



Fort McMurray Public School District

School Review Report

École Dickinsfield School

Presented by the School Review team
(Joe Champion, David Parsons and Rick Thorne)
May 2015



Fort McMurray Public School District

School Review Process

TERMS OF REFERENCE (March 2, 2015)

A. BACKGROUND

The School Review Process, supported by the Board of Trustees and administration, will involve conducting external school reviews which are meant to be both formative and supportive. Two or three schools will be reviewed each year.

B. REVIEW TEAM MANDATE

The Review Team will provide information in the form of observations, commendations, and recommendations to the school Administration and staff, the School Councils, and the District Leadership Team with respect to the following areas:

1) Implementation of FMPSD and Alberta Education Goals

- Education plans
- Timetabling and time allocations
- Professional Growth Plans
- Course Outlines

2) Core, Co-curricular and Extracurricular Programs

- Core program offerings
- Extra-curricular program
- Intramurals
- Student Council (if applicable)

3) School Communications

- Newsletters
- Phone calls home
- Email

4) Support Staff

- Secretaries
- Teacher Assistants
- Support Staff evaluations

5) Parent/Community Involvement

- School Council
- Volunteers

6) School Leadership

- Teacher supervision
- Staff meetings
- Decision-making process
- Budget

7) School Climate

- Student satisfaction
- Parent satisfaction
- Staff satisfaction

8) Student Achievement and Recognition

- Achievement results
- Achievement analysis
- Recognition programs

9) The School as a Safe and Caring Environment

- Student conduct
- Bullying issues

10) Professional Development

- Professional Learning Communities/Professional Learning Fridays
- Staff attendance at workshops and in-services
- Available funds

11) Technology

- Equipment and facilities
- Future plans

12) Library

- Resources available
- Programs offered

13) Physical Facilities

- Appropriateness
- Custodial services
- Central Office Maintenance

14) Student Support Services

- Identification
- IPPS, Inclusion & Programming
- Central Office supports

15) Other priorities identified by the École Dickinsfield School administration

- Value of The Leader in Me program
- Effectiveness of the EDGE program
- Quality of the French Immersion program.

C. REVIEW TEAM MEMBERSHIP - École Dickinsfield School (April 2015)

- Rick Thorne - District Principal
- Joe Champion - Principal, Fort McMurray Christian School
- David Parsons - Vice Principal Walter and Gladys Hill Public School

D. PROCESS FOR GATHERING INFORMATION

- Staff, Student, Parent surveys
- Staff, Student & Parent interviews
- School Council interview
- Review of school based documents and materials

E. HOW THE REVIEW RESULTS WILL BE USED

1. To affirm the positive features and practices which are taking place at the school and to provide positive feedback where appropriate.
2. To provide feedback to the school Principal/staff/School Council that will assist the school with planning for the future.
3. To develop a short-term and long-term action plan to address any areas that need strengthening.
4. To provide a Review Report to the District Senior Leadership team.
5. To produce a one page summary that can be shared with the School Community.

F. ACTION PLAN FOLLOW-UP

1. The responsibility for follow-up monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plan will rest with the Superintendent or designate.
2. The principal shall be responsible for reporting progress on the Action Plan to the Senior Leadership Team.

SCHOOL REVIEW

The findings in this school review are based on:

Online surveys:

Survey	# of Respondents	Total Possible	Return Rate %
Parents	Students represented 247	Total # of students 702	35%
Teachers	27	37	73%
Support staff	11	19	58%

Individual interviews (conducted at École Dickinsfield School April 20-23, 2015)

- Teachers (13 staff randomly selected + 2 who requested to be interviewed)
- Support staff (7 staff randomly selected)
- Interview with School Council with school admin absent
- Interview Student focus groups
 - Division one – Nine students
 - Division two – Six Students
- Interview school administration (Mr. Smith, Mme. Wells and Mr. Andrews)

Other Documents

- École Dickinsfield School Growth Plan (SEP/AERR 2014-15)
- Alberta Education Accountability Pillar Results Fall 2014
- Tell Them From Me survey summary (grades 4-6 students)
- The Leader in Me Report completed Winter 2015

The School Review team spent two full days at the school beginning with an excellent tour of the school by grade 3 student Melissa, a tour leader. As much time as possible was spent in and around the school trying to get a sense of the ‘feeling’ of the school. Unfortunately, the large number of interviews prevented the team from spending as much time doing this as we would have liked. A recommendation for future school reviews will be to ensure that there is ample time to do this.

