



**CODE JK to Grade 1
Assessment and Intervention Project
~ Final Report ~**

July 2010

2009–2010 CODE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROJECT: JK–GRADE 1 ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

BACKGROUND

The Special Education Policy and Programs Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Education provided funding for the 2009–2010 school year to the Council of Directors of Education (CODE) to support the development and implementation of effective, evidence-informed assessment and intervention strategies for all students in Junior Kindergarten through Grade 1.

This JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies project built on the lessons learned from the previous CODE Special Education Project 2005–2009 which focused on implementation of the recommendations of *Education for All: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students with Special Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6* (2005). The JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies Project provided support to ensure that the knowledge gained during the past four school years continues to generate improved learning for both students and staff in Ontario schools.

With its focus on achievement for all students in JK–Grade 1, this project provided an opportunity for school boards to work together in collaborative ways to identify evidence-informed practices, encourage the implementation and monitoring of those practices and to mobilize knowledge transfers and exchanges across school board boundaries.

Barrie Region JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies Project Report to CODE May, 2010

The project was designed to identify existing effective, evidence-informed assessment and intervention strategies; share these through leadership networks; build teacher/school board capacity to implement them; and develop a monitoring tool to support school boards in the implementation process.

The Ministry/CODE Liaison Committee identified the following student, parent, and system outcomes for the CODE JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies Project, which were shared in a CODE memo to lead boards, dated October 13, 2009:

For students:

- improved student achievement
- increased student engagement
- early identification and intervention for students that need additional time and support

For parents:

- increased opportunity for parent engagement
- increased parent confidence in public education

For the system:

- increased capacity to implement effective classroom/school evidence-informed assessment and intervention strategies for students in JK–Grade 1
- improved board capacity to conduct self-assessment on implementation of evidence-informed assessment and intervention strategies for students in JK–Grade 1
- enhanced knowledge sharing among boards on effective evidence-informed assessment and intervention strategies for students in JK–Grade 1

This project is aligned with the following three main goals of the Ministry of Education: to improve student achievement; to reduce gaps in student achievement; and to increase confidence in, and support for, public education.

Finally, the project supports other current Ministry initiatives and documents, including:

- *With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario* (2009), written by Charles Pascal, Special Advisor on Early Learning
- *Growing Success; Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools, First Edition, Covering Grades 1 to 12* (2010)
- *2010–2011: The Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten Program* (2010) draft curriculum document
- *Planning Entry to School: A Resource Guide* (2005)
- *Learning for All K–12* (2009) draft document
- *The School Effectiveness Framework: A Collegial Process for Continued Growth in the Effectiveness of Ontario Elementary Schools* (2007)
- *Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings* (2007)

PROJECT PROCESS OVERVIEW

The following process was used to support the development of a provincial overview of assessment and intervention strategies which reflects the experience and expertise of Ontario educators.

A lead board for each of the seven regions was chosen in October 2009 after all boards were invited to submit an expression of interest in carrying out the lead board functions as outlined by the CODE team. There was a desire to build upon the processes developed and the student, parent and system outcomes achieved during the CODE Special Education Project 2005–2009. The following lead boards were selected:

- York Region District School Board – Barrie Region;
- Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board – London Region;
- Sudbury Catholic District School Board – North Bay/Sudbury Region;
- Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board – Ottawa Region;
- Lakehead District School Board – Thunder Bay Region;
- Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board – Toronto and Area Region; and
- CSDC des Grandes Rivières – representing Ontario’s French-language school boards.

These lead boards were responsible for assembling a working group from all boards in the same region of the province and scheduling regional team meetings. CODE provided up to \$10,000 in approved funding to all interested school boards as well as additional funding of \$30,000 to the selected lead boards on a regional basis. Sixty-eight school boards participated in this project.

To initiate the CODE Special Education Project: JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies, CODE team leaders and lead superintendents for each region made presentations at Regional Special Education Council meetings. Then, every region in the province made plans to support the project focus on joint work at the regional level by finding ways to engage all boards in dialogue and reflection on current practice. At face-to-face regional meetings, during video/teleconferences, and by means of structured interviews, board representatives described their own JK–Grade 1 assessment and intervention strategies and learned about strategies used in other boards to improve student learning and to build teacher, school and system capacity.

These regional professional learning communities reflected upon two key questions:

1. What is important to all of us in this region in relation to JK–Grade 1 assessment and intervention?
2. What will we focus on in developing our suggestions for the JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Framework for the Province?

Boards collected data in response to reflective questions about the five elements in the Collection of Evidence Template for Lead Boards (see **Appendix A**). This framework was aligned with Ministry goals, with lessons learned at the district and school levels during the CODE Special Education Project (2005–2009), and with the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat’s School Effectiveness Framework. The template was intended to support the development of a provincial framework which would be a synthesis of effective practices across Ontario and focused on the five key elements: Assessment and Intervention Strategies/Use of Data; Parent Involvement/Community Communication; Instructional Leadership; Professional Learning and Capacity Building; and System Process/Organization.

The three CODE team leaders participated in regional meetings and/or teleconferences and provided lead superintendents with ongoing support and monitoring for the project. Lead superintendents met face-to-face with the CODE team and Ministry of Education representatives on September 30, 2009, and February 25, 2010. They participated in teleconferences on October 13, 2009 to review and revise the Collection of Evidence Template, and on November 24, 2009 to report on progress.

There was an additional teleconference for lead superintendents and the CODE team on March 25, 2010 to plan for final reports and presentations. Each region was required to prepare a final submission for the project team of CODE/lead board members focused on effective, evidence-informed assessment and intervention strategies for students in JK–Grade 1. These reports were presented at a May 18–19, 2010 provincial meeting attended by lead board superintendents, two additional staff members from each region, and staff from the Special Education Policy and Programs Branch. The CODE team then developed an assessment and intervention framework for use across the province by synthesizing effective strategies and practices identified in the regional reports.

In addition to these regional reports, individual boards submitted final reports on their projects for funding. These reports summarized board activities at both the regional and local levels. Work done at the local level in many boards focused on the identification and use of effective assessment/intervention tools, both commercially made and locally developed; the implementation of these tools; and building the capacity of Kindergarten and Grade 1 teachers in the use effective assessment and intervention strategies. Other board work focused on strategies to support early literacy, including oral language development and early identification strategies for JK–Grade 1 students. Work at the local level was characterized by the use of multidisciplinary teams—staff from the special education and curriculum departments working together.

REGIONAL PROCESS

Unlike the earlier CODE Special Education Project 2005–2009, with its focus on individual board projects, the JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention project was designed to encourage a regional process focused on common goals.

From the Fall of 2009 to the Spring of 2010, regional development, as outlined in more detail in this next section of the report, occurred in response to the Collection of Evidence Template (**Appendix A**). This template included evidence of student learning, of change in teacher knowledge and practice, and of meaningful parent engagement. The template was designed as an outline to guide district and regional thinking about current effective, evidence-informed assessment and intervention practices; to inform a provincial description of evidence-informed practices; and to promote collaborative reflection on and exploration of the JK–Grade 1 assessment and instructional intervention process. The template provided parameters for the collection of data for the JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies project, within the context of the two key questions mentioned previously in the Project Process Overview and the five key elements developed through the CODE Special Education Project 2005–2009.

This regional process provided a unique opportunity to facilitate professional growth and networking at the board, regional, and provincial levels.

Boards serving as lead boards for the project were asked to reflect upon their history of school and district Early Years assessment and instructional intervention processes and the monitoring of progress with data. This interactive process involving shared reflection and joint work by regional working groups proved to be a valuable experience. Through the regional process, individual boards were able to reflect at some length on their own practices. Through the sharing of current, effective, evidence-informed assessment and intervention practices, boards were able to develop a growing understanding of the research and use of assessment tools, including the need to rework commercial assessment tools to fit local contexts. Participants from both special education and program departments and people from a variety of different roles were able to be part of the collaboration and reflective dialogue at the regional level.

Barrie Region

Representatives of all boards in the Barrie Region, with York Region District School Board acting as the lead board, reviewed the evidence-informed assessment and intervention practices used in their region during five face-to-face meetings. Meeting participants included speech and language pathologists and consultants and coordinators from both special education and curriculum.

The Barrie Region CODE project built upon a former regional project, Alternative Curriculum Expectations (ACE). The ACE document provides a set of curriculum expectations that outline the development of oral language from birth to age 4. The ACE group explored ways to develop programs for children of any age based on this developmental continuum, with a focus on oral communication as the foundation for all learning. The ACE project involved speech and language pathologists in an important way, and everyone felt it was essential to include them again. All participants in the ACE project were invited to the CODE JK–Grade 1 project meetings and were asked to bring curriculum representatives from their boards.

The design of the Barrie Region’s CODE JK–Grade 1 project was informed by the success of the ACE project. Focus was on key predictors of success in early literacy development: oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge/letter recognition. The working committee highlighted the four components throughout the project year and described each of the four aspects of literacy at some length in their final report.

