

LIMESTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

INNOVATION FUNDING (15 – 16)

CREATIVITY, INNOVATION, PEDAGOGY, TECHNOLOGY AND CHANGE LEADERSHIP

Who Participated in the Learning: Director and members of the Senior Team

Where the Program or Projected Investigated was Located: We visited schools in the Belton and Coppell Independent School Districts in Texas. We are also exploring New Pedagogies for Deep Learning and as a result, we visited the Ottawa Catholic School Board's Learning Fair.

What was Learned: The purpose of our visits to the Belton and Coppell Independent Schools Districts were to see schools in these Districts effectively using strong pedagogical practices supported by the use of technology to enhance the learning experience.

What we saw that Resonated with us:

- a) Student Voice enables us to be responsive and facilitate learning opportunities to meet the needs of all students.
- b) A project-based approach to learning connected to the big ideas in the curriculum across multiple subject areas is highly engaging for all students. PBL in these Districts has a strong connection to a real-world application. This is supported by Fullan et al work in NPDL (partnerships).
- c) Staff and student collaboration is critical to the success of our schools and communities. In the schools we visited, the learning environments were set up in such ways that collaboration was not invitational, it was a requirement. All learning tasks were designed in ways to ensure that student collaboration was included and structures were in place to foster "deep" collaboration amongst educators.
- d) Technology was used to support collaboration and learning between students and educators. This was facilitated through Learning Management Systems (e.g. Students collaboratively working on a learning task at the same time on-line, real-time feedback by the teacher to the group/individual, course work all located on the LMS). The use of applications and technology varied as to how learning was shared with others.
- e) Visionary Leadership was evident in both districts by the structures and processes that were in place to create the conditions in schools for students and staff to achieve success.

- f) Professional relationships between teachers and students were different at the New Tech High Schools we visited. It was clear that there was not a visible hierarchy between the teacher and the student and that the teacher was very much a “co-learner.” One teacher shared that “students still need us in this shifting environment. It is okay if we do not know everything, in fact, it is good modelling.” However, there was a great deal of respect and trust between staff and students that did not impact the teacher providing direction and guidance, as required.

Our Visit to Ottawa Catholic DSB to hear from a number of schools involved in the New Pedagogies for Deep Learning resulted in the following learning:

- 1) New Pedagogies for Deep Learning is a framework that can leverage and mobilize the development of 21st Century skills.
- 2) Technology, when used effectively can leverage change and improved learning.
- 3) NPDL is a mindset and a way of thinking.
- 4) Collaborative Inquiry for teachers is built into NPDL.
- 5) There are local, national and international networks that will support the learning of schools involved in the project.
- 6) NPDL Resources are available to assist with implementation and monitoring of the learning.
- 7) OCDSB’s implementation plan.

Application for the District: We plan on using what we have learned and has resonated with us as a result of the Innovation Funding to:

- Focus on the development of engaging, authentic and relevant learning tasks based on the big ideas in the curriculum, ensuring critical thinking is evident, supported by effective planning, lesson design and the use of technology to leverage, extend, access and support the learning.
- The role of the educator is changing. Our educators must embrace the role of co-learner who models risk taking and critical thinking and are comfortable with the “gray zone.”
- We need to develop confidence in all of our students. What better way than through listening to their voice on a day to day basis in classrooms and in more formalized methods (surveys, focus groups).
- Technology in service of effective teaching through the application of high yield instructional practices can have a profound impact on learning.
- Continued use of the LNS Monograph on the 3rd teacher and the impact that our learning environments have in supporting collaboration and learning.
- The explicit application of one or more of the 6c’s in our learning environments is critical to ensuring students are well prepared to achieve success in a global ecosystem through a deep approach to learning.