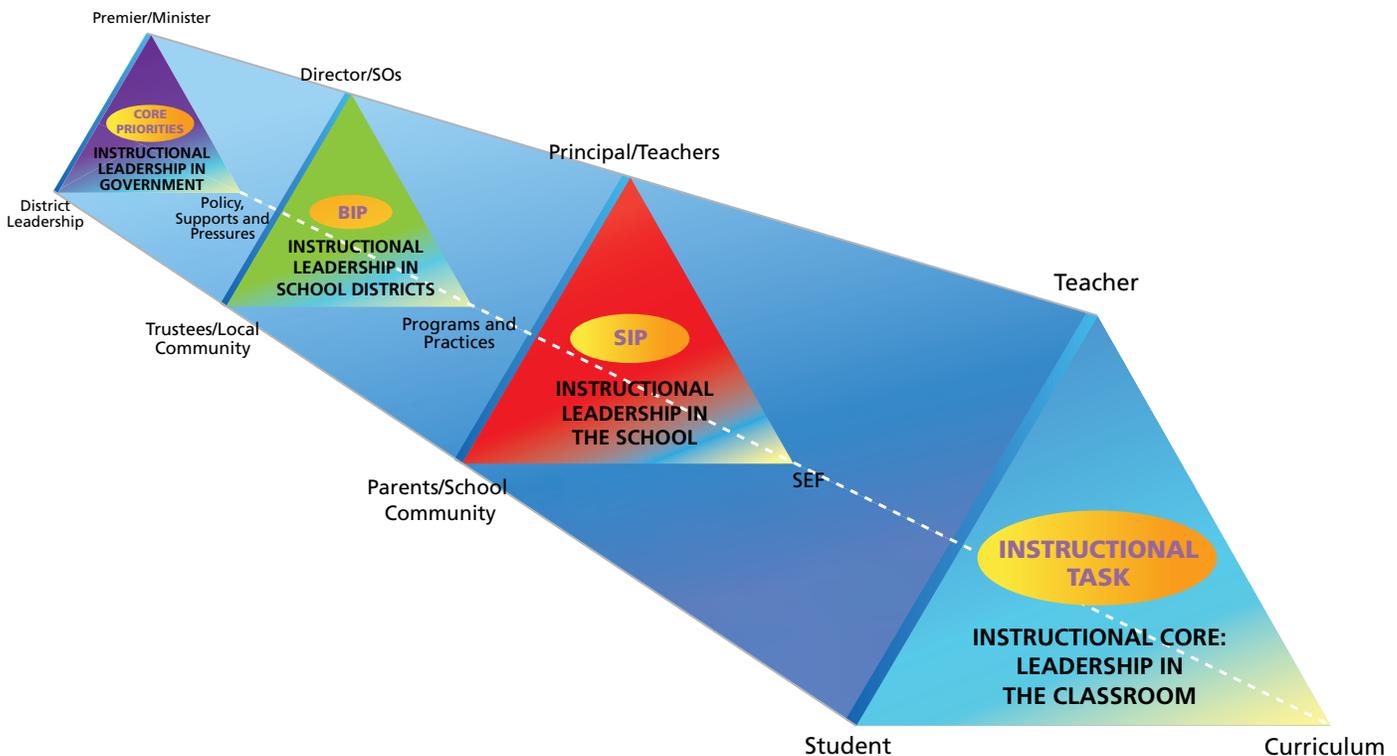


The next circle identifies the six components of the SEF that inform instructional practice, programming and professional learning and lead to focused instruction and assessment for each student. A number of effective practice indicators and samples of evidence are included in the document.

The outer circle of the SEF (K-12) diagram provides the big picture view of the school that must be attended to by all staff as they sustain a culture of learning and collaboration. The interrelationships among the elements in the outer circle and the manner in which the elements function together contribute directly to the quality of student learning. To sustain a culture where student learning, well-being and achievement are realised, all staff:

- ❖ engage in *systems thinking* which allows them to look both within and to the larger system for connections that will help them maximize organizational effectiveness.
- ❖ accept *accountability* for student learning and achievement and engage in continuous improvement.
- ❖ share responsibility for *instructional leadership*.
- ❖ reflect on and adapt the school's *evidence-based direction* based on student learning needs.
- ❖ contribute to a safe, accepting and inclusive learning environment.

## Improvement Planning and School Self-Assessment



This prism illustrates:

- ❖ how provincial direction, district priorities, school improvement efforts and all learning environments exist to support student achievement and well-being.
- ❖ how focus and energy on the instructional core are key to teaching, learning and leading in Ontario.
- ❖ how both qualitative and quantitative classroom data inform school planning, which in turn informs the district and province about student learning needs and well-being.
- ❖ the necessity of coherence among policy, programs, implementation and professional learning.

Assessment of school effectiveness is an ongoing inquiry process that drives improvements in schools and classrooms. The SEF provides a set of evidence-based criteria for school self-assessment which informs the development of the school improvement plan.

This process is intended to be a thoughtful inquiry rather than a checklist. It is a way to identify strategies that will lever improvement and inform school improvement planning for student achievement. Participation by all schools and all staff in an annual self-assessment process will enhance school effectiveness, build capacity and foster improved student achievement and well-being.

### **Connection to the Ontario Leadership Framework 2012**

The Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF) 2012, and the District Effectiveness Framework (DEF), advocate for the highest standard of leadership practice and are resources that assist educators in Ontario in building coherence and aligning leadership practices across schools and districts. The OLF and DEF inform the direction for system, school and classroom leaders represented in the SEF K-12, 2013. These comprehensive resources are united by their common advocacy for the most significant evidence-informed leadership practices – *those that make the most positive differences to student achievement and well-being.*

### **Linking School Self-Assessment and School Improvement Planning**

- ❖ Review recommendations from previous school self-assessments and feedback from the district process (if applicable).
- ❖ Conduct school self-assessment for current year as part of a needs assessment.
- ❖ Review the components and indicators in the SEF K-12 and determine areas requiring attention in developing the school improvement plan.
- ❖ Determine what data will be collected and used for evidence of success.
- ❖ Determine how monitoring will occur.
- ❖ Share the results of the school self-assessment and the School Improvement Plan, according to board protocols.
- ❖ Implement and adjust actions in response to data and evidence gathered through monitoring.

## Data Collection and Analysis

- ❖ Review and analyze all assessment data (student achievement, perceptual, demographic and program).
- ❖ Select, revise or refine goal-setting targets for student achievement. (The School Improvement Plan might indicate an overarching goal related to the area of greatest student need and then departments, divisions or grades could select an aspect of the goal, specifically based on the data, as a focus).
- ❖ Identify curriculum/learning expectations that relate to the goal.
- ❖ Examine the indicators in the SEF that require attention. Select indicators that will directly impact student learning goals.
- ❖ Consider completing the chart below which reflects the relationship of the School Effectiveness Framework and school improvement planning.
- ❖ Move into action on goals, set targets for student achievement and well-being and plan instruction.
- ❖ Implement strategies for mobilizing the plan and supporting classroom practice.

Goals identified in SIP	Indicator from the framework related to goals	Where are we now?	Where do we want to be?	What student work/ evidence will tell us we are there?	What do we have to learn and/or do differently to get there?	Who can help us?	Who is monitoring? When? How? What is being monitored?
1.							
2.							
3.							

## Monitoring

Some methods of ongoing monitoring include:

- ❖ discussing the School Improvement Plan at staff, division, department and/or Professional Learning Community meetings
- ❖ planning professional learning based on the specific actions/strategies in the School Improvement Plan
- ❖ assessing progress according to established checkpoints and timelines
- ❖ collaborative analysis of a wide range of student data
- ❖ reflecting on targets and the results of instruction to determine the next steps.

## The District Process

The District Process is intended to promote a culture of reflection, collaborative inquiry and shared responsibility for continuous improvement at both the board and the school. To be successful, the District Process must be collaborative, collegial, equitable, inclusive and generate respectful interactions. It must have open, honest and transparent communication throughout the process and be consistent with the intent of the Ontario Leadership Framework, the District Effectiveness Framework and this document. A non-evaluative, supportive stance is essential.

The uniqueness of each school and the strategies undertaken to promote increased student learning, achievement and well-being provide the context for the District Process which:

- ❖ builds upon the school self-assessment process (School Self-Assessments precede the District Process).
- ❖ supports schools in the complex inquiry process and ongoing self-reflection, specific to the indicators each school has identified in their school improvement plan.
- ❖ helps districts develop a deeper understanding of the strengths and areas of need in elementary and secondary schools.
- ❖ supports the notion of continuous improvement for schools and districts.
- ❖ informs board improvement planning, goal setting, professional learning supports and budget processes.
- ❖ follows a cycle that allows all schools to benefit from a district process within a reasonable timeframe (e.g., three to five years).

See Part 3 District Processes for further information.

# 2

## Part 2

# Components, Indicators, Evidence

## Component 1 *Assessment for, as and of Learning*

*“Assessment is the process of gathering information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the curriculum expectations in a subject or course. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning. Assessment for the purpose of improving student learning is seen as both “assessment for learning” and “assessment as learning”. As part of assessment for learning, teachers provide students with descriptive feedback and coaching for improvement. Teachers engage in assessment as learning by helping all students develop their capacity to be independent, autonomous learners who are able to set individual goals, monitor their own progress, determine next steps, and reflect on their thinking and learning.”*

*Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools, 2010, p. 28*

### **At the District**

Districts/district leaders:

- ❖ Align assessment, evaluation and reporting policies and practices with the principles of equity and inclusive education to meet the diverse needs of students and their families.
- ❖ Support principals and educators in reaching high levels of informed professional judgement and assessment literacy.
- ❖ Use systematically-collected data and information about student learning to inform decision-making and actions for the district, schools and classrooms. (e.g., Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and School Improvement Plan).
- ❖ Establish collaborative structures and opportunities to collect and disaggregate student achievement data to identify gaps and set ambitious targets.

