



# A Comprehensive Toolkit for Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools: Strategies from the Thames Valley District School Board

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*Claire Crooks, Barb Sonier, Toni Wilson, Susan Dale, Laura Elliott, Ray Hughes, and Peter Jaffe*



# Chapter 1

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## *Looking back to move forward*

*In the introduction we start by providing an overview of the national context for safe schools and bullying. Next, we set the stage for the toolkit by tracing the emergence of safe schools through legislative changes and other ministry direction in Ontario. A brief history of safe schools in the Thames Valley District School Board shows the parallel emergence of safe schools in our district. Finally, we provide an orientation to the organization of this toolkit.*

# CHAPTER 1: LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The opportunity to develop a toolkit based on the Thames Valley District School Board's approach to safe schools is at once both exciting and daunting. It is an exciting opportunity to share with other boards the programs and procedures that have proven effective and successful. It is exciting to be able to reflect on the past 12 years since the Safe Schools Act and critically examine what has led to success and where barriers still exist. At the same time it is daunting to try to capture all of the protocols, programs, and considerations into one document.

Why do we need a toolkit for Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools? All boards recognize at some level the importance of safe, inclusive, and accepting environments, either through vision statements or formally in policies and procedures. Significant research underscores the importance of safe schools in promoting achievement and well-being and more generally, in promoting healthy development in every capacity. Youth need to feel safe and accepted in their schools, families and communities to be able to learn and develop to their full potential.

In deciding what pieces of the TVDSB Safe Schools story to tell, we began with the following thoughts:

*The most useful toolkits are both comprehensive and practical.*

Safe Schools covers a wide domain including policies and procedures, programs, and monitoring and assessment. Furthermore, there are a number of stakeholders with different needs and capabilities including students, educators, administrators, families, and community partners. With this toolkit we have set out to discuss the TVDSB approach to safe schools across all of these dimensions. Furthermore, we have emphasized practicality by including actual protocols and program examples in the Appendices and commentary on how these programs and policies were successfully implemented. For example, we know that the best training resources can collect dust on a shelf unless they are carefully implemented and appropriate follow-up is put in place. In this toolkit we describe innovative training resources, but also the systems put in place to help ensure that training is carried out in a manner that maximizes effectiveness.

*Aligning safe schools initiatives with other mandates helps to make it a priority in a busy environment.*

We are aware that many school leaders in TVDSB and beyond face numerous responsibilities and may at times feel overwhelmed by the number of frameworks they are expected to incorporate. Throughout the toolkit we identify natural points of alignment, because although there are currently many competing priorities and frameworks, many of these are highly compatible and complementary. For example, we highlight how safe schools can contribute to literacy outcomes. We identify how safe schools, Mental Health, First Nations Métis and Inuit initiatives, and Equity and Inclusive Education (EIE) all reinforce and support the work that each other are doing. Finally, we show direct alignment between the safe schools approaches we are describing and the Ontario Leadership Framework 2012.

*Although this toolkit is in many ways the TVDSB Safe Schools story, we have designed it to be more universally applicable.*

A key objective of this toolkit is to document those effective practices. At the same time, each board has its own unique context and Safe Schools is not a one-size-fits all enterprise, regardless of whether you are talking about the student, school or board level. To increase the generalizability of the toolkit, we use a number of different approaches such that leaders can select whichever one most closely resembles their own frame of reference. Furthermore, where possible we have included commentary on how practices might be adapted for smaller boards or specific challenges.



*Reflections on why these initiatives seem to work better than others are more informative than a laundry list of programs and policies.*

Finally, we believe that imperfect models are more useful than an idealized story of perfection. Throughout the toolkit we critically analyze why successful initiatives worked, and have also tried to share some of our challenges and ongoing areas of growth.

To provide the background for this toolkit, we begin with an overview of safe schools in the Canadian context, then focus in on safe schools in Ontario, and finally provide a brief history of safe schools in the Thames Valley District School Board.

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## THE CANADIAN CONTEXT FOR SAFE SCHOOLS

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Many schools across Canada have made safety a priority. Media reports have highlighted individual tragedies that motivate parents, trustees, teachers and students to redouble efforts on creating safe, inclusive and accepting learning environments through policies, legislation and programs. Nonetheless, while many schools and districts can identify successes in their programming, at a national level we have not shown much progress in reducing bullying in the past twenty years compared to other industrialized countries.

Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) is a cross-national study of the health behaviours of young people aged 11 to 15. It is a series of surveys supported by the World Health Organization and is carried out by research teams from 35 countries in Europe and North America, including Canada. The study is done every four years.

Bullying and victimization experiences are measured, among a range of other health, well-being, and social context indicators. HBSC data continue to indicate that bullying is a pervasive and serious problem in Canada. There is significant regional variability among rates, with youth in northern communities reporting disproportionately high rates of victimization experiences.

On the 2001/2002 survey, Canada overall ranked a dismal 26th and 27th out of 35 countries on 13 year-old students' reports of bullying and victimization, respectively (Craig & Harel, 2004). Across all categories of bullying or victimization, Canada consistently ranked at or below the middle of the international group. Moreover, our position on the international stage across all age and gender categories has slipped relative to other countries. While actual rates have stayed relatively stable, our ranking has dropped.

The drop in Canada's relative ranking in spite of stable rates, suggests that other countries have been preventing bullying problems more effectively than Canada. Many of the countries that rank higher than Canada, such as Norway and England, have had national campaigns to address bullying problems. In comparison, there have been pockets of innovation across Canada, but a national strategy has been noticeably absent. Furthermore, there is significant variability in the policies and legislation across provincial and territorial Departments and Ministries of Education, which leads to an inconsistent response from one region to the next. Even among school boards, and in provinces where a concerted and comprehensive effort is underway, changing norms and system responses takes time and cannot be expected to drastically reduce rates of bullying overnight. The high proportions of Canadian students who report bullying or being bullied confirm that this represents an important social problem for Canada.

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## THE EMERGENCE OF SAFE SCHOOLS AS A CONCEPT IN ONTARIO

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In Ontario, Safe Schools has grown from a primary focus on a strict discipline response for negative behaviour to a much wider umbrella of policies and procedures to foster a positive school climate. The legislative changes that have occurred since the introduction of the Safe Schools Act in 2000 have served as a foundation for this massive widening of scope. A brief review of the relevant legislation sets the stage for further discussion of the expanding role of safe schools. Although the legislation and formation of the Safe Schools Action Team are discussed below, additional important events and developments are depicted in Figure 1.1.





## *BILL 81 (2000) – THE SAFE SCHOOLS ACT*

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The introduction of the Safe Schools Act in 2000 allowed schools to set mandatory suspensions or expulsions for certain infractions, and shifted the power to expel students from the school boards to principals. It also provided teachers with the power to suspend students for up to one day. The emphasis of the Safe Schools Act was on clear and consistently applied consequences for behavioural infractions. The philosophy of Bill 81 was interpreted by many as a zero tolerance approach to student discipline and led to a regime of strict discipline on the part of most school boards. One of the challenges facing the Act from the beginning was the timing of the implementation. The Act was passed in June and boards were expected to implement the changes by the start of the following school year. Because the act was passed at the end of the school year it was a really difficult time for training of administrators, which reduced the effectiveness of the implementation. Overall, the interpretation of the Act created an environment of zero tolerance and resulted in large numbers of suspensions and expulsions. On July 8, 2005, the Ontario Human Rights Commission filed a complaint regarding the Safe Schools sections of the Education Act maintaining these sections had an adverse impact on racialized students and students with disabilities. In 2007, the Ministry reached a legal Minutes of Settlement (MOS) agreement with the OHRC. In April 2012, the settlement was closed by the OHRC. The OHRC recognized that the ministry had met, and in many cases exceeded, the commitments that were made in the settlement.

The Ministry and the OHRC have continued to collaborate to help foster safe, equitable and inclusive learning environments in schools and boards across Ontario. For example;

- The OHRC was consulted and provided input on Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and Implementation Guidelines. In its 2010/11 annual report the OHRC highlights the steps it has taken to support the implementation of the Strategy.
- The OHRC provided input on the ministry’s sample school climate surveys.
- In January 2011, the ministry released a revised Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol. The OHRC and key education and police services stakeholders were consulted in the development of the Model.

## *APPOINTMENT OF THE PROVINCIAL SAFE SCHOOLS ACTION TEAM*

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In December 2004 the Minister appointed a provincial Safe Schools Action Team, made up of recognized safety and education experts. This team visited communities across Ontario to advise on the development of a comprehensive province-wide approach to bullying prevention in Ontario schools. The appointment of this team marked a significant shift in the recognition of the importance of Safe Schools as a core education issue by the ministry.

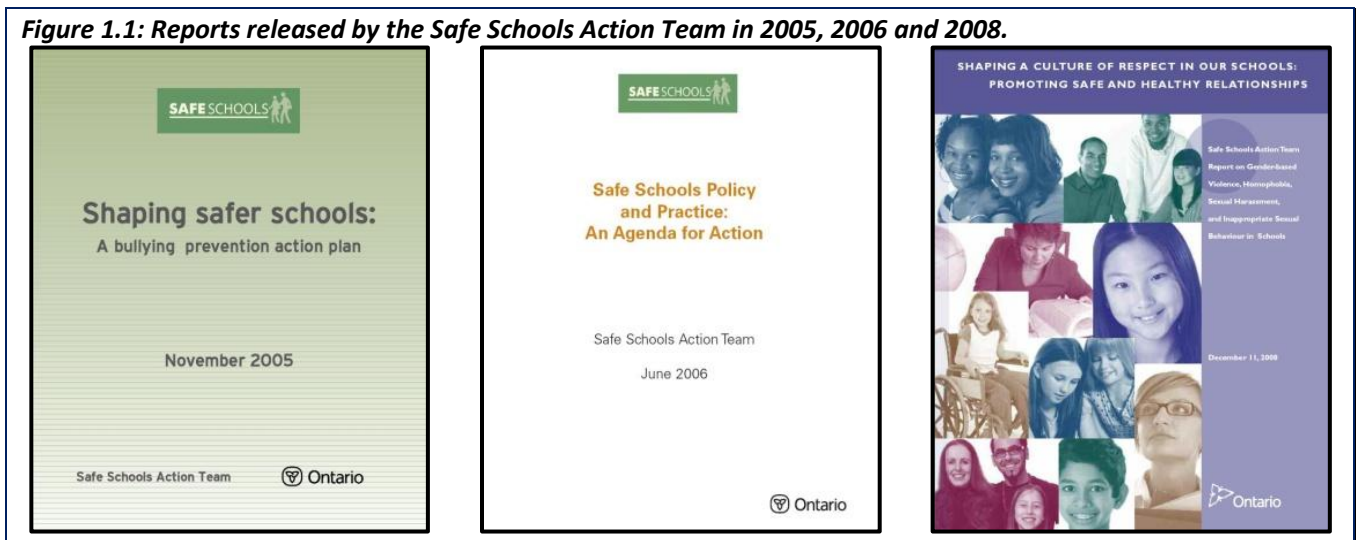
Over a 4-year period, this team was intensively involved in consultation and developing recommendations. The timelines of involvement for the Safe Schools Action Team were as follows:

- Spring 2005 – The team consulted with students, school staff, parents, and community agencies and organizations about issues of bullying prevention.
- November 2005 – The team presented its first report: *Shaping Safer Schools: A Bullying Prevention Action Plan*.
- November 2005 – The team was engaged to review the Safe Schools provisions of the Education Act.
- November 2005 – February 2006 – More than 800 parents, teachers, students and other community members provided input to the team on safe schools issues.
- June 2006 – The team delivered its report on school safety: *Safe Schools Policy and Practice: An Agenda for Action* summarizing its findings and recommending areas for taking action.



- June 2007 – The Ontario government passed amendments to the Education Act based on the Safe Schools Action Team's recommendations. The changes more effectively combine discipline with opportunities for students to keep learning. The changes also place a greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention. It also recommended adding bullying as an infraction for which suspension must be considered.
- February 2008 – The team was re-engaged to address the barriers to reporting and review the issues of gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual behaviour in schools.
- March – October 2008 – The team consulted with students, school staff, parents, and community agencies and organizations about issues of homophobia, sexual harassment, gender-based violence and inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- December 2008 – the team delivered its third report – *Shaping a Culture of Respect in Our Schools: Promoting Safe and Healthy Relationships*. This report addressed gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour in schools.

**Figure 1.1: Reports released by the Safe Schools Action Team in 2005, 2006 and 2008.**



### *BILL 212 (2007) – PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE AND SCHOOL SAFETY ACT*

Bill 212 was designed to rebalance the zero tolerance approach taken by many boards in response to the Safe Schools Act (2000), which resulted in high numbers of suspensions and expulsions. To increase consistency and accountability, it shifted the authority to expel students from principals back to school boards. Similarly, principals (instead of individual teachers) were given the authority to determine suspensions, which was expected to lead to more consistent application of standards for mitigating and other factors. Bill 212 required school boards to provide educational programs and supports such as counselling to students who have been expelled or are on a long-term suspension (6 or more days), and removed the requirement to issue immediate suspensions or expulsions for inappropriate behaviour without offering them a program. It included a commitment to progressive discipline and the idea that alternatives to discipline must be considered such as meetings with parents or referrals to a community agency. One area where schools boards' powers were increased was that they could now discipline students for bullying and other incidents for which suspension or expulsion must be considered including incidents that happens online or off school property if there was an impact on school climate.



### *BILL 157 (2010) – KEEPING OUR KIDS SAFE AT SCHOOL ACT*

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The purpose of Bill 157 was to make schools safer by outlining specific reporting and responding requirements for all staff. Bill 157 required all board employees to report to principals when they became aware that students may have engaged in incidents for which they could be suspended or expelled. Furthermore, it required principals to inform the parents of students harmed as a result of an incident for which a student could be suspended or expelled. Bill 157 required school staff who work directly with students to respond if they observe student behaviour likely to have a negative impact on the school climate. This specific response was to be carried out in accordance with ministry and school board policy.

### *BILL 13 (2012) – ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT*

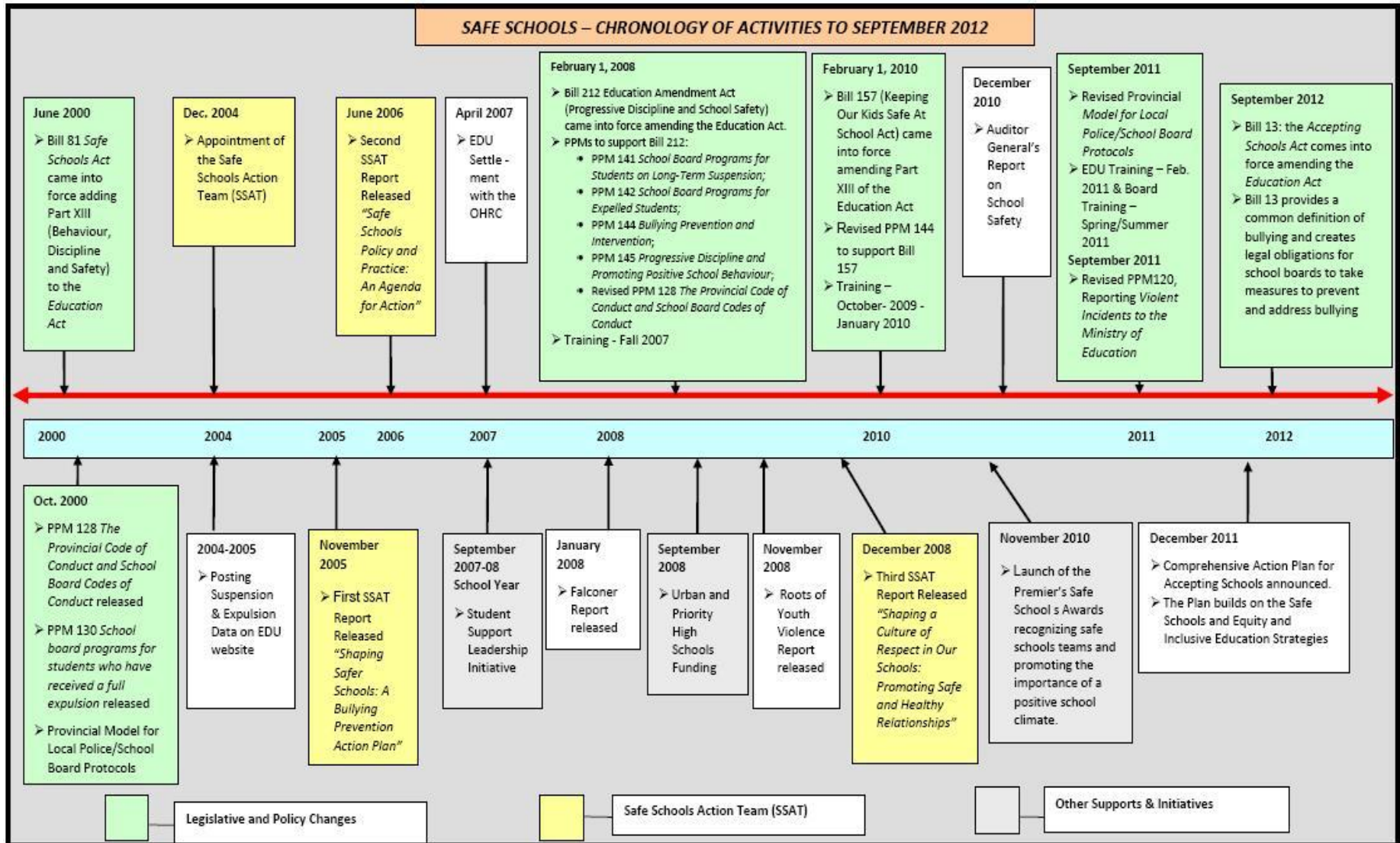
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Bill 13 (Accepting Schools Act 2012) came into force on September 1, 2012. Provisions include principals' duty to investigate all reports submitted by board employees, and to notify parents of students who have engaged in behaviour for which they can be suspended or expelled and that harmed another student. Similar notification provisions exist for parents of students who have been harmed. Bill 13 also requires schools to provide support for students who want to lead activities or organizations that promote positive school climate, including Gay-Straight Alliances. There is also an expanded responsibility for organizations using school property to follow the relevant Provincial Code of Conduct and the requirement to add "to prevent bullying" to board Codes of Conduct. An important provision of Bill 13 is that bullying, in certain circumstances, may be considered for expulsion. Additional requirements include incorporating changes to the definition of bullying, and the requirement to suspend and consider referring the student for an expulsion hearing if the bullying was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate. Other requirements include amending multi-year plans around positive school climate and bullying prevention, conducting school climate surveys of students, staff and parents at least every two years, supports for students, awareness raising opportunities for parents, and professional development programs for teachers and other staff.

When looking at these changes holistically, it is clear that educators' responsibilities have grown immensely. No longer are administrators and educators simply responsible for what occurs within the four walls of a school. In the past twelve years, the emphasis has shifted from a reactive response to unacceptable behaviours, to a complex progressive discipline model that ranges from prevention and responding to negative behaviour all the way to proactively promoting a healthy school climate. Not only do administrators need to be able to meet all of these requirements, but they are responsible for helping to ensure that their staff has the awareness, skills, and self-efficacy to meet all of their requirements as well. A timeline of all of the ministry safe schools developments from 2000 to 2012 is depicted in Figure 1.2 (Ministry of Education, 2012).



Figure 1.2: Safe Schools – Chronology of Activities to September 2012



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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF SAFE SCHOOLS IN TVDSB

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The Thames Valley District School Board is one of the largest public school boards in Ontario, serving an area that stretches more than 200 km – from Rodney to Tavistock and Glencoe to Norwich – across more than 7,000 square km (see map below). TVDSB came into being on January 1, 1998, with the amalgamation of the Elgin County Board of Education, the Board of Education for the City of London, Middlesex County Board of Education and Oxford County Board of Education. Currently there are 162 schools (133 elementary and 29 secondary) serving approximately 71,000 students. The district covers urban, suburban and rural communities. In addition, students from three neighbouring First Nations communities attend TVDSB schools starting in grades JK, 7 or 9. There are 15 trustees overseeing the TVDSB, six elected to represent London, two each for the counties of Elgin, Middlesex and Oxford, one First Nations Trustee and two non-voting student trustees.



We begin our history of Safe Schools at the time of amalgamation in 1998. Looking back over these past 14 years there have been many successes, as well as bumps in the road. During this time we have seen a shift from Safe Schools as a somewhat fragile, externally-funded endeavour, to a major priority for the board with significant dedicated resources. Looking back, we have identified key events and developments that helped create the momentum that is there today. A timeline of Safe Schools in TVDSB is provided in Figure 1.3 (1998-2007) and Figure 1.4 (2008 -2012). Many of the initiatives mentioned in this historical overview are discussed in more detail within this toolkit, but are described briefly here to provide a sense of the development of Safe Schools in the board.

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### FIRST SAFE SCHOOLS COORDINATOR

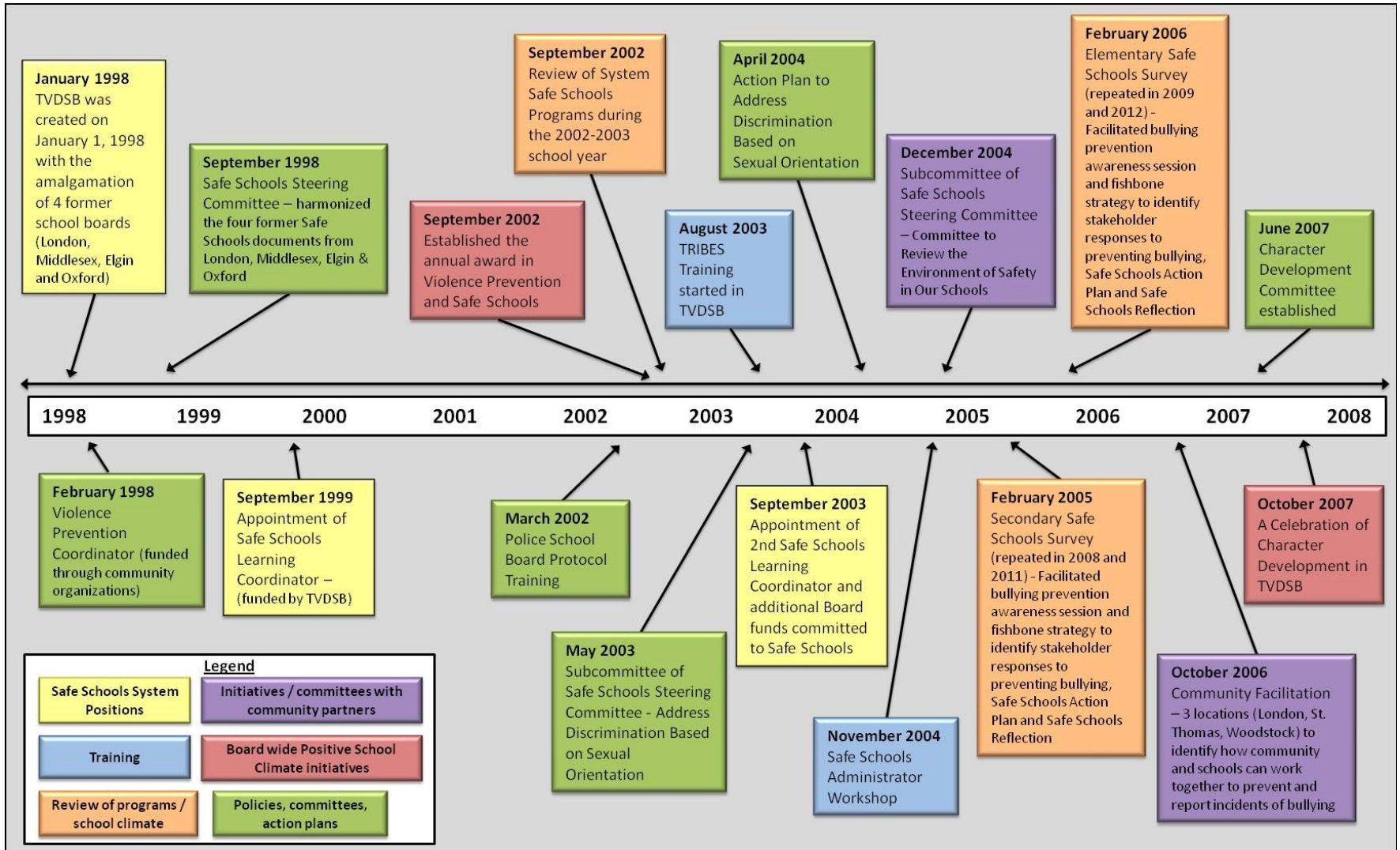
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At the time of amalgamation, two of the four boards were already doing innovative violence prevention work in small pockets. The London Board had developed dating violence prevention activities that included assemblies and was even undertaking small scale evaluation of these initiatives. They were doing drama presentations to address bullying and were already being recognized for their leadership in this area. Similarly, Middlesex County, although much smaller, was also a leader in this emerging field. They had a designated violence prevention staff member (under the auspices of Health and Physical Education and Special Projects). They had also been developing innovative bullying prevention and dating violence prevention programming, funded largely by a local foundation.

