

***Moving Forward with High School Redesign***  
***A Guide to Support Implementation: Essential Conditions***

Successful implementation is complex work; it requires the intentional efforts of school leaders in an environment where stakeholders are committed to doing what is best for student learning. The following information outlines actions taken by several school administrators involved in the High School Flexibility Project.

ESSENTIAL CONDITION	ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THIS ESSENTIAL CONDITION
<p><b>Shared Vision</b></p> <p>Stakeholders share an understanding of, and commitment to, the intended outcomes.</p>	<p>Examine the present situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are we doing well and what is the evidence?</li> <li>● What are we not doing so well, and what is the evidence?</li> <li>● What might be possible?</li> </ul> <p>Provide staff, parents, students and community with enough time to have in-depth conversations about what the vision could be.</p> <p>Ask questions of parents, students, teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What do you want to have happen in this school?</li> <li>● What do you want the school to look like, feel like? (It doesn't have to look like all other schools).</li> <li>● In three years, what do you want your Grade 10 students to say about their high school experience?</li> </ul> <p><b>The staff, students' and parents' vision is created from research and discussions and comes as a result of everyone learning together.</b></p>

<p><b>Leadership</b></p> <p>Leaders at all levels have the capacity to champion the shift from the current reality to the intended outcomes</p>	<p>Further develop the leadership that is already present in the building and provide leaders/staff with opportunities to fine-tune their skills.</p> <p>Develop awareness that distributed leadership is essential to shifting a culture from a traditional school setting to a flexible learning environment to meet the needs of all learners.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for the identified leaders to work directly with staff.</p> <p>Use purposeful, strategic planning to implement key findings so that the direction set becomes “staff driven” not top down. This process supports the use of the great ideas generated by the staff. The next step is to assemble a team to bring the vision to life.</p> <p><b>Collectively, school leaders need to clearly and succinctly describe to all stakeholders what needs to be done, what it will look like, and the outcome they are working toward. They also need to be able to articulate the evidence they will accept as success.</b></p> <p><b>Leaders must maintain the focus as there are distractions that can take you away from the vision. Leaders need to maintain a narrow focus and keep going back to the vision.</b></p>
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<p><b>Research and Evidence</b></p> <p>Current research, evidence, and lessons learned inform implementation decisions.</p>	<p>Create awareness that it is important for the staff to clearly see where they are as a school in order to make well-informed decisions with respect to where they would like to be.</p> <p>Additional sources of data beyond the information gathered through the Accountability Pillar are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Tell Them From Me Survey</li> <li>● Involving parents and community using Google Docs or Survey Monkey to take a quick pulse of how well things are going</li> <li>● Focus groups with students, staff and parents. Ask open-ended questions around what they would like the school to stop, start and continue.</li> </ul> <p>Involve staff in analyzing data to see whether the changes are bringing about desired results and to assure them that these changes and all of their hard work are having an impact on student success.</p> <p>Research studies with High School Redesign schools help deepen the understanding of what a shift in culture, and a change in teacher practice, can look like, in order to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner. Possible focus area for research includes how redesign impacts any one of students’ levels of anxiety, resiliency, view of self as learner, teacher pedagogy or efficacy (student and/or teacher).</p>

	<p><b>Data and data analysis is critical as baselines are established for the school and need to be continuous so that adjustments can be made along the way.</b></p>
<p><b>Resources</b></p> <p>Human resources, materials, funding, and infrastructure are in place to realize the intended outcomes.</p>	<p>The resource with the greatest impact is Professional Development. It helps all staff better understand the need for change, and generate excitement and energy to make the shift. Sending teachers in teams to visit other schools is an essential consideration, where possible.</p> <p>The distributed leadership model is pivotal as a change agent.</p> <p>Providing built-in teacher collaboration time is essential. Teachers need time to talk about change: this includes what change needs to look like for the whole department/school, how staff will support each other on this journey, and how they will reflect and adjust as they make this shift in their philosophy and practice. Designs, such as team teaching opportunities, scheduling common prep times, flex schedules and recombining classes need to be discussed and implemented, where possible.</p> <p>Sharing best practices among teams of teachers is important. This sharing time is used to identify the particular skills each teacher brings to the team, what makes them good at that skill and what is getting in the way of them not sharing their strengths with others.</p>
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<p><b>Teacher Professional Growth</b></p> <p>Teacher knowledge, skills and attributes are enhanced through ongoing professional learning.</p>	<p>Examine ideas around changing practices to meet the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner, including critical thinking activities, embedding technology to enhance learning, and the implementation of an intervention plan so all students are successful.</p> <p>Designs for professional learning include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff meetings and Professional Learning Days - increasing focus on instructional practice vs. business items</li> <li>• teacher collaborative time - focusing on pedagogy and practice</li> <li>• administrators as instructional leaders - increasing administrative presence in classrooms and providing feedback to teachers</li> </ul> <p>Some areas of focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Learning Communities</li> <li>• Engaged Critical Thinkers</li> <li>• Project Based Learning</li> <li>• Personalized Learning</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Self-directed Learners</li> <li>• Brain research</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Distributed leadership</li> <li>• Differentiated instruction</li> <li>• Backwards by design</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Time</b></p> <p>Time is provided to support implementation.</p>	<p>Staff needs time to absorb where they are going and what needs to be done to get there.</p> <p>Pressure vs. supporting - pressure is needed to move forward but with enough support and time to reflect and to create a state of readiness.</p> <p>It is essential to find time in the school day for students to receive the support they need and for teachers to collaborate.</p> <p>Collaborative time for staff is essential, with guidelines. It needs to be a focused team effort centred on work related to goals (school or department).</p> <p>Provide constant reaffirmation that changing a culture takes time..</p> <p>Engage in ongoing assessment conversations of what the desired outcome is, reflection on progress, and analysis of how to proceed. It is important for leaders to keep up their confidence and assure their staff that setbacks are going to occur but the focus needs to remain on the larger goal.</p>
<p><b>Community Engagement</b></p> <p>Parents, school councils, students, community members, businesses, industry and post-secondary institutions are partners in supporting implementation.</p>	<p>Multiple opportunities for community engagement need to be ongoing. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Administration and Department Heads present to Senior Executive</li> <li>● Open House and invitations sent to all parents and their children</li> <li>● Present to the Board of Trustees, followed by a Question and Answer opportunity</li> <li>● Present to School Council, followed by a Question and Answer opportunity</li> <li>● Visit feeder schools to talk with students/parents.</li> <li>● Write articles to submit to the local paper/media.</li> <li>● Conduct ongoing surveys and focus groups with parents and community.</li> <li>● Maximize use of website/blogs and other social media, including Facebook and Twitter.</li> <li>● Engage in conversations with organizations, such as Rotary and Chamber of Commerce.</li> </ul> <p>Find multiple opportunities to support parents as their role and their understanding of “learning” for their child has shifted and they need to increase their awareness and confidence in this work.</p>

[A Guide to Support Implementation: Essential Conditions](#) was used as a basis for the interviews with the following administrators, which resulted in the creation of this document:

- Shauna Boyce - Memorial Composite High School, Parkland School Division
- Darlene Marcinkevics - Spruce Grove Composite High School, Parkland School Division
- Trevor Mitchell - St. Francis of Assisi, Living Waters Catholic Schools

More information on Essential Conditions at <http://www.essentialconditions.ca/>