Data collected from each of these sources provided the review team with critical input into this report. Although we do not mention every comment written on the surveys or made during our interviews, we have included trends and recurring themes identifying areas of satisfaction and/or areas of concern.

Percentages quoted here are based on the number of respondents that had an opinion, and do not include those who indicated that the questions ‘Doesn’t apply’.

Though sheer volume prevents us from including all responses in this report, the survey results in their entirety have been available to the École Dickinsfield School Administration for their use in continuous improvement.

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF FMPSD AND ALBERTA EDUCATION GOALS

Observations:

- The school's Annual Education Plan is complete, including a school philosophy and mission statement.
- The principal meets annually with each teacher to review their growth plans and course outlines.
- Class sizes:

Grade	Avg. class size for grade	Avg. class size French Immer.	Avg. Class size English	Largest class in grade
ECDP	19.25	20.5	18	21
Kdg.	18.5	20.25	15	21
Grade 1	21.4	23	19	23
Grade 2	19.2	18.25	23	23
Grade 3	21.75*	23.5	20*	24
Grade 4	19.75*	18.5	21*	23
Grade 5	23	26.5	19.5	28
Grade 6	18	15	21	21

- includes a grade 3 / 4 split class (English)

- Most areas of the Accountability Pillar remain good or excellent.
- Student Learning Achievement has declined, both in Acceptable Standard and Standard of Excellence.
- PAT acceptable remains above province with PAT Excellence below.

Measure Category	Measure Category	Measure	École Dickinsfield School..			Alberta			Measure Evaluation		
			Current Result	Prev Year	Prev 3 Yr avg	Current Result	Prev Year	Prev 3 Yr Avg	Achievement	Improvement	Overall
Safe/Caring Schools	Good	Safe and Caring	86.8	89.5	89.7	89.1	89.0	88.6	High	Maintained	Good
Student Learning Opportunities	Excellent	Program of Studies	85.1	69.5	79.1	81.3	81.5	81.1	Very High	Maintained	Excellent
		Ed. Quality	94.3	92.8	90.1	89.2	89.8	89.5	Very High	Maintained	Excellent
Student Learning Achievement	Issue	PAT: Accept.	75.1	83.3	89.1	74.0	75.3	75.5	Intermediate	Declined Significantly	Issue
		PAT: Excell.	14.0	14.4	26.0	19.0	19.1	19.6	Low	Declined	Issue
Prep for Lifelong Lrng, Wld of Work, Citiz.	Excellent	Work Prep.	88.7	72.1	73.2	81.2	80.3	80.0	Very High	Improved	Excellent
		Citizenship	87.1	86.6	86.1	83.4	83.4	82.6	Very High	Maintained	Excellent
Parental Involvement	Excellent	Parental Involvement	84.4	73.9	81.4	80.6	80.3	80.0	Very High	Maintained	Excellent
Continuous Improvement	Excellent	School Improvement	85.6	71.9	81.5	79.8	80.6	80.2	Very High	Maintained	Excellent

Commendations:

- 94% of parents indicated satisfaction with the overall quality of education their child is receiving.
- There is an increased use of literacy and numeracy centres among most staff, in an attempt to improve literacy and numeracy performance. (Teacher interviews)
- 92% of parents are satisfied with the instructional methods used by teachers in the school.
- In the Tell Them From Me Survey of grades 5&6 students, students rated the drivers of student outcomes right at the Canadian norm (effective learning time 8/10 both school and nation, relevance 7.9 school vs 7.8 Canada and rigor of classroom instruction 8 school vs 7.9 Canada)
- 85% of parents feel that the number of students in their child's classes are acceptable.
- Out of the nine 'current year' measures on the Accountability Pillar, seven are above the province.
- A number of teachers indicated that there was a high degree of collaboration this year on benchmarking.

Recommendations:

- While staff clearly recognized the complexity of developing a timetable in a large school with French Immersion and English and also having to accommodate students in the PEAK Academy, 33% of staff indicate a level of dissatisfaction with the school's timetable. It is recommended that staff or representatives of staff be involved in some way in the development of the timetable. In doing so, they may be able to offer suggestions for improving the timetable given the restrictions placed on it, and may have a better sense for those complexities that prevent the timetable from being what they would like it to be.
- Because 26% of teachers did not know the key strategies in the school's School Growth Plan. It is recommended that means be explored through which all staff be more involved in the development of the School Growth Plan, and that the plan be more regularly reviewed / revisited with staff, either through PLFs, divisional or grade level collaboration.