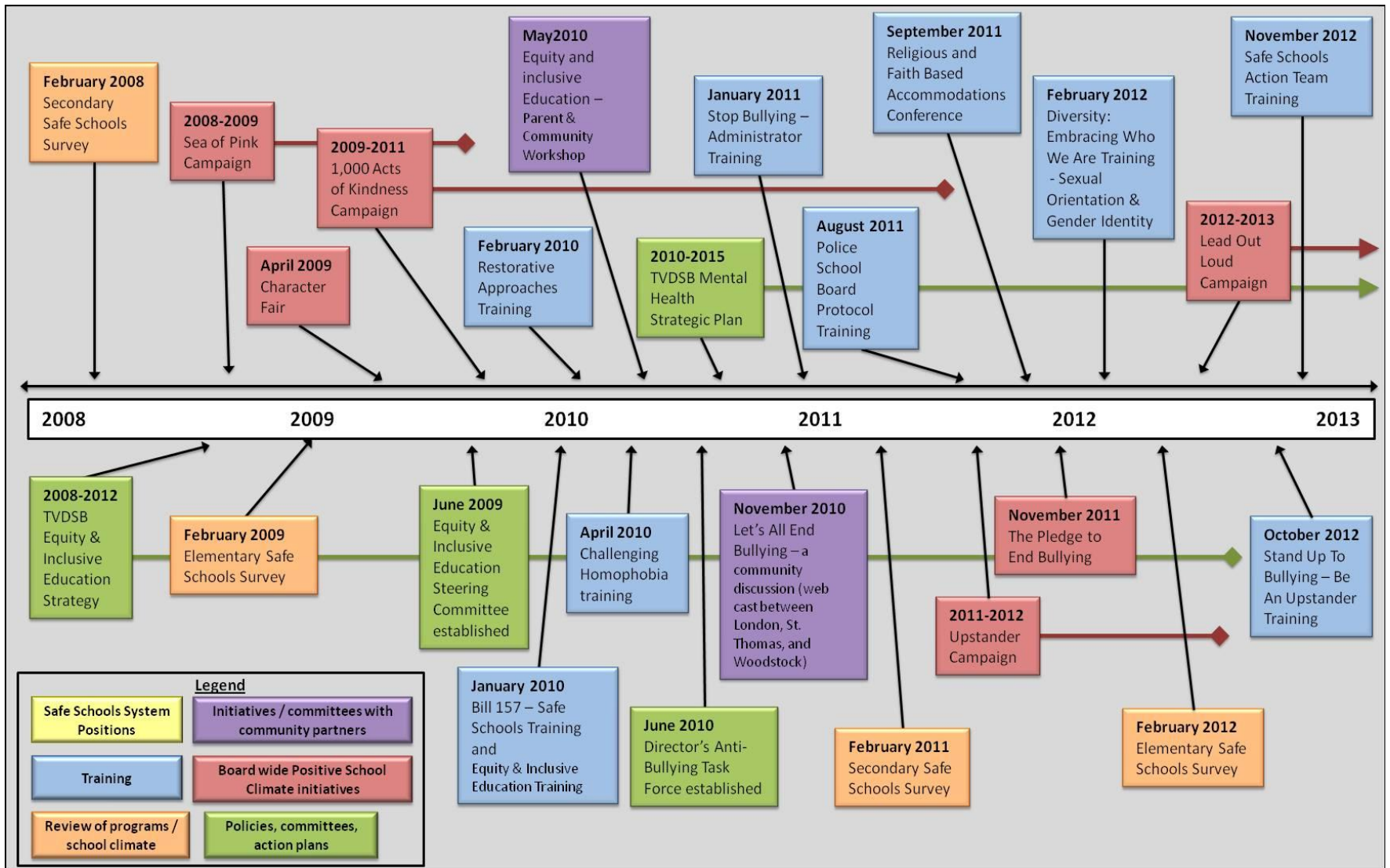
After the amalgamation, the foundation that was supporting the work in Middlesex was concerned that this work would get lost in the shuffle during the amalgamation. The foundation offered to pay for a Safe School Coordinator at the newly merged board so that the work developing in Middlesex could continue. In February 1998, following amalgamation, the first Safe Schools Coordinator was appointed in TVDSB. This position allowed the work being done in the London and Middlesex boards to be brought together into one program. Although this position would later become a blueprint for ministry policy, in the early days it was a very fragile experiment, funded completely by external resources. This newly created position had sole responsibility for all prevention and crisis intervention within the newly amalgamated board's 200 schools. In the first two years of this portfolio, there were no internal resources allotted to Safe Schools in the budget, and the coordinator remembers relying on the goodwill of others to even get resources photocopied. The Safe Schools Coordinator position became funded by the school board in 1999-2000, representing an important step towards stability.



**Figure 1.3: TVDSB Safe Schools Timeline (1998-2007)**



**Figure 1.4: TVDSB Safe Schools Timeline (2008-2012)**



## *EXTENSIVE INTERNAL REVIEW PROCESS*

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The decision to fund a full time dedicated position for Safe Schools was not without controversy. In 2002, the Executive Superintendent of Operations requested a comprehensive internal evaluation of the Safe Schools Coordinator position. Essentially, he wanted clear evidence that the position was worth the money being allocated to it. This request for an audit reflects a commonly held belief at the time that Safe Schools was not a core responsibility for boards and as such utilized resources that could be better used elsewhere. The evaluation of the Safe Schools position took an entire year, during which internal programming was reviewed and submissions were accepted from community partners. The number and strength of the community submissions in particular highlighted the critical partnerships that had been formed in those early days, setting the stage for a commitment to partnerships and community engagement that continues to be a major focus to this day. In the end the results of the evaluation were overwhelmingly positive. Indeed, the quantity of work being done (in addition to the quality) prompted the board to add a second position, effectively doubling the Safe Schools team. The second person appointed to Safe Schools team remains in the coordinator position to this day, creating important continuity and a solid expertise base that can be difficult to achieve if coordinators are rotated in and out of this portfolio.

## *ESTABLISHMENT OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARD IN SAFE SCHOOLS*

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In 2002 the TVDSB established an annual award in violence prevention and safe schools. Secondary schools were invited to nominate two students based on their leadership in this area. The launch of this award was significant in that it made a strong statement from the board about the importance and value of this work. The idea was to try to bring the same status to safe schools and violence prevention achievements as was shown in other areas, such as athletics. The event has enjoyed great success and grown such that the 11th annual awards night in 2012 included 57 award winners representing 27 secondary schools in the board.

## *RESPONDING TO TRAGEDY*

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In November 2004, the TVDSB was shaken when one of its high school students committed suicide. The student had been the victim of ongoing bullying by other students, which has been considered to be a contributing factor to his suicide. In the aftermath of the tragedy, the board committed to a thorough analysis of the system to determine what could be learned from the tragedy, and how to move forward to eliminate bullying within its schools. While the response to the tragic event was immediate, it was not impulsive. Even though such a tragedy could trigger a defensive response, such as denial and silence, the response was well thought out and inclusive. The TVDSB was under great pressure from parents and the media to take immediate action, but they stepped back and made a careful plan that would involve the whole school system in their response. In December, 2004, The TVDSB established a Committee to Review the Environment of Safety in Our Schools (CRESS). The committee was mandated to determine 1) why youth do not report information regarding harassment; and 2) what school communities can do to create a culture that encourages youth to report information regarding harassment. This mandate reflects the stage of progress at the time in that the focus is on trying to better understand the problem (i.e., the code of silence around bullying) and identify specific strategies to reduce that challenge. On the basis of this mandate the TVDSB surveyed all secondary students (and subsequently elementary students in grades four and up) to assess overall school climate and barriers to reporting bullying. There have now been three waves of data– collected from the secondary panel in 2005, 2008, and 2011, and from the elementary panel in 2006, 2009, and 2012 – through this board wide assessment process and the results provide important direction for Safe Schools.





## *HAVING OUR SAFE SCHOOLS COORDINATOR NAMED TO THE MINISTRY SAFE SCHOOLS ACTION TEAM*

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In December 2004, the TVDSB Safe Schools Coordinator was named to the inaugural ministry Safe Schools Action Team (SSAT). This appointment has created several pragmatic advantages for the board. First, some of the procedures already in place in TVDSB served as models for recommendations made by the SSAT, which put TVDSB ahead of the game for implementation. The second advantage was a higher degree of awareness of the activities of the SSAT and a commitment to implement as many of the SSAT's recommendations as possible. As a result, there has been continuous and incremental progress in Safe Schools, even between ministry directives.

## *CREATION OF THE DIRECTOR'S ANTI-BULLYING TASK FORCE*

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Similar to the Committee to Review the Environment of Safety in Our Schools (CRESS), the Director's Anti-Bullying Task Force was created partially in response to a tragic event, whereby a teen who committed suicide was identified as a victim of bullying. Following the student's death in May 2010, the Director of Education for the TVDSB established a community Task Force to help the board continue to address bullying. The purpose was to bring together key members of the community to collectively address the complex issue of bullying. His vision saw the mobilization of the entire community - a total community wrapping itself around the problem. In his mind, if we as a community were to be successful in tackling bullying, we would need to find further ways to work together to this end. In reaching out, he sought the community's help to educate, not only our children and youth, but everyone, that bullying is wrong and hurtful and can have serious consequences within our communities. The Task Force planned and conducted a number of community mobilization and evaluation initiatives, which are profiled in this toolkit. The engagement of CTV as a media partner was a particularly innovative and effective component of this community mobilization process, and led to a major international award.

## *RECENT APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR AND A TRUSTEE TO THE NEW EXPERT PANEL*

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The profile of Safe Schools in TVDSB has continued to grow with the recent appointment of both the Director of Education and a Trustee to the Accepting Schools Expert Panel in June 2012. The Ontario Ministry of Education created the 15-member expert panel to identify and advise on developing resources and practices that promote a positive school climate, equity and inclusive education, as well as bullying prevention and early intervention. The inclusion of two TVDSB leaders speaks to the commitment and expertise of the board in this area.

\*\*\*\*\*

Upon reflection, some of the progress in Safe Schools has come in the continuous development of programming and other growth which has evolved from how our board has responded to tragedy or adversity. This climate of openness and willingness to learn is a hallmark of TVDSB Safe Schools and enables the board to learn and improve following tragedies. This climate continues to be fostered by the current leadership, as evident in their willingness to work with media on a major bullying prevention initiative, and in doing so, put both Safe Schools successes and challenges in the limelight.

Although we are talking about our particular board's experience, looking at other boards we see a similar pattern whereby tragedy can serve as a catalyst for self-reflection and transformation. For example, the tragic 2007 shooting death of a student in the Toronto District School Board triggered a similar response of investigation and analysis. The board undertook a massive inquiry to address the larger issues and context instead of trying to dismiss the shooting as one aberration. The resulting Falconer Report noted that many of the current practices and policies had been a failure, and that, "marginalized youth cannot be punished/ suspended into becoming engaged." The Falconer report included recommendations for sweeping system reform, some of which have resulted in numerous innovations, notably the creation of a gender-based violence prevention office.



Looking beyond responses to tragedy, there are several factors that have promoted the continuous innovation and growth of Safe Schools in the TVDSB. Specifically, leadership, resource commitment, engagement of partners, and a commitment to data-informed decision making have all supported the success of safe schools. These factors will emerge as themes in the examples used throughout this toolkit.

## ORGANIZATION OF THIS TOOLKIT

There are many ways that this toolkit could be organized. We know that administrators and board personnel will be looking for different things from the toolkit based on their individual needs and the capacity of the schools and boards within which they are working. Different boards use different approaches to meet the same requirements and challenges. We have organized this book so that people can come to the same information through different avenues.

We present our strategies through four different approaches, moving from the pragmatic and tactical to the more strategic. We begin with a practical focus by organizing policies, procedures, and programs that have been developed in response to specific Policy/Program Memoranda and other key ministry documents. The second approach is a more global one using the School Assessment Checklist (Jaffe, Crooks, & Watson, 2009) as a starting point for assessing and planning Safe Schools Initiatives. Next we highlight some of the major principles of effective Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools initiatives and discuss challenges and tips for success in each of these principles. Our final approach aligns with the Ministry of Education’s whole school approach.

Figure 1.5 compares these different approaches so that toolkit users can select a starting section.

**Figure 1.5: Description of the four approaches used in the toolkit**



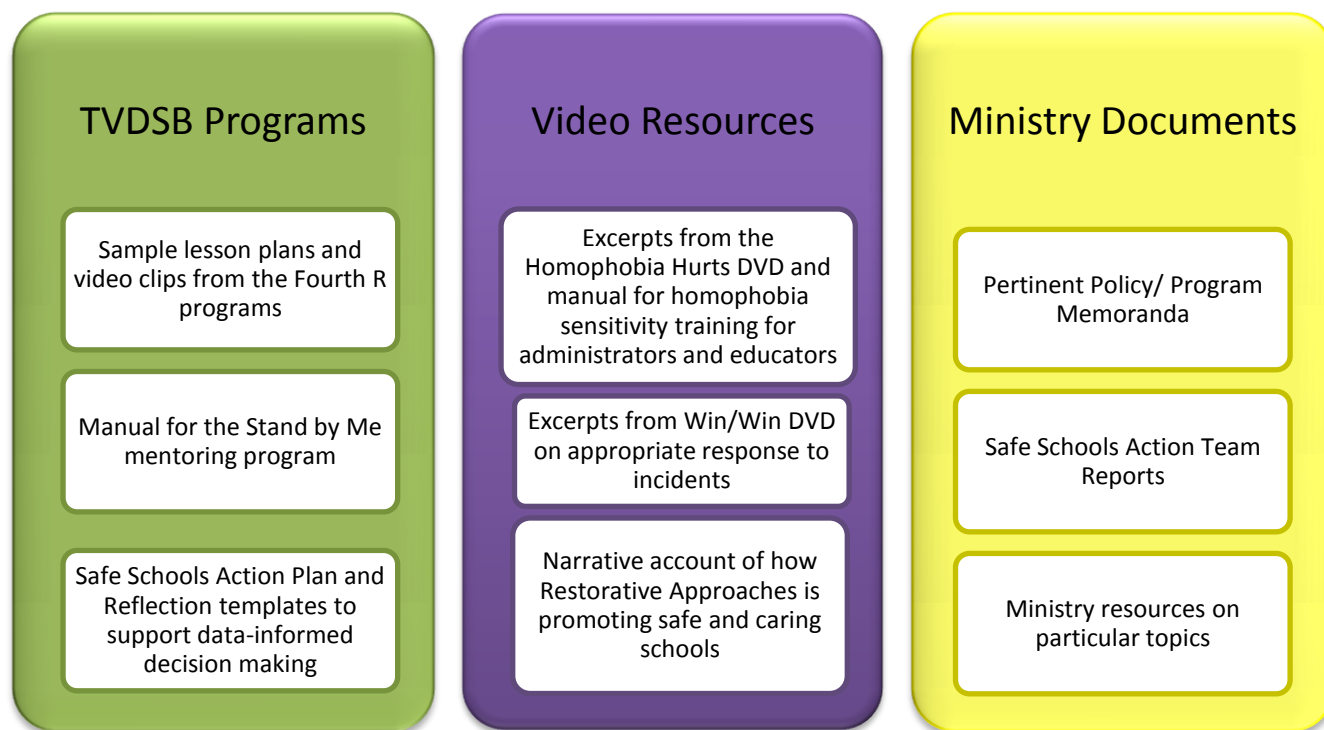
Regardless of the approach, the examples are cross-referenced such that there are different avenues for accessing the examples and strategies. After these approaches for Safe Schools are discussed, we end with several comprehensive case studies highlighting major initiatives that have stood out either for their sustainability and track records, or represent exciting and innovative approaches to emerging issues.



## NOTE ABOUT THE ACCOMPANYING DVD

In addition to this manual, an accompanying DVD was developed as part of the toolkit project. The DVD contains the same information as this manual, but includes numerous examples of program resources and templates, video resources, and relevant ministry documents. In this manual, the availability of these examples is indicated by highlighted text: green highlighting denotes program information, purple highlighting is used for video resources, and yellow highlighting links to ministry documents. Samples of the supporting materials included on the DVD are shown in Figure 1.6 below. A full list of supporting materials available on the DVD is available in Appendix C.

**Figure 1.6: Examples of Toolkit DVD Content**





# Chapter 2

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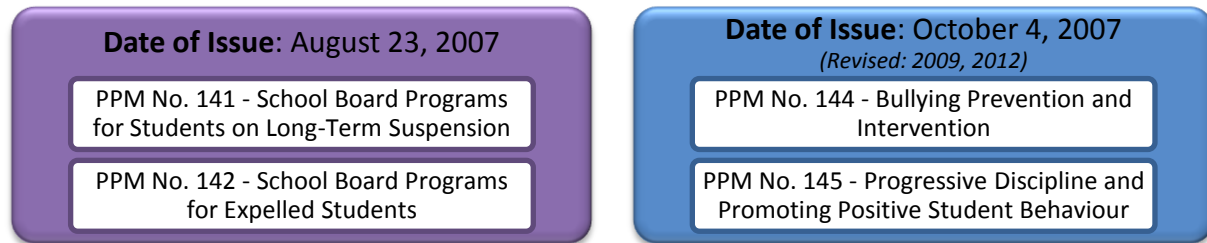
## *Responding to a Changing Environment: Putting Ministry Mandates into Action*

*In this section we trace the legislative changes introduced by Bills 212 and 157, and highlight the strategies used by TVDSB to meet the requirements of these Bills. For each Bill we identify the major requirements as outlined in specific Policy / Program Memoranda. We end this section with an overview of the recently enacted Bill 13 and some of the implementation plans and activities underway.*

## CHAPTER 2: RESPONDING TO A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

As noted in the introduction, the Safe Schools Act resulted in a strict discipline approach to behavioural infractions. The Bill addressed consequences for negative behaviour, but did not include much in the way of prevention or creating a school environment conducive to safety and positive behaviour. School boards were largely left to their own discretion to implement the requirements of Bill 81 and there was a very short window to do so. As a result, the implementation was inconsistent from board to board and in some cases from school to school within the same board. It is little wonder that many boards saw challenges with the legislation from the beginning.

Bill 112 represented a departure from the hard-line zero tolerance approach taken by many boards in their interpretation of the *Safe Schools Act, 2000* to a focus on early intervention and prevention strategies. To increase consistency and accountability, it shifted the power to expel students from the principals back to the board and stated that teachers no longer have the authority to suspend. Bill 112 had a strong commitment to progressive discipline and alternatives to suspension and expulsion. The inclusion of violence prevention and progressive discipline policies and procedures meant that there were extensive requirements for boards arising from this legislation. There were four new and one revised Policy/Program Memoranda (PPM) arising from Bill 112. PPM No. 141 and PPM No. 142 addressed programming for students on long-term suspension and expulsion, respectively. PPM No. 144 contained comprehensive and specific requirements for bullying prevention and intervention and PPM No. 128 asked boards to revise their Codes of Conduct. Finally, PPM No. 145 focused on progressive discipline and promoting positive student behaviour.



Bill 157 aimed to increase student safety by clarifying the scope of mandated responding and reporting to principals. It contained provisions for teaching and non-teaching staff in outlining specific responding and reporting requirements. As part of the implementation of Bill 157, PPM No. 144 and PPM No. 145 were revised.

In this section we outline the major provisions of the different Policy/Program Memoranda and describe the corresponding policies and procedures, programs, and training that were put in place to meet these provisions. Although policies and procedures provide the foundation for change, they are only pieces of paper until they are enacted system-wide. With that in mind, we attend to the implementation process that has created the structure for success in these areas as we highlight the TVDSB response to these Policy/Program Memoranda.

We begin by looking at PPM No. 141 and PPM No. 142 together, as they address similar issues with their foci on suspended and expelled students, respectively. Next we address PPM No. 144 and PPM No. 145 together, again because of the overlap in requirements. We have included a chart for each set of PPM with the major requirements and TVDSB initiatives with Appendix information provided. In the Appendix we provide further description of a number of initiatives; however, the accompanying DVD provides many more specific resources including video training files, and implementation directions. As noted in the introduction, a number of initiatives undertaken by TVDSB that align with PPM requirements were actually put in place prior to the PPM on the recommendation of the Safe Schools Action Team in one of their reports. In the cases where initiatives or policies were implemented on the basis of a Safe Schools Action Team report and then required minor revision once a PPM was released, this sequence of events is noted in the tables and accompanying text.



This section ends with looking ahead to Bill 13 and the initiatives we are already putting in place in anticipation of further revisions to PPM No. 144 and PPM No. 145.

**PPM No. 141: School Board Programs for Students on Long-Term Suspensions**  
**PPM No. 142: School Board Programs for Expelled Students**

The main focus of Bill 212 was the requirement of every board to offer a specific program for students who were suspended or expelled. PPM No. 141 and PPM No. 142 address program and policy requirements for these suspension and expulsion programs. Table 2.1 outlines the major components of these memoranda.

**Table 2.1: PPM No. 141 and PPM No. 142 (2007)**

| GENERAL REQUIREMENT   |  |
|---|--|
| REQUIREMENT   | TVDSB RESPONSE                             |
| Boards are expected to have at least one program for students who are on long-term (i.e., 6 school days) suspension. Students on short-term suspension are expected to be provided with homework packages to help ensure they do not fall behind in their school work.  | U-Turn program                             |
| Boards are expected to have at least one program for expelled students.   |  |
| PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS  |  |
| REQUIREMENT   | TVDSB RESPONSE                             |
| A Student Action Plan (SAP) is developed for all students on long-term suspension who make a commitment to attend the board program for long-term suspension students. Those suspended more than ten school days require a non-academic component in addition to the academic component. When a long-term suspension student is considered ready to be re-admitted to school, a re-entry meeting is held. | U-Turn program Student Action Plan         |
| A Student Action Plan is developed for every expelled student who makes a commitment to attend the board program for expelled students.   |  |
| When an expelled student is considered ready to be re-admitted to school, a re-entry plan is expected.  | U-Turn program re-entry plan               |
| ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS   |  |
| REQUIREMENT   | TVDSB RESPONSE                             |
| Boards must continue to collect data on suspensions and report it to the ministry.  | Continue to collect and report these data. |
| Boards must establish performance indicators for monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating the effectiveness of the board program.  | Numerous indicators developed.             |

**TVDSB RESPONSE TO PPM NO. 141 AND PPM NO. 142**

**PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

The major program initiative put in place in response to PPM No. 141 and PPM No. 142 was the U-Turn Program. The U-Turn program is an innovative approach based on a strong community partnership and a commitment to Restorative Approaches.



## U-TURN PROGRAM

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The U-Turn program opened on February 1, 2008 and is based on Restorative Approaches. By focusing on the behaviour and not the student, the program aims to break through some of the barriers students have by exploring the behaviours that led to suspension or expulsion. Students who engage in behaviours that lead to suspension or expulsion are increasingly disconnected from the school and their community. Students in the site-based U-Turn program participate in daily activities to help them build relationships with their peers and staff and to build a sense of community within the group.



All U-Turn staff members have been trained in Restorative Justice by St. Leonard's Community Services London. The intent of the program is to allow students to continue their education while addressing issues that led to their suspension or expulsion. A basic premise is to always separate the behaviour from the student. Students must accept responsibility for their actions before re-integration back into a community school is possible. U-turn employs Restorative Approaches each day commencing and finishing with a community circle.