**Indicator 1.1 Assessment is connected to the curriculum, collaboratively developed by educators and used to inform next steps in learning and instruction.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Expectations, goals, criteria, tasks and assessment are aligned and planned concurrently.
- ❖ Quality evidence of learning is determined collaboratively (e.g., through moderation, lesson study, co-planning) across grades, courses and pathways to determine student learning needs.
- ❖ Meaningful tasks, activities and experiences are designed to:
  - foster thinking and metacognition
  - build on students’ diverse perspectives, knowledge and experiences
  - assess the depth of new learning in order to identify next steps.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Assessment *for* and *as* learning processes are evident as students undertake authentic and relevant performance tasks.
- ❖ Educators and students co-construct success criteria in relation to authentic and relevant performance tasks.
- ❖ Multiple and varied opportunities are provided for students to demonstrate, communicate and refine their learning.
- ❖ Student learning is regularly documented to inform educator and student next steps.
- ❖ Students are supported and assessed in the ongoing development of learning skills and work habits.

**Students:**

- ❖ Actively plan for and set personalized learning goals that relate to the curriculum expectations.
- ❖ Engage in authentic and relevant performance tasks that are connected to their learning goals.

**Indicator 1.2 A variety of relevant and meaningful assessment data is used by students and educators to continuously monitor learning, to inform instruction and to determine next steps.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Student profiles, learning portfolios of student work, IEPs and assessment data are shared among educators in a confidential manner as students’ progress from Kindergarten to Grade 12 and/or between schools.
- ❖ Collaborative processes are in place to guide problem-solving and decision-making in relation to prevention and interventions that may be required where data indicate students are not demonstrating the intended learning expectations.

- ❖ Student achievement data are collected (e.g., through observation, work samples, conversations, assessment tasks) and disaggregated at critical checkpoints in the learning each term/semester/year to monitor progress toward school targets and in order to determine next steps to assure continuous improvement in student achievement.
- ❖ Student assessments and achievement data inform the focus of professional learning and provide insight to its impact on student learning.
- ❖ Collaborative development of assessment tasks, tools (e.g. rubrics) and practices supports consistency of practice in and between grades, divisions, departments and courses.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ A variety of assessment strategies and tools that meet the needs of all students are used to improve learning and inform instructional decisions (e.g., observations, demonstrations and presentations, projects, work samples, conversations, portfolios of student work).
- ❖ Student achievement information is collected through common assessment tools identified by the district and/or school, analyzed and shared as part of the assessment *for* learning process.
- ❖ Instructional decisions are made and actions taken in response to students' demonstrations of learning.

**Students:**

- ❖ Use assessment data to refine their work, plan next steps and monitor their own progress.
- ❖ Provide explicit feedback about their engagement and learning to educators.
- ❖ Advocate for what they need as learners.

**Indicator 1.3 Students and educators build a common understanding of what students are learning by identifying, sharing and clarifying the learning goals and success criteria.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Shared understanding of assessment *for*, *as* and *of* learning is built.
- ❖ Inclusive and common instruction and assessment language is used across classrooms.
- ❖ Assessment and instruction are collaboratively designed to ensure a clear understanding of the learning goals and success criteria.
- ❖ Collaborative development of common assessment tools (e.g. success criteria to inform rubrics) and practices support consistency of practice in and between grades, divisions, departments and courses.
- ❖ Data and information about professional learning are collected on a regular basis throughout the year to ascertain the impact on instructional practice, student learning and professional learning needs.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Learning goals and success criteria identify the intended student learning, based on the knowledge, skills, concepts and processes from the Ontario curriculum, including the achievement charts.
- ❖ During the learning, students and teachers co-construct the success criteria linked to learning goals.

- ❖ Learning goals and success criteria are expressed in language that is meaningful to students.
- ❖ Learning goals and success criteria are open to review and revision.

**Students:**

- ❖ Describe what they are learning, the purpose of the learning and what it looks like.
- ❖ Co-construct success criteria linked to learning goals.
- ❖ Articulate their understanding of the learning goals and the success criteria that will be used to assess their learning.
- ❖ Participate in the development of their individual learning goals.
- ❖ Use the learning goals and success criteria to assess and improve their own learning.

**Indicator 1.4 During learning, timely, ongoing, descriptive feedback about student progress is provided, based on student actions and co-constructed success criteria.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ A culture of learning is promoted in schools and classrooms whereby errors are seen as opportunities for learning and improvement.
- ❖ Ongoing, descriptive feedback is collaboratively analyzed to provide information about student learning and to identify next steps.
- ❖ Student assessment and evaluation practices are collaboratively reviewed in order to identify and address any potential systemic bias.
- ❖ Processes and practices are in place to recognize and celebrate student progress.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Learning goals and success criteria are used consistently to scaffold student learning, provide descriptive feedback and set high expectations for students.
- ❖ Timely, explicit and constructive feedback related to the success criteria is descriptive rather than evaluative and extends thinking.
- ❖ Student learning and progress is clarified throughout the learning process (e.g., through interviews, conferences and learning conversations with small groups, pairs and/or individual students).
- ❖ Students have multiple and varied opportunities to revise and refine their demonstrations of learning.
- ❖ Opportunities for students to provide quality feedback to classmates, educators and themselves are planned and occur.

**Students:**

- ❖ Use descriptive feedback, based on the success criteria, to revise and refine their demonstrations of learning and set individual learning goals.
- ❖ Provide accurate, constructive and descriptive feedback to themselves, their classmates, and educators in relation to the predetermined success criteria.

**Indicator 1.5 Students are explicitly taught and regularly use self-assessment skills to monitor, improve and communicate their learning, within the context of the Ontario curriculum and/or Individual Education Plan (IEP).**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Educators share strategies for helping students to develop, understand and use criteria, identify strengths and areas for improvement and develop and implement goals for next steps in learning.
- ❖ Self-assessment is used throughout the school as a skill connected to higher order processes such as metacognition and self-regulation.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Self-assessment skills and goal setting are taught, modelled and practised.
- ❖ Using co-constructed success criteria, opportunities are planned for students to practise self and peer assessment.
- ❖ Educators provide students with qualitative feedback on their peer and self-assessment skills.

**Students:**

- ❖ Engage in learning conversations and peer assessment to explain and question their own thinking.
- ❖ Use work samples to help them understand what quality work looks like and to develop or refine their understanding of success criteria.
- ❖ Use success criteria to assess and monitor their progress and set individual learning goals.
- ❖ Participate in the collection and development of personal documentation of learning (e.g., portfolios, learning logs, course notebooks, student files) that assist in informing the next steps in their learning.
- ❖ Set and track learning goals based on identification of strengths and needs through a variety of forums (e.g., student-led conferences)

**Indicator 1.6 Assessment of learning provides relevant and meaningful evidence to evaluate the quality of student achievement at or near the end of a cycle of learning and to determine next steps.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ A fair and equitable assessment and evaluation policy is in place, is clearly articulated and shared with staff, students, parents and the community.
- ❖ Tasks/assignments for assessment of learning are aligned with the curriculum expectations and/or the learning expectations in the IEP.
- ❖ Assessment of learning is based on the most consistent, more recent demonstrations of learning.
- ❖ Comments on report cards are personalized, clear, precise and meaningful to reflect individual student progress.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ A range of evidence for the assessment *of* learning is collected through observations, conversations and student products.
- ❖ Assessment *of* learning is based on the performance standards set out in the Achievement Chart and the content standards identified by the overall curriculum expectations and/or IEP.
- ❖ Assessment criteria align with the overall expectations and form the basis of assessment *of* learning.
- ❖ Assessment *of* learning provides evidence to inform next steps.
- ❖ Learning skills and work habits are evaluated and reported to parents.

**Students:**

- ❖ Choose, where possible, how they demonstrate their learning for the purposes of assessment *of* learning.
- ❖ Demonstrate an understanding of how their learning will be evaluated.
- ❖ Use assessment *of* learning results to set new learning goals.

**Indicator 1.7 Ongoing communication about learning is in place to allow students, educators and parents to monitor and support student learning.****At the school:**

- ❖ Communication protocols and timelines are clearly communicated in school publications, including websites.
- ❖ School-wide processes are developed to inform and engage parents and students in learning, assessment practices and how next steps in learning are determined.
- ❖ Parents and students learn about the different purposes of assessment and evaluation.
- ❖ Parents are engaged through ongoing communication and dialogue to support a positive learning environment at home and at school.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ All communication about assessment is personalized, clear, precise and meaningful.
- ❖ A system (e.g. student agenda, classroom website, moodle, blog) is in place to allow educators, students and parents to continuously monitor student progress.
- ❖ Clear learning goals and success criteria are identified, shared and clarified with students and parents.
- ❖ Communication at critical check points in the learning allows students and parents to contribute to and monitor progress during the learning.
- ❖ Students and parents are involved in an ongoing communication process regarding student learning, through a variety of strategies (e.g., portfolio discussions, student-led conferences, IEP meetings, conferences with educators).

**Students:**

- ❖ Identify and communicate their learning preferences, individual strengths and areas for further improvement.
- ❖ Participate in meetings regarding their learning and progress (e.g. student-led conferences, IEP meetings, conferences with educators).
- ❖ Engage in learning conversations and discussions with educators and peers that elicit evidence of understanding.
- ❖ Comment on their report cards about strengths and goals.

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*All students (as all educators) do not always succeed first time, nor do they always know what to do next, and nor do they always attain perfection. This is not a deficit, or deficit thinking, or concentrating on the negative; rather, it is the opposite in that acknowledging errors allows for opportunities. Error is the difference between what we know and can do, and what we aim to know and do- and this applies to all (struggling and talented; students and educators).*

Hattie, 2012, p. 115.