2. CORE AND CO-CURRICULAR* AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR* PROGRAMS

Observations:

- The school's educational program is currently supported by 37 FTE teaching staff (ATA) including a principal and two vice principals (one of which teaches half time) and three part time teachers (94.5, 38.3, and 42.1 FTE).
- École Dickinsfield School has 702 students from ECDP to grade 6, offering both a French Immersion and an English stream.

	French Immersion	English stream	Total students
ECDP	41 (53%)	36 (47%)	77
Kdg.	81 (73%)	30 (27%)	111
ECS total	122 (65%)	66 (35%)	188
Grade 1	69 (65%)	38 (35%)	107
Grade 2	73 (76%)	23 (24%)	96
Grade 3	47 (59%)	33 (42%)	80
Division 1 total	189 (67%)	94 (33%)	283
Grade 4	37 (55%)	30 (45%)	67
Grade 5	53 (58%)	39 (42%)	92
Grade 6	30 (42%)	42 (58%)	72
Division 2 total	120 (52%)	111 (48%)	231
School total	431(61%)	271 (39%)	702

- This school has been involved in the Leader in Me program since 2011 and is currently working towards attaining Lighthouse School status. The Lighthouse Milestone is a highly regarded standard set by Franklin Covey that represents a significant benchmark and it is evidence that a high standard has been met by a school.
- The school has also housed students from the PEAK (formerly called EDGE) program since 2011. These students are in grades 4-6 and are involved in either the hockey academy or dance academy.
- The school has also been an APPLE healthy and active school since 2012. There is currently 0.2 fte assigned to a teacher as APPLE school facilitator.
- The school also practices environmental stewardship through programs such as wasteless lunches, lights out initiative, vermicomposting, recycling, hosting a community garden and much more.
- The school offers a wide range of co-curricular activities including
 - All grades: Holiday concerts, Science Fair Club, Literacy Week, Terry Fox Run, UNICEF, Jump Rope for Heart;
 - ECDP- Grade 3: Sock hops;
 - Grades 1-6: Musical Production, Chess Club,, Student Lighthouse, Apple Core/Apple Seeds, Yoga, school-wide leadership jobs running club/kilometre club, Spring/fall/winter games;
 - Grades 2-6: Global Club;

- Grades 4-6: Robotics, Handbells, ATB student bank, Geography Challenge. School dances;
- Grades 5-6: Boys and Girls Basketball, Boys and Girls Volleyball, Student Newspaper, Cooking Club.
- Given the number of activities, it was somewhat surprising that in the Tell Them From Me Survey of grades 5 & 6 students,
 - 64% of DF students indicated that they played sports other than in gym class compared to 69% nationally.
 - With regards to clubs, only 34% of the same students indicated they take part in art, drama or music groups; school clubs or a school committee, compared to 49% nationally.

Commendations:

- 90% of parents are 'satisfied with the variety of courses offered such as music, P.E or alternative program (EDGE)'.
- 90% of parents also feel that 'students have a good choice of lunchtime and after-school clubs, teams and programs.'
- Teachers and students also share this view as communicated through the interviews and focus groups.
- Programs such as this demand a major commitment from staff and other leaders. That such a large number of activities can be offered speaks well of their commitment.

Recommendations:

- Keep up the great work and continue to strive to offer programs that meet the needs of students with a diverse range of interests and aptitudes.
- Review with students the result on Tell Them From Me survey regarding involvement in sports and other school clubs and activities. Try to determine why those results don't appear to be consistent with the number and variety of co-curricular programs available to students at École Dickinsfield School.

***The terms co-curricular and extracurricular are often used interchangeably . For the purpose of this report we will most often use the term co-curricular to represent both, as we feel that all experiences that children are exposed to support the education of the whole child and are not necessarily 'extra' to the curriculum. According to the Glossary of Educational Reform, 2013,**

*"Generally speaking, co-curricular activities are an extension of the formal learning experiences in a course or academic program, while extracurricular activities may be offered or coordinated by a school, but may not be explicitly connected to academic learning. **This distinction is extremely fuzzy in practice, however, and the terms are often used interchangeably.** Athletics, for example, are typically considered to be extracurricular activities, while a science fair would more likely be considered a co-curricular activity, given that students are learning science, participation may be required by the school, students may be graded on their entries, or a science teacher may coordinate the fair. Still, in some schools certain athletics activities might be considered "co-curricular," while in other schools a science fair may be labeled "extracurricular."*

3. SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

Observations:

