# MASS Journal

Fall 2019

The official magazine of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents

# Building Capacity in Instructional Leadership

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# MASS Journal

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**On the cover:** Leaders in Hanover School Division are working together to build collective efficacy. Learn more starting on page 16. This issue's cover features (clockwise): Graham Sereda, Vice Principal at Niverville High School; Craig Cumming, Vice Principal at Niverville Middle School; Jolene Kehler, Vice Principal at Niverville Elementary School; Tracy Beaudin, Principal at Niverville Elementary School; Kimberly Funk, Principal at Niverville High School; Michael Koester, Principal at Niverville Middle School; Colin Campbell, Assistant Superintendent; and Shelley Amos, Assistant Superintendent. *Photo by Alexandra Kozub.*

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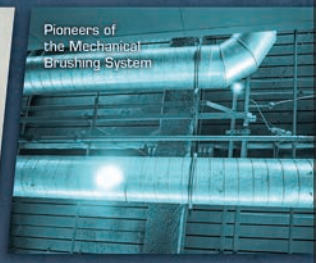


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# Through the articles in this issue, you will see there is always more to learn.

I'm honoured to be in the role of president of MASS and look forward to engaging the many new superintendents and assistant superintendents across the province as you are introduced to the supports and leadership offered by MASS.

The theme for this issue of *MASS Journal* is building capacity in instructional leadership. The articles support the work we have already begun at MASS. This summer we met with Dr. Steven Katz, a director with the international research and evaluation firm Aporia Consulting Ltd. and a faculty member in the Applied Psychology and Human Development department at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. Dr. Katz's research, which fits in with this issue's theme, shows that visible and public learning through promoting and participating in teacher development is the most powerful thing leaders do that links to student achievement. We agree.

We are anticipating the Manitoba Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education report early in the new year. For Manitoba's children, I hope many of the recommendations put forth by the stakeholders in education are included in the report. I encourage you to review MASS's submission, which can be found at www.mass.mb.ca. Our long-term vision remains constant: education involves both the acquisition of knowledge and understanding and the formation of character in order to live a successful life in concert with other people.

As leaders, we are also learning how to learn through our various inquiry cycles. Plan. Act. Assess. Reflect. As we heard from Dr. Katz, what you tried might not have worked, but you learned from it, you refined the practice and you went back in, continuing the cycle. Through the articles in this issue, you will see there is always more to learn.

Wishing you a great school year!

**Pauline Clarke**
President of MASS
Chief Superintendent/CEO, Winnipeg School Division

J'ai l'honneur d'occuper le poste de présidente de la Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS) et je suis impatiente d'établir le contact avec les nombreux nouveaux surintendants et directeurs généraux adjoints de la province qui s'apprêtent à découvrir les mesures de soutien et d'encadrement offerts par notre association.

Le présent numéro du *MASS Journal* a pour thème le renforcement des capacités en matière de leadership pédagogique. Les articles vont dans le sens des travaux déjà en cours à la MASS. Cet été, nous avons rencontré Steven Katz, l'un des administrateurs du cabinet international de recherche et d'évaluation Aporia Consulting Ltd. et membre du corps professoral du département de psychologie appliquée et de développement humain de l'Institut d'études pédagogiques de l'Ontario de l'Université de Toronto. Les recherches de M. Katz, qui cadrent avec le thème de ce numéro, montrent que l'apprentissage visible et public par l'encouragement du perfectionnement des enseignants et par leur participation aux activités de perfectionnement est, de toutes les choses que font les leaders, la plus porteuse quant à ses liens avec les réalisations des élèves. Et nous sommes du même avis.

Nous attendons le rapport de la Commission sur l'éducation de la maternelle à la 12e année du Manitoba au début de la nouvelle année. J'ose espérer, pour le bien des enfants de la province, que bon nombre des recommandations des intervenants en éducation seront incluses dans ce rapport. Je vous invite à prendre connaissance du mémoire de la MASS, que vous trouverez à l'adresse www.mass.mb.ca. Notre vision à long terme demeure la même : l'éducation implique à la fois l'acquisition du savoir et la compréhension et la formation du caractère pour réussir dans la vie en coopération avec d'autres personnes.

En tant que leaders, nous apprenons nous aussi à apprendre au fil des différentes étapes du cycle d'enquête que sont la planification, l'action, l'évaluation et la réflexion. Comme l'a dit M. Katz, peutêtre avezvous que tenté quelque chose qui n'a pas marché, mais vous en avez tiré des leçons, vous avez affiné la pratique et vous vous êtes remis à la tâche en poursuivant le cycle. À la lecture des articles de ce numéro, vous verrez qu'il y a toujours plus à apprendre.

Je vous souhaite une excellente année scolaire.

**Pauline Clarke**
Présidente de la MASS
Superintendante en chef/chef de l'exploitation, Division scolaire de Winnipeg

# MASS 2019-2020 Executive

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# MASS 2019-2020 Priorities

**Mission:**
MASS provides leadership for public education by advocating in the best interests of learners and supports its members through professional services.

**MASS believes that our mandate is to be leaders of learning, in our local school systems and in the broader domains of provincial, national and global public education. MASS believes a quality education empowers the whole child to constructively participate in global society.**

We model learning that is:
- Active and visible;
- Based on robust research;
- Tested through purposeful application in the field; and
- Evaluated using a wide range of meaningful data.

We take responsibility for our own continuous learning and the learning of everyone we lead:
- Creating and fostering safe, supportive, inclusive and challenging environments;
- Ensuring essential learning for each and every child; and
- Preparing others to go beyond our own learning.

We are guided by our learning in shaping policy and practice to achieve what is best for the children in our care.

**MASS believes that improved achievement and well-being for all of our students requires a shared commitment to raising both equity and quality.**
- A conscious and persistent commitment to equity, system-wide and across sectors, leads to poverty reduction, greater inclusion and an appreciation for the riches that diversity brings.
- A purposeful and sustained commitment to quality education for every student increases the capacity for teaching, learning and leading throughout the system.
- A strong grounding in literacy and numeracy and a rich learning experience involving inquiry, curiosity, creativity and artistic expression enables all students to achieve success and to flourish in life, academics and career.
- A respect for and openness to authentic youth voices and support for meaningful student action are critical for building capacity and self-efficacy in our students.

MASS actively works towards equity and quality throughout the public education system, with a special focus on three action areas:

» **Early Learning**
» **Indigenous Education**
» **Mental Health and Well-Being**

The **Early Learning Committee** will take leadership to ensure that MASS:
- Advocates for full implementation of the Calls to Action in the MASS position paper on Early Childhood Education.
- Participates actively on the Provincial Educaring Committee.

The **Indigenous Education Committee** will take leadership to ensure that MASS:
- Builds capacity in MASS and school divisions to address the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.
- Promotes ever increasing academic achievement, graduation, school completion and positive life outcomes for Indigenous students, informed by collective inquiry into evidence
- Actively supports the teaching of Indigenous perspectives, corrective history and culture and the use of Indigenous languages.

The **Mental Health and Well-Being Committee** will take leadership to ensure that MASS:
- Advocates for an implementation of a comprehensive provincial Children and Youth Mental Health Strategy.
- Collaborates with The Education for Sustainable Well-Being Research Group at the University of Manitoba and Manitoba Education and Training to develop tools and indicators for assessing the well-being and well-becoming of students in schools.
- Pursues inter-sectoral liaisons with public and mental health organizations and agencies.
- Contributes to a national voice on mental health through CASSA and through input into the Canadian Mental Health Strategy.
- Promotes Mental Health Literacy in mental health for all educators and pre-service educators.
- Renewing MASS Mental Health position paper and calls to action. ■