The U-Turn program has two components: academic and social-emotional. Individualized plans define both of those components for each student in the program. Participation in the program is voluntary; however, expelled students must satisfy the objectives for successful completion of the program before re-entry into a community school is permissible.

Approximately half of each day is devoted to Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). The SEL component looks different for short-term suspended students, than for long-term suspended and expelled students. For short-term suspended students, there is limited time to do more than meet with students and make appropriate referrals or consults. For long-term suspension and expulsion cases, the SEL program has a few different components. There is individual counselling with the social worker. There is also group counselling in a variety of different contexts. There are group programs run by the counsellor, the psychometrist, and the teacher, including emotions management, choices, boys' groups, and girls' groups. There is community involvement whereby students go out into the community and volunteer their services (e.g., at the boys and girls club, park clean-ups, etc). Finally, there is a physical component to the non-academic program – the students go to the YMCA weekly to promote physical health and well-being.

The program is delivered in two different formats. The first is site-based for students who have been expelled and for students who have been suspended for more than ten days. The second format is an itinerant program for students who have been suspended for six to ten days. This program also supports students outside the two city sites of London and St. Thomas. The itinerant program is brought to the students wherever the students are located – for example in the public library in Woodstock. Occasionally students are transported to a site-based program if it is in the best interest of the student.

U-Turn is also a preventative program providing intensive support for some at risk students. This only occurs through referral by the principal and approval by the superintendent. TVDSB hopes that intensive support can help to avoid a long-term suspension or expulsion. The number of long-term suspensions and expulsions has decreased in TVDSB over the last few years, which means that the number of “true” U-Turn students has also decreased.

The U-Turn program has been very successful in its first four years, as evident by a number of trends/observations:

- Low re-referral rates – students who return to the regular program are not being suspended again
- Students view it as a positive environment and an increasing number of students are accessing the program for exceptional circumstances rather than disciplinary referral (e.g., anxiety impedes attendance in the regular program)
- High rates of graduation among program participants



## SUCCESS FACTORS FOR THE U-TURN PROGRAM

### U-Turn program success factors include:

- Flexibility through the itinerant program to work with students on 6 to 10 school day suspensions in their home communities
- Emphasis on Restorative Approaches and social emotional learning to address the factors that led to suspension in the first place
- Partnership with St. Leonard's Community Services to provide support for Restorative Approaches
- All U-Turn staff trained by Dr. Ross Greene in Collaborative Problem-Solving (Greene, 2009)
- An ability to provide flexibility in transitioning back to the community school. For example, participants might elect to spend half of their school day in U-Turn and half in the regular program as part of their transition plan.

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Consistent with PPM No. 141 and PPM No. 142, the TVDSB continues to collect and report suspension and expulsion data to the ministry. In order to produce a sufficiently detailed picture of disciplinary actions in TVDSB, we calculate a number of different indices. The range of indices provides a picture of the numbers of students involved as well as the severity of incidents, while accounting for other factors such as enrolment.

To be able to capture a full picture, the TVDSB Research and Assessment Department developed the following indices:

- The total number of incidents across the board that resulted in a disciplinary action
- The percentage of students involved based on enrolment numbers
- The numbers of suspensions versus recommendations for expulsion and actual expulsions
- The total number of students suspended (i.e., a student with multiple suspensions would only be counted once)
- The percentage of students suspended
- Total suspended days across the board
- Total suspended days per student (i.e., accounting for enrolment)

By calculating all of the indices over the past 5 years, it increases our confidence that change in any particular index is not an anomaly or due to changes in enrolment. Because rates of incidents and disciplinary actions have declined across virtually all of these indices, collectively these indices provide a clear picture that serious behavioural incidents in the board have declined.

### PPM No. 144: BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

### PPM No. 145: PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE AND PROMOTING POSITIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

In comparison to PPM No. 141 and PPM No. 142, PPM No. 144 (Bullying Prevention and Intervention) and PPM No. 145 (Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour) required a much more multi-faceted response. Both of these PPM were initially released after Bill 212, but later revised to include provisions related to Bill 157. They are currently being further revised to include provisions related to Bill 13. The requirements are discussed collectively in this section.

In some cases, the board had already made changes that aligned with the requirements of the PPM. For example, under the PPM all boards were required to include a particular definition of bullying. TVDSB had already





developed a similar definition based on the recommendations from the Safe Schools Action Team, and then made minor revisions on the basis of PPM No. 144 and PPM No. 145.

Other provisions required the implementation of significant programming, training and leadership opportunities. Table 2.2 indicates the major requirements of PPM No. 144 and PPM No. 145 and the TVDSB responses that were developed or strengthened in response, along with relevant appendix references [or links for the DVD as the case may be]. Following Table 2.2, the major components are discussed under the following headings: policy statement / definition of bullying; prevention and awareness strategies; intervention and support strategies; building partnerships; reporting to principals; training strategies for administrators, teachers, and non-teaching staff; communication and outreach strategies; monitoring and review; and Safe Schools teams. Not all of these headings are addressed in both PPMs, although the majority of them have provisions in each.

**Table 2.2: PPM No. 144 and PPM No. 145 (2007; revised 2009, 2012)**

| <b>POLICY STATEMENT / DEFINITION OF BULLYING</b>  |  |
|---|--|
| <b>REQUIREMENT</b>  | <b>TVDSB RESPONSE</b>  |
| Changes to policy statements and the definition of bullying. Specific statements to be included in board policies on progressive discipline.  | These changes had already been undertaken based on recommendations from the Safe Schools Action Team and required only minor revision. Specific statements were added.   |
| <b>PREVENTION AND AWARENESS STRATEGIES</b>  |  |
| <b>REQUIREMENT</b>  | <b>TVDSB RESPONSE</b>  |
| Teaching strategies that support the school-wide bullying prevention policies.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WITS</li> <li>• Roots of Empathy</li> <li>• Steps to Respect</li> <li>• Fourth R Health</li> <li>• Fourth R English</li> </ul>  |
| Teaching strategies that focus on developing healthy relationships by including bullying prevention throughout the curriculum in daily classroom teaching.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angel Video</li> <li>• SOS Video</li> <li>• Diversity: Embracing Who we Are</li> <li>• Critical Media Literacy</li> </ul>   |
| Opportunities for all students to participate in bullying prevention and leadership initiatives within their own school.  | Offer 3 student conferences each year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Safe Schools Conference</li> <li>• Gay-Straight Alliance Conference</li> <li>• SAVE Conference</li> </ul>  |
| Boards must provide opportunities for all members of the school community to increase knowledge and understanding about homophobia, gender-based violence, sexual harassment, inappropriate sexual behaviour, critical media literacy, and safe Internet use. | Students – classroom-based instruction and leadership opportunities (see above) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Intentions??</li> </ul> Staff professional development – (see training section below) Parents - media violence and cyber-bullying presentations                  |
| Boards must require schools to survey students about school climate every two years. The results of these must be shared with safe schools teams and inform school improvement plans.   | TVDSB had developed a three-year cycle for collecting school climate data starting in 2005. TVDSB now uses a two year cycle.   |
| <b>INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES</b>  |  |
| <b>REQUIREMENT</b>  | <b>TVDSB RESPONSE</b>  |
| Support for students who have been bullied, students who have bullied others, and students who have been affected by observing bullying.  | Team meetings are held to support students who are victimized and/or students who bully. They then develop a safety plan which may include administrators, parents, teachers, students, support staff, psychologist, and/or Safe Schools coordinators. Restorative Approaches are implemented. |



Comprehensive intervention strategy to address incidents of bullying in an appropriate and timely manner and consistent with a progressive discipline approach.

Employees must take seriously all allegations of bullying behaviour and act in a timely, sensitive and supportive manner when responding to students who disclose.

Board employees must take seriously all allegations of gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment, and inappropriate behaviour and respond in a timely, sensitive and supportive manner.

All staff who work directly with students must respond to any behaviour that is likely to have a negative impact on student climate.

Procedures to allow students to report bullying incidents safely and in a way that minimizes reprisal.

Outline procedures in place to support students – as well as their parents—regarding bullying issues, including bullying based on gender and sexual orientation.

Numerous protocols developed or adapted, and implemented:

- 4 A Response
- Response to Inappropriate Behaviour
- Win/Win responses
- Police / School Board Protocol
- Intervention Protocol for Staff
- Anonymous Reporting

Trainings – Vice principals, new administrators, leadership track teachers (see training section below)

Significant training to implement these policies (see Training Section below)

Following our 1st system wide Safe Schools survey, all schools were encouraged to develop a method of anonymous reporting in their schools. After Bill 157, schools were requested to offer an anonymous online reporting procedure. Step by step instructions were provided for each school to help ensure consistency.

- Diversity: Embracing Who We Are Resources
- Homophobia Hurts DVD

## BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

### REQUIREMENT

Boards should engage the whole school community to promote a positive school environment and support the progressive discipline continuum. Every school board must: Direct schools to work with agencies or organizations that have expertise in gender-based violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behaviour to provide support for students, parents and teachers in addressing these issues

Maintain an up-to-date contact list of community agencies that have expertise in these areas and make it available to staff and students in every school. Ensure that all publicly funded schools provide access to public health units to deliver their mandated public health curriculum

### TVDSB RESPONSE

St. Leonard’s Community Services; CAMH Centre for Prevention Science; Western University  
Police Services  
Public Health Units  
Director’s Task Force  
Numerous partnerships with community organizations on a project basis or to meet the needs of a particular school community  
A memo outlining the collaborative partnership between Public Health and TVDSB to all schools

## REPORTING TO PRINCIPALS

### REQUIREMENT

Behaviour that must be considered for suspension or expulsion must be reported to the principal. Specific requirements for record keeping and written notification.

### TVDSB RESPONSE

- Bill 157 Training



## TRAINING STRATEGIES FOR ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS AND NON-TEACHING STAFF

### REQUIREMENT

Boards must put in place training strategies on bullying prevention and intervention for all administrators, teachers, and non-teaching staff.

### TVDSB RESPONSE

- Bill 157 training
- Homophobia Sensitivity training
- Stop Bullying training

## COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH STRATEGIES

### REQUIREMENT

Boards must actively communicate their policies and procedures on bullying prevention and intervention to key stakeholders

Boards must actively communicate progressive discipline policies and procedures to key stakeholders.

### TVDSB RESPONSE

- Safe Schools website
- Director’s Task force
- Superintendent Memos, trainings

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

### REQUIREMENT

Boards must monitor, review, and evaluate the effectiveness of board policies and procedures through indicators established in consultation with teachers, non-teaching staff, students, parents, school councils, their Special Education Advisory Committee, their Parent Involvement Committee, and service providers in the community.

Bullying prevention must be included in school improvement plans.

Boards must direct schools to address gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual behaviour in their school improvement plans.

Boards must require that all schools develop and implement a school-wide progressive discipline plan.

Boards must direct schools to evaluate the effectiveness of their safe schools policies and programs.

### TVDSB RESPONSE

- Safe Schools Survey
- School Assessment Checklist
- Safe Schools Action Plan (part of school improvement plan)
- Safe Schools Reflection
- Pre- and post- research on Restorative Approaches pilot
- Fourth R evaluation (partnership with CAMH)
- Current FNMI evaluation (partnership with CAMH)

## SAFE SCHOOLS TEAMS

### REQUIREMENT

Each school must have in place a Safe Schools team responsible for school safety that is composed of at least one student (where appropriate), one parent, one teacher, one non-teaching staff member, one community partner, and the principal.

### TVDSB RESPONSE

- Mandated to report committee names and meeting dates to system for accountability.
- Ongoing mandatory trainings to be held to clarify roles and responsibilities.
- Provision of release time to facilitate meetings if necessary.

## TVDSB RESPONSE TO PPM NO. 144 AND PPM NO. 145

### POLICY STATEMENT/DEFINITION OF BULLYING

PPM No. 144 and PPM No. 145 both had provisions for changing board policy statements. Policies were required to use specific statements and a particular definition of bullying. Furthermore, policies were required to be updated to include specific statements about progressive discipline. Many of these changes had already been undertaken based on recommendations from the Safe Schools Action Team and required only minor revision.



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## PREVENTION AND AWARENESS STRATEGIES

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Prevention and awareness strategies have been developed for students, staff, and parents / community. Initiatives for students include programming integrated into classroom curriculum as well as student conferences. Significant training has been conducted to raise awareness and increase capacity among staff (discussed under the Training heading of this section). Finally, a number of education and engagement initiatives have been undertaken with parents and community partners. All of these prevention and intervention strategies form a spectrum of strategies, as shown in Figure 2.1. Collectively, these strategies promote a positive school climate, prevent bullying and other forms of violence, and help ensure consistent responding to incidents.

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## INTEGRATING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND BULLYING PREVENTION INTO TEACHING STRATEGIES

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Bill 212 identified the importance of integrating relationship promotion and bullying prevention strategies into the classroom and curriculum rather than treating them as an add-on. The ability to use a relationship promotion program that meets ministry curriculum expectations was identified as a key benefit by both administrators and educators in a study investigating the use of the Fourth R program (Crooks, Wolfe, Hughes, Jaffe & Chiodo, 2008). Furthermore, using programs that support literacy and do not detract from instructional time are consistent with TVDSB goals.

TVDSB offer educators the opportunity to use these integrated classroom-based programs that support literacy and curriculum expectations while promoting healthy relationships and reducing bullying and other forms of violence from JK-grade 12. Below we describe the different programs we use, starting with our youngest students and moving to our senior students (i.e., WITS; Roots of Empathy; Steps to Respect; SOS; Fourth R Health; Fourth R English; Good Intentions??). We also highlight two resources that include curriculum-connected resources for grades JK-12 (Diversity: Embracing Who We Are project; Media Literacy initiative).

Several of the programs we use are evidence-based, most notably WITS, Roots of Empathy, Steps to Respect, and Fourth R. For more information about evidence-based programs and the Public Health Agency of Canada Best Practices Portal, which provides information about best practices, see Textbox 2.1.

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### WITS PROGRAM – WALK AWAY, IGNORE, TALK IT OUT, SEEK HELP

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The *WITS* program is a Canadian, literacy based conflict resolution and bullying prevention program for children in kindergarten-grade 3. Children learn to use the acronym *WITS* (Walk away, Ignore, Talk it out, Seek help) for conflict resolution strategies. Although children learn these strategies, the main objective is to create environments that are more responsive for children when they report bullying. Issues such as friendship and bullying are addressed with age appropriate children's books and follow-up activities. One advantage of the *WITS* program is that the teacher training is available for free online at <http://web.uvic.ca/wits/>. In addition to the teacher-implemented component there are resources for community partners, families, and children. The Safe Schools team has made information about *WITS* available to all elementary schools, but has not been involved with a systematic implementation at this point.

Using Your WITS<sup>®</sup>  
to Prevent Peer Victimization



A Resource Guide to  
the WITS Primary &  
WITS LEADS Programs

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### ROOTS OF EMPATHY

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Roots of Empathy  
Racines de l'empathie

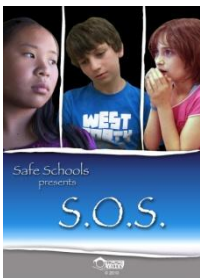
Started in 1996, *Roots of Empathy* is an evidence-based classroom program that has shown significant effect in reducing levels of aggression among schoolchildren while raising social/emotional competence and increasing empathy. At the heart of the program are a neighbourhood infant and parent who engage students in their classroom. Over the school year, a trained *Roots of Empathy* Instructor guides the children as they observe the relationship between baby and parent, understanding the baby's intentions and emotions. Through this model of experiential learning, the baby is the "Teacher" and a catalyst,



helping children identify and reflect on their own feelings and the feelings of others. Support for *Roots of Empathy* is provided by staff from the School Counselling and Social Work Services department.

## STEPS TO RESPECT

*Steps to Respect* is a bullying prevention program developed to help adults and students decrease bullying and establish a safe, caring, and respectful school climate. The program's dual focus on bullying and friendship is based on research showing that friendship protects children from the harmful effects of bullying. Students learn a variety of relationship skills, including strategies for making and keeping friends and steps for joining a group activity. The *Steps to Respect* program also teaches children skills for coping with bullying, including recognizing bullying, using assertive behaviours to respond to bullying, and reporting bullying to adults. Because many children become involved as bystanders to bullying (in both helpful and harmful ways), the *Steps to Respect* program emphasizes that all members of a school community must take responsibility for decreasing bullying. The program includes an 11 lesson skill unit and an 8 lesson literature unit. It is delivered in classrooms for grades 3 to 6 students. *Steps to Respect* has a strong evidence base as an effective program. More information about Steps to Respect is available on their website at: [www.cfchildren.org/steps-to-respect](http://www.cfchildren.org/steps-to-respect). The TVDSB Safe Schools team conducts *Steps to Respect* training annually for up to 50 educators who wish to implement it.



## S.O.S.

S.O.S. is a locally developed resource to support educators in classroom discussions and activities. It was developed for grades 4 to 6 and includes curriculum connections to Language Arts. The DVD is a collection of three different stories on bullying and harassment intended to generate discussion and lead to positive action in bullying prevention. The DVD resource has been rolled out to all 137 elementary schools. It includes follow up material with curriculum connections and lesson plans for classroom teachers.

## FOURTH R HEALTH

The *Fourth R* is an evidence-based program that promotes healthy relationships and targets violence, high-risk sexual behaviour, and substance use among adolescents. The *Fourth R* was developed in the TVDSB in partnership with researchers from the CAMH Centre for Prevention Science and Western University. The program is available for grades 7, 8, and 9, and each version meets the Ontario Health curriculum requirements. The contention of the *Fourth R* is that relationship skills can be taught in a similar academic setting to the other 'three Rs' (Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic). The program is delivered by classroom teachers, who have received a 2 ½ hour training workshop to familiarize them with the materials and methods needed to implement the intervention. The grade 9 *Fourth R* curriculum has 3 main units, each containing seven 75-minute lessons: 1) personal safety and injury prevention, 2) healthy growth and sexuality, and 3) substance use and abuse. Grades 7 and 8 differ slightly based on curriculum expectations and class length. The topics are taught with the underlying theme of healthy, non-violent relationship skills. There is a strong emphasis on skill development and students have ample opportunities to practise new skills in role plays. More information is available at [www.youthrelationships.org](http://www.youthrelationships.org). The TVDSB conducts annual trainings for all of the *Fourth R* programs and makes materials available through a licensing agreement with CAMH that permits the production of as many set of materials as necessary.



*Fourth R* Health has also been adapted for specific settings and populations. More about the programming and adaptations is available on page 136.



## FOURTH R ENGLISH

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The Fourth R English program was designed to meet curriculum expectations for grades 9-12. Each curriculum unit involves analyzing issues, solving problems, and applying ideas while developing the skills of effective communication such as speaking, listening, and presenting. At the same time, the lessons are designed to support a balanced-literacy English classroom, and to address many key subject-specific learning expectations. A variety of reading levels in the texts, combined with the broad selection of activities allows the teacher to differentiate the instruction and the performance expectations for each student. Extension activities support character education, critical-literacy and critical-thinking skills which are important to improving student learning in the subject area. Adolescents require opportunities to learn new skills (e.g., critical thinking, communication and problem-solving), and practise applying them in different situations. The lessons provide many opportunities to practise role playing the skills. Students will share their ideas in small groups, larger groups, and whole class discussions. Some exercises are designed to be done individually, while other exercises involve collaboration with classmates. Further information about the history, development, and evaluation of the Fourth R in TVDSB is available in the case study section (see page 136).

## GOOD INTENTIONS??

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TVDSB created the film *Good Intentions??*, which is based on the true story of a young woman who experienced gender based relationship violence. Secondary school students review the warning signs of relationship violence and develop skills and strategies to help a friend in need. Follow up discussion is provided by trained Western University student facilitators.



## DIVERSITY: EMBRACING WHO WE ARE

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The DIVERSITY: Embracing Who We Are initiative is a resource that was launched in conjunction with training (see page 127 for case study). Each elementary school library received 10 mentor texts related to the first diversity dimension to be addressed – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. Each school also received a teacher resource binder including curriculum expectations and literacy connections to support the Diversity

Mentor Text selections. At the secondary level – each school sent a team of 4 teachers (Teacher-Librarian, English, Health & Physical Education, Social Science) to attend a 1/2 day workshop. At the elementary level – each school sent the Teacher Librarian to attend a ½ day workshop. Each school library received 30 mentor texts. Each school also received teacher resource binders including curriculum expectations and literacy connections to support the Diversity Mentor Text selections in three subject areas.

## MEDIA LITERACY INITIATIVE

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Another resource used in TVDSB is the Media Literacy Initiative resource that was developed by a consortium of stakeholders to develop media literacy lessons that matched specific curriculum expectations for every grade (K-12) using cutting-edge literacy strategies. TVDSB educators were involved as writers on the project. The full resource is available online through Western University's Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children at: [www.crvawc.ca/CritMedLitCD/index.html](http://www.crvawc.ca/CritMedLitCD/index.html).



### **Textbox 2.1: Evidence-Based Programs, Evidence-Informed Programs, and Data-Informed Decision-Making**

There has been a strong move towards Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) in education and social service sectors. EBP is important because in this time of increased fiscal restraint, precious resources should be directed to programs that achieve their desired outcomes. Furthermore, there are numerous examples of highly popular prevention programs that have been shown to be ineffective or even detrimental. Unfortunately, with the increased interest in EBP, the term has been over-used and lost clarity. Used correctly, EBP refers to programs that have been demonstrated to be effective in at least one rigorously designed evaluation. The difference between evidence-based, evidence-informed, and data-informed provides an important framework for understanding which term can be applied to a particular program or initiative.

**Evidence-Based Practice** refers to programs that have been found effective through research. There are different standards of evidence, and traditionally, the Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) has been considered the most rigorous. RCTs are large evaluation studies where individuals (or families or schools) are randomly assigned to an intervention or control condition. RCTs do not have the same problems associated with other common evaluation designs. For example, quasi-experimental or comparison group research (whereby the assignment to intervention or control is not random) can have bias in terms of intervention groups being self-selecting and potentially more motivated to change. Pre- and post-designs with no comparison group make it impossible to know if changes are related to an intervention or simply a function of development. For example, if dating violence rates increase following an intervention, it might be that the intervention had a negative impact, or it might be that rates went up because the participants were older and more were dating. An RCT design provides confidence that observed changes are the result of the intervention and not pre-existing group differences or a function of development. However, there is growing consensus that Randomized Controlled Trials are not always feasible or necessary, and other research designed can provide the requisite evidence base.

