**YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**


**School Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and Well-Being**
**2015-2016**

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**School Context and Needs Assessment**

The Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School is the oldest of three publicly-funded high schools in the Town of Aurora. The core neighbourhood of its boundary area is shrinking in population. Many students from the east side of town are opting for the newer Catholic secondary school to which they can walk. Others are opting for Aurora High School for its perceived better academic reputation and its ease of access by public transportation. These factors have contributed to the decreasing enrollment at the Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School. School enrollment has decreased from over 1100 students in September 2012 to just over 700 students in September 2015. This lower enrollment has limited some course choices for students. The school has just completed a series of renovation projects that began in the spring of 2013. The school wants to continue to make improvements to its achievement levels on standardized provincial assessments while maintaining a positive learning and teaching environment for students and staff. School staff has been making efforts to attract more Grade 9 students to the school.

| Credit Accumulation (as of June 2014) | Credit Accumulation (as of June 2015) |
|---|---|
| *Cognos Report: Credit Earned Summary, Historical Student Enrollment, June 30, 2014* | *Cognos Report: Credit Earned Summary, Historical Student Enrollment, June 30, 2015* |
| • Gr. 9 students with 8+ credits at 88% (126/143) | • Gr. 9 students with 8+ credits at 86% (147/171) |
| • Gr. 10 students with 16+ credits at 87% (185/214) | • Gr. 10 students with 16+ credits at 79% (123/156) |
| • Gr. 11 students with 23+ credits at 84% (173/203) | • Gr. 11 students with 23+ credits at 84% (185/221) |

**OSSLT – Results of Spring 2015 Test**
- 84% pass for FTE students on OSSLT
- 53% pass for FTE Special Education students on OSSLT
- 52% pass for first-time eligible Applied English students
- 66% pass for previously eligible on OSSLT

**Grade 9 Math EQAO – Results from 2014-2015 year**
- 39% at or above provincial standard on Applied Math test
- 90% at or above provincial standard on Academic Math test

**School Climate – Results from the system Student School Climate Survey (Fall 2010):**
- 63% of students report that adults at this school care about each of them as a person. *#8. Affective engagement.*
- 81% of students report feeling safe (agree or strongly agree) at this school. *#78. Safe environment.*
- 62% of our students indicate that they are happy with the ways all or most of their teachers teach them. *#53. Personalized learning activities.*
- Students indicate that they feel unwelcome or uncomfortable due to their race, culture or skin colour (23%), their religion or faith (14%), or their sexual orientation (9%). *#64. Equity/Welcome, inclusive environment.*

**Learning and Teaching**

**Theory of Action:**

If we focus on LSWH,
- and if teachers and students use a common language and have a common understanding of LSWH,
- and if we engage in PD on the teaching and tracking of LSWH and co-create resources,
- and if teachers explicitly teach and consistently incorporate LSWH into their lessons,
- and if teachers monitor students' LSWH and provide regular feedback opportunities,
- and if students are given time to reflect on and monitor their own LSWH,
- and if students set goals to improve their LSWH,
- and if we – individually and collaboratively – reflect on, share and revise our implementation strategies,

then students will become more engaged as learners, they will take more initiative, they will show more responsibility for their own learning, and overall student achievement will improve.

**Challenge of Practice:**

In the area of Learning Skills, our students collaborate respectfully and work well in a structured / guided environment.  They have difficulty taking initiative (e.g. asking for clarification, appropriately negotiating time lines, and being independent learners).  They are struggling to develop individual responsibility (e.g. completing homework, meeting deadlines, being accountable for their learning). We need to learn how to better explicitly teach learning skills. We need to learn how to more effectively embed learning skills into learning tasks.

**Strategy, Plans and Actions:**

A1. By June 30, 2016, there will be an increase in overall credit accumulation as measured by the June Report Card:
- 4 point increase for Grade 9s with 8 or more credits (from 86% to 90%)
- 8 point increase for Grade 10s with 16 or more credits (from 79% to 87%)
- 1 point increase for Grade 11s with 23 or more credits (from 84% to 85%)

**OSSLT -- Results of Spring 2015 Test**

- 84% pass for FTE students on OSSLT (This is down 6% from 90% during the previous year.)
- 53% pass for FTE Special Education students on OSSLT (This is down 17% from 70% during the previous year.)
- 52% pass for first-time eligible Applied English students (This is equal to the previous year.)
- 66% pass for previously eligible on OSSLT (This is up 19% from 47% during the previous year.)