The region initially planned to put together an electronic compilation of recommended assessment and intervention tools used in all the boards. The group soon realized that the project timeline would not permit this compilation because of lack of time to field-test given strategies, collect evidence, and reach consensus; however, a very useful resource listing both commercially created and board-developed assessment tools was developed. This resource is organized under the four categories with an additional “Other” category for areas other than language skills. There are also links to further information about the use of each tool. The Barrie Region also identified a long list of strategies and interventions used in different boards and prepared a detailed description of an effective process for transition to Kindergarten and school entry.

One regional meeting that was attended by the CODE team leader and the project evaluator was devoted to presentations from each board about effective JK–Grade 1 intervention strategies. A key lesson learned was the need to support teachers in knowing how to use assessment data to link assessment with instruction. Group members agreed that there is a significant gap in specific knowledge about how to foster deep conversations, use rich literature, and promote higher levels of thinking in response to student needs in the hierarchy of oral language learning, with suggestions for appropriate texts and tasks. Participants at this meeting spoke of early language skills as a chain which cannot be broken—a chain that is different for different students. Teachers need support to know where the chain is broken and how to begin effective intervention. Members of this working committee believed that such information is not included in current resources for teachers and early childhood educators (ECEs). Moreover, they believed that it is not provided in the *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT)* document, but that it is essential, foundational information. The group agreed that a highly effective use of the time of speech and language pathologists involves having them provide coaching and modelling of strategies in JK–Grade 1 classrooms. There were comments that this is another example of the message “Essential for Some; Good for All,” in that assessment and intervention strategies designed for special populations can be useful for all students.

French-Language Boards

Although the French-language boards were considered as a “region” for the purposes of the CODE JK–Grade 1 project, the boards represent the entire province. The CODE French Language team member and lead superintendent for the project from CSDC des Grandes Rivières launched the CODE project at a provincial meeting of the French-language boards. Because of the great distances and many different organizational structures involved, this project began rather slowly. There was some difficulty at first in identifying a process for all of the boards, and some confusion on the part of principals and directors of services who attended the initial meeting, as to whether the project was a program or Special Education initiative. Four French-language boards declared themselves unable to participate because of other commitments—the only boards province-wide that were not involved in the CODE JK–Grade 1 project.

The boards held teleconferences and video conferences to affirm project goals, to clarify the questions on the Collection of Evidence Template for Lead Boards, to identify a flexible process within which all boards could work, and to resolve concerns about jurisdiction. Superintendents of curriculum and special education in the different boards knew they could work together, and the project came to involve representatives from both curriculum and special education, including speech and language pathologists and psychologists. Since the northern French-language boards have a long history of working together, they were able to begin to address project goals very quickly.

The focus in all boards was on considering the five key elements of the JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies project and identifying effective strategies and practices to support JK–Grade 1 students. Some boards evaluated their current status as being at the Preparation, Initiating, Implementing, or Sustaining stages of development in relation to these five key elements.

On April 20–21, 2010, representatives of French-language boards from across Ontario met to review evidence-informed practices and lessons learned during their project work. The meeting was attended by the lead board superintendent, the French-language CODE team member, a teacher, school principals, an Early Years program leader, consultants, directors of services in special education, superintendents, and a Ministry of Education representative from the North Bay/Sudbury Regional Office. The boards worked with a hired consultant, who was a retired principal, to facilitate the discussion of their findings of best practices under each of the elements, to assist with the collection of data, and to help develop a draft monitoring framework. In preparation for the meeting, group members were asked to respond to the questions on the Collection of Evidence Template. Participants were to focus on the five key elements and complete a summary template about what they thought was really important to include as best practices in a provincial framework. Participants were also asked to bring evidence to support the practice (e.g., a document, strategy, tool, checklist, procedure, or policy).

Participants stressed the need for alignment of Ministry of Education initiatives—for example, the *Growing Success* document, the *Early Learning Program*, *Learning for All*, the monitoring framework that will be an outcome of this CODE project, and *la Politique d'Aménagement linguistique*. The concept of “assessment” and “evaluation” as being separate and different was a challenge during some discussions, because in French there is only a single term for “evaluation.” The group identified effective practices for all five elements and recommended that the framework be used as a self-evaluation tool, not as a set of directives for the early years. Some boards reported that they had evaluated their whole program delivery as a result of the CODE JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies project. These were boards in which both the superintendent and director of services assumed leadership of the project. Their instructional leadership was identified as the reason for their success.

The ideas from the meeting were synthesized into a draft document by the lead board superintendent and the French Language CODE team member. A draft summary was shared at a provincial meeting and was sent out to participants and superintendents for review. Results were shared with board representatives at several meetings in April and May. French Language outcomes and recommendations were shared at the province-wide CODE meeting on May 18-19. The French-language boards reported that the province-wide sharing was engaging, informative, particularly interesting, and useful. They agreed that the boards needed to continue to share best practices and evidence of success and that curriculum and special education leaders needed to share ideas across boards. New leadership networks were developed to share practices and to reflect on evidence-informed tools and strategies.

London Region

The London region CODE JK–Grade 1 project was implemented in three phases. In the first phase, the superintendents of special education in the region decided to collect and collate information about the JK–Grade 1 project using the consultant services of a recently retired RSEC member. All boards in the region used the same template for the review of practices. The template collected information about assessment and intervention strategies, capacity building, collaboration, and ways of measuring progress and informing parents. The template required boards to identify effective indicators and evidence, effective practices and their key components. Boards were also asked to identify their current baseline stage of implementation related to each of the indicated elements.

In the second phase, the consultant visited each board, conducted face-to-face interviews about information that the region was collecting about the four projects (ASD-Phase 2 Connections; A4-Assessing Achievement in Alternative Areas; Learning for All; and the JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies project), and met with board representatives to verify the information and identify resources that would be shared regionally. The London region decided to include face-to-face interviews in each board because this process was used during the CODE Special Education Project (2005–2009) and was very effective. During the interview a board representative identified not only current effective practices, but also the key components of effective practice even if the board was not currently implementing such practices.

In the third phase, the consultant collected all the data and presented it to RSEC for discussion and input. The lead board superintendent from the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board and the consultant together developed the final report. Both attended the May 18–19 provincial meeting to present findings. The final framework from the region was designed to document practices, trends, and who has key information about specific practices. This report identified the key components of effective assessment and intervention practices and provided useful data about the stage of implementation of each of the identified practices using a four-point scale: Preparation, Initiating, Implementing, or Sustaining. The data provided the percentages of boards in the region at each stage of development, as self-reported to the project consultant. Boards in the region prepared a long list of resources to put on a website that will allow ready access by all boards.

Ottawa Region

The Ottawa Regional JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Learning Team was comprised of personnel from each of the region’s school boards, and included a range of reflective practitioners from curriculum, special education, and specialized services. The regional lead superintendent from Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board acted as the facilitator for five face-to-face meetings related to the CODE JK–Grade 1 project. Each full day meeting was hosted by a different board.

A professional learning team was implemented, with the group establishing norms and committing to a project management plan. The team also studied the project Evaluation Matrix and Collection of Evidence Template. Participants began by studying the belief statements in *Learning for All* and asking key questions about the difficulty of implementing them in daily practice.

The regional sessions all started with a brain teaser, a review of the project vision, and a group commitment to providing a message about a JK–Grade 1 framework for the province. Work focused on an identified assessment or intervention element. The lead board superintendent asked small mixed-board groups to respond to questions about the element being studied that day and to be prepared to report. Team members knew the key questions in advance and brought to the table artifacts regarding board strategies, procedures, and protocols. Each session concluded with the sharing and critique of recommendations for consideration in a final report. Following the meeting, the lead board superintendent reviewed all meeting notes and synthesized the recommendations into a draft report to be reviewed at the next meeting. Each meeting involved a review of the recommendations from the previous session. Team members maintained a project binder, which built upon work completed in previous learning team sessions. In addition, an email network was established to inform members of meeting dates and preparation activities. After all five elements had

been studied, the working committee met on April 1, 2010, to review the final report and all recommendations.

The final Ottawa region report provided broad recommendations for overarching outcomes related to the five key elements of the JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies project. A key issue upon which the Ottawa region had formed consensus was that screening tools and entry processes are critical. The region did not produce a list of assessment and intervention tools and strategies recommended by different boards in the region for inclusion in a monitoring framework.

Sudbury/North Bay Region

During the 2009–2010 school year, eight English school boards of the Sudbury/North Bay Region assembled through a combination of teleconferences and face-to-face meetings to carry out the collaborative work required by the JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies project. The focus points of their dialogue included identifying existing JK–Grade 1 assessment and intervention strategies presently used within each board; sharing these board-specific tools through networking dialogue; enhancing these assessment/intervention strategies with more specific criteria and, in doing so, improving student success; and supporting each other through discussion about the evidence gathered through the implementation of the tools used in each board.