- School administration employs a number of means to communicate to parents, staff and students.
- Communication to the parent community occurs through a school app, website, facebook and Twitter page along with the usual emails. Communication to individual parents tends to happen through telephone or face-to-face conversations.
- Communication among staff generally occurs through e-mail or face-to-face.
- Admin communicates with staff face-to-face where possible or through e-mail.
- Many staff members commented that they appreciated receiving the MMM (Monday Morning Minutes) that comes from Mme. Wells each week, and say they find it valuable in planning their week.
- Teachers communicate with parents in person or by phone where possible.
- 76% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that their child's report card provided them with clear and useful information regarding his/her program.
- When you look specifically at grades 4-6 parents, the ones who initially appeared most concerned with the absence of a number grade on the new report card, a smaller percentage, 66% agreed or strongly agreed. *It is important to note here that the new report card is a district and not a school initiative, and this information is provided as a point of interest more than an analysis of anything the school is doing with report cards.*

Commendations:

- 92% of parents were satisfied with the information they receive from the school.
- 96% were satisfied with how they receive information from the school.
- 91% of support staff feel there is good communication among school staff.
- 81% of teachers are satisfied with the level of communication at the school.
 - Some expressed that more staff meetings may be helpful.

Recommendations:

- Based on suggestions by a number of staff, consider whether regular staff meetings may be a way to further improve what is already commendable communication.

4. SUPPORT STAFF

Observations:

- Delivery of the school's educational program is supported by 13 educational assistants, 3 secretaries, 1 librarian 1 contract counsellor and 3 custodians.
- It was clear that support staff is a valued part of the the École Dickinsfield team, and every effort was done to involve them in all aspects of the school. This is supported by the fact that:
 - 91% of support staff feel that other staff understand and support their role in the school.
 - 100% of support staff enjoy working at this school.

Commendations:

- 96% of parents felt that support staff (eg. Educational Assistants, secretaries, librarian and custodians) are helpful and friendly.
- While concerns were expressed by teaching staff about the reduction in educational assistants, particularly school funded learning support EAs in both English and French in recent years, 96% of teachers felt that support staff in their school provides effective support for students and teachers.
- 100% of surveyed support staff enjoyed working at this school.

Recommendations:

- Continue to fully involve support staff in all aspects of school life.
- While attendance at staff meetings outside their hours of work cannot be compulsory without pay, continue to invite support staff to attend these meetings. (Currently 64% indicate that they attend staff meetings, a relatively large number given that this is not mandatory for them.)

5. PARENT/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Observations:

- This school has clearly and effectively delineated the work of the School Council with an advisory function from the Parent Council, which deals with fundraising efforts. There is very little overlap in either their functions or their membership.
- Both groups operate very effectively within the parameters set out for them,
- The School Council meets monthly.
- There is also a Parent Council, whose focus is on fundraising.
- There was a 35% response rate to the parent survey for the School Review process.
- At a recent ASCA (ALberta School Councils Association) conference and AGM in Edmonton, four parents of École Dickinsfield School were in attendance.

Commendations:

- Parents appear to be engaged and committed to their school community. 84% of parents surveyed agreed that they have the opportunity to provide input into decisions that are made at the school that impact their child.
- School Council felt that their opinions were valued by school administration who often ask the Council for input in important decisions.
- The School Council continues to find ways to encourage more participation by alternating scheduling of the meetings from evening to within the school day on alternate months.

Recommendations:

- In our meeting with School Council, the membership expressed an interest in being more involved in the School Growth Planning process. They noted that at one point in the past they would be brought into the school for an afternoon with the staff and the administration to offer their input into the plan. It is recommended that admin explore a way to involve the parents in this process at the development level, possibly bringing them in for a session with the entire staff as part of a PLF where all parties look at the data and develop strategies that will form the basis of the annual School Growth Plan.
- Continue to use alternate scheduling of meetings as a way to involve and engage more parents.

6. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Observations:

- Principal conducts all formal supervision/evaluation. The full administrative team is involved in supervision of staff on a regular basis.
- Some concerns were expressed by new teachers requesting increased support through the district's New Teacher Induction Program
- There is widespread support for the The Leader in Me program and recognition of the benefits of the program. Some staff questioned whether the amount of focus on TLIM in PLFs may sometimes take away from other things such as collaboration on literacy and numeracy.

