



Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) Project Synopsis

Project ID:30267 - Successful Students via High School Completion

School Authority: 1250- Fort Vermilion School Division No. 52

Scope: 3500 Students, Grades 4 to 12, 19 Schools

PROJECT PLAN

Project Description:

This AISI project will focus on increasing the percentage of students completing high school within a three year period of starting their program. Fort Vermilion School Division students have not met provincial averages in the areas of high school completion, transition to post secondary and have traditionally had higher averages for student dropout rates. Current data indicates that the Fort Vermilion School Division is currently 16.1 percent lower than the province in the high school completion rate, 14 percent lower than the province in the percentage of students transitioning to post secondary and has 7.5 percent more students dropping out of school than the rest of the province. Our goal is to move from 54.1 to 65 percent of our students graduating from high school within the next three years.

The Fort Vermilion School Division plans to put in place a person that will be critical in leading this project and working directly with school administration and teachers. This person will be referred to as the Director of School Completion.

The Director of School Completion will provide ongoing direction, mentorship and support for young administrators. This is an essential service for the Fort Vermilion School Division when you examine its location, demographics and transient nature. This director will conduct research into the factors which affect each individual school's transition and completion rates. They will aid administrators in conducting assessments for each school in the areas of school climate, programming, academic counseling services, community partnerships and school operations. From each of these assessments will come individual approaches and strategies to impact grade and school transition rates, dropout rates and inevitably the Fort Vermilion School Division's high school completion rate? The Director of School Completion will also provide professional development to administrators and teachers in the above mentioned areas. The intention of this AISI project is to create solid, research based practices that impact the number of students completing high school.

Improvement Goals:

Student Learning Goals	Strategies	Measures
Increase the percentage of FVSD Students completing high school.	Assess and impact the factors that affect FVSD students completing high school. These factors include cultural aspects, school climate as well as programming, timetabling, and career counseling at the high school level.	Alberta Education measures of High School Completion, Drop Out Rate, and Transition to Post Secondary as measured by the Accountability Pillar. The division will also be utilizing the student transition rates into grade 10, 11 and 12.



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Evaluation Methods:

The ongoing evaluation of the project will include:

- All data collected over the three years of the project will be reviewed and analyzed on a yearly basis.
- Annual reports will be compiled and submitted to Alberta Education. The results of each year's analysis and report will provide direction for the ongoing implementation of the project.
- An annual report based on the analysis of the data will be presented to the FVSD Board of Trustees.
- The Superintendent will incorporate a discussion in his annual planning and review meeting at each school in regards to the progress of the AISI project and its impact at the school level.
- Ongoing reports, discussions and Professional Development in the area of the AISI Project at the Monthly Leadership Team meetings.
- The data and its implications will be used at the end of the three years to determine the overall success of the project.

PROJECT RESULTS

Student Learning Outcomes:

2006/2007

Several targets were not achieved during year one of the project. Most strategies were developed over that year and only several reached implementation stage during the latter part of the year.

The overall measure of our strategy (increasing the number of students completing in three years) will be a product of all strategies having an opportunity to be implemented and have impact over the two remaining years. It is anticipated we will see the impact of these strategies during year two of the project.

2007/2008

This year has been a very good year as it has been one of implementing strategies and services for students, teachers and schools. Programming increased to support students having an increased awareness of career possibilities, know more about their personal aptitudes and the importance of school completion to future choices. More schools developed school completion programs which vary in approach but will have continuing impact on school completion. In addition:

- High School Completion results increased by 8%.
- Drop-out rate decreases.
- Returning rates increased.
- Transition rates increased.
- Parent satisfaction indicators increased.
- School administrator satisfaction with AISI program is high.



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2008/2009

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- High School Completion results in a decrease by 6.3%.
- Drop-out rate decreases from 10.3 to 9.4.