The group had its first face-to-face meeting in the region in Sudbury on February 12, 2010. This meeting involved 25 participants including superintendents of education, consultants, principals, teachers, special education staff, and speech pathologists. The group began by studying the Collection of Evidence Template for Lead Boards. They then shared assessment and intervention strategies used in the different boards and revised the Collection of Evidence Template. They also focused on the common elements and common gaps in delivery. The lead board superintendent from Sudbury Catholic District School Board organized the responses from the meeting and sent the material to all participants. Each participant also completed a “Cheers, Fears and Unclears” feedback form, outlining highlights and concerns from the initial meeting.

At a teleconference on March 5, 2010, the group reviewed data from the templates submitted from the working team in each board. The CODE project co-chair joined the teleconference and confirmed the need for continuing dialogue and for different points of view to be heard. The group decided to go back to the individual boards to “dig deeper.” Another teleconference was held on April 12. The group discussed additional data from the boards and highlighted board priorities and best practices. A representative from each board sent a detailed template to the lead board superintendent organized under the headings of practice/tool; five elements; evidence; and notes. The templates were synthesized into a summary document in preparation for a second face-to-face meeting on May 10. A retired teacher, who did not participate in the face-to-face sessions or teleconferences, was hired to coordinate all of the data from the region.

All participants received a copy of the Evidence Collection Summary prior to the May 10 face-to-face meeting in Sudbury—the final meeting before the May 18–19 province-wide CODE meeting. Fifteen participants attended, including the CODE project evaluator and several others participating by teleconference. The lead board superintendent reviewed the reporting requirements for May 18–19. Work groups from all the boards discussed the summary document and provided feedback. All participants worked through the Evidence Collection Summary together. The group made revisions and agreed to add a recommendation about the importance of consistent support and intervention for oral communication in the early years. The group agreed with the lead superintendent’s suggestion that all the board templates be attached to the final regional summary. Participants held a regional teleconference on June 1 to debrief about the May 18–19 meeting in Toronto.

Demonstrated strengths across the region included the following: there was maximum alignment with the content of support resources and learning from initiatives provided by the Ministry of Education; assessment tools and follow-up interventions were collaboratively implemented and tracked by school teams; and assessment results informed next steps. The following were identified as gaps as a result of the collaborative dialogue: providing sufficient job-embedded training to teachers and assuring that they would work collaboratively with special education personnel to provide a variety of levels of intervention (note: this is an area for which they believe a model must be created); presenting assessment findings to parents in a

consistent way across each district; and ensuring that parents are involved in understanding the goals of the intervention process.

Thunder Bay Region

In the Thunder Bay Region, the CODE JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies project began with two video/teleconferences. A member of the CODE team participated in the initial conference. The lead superintendent for the region, a Kindergarten resource teacher, and a special education resource teacher, all from Lakehead District School Board, provided project leadership. One regional advantage was that special education coordinators from different boards knew each other already, had worked together before, and were able to get the project moving.

Superintendents and other representatives of different boards in the region studied the template provided by the CODE team. After much discussion, the region decided to focus on four key themes: screening processes, the developmental continuum, student profiles, and family engagement. Representatives then developed working groups in their own boards.

The region held only one face-to-face meeting in Thunder Bay on February 24, 2010, because of the distances between boards. This meeting involved a superintendent, four special education coordinators, a speech and language pathologist, a school principal, and an Early Years teacher. A member of the CODE team attended this meeting. The lead board superintendent conducted a supplementary meeting with the Aboriginal coordinator. Each board shared its practices for the Early Years and there was discussion about common elements and differences. The boards studied all five elements, but each board was responsible for delivering on only one of the elements. A draft report was developed by the lead team and sent out for review to all boards in the region for response. They received a number of suggestions for minor revisions, but no requests for major changes to the draft document. The region held a last video/teleconference to discuss and debate the issues and final changes to the regional report were made.

The Thunder Bay Region reached consensus about a number of issues that are different in the north and that need special attention. The region has a key concern about social and emotional issues and programs for children in JK–Grade 1. There was agreement across the region that more work needs to be done in evaluating the different assessment tools and strategies currently being used and in determining how to link assessment to intervention—especially in relation to student behaviour and social/emotional growth. The region stressed the need for a provincial monitoring framework that is flexible enough to meet a variety of local needs. There are local issues that must be addressed in flexible ways—for example, distance; small schools where teachers may have JK–Grade 2 students in one classroom; and different community expectations and needs related to Aboriginal communities. There was consensus that no single tool for entry screening would meet all the needs of the region.

Toronto and Area Region

The lead board for the Toronto and Area Region, the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, facilitated a consultation process with its participating boards. From January to April 2010, a series of monthly sessions took place, including face-to-face meetings and teleconferences with all regional team members, as well as collaborations among individual boards for a specific task related to the project.

For the purposes of a regional team activity, boards were asked to select one of the five core elements in the CODE JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies project framework and critically analyze the guiding questions with another board where possible. By regularly meeting to discuss the CODE JK–1 project, boards were able to discuss and share effective practices for students in JK–Grade 1. This process involved using the CODE JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies Template, and incorporated feedback from regional team members, and board/school staff involved in the local projects.

Through a series of regional meetings and discussions, board representatives revised the original CODE template. The revised framework/monitoring tool developed by the Toronto and Area Region boards consists of the five key elements, an overall status rating, and a set of detailed corresponding guiding questions for each element, as well as areas to describe key lessons learned and evidence supporting these lessons.

Individual school boards completed this template for their final submissions to the lead board and as part of the final report presented to CODE. To capture reflections from participating boards in the Toronto and Area Region, a series of 30-minute telephone interviews with CODE JK–Grade 1 project leads or designates was conducted by a researcher from the lead board on April 12 and 13, 2010. Five questions addressing the two primary project outcomes—processes involved in the regional team collaboration and the utility/effectiveness of the monitoring tool developed—were asked.

As a next step, board representatives gathered in June 2010 to have a final sharing of feedback from the provincial consultation process. In addition, boards will have an opportunity to share their final results from individual projects. This activity will allow boards to have a better understanding of some of the direct student, parent, and system outcomes.

PROJECT EVALUATION

CODE selected an independent evaluator to participate in the development of an assessment framework for school boards to measure implementation of evidence-informed assessment and intervention strategies for students in JK–Grade 1; to report on the CODE process used to accomplish the goals of the project; and to report on student, parent, and system outcomes as per the goals of the project.

Serving as an “embedded evaluator” by participating in the development of the assessment tool, the evaluator would assess the extent to which the CODE assessment tool demonstrates the capacity to support all boards in implementing evidence-informed assessment and intervention strategies for JK–Grade 1 students.

The evaluator would determine the extent to which the CODE process supported the achievement of the project goals and whether CODE leadership of the process added value to the project.

The evaluator would also be able to assess the extent to which the CODE project improved student learning, student engagement, and parent confidence in publicly-funded education; teacher, school, and system capacity to implement effective, evidence-informed assessment and intervention strategies for JK–Grade 1 students; collaboration among boards; and dissemination of knowledge about assessment and intervention strategies.

The Project Evaluation Matrix used by the evaluator is provided in **Appendix B** of this report.

The evaluator’s report will be submitted to the Ministry of Education by the end of July 2010.

CURRENT JK–GRADE 1 ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION PRACTICES

Young children show their understanding by doing, showing, and telling. Early Learning–Kindergarten teams need to use assessment strategies of observing, listening, and asking probing questions in order to assess and evaluate children’s achievement...

Assessment is the key to effective teaching. Its primary purpose is to improve children’s learning, and it is the starting point for instruction in the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten program. Early Learning–Kindergarten team members interpret and analyze the notes they have taken to document their observations and make plans for further instruction and learning based on their analysis. Team members need to observe, monitor, and document children’s learning continually, and regularly report to parents their assessment findings about children’s progress towards the achievement of the learning expectations. Team members also provide feedback to the children themselves.

2010–11: The Full-Day Early Learning-Kindergarten Program, draft (2010)

Information about current JK–Grade 1 assessment and intervention practices was collected by lead boards throughout the project. Sharing occurred through lead board reports to CODE and provincial presentations in May, 2010.

The charts below provide a selection of effective practices which emerged from the work and include a few representative examples. There was variability in these practices across regions and boards based on factors such as board size, existing board and/or Ministry initiatives, and the degree of collaboration amongst boards and departments. For further information about these regional examples below, please contact the appropriate lead board superintendent(s). Contact information for these lead board superintendents for each region is provided in **Appendix D** of this report.