Commendations:

- 84% of parents agreed that they have the opportunity to provide input into decisions that are made at the school that impact their child. School council concurred that they felt they had input and commented that administration is always willing to listen and often asks them to brainstorm on issues.
- 87% of parents expressed satisfaction that when they bring concerns to the school, they feel they are heard and taken seriously.
- 91% of support staff felt that they have the opportunity to provide meaningful input into the decision-making process at the school
- 91% of support staff also felt that they receive appropriate feedback about their performance
- 96% of teachers feel they receive appropriate supervision/evaluation at school. One teacher noted, "Teachers don't just receive evaluation, they receive support."

Recommendations:

- School administration may want to consider the following information as they move forward:
 - Only 56% of teachers agreed that staff meetings are productive.
 - 66% were satisfied with the opportunities to be a part of a collaborative group that communicates regularly to share resources and ideas.
 - Though admin did a presentation with staff on budget at the beginning of the year, only 52% of teachers felt they were aware of how school funds are allocated.
- Consider regular divisional meetings and/or divisional collaboration as part of the PLFs. This may further enhance satisfaction with opportunities for collaboration by teachers.

7. SCHOOL CLIMATE

Observations:

- “A big school that feels like a small school.” This is how one teacher described it in their survey responses. This sentiment was widespread among all stakeholders, and was also felt by the School Review team in our time at the school.
- The team was met by an amazing grade three student, Melissa, who gave us a tour of the school and through her bright, warm and welcoming personality set the stage for what we would see during our visit.
- When asked about why the school remains so consistently welcoming, despite the significant staff changes, it was commented by a number of staff that was just the culture of the school, and people coming into the school simply follow what they see, perpetuating the positive climate.

Commendations

- 93% of parents said they feel welcome when they visit the school
- 90% of parents indicated that their child enjoys attending school
- 94% of parents felt that their child’s teacher cares about their child.
- In our student focus groups, students in both division one and division two showed a great deal of pride in their school as they shared the many of the things that they loved about their school , from the ‘wonderful teachers and students” to the programs such as TLIM, EDGE, APPLE to the exciting activities happening around the school such as the reading minutes to vermicomposting and countless others
- Care is taken to recognize staff accomplishments. “Kudos” are given at the beginning of PLFs for staff who went the extra mile. The school uses the district’s “Doing What’s Best for Kids award”. The administration regularly nominates staff for provincial awards such as the Excellence in Teaching Award or Edwin Parr Award.

Recommendations:

- Continue to celebrate the amazing climate that the students, staff and parents have created at École Dickinsfield and continue to hold it as a key part of the school’s culture.

8. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND RECOGNITION

Observations:

Accountability Pillar Report (2014) Student Learning Achievement:

Measure Category	Measure Category	Measure	École Dickinsfield School			Alberta			Measure Evaluation		
			Current Result	Prev Year	Prev 3 Yr avg	Current Result	Prev Year	Prev 3 Yr Avg	Achievement	Improvement	Overall
Student Learning Achievement	Issue	PAT: Accept.	75.1	83.3	89.1	74.0	75.3	75.5	Intermediate	Dec. Signif.	Issue
		PAT: Excell.	14.0	14.4	26.0	19.0	19.1	19.6	Low	Declined	Issue

- While the PAT Acceptable Standard remains above the Alberta current result (75.1 vs. 74), the current result is significantly lower than the Previous year and previous 3 year average.
- The PAT Standard of Excellence is below the Alberta current result and significantly below the school's 3 year average.
- In their Three Year Strategic Education Plan 2014-2017 (School Growth Plan) the school has identified a number of strategies designed to address the decline.
- The establishment of a new report card in the district has caused each school to rethink the traditional year-end awards, as many of which were based on marks. This school has refined this process so that it's year end assembly recognized student accomplishments.
- As part of the Leader in Me Program, much emphasis is placed on 'bucket filling', offering compliments to those around you.

Commendations:

- 89% of parents are satisfied with the academic progress of their child. A few parent comments on the survey questioned why the academic results as part of the Accountability Pillar have declined in recent years.
- 80% of parents are satisfied that the school recognizes students for their accomplishments (ie. academic achievement, athletics, fine arts, etc..) in a variety of ways. Several negative comments pointed to the lack of academic awards as a result of the new report cards, which do not have numeric grades.
- 89% of teachers surveyed are satisfied that the school has an effective program for recognizing student achievement. Many pointed to The Leader in Me as contributing to this recognition.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that admin ensure that developing and implementing effective strategies for improvement of academic achievement remains a high priority.

