

## MODERN LEARNING STRATEGY

### CONTEXT

The York Region District School Board (YRDSB) expects schools to provide learning environments which prepare students to adapt, achieve and excel in a world that is constantly changing. School engagement has far-reaching societal implications; therefore, schools must be places where students are engaged deeply in learning and challenged to develop the skills and mindsets that are integral to modern learning. District data indicates that students feel that doing well in school is important; it also shows that both elementary and secondary students would like school to be more interesting. National and district data indicate a downward trend in students' interest in school as they progress through the grades. To be more engaged, all students need to have input into their learning as well as opportunities to investigate and address real-life issues.

The Modern Learning Strategy provides direction for actions in classrooms, schools and the system to engage students in authentic, relevant and deep learning that enables them to create, connect, communicate and share their learning with the world and to be future ready.

To support understanding of a specific school context, visit tools to access school reports/data and YRDSB's [modern learning targets](#).

### FOUNDATIONAL PRACTICES THINKING PROMPTS

The following three thinking prompts are designed to assist in fostering an Equity, Innovation and Leadership mindset. While reviewing the contents of the Modern Learning Strategy, these questions provide a lens through which decisions should be filtered.

1. Who might share leadership (Formal leaders/ Informal leaders/ Student leaders/ Other) in implementing an action? How might implementing this action both engage and develop leadership skills more broadly?
2. How will we ensure that our diversity strengthens our implementation of an action? How might we identify and reduce barriers in order to increase equity and inclusion in our implementation?
3. How might innovations in our practice (processes, technologies, resources) improve our implementation of an action? How might we consider local and global research in implementing this action?

To further support the implementation of the actions, visit [foundational practices core resources](#).

### MODERN LEARNING THEORY OF ACTION

**If we:**

- build knowledge and capacity;
- foster deep learning, innovative teaching and sound assessment;
- plan for sustainable and flexible environmental design; and
- create collaborative learning communities,

**then** students will be engaged in authentic, relevant and deep learning that enables them to create, connect, communicate and share their learning with the world and to be future ready.



### BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY

*Building Knowledge and Capacity* involves connecting research and practice to build capacity and develop an understanding of the interrelationships among deep learning, skills and mindsets to support all learners as engaged and caring citizens of the world.



### LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

*Learning, Teaching and Assessment* involves educators, students and community partners focusing on the co-creation of learning opportunities that are authentic, experiential, flexible and personalized.



### ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

*Environmental Design* attends to both technological infrastructure and physical spaces. Sustainable and flexible environmental design is intentional and responsive to student needs.



### COLLABORATIVE LEARNING COMMUNITIES

*Collaborative Learning Communities* build, support and value partnerships among students, educators, families and communities within dynamic and flexible learning environments. Learners in collaborative communities embrace challenges, creativity and problem solving with a commitment and responsibility for contributing to the shared learning of all members of the learning community.

### ACTIONS

#### System

Build a collective understanding of the Modern Learning Frame and make connections among the specific components through professional conversations and the development of professional learning opportunities

Learn with and from researchers and educators to support ongoing strategic planning, implementation and monitoring of the Modern Learning Strategy

Investigate, communicate and provide access to diverse and emerging resources to support modern learning

Identify and nurture the development of innovative practices to build system capacity (e.g., School-Based Collaborative Learning Projects)

Create and support educational networking strategies that connect research, resources and practical tools

Support system and school leaders and Modern Learning Representative Team Members to build capacity for modern learning approaches

#### School

Build a collective understanding of the Modern Learning Frame and make connections among the specific components through professional conversations, school improvement planning and co-learning opportunities

Review modern learning research and resources, through the BWW Modern Learning Page

#### Classroom

Develop approaches to support student learning based on research and resources linked to the Modern Learning Frame

Identify, learn about and implement research-based instructional and assessment strategies found on the BWW Modern Learning Page to support student learning

### ACTIONS

#### System

Develop and sustain collaboration across teams and departments to support modern learning

Provide experiential, social and formal professional learning opportunities and resources for teaching, learning and assessment

Create guidelines that support libraries and Makerspaces as components of the Learning Commons

#### School

Implement modern learning approaches with staff which reflect the interconnectedness of mindsets, deep learning, and skills

Support interdisciplinary/[integrated learning](#), experiential learning opportunities and flexible structures (e.g., time, space, resources)

Promote libraries and Makerspaces as key components of the Learning Commons that extend and enhance purposeful, curriculum-based student learning

#### Classroom

Implement modern learning approaches with students reflective of the interconnectedness of mindsets, deep learning, and skills

#### Mindsets

- Model, promote and teach digital, environmental and global citizenship and responsibility
- Use language that aligns with a growth mindset and supports students' willingness to take risks, to innovate and to persevere

#### Deep Learning

- Engage in a process of assessment for and as learning when co-designing learning with/for students to promote student voice and engagement
- Promote personalized learning models to meet the needs of students
- Co-learn with students through [inquiry-based learning](#), authentic tasks and critical thinking approaches
- Explore modern learning through the lens of the Instructional Core
- Embed strategies that support innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship in the context of authentic challenges

#### Skills

- Foster students' capacity to be their own assessors and to ultimately become independent and autonomous learners
- Develop learners' ability to analyze, evaluate, interpret and synthesize information in order to navigate, question, challenge and transform understanding (e.g., teach learners to critically assess bias and voice within media)
- Develop opportunities for creative problem solving and idea generation

