



AND SO THEY COME TO US



And so they come to us –
 The speeding summer gone –
 With faces mirroring their past.
 Some show remembrance of last June,
 And some of yesterday, or of this morning –
 For no child comes to school alone.
 They come with hopes, and fears, and dreams.
 They come with memory of home –
 The mother's kiss and father's fond embrace,
 Or grim reality of emptiness.
 Some mothers have no time to wave goodbye;
 A father has no face who is not known,
 Who never was, or who will never be.

And so they come to us –
 With laughter and with tears,
 The sturdy strong and woeful weak,
 The members of the throng
 Who look and act alike –
 Their dress and manners of a kind –
 Yet each a separate mind and soul,
 Unlike what ever was before in all of time.
 They come to greet the world,
 To seek life out,
 To find their own identity in space.

And so they come to us –
 And we reach out to them
 With understanding and with love.
 We share the sacred trust we hold,
 Yet know that each of us
 Must somehow stand alone
 With every child in turn
 To help them see, and hear, and feel.
 Our children come to learn
 The way to truth –
 And so they come to us.

Joseph Manch



RELATIONSHIPS: THE KEY TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Dear System Leaders, The following information is intended to support us as we continue to build relationships and a culture of collaboration, so that school improvement planning will thrive.

“Intensification of leadership is a way to increase the number of people engaged in leadership roles and the scope of the school’s work as it relates to student outcomes...intensified leadership suggests that leadership roles must meaningfully and purposefully be inhabited by the many.”
 (Hawley & Schneider, 2009)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Local and Provincial Context for School Improvement Planning 3

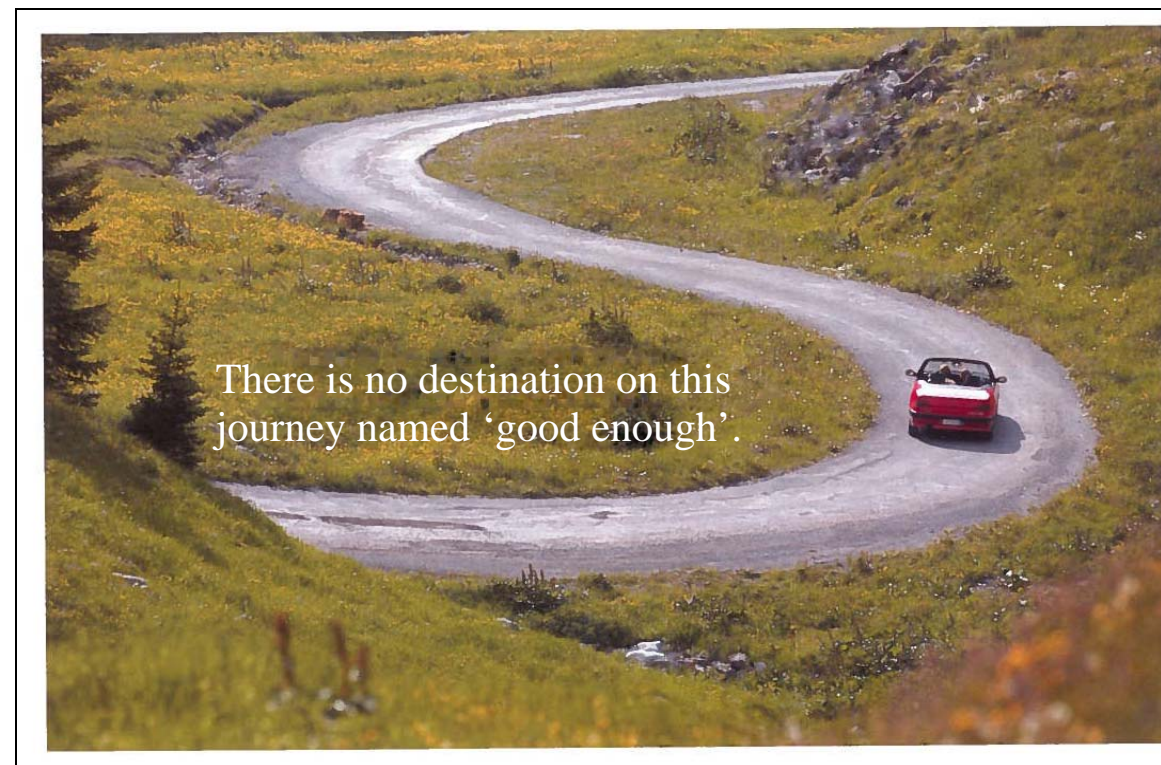
The Important Role of the Instructional Leader 4

Growing As A Whole Person: Our Strategy in Action 6

Collaborative Strategies for Supporting Our Progress 8

A Template for Action and Support:
 September/October 2011 in Elementary and Secondary Schools 9

We look forward to a very promising school year in 2011-2012. With our collective knowledge, leadership, and commitment, our schools will excel in our moral imperative to provide an engaging, high quality, relevant education to every student in our Catholic schools.



