

**Grand Erie District School Board  
CODE Director Innovation Funds Report  
2015-16**

**Who Participated**

Linda De Vos – Superintendent of Education – Elementary Program  
Andy Nesbitt – Superintendent of Education – Secondary Program, Student Success  
Liana Thompson – Superintendent of Education – Special Education

**Where the program or project investigated was located**

The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Model Schools Conference took place in Orlando Florida from June 26 – 29, 2016. The audience was international. The theme of the conference was Rigor, Relevance and Relationships.

**Background**

The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Model Schools Conference brings educators together to highlight Model Schools and Innovative Districts. The focus of the conference is the belief that all students should have equitable access to educational opportunities so that all students can succeed.

The conference focused on a system of effective instruction created by Bill Daggett. The system provides a coherent focus across the entire educational organization on the development and support of instructional effectiveness to increase rigorous learning opportunities for all students.

**What We Learned**

Culture trumps strategy. We must create a culture to support change. Schools must be future focused in order to help students become financially and emotionally independent as adults. To do this we need to ask the following questions:

1. **Why** do we need to change?
2. **What** do we need to do?
3. **How** are we going to do it?

**WHY**

We need to change because the world is changing in six major areas - provincial expectations, demographics, technology, social media, work place, higher education.

In order to respond to the changes in these areas, schools need strong curriculum but more importantly a culture of innovation. We must acknowledge that there is a shift from community to networks and that the workplace has been fundamentally changed by this shift.

**WHAT**

The belief is that instruction and learning must be effective and student based in achievement of core curriculum, ability to be rigorous and go beyond the learning, and engaged so that they are motivated and committed to learning. The philosophy can be divided into four quadrants, A, B, C, and D.

Quad A - Teacher thinks

Quad C - Student thinks

Quad B - Student Works

Quad D - Student Thinks and Works

“Quad D” instruction is the most effective form of instruction. In Quad D, the student thinks and works. Shifting from the teaching model to the learning model is required. The role of teacher changes from disseminator of knowledge to the facilitator of learning.

## **HOW**

We must acknowledge that one size does not fit all; for student, school or the district. We need to think outside the box and effect organizational change that supports a fundamental shift in instruction to focus on student learning and growth in core curriculum, learning skills, engagement and personal attributes.

### **Application in your district school board**

We will use the learnings from the conference as we begin the implementation of our new Grand Erie Multi-Year Plan that provides strategic directions for 2016-2020. We will also use our learnings as we build our Annual Operating Plans in the areas of Equity, Well-Being, Community, Technology and Environment and our Annual Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement.

We will:

Engage in a growth model (rather than a proficiency model).

Create an action plan. In the action plan, compare our present state to our desired state.

Find best practices.

Identify challenges.

Insist on excellence and high expectations.

When determining what we need to change we must consider that students are very different than they were 30 years ago. Now students are digital natives, the majority race (Caucasian) is becoming the minority race, many more students are coming from poverty, students communicate and interact differently, and most importantly they are always connected, except in schools.

### **How do we get out of the box?**

We need to move from quadrants AC to quadrants BD. We need to prepare kids to live in the "D" quadrant specifically. We do this by really looking at large, multiple sets of data and look for patterns and trends to target what we need to change or enhance in our schools.

Lessons need to intentionally embed opportunities for students to practice skills that foster creative thinking. To raise rigour we need to push curiosity and imagination yet also stress agency. We want students to be agents of their own learning. They need to establish purpose, passion and perseverance for what they are learning.

Our ultimate goal is to create classrooms of innovation and creativity. This is how we get to “Quad D”. We need to teach students skills that can’t be googled. The key is to find what each student has a passion for and then use analogies, metaphors and visual thinking to help them expand on and learn about their passion.