**Grade 9 Math EQAO – Results from 2014-2015 year**
- 39% at or above provincial standard on Applied Math test (This is down 7% from 46% during the previous year.)
- 90% at or above provincial standard on Academic Math test (This is up 3% from 87% during the previous year.)

*Support for all students:*
- Teachers and students can refer to the Learning Skills and Work Habits posters
- Teachers incorporate the common language of Learning Skills and Work Habits into lessons
- Teachers provide self-assessment templates for students to self-assess and monitor Learning Skills and Work Habits
- Teachers begin to incorporate explicit questioning strategies in all units of study to promote higher-order thinking skills (from Bloom's taxonomy)
- Students are able to articulate what they are learning using Learning Goals and Success Criteria as points of reference
- Teachers engage in assessment for/as/of learning practices and use results to more effectively address the needs, interests, and abilities of each student
- Teaching practices are differentiated, and include accommodations for ELLs, students with IEPs, and at-risk students
- Provide targeted supports, such as After School Programs in Literacy and Numeracy, the Math Help-Room, the Student Success Centre, the Resource Room.

| **Resources:** | **Professional Learning:** |
|---|---|
| <ul><li>Adolescent Literacy Guide</li><li>Student Success Team</li><li>Guidance Department</li><li>School Social Worker</li><li>School Psychologist</li><li>Digital Literacy Resource Teacher</li><li>Growing Success, 2010</li><li>Board Assessment, Evaluation, and Communication Protocols</li><li>Assessing Learning Skills rubrics, LSWH posters in classrooms, LSWH tracking templates</li></ul> | <ul><li>PD on learning skills and work habits</li><li>Refresh learning with staff on developing consistency in the writing of Learning Goals and Success Criteria, and how to incorporate them in the classroom more effectively</li><li>Share best practices</li><li>Lunch and Learns</li><li>Adolescent Literacy Team</li><li>Learning Network Team</li></ul> |

**Targets and Monitoring:**

- Analyze Interim progress data and Mid-Semester Report Card results (including Learning Skills)
- Review credit accumulation on Final Report Cards, and compare to previous data
- Classroom teachers and Admin monitor the explicit teaching and assessment of Learning Skills and Work Habits in all classes

**Environment, Engagement, and Well-Being**

**Theory of Action:**

If we focus on our school as being a safe and inclusive environment,
- by encouraging students to collaborate and learn with, from and about their peers
- by continuing to develop a learning environment that supports the diversity of all learners (i.e. cultural backgrounds and traditions, religion, languages, gender, sexual orientation, learning styles, pathways, interests, physical ability)
- by promoting all pathways and post-secondary destinations
- by emphasizing mental and emotional health and physical well-being

then students will feel engaged affectively, will feel safe, and will feel that their learning has been personalized for them.

**Strategy, Plans and Actions:**

- 63% of students report that adults at this school care about each of them as a person. *#8. Affective engagement.*
- 81% of students report feeling safe (agree or strongly agree) at this school. *#78. Safe environment*
- 62% of our students indicate that they are happy with the ways all or most of their teachers teach them. *#53. Personalized learning activities.*

By the next system Student School Climate Survey, students will report that they experience Williams as a safer, more welcoming and supportive school (as measured by perception data in the system Student School Climate Survey):

- 7 point increase (from 63% to 70%) in students reporting that adults at this school care about each of them as a person. *#8. Affective engagement.*
- 9 point increase (from 81% to 90%) of students reporting feeling safe (agree or strongly agree) at this school. *#78. Safe environment.*
- 8 point increase (from 62% to 70%) of our students indicating that they are happy with the ways all or most of their teachers teach them. *#53. Personalized learning activities.*

| **Resources:** | **Professional Learning:** |
|---|---|
| <br>- Student Success Team case management meetings<br>- Character and attendance recognition cards<br>- Progressive discipline and restorative practices<br>- LOG EA<br>- YRP School Resource Officer<br>- YR Public Health Nurse<br>- Guest speakers | <br><br>PD on Equity and Inclusion<br>PD on embedding and facilitating use of assistive technology in daily instruction: Lunch 'n' Learns |

