

## **High Prairie School Division # 48**

### **Action Plans for Improving Results**

**(Specific to PAT Excellence and DE Acceptable)**

Results on Provincial Achievement Tests in excellence and Diploma Exams in acceptable dropped this year giving us an overall concern in these areas. We are therefore, submitting an addendum to our Three Year Education Plan in an effort to impact this decline before the next set of results. There are six strategies that we have identified in our action plan that we believe will have a positive impact on PAT and DE results.

1. Heightened awareness and implementation of Assessment For Learning
2. Technology used to enhance student achievement and cover the Provincial Information and Communication Technology curricular outcomes.
3. Staff, students, parents and the community provided with better opportunities to become actively engaged in development and achievement of the vision, mission and school improvement goals.
4. Focused support to address the needs of all learners.
5. Data driven decisions, goals and strategies.
6. Engage in high quality interviews, aggressive recruitment and formalized mentorships programs for school based administrators and new teachers.

### **Context:**

High Prairie School Division # 48 is located in Northern Alberta. Approximately 3600 students are taught in 12 schools including 3 Outreach programs by over 220 FTE teachers supplemented by 290 additional full and part-time employees.

The annual teacher turnover in HPSD is around 20%. Therefore, embedding practice and then continuing to build on effective practice each year is a considerable challenge. Each year we are required to constantly return professional development for the beginning teacher rather than enhance the skills of senior teachers. The teacher retention reality we face is that we can lose embedded and effective practice as quickly as we can build and support these practices. Therefore, a future challenge is to build the structures within each school to carry on effective practices even though a high percentage of staff turn-over exists.

In order to provide teachers with appropriate professional development, teachers need to be absent from their classroom during instructional time. The challenge is that there is a lack of qualified substitute teachers who can maintain the quality and integrity of instruction during the regular teachers' absence. Our Division has modified the calendar to minimize this impact, but

the challenge remains. Secondly, to not provide adequate professional development would potentially mean teachers in our classrooms who are not developing in the areas that are critical to enhanced student success.

The ability to purchase technological equipment and get it installed is posing greater problems with the lack of trained tradesmen in the north. Presently a SMART Board can take 9 months to get installed in our schools. Once the technology is installed providing professional development to teachers comes back to the same problem we have already discussed with taking teachers out of their classrooms. Further there is very little opportunity to have teachers attend workshops on technology when the equipment is being purchased and installed in piecemeal stages.

Leadership development and sustainability is a significant challenge. Many administrators in our division will be retiring over the next few years. While we have several bright and eager teachers willing to take on the leadership's role, there needs to be an opportunity to train these potential leaders. As a northern division we can provide training and extensive professional development to teachers in seconded positions only to have them hired by other divisions in the province, closer to major centers.

Providing the breadth of programming in all schools is a challenge. Students in the north deserve quality instruction in all areas, including fine arts, CTS courses and second languages. HPSD faces significant challenges in offering certain programs due to the sustained availability of staff. We have cut valuable programs due to the inability to recruit staff with the needed skill set.

There are a number of students in HPSD who have special needs. It is our intention to address the needs of every student. Providing the services for students is becoming increasingly more difficult. Positions in Speech Language and Occupational Therapy remain vacant for years at a time. Special Education trained teachers and coordinators are often filled by generalist teachers. While we provide training and professional development the candidates will often leave after a few years and we are back to training new teachers for these demanding positions.

Most students are bright and capable. However, for numerous reasons students are not demonstrating their capabilities or are excelling in areas outside of the education system. The challenge is to build junior high and high school programming that is relevant to the needs and desires of the youth of the north, while at the same time meeting the needs of communities and society.

## Action Plan:

### 1. Heightened awareness and implementation of Assessment For Learning

**Purpose:** The key purpose of Assessment for Learning is to improve classroom assessment practices in order to improve student learning across all grades and subjects

- a. AISI Coordinator and Lead Learners continue to support teachers in common assessment creation
  - i. All grade level teachers in K-6 will meet three times throughout the year to produce a division-wide outcome based report card.
  - ii. Each school will receive ongoing, in-school support from AISI to focus on assessment strategies to enhance student achievement specifically on the acceptable standards.
  - iii. Teachers will move to outcome based reporting and will develop portfolios of student's work as evidence of outcome achievement.
  - iv. Outdated evaluation practices such as awarding "0" for incomplete work will be phased out.
  
- b. AISI Coordinator and Lead Learners will continue building on Professional Learning Communities to facilitate teacher collaboration
  - i. Principals will build their timetables to allow for embedded PLC time.
  - ii. PLC minutes will reflect teachers exploration of the POS and common assessment practices and will work together to ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed.

