Livingstone Range
SCHOOL DIVISION No. 68

Enhancing High School Programming

Annual Results Report 2010-11 and Three Year Plan 2009-2012

Approved January 12, 2010

Revised November 2011

Rationale

The Livingstone Range School Division is located in the south west corner of the province. We serve approximately 4000 students, 1000 of which are in our six high schools. Our jurisdiction is currently experiencing an annual decline in enrollment of 3% over the last 10 years. This decline has made it increasingly difficult to continue to offer high school programs that meet the current and potential needs of our students. A recent audit has shown erosion of equipment, facilities, and program offerings and, as a result, a continued decline in the number of CEUs earned by students. This decline in CEUs negatively impacts school budget lines resulting in staffing and programming cuts making it increasingly difficult for small rural high schools to respond effectively to the programming needs of students using traditional delivery methods and outdated facilities. Our jurisdiction has functioned under a site based decision-making model since the mid 1990s; as a result, there has been no jurisdictionally coordinated plan with accompanying budget. It has become clear from our audit that this lack of planning and budgeting has resulted in a major decline in many of our high school programs. It is clear that a jurisdictional approach must be taken.

With continued declining enrolment, patterns are starting to emerge that will need to be addressed to alter the present trends:

1. Less Course Offerings
    a. Chemistry and Physics are only offered every other year in many of our high schools due to low enrolment numbers
    b. Decline of Second Language Programs
    c. Decline in Fine Arts Programming (Art, Music, Drama)
    d. Decline in CTS offerings (Construction, Fabrication, Mechanics, Cooking, and Fashion Studies)
    e. Decline in non-core courses (Psychology, Sociology)

2. Student/Parent Satisfaction
    a. 55% of Grade 10 students are satisfied with course variety. This is a drop of 23% from Grade 7 satisfaction (Spring 2009)
    b. Parent satisfaction with the opportunity for a wide range of programs was at a four year low (Spring 2009)

3. Teacher Burn Out: Some schools are finding it difficult to keep teachers as a result of course load. In many of our small schools one teacher could be responsible for all high school science courses and another for all high school math courses. Teachers in urban centres may have only 1 or 2 courses in total per semester to prepare for, compared to some of ours which could be 4 to 6 courses per semester to prep for.

4. Teacher Availability: It is getting increasingly difficult to find trained teachers in content specific curriculums. This stretches from CTS trades people to Pure Math 30 teachers

Literature Review

An analysis [of the research and its underlying] principles reveal some common themes. Organizations that are striving to support meaningful high school redesign are focusing on the following:

- Mastery Learning
- Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum
- Personalization *(great deal of recent research in this area)*
- Flexible Learning Environments
- Educator Roles and Professional Development
- Meaningful Relationships
- Home and Community Involvement (High School Flexibility Enhancement; Alberta Education 2009)

A review of some of the models prevalent in high school redesign efforts reveals several common characteristics that can be linked to the foundational principles of high school redesign. For example, most models or initiatives:

- establish high expectations for all students with respect to their preparedness for post-secondary education and/or careers;
- integrate, to varying degrees, rigorous standards-based core academic curricula with career/technical curricula;
- provide extensive student supports;
- are structured around a small learning community;
- support teacher professional growth;
- actively promote meaningful and sustained student-adult relationships;
- nurture home-school-community alliances (High School Flexibility Enhancement; Alberta Education 2009)

According to the literature, many effective strategies exist to make high schools more supportive, more rigorous, and more oriented toward students' futures (the Coalition of Essential Schools School Benchmarks – Classroom Practices, 2009; Nair, 2003; MRDC, 2008). These strategies include but are not limited to:

- addressing 21st century learning,
- faculty advisory systems,
- assessment for learning strategies,
- flexible scheduling,
- career awareness and work internships,
- catch-up courses,
- data-based decision making,
- differentiating instruction,
- heterogeneous grouping,
- inter-disciplinary and thematic instruction,
- professional learning communities,
- project-based learning,
- safety-net programs,
- universal design for learning,
- using technology to personalize learning.