*The Public Health Agency of Canada has launched the Best Practices Portal to provide a repository of Best (evidence-based) and Promising (evidence-informed) practices. It can be accessed at:  
<http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/>*

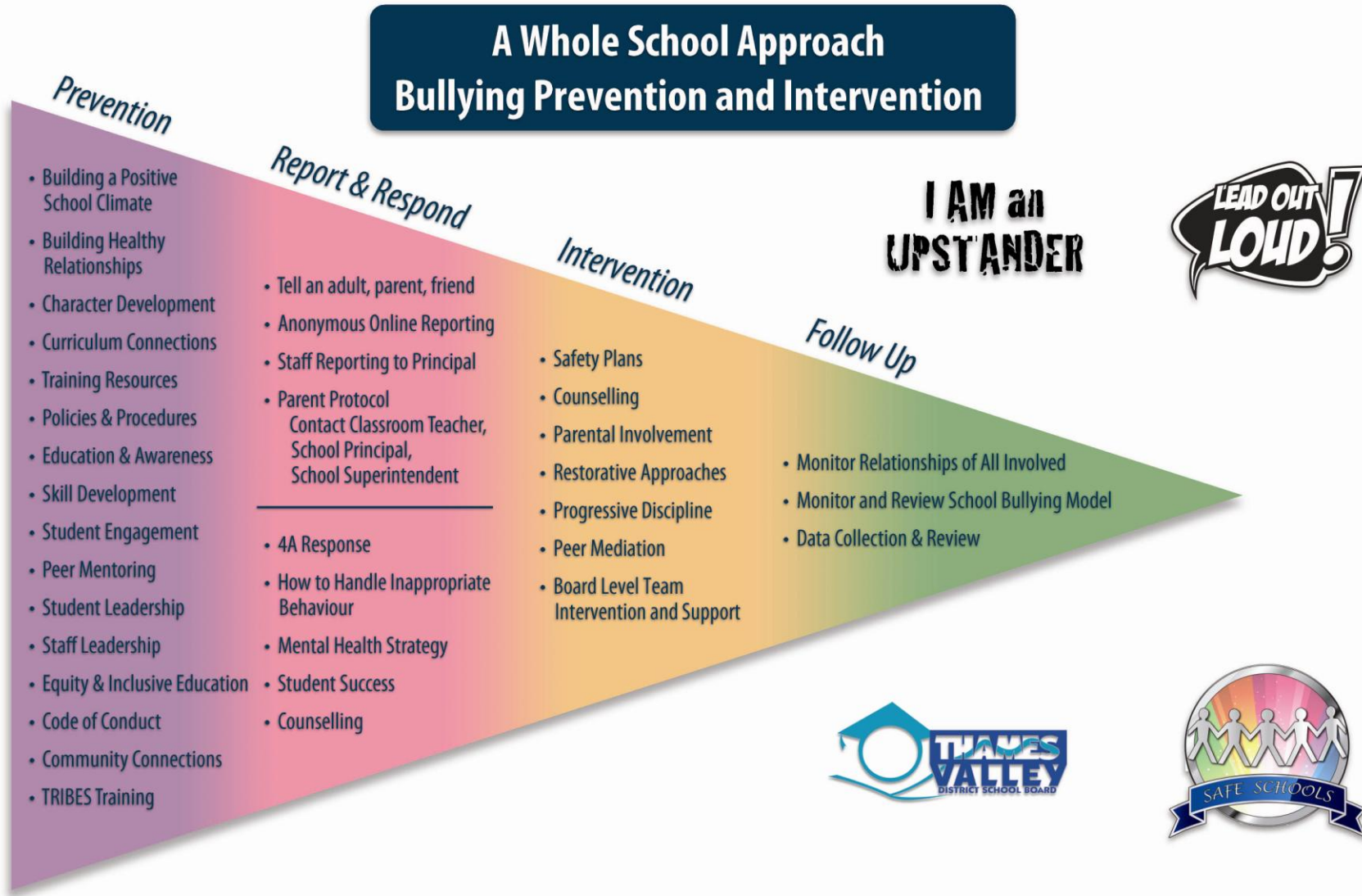
There are some caveats to selecting EBP in that it is important to consider how closely the population with which the program was developed and evaluated matches your own student population. In addition, there is a lack of EBP, particularly for some student groups, such that it is important to balance selecting EBP with considering innovative approaches that might be evidence-informed but lack rigorous evaluation at this point. For example, there is a dearth of EBP for use with FNMI youth at this point, and a need to rely on evidence-informed practice instead. Furthermore, programs are only as effective as their implementation (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). Implementation can be improved by good training, ongoing support, and some type of monitoring.

**Evidence-Informed Practice** can refer to programming that is based on EBP but has not in and of itself been evaluated. For example, the Aboriginal Perspective Fourth R is evidence-informed in that it is an adaptation of an EBP. Evidence-informed is also used to signify programming that has been developed based on research about the development of a particular behaviour. For example, bullying prevention programs that seek to alter peer group dynamics, increase reporting, and promote empathy can be considered evidence-informed in that all of these are implicated in bullying. Finally, evidence-informed can refer to programs with formative or process evaluations, but that lack rigorous outcome evaluation.

**Data-Informed Decision Making** extends beyond the parameters of a particular program and initiative and can be used to describe a process. In data-informed decision making, boards set out in an intentional way to collect data to provide a basis for establishing objectives and determining the success of initiatives. In this decision-making process, data encompasses a wide range of information and can include audits, needs surveys, school climate data, focus groups, and surveys. Developing a data-informed decision-making cycle for Safe Schools is a complex undertaking; we discuss a model for this practice extensively in Chapter 3 (page 51).



Figure 2.1: A whole school approach to bullying prevention and intervention





## SUCCESS FACTORS FOR CLASSROOM-BASED HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP PROMOTION AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION STRATEGIES

### Classroom-based programming success factors include:

- A clear connection to curriculum expectations and use of innovative literacy strategies allows educators to promote healthy relationships and prevent violence while improving literacy.
- Provision of regular training helps to offset the sustainability challenge of teacher turnover. Incidentally, the opportunity for new teachers to be trained in a program has been identified by educators and administrators as the single most important activity to increase sustainability (Crooks et al., 2008; Crooks, Burleigh, Lapp, Snowshoe, Aikens, & Hughes, 2012).
- Allocation of money in the Safe Schools budget to purchase program materials (rather than expecting individual schools or teachers to purchase them) has improved uptake and sustainability.
- Developing Master Trainers within the TVDSB (i.e., for Steps to Respect and the Fourth R) reduces the costs associated with bringing in external trainers each year.
- In several of the programs (i.e., Fourth R, S.O.S., Diversity Project, Media Literacy Resource), TVDSB educators either contributed to or developed the resource, increasing the sense of ownership and relevancy.

## LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS: ACTION-BASED YOUTH CONFERENCES

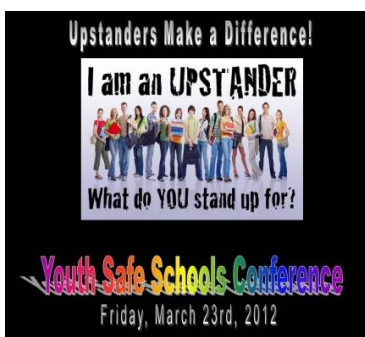
One of the requirements of Bill 212 was the provision of leadership opportunities for students. An effective way to accomplish this objective is through action-based conferences that allow youth to learn, inspire and be inspired, and network. TVDSB has three annual youth empowerment conferences.

### SAVE CONFERENCE (STUDENTS AGAINST VIOLENCE EVERYWHERE)

The annual SAVE Conference is presented in partnership with local police services. It includes a dramatic play, two motivational speakers and a challenge for students to return to their schools as positive leaders. Two grade 7 students and one administrator/teacher from each elementary school are invited to this half day conference. Student leaders participate in a variety of sessions and are equipped with ideas to implement Safe Schools initiatives at their own school. Students are asked to complete an action plan with their teachers for building healthy relationships in their schools. Annual awards are presented to three elementary schools on the basis of creative awareness videos they have developed.



### YSSC CONFERENCE (YOUTH SAFE SCHOOLS CONFERENCE)



Secondary student leaders attend an annual Youth Safe Schools Conference which motivates them to make positive differences in their schools. Student leaders promote Safe Schools activities with ongoing support throughout the year. Each year, 6 students and 1 teacher are invited from each of our secondary schools. The conference is presented in partnership with the Fourth R Program and develops partnerships among staff, students, parents and the community who are committed to creating a culture of caring in our schools. The conference provides an opportunity for students and teachers to network among schools and learn more about effective initiatives that have been organized throughout the school district in order to develop their own action plan.



## *GSA CONFERENCE (GAY STRAIGHT ALLIANCE CONFERENCE)*

Secondary student leaders attend an annual spring GSA Conference to discuss issues related to discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The goal of the conference is to empower students to create an action plan they can implement at their school. The conference has grown steadily over the past 7 years as there are an increasing number of students dedicated to this important cause. The conference helps to build students' confidence and a sense of community by bringing GSA's from across our school board together to discuss concerns and ideas with representatives from community groups. Keynote speakers have presented their own personal stories to address issues of coming out, homophobia and transphobia. One year students had the opportunity to hear a Minister of Education share her own story and answer questions by teleconference. This dialogue was instrumental in students feeling positive and validated.



## *SUCCESS FACTORS FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCES*

### **Youth empowerment conference success factors include:**

- Activities need to be engaging and interactive.
- An emphasis on specific action-planning to mobilize youth when they return to their schools to help participants parlay their enthusiasm into action.
- Having multiple participants from each school rather than a single representative provides an important ally as participants seek to make changes back in their schools.
- It is important to have a specific role for educators in providing support after the conference to implement these action plans back in the school community. Ideally the educator accompanying the participants has an interest in playing this role.
- Providing clear and specific guidance as to how schools should select delegates contributes to a successful conference.

## *PARENT AWARENESS AND EDUCATION*

The TVDSB Safe Schools team has a long history of engaging parents and providing opportunities for awareness and education.

## *BULLYING AWARENESS AND CONSULTATION INITIATIVE*

Following the first round of Safe Schools surveys back in 2005-2006, the team facilitated sessions at every elementary and secondary school. These sessions began with an awareness session on bullying. These sessions were designed to be attended by a multi-stakeholder group at each school (including administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community representatives). These sessions were modeled on the province-wide consultations done by the Safe Schools Action Team in that they engaged the groups with a fishbone brainstorming exercise on bullying prevention. These sessions had dual objectives in that they were intended to educate, but also mobilize by increasing a sense of joint ownership over the problem of bullying and solutions required.

## *MEDIA VIOLENCE, SOCIAL NETWORKING, AND CYBER-BULLYING TRAINING INITIATIVES*

More recently, we have focused our parent education activities around the issues of media violence, social networking and cyber-bullying. Although it is consistently difficult to get large numbers of parents out to education events, we have found that today's parents are highly interested in these issues and many are seeking guidance in finding strategies to increase their children's safety in this new digital world. Through our partnerships



with Western University and CAMH Centre for Prevention Science, we have made several opportunities available to parents. These include a major full day conference on media literacy, and smaller parent information nights at schools that address social networking and cyber-bullying. These offerings have been very popular with parents, and preliminary evaluation has indicated that parents have indeed implemented specific strategies at 6-month follow-up (see page 102 for more information about the evaluation).

## COMMUNITY-WIDE ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

In 2006 and again in 2010 we undertook large-scale Safe Schools community consultations to engage and raise awareness with parents and other community partners. Safe Schools do not just happen. They are created and sustained by people dedicated to ensuring positive, respectful relationships and environments. The involvement of community members is recognized as a positive and reinforcing influence. These initiatives are resource-intensive in their planning and delivery, but have attracted a much larger number of participants (i.e., 300 and 600, respectively) rather than smaller school-based initiatives (see page 107 for more information).

## CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY COMMITTEE

In 2011, the Media Violence Conference engaged teachers, administrators, students, parents and community members to critically address issues of media violence. As a follow up to the conference, TVDSB has created a Critical Media Literacy Committee. Committee members have worked together to develop educational parent, student and teacher presentations. Further strategies for parent engagement are discussed on pg 117.

## INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES



In response to Bills 212 and 157, TVDSB developed or adapted a number of intervention and support protocols. These protocols were consistent with progressive discipline, had emphasis on teachable moments, and emphasized a consistent approach to handling incidents. Ideally, the response to an incident should be relatively uniform, regardless of the educator who intervenes and where the incident takes place. TVDSB has put significant effort into developing clear guidelines and teaching people to use them, as discussed later in the Training section.

In particular, the following intervention and support strategies have been put in place:

### 4 A RESPONSE: AFFIRM-ASK-ASSESS-ACT

TVDSB recognizes the importance of a responsive environment and the role that such an environment plays in promoting a safe, inclusive, and accepting school. We have put significant effort into understanding barriers that prevent students from reporting or seeking help when they experience or witness harassment and bullying. Furthermore, we recognize that encouraging students to report is only effective if their disclosures are handled in a safe and respectful manner. It is the effective responding to such disclosures more than encouragement to report that will change the culture in schools and make help-seeking more permissible.

#### *Textbox 2.2: 4-A Process for Handling Reports (adapted from Steps to Respect)*

- 1. AFFIRM – Affirm the student’s feelings**
- 2. ASK – Ask questions**
- 3. ASSESS – Assess the student’s safety**
- 4. ACT – Tell the student what will happen next**

To address the need to build capacity regarding responding to disclosures, we modified the 4-A Process for Handling Reports from the Steps to Respect program and implemented it across the board. This process teaches educators to use the following sequence in responding to students who are disclosing or seeking help: **AFFIRM** the student’s feelings, **ASK** questions, **ASSESS** student safety, and **ACT** (see Textbox 2.2). The protocol was expanded



in terms of creating specific guidelines for responding to victims, aggressors, and bystanders. It is an important step-by-step resource that goes beyond telling educators *what* to do and helps them understand *how* to do it.

### RESPONSE TO INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

The TVDSB protocol for responding to inappropriate behaviour was adapted from the Toronto District School Board’s *How to Handle Harassment in the Hallways in Three Minutes*. We thought it was such an excellent protocol that we expanded it to include inappropriate behaviour beyond harassment regardless of where it occurred. The Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour protocol operationalizes the idea of teachable moments – that educators must address harassment and other inappropriate behaviour every time and every place it occurs (see Textbox 2.3).

**Textbox 2.3: Response to Inappropriate Behaviour**  
(adapted from the Toronto District School Board)

1. **STOP** the inappropriate behaviour
2. **NAME** the inappropriate behaviour
3. **EXPLAIN** why the behaviour is inappropriate
4. **ASK** for change in the future

The protocol offers 4 clear cut steps for addressing inappropriate behaviour immediately and consistently: 1. **STOP** the inappropriate behaviour; 2. **NAME** the inappropriate behaviour; 3) **EXPLAIN** why the behaviour is inappropriate; and 4. **ASK** for change in the future. An important component of creating teachable moments requires that the protocol is not conducted privately unless absolutely necessary. Although effective, the protocol takes practise to use comfortably, and our team has conducted extensive training throughout the board to help build this capacity (see Training on page 29).

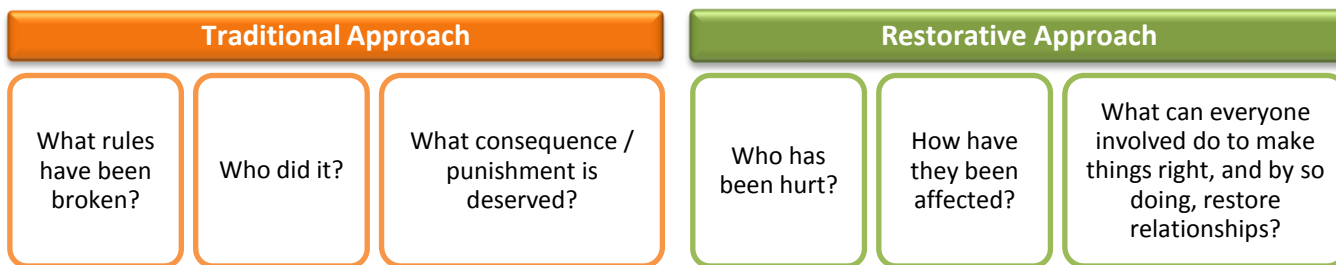
### POLICE/SCHOOL BOARD PROTOCOL

In 2000, TVDSB developed a police / school board protocol which was revised in 2011 to detail the specific responses required for a range of negative behaviours, including: harassment; fighting; destruction of property or theft; materials that are explicitly sexist, racist, or glorify violence; substance use or possession; and a range of more serious violence behaviours. The protocol clearly spells out all of the required steps for administrators, including whether or not superintendents and/or police should be contacted and what information they may require. Other provisions include whether or not parents/guardians should be contacted, whether or not suspension should be considered, etc. In August 2011 system-wide training for this protocol was provided to all administrators (including co-terminus boards) and all police services in the area.

### RESTORATIVE APPROACHES

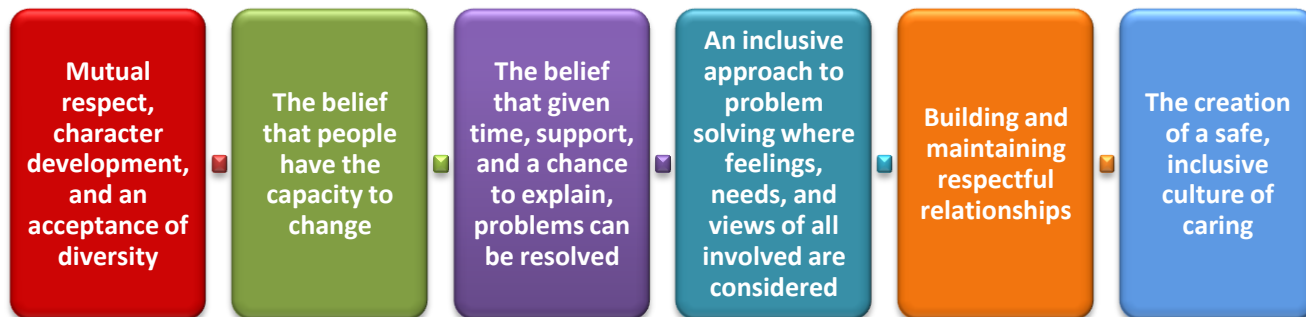
TVDSB has implemented a Restorative Approaches continuum that includes promoting healthy relationships, managing difficulties and disruptions, and restoring relationships. The use of Restorative Approaches requires a shift in the types of questions students are asked following an incident. Figure 2.2 shows how the questions differ between a traditional approach to discipline and a restorative approach.

**Figure 2.2: Comparison of traditional and restorative approaches**



More than being a particular protocol, Restorative Approaches are based on a set of values. These values provide a basis for responding to each incident in a way that meets the needs of those particular students, but is grounded in a common set of values (see Figure 2.3).

**Figure 2.3: Restorative Approaches Values:**



Restorative Approaches are based on a continuum that includes a range of strategies for promoting a positive school climate and implementing progressive discipline (see Figure 2.4). The right end of the continuum refers to situations where harm has been caused and Restorative Approaches of increasing intensity might be appropriate. There have been many training opportunities to support the implementation of Restorative Approaches in TVDSB.

Restorative Approaches is an effective way to implement progressive discipline. When an administrator becomes aware that a student has been harmed, an investigation takes place and appropriate consequences are given. In certain situations, it becomes apparent that Restorative Approaches is the best way to meet the needs of the students.

In these appropriate cases, once students who have been harmed and their parents/guardians agree, trained facilitators from St. Leonard's Community Services come in to assess the situation to determine whether they lead classroom sessions, use informal conferencing or move to a formal restorative conference. This process gives everyone a voice, encourages people to take responsibility for their actions, determines reasonable consequences, and repairs relationships so that everyone can move forward in a supportive environment. An evaluation of Restorative Approaches in the TVDSB program found that providing participants with a voice was one of the pieces of the process that was most appreciated.

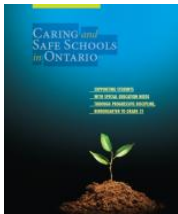
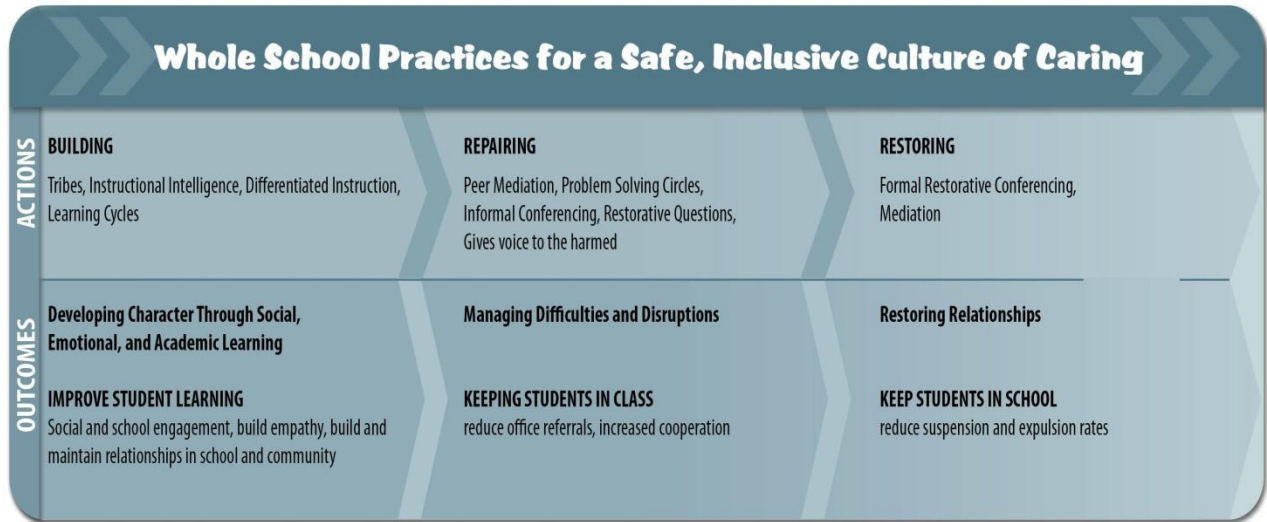
**Figure 2.4: Whole school practices to support Restorative Approaches**



Furthermore, Restorative Approaches are embedded in a culture of caring and progressive discipline (Figure 2.5).



**Figure 2.5: Restorative Approaches as part of a larger set of practices to promote a positive school climate**



More information about progressive discipline and restorative approaches (including an example of the use of a restorative circle) are included in the Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario document. Although this document was developed to support students with special education needs, it is useful much beyond the intended scope.

### ANONYMOUS REPORTING

Following our first Safe Schools Survey with secondary students in 2005, it was apparent that increasing student reporting and help-seeking were important priorities for our board. Our survey indicated that there are many reasons that students do not report (TVDSB Research and Assessment, 2008). The top five reasons included:

1. Don't want to be known as a "rat"
2. Bullying will only get worse if reported
3. Think they can handle it themselves
4. Believe school staff won't do anything about it
5. Not sure the incident is bullying

These findings demonstrated that there were many areas needing improvement: increasing student awareness around bullying and working with bystanders, for example. However, fears about reporting can be reduced through better anonymous reporting systems. Following our system wide survey, all schools were encouraged to develop a method of anonymous reporting in their schools. After Bill 157, schools were requested to provide anonymous online reporting. Step by step instructions were provided for each school to help ensure consistency.

### INTERVENTION PROTOCOL FOR STAFF

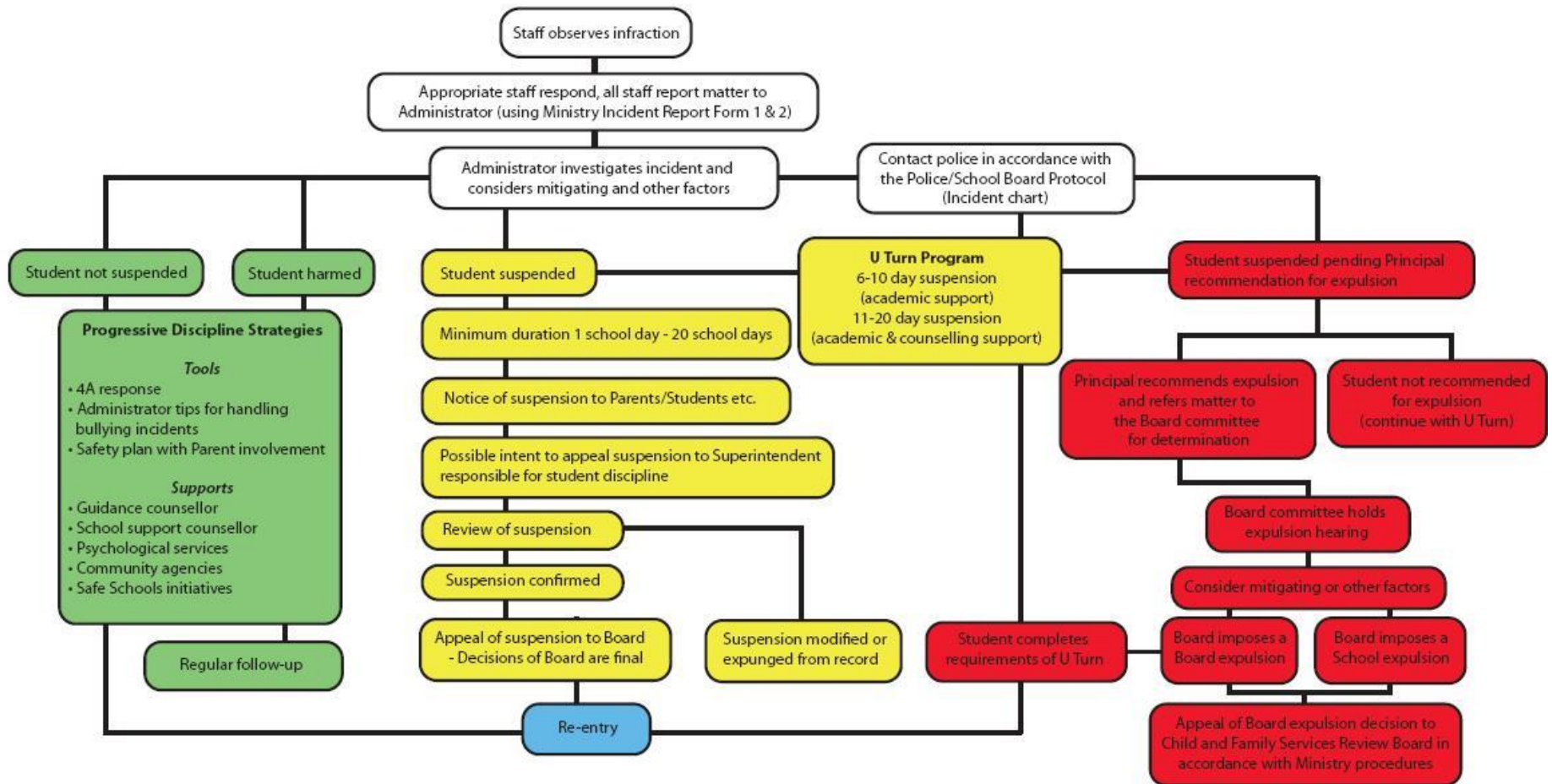
To assist administrators with integrating the different policies regarding progressive discipline, grounds for suspension and responding to incidents, a flowchart was developed (see Figure 2.6). The flowchart provides an overview of the different choices and procedures relevant to different types of incidents. It cross-references other protocols and reporting requirements to provide a quick overview of processes involved. This protocol has been reviewed in training for all administrators in the board.



