



Invitation to Information Session

**Topic: PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
EARLY LEARNING STRATEGY**

Date: April 22, 2013

Time: 6:00 P.M.

Location: City Hall Council Chambers

HWDSB Information Session

Topic: Parent and Community Engagement

Parent and community engagement continue to be a priority in Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board. “Knowing our parents and community” are clearly articulated as expectations within our 2012/13 Annual Operating Plan. Are these words shifting to action? In spring, 2012, elementary and secondary administrators were invited to complete an annual District Effectiveness Leadership Survey. It is worthy to note that administrators felt that as a board we had made significant gains (from the previous year) in the area of relationships with parents. While there is still work to do, we are, as a system, digging deeper in order to “know our parents and community.” Provincially, this focus is embedded in:

- 2012 Ontario Leadership Framework (System Level and School Level Leadership)
- School Effectiveness Framework (for school self assessment)
- Ministry Parent Engagement Policy, 2010

“The positive effects of engaging parents in their children’s learning include improved student achievement and well-being. Here are things to consider:

- Think about the different types of engagement;
- Encourage proven strategies to enhance parent engagement;
- Identify barriers to parent engagement and develop solutions;
- Ask parents what they need;
- Provide tools and resources to support parent engagement in their children’s learning at home and school.”

Supporting the Ontario Leadership Strategy, Engaging Parents in Their Children’s Learning, January, 2013, The Institute for Education Leadership

We continue to collaborate and work with our community in support of student achievement and well-being. This engagement brings community into the classroom and takes the classroom into the community in support of:

- Achievement
- Engagement
- Equity

The *May, 2012 – April, 2013 Parent and Community Engagement Action Plan* focused on the essential components of:

- Policy Development
- Tiered Approach to Engagement
- Parent Voice
- Development of a Community Engagement Plan

Progress in these areas will be reflected in this report while giving attention to next steps within the areas of:

- Policy Development
- Tiered Approach to Engagement
- Parent Voice
- Community Engagement in Support of Achievement, Engagement and Equity



EXECUTIVE REPORT TO STANDING COMMITTEE

Name of Report: Parent and Community Engagement Report

To: John Malloy, Director of Education

From: Executive Council

Date: April 22, 2013

Organizational Alignment

- **Strategic Direction:**
 - HWDSB will achieve high levels of parent engagement in our school communities
 - HWDSB will maintain and strengthen collaborative relationships with community partners
- **Annual Operating Plan:**
 - Knowing our parents and community
- **Director's Performance Appraisal:**
 - Collaboratively engage our parents and our communities to improve student achievement.
 - Develop and implement a Parent Engagement Plan that includes opportunities for effective consultation within the Board and with our parents and communities.

Related 2012 – 2013 Monitoring Reports (previously presented)

- Corporate Communications Plan
 - Equity of Access, Opportunity and Outcome Report
 - K – 2 Oral Language and Early Reading Strategy Report
 - Student Achievement Report
 - French Immersion Strategy Report
 - Safe and Equitable Schools Report
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(Note: the use of parent in this report is intended to be inclusive term representing parents, guardians and caregivers)

Overview/Context

Parent and community engagement continue to be a priority in Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board. “Knowing our parents and community” are clearly articulated as expectations within our 2012/13 Annual Operating Plan. Are these words shifting to action? In spring, 2012, elementary and secondary administrators were invited to complete an annual District Effectiveness Leadership Survey. It is worthy to note that administrators felt that as a board we had made significant gains (from the previous year) in the area of relationships with parents. While there is still work to do, we are, as a system, digging deeper in order to “know our parents and community.” Provincially, this focus is embedded in:

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POLICY DEVELOPMENT

In June, 2012, trustees approved Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Engagement Pillar Policy. The Pillar Policy was developed with input from a variety of stakeholders and provides high level Guiding Principles and Intended Outcomes for Student, Parent, Community, and Staff Engagement. During the 2012/2013 school year, staff have been working with a subcommittee of the Parent Involvement Committee, which consists of parents and school administration, in the development of the Parent Engagement Scoping Document which is being presented to Policy Working Subcommittee in April. The target completion for the Parent Engagement Policy is November, 2013. A focus group of community partners are providing input into the Community Engagement Policy. A first draft of this Policy will be presented to Policy Working Subcommittee in May, 2013.

TIERED APPROACH TO ENGAGEMENT

While support is provided for all Tiers of engagement (Appendix A), specific attention has been given to Tier 3 engagement. All elementary and secondary schools continue to focus on engaging a small group of parents, in a deep and meaningful way, with a goal of impacting student achievement and well-being. Our work in this area has resulted in Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board being invited to participate in a provincial research project related to effective parent engagement. Data gathered through the District Leadership Effectiveness Survey would also suggest we are seeing increased focus, at the school level, in this area.

Examples of engagement by **schools** at each Tier are outlined below.

Tier 1 Parent Engagement (Engagement for All)

What We Did

Ongoing support is being provided to educators (K-12) with the **HWDSB Commons**, our award-winning board provisioned blogging platform. With this tool, educators are able to post their learning goals and success criteria for each cycle or unit, classroom information, as well as materials and resources to support students and their parents at home. Unlike a traditional website, the HWDSB Commons is interactive, thus allowing for reciprocal conversations and interactive collaboration. Parents are provided with a window to their child's learning and, as such, are continually provided with conversation starters around student achievement. As all learning is made visible, parents can ask their children meaningful open-ended questions around the days activity rather than the generic "What did you do at school today?" Many educators are exploring new digital tools such as these so as to better engage students and their parents with both learning and culture in mind. In 2013 the HWDSB Commons received the CEA (Canadian Education Association) honourable mention of the Ken Spencer Award for Innovation in Teaching and Learning.

What We Learned/Next Steps

Parents want to know what their children are doing at school. One parent reported that these electronic formats allow a window into their child's day which they appreciate. Parents want to engage with their children about school but they need topics to talk about, these formats are providing access to the classroom and the learning involved 24/7 providing parents with these topics for conversation. Research indicates home conversation about what happens in school can positively impact student achievement. Blogs allow for conversation and input to occur in an organic and fluid manner. For parents who do not have access to a computer, some educators will take screen shots of the documentation, or conversation, and send a hard copy home to the family to ensure all parents have an opportunity to access the information.

We will continue to support educators in a responsive way with the integration of digital tools into their practice. This needs to be both purposeful and meaningful to them. We will continue to monitor sites that are highly active and seek feedback from parents to determine best practices for parent engagement in a digital medium.

Tier 2 Parent Engagement (Engagement for a Selected Audience)

What We Did

Graduation from elementary to secondary school is a major transition for students and their families. To help ease this transition, Ancaster Senior Public Elementary School and Ancaster High School have been working on a unique student and parent engagement initiative: What's Your Grade 9 Voice (Appendix B). Grade 8 students who will be attending Ancaster High School were be provided with the opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas in regards to beginning their high school journey in the upcoming school year. The school aims to engage students in a variety of ways, including electronic and face-to-face, so as to address individual learning styles and preferences. This expression of student voice follows the framework of the Secondary School oriented Director's Student Voice Forums and, in this context, will help to inform the supports

offered for students in the transition process between schools and the learning environments they will be a part of.

In addition to an opportunity for students to share their voice, parents will be fully engaged in this process as they too will be asked to share their thoughts, ideas and questions about their child's transition to grade 9. They will have an opportunity to share through an electronic form and through their own parent forum to be held at the school following the student forum. The blog that will be a part of the electronic format for the students to express their ideas, questions, and concerns is a public space, thus providing parents with a window to the engagement of the students. This transparency through technology provides parents a dynamic opportunity to be both a spectator of student engagement from afar with opportunities to participate and respond as well.

What We Learned/Next Steps

Parents have told us that they would like greater access to the learning and experiences of their children. Websites, blogs, and other social media platforms enable parents to see and to participate with learning activities happening at the school – thus providing them with a window to the school through whichever type of screen they are using. Student and Parent Voice are priorities in the Annual Operating Plan of HWDSB and are not separate in their scope. Through joint and complimentary activities such as these parents can be provided with authentic artifacts of student learning that can serve as starting points of conversation. They give parents something to talk about with their children beyond one-word answer responses (i.e. “How your day...Fine was” or “What did you do today...nothing”. Instead, parents could say, “I see you are wondering about getting lost at your new high school. Tell me about that?” One of the highest yield strategies in terms of parent engagement in support for student achievement is talking about learning and their school. This platform provides an outlet for that to occur in an authentic and meaningful way.

Staff are continue to support the planning and implementation of this type of outreach. Some student contributions can be seen in this blog:

<http://ahsroyalroar.commons.hwdsb.on.ca/category/grade-8-student-voice/ancaster-senior/>

The intent is to respond to the students and their parents and provide supports in response to expressed need. Feedback will be collected to inform planning for next year.

Tier 3 Parent Engagement (Engagement for a Few)

What We Did

Over the past several years HWDSB has provided after school literacy and numeracy support to students through the After School Scholars Program. In 2010/11, the **Scholars Community Program**, a parent engagement program, was introduced at Prince of Wales Elementary School. In 2011/2012 the Scholars Community Program expanded to include W. H. Ballard Elementary School and together began to better inform our work around Tier 3 parent engagement.

The Scholar's Community is for parents and other family members to come together to share in co-created learning experiences important to the families, with the school administration. The key elements of the Scholar's Community includes:

- Personal contact and an invitation to participate;
- Asking parents what they need and responding;
- Removal of barriers;
- Ending the evening with a family meal;

- Being open to suggestions and input.

These sessions can include members of the community as guest speakers, trips to hear speakers in the community or can focus on how students learn and how families can support that learning in the home environment. The key to the success of this program is to meet families where they are at and to support their needs as parents and members of the community.

As a result of our Tier 3 parent engagement work in all schools, in 2012/2013, we were invited to become part of a provincial project, led by Dr. Ken Leithwood, around the impact of parent engagement on student achievement and well-being. Our work is based upon the model of the Scholar's Program and the Scholar's Community Program at both Prince of Wales and W. H. Ballard.

This year, we are working with six elementary schools building upon the framework of the Scholars Student Program with a Scholars Community parent component. The parents involved in this project will be invited to be part of the research and data collection as we work with partner boards to determine the components of effective parent engagement. Schools participating in the project include:

- Bennetto
- Dr. Davey (with a focus on parents of English Language Learners)
- Pauline Johnson
- Prince of Wales (mentor role)
- Roxborough Park
- W. H. Ballard (mentor role)

Staff were invited to the 2013 OERS (Ontario Education Research Symposium) to present a vignette and workshop on this Tier 3 Parent Engagement approach and the Scholars Community initiative.

In 2011/2012 staff collaborated with Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion (HCCI) on a Parent Reaching Out Grant funded project entitled ***Building Capacity and Creating Dialogue***. The goal of this project was to provide parents from diverse ethnic, socio-economic, and multi-linguistic backgrounds with information and skills to better understand and make more effective use of the school system. Three focus groups were identified through conversation with Sir John A. MacDonald Secondary School and its associate schools, Queen Victoria, Bennetto, and Hess St. schools: Somali, Karen, and Roma. Conversations were held with a sample group of each community to first build relationships and then assess their needs. Building upon our learnings from the Scholars Community Program, personal invitations were made through community members that had a pre-existing relationship with the families (i.e. SWIS workers through YMCA Immigrant Settlement Services and volunteer translators through HCCI). Translated paper invitations were also circulated. We asked parents what they needed, how we can help, and how they would like to be engaged. Based upon feedback from the families, workshops were held at HCCI during the summer months.

What We Learned/Next Steps

Our learning to date is based upon our work at Prince of Wales and W. H. Ballard. It is very important that we listen to parents so as to best support them where they are and to not assume what they need. We know that every parent is different - as is every community – what is good for one may not be so for another so we need to be responsive to individual needs. Key to the

success of this program is building trusting relationships with families through personal contact and relationships. Educators in the program need to be mindful of their personal assumptions and biases and be open to becoming a learning partner with the whole family. Specific learning from the research project are yet to be determined.

When trust has been established, there is a willingness for the level of engagement to expand. Specifically, at Prince of Wales, parents had shared an interest in learning about ways in which to earn a secondary school diploma. This has resulted in a “satellite” Community and Continuing Education classroom being established at Prince of Wales to support the parents in earning their diploma. This approach to CCE is of interest to other communities and something that staff is exploring with our partners at the City of Hamilton.

At the conclusion of the research project, data will be gathered and analyzed with the support of Ebest around how effective this parent engagement approach has been. This will become part of the broader provincial findings related to this project. This knowledge will inform our next steps. In addition, as Scholars is a “spring” initiative, we are investigating ways to maintain the engagement in the Fall and Winter.

Through the *Building Capacity Creating Dialogue* project parents helped us to understand that translated material is helpful but that they need more personalized support to understand the material (i.e. reading strategies being sent home but parents don’t know how to do them and feel they can’t ask for help due to language barriers). We learned that small group dialogue, with a translator, is more effective if the initial invitation is personal and through someone who is a trusted leader in the community or someone with whom they have a pre-existing relationship.

This learning continues to be applied in new contexts, when providing responsive support to schools (Appendix D).

PARENT VOICE

What We Did

During 2011/2012 the **Parent Voice Survey** underwent significant revision based upon feedback received from parents and the Parent Involvement Committee. The redesigned survey gathered data in the areas of:

- parent engagement
- school climate
- parent communication
- volunteering

While the response from any single school was not significant enough to draw conclusions for that school, the 482 responses are sufficient to draw general system conclusions. (Appendix E)

Over 60 parents participated in the learning sessions that supported school-based Positive School Climate teams in reviewing their **School Climate Survey** data and looking at ways to “dig deeper” and determine an area of focus. Both the parent survey and student survey focused on the same school climate questions.

Focus 4 Family (Appendix F) is a program designed to offer educational, recreational and creative programs for family members of all ages. We offered sessions in two locations over four sessions, and based on feedback from the previous year, we expanded to a mountain location. Two sessions took place at Mountain Secondary and two sessions took place at Parkview Secondary.

In an effort to remove barriers to family participation, both transportation and meals were provided to participants. This year we introduced our new on-line registration system for families. In addition we made an even greater connection with our community partners to support the work we do with families and to encourage families to make connections with the community. Those partners included: Boys and Girls Clubs of Hamilton, Hamilton Police Services, Hamilton Public Library, McMaster Right to Play, Wesley Urban Ministries and the YMCA.

In May 2012, the Parent Involvement Committee's Communications Subcommittee began to plan for ways in which to improve communication between PIC, school councils and parents across the Board. While PIC has seen a steady increase in the number of parental applicants each year, there continued to be concern that too many parents weren't aware of PIC, their role and the opportunity to become involved. Further, PIC believed that more information could be shared, that parents needed a place to share information, and that we could improve our explanation of supports, programs and terms found in HWDSB. After considering various methods, with the support of Corporate Communications, the subcommittee decided that a significant redesign of the **PIC web presence** would be an appropriate first step. This would occur slightly ahead of the redesign of the HWDSB website.

Parents as Partners (Appendix G) is a series of 6 workshops to help parents of students with special needs to understand special education and develop positive partnerships with school teams. The workshops are held in the early evening and use fun, interactive activities to cover topics such as planning for Kindergarten, effective partnership skills and understanding. Workshops are open to all parents of children/youth with special needs; some are designed for those whose children will be entering school for the first time, another for those whose son or daughter will be transitioning to secondary school. Parents as Partners is a collaborative project of SEAC, Autism Services, Communication Services, Parent Engagement and Early Learning and Special Education Departments. Attendance at sessions has varied between 30 to 50 adults and 15 – 20 children in child minding/youth care.

“Parents play a vital role in publicly funded education. Ontario's **Parents Reaching Out (PRO)** grants encourage parent engagement at the local, regional and provincial levels. They are designed to support parents in identifying barriers to parent engagement in their own community and to find local solutions to involve more parents in support of student achievement and well-being.” (Ministry of Education website). In support of parents providing relevant and responsive support to parents within their community, we provided a PRO (Parents Reaching Out) Grant writing workshop for School Council members. This was held in order to support Councils with this process with a goal of increasing the number of successful grants being provided to our schools and to increase the level of activities co-created by schools and parents in partnership. Where possible, schools were encouraged to align their PRO Grant request with their Tier 3 parent engagement approach. We have seen an increase in the number of schools applying for PRO Grants since 2010. From 2011/12 to 2012/13 we saw the number of applications increase 11% from 43 to 54. Appendix H provides an overview of the projects that were funded.

Building upon some initial parent outreach in 2011/12, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board partnered with The LGBTQ Wellness Centre of Hamilton (The Well) in an outreach project to

engage the **parents of transgender students** (Appendix I) who attend our schools. Funded by a Regional Parent Reaching Out Grant, the goals and objectives of this outreach are to:

- Provide regular opportunities for parents of transgender students at HWDSB secondary schools to meet and engage in dialogues and discussions;
- Provide parents of transgender students with information to help them better understand HWDSB school and system supports through a Parent Resource Guide. The Parent Resource Guide will increase parents/guardians' understanding of trans-related issues and school supports, for example, transition planning, safe school practices and empower them with knowledge and skills to be advocates for their child.

Each session is co-facilitated by staff from HWDSB and the LGBTQ Community Wellness Centre of Hamilton (The Well)

What We Learned/Next Steps

As we continue our work in creating a Positive School Climate, there is a need for school administrators to dig deeper into the Parent Voice data and the potential relevancy for their individual school. Specifically, the areas of bullying, cultural awareness and communicating successes to parents. A learning session is planned for May which will support school administrators in using this data, in addition to student voice data, to help identify a positive school climate focus. Positive School Climate Consultants will continue to provide responsive support for schools. In addition, as a "go forward" strategy, the Parent Voice Survey will be administered to 50% of our schools annually, following the Positive School Climate Survey model, in order to avoid survey fatigue. This will provide schools with annual data (i.e. parent and student on opposite years).

In being responsive to parent needs we recognize that there is a need to shift the approach and the concept of Focus 4 Family and has been taken back to the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) for review and feedback. One idea being considered is mentoring a parent group, within each Cluster, who will take ownership over organizing and coordinating learning experiences of interest to parents in the Cluster. Once we have a clear direction from PIC, we will proceed with future plans accordingly.

Over the course of several subcommittee meetings, and in consultation with the full PIC, parents and staff worked together on a web redesign that would emphasize dynamic content that changes frequently, a system of categorization that made it easy to find what a visitor needs, and a way for parents to share content from their own perspective. This area will provide an opportunity for individuals as well as groups (i.e. home and schools, school councils) to share information and ideas. Parents have contributed content on school agendas and PRO grants. We also learned that PIC members are sent a large volume of parent-related information by email which is difficult to retain and share with a wider audience. With this understanding, we launched a new site in October 2012, which can be found at <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/pic>

This spring, PIC members will communicate information about the redesign and PIC's role through visits to school council meetings. In addition, we will be working with Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion (HCCI) as we begin recruitment for 2013/14 in an effort to ensure broad parent representation on our PIC. We are also refining how we can share PIC website content with schools so that it may appear in school newsletters.

The current model of rotating Parents as Partners sessions among schools appears to be a successful strategy. There is a need to review workshop content and activities and to develop a parent evaluation tool to ensure that the program that we are providing is responsive to parent needs. We will also be considering expansion of a number of the sessions offered.

We are currently planning a PRO grant writing workshop for the 2013/14 school year and we will circulate the information on the successful grant applications from the 2012/13 school year to help School Council Chairs better understand the projects the Ministry is willing to fund. Similar information will be sent directly to principals to increase their awareness of successful applications and to provide possible opportunities for the future. For those schools who did not receive PRO grants last year, we will make direct contact with the principal to see what we can do to support their School Council in participating in the grant writing application process. A review of application data also indicates that very few schools, which are defined Ministry Priority Schools (in low SES neighbourhoods), seem to apply for PRO Grants. Staff will be contacting school administrators directly in order to provide support, if necessary, for the application process.

We have learned that by reaching out to parents, this initiative has sent a strong message to our LGBTQ students and their families that they are recognized and valued members of the HWDSB learning community. In addition, through increased knowledge of school and system supports and services, parents are in the process of providing information that will assist in the development of a resource guide for parents. The parents have gained confidence in the board's efforts in fostering a safe and inclusive learning environment for LGBTQ students as they share success stories. As we approach June, it was decided that students should be invited to join their parents at the final session. We will be looking to continue the dialogue with parents in 2013/14 based upon feedback from parents gathered through a survey.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement in support of student achievement and well-being is the work of many individuals within Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board. We continue to collaborate and work with our community in support of student achievement and well-being. This engagement brings community into the classroom and takes the classroom into the community in support of

- Achievement
- Engagement
- Equity

It is through authentic community collaboration, focused on shared outcomes, that we are making a difference in the areas of achievement (and well-being), engagement and equity. Appendix J provides an overview of some of the areas in which we engage in support of student achievement in the Arts, our focus on mental health, and student well-being.

Achievement

What We Did

Students who are interested in the world of the Arts and Business but who are looking for an experience outside of their secondary school have been able to participate in a community-based placement in a program entitled **Nu Deal**. Nu Deal (Appendix K) is a youth enterprise program operated by Centre 3 Art Studios. It is located in the downtown core of Hamilton. Centre 3 is a not-for-profit artist-run centre defined by art, education, and community. The Studio has established itself as a lead organization in reshaping the workplace and cultural environment in Hamilton,

offering skills development in creative arts, business, and community development. The Nu Deal program focuses on in-risk youth by providing creative and entrepreneurial skills development, and the support to identify and engage in a pathway for employment or self-employment and enterprise. Their current industrious youth enterprise program called Nu Deal combines skills development in creative arts, business and community development for solution-based opportunities, specifically for in-risk youth.

HWDSB formalized a collaborative named **School Based Health Network** which formed as a result of the partner's collective belief that all youth have the right to be at their maximum well-being so they can achieve their full potential, ultimately supporting the Ontario government's mental health strategy, "Open Minds, Healthy Minds." Key partners include: HWDSB, HCWDSB, McMaster University School of Nursing, and Refuge Newcomer Health. We know that Hamilton's health profile indicates that with the city's highest need neighbourhoods there are disparities income, life expectancy, education and overall health. These neighbourhoods have the highest rates of psychiatric related emergencies, highest rates of trauma incitements to children under the age of 16 and highest rates of drop outs. (*Buist 2010 Code Red Series, Hamilton Spectator*). Moreover, a large number of students in these high-needs schools (and their families) do not have regular access to primary care services. Knowing that our students need and deserve more intensive health supports in high need neighbourhoods, the collaborative secured funding to pilot a program that supports students and their families in addressing key health issues affecting student achievement and well-being, by placing a Nurse Practitioner in Sir John A MacDonald. The Nurse Practitioner provided primary care support and when needed, the in-school team would pair the students with a family physician who is part of a Family Health Team. The collaborative believes that a broad approach to overall health for students, by having a Nurse Practitioner in schools would lead to improved student health outcomes and in turn, result in system level benefits including, but not limited to: reduced emergency visits; greater access to primary care and ultimately healthier students and increased achievement and well-being.

A Nurse Practitioner was present in Sir John A MacDonald Secondary School in May and June of the 2012 school year and all year this year for 2 half days per week to support students and their families

In support of our K – 2 Literacy Strategy, staff began collaborating on **Literacy 4 Life**, an initiative designed to mobilize community around the importance of reading. An interdisciplinary team has developed a plan that looks at supporting existing volunteers and/or co-op students, in learning techniques, approaches and language that align with the effective instruction in the classroom. (Appendix L)

We are committed to developing and delivering a training program for existing volunteers who read with our students ranging from older students, parents to community groups providing programming related to reading and partners (PFLCs, OEYCs, post-secondary institutions) The training would be delivered in the Fall and would be a pilot that would inform a broader strategy of engaging the community at large to encourage citizens to make Hamilton the "City that reads."

What We Learned/Next Steps

The **Nu Deal** placement has provided students with an opportunity to experience success and to re-engage. Building upon this success, HWDSB has been successful in receiving funding to place a teacher onsite at Nu Deal, beginning in September, 2013. This will allow us to formally include Nu Deal as an alternative placement for our students. A dedicated HWDSB teacher will work with students at the Centre 3 site to offer a contextualized learning experience with an arts focus. The

teacher will deliver, assess and evaluate learning so that students will earn a package of 3 credits (tailored to the grade and pathway of the individual student).