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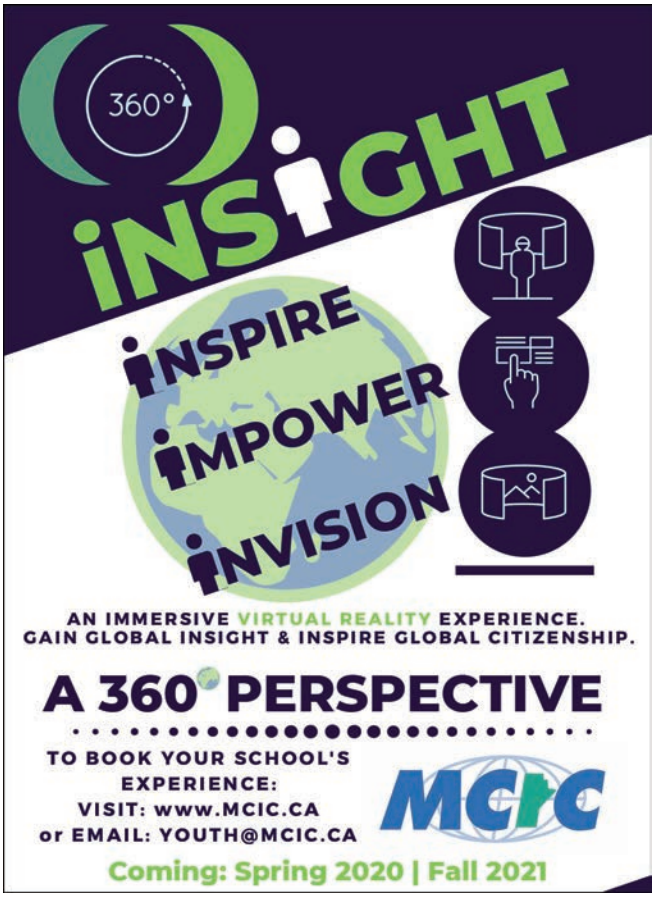
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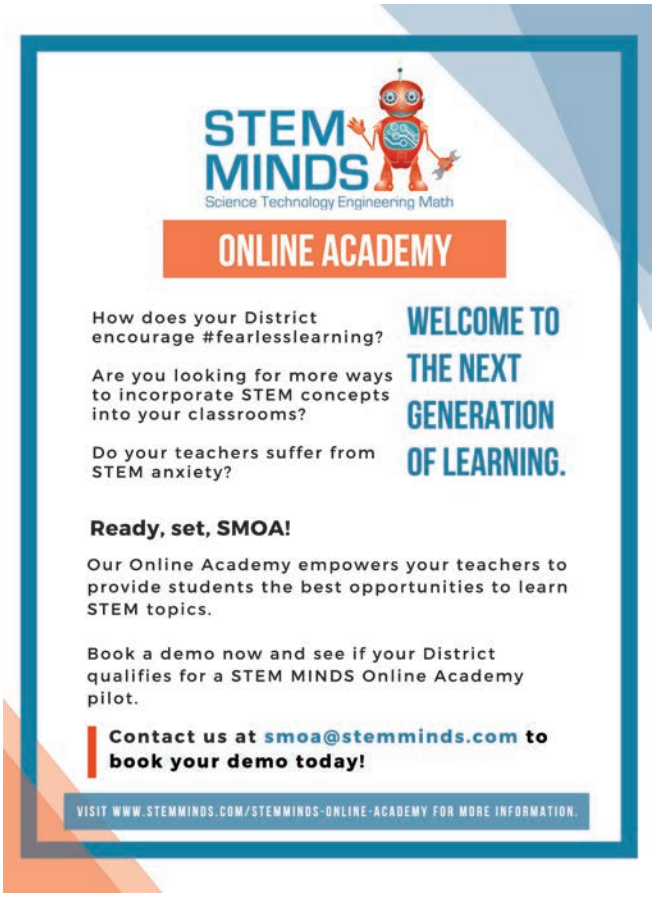
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# Continuous Improvement Review:

## A New Approach to Align School Improvement and Divisional Action Plans

**By Iain Riffel and Susan Schmidt, Pembina Trails School Division**

The purpose of this article is to share a collaborative model and process for aligning divisional programs and student services initiatives to school-based improvement planning and vice versa. An application for using divisional and school-based data on engagement, graduation, literacy and numeracy, within the demographic context of individual school communities and from multiple sources, is shared.

### Background

Prior to 2018-19, school improvement planning in the Pembina Trails School Division was largely led by school administrators. Senior administrative leadership provided entry points to early adopters and leveraged mandates and opportunities.

Pembina Trails had established several structures over several years to focus on student learning, reflective practices and data. For example, in Kindergarten to Grade 8, an initiative called Strong Beginnings took place where students attended an hour session with their teacher to assess where the child is at regarding literacy and numeracy. After assessments were completed, the division then provided substitute time for school teams to develop class profiles based on Faye Brownlee's model.

Goals, programming plans and supports were articulated. The purpose of this experience was for both the teacher and team to examine how to improve learning in the class. During this process, the team pushed each other and created a culture of collaboration in the school community that focused on high yield teaching practices that promoted inclusion and student success.

In the fall of each school year, school administrators shared their school plan with their assigned senior administrator. They further reported on the challenges and successes of the plan through school profile meetings in the spring, which often included other staff members and sometimes students. Written reports were submitted in the fall using Manitoba's school planning framework. This was followed up with a template provided by the division that sought to align school improvement initiatives to the division's three expectations for student learning, which focussed on intellectual/personal engagement, graduation, literacy and numeracy.

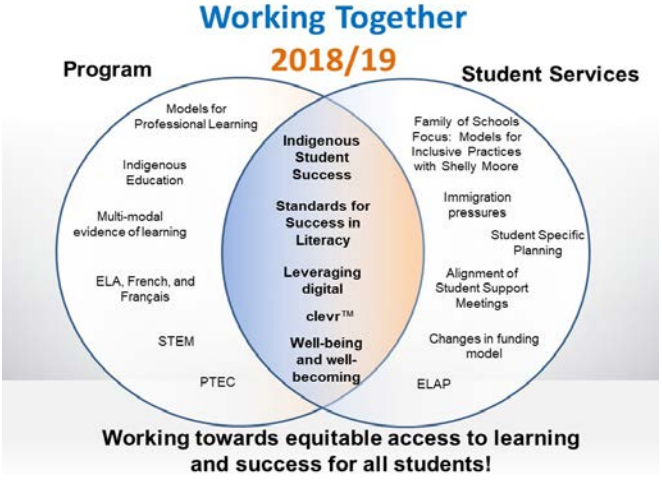
In the spring, senior administrators, student services consultants and school teams, including administrators, staff and sometimes students, met to review the success of the school profile. These meetings offered the opportunity to celebrate the successes of the learning of staff and students, set goals, further articulate professional learning needs and provide the division with trends of needs and successes.

Although there were many efforts and gains in aligning school improvement plans, processes and efforts across schools to the divisional initiatives, over time the value of this time seemed to lose purpose, and the division reflected on new options for the future. As a result, beginning in 2018-19, senior administration introduced a new school improvement planning and reporting cycle to school administrators called Continuous Improvement Review (CIR) meetings.

### Model

In keeping with Manitoba Education and Training's new approach and expectations for reporting on divisional improvement planning, CIR meetings were scheduled between school leaders and a consistent team of senior administration representing program and student services portfolios. Previous school planning and profile meetings were abandoned. Representation of clinical staff, consultants, program leaders, student services teachers, classroom teachers and sometimes students was no longer required.

CIR meetings were scheduled after the first term reporting period. In timing these, the senior administration team was mindful of other important divisionally led planning



cycles that required the focus of school administrators and any other requirements that could draw the attention away from their day to day work.

### Purpose

As was shared with school administrators, the purpose of CIR meetings was to:

- Align repetitive structures and redundant exercises;
- Create consistency;
- Develop and support what is required divisionally;
- Develop and support local capacity and leadership; and,
- Improve student success in achievement, engagement and graduation indicators.

### Information folder

A folder of information for common reference points was shared with school administrators that included:

- The Baragar District Intelligence demographic report, which is based on 2011-2016 census data and September 2017 EIS;
- EDI at early year level (February 2017);
- Provincial formative assessments at early year, middle year and senior year level (June 2018);
- Tell Them From Me (TTFM) survey results (June 2018);
- Thought Exchange Reports (online only, June 2018);
- A School Community Report (June 2018); and
- The School Plan (October 2018).

Aspects of the divisional action plan were also shared with the understanding that school improvement plans would explicitly reflect these priorities with a commitment on the part of the senior administration team to hold focus on these educational priorities throughout the school year.

### Process

In preparation for each meeting, the Assistant Superintendent—Program and Assistant Superintendent—Student Services reviewed information gathered for each school from previous years' school profile meetings, acting like school-based administrators, having to answer the CIR meeting questions.

The purpose of the meeting was not to review all documents provided, line by line; it was to answer the following framing questions and make authentic connections:

- How do leaders describe the community's demographic?
  a. How is the school responsive to all student needs?
  b. How are Indigenous students fairing when compared to non-Indigenous students in belonging, success and well-being?
- What are the school's strengths, and what innovations are being pursued?
  a. Where is the school in implementing the SSL?
  b. Where is the school in implementing inclusive practices?
- In thinking about staff and student needs, what are the challenges that the school is seeking to address?
- How do divisional/provincial provided datasets and locally developed data inform the school's practice?
- What does the school require, and how will the school measure impact of its initiatives?

Each question was answered in a timed way, within an hour.

### Feedback from school administrators

School administrators reported 4.5 out of 5 in high value for both the preparation process and the meeting. The meeting resonated with single school administrators as well as administrators on teams.

One school administrative team reported that, "We loved meeting and thought the timing was great. Why? Because we have our year set up, and trends are emerging. If we share with you in early December, then we are all being more responsive for the remaining six months."

"This process provided a wider scope for looking at current practice as well as how practice may change in the future to meet student needs," said another school administrator. "I liked the more intimate meeting setting. It allowed for more reflective conversation."

Approximately half of school administrators reported requiring more information on how to link data to questions with a wish to connect any trends to multi-year planning. In addition, there is a desire to connect school-based tracked data in divisionally legitimate ways.

"It was mentioned at the meeting that some were a little uncomfortable with the

data driven questions, but I loved them," said a school administrator. "The important thing is to create a "data culture" in which we all look at results openly, honestly and without judgement. That's a tough thing to do."

Approximately half of the school administrators reported that the meetings felt rushed and that meetings should be 90 minutes long. Others expressed that the meetings should occur at school sites. Some schools wished for an additional meeting between senior administration and school staff for celebration, deeper understanding, leadership development, relationship making and representation of voices and school/team strengths.