Figure 2.6: Intervention protocol for staff



# Intervention Protocol



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## BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

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Although Safe Schools in TVDSB has a long history of community collaboration, in the past few years TVDSB has begun a complete review of all of our partnerships and our approach to forming partnerships. We are doing fewer one-off activities with community agencies in the school, and have become more strategic and coordinated in our partnerships as a whole.

### PARTNERSHIP SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS

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In response to the deluge of requests for partnerships from community agencies, we have developed a number of considerations for the selection of partnerships. The intent in establishing these criteria is to help ensure that organizations delivering services in TVDSB schools are held to the same high standards that TVDSB staff members are held. These considerations include:



Once a partnership proceeds, TVDSB requires criminal background checks for all volunteers, evidence of \$2 million in liability insurance held by the organization, and a signed legal agreement with the board. These considerations for selecting partnerships and requirements for moving ahead helps ensure due diligence. Student safety and learning are foremost considerations. Our aim is to help ensure that work being delivered in TVDSB schools is of the highest quality and aligned with the board's principles.

### STRATEGIC COMMUNITY-WIDE PARTNERSHIPS

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Our strategic partnering at the community level occurs through the Director's Task Force on Bullying Prevention, and the Safe Schools Steering Committee, which have 16 and 14 community agency members, respectively. The Director's Task Force has used a community consultation process to look at complementary roles and responsibilities for preventing and responding to bullying. As part of that process, each community partner agency was asked to identify a specific strategy that they would undertake as their piece of the bullying prevention puzzle.

Another strategic partnership is the Student Support Leadership Initiative (SSLI). The SSLI originated as a joint enterprise of the Ontario Ministries of Education and Children and Youth Services, and now also includes the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Its purpose is to strengthen student supports through improved collaboration and coordination among school boards and community agencies. One of the protocols of The Student Support Leadership Initiative (SSLI) was to provide financial support to promote community collaboration including school boards. In TVDSB these resources were used to conduct Threat Assessment training for TVDSB and our coterminous Catholic board. Five training opportunities were organized over a two year period. In both boards the Fair Notice for Threat Assessment policy has been approved and distributed. At the system level, TVDSB is in the process of developing a policy and procedure on Threat Assessment. In the fall of 2012, community-based meetings will be conducted with partners and school boards involved with the Threat Assessment Training. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the implementation of the training and how to continue to work together to provide safe environments for students.

### EXAMPLES OF MAJOR PARTNERSHIPS

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In addition to these community-wide partnerships, we have intensive programming and evaluation partnerships with St. Leonard's Community Services London & Region, the CAMH Centre for Prevention Science, Western University Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, Police Services and Health Units.







St. Leonard's Community Services London & Region (SLCS) is dedicated to promoting positive change in all persons who are or could be in conflict with the law to realize their potential, leading to a safer community. They are a key partner of TVDSB in three areas including the U-Turn program (see page 17),

Restorative Approaches (see page 30) and through Peer Mediation Training through the Peer Power Centre.

Developed in 1991, The Peer Power Centre promotes a forward thinking emphasis on prevention and empowering youth with knowledge, skills and resources through the provision of peer mediation training. Peer mediation is an effective conflict resolution method where youth mediators facilitate a five-stage interest based mediation process for peers who are in conflict. They are diligently trained to be neutral listeners and effective questioners and to provide a safe, respectful, non-judgmental atmosphere that allows the disputants to tell their stories and to be heard. A resolution is agreed upon and signed by both disputants. Youth agree that it works because of the equality, confidentiality and respect. Peer Power has been training secondary school mediators and teachers since 1995. Peer Mediation Training in secondary schools is demanding, rewarding and empowering. Through experiential activities and role-playing, participants learn conflict awareness, diversity and gender based biases, communication skills and mediation skills.

CAMH CENTRE FOR PREVENTION SCIENCE

The CAMH Centre for Prevention Science is unique in that it includes researchers, psychologists and educators working together to develop and evaluate healthy relationship and violence prevention programs. TVDSB has a long history of partnering on a range of program and research initiatives including:



- Development, implementation and evaluation of the Grade 9 Fourth R program (page 136).
- Development of other Fourth R adaptation and extensions including Grades 7 and 8 Health, and Grades 9-12 English (page 136).
- Development, implementation and evaluation of a range of strengths-based programming for FNMI youth, including classroom based programming, mentoring, transition conferences and cultural leadership camp (page 82).
- Parent engagement initiatives such as cyber-bullying, media literacy training (page 102), and community-based events for FNMI families.
- Collaboration on the development of the cross-curricular lesson plans addressing Media Literacy (page 24).
- Partnering on annual events such as the Father's Day Breakfast (page 112), the Youth Safe Schools Conference (page 27) and the Annual Student Leadership in Safe Schools Awards (page 100).
- A three-year provincial study on sustainable strategies in safe schools (page 42).
- Evaluation of the Urban Priority project in 3 schools.
- Participation of TVDSB staff on CAMH Centre for Prevention Science committees and working groups, and vice versa.
- Development and piloting of innovative new programming, such as the Healthy Relationships Plus program that includes a focus on promoting positive mental health and is anticipated to be piloted in the fall of 2012 (page 77).
- Collaboration on this toolkit



The Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children (CREVAWC) is a university-based research centre that promotes the development of



**Centre for Research & Education  
on Violence Against Women & Children**

community-centred, action research. The Centre's role is to facilitate the cooperation of individuals, groups, and institutions representing the diversity of the community to pursue research questions and training opportunities to understand and prevent abuse. Partnership activities with CREVAWC include:

- Development, implementation and evaluation of the Grade 9 Fourth R program (page 136).
- Implementation and evaluation of media literacy training initiatives for parents and educators (page 102).
- Collaboration on the development of the cross-curricular lesson plans addressing Media Literacy (page 24).
- Partnering on the annual Father's Day Breakfast (page 112).
- A three-year provincial study on sustainable strategies in safe schools (page 42). TVDSB provided five schools for this study and the Head of Research and Assessment participated on the Steering Committee.
- Participation of TVDSB staff on CREVAWC committees and working groups, and vice versa.
- Contribution of TVDSB expertise to the Safe Schools Course offered to pre-service teachers. Typically the TVDSB Safe Schools Coordinator delivers a guest lecture on the TRIBES process.
- Collaboration on this toolkit

#### POLICE SERVICES

Police play a vital role in supporting and enhancing the efforts of schools and their communities to be safer places in which to learn and work. In addition to responding to and investigating school-related incidents, police are essential partners in the prevention of crime and violence. TVDSB is fortunate that many of our seven regional police services provide funding for School Resource Officers to be an important part of the school community. These officers are assigned to elementary and secondary schools and liaise with school administration to teach classes, safety programs, and strive to create a positive relationship between the police and students. They are actively involved in the student suspension and re-entry process when requested. These officers have also partnered with the schools by being part of the School Council and Safe Schools Teams. London Police Service has played an important leadership role in promoting healthy relationships as a partner in the annual Father's Day Breakfast initiative.



*The London Police Service continues to work proactively with the Thames Valley District School Board to ensure that we provide our students with a secure environment to allow for optimal learning and socialization. Our Secondary School Resource Officers and School Safety Officers partner with educators promoting the concept that students can be advocates for safety in order to give them the best possible school experience. The London Police is also very proud to participate with the TVDSB at the annual Father's Day Breakfast which has educated young men and encouraged them to step forward, make a difference and stop violence against women.*

~ Brad Duncan, Chief of Police, London Police Services



## HEALTH UNITS

Public health units are vital community partners that engage students and assist school staff and parents to promote healthy, active living in TVDSB schools. Local health unit staff members are involved in work on numerous safe schools related topics such as reproductive health and the prevention of injury. In TVDSB the involvement of the health unit is negotiated by principals at the individual school level following board approval of the programs. There are three health units within the TVDSB region and there is a representative from one of the three units on the TVDSB Safe Schools Committee.

## SUCCESS FACTORS FOR BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

### Partnership success factors include:

- Fostering long-term relationships with community agencies that have a strong commitment to children and youth in health, mental health, social service, police and justice sectors.
- Engaging professionals and volunteers in a consultation process that encourages the sharing of information as well as the understanding of complementary roles and responsibilities.
- Recognizing the unique areas of expertise that diverse community professionals bring to the school system and aligning that expertise with system needs (e.g., agencies involved with sexual violence and dating violence).
- Seeking opportunities to collaborate with community partners to develop innovative programs and evaluate these efforts to promote effective strategies in creating safe school environments.

## REPORTING TO PRINCIPALS

The introduction of Bill 157 resulted in significantly expanded duties for educators to respond to and report inappropriate student behaviour of a wide range. Recognizing the complexity of the new policies, the TVDSB Safe Schools team conducted extensive training in this area (below).

## TRAINING STRATEGIES FOR ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS AND NON-TEACHING STAFF

The Safe Schools team conducts program-specific training and board wide training to build capacity, and implement new policies and procedures. In terms of program-specific trainings, annual offerings include *TRIBES*, *The Fourth R*, and *Steps to Respect*.

Beyond training in specific prevention programs, the TVDSB Safe Schools team conducts trainings on broader issues and procedures with administrators, vice principals, and leadership track teachers. Many of our training initiatives use a train-the-trainer approach whereby administrators are trained and provided with resources to train their staff in turn. This approach is necessary because the size of our board makes it hard for a centralized training team to deliver training system-wide. Our board makes extensive use of drama in our training (i.e., role plays, video vignettes) because it is engaging and because it can be turned into videos to support the train-the-trainer model.

Three major trainings were conducted between January 2010 and January 2011, including Bill 157 Training, Homophobia Sensitivity Training, and Stop Bullying Training. Each training addressed awareness and attitudes, specific legislative requirements, and a skill-based component to increase capacity.

## HOMOPHOBIA SENSITIVITY TRAINING

The Safe Schools Action Team report, *Shaping a Culture of Respect In Our Schools: Promoting Safe and Healthy Relationships* (December 2008) on gender-based violence, homophobia, sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual behaviour in schools caused us to consider what we were doing to prevent homophobia in schools. In



response to that report we began to develop a training module. Bill 157 and the accompanying PPM supported our decision to lead an administrator/teacher homophobia sensitivity training.

### HOMOPHOBIA HURTS DVD AND RESOURCES

The TVDSB Safe Schools team created the Homophobia Hurts DVD to complement the Homophobia Sensitivity Training. True stories were collected from teachers and students and turned into monologues to tell the stories. The student stories encourage empathy, ask to what extent students feel supported and question the effectiveness of the adult response – both teacher and parent. The stories also encourage peers to support fellow students. The adult stories encourage support from colleagues and administrators, and ask to what extent adults are effectively supporting students. The monologues were presented by actors to show the negative impact of homophobia on individuals. The DVD also includes reflections and questions on a CD which are intended to generate discussion with staff, parents, and/or students and lead to positive action against homophobia. The model was a train-the-trainer approach in that administrators then used the DVD and supporting materials to train their own staff. The training was completed in the spring of 2010. An administrator and a key teacher from every school received the half day training. The TVDSB Safe Schools team provided a facilitator package for each school and the expectation was that the administrator and key teacher lead a 30 minute homophobia sensitivity training in their schools at a staff meeting by the fall of 2010.



### BILL 157 TRAINING

When teachers intervene in a timely, consistent and unambiguous manner their efforts are usually effective (Olweus, 1993). Conversely, inappropriate or inconsistent responding can embolden perpetrators and make things worse for victims (Huesmann & Eron, 1984; Smith & Shu, 2000). Ineffective responding can also lower the likelihood of a victim reporting in the future, if their help-seeking efforts do not lead to an improvement of the situation (Pepler, Craig, Ziegler, & Charach, 1994). Recognizing and responding to bullying is an area for potential growth; observational data in one study indicated that teachers intervened in only 4% of bullying incidents that occurred on the playground (Craig & Pepler, 1997).

For the Bill 157 training, facilitators performed scenes of student interactions or behaviour that would require educators to respond and potentially report. At the training participants were asked how they would respond in such a situation. We then showed the same scene handled more effectively by teachers and administrators. Following the training, we created a video, Win/Win Responses, to be used by administrators as a resource to train teachers how to respond effectively to inappropriate behaviour. All administrators in the board were trained and provided with the necessary resources to implement a train-the-trainer model in which administrators trained their entire staff.

### WIN/WIN DVD AND RESOURCES



The TVDSB Safe Schools team worked with educators, diverse students from elementary and secondary schools, as well as several university students to develop a number of scenarios commonly faced by educators and role model win/win situations. The scenarios provide an opportunity to increase educators' capacity to recognize scenarios that require reporting to administration, but also how to go beyond recognizing reportable incidents and use the situation as a teachable moment. The result was the Win/Win Responses DVD and accompanying materials. All administrators were in-serviced with this new resource and provided with a copy to use with their staff. The resource is easy to utilize because it is done in brief clips to facilitate a range of training opportunities. For example, administrators could easily do one 5-minute segment at a monthly staff meeting.



## STOP BULLYING TRAINING

The Stop Bullying training builds capacity for educators to recognize and respond to all types of bullying. It included awareness about homophobia in its many forms, orientation to the new definition of bullying, and a description of different types of bullying. It addressed cyber-bullying and both the similarities and differences with traditional bullying. It highlighted the importance of creating a culture of caring as a foundation for a progressive discipline model. The Stop Bullying training described some of the programs and supports available within TVDSB. Participants were also trained on the specific intervention protocols. Administrators were provided with specific tips for handling bullying incidents. The training also addressed the foundation of progressive discipline and Restorative Approaches. Similar to other training initiatives, the Stop Bullying module used a train-the-trainer approach whereby administrators were provided with a facilitator package and DVD to in-service staff.

## SUCCESS FACTORS FOR STAFF TRAINING INITIATIVES

### Training success factors include:

- Given the size of TVDSB, it is not possible for the Safe Schools Team to in-service all staff. A train-the-trainer model utilizing administrators and key staff to provide training to staff provides a feasible alternative.
- Use of drama and role plays is engaging for participants and lends itself well to a train-the-trainer model in that role plays can be video-taped and provided to administrators for use with their staff.
- Strong supporting materials including speaker notes and DVD resources increases the confidence of administrators in their trainer capacity.
- Clear expectations about which trainings are mandatory increase participation and compliance.

## COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Communication and outreach can be challenging in a board of TVDSB's size. We have used a multi-pronged strategy to effectively communicate with stakeholders. Our strategy includes a comprehensive safe schools website and Superintendent Memoranda. The website includes an overview of policies, procedures, available programs and resources, with information for families and community partners. The Director's task force has provided an effective vehicle for ensuring two-way communication with major community partners. Finally, our extensive training initiatives provide an important opportunity for face-to-face communication about new policies and procedures.

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

Monitoring and review are priorities for the TVDSB Safe Schools team in partnership with the Research and Assessment department. There are three types of monitoring and review that occur:

### SYSTEM-WIDE SAFE SCHOOLS SURVEY

The system-wide Safe Schools survey had been implemented on a 3-year cycle and there have now been three waves of data collection. Consistent with ministry requirements, we have moved to a two year cycle. Results are collated at a board level to track overall trends, but are also provided back to administrators at the school level.

### USE OF SCHOOL PLANS TO MONITOR COMPLIANCE WITH DATA-INFORMED DECISION MAKING

Administrators are expected to use the safe schools survey data, the School Assessment Checklist (discussed in Chapter 3, starting on page 46), and other data to develop clear goals and actions.



## EVALUATION OF SPECIFIC INITIATIVES

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TVDSB has also undertaken numerous evaluations of specific initiatives. Some of these have been done internally, including a pilot evaluation of Restorative Approaches, and feedback from our student conferences and drama presentations. Other evaluations have been undertaken in partnership with researchers at the CAMH Centre for Prevention Science and Western University. These include a RCT of the Fourth R (completed), an evaluation of the Urban Priority Project (underway) and a longitudinal evaluation of programming for FNMI students (underway). In addition, an evaluation of TRIBES in TVDSB was undertaken by a PhD student from Queens University. Specific assessment and evaluation strategies and challenges are discussed in Chapter 4 (see page 63).

## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS

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The use of safe schools data to inform specific objectives and indicators in school improvement plans marks an important step towards data-informed decision making; however, using data in this way is a complex skill. In TVDSB administrators are provided with significant guidance and specific templates to undertake this process. This process is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 (see page 45).

## SAFE SCHOOLS TEAMS

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A number of policies have been put in place to maximize functioning and help ensure accountability with individual Safe Schools Teams. Support is provided through the availability of release time to facilitate meetings. Accountability is promoted by requiring administrators to report committee names and meeting dates to the system. Although these measures increase accountability, we believe that the functioning of Safe Schools teams in individual schools across the board is an area for continued growth and improvement. Future training for every Safe Schools team in the board will clarify roles and responsibilities and provide guidance on data-informed goals and action plans.

## BILL 13: ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT

Looking ahead to implementation of Bill 13 and the Accepting Schools Comprehensive Action Plan, it is not clear that there will be entirely new responses or programs required in TVDSB. For example, supporting students in the development of Gay/Straight Alliances is an important part of Bill 13, and TVDSB already has an established history of supporting GSAs.

The directions that the TVDSB Safe Schools team is taking (pending revisions to PPM No. 144 and PPM No. 145) are capacity building initiatives to broaden and deepen the responsibility for Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools across the board. The following capacity-building approaches have been planned for a 2012-2013 launch:

**Development of a Critical Media Literacy Committee of Educators:** TVDSB has an established history of leadership in Critical Media Literacy issues. Currently, we have a number of expert trainers who are widely sought after as speakers and consultants. The formation of a Critical Media Literacy team will broaden this expert base and increase our capacity to deliver key messages to students, parents and other teachers.

**Purchasing of books about bullying:** Similar to the Diversity Project (see page 127), the TVDSB Safe Schools team has selected and purchased books that address bullying issues for all grades. These books will be rolled out in conjunction with resources to help teachers incorporate them into curriculum.

**Safe School Team training:** The role of the Safe Schools Team at each school is a critical one, yet we know there are many challenges that impede optimal functioning of these teams. Continued training and capacity building for these teams is a major goal for TVDSB, as these teams in turn support the Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools initiatives throughout the school board.





# Chapter 3

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## *Using the Sustainable Strategies School Assessment Checklist to Identify Gaps and Build on Strengths*

*In this section we introduce a Stages of Change model for understanding where schools are in regards to their safe schools initiatives. The School Assessment Checklist is provided as a basis for assessing progress and identifying stage of change. We have provided an implementation sequence for embedding this assessment process into a plan that includes training, assessment, action planning, and reflection.*

## CHAPTER 3: USING THE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES SCHOOL ASSESSMENT CONTINUUM AND CHECKLIST TO IDENTIFY GAPS AND STRENGTHS

Tackling safe schools can be a daunting undertaking, and in this section we offer a continuum and checklist approach to help administrators get started. In this section we offer a discussion of how TVDSB has implemented a stages of change model to safe schools, and integrated assessment and action planning tools to support data-informed decision making. Our move towards this approach stems from our involvement in a provincial research project on sustainable strategies, led by Peter Jaffe and Claire Crooks between 2004 and 2008. The Sustainable Strategies project involved researchers working with 23 schools from four boards around the province to better understand the successes and challenges in both implementation and sustainability of safe schools initiatives. This approach provides an excellent tool for administrators who are getting started with Safe School or perhaps who have changed schools and need to understand the strengths and gaps at a new school.

TVDSB was closely involved in the Sustainable Strategies project in a number of ways. First, the Safe Schools Continuum explored and developed over the course of the four-year project was based on preliminary work conducted by a TVDSB administrator to articulate the different stages of change and associated characteristics. Second, a number of TVDSB schools participated in the research project and facilitated numerous data collection processes for the research team over the span of the project. Third, the Manager of the TVDSB Research and Assessment Services was closely involved in the project methodology and implementation, providing ongoing support as a member of the research advisory group. Finally, numerous TVDSB administrators provided video interviews for the DVD resource arising from the project. The DVD is an interactive resource that includes assessment tools and specific strategies based on a particular school's stage of change. Video clips of interviews throughout the resource illustrate common challenges and successes strategies. The DVD resource can be accessed through the web at: [www.crvawc.ca/SafeSchoolsCD/index.html](http://www.crvawc.ca/SafeSchoolsCD/index.html).



On the basis of the Sustainable Strategies project, the safe schools continuum was further developed and an accompanying Sustainable Strategies School Assessment Checklist was developed. Our board has implemented this checklist with all administrators as a way of moving towards data-informed decision making in safe schools. Other benefits of this board-wide implementation include the development of a common language and the identification of a model or paradigm for understanding all of the separate components of safe schools.

This section begins with an overview of stages of change models in general, followed by the specific stages on the safe schools continuum. Each stage is described in terms of the types of attitudes, characteristics and activities that are evident in a school at that stage. The majority of this section describes TVDSB's five step implementation process for utilizing this stages of change model, including: 1. Training; 2. Completing the Sustainable Strategies School Assessment Checklist; 3. Data-informed action planning; 4. Reflection process; and, 5. Ongoing training.

Although this section describes the implementation of the Sustainable Strategies School Assessment Checklist in the TVDSB, we are aware that our co-terminus Catholic board has also undertaken a similar process, with the particular implementation strategies determined to meet their particular needs. In addition, other boards are in various stages of implementing the Sustainable Strategies model, book, and checklist as a way to provide an organizing framework for their initiatives.





## A STAGES OF CHANGE APPROACH TO SAFE SCHOOLS

Change is not a one step process. It involves a series of transitions along the way from recognizing the presence of a problem to achieving sustainable change. One model that is well supported by empirical evidence is the Transtheoretical Model of Change (TTM; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982), which was developed to provide a framework to understanding changes that take place within an individual who is making a major behavioural change in health-related behaviours.

The TTM is based on the theory that individuals go through a series of stages when they embark on a change in behaviour, such as the cessation of smoking. Each stage in the process differs from the previous stage in terms of readiness to take action. Individuals, generally, do not move through these stages in a linear manner, but rather may have some occasional slippage to the previous stage before moving forward again. Recognizing that this slippage is part of the change process helps individuals plan for such relapses, rather than allowing themselves to be derailed by these setbacks. Research supports that matching particular strategies for assisting the individual to the stage of change improves the success rates and decreases the chance of the individual dropping out across a wide range of targeted behaviours. Simply put, the TTM recognizes that creating change does not entail one-size-fits-all approaches, and provides a paradigm for selecting strategies based on readiness to change.