The **School-Based Health Network** Nurse Practitioner service is being well utilized by students and their families. In a two month period 81 visits were made with 9 clinics being offered. The gender ratio for visits is approximately 2:1 for females. One very positive outcome the Network has experienced over the two years is that there is an increasing interest from the medical community to become more involved in the Network and support in facilitating the development of the program both from a staffing and funding perspective. The School-Based Health Network will be focusing on Partnership Agreements which further define the scope of activities at the school level. We will also be looking at the potential of expanded service offering in 2012/13.

The process of developing the **Literacy 4 Life** plan highlighted the need to begin small and work with existing volunteers to ensure that as we move forward with a larger audience that we have been able to plan, act, assess and reflect with an audience that is already engaged in our schools. In working with volunteers from various service clubs, community agencies and post-secondary institutions we learned that they have a strong desire to training in reading with students and help them develop a love of reading

Engagement

What We Did

In partnership with the **Hamilton Conservatory for the Arts**, our students had the opportunity to be involved in Supercrawl - an artistic and cultural festival located in the James Street North area, an annual arts event held in September. Our students were involved in three arts opportunities related to Supercrawl (Appendix M).

HWDSB partnered with **The Bruce Trail Trek** for kids, a 900 km journey in support of student nutrition. During the Trek, students had the opportunity to engage with the Trekkers or learn about the Bruce Trail through the use of interactive learning activities that were developed by a staff team. In addition to learning about the Bruce Trail, students had the opportunity to learn about social justice and supporting others within their community. Staff and students supported the initiative in a number of different ways including but not limited to: hiking part of the trek themselves; meeting and interviewing the team at Mohawk Sports Complex on October 2, 2012; engaging in curriculum activities, paying a toonie for dress down Fridays, and engaging in a non-perishable food drive.

Measuring how effectively HWDSB engages with community became a focus during 2012/2013. In collaboration with Ebest, staff have determined that HWDSB would benefit from a **report card** on Community Use of Schools as it relates to the facilities, access to facilities and customer service in booking rentals. A second report card is being co-created in July 2013 to gain feedback from community in areas of customer service, partnerships, and connected to the main purposes for partnerships (i.e. socio-economic supports, academic support etc.). Implementation of both report cards, through a pilot format, will begin in October, 2013.

In addition Partnership and Community Engagement staff have begun the collection of staff involved in collaborative tables in the community and have determined that personalized interviews with all managers and system principals would best inform the areas of engagement along with expectations from the collaboratives. Personal interviews will be completed by May with the

information being updated annually. This will help inform Senior staff on how best to support the Board's vision.

What We Learned/Next Steps

Supercrawl was an opportunity for many students to visit an art gallery for the first time. For others, it was also their first experience downtown. Giving students the opportunity to explore a part of their city they had not experienced before was very rewarding for the students. It also provided an authentic and real world exposure to the arts that many had not considered before.

Student nutrition programs have been significantly improved with the non-perishable food drive allowing programs to purchase more expensive items such as dairy and fruits and vegetables. Schools with snack programs have been able to look at introducing nutrition programs. In addition, students had the opportunity to learn first-hand about the Bruce Trail as a result of the interdisciplinary team who worked to create learning experiences across the curriculum, for teachers to access. Students were also exposed to elements of social justice and giving back within their community. October will continue to be Nutrition Program month in HWDSB with a focus on related food drives and fundraising for schools in our community.

Equity

What We Did

HWDSB has partnered with McMaster University, McMaster Hospital and Public Health to identify and address the needs of five Board identified high need schools in a pilot project to address vision problems of students aged 7-12 years of age as part of a **Vision Screening Project**. The project's mandate is to identify students with vision problems and possible signs of Amblyopia, an eye disorder characterized by an impaired vision in an eye that otherwise appear normal, or out of proportion to associated structural abnormalities of the eye. If left untreated could result in blindness. Initial screening was done at the schools (Cathy Wever, Hess St, Dr. Davey, Queen Victoria and Bennetto). Those found with vision problems were referred to McMaster University Hospital Vision Clinic for more intensive screening.

During 2012/13 we established our **First Nation, Metis, Inuit Advisory Committee**. As part of our FNMI Policy, this group will provide advice to staff on topics related to First Nation, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) student success and well-being. This committee consists of representation from a variety of FNMI community groups as well as Mohawk College and McMaster University. At our initial meeting, the group provided insight into our introduction of Voluntary, Confidential Self Identification for FNMI students. Community plays a critical role in the achievement of our First Nation, Metis and Inuit student population (Appendix N).

As part of our work in looking at equity of opportunity, access and outcomes, staff have been working to fine tune a **partnership/engagement database** which can be used by schools or at the system level when applying an equity lens to decision-making. Staff have been populating the database with information gathered through one-on-one interviews with Administrators and Managers. Partnerships and engagement opportunities are being classified into the following areas: Literacy/Numeracy; Recreation; Health and Wellness; Arts; Mentoring; Curriculum; Mental Health; Newcomer Services; Nutrition; Public Health; Volunteers and Donations. Approximately 80 schools have been interviewed to date. Administrators and Managers and Superintendents will be receiving usernames and passwords to view their profiles and to help inform their work in partnership development and tracking.

What We Learned/Next Steps

The initial results are indicating that while only an estimated 1%-5% of the population is affected by Amblyopia, our students are showing an approximate 20-30% in some schools and by assessing the need for glasses and potentially Amblyopia students will presumably perform better in school.

Our early work with the FNMI Advisory Committee has underscored that the community can provide HWDSB staff with great insight into how to best reach out to the FNMI community in a way that is respectful and inclusive. We have also seen a great willingness from Aboriginal organizations to reach out and support student achievement and well-being.

2013 – 2014 Parent and Community Engagement Action Plan

<u>Essential Component</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Evidence</u>	<u>Implementation and Monitoring</u>
Policy	Create a Parent Engagement Policy and a Community Engagement Policy as a subset of the Engagement Pillar Policy.	Policy developed	November, 2013
Tiered approach to engagement	<p>Provide support for schools parent engagement initiatives including capacity building around effective engagement.</p> <p>All schools engage a selected group of parents in an effective way</p> <p>Review learnings from Leithwood initiative and expand where appropriate</p>	<p>Launch Parent Engagement Toolkit for Administrators</p> <p>Demonstrated shift from involvement to engagement.</p> <p>Reflection in SEF and School Improvement Plans</p> <p>Completion of research project</p>	<p>June, 2013</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>January, 2014</p>
Parent voice	<p>Collect parent voice data using the Parent Voice Survey and community-based focus groups</p> <p>Support schools in digging deeper related to bullying, cultural awareness and communicating student success</p>	<p>Revise completion to align with Student Positive School Climate survey and administered to 50% of schools</p> <p>School Climate Plans are developed and strategies implemented</p>	<p>April, 2014</p> <p>January, 2014</p>
Community Engagement in Support of Achievement, Engagement and Equity	<p>Re-define function and services of the Partnership and Community Engagement Department (given shift in ownership of engagement and evolution of the Foundation)</p> <p>Community Engagement Report Card and Community Use of Schools Report Card are piloted in order to seek feedback from partners</p> <p>Analyze and review list of staff represented on collaborative tables throughout the community to support community achievement and ensure information from these tables informs</p>	<p>Input gathered from internal stakeholders</p> <p>Pilot complete</p> <p>List is developed</p>	<p>December, 2013</p> <p>December, 2013</p> <p>May, 2013</p>

<u>Essential Component</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Evidence</u>	<u>Implementation and Monitoring</u>
	<p>and supports the strategic directions of HWDSB.</p> <p>Community is engaged in our K-2 Literacy Strategy via Literacy 4 Life</p>	<p>Initial group is trained and providing support in schools</p>	<p>November, 2013</p>

Appendix A – Tiers of Parent Engagement

Examples of Parental Engagement by Tier:



- Tier 1 – parent engagement for all parents. Traditional types of engagement including open houses and newsletters. Generally they provide information to those that are seeking it. Tier 1 builds relationships and confidence with the school or education system.
- Tier 2 – parent engagement for a selected audience of parents. This could include an information session for Grade 8 parents before their child transitions to Grade 9. The audience and purpose are defined and generally Tier 2 provides information to those seeking it.
- Tier 3 – parent engagement for a defined audience of parents. This involves reaching out and engaging a small group of parents in a deep and meaningful way and in way that has a positive impact on student achievement and well-being.

Appendix B – What's Your Grade 9 Voice

INTRODUCING: **What's Your Grade 9 Voice**

It is with pleasure and excitement that I share with you plans to give voice to all Grade 8 students over the next two months as we work together with staff from Ancaster High to support the transition of all Ancaster Senior Public School Grade 8 students to Grade 9.

We began today with a introductory presentation to all Grade 8 classes by their Homeform Teacher featuring a video and an outline of what's to come. Please click on this link to view the presentation:

[What's Your Grade 9 Voice: Student Intro Presentation](#)

For your understanding:

Thursday March 28th - Period 1:

Each grade 8 class will participate in a collaborative Google Doc Group Activity crowdsourcing questions and wonderings about Grade 9.

*These questions and wonderings will be collated and studied by Ancaster High staff along with ASPS staff and will be the foundation for determining our theme based questions for our **Express Your Grade Nine Voice Day** on April 17th.*

*Wednesday April 17th - 8:30 am - 11:00 am **Express Your Grade 9 Voice Day***

A morning full of dynamic interactive stations where all grade 8 students will have the opportunity to express their thoughts, ideas, and wonderings in regards to beginning their high school journey in the coming school year.

We aim to engage students in a variety of ways so as to address individual learning styles and preferences. Students will be able to choose how to contribute their thinking and thoughts via Bloggers Cafe, Grafitti Walls / Boards, Speakers Corner (video blogs) and Speakers Alley (audio podcasts).

*Wednesday May 15th - 9:30 am - 12:30 am **Ancaster High Transition Day***

In the morning, all Grade 8 students along with Grade 8 Homeform Teachers will venture over to Ancaster High for a morning activity and pizza lunch. More details to follow.

NOW IT IS YOUR TURN - **What's Your Parent Voice?**

Take some time, reflect and I invite you to share your questions, wonderings and comments. Please open this GDoc Form: [What's Your Parent Voice](#) and respond to these two prompts:

In thinking about your son or daughter and their upcoming start in grade 9, what questions do you have?

In thinking about your son or daughter and their upcoming start in grade 9, what do you wonder about?

We will collate your questions and wondering and respond back. Promise.

In closing, we look forward to learning from our students and you, our parents. It is so exciting to share this plan with you and on behalf of all the staff who are creating and supporting this very important plan, thank you for your time and ongoing support.

Appendix C – W. H. Ballard Scholars Community Program – Parent Feedback

We had 11 students sign up for our grade three After School Scholars' Program. All of the families were contacted to be part of the parent engagement project. Initially, we had 5 families express an interest in the program. For most of the sessions, these 5 families consistently attended the program. It began at 4:15 and concluded at 5:00 with a meal. Some sessions, we had as many as 7 families attend.

Here are anecdotal reflections shared by participants:

- There was a stronger connection between school, home and principal along with an increase in communication between the groups.
- One parent commented her daughter did not want to attend the scholars' program until she found out that her mother would be coming to the school for the parent group.
- One parent noticed a significant change in his daughter's abilities since the beginning of the program.
- The session with the math facilitator was very helpful because parents were able to ask guiding questions at home and provide necessary support.
- There was an increase in parental confidence when supporting their child with homework.
- A parent suggested we setup a Twitter account to inform parents of upcoming events.
- The Parent Conference was very informative presentation. A parent questioned why other parents did not attend the conference as they missed out on an excellent opportunity.
- We appreciated the healthy meals.
- The information presented by community organizations was well-received and helpful for the parents to develop a connection to their community.
- One family has a child with a rare disorder. With the support of our school social worker by attending doctor's appointments, they gained a better understanding of the condition. This parent wanted to know how he could setup his own support group for other parents with the same condition. Before the project, this parent was disengaged and had little trust with the school. In the end, he was a regular contributor to our discussions. It was observed that the parents and children took more responsibility with the meal- cleaning dishes, serving each other food and setting the tables.

Appendix D – Tier 3 Engagement at Helen Detwiler

Responsive Parent Focus Groups – Reaching Out to the Arabic Community – Knowing Our Parents

Parent Engagement and School Climate Consultants have been collaborating with school staff at Helen Detwiler Elementary in regards to establishing a stronger understanding and relationship with the diverse community of which the school is apart. The school's English Language Learner snapshot indicates that there are a large number of families in the area that identify Arabic as their first language. Expanding upon the school's approved PRO Grant (in which they aimed to translate materials into a variety of languages) we are aiming to focus solely on the Arabic community in this first (of a three) year proposed plan to know each group within the community on a deeper and richer level. A connection has been made with an Arabic speaking parent within the community (a member of the school council) who will help to make personal contacts by inviting parents (in Arabic) to attend a meeting at the school (or a place of their choosing) to get to know each other and to express questions, concerns, or interests in regards to the school and, perhaps, if there is something they would like to learn more about. The goal is to invite parents to conversation through which we can learn more about how to respond to them and their individual concerns and needs in a personalized way. Getting to know individual families on a deeper level in this way will also help to support the staff of the school with their cultural proficiency and knowledge for how they can support the diverse students and families they work with and support.

Through our work with Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion last year, we learned that the translation of materials into other languages is not enough to truly engage diverse families. While translated items could be read, the context of them is often not understood. Parents need support, personal contacts, and opportunities to express themselves in their way and in their language with a translator. We also learned that not only is each individual unique with their own interest, strengths, and needs but that each community varies as well in terms of background, history, and culture. In order to be responsive to parents we learned that we have to listen and personalize so that we can build relationships and to provide parents with what they need to support their children in achieving to their full potential.

The key next step is to reach out to Arabic Families in the community via translated invitation and follow-up personal phone call, in Arabic through a volunteer if required. Based on family feedback and preference, a venue to meet with families will be organized which could include a school, YMCA in the neighbourhood or a mosque. This meeting with families will help to build relationships, establish trust and assess needs of these families. This meeting will be responsive in meeting a request or need of this population through an interactive workshop before the end of the school year.

Appendix E – Parent Voice Survey Summary

- Parental support of their child’s schooling was done primarily through talking with their child about school (e.g., asking their child about their day at school), attending school events and/or parent –teacher nights and through helping their child with their homework.
- Parent attitudes towards both their child’s success and their parental abilities to support their child at school were also important aspects of parental support and engagement. When asked about additional ways for parents to be involved at their child’s school
- Although the majority (81%) indicated that they are aware of ways to be involved, only 64% stated that they actually do volunteer within the school community.
- The majority of parents indicated they feel comfortable initiating contact with their child’s school and know who to contact at the school if they have a question.
- The largest response (35%) felt that the school only “somewhat” updates them on their child’s academic progress.
- When communicating with parents, using social media (e.g., Twitter, blogs) proved least effective in keeping parents informed. This may be due to parent’s lack of comfort using social media sites, or that it is simply more convenient to get the information from more familiar sources such as school emails, newsletters, talking with their child, other parents, and their child’s teacher(s).
- Parental feedback on the overall climate at their child’s school showed that the majority of respondents do feel that their child’s school is a safe and caring place for the students (70% overall). However issues such as bullying based on their child’s appearance, grades, and/or their trouble with learning, are still concerns held by 53% of the responding parents.

General Summary:

Overall parents felt as though their child’s school is helping their child succeed. The results of the survey are to be taken as a benchmark of where the school board’s efforts are currently being received, and where progress can be made. Issues such as bullying, the need for additional cultural awareness through the schools, and updating parents on their child’s successes in school, were identified as areas that need to be addressed for further improvement.

Appendix F – Focus 4 Family

Each session began with a family-style meal prepared by the students of that school's hospitality program. Following the meal a variety of program options were available for families. Some programs were designed for parents and their children together and some programs were designed with a parent focus which meant there was also a need for child-only programming. More focus was on parent-child programs so we could model student learning for parents and have parents as active participants in their child's learning. We attempted to ensure learning in these sessions was transferable to the home so parents could repeat the activities on their own time.

Families were able to access the registration information on our website and complete a one-time sign-up process that would mean future registration would be quick and easy. This registration system can be used beyond Focus 4 Family and can be used by any HWDSB departments planning programs for families.

Appendix G - Parents as Partners Workshop Series

Helping Parents of Children with Special Needs to Develop Effective Partnerships with Schools

HWDSB is committed to engaging all parents. For a few of our parents, specific, targeted interventions are required. The **Parents as Partners** workshops series is targeted at families of children with special needs who will be starting Kindergarten or are already enrolled in school. The workshops:

- Help families to plan transitions
- Provide parents with information on HWDSB special education programs and services
- Help parents to develop the skills they need to be effective partners with school staff

Workshop One:

Getting Ready for School: Planning for Kindergarten

- This workshop is for families who are thinking of registering their child for school in September. The workshop provides information on when to start the process and what will be involved. The workshop activities will help parents to organize information about their child, and get ready for the meetings where they will be talking about your child.

Workshop Two:

Strategies for Effective Partnerships: Communicating for Success

- This workshop is for any parent of a child with special needs who is attending school or getting ready to start school. The workshop provides some great tips and strategies to help develop positive relationships with school staff. The fun activities will help to improve negotiation and problem solving skills.

Workshop Three:

The Kindergarten Program: Supporting Students with Special Needs

- This workshop provides parents with information about the Kindergarten program and the daily activities of a Junior Kindergarten (JK) or Senior Kindergarten (SK) classroom. Parents will meet a Kindergarten Teacher and find out how the teacher adjusts the activities to meet the individual needs of all the children. Parents will also learn how the teacher determines the need for special education programs and services.

Workshop Four:

IPRC: Identification, Placement and Review Committee

- This workshop provides parents with an introduction to special education in Ontario schools and the IPRC process. Parents will learn some of the special education language “jargon” used by Teachers and Principals and how the school system supports students with special education needs. Workshop activities will help parents to understand their rights in special education and their role in working with the school to support their child’s needs.

Workshop Five:

The Individual Education Plan (IEP): Introduction to the IEP and Parent Role

- The Individual Education Plan (IEP) is the most important document for students with special education needs. This workshop provides information about the purpose of the IEP and the process for development and review of the IEP. Workshop activities will help parents to understand how the IEP helps students and how they can support the school in the development and monitoring of the IEP.

Workshop Six: (Will be offered twice during the year)

Transition to High School

- This workshop provides parents with the information regarding the transition of their child from elementary to secondary school. The workshop will focus on developing a positive transition process to support students.

Appendix H – Parent Reaching Out (PRO) Grant Initiatives

School Name	Title of Project	Amount Recommended
A M Cunningham Junior Public School	EcoArts Extravaganza	\$1,000
Ancaster High School	Social Media for Students and Parents	\$990
Ancaster Meadow Elementary Public School	Partnership in Learning	\$1,000
Balaclava Public School	What's My & Your Learning Style? - Enhancing Your Child's Academic Success	\$1,000
Barton Secondary School	Parent Handbook	\$1,000
Buchanan Park School	Parent Information series	\$1,000
Cathy Wever Elementary Public School	Early Literacy in the Classroom - Parent Resources and Information Sessions	\$1,000
Collegiate Avenue School	2012-13 Translation Activities and Parent Resource/Lending Library for the Collegiate Avenue School community	\$1,000
Dalewood Senior Public School	Adolescents - why do they do the things they do?	\$1,000
Delta Secondary School	Planning for Post Secondary Education	\$965
Eastmount Park Junior Public School	Learning with Parents Through Family Activities	\$290
Elizabeth Bagshaw School	Respecting Diversity	\$1,000
Fessenden School	Parent Lending Library -- Raising Socially Responsible Children	\$1,000
Flamborough Centre School	Family Carousel Night	\$1,000
Glen Brae Middle School	Community Resource Event	\$1,000
Glen Echo Junior Public School	Literacy day	\$1,000
Glendale Secondary School	Engaging Our Diverse Community	\$1,000
Gordon Price School	Engaging Parents at Gordon Price	\$895
Green Acres School	Getting Connected	\$400
Helen Detwiler Junior Elementary School	Engaging our Diverse Cultures	\$1,000
Hess Street Junior Public School	Literacy Night Event	\$1,000
Highland Secondary School	Parents Supporting Students Speaker Series	\$960
Highview Public School	Raising Responsible Children	\$1,000

Huntington Park Junior Public School	Optimistic Possibilities Speaker Series	\$1,000
Janet Lee Public School	Parent Involvement-Community Outreach	\$500
Lake Avenue Public School	Enhancing Parent Communication	\$1,000
Lawfield Elementary School E S	Parent Workshops	\$1,000
Lisgar Junior Public School	Social Network and Bullying? grades 4-8 and Bullying...not my child!!! k - 3	\$1,000
Memorial (City) School	Memorial Parent Handbook	\$800
Memorial Public School	Health& Fitness Wellness	\$750
Millgrove Public School	Anti bullying Presentation	\$1,000
Mount Albion Public School	Facebook 101	\$1,000
Norwood Park Elementary School	Social Networking Safety for Parents	\$1,000
Parkdale School	Parent Engagement Through Math and Reading	\$1,000
Pauline Johnson Public School	Parents as Partners in Literacy	\$500
Prince Philip Junior Public School	A Numeracy Night for Parents	\$700
Queen Mary Public School	Promoting a Positive School Environment	\$500
R L Hyslop Elementary School	Science Night at R L Hyslop Elementary School	\$1,000
Ridgemount Junior Public School	Make and Take Parent Involvement Literacy and Mathematics Project	\$1,000
Rousseau Public School	Supporting Student Success Speaker Series	\$1,000
Roxborough Park Junior Public School	Parent Involvement	\$1,000
Ryerson Middle School	Engaging Your Teen	\$1,000
Saltfleet High School	Parent Forum Speaker Series	\$1,000
Sir Wilfrid Laurier Public School	Stand Up Keep Your Kids Presentation	\$985
Sir William Osler Elementary School (Elem) S	Parents as Partners in Math & Literacy	\$1,000
Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School	Safer Social Media & Facebook 101 Seminar	\$1,000
Spencer Valley Public School	Student Success: How We Make it Happen Together.	\$1,000
Tapleystown Public School	School Council Commuications	\$1,000
Templemead Elementary School	Parents Supporting Their Children for Academic Success	\$1,000

Viscount Montgomery Public School	Wonderful Web	\$1,000
W H Ballard Public School	Guest Speaker	\$1,000
Westdale Secondary School	Parents for Students' Mental Health at Westdale	\$1,000
Westmount Secondary School	Laughter for Mental Health	\$1,000
Westwood Junior Public School	Communication -Wellness Club and Newsletter	\$400
Yorkview School	Supporting Parents	\$500
Hamilton-Wentworth DSB Total	55	\$50,135

Appendix I – Support for Parents of Transgender Students

In partnership with The Well, six sessions are being held for parents of transgender students who attend or plan to attend elementary and secondary schools in HWDSB.

