Report on Meadow Lane School- ISD Hutterian Schools Improvement Planning Goals for 2016-17

Every year, the ISD Hutterian Schools come together to create a School Improvement Plan that will help staff focus on specific ways to improve student achievement. Our plans focus on four specific areas, all of which match the ISD Divisional Strategic Plan goals. The following outlines what our Hutterian Schools were focused on over the past year. You may notice that this year's goals closely resemble the 2015-16 goals. This has been intentional, as we recognize that significant improvement often takes more than one school year. While the goals and strategies do have slight variations from last year's plan, our over-riding goal remains the same-to not *just* teach our students skills for reading, writing and doing mathematics, but to help them become better at *learning*, in general.

When reflecting on growth for the year, and in setting goals for the next year, statistics and evidence from all ISD Hutterian schools and our 242 ISD Hutterian students are considered. Individual school data may differ somewhat from the larger group, but it is very difficult to collect data for very small groups. For that reason, growth is measured for the group as a whole.

Literacy

We established a literacy goal for students in grades 3-8 that continued our focus on the areas of reading comprehension and critical thinking. Again, we chose strategies that would help students become better readers and, more importantly, better at understanding and communicating what they have read. This past year, we had an intense focus on non-fiction text, as we recognized that a large number of our students struggled to make meaning of this type of reading, in particular. While assessment of growth was measured in a number of ways, one of the primary data sources used to gage student improvement in comprehension and critical thinking is the RAD assessment.

The RAD is formally administered as an initial assessment in September and then again in May to measure growth. The strategies used to support growth throughout the year have definitely paid off, as students showed significant improvement from September to June. Our goal was to see 70% of our students in these grades achieve a "3" or higher on the Reading and Critical Thinking categories of their June report cards this year. While we will fall just short of that mark, the number of students achieving a "3" or higher has increased from 56% last year June, to 68% this year. We are extremely pleased with this result! We believe that student growth will continue in the coming year and have set a goal to reflect our confidence. We believe 75% of students can achieve a "3" or higher in the report card categories of Reading Comprehension and Critical Thinking. We encourage parents to speak with your children's teachers to find out how you can help your student improve in these areas by using some simple strategies while reading together at home.

Numeracy

Our numeracy goals for students in grades 3-10 targeted improvement in student mathematical understanding, thinking, application and communication, and developing student confidence as math learners. This goal was a response to teachers identifying that our students have difficulty explaining mathematical thinking and applying isolated learning of skills to problem solving. We wanted to foster the use of language in math and make a shift from skill-based instruction to problem-based instruction. We made specific efforts to help students to orally explain their mathematical thinking using "Math Talk" strategies. Students struggled with this significantly at the beginning of the year, but have shown some growth in their ability to explain their thinking verbally.

Our numeracy goal for next year will have a focus similar to this year's, as student growth continues to fall short of our target of 70% of students achieving "3" or higher in problem solving. We have refined our strategies for 2017-18 to develop focused attention to problem-based instruction, including project-based, authentic mathematics learning for

high school students. This strategy, in particular, is in response to feedback we received from the parent and student engagement surveys conducted in the spring. Our goal will be to improve student achievement in problem solving, in part, by making it relevant and connected to the world our students live in. We hope to see 70% of our students achieving a "3" or higher (70% or higher for high school students) in the problem solving category of the report card by the end of the next school year.

Positive, Respectful Learning Environment

Ensuring a positive, respectful learning environment in our schools is of high priority for all of us. Students learn best when they feel safe and respected by everyone in the school. In an effort to provide this type of school climate, our staff has continued to model and promote the principals of Restitution. All schools have established beliefs about the responsibilities of everyone in the school in relation to behaviour, and identified bottom lines as specific behaviours that warrant consequences. For most issues that involve undesirable behaviours, students are asked to "fix" the situation by taking some action that restores the relationship without punishment. We believe this practice promotes self-discipline and respect amongst students and staff. Based on our survey results from this spring, parents and students support the use of restitution practices at schools, although there is an indication of uncertainty surrounding some of the principles and practices involved. In response, our goal in 2017-18 will be to provide more modelling for students, specifically around how to "fix" problems beyond just saying "I'm sorry", and to offer parents more information and opportunities to learn about restitution, in general. Guidance programming will also address the topics of kindness and respect. This was noted by over 75% of parents as very important in our spring survey results. Other guidance topics that were suggested by parents were personal safety (45%) and mental health education around anxiety and depression (45%). These topics will also addressed throughout the school year.

Intellectual Engagement

Intellectual Engagement is all about a student's personal investment in learning. It is about understanding the "why" in what they are being asked to learn, setting goals and applying strategies for improving, and reflecting on their progress in order to set new learning goals. Teachers strive to nurture intellectual engagement by deliberately planning for student interests, learning preferences, and readiness levels. In Hutterian Schools, cultural considerations should also be reflected wherever possible.

We continue to make gains in this area through improved instructional practice, although we still have work to do to reach our goal of having 100% of students intellectually engaged in their learning. In our 2017-18 improvement plan, we will continue to employ practices that will bring us toward this mark. We will work to see all students consistently setting long and short term goals for improvement, showing that they understand the criteria for demonstrating their learning and referring to examples of quality work to support their movement toward learning goals. We also hope to have all students creating learning portfolios that reflect their achievement and challenges across subjects, and then using these to explain their own growth and challenges to their parents.

Making learning more culturally relevant was something that stood out as important to all students and parents in our spring surveys. We also recognize that this is an important part of motivating students to fully engage in learning. This year, cultural consideration has been given to such things as library materials, and a conscious effort to draw explicit connections between learning targets and Hutterian culture has been made. This will continue as part of our plan for next year, with a particular focus on authentic, project-based math for our high school students.