In the TTM model, the first stage of change is a pre-contemplation stage, in which individuals are not thinking about changing their behaviour and may be in denial about the extent of the problem. In the contemplation stage, the individual is aware that they have a problem and they intend to make a change in the near future. It is when the person reaches the preparation stage that they are ready to take immediate action. By the action stage, an individual is making specific behavioural changes. Once the behavioural change is made and becomes integrated into everyday living, the person has reached the final stage – maintenance.

The TTM was developed to describe change in health-related behaviours such as smoking, exercise or diet, but has been expanded to include change in social issues including violence perpetration. The model successfully explains change in a wide range of behaviours, suggesting that the model itself works, somewhat independently of the problem under consideration. In addition, the model has been applied to organizations, recognizing that a new initiative may be unsuccessful not because the initiative is a bad one, but rather because the implementation was attempted without the organization's readiness to change being addressed.

As part of the Sustainable Strategies project, the TTM was adapted to fit school-based safe schools initiatives. The modified model is referred to as the Safe Schools Continuum and it includes stages called Developing Awareness; Planning and Responding; and, Educating and Leading (Jaffe et al., 2009). Each stage has particular characteristics, attitude and actions associated with it, which assist educators in locating their particular school along the Safe Schools Continuum (see Table 3.1).

The utility of the Safe Schools Continuum is that awareness of a school's current place on the continuum helps identify concrete actions that are likely to be successful in moving that school to the next stage. Developing and implementing a safe schools plan requires an investment of time and talent from a wide range of school partners. An administrator or other leaders can inadvertently set their school up for failure by attempting a complicated intervention without the necessary foundation or sufficient buy-in from partners. A school that is not yet ready to take on an extensive violence prevention program, may be better served by developing smaller interventions and prevention initiatives that will assist the school to build the momentum needed to address the larger issues. Based on a school's readiness for change as described in the Safe Schools Continuum, different strategies and programs may be appropriate at a particular school.

In the next pages we provide descriptions of the three stages on the safe schools continuum and then describe the process of using the checklist and understanding the data that it generates.



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## STAGE 1: DEVELOPING AWARENESS

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Schools in the Developing Awareness stage recognize that bullying and violence in the school are issues that need to be addressed by all stakeholders. School administration and staff understand that students need a safe environment before they can begin to learn. There is recognition that much work needs to be done to address issues of violence in the school community. These schools realize that they are not where they want to be with respect to safe schools, but may be unclear about next steps. Also, they may face significant barriers that seem insurmountable – staff resistance about prioritizing safe schools, external community factors, etc. The focus for Stage 1 schools is on building a foundation and increasing motivation across all stakeholders to prepare for making and implementing an action plan.

In this stage, the administration and staff will begin to review and assess school policies and procedures to further understand what has already been written and done to improve school safety. Surveys may be completed with students, staff and/or parents to measure student, staff and/or parent understanding of bullying and violence in the school community. In this stage, there is much reading, auditing, inquiring and discussing about the nature of violence in the school and how to improve the school environment. After a thorough investigation of the current situation, questions are raised and an examination into possible next steps is initiated.

Stage 1 schools may have some safe schools initiatives underway (indeed in the current climate it would be unusual to find a school doing nothing!), but their initiatives tend to be isolated and not integrated into a larger plan. Furthermore, it may be relatively few students or staff involved and a general lack of support for these initiatives. In some cases Stage 1 schools may look busy, but they are not really moving forward.

*Textbox 3.1: For more information and specific strategies for moving from Stage 1 to Stage 2 or Stage 2 to Stage 3, visit the interactive DVD resource developed for administrators at:*

*[www.crvawc.ca/SafeSchoolsCD/index.html](http://www.crvawc.ca/SafeSchoolsCD/index.html)*

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## STAGE 2: PLANNING AND RESPONDING

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A school in the Planning and Responding stage has a better understanding of their needs and is in a position to use that information to plan and implement specific strategies. In Stage 2, a school is using information from the audits or surveys conducted and review of other schools' initiatives to develop violence prevention protocols and plans. The school is beginning to acquire resources, develop new strategies and implement programs to address the issue of bullying and other forms of violence.

A Stage 2 school is actively working to engage representatives from all stakeholder groups (staff, students, parents & community agencies), although the success of these engagement attempts may be variable. Indeed, parent engagement was identified throughout our study as an ongoing challenge facing most schools, (even those who were clearly Stage 3 schools in all other respects). In Stage 2, committees are formed to establish goals and to assist in the creation of an overall plan for making the school environment safe for all students. Moreover, these committees meet on a regular and predetermined basis, rather than on an as-needed basis or solely in response to critical incidents. Decisions are made to reinforce or modify current protocols and processes and training is put in place to support the plan and encourage the implementation of specific initiatives. There is consensus among partners with respect to the action plan. Results of the various initiatives are measured and modifications made if required. One senses a great deal of hope and energy on the road to the development of sustainable programs.

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## STAGE 3: EDUCATING AND LEADING

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A school at the Educating and Leading stage of the continuum has consolidated its safe schools efforts. The focus is on further integrating initiatives and maintaining a sense of renewal with them. New initiatives tend to be enhancements of existing programs and not stand alone programs. There is a diversification of effort in that no



strategy undertaken as part of the safe school program is dependent on any single or small group of staff, but rather is embedded in the school curriculum and climate.

Staff, students, parents and community partners readily take responsibility for the existence and implementation of a safe school environment. There is recognition that the maintenance of a safe and welcoming environment is an active, ongoing responsibility to review, evaluate and respond to what is happening in the school and to share expertise with others beyond the school. Violence prevention and safe school initiatives are well integrated into all aspects of school life. The school has the capacity to respond effectively to any new issues which arise. Successes are celebrated and new staff, students and parents are mentored as future leaders. At this stage the school is a role model of a dynamic safe school and is willing to share its experiences and expertise.

Despite their leadership and commitment to safe schools initiatives, Stage 3 schools are not without critical incidents or violence. What demarcates a Stage 3 school is the response to these incidents rather than a lack of them. Responses to violence are consistent and coordinated, and each of the stakeholders knows their role in these situations.

A stages of change model recognizes that change does not always move forward in a straight line from developing awareness to the third stage of educating and leading. Schools will experience setbacks – loss of key staff, critical incidents, funding cutbacks -- before they are able to move forward again. Similar to the game of Snakes and Ladders, where occasionally the player slides back down before being able to move forward again, schools may experience back-sliding. Continuously reviewing, evaluating and making adjustments to safe schools strategies and programs is required to keep moving forward towards a sustainable, integrated safe school program.



## IMPLEMENTATION SEQUENCE

In 2011 the TVDSB Safe Schools team decided to implement the Sustainable Strategies School Assessment Checklist and stages of change model as part of the data-informed decision making process used by secondary school administrators in developing their Safe Schools Action Plan (SSAP). We have used a five stage implementation cycle as shown in Figure 3.1. Both step 1 and step 5 include training, but they are separated in this discussion in order to highlight the initial implementation of this process.

**Figure 3.1: The implementation cycle for data-informed decision making using the Sustainable Strategies School Assessment Checklist**



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## 1. TRAINING

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All secondary school principals in TVDSB have been trained on the stages of change model and use of the Sustainable Strategies School Assessment Checklist. In the training administrators learned general information about the utility of a stages of change model. In addition, they were provided with explicit step-by-step instructions on different ways to utilize the checklist (as described below). As part of the training each administrator was provided with a copy of the checklist as well as the book that describes the development and use of the checklist (Jaffe et al., 2009).

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## 2. COMPLETING THE SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES SCHOOL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

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The second step of the implementation was a instruction to administrators to complete the Sustainable Strategies School Assessment Checklist as part of their Safe Schools Action Plan every two years. The use of the checklist is described below, along with the actual checklist. These have been adapted from the book, *Creating safe school environments: From small steps to sustainable change* (London, Ontario: Althouse, Press).

Checklist preamble from Sustainable Strategies book:

The Sustainable Strategies School Assessment Checklist contains items that address four components of safe schools policies and procedures, interventions, prevention programs and school climate. The five-point scale corresponds to the three stages of change and two transition stages between them. The checklist will assist you to identify your school's needs in each area and through the use of the scoring guide will assist you to identify which stage of change best describes your school's progress in these four key areas. The profile of your school developed through scoring the Sustainable Strategies School Assessment Checklist should assist you to identify areas where you need to focus your attention, as well as areas that you need to take time to enhance and celebrate.

### PURPOSE OF THE CHECKLIST

The checklist is a tool to gather information about your school across a variety of safe school areas such as the presence of safe school intervention strategies and the knowledge of safe school policies by staff and students. It has been designed to guide discussion and thinking at your school about the quality and nature of the strategies in place that contribute to a safe school.

### HOW TO COMPLETE THE CHECKLIST

The Sustainable Strategies School Assessment Checklist can be completed by the principal (or another lead educator) with extensive knowledge of the school. The benefit of this approach is efficiency. The limitation is that support for change will be greater if all stakeholders contribute to the discussion and action plan. Alternatively, multiple people complete the checklist and build consensus on the results. For example, each team member of the school's Safe Schools Team could complete the checklist individually. Then, in a consensus building exercise team members arrive at an agreed upon response to each of the checklist items. This process leads to a higher level of awareness among informants as individuals explain their points of view. Although it takes more time than completion by a single informant, it will help build momentum and commitment through the engagement process. A third approach is to have each member complete the checklist and then compile the results to get an average for each response. This method provides more representative data than can be generated by one informant, but does not confer the same motivational benefit as the consensus-building approach. In addition, this approach provides a range and variability of views. Of particular interest with this method is the identification of areas where there is the most variability as there will need to be some reconciliation of views before action planning can ensue.



## STEP 1 – REVIEW THE STAGES OF CHANGE

In the Stages of Change model, there are three stages with transitions between each stage. Table 3.1 below includes a description of each stage and its key characteristics. Please read this section carefully before completing the questionnaire.

**Table 3.1: Descriptions of stages of change on the Safe Schools Continuum**

| STAGE                    | NAME                           | DESCRIPTION   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Stage 1</b>           | <i>Developing Awareness</i>    | <p>CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS STAGE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: Small number of people involved; the school responds to crisis; violence prevention is generally low profile; resources are not identified.</p> <p>THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS AND ATTITUDES CHARACTERIZE THIS STAGE: Naming the problem, measuring, assessing, auditing, examining, surveying, reading, investigating.</p> <p>PROGRAMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS STAGE: Videos, assemblies, motivational speakers, one-time events.</p>   |
| <b>Moving to Stage 2</b> | <i>Transition stage</i>        | While some of the characteristics of stage 1 are still present, there is some movement toward stage 2.  |
| <b>Stage 2</b>           | <i>Planning and Responding</i> | <p>CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS STAGE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: More educational partners involved; higher profile for violence prevention activities; more people understand the issues; efforts still depend on outside resources.</p> <p>THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS AND ATTITUDES CHARACTERIZE THIS STAGE: Engaging; developing; implementing; meeting; reinforcing; creating; modifying; training staff; planning; understanding the problem and making the links to gender, race or vulnerabilities; developing action plans; wanting to involve all stakeholders; being hopeful about potential for change; accepting challenges.</p> <p>PROGRAMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS STAGE: Kelso’s Choices, Character Education, partial implementation of other comprehensive programs. Programs are additional to the curriculum.</p> |
| <b>Moving to Stage 3</b> | <i>Transition stage</i>        | While some of the characteristics of stage 2 are still present, there is some movement towards stage 3.   |
| <b>Stage 3</b>           | <i>Educating and Leading</i>   | <p>CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS STAGE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: The majority of education partners are involved. The school community is strongly supportive. Violence prevention is high profile in the school and well recognized. The school is generating resources to be shared.</p> <p>THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS AND ATTITUDES CHARACTERIZE THIS STAGE: Consolidating; leading; enhancing; staff-to-staff mentoring; student-to-student mentoring; sharing; evaluating; reviewing; celebrating; recognizing; rewarding; sustaining; taking responsibility for the problem; being comfortable with all stakeholders at the table; willing to share expertise</p> <p>PROGRAMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS STAGE: Fourth R and other programs are embedded in the curriculum.</p>   |



*STEP 2 – COMPLETE THE SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES SCHOOL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST*

Please identify the Stage of Change that characterizes your school for each item. Place a ✓ under the Stage that corresponds to each item. In order to identify safe school strategies that address your school's unique needs, it is important to answer the questions accurately and honestly. The completion of this Checklist by different stakeholders may be useful in gathering information about your school. Please note that the words in the items such as "know" and "recognize" have been carefully thought out to reflect the stages of change model. Staff refers to all adults in the school.

|  | Stage 1 | Transition to | Stage 2 | Transition to | Stage 3 |
|--|---------|---------------|---------|---------------|---------|
| 1. Students know the expectations of a safe school environment.  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 2. Staff maintains a high level of visibility in the halls and school yard.  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 3. Staff recognize that harassment and bullying are important issues for schools to address.   |         |               |         |               |         |
| 4. Parents recognize that harassment and bullying are important issues for schools to address.   |         |               |         |               |         |
| 5. Students recognize that harassment and bullying are wrong.  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 6. Violence prevention issues are addressed in school newsletters and web sites.   |         |               |         |               |         |
| 7. The school has a collection of violence prevention resources that are used regularly by staff.                                      |         |               |         |               |         |
| 8. The school provides healthy sexuality, alcohol, and drug prevention programs.   |         |               |         |               |         |
| 9. New staff, students, and parents are mentored as future leaders.  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 10. Students are aware of the importance of school-based violence prevention initiatives.  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 11. Students have an opportunity to participate in violence prevention initiatives.  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 12. Violence prevention and safe school initiatives are well integrated into all aspects of school life.                               |         |               |         |               |         |
| 13. Violence prevention initiatives are integrated into the curriculum.  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 14. Staff participate/have participated in violence prevention training.   |         |               |         |               |         |
| 15. Students, staff, and parents meet regularly to keep issues of violence prevention moving forward.                                  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 16. Staff are committed to implementing all recent board and Ministry of Education safe school policies.                               |         |               |         |               |         |
| 17. There is a protocol in place to allow students and parents to report incidents of bullying/harassment without fear of retaliation. |         |               |         |               |         |
| 18. The school makes efforts to share its violence prevention protocols with parents and other schools.                                |         |               |         |               |         |
| 19. Parents understand safe school policies and procedures.  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 20. The Code of Conduct is well known by staff, students and parents.  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 21. Staff consistently enforce the existing Code of Conduct.   |         |               |         |               |         |
| 22. The Code of Conduct meets the needs of the diverse student population.   |         |               |         |               |         |
| 23. Staff members are confident and comfortable intervening in harassment and bullying incidents.                                      |         |               |         |               |         |



| Please identify the Stage of Change that characterizes your school for each item. Place a ✓ under the Stage that corresponds to each item. In order to identify safe school strategies that address your school's unique needs, it is important to answer the questions accurately and honestly. The completion of this Checklist by different stakeholders may be useful in gathering information about your school. Please note that the words in the items such as "know" and "recognize" have been carefully thought out to reflect the stages of change model. Staff refers to all adults in the school. | Stage 1 | Transition to | Stage 2 | Transition to | Stage 3 |
|---|---------|---------------|---------|---------------|---------|
| 24. When harassment and bullying reports are received, follow-up addresses the needs of both victims and perpetrators.  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 25. A suspension re-entry program is established protocol for students suspended for violence.  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 26. Students are trained and have an opportunity to use their non-violent conflict resolution skills.   |         |               |         |               |         |
| 27. Information is readily available on how and where students can get help (e.g., in posters and planners).  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 28. Both parents and students feel confident that reported incidents of violence will be addressed consistently by staff.   |         |               |         |               |         |
| 29. Staff regularly describe, model, and reward respectful behaviour.   |         |               |         |               |         |
| 30. Equity, social justice and other student clubs that support a safe school and promote respect and tolerance are well received by the school community.  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 31. The physical plant is clean and well-cared for (e.g., graffiti are removed from the walls immediately).   |         |               |         |               |         |
| 32. Staff recognize the underlying social factors associated with violence at school.   |         |               |         |               |         |
| 33. Staff, students, and parents are actively involved on the safe schools committee (recommended in Shaping Safer Schools, 2005).  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 34. The school is actively engaged in activities that encourage a sense of belonging and build school pride.  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 35. Parents support violence prevention initiatives.  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 36. The School Council see themselves as having an important role in violence prevention.   |         |               |         |               |         |
| 37. Representatives of community agencies regularly make presentations on violence prevention issues in the school.   |         |               |         |               |         |
| 38. Representatives of community agencies regularly attend and contribute to the safe schools committee.  |         |               |         |               |         |
| 39. The Student Council supports violence prevention initiatives in the school.   |         |               |         |               |         |
| 40. Students take initiative to access information and resources and actively participate in safe schools programs.   |         |               |         |               |         |
| 41. The school recognizes and/or celebrates positive contributions to violence prevention efforts.  |         |               |         |               |         |

**Questions:**

- Identify your key safe schools initiatives. Which are most successful? Explain.
- Share one success story or highlight an initiative taking place at your school that you are proud of.



### STEP 3 – DETERMINE YOUR SCHOOL'S SCORES

Your completed Checklist describes your school's stage of change for each of the four areas – Prevention, Policy and Procedures, Intervention, and School Climate. Please complete the score exercise below in order to get a more complete picture and to identify the next steps for your school.

- For each of the four areas count the number of check marks in each column.
- Multiply the total for each column by 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 as shown below.
- Add the 5 scores to get a total score for each area.
- Transfer the total score for each area to the Stage of Change Profile (see next page)

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| <b>PREVENTION</b> ( <i>checklist items 1 to 15</i> )             | <b><u>Score</u></b>  |
| Number of checks in column 1 (Stage 1) = ___ times 1 = ___       | <input type="text"/> |
| Number of checks in column 2 (Trs to 2) = ___ times 2 = ___      |                      |
| Number of checks in column 3 (Stage 2) = ___ times 3 = ___       |                      |
| Number of checks in column 4 (Trs to 3) = ___ times 4 = ___      |                      |
| Number of checks in column 5 (Stage 3) = ___ times 5 = ___       |                      |
| <b>TOTAL SCORE for Prevention:</b> _____                         |                      |
| <b>POLICY AND PROCEDURES</b> ( <i>checklist items 16 to 22</i> ) | <b><u>Score</u></b>  |
| Number of checks in column 1 (Stage 1) = ___ times 1 = ___       | <input type="text"/> |
| Number of checks in column 2 (Trs to 2) = ___ times 2 = ___      |                      |
| Number of checks in column 3 (Stage 2) = ___ times 3 = ___       |                      |
| Number of checks in column 4 (Trs to 3) = ___ times 4 = ___      |                      |
| Number of checks in column 5 (Stage 3) = ___ times 5 = ___       |                      |
| <b>TOTAL SCORE for Policy and Procedures:</b> _____              |                      |
| <b>INTERVENTION</b> ( <i>checklist items 23 to 28</i> )          | <b><u>Score</u></b>  |
| Number of checks in column 1 (Stage 1) = ___ times 1 = ___       | <input type="text"/> |
| Number of checks in column 2 (Trs to 2) = ___ times 2 = ___      |                      |
| Number of checks in column 3 (Stage 2) = ___ times 3 = ___       |                      |
| Number of checks in column 4 (Trs to 3) = ___ times 4 = ___      |                      |
| Number of checks in column 5 (Stage 3) = ___ times 5 = ___       |                      |
| <b>TOTAL SCORE for Intervention:</b> _____                       |                      |
| <b>SCHOOL CLIMATE</b> ( <i>checklist items 29 to 41</i> )        | <b><u>Score</u></b>  |
| Number of checks in column 1 (Stage 1) = ___ times 1 = ___       | <input type="text"/> |
| Number of checks in column 2 (Trs to 2) = ___ times 2 = ___      |                      |
| Number of checks in column 3 (Stage 2) = ___ times 3 = ___       |                      |
| Number of checks in column 4 (Trs to 3) = ___ times 4 = ___      |                      |
| Number of checks in column 5 (Stage 3) = ___ times 5 = ___       |                      |
| <b>TOTAL SCORE for School Climate:</b> _____                     |                      |





## STEP 4 – STAGE OF CHANGE PROFILE

### Identify Your School's Stage of Change Profile

Use this template to summarize your school's stage of change for each area and determine appropriate next steps.

Use a vertical line “|” to mark the total score from each of the 4 areas, place 4 vertical lines on the scales below. Note that the line may be between two numbers – that's okay. You are trying to get an overall picture of the stage of change currently identified at your school.

For example, if the total score for Prevention was 42, the line would be in the Prevention Stage 2 box (yellow).

|                              |                 |                 |                 |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Prevention</b>            | <b>15 23 30</b> | <b>38 45 53</b> | <b>60 68 75</b> |
| <b>Policy and Procedures</b> | <b>7 11 14</b>  | <b>18 21 25</b> | <b>28 32 35</b> |
| <b>Intervention</b>          | <b>6 9 12</b>   | <b>15 18 21</b> | <b>24 27 30</b> |
| <b>School Climate</b>        | <b>13 20 26</b> | <b>33 39 46</b> | <b>52 59 65</b> |
|                              | <b>Stage 1</b>  | <b>Stage 2</b>  | <b>Stage 3</b>  |

### 3. DATA-INFORMED ACTION PLANNING

In TVDSB, a Safe School Action Plan template was developed to guide principals and their Safe Schools Teams through the process of developing data-informed action plans. Administrators are required to complete Safe Schools Action Plans on a two-year cycle. The template (see Figure 3.2) includes educational information such as potential sources of information for administrators to consider, and characteristics of effective prevention programming. Administrators are encouraged to reflect on a wide range of data from multiple sources in developing their goals. Administrators are also required to identify their school's stage of change in each of the four areas (policies and procedures, prevention, intervention, and school climate), thereby increasing the accountability for completing the Sustainable Strategies School Assessment Checklist. There are a number of reflection questions that the administrator may consider individually or with the Safe Schools Team. These questions encourage administrators to consider major themes in effective safe schools plans such as integration of initiatives into curriculum, engagement of stakeholders, and provision of anonymous reporting.

The second page of the Safe Schools Action Plan is dedicated to identifying three goals and specific implementation plans to achieve those goals. Goals are cross-referenced to the four areas assessed with the checklist. Administrators are required to identify who will be involved in the implementation, timelines, indicators of success, and communication plans. Finally, the plan asks administrators to identify upcoming meeting dates for the Safe Schools Team. Requiring this detail helps administrators keep the process on their radar in light of the myriad of competing priorities and other responsibilities they maintain.



*TVDSB has been a leader in establishing evidence-based approaches to understanding the beliefs, behaviors and needs of students with respect to violence-prevention initiatives.*

~ Dr. Steve Killip, Manager of TVDSB Research and Assessment Services



**Figure 3.2: Safe Schools Action Plan 2012-2013**



**SAFE SCHOOLS  
ACTION PLAN**



School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Safe School Action Team Composition – Please indicate the number of representatives in the following categories:  
 Students: \_\_\_\_ Teaching Staff: \_\_\_\_ Non-Teaching Staff: \_\_\_\_ Parents: \_\_\_\_ Community: \_\_\_\_ Admin: \_\_\_\_

**Points for Consideration:**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Effective Action Plans consider the following sources of information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Strategies information and checklist</li> <li>• Current survey results and analysis</li> <li>• Survey trends</li> <li>• Suspension reports</li> <li>• Feedback about Safe Schools initiatives</li> <li>• Feedback from staff about school climate</li> <li>• Focus groups of students and educational partners</li> <li>• Audits of physical plant</li> <li>• Review of existing programs and policies</li> <li>• Information and input from community members and parents</li> <li>• Violent incident reports</li> <li>• Office referrals</li> </ul> | <p>Effective Safe School Programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are comprehensive in nature</li> <li>• Focus on skills</li> <li>• Select appropriate targets for change</li> <li>• Include peers in the delivery of the program</li> <li>• Include parents</li> <li>• Attempt to change the larger environment</li> <li>• Attend to the implementation issues</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

After completing the School Assessment Checklist, identify your school’s Stage of Change:

|                              | Total Score | Stage |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------|
| <b>Prevention</b>            |             |       |
| <b>Policy and Procedures</b> |             |       |
| <b>Intervention</b>          |             |       |
| <b>School Climate</b>        |             |       |

After completing the Safe Schools Assessment Checklist, examining the survey data with your team, and reviewing other sources of information, consider some of the following questions to help guide discussion and move you towards developing and selecting your school goal(s).