Each session has been scheduled for 2 hours in length but extends to at least 3 hours due to the richness of the dialogue and responding to parent need and request

Meeting agendas include the following;

- Open dialogue
- Guest speakers
- Issues and concerns relating to gender identity, gender non-conformity, and transitioning
- Barriers, supports, advocacy in schools
- School- and community-based resources

Appendix J - Overview of Where/How We Engage Community in Support of the Arts, Mental Health and Well-Being

Area of Focus	Who	How
Arts	Art Gallery of Hamilton	Education programs and exhibitions for students K – 12 – hands on studio programs and art history critical analysis
	McMaster Museum of Art	Provides tours and educational experiences for children k – 12 – hands on in their print gallery for secondary students
	Dundas Valley School of Art	Secondary programs take part in special figure drawing classes / portfolio prep.
		ARTIST Connection III exhibit – local artists exhibition touring schools over the next three years – full education package and visiting artists program accompanies exhibition
Carnegie Gallery (Dundas)	Hosts secondary exhibitions for Highland and Parkside Secondary	

Area of Focus	Who	How
Mental Health	McMaster Children's Hospital Regional Child and Youth Mental Health Service	Through referrals for families and youth
	St Joseph's Hospital- Cleghorn Program	Referrals and coordination of service delivery and capacity building
	Lynwood Charlton Family Centre	Coordinating teaching staff for Section 23 students and IMHHS program for students in their home school (i.e. group supports are offered within our system programs)
	John Howard Society	John Howard staff work in HWDSB schools through targeted interventions. (Tier 2)
	Alternatives for Youth	JHS Counsellors in 9 secondary schools for addictions counselling
	Bereaved Families of Ontario	Co-facilitation of bereavement group
	Children's Aid Society of Hamilton	Referrals for child protection services and to improve academic achievement in the care of CAS
	Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton	Referrals for child protection services and to improve academic achievement in the care of CAS
	Contact Hamilton	Collaboration with community to improve access to service for client families
	Community Child Abuse Council	Collaborate to enhance services for new Immigrant families that have experienced trauma as well as service for children and youth who have experience sexual trauma
	Child and Adolescent Services	Agency offers service in one HWDSB secondary school and helps facilitate supports for provision of trauma and other mental health concerns
	Family Health Team	Collaboration between family physicians and other mental health services offered through the practice and schools

Area of Focus	Who	How
Mental Health	Banyan Youth Services	Offer Section 23 class and other services for families in the community
	Hamilton Police	Joint initiatives for safety in schools
	Public Health	Collaboration in mental health promotion and prevention programs in schools
	Youth Net/Public Health	Programs for mental health stigma reduction
	Sexual Health Network	Collaborate and program development related to healthy sexuality as well as parenting information sessions for new immigrant parents and how to speak with their children about health and sexuality
	FASD Leadership Team	Collaboration on development of FASD strategy for Hamilton as well as offering joint consultation on students with FASD to school staff and families
	Hamilton Pathways to Education	Academic and social supports to at risk students in North End Hamilton
	McMaster University School of Social Work	Work placements for students in BSW
	Sir Wilfrid Laurier School of Social Work	Work placements for students in BSW
	Mohawk College	Placements for students in various diploma programs
	Offord Centre	Provides research and enhances our knowledge exchange capacity
HWCSB	Joint planning and collaboration on initiatives in both service to families and capacity building for staff	

Area of Focus	Who	How
Health & Well Being "Active Recess"	John Howard Society	Collaboration on K-10 Active Recess initiative to enhance students' social well being and physical activity.
Health & Well Being "Outdoor Education"	Hamilton Industrial Environmental Association	Program funding support for K-5 inner city schools looking to develop links between science of nature and activity outdoors. Experiential learning opportunities through hand on approach to being outside.
Health & Well Being "Physical & Health Literacy for All"	Royal Botanical Gardens	Programs from K-12 developing links between science of nature and activity outdoors. Experiential learning opportunities through hand on approach to being outside.
	Hamilton Conservation Authority	Programs from K-12 developing links between science of nature and activity outdoors. Experiential learning opportunities through hand on approach to being outside.
	Hamilton Parks and Recreation	Collaboration and instructional training on alignment of programs across the system to support the physical and health literacy of students.
	Public Health	Collaboration and instructional training on alignment of programs across the system to support the physical and health literacy of students.
	Boys and Girls Clubs	Collaboration and instructional training on alignment of programs across the system to support the physical and health literacy of students.
	YWCA	Collaboration and instructional training on alignment of programs across the system to support the physical and health literacy of students.

Area of Focus	Who	How
Health & Well Being "Physical & Health Literacy for All"	Sport Hamilton	Collaboration and instructional training on alignment of programs across the system to support the physical and health literacy of students.
	Brock University	Collaboration and sharing of instructional strategies to engage students with special needs in physical activity and healthy living.
	Mohawk College	Collaboration and sharing of resources to help facilitate instructional programs relating to physical activity and health geared towards students with special needs.

Health & Well Being "Low Cost Helmet Initiative"	Seven Star Sports	Collaboration and implementation strategy to provide children with access to safe affordable helmets to participate in physical activities.
	McMaster University	Collaboration and implementation strategy to provide children with access to safe affordable helmets to participate in physical activities.
	Hamilton Police	Collaboration and implementation strategy to provide children with access to safe affordable helmets to participate in physical activities.
	Public Health	Collaboration and implementation strategy to provide children with access to safe affordable helmets to participate in physical activities.

Area of Focus	Who	How
Health & Well Being "Tourism, Culture and Sport"	Hamilton Sport Hall of Fame	Collaboration and implementation strategies for implementation of Sport Heroes from Hamilton area. Inclass instruction linked to history and physical education. Pathefinders Project and Newspaper in Education.

Appendix K – Nu Deal

Based on The Urban Arts Initiative Feasibility Study, conducted and published by Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton in August 2010, Nu Deal supports the following core findings:

- There is a population of youth in Hamilton who are street-involved, homeless and at-risk. These are youth who face many challenges but bring incredible strength, creativity and resilience to their lives and to our community.
- Engaging in arts and creative opportunities contribute to better health and social outcomes for at risk, street-involved and homeless youth.
- While Hamilton has arts opportunities for young people, the community lacks a centralized, comprehensive program for at-risk youth to be engaging in creative expression in both structured and non-structured ways.
- Stakeholders (including youth) from the Hamilton community have identified the need for arts opportunities and provided advice on the strengths to build on and potential resources for moving forward.
- A comprehensive arts program for at-risk youth must be centred on the experience and influence of young people, must strive for social inclusion and innovation.

Student Programming at Nu Deal

Credits that student may earn through Nu Deal include: English (9-12, Applied or Academic), Civics (CHV2O) and/or Careers (GLC2O), The Arts (Visual Arts AVI1O/2O, or Media Arts ASM1O/2O/3M/4M), and Business (BDP30, The Enterprising Person). An additional credit may potentially be earned by investigating the possibility of credit recovery. The focus of the one-semester program will be achievement of the 3-4-credit package and creation of a clear pathway plan with school and community supports. Students will form working relationships with members of Centre 3's arts community and its arts community partners, so that pathway learning can continue after exiting the program.

Structured daily sessions will involve 10 -15 youth, one dedicated HWDSB teacher, a team of Centre 3 instructors and one technical assistant to assure participants receive the attention they need to support their learning and develop their skills within each of the credit-earning opportunities. The academic instruction will be embedded in the art program offered through the Nu-Deal, creating a true alternative learning format for the students to assist them in engaging in the academic programming component of the initiative. Students will also be supported by HWDSB system staff, including social work, and an inter-disciplinary team of consultants, including special education, school climate, arts consultant, secondary/elementary program, English Language Learner and Aboriginal Community liaison when applicable.

HWDSB will support transition of youth exiting the program, to the setting appropriate to each youth's next steps, which may include a return to the youth's home school, an arts focus program in another HWDSB school, co-operative/experiential learning, alternative education, college, or university or the workplace.

Specific opportunities will be developed in consultation with individual youth and their legal guardian where appropriate, to identify their needs, passions, and goals in pursuit of reengagement. HWDSB and the dedicated teacher will work with individual youth to provide access to information and support for pathway planning and further education within areas of interest to the individual student and student need.

Appendix L – Literacy 4 Life

Potential outcomes of the initiative include:

- Improving the reading skills of children in Pre K-2 who are reading below grade level
- Providing additional opportunities for students reading at grade level to practice their skills
- Increasing student's self-confidence through one-on-one support in comprehension and decoding skills.
- Fostering a love of reading, an appreciation of literature, and provide students with positive role models.
- Engaging parents/caregivers and community around the goal of all students reading by Grade 3.
- Developing and deliver training for parents/caregivers and community that teaches them HOW to read with a child.
- This initiative is intended to support the already existing effective classroom practices. This program will complement existing community volunteer reading programs (i.e. Neighbour 2 Neighbour) by supporting training opportunities and providing supports for schools beyond the volunteer organization's mandate.

Appendix M – Supercrawl

HWDSB students were involved in three main activities connected with Supercrawl:

- *Kidscrawl* provided the students a chance to engage with and discuss a variety of artwork, exposure to careers and prospects related to visual and media arts as they toured the various galleries and cultural spaces. The students took part in a walking tour of all the galleries and shops that opened specifically to support the students in the kids crawl. HWDSB Elementary and Secondary School students (Grades 4 – 12) registered for this program and had an exclusive opportunity to preview work by local and international visual artists and explore exciting cultural spaces as part of Hamilton's unique cultural event. Over 800 students descended on James Street North visiting the 14 sites.
- The Education Challenge went out to HWDSB to participate in creating artwork based on a common theme of "Making Hamilton a better Place - transforming our parks" Students in grades 7 - 12 participated in the project from many of our schools and their work was on display at the New Lister Block building outside Tourism Hamilton. This exhibition gave many of our students the opportunity to share their thoughts and creative ideas for making Hamilton a better place and have their own artwork on display at Supercrawl.
- Student Volunteers - Kidscrawl also required a number of active student volunteers. Many of our students from SJAM and Delta supported the schools on the walking tour and at the various cultural locations with a variety of supporting roles. The students were a tremendous asset to the entire project running smoothly and they really enjoyed the opportunity to be involved in Supercrawl this way too.

Appendix N – First Nation, Metis, Inuit Community Engagement in Support of Achievement, Engagement and Equity

Engagement Activities	Community / HWDSB Participants Involved in Working Relationship
HWDSB FNMI Self-Identification Development and Implementation Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HWDSB elementary and secondary schools, students, families, and community groups • HWDSB Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee • Hamilton Aboriginal Education Council (HAEC) • Corporate Communications • Aboriginal Frontline Workers Group (Hamilton) <p>Schools involved in pilot, March 2013:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sir John A. Macdonald, Queen Mary, Prince of Wales, Sir Winston Churchill, and Cardinal Heights <p>Other groups working with to engage with in order to support FNMI self-identification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Frontline Workers Group • Protecting Mother Earth Powwow Committee via De dwa dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre
Aboriginal Residential School Theatre Performance , “Ten Miles Out”	<p>Aboriginal Community Liaison assists with coordinating the initiative and engaging with the following individuals/groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glendale Secondary School staff and students • Co-op student from Sir John A. Macdonald • Woodlands Cultural Centre • Aboriginal residential school survivors • Volunteer artist and engineer to assist with set • Hamilton Spectator <p>*Stage play will raise awareness about FNMI self-identification process as well as historical and contemporary issues.</p>
Aboriginal Youth Career and Education Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HWDSB Consultants (Student & Parent Engagement, CO-OP, OYAP, SHSM and Pathways Consultant) • McMaster University, Indigenous Student Services • Aboriginal Engagement Worker, Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School <p>As of April 16th, 2013 the following participants (speakers, mentors, and exhibitors) will also be part of the event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McMaster University, Indigenous Student Services • Mohawk College • Members from APSIP (Aboriginal Post-Secondary Recruiters from across Ontario) • Skills Canada • Dream Catcher Fund • Métis Nation of Ontario Training Initiatives • De dwa dehs Aboriginal Health Centre

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hamilton Police • Jukasa Media Group, Six Nations • Trina Bucko Consulting and Training • Dr. Patricia Farrugia <p><i>Aboriginal high school students are invited to attend with a teacher chaperone.</i></p>
<p>Aboriginal Justice Initiative</p>	<p>Community working group that seeks to support building awareness and understanding, as well support resource development in the area of the residential school system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent of Student Achievement • HWDSB Community and Partnership Engagement • HWDSB program consultants and other staff members • Representatives from HWCDSB • Members of the community <p><i>Additional resource supports:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland Cultural Centre • Goodminds • Legacy of Hope Foundation
<p>Hamilton Aboriginal Education Council (HAEC)</p>	<p>HWDSB Aboriginal Community Liaison participates as Co-Chair and facilitated the creation of the strategic plan in consultation with community stakeholders.</p>
<p>Aboriginal Frontline Workers Group</p>	<p>HWDSB Aboriginal Community Liaison attends meetings that engages the following community agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De dwa dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre • Hamilton Indian Regional Indian Centre • Native Women’s Centre • Niagara Peninsula Aboriginal Area Management Board (NPAAMB) • Niwasa Aboriginal Education Programs • Ontario Native Women’s Association – Aboriginal Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program • Sacajawea Non-Profit Housing Inc. • Urban Native Homes
<p>HWDSB Aboriginal Social Work</p>	<p>HWDSB Aboriginal Community Liaison works in collaboration with the HWDSB Aboriginal Social Worker to identify community-based connections for staff, students, and families including, but not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De dwa dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre • Hamilton Indian Regional Indian Centre • Native Women’s Centre • Niagara Peninsula Aboriginal Area Management Board (NPAAMB) • Ontario Native Women’s Association – Aboriginal Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Native Homes • SHAE, HRIC • NYA:WEH / Aboriginal Engagement Initiative • Mohawk College / McMaster University, Indigenous Student Services
<p>Brock University, Aboriginal Education Council</p>	<p>HWDSB Aboriginal Community Liaisons attends meetings hosted at Brock University, St. Catherine’s Campus that engages the following members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brock University, Aboriginal Education Council Members
<p>Urban Aboriginal Cultural Competency Training</p>	<p>HWDSB Aboriginal Community Liaison provides support for coordinating the professional development workshop while at the engaging the following individuals/community groups in the process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) • HWDSB staff members • Aboriginal Community Elder

Appendix O
Parent/Community Engagement Action Plan – May, 2012 – April, 2013

<u>Essential Component</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Evidence</u>	<u>Implementation and Monitoring</u>
Policy	Create a Parent Engagement Policy and a Community Engagement Policy as a subset of the Engagement Pillar Policy.	Policy developed	See report content for updates on implementation of items in plan
Tiered approach to engagement	<p>Provide support for schools parent engagement initiatives including capacity building around effective engagement.</p> <p>All schools engage a selected group of parents in an effective way</p> <p>Collaborative inquiry group to investigate “how do we teach parents what they want to learn in their role of co-producers of student learning?”</p> <p>Review learnings from HCCI pilot related to engaging diverse populations and expand where appropriate.</p> <p>Utilize the Parent Engagement Toolkit to support effective parental engagement</p>	<p>Demonstrated shift from involvement to engagement.</p> <p>Reflection in SEF and School Improvement Plans</p> <p>Learnings shared via Engagement Toolkit</p> <p>Next steps plan developed with HCCI</p> <p>Administrators “posts” to the toolkit</p>	
Parent voice	<p>Website is redesigned based upon feedback from parents (note: formerly Virtual Resource Centre project)</p> <p>Collect parent voice data using the Parent Voice Survey and community-based focus groups</p>	<p>Website content and design is informed by PIC, SEAC, FIAC and Rural Schools Advisory Committees.</p> <p>Revisions made to the website</p> <p>Parent engagement plan modified based upon feedback</p>	
Continued development of the community engagement plan	Investigate the potential of a Community Engagement Report Card to seek feedback from partners	Next steps related to gathering feedback are determined	

<u>Essential Component</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Evidence</u>	<u>Implementation and Monitoring</u>
	<p>Engage with early learning partners to expand our understanding of early years learning in order to inform our strategy in support of creating seamless transitions, seamless day and evidence-based developmental programming</p> <p>Capacity building with administrators on how the Partnership Database can support their school improvement plan.</p> <p>Analyze and review list of staff represented on collaborative tables throughout the community to support community achievement and ensure information from these tables informs and supports the strategic directions of HWDSB.</p>	<p>Partner expertise to inform our work and build capacity with staff for emergent curriculum, developmental stages, documentation of learning and parent engagement (i.e. ASCY, Colleges, Universities, Child Care Partners)</p> <p>Collaboration with stakeholders on Extended Day Programming and long term direction</p> <p>Tracked usage of the database to collect baseline data</p> <p>Updated list is circulated annually for review and updates and staff are assigned collaborative tables to support the Board's Vision.</p> <p>Publication and distribution of an HWDSB/community directory of key staff contacts on collaborative tables in the community.</p>	

HWDSB Information Session

Topic: Early Learning Report – April, 2012

The Early Learning Report reflects the Board's commitment to quality early learning programs and services as critical to long term outcomes related to student achievement and well-being. In collaboration with our community partners, the Early Learning Strategy responds to the changing landscape of child care and early learning underway in the Ministry of Education.

The attached report outlines the actions the Board has taken over the past year to move the system towards the new vision, particularly in terms of the following:

- implementation of the Full Day Kindergarten Program which is currently being provided for approximately 49% of our Kindergarten students,
- key messages for system leaders and capacity builders which provide the foundation for a shift in culture as identified in school-based outcomes; and,
- a new approach to extended day and child care in our schools aligned with the Ministry directions.

In 2013, the province of Ontario released a guiding document entitled the *Ontario Early Years Policy Framework*. The key areas of focus in this document include:

- Continue with the implementation of full-day kindergarten
- Create an effective approach to implementing Best Start Child and Family Centres
- Improve the delivery of speech and language services
- Stabilize and transform the child care system

The *Ontario Early Years Policy Framework* coupled with the functions of:

- Building Team
- Building Program
- Building Continuity
- Building Partnerships/Creating a Quality and Coordinated Early Learning and Care System

provide the framework for our *Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Early Learning Strategy* (Appendix B). At this stage, the strategy provides high level key messages for each of the functions and further defines the role of leaders and staff in shifting culture, understanding and ultimately action, related to early learning. Our annual action plan considers how we build capacity in each of the areas. It is worthy to note that as Full Day Kindergarten is implemented in new schools each year, the action plan will have some components that are repetitive, reflecting the beginning stage of implementation.

In terms of monitoring the impact of the new Full Day Kindergarten program we are pleased to present information regarding the promising initial scores in terms of student achievement as reported through EDI studies and in terms of parent and staff surveys in our own jurisdiction.



EXECUTIVE REPORT TO STANDING COMMITTEE

Name of Report: Early Learning Report

To: John Malloy, Director of Education

From: Executive Council

Date: April 22, 2013

Organizational Alignment

- **Strategic Direction:**
 - *Achievement Matters* – HWDSB will prepare all elementary students to be ready for success at the secondary school level
 - *Engagement Matters* – HWDSB will achieve high levels of student engagement in our schools, HWDSB will achieve high levels of parent engagement in our school communities, HWDSB will maintain and strengthen collaborative relationships with community partners

 - **Annual Operating Plan:**
 - *Knowing Our Students* – Tiered approach pre K – 2 literacy focus, equity lens
 - *Knowing Our Staff* – Professional learning for schools and departments within a responsive system, equity lens
 - *Knowing Our Parents and Community* – Tiered approach to parent engagement, continued development of the community engagement plan, equity lens

 - **Director's Performance Appraisal:**
 - Initial implementation of Early Learning Program
-

Overview/Context

In September, 2010 school boards began the implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten in schools across the province. This year Full-Day Kindergarten operated in 41 of our HWDSB schools, and as we move towards Year 4 implementation for September 2013/14, we are reorienting our system in alignment with the continuing movement of child care and early learning to the governance structure of the Ministry of Education.

The provincial journey to Early Learning began in November 2004, when the government of Ontario announced the Best Start initiative as their early learning and care strategy. The Best Start plan was the largest investment in child care and early childhood development in the province's history and reflected a new commitment to Ontario's children. The goal of Best Start is that children will be ready and eager to achieve success in school by the time they start grade one.

In June, 2012, the Ministry released a discussion paper *Modernizing Child Care in Ontario* designed to “begin a conversation that will help move Ontario towards a higher quality, accessible and coordinated early learning and care system for all children.” (2012: EL3, page 1)

In support of the government’s long-term vision and feedback received regarding *Modernizing Child Care*, a “Schools-First Child Care Capital Retrofit Policy” was put in place in 2012 articulating a greater role for school boards in the planning and coordinating of early years programs and services in our community. This involves looking at the possibility of relocating early years programs (for children from birth to age 3.8) from community spaces into unused school spaces. As a Board, we have been progressive in co-locating programs when possible but this policy will have us take a closer look at the other possibilities that may exist to extend our current co-location process into more of a partnership to benefit children and their families and to support better outcomes for children.

In addition, during 2012, the Ministry released a new Child Care Funding Formula and Funding Framework which speaks to how municipalities will fund child care programs.

Early in 2013, the Province of Ontario released the *Ontario Early Years Policy Framework* with the following vision:

Ontario’s children and families are supported by a system of responsive, high-quality, accessible and increasingly integrated early years programs and services that contribute to healthy child development today and a stronger future for tomorrow.

Ontario Early Years Policy Framework, page 2

This vision supports the work of the Hamilton community in making Hamilton the best place to raise a child. The guiding principles of the *Policy Framework* are:

- Programs and services are centred on the child and the family
- Programs and services are of high quality
- Strong partnerships are essential
- Programs and services are publicly accountable.

Ontario Early Years Policy Framework, page 7

The Policy Framework principles are consistent with the Guiding Principles for Early Learning in Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, approved by Trustees, in March, 2012:

- Early child development sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health.
- Partnerships with families and communities are vital in ensuring the ability of early childhood settings to meet the needs of young children.
- A planned curriculum supports early learning.
- High quality play-based activity (a platform for inquiry) is the primary means of learning in the early years.
- Knowledgeable and responsive early childhood instructors are essential facilitators in safe and engaging early learning environments.
- Diversity, equity and inclusion are prerequisites for optimal development in early learning environments.

The key areas of focus of the *Ontario Early Years Policy Framework* include:

- Continue with the implementation of full-day kindergarten
- Create an effective approach to implementing Best Start Child and Family Centres
- Improve the delivery of speech and language services
- Stabilize and transform the child care system

The *Ontario Early Years Policy Framework* coupled with the functions of:

- Building Team
- Building Program
- Building Continuity
- Building Partnerships/Creating a Quality and Coordinated Early Learning and Care System

provides the framework for our *Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Early Learning Strategy* (Appendix B). At this stage, the strategy provides high level key messages for each of the functions and further defines the role of the role of staff in shifting culture, understanding and ultimately action, related to early learning. Our annual action plan considers how we build capacity in each of the identified areas. It is worthy to note that as Full Day Kindergarten is implemented in new schools each year, the action plan will have some components that are repetitive, reflecting the beginning stage of implementation.

Boards of Education now have a greater role than ever before to work with our community partners, including the city of Hamilton, in shaping the early years landscape in our community and moving forward the vision of the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework. The provincial vision and integration of the child care system into the Ministry of Education aligns with our developing HWDSB Early Learning Strategy. Our Early Learning Strategy continues to define our role within the early learning sector and builds towards a “seamless” learning experience for students and parents. We will continue to address capacity building and a shifting culture by providing a clear vision and expectation related to early learning. We will continue to work to show families that our Board is aware of the years before school, values the role of the family and respects the role of parents in the education of their child, hopefully increasing the level of parent engagement early in a child’s academic career and sustaining that engagement as the child moves through their education.

What We Did

Guiding Principles and Key Messages

The implementation of the Full Day Kindergarten program has provided an opportunity to bring the philosophy and approach of the early learning system in the pre-school years from birth to age 3.8 into the formal school system, not only in the Kindergarten years, but also moving into Grade 1 and the early primary years. Last year Trustees approved, the Guiding Principles (Appendix A) to inform our view of the young child in the school system and the best practices in terms of maximizing student learning and achievement. This year we are working on a series of key messages (part of our Early Learning Strategy) for Board leaders (Appendix B) with intended outcomes to help our leaders with the work of system change in attitudes, programs, pedagogy and structures that will result in benefits for our students and families.

Ministry of Education Capacity Building

The Ministry continues to offer strong support to HWDSB in terms of deepening our understanding of Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) pedagogy and networking among boards in the south-west region of the province. Regional meetings held three times a year bring together the Program Leads. Other meetings bring board teams and our Early Learning childcare partners (e.g. Hamilton Consolidated Municipal System Management) together for professional learning, Ministry updates and discussion of topics of interest.

The professional learning around inquiry stance and play-based emergent curriculum in FDK has been enhanced and extended into the early primary years through the Ministry Early Primary Collaborative Inquiry involving K, Grade 1 and 2 teachers across various schools in our board and other boards.

In March, Executive Council participated in a day-long Ministry session designed to further develop our capacity related to Full Day Kindergarten, Extended Day and Child Care. In addition, each spring the Ministry continues to offer training for a representative group of our new to FDK administrative leaders as they prepare to implement FDK for the first time. Representative Kindergarten teachers, Grade 1 and Designated Early Childhood Educators also participate.

BUILDING TEAM

What We Did

The system and organizational work of implementing Full Day Kindergarten continues and becomes more complex as we implement Year 3 and plan for Year 4 and 5. .

Enrollment and Staffing

The 2012-13 school year saw 3279 students enrolled in Full Day Kindergarten, once again surpassing the enrolment allocation funded by the Ministry of 3016. The Ministry target was 49% of Kindergarten students enrolled in FDK for this year. Following September reorganization there were a total of 128 classes, some in which there were fewer than 16 students were staffed with a teacher only (11 classes), and there were also a limited number of teacher-only FDK/Grade 1 splits (4 classes).

Recruitment, Development and Labour Relations

The 2012-13 school year required our largest number of Early Childhood Educator hires to date and in an effort to ensure high quality candidates were being recruited and hired into these positions, we refined our hiring process to include a pre-screening of candidates. The first phase of selection was a resume review; candidates were then short-listed and provided with an opportunity to complete a written task. This task allowed us a chance to review candidates' skills and knowledge prior to the face-to-face interview which streamlined our process. Principals lead the interview process and were supported by members of the Early Learning Team.