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## Component 2 School and Classroom Leadership

*“Professional learning communities judge their effectiveness on the basis of results. Every educator participates in an ongoing process of identifying current levels of achievement, establishing goals to improve those levels, and working together to achieve those goals. Sustaining an effective professional learning community requires that school staff focus on learning as much as teaching, on working collaboratively to improve learning, and on holding themselves accountable for the kinds of results that fuel continued improvements.”*

*Learning for All K–12, 2011 p.55*

### **At the District**

Districts/district leaders:

- ❖ Create alignment and coherence.
- ❖ Take action in relation to improving collaborative instructional leadership in schools.
- ❖ Assist educators in developing sophisticated understandings of effective instruction for students.
- ❖ Establish ambitious and realistic goals for student achievement and well-being through board improvement planning (BIPSA).
- ❖ Monitor the implementation of both the BIPSA and individual School Improvement Plans (SIPs).
- ❖ Review student progress and support improvements in instructional practice.
- ❖ Provide differentiated professional learning opportunities in response to the needs of educators, identified through the School Self-Assessment Process.
- ❖ Establish policies and practices that promote positive student behaviour and well-being.
- ❖ Promote and support a collaborative learning culture (e.g., a commitment to continuous improvement, a collective focus on student learning for all, deprivatization of practice and reflective dialogue).

### **Indicator 2.1 Collaborative instructional leadership builds capacity to strengthen and enhance teaching and learning.**

At the school:

- ❖ School Improvement Planning:
  - involves all staff in planning, implementing, monitoring and refining the SIP, based on analysis of the current needs assessment that is drawn from a variety of data sources e.g., perceptual, demographic, program, achievement.
  - identifies areas requiring an instructional emphasis (e.g., through the development of a small number of goals based on current student achievement data).

- communicates progress in improving student achievement and meeting targets to parents and the school community (e.g., newsletters, school council agendas, school website).
  - informs the school budget.
  - is supported by school leaders through “open to learning” classroom visits and conversations.
  - includes the review of student achievement data, including evidence from collaborative inquiries at specific times throughout the year, to ensure that schools can demonstrate progress in meeting the targets and goals in all classrooms and for every student
  - includes student input.
- ❖ A school improvement team supports the principal/staff to collaboratively develop and monitor the goals in the school improvement plan and to complete the School Self-Assessment, based on the School Effectiveness Framework.
  - ❖ Collaborative planning, design of common assessments and unit plans, use of resources and culminating activities occurs within and across grade levels and courses of study.
  - ❖ Professional learning priorities are based on needs that emerge from the analysis of student work and are aligned with the goals in the SIP.
  - ❖ Structures are in place to ensure that school leaders actively co-learn with staff.
  - ❖ A collaborative learning culture (e.g., a commitment to continuous improvement, a collective focus on student learning for all, deprivatization of practice and reflective dialogue) is evident.
  - ❖ Parents are engaged through ongoing communication and dialogue to support a positive learning environment at home and at school.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Planning, instruction and assessment align with goals identified in the SIP.
- ❖ Student achievement data are used to identify and plan for instruction that continuously moves students from current levels of achievement to applying new knowledge and skills independently.
- ❖ Evidence-based teaching practices, modelled in professional learning, are used in classrooms.
- ❖ Collaborative learning, inquiry, co-planning and/or co-teaching inform instructional practices to meet the needs of students.

**Students:**

- ❖ Confidently engage in the learning process by using accountable talk, being on task, self-advocating, demonstrating curiosity, self-regulating, persevering, and taking ownership for their learning/classroom.
- ❖ Access and demonstrate the intended learning.

## Indicator 2.2 **Processes and practices are designed to deepen understanding of the curriculum and refine instruction to improve student learning and achievement.**

### At the school:

- ❖ The learning environment supports professional dialogue about the big ideas and content in the curriculum and how to implement instructional practices that lead students to deep conceptual understanding.
- ❖ Professional learning is continuous and responsive to student learning needs, identified by a wide range of data and informed by ministry policy, resource documents and board guidelines.
- ❖ Access to expertise and professional learning resources is provided in response to the range of student needs.
- ❖ System resources are accessed to support professional learning.
- ❖ Structures, processes and practices that have been collaboratively established at the school and school community are used to determine day-to-day decision-making, based on student needs e.g. pyramid of interventions/tiered approach.

### In the classroom:

- ❖ Input from students on the effectiveness of instructional approaches is used to address next steps.
- ❖ Professional learning supports the growth of a wide repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies and their appropriate use.
- ❖ Ongoing communication and action regarding prevention and interventions support student success.
- ❖ Rich and relevant tasks advance learning, creativity and innovation.

### Students:

- ❖ Access and engage in the intended learning as individuals, in small groups and as a whole class.
- ❖ Independently apply knowledge, skills, concepts and processes in different contexts.

## Indicator 2.3 **Organizational structures are coherent, flexible and respond to the needs of students.**

### At the school:

- ❖ The learning environment is intentionally organized to optimize learning time.
- ❖ Timetabling is strategic and facilitates learning for all students and the appropriate allocation of human and other resources.
- ❖ The allocation of human and other resources is responsive to changing student needs.
- ❖ (Elementary) Sustained uninterrupted blocks of learning time are used daily for literacy and numeracy.

- ❖ The budget process is transparent and reflects school priorities in the School Improvement Plan.
- ❖ Communication and procedures support student learning during all transitions.
- ❖ Teams meet regularly for the purpose of supporting learning for students, including those who are not meeting subject/course requirements and/or learning expectations in the Individual Education Plan.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ The learning environment is both intellectually challenging and developmentally appropriate for all students and is organized to optimize teaching and learning.
- ❖ Student advocacy is taught and welcomed.

**Students:**

- ❖ Advocate for conditions that support their learning.
- ❖ Work in flexible and varied groupings according to the learning task and their learning needs.

**Indicator 2.4 Job-embedded and inquiry-based professional learning builds capacity, informs instructional practice and contributes to a culture of learning.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Professional learning is inquiry-based and responsive to student assessment data.
- ❖ School leaders are engaged in professional learning with staff.
- ❖ Conditions (e.g. time to meet and talk, common planning time) that promote collaborative learning cultures are established.
- ❖ School leaders regularly visit all classrooms to engage in ongoing inquiry regarding effective instructional practices and how to increase their impact on student learning.
- ❖ School leaders seek out relevant professional learning and resources (e.g., curriculum and resource documents, webcasts, monographs, podcasts, ministry websites, institutes, conferences, etc.) to support educators.
- ❖ Evidence of student learning (e.g., writing samples, mathematical representations of thinking, running records, class profiles) is shared as a catalyst for professional dialogue.
- ❖ Professional dialogue, based on research literature and learning in the field, supports the use of consistent language and practices.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Knowledge and effective evidence-based instructional practices are shared (e.g., through co-planning, co-teaching, mentoring, inquiry and coaching).
- ❖ Risk-taking is demonstrated by trying new instructional practices and strategies.
- ❖ Consistent language and practices (e.g., use of graphic organizers, Bansho) are modelled across classrooms.

**Students:**

- ❖ Articulate how instructional practices support their learning (e.g. how technology helps them extend their ideas and challenges their thinking).
- ❖ Use common processes and terminology in and across classrooms, as modelled by educators.

**Indicator 2.5 Staff, students, parents and school community promote and sustain student well-being and positive student behaviour in a safe, accepting, inclusive and healthy learning environment.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ A whole school approach is used to engage all members of the school community in developing policies and engaging in practices that will build and sustain a safe and accepting learning environment.
- ❖ Safe and Accepting Schools Teams develop and update strategies to maintain and improve the school climate e.g., bullying prevention and intervention plans.
- ❖ Healthy schools policies and programs are implemented (e.g., healthy eating, increased physical activity, injury prevention)
- ❖ The tenets of equity and diversity are embedded in the school culture.
- ❖ Ongoing opportunities are provided to gather and act on input regarding the learning culture from staff, students and parents including a process to survey students, staff and parents regarding school climate at least once every two years.
- ❖ All staff have a duty to report incidents of discrimination, harassment and bullying, including incidents involving the use of social media.
- ❖ All staff are aware of their role in responding to emergencies, including those under local police/school board protocols.
- ❖ School-wide approaches promote positive relationship-building between and among students and educators, using tools such as peer mediation, conflict resolution and other evidence-informed practices.
- ❖ Processes are in place to support new students as they become part of the school community (e.g. student ambassadors welcome new students to the classroom/school).

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Classroom practice reflects safe, accepting, inclusive, caring, respectful and healthy learning environments.
- ❖ The learning environment supports the diversity of learners.
- ❖ Character development is an integral part of the learning environment.
- ❖ Early intervention and/or progressive discipline guides students' choices and decision-making.
- ❖ In addition to the necessary knowledge and skills, the learning environment provides modelling for students to make safe and healthy decisions (e.g., injury prevention, healthy eating, physical activity, digital safety).

**Students:**

- ❖ Engage in safe and healthy living and healthy relationships, including those developed through social media.
- ❖ Behave in accordance with the school code of conduct.
- ❖ Contribute to the establishment of a safe, accepting and healthy learning environment.
- ❖ Respond in accordance to school policy and practices to emergencies (e.g. fire drills, lock downs).
- ❖ Report incidents of discrimination, harassment, bullying and injustice and contribute to solutions.
- ❖ Contribute to problem-solving in respectful, responsible ways.
- ❖ Establish and lead activities that promote safe, accepting and inclusive learning environments.

## Component 3 Student Engagement

*Motivation, engagement and student voice are [critical elements] of student-centered learning. Without motivation, there is no push to learn; without engagement there is no way to learn; and without voice, there is no authenticity in the learning. For students to create new knowledge, succeed academically, and develop into healthy adults, they require each of these experiences.*

Toshalis, E., & Nakkula, M. J. *Motivation, Engagement and Student Voice, Jobs for the Future* (2012, April)

### At the District

Districts/district leaders:

- ❖ See student engagement as a leadership priority and communicate it to the school community.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for students' to be partners in decisions impacting their educational experience.
- ❖ Seek student voice that reflects the diversity, needs and interests of the student population, regarding their educational experience and policies and programs through a variety of channels (e.g., social media, Student Trustees, Advisory Councils, Student Senate, Student Council classroom and district-wide surveys).
- ❖ Create and monitor evidence-based conditions that foster the intellectual, institutional and social engagement of all students.