As one school administrator reported, "I appreciate change and how we can improve on processes to enable efficiencies and to create more efficient data sets to inform better decision making. Time is always a limitation and I am not sure what the answer is for this. This process was focused on managing time, which I felt was important. However, I am not sure there was enough time to give all the information justice."

## Conclusion

At a MASS Metro Regional meeting, Pembina Trails learned about a strategy from River East Transcona School Division, where the Assistant Superintendent responsible synthesized information through their school improvement planning/reporting process to inform planning with other senior administrators. Pembina Trails is much appreciative of this idea. The approach broadened the original intent for impact and offered tangible improvements for the senior administrative team and Board of Trustees.

Without question, the CIR meetings and process were worthwhile and will continue. There is a need to develop second generation questions for administrative teams that are the same from 2018-19 to 2019-20.

As one school administrator said, "It would be nice for this to be a multi-year process recognizing where administration is in their cycle and to have a collaborative look at multiple school plans, especially schools with similar profiles." ■

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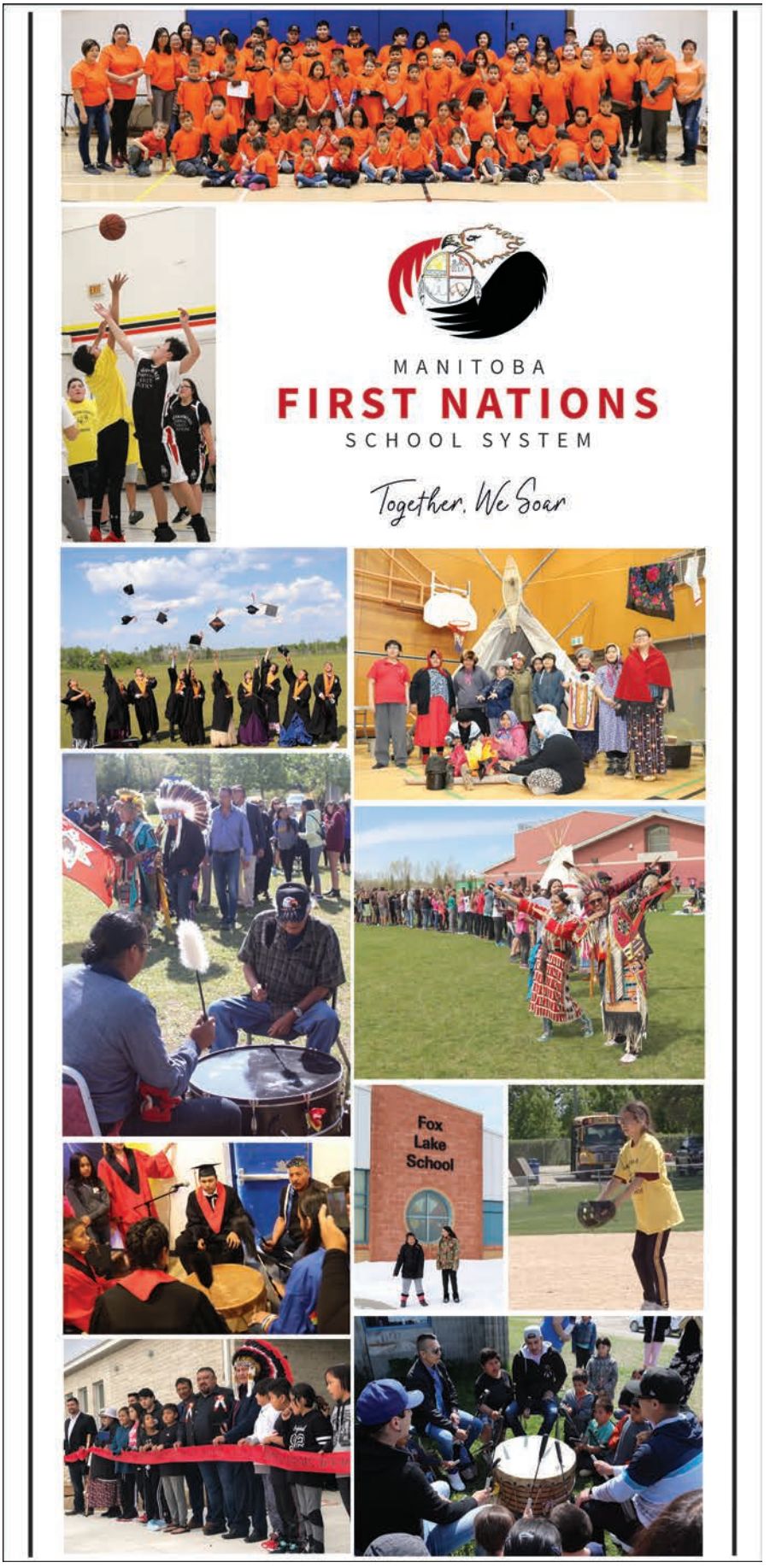
*Iain Riffel is Assistant Superintendent – Program in the Pembina Trails School Division. Susan Schmidt retired in July 2019 from her role as Assistant Superintendent – Student Services.*



# My Evergreen Classroom: Teacher Voice and Peer Walk-throughs as Instructional Leadership

**By Sandra Herbst, Connect 2Learning; with Scott Hill, Evergreen School Division; and Roza Gray, Evergreen School Division**

What counts, what matters, what is important in classrooms in Evergreen School Division to support effective teaching and learning? This question is the central focus of our efforts to re-calibrate what it is that we stand for as a school division.

Until now, we have relied on the language of others: Framework for Teaching and the Effective Teaching Practices Framework.[1] However, the adoption of others' statements is inconsistent with our understanding that quality assessment practices demand the deep involvement of the learner.

So, how could we walk the talk? In what ways could we bring alignment between our leadership action and the expectations that we had for our teachers? Finally, how could we leverage strong instructional practices at the system level?

The responses to these questions directed the process we followed, which sustained us over the past three years. In other words, our description would be the product of a process that honoured our current status, was inclusive, reflected the best of what research offered and nudged us to something even better.

Because the description that follows is placed on this page—a one-dimensional surface—it can convey a sense of something linear. This is far from the truth; each "step" was punctuated with rounds of feedback and adjustment. Plans evolved—prior actions were revisited and assessed to inform course corrections. Different voices offered counsel. However, what did not change was the goal: a "homegrown" description of effective teaching that could both inform and inspire.

- The question, "What counts, what matters, what is important in effective classroom teaching and learning?" was given to each school principal to take to their respective faculties. Staff engaged in conversations to uncover the important classroom practices in their school. Responses varied; however, no voice was turned away.
- School leaders and members of the superintendents' departments worked with the overwhelming pile of ideas. Simply put, this was a research undertaking; we were not only sorting the ideas but also discerning patterns and trends among the hundreds of strips of paper. Additionally, this group sought to identify what had not been stated, in other words: "What might be missing? Where is current pedagogical research pointing?"
- These ideas, roughly sorted, were brought back to smaller groups of teachers identified by the local teachers' association. Their role was to refine the lists, eliminate perceived duplication, add statements that were deemed to be missing, and refine the language so that it would be understood by their membership. Most importantly though, and perhaps most difficult, was to distill each list into a statement(s) that would honour not only the literal meaning of the ideas, but also the spirit of those ideas.
- This emerging list of eight concepts created a draft—a foundation—that would serve as a basis of continued discussion for over one school year. For some, it acted as a place from which to build their professional growth plans; for others, it helped to inform meeting agendas; for the group of school leaders it became the basis of a continued inquiry into how to provide

*Learning Today to Improve Tomorrow*

high degrees of feedback to teachers in the learning walk (walk-through) process. Following that year of "field testing" the document, slight revisions were made.

- Currently, we are engaging in processes of discovery and further inquiry. What specific instructional strategies support the statements of My Evergreen Classroom? What can each statement mean practically in the life of busy and complex learning environments? In order to do this, we are once again leveraging the voices of all teachers in our schools.
- Not unlike the way in which we began, our principals have gathered from all of their teachers the strategies that they believe bring My Evergreen Classroom to life. As recently as August 2019, 60 teachers gathered to review these contributions and engage with one another to consider additions. This work will continue so that in the end each statement will be accompanied by a handful of high-leverage strategies that can be adapted and applied across grade levels and subject areas, along with short video clips that will further illustrate the strategy taking place in our classrooms.

As stated earlier, we have been intentionally gathering feedback to adjust plans and next steps and to annotate our process along the way. What we notice is a gathering of momentum of anticipation, hope and excitement. As one member of the teachers' association executive said to a large group of his colleagues, "I wish that I had had this when I began teaching. It focuses my attention and my efforts and allows me to see what is important in my classroom. And it was built by us, for us."

You may be reading this and think, "This is a no brainer!" or "How could this have taken the time that it has?" or "Has this been worth it?" Truthfully, there were points along the way when we wondered these very things ourselves. We decided, though, that simply adopting another's organizations beliefs, though neat and tidy, had not been serving us well.