Boards across the province are working through the challenge of an Early Childhood Educator shortage. We have not yet felt any impacts of this shortage when recruiting for full time positions but it has been a challenge to recruit and retain ECEs to our occasional list. The Early Learning Team continues to work with Human Resources to ensure we are able to meet the demand of coverage in classrooms.

We are in the process of developing a Performance Appraisal Process for our Designated Early Childhood Educators with the support of Human Resources.

We spent time negotiating a new Collective Agreement with our DECE local but the agreement was not ratified before the imposition of contracts. However, the work that was done in this round of negotiations will better inform the next round for a new Collective Agreement in 2014.

As part of the Year 1 FDK program evaluation process, Teachers and ECE's were also asked to complete a survey about their perceptions of the FDK program, their relationship with each other, roles and responsibilities as well as the benefits and challenges of the new program. The survey was sent out in June 2012 to the 22 teachers in the 11 HWDSB Year 1 FDK schools.

Early Learning and Child Care

Staff continue to participate on community committees and roundtables including The Best Start Network and the City of Hamilton Early Years Community Plan Steering Committee as our role within the early learning and child care sector is further defined by the Ministry of Education. This allows us to engage with our community partners as well have input into the approach that will be taken as the city implements the 2012-2015 Early Years Community Plan. We have established a joint HWDSB, HWCDSB, Best Start Network and CMSM (Consolidated Municipal Services Manager) Steering Committee who meet regularly to review the potential repurposing of existing child care spaces in schools in order to meet the needs of children from birth to age 3.8. In addition, city staff and HWDSB staff meet on a regular basis to discuss alignment between the Early Years Community Plan and Extended Day and Child Care in schools.

What We Learned

Enrolment and Staffing

The Ministry maximum of 30 students in any FDK class is challenging in all settings but particularly critical for students in our high needs schools. In order to mitigate the needs of some schools, some extra staffing was allocated to support students and staff. In future staffing models the classes in our high and moderate needs schools will benefit from a lower student to teacher ratio (equitable allocation of resources) that will still allow us to meet the Ministry required across the board average of 26.

Recruitment, Development and Labour Relations

From our surveys we learned that teachers and ECE's acknowledge the benefits and challenges of having two educators in the classroom, the importance of developing a relationship with open communication, working together to plan and teach, and the need for equality in the classroom. They also report on the benefits and challenges that students may experience from better reading, writing and social skills to being tired at the end of the day. Administration and consultants have recognized and continue to support educators with the development of their roles and relationships as well as with delivering the play-based program. We need to continue to build capacity with our FDK teams in the following areas: pedagogy, inquiry-based learning that incorporates numeracy and literacy concepts, use of technology in the classroom and we need to continue to develop and support teams in the classroom pairs and in their schools groups. Moving forward, our plans include continuing to survey FDK teams to gain a better understanding of their needs; develop materials to support new educators, principals and superintendents; continue building capacity in administrators; increase parent engagement in the program and create FDK cluster networks.

Early Learning and Child Care

The implementation of full day kindergarten in schools means that 4 and 5 year children are being removed from the child care system. This is resulting in unpredictability for child care providers. School boards are expected to play a role in the work required to transform and stabilize child care within the city. As a result, ongoing collaboration with the city, HWCDSB and our child care partners is essential as we move forward.

BUILDING PROGRAM

What We Did

Facilities, Capital and Equipment

Sometimes referred to as the "Third Teacher" (*The Third Teacher*, Capacity Building Series, July 2012, Student Achievement Division, Ontario Ministry of Education) the physical environment plays a role in setting the conditions for an effective teaching and learning environment.

Accommodation and Planning and Facilities Management continue to play a vital role in the planning of future FDK classrooms. The 2012-13 school year was slated for the largest increase in FDK enrolment (from 20 to 49%) and a large number of renovations and retrofits were required. In an effort to minimize the impact of renovations, some schools had students shifting classrooms over the March Break to allow for additional time for the renovations to be completed. Even so some schools were not completed until after the start of the 2012-13 school year.

Facilities Management and the Early Learning Team met with each principal where retrofits or renovations were taking place to ensure all stakeholders had an understanding of the scope of the work. The Early Learning Team met with any child care operator affected by the retrofits or renovations to ensure they were aware of the possible impacts on their programs and to offer our support in working with them to minimize those impacts whenever possible.

The Early Learning Team continued with its earlier practice of inventorying all classrooms to develop a gap analysis of materials and equipment. The tool used to develop this inventory is the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales which has been researched and validated internationally and is a commonly used tool in the early years sector.

The *Schools-First Child Care Retrofit Policy* released by the Ministry in November, 2012 looks to school boards to collaborate with their coterminus school board and the local CMSM on possible elementary school space that may be retrofitted and repurposed as child care space for infants and toddlers. This process is expected to be completed by August, 2015. HWDSB has received \$2,439,000 for this purpose. For year one, spaces at Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Cathy Wever have been identified as possible locations for conversion. A process to invite operators into the potential space is yet to be determined.

Capacity Building

The Early Learning Team was involved in a variety of levels of capacity building at multiple entry points including work with Superintendents of Student Achievement, Principal teams, Full Day Early Learning Teams as well as engaging in Community Outreach.

Superintendents were invited to shadow the Early Learning Team to examine the Full-Day Kindergarten classes within their cluster. Superintendents had an opportunity to learn more about: the environment as the third teacher; documenting children's learning for planning, acting, assessing and reviewing; role of team members; inquiry-based learning; 'prep' teacher engagement and instructional delivery models. This model included guided visits to Parenting and Family Literacy Centres (PFLCs) to increase understanding of the role that these Centres play in parent engagement and school readiness.

The Early Learning Team provided responsive support to school administrators on a range of topics including: understanding the role of Designated Early Childhood Educators, team responsibilities, Teaching and Learning Critical Pathways plans, pedagogy, child spaces vs. teacher spaces, extended-day programs, early learning and child care partnerships, child development, recruitment, classroom structures, and building retrofits and renovations.

Full-Day Kindergarten Early Learning Team Leads (Mary Elliott, Early Learning Consultant and Lisa Kiriakopoulos and Sarah Roarke of the Parent Engagement and Early Learning Department) provide mentoring to team members and individuals. They consult and collaborate in asset building in a strengths-based approach, problem solving within the classroom related to student behaviour, engagement, program philosophies, pedagogy, learning, reflective practice and environmental considerations. The Early Learning Team also continues to provide in-servicing related to interpersonal communication, group dynamics, observation and documentation, collaborative practices, digital communication, understanding the Full Day Kindergarten document, and support materials, as well as parent engagement strategies. Given the recent political climate, it has been more challenging to meet the professional development needs of the teachers and the early childhood educators as we have been unable to offer the normally popular after school sessions (such as the well-attended FDK Open Houses) and large scale networking sessions; instead most of the sessions have been at the school level during the instructional day allowing the Early Learning Team to better differentiate for specific teams depending on their needs.

Technology in FDK

Year 3 also saw continued development of the Early Learning Technology pilot. One of the main intents was to give teachers a tool to capture the learning in their room in dynamic ways, as the learning is taking place, and then allowing that data to be tagged, categorized and sorted for future use, reflection, and individualized planning. In Year 3 the ipad technology project was enhanced with the CLIC program, *Capture Learning in the Classroom (CLIC)*, which supports teachers and early childhood educators in capturing and organizing their observations of children at play, connects those observations in learning stories and curriculum outcomes and generates reports that will support planning and communication of learning. Although this software is new to FDK, it is a program based on a grassroots project developed at Affiliated Services for Children and Youth (ASCY) here in Hamilton called, Save the Day for Play. We are fortunate that it was a local program because many of our ECEs had been trained to use this program so transitioning to CLIC was smoother from their experiences.

Program Evaluation

Although the Ministry of Education is involved in a provincial evaluation of the FDK program, HWDSB felt it was important to collect local data to support our students, parents, teachers, and schools in this transition. During the 2010/11 and 2011/12 school years, E-BEST assisted with the evaluation of the FDK program (see Appendix D).

The November 2012 research results from the Peel Board regarding the implementation of FDK painted a positive picture of the implementation and early outcomes for children and these early results foreshadowed the data in our local studies which were conducted through EBEST as well as with the support of The City of Hamilton Best Start and the Offord Centre.

In March 2012 an information letter was sent home to parents describing the study and asking parents for permission for HWDSB to collect and use two types of data - student achievement data that is routinely collected by the classroom teacher (text level from the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and the score from the Yopp-

Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation). The second type information consisted of the teachers' and the early childhood educators' rating on the Early Developmental Instrument (EDI). The EDI assesses a child's school readiness in five general domains of child development:

- 1) physical health and well-being
- 2) social competence
- 3) emotional maturity
- 4) language and cognitive development
- 5) communication skills and general knowledge.

Of the 166 parents that provided permission for their child's data to be used, a total of 85 students were randomly chosen to be included and participate in this study.

In addition to student level data, parents of children who were selected to participate in the study were asked to complete a survey about their perceptions of the FDK program. This survey was sent home to parents in June. Parents were asked to complete the survey and return it to their child's classroom teacher or early childhood educator. Parents were made aware that their survey responses would be connected to the EDI results for their child.

The EDI component sampled students from teacher-DECE lead classrooms in Year 1 schools in both boards. From each class four students without special needs as well as all students identified as special needs were included in the study. The EDI was completed by both educators in March 2012. Results were standardized to control for differences in gender, age within cohort and neighbourhood socio-economic status. The study had a total sample of 160 students from both boards,

What We Learned

Facilities, Capital and Equipment

To date Ministry capital funding has not been adequate to address all the needs of purpose-built FDK rooms and the Board has had to make difficult decisions about how the renovations, retrofits and new builds would be implemented. In addition, the possibility of future ARCs must be considered in determining how best to utilize scarce Ministry capital funds in an effective way that supports long-term planning. Having experienced the delays and problems associated with a massive Year 3 scope of capital work, Facilities Management has learned from the problems and will be more proactive in ensuring that the construction process is aligned with school needs.

Given our experience with larger than expected enrolment and mobility, we have learned that it is necessary to order sufficient furniture and equipment to ensure that newly organized FDK classes following September reorganization can be ready to provide program to the students as soon as possible.

In support of the *Schools-First Child Care Capital Retrofit Policy* additional collaboration with HWCDSB, CMSM and Best Start is necessary to determine infant and toddler child care needs, possible spaces for conversion and possible child care providers.

Capacity Building

We have learned that we need to continue to build capacity with our FDK teams in the following areas: pedagogy, inquiry-based learning that incorporates numeracy and literacy concepts, use of technology in the classroom and we need to continue to develop and support teams in classroom pairs and in their schools groups.

Moving forward, our plans include surveying FDK teams to gain a better understanding of their needs; developing materials to support new educators, principals and superintendents; continuing to build capacity in administrators; increasing parent engagement in the program; and creating FDK cluster networks.

Technology in FDK

In three Year 1 pilot schools (Bennetto, Roxborough Park, and Pauline Johnson) we learned that the iPod touch had resulted in better programming, and had enhanced the educators ability to respond and differentiate to the individual needs of the students. EBEST is continuing work on this this project and a video is in production.

Educators begin with a basic understanding of how to collect multimedia (audio, video, photos) as a form of assessment documentation (privately, without a blog) and then move towards full implementation of iPad-as-Assessment-tool (replacing binders, and leveraging tools like CLIC to gather and collate data) and Blog-as-Engagement-tool (sharing the learning happening within the classroom with both the parent community, and with the rest of the HWDSB FDK teaching community). Taking documentation and sharing it online results in increased parent engagement. This sharing online with parents enables them to become partners in the learning process, and opens up the walls of the classroom so that parents can help reinforce concepts learned in class. The blog provides a space for teachers to engage with the parent community, and share the work happening within the class.

At <http://commons.hwdsb.on.ca/members/tro/lists/kindergarten-educators> we have a list of 68 FDK classroom blogs currently available and the vast majority of these teachers did not formerly have a web presence. These are teachers who are willing to share their practice with the rest of the HWDSB community. This number becomes larger when we account for the educators who do not wish to be "listed" within the Commons. This would include teachers who opted to keep their blogs private to parents through a password protected blog. The data shows that 80% of the respondents had not previously utilized iPads in their teaching practice and that 68% had not blogged previously.

It should be noted that the iPads provisioned through the FDK 21st Century Learning initiative were intended as an educator tool, not something for the students to utilize, but rather as a device to help capture the learning happening in the classroom. It is important to capitalize on concrete learning materials in a play/inquiry-based learning environment in Kindergarten and although there are a large number of Apps that target the early learning segment, the vast majority of them are simple, drill-based exercises, that don't lend themselves well to collaborating with peers, learning socially, or exploring open ended problems. We do, however, endorse the use of the device as a tool for the students to capture their own learning, but we do not want to see learning centres based around a particular app in FDK.

Program Evaluation

The implementation of the FDK program in our schools has allowed us to gather and analyze information about student achievement and to learn about teacher, ECE and parent experiences.

Due to not having a control group it is difficult to say with certainty whether the FDK program is significantly impacting student DRA text levels and Yopp-Singer scores more than a half-time program. However, findings from the EDI as documented in a City of Hamilton study (see Appendix D) do report improvements in language and cognitive development, communication skills and general knowledge and physical health and well-being. When looking at the five EDI domains and the "overall" measure of "Low on one or more domains", the expected level of vulnerability on an EDI domain is 10% and the expected level of vulnerability on ANY domain (i.e., one or more) is 25%. So in using those measures there was considerable improvement in Language & Cognitive Development (which is the academic skills area: literacy and numeracy) – from 14.0% to 4.2% – and in Communication Skills & General Knowledge – from 13.8% to 6.1%. The improvement in Physical Health & Well-Being wasn't *quite* large enough to overcome sampling size/random variation but it seems promising. On Social Competence, Emotional Maturity and Overall (one or more), there was no detectable difference. In another comparison, the data for the control group was broken down into its four component years (2002, 2005, 2008, and 2010). By breaking the years down, it was shown that the vulnerability on Physical Health & Well-Being and on Communication Skills & General Knowledge had, in fact, been drifting upwards. On those two domains, our sample shows a clear end to that drift. On Communication Skills & General Knowledge, the correction was sharp enough to be "statistically significant". On Physical Health & Well-Being, it was not strong enough to denote "significant improvement" but could be considered "promising". (See Appendix D)

Teachers, ECE's and parents continue to share their experiences with the new program. Parents also shared their observations of the Kindergarten classroom, their child's learnings while attending the program and how having their child in a full time learning environment impacted their personal activities. We will continue to support parents with their child's transition into Kindergarten as well as understanding the information provided about their child's development/progress.

BUILDING CONTINUITY

What We Did

Communication with Parents and the Community

Corporate Communication continues to be a strong partner of the Early Learning Team in helping to facilitate communication with both our parents and our community. Our website and other materials continue to be a great resource for parents to reference. In other sections of this report we discuss new FDK communication strategies with parents such as blogging and utilization of CLIC, an assessment/ documentation tool and the impact on parent engagement.

Our *Blue Bag Registration Initiative* is an important resource provided to families registering their child for Kindergarten. The bag includes the following: welcome letter from the Director, *Kindergarten Learn and Grow* pamphlet, a Hamilton Best Start *It's Time for School* Calendar along with important program information on Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, Ontario Early Years Centres and Eye See, Eye Learn. For full-day kindergarten schools, there is also Ministry information included so parents are able to better understand the full-day program.

In the spring schools offer parents a range of opportunities to make that important first connection with their child's school through the registration and orientation process. At many of our schools there is also a more hands-on inquiry-based learning experience for the children and their families to help parents understand how they can support their child's learning with some basic, affordable materials. Select schools will continue to offer the "Welcome to Kindergarten" program through The Learning Partnership. Similar to our internal programs, this program was developed to provide children and their families with resources and experiences to support a smooth transition to school.

Parents as Partners, is an engagement strategy for parents of children with special needs. It was first implemented in May of 2012. This six part workshop series begins by inviting the parents, in the spring prior to their child's school entry, to attend an evening session at Prince of Wales school where they learned about the kindergarten program from the perspective of engaging and learning for children with special needs. They then had the opportunity to visit and talk with the kindergarten educators.

Last year, HWDSB participated in a small scale parent survey connected to the Early Development Instrument (EDI) with students who had experienced two-years of FDK with 57 parents providing their perspective on Full-Day Kindergarten. With the support of E-BEST, we learned that approximately 70% of parents felt their children benefited either 'a lot' or 'more than expected' from the FDK program. Parents reported that with their children attending FDK, more than half the parents reported working to be easier and that they could spend more time with other family members. Many parents appreciated their children experiencing fewer transitions in their day.

Children with Special Needs

HWDSB and HWCDSB, in partnership with Integration Resources Hub, CCAC and McMaster Children's Hospital, share an exemplary school entry process for young children with complex special needs who will be going to school in September and their parents. It begins with a joint Parent Information evening in early winter and is followed up with individualized family meetings in March and April. The parents meet with their school principal and Learning Resource Teacher, community partners who have been significant in their child's preschool years and specialized school board supports who will be involved with them in the fall. In 2011-12 more than 100 such meetings were held, some resulting in cross-visits to childcare centres in the spring and/or to schools in the fall as Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) shared their knowledge and understanding of a given child and how s/he learns best.

Extended Day Programming

A key component of full-day kindergarten is the Extended Day Program. The Extended Day Program takes place outside of school hours (i.e. before and/or after school) and is intended to be complementary to the school day to provide a seamless program for children. The extended day program uses the same:

- pedagogy as the school day

- classroom space and
- shares resources and materials with the school day program.

Families now have a greater opportunity for their children to be in more seamless programs that strongly link education and care.

The extended day program is consistent with and complementary to the core day program in the following ways:

- All children benefit from consistent routines through the day program and the extended-day program. They will also have opportunities to help develop these routines with the Early Learning–Kindergarten team (e.g., routines for self-regulation at learning centres)
- All children benefit from extended periods of time in a play-based program to independently explore and consolidate learning throughout their day
- All children benefit from daily participation in activities that promote health, well-being, and active living (e.g., preparation of nutritious snacks, outdoor play, gross-motor activities)
- Families benefit from ongoing and regular communication with members of the Early Learning–Kindergarten team who are actively engaged with their child throughout the day.

*The Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program Extended Day Program,
Page 2, 3*

Each year, Boards of Education are required to complete a needs assessment at each full-day kindergarten school to determine the need for an extended day program. In our Board, sufficient demand equates to 20 students needing a program outside of school hours. Where there is sufficient demand, the Board must provide the program, either directly or through a third-party child care provider. HWDSB is also responsible for the quality of the program offered in the Kindergarten Extended Day Program.

In 2012/13, staff developed a framework for Extended Day Programming which is based upon the guiding principles of:

- Providing a seamless experience for children and families
- Providing a high quality program
- Reflecting education’s role in child care (i.e. extended day, stabilizing etc.)
- Alignment with The City of Hamilton/Best Start Network Early Years Community Plan

In an effort to work toward a more seamless model, we have been planning with the City of Hamilton and reviewing our model, and other models throughout the province, to see how we can improve this program in our Board.

Seamlessness is achieved in our model by having one provider for our K – 2 Extended Day Programming in all elementary schools (where there is viability/demand). This aligns with our K- 2 Literacy Strategy and provides for opportunities to further link classroom and extended experiences.

Seamlessness would also be achieved within neighbourhoods. As per *the Schools First Child Care Retrofit Policy*, where there is space, and demand, operators would be provided with the opportunity to relocate into classroom space for children from birth to age 3.8. Similarly, where there is demand, we would be seeking child care and after school programming partners for:

- Children in grades 3 – 5
- Children in grades 6 – 8 (with an Arts or Rec. focus)

Providers would provide programming for all schools (where there is sufficient demand) within the neighbourhood and would be provided the opportunity to provide programming in multiple neighbourhoods.

This Framework also serves to integrate other activities of the board such as Priority Schools programming, into a cohesive, aligned model for after school program delivery. (Appendix F)

What We Learned

Communication with Parents and the Community

Parents are usually highly engaged as their children enter kindergarten and we have learned that parents support the Full Day Kindergarten program for the education of their children and as a way of meeting family needs. The engagement continues through our Technology in FDK pilot with the provision of documentation through vehicles such as blogging.

Parents want to engage in their children's education and offering parents a range of methods to support their children's learning has proven successful in meeting more of their needs. Through formal and informal collection methods, parent feedback on the FDK program has been very positive. We have learned that by becoming part of a learning community with other interested stakeholders like our coterminous board and other regional boards, the city, the Ministry, researchers and educators that we as a system will grow more responsive, knowledgeable and effective in our practice.

Children with Special Needs

With Full-Day Kindergarten, we are seeing a higher number of children with special needs entering the school system at a younger age. This has increased the number of supports required directly in the classroom as well as through board support staff. Educators in the classrooms are expressing concern about these higher numbers and the implications to quality program with the large class sizes.

In a brief survey with kindergarten educators, we learned that when the educator is able to attend the early intake meetings in the spring or an intake meeting is set up prior to the child with special needs arriving at school; when professional reports are provided to the classroom educators; opportunities are provided for the classroom educators to observe the child in their early learning and care environment; specialized equipment and/or personnel are available to the child that first day of school, then the transition process is more seamless and there appears to be less adjustments needed as school staff can provide a personalized and responsive program for students.

Extended Day

Parents are requesting more service in schools to meet their families' needs outside of school hours. Through the survey process, we are able to establish a need but often when it comes time to register those families, program viability may decrease reducing the opportunity to start new programs for families. The Extended Day provider and the school staff need to work as a collaborative team. We need to identify operational, pedagogical and capacity building opportunities to begin to move towards a more seamless experience. Having multiple early learning and child care operators providing extended day programs, we are not able to provide a consistent program to children across the system. A move to a single provider for extended day in K to 2 also aligns with our K – 2 Literacy Strategy. This means a continued, but different role for all of our existing early learning and child care partners. We need to continue to collaborate with stakeholders as we move forward. The goal is to begin this shift in September, 2014 with the new structure in place in all schools by September, 2015.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS/CREATING A QUALITY AND COORDINATED EARLY LEARNING AND CARE SYSTEM

What We Did

Best Start Child and Family Centres

In 2009 Charles Pascal, Special Advisor to the Premier of Ontario on Early Learning, released a report "With Our Best Future in Mind" that made a number of recommendations including the development of Best Start Child and Family Centres. The provincial government has accepted Pascal's vision of Best Start Child and Family Centres and this vision includes having Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, Ontario Early Years Centres, Child Care/Family Resources Centres and Better Beginnings, Better Futures operating in a more seamless manner to

support families. The expected date for the change from these programs to Best Start Child and Family Centres is September 2014.

The implementation of Best Start Child and Family Centres will include establishing common governance structures, establishing a common mandate and identity, creating a core set of expectations, developing and maintaining partnerships to adapt services to meet local need, working with First Nation partners to build on existing programs, and developing strategies and resources that support parents in making decisions about services and supports for their children.

The Best Start Child and Family Centres will:

- provide families and caregivers with universally accessible programs, services, and resources in easily accessible locations, and will be supported by an easy-to-use provincial website;
- provide quality programming that supports play and inquiry-based learning opportunities for children, guided by the principles of the Early Learning Framework;
- deliver programs led by qualified staff teams that include at least one registered early childhood educator;
- provide access to information and referral to help families access screening, assessment, and other specialized services in the community as needed;
- offer programs that are flexible and adaptable to local community needs.

Ontario Early Years Policy Framework, page 16

This shift to Best Start Child and Family Centres has a direct impact on HWDSB as we are the operator of eight Parenting and Family Literacy Centres (PFLC). These programs are currently located at the following schools:

Adelaide Hoodless Memorial (city)	Bennetto Prince of Wales	Dr. Davey Queen Victoria	Lake Avenue Westwood
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During the 2011-2012 school year we had more than 20,000 visits from children from birth to six years of age. PFLC help prepare children for school and encourage parents to engage in their child's learning and they provide parents with the opportunity to become more familiar and comfortable in school settings which will support a smoother transition to school for the whole family.

Programs help build basic numeracy and literacy skills through an inquiry-based approach with the Program Facilitator modeling skills for parents and introducing parents to the *Early Learning for Every Child Today* (ELECT) document which acts as a curriculum document for these programs. Parents whose first language is not English can access books to read to their children in their first language. Other opportunities for families include linking with other families and having access to referral information should they need it to support their child's healthy growth and development.