### Indicator 3.1 **The teaching and learning environment is inclusive, promotes the intellectual engagement of all students and reflects individual student strengths, needs, learning preferences and cultural perspectives.**

At the school:

- ❖ Equity, inclusivity and diversity practices reflect board and Ministry policy.
- ❖ Educators collaborate to identify and implement evidence-based conditions that support the intellectual engagement of students (e.g. learning experiences that are clear, meaningful, interesting, motivating, challenging, productive and include ongoing descriptive feedback and opportunities for metacognition).
- ❖ Engaging learning experiences ensure all students use higher-order thinking skills, solve complex problems, develop increased understanding, and construct new knowledge.
- ❖ Instruction is differentiated and curriculum materials, digital tools, human and a range of other resources are provided to support student strengths and needs.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Students and educators work together to build a collaborative and safe learning environment, free from discriminatory bias and systemic barriers.
- ❖ Learning experiences are engaging, promote collaboration, innovation and creativity (i.e. are clear, meaningful, challenging, productive and include problem solving and critical thinking on a variety of issues).
- ❖ Ongoing feedback between and among students and teachers enables students to refine both thinking and products.
- ❖ The teaching and learning environment enables students to reach ambitious goals.
- ❖ Student input is actively and regularly sought with regard to curriculum delivery and program needs.

**Students:**

- ❖ See themselves, their values, culture and interests reflected in their learning environment.
- ❖ Assume ownership in learning experiences that are collaborative, innovative and creative.
- ❖ Demonstrate confidence, resilience, self-regulation and self-efficacy in their capacity to learn and succeed.
- ❖ Try new tasks, take risks and share learning with others.
- ❖ Willingly participate in feedback processes to refine thinking and learning.
- ❖ Voice their program needs.

**Indicator 3.2 Students' stated priorities that reflect the diversity, needs and interests of the student population are embedded in School Improvement Plans (SIPs).**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Student voice that reflects the diversity of the student population is actively and regularly sought to inform school climate, instruction and program needs.
- ❖ Opportunities are provided for students to give input and respond to school improvement goals and strategies.
- ❖ School improvement plans focus on student learning and well-being.
- ❖ Challenges and barriers to student participation are identified and resolutions sought.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Educators and students collaborate to create a positive learning environment in the classroom and school that maximizes engagement, achievement and well-being.
- ❖ Students' cultures, perspectives, interests and achievements are reflected in their learning environment.
- ❖ Classroom goals are built collaboratively and reflect the school improvement plan.

**Students:**

- ❖ Provide input related to stated priorities, school programs and opportunities at the classroom and school.
- ❖ Represent their own voice and the voice of others when advocating for conditions that support their learning.

**Indicator 3.3 Students are partners in dialogue and discussions to inform programs and activities in the classroom and school that represent the diversity, needs and interests of the student population.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Processes are in place for students to suggest and initiate school-wide activities.
- ❖ Students are informed about activities and their participation is actively encouraged.
- ❖ Opportunities are provided for students to collaborate in the development of school plans that outline potential school-related activities.
- ❖ School-related activities respond to diverse needs, interests and well-being of students.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ A positive learning environment is established to support student engagement and belonging.
- ❖ Classroom activities are created collaboratively and reflect the diverse needs and interests of students.

**Students:**

- ❖ Contribute ideas and identify their needs and interests in relation to school and classroom activities.
- ❖ Engage in and contribute to a positive school and classroom culture.

**Indicator 3.4 Students demonstrate a wide range of transferable skills, such as teamwork, advocacy, leadership and global citizenship.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ A culture exists where interactions between and among staff and students are respectful and honour different ideas and values.
- ❖ Programs and activities enable students to work as effective team members with peers, educators and the wider global community.
- ❖ Students are supported in their role as advocates, school and community leaders and conscientious global citizens.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Creative, innovative and diverse perspectives are encouraged and nurtured.
- ❖ Positive peer, teacher, school and community relationships are evident and fostered through intentional strategies and activities.
- ❖ Authentic learning experiences that incorporate a variety of diverse and innovative perspectives foster a sense of responsibility and action-oriented responses to global issues.

Students:

- ❖ Use creative, innovative and diverse perspectives to collaborate and think critically in the classroom and school.
- ❖ Demonstrate strong and respectful peer, school and community relationships.
- ❖ Apply teamwork, advocacy and leadership skills to daily interactions and in response to broader global issues.
- ❖ Demonstrate action-oriented global-mindedness.

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*“The power of positive teacher-student relationships is critical for learning to occur. This relationship involves showing students that the teacher cares for their learning as a student, can see their perspective, and communicate it back to them so they have valuable feedback to self-assess, feel safe, and learn to understand others and the content with the same interest and concern.”*

Cornelius-White, 2007, p. 123

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## Component 4 Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

*“Innovative teaching practices consist of three elements: student-centered pedagogy (including knowledge building, self-regulation and assessment, collaboration, and skilled communication); learning beyond the classroom (including problem-solving and real-world innovation); and use of Information and Communication Technology (in service of specific and concrete learning goals).”*

From *Stratosphere: Integrating Technology, Pedagogy and Change Knowledge*  
Michael Fullan (2013 p. 43) Pearson Canada Inc., Toronto

### At the District

Districts/district leaders:

- ❖ Establish a culture of high expectations for student engagement, learning, achievement and well-being.
- ❖ Build connections and coherence among curriculum, instruction and assessment to address the diverse learning needs of students.
- ❖ Establish and support comprehensive literacy and numeracy programs to equip students for success.
- ❖ Develop policies and allocate funding to help ensure that learning resources are current, culturally relevant, responsive and inclusive.
- ❖ Develop, implement and monitor policy for the safe, legal and ethical use of information and technology.

### Indicator 4.1 **A culture of high expectations supports the belief that all students can learn, progress and achieve.**

At the school:

- ❖ The focus on student achievement is evident and clearly communicated within the school and to the school community in a variety of ways and in languages reflective of community needs.
- ❖ Student achievement is celebrated in an inclusive way throughout the school.
- ❖ Qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources inform school improvement planning.
- ❖ The School Improvement Plan identifies ambitious targets against which progress in learning and student achievement are measured.
- ❖ Professional learning, grounded in evidence-based practice and research, focuses on continuous improvement of teaching and learning.

In the classroom:

- ❖ Realistic and ambitious learning goals are set and regularly reviewed with students.
- ❖ Multiple and varied opportunities are provided for students to demonstrate learning.
- ❖ Ongoing monitoring and moderation of student work informs instruction to ensure that each student learns, progresses and achieves stated goals.

Students:

- ❖ Learn, progress and achieve in relation to their goals.
- ❖ Demonstrate and apply their learning in a variety of contexts and forms.

**Indicator 4.2 A clear emphasis on high levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy is evident throughout the school.**

At the school:

**Literacy and Numeracy**

- ❖ Data are analyzed to identify strengths and gaps in literacy and numeracy achievement and to determine ambitious learning goals for school-wide improvement.
- ❖ A comprehensive literacy and numeracy focus supports student achievement through use of the current Ontario curriculum and associated resource documents.
- ❖ Curriculum expectations are appropriately clustered and considered as a developmental continuum of learning across the grades/courses.
- ❖ Cross-curricular planning and programming enables students to practise and apply literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills in meaningful ways.
- ❖ Literacy and numeracy instruction is inquiry-based, intellectually challenging and developmentally appropriate for all students.
- ❖ Learning opportunities require higher order thinking.
- ❖ Conditions are created for developing imagination, creativity, innovation and risk-taking in the culture of the school.

In the classroom:

**Literacy**

- ❖ Literacy specific concepts, processes, and skills occur explicitly in every subject area.
- ❖ Instruction in all content areas supports students in
  - purposefully selecting and using techniques and processes in order to construct and communicate meaning
  - employing critical thinking skills with respect to a wide range of perspectives
  - advocating for their learning and making connections to their experience, values, culture, and interests
  - communicating effectively for specific purposes and audiences.
- ❖ Instruction (e.g. the gradual release of responsibility) supports students in moving confidently to independent demonstration and application of the intended learning.
- ❖ Instruction is designed to support students in developing capacity for metacognition and understanding how questioning shapes thinking and learning.
- ❖ The teaching-learning process enables students to practise, apply and see relevance in their learning across curriculum areas.
- ❖ Instruction in all content areas supports clear connections among reading, writing, oral and digital communication and media literacy.
- ❖ Instructional practices are strategically used to meet the diverse learning needs of students.

**In the classroom:****Numeracy**

- ❖ Numeracy specific concepts are explicitly used to deepen student learning and understanding in all subjects.
- ❖ In mathematics classrooms:
  - Learning experiences provide the conditions for students to activate prior knowledge, develop thinking and consolidate learning.
  - Inquiry-based instruction engages students in developing deep conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and strategic competence.
  - Students engage in mathematics through the process expectations as described in the Ontario Curriculum.
  - New learning is built on students' prior mathematical knowledge and understandings.
  - Tasks are differentiated to meet the diversity of students learning needs, honoring multiple ways of thinking and are grounded in big ideas within the Ontario Curriculum.
  - The learning environment is designed to ensure there is space for collaborative work with equitable access to a variety of tools, learning resources, technology and manipulatives.
  - All students and educators form a learning community where mathematics inquiry is framed positively and risk-taking is the norm.
  - Documentation of students' mathematical thinking, analyses and discussion are used to illustrate different aspects of effective mathematics learning.
  - Student thinking is visible and reflects the mathematics currently being learned.

**Students:****Literacy**

- ❖ Use critical literacy and numeracy skills to think more deeply about the texts they read (situations and problems) and the texts they create (interpretations and solutions).
- ❖ Ask questions for different purposes (e.g., clarify meaning, encourage reflection, detect bias, determine author's intent).
- ❖ Sort and analyze information from a variety of sources.
- ❖ Summarize and synthesize in order to understand what they read, hear and see.
- ❖ Understand, acquire, build on and apply oral communication, reading, writing and media literacy knowledge and skills.
- ❖ Independently choose to read and write with a variety of texts and tools.
- ❖ Listen actively to others (e.g., ask questions, share ideas and strategies and build on the ideas of others).
- ❖ Communicate their learning through a variety of modes and forms for different purposes and audiences.
- ❖ Apply higher-order thinking skills in new contexts.