When challenged by some that the result is not much different than what could have been and had already been adopted, we were buoyed by the persistent research that reminds us of learner efficacy, ownership, voice and agency. In short, we were only undertaking a process that is expected in classrooms every day. Moreover, as another of the teachers reported, "Because so many teachers have had a voice in the process, it will feel like ours collectively; not something that is mandated without our input. It is an 'Evergreen School Division Brand,' if you will. And I think that is pretty special."

My Evergreen Classroom, though now stylized and in print, is simultaneously pragmatic and aspirational and, as such, will continue to evolve. To this point, it has been influenced by what we currently know. This will change over time, and, as a result, our statements may shift. Nevertheless, its evolution will meaningfully impact other practices, procedures and protocols:

- Professional growth plans;
- Principal and Peer Learning Walks;
- School presentations to the Board of Trustees; and
- Divisional professional development plans.

My Evergreen Classroom is what we want to be known for. This is our brand and our guarantee. It comes not from the words of another but is deeply rooted in language that we can all understand because it was born from all of us. As one of our teacher participants stated, "This will not only promote a better learning environment for our students, it has also fostered a healthy and positive working environment for teachers, where teacher voice is respected and valued. Going forward, by participating in opportunities like these, we, as learners and leaders, will be able to develop a powerful cycle of support for ourselves, combining our knowledge, classroom experiences and questions, collaboration, reflection and decision making, which is paramount for teacher development and student learning." ■

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*Sandra Herbst is an author, speaker, coach, mentor and consultant in her role as Senior Associate with Connect 2 Learning. Scott Hill is the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services & Curriculum in Evergreen School Division. Roza Gray is Superintendent and CEO of Evergreen School Division.*

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# Hanover School Division: Our Classroom

**By Shelley Amos and Colin Campbell, Hanover School Division**

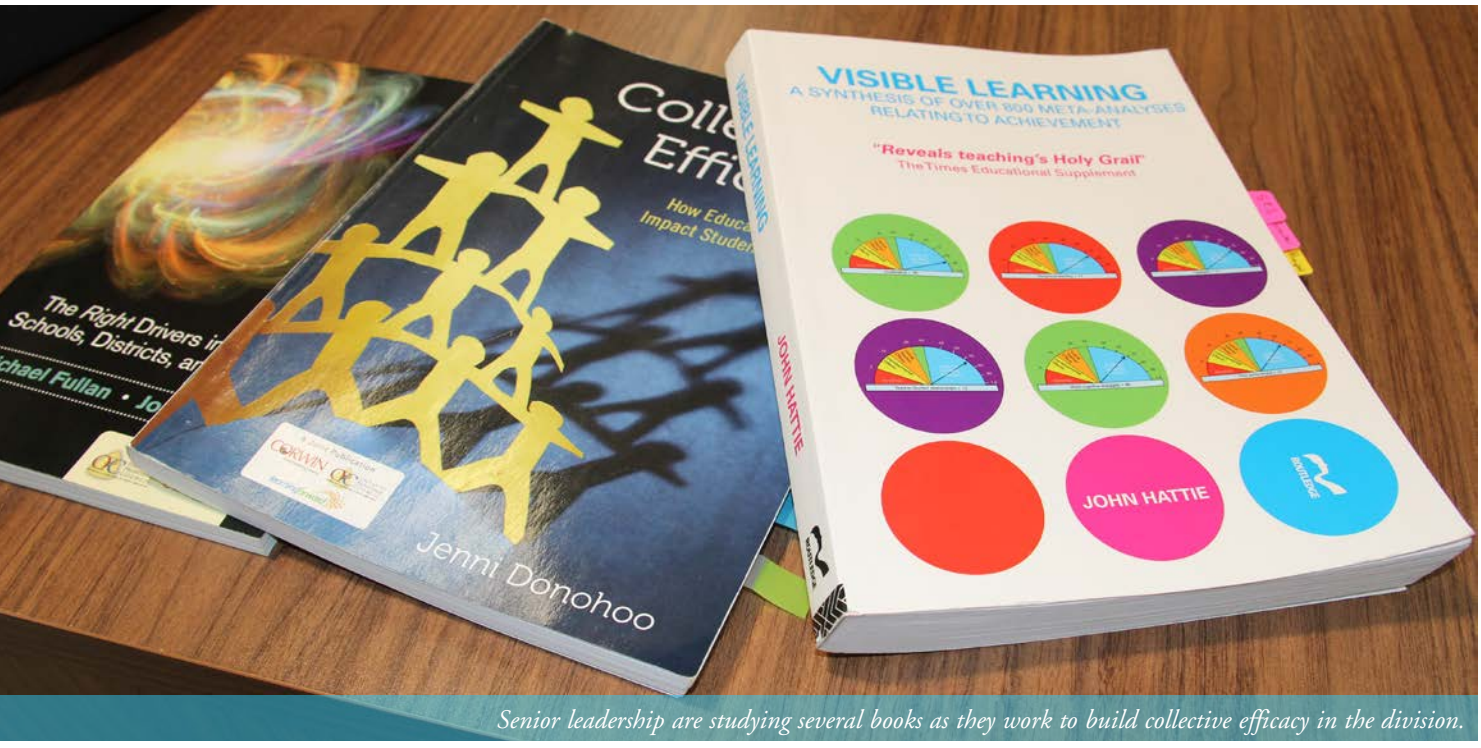
When our senior leadership team attended the MASS Summer Institute, August 2018, Dr. Steven Katz presented on the impact leadership has in the education system.[1] He reminded us that as superintendents our main sphere of influence, as he describes—Our Classroom—should be our principals. Professor Katz explained further that as divisional system leaders, we must invest time and money into our principals because schools that have a high impact on student learning have principals with strong instructional leadership skills.

These statements were powerful. It was clear why we were to focus on building the capacity of principals, but we were still unsure of what that was going to be. At the Summer Institute Katz went on to explain the impact of an individual's and group beliefs. Katz explained that when it comes to successful school improvement, "a faculty's belief that they cannot foster the conditions necessary to impact student learning is the most dangerous of these entrenched beliefs." What Katz was referring to was the impact of an individual's self-efficacy and a group's collective efficacy.

Professor John Hattie, author of *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*, ranks Collective Teacher Efficacy at 1.57 on his impact scale.[2] With the extensive research base from Hattie and Katz, our superintendents team decided we wanted to spend the next couple of years embarking on building the collective efficacy of our principal group. We want our principals in our superintendent's "classroom" to believe that they can individually, and as a group, help grow schools in Hanover that are "striving for excellence while developing skills and promoting values for a productive and wholesome life," as the division's mission statement says.

In addition to the collective efficacy research that we had been reading, we came across another researcher, Jenni Donohoo, who wrote *Collective Efficacy: How Educators' Beliefs Impact Student Learning*.[3] After reading her book we knew that she was the one our principals should hear from. We decided to bring her in to attend our principal retreat in October 2018. This was a pivotal moment for the principal group as they were now hearing from a leading researcher in collective efficacy, who was encouraging them to build their capacity in working together as a leadership group.

Our guiding question heading into the administration retreat was, "How can we intentionally deepen the work with our teams?" We led into the introduction of collective efficacy by referring to the work we'd done during the past couple of years




*Senior leadership are studying several books as they work to build collective efficacy in the division.*

with instructional leadership and collaboration. We linked our previous book studies with Deep Learning and Coherence to this new work we were embarking on.[4] We also discussed the concepts of trust, vulnerability and courage as foundations for groups of people working together.

Donohoo introduced her work by referring to Hattie's research into the impact of collective efficacy. She then launched into work with our administration council and senior leadership for two days to help us further our learning and have dialogue surrounding how principals could use the concept of collective efficacy with school staff. She defined collective efficacy for us as a belief system that can have a greater impact on student outcomes than socio-economic factors and influences from the home.

The following were the learning intentions for our group:

- Know what collective teacher efficacy is and understand its impact on student outcomes;
- Know the positive and negative consequences associated with collective teacher efficacy;
- Understand sources that influence staffs' beliefs about their ability to impact student results;
- Explore the relationship between high expectations and efficacy;
- Know the six enabling conditions for collective efficacy to flourish and reflect on the degree to which these enabling conditions are in place in their schools/districts;
- Examine ways to foster efficacy beliefs through four research-based leadership practices;
- Explore efficacy enhancing collaborative learning structures and protocols;
- Develop a theory of action for fostering collective teacher efficacy in their schools/districts; and
- Consider how collective efficacy beliefs come to fruition in your own practice.

One of our key learnings was how teams can build collective efficacy. Donohoo's work discusses four sources of collective efficacy:

1. Mastery experiences;
2. Vicarious experiences;
3. Social persuasion; and
4. Affective states.

It is through intentionality with these experiences and emotions, alongside causal attributions, that we build collective efficacy. As superintendents we left that retreat knowing we were on the right path, ready to plan the professional development for the Hanover School Division principals over the next couple of years.

As a continued professional learning component of our administration councils in 2018-19, we randomly partnered the principals and vice principals and asked them to visit each other's schools and share their learning at an administration council. This vicarious experience was well-received, and we decided to repeat the process in the second half of the year with a new partner.