This school year our Board was provided funding to add a new site in one of our schools. In consultation with stakeholders, including the Best Start Network, we chose to locate our newest program at Dr. Davey School in partnership with an existing early years program. This collaboration has not only provided increased opportunities for parents to play and learn with their children but can be seen as the beginning stages of a Best Start Child and Family Centre. We are in the early stages of bringing together the programs and services of a Parenting and Family Literacy Centre and an Ontario Early Years Centre. The development of this community hub has increased the opportunities for parents to access services and other resources they may need for their families and it will increase our connections to the school and help support the school with their school readiness efforts.

Improve the Delivery of Speech and Language Services

A partnership between the Best Start Network including the City of Hamilton, Early Words, McMaster Children's Hospital and Affiliated Services for Child and Youth occurred to explore the possibilities for further collaboration to transition students with special needs more seamlessly into FDK. Following the individualized family meetings that occurred in March and April, 21 children and their families were provided with the opportunity to be seen by an occupational therapist and/or physical therapist. Also, young children who were being supported by Early Words continued to receive services during their JK year and parents could now self-refer up to December 31 of their child's JK year.

Stabilizing and Transforming the Child Care System

September 2012 marked 49% of kindergarten age children in full-day kindergarten which means fewer children in the licensed sector child care. Through a consultation process, the Hamilton Best Start Network and the City of Hamilton have identified this as one of the challenges in the Early Years Community Plan and identified some recommendations to help manage the issue.

Challenge: Enrolment in full day kindergarten means there are fewer 4 and 5-year-olds in child care. This results in a loss of revenue from the less expensive care for older children, which has historically offset the cost of more expensive care for younger children. At the same time, there is overlap and sometimes inconsistent quality among organizations receiving public funding to provide child care services.

The City of Hamilton/Hamilton Best Start Network – Early Years Community Plan, 2012

Our ongoing collaboration with the CMSM (Consolidated Municipal Services Manager) and city staff helped to inform our extended day, child care and after school programming direction. Implementation will continue to be collaborative with attention being given to how the above noted challenge can be addressed and what HWDSB's role will be within that context. (Appendix G)

What We Learned

Early Learning and Child Care operators have expressed concern about the implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten and the loss of four and five year olds in their sector since the announcement of FDK. During the first two years of FDK, we had operators across the community share their concerns about the negative impacts on their organizations of FDK but this year there has been a larger number of operators expressing concern about the impact of four and five year olds moving out of their system and into the school system.

Typically, early learning and child care operators rely on the fees from older children to help offset the higher cost of programming for younger children in their programs. As four and five year olds move out of the early learning and child care sector, it has meant a reduction in revenue for early learning and child care operators and a destabilization to some operators.

The city of Hamilton just released results from five community consultation sessions completed in March 2013 (Appendix . Participants were asked to share their vision of the early sector in 2015 and these were some of the words used to describe that vision: sustainable, efficient, responsive to community needs, child and family centred, integrated, inclusive, accessible and quality.

As the early learning and child care community continues to see four and five year olds leave their sector to attend school on a full time basis the city's consultation process asked participants what the city's priorities should be for 2013 to stabilize the early learning and child care sector and these were the responses documented:

- Support planning, information and training for the early years sector during this transition period
- Reduce the subsidy wait list
- Review wage subsidy for early years staff
- Review subsidy per diems
- Support capital retrofits, repairs and maintenance required to transition operators to providing service to other age groups

Next Steps

As we continue to see Full-Day Kindergarten expand, we need to continue to collaborate with all key stakeholders in the early learning and child care sector to work as a partner in the transformation and stabilization of the early learning and child care sector. This includes planning regularly scheduled meetings with all stakeholders, as well as meeting with individual agencies, to ensure we are able to continue to offer a range of high quality programs and services to children and family before children begin school and once they are in school to offer these same high quality opportunities outside of all instructional periods. As a key partner in this planning, we want to ensure that families are able to access the programs and service in a convenient location with equitable access to families. Within this

context, we need to continue our community collaboration as a governance structure and vision is established for Best Start Child and Family Centres.

April 2013 – March 2014 Action Plan				
Essential Component	Strategies	Evidence	Implementation and Monitoring	Next Steps 2013-14
Development of an Early Learning Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School administration and staff developing a shared understanding and ownership over extended day and early learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of key messages for system leaders • Continued implementation of full-day kindergarten • Begin implementation of a new model of extended day and child care • Extended Day and Child Care Partners are viewed as an extension of the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messages developed and shared with Executive Council for review • Year 3 FDK in 41 schools • Information from FDK implementation studies and research provides direction for Early Learning Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to share key messages with system leaders and to provide opportunities to deepen understanding of expectations • Role Clarity within the teaching partnership in FDK • Collaborate with early learning and child care stakeholders on transformation and stabilization including opportunities to transform space via Schools-First Child Care Capital Retrofit Policy • Extended Day Programs are located in classrooms • Schools resources (e.g. books) are available in Extended Day Programs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with early learning partners to expand our understanding of early years learning in order to inform our strategy in support of creating seamless day and evidence-based developmental programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint professional development (i.e. child care and HWDSB, JK/SK teachers and ECEs) • Collaborative (HWDSB and partners) development of success criteria for seamless transitions and seamless day • Partner expertise to inform our work and build 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development offered by ASCY for FDK staff at both boards as well as child care staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued professional development utilizing the expertise of partners such as ASCY, universities, and colleges) • Meeting with partners to plan for transitions

		<p>capacity with staff for emergent curriculum, developmental stages, documentation of learning and parent engagement (i.e. ASCY, Colleges, Universities, Child Care Partners)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with stakeholders on Extended Day Programming Child Care and long term direction 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building capacity in the areas of effective pedagogy and engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiated learning strategies to support administrator capacity building in understanding , supporting and monitoring effective extended day and full-day kindergarten programs • Differentiated learning strategies to support teachers and ECE capacity building in understanding FDK pedagogy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall Early Learning Team visits to each FDK classroom to ascertain professional development needs of staff specific to that site • Release time for both teachers and DECEs provided for job-embedded networking and support to each school site • Consultant support for administrators on a variety of topics related to the implementation of FDK • PA Day session for DECEs January 2013 • Training for new FDK teachers and newly hired ECEs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training modules: Facilitating Literacy and Numeracy in FDK using inquiry and play based approaches • Training Modules: Team Building – communication, reciprocal engagement • Support for CLiC (Capturing Learning in the Classroom) and documentation capacity building • Facilitation of FDK visits for some administrators and Principal Learning Teams • Creation of a FDK Portal conference for Administrators and SOSAs • Building capacity with Instructional Coaches in FDK pedagogy • Survey FDK teams and principals to gauge responsiveness of Early Learning

				<p>program success in regards to implementation and sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of webinar training packages for continuous support of staff moving into new positions/roles – Superintendents, Principals, Educators • Promoting “The Commons” (for Educators, Families and Communities) and “The Portal” as a resource for Educators
<p>NEW COMPONENT FOR 2013-14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for the transition of Parenting and Family Literacy Centres (PFLC) to Best Start Child and Family Centres (September 2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with the provincial network of PFLC to advocate for school-based programs managed by school boards • Collaborate with the city and other stakeholders to develop the plan for our community based on the Ontario Early Learning Framework and Hamilton Early Years Community Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the progress at the Dr Davey/Beasley Child and Family Centre location and share with stakeholders • Continue training and development of PFLC to ensure best practice in programs • Provide support to principals to understand the importance and value of the early years and parent engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and act on provincial messages on the future direction of programs • Participate in Best Start Network and sub-committees of Network to support Board participation in the operation of PFLC • Provide opportunities for members of Executive Council to tour locations

Appendix A – HWDSB Guiding Principles for Early Learning

<i>Guiding Principles</i>	<i>Rationale</i>
Early child development sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health.	Early brain development is stimulated through experiences and interactions with responsive adults. Care and learning are inseparable concepts; a nurturing caring environment is an essential component of early learning
Partnerships with families and communities are vital in ensuring the ability of early childhood settings to meet the needs of young children.	Family engagement multiplies children’s opportunities for learning. Where parents/caregivers are involved in early childhood settings, children tend to have positive outcomes in primary grades and there are opportunities to communicate with, and connect families to, other community resources, including public health, primary health care, housing and specialized services.
A planned curriculum supports early learning.	Beginning with an informed understanding of what children are capable of learning and how they learn effectively, curriculum includes the organization of the physical space, materials and activities designed to encourage learning processes, skills and the acquisition of specific information. Goals support self-regulation (behaviour, emotion and attention), identity, social inclusion, health and well-being, language and thinking skills, and physical skills, as well as the foundation knowledge and concepts needed for literacy and numeracy. Planned <i>emergent</i> curriculum provides the structure and direction for early childhood professionals to support the development of capacities and skills while respecting a child’s interests and choices. Children are “learning how to learn” in the early childhood setting by constructing knowledge through physical activity, social interactions with others and their own active thinking.
High quality play-based activity (a platform for inquiry) is the primary means of learning in the early years.	As the primary mode of learning during the preschool and primary years, play engages children and promotes learning. High quality play is mediated by adults “play partners” who inject small amounts of focused direct instruction based on the needs of the child into daily play. Problems introduced into the environment engage children’s curiosity and allow them to apply problem-solving skills. Play is the platform for inquiry and exploration. It offers children practice in choosing, generating possibilities and taking risks. Children use language and thinking skills to compare and plan, problem-solve, negotiate and evaluate in pretend play, trying on a variety of roles and scenarios which facilitate perspective-taking and, later, abstract thought. The important contribution that high-quality play can make to children’s literacy, numeracy and inquiry skills in the early years is often misunderstood; abandoning play to have too strong a focus on formal instruction of isolated skills like learning symbols (letters, sounds, numbers), can reduce children’s literacy skills – as well as their numeracy and inquiry skills..
Knowledgeable and responsive early childhood instructors are essential facilitators in safe and engaging early learning environments	Early childhood practitioners are responsive to children, families and communities. They communicate to family members and caregivers how play experiences promote learning and optimal development. They respect that parents/families remain the experts on their own children. The FDK team of teacher and Early Childhood Educators operate as reflective practitioners, facilitating social and physical environments where children thrive. Their efforts makes curriculum meaningful when there are clear matches between a child’s current knowledge and interests and the opportunities provided for development and learning. Their emotionally warm and positive approach supports constructive behaviour and self-regulation. They enter play to build children’s competencies as they focus children’s observations, use language to describe events and ask questions that provoke thinking without taking command of the play
Diversity, equity and inclusion are prerequisites for optimal development in early learning environments	Early childhood settings can plan for meaningful engagement and equitable outcomes for all children by taking into account the differences each child and family brings to an early childhood setting. They and their families benefit most when they are fully included and when they feel that they belong. Children grow up with a strong sense of self in environments that promote attitudes, beliefs and values of equity and democracy and support their full participation (Bennett, 2004). Early childhood settings can be proactive in identifying strategies that will respect families’ diverse linguistic, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds and value this diversity as an asset that enriches the environment for everyone. Effective strategies begin by identifying the early learning and child care needs of families in their communities, and taking this information into account when planning the curriculum and pedagogy of the program keeping in mind program standards that reflect inclusion.

(Approved by Trustees in March 2012)

Appendix B – Early Learning Key Messages

Building Team

- Collaborative early childhood educator and teacher teams are important
- Communication and collaboration with child care partners at all levels (i.e. classroom, school and system) is essential
- Partnerships with families and communities are vital in ensuring the ability of early childhood settings to meet the needs of young children

Building Program

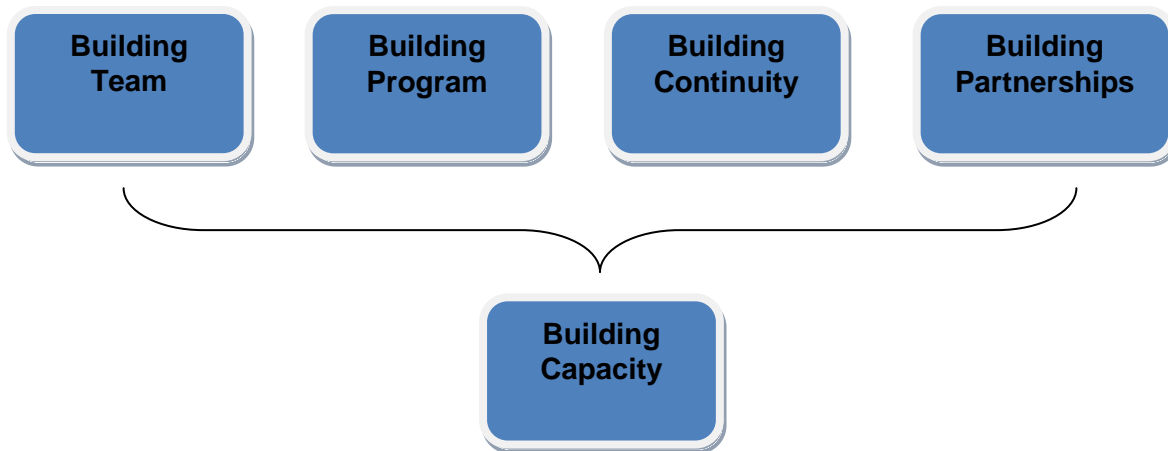
- Early childhood development sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behavior and growth
- Inquiry, as a learning stance, is required to ensure that high quality, play-based activity is the primary means of learning in the early years – inquiry and learning are synonymous
- Engaging parents, caregivers and families in the program impacts student learning
- Seamless program coherence between the core day and extended day is important

Building Continuity

- Planning and supporting all children and families to ensure smooth and successful transitions (including Grade 1) is essential
- Seamless experiences for children and families are important
- Schools must work with early learning partners, within and external to the school, to look for opportunities for collaboration and shared understanding

Building Partnerships/Creating a Quality and Coordinated Early Learning and Care System

- Collaboration with early learning partners to support system transformation is required



Early Learning Strategy				
<p>Director – sets direction, monthly principal meetings, Executive Council</p>	<p>Superintendents - reinforcing messages with principals, taking actions to model appropriate stances, monitor key aspects of implementation, promote integration of services</p>	<p>Principals – understand, implement and model key messages, classroom visits and support to staff, working with community partners to promote seamless transitions and integration of services</p>	<p>Central Support Staff – understand key messages, develop responsive strategies to support administrators and teaching staff in implementation of FDK, work with community partners to integrate services and professional development where possible</p>	<p>Expected School Staff Outcomes</p>
Building Team				
<p>KEY MESSAGE -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Collaborative early childhood educator and teacher teams are important</i> 				
<p>KEY MESSAGE –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Communication and collaboration with child care partners at all levels (i.e. classroom, school and system) are essential</i> • <i>Partnerships with families and communities are vital in ensuring the ability of early childhood settings to meet the needs of young children</i> 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Support The Early Learning Leadership Team ❖ Visiting FDK classrooms when in FDK sites and speaking to the K teams ❖ Visiting PFLCs and engaging staff ❖ Visiting on-site partner programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Participating in FDK learning teams in schools ❖ Visit FDK classrooms, PFLCs and child care programs and dialogue with FDK teams, child care operators and parents when in schools ❖ Support the work of the Early Learning Leadership Team in schools to create strong collaborative teams in FDK ❖ Encourage principals to reflect on their implementation of the Key Messages in SIP visits and during PLTs, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Collaborate with educator teams ❖ Support conflict resolution/shared solutions ❖ Develop mentorship/ coaching strategies to support the teams forming strong collaborative partnerships ❖ Utilize the resources of the Early Learning Leadership Team (human and material resources) to work with teams ❖ Support differentiated professional learning opportunities for staff and themselves ❖ Communicate and collaborate with child care partners to support early learners ❖ Work with PFLC staff as part of the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Collaborate to provide strong, responsive support to FDK learning teams ❖ Provide resources to support administrators in developing strong FDK teams and for visiting FDK classrooms ❖ Support conflict resolution/shared solutions in terms of programming ❖ Implement coaching strategies ❖ Learn with and support the Early Learning Leadership Team ❖ Provide differentiated professional learning opportunities ❖ Learn from and with child care partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ FDK teams operate as collaborative partners utilizing their diverse training and expertise to meet the needs of young children ❖ FDK teams learn together through collaborative inquiry ❖ FDK teams learn from and with community partners in child care and PFLC staff ❖ FDK teams work in a seamless way with Extended Day and Child Care partners ❖ FDK teams encourage and seek parent voice

Building Program

KEY MESSAGE -

- *Early child development sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and growth*

KEY MESSAGE -

- *Inquiry as a learning stance is required to ensure that high quality play-based activity is the primary means of learning in the early years – inquiry and play are synonymous*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Taking opportunities in FDK classroom visits to observe play-based learning approaches in operation and to note the educators efforts at making children’s thinking and learning visible (i.e. documentation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Discuss implementation of FDK, PFLCs, liaison with early learning organizations and child care operators during school visits ❖ Make FDK implementation a priority for SIP visits ❖ Taking opportunities in FDK classroom visits to observe play-based learning approaches in operation and note the educators efforts at making children’s thinking and learning visible (i.e. documentation) ❖ Take opportunities to discuss play-based programming with FDK teams and to participate in FDK learning teams, noting how literacy and numeracy are embedded during the day ❖ Support PLTs in their exploration and support of FDK implementation ❖ Be aware of the “look fors” for an exemplary FD ❖ Encourage principals to make connections with coop and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Promote and implement the key messages ❖ Encourage FDK teams to explore and enhance inquiry as a learning stance ❖ Support staff in enriching learning environments (indoors/outdoors) ❖ Expect the FDK team to embed literacy and numeracy throughout the day ❖ Expect the kindergarten team to assess continuously and through documentation make children’s thinking and learning visible ❖ Offer and participate in differentiated professional learning opportunities ❖ Ensure that student voice is valued by making what students say as part of the teaching and learning process/pedagogy ❖ Help the FDK team explore and validate the educator’s and student’s roles in a play-based, inquiry learning environment ❖ Collaborate with the Extended Day provider around the curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Understand and support the consistent key messages ❖ Create resources to support administrators, Principal Learning Teams and teacher learning teams, in understanding the “look fors” for an exemplary FDK program ❖ Help administrators and FDK teams understand Inquiry as a learning stance ❖ Provide support to administrators in understanding FDK TLC ❖ Provide support to administrators in understanding their role related to Extended Day and Child Care ❖ Provide support to assist in Enriching learning environments (indoors/outdoors) ❖ Demonstrate and model the embedding of literacy and numeracy throughout the day ❖ Support/coach assessment for learning/documentation of learning (making learning visible) and next steps in responding to children’s needs ❖ Support the appropriate use of technology ❖ Provide differentiated professional learning opportunities ❖ Connect with other learning organizations, initiatives and existing structures that support professional development in the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ FDK teams are familiar with and deeply understand the FDK pedagogy ❖ FDK teams use inquiry as a learning stance ❖ FDK environments reflect the optimum learning conditions for children ❖ Literacy and numeracy are embedded throughout the day in natural ways ❖ FDK teams use documentation to “make learning visible” and to assess the next steps for learning ❖ Technology is used to engage and enhance children’s learning; support quality assessment practices and engage parents in their child’s progress ❖ A variety of learning organizations and opportunities are provided to support the learning needs of FDK teams and board other personnel connected with early learning ❖ Children learn through a play-based approach in which the child takes a leading role in the inquiry supported by the educator in a variety of roles (play participant, questioner, prompter, facilitator, etc.)
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	<p>ECE development programs in community college and high schools to provide support to classrooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Provide promising practice guidance in using other school personnel (e.g. prep coverage) and volunteers to support FDK ❖ 	<p>implementation and opportunities for seamlessness</p>	<p>area of early learning professional development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Provide opportunities for the FDK teams to explore the educator's and student's role in a play-based, inquiry learning environment 	
<p>KEY MESSAGE -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Engaging parents, caregivers and families in the program impacts student learning</i> • <i>Seamless program coherence between the core day and extended day is important</i> 				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Encourage principals to connect with the parents and caregivers to gather their feedback and suggestions ❖ Support the monitoring of the extended day program coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ensure that FDK team is engaging parents, caregivers and families – explore possibility of programs such as the Family Path ❖ “Own” before and after school/extended day programs and create opportunities for developing coherence between the before/after school program and the core day personnel and programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Provide support and strategies for engaging parents, caregivers and families ❖ Provide support to administrators and the system to monitor and ensure coherence between the before/after school program and the core day ❖ Support school staff in shifting culture, understanding and action related to Extended Day and Child Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Parents, caregivers and families are engaged in their children's learning in a variety of ways (e.g. technology, classroom visits, conferences) ❖ Coherence between the extended program and the core program is monitored appropriately ❖ Classroom environment and resources during Extended Day match the school day experience ❖ Ongoing collaboration between Extended Day and school day educator teams

Building Continuity

KEY MESSAGE:

- *Planning and supporting all children and families to ensure smooth and successful transitions (including Grade 1) is essential*
- *Seamless experiences for children and families are important*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ SIP visits monitor planning and implementation of transition to school practices and programs ❖ Include Transitions to Grade One and connections across the early learning and primary programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Work with school staff and partners to support smooth transitions/entry to school processes for ALL children ❖ Extend transition planning to Grade One and make connections across the early learning and primary programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Provide training and support for school administrators and teaching staff to ensure a smooth transition/entry to school process ❖ Provide opportunities and suggestions for schools in moving the philosophy of FDK into the early primary grades with smooth transitions and connections across the early learning and primary programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Administrators, FDK teams, Extended Day, and other teaching staff collaborate to ensure quality transitions ❖ Parent satisfaction with transition processes ❖ FDK philosophy and approach impacts early primary classroom teachers to ensure quality transitions to Grade 1 and 2
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KEY MESSAGE:

- *Schools must work with early learning partners, within and external to the school, to look for opportunities for collaboration and shared understanding*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Assist schools in implementing shared space with early learning partners ❖ Support joint professional learning opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Make connections to EDU & school board priorities (e.g., EPCI, SWST; BIPSA; Leadership initiatives and mentoring, etc.) ❖ Ensure that child care partners have access to shared space, where applicable and promote understanding of the importance of these partnerships with school staff ❖ Take advantage of opportunities to build shared understanding (e.g., planning time teachers, child care partners etc.) ❖ Point out and promote links to other early learning and care initiatives (Best Start Networks) ❖ Use the school newsletter/other vehicles to share information about 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Make connections for staff to EDU & school board priorities (e.g., EPCI, SWST; BIPSA; Leadership initiatives and mentoring, etc) ❖ Help staff develop the understanding of the importance of shared space and promote relationships that support the collaboration required in shared space ❖ Encourage and participate in opportunities to build shared understanding (e.g., planning time teachers, child care partners etc.) ❖ Link to other early learning and care initiatives (Best Start Networks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Shared space is implemented in a positive and collaborative way between partners ❖ Child care, PFLC , teaching staff and other personnel involved in early learning (e.g. OEYC) see themselves as partners in the implementation of early learning by sharing knowledge, resources and spaces and promoting their partners to the wider parent community ❖ Joint professional learning opportunities are developed , promoted and attended
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		early learning services in the community and how to access and utilize them		
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Building Partnerships / Creating a Quality and Coordinated Early Learning and Care System

KEY MESSAGE:

- *Collaboration with early learning partners to support system transformation is required*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Involvement in Best Start Network and other community planning tables ❖ Planning with CMSMs/DSAABs and coterminous school boards (including Schools-First Child Care Capital Retrofit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Encourage principals and teachers to understand and support system transformation through discussions at SIP visits and other learning opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Collaborate fully in any work that involves the school in system transformation: ❖ Communicate effectively with all partners and clients ❖ Encourage child care connections where available ❖ Model and encourage the importance of family engagement ❖ Plan and support <i>all</i> children to ensure smooth, successful transitions ❖ Develop partnerships with community service agencies ❖ Model and promote Involvement in child care and community planning tables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Understand the vision of system transformation and communicate the key messages ❖ Communicate effectively with all partners and clients ❖ Promote the importance of and strategies for Family Engagement ❖ Planning and supporting <i>all</i> children to ensure smooth, successful transitions ❖ Encourage community service agency partnerships ❖ Involvement in Best Start Network and other community planning tables ❖ Planning with CMSMs/DSAABs and coterminous school boards (including Schools-First Child Care Capital Retrofit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ HWDSB personnel are actively involved as partners on community planning tables at all levels ❖ School staff understand , support and promote system transformation ❖ School staff communicate more effectively with child care and early learning partners with shared messages and understanding ❖ School staff communicate with clients more effectively ❖ Parent/ family engagement in connection with the early years is maintained and enhanced as children move into the school system ❖ Transitions for children are seamless and supported ❖ Services for children are coordinated and continued as children move into the school system ❖ Spaces in schools are utilized to support system transformation (Schools First Child Care Retrofit)
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RESEARCH