BOARD MISSION STATEMENT

We are a Catholic School Board. We serve our students, working with the home, parish and school community to:

- Nurture a Christ-centred environment;
- Provide student-focused learning opportunities;
- Support the growth of the whole person.

**A Template for Action and Support:
September/October 2011**

ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
<p>3. Ensure SEF indicators are on the SIP and try to use the SEF K-12 to choose strategies/actions for your SIP.</p>	<p>3. Use your K-12 SEF template to determine the SEF area(s) of focus that will complement your school-wide SMART goal(s). Please determine which component(s)/indicator(s) you will focus on in your SIP process this school year.</p>
<p>In October:</p> <p>Principals are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Determine your SIP team, consisting of a teacher from each division. Release time is provided for the SIP team to meet with you and coordinator, as well as LRT and/or system SERT for your school to finalize the SIP. Set a half day meeting with your SIP to do this. Share the SIP at your October PLC. Each teacher will identify marker students in their class and relate this to the divisional SMART goal, perhaps choosing an inquiry question to use to frame their work in improving student achievement in their class with their marker students. Support for collaborative inquiry will be ongoing through the year and on an as needs basis. <p>Example: How might a focus on accountable talk in the three-part math lesson improve student achievement in proportional reasoning?</p> <p>Example: How might ongoing, descriptive feedback on students' work in a non-fiction writing unit improve their writing of a report?</p>	<p>In September and October:</p> <p>Principals are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with cabinet, coordinator, as well as Student Success teacher and Literacy/ Numeracy coaches, to review and revise the school-wide SIP goal(s). Release time is provided; Join with department heads in presenting the SIP at the first departmental meeting (sometime in October), sharing the BIP and the pertinent school-wide data. Department members are asked to review their departmental goals and strategies, and consider revisions in light of the board and school goals. Release time is provided for departments to meet; Ask departments to discuss and decide upon a departmental plan of action for the year, to include monitoring of their goal, professional learning and sharing of strategies.
<p>After your October PLC:</p> <p>Principals are asked to share the information that comes from the October PLCs with their superintendent. This information will be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate professional learning networks; Make adjustments to the BIP that reflect the learning needs identified by teachers; Help and support principals on an on-going basis; Determine more leading indicators. 	<p>After the first Departmental Meetings:</p> <p>Principals are asked to share the information that comes from these meetings with their superintendent. We will be able to make adjustments to the BIP that reflect the learning needs identified by teachers. We will be able to help and support principals on an on-going basis. We will be able to determine more leading indicators for us to monitor</p>

The Local and Provincial Context for School Improvement Planning

It is an awesome responsibility to facilitate improvements in learning for all students in our Catholic schools. The following foundation documents provide the framework and directive for improving student learning.

1. The Catholic School Leadership Framework (an example for illustration purposes):

Catholic Faith, Community, Culture	Setting Directions	Building Relationships and Developing People	Developing the Organization	Leading the Instructional Program	Securing Accountability
The principal builds and sustains a Catholic Professional Learning Community that promotes a sense of collective responsibility for the worth and dignity of all, nurtures a Catholic school culture and faith development, and links the school with home and parish.	The principal builds a shared vision, fosters the acceptance of group goals and sets and communicates high performance expectations.	The principal strives to foster genuine trusting relationships with students, staff, families and communities, guided by a sense of mutual respect. The principal affirms and empowers others to work in the best interests of all students.	The principal builds collaborative cultures, structures the organization for success, and connects the school to its wider environment.	The principal sets high expectations for learning outcomes and monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of instruction. The principal manages the school effectively so that everyone can focus on teaching and learning.	The principal is accountable to students, parents, the community, supervisors and the board for ensuring that students benefit from a high quality education and for promoting collective responsibility for student outcomes within the whole school community. The principal is specifically accountable for the goals set out in the school improvement plan.

2. The K-12 School Effectiveness Framework:
This provincial resource provides a framework to support school improvement and student success in all of Ontario's schools through the strategic alignment of the six components:

- Assessment for, as, and of Learning;
- School and Classroom Leadership;
- Student Voice;
- Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning;
- Programs and Pathways;
- Home, School, and Community Partnerships.

3. The K-12 Board Improvement Plan:
This provincially-mandated plan includes board goals. Like your School Improvement Plans, this board plan was developed through a careful analysis of our student achievement data.

4. School Improvement Plan:
In all elementary and secondary schools, the SIP is a collaboratively-developed, data-driven statement of the SMART goal(s) your school intends to pursue to improve student learning. These goals are tied to BIP goals.