Our intent during the 2019-20 year is to increase our intentionality with the principals' group as we continue to learn about the impact of collective efficacy. We have also been influenced by the work of Peter DeWitt, who states: "Leadership shouldn't be a solitary pursuit. We work better when we learn collectively with others. That collective work provides us with people to have deep conversations with, and they challenge our thinking around the topic we are working on. Good leaders inspire people to

*Hanover leaders discuss collective efficacy.*

authentically work together through challenging each other around a problem of practice in order to improve their educational surroundings. Getting people to work together is part of collective efficacy, which is the extension of self-efficacy."[5]

The purpose of our work with the principals is to learn about collective efficacy and collaborative leadership and how the impact is connected to student outcomes. Our hope is to model learning and processes that not only strengthen our principals' self-efficacy and collective efficacy but also inform their thinking about how they work with teachers in their schools and ultimately have the most impact on student outcomes.

This school year we have divided the principals and vice principals into nine groups, each consisting of four administrators. We aimed for diversity in the groups, which consist of "veterans," "rookies," principals and vice principals with representation from our larger, smaller, urban and rural schools. Each group will determine a problem of practice, why the problem is important and how they will work on the problem.

The scope of the problem needs to be in the realm of instructional leadership and with a school leader perspective. The group is asked to create or find an observation protocol to utilize. (Donohoo's book on collective efficacy has several to choose from). Two schools will be visited by the members as a group in the first half of the year. The groups will then give 10-minute presentations to discuss their learnings and celebrations, share their chosen observation protocol and reflect on how the process worked for the group. A second round of observations and presentations will take place with the two remaining schools in the latter half of the school year. Our senior leadership team is looking forward to engaging with the discussions and values the opportunity to provide time for these professional conversations throughout the year during our administration council meetings.

We believe that the principals and vice principals in our "classroom" are on the right path to building a strong collective efficacy. They are building a cohesive group of instructional leaders that believe they can have a strong impact in their schools. As a senior leadership team, we feel our role moving forward with our classroom is to

continually provide multiple opportunities for mastery experiences.

We began with school tours to engage principals with vicarious experiences of working closer with their colleagues. Social persuasion was experienced as leaders shared their learnings in what other leaders saw in their buildings. We hope that during our administration council meetings this year having nine groups of principals present their learnings on their group's problem of practice will create opportunity for the positive affective states to be felt by everyone. We are proud of the work that our principals have put into their instructional leadership practices, and we will continue to serve our classroom in a trusting manner so that each and every leader believes that they are supported and appreciated, knowing that we are stronger as a collective. ■

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***Shelley Amos is an Assistant Superintendent with Hanover School Division. Her vision for educational leadership is to serve people with both heart and mind through the lenses of purpose and perseverance. Colin Campbell is an Assistant Superintendent with Hanover School Division. He brings 16 years of instructional experience to his role.***

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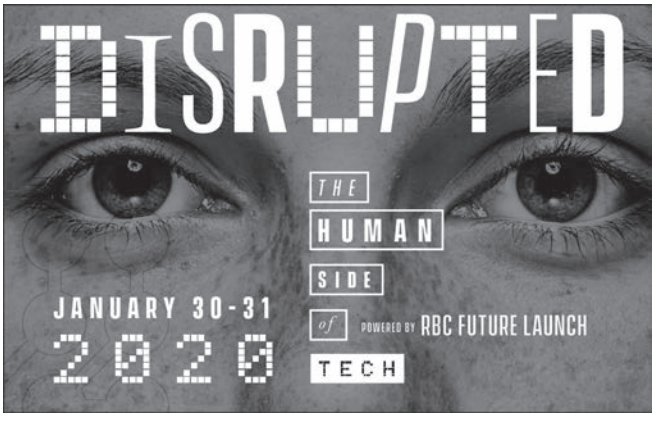


# Supporting Instructional Leaders through Action Learning Schools

**By Carolyn Cory, Southwest Horizon School Division; Eileen Sutherland, Manitoba Rural Learning Consortium; and Jonathan Toews, Border Land School Division**

Action Learning Schools is a process for empowering schools to improve the quality of schools from within. This process focuses on developing meaningful observations around what is working in schools and contributes to the on-going improvement of schools. Action Learning Schools grows out of the understanding that organizations can collaborate, learn and develop shared understandings around organizational improvement. Ultimately, the goal of Action Learning Schools is to enhance student outcomes.

Action Learning Schools is a circular process. Schools undertake collaborative action research and develop their knowledge base of the best practice in the process. Changes in practice are scaled up through repeated movement through the action research cycle, with a positive impact on student achievement. Practices include:

- **Learning organizations:** Schools that participate with Action Learning Schools are learning organizations. Action Learning Schools is developed from the understanding that both organizations and individuals learn and grow through this collaborative system.
- **Appreciative:** Action Learning Schools is an appreciative process that grows out of a focus on what is working and how to build from the schools' strengths.
- **Process oriented:** Action Learning Schools involves processes that become part of the ongoing work of the school and regularly scheduled teacher collaboration throughout the year.
- **Evidence based:** The process of Action Learning Schools works to collect and use evidence to enhance the work of teachers and maximize the potential of students. Educational literature, best practice and student data are used as evidence to inform practice.
- **Instructional leadership focused:** Action Learning Schools works with principals and school leadership teams to collectively lead and support implementation, driving the change the school is working towards.

Currently, 20 schools from seven school divisions in Manitoba are engaged in the process.

## How does the model work?

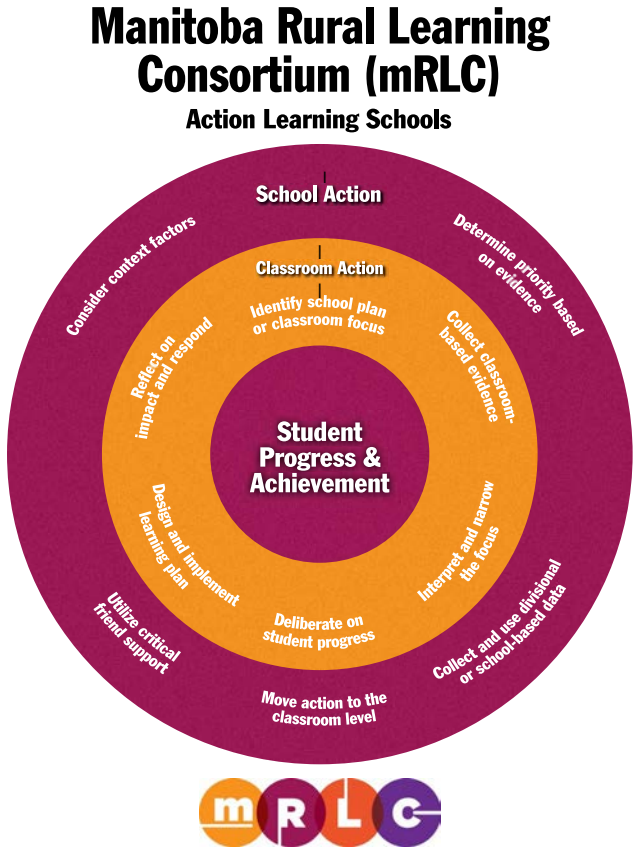
The school principal guides the process within the school, with the support of an established leadership team. They, with the support of all staff, determine a clear focus and set an improvement goal based on student achievement evidence. A negotiated plan based on research, both theirs and others, informs the next steps.

Teachers are encouraged to plan using short cycles of inquiry (Learning Sprints)[1] and to then reflect on student progress. The leadership team recognizes that substantive change can only happen in the classroom, so they create collaborative professional learning opportunities within the school and organize and facilitate learning groups based on the needs expressed by the teachers.

A critical friend, external to the school and division, is committed to providing support to the school. Their role is to be encouraging and supportive but they are also able to provide constructive feedback based on their expertise. This relationship forms the basis for collaborative work.

## Action Learning Schools in Border Land School Division

The learning journey with Border Land School Division, through Action Learning Schools, began with two schools and has grown to include eight. Initially, participation was school initiated; over time, having seen the positive impact on participating schools, participation in Action Learning



Schools has become a divisional initiative. From a divisional perspective, the decision to move to school wide implementation flowed from observations by senior administration that school plans were more focused.

Furthermore, principals were vocal in affirming the value of working alongside a critical friend. The role of the critical friend added value because they provided an objective lens for principals to reflect on their planning. In school visits, it was evident to senior administration that school leaders had sharpened their school planning skills—in particular, literacy and numeracy goals were more targeted, and, as a result, there was a sense that the school plan was a worthwhile document.

When asked about the impact for school planning, a consistent theme that emerged from principal responses was clarity of purpose. Expectations for school planning have always been an important aspect of principal leadership; what each of the four principals highlighted, however, was a greater sense of confidence in the precision of school goals.

"For our writing goal we focused on teaching and using conventions, as this was an area that consistently showed up on the BC writing rubrics throughout the grades as a growing edge," described one principal. They also noted that the clarity of focus provided the confidence to make school goals visible to the school community, including students and parents. Another principal stated that "the main impact of working with a critical friend was to help us see the value and purpose in drilling down to set narrow and specific goals for students."