- Charles Pascal http://www.ontario.ca/ontprodconsume/groups/content/@onca/@initiatives/documents/document/ont06_018899.pdf
 Fraser Mustard <http://earlyyearsstudy.ca/en/report/download-early-years-study-3/>
 Early Learning for Every Child Today
 ❖ http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/documents/topics/earlychildhood/early_learning_for_every_child_today.pdf

Appendix C – Three Years of Implementation – What We Did

MINISTRY CONNECTIONS : interactions/support with or by Ministry of Education for Full Day Kindergarten or Child Care issues	
2012-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry Collaboration Meetings – Program Leads Meeting (London West) and liaison/collaboration with Early Learning Partners (CMSM, child care, etc.) ▪ Early Primary Collaborative Project – A Ministry initiative to support Full Day Kindergarten teams (as well as other grades in the primary division) as they explore a topic in depth. This year the focus has been how to incorporate descriptive feedback in the classroom. ▪ Ministry training for Board and administrative teams ▪ Spring Training (for new and existing FDK administrators and Board teams, teacher and DECE representatives)
2011-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry Collaboration Meetings – Program Leads Meeting (London West) and liaison/collaboration with Early Learning Partners (CMSM, child care, etc.) • Collaboration with Boards within London West region (e.g. FDK/1 splits) • Early Primary Collaborative Project • Ministry consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ with Full Day Kindergarten teams around the Growing Success document ✓ feedback on the draft curriculum involving Full Day Kindergarten stakeholders ✓ Full Day Kindergarten parents involved in Ministry feedback process • Ministry invitation to showcase exemplary skills and knowledge of pedagogy and participate in video recorded sessions for future use in training • Ministry training (May – full day) for new and existing FDK administrators and Board teams, teacher and DECE representatives
2010-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry Early Primary Collaborative Project • Ministry training and feedback sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Early Learning Program Draft overview – Ministry hosted ✓ Curriculum Capacity Building and Relationship training in London ✓ Ministry Summer voluntary Ministry training sessions (x2) ✓ Fall training ½ day with Ministry representation including training in early identification • Liaison with Early Learning Partners (child care) • Consultation for Full Day Kindergarten site selection under direction of Ministry design process

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING – supporting the understanding of and implementation of Full Day Kindergarten and the Early Years Strategy

2012-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of key messages for leadership groups to support the Early Years Strategy • Professional learning is focused at the school level where the Early Learning team works with administrators and FDK educators on job-embedded team learning. • Training is also provided at multiple entry points for the following groups: Superintendents of Student Achievement, Principals (large group and smaller Principal learning Teams), Full Day Early Learning Teams, Community Outreach <p><u>Superintendents of Student Achievement</u></p> <p>Following the development of the key messages for Early Learning and a learning session for Executive Council, Superintendents were invited to shadow the Full Day Kindergarten Leads to examine the Full Day Kindergarten class/es within their cluster and at times, other clusters, in areas of: Physical environment, Documentation, Literacy, Aesthetics, Team Roles, Inquiry Based Learning, ‘Prep’ Teacher engagement, Instructional Delivery Modes. SOSAs will be able to review and reinforce the key messages and expectations with all principals in their clusters for 2013-14.</p> <p><u>Principal Teams:</u></p> <p>Principals of FDK classes engage with Full Day Kindergarten Leads to collaborate on best practices, understanding the role of Designated Early Childhood Educators, team responsibilities, Teaching and Learning Critical Pathways plans. Principals of Incoming Full Day Kindergarten are engaged in conversations around Pedagogy, Child Spaces vs. Teacher Spaces, Extended Day Programs, Child Care Partnerships, Child Development, Role of Designated Early Childhood Education, hiring timelines,</p>
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	<p>classroom structures, and possible renovations/builds. Some Principal Learning Teams are focussing on FDK implementation in their PLT time by visiting sites and engaging with the members of the Early learning Team as well as teachers and DECEs.</p> <p><u>Full Day Kindergarten Teams</u></p> <p>Full Day Kindergarten Early Learning Team Leads provide mentoring to team members and individuals, asset building in a strengths-based approach, problem solving within the classroom related to student behaviour, engagement, program philosophies, pedagogy, learning, reflective practice and environmental considerations. Early Learning Team Leads provide team in-servicing related to interpersonal communication, group dynamics, observation and documentation, collaborative practices, digital communication, understanding the Full Day Kindergarten document, and supportive materials, as well as parent engagement strategies.</p> <p>Teaching Learning Critical Pathway consultations: Meeting with Kindergarten Teachers to plan an assessment cycle using Learning Goals and Success Criteria based on the Full Day - Early Learning Kindergarten Program</p> <p>Print and Digital Resources provided to teams – Full Day Kindergarten (Ministry), Full Day Kindergarten Extended Day (Ministry), Thinking it Through (ETFO), Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ASCY) Resources, Stuart Shankar book – Calm, Alert and Learning, and Explorations, Overview of CLIC (Capturing Learning in the Classroom) (Capturing Learning in the Classroom)</p> <p><u>Community Outreach</u></p> <p>Early Learning Team Leads participate in community projects, events and belong to various committees within the Hamilton Wentworth community. Through reciprocal sharing, Hamilton Wentworth District School Board acts as a partner in collaborative learning practices with the community identifying gaps in services, community issues, networking possibilities, goals setting, problem solving. A list of these community groups is listed in the “Community” section.</p> <p>Professional Learning/ Staff Development offered in 2012-2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-servicing spring – Overview of Full Day Kindergarten Pedagogy, Teacher/Designated Early Childhood Educator team • Designated Early Childhood Educator Summer Training – ABC/123 • Summer Institute – half day courses offered on the following topics: Observation, Documentation, Play-based Learning, Learning environment, Self-regulation • Release time as a school Full Day Kindergarten team for tailored Professional Development facilitated by Early Learning Team • Mentoring Designated Early Childhood Educators • Roots of Empathy Training and Implementation – A proactive program aimed at reducing bullying and fostering empathy. It involves the training of a facilitator, a parent and baby partner, and a teacher. It is a proscriptive program carried out over the duration of a school year. • New Teacher Inductee Program • Affiliated Services for Children and Youth led networks in development • Early Words bridging to December for student support • ½ day PD Event for all Designated Early Childhood Educator's
<p>2011-12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of in-school resources including <i>Kindergarten Teachers Resource Book</i> (Nelson), <i>Math Makes Sense</i> (Pearson), <i>Nelson Mathematics Kindergarten</i>, <i>Let's Talk About it</i> (Mondo), <i>Sails Shared Reading Posters</i>, <i>Coco Writes</i> • Capacity building meetings – <i>Thinking it Through</i> (ETFO) purchased as a support – cross cluster planning • Designated Early Childhood Educator Summer Training • Roots of Empathy Training and Implementation • New Teacher Inductee Program • After-school drop-in networking sessions • Open Houses for teaching team collaboration - Open houses utilized as a training opportunity for Full Day Kindergarten teams • Open-Space Networking Sessions • SK/1 In-service – Ontario Curriculum Expectations, and Combined Grade Document – Ministry • SK/1 attended PD session at Thames Valley District School Board • Addressing broader Early Learning Child Care community concerns through joint PD sessions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Day Kindergarten teams released ½ days for planning and reflection depending on need • Pedagogy over view with Literacy Improvement Project Teacher and Math Facilitator • Principal In-service (OLM) • Teaching Learning Critical Pathway consultations • Board Leads and Principal Sessions for Full Day Kindergarten draft and Extended Day program – 3 days (Day 1: Principals and Administrator, Day 2 & 3: Teachers/Designated Early Childhood Educators)
2010-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated Early Childhood Educator Summer Training • Roots of Empathy Training and Implementation • New Teacher Inductee Program • After-school drop-in networking sessions • Open Houses for teaching team collaboration • Affiliated Services for Children and Youth consultations to classrooms to evaluate the environment • 4 Teacher/Designated Early Childhood Educator release days to support planning and networking • Affiliated Services for Children and Youth days for whole group sessions • Designated Early Childhood Educator orientation • Networking sessions • Classroom inter-visitation occurs • Visit to Nipissing to review model Full Day Kindergarten classroom • Networking with co-terminus boards – Full Day Kindergarten teams • Karen Callahan – at Charles Strut – Documentation in the K classroom, • Teaching Learning Critical Pathway consultations • Full Day Kindergarten session with Teachers, Early Childhood Education and Admin. together for the first time – team building, Full Day Kindergarten environments
SYSTEMS and ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT supporting program facilitation	
2012-13	<p><u>Planning for FDK implementation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning with finance, facilities, partners and stakeholders – Year 3, 4 & 5 <p><u>Materials and Equipment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing with Inventory Gap analysis for all Year 4 schools (existing Full Day Kindergarten classrooms and future classrooms) for appropriateness and relation to Full Day Kindergarten pedagogy – furniture, K equipment, computer and printer, iPods or pads for CLIC • Reorganization analysis and gap recovery for Year 1-3 schools (new and decommissioned classes) <p><u>Registration Process</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Bag Registration Initiative – when families register their child for Kindergarten they receive a free blue cloth bag with many resources included inside (pamphlets advertising community partnerships like Ontario Early Years Centres, Parent and Family Literacy Centres, Eye See...Eye Learn) • Revision of Early Intervention Process (Assessment Timeline) including drop-in session • Spring Intake Process for children with Special Needs <p><u>Human Resources processes:</u> recruitment and hiring of educators, contract issues, job action by other Board personnel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated Early Childhood Educator hiring in conjunction with Human Resources • Expansion of Occasional Designated Early Childhood Educator's Supply list • Designated Early Childhood Educator Contract Negotiations • Performance Appraisal for Designated Early Childhood Educators – in development • Negotiate workload issues with caretaking staff in order to service diverse demands within Full Day Kindergarten classrooms • Recognize the provincial shortage of Early Childhood Educators and provide data to College and University recruitment strategies <p><u>Extended Day</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended Day Surveys –in order to ascertain service need for before and after school care as per provincial mandate. • Liaison with Child Care partners to provide Extended Day Programs where appropriate. <p><u>Facilities</u></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities – Renovation/addition collaboration related to schools receiving Full Day Kindergarten • Accommodation & Planning – responding to planning requirements related to Full Day Kindergarten operation <p><u>Child Care Needs and Board Planning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidated Municipal Service Manager – Hamilton – Early Learning Team Leads collaboration with City of Hamilton to in address child care needs related to impact of Full Day Kindergarten
2011-12	<p><u>Planning for FDK implementation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning with finance, facilities, partners and stakeholders – Year 3, 4 & 5 <p><u>Materials and Equipment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of current Inventory existing in Full Day Kindergarten classrooms and future classrooms for appropriateness and relation to Full Day Kindergarten pedagogy. Supplies are provided where gaps exist. • Respond to School Re-organization - analysis and gap recovery <p><u>Extended Day</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended Day Surveys • Liaison with Child Care partners to provide Extended Day Programs where appropriate. <p><u>Registration</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Bag Registration Initiative • Spring Intake Process for children with special needs • Partnership with Coordinated Care Access for Child Care and McMaster Hospital around exemplary school entry process for special education children • Recognition that there is an increasing representation of children entering with diverse special needs enrolling in the Full Day Kindergarten programs. <p><u>Human Resources processes:</u> recruitment and hiring of educators, contract issues, job action by other Board personnel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated Early Childhood Educator hiring in conjunction with Human Resources • Expansion of Occasional Designated Early Childhood Educator's Supply list • Designated Early Childhood Educator Contract Negotiations • Negotiate workload issues with caretaking staff in order to service diverse demands within Full Day Kindergarten classrooms • Action response to accommodate class size grievance • Recognize the provincial shortage of Early Childhood Education's and provide data to College and University recruitment strategies <p><u>Facilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities – Collaboration with Facilities Management developing board standards around design specifications; framework for decision-making regarding additions • Renovation/addition collaboration related to schools receiving Full Day Kindergarten
2010-11	<p><u>Planning for FDK implementation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning with finance, facilities, partners and stakeholders – Year 3, 4 & 5 • Develop communication plan for Year 2 in collaboration with corporate communications and finance (extended day) <p><u>Registration Process</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Bag Registration Initiative • Spring Intake Process for children with Special Needs • Review of supports for children with special needs both children in the program and those entering <p><u>Extended Day</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended Day Surveys • Liaison with Child Care partners to provide Extended Day Programs where appropriate. <p><u>Human Resources processes:</u> recruitment and hiring of educators, contract issues, job action by other Board personnel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated Early Childhood Educator hiring in conjunction with Human Resources • Occasional Designated Early Childhood Educator's Supply list • Negotiate workload issues with caretaking staff in order to service diverse demands within Full Day Kindergarten classrooms • Designated Early Childhood Educator Application Review <p><u>Facilities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities – Collaboration on Educational Design Standards for FDK • Renovation/addition collaboration related to schools receiving Full Day Kindergarten

HWDSB's Full Day Kindergarten Program

Evaluation Findings for the 2011/12 School Year

Responsibility:

Krys Croxall, Superintendent of Student Achievement

Report by:

Trisha Woehrle (Teacher Research Consultant, E-BEST)



January 2013



Introduction

In September 2010, the Province of Ontario began phasing in full day Kindergarten (FDK) for four and five year old students with the plan that all elementary schools in Hamilton will offer the program by September 2014. Unique to the full day early learning Kindergarten program is the teaching model that includes teachers and early childhood educators (ECEs) in the classroom. These teaching professionals work together to plan and facilitate programming. The teaching model follows a play-based curriculum which is a child-centred, developmentally appropriate approach that considers the whole child and is intended to provide the foundations for a more positive trajectory for learning.

In September 2011, 11 HWDSB schools (called Year 1 schools) offered the full day learning program. In September 2012, five additional schools were included. Although the Ministry of Education is involved in a provincial evaluation of the FDK program, HWDSB felt it was important to collect local data to support our students, parents, teachers, and schools in this transition. During the 2010/11 and 2011/12 school years, E-BEST assisted with the evaluation of the FDK program. A description of the study and findings for the 2010/11 school year are available in a separate report. This report will focus on the evaluation plan and findings for the 2011/12 school year.

Evaluation Plan

An information letter was sent home to parents in March 2012 describing the study and asking parents for permission for HWDSB to collect and use two types of data. The first type of data was student achievement data that is routinely collected by the classroom teacher. The information included the text level from the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and the score from the Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation.

- *The DRA is the early reading assessment used by the HWDSB. It is individually administered to students in the primary and junior grades. Within HWDSB, the reading text level for all primary students is collected. There are a total of 18 levels which range from A- to level 38. Spring benchmarks have been established for each grade. The benchmark at the end of JK is an A or 1 and the benchmark at the end of SK is a level 4.*

- *The Yopp-Singer was designed to be used with English speaking Kindergarten students. This 22-item test is individually administered and requires five to ten minutes to complete. This test measures a students' ability to orally segment the phonemes in a word. Students who segment all or nearly all of the items correctly may be considered phonemically aware. Students who correctly segment some items display emerging phonemic awareness. Students who are able to segment only a few items or none at all lack appropriate levels of phonemic awareness. Without intervention, those students scoring very low are likely to experience difficulty with reading and spelling (Yopp, 1995b). In HWDSB, children scoring below 12 are followed and the assessment re-administered to ensure that appropriate gains are made.*

The second type information consisted of the teachers' and/or ECEs' rating on the Early Developmental Instrument (EDI). The EDI assesses a child's school readiness in five general domains of child development: 1) physical health and well-being, 2) social competence, 3) emotional maturity 4) language and cognitive development, and 5) communication skills and general knowledge.

Of the 166 parents that provided permission for their child's data to be used, a total of 85 students were randomly chosen to be included and participate in this study.

In addition to student level data, parents of children who were selected to participate in the study were asked to complete a survey about their perceptions of the FDK program. This survey was sent home to

parents in June. Parents were asked to complete the survey and return it to their child's classroom teacher. Parents were made aware that their survey responses would be connected to the EDI results for their child.

Teachers and ECE's were also asked to complete a survey about their perceptions of the FDK program, their relationship with each other, roles and responsibilities as well as the benefits and challenges of the new program. The survey was sent out in June 2012 to the 22 teachers in the 11 HWDSB Year 1 FDK schools.

Findings

This section will present the student achievement data (DRA and Yopp-Singer) routinely collected by the classroom teacher, the results of the EDI and a summary of the teacher, ECE and parent survey responses.

Classroom Student Achievement Data

The Winter and Spring DRA text levels of the small sample of students are presented in Table 1. The Winter DRA text levels were available for 83 out of the 85 students while the Spring text levels were available for 78 students. HWDSB's Spring benchmark for SK is level 4. A total of 19 (22%) students had already met the Spring benchmark during the Winter administration of the DRA. The majority of the remaining students were approaching the benchmark. In the Spring, 43 (51%) students had met or exceeded the Spring benchmark, 19 (22%) were at level 3, just below the benchmark.

Table 1: DRA Text Levels for Senior Kindergarten Students

DRA Text Level	A-	A	1	2	3	4	6	8	10	12	13	14	16	18-22	24	26-30
Winter DRA	2	4	11	20	27	9	6	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
Spring DRA	2	2	3	9	19	21	8	5	3	4	0	0	1	0	1	0

The Yopp-Singer was completed on the selected sample of 85 students. Scores ranged from 0 to 22 words correct with an average score of 13.43. Yopp (1988) reported a mean raw score of 11.78 ± 7.66 for a sample of 96 Kindergarten children tested in April and May of the school year. As described above, in 1995(b) Yopp explains that teachers should expect a wide range of scores and described three broad categories of performance: phonemic awareness, emerging phonemic awareness and delayed phonemic awareness.

EDI

The next two tables were provided to HWDSB from the Data Analysis Coordinator (DAC) from the City of Hamilton. These tables present the findings for the EDI for both the HWDSB and our co-terminus board. Table 2 displays the results for the 2012 school year, comparing our current FDK sample to a control group (EDI results from 2002 to 2010 from the same schools).

The DAC from the City of Hamilton explained: *"Our evaluation sampled the same number of children from each classroom, regardless of the number of children in the classroom. The results have therefore been re-weighted to reflect the actual number of children in these classes. Since we're using the previous results from the same schools as our "control", it matters that St. Matthew is a new school. St. Matthew's students make up a much larger proportion of our weighted sample (11.8%) than of the control (1.6%), which also means there's a greater share of children from Glanbrook and from areas with a Social Risk of 0. To correct for this, as well as for any gender or age-in-birth-cohort variation, all results have been standardized for*

gender, quarter of birth, and (CT level) Social Risk. These comparisons are only to the EDI ratings provided by the teachers and are only for the children not already identified as having special needs.

The result: a significant improvement in Language & Cognitive Development (14.0% to 4.2%) and in Communication Skills & General Knowledge (13.8% to 6.1%). There was also improvement in Physical Health & Well-Being (18.3% to 10.9%), but not quite enough to rule out random variation” (C. Borst, personal communication, December 4, 2012). As well, the final column described as ‘low on 1+’ means that approximately 35% of the control group was vulnerable on one or more domains while approximately 30% of the study group were.

Table 2: EDI Findings for the FDK Sample vs. the Control Group (pooled from same schools)

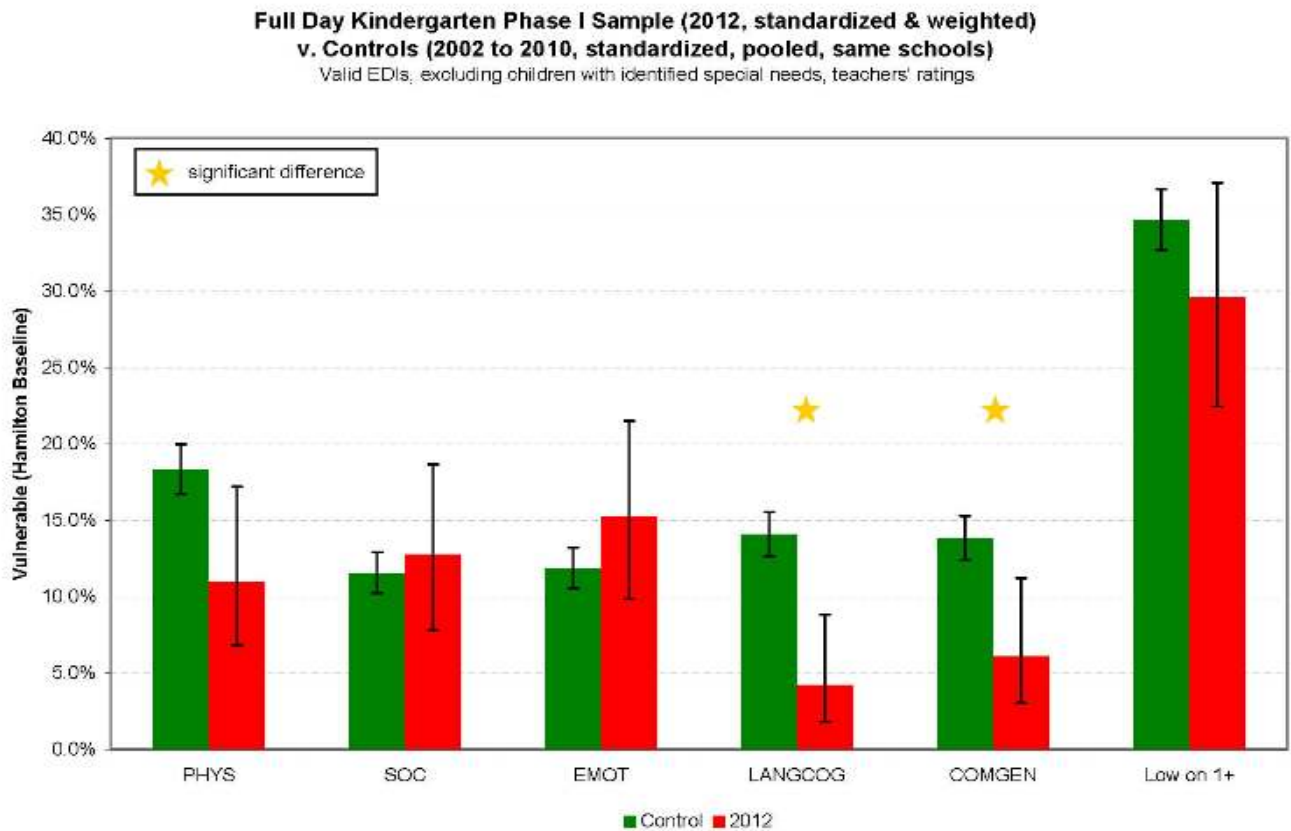
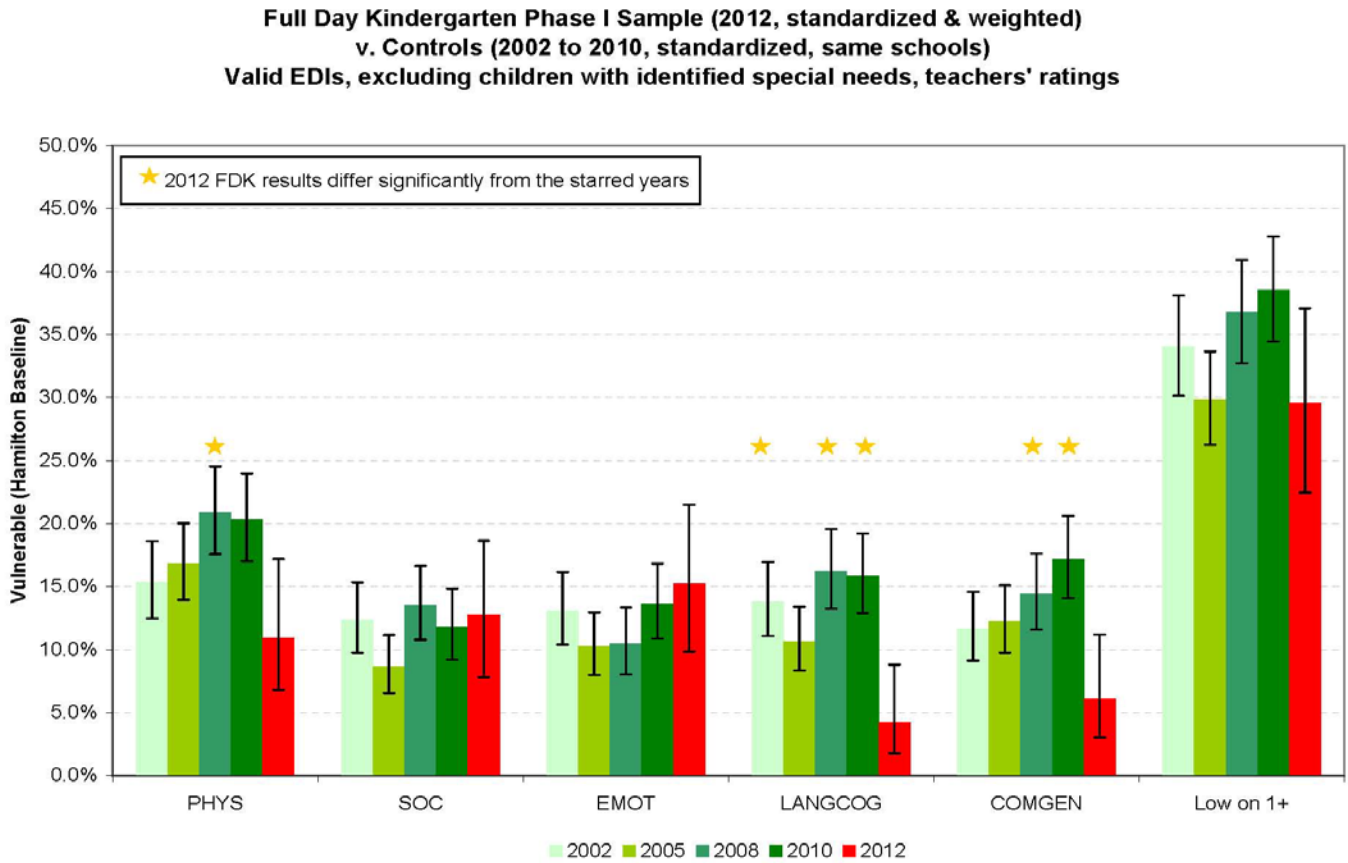


Table 3 also presents findings from the EDI; however this table displays the results from each year (from 2002) that the EDI has been completed. The findings for the control group are for schools involved in this FDK study. The red column displays the FDK small sample for the 2011/12 school year. The 2012 FDK results differ significantly from the starred years. For physical health and well-being, the 2012 FDK small sample, differed significantly from the 2008 sample. For language and cognitive development, the 2012 FDK small sample differed significantly from the samples in 2002, 2008 and 2010. Finally, the 2012 FDK small sample differed significantly from the 2008 and 2010 sample in communication skills and general knowledge.