1. In what ways is safe schools imbedded into your school’s curricular programs? Are programs evidence based and age appropriate? Do gaps by grade or subject area exist?
2. Do staff know and consistently apply policies and procedures in line with Ministry of Education requirements? What type of ongoing training is available?
3. Do all stakeholders feel welcome and involved in your school and its activities? What gaps, if any, are evident?
4. Overall, is there sustainability to safe schools initiatives/programs? Consider the number of “one off” programs versus continuous initiatives/programs. What programs appear to have buy-in and are showing success? Which programs need to be reviewed?
5. What is the anonymous reporting system at your school? Do you feel this method is working well for your students? What evidence do you have to support this?
6. In what ways are stakeholders involved in the plan’s development, implementation, and review of outcomes?



Based on the information gathered from the points for consideration on page one, the Safe Schools Reflection completed in Spring 2011, identify up to 3 goals the school plans to implement. Complete the template below for each goal the team has identified.

| Goal #1  |   |   |                        |
|--|---|---|------------------------|
| Specific Goal:   | Specific Implementation Strategies:   | Timelines:  | Indicators of Success: |
| Is this goal related to:<br>Prevention ___<br>Policy & Procedure ___<br>Intervention ___<br>School Climate ___ | Stakeholders involved in the implementation and outcome of this goal:<br>Students: ___ Teaching Staff: ___ Support Staff: ___<br>Parents: ___ Admin: ___ Community: ___ | How will you communicate this goal to stakeholders? |                        |

| Goal #2  |   |   |                        |
|--|---|---|------------------------|
| Specific Goal:   | Specific Implementation Strategies:   | Timelines:  | Indicators of Success: |
| Is this goal related to:<br>Prevention ___<br>Policy & Procedure ___<br>Intervention ___<br>School Climate ___ | Stakeholders involved in the implementation and outcome of this goal:<br>Students: ___ Teaching Staff: ___ Support Staff: ___<br>Parents: ___ Admin: ___ Community: ___ | How will you communicate this goal to stakeholders? |                        |

| Goal #3  |   |   |                        |
|--|---|---|------------------------|
| Specific Goal:   | Specific Implementation Strategies:   | Timelines:  | Indicators of Success: |
| Is this goal related to:<br>Prevention ___<br>Policy & Procedure ___<br>Intervention ___<br>School Climate ___ | Stakeholders involved in the implementation and outcome of this goal:<br>Students: ___ Teaching Staff: ___ Support Staff: ___<br>Parents: ___ Admin: ___ Community: ___ | How will you communicate this goal to stakeholders? |                        |

Next Safe Schools Action Team Meeting Dates:

#2- \_\_\_\_\_

#3- \_\_\_\_\_

Reminder: Safe Schools will provide ½ day coverage for meetings within the school day for a maximum of 2 Safe Schools Action Plan meetings.



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#### 4. REFLECTION PROCESS

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As part of supporting a data-informed decision-making approach, the TVDSB Safe Schools team has implemented a formal reflection process for Safe Schools Teams at individual schools to complete on alternate years from the Safe Schools Action Plan process. By alternating between the action plan and reflection processes, school administrators are supported in maintaining consistent prioritization of, and attention to, their safe schools plan. The reflection process includes a one page template (shown in Figure 3.3) that requires Safe School Action Teams to answer a number of questions about progress with their action plan. The reflection process asks about indicators of success and an identification of the school's overall stage on the safe schools continuum. It also asks action teams to specifically document the provision of an anonymous reporting mechanism, thereby ensuring compliance with the ministry requirement. The reflection process provides an opportunity for administrators to access support from the TVDSB Safe Schools team in that they are asked to identify if they require any assistance at the midway point of implementing their Safe Schools Action Plan.

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#### 5. ONGOING TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

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Although we have implemented the use of the Sustainable Strategies School Assessment Checklist with all administrators in TVDSB, we recognize that effective use of the checklist in supporting a data-informed decision making model is a challenging endeavor. In reviewing the action plans that are submitted by administrators, we see a wide range in terms of how effectively the data have been used to support goals and action plans. We see the implementation of this tool as an ongoing process and not a one-time event. Use of the checklist and how to integrate information from the checklist with data from the Safe Schools Survey and other sources will be a major focus in a future training of our Safe Schools Action Teams. By engaging Safe Schools Action Teams in this process we hope to build capacity at the school level and not have the responsibility rest so heavily on administrators alone. Engaging a wider group of leaders also increases the visibility, and therefore accountability, for meeting safe schools requirements.



*Thames Valley District School Board's staff has slowly, purposefully and continuously created an ever expanding Safe Schools puzzle of interconnected pieces that have facilitated the implementation of Safe Schools Action Plans in each school community. Prevention, intervention, follow up support, training for understanding, programs for changing attitudes and behaviours, policies for consistency, and personnel for support have all been in place to assist administration to lead the multiple stake holders. Of key significance is the critical connection between the curriculum and the day to day operation of schools to ensure that benefit comes out of the alignment between program and practice.*

~ Karen Dalton, TVDSB Executive Superintendent, Operation Services



### SUMMARY – SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES SCHOOL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST SECTION

In this section we have outlined how TVDSB utilizes a stages of change model to help administrators understand the needs of their individual schools and recognize gaps in the areas of policies and procedures, prevention, intervention, and school climate. Specifically, training, use of the Sustainable Strategies School Assessment Checklist, data-informed decision making, and a reflection process, have been implemented to build capacity in this regard. Beyond the application to Safe Schools, providing a step-by-step process for data-informed decision making helps to build important skills that can be applied in other parts of school planning. Indeed, data-informed decision making is widely regarded as a best practice and is a core component of the Ontario Leadership Framework.



**Figure 3.3: Safe Schools Reflection**



**Safe Schools  
REFLECTION**



Please organize an interim meeting with your Safe Schools Action Team to complete the following Reflection.

|   |               |                    |
|---|---------------|--------------------|
| School:   | Meeting Date: | Lead Staff Member: |
| Safe Schools Action Team Members Present:   |               |                    |
| Outline your Safe Schools focus as listed in your school action plan from last year:  |               |                    |
| What has your school accomplished to date regarding your action plan?   |               |                    |
| What part of the action plan is your school still in the process of implementing?   |               |                    |
| Is there anything observable at this time that leads you to think there has been some success?  |               |                    |
| Describe the mechanism your school has that enables students and parents to report anonymously incidents of bullying to teachers and school administrators?   |               |                    |
| Which stage on the Safe Schools Continuum (Sustainable Strategies for Safe Schools) best describes your school?   |               |                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 1 - Developing Awareness<br><input type="checkbox"/> Stage 2 - Planning and Responding or<br><input type="checkbox"/> Stage 3 - Educating and Leading  |               |                    |
| Outline the next steps for your school:   |               |                    |
| Do you need system support at this time to continue implementation? <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</span><br>If yes, please outline specifically what the system can do to support your school. |               |                    |

**Next Safe Schools Action Team Meeting Dates:**





# Chapter 4

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## *Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools*

*In this section we identify four principles that provide an essential foundation for all Safe Schools work: assess and evaluate; promote healthy relationships; align with other initiatives and frameworks; and adapt for diverse contexts. For each principle we discuss why it is important and provide specific strategies for success. These principles and strategies are illustrated with examples from the TVDSB. Finally, we identify common challenges and some possible solutions to these.*

# CHAPTER 4: PRINCIPLES FOR CREATING SAFE, INCLUSIVE AND ACCEPTING SCHOOLS

## PRINCIPLES FOR CREATING SAFE, INCLUSIVE AND ACCEPTING SCHOOLS

In reflecting on Safe Schools in TVDSB, we realize beyond responding to Policy / Program Memoranda, and looking at specific areas with the Sustainable Strategies School Assessment Checklist, there are also principles that lead to success. In reviewing all of the initiatives, but even more so, the way that Safe Schools is approached, we identified four major principles for effectiveness. These include assessment and evaluation, promoting healthy relationships, intentional implementation, and adapting for diverse contexts. These principles are evident in the practices implemented in TVDSB, but can also be more widely applied to practices in any board.



For each principle, the following sections are included:



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## PRINCIPLE 1: ASSESS AND EVALUATE

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### Reflection Questions

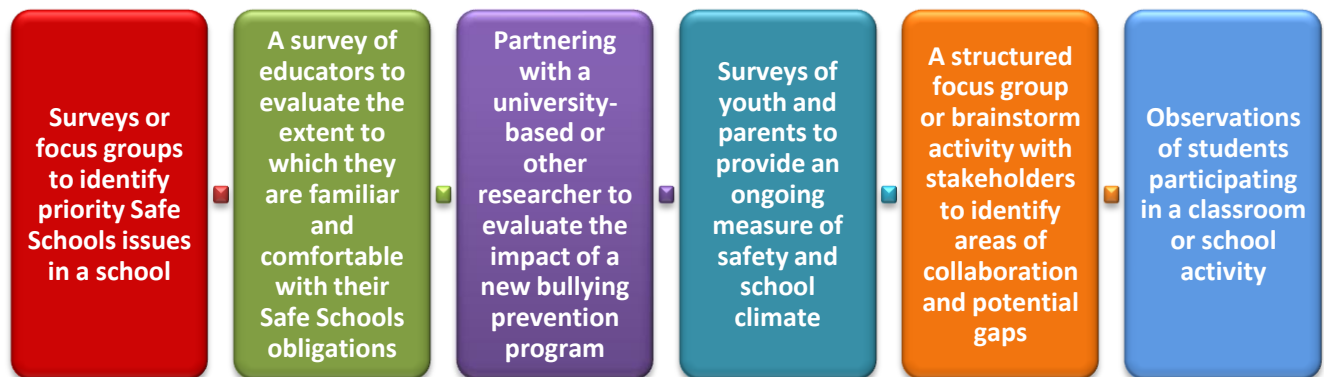
- 1 Do we routinely assess school safety and climate in our school communities?
- 2 Do we look for opportunities to evaluate our Safe Schools initiatives either internally or in partnership with external researchers?
- 3 Do we feed back results to stakeholders in a format that supports informed decision-making and next steps in a timely manner?

Assessment and evaluation provide an important foundation for effective Safe Schools programs, policies and procedures. Section 169.1 (2.1) of the Education Act now states that boards are required to survey students, parents/guardians and school staff at least once every two years.

Assessment and evaluation refer to the process of collecting data to inform a process or decision. The difference between the two is that assessment is broader in the types of questions it addresses and can include needs assessment, baseline assessments, tracking of incidents, etc. In comparison, evaluation is a type of assessment designed to weigh the impacts of a particular program, policy or procedure.

### ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES COULD INCLUDE:

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Ideally these activities are used at different points of development in a Safe Schools strategy. Depending on the assessment or evaluation question, different types of activities are more appropriate than others. Regardless of the strategies and evaluation questions, integrating these activities supports a data-informed decision making process and sends a clear statement about the importance of monitoring our programming and doing what works.

● ● ●  
*We measure what we value and we value what we measure.*

~ Dr. Peter Jaffe, Trustee

● ● ●





## WHY ARE ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION IMPORTANT?

There are many strategic and accountability reasons to incorporate an assessment and evaluation component into your Safe Schools strategy. Assessment and evaluation provide an important foundation for evidence-based decision-making. Conducting assessment and highlighting results also makes a very strong statement about the importance of knowing how a system is performing in the area of Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools, much like how we track literacy and numeracy scores. Assessment and evaluation processes can:

### Identify needs

- Assessment can identify important Safe Schools priorities such as places in the school where children feel unsafe. Even very young children can participate in this type of assessment by being given a map of the school and encouraged to mark unsafe spots with an 'X.'
- Needs assessment can help identify small starting steps in an environment of limited resources rather than trying to develop and implement all programming at once.

### Provide a baseline

- Assessment can provide a snapshot of strengths and weaknesses, school climate, etc. that serves as a baseline for future initiatives.
- Once baseline data have been collected, future assessment can identify changes as a result of new policies or programs. For example, student reported barriers to reporting bullying might be shown to decrease after policies and procedures are initiated to enable anonymous reporting and change norms about help seeking.

### Capture perspectives

- Multistakeholder assessments can provide important insight into different perceptions among groups.
- For example, students and parents might have very different views about safety while in transit to school.
- Even within a particular stakeholder group there will be a range of views that are important to consider in developing plans for Safe Schools.

### Assess initiatives

- One of the most important assessment purposes is evaluating specific procedures, policies and programs.
- These evaluations typically include either a comparison group or assessment over time in an attempt to isolate the impact of the initiative being assessed.
- Programs or policies can be assessed.

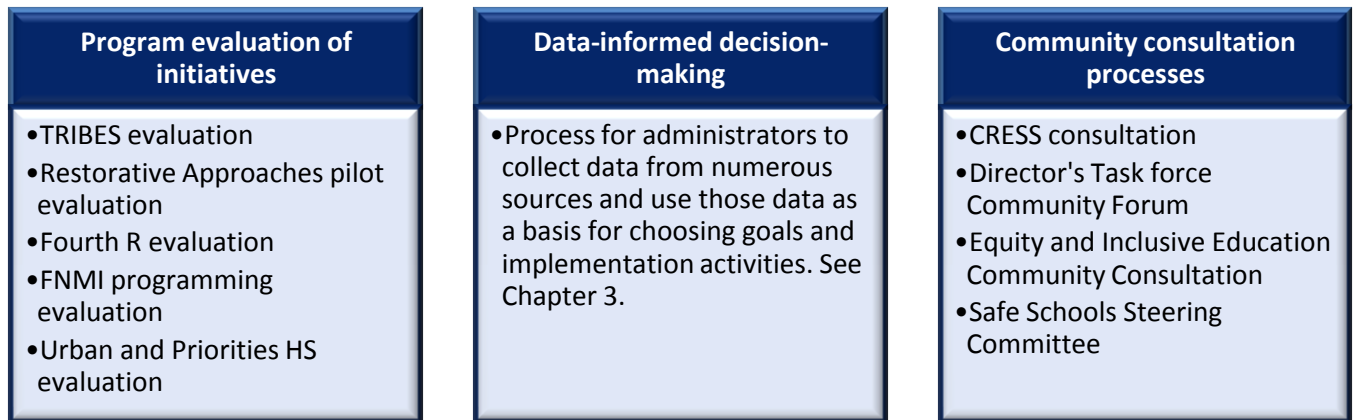
### Highlight importance

- Assessing Safe Schools initiatives and issues makes a strong statement about its importance.
- Assessment data can also highlight successes to be celebrated, such as a progressive improvement in school climate.
- The idea of a report card for Safe Schools puts the issue on par with literacy and numeracy achievement.



## TVDSB ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Numerous Safe Schools assessment and evaluation initiatives are described elsewhere in this toolkit. These include:



One initiative that has had longstanding success is the TVDSB Safe Schools Survey.

### TVDSB EXAMPLE: SAFE SCHOOLS SURVEY

In 2005 the TVDSB Research and Assessment Services developed Safe Schools surveys with the intention of developing an ongoing assessment process to track trends over time. The first survey was a response to a teen suicide related to bullying where the overarching question was why so many students knew what was happening but did not tell. There are two forms of the survey, one for elementary students in grades 4 through 8 and another for secondary students. The assessment process was implemented with a commitment to re-survey the entire student body every three years, rather than making it a one-time event. Furthermore, the survey is evolving as new Safe Schools issues arise (such as the inclusion of cyber bullying subsequent to the first survey). The surveys and results of the first three administrations (2005-2006; 2008-2009; and 2011-2012) are available on the TVDSB Safe Schools website at [www.tvdsb.ca/programs.cfm?subpage=33](http://www.tvdsb.ca/programs.cfm?subpage=33).

The elementary survey was divided into 6 sections as follows:



Students were asked to respond to several questions in each section using 5-point Likert scales (i.e., was a particular school strategy “not very helpful” up to “very helpful”). The students had an opportunity to write their comments at the end of the survey.

The Safe Schools Survey for secondary students was used to obtain information from all students in grades 9 through 12 on their perceptions about safety and experiences with bullying at their school. It was also used to gather student views on why bullying is not reported and strategies they felt would be effective in dealing with bullying. The survey was similar to the elementary survey but more detailed. Students were asked their perceptions about the school followed by a series of questions on personal safety (where in the school do they feel safe or unsafe), incidents, and then three scenarios asking how the student would respond to given situations. The scenario questions were followed by questions on reporting bullying and dealing with bullying. Students were asked to respond to these questions using a five point scale from “not very effective” to “very effective”. In the final section of the survey, students were asked to respond to a list of strategies to deal with bullying on a five



point scale from “would not really help a lot” to “would really help a lot”. Secondary school students were also given an opportunity to make comments at the end of the survey.

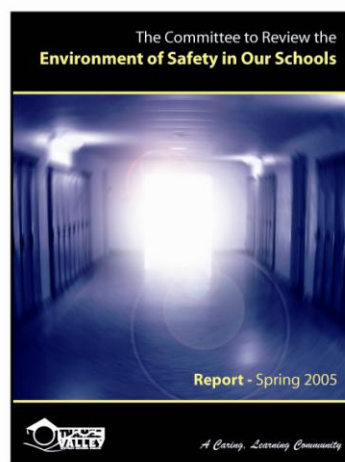
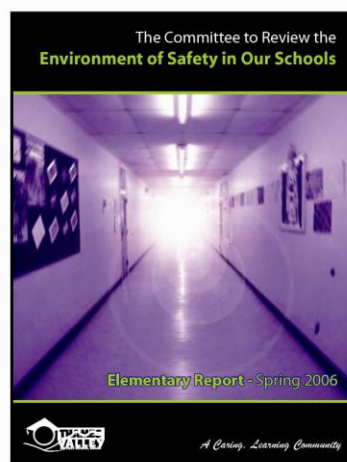
Collecting system-wide Safe Schools data is only the first step of the assessment process. TVDSB Research and Assessment Services followed up on the results by sending individual school results to each school combined with the overall board results as a basis for comparison. After the first assessment wave, school principals were directed to follow-up by organizing focus groups of all educational partners, including students, parents, support staff, teachers, administrators, and community members. In these sessions, the facilitator shared information with the focus group participants on the data from their own school compared to the overall board data. As well, the facilitator provided information on the nature and causes of bullying behaviour and its effects on students, those who bully, those who are the victims and the majority who are the bystanders. The school board provided guidelines on how their survey results could be used to direct discussion of the focus group or Safe Schools Action Team at their school. This presentation was followed by a brainstorming session involving the use of the fishbone graphic and the format outlined later in this chapter (see Chapter 5). In subsequent assessment waves, school data were provided back to administrators with the directive to utilize the data in developing goals for their Safe Schools Action Plan (see page 51).

### PROVIDING FEEDBACK TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS

Providing feedback to all stakeholders is an important step in building awareness and a shared vision of violence-free schools. Survey data are shared with stakeholders through a variety of methods. A presentation is made to the board with an emphasis on planning for next steps to address the findings. Similar to the presentation of EQAO results, Trustees get a report about school safety and climate, and what is being done to address any gaps. Other feedback loops for the broader community include: presentations at system Safe Schools Committee meetings and School Council meetings; survey reports on the Safe Schools website; parent information in schools’ newsletters; and, local media coverage of results.

### BENEFITS OF LONGITUDINAL TRACKING

Collecting data over time on the same set of indicators has enabled TVDSB to look at trends in Safe Schools. These data help support the overall effectiveness of Safe Schools initiatives while identifying areas for continued improvement. Overall, the results of the first three waves of data indicated improvements in virtually all indicators (TVDSB, Research and Assessment, 2011). Furthermore, patterns of bullying and safety were identified, which provide important information for future efforts and new initiatives.



## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

### **Leadership is key**

- The tone for the importance of assessment and evaluation is set by those in senior leadership positions.
- Look for opportunities to convey not only the importance of assessment, but also specific examples of ways in which assessment activities have identified successes or determined future decisions.

### **Engaging stakeholders increases buy in for results**

- The earlier stakeholders can be brought into the development of the assessment process, the more a sense of shared ownership emerges.
- For example, conducting community consultations to brainstorm gaps in services with community partners provides a foundation for collaborative planning based on the results.

### **Provide feedback in a timely manner**

- When people engage in an assessment or evaluation process, they should be informed of the results and implications of the findings.
- When this process takes too long or is omitted altogether, the sense of engagement is decreased and they may be less likely to engage in future assessment activities.

### **Obtain multiple perspectives when possible**

- Even administrators who have a strong finger on the pulse of the school may be surprised at how much perspectives differ.
- Identifying major differences in perspective may provide important insight into significant problem areas.
- Including multiple stakeholders not only provides better data, it makes an important statement about the shared responsibility of Safe Schools.

### **Use of existing measures can increase efficiency**

- There is a whole science behind measure development that increases the likelihood that the measure will produce reliable and valid data.
- Using measures that have established track records increases the likelihood of useful data. (See the Ministry website for examples).
- In some cases you may be able to compare your results to established norms.

### **Multi-method approaches improve validity**

- Every data collection approach has its inherent advantages and disadvantages.
- Using a combination of methods -- such as surveys, official record review and interviews -- minimizes the bias of any one method.
- Different stakeholders have a preference for different types of data and using a combination of quantitative and qualitative results may engage a larger audience than using one type alone.

### **Embed safe schools in the Student Effectiveness Framework (K-12)**

- The *School Effectiveness Framework (SEF, K-12)* is a school self-assessment tool, grounded in research and professional learning, used to promote school improvement and student success.
- Numerous areas in the SEF (K-12) align with safe schools (e.g., student voice, and home, school, and community partnerships)



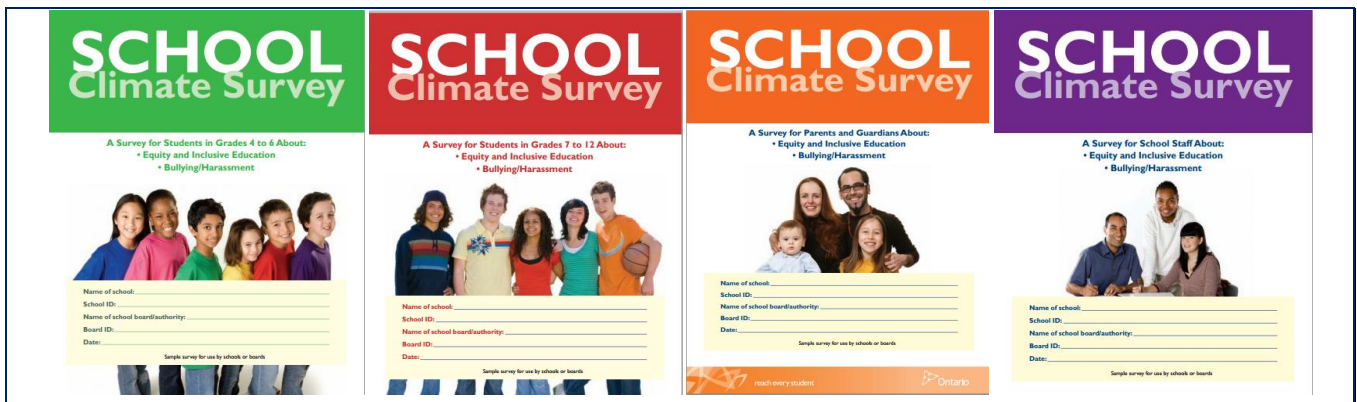
## SPECIFIC CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Assessment and evaluation activities can be challenging, particularly in schools and boards where designated staff are not available to assist. Below are some common challenges and possible solutions:

### CHALLENGE 1: MY SCHOOL BOARD DOES NOT HAVE A RESEARCH DIVISION

Many of the assessment successes in TVDSB are a result of a large Research and Assessment Services with highly qualified personnel. We recognize that many boards do not have the same resources, and will need to be creative to undertake assessment without the same resources. The following tips may be helpful in addressing this challenge:

- As with implementation, starting small will provide a foundation of success from which to move forward. Focus groups or structured brainstorming sessions to identify school needs is one starting point that identifies priorities without producing masses of unmanageable data.
- One possibility is to utilize assessment resources that have guidelines for scoring, interpretation and action planning built into the measures. The Sustainable Strategies School Assessment Checklist discussed in Chapter 3 is one such tool. It provides scores in the areas of policies and procedures, prevention, intervention and school climate.
- The Ministry of Education has some online resources to help boards assess school climate. Ministry of Education Sample School Climate Surveys are available at no cost in a variety of formats (text, PDF, Online) for students in grades 4-6, grades 7-12, parents or guardians, and school staff. The revised surveys include questions relating to equity and inclusive education, and also ask about incidents of sexual, gender-based bullying and homophobia.
  - PDF and Text versions are available at: [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/climate.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/climate.html) (text version can be adapted to meet local needs).
  - Online tool with data roll-up is available at: [www.edu-climate-surveys.ca/](http://www.edu-climate-surveys.ca/)



- In the ministry document, *Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario*, there is a brief checklist for assessing school culture (shown below) that might provide a useful starting point.