While the sense of having been positively impacted was clear in each of the principals' responses, the range of experience shaped the nature of the impact. A first-year principal pointed to the valuable sense of mentorship provided by working with a critical friend, stating that the collaboration "put me on a learning curve to effectively work with staff on school goals."

A veteran principal explained that she felt affirmed in the work she was already doing and that the critical friend "helped me link to resources and some alternate protocols or frameworks to try with staff to become more specific in examining evidence of student learning." Without exception, principals expressed value in working alongside a critical friend, as an "outside person."

Teacher impact was observed in a variety of ways; from "going deeper into the work and having more ideas for how to work on the goals," to holding "everyone a bit more accountable," to giving teachers a "clear sense of how to continually check in on students and create short sprints to address an area they were struggling with." Teachers felt more confident and equipped to take on leadership roles.

Impact on students was identified by principals as evident in students' sense of engagement, enthusiasm and clarity of what matters in learning. One principal highlighted that, "Students see themselves making gains in the specified goal and can use language to describe what they are working towards." From another school the principal beautifully noted that the students "Get more of the best from their teachers."

## Action Learning Schools in Southwest Horizon School Division

Two schools in Southwest Horizon School Division began as pilot schools in the initial Action Learning Schools project, with five more schools joining the project during the 2018-19 school year. Each school had established norms and protocols for kindergarten to Grade 12 Professional Learning Communities, but found that collaboration with a critical friend added clarity and value to their work. In describing the process, one principal said, "We developed a common understanding and a common language, and, consequently, our dialogue became deeper as we participated in collaborative analysis of student evidence to determine our next steps."

Principals consistently reported that a critical friend provided a balance of affirmation, challenge and accountability in assisting the school team. A veteran principal said, "I appreciate the external skillset of expertise and experience that the critical friend brings to the table as well as the perspective, strategies and best practise shared from other divisions, national and international educational settings."

Principals view their critical friend much like senior administration who observe, assist with the collection of data, ask tough questions and provide feedback. The difference, however, is the absence, whether perceived or real, of preconceived bias and evaluation. Principals believe the sole purpose of a critical friend is to assist with school improvement.

Another principal identified the greatest impact in her first year working with Action Learning Schools as the challenge of bringing specific evidence to the table for collaborative analysis. Success criteria became clearer because the team was challenged to narrow goals to a very specific level. All participants reported that Action Learning Schools assisted the team to maintain their focus, keep the noise out and go an inch wide and a mile deep with their learning.

One of the strongest impacts of critical friends noted by teachers was the focus on celebration. One coach stated, "As instructional leaders we tend to gain momentum as we watch our students learn and progress but forget to celebrate the successes, no matter the size." Another coach reported, "We had a critical friend for four years, and now that our critical friend has moved on, it feels like a staff member has moved out of our school!"

Although senior administration does not participate directly in the school-based work of Action Learning Schools in schools or receive direct feedback from critical friends, the influence of the work permeates the system. Principals and literacy and numeracy coaches provide evidence of their team's work during monthly leadership meetings, sharing the work developed and expanding the knowledge base and the learning network.

Assuming the role of a critical friend to schools outside my own division has challenged me to examine my impact as a system leader and to develop my coaching and collaboration skills. Although there are many similarities between the roles of system leader and critical friend, the role of a critical friend is solely about improving schools by building capacity through collaborative work. As well, through collaborating with a cohort of critical friends, I can bring additional value to my home division.

## Conclusion

Evidence indicates that Action Learning Schools supports school leaders, in conjunction with their staff, to collect and to use student evidence to narrow their focus, and then take deliberate action to achieve their goals. By doing this, teachers are empowered to think about improvement in terms of short cycles of inquiry and are held accountable for the commitments they make.

External critical friends working in partnership with the leadership team are valued for their non-evaluative, advocacy stance as they influence the actions that best bring about the schools' desired change. Action Learning Schools in schools promises to be a valuable process for Manitoba schools. ■

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*Carolyn Cory is the Superintendent for the Southwest Horizon School Division. Eileen Sutherland is the Executive Director for the Manitoba Rural Learning Consortium, and Jonathan Toews is the Assistant Superintendent for Border Land School Division.*

**Reference**

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# Using Video Conferencing to Support Student Learning in Manitoba Colony Schools

**By Keith Murray, Prairie Spirit School Division**

Manitoba is home to approximately 100 Hutterite communities, each with their own school.[1] To a first-time visitor, memories of the traditional one-room schoolhouse will come to mind. Individual school enrolments can reach up to 70 students, however, most enrolments are closer to 40 students in kindergarten to Grade 12.

Colonies are staffed by certified teachers with some colonies using their own university trained and certified people as teachers. Staffing and program costs are the responsibility of the area school division, while building costs are the responsibility of the local colony community. In the Prairie Spirit School Division, we have 14 colony schools.

The teachers at colony schools are usually responsible for a multigrade classroom in the kindergarten to Grade 8 levels and for supporting all course requirements in Grades 9 to 12. The teachers work hard to be knowledgeable in many different content areas and grade levels. However, once students require courses at the high school level, it is no longer reasonable to expect a teacher to have sufficient content knowledge in all courses or subject areas.

## Independent Study Program

In recent practice, colony schools have used a variety of approaches to offer courses to high school students. One of the first approaches used was like traditional correspondence courses, called the Independent Study Program (ISP).

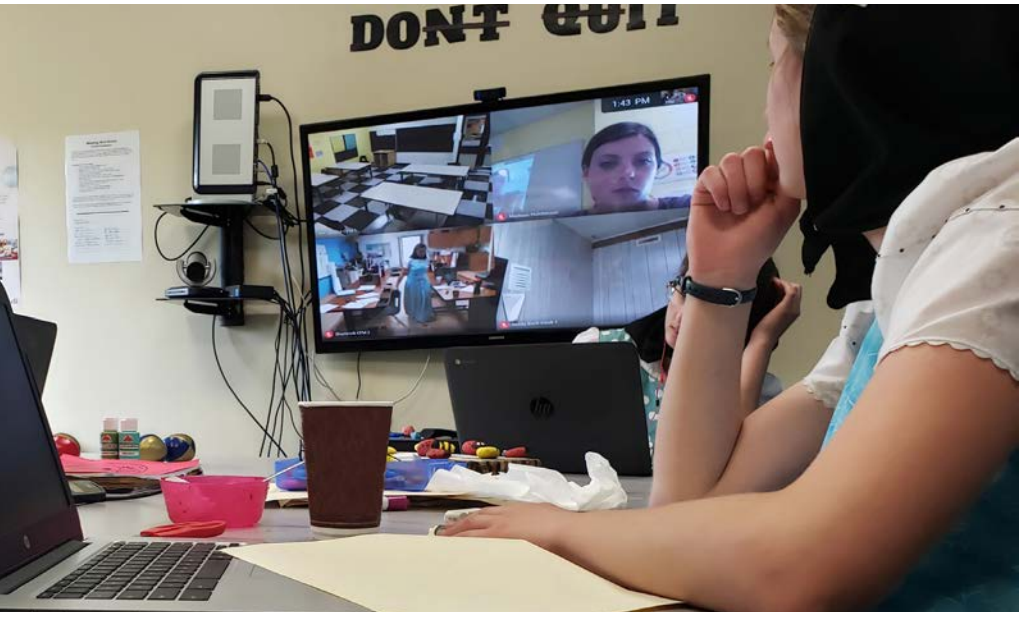
Teachers would often use these course materials with the students and mark the related assignments and assessments locally. The lack of a local cohort to work with is a challenge for students in this approach. Colony students are raised in a culture that is very communal, and they find increased success when working with other students.

## Teacher Mediated Option

A second approach that was designed to increase the sense of a classroom group and provide increased content knowledge on the teacher's part is the Teacher Mediated Option (TMO), teleconference courses. Students would be in a full year course with the classroom time being held every second day for approximately an hour.

The course materials are very similar to ISP materials, with the added benefit of a live teacher every second day. The main challenge to success for students is a result of the logistics of a teleconference with 20 or more students on the phone at the same time. In many cases, there would be no direct supervision of students at each participating school.

A second challenge for students is a result of document flow challenges created by the large distances between schools.




## Challenges and solutions

In general, it remains challenging for teachers to maintain grade-level expectations for student work due to frequent absences at schools and the other challenges already listed. There was a strong desire from our colony principals to improve the experience for our high school students. During the last few years, the internet connectivity to most colony schools has been improved to the point where a reliable video conference feed could be sustained.

At the same time, the actual technology for supporting the delivery and receiving of video conferencing has evolved from prohibitively expensive hardware-based solutions from companies like Cisco and Polycom to relatively affordable software-based solutions like Zoom and Google Hangouts (Meet). The quality of the video and audio of the software-based solutions are now indistinguishable from hardware-based solutions.

The other area of concern was the challenge of document flow and communications between the teacher and students during and outside of instructional time. We have tried using Canada Post, itinerant staff as couriers and even fax machines to

deliver course work and assignments. Each of these created more problems than they solved. Documents were usually delayed and often lost.

Our solution for leveraging the capacity of our staff and improving the experience for students has been built using G Suite for Education. This is the enterprise version of Google for education. In addition to the commonly used Gmail, we also make extensive use of Google Drive, Google Calendar and Google Classroom as a learning management system (LMS).