The Important Role of the Instructional Leader

Background Information

The elementary Joint Professional Development Committee promotes the following best practices in sustaining Catholic PLCs:

- PLCs are teacher driven and informed by student learning needs. The principals have an important role as a facilitator. "Informed by student learning needs" means that decisions and strategies that the PLC may make or implement, are to be based on student needs.
- The work of the PLC is to be completed during the work day.
- It is key that: There is a active participation of the members in decision-making. The group makes plans to implement their chosen strategies and a sharing of duties; innovation and creativity are encouraged.

Each of us has a critical role in building strong Catholic PLCs!

Teacher-driven and informed by student learning needs

- Teacher driven and informed by student learning needs = using classroom data, i.e., DRA, running records, anecdotal notes, observations, surveys, tests, quizzes, results of performance tasks, etc. Teachers identify student learning needs based on curriculum, and plan instruction to address the needs of all/some students. Teachers identify marker students.
- Teachers bring and discuss student work at the PLC meeting in order to receive support from each other and to learn together how to address the learning needs.
- Teachers formulate a classroom plan of action which could be stated as an inquiry question/action research/pathway based on the student learning needs. This process will be used to improve the learning for their marker students.
- Teachers identify professional learning for their own needs in order to accomplish their classroom plan of action.
- Teachers identify their working partner, e.g., teachers in their division; other teachers of the same grade; a combination of these.

Principal has an important role as facilitator

- **Principal has an important role as facilitator** = gathering school-based data, i.e., report card marks, DRA, Phonemic Awareness, CASI, EQAO, etc., in or order to determine divisional foci.
- These foci translate (with the help of the School Improvement Team) into SMART goals. The School Improvement Team should consist of one teacher per division and the SERT. All teachers at the school should be given a chance if they so desire to be part of the SIT. Therefore, the SIT does not need to remain the same year after year. Teachers should have input into its formation.

A Template for Action and Support: September/October 2011

Nothing in this timeline excludes any of the things that you have already established at the school, e.g., ways of tracking student achievement. It is simply a new model of starting the year that supports you in developing SMART goals, that honours teachers' own learning needs and goals based on who their marker students are, and that ties school improvement planning to the board improvement planning and vice versa.

ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY
<p>In May/June:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You will have completed some work with your SIT to revise your SMART goals. 2. Receiving teachers will have access to previous student data as per your assessment framework. 3. We will share our BIP goals in order that they can inform your SIP goal(s). 	<p>In May/June:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At the departmental level, use the <i>Professional Learning Cycle</i> to evaluate the status of the 2010-11 departmental goals, and determine the 2011-12 departmental goals; record the departmental goal(s) on the <i>Secondary Improvement Plan</i> and submit it to the principal. The learning needs of students who are not meeting with success at the Provincial Standard should continue to be the focus of departmental goals and strategies. 2. At the school-wide level, principals are to meet with their School Improvement Teams or their cabinet, and apply some or all components of the School Effectiveness Framework to determine school-wide strengths and needs. This SEF analysis should be used to determine a school-wide goal(s), which is to be recorded on the <i>Secondary Improvement Plan</i>. 3. We will share our BIP goals.
<p>In August/September:</p> <p>LCT will share collaborative inquiry questions brainstormed and developed from BIP goals for you and your teachers' consideration in pursuit of your SIP goals. Principals are asked to collaborate with coordinator to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review with staff how the BIP goals apply to their schools; 2. Review and revise SMART goal(s) for the year based on most recent student achievement data, (e.g., A +, report card data and EQAO); 	<p>In September:</p> <p>LCT will share collaborative inquiry questions brainstormed and developed from BIP goals for your Cabinet's/SIP team's consideration. Principals are asked to collaborate with coordinator to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine and choose which BIP goals apply to your school (subject, department, and/or grades); 2. Revise your school-wide SMART goal(s) based on student achievement data (e.g. report card data, EQAO...);

Collaborative Strategies for Supporting Our Progress

The following collaborative strategies are intended to support your school improvement progress:

1. Regular meetings with you and other staff members:

We value the work you are doing in your schools that we will be there regularly (to celebrate and collaborate). At our first school meeting, we will collaboratively set meeting dates, etc.

2. LCT Support

The members of the Learning Coordination Team are full participants along with principals and vice principals at LLC, and are co-learners in the school and board improvement planning process. In continuing to support growth in student achievement, coordinators will work more closely with school principals as partners in the SIP process. You are asked to work closer and regularly with the coordinator who has responsibility for your school to analyze student achievement data and to plan joint work, i.e., PLCs. Principals are encouraged to continue to build relationships with all members of our LCT. Please feel free to contact any coordinator for matters pertinent to that coordinator's portfolio or expertise.