In particular, the researchers agree that the following benefits can be realized by enhancing flexibility in high schools:

- Higher Student Achievement Levels (Quint, 2005; Kemple et al, 2005 and 2008; May et al, 2004; Southern Regional Education Board, (2005; Lieberman, 2004)
- Higher Retention, Promotion, and Graduation Rates (MRDC, 2005; Lieberman, 2004)
- Improved Student Engagement/Participation (Klem and Connell, 2008; MRDC, 2008; Kemple et al, 2008; Smith, 2007)
- Success for Disadvantaged Youth (Kemple et al, 2005 and 2008; May et al, 2004; Martinez and Klophott,2005)
- Smoother Transitions to Post-secondary Education and Careers (Kemple et al, 2008; Lieberman, 2004)
- Safer and more Caring and Orderly Schools (Kemple et al, 2008)
- Schools as Professional Learning Communities (Kemple et al, 2008)

Although research indicates that high school redesign efforts are showing promise, Quint et al (2008), Darling-Hammond (2002), Pecheone (2006), McNeil (2003), Century and Levy (2002) and Brand (2004) identify challenges that must be overcome in order for localized high school redesign efforts to succeed. Some of the key challenges that have been identified include the following:

- Accurately estimating the required time and resources (Darling-Hammond, 2002)
- Localizing high school redesigns to the school and community (Pecheone, 2006)
- Engaging stakeholders in the high school redesign process (McNeil, 2003; Century and Levy, 2002)
- Implementing and sustaining the redesign effort over time (Century and Levy, 2002)

As Brand (2004) explains in a review of …high school transformations, successful redesign requires the unity of plan, motivation, and effort from all stakeholders to overcome any challenges that arise; it requires the “synchronization of many discrete efforts.”

The following comparison was excerpted from Lachat, Mary Ann; The Education Alliance, Brown University, Providence Rhode Island; *Data-Driven High School Reform: The Breaking Ranks Model*; 2001; http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/hischlrfm/datdrv_hsrfm.pdf; Retrieved February 2009

PARADIGM

TRADITIONAL SCHOOL PARADIGM	NEW PARADIGM FOR SCHOOLS
The "inputs" and process of education are emphasized over results. Curriculum is "covered," and instruction is organized around limited time units prescribed by the school schedule. Schools accept the failure of a significant number of students.	The school mission emphasizes high levels of learning for all students. Diverse abilities, developmental levels, readiness, and learning styles are addressed so that all can succeed. There is flexibility in the use of instructional time with an emphasis on learning, not how much content has to be "covered".
Learning is organized around a standardized curriculum delivered in standardized time periods. Credentials are awarded based on "time served", issued in "Carnegie Units".	Learning is organized around what students should know and be able to do. Credentialing is based on student demonstration of proficiency in these knowledge and skill areas.
The curriculum is derived from existing content, which is most often determined by textbooks. The curriculum is organized around a set of units, sequences, concepts and facts.	The curriculum is derived from standards that define what students should know and be able to do. Subject matter is "integrated" around "real-world" tasks that require reasoning, problem solving, and communication.
Assessment is done at the end of instruction and is narrowly focused on lower-level and fragmented (end-of-unit) skills that can be assessed through paper-pencil responses. Norm-referenced standardized test results are the basis of accountability.	Assessment is integrated with instruction and focuses on what students understand and can do. Methods assess students' competencies through demonstrations, portfolios of work, and other measures. State-based assessments are the basis of external accountability.

TRADITIONAL SCHOOL PARADIGM

School accountability is defined in terms of programs offered, attendance and dropout rates, the number of students who are credentialed, and the results of norm-referenced tests. There is minimal systematic monitoring of student progress on an ongoing basis.

School improvement focuses on: improving the existing organization; adding new programs; changing textbooks; offering teacher workshops; improving school climate; and increasing staff participation in decision making.

NEW PARADIGM FOR SCHOOLS

The school is accountable for demonstrating that all students are developing proficiencies that represent high-level standards for what students should know and be able to do. There is an emphasis on frequent monitoring of student progress.

The emphasis is on systemic reform of school structures, the curriculum, and instructional practices. Collaborative leadership and continuous professional development are emphasized. Improvement is based on sound data about student learning and achievement.

Livingstone Range School Division requires a long term plan to be in place to ensure these aforementioned current concerns do not grow into major programming issues that impact student learning. Given the collaboratively designed Vision and Guiding Principles that drive our decision-making (see below), we need to ensure that we develop strategies that support each high school community in looking forward together to meet the needs of our students in the long term. As such, two areas become the focus of this plan – CTS Programming and Alternative Course Delivery.