Effective/Promising Practices

Instructional Strategy:

2006/2007

- Implementation of the Self Assessment Toolkit and External reviews division wide were implemented. Two schools had external reviews completed. Both of these had recommendations on instructional practice.
- Modules on Career development were implemented that included courses on aptitude assessment and portfolio development.
- Career programming was implemented and integrated into core programming in grades 6-12.
- A housing project was implemented by Fort Vermilion Public School as a strategy to provide alternative programming to student at risk of dropping out and for RAP programming for others. The project built two houses for a local First Nations band. Students working with a journeyman carpenter/teacher provided the manpower and the band the materials. Half of the 15 students participating were identified as at-risk K& E students. The program was highly successful. The role of the AISI project was and advisory one to the school. The AISI project will be promoting this type of programming in other communities during the coming year.
- Junior High Career fairs were added to the jurisdictions programming.
- Surveys of all business in the division were conducted and 65 new business partners were identified and confirmed for work Experience, RAP and Internship Programs.
- Summer internship programs with the Hospital and Forest industry were transferred from summer-only placements to the Copernican system at our pilot school.

2007/2008

Three schools received External reviews which supplied them with data to advise future planning and program inputs.

Programming using the Health Curriculum was developed for implementation in grades 2-6 (the project scope was gr. 4-12 but we decided that we wanted career awareness expanded in the lower grades.)The counselors went through the Health curriculum in consultation with the teachers to add to the Career awareness sections of the grades 2-6 curriculum.



Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) Project Synopsis

Two Travelling Trades trailers were designed and contracts awarded to develop them for inclusion in the 2008-2009 school year. (These trailers provide CTS for smaller schools where it is not cost effective to set these up in each school: i.e.cosmetology, mechanics and electronics.)

An average of eight counselor visits per year to school sites to work with students on career programming.

Five guest speakers were utilized by schools to discuss careers.

Two career days were conducted with very positive reviews.

High Level Public School pilot project with Copernican timetable model is highly successful. Student reviews show very high levels of satisfaction and student success.

Average number of FNMI credits per student on Copernican system rises from 15.9 to 22.8.

2008/2009

Three schools received External reviews which supplied them with data to advise future planning and program inputs.

Three travelling Trades trailers were designed and put into service 2008-2009 school year. (These trailers provide 18 CTS credits for smaller schools where it is not cost effective to set these up in each school: i.e. cosmetology, mechanics and electronics.)

An average of eight counselor visits per year to school sites to work with students on career programming.

Two interactive hands on career days were conducted with very positive reviews.

High Level Public School pilot project with Copernican timetable model is highly successful. Student reviews show very high levels of satisfaction and student success.

Average number of FNMI credits per student on Copernican system rises from 15.9 to 22.8.

Professional Development:

2006/2007

- Professional development was implemented that served to team build all high school counselors into a cohesive group that set division protocols for grade 7-12 counselors.

- CTS teachers were given PD opportunities that lead to standard programming expectations in schools.

- CTS teachers accessed Red Deer Colleges Rural Training Initiative for CTS teachers during the summer of 2007.

- Nine sessions on School Culture and Climate, Understanding Student Behavior and Functional Assessment for the Classroom Teacher were offered by the Director of School Completion.



Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) Project Synopsis

- Junior administrators were involved in school external reviews and also accessed the Director of School Completion as an advisor on operational procedures.

2007/2008

Two teachers received summer training at Red deer College in CTS areas.

All district counselors and off campus supervisors were trained in Site Inspection procedures.(necessary to conduct site inspections for safety, etc)

Career Cruising training delivered.

All high school counselors attended the BTT conference.

Three speakers brought in for PD day in September.

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Student Assessment:

2006/2007

- Rubrics and exemplars were developed division-wide in our CTS programs. These served not only to assist student knowledge of how they would be assessed but also assisted CTS teachers not having formal training in this field, to meet outcomes.