### Numeracy

- ❖ Persevere to solve mathematical tasks and demonstrate mathematical thinking in different ways.
- ❖ Make connections among mathematical concepts, procedures, and strategies.
- ❖ Make connections between their tacit mathematics knowledge and problem situations.
- ❖ Develop and apply reasoning skills in a variety of contexts to make and support their mathematical conjectures.
- ❖ Engage actively with other students and the teacher (e.g., ask questions, elaborate on ideas and strategies and make sense of errors).
- ❖ Reflect on and monitor their thinking to help clarify their understanding and make sense of the mathematics they are learning (e.g., compare, contrast and adjust strategies used, explain their solutions, record their mathematics processes).
- ❖ Make connections across mathematics strands and subject areas.

### Indicator 4.3 **Teaching and learning in the 21st Century is collaborative, innovative and creative within a global context.**

#### At the school:

- ❖ A global perspective is developed and presented across content areas through inquiry based co-learning.
- ❖ Teaching and learning includes critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration.
- ❖ Students are connected and challenged beyond the world of the school, using a variety of learning technologies.
- ❖ Effective pedagogy is supported by diverse technologies.
- ❖ A digital environment is an integral part of professional practice, learning and leadership.
- ❖ District policy for the safe, legal and ethical use of information and communication technology is implemented and monitored.
- ❖ School planning and professional practice align with evolving district and provincial priorities, focusing on 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning and science and innovation.

#### In the classroom:

- ❖ Higher order thinking skills are consistently integrated across disciplines.
- ❖ A personal and local perspective is cultivated so that each student can make relevant links to the curriculum.
- ❖ Tasks and assessments require students to apply knowledge, think critically, and analyse and synthesize in new situations and contexts.
- ❖ Instruction includes how to access and evaluate the reliability, validity and credibility of resources.
- ❖ Instruction includes how to connect with others and to create e-communities.
- ❖ Instruction includes the ethical/legal use of information communications technologies.

**Students:**

- ❖ Have access to and select appropriate technologies based on the task.
- ❖ Use technologies to construct knowledge and document their learning.
- ❖ Integrate, synthesize and apply content knowledge learning in novel situations with growing independence.
- ❖ Demonstrate resilience and persistence when faced with challenges.
- ❖ Work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams.
- ❖ Apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of information technologies.
- ❖ Assume leadership roles when working on authentic problems/projects and incorporate the use of relevant data, tools and experts in and beyond the classroom.
- ❖ Access, critically evaluate and use texts, including digital content.

#### **Indicator 4.4 Learning is deepened through authentic, relevant and meaningful student inquiry.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Courses/units of study are developed to promote learning through student inquiry.
- ❖ Teaching and learning strategies support student inquiry.
- ❖ Learning through problem-solving supports students in connecting ideas and developing conceptual understanding.
- ❖ Explicit teaching of concepts, processes and skills within inquiry supports students' learning.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Students are engaged in exploring real-world situations/issues and solving authentic problems.
- ❖ Self and peer assessment opportunities are used to establish a culture of inquiry.
- ❖ Critical thinking skills are taught, modelled, practised and developed.
- ❖ Metacognition is modelled through the instructional process.
- ❖ Instruction enables all students to explore the big ideas (i.e., to go beyond discrete facts and skills in order to develop deep conceptual understanding).
- ❖ Students are provided with regular opportunities for planned, purposeful, accountable talk.

**Students:**

- ❖ Identify authentic problems and pose significant questions for investigations across all curriculum areas.
- ❖ Demonstrate curiosity and a positive and productive disposition to learning.
- ❖ Demonstrate skills of metacognition.
- ❖ Take risks to share works in progress (ideas, solutions, strategies) in order to test hypotheses, obtain feedback and suggestions from peers and teachers.

**Indicator 4.5 Instruction and assessment are differentiated in response to student strengths, needs and prior learning.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Knowing each learner through documentation and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources is a school-wide priority.
- ❖ A wide range of instructional strategies (e.g., parallel tasks, open problems, tiered assignments) are used to meet the diverse learning needs of all students.
- ❖ Individual and team planning is based on assessment of student strengths and needs.
- ❖ Student work is analysed to identify ways to differentiate instruction and assessment.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Based on the analysis of student data, personalized learning activities are designed to address students' diverse learning preferences, interests, and readiness to learn a concept.
- ❖ Students are grouped and regrouped, frequently and flexibly.
- ❖ Learning groups are based on prior assessment of student learning, strengths and needs, interests and/or learning preferences.
- ❖ Choices are provided based on prior assessment of student learning, interests and/or learning preferences.
- ❖ Students are taught how to make choices (e.g., assignment, learning centre task, resources) based on their readiness, interests and learning preferences.
- ❖ Learning goals reflect student learning needs and support student achievement of the curriculum expectations.
- ❖ Students whose culture/first language differs from the culture/language of instruction are intentionally supported in order to be able to access the intended learning.

**Students:**

- ❖ Make choices (e.g., assignment, resources, learning centre task) based on their readiness, interests and learning preferences.
- ❖ Work in groups and follow collaborative group norms.
- ❖ Have opportunities to identify their learning preferences and/or environment (e.g. individually, in a quiet location away from others, in an active area of the room, as part of a group).

**Indicator 4.6 Resources for students are relevant, current, accessible, inclusive and monitored for bias.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Resources that reflect diverse backgrounds, languages and cultures are available to support all areas of learning in the Ontario curriculum and student needs (e.g., digital tools and resources, graphic novels, manipulatives).
- ❖ Assistive technologies support the engagement of students.
- ❖ A process is in place to review student learning materials.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Authentic learning experiences and assessments incorporate contemporary tools and resources to maximize learning in context.
- ❖ Learning experiences that incorporate digital tools and resources are designed to promote student learning and creativity.
- ❖ Resources are selected strategically to support instruction.
- ❖ Students are supported in recognizing and deconstructing biases in resources.

**Students:**

- ❖ Explore, make connections to the world and apply their learning, using resources that reflect diverse backgrounds, languages and cultures.
- ❖ Communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences, using a variety of media and formats.
- ❖ Work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others.
- ❖ Recognize and deconstruct biases.

**Indicator 4.7 Timely and tiered interventions, supported by a team approach, respond to individual student learning needs and well-being.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ School teams (e.g., Student Success, Safe and Accepting Schools, IEP) meet on an ongoing basis to review academic, social and emotional progress of students.
- ❖ Gaps in achievement are identified for students through disaggregated data and targets are set to close achievement gaps.
- ❖ Communication and collaborative planning result in early intervention to support students.
- ❖ Tracking mechanisms are current, available to all staff and used on an ongoing basis for discussions on refining instructional strategies for student learning.
- ❖ Multiple opportunities are provided for parents and students to actively participate in ongoing review and update of IEPs.
- ❖ Educators are aware of the diverse community supports involved in assisting students and can facilitate appropriate access to those services (e.g., settlement workers, mental health agencies, public health units).

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Student learning profiles, IEPs and/or portfolios are current and used to support and monitor student learning.
- ❖ Trends and patterns in student data are used to identify and implement interventions to support student learning.
- ❖ Responsibility for the success of all students is demonstrated.

Students:

- ❖ Demonstrate confidence and self-advocacy in their capacity to learn and succeed (e.g., risk taking, willingness to try new tasks, sharing learning with others).
- ❖ Reflect on their needs and advocate for appropriate interventions.
- ❖ Collaborate with educators to create and evaluate interventions.
- ❖ Respond to supports and interventions.

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*“Accomplishing the maximum impact on student learning depends on teams of teachers, working together, with excellent leaders or coaches, agreeing on worthwhile outcomes, setting high expectations, knowing students’ starting and desired success in learning, seeking evidence continually about their impact on all students, modifying their teaching in light of this evaluation and joining in the success of truly making a difference to student outcomes.”*

(Hattie, 2012 pg. 35)

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## Component 5 Pathways Planning and Programming

*“Creating Pathways to Success puts students at the centre of their own learning, viewing them as the architects of their own lives. Students are encouraged to discover who they are, explore opportunities, pursue their passions and design personal pathways to success. They are encouraged to express their insights in individual ways and to keep track of what they discover about themselves and their interests, passions, and opportunities over time.*

*When students are empowered to design and plan their own lives, they are engaged, they achieve and they find themselves applying their learning to their daily lives. In an environment that encourages such learning, students develop confidence in knowing that their school programs are created with them in mind, that the world beyond school has something to offer them, and that they have something to offer the world. It takes the whole education community (educators, administrators, students and parents), as well as the broader community to support students in successful education and career/life planning.*

*Creating Pathways to Success, The Education and Career/Life Program Policy for Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013.*

### At the District

Districts/district leaders:

- ❖ Establish policies and procedures for the development and implementation of comprehensive K-12 education and career/life planning programs and practices that are responsive to the learning needs, interests and aspirations of all students.
- ❖ Develop communication strategies to inform students, parents and the broader community about the available specialized programs (e.g., French Immersion, Specialist High Skills Major, Dual Credit, Arts) and opportunities (e.g., after school swim programs, arts programs, robotics).
- ❖ Work with the community to provide equity of opportunity for students to access specialized programs and opportunities.

### Indicator 5.1 **Comprehensive education and career/life planning programs meet the learning needs, interests and aspirations of all students.**

At the school:

- ❖ School and community stakeholders work collaboratively to develop and support the implementation of a K-12 education and career/life planning program that is embedded across all subjects, courses and daily learning activities.
- ❖ A variety of classroom and school-wide opportunities meet the diverse needs, interests and aspirations of all students to help them develop the knowledge and skills to make informed education and career/life choices.

- ❖ Students are supported in education and career/life planning through their development of a portfolio (Kindergarten to Grade 6) and an Individual Pathways Plan (Grades 7 to 12).
- ❖ Structures and processes are in place to support successful transitions (e.g., home to school, grade to grade, division to division, elementary to secondary, secondary to post-secondary/work).

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Education and career/life planning connects areas of learning to the ongoing curricular learning activities of the classroom and broader community.
- ❖ Respect for all pathways and destinations is evident in instruction (e.g., blended learning, SHSM).
- ❖ Students develop awareness of themselves and their opportunities to make decisions, set goals and create plans for achieving their goals.
- ❖ Instruction supports students in making informed choices for successful transitions (e.g., changing contexts, grade to grade, school to school, school to post-secondary including work).