Vision

Provide pedagogically sound high school programs for students that are:

- Responsive and flexible to their needs
- Engaging
- Reflective of the 21st century learner
- Responsive to the learning needs of all students
- Sustainable

High School Programming Guiding Principles

1. School and communities will work collaboratively to provide the best quality educational opportunities for students.
2. All six high schools will work collaboratively to deliver educational programs to high school students.
3. Equitable access to programming opportunities for all students within their community.
4. Program delivery will be flexible and responsive to student need.
5. Decisions about High School programming will consider sustainability of:
    a) Equipment
    b) Staff
    c) Students
    d) Facilities
    e) Transportation

Enhancing High School Programming

Livingstone Range School Division

Goal: Enhance High School Programming

Desired Outcomes	Measure	Strategies	Results
1 CTS Programs and facilities that are relevant learning opportunities that inspire students' interests and passions with connections to business, industry and post secondary.	CTS Long term plan in place that is Board Approved # of students participating in credentialed pathways	1.1 Construct jurisdictional CTS Long Term Plan that addresses: o Programming o Staffing o Facilities o Equipment o Budget o Implement Plan 1.2 Work in partnership with Careers the Next Generation, Alberta Health Services, and Norquest College to provide a Health Care Aid credentialed pathway in LRSD High Schools 1.3 Work in partnership with Lethbridge College and other school jurisdictions to explore potential credentialed CTS pathways that could be offered to LRSD students	• CTS Long Term Plan established in February 2009 • Health Care Aid program established in LRSD in September 2009 • January 12 and 19 2011 meeting with Horizon, Westwind, Holy Spirit and Lethbridge College to partner on planning for Dual Credits courses • Feb 4 – Met with Lethbridge College, Holy Spirit, West Winds and Horizon School Divisions to brainstorm partnership possibilities in the area of CTS
2 High Schools working together to meet the needs of all students	# of collaborative projects between schools	2.1 Establish a coordinated school day that would allow for the sharing of teachers and resources 2.2 Schools pool funds to hire off-campus teachers to provide supervision for students participating in: o Work Experience o Green Certificate o Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) 2.3 Pooling funds to provide for alternative delivery programming options	• Coordinated school day for High School established in September 2009. 5 of 6 schools are participating • September 2010 High Schools pooled funds to hire 1.0 off-campus teacher • In 2010-11 High School Administrators met 4 times to coordinate services

Desired Outcomes	Measure	Strategies	Results
		2.4 Regular High School Admin Meetings to coordinate high school programming and work on: o Collaborative timetabling o Sharing of resources o Review and revising data and plans o Sharing of effective practices/pedagogy o Supervision of off-campus and alternative delivery projects	
3 Livingstone Range SD schools will offer a distributed learning model which offers multiple channels of learning and teaching through a variety of delivery formats and mediums, whereby through design, students and their teachers may be separated in time and/or space for some or all of their interactions.	# of student courses in Alternative Delivery Project # of VC Courses # of high school students participating in VC courses % of high school participating in Alternate Delivery Project	3.1 All high schools will have video conferencing classrooms that will allow for VC delivery in each high school 3.2 All high school administrators will meet in the spring of each year to plan for VC courses for the upcoming school year 3.3 Complete a Technology Review to assess the LRSD technology infrastructure and equipment to ensure it can support a distributed learning model (2010-2011). 3.4 Implement a Technology Plan that ensures equipment and infrastructure are in place that will support a distributed learning model. 3.5 In partnership with Alberta Distance Learning Centre, implement a distributed learning model for high school math and science for the 2010-2011 school year.(Alternative Delivery Project) 3.6 For the 2011-2012 school year install a VC suite at the Cross Roads campus in order to support the Alternative Delivery Project. 3.7 Explore a distributed learning model for High School Social Studies and Language Arts (2011-2012)	• As of September 2010 all high schools have VC classrooms • Partnership was established with Alberta Distance Learning in June 2010 to support the Alternative Delivery Project • December 2010 Technology Review was completed • In 2010-2011 Math 31 was offered by VC – 20 students enrolled • 247 students were enrolled in the Math/Science alternative delivery project in 2010-2011