**Anticipated Outcome:** Through the process of Assessment For Learning, teachers will refine their practices and share new insights about ways to engage students and provide meaningful feedback to students to help them improve their learning.

### 2. Technology used to enhance student achievement and cover the Provincial Information and Communication Technology curricular outcomes

**Purpose:** HPSD recognizes the need for changes in its organization and its structures by implementing programs based on current research, and by responding to a changing paradigm for learning.

- a. Expand the development of teachers' skills in relation to the effective use of SMART boards and Content Delivery Devices (CDDs) in each school
  - i. A Three Year Technology plan is being developed to reflect the work being done to ensure 83 new SMART boards will be installed in classrooms.
  - ii. Professional Development will be given to teachers to ensure use of technology supports learners and enhances achievement.
  
- b. Monitoring of the ICT outcomes to ensure curricular objectives are being met and both staff and students have support.

**Anticipated Outcome:** Technology integration in the classroom can help change teacher-student relationships, encourage project based learning and support the acquisition of skills such as higher order analysis and problem solving.

**3. Staff, students, parents and the community provided with better opportunities to become actively engaged in development and achievement of the vision, mission and school improvement goals.**

**Purpose:** Each school will endeavor to involve parents in the planning processes and other aspects of school operations so that parents have a valued voice in their child's education.

- a. Host a School Council workshop for Trustees, Executive Council, principals and School Council executive to facilitate effective School Councils and investigate the possibility of a Council of School Councils (COSC) within HPSD.
- b. Pilot a School/Community planning evening in one school to investigate community involvement into the 3YEP process for all of the schools in HPSD
- c. Pilot the "Finding Our Ways Together" project in one school with a focus on greater involvement of the aboriginal community.
- d. Hire a facilitator to work with HPSD's Trustees, Executive Council, and Principals to develop a strategic plan with a focus for the next three years.

**Anticipated Outcome:** Students will feel connected to the school and the needs of the community and society will be identified. As a result the quality of education delivered in each of our schools will be impacted.

**4. Focused support to address the needs of all learners**

**Purpose:** While HPSD has received very positive reviews in the realignment review for Special Education, we need to improve in some areas in order to better meet the needs and provide better learning experiences for our students with special needs and students at risk of not completing their programs.

- a. Provide a focus of support in one school for an Action Research project to look at improved student achievement.
- b. Staff will be trained to use Assistive Technology when required to enhance or assist student learning.
- c. Ensure focused collaborative student support networks are working in every school to identify at-risk students; provide for their needs; identify reasons for leaving school prior to completion; and provide a smooth re-entry process.

**Anticipated Outcome:** Expanding on the use of assistive technology, continued growth in teacher skills in the area of differentiated instruction, the use of assessing as a learning tool in the classrooms, and counseling services will provide the support structures needed for special needs students and at-risk students to be equally successful at school.

## **5. Data driven decisions, goals and strategies**

**Purpose:** Engage in systematic processes of analysis of learning, goal setting and the implementation of change strategies for the continuous improvement of student learning.

- a. A new divisional statistician will help schools collect, disaggregate and represent data to drive the decision-making process.
- b. Assistance will be provided to schools to ensure teachers are analyzing Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Exams and disaggregating student achievement data to change practices in teaching and assessment.
- c. Schools that have priority measures will be provided assistance to identify and develop appropriate action plans implement these plans.
- d. Assist school in the identification of strategies that address aboriginal academic success.
- e. An External Review will be piloted in one school to identify specific improvement strategies.

**Anticipated Outcomes:** Through the systematic process of analysis each school as well as the school division will use data to identify focus areas and goals to improve student learning.

## **6. Engage in high quality interviews, aggressive recruitment and formalized mentorships programs for school based administrators and new teachers.**

**Purpose:** HPSD believes that the quality of learning experiences student engage in is directly related to the personnel the division employs.

- a. Recruit and retain outstanding individuals who will advance the division's vision.
- b. Support all teachers new to the division with a comprehensive orientation, continued support and updated information on GLA, Assessment For Learning, First Steps in Math and technology advances.
- c. Continue to support teacher in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years of teaching in the division with the Mentor/Coach Support all new administrators with a Leader Coach. Formalize the administrative support program.
- d. Evaluate all site administrators using the Principal Quality Standard.
- e. Provide ongoing interview training to leaders.

**Anticipated Outcomes:** By recruiting the best and focusing on training and orientation for new personnel, HPSD's teachers and leaders will collaborate to set and achieve high standards of student learning and achievement, and engage in continuous professional learning.