Consider:

- Ensuring input and the resultant buy in that comes from actively involving all staff and representatives from your School Council in the analysis of data and development of the School Growth plan, including S.M.A.R.T. goals and strategies targeted at improvement in academic areas which have recently declined.
- Ensuring that discussions and collaboration around strategies specifically for improvement of Academic Achievement receive an appropriate amount of PLF time and attention. While it is recognized that some of the decline in academic achievement may be attributed to the loss of learning support positions in the school as a result of financial limitations, the challenge will be to work with the staff to find ways that the classroom teacher can support the students within the classroom by identifying areas of need and then finding interventions that can work within the classroom with support from the limited support from the existing learning support positions.

9. THE SCHOOL AS A SAFE AND CARING ENVIRONMENT

Observations:

- The Leader in Me Program is felt by many parents and staff to be a major contributing factor to the safe and caring environment evident in this school. In fact, some even referred to TLIM as an anti-bullying program.
- The school employs a system of progressive discipline with a focus on remediation rather than being punitive. Most discipline issues are handled by teaching and support staff, with the admin getting involved in cases that are more serious or repetitive. Parents are also advised of incidents involving their child and become a part of the process.
- 78% agreed bullying was NOT a major problem at their school. Of the remaining 22% that felt that bullying was a problem, 15% disagreed with the statement and 7% strongly disagreed.

Commendations:

- In the focus groups with students it became evident that students could define bullying and distinguish it from isolated acts of aggression. The students were able to identify specific incidents of bullying occurring in the school and how they were being positively dealt with by all levels of staff
- When asked who they could turn to if they had a problem, students mentioned their teachers, administrators and parents. The school counsellor was mentioned by virtually all children, indicating that they all knew her and were very comfortable with her.
- In the Tell Them from Me survey grades 5 & 6 students rated advocacy at school (feeling they have someone at school who consistently provides encouragement and can be turned to for advice) as 6.3/10 compared to 4.9 for the nation, with positive teacher-student relations coming in at 8.2/10 compared to 7.9 nationally.
- 96% of teachers and 93% of parents agreed that the students are respectful and well behaved,
- 89% of teachers and 87% of parents felt that the school's discipline policy and procedures are effective
- 96% of parents felt that their child's teacher cared about them.

Recommendations:

- Some concerns were expressed during interviews by a number of staff members about their uncertainty as to how to deal with emergent medical situations. It is recommended that the school ensure a plan to deal with such a matter is clearly communicated to staff, including providing all staff members with names of staff members who are currently certified in first aid, and can be contacted quickly should the need arise.

10. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Observations:

- 65% of staff were satisfied with the opportunities they have had to be part of a collaborative group that communicates regularly to share resources and ideas.
- 67% of teachers felt that Professional Development opportunities have enhanced their teaching skills and effectiveness.
- While most new staff felt welcomed and supported, there was some concern expressed about the formal support of new teachers through a mentorship program.

Commendations:

- 91% of support staff surveyed felt they had adequate opportunities for professional development.

Recommendations:

- Consider how to more effectively use PLFs to address the concerns of staff about lack of collaboration, including collaboration on curricular issues (literacy and numeracy) input into the School Growth Process.
- While all staff see the benefits of The Leader In Me and believe in the program, it was suggested that more PLF time needs to be spent on matters other than TLIM.

11. TECHNOLOGY

Observations:

- The school currently has one computer lab as well as one laptop cart and one iPad cart that can be signed out as needed. 20 iPads have been dispersed into the classrooms. It was also noted that chromebooks have been ordered to aid the transition of students into École MacTavish, where that technology is widely used.
- Promethean boards are available in all classrooms, and a number of teachers also pointed out their use of promethean boards as well as the use of mathletics and RAZ Kids by their students as positive uses of technology.

Commendations:

- 90% of parents surveyed felt that their child is utilizing technology in the school that assists his/her learning. There were some comments however indicating the need for more 'computers'.
- It was noted that the iPads and laptops referred to above have been purchased by the Parent Association in the past year and a half.
- 89% of teachers were satisfied with the technology available at the school.

Recommendations:

- Staying on top of evolving technology in a large school with limited resources is indeed a challenge. This school is very fortunate to have a Parent Council who have supported the school through the purchase of needed technology. It is recommended that the school continue its commitment to staying current with the technology with the support of their Parent Council and any other means available to them.