3. Job-embedded Professional Learning

For Secondary: Department Heads are to call regular meetings throughout each semester, to ensure progress on their departmental goals by applying the Professional Learning Cycle. At least two or three departmental meetings per semester should be called for this purpose. Principals are to provide the Secondary Learning Coordinator with the dates of departmental sessions. Likewise, principals are to monitor the school-wide goals by holding regular meetings of their SIP teams or cabinet. Supply teachers are to be called in for these departmental and school-wide SIP meetings, to the Coordinators name. The Coordinator is available to attend departmental meetings upon request. Principals and vice principals should also participate in these departmental planning meetings.

For Elementary: The job-embedded time for each elementary teacher has yet to be determined for 2011-2012. Networking opportunities will be additional job-embedded time. In addition, each school will have 1/2 day for the SEF school self-assessment, i.e., pause and reflect. Members of the SIT will have an additional 1/2 day to revise the SIP with the principal and member of LCT after the school self-assessment.

“Professional community directs a spotlight on the relationships among adults within the school. By focusing on the structural and human resource conditions necessary for schools to become strongly connected around the goal of student learning, the framework suggests that strong cultures are based on shared norms and values, reflective dialogue, public practice, and collaboration.”

(Louis & Kruse, 1995)

The Important Role of the Instructional Leader

- (iii) The principal helps to set the norms for the PLC meetings. These include, but are not limited to:
- the norms established by the Joint PD committee;
 - the community has active member participation in decision-making;
 - the group makes plans to implement their chosen strategies;
 - there is a sharing of duties; innovation and creativity are encouraged.
- (iv) A further norm established in the research on effective PLCs is that **student work** (tests, essays, journals, daily work, culminating task, running records, video artefacts of student work, etc.) **must be part of each PLC for analysis**. The analysis of this student work may take the form of:
- providing descriptive feedback;
 - discussing success criteria; and/or
 - unpacking a curriculum expectation/learning goal based on the student work. This way the focus of the PLC remains on student learning needs, and teacher planning for next steps.
- (v) Principals identify the dates and times of the school PLC meetings with input from the SIT. As well as analysis of student work, **these meetings include some discussion of progress toward the SMART goal(s) and/or the inquiries that teachers are pursuing**. Evidence in the form of copies of student work can be provided. It is expected that progress is being made in each classroom, not that the rate of progress is determined by the principal or that every classroom needs to show the same progress.
- (vi) Each PLC **includes some component of teacher professional learning around the strategy(ies) to which they are committing**. This learning includes the use of resources, i.e., print, DVD, LRT, System SERT and LCT.
- (vi) Principals act on decisions made in the PLC when these decisions involve teachers desiring to form networks for learning. They share the information with superintendents/LCT in order that these learning networks are developed. Principals, in collaboration with the SIT and Learning Coordinator, develop agendas for each PLC meeting and distribute to teachers before the meeting so they are informed.

“Every interaction that a child has, during the course of a day, influences the adult that the child will become.”

Dr. Joyce Dealt

Growing As A Whole Person

Mission-Driven Shared Vision 2015: We are a Catholic School Board. We serve our students, working with the home, parish and school community to: nurture a Christ-Centered environment; provide student-focused learning opportunities; and support the growth of the whole person.

Core Strategy: Our Core Literacy Strategy, including Mathematical Literacy, demonstrates in text and visual form, how all of our work has a singular focus on increasing all students' achievement.

Student Outcomes

To realize our shared vision, what outcomes will we achieve?

- Students increasingly demonstrate the OCGEs.
- All MOE targets are exceeded by each school.
- Each high school's target for # of graduates is achieved.
- Students achieve one or more EQAO levels higher.

Resource Outcomes

How will we know that we are leveraging our resources towards our Mission-Driven Shared Vision?

- Our resources are leveraged in making optimal progress on our Student Outcomes through these Key Enablers and Core Processes.

Core Processes

To reliably achieve our Student Outcomes, what are the main processes at which we must excel across our Board?

- Our Catholic Learning Process produces student-led and student/staff collaborative experiences that reflect the OCGEs.
- Our Core Literacy Process steps at each level achieve age-appropriate, discipline-specific literacy.
- Our Continuous Assessment Process results in student-focused instructional decisions which include literacy and critical thinking.

Key Enablers

To enable us to excel at these processes, what key strengths do we need to have in structure and systems, culture and skills?

- Our Catholic Culture is based on the collective belief and understanding of our Mission that we will have more potential to be realized.
- A high level of Skill in Collaborative Decision-Making builds strong relationships between all stakeholders.
- Our Knowledge System provides principals with timely access to school-focused data and best available teaching practices, including for the 21st century learner.
- Our Cross-Functional Team Structure keeps us aligned on our strategy and empowered to achieve our targets on key indicators.