

2021-22

Annual School Development Report

Grandy's River Collegiate

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School Mission

The mission of Grandy's River Collegiate is to provide all students with a balanced program fostering independence, lifelong learning, and a caring attitude toward people and the environment, in an ever changing world. This mission is made possible through a partnership amongst all members of the school community in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Strategic Issue/Goal: INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE

Objectives:

Our objectives are to increase student engagement and achievement through the implementation of Deep Learning and development of more authentic learning environments, increase student engagement and achievement by implementing the UDL principles, as well as to utilize our PLC's to improve internal assessment to guide instructional practices.

How did you know this was a Strategic Issue/Objective? What evidence did you have?

We decided that Instructional Practice is a strategic issue that we wish to prioritize, due to results from PMF data and teacher observations. The PMF data indicated a need for improvement with respect to student engagement. Teacher observations identified concerns of students having no desire to complete learning activities unless there was an end result grade, as well as lack of classroom student engagement. While many of our students are doing well with traditional assessments, there has been evidence and discussion surrounding their engagement and evidence of authentic learning. As new pedagogy and professional learning opportunities guide us to developing more authentic learning environments, it is crucial that we improve upon our instructional practices.

Year-end Summary of Progress. What evidence do you have to support this progress?

We began this process by utilizing the majority of time during staff meetings and PLC's to introduce Deep Learning and to learn about what it is and how we can create a culture of Deep Learning in our school. We reviewed the following with staff: Four elements of learning, Six global competencies and the roles of the teacher. We established a school DL team where both administration and staff participated in professional learning opportunities provided by the district. During staff meetings and PLC's, administration shared new materials. As staff members gained experiences, they contributed to the learning that was taking place during staff meetings/PLC's as well.

The dedication to learning about improving our instructional practices with a focus on Deep Learning slowly began to emerge in our classrooms at GRC. It is also important to note that the cancellation of provincial assessments provided reprieve for teachers from often rigid traditional instructional practices that focused on specific curriculum outcomes. The cancellation of examinations, provided teachers with the breathing room to do more activities and lessons that they often wish they had time for and provided them relief to try out new instructional approaches in their classrooms.

As we began to learn and gain a better understanding of Michael Fullen's 6 C's and Deep Learning, staff began to gain confidence as they realized that many of the lessons and projects that they had already been working on with their students fell well under the classification of DL. Teachers began to take the approach of entering through one or two of the six global competencies to guide their planning and approach in the classes. Entering the planning process through this route, provided teachers with more confidence and more creativity which in turn increased the Deep learning opportunities being provided to students.

Year end progress that supported this objective was a large focus was placed on creating a Learning Commons to be used by K-12 teachers and students. Organization of the space was completed to provide a more conducive physical layout as well as organization of materials and technology to support our DL efforts. The creation of this space took researching and planning by staff which took up a large amount of time and focus. Deep Learning initiatives continued to take place in unit and daily planning in the classroom but is still a learning process and some staff are more comfortable taking this approach than others.

Next Steps...

Our next steps include the utilization of the Learning Commons more often by classes in K-12. The materials in the LC contribute to DL opportunities and learning exploration. Adapting to using this space will continue to be a work in progress as it is a new physical space that teachers and students need to explore and over time hopefully utilize with both comfort and ease.

We plan on continuing with whole school Deep Learning Projects both whole school and classroom based.

Strategic Issue/ Goal: OPTIMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Objective:
 Our objectives are to increase family and school community involvement, increase the use of outdoor play/learning areas, and provide our students with opportunities for learning experiences outside the traditional classroom. Through these objectives, we intend to increase the use of technology in all K-12 classrooms, as well as implement a school-wide PBIS program.

How did you know this was a Strategic Issue/Objective? What evidence did you have?
 As we strive towards improving social and emotional learning, through the leadership of our Safe and Caring Schools Committee, we decided to prioritize the strategic issue of Optimal Learning Environments. Our current PMF data also indicated a need for students to feel connected to our school, as well as improving the students' sense of belonging. While as a staff we felt that we had been achieving this goal in the past, the current global pandemic has brought forth many challenges to students' social and emotional learning environment, requiring a reassessment of this strategic issue, and a need to improve upon our action plans. We slowly implemented our outside learning area, and some alternate seating, which provided a positive reception, therefore it is important for us to continue to build upon these positive changes.

Year-end Summary of Progress. What evidence do you have to support this progress?
 The provincial contribution of chromebooks for grades 7-12 students also aided in the technological shift that optimized our virtual learning spaces. We were able to provide all of our students in grades 5 & 6 with Chrome books that were gifted to the school from St. James Regional High as they received new issues. This provided our Elementary classrooms with a whole class approach to technology and supported the UDL policy in their classrooms. Students have been taking advantage of typing their work as well as voice to text. The whole class set has benefited all students and supports inclusion in the classroom. There was an increase in use of applications in the daily classroom such as Epic and Zorbits.. Digital leverage was also maintained through the usage of Google Classroom and making sure that all course material is uploaded to the classroom for all students to access. This approach to UDL also provided more students with the opportunity to utilize technology to the degree to which they felt best supported their learning.

Outdoor learning continued to take whenever possible. While the last few years increased outside time out of necessity, it continued by choice for both teachers and students. These shifts in learning spaces, provided students with more authentic learning opportunities as well as contributed positively to their social-emotional well-being. K-6 Students continued to have supervised free play time outside during lunch time as well as an increase in free play time outside in primary grades. Junior and Senior high students also spent more time outside during break time and many borrowed the school bicycles and snowshoes. Physical Education classes also took place more often outside.

Students were very eager to get outside every day and this shift has certainly contributed to their free-play learning opportunities as well as an improvement to their social and emotional well-being.

This past year saw a continuation of both planning and creating improvements to student learning opportunities. K-6 classrooms continued to be provided with additional learning resources to improve learning opportunities. Some of these examples include: standing Lego table, Standing Connect Four games, Osmo as well as STEAM kit opportunities.

Next Steps:

We plan to continue with extending our learning to areas outside of the physical classroom. Our hope is to increase play in K-6 as well as physical activity and recreation for all students. We plan to continue leveraging digitally with the consistent use of ChromeBooks in 5-12 and placing all materials in student Google classrooms. We plan on increasing the use of technology in K-4. We also hope to communicate better with families through technology using email communication.