12. LIBRARY

Observations:

- The school has the services of one full time 6 hour library tech.
- Each class is scheduled to attend the library once each six day cycle for book exchange, with the librarian reading to them about once every three weeks.
- It was also indicated by teachers that Ms. Doblanko was very helpful in assisting them to find appropriate resources.
- When the School review team was at the school, Ms. Doblanko was working with the student library leaders to do a video to explain to everyone how to best use the library/resource centre.
- Staff also indicated that they felt supported in that they could send students to the library who needed extra support through having an alternate space to write a test, or have it read to them.

Commendations:

- 95% of parents surveyed felt that the school library contributes to their child's quality of education.
- 100% of teachers felt that the school library effectively supports student learning.

Recommendations:

- With the library operating as efficiently and effectively as it currently does the transition to a Learning Commons as promoted by District should be an easy one.

13. PHYSICAL FACILITIES

Observations:

- École Dickinsfield School was opened in 1983. It consists of a core school and a number of modular classrooms (portables) that have been added as the school grows. The challenges of growth has meant that classroom space has been found in places where classes didn't exist before. In a couple of cases, the classrooms created are quite small. A number of staff commiserated about not having a window in their classroom, a fact that is unavoidable given the design of the school and the demands created by growth.
- 78% of parents indicated that the school facility and its physical condition are adequate to accommodate the programs offered at the school. Not surprisingly, the comments express some concern about crowding as a result of the rapid growth of the school.

Commendations:

- 100% of teachers, 100% of support staff and 98% of parents feel the school is clean. This sentiment was echoed by the students interviewed and the School Council.
- The exterior play area is an exceptionally attractive and functional space, that came about as a result largely of parental lobbying of the municipality at a time when the school had lost virtually all of it's play area to construction.

Recommendations:

- Continue to explore ways to maximize the building space given the structure's size, layout and age.

14. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Observations:

- Along with the LAC, students are served by 13 Educational Assistants, 11 six hour EAs and two three hour EAs.
 - Early learning EAs: 6 - 6 hour and 2 - 3 hour positions
 - One-on-one EA: 1 - 6 hour position
 - Inclusive block EAs: 2 - 6 hour positions
 - Learning support EA - 1 - 6 hour position
 - SLP assistant: 0.5 fte (district position)
- Students with an IPP:
 - ECDP: 43 students
 - Kindergarten: 68 students
 - Grades 1 - 6: 29 students

Commendations:

- 92% of parents felt that their child receives the help needed to succeed in school
- 91% of parents agreed that the school teaches all students in a fair and equal manner, while at the same time taking individual learning styles into consideration.
- 81% of teachers feel supported regarding inclusion of ALL student in their classroom. Some concerns were expressed here on the cancellation of learning support EAs recently.
- Teachers commented positively about the support of the Educational Assistants in their classrooms as well as the LAC. They did express concern however about the decrease in the number of school funded Learning Support EAs in recent years.

Recommendations:

- Consider ways that classroom teachers can be supported to deal with the absence of Learning Support Educational Assistants.

15. Other areas identified by school administration

Observations:

- The administration of the school was given the opportunity to add items specific to their school. Items were added related to:
 - The value of The Leader in Me program
 - Effectiveness of the EDGE program
 - The quality of the French Immersion Program.

Commendations:

- 93% of parents feel that The Leader in Me is a worthwhile initiative that is helping provide their child with valuable life skills.
- This was a sentiment echoed repeatedly by admin, staff and School Council in their interviews and both student focus groups.
- Students excitedly and with great pride shared their leadership roles, both at the school and classroom level with the team.
- 97% of parents responding felt the French Immersion program at Dickinsfield provided a high quality second language learning program.

Recommendations:

- While 72% of the parents were satisfied with the EDGE program, there were different perspectives from both the families registered in the program and from those that were not. With the new PEAK Sports Academy recently announced, school administration is encouraged to work with PEAK staff to enhance the program's development.

SUMMARY

“A big school that feels like a small school.” This is how one teacher described École Dickinsfield School, and that is exactly what the School review team found in it’s time at the school. From the welcome tour by our grade three tour guide Melissa, to our conversations with the students, staff and parents there was a strong sense that EDF has a culture that has created and continues to be welcoming and friendly. The fact that 93% of parents surveyed indicated that they feel welcome when they visit the school, and an amazing 90% indicated that their child enjoys attending school supports the observations made by the team and the positive comments made by the staff and students in this regard.