JK–GRADE 1 ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

| CURRENT PRACTICES | REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of a detailed entry-to-school process which involves the gathering of student information to allow for a smooth transition to school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all regions |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishment of Kindergarten assessment frameworks with a focus on early identification and intervention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “Fair Start” screening program is administered at JK registration and results are shared with partner and community agencies for intervention as needed. The program screens for vision, hearing, social development, speech and language development, gross and fine motor skills and nutrition (Thunder Bay Region) • Assessment Companion Tool (ACT) helps teachers to measure and monitor the continuum of development in oral language from birth to age 4 (piloted in the Barrie Region in 2009–2010) • Speech screening for all JK students, with identification as red, yellow or green, leads to a class profile based on screening results (Sudbury/North Bay Region) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of one or more assessment tools for students in JK–Grade 1 related to oral language development, phonological awareness, and social skill building | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten Assessment Framework, screens for a variety of skills (Barrie Region) • Assessment cycle: Oral Language Observation checklist, Teacher School Readiness Inventory (TSRI), Nipissing Developmental Screen, DRA, Hearing and Recording Sounds, Yopp-Singer Speech and Language Phonological Screening Tool (Sudbury/North Bay Region) • The Young Minds at Play (YMAP) program, an early detection and prevention program in the area of social-emotional development (Toronto and Area Region) • Binder of Assessment Tools (BAT)—phonological awareness, alphabetic understanding (Clay), letter/sound |

| CURRENT PRACTICES | REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES |
|--|--|
| | awareness, sight word list, Morrison-McCall, Reading Records (Sudbury/North Bay Region) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of many types of assessment tools and/or toolkits for JK and SK students; commercially created and/or local adaptations of commercial tools; and in-house tools developed by individual boards to address local contexts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher School Readiness Inventory (TSRI) for at-risk JK students; Language Assessment Resource (LAR) toolkit for JK and SK students • Web Based teaching Tool (WBTT) helps teachers track student achievement and monitor it regularly—widely used • Outil d’enseignement webalisé • Échelle de progression en lecture • Math Assessment Tasks (Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board) • Primary Literacy Assessment Battery (PLAB): a collection of key literacy assessments – French version available • Miriam Trehearne Oral Language Checklist |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of standardized tools to assess the progress and achievement of Grade 1 students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), PM Benchmarks (widely used in most regions) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of a continuous assessment cycle to measure student outcomes over time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of report cards, data walls, data collection tools, professional learning communities (all regions) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expansion of data walls to include Kindergarten | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data walls updated monthly; updated bi-weekly for students at -risk (London Region) • Kindergarten data walls, with results from multiple data sources, including Marie Clay’s observation study (Toronto and Area Region) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of a data monitoring/tracking system (note: The majority of assessment tools for JK–Grade 1 students are in paper format; some boards have electronic formats and track students’ progress through a data management system) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A+, Students Achieve, electronic data management system (Toronto and Area Region) • Parcours scolaire mat–12e (French-language boards) • principals are responsible for ensuring assessment data is inputted into centralized electronic data collection tool two to three times per school year (Barrie) |

| CURRENT PRACTICES | REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES |
|--|--|
| | Region) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of data warehouse—input three times per year (London Region) • teachers input PLAB assessment data electronically to create individual and class learning profiles (Sudbury/North Bay Region) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementation /use of student learning profiles; some use of class profiles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers view assessment data on class profiles allowing for precision teaching from students' achievement baseline (Sudbury/North Bay Region) • L'Échelle de progression en lecture, les données : Profil de langue, langagière et parole (PLLP) (French-language boards) • student profile including data, how used, and how parents are involved/informed (Ottawa Region) • class profiles created for each of the assessment tools within the literacy assessment portfolio (London Region) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus on the development of oral language skills at the kindergarten level branching into reading and writing at the grade 1 level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trousse d'évaluation diagnostique des compétences langagières (French-language boards) • oral language as the foundation for literacy, a project focused on evidence-based predictors of success in early literacy development: alphabet knowledge, print awareness, phonological awareness, and oral language (Barrie Region) • collection of authentic data on the continuum of oral language development in play-based learning, with pre- and post-assessment, ongoing focused observation data, teacher moderation from video clips (Toronto and Area Region) • évaluation systémique en langage des maternelles par l'orthophoniste avec rapport d'interventions (French Language Boards) |

JK–GRADE 1 INTERVENTION PRACTICES

| CURRENT PRACTICES | REGIONAL EXAMPLES |
|-------------------|-------------------|
|-------------------|-------------------|

| CURRENT PRACTICES | REGIONAL EXAMPLES |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of tiered interventions (universal, specific, and targeted) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS); Success by Seven/Good Readers Club (Thunder Bay Region) • Tier 1 Intervention: Kindergarten Language and Literacy in the Classroom (KLLIC) used in conjunction with Tier 2 Intervention: Class Act (Phonological Awareness kits); RAP program for Gr. 1: a boost in decoding strategies (London Region) • PLAB Intervention Binder: a collection of ideas to support instruction or intervention for each assessment area tested in the PLAB (Sudbury/North Bay Region) • Pyramide d'interventions (French-language boards) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of Ministry and/or board initiatives to address students in JK–Grade 1 experiencing challenges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat's (LNS's) K–Grade 1 collaborative inquiry project; staggered entry for JK–SK students; early and ongoing identification documentation in curriculum and special education; Even Start program for pre-kindergarten students (Toronto and Area Region) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • levels of support identified at the school, system, and community levels, including evidence of the use of multidisciplinary teams | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multidisciplinary teams were formed at the school level (with support from board level staff as necessary) to review the needs of students presenting challenges in the classroom. (Barrie, Ottawa, and Toronto and Area Regions) • board-level supports include contained classes for at-risk students—for example, Kindergarten transition language classes; programs and/or services for children who need extra support, such as the Kindergarten and Intervention Needs Development Program (KIND) (Toronto and Area Region) • protocols are in place for access by community professionals and paraprofessionals. (London Region) • literacy teachers working closely with classroom teachers (London Region) • speech and language staff working closely with classroom teachers modelling and coaching in the classroom (Barrie Region) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of collaborative practices within the | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents are invited to engage in school |

| CURRENT PRACTICES | REGIONAL EXAMPLES |
|--|--|
| <p>school/system/community</p> | <p>activities such as Family Nights, Open Houses, Welcome to Kindergarten days, Esso Math Sessions. (Sudbury/North Bay Region)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pre-school transitions: structured process for communicating with day care and other community agencies about students with known special needs (Thunder Bay Region) • collaboration entre les conseils scolaires et les agences communautaires pour la livraison de programmes et de services avant et après l'entrée à l'école (French-language boards) • programme pour préparer l'enfant avant l'entrée à l'école en septembre offert par l'école ou les agences communautaires: ex: Passerelle, à l'école c'est cool, à l'école j'en raffole, Grand maintenant (French-language boards) • staff membership on various community committees and planning tables (London Region) • ongoing team meetings at the school level; partnerships with community agencies to offer initial school entry screening and information sessions for families (Barrie Region) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence of strong community partnerships including work with coterminous boards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • success by Six Peel, Our Kids Network, Transition to Kindergarten committee (Toronto and Area Region) |

KEY ELEMENTS AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

As mentioned earlier in this report, from the Fall of 2009 to Spring 2010, regional development occurred in response to the Collection of Evidence Template (**Appendix A**). This template included evidence of student learning, change in teacher knowledge and practice, and meaningful parent engagement. It was designed as an outline to guide district and regional thinking about current, effective, evidence-informed assessment and intervention practices; to inform a provincial description of evidence-informed practices; and to promote collaborative reflection on and exploration of the JK–Grade 1 assessment and instructional intervention process. The template provided parameters for the collection of data for the JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies project, within the context of the two key questions and the five key elements developed through the CODE Special Education Project 2005–2009.

The key questions were:

- What is important to all of us in this region in relation to JK–Grade 1 assessment and intervention?
- What will we focus on in developing our suggestions for the JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Framework for the province?

The five key elements were as follows:

- Assessment and Intervention Strategies/Use of Data
- Parent Involvement/Community Communication
- Instructional Leadership
- Professional Learning and Capacity Building
- System Process/Organization

Thematic analyses of the elements listed above were conducted using regional information presented on lessons learned and supporting evidence at the May 2010 provincial meeting. Common indicators for each element which emerged from this work are outlined below. They represent a synthesis of effective strategies and practices identified in the regional reports and have been incorporated into the Assessment and Intervention Monitoring Framework recommended for use across the province (see **Appendix C**).

The CODE JK–Grade 1 Project fostered self-evaluation at all levels and a study of the Early Years through many different lenses. Boards engaged in self-evaluation of their own strategies and practices in preparation for regional dialogues and in order to complete board reports. Regions evaluated their responses to the Collection of Evidence Template and prepared presentations and reports to be shared at the provincial level. The monitoring framework developed as a key outcome of the CODE project will support system and school leaders in monitoring evidence-informed assessment and intervention strategies for students in JK–Grade 1 all across Ontario.

ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES/USE OF DATA

Become Assessment and Data Literate.

Conversations with parents are never comfortable if teachers feel exposed, vulnerable or threatened. Teachers need to develop a shared understanding about the evidence available to them (about the school and individual students) so that they can explain their decisions and communicate about student learning clearly and confidently.