Project Management:

2006/2007

Reviews of all CTS facilities were conducted and \$225,000 of Capital equipment upgrades and facilities upgrades were injected. This is a continuing commitment from the division with the goal to increase the breadth and depth of CTS course offerings to students in all schools.

Monthly career counselor and quarterly CTS teacher meetings were established to build capacity and develop strategy to maintain current programming and define new offerings.

2007/2008

An additional \$175,000 was injected into the renovation and improvements to 3 CTS facilities.



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Parental Involvement:

2006/2007

- Parents were involved in both self assessment surveys and external reviews.

-Parent involvement was sought and received in implementing Internet based aptitude testing in our Mennonite communities.

-Parents, school council members, students and community partners were involved in investigating a school in Lethbridge that utilizes the Copernican timetable model. Following this a pilot project was established that saw one of our high schools selected to begin this system in the 2007/8 school year.

2007/2008

- Presentations to School Council Chairs.

- Attendance at School Council meetings and public meetings.

2008/2009

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Summary and Reflections

What worked well:

2006/2007

The project impacts many components of our system and is not piece-meal in its approach. Going through the research and strategy development phase required us to think and plan with a Systems Approach in mind where all district practices were on the table for review.

What has worked well is the willingness on the part of teachers, parents, business partners, administrators and central office leadership to all contribute to the strategies we are now implementing.

2007/2008

- Copernican pilot project at High Level Public School.
- Schools incorporating careers programming into planning and practices.
- Business partners interested in direction schools are taking.
- New cosmetology program is very successful.
- Student interest in their personal skills, career routes and schooling has increased.
- Students accessed the Career Cruising website 328,299 times.

2008/2009

- Copernican pilot project at High Level Public School.
- Schools incorporating careers programming into planning and practices.
- The CTS travelling trade trailers have worked out great are being used extensively in all 5 high schools.

What did not work well:

2006/2007

- Attempting to deal with too many grade levels during initial phase.
- Having too high an expectation of being able to impact classroom instruction in core courses through adding stay-in- school initiatives.
- Rushing to implement strategies before seeing they are not stand-alone items. They require many system components and practices to work with them.

2007/2008

Challenges locating career resources to support programming at lower grade levels.

Challenges getting Travelling Trailers in place by year end.

Some school leaders marginally buy in to programming.



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2008/2009

The implementation of study portfolios and success teams struggled to get off the ground. Future work will continue in this area.

Project adjustments

2006/2007

-Adjustments were made to implementation schedules.

-Some strategies and goals were removed from the plan. It was not possible to do a good job of it all.

2007/2008

Health Curriculum supports and Travelling Trade implementation moved to 2008-9 school year.

2008/2009

Travelling Trade implementation moved to 2008-9 school year and was scheduled.

Sharing and celebration of success

2006/2007

- School Council, board and administrator presentations.
- Radio advertisements developed and year round contracts purchased with two radio stations.
- Newspaper coverage.
- Chamber of Commerce and Community Inter-agency presentations.

2007/2008

- School Board, parent council and school administration communication.
- Radio ads
- Newspaper
- School Communication newsletters
- Website and School Monitor systems.

2008/2009

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Unanticipated results/effects

2006/2007

- Over 200,00 student hits on our Aptitude/Career planning website by students and parents.



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- Considerable student "chatter" on careers.
- Significant business partner interest and willingness to support our direction.
- Tremendous parent and student support for our pilot project having the Copernican model.
- An 80% transition rate from grade 9 to grade 10 in one of our feeder schools that normally has a 40% transition rate.
- Considerable support for allowing students to have internet access to our careers programming site in traditional Mennonite communities.

2007/2008

Copernican pilot very successful at High level Public.

96% student satisfaction with model. FNMI-100%

87% of students felt attendance improved. FNMI-95%

90% indicated being more responsible for their learning. FNMI-96%

95% off students indicated success in their courses. FNMI-100%

FNMI credits-earned per student per year, increases from a 3 year average of 17.5 to 29 credits per FNMI student.