**Students:**

- ❖ Use the Four-Step Inquiry Process for Education and Career/life Planning to reflect on *who am I, what are my opportunities, who do I want to become and what is my plan for achieving my goals.*
- ❖ Record their thinking in their portfolio (Kindergarten to Grade 6) and Individual Pathways Plan (Grades 7 to 12) and, where appropriate, share with parents, educators and peers.
- ❖ Demonstrate awareness and respect for various pathways and destinations.

**Indicator 5.2 Opportunities for authentic learning experiences and experiential learning exist in all classrooms and programs.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ School and community partners work collaboratively to support diverse, authentic, experiential and contextualized learning opportunities within the school and broader community.
- ❖ Experiences are provided to help students explore future learning or career/life opportunities. (e.g., Reach Ahead)
- ❖ School-wide activities (e.g., guest speakers, career fairs) and career-focused programs such as cooperative education are in place to support student learning in all subject areas.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Authentic tasks and experiential learning enable students to apply subject-specific knowledge and skills to work-related situations, explore subject-related education and career/life options and become competent, self-directed planners.
- ❖ Planned and purposeful experiential learning tasks, either individually, in small groups or as class projects, help students develop self-knowledge and opportunity-awareness.

**Students:**

- ❖ Discover strengths, refine and pursue their interests and aspirations.
- ❖ Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between what they are learning, why they are learning it and how it connects to their lives.
- ❖ Are able to set goals and select appropriate activities, courses, programs and pathways that reflect their interests, skills and aspirations.

### **Indicator 5.3 Students, parents, families, and educators understand the full range of pathways, programs, options and supports that are available.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Information and opportunities for dialogue about all options, programs, pathways and destinations is accessible through a variety of means to students, parents, families and staff.
- ❖ Students, parents, families and staff have access to necessary information to make informed decisions at key transitional stages (e.g., home to school, division to division, elementary to secondary, secondary to post-secondary/work).
- ❖ Educators demonstrate respect and support for all pathways and destinations.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Connections are made between the Ontario curriculum and the full range of education and career/life options.
- ❖ Transition plans are implemented using available supports and resources.

**Students:**

- ❖ Demonstrate a growing awareness of themselves and the full range of opportunities available to them based on their skills, interests and aspirations.
- ❖ Utilize appropriate resources to make informed decisions and set goals related to education and career/life planning.

### **Indicator 5.4 Students build on in-school and out-of-school experiences to further explore and reflect upon their interests, strengths, skills and education and career/life aspirations.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Various activities and events within the school, district or community (e.g., sports teams, extra-curricular activities, leadership opportunities, Skills Canada, arts camp, science fairs) provide opportunities for students to learn more about their interests, strengths and aspirations and contributions to a civil society.
- ❖ Students experience a variety of career/life opportunities (e.g., guest speakers, field trips, career fairs, job shadowing, cooperative education, community involvement).

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Flexibility and support allow students to engage in in-school and out-of-school activities and experiential learning opportunities related to their portfolio or Individual Pathways Plan (IPP).
- ❖ Educators provide opportunities for students to reflect on, document and share their learning from their in-school and out-of-school activities and experiential learning.

**Students:**

- ❖ Reflect on their in-school and out-of school learning related to the education and career/ life planning process and document in a portfolio or Individual Pathways Plan (IPP).
- ❖ Choose experiences, programs and/or pathway opportunities that reflect their interests, strengths and aspirations.

## Component 6 Home, School and Community Partnerships

*“When parents are engaged and involved, everyone benefits, and our schools become increasingly rich and positive places to teach, learn and grow.”*

*(Supporting the Ontario Leadership Strategy, 2012, p.1)*

### At the District

Districts/district leaders:

- ❖ Commit to outreach and development of partnerships with parents, guardians, family and community to support student well-being and achievement.
- ❖ Build and support home, school and community partnerships by sharing current information about student learning and achievement in an ongoing and transparent manner.
- ❖ Provide learning opportunities, resources and supports to help parents and families support student learning.
- ❖ Establish and maintain a Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) to seek the advice and ideas of parents on how to support, encourage and enhance parent engagement in support of student achievement and well-being.

### Indicator 6.1 **The School Council has a meaningful role in supporting learning, well-being and achievement for students.**

At the school:

- ❖ The School Council, in partnership with staff, consults with, listens to and assists the parent community in becoming familiar with current school and community issues and information (e.g., opportunity to learn about the School Improvement Plan).
- ❖ The School Council encourages parents' involvement in their children's learning at home and at school.
- ❖ Targets and achievement results are communicated to the school community both to build public confidence and to engage parents in supporting student learning and achievement.
- ❖ The School Council promotes increased parent involvement that reflects the diversity of the school community to support student achievement and well-being.
- ❖ The School Council identifies and works with staff to address barriers to parent and community engagement.

In the classroom:

- ❖ The School Council promotes parent and community involvement in classroom activities.

Students:

- ❖ Experience the link between home and school.
- ❖ Benefit from and/or make use of role models in the community.
- ❖ Value the contribution of parents and community members to learning and well-being.

**Indicator 6.2 Students, parents and community members are engaged and welcomed, as respected and valued partners in student learning.**

At the school:

- ❖ Various strategies are used to communicate and engage parents (e.g., informal discussions, school and/or class newsletters, websites, student agendas, surveys).
- ❖ Communication with parents is ongoing and timely.
- ❖ An ongoing assessment of parent and community engagement is conducted.
- ❖ A positive, welcoming school climate is fostered to encourage, value and consider parent and community perspectives.
- ❖ A process is in place to welcome and support new families to the school community.
- ❖ The cultural and linguistic diversity of the school and community is recognized and respected.
- ❖ A range of opportunities for parent, family and community involvement/engagement is available (e.g., hours conducive to attendance).

In the classroom:

- ❖ The classroom environment is inviting for and respectful of students, parents and community members.
- ❖ Parents and community members are invited to contribute in various activities and learning opportunities (e.g., reading mentors, math coaches, employers, story tellers).

Students:

- ❖ See themselves as valued members of the school community and take pride in representing their school.
- ❖ Identify how their culture is reflected in the learning opportunities in the classroom and school.
- ❖ Interact positively with peers, parents and community members.

**Indicator 6.3 The school and community build partnerships to enhance learning opportunities and well-being for students.**

At the school:

- ❖ Student learning and well-being are intentionally supported through the meaningful involvement of parents, families, members of the School Council and community partners.
- ❖ Participation in community activities is supported (e.g., career fairs, charity events, Skills Canada).

- ❖ Parents have opportunities to enhance their own learning and skills in order to support student learning at home and in the school.
- ❖ Processes are in place to establish partnerships (e.g., co-op placements, School College Work Initiative, Public Health Units).
- ❖ Partnerships with community organizations are established so that students and their families have access to programs and services on the school premises during and outside of regular school hours (e.g., breakfast programs, tutoring, Community Use of Schools funding).

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Learning experiences prepare students to interact positively with community partners.
- ❖ Students are provided with planned and purposeful learning experiences with community partners.

**Students:**

- ❖ Participate in and learn from interactions with community partners both in school and in community settings (e.g., community involvement graduation requirement, volunteerism).
- ❖ Students are aware of and access programs and services available to them in their school and community to support their social, emotional, cognitive and physical development.
- ❖ Demonstrate social responsibility in the school and in the community.

**Indicator 6.4 Learning opportunities, resources and supports are provided to help parents support student learning and have productive parent-teacher-student conversations.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ A variety of forums and supports are available at the school and in the community (e.g., curriculum evenings, workshops, guest speakers) to deepen parents' understanding of the teaching, learning and assessment processes.
- ❖ Parents have opportunities to expand their own learning (e.g., sessions on parenting skills, internet safety, nutrition).
- ❖ Ongoing communication and outreach activities increase engagement and build effective school-parent-family relationships.
- ❖ Focus on intentional, positive engagement with parents and the community.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ A variety of methods are used to engage parents' support for student learning (e.g., class website, conferences, newsletter).
- ❖ Information about courses/units of study is shared with parents to support student learning (e.g., big ideas, learning goals, success criteria).
- ❖ Partnerships with parents foster positive attitudes about school and improved academic achievement.

- ❖ Parents are enabled to participate fully in parent/teacher conferences (e.g., translators, babysitting, scheduling).
- ❖ Relevant and up-to-date information about education transitions is provided through parent-teacher-student conversations.

**Students:**

- ❖ Share their learning with their parents/families.
- ❖ Demonstrate engagement in parent-teacher-student conversations.
- ❖ Make connections between the learning at home and the learning at school.

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*“Parents need to hold high aspirations and expectations for their children, and schools need to work in partnership with parents so that the home and the school can share in these expectations and support learning.”*

Hattie, 2009, p. 70

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# 3

## Part 3

# District Process

### The District Steering Committee

Districts create a District Steering Committee and may, in addition, create one or more district process teams. The composition of the steering committee is determined by the board. Since educators' federations and support staff unions have a vested interest in the quality of schools, districts are encouraged to include the federations and unions in their efforts to engage in a process that is collegial, collaborative, equitable, and inclusive.

### The District Steering Committee:

- ❖ assists with the overall plan for the implementation of the SEF (K-12), including reviewing the range of supports for schools' self-assessments
- ❖ has in-depth knowledge of the board improvement plan
- ❖ develops protocols for the process, timelines, implementation and follow-up for School Self-Assessments in all schools and District Processes in selected schools
- ❖ provides orientation and professional learning for those that will serve on the district process teams.

### Suggested District Process

#### Pre-Meeting

- ❖ Review the data, plans and progress from the school's self-assessment process, as well as any evidence the school has prepared to share with the District Team.
- ❖ The District Team, in consultation with the principal and school team, will learn about the impact to date of the staff's implementation strategies.