Lorna Earl and Steven Katz (2006), Leading Schools in a Data-Rich World, p. 98

The Kindergarten Program outlines a framework for assessment and evaluation strategies. Assessment is viewed as the gathering of evidence through observing what the child can do, say and apply. That evidence is evaluated to determine the child's progress in achieving learning expectations, cognitive, social and emotional development.

Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings (2007)

The JK–Grade 1 assessment and intervention strategies framework recognizes that effective **assessment and intervention strategies/use of data** are:

- holistic and developmental
- for personalized instruction
- research-based
- multidisciplinary
- in the context of a tiered approach
- monitored and tracked
- aligned with class/student profiles, plans, and instruction
- multiple measures
- analyzed with team or case studies
- continuous
- linked to school and board improvement plans
- congruent provincially

INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE IMPACTING STUDENT, PARENT, AND SYSTEM PROJECT OUTCOMES

1) HOLISTIC AND DEVELOPMENTAL

Assessment and intervention strategies focus on what the child can do and take into account the developmental stage of the child.

Assessment of students' readiness for school is based on a developmental continuum.

2) FOR PERSONALIZED INSTRUCTION

Precise and intensive assessments and interventions are planned for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 students when appropriate.

Students with special education needs in Kindergarten and Grade 1 have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to outline modified or alternative curriculum expectations and how they will be assessed.

Teachers view assessment data on class profiles that allow information for personalized instruction and precision teaching from students' achievement baseline.

3) RESEARCH-BASED

Kindergarten and Grade 1 students are engaged in using literacy and assessment language.

JK–Grade 1 assessment and intervention strategies are informed by research. Knowledge and understanding of language acquisition with oral language development as a foundation is critical.

4) MULTIDISCIPLINARY

Multidisciplinary teams are necessary to ensure that board and school goals related to early years assessment and intervention strategies are met.

Speech and Language staff play an invaluable role in supporting instruction in Kindergarten and Grade 1 classrooms.

There is a structured entry-to-school process that engages parents, builds partnerships with community agencies, and involves multidisciplinary case conferences for students with special needs.

5) IN THE CONTEXT OF A TIERED APPROACH

The tiered approach to assessment and intervention begins in Kindergarten as students who are at risk are identified early and are provided with the appropriate intensity of instruction to prevent later difficulties.

6) MONITORED AND TRACKED

School teams use report cards, data walls, professional learning communities, and centralized electronic data collection tools to measure student outcomes over time from Kindergarten to Grade 1.

For students with special education needs, outcomes are also tracked through school team-meeting records and updating of IEPs.

A central mechanism is in place to track and monitor student achievement at the JK–Grade 1 level (e.g., an electronic data tracking system).

7) ALIGNED WITH CLASS/STUDENT PROFILES, PLANS AND INSTRUCTION

Student Learning Profiles (SLPs) are developed and used to inform practice for JK–Grade 1 students and follow the student through his/her school career.

The continuous assessment process and cycle is aligned with the SLP so that data may be recorded, analyzed, and used for planning instruction. The SLP is developed and referenced collaboratively by both teaching and non-teaching educational partners.

JK–Grade 1 assessment and intervention strategies and tools are aligned with the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the children.

Assessment and intervention strategies for JK–Grade 1 are aligned with board plans and Ministry policies/documents, including *The Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten Program*.

8) MULTIPLE MEASURES

Assessment information is received from multiple sources. For example, data from regulated health professionals and/or external agencies is used to inform programming, and partnerships exist with community agencies to offer services such as initial screening upon school entry.

Multiple measures of data are used to inform instructional decision making. By involving a diverse group of professionals in data analysis, next steps for student learning may be developed, especially for at-risk students.

9) ANALYZED WITH TEAM OR CASE STUDIES

Teacher and educational partners engage in school and board learning teams, which focus on understanding the application of assessment tools and analysis of assessment data to inform next steps for continued student development.

10) CONTINUOUS

Continuous assessment through observation and documentation of each child's development is an essential part of professional practice in early childhood settings to determine any necessary instructional interventions. Teachers assess the child's learning on an ongoing basis in the context of everyday classroom experiences using a variety of strategies and tools (diagnostic, formative, and summative).

The JK–Grade 1 student begins to learn to self-assess through teacher modelling using real classroom experiences.

11) LINKED TO SCHOOL AND BOARD IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Assessment and intervention strategies for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 are linked to board and school improvement plans, including *The School Effectiveness Framework* and the draft *Improvement Planning Assessment Tool* (March 12, 2010).

12) CONGRUENT PROVINCIALLY

Consistency/congruency across boards/regions/the province in use of JK–Grade 1 assessment and intervention strategies will foster consistent and supported implementation. Common assessment and intervention tools (e.g., oral language, developmental, socio-emotional) are used throughout Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 to ensure consistency of standards. Resources are shared across boards/regions.

EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

The French Language Region boards reported that le Conseil scolaire du district du Grand Nord de l'Ontario has a pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 student profile which follows the student throughout his/her school years and shows what interventions have been implemented over time for the student.

In the Thunder Bay District, a coalition of Northern Education Leaders (NOEL) has created an oral language project aimed at Aboriginal children. The coalition has representatives from school boards and authorities across northwestern Ontario, three post-secondary institutions, and the Ministry of Education. This is a research project sponsored by the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. The project combines the self-identification process with oral language and looks at how strong oral language skills and receptive language impact on literacy skills. The project arose out of concern for the achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. All eight school boards in northwestern Ontario—Superior-Greenstone District School Board, Superior North Catholic District School Board, Lakehead Public Schools, Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board, Rainy River District School Board, Northwest Catholic District School Board, Kenora Catholic District School Board, Keewatin-Patricia District School Board—and the Northern Schools Resource Alliance are involved. All Junior Kindergarten and Grade 1 teachers have received training.

In the Ottawa Region, representatives from the Ottawa Catholic District School Board's special education, student services, and student success departments, in collaboration with the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, formed a team to identify and summarize their assessment and intervention practices, JK–Grade 1 (e.g., Kindergarten assessment procedures, JK speech and language screening, and liaison with First Words pre-school speech and language program). They developed a board-wide Kindergarten assessment schedule and ran focus groups where Kindergarten and language class teachers came together to share data and discuss student transitioning to Grade 1.

In the Sudbury/North Bay Region, the District School Board Ontario North East developed a primary literacy assessment and intervention tool called the Primary Literacy Assessment Battery (PLAB). It is a collection of key literacy assessments derived from various sources. There is a French version of the PLAB for French Immersion students. The PLAB consists of an intervention binder, a literacy skill builder kit, intervention tracking sheets and an electronic data collection system. Teachers input PLAB assessment data into a data collection site to create individual and class learning profiles. The PLAB is consistently administered across the board in all JK–Grade 1 English and French Immersion classrooms.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT/COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION

Communities influence child outcomes. The family within the community is the primary place where children grow and learn. Being able to describe and understand the community is essential to curriculum development, individual program and service planning and assessing development. Understanding of the community is not limited to knowledge and understanding of children and families enrolled in an early childhood setting. Inclusive programs strive to know, understand and involve those families that do not (from choice or otherwise) participate.

Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings (2007)

The JK–Grade 1 assessment and intervention strategies provincial framework recognizes that effective **parent involvement/community communication** is:

- authentic, ongoing engagement
- supported by inclusive partnerships
- rooted in defined processes

Where **communication** is:

- timely
- related to the development of the child
- reciprocal and sensitive

INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE IMPACTING STUDENT, PARENT, AND SYSTEM PROJECT OUTCOMES

1) AUTHENTIC, ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

School boards provide information evenings and welcome community partners to plan transition, facilitate referrals, and learn about individual students.

School teams support parents and community partners by sharing, promoting, and modelling interventions and learning strategies.

Report cards and curriculum information nights continue the dialogue between school and home.

2) SUPPORTED BY INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Central staff participates in community learning networks, including community planning tables.

Local agencies and Ministry partners supporting early childhood education and development are featured regularly in elementary school newsletters.

Intake packages are completed for students with special education needs and shared across multidisciplinary board teams.

Schools have ongoing team meetings.

3) ROOTED IN DEFINED PROCESSES

Parents/families are involved in the entry to school process. School board entry procedures list local community agencies and partners, as well as resources which they provide to support a strong foundation for the development of the whole child. Entry procedures are posted on each school board's website and are updated regularly through the use of web links to local agencies and Ministry partners.

4) TIMELY

There is informal and formal communication with families about how parents can be a part of the process regarding the results of assessments, screenings, and ongoing interventions. There is collaboration with community agencies that may also be supporting students so that all parties are working together in the best interest of the child.

Parents/families are informed of the need for intervention strategies so that interventions may be implemented in the school, home, and community in a timely fashion.

5) RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD

The transfer of information from teachers to parents/community members is seamless and understood.

As Grade 1 has a very different structure than Kindergarten, a school-based information night for families of students entering Grade 1 is beneficial in educating parents about the expectations.

School boards provide information brochures to parents.

Schools utilize school-to-home/home-to-school journals for continuous information sharing.

