

REPORT TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES November 22, 2016

Dan Parr, Director of Education

SUBJECT: Promoting Educational Achievement and Innovation

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BACKGROUND:

As identified in the Board Strategic Plan priority “Promoting Educational Achievement and Innovation”, our schools are engaged in a variety of strategies to support students’ learning experiences. Our goal is for learning in our classrooms to be “21st-Century: reflective of the global and digital age in which we live, rich in critical thinking, creativity and citizenship and enhanced by technology.”

Commencing during 2014/15, the St. Clair Catholic District School Board (SCCDSB) entered into a world-wide collaborative inquiry led by Michael Fullan. This inquiry, entitled New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL) was to include 1000 schools in 100 countries with the sole purpose of fostering a, “*global movement dedicated to transforming learning by identifying new pedagogies that foster deep learning competencies and ways to measure progress.*” SCCDSB entered into this agreement with the following 6 schools: St. Patrick’s, Ursuline College, Holy Trinity, St. Philip, St. Michael Ridgetown and Holy Family. Using the Council of Directors of Education (CODE) Technology Learning Fund, approximately 40 educators were provided technology for their classroom as well as being provided with release time over the course of the previous 3 years to investigate how technology and deep learning tasks can be leveraged to increase student engagement and achievement.

At the conclusion of each of the last three school years a variety of learning opportunities from our system were shared with the world wide collaborative inquiry. In June of 2016, two projects were submitted for consideration among the Canadian cluster of schools involved with NPDL. Over the summer months, educators from around the globe reviewed learning submissions to determine what were the richest learning exemplars from across the globe. It is with tremendous pride that we share that Andrea DeBruyn, a grade 7/8 teacher at St. Michael Ridgetown, has had her learning task identified as one of the 5 strongest global examples of what Deep Learning can look like for our students. The task, entitled “Run, Hide, Survive” invited students to research, write, produce, and perform a play intended to educate other students, families, and the community about refugees, and to raise funds, through ticket sales, for refugees coming into their community. Curriculum expectations met through the learning experience included: investigating perspectives of different groups on the Refugee Crisis and how it affects Canada as a whole; analyzing major challenges facing different groups and examining the actions taken to improve their lives; and, through drama, communicating multiple perspectives, feelings, and possible outcomes related to the immigration of refugees.

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This year, we are leveraging the learning that has occurred in the 6 NPDL schools to spread this learning across the system. Using funding through the Technology and Learning Fund, supported by CODE, schools are exploring technology-enabled pedagogical practices focused on key 21st Century competencies such as critical thinking, problem-solving collaboration, communication, creativity and entrepreneurship.

Every school has a team of educators and principals involved in professional learning to explore the role of teachers as activators of learning, who design learning experiences that build on learner strengths, needs and interests, create new knowledge using real-life, authentic connections, and also enhance learning experiences with technology. We have created a system focus to frame this work: “If we understand and implement the foundations and conditions for innovative learning, then all learners will develop 21st Century competencies and improve achievement in literacy and numeracy.” The foundations and conditions for learning anchor learning conversations in schools and align with the NDPL framework. School teams will be learning together in networks during the year and sharing this learning in the spring across the system.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the St. Clair Catholic District School Board receive the report: *Promoting Educational Achievement and Innovation*, for information.