

Leadership Making a Difference

Once again I am very pleased to highlight just a few examples of the many ways Directors of Education in Ontario are continuing to expand and enhance Ministry of Education direction through innovative and student-centred programs.

This month our focus is on a province-wide initiative, **the 21st Century Teaching and Learning Research Project**, and on new directions for enabling future student success.

Fullan and Langworthy state in *A Rich Seam* (2014),

“... ‘new pedagogies’ are not just instructional strategies. They are powerful models of teaching and learning, enabled and accelerated by increasingly pervasive digital tools and resources, taking hold within learning environments that measure and support deep learning at all levels of the education system.”

21st Century Round Table

More than 300 educators came together on October 23 at the Toronto Reference Library to review almost 80 board projects involving technology for the enhancement of instruction and learning. The 21st Century Round Table featured keynote speaker Chris Dede from Harvard University, who addressed trends in technology and education across the United States and around the world. (Mr. Dede’s informative slide presentation from the event is included with this newsletter as an attachment.)

Those attending had an opportunity to share their own initiatives with other boards via a gallery walk, which allowed all to see an overview of these various projects. The event, which focused on the importance of providing our students with learning skills for the future, was a summary of the third phase of technology innovation sponsored by the Ministry of Education and CODE.

In keeping with the spirit of the 21st Century Round Table (at which a number of Directors attended), this newsletter puts the spotlight on some complimentary programs boards are undertaking to prepare their students for future learning and living.



Toronto Catholic District School Board

A Learning Plan for the 21st Century

The environment in which students live and will eventually work has dramatically changed in the past few decades. This change, largely due to rapid advancements in technology, is affecting how we work, learn and socialize. As the Toronto Catholic District School Board moves into 21st Century Learning, **Project neXt** examines many of TCDSB's current practices and begins to construct a framework that promotes the 21st Century Fluencies through a Catholic lens.

The four pillars of 21st Century Learning that Project neXt examines:

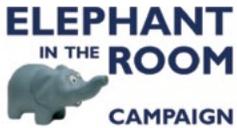
- ✦ Identifying the skills needed to succeed: the 4 C's – Communication, Collaboration, Creativity and Critical Thinking
- ✦ Identifying the stakeholders and their moral imperatives – Project neXt defines each community member as an important part of 21st Century Learning and Teaching.
- ✦ Identifying the neXt Lesson – six elements or competencies that serve to help educators understand and implement opportunities for learning activities that build 21st Century Skills.
- ✦ Identifying the board's progress in adopting 21st Century Practices.

www.tcdsb.org/ProgramsServices/SchoolProgramsK12/AcademicICT/Pages/default.aspx

Greater Essex County District School Board

Changing Futures, Building Opportunities

The Greater Essex County District School Board's **Change Your Future (CYF)** program is helping students overcome barriers they may face due to their cultural identities. Through a mix of counselling, tutoring and job-shadowing/employment opportunities, CYF encourages students to realize their full potential. Areas covered by the program include identifying academic direction, exploring career options, and developing job search and interviewing skills. The aim of Change Your Future is to provide young people with the time, attention and advice that can help them develop the skills necessary for contributing meaningfully to society. As Diversity Officer **Rachel Olivero** notes, "we believe that if the child has really high self-esteem, they'll do better in school. By helping kids understand who they are and where they came from, we're empowering them to help themselves." About 150 students participate in the program each year. Through CYF counsellors at Herman and Century Secondary Schools, students take part in group gatherings, workshops, daily counseling meetings, and an annual awards ceremony celebrating participants' accomplishments. www.gecdsb.on.ca



Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario

Elephant in the Room Campaign

A blue elephant will be displayed in schools and board locations of The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario to symbolize its participation in the **Elephant in the Room Anti-Stigma Campaign** for awareness about mental illness in the workplace and in the classroom. Initiated by the Mood Disorders Society of Canada, the national campaign is designed to build awareness and eliminate stigma associated with mental illness. CDSBEO is the first school board in the province to partner with MDSC on this initiative. The blue elephants signify that the board cares about the wellness of others, and is a safe place to talk about mental health without fear of repercussions. The initiative is focused on helping build understanding around mental health issues while nurturing a board culture of empathy and support.

The CDSBEO has committed itself to building resiliency and positive mental health for all of its students. The Board has identified a “Continuum of Support providing Prevention, Targeted Intervention and Specialized Supports” to help students develop resiliency and restorative practices, to stop bullying, and to support positive mental health. Using a strengths-based approach, CDSBEO is supporting students to become positive, productive and responsible individuals. www.cdsbeo.on.ca/our-programs/mental-health/our-mental-health-programsinitiatives/

Rainy River District School Board

Character in Action

The Rainy River District School Board’s new **Character in Action** program focuses on the democratic ideals of citizenship, justice, thoughtful decision-making, and enhanced quality of life. A key part of its Equity and Inclusive Education initiative, the RRDSB Character in Action program supports character education in all of its schools. By practising and applying the character attributes – Respect, Initiative, Courage, Compassion, Optimism, Honesty, Integrity, Fairness, Perseverance, and Responsibility – students and staff maximize opportunities to learn. Valued and acknowledged within the character attributes are the First Nations’ teachings that address body, mind and spirit development and well-being by encompassing the Seven Grandfather Teachings of love, respect, humility, bravery, honesty, truth and wisdom.

Monthly Character in Action themes are outlined for each grade and coordinated with the board’s current anti-bullying units of study with grade specific lessons. Included are activities that support the character attribute focus for each month, September through June. Detailed teacher resource materials, available in each school, are outlined month by month in the Character In Action teaching modules. www.rrdsb.com/initiatives/character-action

Other CODE Provincial Sessions During October and November

In addition to the 21st Century Round Table, CODE has been involved in other significant provincial sessions over the past month.

On October 28, the CODE Consortium symposium was held at the **InterContinental** in Toronto. With a focus on Leading From the Middle, the ten boards forming the consortium outlined the projects they are developing around this theme, and identified the research component that will monitor the projects over the next two years. Additional boards attended the event, with the aim of joining the Consortium. Andy Hargreaves, who addressed the group throughout the day, elaborated on the concept of Leading From the Middle as an effective board philosophy.

On November 6, the executives of the sixteen Regional Planning Teams of School College Work met at the Holiday Inn Airport to review Dual Credit programs in the 2014 school year and to receive the RFP for planning Board and College input into the next initiative for 2015-2018.

Dual Credit numbers completed continue to grow, leading to success for more than 20,000 students last year.

Regards,



Frank Kelly