6) RECIPROCAL AND SENSITIVE

Working families require flexible timelines for interviews to take place prior to school entry. Teachers require a structured guideline to follow in order to collect important information as well as the flexibility to share classroom routines.

Early communication with families has a positive message in order to build a trusting partnership so that concerns may be shared in an atmosphere where parents have a trust that all parties (e.g., school, therapists, child care) are working as part of the team to support the development of their child. If parents are inundated with negative messages too early, they become distrustful and disengaged from the school.

Schools are aware of, and sensitive to, issues of isolation and culture that may exist to make families wary of institutions like schools, health care providers, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, and psychologists.

EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Evidence-informed assessment and intervention strategies are shared at various community learning networks throughout the Toronto and Area Region boards—for example, Our Kids Network (Halton Catholic District School Board, Halton District School Board); Success by Six Peel (Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, Peel District School Board); and the Dufferin Coalition for Kids (Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, Upper Grand District School Board, Wellington Catholic District School Board).

A number of French-language boards have planned transition activities such as *Ma passerelle en maternelle*, and *Bienvenue à maternelle* for the child and his/her parents to welcome them and to inform them about their new school environment.

In the Ottawa Region, in the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board, nine schools host the Best Start program. Best Start programs provide school readiness through early learning and licensed child care, easier accessibility for families requiring child care, access to a wide range of early learning and care services, and extended hours. In addition, seven schools will offer the Early Learning Program in September 2010, featuring all-day, every-day Junior and Senior Kindergarten.

In the Barrie Region, the Grey Bruce Children's Alliance works to coordinate a variety of services for children, including the Let's Learn Clinics, through which numerous local agencies and support services collaborate in school-entry planning. This partnership involves the two coterminous district school boards, Grey Bruce Heath Unit, Community Living Associations, Early Years Centres, social services from both Bruce and Grey Counties, and numerous other local agencies and support services. The project provides for an extensive pre-school screening process in conjunction with early registration for Junior and Senior Kindergarten. Professionals such as a speech-language pathologist, a pre-school resource teacher, a public health nurse, and OEYC and child care centre staff are available at the clinics to answer questions and conduct pre-school assessments. In addition, school staff are also present to share information. These clinics are now offered throughout both school boards. Evaluation data that have been gathered indicate that parents, school staff, and community agency representatives are extremely pleased with the outcomes of this project. Some of the positive outcomes that have been identified include enhanced school readiness, earlier and more intensive intervention, and the development of far more reliable statistics about the type and number of pre-school services that are required for children and families. In the London region, the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board is using a similar process.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership is second only to teaching in its impact on student outcomes. School and system instructional leaders play a critical role in supporting an integrated approach to student-centred learning through their commitment to equity and student outcome. Supervisory officers, principals, and vice principals put in place supportive system and school practices and procedures such as professional learning communities. They facilitate forward planning, align resources, and provide the support to build an integrated process of assessment and instruction in their schools.

In addition, lead educators in elementary and secondary schools also play a significant role in this process by working directly with teachers through job-embedded training and coaching and through existing initiatives.

Learning for All K–12 (2009) draft document

The JK–Grade 1 assessment and intervention strategies provincial framework recognizes that effective **instructional leadership** includes:

- a focus on the teaching and learning process
- shared leadership/responsibility
- collaboration
- a multidisciplinary approach
- alignment

INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE IMPACTING STUDENT, PARENT, AND SYSTEM PROJECT OUTCOMES

1) A FOCUS ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

Assessment and intervention strategies reflect awareness of current research affecting early childhood learning.

Assessment data is collected electronically and readily available to school and district leaders.

School principals lead in-school teams and ensure that all team members understand that closing the gap means moving a student to demonstrate actual achievement matching the student's potential.

Assessment is diagnostic, formative, and summative in nature, and is collected at a variety of times throughout the school year from a variety of sources; the guiding principle is “assess often, assess early, and intervene early.” Assessment guides instruction for the Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 learner.

New teachers are supported with appropriate professional development around evidence-informed practice in early learning.

Research and evidence-based strategies are used to inform practice.

A monitoring system is in place and is connected with the School Effectiveness Framework.

2) SHARED LEADERSHIP/RESPONSIBILITY

The superintendent responsible for JK–Grade 1 assessment and intervention strategies understands the gradual release of responsibility model of instruction and promotes shared leadership.

There is shared leadership between the board consultants and school team staff.

School and district early learning networks are connected across the system and mechanisms are in place for sharing and growing learning from each network. Instructional leadership is a shared responsibility by all participants in the early learning network.

Principals lead in-school teams. Principals and superintendents perform a critical role in establishing, supporting, and sustaining professional learning environments at the district and at the school level.

A key contact person is used for Kindergarten Grade 1 to break down silos.

3) COLLABORATION

There is increased communication and collaboration amongst educational partners.

Interventions move beyond the classroom level for some students, especially those with special education needs. They include accessing school and community-based resources/personnel. A system of problem solving for students at risk exists at the school and/or board level.

There is professional collaboration amongst schools to ensure consist practices.

4) A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Multidisciplinary teams are used to ensure that board and school goals related to the early years are being met.

5) ALIGNMENT

The early identification strategy is mindfully planned by instructional leaders to ensure alignment with Ministry of Education priorities and coherence with board and school priorities.

School improvement plans are created based on collected data, and align with board and Ministry expectations.

System level staff supports the work of school level staff to ensure consistency in practice as well as to create alignment with Ministry initiatives.

Assessments and timelines are standardized across schools and the board.

EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

At the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board in the Toronto and Area Region, the superintendent responsible for the Early Years is a strong advocate for the gradual release of responsibility model and empowers staff to gradually take things on.

In the Sudbury/North Bay Region, the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board conducted phonological screening of all Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 students and eight-week intervention sessions throughout the school year (fall, winter, spring) to improve phonological awareness and skills in rhyme, syllables, and phonemes. In the Fall of 2009, all JK–Grade 1 students were screened. In-class intervention blocks occurred in the winter of 2009–2010. In the Spring of 2010, teacher training was held in the early learning program pilot schools. Teachers were trained to model strategies and to expand children’s responses and understanding.

In the Toronto and Area Region, at the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB), the implementation of Learning for All is grounded in the universal design concept of “good for all, necessary for some.” A tiered approach to instruction and intervention infuses the work of the special services and curriculum departments. The TCDSB Early Identification for Assessment and Intervention Strategy document is also built upon the principles of universal design and the tiered approach. To capture the processes and components of early intervention for all students, students at risk, and students with special needs, a flowchart was created which links school entry and assessment and intervention processes with community agencies and supports.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Teams focus their efforts on crucial questions related to learning, and produce work that reflects that focus, such as identifying learning goals for curriculum planning needs, sharing different kinds of assessment tools, analyzing data on student achievement, and developing and sharing instructional strategies and other approaches for improving results. Teams should also develop norms to clarify roles, responsibilities, and relationships among team members. Teams work towards student achievement goals that are linked to school and system goals.

Learning for All K-12 (2009) draft document

The JK–Grade 1 assessment and intervention strategies provincial framework recognizes that effective **professional learning and capacity building** includes:

- multidisciplinary teams
- instructional classroom teams
- professional learning communities (PLCs)/networks
- differentiated staff development

INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE IMPACTING STUDENT, PARENT, AND SYSTEM PROJECT OUTCOMES

1) MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAMS

There is increased collaboration between curriculum and special education departments.

A process is in place to ensure that an effective use of assessment information from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 and beyond occurs.

In classrooms, there are team-teaching opportunities and multidisciplinary teams for support.

System-level consultants and coordinators support families of schools.

There are early learning networks in place reflective of the multidisciplinary team and include Kindergarten teachers. The early learning network establishes its learning goals and inquiry processes to impact identified student learning outcomes, and student learning profiles are used.

Community agencies, therapists, and other support workers are included in team meetings and case conferences.

2) INSTRUCTIONAL CLASSROOM TEAMS

Teachers are able to articulate students' individual strengths and needs to differentiate instruction.

School administrators see and hear evidence of learning during “walk-throughs” in Kindergarten and Grade 1 classrooms.

At the school level, there is teacher mentoring; there are resource hubs to share resources; there are case conferences with school staff; there is teacher moderation and moderated marking; and there are critical learning instructional pathways, class profiles, and sharing of evidence-based practice.

3) PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES (PLCS)/NETWORKS

Professional learning communities (PLCs) are comprised of multidisciplinary team members. PLC sessions are structured and include a reflective process in order to build capacity.

4) DIFFERENTIATED STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Teachers are provided with appropriate support and embedded professional development to help them understand and interpret data, as well as to plan appropriate programs and interventions that fit the developmental stages of early learners.

EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

The London Region has a wiki to enable its boards to share information. They will soon have an operational website which will house resource documents for sharing (for example, assessment and intervention strategies). The website information includes resources from all four projects: Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) – Phase 2 Connections, A4 – Assessing Achievement in Alternative Areas, Learning for All, and the CODE JK–Grade 1 project.