While many long term staff and parents comment that this culture has been a feature of the school for many years, all point to the fact that The Leader in Me Program that the school has been actively involved in since 2011 plays a large part in the school environment. There is widespread belief on the part of the students, staff and parents that this program is an excellent one, integral to the school, and providing children with valuable life skills. All around the school, there was evidence of student leadership as a result of this program. From the tour leader who welcomed us to the school to the library leaders, the O Canada leaders, the environmental leaders and the dozens of leadership roles both in the class and at the school level, it is clear that along with the skills that the children are developing, they are also becoming quite confident young individuals. Indicative of the overwhelming parental support, one parent in the survey commented, “I cannot say enough how much I support this program. AMAZING results are so obvious every time I visit the building...which is daily! Keep this program above all others.”

An abundance of programming both curricular and co-curricular, meeting the very diverse needs of the school community, is available at École Dickinsfield School with $\frac{2}{3}$ of it’s students enrolled in this program from ECDP to grade 6. It is the only French Immersion elementary school in the Public School District. 97% of parents surveyed felt that this program provides a high quality second language learning program. The PEAK Athletic Academy (formerly EDGE) is available at EDF along with only one other elementary school in the Public School system. This program has promoted and accommodated passion-based learning at EDF since 2011 and is currently focused on hockey and dance. While generally highly accepted by the school community, there exists some different perspectives from those registered and those not. The announcement of the new, much more affordable PEAK academy should remove some of the concerns, especially with regards the the cost of the program, but it will still be very important for the schools to work together to define the issues that exist and enhance the program.

École Dickinsfield School has a long tradition of academic excellence. While the recent results continue to be above the provincial average in most areas, a small decline has been noted recently. The school, through its School Growth Process, is exploring and employing strategies to address those issues as part of its effort towards continuous improvement. It is anticipated with the collaborative effort of the entire school community, results will return to their historically high levels.

Co-curricularly, it is hard to imagine that any elementary school can offer more for their students than École Dickinsfield School. Regardless of their interest from athletics to chess to music or the environment, there is something for every child at all grade levels. One area that École Dickinsfield School has earned a very positive reputation for in recent years has been in its work

with students in the area of environmental stewardship. This initiative takes on many faces from wasteless lunches, community gardens, vermicomposting, recycling, lights out, and many more. In all cases, students are being exposed to responsible citizenship as they protect their environment. Of course, none of these co-curricular activities can happen without a dedicated staff and parents who commit time from their extremely busy schedule to provide the students with experiences that contribute to the development of the whole child.

The staff at École Dickinsfield School is held in extremely high regard by the students and parents. In the student focus groups, students in both Div one and Div two talked about the excellent staff, and reiterated the fact that there were numerous people they could turn to if they needed to speak to someone. They further stated that while bullying occurs (as it does in every school) the staff, from the teachers to the counsellor to the school administration take it very seriously and deal with it when it occurs. Parents reinforced these positive comments about the school staff, with 94% indicating that their child's teacher cared about him/her. Furthermore, 96% of parents felt that support staff, including Educational Assistants, secretaries, custodians and librarian are helpful and friendly.

There was a high degree of satisfaction among the staff in all aspects of their work at École Dickinsfield School. They are very positive about the support received from admin, colleagues and parents. One teacher commented "Teachers don't just receive evaluation, they receive support". With this said there was some concern expressed by a few teachers that new teachers need more support, and were missing the quality New Teacher Induction program that has previously existed. Communication from admin to staff, among staff and between school and parents all appear to be quite good. Several did indicate that they would like to see more staff meetings. Two areas that some staff felt they would like to see improved were in the areas of increased collaborative time and improvements to the school timetable. Recommendations in these regards can be found in this report.

Parental engagement at École Dickinsfield School remains strong. While the parents and admin are both seeking ways to improve on the number of parents involved, it is evident that the ones that are involved are extremely dedicated and hard working and engaged. The School Council spoke well of their strong relationship with the school and school administration, and felt that their input was both valued and welcome by them. They did indicate that their involvement in development of the School Growth Plan was minimal, though the plan was presented to them and they were given the opportunity for input at that point. Some felt that they would like to be involved in the development of the plan from the beginning, a recommendation made in this report. The Parent Council, the fundraising arm is quite active and effective, raising much needed funds for the school in many areas, including providing technology such as iPads, laptops and chromebooks in recent years. The parent community at EDF is quite strong overall, and when their playground area had been negatively impacted by municipal activities a couple of years ago, the strong, united École Dickinsfield parents lobbied effectively to have it restored.

This report provides overwhelming evidence of a strong, progressive, welcoming and responsive school community at École Dickinsfield School, one that will only get better as the entire school community focuses on continuous improvement in all areas. Their volunteering to be the first school to undergo the School Review process at FMPD speaks well of their commitment to do just that.