**Classroom strategies**
- Address every student by name in classroom interactions
- Address issues of intolerance as they arise and insist on respectful language
- Encourage students to learn with, from and about their peers
- Value differences, recognize significant faith days and practices
- Consistently model and reinforce character attributes
- Promote pathways (workplace, apprenticeship, college, university) within courses
- Employ strategies to promote safe, caring and healthy learning environments for all
- Apply progressive discipline strategies with dignity and in ways that help students to make better choices thereafter
- Differentiate instruction and assessment to meet all students' needs, interests, and strengths

**School Strategies**
- Expand existing programs to continue to build cultural awareness and sensitivity, and acceptance of differences
- Engage in assets-based conversations with and about students
- Continue to share Information (e.g. through assemblies, PA Announcements, library displays) to help members of the school to make better-informed decisions
- Engage in more restorative conversations that build empathy and reflection
- Recognize non-verbal cues of students that might indicate an incidence of harassment or bullying and intervene early in situations involving putdowns, bullying, harassment or other anti-social behaviour
- Promote all pathways (workplace, apprenticeship, college, university) in representation of courses offered by the school
- Continue improvements to the physical plant (e.g. locker replacement, front foyer, hallway displays, weight room and Comm Tech lab)

**Targets and Monitoring:**
- In-house surveys (e.g. Grade 10 Focus Group, Students' Council Questionnaire – by Grade level)
- Student School Climate Survey – Healthy School Team – ongoing  Action Research

**Equity and Inclusivity**

**Theory of Action:**

If we focus on equity and inclusivity,
- by continuing to develop a learning environment that supports the diversity of all learners (i.e. cultural backgrounds and traditions, religion, languages, gender, sexual orientation, learning styles, pathways, interests, physical ability)
- by promoting character development
- by continuing to create opportunities for staff to participate in and share their learning about equity, inclusivity and diversity
- by including student voice in equity, diversity and inclusivity understanding and planning

then students will feel more welcome, comfortable, and represented at Williams.

**Strategy, Plans and Actions:**

Students indicate that they feel unwelcome or uncomfortable due to their race, culture or skin colour (23%), their religion or faith (14%), or their sexual orientation (9%). *#64. Equity/Welcome, inclusive environment.*

For students indicating that they feel unwelcome or uncomfortable, there will be a:
- 8 point decrease (from 23% to 15%) due to race, culture or skin colour;
- 4 point decrease (from 14% to 10%) due to religion or faith;
- 4 point decrease (from 9% to 5%) due to sexual orientation.

| **Resources:** | **Professional Learning:** |
|---|---|
| <br>• Equity Council / GSA / PC4L<br>• Staff PD and student learning on Bullying Prevention | Positive Spaces/EGALE workshops |

**Targets and Monitoring:**

- In-house surveys (e.g. Grade 10 Focus Group, Students' Council Questionnaire – by Grade level)
- Student School Climate Survey – Healthy School Team – ongoing  Action Research

**Building Leadership Capacity and Succession Planning**

**Theory of Action:**
If we encourage all staff members to see themselves as leaders by:
- supporting all staff members in acquiring the attitudes, knowledge and skills required to successfully perform their role;
- providing ongoing opportunities for professional learning, collaboration and sharing of effective practices;
- including staff in the identification and development of school goals;
- encouraging, fostering and developing strategic leadership for individuals, teams, and departments;

then we will proactively build capacity, promote a positive professional culture aligned with the Board's Mission, Vision and Values, and address the long-term sustainability of the organization.

**System Strategy, Plans and Actions:**

• Leadership Strategy – Developing and mobilizing leadership practices that support professionalism, encourage excellence and innovation, and inspire current and future leaders.
• Targeted professional learning and support to ensure readiness for those who are aspiring to formal leadership roles, newly appointed, and experienced.
• Induction programs to ensure that all employees have the knowledge, training and resources to be successful in their roles.

| **Resources:** | **Professional Learning:** |
|---|---|
| Allocate funds in school budget for some professional learning | Induction Programs<br>Opportunities to pursue professional interests<br>Opportunities to present professional learning with staff |

**Targets and Monitoring:**

• Increased participation of staff in professional learning programs