Le conseil scolaire du district du Grand Nord de l'Ontario a établi des réseaux de communauté d'apprentissage professionnel de directions afin de mobiliser leurs connaissances en appui aux besoins identifiés.

In the London Region, the Wellington Catholic District School Board's capacity building focused on the importance of transferring information between Junior Kindergarten and Grade 1 teachers. By sharing assessment data and understanding the results, teachers learned that skills taught in the previous grade could be honoured and differentiating instruction was easier in the following term. This was achieved through training, Teaching Learning Critical Pathways (TLCs), and communication from administrators on the importance of the transfer of information from JK–Grade 1.

In the Barrie Region, York Region District School Board speech and language pathologists and/or Communication Disorder Assistants (CDAs) are doing read-aloud and oral language work in early learning classes to model for teachers.

SYSTEM PROCESS/ORGANIZATION

School/System Organization promotes a common vision and shared goals about the best ways to support students with special education needs in regular classrooms; ... embeds training and learning in all system initiatives and school improvement plans; develops structures to increase collaboration between system departments and leaders; regularly restructures and realigns the roles of central resource staff to address priority needs; ... promotes flexibility in assigning resource teacher and educational assistant time in response to changing data to create the most impact on student achievement.

The CODE Special Education Project 2006–2007 Report, October 2007

The JK–Grade 1 assessment and intervention strategies provincial framework recognizes that effective **system process/organization** includes:

- entry and transition processes
- assessment of, as, and for learning
- alignment
- collaboration
- continuous monitoring

INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE IMPACTING STUDENT, PARENT, AND SYSTEM PROJECT OUTCOMES

1) ENTRY AND TRANSITION PROCESSES

There are protocols for entry to school, including for students with special education needs. Community partners/agencies are collaboratively involved in the process. The protocol requires the completion of a screening process/tool that assists the school team in developing an entry learning profile for each Early Years learner. Case conference meetings with key personnel are held. Communication materials for parents are developed collaboratively with community partners and available through community partners/schools to support the transitioning process.

There is a consistent method of addressing the needs of students entering school with special education needs.

Administration and interpretations of screeners consider cultural awareness.

2) ASSESSMENT OF, AS, AND FOR LEARNING

The assessment process begins with all students, and then focuses in on students who are struggling.

There is an increased focus on classroom assessment before intellectual assessment in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1.

There is use of an electronic data collection process to collect and analyze assessment data at the board level.

There is a consistent timeline for the collection of assessment data.

There is a consistent assessment instrument across the board.

Professional development on assessment is provided either centrally or at the school site.

There is consistent use of report cards and reporting periods across the board.

There is a formalized process for accessing special education support services for Kindergarten to Grade 1 students.

There is consistent use of effective instructional strategies.

Differentiated professional learning opportunities are provided for teachers.

3) ALIGNMENT

Support resources are used consistently to inform professional learning.

Existing organizational divisions are taken into account in order to foster increased capacity to implement system-wide JK–Grade 1 assessment and intervention strategies.

Developmentally appropriate practices in JK–Grade 1 are promoted on a system-wide basis to foster consistent and supported implementation.

Intervention practices are collaboratively planned and aligned with other goals and initiatives through the school improvement planning process; board improvement plans set direction for system and intervention practices and are incorporated into these plans.

There is a formalized process for creating and storing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 students.

4) COLLABORATION

Collaborative teamwork is in place both in school and out of school. Central board staff participates in community planning tables/learning networks.

Multidisciplinary teams are in place to ensure that board and school goals related to the Early Years are being met.

Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs) provide a valuable resource for teachers in assessment and linking assessment to programming for students with special education needs.

Assistance is provided by the board and SERTs to teachers to produce consistent IEPs that link assessment and programming for Junior Kindergarten to Grade One students.

There is a system in place to share board assessment and intervention tools across regions.

5) CONTINUOUS MONITORING

One key contact person is utilized for Ministry and board initiatives that focus on students in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1.

There is a monitoring system in place for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 students.

EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

In the Toronto and Area Region in the Halton Catholic District School Board, an Early Years consultant was a key member of the board team in the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat's K–Grade 1 collaborative inquiry project and the CODE JK–Grade 1 project. This allowed for the sharing of best practices related to this population of students to a variety of audiences at the school and board levels.

In the Thunder Bay Region, the Fair Start pre-school screening tool is a part of registration for Junior Kindergarten in all schools in Thunder Bay (for example, Lakehead District School Board, Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board, and CSDC des Aurores boréales). When a child is registered for Junior Kindergarten, parents/guardians are given a Fair Start screening booklet to complete and return to the school. The booklet is intended to help both the parent and the school identify any concerns which may interfere with learning. The screening booklet asks questions in six areas of a child's development. Booklets are scored by the school and the results are returned to the parent. If a child requires follow-up in any area, parents are given the information so that they may make contact with the appropriate agency. If the agency has not heard from the parent in 30 days, they call parents to see if they would like to make an appointment.

At the Upper Grand District School Board in the Toronto and Area Region, multiple organizational divisions (for example, senior administration, principals, resource teachers, classroom teachers) were involved in the system-wide implementation of the Nipissing Scale as part of the Kindergarten registration process.

GRADE 1 ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES CODE MONITORING FRAMEWORK

These key elements and indicators discussed above and identified through the regional work of the JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Interventions Strategies project were incorporated into the Monitoring Framework (**Appendix C**). The Monitoring Framework, developed as a key outcome of the CODE project, will support system and school leaders in monitoring evidence-informed assessment and intervention strategies for students in JK–Grade 1 all across Ontario.

The Framework is a reflective tool, designed to support system and school leaders in monitoring evidence-informed assessment and intervention strategies for students in JK–Grade 1 all across Ontario. It represents a synthesis of effective strategies and practices identified through the regional work of the project. Thematic analyses of the following five elements: Assessment and Intervention Strategies/Use of Data; Parent Involvement/Community Communication; Instructional Leadership; Professional Learning and Capacity Building; and System Process/Organization were conducted using regional information presented on lessons learned and supporting evidence from the May 2010 provincial meeting. Common indicators for each element which emerged from this work are included in this Framework.

NEXT STEPS

Lead board representatives plan to meet in the Fall of 2010 to develop an implementation plan for this monitoring framework. Regional learning teams will continue to further their discussions and address elements they have identified as critical to improve practice in their regions. Web-based sharing of the Monitoring Framework will be considered.

The following directions are provided to encourage thinking about next steps related to the five key elements of the project identified in the Framework.

Assessment and Intervention Strategies/Use of Data

- Planning for the Ministry's Early Learning initiative, and movement towards a seamless, integrated system to support children from birth to 12 years of age, requires system leadership. The cooperation and teamwork of the various ministries involved (e.g., the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Children and Youth Services) is necessary in order to make best use of existing assessment and intervention resources and to determine what new strategies are needed.
- All Ministry documents related to the Early Learning Program need to be aligned in the area of effective assessment and intervention strategies for early learners (e.g., the ELECT framework; the *Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten Program* document; and the revision of *Growing for Success* to incorporate the new full-day kindergarten program). The work done in the JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies project needs to be considered within the outline of a provincial assessment strategy for young learners.
- An inequality amongst regions exists in the area of availability of speech and language resource staff. This will impact the Early Years learner who has no access to face-to-face speech and language intervention. We need to continue to develop strategies to assist boards with creative ways of maximizing their use of these resource staff. It is important to recognize that speech and language staff play an invaluable role in supporting instruction in Kindergarten and Grade 1 classrooms through both direct and indirect service.
- Boards are encouraged to have a central mechanism in place to track and monitor student achievement at the JK–Grade 1 level, such as an electronic data collection system, so that data may be more easily analyzed in a timely, consistent fashion.
- Schools are encouraged to develop and use student learning profiles to inform practice for JK–Grade 1 students. These profiles would follow the students through their school careers.

Parent Engagement and Community Collaboration*

- Under the recommendations in the Pascal report *With Our Best Futures in Mind* (2009), schools will be providers of full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds and will assume the important role of community hub. Schools will need active support in re-creating themselves as community resources where a range of complementary activities may take place. The use of the JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies monitoring framework across all regions, with a focus on assessment and intervention strategies for young learners, may present opportunities to bridge existing assessment practice in the pre-school years to evidence informed, consistent assessment practice for four- and five-year-olds in the new Early Learning Program. Boards will be able to capitalize on collaborative processes already in place for parents (e.g., Healthy Babies, pre-school speech and language initiatives, public health screenings).
- Collaboration amongst all educational partners, including staff, parents and community agencies improves success for students. Work still needs to be done in the area of meaningful parent engagement in understanding school processes (e.g., enabling parents/families to gain understanding of the assessment and intervention processes for early learners).
- Board staff need to present assessment findings to parents in a consistent way across each district and to ensure that parents are involved in understanding the goals of the intervention process. At the school level, if teachers have the right assessment and intervention tools, they will be more effective in communicating with parents.
- *Please note that the original element heading Parent Involvement/Community Communication was changed in the Next Steps and Framework sections of this report to Parent Engagement and Community Collaboration, to better reflect the themes which emerged from the regional discussions and the work done throughout the project.