### ACTIONS

#### System

Support the strategic implementation of a K-12 Engagement Platform that allows for collaboration and personalization of learning

Ensure the digital systems teachers and students depend upon are secure and operational

Investigate creative and innovative solutions when designing and reimagining flexible learning spaces

Provide access to technology for all teachers through Teacher Technology Engagement Program (TTEP)

Develop a guideline to support app creation

Update Blueprint for Modern Learning to support decisions about the appropriate purchase and use of technology

Refine the Help Desk Strategy to support self-directed processes for troubleshooting

#### School

Explore the use of educational social networks to connect staff with other professionals, resources and innovative practices

Teach digital citizenship and responsibility to support the appropriate use of digital media and tools

Use Blueprint for Supporting Effective Use of Technology in the Modern Learning Classroom to support the acquisition of modern learning resources to make instructional decisions related to the School Improvement Plan

#### Classroom

Explore flexible structures such as use of materials, indoor and outdoor spaces and experiences to enhance modern learning environments (e.g., [third teacher](#), outdoor classrooms)

Leverage digital tools to enhance pedagogy, learning and communication

### ACTIONS

#### System

Model collaborative learning (e.g., [collaborative inquiry approach](#))

Support dynamic, collaborative learning across schools and CECs

Support a Student Trustee Innovation grant and proposal system to directly support student innovation projects

Explore and foster external partnerships in support of student innovation and entrepreneurship

Create, model and support educational social networking by building online and face-to-face professional learning communities

#### School

Support staff collaborative learning across classrooms and/or disciplines within a school (e.g., [Promoting Collaborative Learning Cultures](#), [Principals as Co-Learners: Supporting the Promise of Collaborative Inquiry](#))

Develop a Modern Learning Representative Team to engage in opportunities to deepen knowledge and share learning

Engage with external partners to provide [Community Connected Experiential Learning](#) (e.g., experiential learning, apprenticeship, co-op, entrepreneurial learning opportunities)

Foster and enhance family and community engagement in support of student learning and well-being (e.g., new K-12 Student/Teacher/Family Engagement Platform, community partnerships, Parent Symposiums)

#### Classroom

Create classroom-based collaborative learning communities in which safety, risk taking, innovation and shared ownership for learning are central

#### Co-learn with students

Make connections beyond the classroom to engage students in local and global issues through working with other educators and community organizations

Use technology-enabled learning to support collaboration and communication as well as local and global, environmental and digital citizenship

### PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Continuous professional learning is a crucial part of board and school improvement processes. The following principles have been identified to support planning for professional learning.

#### Principles for Effective Professional Learning

Professional learning is effective when it is:

- responsive to students' identities, thinking, learning, achievement and well-being as evidenced by a range of data gathered from and about students, including perceptual, demographic, program and achievement;
- developed through inquiry, as educators, facilitators, researchers, and/or partners engage in co-learning;
- based on high-quality, evidence-based research;
- built upon a collaborative culture of curiosity and risk-taking;
- differentiated by the educator's readiness and needs, recognizing that different people learn in different ways (e.g., experiential, social, formal) and through different modalities;
- an iterative approach, informed by ongoing analysis, reflection and feedback; and
- focused on developing, deepening and connecting both content knowledge, pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge.

### RESOURCES

Aligning resources effectively, purposefully and efficiently to focus on what matters most is a key leadership function. Resources have been identified to support the implementation of the Modern Learning Strategy.

They are organized into four categories:

- Core Resources
- Supporting Specialized Populations Resources
- Parent/Guardian/Family Resources
- Facilitation Resources

### MONITORING

Monitoring is the ongoing gathering, reviewing and assessing of information to track and document progress towards goals. It is an integral part of board and school improvement processes. The following principles have been identified to support collective monitoring.

#### Principles of Effective Monitoring

Monitoring is effective when it is:

- shared collaboratively by those who are implementing the improvement plan and who have agency to act upon the results;
- reciprocal, involving a two-way flow of information across classroom, school and system to inform responsive action at all levels;
- based on criteria against which evidence from multiple sources (e.g., conversations, observations, products) can be examined;
- focused on the gathering and analysis of the evidence;
- a continuous loop of action, analysis, reflection and response;
- timely and ongoing while implementation is still in progress;
- able to yield timely, precise, and descriptive feedback to inform next steps; and
- rooted in professional discourse in which questions are drivers for deeper understanding of what makes a difference for student achievement and well-being.

### TARGETS

Targets support the evaluation process. Clear identification and communication of the targets are key to board and school improvement planning. The following principles have been identified to support effective target setting.

#### Principles of Effective Target Setting

Targets are effective when they:

- are established through a collaborative process;
- are specific and based on identified needs;
- align with the collective and strategic efforts within the system, school and classrooms;
- identify the progress expected at specific checkpoints;
- are ambitious and attainable predictions of intended results;
- are motivational for continuous improvement; and
- evaluate the impact of strategic actions on student achievement and well-being.

#### Three Types of Targets: Implementation, Perception, Achievement

**Implementation** targets are established to measure whether strategic actions in the BIPSA are being implemented as intended.

**Perception** targets are established to measure the perceptions of students about their school environment with regard to their learning and well-being. Revised school climate survey questions will be implemented in 2017 to gather baseline data specific to the current BIPSA and to set targets for the mid-cycle and five-year checkpoints.

**Achievement** targets are established to measure whether desired results are being realized with regard to student achievement.

[Modern Learning implementation and perception targets](#)