

Brant-Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board

CODE Director Innovation Funds Report 2015-16

1. Who participated?

Michelle Shypula - Superintendent of Education: School Effectiveness
Leslie Telfer - Superintendent of Education: Learning For All

2. Where the program or project investigated was located (Board, School, System, city, conference, etc.):

The experience included visiting High Tech High (HTH) Elementary and Secondary Schools in San Diego, California. The program was a Custom Residency where we observed classrooms in five High Tech Schools over two days.

3. What was learned (highlights, effectiveness at that location)?

The goal of the experience was to learn as much as possible about HTH principles and practices by being immersed in the life of the schools.

The intention of the visit was to enhance our understanding of Project Based Learning in a teacher-facilitated, student-led learning environment.

The curriculum focus in these schools was an interdisciplinary approach which included mathematics, physics and the humanities. The learning projects valued student inquiry into real life problems, aligned with various curriculum components, and were iterative and reflective in nature. Feedback was integral in moving student thinking and in the refinement of the final products. The products created were observed to be innovative and authentic. The focus on student engagement reflected students who demonstrated commitment to their projects verses compliance.

We also observed evidence of the 6 Cs of 21st Century literacy in practice.

4. Application in your district school board what use will you be making of what was learned, value for students or staff or parents?

As a result of this authentic professional learning experience, we have appreciated the opportunity to reflect with colleagues from our own province, as well as Alberta and Saskatchewan who participated in the HTH Custom Residency. Going forward, we recognize that an emphasis on interdisciplinary, cross curricular learning experiences provides a more authentic, engaging, and meaningful learning experience and forging partnerships with our students in this learning results in greater motivation and perseverance. Additionally, in alignment with our district's Board Improvement Plan for 2015-2018 which identifies schools as being places of learning, where process is valued over product, we will continue to focus on effective assessment for/as learning and intentional application of descriptive feedback to extend student thinking.