Instructional Leadership

- Since principals will be responsible for the supervision and monitoring of the Early Learning Program and after-school programming, work needs to be done with the Catholic Principals' Council Ontario (CPCO) and Ontario Principals' Council (OPC) to support principals as they transition to the new model.
- Instructional leaders must recognize the need to expand and bridge both internal and external departmental silos.
- Boards need to ensure that members of the multidisciplinary team (for example, speech and language and early childhood education staff) play a lead instructional role in JK–Grade 1 classrooms.
- Boards need to provide new teachers/early childhood education staff with appropriate, embedded professional development related to evidence-informed assessment and intervention practices in early learning in order to support the transition to the new full-day kindergarten program for four- and five-year-olds. The ELECT curriculum/pedagogical framework must include a common, evidence-based framework for assessment and intervention strategies for young children.

Professional Learning and Capacity Building

- The JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies project provided school boards across Ontario with opportunities to identify existing, effective, evidence-informed assessment and intervention strategies for all Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 students. The development of a website for sharing effective, evidence-informed assessment and intervention tools (both board-developed and commercial) would provide further opportunities for board capacity building and sharing of effective practice .

- As Ontario transitions into the new Early Learning Program (ELP), programs must be staffed by teams of certified teachers and registered early childhood educators (ECEs). Board capacity-building activities must build on the mutual skills and strengths of both groups.
- Early learning networks are in place which reflect the multidisciplinary team. The use of multidisciplinary teams is necessary to ensure that board and school goals related to Early Years assessment and intervention strategies are met. Board capacity-building activities must focus on providing team support to JK–Grade 1 staff as they transition to the new Early Learning Program model.

System Process/Organization

- The regional processes undertaken for the JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies project have allowed both small boards and large boards, English boards and French boards to learn from each other and benefit from each other’s strengths. Boards need to continue to find ways to work efficiently together to support each other as Ontario moves forward with the new full-day kindergarten program and a seamless, integrated system to support children from birth to 12 years of age and their families. We need to continue to provide support for the regional process and share the JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies project outcomes with and across boards.
- The collaboration of CODE, school boards, and the Ministry of Education on the JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies project resulted in a positive change in the way we organize our system work through the value-added regional approach.
- Early learning policies and organizational frameworks should be consistent. Congruency across boards, regions, and the province in the use of JK–Grade 1 assessment and intervention strategies will foster consistent and supported implementation. Common assessment and intervention tools (e.g., oral language, developmental, socio-emotional) should be used throughout Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 to ensure consistency of standards. The regional project process has facilitated the sharing of tools and resources across boards/regions.
- Assessment and intervention strategies for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 are carefully planned by instructional leaders to ensure alignment with Ministry priorities as well as with board and school plans. All plans must link with the school improvement planning process, which is based on collected data, including *The School Effectiveness Framework* and the draft *Improvement Planning Assessment Tool* (March 12, 2010).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ontario government has made the improvement of and the reduction of gaps in student achievement, and building increased confidence and support for publicly funded education, the core of its mandate. The CODE JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies project was a strategic action to build on these government goals and the lessons learned from the previous CODE Special Education Project (2005–2009). The JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies project has provided school boards across Ontario with opportunities to identify existing, effective, evidence-informed assessment and intervention strategies for all Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 students; share these through leadership networks; build teacher and school board capacity to implement them; and develop a monitoring framework to support school boards in the implementation process. The opportunity to facilitate professional growth through a diverse professional educational learning community in which participants learned from each other in a regional learning network was a project highlight.

The CODE JK–Grade 1 Project fostered self-evaluation at all levels and a study of the Early Years through many different lenses. Boards engaged in self-evaluation of their own strategies and practices in preparation for regional dialogues and in order to complete board reports. Regions evaluated their responses to the Collection of Evidence Template and prepared presentations and reports to be shared at the provincial level.

It is important to recognize that effective assessment and intervention strategies are underlying, critical threads running through current Ministry policy and program documents related to the learning of Kindergarten- and Primary-aged children. As Ontario moves further along on its Best Start goals for a seamless and integrated system to support children from birth to 12 years and their families, it becomes critical that the recommendations for the early-learning assessment and intervention strategies listed below be considered in a timely fashion for alignment with current Ministry documents and initiatives, including *Early Learning for Every Child Today* (ELECT); the 2011 edition of *Growing Success*, which will include information pertaining to the new full-day Kindergarten program; and the final version of *The Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten Program* curriculum document.

The following list of recommendations was developed from common themes which emerged from regional project work around key elements and effective practices for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 assessment and intervention strategies.

At the school level:

1. That continuous assessment through observation, documentation, and monitoring of each child's development is an essential part of professional practice in early childhood settings to determine any necessary instructional interventions
2. That teachers will assess the Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 child's learning on an ongoing basis in the context of everyday classroom experiences using a variety of strategies and tools, both commercial and locally developed, and that commercial assessment tools may need to be adapted to fit into local contexts.
3. That intervention strategies are reflective of a tiered approach and will facilitate early identification of students who may be at risk, to ensure appropriate and timely interventions for students who exhibit persistent learning difficulties, significantly reducing the likelihood that they will develop more serious problems in the future.
4. That there will be a structured protocol for entry to school for Kindergarten students, including for those with special education needs; that community partners/agencies/parents must be collaboratively involved in the process; and that the protocol will have a requirement for the completion of a screening process/tool which would assist the school team in developing a student learning profile for the Kindergarten student to follow the student through his/her school career.
5. That work at the school level is multi-tiered and incorporates a multidisciplinary team approach. For example, that speech and language staff is supported to provide both direct and indirect service, including modelling effective strategies for classroom teachers; that early childhood educators (ECEs) are supported in sharing their expertise in early learning classrooms; and that educator teams add to the strengths of the professional preparation and skill sets of both teachers and ECEs (*With Our Best Future in Mind*, p. 33).
6. That in-school teams implement, monitor, and track assessment and intervention strategies used for JK–Grade 1 students, and that report cards, data walls, professional learning communities, and centralized electronic data collection tools are used to measure student outcomes over time from Kindergarten to Grade 1.

At the board level:

7. That assessment and intervention strategies for JK–Grade 1 will be aligned with board plans and Ministry policies/documents, including *2010–11: The Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten Program* draft document.
8. That boards are encouraged to use multidisciplinary teams to ensure that board and school goals related to Early Years assessment and intervention strategies are met.

9. That boards are encouraged to provide focused, embedded professional development opportunities for teachers/ECE staff involved in Early Years programs.
10. That board senior administration should model effective interdisciplinary collaboration (especially between special education and curriculum departments).

At the regional level:

11. That professional learning opportunities for board staff will be provided at the regional level to continue to build capacity to implement effective assessment and intervention strategies for Early Years learners, especially in view of the transition to full-day learning for Kindergarten students beginning in the 2010–2011 school year.
12. That the regional planning and development process for authentic, inter-board involvement will become a priority as a way of impacting education in Ontario.

At the provincial level:

13. That the JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Strategies Monitoring Framework (**Appendix C**) will be adopted by all boards as a self-reflective tool to assist in the implementation of effective, evidence-informed assessment and intervention strategies for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 1 students across the province as Ontario moves into the first year of the full-day early learning program for four- and five-year-olds.
14. That the principle of “necessary for some; good for all” (*Learning for All K–12* draft, 2009) will inform assessment and intervention practices for all JK–Grade 1 students; and that assessment and intervention strategies consistent with this principle for early learners will provide accurate, ongoing information that will help early-learning staff adjust instruction and maximize learning for the young student.
15. That collaborative teamwork will be in place between special education and program departments to enhance outcomes for young learners; and that there will be a recognition of the importance and added value of the expertise and roles that each component brings to the planning table.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The CODE JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Project has been a year-long journey that has led to the development of a deeper understanding of evidence-informed assessment and intervention practices. In addition, regional networks have been formed to support the development of effective instructional practices in the Early Years. This is especially important as the province moves to enhance programs for all students in the Kindergarten years.

The CODE Leadership Team is indebted to all boards in the province that shared their resources and expertise. This would not have occurred without the leadership of lead board superintendents and their staff, who played an extremely important role in bringing regional teams together to engage in ongoing professional dialogue about the importance and efficacy of evidence-informed assessment and intervention practices in the Early Years. Finally, the CODE Leadership Team would like to acknowledge the ongoing support that was provided by staff from the Ministry of Education – Special Education Policy and Programs Branch.

The CODE Special Education Project Leadership Team remains committed to supporting all district school boards in the province as they continue to improve achievement for all students. Clearly, the results of this year’s JK–Grade 1 Assessment and Intervention Project have yet again reinforced the belief that what is essential for some is good for all.