

LEADING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: OUR PRINCIPAL PURPOSE

Friday, May 9, 2008

SYMPOSIUM

**Toronto Airport Marriott
901 Dixon Road, Toronto**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Welcome: Linda Massey, OPC
Gisele Neil, ADFO**

Linda Massey and Gisele Neil welcomed participants and introduced the video, “Leading Student Achievement Highlights, 2005 – 2008”. This video presented the history of the project through a series of clips in which previous symposium presenters spoke to important directions of the project and participants in the project commented on their involvement, the benefits and the progress achieved.

**The Way Forward: Patricia Manson, Senior Executive Officer
The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat**

Patricia Manson began her presentation by stating that the work at the Secretariat focuses on improving the achievement level of all students. She then explained that her topic would be the journey that The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat (LNS) has taken in the last few years towards achieving its goal of improvement in learning and achievement for all students.

In describing this journey, she included the following features:

- the key goal of the Secretariat;
- the key purposes of the Secretariat;
- a summary of the work up to April 2006 (Phases 1 and 2);
- the initiatives introduced from April 2006 to August 2007 (Phase 3);
- the highlights of the achievement demonstrated since the establishment of LNS;
- specific examples of improvement in OFIP schools;
- an outline of the work begun in the fall of 2007 (Phase 4) with a focus on the School Effectiveness Framework;
- a definition of high yield strategies with an accompanying list of examples of such strategies;
- resources available to educators;
- the future focus on networks as the means of developing collective teacher efficacy;
- the overall success of LNS in developing a culture in Ontario focused on the success of all students.

**What We Are Learning from the LSA Evaluation:
Dr. Kenneth Leithwood, Professor of Education Leadership
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto**

Dr. Leithwood began his presentation by pointing out that a major challenge faced by educators in Ontario who are striving to improve student achievement, is the fact that our students are, on the whole, doing well. This means that the challenge lies in determining how to advance from “good” to “great”.

He then made reference to the three goals and five priorities for 2007/08 before providing a brief summary of the results of the first round of data collection in the fall of 2007. Here, Leithwood noted that in their responses, teachers disagreed that they “*observed each other*” and “*planned together as part of the school day.*” He stressed that in order to achieve improvement in student learning, teachers have to observe one another and plan together. Another point he made was that many of the respondents had not heard about the key learning conditions considered priorities for attention this year.

In concluding this portion of his presentation, Leithwood made two recommendations:

1. The success of this phase of the LSA project depends on ensuring sufficient attention to the key learning conditions. This means continuing to disseminate information about these conditions to all participants and encouraging them to engage their teachers in better understanding these conditions and how they can be further improved.
2. The key learning conditions need not be viewed as something distinct from other provincial initiatives such as the Effective Schools Framework and the IEL Leadership Framework. Efforts should be made to demonstrate the interdependence of these initiatives and to help teachers and LSA participants understand that interdependence.

Leithwood then reviewed the year’s priorities and made the following comments:

1. Progress in Developing PLCs – It is imperative that teachers observe one another teaching and interact about what they see in order for improvement in student learning to occur. An effective PLC can support this.
2. Focused Instruction – Energy and urgency that includes close teacher monitoring are the key ingredients of focused instruction.
3. Academic Press – The academic work is the school’s priority, especially work in literacy and numeracy.
4. School Disciplinary Climate – Engaging instruction focused on deep understanding is the most powerful strategy for creating a positive disciplinary climate. It is worth noting that this was the lowest rated condition by teachers in the fall 2007 survey.
5. Collective Teacher Efficacy – An authentic, well functioning PLC should be a powerful developer of collective teacher efficacy.
6. Teacher Trust in Colleagues, Parents and Students – This was the highest (but still moderate) rated of the key conditions by teachers in the fall 2007 survey.
7. Time for Learning – It is important to sensitize staff to the power of this condition since it has a more powerful impact on learning than variations in instructional techniques. If a principal has to choose one condition as a priority, this is the one to choose.

In the next section of his presentation, Leithwood defined leadership as helping people make sense of their work. Given the current context in which a number of provincial initiatives are taking place, he recommended eight questions that can be used to glue these various initiatives together.

Leithwood concluded by explaining what remains in the current round of evaluation activity, namely, completing the May 2008 principals’ and teachers’ surveys, analyzing of the survey and interview data, examining student achievement data, and preparing a report and recommendations for 2008/09.

BREAK

LSA Principal Survey

During the break, participants filled out the Spring 2008 Principals' Survey and submitted the completed forms. They picked up covering letters and 2008 surveys for the members of their principal learning teams to complete and return at a later date.

Setting Directions for Year 4: Barb McMorrow, CPCO

Barb McMorrow introduced the Year 4 LSA brochure and reviewed the contents. She then instructed participants to work in their board teams to complete the form titled, "Setting Directions for Year 4, 2008 – 2009". Discussion focused on the three objectives and the five key conditions that have powerful direct effects on student learning. In their discussion, participants were asked to consider ways in which the LSA project could provide continued support.

LUNCH

Carousel Sessions: Sharing Exemplary Practice: Participants had the opportunity to select two sessions from the following list:

1. The Power of the Teaching Learning Cycle (TLC) within the LSA Project
2. School Effectiveness Framework and Principal Learning Teams
3. Hiring for Student Achievement
4. Les pratiques réussies et les pratiques en voie réussite!
5. Le travail en équipe de collaboration pour favoriser la mise en oeuvre du cadre d'efficacité
6. Sharpening Our Focus: A Collaborative Approach to Instructional Leadership
7. Principal Learning Teams – Partnerships in Action
8. Learning by Doing: Sharing our LSA Journey
9. L'accompagnement régulier auprès des directions et du personnel enseignant

Symposium Dates for Year 4:

- Friday, September 19, 2008
- Friday, January 16, 2009
- Friday, May 8, 2009