Unlike other commercial LMS systems and Microsoft Office, this LMS is free for school divisions. For actual classroom time, we use Google Meet for face to face instruction. Class enrolments are capped at 24 students and four simultaneous school sites for each course. The teacher can teach from any of the school sites or from another location.

In our situation, we have some teachers based in colony schools and some teachers who deliver courses from local town-based schools. We refer to the program as Blended Delivery as we use a variety of experiences for the students, including face to face instructional time using video conferencing, project-based learning and community experiences to fully engage students in their learning.[2]

The capacity of our teachers has been improved in several ways. Subject area teachers delivering the courses have been able to focus their professional development around their area of expertise. Most of our Blended Learning teachers are teaching more than one course in their area of expertise and, as a result, will work with the same students across several grade levels. This helps develop a more personal connection between the teacher and his or her students.

At the same time, the teaching staff assigned to each colony school can focus more of their resources on the kindergarten to Grade 8 students in their schools. They continue to help facilitate student learning for their local high school students but have been freed up from the responsibility of providing direct instruction.

During the 2018-19 school year, we had 91 students complete 355 credits in 20 different courses. Our students are developing as learners in a digital world while still developing a sense of community. Our teachers are developing as lifelong learners with a supportive LMS and technology infrastructure. ■

*Keith Murray, MDE, is the Superintendent of Schools in the Prairie Spirit School Division. He has been involved in education as a teacher, principal, technology coordinator and superintendent for many years.*

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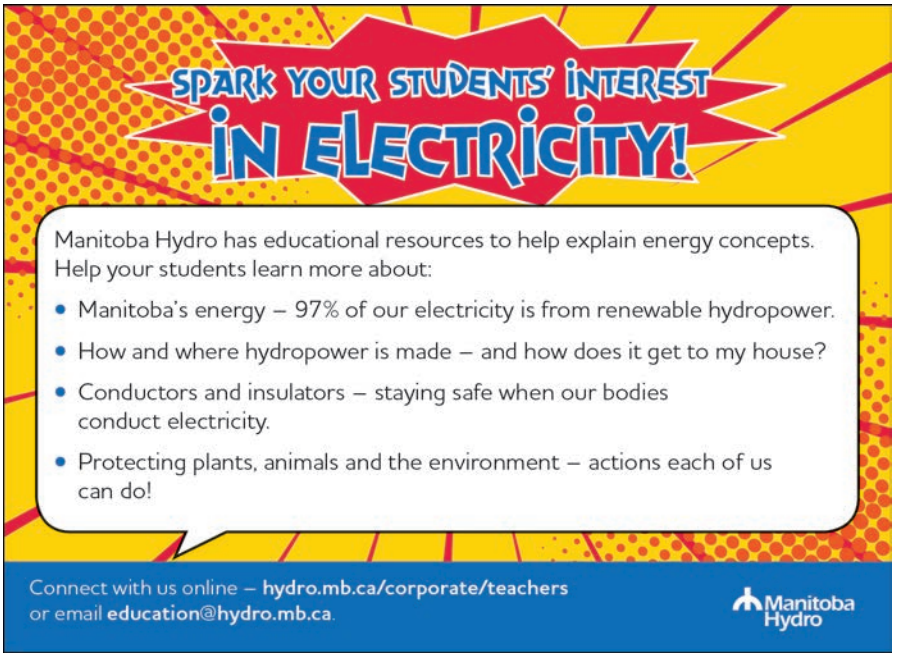

# Just Flip the First Pancake:
## Building Capacity in Learning Sprints

**By Leanne Peters, Sunrise School Division**

In a workshop on Learning Sprints last year, Dr. Simon Breakspear, educational researcher, used the example of making pancakes to describe engaging in a first-time Learning Sprint—the first pancake never really turns out perfectly.[1] It is usually misshapen and squashed, but it tastes fine in the end. In the journey of instructional leadership, we just need to make the pancakes and flip the first one.

Richard Gerver, author of *Education: A Manifesto for Change*, notes, "A successful school must have a relentless focus on teaching and learning, and that must therefore be at the heart of the mission."[2] Schools that are successful at lifting student learning outcomes focus on instructional leadership to support teachers and pedagogy. This article looks at how one school "flipped the first pancake" in its learning journey.

Sunrise School Division joined in the Learning Sprints sessions with Dr. Breakspear that were offered this year through the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS). The goal was to generate some interest and ensure that learning also became a part of assistant superintendent school visits, where conversations focused on student learning, achievement and how to support teachers.

One school that had not been formally involved in the Learning Sprints sessions extended an invitation to the assistant superintendent to learn more about the process. I readily agreed to facilitate a session with the principal and two learning support teachers. The only request was that the school have some sort of classroom data available for examination.

### Learning Sprints

Dr. Breakspear's Learning Sprints follow a simple process: plan, sprint, review. Yet, even within the simplicity, there is still a desire by school teams to develop a "perfect plan" before jumping in and getting started. Teams endeavour to have the plan clearly outlined, the assessments planned, and the teaching moves clearly articulated. While it is both important and helpful to have a plan for teaching and learning, and the "sprinting" or "doing" part of the process, there is also the review or reflection that follows. We chose to approach a Learning Sprint not with the idea of creating a perfect plan, but by digging straight into a classroom set of data.

### Start with the evidence

The principal and two learning support teachers sat at a table armed with knowledge of students, curriculum and pedagogy and with a summary of student assessment data. The assistant superintendent joined them, armed with knowledge of the Learning Sprints process and an ability to ask questions to spark lines of inquiry.

The assignment, a project on Egypt, was broken down into several learning outcomes. For each outcome, the student had earned a summative grade. Upon examination, it became clear that one outcome was difficult for a select group of students. There was also a group of students who were clearly meeting all of the learning outcomes of the project. At this point in the process we paused to ask several questions:

- What did the marks actually mean? Given the school team's experience with the students, did the summative assessment make sense?
- When the student was "approaching the outcome with support," was the support freely offered by the teacher, did the student actually require the support, or did the teacher just offer the support without allowing for productive struggle?
- How often do teachers create a summary or a class profile of a specific assessment in order to plan their next teaching moves?

The team engaged in dialogue around these questions. We struggled with the notion that some of the identified students

were also students on the learning support teachers' caseloads. We brainstormed about the kinds of strategies that could be used to teach them this outcome. As we continued our discussion, it became clear that, in broad terms, teachers do not, on a regular basis, take a student's project and create a class profile of student achievement in order to plan their next learning moves.

This is not to say that teachers do not examine student progress and plan lessons to support their students. However, in our discussion, creating a summary class profile of data from a specific project helped the team to see clearly where there was an achievement gap. Now came the task of identifying how to address that gap. We had to flip the pancake.

## Planning the Learning Sprint

The identified learning outcome that was a challenge for the aforementioned group of students was categorizing information. Using our varied perspectives, we went through a process and used the Learning Sprints tools as applicable. The team was able to clarify which students would benefit from a short Learning Sprint and which teaching strategies might be employed to support those students to be successful.

We ran into a roadblock when the teachers noted that there would not be another opportunity to do an "Egypt project" this year because that unit was finished. Not to be deterred, we looked at the outcome that we wanted to address again, and after conversation, confirmed that it was still important for students to learn the outcome. We considered upcoming units in other subjects and believed there would be an opportunity to teach the skill within a science unit. The roadblock was overcome.

## Next steps

As a follow up to this initial look at the process of using the Learning Sprints process, the first day of school in September was devoted to a short time of professional development for teachers. For this school, the year kicked off with staff learning together about the sprints process. The principal, who demonstrates strong instructional leadership, has structures in place where teams of teachers already collaborate so these teams will use the built-in collaborative time to plan their sprints and move to action to support their students.

## Why is this school ready to flip the pancake?

There are several readiness factors in place that makes this team ready to move into action. Collective efficacy is the belief that by working together educators can achieve a common goal and make a difference in students' achievement of learning outcomes.[3]

This school team has been relatively stable in the last number of years, so the staff have developed working relationships and a collective belief that they can make a difference for the children in their school. Although there is some resistance within the staff, from an outside perspective, there is trust in the principal. While this trust does not make the resistance go away, it does allow teachers to take risks knowing that they are supported by the principal. This school is on its way to continuing to improve learning outcomes for their students one Learning Sprint at a time. ■

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# A Shared Commitment towards Building Leadership Capacity in Rural Manitoba

*As of this past summer 2019, 36 successful applicants have graduated.*

**By Suzanne Cottyn and Donna Davidson, Mountain View School Division**

Building leadership capacity in school systems is vital to student success. Mountain View School Division (MVSD) was—and is—committed to developing staff with the intent of improving the quality of leadership and instruction that supports student learning. Former Superintendent Jack Sullivan valued continuing education for staff. As he observed his staff making weekly treks to Brandon University, sometimes travelling well into the late hours, he thought that there had to be a better way for staff to pursue their master's degree.

In the fall of 2013, Sullivan reached out to Brandon University, Faculty of Education, to explore the possibility of offering a master's degree program in Dauphin, Manitoba, with the majority of the courses offered locally or online. Division leadership was eager to support the idea of making the program more accessible and demonstrating a commitment to educators learning together and deepening their understanding of educational topics.