Table 3: EDI Findings for the FDK Sample vs. the Control Group (pooled from same schools) by year



Findings from the Teacher Survey

A total of 14 out of 22 teachers responded to the survey. Of these teachers, half (n=7, 50%) had taught FDK for two years while the remaining respondents were in their first year of teaching this program. The teachers had worked in the teaching profession from 2 to 22 years with an average of 10.4 years. Two teachers were new to teaching kindergarten while several others reported their Kindergarten teaching experience from six months to eight years (with an average of 3.25 years).

Transitions

The teachers were asked to explain what the transition to FDK was like for them. Several teachers identified the adjustment to having two educators in the classroom. The team needed to learn to work together and identify each other’s roles. While some teachers “enjoyed the atmosphere of two educators” others did not enjoy the relationship with their ECE. One teacher explained that the ECE would go to the administrator to solve issues instead of dealing directly with the teacher while another stated that her partner came from working with infants and did not have experience with Kindergarten aged children. This teacher felt that she was modeling and teaching the ECE similar to a student teacher.

The transition of teaching the new Kindergarten program was exciting to some teachers. They were excited to have the same children all day and to observe the impact that this would have on their learning. *“It was exciting to learn a new pedagogy”, “more free choice for students and listening to what their interests are”*. One teacher wrote: *“I enjoyed getting away from set learning centres because some students wouldn't do anything and would benefit very little from the activity. Having students select according to their interests and guiding students according to their needs is in my opinion a far more beneficial approach to teaching. That being said it is not for everyone and meeting curriculum expectations can pose a challenge because some students will not be interested in writing/reading in spite of your best efforts”*. A few teachers also described the challenge of teaching the new Kindergarten program. One teacher wrote: *“No literacy or math centres each morning. No moving students from centre to centre to ensure that skills covered. Such a drastic, drastic change from right to left. four years ago, K. consultant visited my room and told me WAY too many toys. Throw them out and tighten up program, using literacy centres in a very controlled manner”*, while others acknowledged the challenge of *“learning to let go of the more teacher directed learning”* and having to *“re-think pretty well everything”*.

Other transitions included administrative challenges, such as having the teacher and ECE set-up the classroom together. Classrooms are commonly set-up during the month of August and ECEs are not paid until September. One teacher also felt that she had received little support or guidance from the board in figuring out the new ‘full day Kindergarten way’ and the ‘emergent, play-based, inquiry-based, student-centred documentation’. A few teachers stated that they did not experience a transition to teaching the FDK program due to it being the first year teaching Kindergarten or due to their undergraduate training that was routed in early childhood principles.

Most respondents (n=6, 43%) felt that ‘a few students’ in their class experienced some adjustment when transitioning to school, 4 (29%) teachers indicated ‘some students’ while 1 (7%) teacher chose ‘most students’. One (7%) teacher indicated that the children did not need any time to adjust while the remaining respondents did not answer the question. The adjustments included separating from their parents, being at school all day and being tired in the afternoon (especially the junior Kindergarten students who would be irritable and would easily cry). Teachers also stated that the children needed to learn to follow rules and routines and participate in a structured environment. Several teachers observed that the children with no prior experience in a daycare or nursery school setting had more difficulty transitioning into the Kindergarten classroom. Four (29%) teachers felt it took the children more than a month to adjust, 5 (36%) teachers indicated more than a week and 2 (14%) teachers felt the students adjusted in less than a week. One (7%) teacher indicated that the children did not need any time to adjust while the remaining respondents did not answer the question.

Benefits of FDK

All respondents (n=14, 100%) agreed that having two educators benefited the students. The benefits included *“more adults to interact with”*, more time to provide one-on-one support or work in small groups with the students. Other teachers liked having two educators with different but complimentary expertise to bounce ideas off of and to share in program planning and implementation. Together the team had *“more ideas to stimulate the children and to problem-solve situations”*. Each member of the team also had different strengths and connected differently to the students in the classroom. One teacher also explained how her team could target children with special needs with programming that requires more than one adult in the room. The team was also needed to support the high number of students in the classroom. One teacher suggested that it would be beneficial if all ECE’s were trained on how they could further develop reading and writing skills of students.

Five (36%) of the respondents had taught ‘most’ of the students for the two years that FDK had been running. Two (14%) teachers had taught ‘some’ of the students while 7 (50%) teachers indicated that all of

the children in the program were new to them.

As displayed in Table 4, the teachers identified many areas in which the FDK program had benefited the students ‘a lot’ while half (n=7, 50%) of the teachers felt that students benefited from reading ‘more than expected’.

Table 4: Student Benefits of the Full Day Kindergarten Program

	Not at all	Somewhat	A lot	More than expected
Speaking	0 (0%)	5 (36%)	7 (50%)	2 (14%)
Listening	0 (0%)	7 (50%)	7 (50%)	0 (0%)
Reading	0 (0%)	2 (14%)	5 (36%)	7 (50%)
Math and problem solving skills	0 (0%)	4 (29%)	8 (57%)	2 (14%)
Creativity	0 (0%)	5 (36%)	4 (29%)	5 (36%)
Getting along with other children	1 (7%)	3 (21%)	9 (64%)	1 (7%)
Level of interest in the world around them	0 (0%)	4 (29%)	7 (50%)	3 (21%)
Physical coordination	1 (7%)	7 (50%)	5 (36%)	1 (7%)

In addition to the areas listed above, some teachers commented on other areas that FDK has benefited the students. These areas include writing, drama and music development, “*curiosity about the world around them*”, -independent play, rules and routines, and taking more responsibility for their own learning. One teacher who indicated that they were a pilot class for a Kindergarten technology project wrote: ‘technology’, while another teacher who included the Roots of Empathy program in their classroom as well as spending weekly music time with the special needs class at their school included ‘empathy’.

The teachers were asked to identify the types of student engagement that they had observed in the FDK classroom. As displayed in Table 5, over half of the teacher respondents indicated that they observed active engagement and listening engagement by many or all of the students. ‘Some students’ were observed as not being engaged (n=11, 79%) or disorganized (n=10, 71%) by the majority of teachers.

Table 5: Engagement in the Full Day Kindergarten Classroom

	Not at all	Some students	Many students	All students
Active - Engagement (e.g., students have focused attention and are actively talking or doing something)	0 (0%)	3 (21%)	8 (57%)	3 (21%)
Listening - Engagement (e.g., students have focused attention, listening, paying attention, or watching)	0 (0%)	4 (29%)	9 (64%)	1 (7%)
No - Engagement (e.g., wandering attention or appear to be daydreaming, unoccupied or engaged in inappropriate activities)	3 (21%)	11 (79%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Disorganized (e.g., students active but lack attention/focus for more than a few seconds at a time)	3 (21%)	10 (71%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)

A total of 9 (64%) teachers felt that the students’ experiences in FDK prepared them for grade one, 1 (7%) teacher indicated ‘no’ while 4 (29%) teachers said they were ‘unsure’. Most of the respondents explained

that having the students for the full day offered the time to work on academic and social skills that will prepare them for grade one. Most teachers stated that compared to the half-time program, the students had higher DRA scores, could write small sentences and had developed better social skills with their peers. The students could also follow class routines. One teacher wrote: “...*their reading scores are the highest I have ever had particularly in the inner city in a high needs, high ELL school. Not on grade level necessarily, but these kids are perhaps the best prepared I have sent up*”. Although most teachers felt that the students were better prepared for grade one, there was curiosity about how the students would adjust from a play-based program to ‘a more traditional approach to teaching’ which included less free choice and more time sitting at desks and completing set tasks. One teacher expressed some concern about the FDK program in that “*the program does not encourage Literacy Centres or Math Centres at all...(this teacher) worries that the students are missing one piece of the puzzle*”.

Most teachers responding to this survey (n=11, 79%) indicated that ‘child initiated activities, routinely available, student-selected, student-structured, process-oriented and no educator products’ as the educational approach used most often in their classroom. ‘Educator directed’ (n=2, 14%) and ‘unstructured/free’ (n=1, 7%) approaches were selected by fewer respondents. The common child initiated approaches used for student learning are listed in Table 6. As displayed, learning centres and individual creative time were identified by the majority of survey respondents. Playing indoors and cooperative learning were also popular approaches.

Table 6: Common Child-Initiated Approaches Used

Response	Frequency
Play – Indoors	11 (79%)
Play – Outdoors	6 (43%)
Learning Centres	12 (86%)
Cooperative Learning	10 (71%)
Individual Creativity Time	12 (86%)

(Respondents were allowed to choose **multiple** responses)

Teachers were asked whether the FDK program had allowed them to increase their capacity in specific areas. The areas and their responses are listed in Table 7. The majority of respondents indicated that ‘I am able to offer more in- depth coverage of the curriculum content’ (n=9, 64%) and ‘the schedule provides time to develop differentiation for students at all developmental levels’ (n=10, 72%) either a lot or more than expected.

Table 7: Impact of Full Day Kindergarten

	Not at all	Somewhat	A lot	More than expected	Not sure
I am able to offer more in-depth coverage of the curriculum content	0 (0%)	4 (29%)	2 (14%)	7 (50%)	1 (7%)
The schedule provides time to develop differentiation for students at all developmental levels	0 (0%)	4 (29%)	4 (29%)	6 (43%)	0 (0%)
There is more time to support students with special needs	2 (14%)	7 (50%)	3 (21%)	2 (14%)	0 (0%)
There is more time to support students who need enrichment	2 (14%)	5 (36%)	6 (43%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)

The Educator Team

A total of 11 (79%) teachers that responded to the survey believed that ‘being part of an educator team has enriched their professional development’. One (7%) teacher indicated ‘no’ while 2 (14%) teachers were ‘unsure’. The positive responses included the opportunity to “*learn from our colleagues*”, “*allows for new ideas*” and the ability to better meet the needs of the students and the parents. Several teachers commented on the different perspective that ECE’s have towards child development. One teacher wrote: “*My ECE regularly provides a new perspective. Especially in regards (to) children’s development. They certainly see things that I do not see and approach the students differently*”. Others enjoyed the opportunity to “*stand back and observe kids with someone else*” and their weekly program planning times. One teacher described the time needed for the professionals to truly become an educator team. She stated: “*It took us a year to see the value in each other’s professional philosophies but now we have a good balance and learn from each other every week. We had been a team for over two years and still teach each other valuable professional strategies all the time*”. Not all responses were positive. One teacher commented that there was not enough co-planning time or time to interact and learn from one another while another stated “*I did not feel that (my ECE) brought a great deal of knowledge or ideas to our classroom*”.

The teachers were asked if being part of an educator team allowed them more time to participate in some specific activities. Responses are provided in Table 8. Nine (64%) respondents felt that they had ‘a lot’ of time or ‘more time than expected’ to assess and evaluate students. Half (n=7, 50%) of the respondents felt that they also had this time to get to know the students and their families and provide more feedback on student progress to parents/guardians.

Table 8: Participation in Activities Due to Being Part of an Educator Team

	Not at all	Somewhat	A lot	More than expected	Not sure
get to know the students and their families	1 (7%)	6 (43%)	6 (43%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)
provide more feedback on student progress to parents/guardians	1 (7%)	6 (43%)	6 (43%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)
assess and evaluate students	0 (0%)	5 (36%)	7 (50%)	2 (14%)	0 (0%)
planning activities, lessons, units and annual plans	1 (7%)	8 (57%)	5 (36%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The survey respondents were asked to share the advantages of having two educators in the FDK classroom. The advantages included a “*team approach to planning, teaching and evaluating*”. The educator teams could offer more time for one-on-one and small group instruction as well as time with children struggling with behaviour issues. The educators had different knowledge, expertise and philosophies that could be used to support the students. One teacher had thought that having two educators in the classroom would allow for more one-on-one time with the students. However, due to the large class size she did not feel that this was possible.

Challenges to having two educators in the classroom were also shared. The challenges included understanding each other’s role, the division of responsibilities, personality conflicts, and differing philosophies as to how and activity or program should run. Finding time to meet and plan was noted as a challenge as well as the need for constant communication to ensure a consistent approach and sharing a common space with another educator. One teacher commented that the classroom set-up at the

beginning of the year as a challenge since this task rests mostly with the classroom teacher (the ECE's are not expected to start work until the first day of school). Decisions regarding the classroom set-up as well as some initial programming may have been completed differently if the ECE was involved. ECE's also held different working hours and questions regarding supervision issues and when the ECE was to eat lunch arose. Ensuring that parents understood the role of the ECE in the classroom and that the educators were viewed as equal partners were also a challenge. One teacher felt that although there were two educators, the class sizes were too big, which defeated the purpose of having two educators in the classroom while another teacher stated that the *"teacher is still ultimately responsible for EVERYTHING! (Which I believe is the way it should be)"*.

The final survey question asked teachers to share any advice they had for other educators about being part of the FDK classroom. The advice included the importance of viewing each other as partners and determining each other's role. The teams needed to know how to give and take and compromise and be willing to openly talk about issues or concerns. *"Communication is very important between the two individuals"*. Other teachers noted the importance of being flexible, sharing ideas and working together. One teacher stated: *"Take it slow. Depends on the two educators and how much they agree on little details. Start with dividing the work according to strengths and what each person feels strongly about and compromise from there. The program will evolve over time according to your students, your personalities, parent involvement and the school climate (administration decisions, kindergarten team, grade teachers)"*. Finding time to plan together and determine each other's responsibilities is very essential. Finally, one teacher explained that *"the nature of the teacher and ECE positions are very different (i.e., salary vs. wage, planning time vs. none, longer hours as required vs. set hours), so teacher can't expect the ECE to take on the same time demands as a teacher unless they are going to be compensated similarly"*.

Findings from the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Survey

A total of 7 out of 22 ECEs responded to the survey. Most of the ECE's (n=5, 71%) had taught FDK for two years while the remaining ECE's (n=2, 29%) were in their first year of instruction. The ECE's that responded to the survey had worked in the profession from 2 to 20 years (average of 13.5 years). Two ECE's stated that they had taught in a Kindergarten program as an ECE for 2 to 3 years before teaching in the FDK class. This instruction took place in a childcare classroom.

Transitions

The ECE's were asked to explain what the transition to teaching FDK was like for them. Most of the respondents described the challenges that they experienced. Several ECE's described the difficulty in not knowing what to expect during their first year in the FDK, especially early in the school year. One ECE wrote: *"Insanely busy in the first month and a little overwhelming. With 35 children in each class I thought 'what have I got myself into?' Things settled down after reorganization and went much smoother"*. A few ECE's described the challenge of learning about and navigating board structures. One ECE found the transition difficult due to having little guidance. Another stated: *"I would have liked more answers in the beginning about how to make the goals of the program actually implemented on an ongoing basis; this would have cut down on the trial and error approach"*. Some ECE's also felt that they were being held back by having to participate in school or board activities (such as the TLCP). One ECE felt that the TLCP did not mesh with the FDK program. This ECE wanted to work with the children in a more natural way and have their skills used to their full potential. Some were surprised of the 'educator' role that they had assumed. They had to focus on reading, writing, and phonics more so than when in a play or theme-based daycare. One ECE stated that she was a supply ECE for one year before being placed in a classroom. She appreciated the opportunity to visit and learn from the different classes; however she noted that the documentation of children's play and understanding the curriculum expectation was a learning experience. The transition to

the FDK program was made easier for many of the ECEs when they ‘meshed well’ with their teaching partner and they worked together as a team. One ECE wrote: *“We had so many questions and things to learn but we all came together as a team and helped each other and I think it made us all a stronger team because of all the challenges!”*

The majority of ECE’s (n=5, 71%) stated that ‘a few students’ experienced some adjustment when transitioning into school. The adjustments included being away from their parents for the first time, being tired at the end of the day, learning new routines or where things are (i.e. the washroom) and being on a daily schedule (i.e., waking up and preparing for school each day). Adjusting to the different ‘rules’ that vary from teacher to teacher was mentioned as well as the board’s reorganization at the end of October added an additional transition for some young children. A few (n=3, 43%) ECE’s indicated that it took the children more than a month to adjust, others (n=3, 43%) indicated more than a week, while 1 (14%) ECE stated that the children did not need any time to adjust. The group of students entering SK at their school had the previous year’s experience and had little to no challenges transitioning into the program.

Benefits of FDK

All ECE’s that responded to the survey (n=7) ‘agreed’ that having two educators in the Kindergarten classroom benefited the students. The educators offered two sets of skills, two sets of knowledge, and two teaching styles so they are more capable of reaching various learners in the classroom. Having two educators provided a “fresh look within the room” and the ability to brainstorm and share ideas so to create/facilitate a program that engaged the students. The educators were able to play off each other’s strengths and weaknesses and the children could gravitate towards the educator that they could learn the best from. More individual attention could be paid to the children, which included one-on-one interactions and small group work. As well, one ECE wrote: *“more opportunity is provided naturally for role modeling social interactions, language and communications skills”*. Having two educators also broadens the perspective of student achievements, learning goals and needs. One ECE stated: *“Teachers have different strengths but combined present a stronger program, and responsive, emergent curriculum”*.

Three (43%) of the respondents had taught ‘most’ of the students for the two years that FDK had been running. Two (29%) ECE’s had taught ‘some’ of the students while 2 (29%) ECE’s indicated that all of the children in the program were new to them. As displayed in Table 9, the ECE’s identified many areas in which the FDK program had benefited the students ‘a lot’ while students benefited from reading ‘more than expected’. Other areas that the children experienced benefits included self-confidence, self-regulation, expressing their thoughts and ideas and their acceptance of others’ differences. One ECE thought that regular attendance had improved.

Table 9: Student Benefits of the Full Day Kindergarten Program

	Not at all	Somewhat	A lot	More than expected
Speaking	0 (0%)	1 (14%)	4 (57%)	2 (29%)
Listening	0 (0%)	2 (29%)	4 (57%)	1 (14%)
Reading	0 (0%)	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	5 (71%)
Math and problem solving skills	0 (0%)	1 (14%)	4 (57%)	2 (29%)
Creativity	0 (0%)	2 (29%)	3 (43%)	2 (29%)
Getting along with other children	0 (0%)	1 (14%)	6 (86%)	0 (0%)
Level of interest in the world around them	0 (0%)	1 (14%)	4 (57%)	2 (29%)
Physical coordination	0 (0%)	1 (14%)	6 (86%)	0 (0%)

The ECE's were asked to identify the types of student engagement that they had observed in the FDK classroom. As displayed in Table 10, most of the ECE's responding to the survey (n=6, 85%) indicated that they observed active engagement and listening engagement by many or all of the students. Some students were observed as not being engaged or disorganized.

Table 10: Engagement in the Full Day Kindergarten Classroom

	Not at all	Some students	Many students	All students
Active - Engagement (e.g., students have focused attention and are actively talking or doing something)	0 (0%)	1 (14%)	5 (71%)	1 (14%)
Listening - Engagement (e.g., students have focused attention, listening, paying attention, or watching)	0 (0%)	1 (14%)	6 (86%)	0 (0%)
No - Engagement (e.g., wandering attention, appear to be daydreaming, unoccupied or engaged in inappropriate activities)	1 (14%)	6 (86%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Disorganized (e.g., students active but lack attention/focus for more than a few seconds at a time)	2 (29%)	5 (71%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Almost all (n=6, 86%) of the ECEs felt that the student experiences in FDK helped prepare them for grade one. One ECE indicated that they were 'not sure'. When asked to explain their answer, ECE's stated that *"all areas of growth and development have been explored and enhanced in the past two years (and that) the skills gained will be of benefit in grade one"*. Several ECE's commented not only on the better reading, writing and math skills that the children had but the increased opportunity for problem solving, exploring and using technology. Other ECEs explained that the children had an *"increased attention span"*, *"improved self-regulation skills"* and *"respect for others (both peers and teachers)"*. Finally, one ECE wrote: *"students have been utilizing manipulative and materials they will use in grade one, but in fun ways where they do not even know they are learning"*.

All ECE's responding to this survey indicated that 'child initiated activities, routinely available, student-selected, student-structured, process-oriented and no educator products' as the educational approach used most often in their classroom. The common child initiated approaches used for student learning are

listed in Table 11. As displayed, cooperative learning was identified by all survey respondents. Learning centres and playing indoors were also popular approaches.

Table 11: Common Child-Initiated Approaches Used

Response	
Play - Indoors	6 (86%)
Play - Outdoors	4 (57%)
Learning Centres	6 (86%)
Cooperative Learning	7 (100.0%)
Individual Creativity Time	5 (71%)

(Respondents were allowed to choose **multiple** responses)

The ECEs were asked whether the FDK program had allowed them to increase their capacity in specific areas. The areas and their responses are listed in Table 12. A total of 5 (71%) ECEs indicated that 'I am able to offer more in- depth coverage of the curriculum content' and 'the schedule provides time to develop differentiation for students at all developmental levels' either a lot or more than expected.

Table 12: Impact of Full Day Kindergarten

	Not at all	Somewhat	A lot	More than expected	Not sure
I am able to offer more in-depth coverage of the curriculum content	0 (0%)	1 (14%)	4 (57%)	1 (14%)	1 (14%)
The schedule provides time to develop differentiation for students at all developmental levels	0 (0%)	2 (29%)	2 (29%)	3 (43%)	0 (0%)
There is more time to support students with special needs	0 (0%)	4 (57%)	3 (43%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
There is more time to support students who need enrichment	0 (0%)	3 (43%)	3 (43%)	1 (14%)	0 (0%)

The Educator Team

Almost all (n=5, 71%) of the ECE's stated that being part of an educator team had enriched their professional development. Mixed responses were obtained when the ECE's were asked to explain their answer. The positive responses included the ability to learn from each other, examine past practices and either keep or change them, fine tune methods and "*it has opened up many new ideas and possibilities*". Several ECE's appreciated the opportunity to "*bounce ideas off a colleague*" and "*to extend great ideas into even better ones*". One ECE described that due to the educator team both herself and the teacher were able to experiment more because they would support each other and offer suggestions if the plan did not go well. However, not all responses were positive. One ECE wrote: "*...there still seems to be some separation between ECEs and teachers. Teachers are given extra time to prep and plan but we the ECE's don't. It is hard for us to grow and feel like the team when often we aren't included in certain processes*".