The school may provide information about the following:

- ❖ any local conditions that are noteworthy
- ❖ the alignment of the selected SEF indicators/components to the School Improvement Plan
- ❖ data and evidence of where they are now and how they know
- ❖ results of the school self-assessment process

- ❖ revisions made to the School Improvement Plan as a result of the self-assessment process
- ❖ information on where they intend to be by the end of term/semester/year.

### Determining Scope of District Process

The school team and the District Team work together, using the school's completed self-assessment to determine collaboratively the areas of focus and related evidence to be collected during the school visit.

### School Visits

The District Team conducts a school visit to collect data and observations to be analyzed by team members. Consideration is given to:

- ❖ student work that is available and/or on display
- ❖ what the students are engaged in and learning
- ❖ other evidence identified by staff during the pre-visit meeting.

At the end of the visit, the District Team meets to discuss and consolidate observations and to prepare feedback that will be shared with staff.

### Feedback to Staff

The District Team provides first verbal and then written feedback to the staff to support school planning and the implementation of improvement strategies.

The conversation may include:

- ❖ general observations of the district team related to the indicators identified in the SIP
- ❖ evidence of student learning and well-being
- ❖ areas of strength in the implementation of the School Improvement Plan
- ❖ degree of consistency between and among grades/divisions/departments
- ❖ suggestions for next steps.

The written summary report should provide:

- ❖ a summary of strengths
- ❖ suggestions for next steps
- ❖ recommendations for supporting staff capacity-building
- ❖ a concluding statement about the effectiveness of the school in implementing its plan for improving student learning and achievement.

It is recommended that the summary report be provided in a timely fashion so that it remains relevant and responsive to the process.

## Analysis of Feedback

The principal and educators work together to analyze the report feedback for the purpose of sharpening the focus, setting the direction for capacity-building and developing actions that will be incorporated into the cycle of ongoing school improvement planning and implementation.

Sample questions to stimulate school dialogue:

- ❖ What new information about our students' learning and well-being do we have?
- ❖ What can we learn from this information?
- ❖ What actions will we take and why?
- ❖ What further opportunities are there for precision, personalization and professional learning?
- ❖ Will our targets be revised? Why?
- ❖ What will we do differently by the end of the current term/semester/school year?
- ❖ How will we know that student learning has been impacted by what we have done?
- ❖ How will we monitor our progress?
- ❖ What student work/evidence will we gather for analysis of growth in student learning achievement and well-being based on the actions implemented?
- ❖ What revisions will we make to our school plan to monitor student learning and achievement for continuous improvement?

## Follow-up and Support by the Superintendent of Schools

The Superintendent of Schools plays an important role in school improvement and monitoring of student learning and achievement throughout the school self-assessment and district processes. Follow-up and support may include making board resources available to support the revised school plan, aligning board and school capacity-building efforts and creating opportunities for shared learning across schools.

## Review of the Process

Results from the District Process are analyzed to determine trends and patterns to inform:

- ❖ board improvement planning and capacity-building needs
- ❖ allocation of resources (human, material, financial) to schools for the next school year through the board's budget process
- ❖ expectations and supports for coaching and monitoring.

# 4

## Part 4 Glossary

**Accommodations** refer to teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and/or individualized equipment required to enable a student to learn and to demonstrate learning. The provincial curriculum expectations for the grade are not altered for a student receiving accommodations. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/learningforall2011.pdf> p.143

**Accountability** refers to transparent processes that lead to individual and collective responsibility for strong evidence-based practice and continuous improvement in student learning and achievement and ensures accountability on the part of everyone responsible for student learning. This means that staff engages in systematic, continuous improvement in the quality of the educational experience of students and participates in the discipline of measuring their success by the metric of students' academic performance and well-being.

**Alignment** can be broadly defined as the degree to which the components of an education system – such as standards, curricula, assessments, and instruction – work together to achieve desired goals. When there is alignment, there is a greater likelihood of sustained progress (Fullan, Hill, Crévola 2006).

**Assessment** refers to the process of gathering information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the curriculum expectations in a subject or course. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.143-144

*Assessment as Learning* refers to the process of developing and supporting student metacognition. Students are actively engaged in this assessment process: that is, they monitor their own learning; use assessment feedback from teacher, self, and peers to determine next steps; and set individual learning goals. *Assessment as learning* requires students to have a clear understanding of the learning goals and the success criteria. *Assessment as learning* focuses on the role of the student as the critical connector between assessment and learning.

*Assessment for Learning* is the ongoing process of gathering and interpreting evidence about student learning for the purpose of determining where students are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there. The information gathered is used by teachers to provide feedback and adjust instruction and by students to focus their learning. *Assessment for learning* is a high-yield instructional strategy that takes place while the student is still learning and serves to promote learning.

*Assessment of Learning* is the process of collecting and interpreting evidence for the purpose of summarizing learning at a given point in time, to make judgements about the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria, and to assign a value to represent that quality. The information gathered may be used to communicate the student's achievement to parents, other teachers, students and themselves.

**Authentic Learning Experiences** are intentionally designed to be meaningful to the life of the student (contextualized) and connected to real-life questions and issues. Authentic learning experiences encourage collaborative effort, dialogue with informed expert sources and generalization to broader areas and application. The digital resources including a variety of emerging communication, visualization, and simulation technologies now make it easier to offer students authentic learning experiences ranging from experimentation to real-world problem solving.

**Bansho** literally means board writing in Japanese. It is an important instructional tool used to organize students' mathematical thinking. Such board writing includes the use of mathematical expressions, figures, and diagrams of students' solutions and strategies to a lesson problem on a large-size chalkboard or dry erase board. This written record is derived from the students' perspective for the purpose of facilitating a simultaneous comparison of multiple solution methods. Such facilitation enables the students' discovery of new mathematical ideas and deepens the students' mathematical understanding. Because the chalkboard is a written record of the entire lesson, it gives both the students and teacher a whole view of the class' mathematical discussion throughout the lesson. Also, it fosters student note-taking skills by modelling effective organization.

**Barriers** are obstacles to equity that may be overt or subtle, intended or unintended, and systemic or specific to an individual or group, and that prevents or limits access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other members of society.

**Bias refers** to an opinion, preference, prejudice, or inclination that limits an individual's or a group's ability to make fair, objective, or accurate judgements.

**Big Ideas** are the broad, enduring understandings that should be retained even if the many details of study may not be. Big ideas go beyond discrete facts or skills or fragments of knowledge; they focus on larger concepts, principles or processes that develop over time and support students in future learning endeavours. The curriculum expectations and the instructional focus are the building blocks that deepen understanding of the big ideas. Big ideas are transferable beyond the scope of a particular unit of study. Big Ideas can be thought of as the meaningful patterns that enable one to connect the dots of otherwise fragmented knowledge.

**Class Profile** is an information gathering and planning tool that provides a snapshot of the strengths, needs, interests, and readiness to learn of each of the students in a class, as well as strategies, accommodations, and resources to use with each student. A class profile is both a reference tool for planning assessment and instruction and a tracking tool for monitoring changes throughout the year.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/LearningforAll2011.pdf> p.58

**Coherence** is the logical connections among parts and is a precondition to implementing change. It involves a tri-level understanding and commitment. When coherence occurs, there is a flow and a sense of direction rather than missed messages, turbulence and confusion. (Fullan, Hill, Crévola, 2006).

**Collaborative Inquiry** (as professional learning) is a process in which a group of educators studies its practice and shares results of its studies to deepen the understanding of every group member in order to refine practice in a way that will respond to student learning needs.

**Collaborative Instructional Leadership** is a particular type of influence process in which principal and educators engage in collaborative work focused on student learning and achievement across grade levels through reflection, dialogue and inquiry.

**Common Assessments** are based on the Ontario Curriculum and are designed by two or more teachers. Common assessments include collaborative work to build consistency around balanced assessment practices and common understanding of learning goals through the development of criteria which informs the co-construction of rich assessments *for, as and of* learning.

### **Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP)**

Theorists and practitioners of CRRP recognize that all children learn differently. These differences can be connected to a student's background, language, family structure and a host of various social identities that are present in Ontario classrooms. As part of the CRP framework these dimensions of diversity are seen as strengths and possibilities for enhancing learning rather than challenges for the teacher and/or as deficits of the student or particular communities. This student centred approach to instruction is one where the 'cultural' uniqueness of each student is not just acknowledged and celebrated but more importantly nurtured such that teachers are able to create effective conditions for learning to be successful facilitators of student learning. (Brown-Jeffy and Cooper, 2006; Lynch 2011)

**Deep Understanding** reflects having sufficient grasp of concepts, principles, or skills in order to bring them to bear on new problems and situations and to do a variety of thought-demanding things with a topic – like explaining, finding evidence and examples, generalizing, applying concepts, analysing, and representing a topic in a new way.

**Diagnostic Assessment** is used to identify a student's needs and abilities and the student's readiness to acquire the knowledge and skills outlined in the curriculum expectations. Diagnostic assessment usually takes place at the start of a school year, term, semester, or teaching unit. It is a key tool used by teachers in planning instruction and setting appropriate learning goals. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.146

**Differentiated instruction (DI)** is a teaching approach that adapts instruction and assessment in response to differing student interests, learning preferences, and readiness in order to promote growth in learning. [www.edugains.ca](http://www.edugains.ca) Differentiated Instruction Educator's Guide (2010), p.1. and <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/LearningforAll2011.pdf> Learning for All, 2011(Draft) p.58.

**Diversity** refers to the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.146

**Descriptive Feedback** helps students learn by providing them with precise information about what they are doing well, what needs improvement, and what specific steps they can take to improve. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> Growing Success p. 34

**Education and Career/Life Planning Program** is a purposefully designed and documented program that supports students in acquiring knowledge and skills required to make informed education and career/life choices. This includes knowing yourself, exploring opportunities, making decisions, setting goals and achieving goals

**Equity** is a condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/LearningforAll2011.pdf> p. 58

**Evaluation** refers to the process of judging the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria and assigning a value to represent that quality. Evaluation is based on assessments of learning that provide data on student achievement at strategic times throughout the grade/subject/ course, often at the end of a period of learning.  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.147

**Evidence-based Strategies** are practices that are supported by research and/or inquiry and experiences in classrooms, schools and school boards that have been validated over time.