In late October 2013, an interest survey was distributed to MVSD teaching staff. The division received an overwhelming response with 50 educators interested in joining the cohort. In early February 2014, 48 educators attended an information session offered by Dr. Jacqueline Kirk, Chair of Graduate Studies, and Dr. Heather Duncan, Dean of Education, from Brandon University. Dr. Kirk and Dr. Duncan reviewed Brandon University's 36-credit-hour master of education, which included nine core courses and 18 electives/specialization courses with three possible course completion routes: course-based, project or thesis. The meeting was successful, and the majority of the attendees were eager to apply for entry into the program.

The program commenced in fall 2014, with 45 successful applicants in one of the following areas of specialization: education administration, guidance and counselling, special education, curriculum or thematic. One course was offered each winter, fall and spring/summer session with potential graduation in spring 2018. The course delivery method was a combination of in-person and online sessions. For courses to be held in Dauphin, a minimum number of students was required, otherwise the course was offered on campus.

## Critical aspects of a successful leadership program

There are four critical aspects necessary for building leadership capacity: trust building, communication, reflection and mentorship. These research-based components were evident in the program.

1. **Trust building:** Relationships are the foundation of all we do and are best established through trust building, both our individual consideration of others and our shared collective commitment. Transformational culture is one that is based on shared interests and sense of purpose, conferring a feeling of family and interdependency, and the pursuit of long-term commitments.[1] The structure of the program set the stage for this type of transformational culture to develop, as participants were inspired to work towards their individual goals, while cultivating a collective commitment to learn together over a four-year period. Trust was built over time as participants were given opportunities to be vulnerable in their learning and participate in open and transparent communication about not only their practice but also themselves.
2. **Communication:** A shared commitment to communication excellence with others must be a priority, for when the communication of one's intent or motive is conducted with honesty and transparency, both in words and through actions, trust is further developed.[2] The program encouraged communication between educators within the division, bringing new levels of understanding and connectedness across the 16 schools and seven communities MVSD serves. Open and honest communication was encouraged not only within the cohorts but also divisionally, with many participants sharing their learning with school-based and divisional leaders. Additionally, because participants held varied roles in the division, and were encouraged to speak openly, an overall deeper understanding of system-wide thinking was fostered.
3. **Reflection:** Excellence in reflection starts with knowing who we are, what we value and what we stand for.[3] For actual learning to take place, our implicit beliefs need to become explicit, and we must consider how new information either fits with what we know or embrace the challenge to change our thinking.[4] Intentional interruptions of cognitive and affective supports are necessary if we are going to upset the status quo and see permanent change in our thinking or behaviours.[5] The program required educators to take the time to examine the "why" and "how" of their work. Participants were encouraged to consider both individual and collective educational beliefs in light of current research. This inevitably

challenged participants' beliefs and called on them to prove or shift their current thinking.

4. **Mentorship:** Authentic, enduring learning requires collaboration, and the more complex the learning, the more necessary it is to provide supportive participant structures.[6] Fostering a sense of shared commitment is important from a divisional level down to the classroom level for deep change.[7] The structure of the program provided support and a shared commitment to learning, which nurtured collaboration and peer-mentorship among participants, beyond the classroom.

## Voices of the participants

In June 2019, a survey was sent to program participants, and 15 responded. The survey sought feedback on the benefits of the program, impact of the program on their professional practice, challenges faced and recommendations for improvement.

## Benefits

The respondents expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn within their own community, noting they were able to build and deepen relationships with their colleagues. A trusted network was developed that allowed for rich conversations and great collaboration. One participant expressed "the cohort was allowed to discuss educational challenges facing our communities/division, which I felt was very beneficial and meaningful for my practice."

The local community context provided not only a sense of familiarity and comfort, but also the minimal amount of travel was noted as a key factor in choosing to take a master's degree. Furthermore, several participants stated that they would not have pursued or completed their masters without the accessibility and support of this format. One participant stated, "I do not believe I would have started a master's program through another model." Other benefits expressed by participants included the clear program timeline, flexibility in completion, as well as the combined delivery method.

## Impact on professional practice

The overwhelming response from participants was that taking their master's was the best professional development experienced to date. Many participants found they became more critical and confident decision-makers and developed a deeper understanding of educational issues. For example, participants shared:

- "[The experience] elevated my thinking and understanding of education issues."
- "I am a more critical consumer of information and research."
- "[The program] greatly updated and increased my understanding of educational research and caused me to reflect on, question and solidify my own educational beliefs and practices."

In regard to the direct impact on their practice and student learning, participants shared ways in which they took their learning back into their schools and classrooms. Participants noted the following:

- "[The program has] given me the confidence to make specific choices in my classroom and to advocate more for my students."
- "I am more confident in having tough, but crucial, conversations with parents and colleagues."
- "I feel that I have a much broader base of knowledge to draw on, and much of it is applicable to my classroom practice."

Additionally, participants commented on ways that their master's degree had opened up new professional opportunities for them and assisted them in meeting their own professional goals, such as moving into roles of administration and student services.

## Challenges and recommended changes

The main challenge communicated regarding program delivery was that of time, or, as one participant noted, the "obvious challenges" of completing a master's degree while working full time. In respect to in-person and online sessions, participants were varied in their opinions regarding which method was more preferable. Some reported that they would have appreciated greater flexibility in timelines due to professional or personal responsibilities. Overall, participants felt the program and its delivery was a positive experience, stating they would go through the process again and would recommend it to colleagues.

## Conclusion

As of summer 2019, 36 of the original 45 successful applicants graduated, and two are working on their thesis. This represents a completion rate of 80 per cent. The success of the program can be attributed to the collective accountability of the cohort. Participants felt a sense of commitment to the group, which continued to push them to completion. The division has benefited with an increase in the number of staff trained to fulfill specialized positions in school leadership and student services. The students are the true beneficiaries of the program. They have educators who have gained a deeper understanding of their craft and who are imparting that newly gained knowledge and skills in schools and classrooms across the division. ■

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***Suzanne Cottyn is the Coordinator of Curriculum and Assessment in Mountain View School Division (graduate of the MVSD Master's program). Donna Davidson is a recently retired Superintendent/CEO of Mountain View School Division.***

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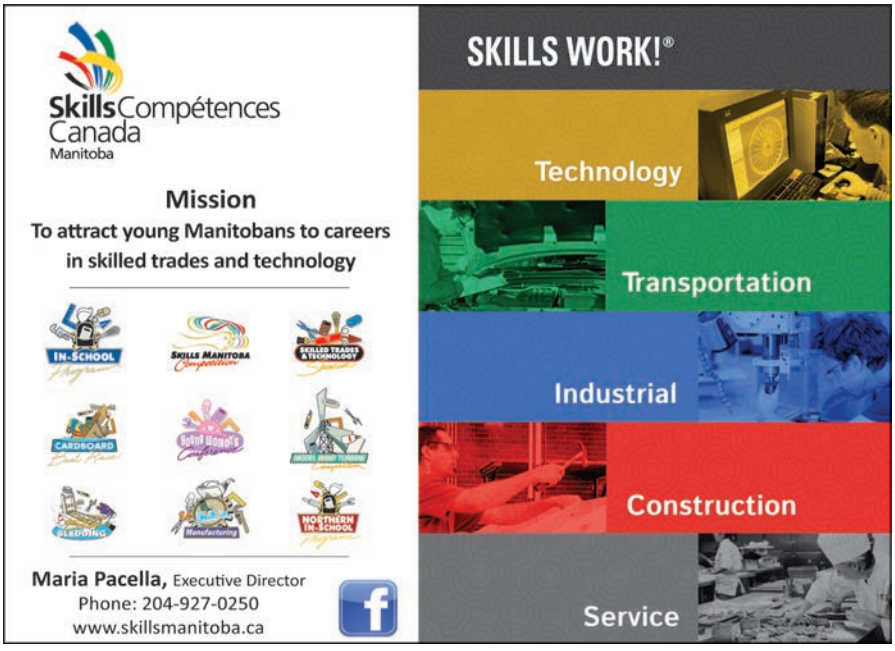


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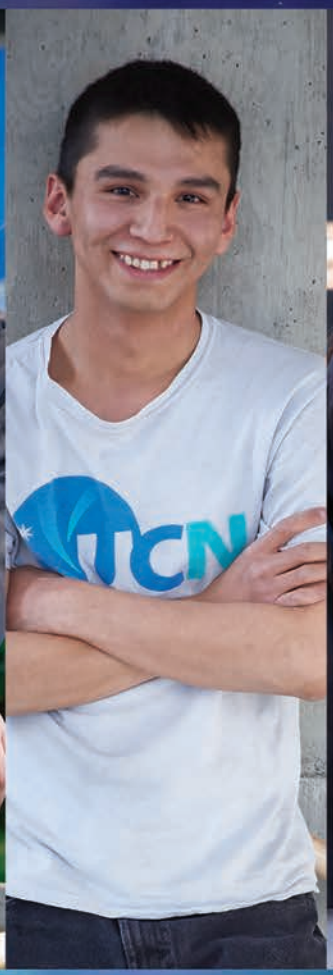

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