The ECE's were asked if being part of an educator team allowed them more time to participate in some specific activities. Responses are provided in Table 13. Six out of the seven respondents felt that they had

‘a lot’ of time or ‘more time than expected’ to get to know the students and to provide feedback on student progress to parents/guardians. Four (57%) respondents felt that they also had this time to assess and evaluate students and to plan activities, lessons, units and annual plans.

Table 13: Participation in Activities Due to Being Part of an Educator Team

	Not at all	Somewhat	A lot	More than expected	Not sure
get to know the students and their families	1 (14%)	0 (0%)	4 (57%)	2 (29%)	0 (0%)
provide more feedback on student progress to parents/guardians	1 (14%)	0 (0%)	3 (43%)	3 (43%)	0 (0%)
assess and evaluate students	1 (14%)	2 (29%)	1 (14%)	3 (43%)	0 (0%)
planning activities, lessons, units and annual plans	2 (29%)	1 (14%)	4 (57%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The ECE’s responding to the survey listed many advantages of having two educators in the FDK classroom. The advantages included having two sets of skills, knowledge and ideas available. The ECE’s wrote about sharing the workload, using each other’s strengths and helping each other with their ‘weak’ areas. One ECE stated: “a *shared development and discussion regarding the program ideas led to more creative and innovative teaching*”. A few ECE’s commented on the benefits of the team during times of assessment and evaluation. One ECE described that having two educators available allowed the students to have a fair environment to undertake assessments such as the DRA and Yopp-Singer. The teacher could complete the evaluation in a quiet space while the program of exploration and learning could continue being led by the other team member. Two educators could also see the different sides of children and could support each other when difficulties arose (i.e. with special needs or behaviours of students, or with difficult parents). Several ECE’s also stated that more attention could be paid to the children in one-on-one and small group activities. Some children were more comfortable with one educator than another and there was consistency when one educator was absent.

The ECE’s responding to the survey identified challenges of having two educators in the FDK classroom. The challenges included finding time to communicate, plan, discuss and work out problems. The lack of time led to a lot of overtime for some ECE’s. It was also challenging to have two qualified educators who want to have teacher instructed time in a program that had reduced large group instructional opportunities. Some educators also had different views on the program due to vague guidelines or contradictory expectations by principals and the Ministry. Role clarity was another challenge. Several ECE’s commented that one educator felt that they were ‘in charge’ or that some teachers felt like they ‘rule the roost’, making it difficult for an ECE to spread their wings. Some felt that the skills of the ECE were not being fully utilized. One ECE felt that they were with the children more often than the classroom teacher ‘at a fraction of the price’ and that it was ‘okay’ for her to be left alone with the students but not for the teacher to take the full class. Finally, one ECE noted that ECE’s are often forgotten by other staff in the school and that it is important for the ECE to be seen as an equal member of school staff.

The ECE’s were asked about the advice that they would share with other educators about being part of a FDK classroom. Almost all ECE’s commented on the benefit of working together as a team. It is important to talk, communicate and to “*play together and learn together*”. One ECE wrote that if a problem arises, don’t wait too long to talk it over as it is often time a misunderstanding. Superior and inferior roles should not exist. The respondents noted the importance of being open to new ideas and approaches, sharing and using the expertise of both educators. One respondent wrote about the importance of “*being strong, vocal*”

and willing to go above and beyond the 'requirements'". One ECE also stated that FDK "is a process that is being undertaken not a finished product. The flow of the day, curriculum and methods to accomplish are the kinks along the way you will navigate daily. Follow the philosophy and stay true to the core values of child development and let the children learn and build confidence for future learning success".

Findings from the Parent Survey

A total of 53 (48 (92%) mothers and 4 (8%) fathers) out of 85 parents responded to the survey. Most respondents (n=36, 71%) indicated that there were two parents/guardians at home, 13 (26%) respondents were single parents/guardians, while 2 (4%) respondents indicated 'other'. Two respondents did not provide a response to this question.

Respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of education as well as the education level of their partner. Almost half of the respondents (n=24, 46%) had completed a college diploma or trades certificate, many had completed high school (n=12, 23%), while fewer (n=9, 18%) had completed an undergraduate or graduate degree. A total of 7 (14%) respondents had not completed high school, while one respondent did not provide a response to this question. As for their partners, 15 (30%) partners had completed high school, 12 (24%) partners completed a college diploma or trades certificate and 7 (14%) partners had completed an undergraduate or graduate degree. A total of 9 (18%) partners did not complete high school while 7 respondents indicated that this question was not applicable.

The majority of respondents (n=33, 65%) had 'always' lived in Canada, 7 (14%) respondents had lived in Canada for more than 10 years while 11 (21%) respondents had lived in Canada for less than 10 years. In the last five years, 14 (28%) parents had never moved while others indicated that their child had moved once (n=22, 43%), twice (n=10, 20%) or three or more times (n=5, 10%) to a different home. Two parents did not provide a response.

When asked about household income before taxes, approximately half of the respondents (n=25, 53%) made less than \$30,000 annually, 11 (22%) households claimed \$30,001 to \$50,000, 8 (16%) households claimed \$50,001 to \$75,000 while few (n=5, 10%) made over \$75,000. Four respondents did not respond to this question.

A total of 18 (35%) parents indicated that their child was in non-parental care on a regular basis before entering Kindergarten. See Table 14 for the type of care provided. As displayed within the table, the most common type of care was provided in the child's home by a relative.

Table 14: Type and Frequency of Non-parental Care

	Part-Time	Full-Time
Centre-based, licensed, non-profit	3 (17%)	5 (28%)
Centre-based, licensed, for profit	2 (11%)	6 (33%)
Other home-based, licensed	1 (6%)	2 (11%)
Other home-based, unlicensed, non-relative	0 (0%)	1 (6%)
Other home-based, unlicensed, relative	4 (22%)	1 (6%)
Child's home, non-relative	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
Child's home, relative	5 (28%)	13 (72%)
Other/don't know	1 (6%)	0 (0%)

Most parents (n=41, 79%) that responded to the survey indicated that their child experienced FDK in junior Kindergarten. Most (n=35, 66%) children started FDK in September 2010 while 14 (26%) children started in September 2011. Four children started FDK throughout the school year, 2 (4%) children stated in January 2012, 1 (2%) child in March 2011, and 1 (2%) parent wrote March 2007 (an error).

Transitions

Just under half (n=23, 44%) of the parent respondents reported that their child experienced some adjustment when transitioning into school. The most common adjustments included: being away from home/mom for the first time, having to adapt to a long day without taking a nap, meeting/getting along with new people and learning a new routine or structure. Most parents (n=10, 40%) believed that the children took one week or less to adjust to FDK, with almost all students (n=19, 76%) being adjusted within the first two weeks.

Parents were asked to indicate the frequency in which they communicate with their child's teacher and/or ECE. As displayed in Table 15, most parents reportedly communicated with their child's teacher (n=20, 38%) and/or ECE (n=17, 32%) on a daily basis. Parents appeared to communicate with the child's teacher more often than the ECE with 6 (11%) parents reporting that they never communicated with their child's ECE.

Table 15: Frequency of Parent and Educator Communication

Response	Teacher	ECE
Never	0 (0%)	6 (11%)
Once/twice a year	5 (9%)	6 (11%)
Monthly	14 (26%)	11 (21%)
Weekly	14 (26%)	13 (25%)
Daily	20 (38%)	17 (32%)

Benefits of FDK

The majority of parents who responded to the survey indicated that having two educators (a teacher and an ECE) in the classroom benefited their child either 'somewhat' (n=3, 6%), 'a lot' (n=25, 47%) or 'more than expected' (n=17, 32%), 7 (13%) parents were unsure, while only one parent indicated 'not at all'. Parents provided a variety of responses when asked to explain the benefits that the children experienced from having two educators in the classroom. The benefits included "more attention", "more one on one interaction" and small group activities, and "my child is able to get that extra help in class". The children have the opportunity to learn from two educators who may have different teaching approaches and so the children can learn in different ways. The children also have "more than one person to go to" and more than one adult to help solve problems (e.g., social, educational) when they arose. One parent wrote: "the partners are what makes it work, both complete each other".

Parents were asked if the FDK program benefited their child in a variety of areas. Table 16 presents the specific areas and the findings. As displayed within the table, approximately 70% of the parents felt that children benefited 'a lot' or 'more than expected' from the FDK program.

Table 16: Benefits of the Full Day Kindergarten Program

	Not at all	Somewhat	A lot	More than expected	Not sure
Speaking	2 (4%)	10 (20%)	22 (44%)	15 (30%)	1 (2%)
Listening	3 (6%)	13 (25%)	24 (45%)	13 (25%)	0 (0%)
Reading	2 (4%)	5 (9%)	18 (34%)	28 (53%)	0 (0%)
Math and problem solving skills	0 (0%)	14 (26%)	23 (43%)	16 (30%)	0 (0%)
Creativity	0 (0%)	12 (23%)	22 (42%)	18 (35%)	0 (0%)
Getting along with other children	2 (4%)	5 (10%)	25 (48%)	18 (35%)	2 (4%)
Level of interest in the world around them	0 (0%)	6 (12%)	22 (42%)	22 (42%)	2 (4%)
Physical coordination	0 (0%)	14 (27%)	21 (40%)	17 (33%)	0 (0%)

In addition to the benefits listed in Table 3, parents identified other areas that FDK benefited their child. The benefits included reading, writing, communication or language skills, relationships with friends/social skills, positive self-image, confidence, memory and cognitive skills.

Parent Activities

The next question asked parents about their own activities and experiences when their child entered FDK. As displayed in the Table 17, over half of the respondents found working (either part or full time) to be easier, all noted more time for daily tasks or errands, and many could spend more time with other family members. A total of 34 (68%) respondents indicated that they saved money on child care either 'a lot' or 'more than expected'. Many (n=38, 79%) respondents appreciated the fewer transitions that children experienced.

Table 17: Parent Activities and Experiences When Their Child Started Full Day Kindergarten

	Not at all	Somewhat	A lot	More than expected	Not sure
work full-time more easily	11 (26%)	4 (10%)	15 (38%)	9 (21%)	3 (7%)
work part-time more easily	7 (19%)	7 (19%)	14 (38%)	5 (14%)	4 (11%)
return to work or get a job more easily	10 (29%)	4 (11%)	12 (34%)	4 (11%)	5 (14%)
return to school or training	11 (31%)	5 (14%)	8 (23%)	4 (11%)	7 (20%)
have more time for daily tasks/errands	0 (0%)	7 (14%)	27 (55%)	15 (31%)	0 (0%)
spend more time with other family members (e.g., son/daughter, siblings, parents, etc.)	2 (4%)	9 (19%)	24 (50%)	12 (25%)	1 (2%)
save money that would have been spent on child care/daycare	11 (22%)	4 (8%)	20 (40%)	14 (28%)	1 (2%)
participate in your child's school or classroom more	8 (17%)	21 (44%)	10 (21%)	7 (15%)	2 (4%)
volunteer in your community	16 (40%)	11 (28%)	6 (15%)	5 (13%)	2 (5%)
use community-based programs (e.g., Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, OEYCs, Libraries, etc.)	17 (38%)	8 (18%)	11 (24%)	4 (9%)	5 (11%)
make the day easier because your child has less transitions between home, daycare, school, extra-curricular activities, etc.	7 (15%)	3 (6%)	24 (50%)	14 (29%)	0 (0%)
feel more supported in parenting your child	6 (12%)	11 (22%)	19 (39%)	11 (22%)	2 (4%)

Importance of FDK

Parents were asked to identify the aspects of FDK that were important to them. Several parents commented on having the child participate in a full day of learning and the routine associated with this schedule. The FDK schedule also encouraged less separation issues, fewer transitions (specifically between home, school and daycare) and prepared children for the full time schedule expected in grade one. Some parents stated that FDK allowed the children the opportunity to learn more and spend more time reading, writing, listening and socializing with friends their own age. The program is less rushed, the teachers can accomplish more, and students are encouraged to learn in a comfortable, less hurried environment (compared to the previous half-day schedule). Parents were pleased that their children had a “safe place to go” with “caring and knowledgeable staff”. Several respondents identified that having two educators in the classroom as an important part of the FDK program since it provided more one-on-one and small group instruction. The need for two educators also provided more jobs to educators. Finally, one parent also noted that the full day schedule allowed them the opportunity to work.

While some parents stated that they did not have any suggestions or “I’m not sure at this time” others offered ideas for how the FDK program could be improved. Respondents suggested: “better leadership over the lunch hour”, more time for students to eat their lunch, devote “more time to reading and writing instead of singing and playing”, and focus more attention on science experiments. A better ‘quiet time’ or napping schedule was suggested “as some children (were) very tired by Friday and would nap daily if the environment allowed it”. One parent would like to have an overview or schedule of the curriculum so they are better able to help their child at home. Some parents stated that they were satisfied with the program and would agree with the statement: “I believe the program is pretty good as it is”.

Summary

HWDSB continues to monitor the implementation of the FDK program in our schools. During the 2011-12 school year (second year of implementation), the year 1 schools were involved in an evaluation to collect information about student achievement and to learn about teacher, ECE and parent experiences. Due to not having a control group it is difficult to say with certainty whether the FDK program is significantly impacting student DRA text levels and Yopp-Singer scores more than a half-time program. However, findings from the EDI do report improvements in language and cognitive development, communication skills and general knowledge and physical health and well-being. Teachers, ECE's and parents continue to share their experiences with the new program. Teachers and ECE's acknowledge the benefits and challenges of having two educators in the classroom, the importance of developing a relationship with open communication, working together to plan and teach, and the need for equality in the classroom. They also report on the benefits and challenges that students may experience from better reading, writing and social skills to being tired at the end of the day. Parents also shared their observations of the Kindergarten classroom, their child's learnings while attending the program and how having their child in a full time learning environment impacted their personal activities.

Over the next few years, the FDK program will continue to phase into all schools across the city and the province. From the information collected during the first two years of implementation, HWDSB administration and consultants should recognize the need to continue to support the educators with the development of their roles and relationships as well as with delivering the play-based program. Parents and students could also be supported through their initial transitions into the program and parents should be provided with the necessary information about classroom activities, their child's progress/development, and the curriculum.

Appendix D.1 – Best Start Full Day Kindergarten Evaluation



Method: Data Collection

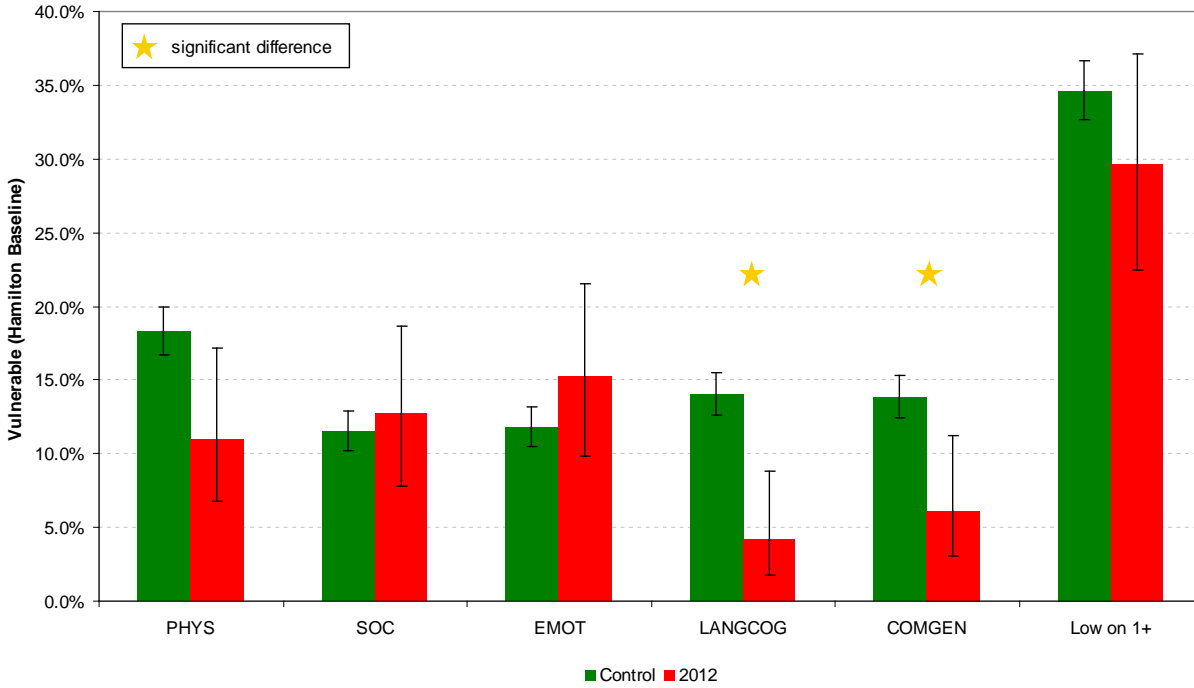
- Phase I FDK schools only (i.e., started in 2010)
- Only SK classes with “full program” (i.e., both teacher and ECE in room for full day)
- 4 children *without* identified special needs randomly selected, plus all children *with* identified needs*
 - *HWDSB sought parent consents – where consent not received, chose next student (alphabetically) with consent – adds element of self-selection to random selection
- EDI completed independently by *both* educators in March 2012



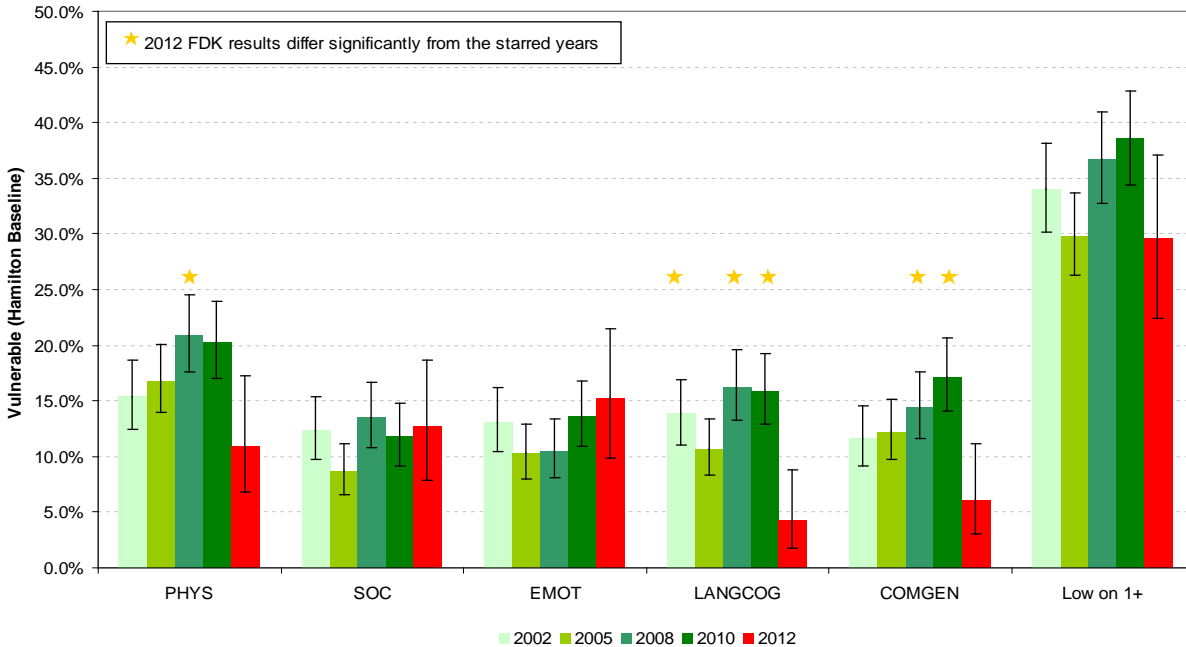
Method: Data Analysis

- Compared teacher responses *only*, for children without identified special needs
- Total sample: 160 (from both boards)
- Previous EDI results (2002-2010) from same set of schools used as control
- Sample weighted – 4 students from 8 in blended class each represent 2 students; 4 from 24 each represent 6 students
- Results standardized to control for differences in gender, age within cohort, and neighbourhood socio-economic status

**Full Day Kindergarten Phase I Sample (2012, standardized & weighted)
v. Controls (2002 to 2010, standardized, pooled, same schools)**
Valid EDIs, excluding children with identified special needs, teachers' ratings



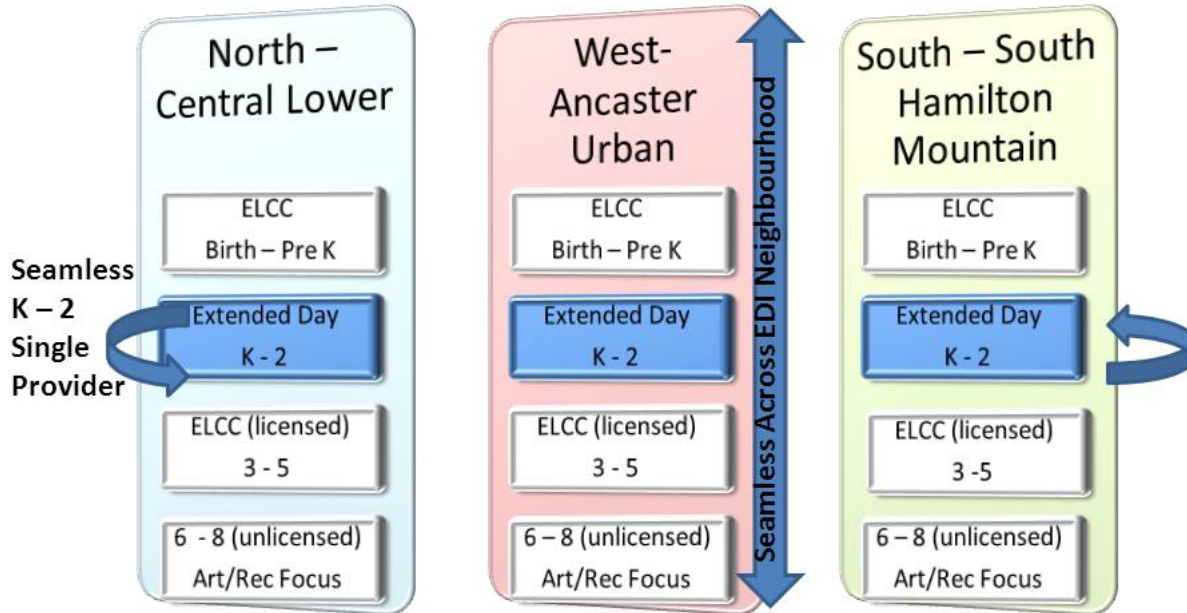
**Full Day Kindergarten Phase I Sample (2012, standardized & weighted)
v. Controls (2002 to 2010, standardized, same schools)**
Valid EDIs, excluding children with identified special needs, teachers' ratings



Appendix F – Extended Day and Early Learning and Child Care in HWDSB

**Extended Day and Early Learning and Child Care in Hamilton-Wentworth
District School Board**

Three Clusters (13 EDI Neighbourhoods– starting point) (Examples Below)



Seamless Experience for Children and Families High Quality Program Transforming and Stabilizing Child Care

Appendix G - Stabilizing and Transforming Child Care

Recommendation 1: Develop a pilot project in a single neighbourhood cluster for the integration of service at the neighbourhood level. Build on the existing neighbourhood planning committees and align with the City Of Hamilton Neighbourhood Action Plans.

Recommendation 2: In concert with the recommendation above, develop a neighbourhood map of child care clientele in relation to neighbourhood providers. Invite the Directors of the child care providing organizations and their boards of directors and other early years service providers to participate in a facilitated planning process in which they are provided with the data and asked to consider how child care services within the neighbourhood might be rationalized among existing providers and how providers who might be freed of responsibility for child care might provide other needed early years services. Consider making participation in the facilitated planning process mandatory for any child care program receiving public funding.

Recommendation 3: Work with the community to address the implications from the Ministry of Education's modernization of child care discussion paper results once released.

The City of Hamilton/Hamilton Best Start Early Years Community Plan 2012-2015, page 15

Appendix H – City of Hamilton Community Consultation Results