**Exemplars** are samples of authentic student work that illustrate the intended quality of work as described by the success criteria or assessment tool.

**Experiential Learning** is an activity in which students learn from an experience, reflect on the learning and then apply that learning to new situations.

**Formative Assessment** takes place during Instruction in order to provide direction for helping students improve while they are still gaining knowledge and practising skills. (See Assessment for Learning) <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.147

**Four-Step Inquiry Process for Education and Career/Life Planning** is a conceptual framework built on four questions linked to the four areas of learning in education and career/life planning:

- 1) Who am I?
- 2) What are my opportunities
- 3) Who do I want to become?
- 4) What is my plan in achieving my goals?

**Foundations for a Healthy School** includes the following components:

- ❖ High-Quality Instruction and Programs
- ❖ Healthy Physical Environment
- ❖ Supportive Social Environment
- ❖ Community Partnerships

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/foundations.pdf>

**Global Mindedness** refers to a world view in which an individual perceives him or herself as connected to the world community and is aware of his or her responsibility for its members. It involves being literate about and respectful of the cultures with which one interacts. Students must have the knowledge and skills to investigate the world in robust ways, to recognize and weigh their own perspectives as well as the perspectives of others, to communicate ideas effectively to diverse audiences in multiple ways, and to take action in order to not just learn about the world but to make a difference in the world.

**Gradual Release of Responsibility** refers to a process that involves scaffolding instruction and providing appropriate amounts of support to students based on their needs. For example, the teacher first models a new strategy, then explicitly teaches and works with students. The teacher then coaches students as they attempt to complete tasks on their own. Finally, students work independently, with feedback from the teacher. This process occurs over time in relation to the depth and breadth of the intended learning.  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.147

**Higher-Order Thinking** refers to the transformation of information and ideas that occurs when students combine facts and ideas and use them to synthesize, generalize, explain, hypothesize, or arrive at some conclusion or interpretation. By manipulating information and ideas through these processes, students are able to solve problems, acquire understanding and discover new meaning. In contrast, lower-order thinking occurs when students are asked to receive or recite factual information or to employ rules and algorithms through repetitive routines.

**Inclusive Education** is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.148

**Individual Education Plan (IEP)** is a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student, including a record of the particular accommodations needed to help the student achieve his or her learning expectations.  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/LearningforAll2011.pdf> p.59

**Information Communication Technology** is a general term that describes any technology that helps to produce, manipulate, store, communicate, and/or disseminate information.

**Inquiry-Based Learning** engages students in asking questions and problem solving to build knowledge. [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS\\_StudentInquiry.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_StudentInquiry.pdf)

**Job-Embedded Professional Learning** is learning by doing, reflecting on the experience, and then generating and sharing new insights and learning with others.  
[http://eworkshop.on.ca/edu/pdf/Mod42\\_prof\\_learn.pdf](http://eworkshop.on.ca/edu/pdf/Mod42_prof_learn.pdf)

**Learning Goals** are brief statements that describe for a student what he or she should know and be able to do by the end of a period of instruction (e.g., a lesson, series of lessons, or subtask). The goals represent subsets or clusters of knowledge and skills that the student must master to successfully achieve the overall curriculum expectations.  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf>

**Mathematical Processes** refers to problem solving, reasoning and proving, reflecting, selecting tools and computational strategies, connecting, representing and communicating – the processes through which students acquire and apply mathematical knowledge and skills. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/studentsuccess/lms/processes.pdf>

**Metacognition** refers to the process of thinking about one's own thought processes. Metacognitive skills include the ability to monitor one's own learning.  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.149

**Moderation** is an assessment strategy that involves educators coming together to collaboratively look at student work or the tasks assigned to students in order to assess the work or align the tasks to the curriculum. See also Teacher Moderation.

**Moodle** is a free open source course management system and it is used to produce websites and Internet-based courses. Guided by a social constructionist philosophy of learning (that is, explaining ideas to someone else as a method to learn it yourself: constructing something for someone else to understand and experience), Moodle is designed to help educators create effective online learning communities. The focus of Moodle is on the learner's perspective.

**Parent Engagement** supports student learning and public confidence by involving parents in the implementation of the equity and inclusive education strategy. Through school councils and parent involvement committees, parents are encouraged to provide advice to educators on how to support and promote equity and inclusive education. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.pdf> p. 26

**Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)** is an important advisory body that operates as a direct link between parents and a board's director of education and its trustees. Where school councils focus on the local school and community, PICs participate at the board level and focus on things that affect more than one school. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/PIC.html>

**Pathways Thinking** promotes success in school and life, It is essential for Ontario schools to provide each student with the opportunities and support to plan their individual pathway through school and to make a successful transition to their initial post-secondary destination. This "Pathways Thinking" includes:

- ❖ Supporting students in identifying their personal interests, strengths, abilities and aspirations and using this knowledge of themselves to inform their choice of learning opportunities and programs.
- ❖ Providing a range of diverse and engaging learning opportunities, courses and programs both in and out of school that meet the interests, strengths, needs and aspirations of the students and honours all postsecondary destinations – apprenticeship training, college, community living, university, and the workplace.

**Portfolio** refers to a collection of samples of student work that the student, with teacher support, carefully selects and adds to on an ongoing basis to track what the student has learned throughout the year. Both educators and students assess the work in portfolios. Because students are asked to actively reflect on their learning in order to choose the samples that will go into the portfolio, a portfolio is an especially powerful self-assessment tool. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.152

**Procedural Fluency** is considered to be a characteristic of mathematical literacy. It involves the ability to carry out procedures (e.g., multiplication, addition) flexibly, accurately, efficiently and appropriately.

**Professional Judgement** refers to judgement that is informed by professional knowledge of curriculum expectations, context, evidence of learning, methods of instruction and assessment, and the criteria and standards that indicate success in student learning. In professional practice, judgement involves a purposeful and systematic thinking process that evolves in terms of accuracy and insight with ongoing reflection and self-correction. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.152

**Performance Task** is an authentic problem, or challenge that requires students to demonstrate their understanding by applying knowledge and skills to real-life situations or scenarios. Performance tasks usually address all four categories of the achievement chart and several overall curriculum expectations and provide flexibility in how students can demonstrate their learning. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.153

**Safe Schools Strategy** includes creating policies and practices that enable a positive learning environment where students are welcomed, feel safe and free from harassment/bullying. It also includes the use of sample school climate surveys to help principals assess perceptions of safety by students, parents, and school staff to inform prevention and intervention plans. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/safeschools.html>

**Scaffolding** refers to an instructional approach that involves breaking down tasks so that students can concentrate on specific, manageable learning goals and gradually build understanding and skill, with the aid of modelling by the teacher and ample opportunity for practice. Scaffolding provides students with a supportive structure within which to learn leading to a gradual release responsibility <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.153

**School Climate** includes the learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions. Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in the learning environment to support a positive school climate and a culture of mutual respect. (PPM 144) <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/144.pdf>

**School Council** is an advisory body to the school and school board. They provide a forum through which parents and other members of school community can contribute to improving student achievement and well-being at the school level.

**Special Education Program** is a program for an exceptional pupil that is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation, and that includes a plan containing specific objectives and an outline of educational services that meet the needs of the exceptional student. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.153

**Special Education Services** refers to facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.153

**Student Self-Assessment** refers to a process by which a student, with the ongoing support of the teacher, learns to recognize, describe, and apply success criteria related to particular learning goals and then use the information to monitor his or her own progress towards achieving the learning goals, make adjustments in learning approaches, and set individual goals for learning. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.154

**Student Engagement** is the extent to which students identify with and value schooling outcomes, have a sense of belonging at school, participate in academic and non-academic activities, strive to meet the formal requirements of schooling and make a serious personal investment in learning. Willms, Friesen and Milton (2009) identify three dimensions of student engagement:

- ❖ Social engagement: A sense of belonging and participation in school life
- ❖ Academic or Institutional engagement: Participation in the formal requirements of schooling

- ❖ Intellectual engagement: A serious emotional and cognitive investment in learning, using higher order thinking skills (such as analysis and evaluation) to increase understanding, solve complex problems, or construct new knowledge

**Student Well-Being** represents a balanced state of social-emotional, physical and cognitive well-being. A holistic concept that is multi-dimensional ( Student well-being Framework, 2009). It means having a positive sense of how students feel, think and act which improves their ability to enjoy life and reach their full potential in the school and broader community. Optimal student well-being is characterized by positive attitudes about school, positive relationships with peers and teachers, resilience, and satisfaction with self and learning experiences at school. (Noble et al., 2008).

**Success Criteria** refers to standards or specific descriptions of successful attainment of learning goals developed by teachers informed by the criteria in the achievement chart, discussed and agreed upon in collaboration with students. They are used to determine to what degree a learning goal(s) has been achieved in relation to students work. Criteria describe what success “looks like”, and allow the teacher and student to gather information about student progress and the quality of student learning.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.155

**Summative Assessment** refers to an evaluation that occurs at the end of important segments of student learning. It is used to summarize and communicate what students know and can do with respect to curriculum expectations.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.155

**Targets** are set using a wide variety of data and represent the intended improvement in student learning. They are achieved by the focused efforts of staff, parents and students themselves.

**Teacher moderation** is a process for ensuring that the assessment of student learning and the results of assessment and evaluation are comparable across classes and/or schools. In teacher moderation, educators examine student work together to share beliefs and practices, enhance their understanding, compare their interpretations of student results, and confirm their judgements about a student’s level of achievement. Educators might also look at the assignment that was given and analyse its effectiveness in relation to the learning achieved by the students. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growsuccess.pdf> p.155

**The Tiered Approach** refers to a systematic, sequential instructional approach that uses specific instructional interventions of increasing intensity to address students’ needs. It can be used to address either the academic or the behavioural needs of students who are having difficulty. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/LearningforAll2011.pdf> p. 60

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** refers to a teaching approach that focuses on using teaching strategies and/or pedagogical materials designed to meet special needs to enhance learning for *all* students, regardless of age, skills, or situation. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/LearningforAll2011.pdf> p. 60

# 5

## Part 5

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