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The learning environment is healthy, safe, and orderly.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The school atmosphere is positive, friendly, and welcoming.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Morale among students and staff is high.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teachers, students, and parents feel that the environment is favourable to learning.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Diversity is acknowledged, accepted, and respected.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The school mission or vision promotes student achievement.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> There are high expectations for all students.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Students have opportunities to enhance their self-esteem and develop respect for themselves and others.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Expectations for student behaviour are clear and effectively communicated, and students are supported in their efforts to meet those expectations.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School leaders actively promote initiatives to strengthen instructional skills and techniques.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The quality of classroom instruction is consistently high.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teachers receive recognition and support for their contribution to the students and the school programs.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The value of teamwork is recognized, and responsibilities are shared.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Relationships and interactions between students and between students and teachers are positive and characterized by mutual respect.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community involvement in school activities is welcomed and proactively sought.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parents are welcomed into the school through meaningful involvement as partners in the learning process.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School leaders encourage risk taking, individual initiative, and leadership growth.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mistakes are seen as an opportunity for learning.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consequences for challenging student behaviour are appropriate and are applied fairly.</li> </ul> |
|--|

- PREVNet is a national organization that supports data collection and interpretation in schools as part of its mandate to increase evidence-based practice. PREVNet has a series of six secure online surveys to assess the nature and extent of bullying in individual school or non-governmental organization (NGO) settings and provide tailored, evidence-based prevention strategies. Surveys are for: principals/NGO district leaders; teachers/NGO group leaders; students kindergarten to grade 3; students in grades 4 to 6; students in grades 7 to 12; and parents. The surveys can be used several times throughout the year to gauge the success of an organization's prevention/promotion efforts. Schools can contact PREVNet for more information at [prevnet@queensu.ca](mailto:prevnet@queensu.ca).



- Partner with districts that have a Research department, or purchase their research services directly.
- Partnerships with regional universities and colleges, particularly the 13 faculties of education around the province, can provide important evaluation resources. There are often many professors and graduate students with an interest in Safe Schools, and these individuals can contribute significantly to evaluation.
- Online survey tools can be utilized to create efficiencies in data collection and preliminary analysis. Survey Monkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)) is one such tool that allows users to design surveys with different types of questions (including open-ended). It can facilitate data collection in boards where there is a big geographic area as participants can log in from their individual schools or homes. Furthermore, Survey Monkey can do preliminary descriptive analysis including cross tabulations. Survey Monkey is available for free, but for a nominal fee for an upgraded version, school boards will obtain more security provisions for privacy of data.



- There are many resources available for designing and implementing basic program evaluation. The Imagine Canada project evaluation guide for non-profit organizations is an excellent resource (Zarinpoush, 2006). It includes a four-step process for creating an evaluation plan, implementing an evaluation plan, analyzing and interpreting data, and communicating evaluation results. Furthermore, it includes useful templates to address practical aspects of program evaluation. It is available at: [http://library.imaginecanada.ca/files/nonprofitscan/en/csc/projectguide\\_final.pdf](http://library.imaginecanada.ca/files/nonprofitscan/en/csc/projectguide_final.pdf).

### CHALLENGE 2: PRIORITIZING ASSESSMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF MULTIPLE DEMANDS ON LEADERS

Assessment and evaluation activities do cause more work for educators, whether they are expected to complete surveys and focus groups themselves or coordinate return of consent forms for students. Possible strategies include:

- The extent to which the objectives of the assessment are clear and relevant to educators can help offset the added work. The Ontario Leadership Framework 2012 (see Textbox 4.1) profiles the important role that leaders play in creating a culture in which the use of data is valued. The OLF 2012 is a resource that leaders can use as they consider ways to create a data culture including creating this type of buy-in.
- Establishing a track record of providing meaningful and accessible results of assessment activities to stakeholders can increase buy-in. When stakeholders contribute to an evaluation process and never hear back from the evaluation team, the sense of relevancy will be decreased for future assessment activities.
- In some cases, external researchers may need to budget incentives for educators to complete forms and other evaluation activities that are clearly above and beyond their regular workload and will need to be completed outside of regular work hours.
- Developing a clear set of guidelines for external research applications can reduce the bombardment of research requests (see, for example, TVDSB Research and Assessment guidelines). One strategy that boards use is to limit consideration of research proposals to those that have a clear link to board initiatives and to make particularly busy months of the academic year as off-limits for research activities.

### CHALLENGE 3: INCORPORATING DATA INTO AN ACTION PLAN IS A COMPLEX SKILL

The process of taking data and survey results and using them as the basis for an action plan requires a specific set of skills. Although TVDSB requires all administrators in conjunction with their Safe Schools Action Team to draft a Safe Schools Action Plan that identifies how data are used to determine goals and implementation activities (see Chapter 3 on page 42), there is significant variability in the level of success across administrators. Possible solutions include:

- Providing administrators with orientation and training to the process as well as support on an ongoing basis.
- Providing a template and sample action plans may help administrators develop their own plans.
- School board leadership can promote accountability by requiring the action plans to be submitted on an annual or bi-annual basis.
- Using data to inform decision-making is identified as a Core Leadership Capacity in the Ontario Leadership Framework (2012). More information about practices that support the use of data is identified in that document. *Using Data: Transforming Potential into Action*, 5<sup>th</sup> in the series of *Ideas Into Action* bulletins produced by the ministry provides research insights and practical strategies for school and system leaders to support capacity building in using data effectively.
- These data can also inform School Improvement Plans, as well as the Board's Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA).



#### **Textbox 4.1: Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools and the Ontario Leadership Framework**

Many of the leadership practices emphasized throughout this toolkit are consistent with the Ontario Leadership Framework 2012. The OLF 2012 describes what good leadership looks like, based on evidence about what makes the most difference to student achievement and well-being. It identifies the practices of successful school and system leaders, as well as the organizational practices of successful schools and districts. In addition, the framework includes a small but critical number of personal leadership resources (leadership traits and dispositions) that have been found to increase the effectiveness of leadership practices.

The framework is a resource that can assist educators in building coherence and aligning practices across schools and districts. Discussion of the OLF practices provides opportunities for educators to determine areas of strength and areas for growth. The framework is not a checklist but rather a tool for discussion.

#### **What is the purpose of the OLF 2012?**

- facilitate a shared vision of leadership in schools and districts
- promote a common language that fosters an understanding of leadership and what it means to be a school or system leader
- identify the practices, actions and traits or personal characteristics that describe effective leadership
- guide the design and implementation of professional learning for school and system leaders
- identify the characteristics of highly performing schools and systems - K-12 School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) and District Effectiveness Framework (DEF)
- aid in the recruitment, development, selection and retention of school and system leaders

*More information about the OLF 2012 can be accessed at the Institute for Education Leadership's website: [www.education-leadership-ontario.ca](http://www.education-leadership-ontario.ca)*

The leadership framework provides aspiring leaders at both the school and district levels with important insights about what they will need to learn to be successful. For those already in leadership positions, it serves as a valuable tool for self-reflection and self-assessment. Finally, the framework also supports the work of those responsible for recruiting, selecting, developing and retaining new leaders.

#### **What are the key components of the OLF 2012?**

The framework provides leaders with a clear picture of what effective leadership looks like at both the level of the individual leader and the organization. It describes what an effective leader does and what an effective organization does. The framework also distinguishes between school and system level leaders.

The key components are as follows:

- **School-level Leadership Practices:** Identifies 21 distinct practices, organized in five domains, for formal and informal leaders in schools. The five Core Leadership Capacities – setting goals, aligning resources with priorities, promoting collaborative learning cultures, using data, and engaging in courageous conversations – are seen as fundamental to all leadership practice.
- **Characteristics of Effective Schools: *The K–12 School Effectiveness Framework (K–12 SEF)*:** Identifies evidence-based indicators of successful practice in six components of effective schools. Created in 2010 by the ministry's Student Achievement Division, the K–12 SEF is key to the work of schools and boards. It is a companion piece to the OLF 2012, included as one of its components to show the link between school-level leadership and school effectiveness.
- **Characteristics of Successful School Systems: *A District Effectiveness Framework (DEF)*:** Describes features of school systems, in four domains, that make positive contributions to growth in student achievement and well-being.
- **System-level Leadership Practices:** Identifies a set of unique practices required of system-level leaders (academic and business) that enhance the school-level practices.
- **Personal Leadership Resources:** Describes a set of personal attributes, in three categories, found to be key to the effective enactment of leadership practices at both the school and system level.





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## PRINCIPLE 2: PROMOTE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

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### Reflection Questions

1

Do our Safe Schools initiatives go beyond a focus on preventing violence (i.e., are they embedded in a much broader focus on healthy relationships)?

2

Do we offer skill-based opportunities for students, staff, and other stakeholders to build healthy relationships?

3

Does our staff understand the close connection between healthy relationships and student success, and as a result, prioritize healthy relationships throughout our programming?

Safe Schools cannot focus on violence prevention alone; efforts must be embedded in a larger school climate that promotes healthy relationships. Students require opportunities to think about the types of relationships they want to have, and to develop the necessary skills for healthy relationships. They need access to positive role models who teach them about healthy relationships, but more importantly, who model them. These relationships are important from the beginning. Children who develop warm, positive relationships with their kindergarten teachers are more excited about learning, more positive about coming to school, more self-confident, and achieve more in the classroom (Birch & Ladd, 1997).

The Ontario Ministry of Child and Youth Services offers guidance to adults who work with youth in, *Stepping Stones: A Resource on Youth Development* resource. This tool provides adults with information and resources to help ensure that youth are fully supported in becoming purposeful, involved and engaged members of society.



It is not an overstatement to say that relationships are the single most important aspect of children's development, as noted in this quote from the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child:

● ● ●  
*Young children experience their world as an environment of relationships and these relationships affect virtually all aspects of their development.*

~ National Scientific Council on the Developing Child Working Paper #1, 2004

● ● ●  
A growing body of research indicates that healthy relationships are essentially the foundation for healthy development in children and youth. The importance of children being supported in healthy relationships with adults to develop to their full capacity is undeniable. There are two major streams of research that make this link:

#### ***Relationships matter for developing social and emotional well-being:***

One research stream has looked at the association between relationships and social and emotional outcomes for children. For example, the most recent findings on Canadian children and youth from the World Health Organization Health Behaviour of School Aged Children survey underscores the importance of relationships (Freeman et al, 2012). In this national sample of more than 26,000 students, positive mental health outcomes were associated with environments that are supportive, and with good communication with adults and peers in those environments. Positive mental health outcomes also coincided with healthy choices in terms of risk behaviours. Relationship with peers, parents, and educators were all important to youth outcomes.



At the peer level, for example, bullying and violence were strongly related to emotional and behavioural problems. Girls and boys who report bullying involvement as both bullies and victims report higher levels of emotional problems (51% and 34%) than those who report involvement in neither behaviour (20% and 13%). Conversely, peer support was associated with positive mental health. Other research has shown that peer support may be especially important for some youth. For example, the association between family adversity and child externalizing behaviour disappears when children have high levels of positive relationships (Criss, Pettit, Bates, Dodge, & Lapp, 2002).

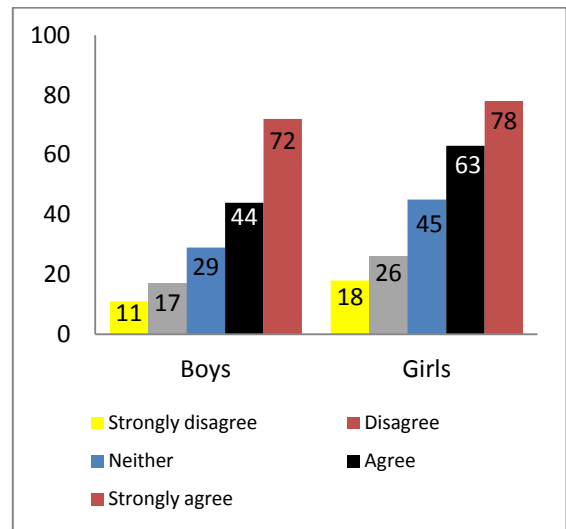
Beyond peers, relationships with parents play an important role in the well-being of children and youth. In the most recent Health Behaviour of School Aged Children data, there was a wide range of parental relationship factors implicated in social and emotional well being (Freeman et al., 2012). For example, students who have many disagreements with parents reported much higher levels of emotional problems, as shown in the graph to the right. Boys and girls who reported many disagreements had approximately five to eight times higher rates of emotional problems than peers who did not.

In addition to parent and peer influences, the Health Behaviour of School Aged Children survey findings highlighted the role that schools can play in mitigating other influences in students lives. Notably, positive school environments and higher level of teacher support were also associated with positive mental health. For example, 58% of boys in schools with a high positive school climate report positive mental health, compared to only 29% of boys in schools with low positive climate. The findings for girls in high and low positive climates are similar (46% versus 18% reporting high levels of emotional well-being).

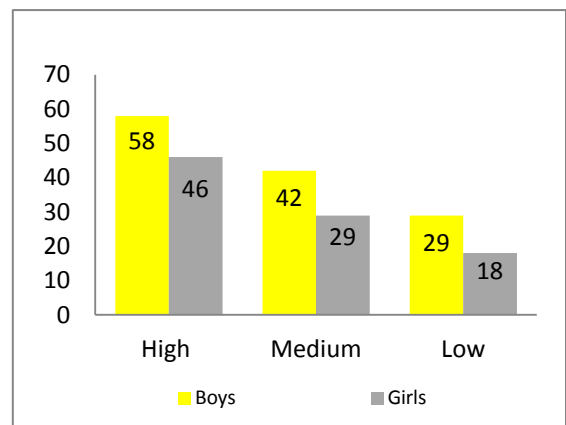
These examples are provided from the recent Health Behaviour for School Aged children because the data are current, Canadian, and include a large sample, but they are in no means exhaustive. Other researchers have pointed out that the cumulative research demonstrating the extent to which relationships play a major socializing role in the lives of children and youth has reached the point that it is considered self-evident (Parker, Rubin, Erath, Wojslawowicz & Buskirk, 2006).

**Relationships matter for developing optimal brain and genetic functioning:**

A second major research stream outlining the role of relationships in development has looked at the neurological, genetic, and physiological functioning. It is clear that unhealthy relationships and violence can have a profound impact on physiological development. Evidence for this view has emerged from a number of diverse studies. Major examples of these findings are included (see Textbox 4.2), as summarized by Drs. Deb Pepler and Wendy Craig, Scientific Co-Directors of PREVNet.



**Figure 4.1 (above): Rates of emotional problems by agreement with the statement, 'I have lots of arguments with my parents'**



**Figure 4.2 (above): Students reporting high levels of emotional well-being by school climate by gender.**



### PREVNET

The **Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network (PREVNet)** is a coalition of Canadians concerned about bullying. The primary goal of PREVNet is to translate and exchange knowledge about bullying to enhance awareness, to provide assessment and intervention tools, and to promote policy related to the problems of bullying. The mission of PREVNet is to develop a national strategy to reduce problems of bullying and victimization throughout Canada. Recognizing that bullying is a community problem evident across the lifespan, and not just a problem in schools, PREVNet utilizes a collaborative model that establishes partnerships with researchers from universities across Canada, national nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and governments in order to create safe, healthy environments for all Canadian children and youth. The PREVNet vision is to bridge research and practice by disseminating understanding and effective practices related to bullying through the government and NGO channels to every community in Canada.



PREVNet can offer support to school boards through:

- An excellent website with fact sheets and resources for teachers, students and parents on responding to bullying, and a range of related topics ([www.prevnet.ca](http://www.prevnet.ca))
- An annual conference that features national experts providing practical applications of their research and community partners providing their successes with evidence-based programming
- In some cases the ability to partner on specific research projects
- Books stemming from their annual conferences



*We envision moving knowledge and evidence-based practice about bullying problems to a recreation centre in Victoria, a kitchen table in Iqaluit, and a school playground in St. John's.*

~Wendy Craig and Deb Pepler, Scientific Co-Directors of PREVNet



### THE CANADIAN WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

The **Canadian Women's Foundation** has worked for twenty years to build a community of women and men who are working together to stop the violence, end poverty and empower girls. The Canadian Women's Foundation has been investing in teen healthy relationship programs for 15 years; and in 2007 moved to multi-year investments. The programs that they fund work with both teen boys and girls, but apply a gender lens in understanding how the intent and impacts of violence may be different. They have recently launched a national learning initiative to share lessons from the best practice programs that they fund with schools and community organizations around the country.



The Canadian Women's Foundation Strategy for Teen Healthy Relationships Strategy includes:

- An online resource, Relationships 101, that summarizes current findings and practical implications of school-based teen healthy relationship programs: available at [www.canadianwomen.org/sites/canadianwomen.org/files/PDF%20-%20Healthy%20Relationships%20101.pdf](http://www.canadianwomen.org/sites/canadianwomen.org/files/PDF%20-%20Healthy%20Relationships%20101.pdf)
- Additional resources under development such as e-bulletins, webinars, and curriculum materials.



***Textbox 4.2: The Impact of Relationships on Neurological and Physiological Development: A Review of the Converging Evidence***

BY DEB PEPLER AND WENDY CRAIG, SCIENTIFIC CO-DIRECTORS OF PREVNET

***RELATIONSHIPS MATTER FOR GENE EXPRESSION***

The “operating system” for genes is built over time through positive experiences, such as exposure to rich learning opportunities, or negative experiences, such as stressful life circumstances. Not all genes in an individual get activated or expressed. Genes are like switches, and experiences leave a chemical “signature” on genes, which can be temporary or permanent and affect how easily the genes are switched on or off (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004).

***EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE CAN DAMAGE DNA***

A recent study by Moffitt, Caspi and colleagues shows that exposure to 2 of 3 types of violence (witnessing domestic violence, child maltreatment, frequent bullying) is linked to premature aging of DNA. Telomere erosion appears to be associated with children’s prolonged and high levels of stress. (Shalev, et al., 2012).

***THE ROLE OF VICTIMIZATION IN PREDICTING AGGRESSION IS DRIVEN BY A COMPLEX GENE-ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION***

Twin studies have shown that both nature and nurture play a role in predicting whether victimization experiences will lead to aggression in children (Brendgen, et al., 2008).

***STRESS PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE IN BRAIN DEVELOPMENT***

The brain adapts to the experiences that a child has. If the child has positive experiences, the brain adapts positively for learning, memory, and regulation. If the child has stressful experiences, the brain adapts negatively, with too much or too little response to any stress. As the brain develops, the gene expression adapts as well, leading to further positive or negative brain development (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2009).

***STRESS ASSOCIATED WITH VICTIMIZATION AFFECT THE DEVELOPING BRAIN***

Victimization is stressful and linked to depressive symptoms, which are in turn linked to dysregulated stress responses (i.e., in cortisol). Dysregulated stress response is linked to poorer memory functioning. Drawing the links, victimization can lead to poorer memory functioning (Vaillancourt, et al., 2011).

***PERSISTENT AND CHRONIC VICTIMIZATION IS STRESSFUL***

Chronically high levels of cortisol is detrimental for health (i.e., suppressed immune functioning). Peer victimization in adolescence is linked with altered HPA axis functioning (i.e., dysregulated stress response). This dysregulated stress response is in turn linked to more visits to the doctor, showing that chronic victimization is bad for physical health and development, regardless of whether injury occurs (Knack, Jensen-Campbell, & Baum, 2011).



## TVDSB SYSTEM-SUPPORTED INITIATIVES THAT PROMOTE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

A number of TVDSB initiatives promote healthy relationships among students. The most critical strategy in our view is embedding healthy relationships into the curriculum, as discussed in Chapter 2 (see page 22). These classroom-based curriculum and other approaches are discussed elsewhere in the toolkit and include:



## TVDSB EXAMPLE: PROMOTING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH TRIBES

TVDSB has found TRIBES to be an excellent way to increase healthy relationships throughout schools. TRIBES is a research-informed process that focuses on developing a community of learners within a classroom or school. Jeanne Gibbs (1995) created the process to give teachers, students and administrators the tools to work together as a team (or tribe). These teams solve problems and work proactively inside and outside the classroom. Initially, the TRIBES process was created to address the prevention of substance abuse. The shaping of caring environments was also seen to have possibilities for decreasing behaviour problems, increasing self-esteem, improving cooperation and achievement.

The TRIBES process creates an environment that is safe and caring for all students. If a student chooses to act out, the repercussions are known in advance. The process provides teachers with strategies to make learning an active process instead of a passive one. As a result, this type of engagement fosters an inclusive community. TRIBES is based on four main agreements that all students, teachers and administrators follow: 1) attentive listening; 2) appreciations (no put downs); 3) mutual respect; and 4) the right to pass.

During a TRIBES training, educators are taken through three stages: inclusion, influence, and community. The 24 hours of training takes educators through a process that students would follow during the school year:

- It is important to incorporate inclusion activities such as *community circle*, *name wave* and *partner introduction* at the beginning of the school year and incorporate inclusion whenever a new grouping or activity takes place.
- The stage of influence uses strategies to develop problem solving, decision making and conflict resolution skills. We use strategies such as *Where do I Stand?* and, *Put Yourself on the Line* to develop students' skills.
- When the class has created a true sense of community, then there is a shift towards discovery learning motivated by the students. *Novel in an Hour* is an activity where everyone's strengths are celebrated.



The TRIBES process is teacher directed at first but as time moves on an inclusive, respectful culture is created and the classroom becomes student led and student focused.



*The TRIBES training allows educators to put themselves in the shoes of their students to experience what it is like to feel inclusion and to be an important part of a group. Teachers often say that the 4 day training is the most effective PD that they have taken as it is immediately adaptable for their classroom. The four agreements are a great foundation for building a culture of caring among their students. TRIBES is an effective process to meet the needs of all students in achieving their potential.*

~ Susan Dale, Safe Schools Learning Coordinator



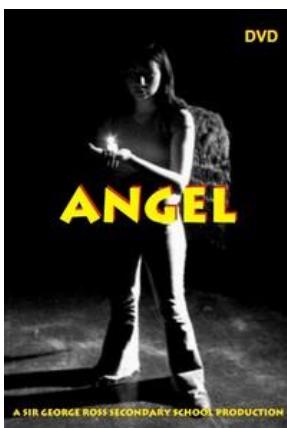
Since 2003, more than 2000 teachers have been trained in TRIBES in the TVDSB. The consistently high level of interest in the TRIBES process demonstrates a passion for creating safe and inclusive classrooms that encompass differentiated methods; ideas that match well with TVDSB's vision of "each student, every day".

During the 2009-2010 school year the TRIBES process was evaluated in the TVDSB. By initiating an evaluation of the TVDSB TRIBES process, the Safe Schools team made a commitment to deepen their understanding of the role the TRIBES process plays in the lives of students as well as teachers. The evaluation report highlighted numerous benefits, including the 6 themes in the figure below (Searle, 2010) ([www.tvdsb.ca/files/128663/tribes2.pdf](http://www.tvdsb.ca/files/128663/tribes2.pdf)).

#### Six Lessons Emerging from the TVDSB Tribes Evaluation

- Teachers experience TRIBES very positively and report a range of benefits
- The TRIBES process promotes student learning as well as the learning of professionals who work with them
- A caring community is fostered by the TRIBES process.
- The TRIBES process is compatible with other TVDSB initiatives.
- There is an overlap between TVDSB's 8 foundational principles and the values of the TRIBES process - as both focus on improving student learning and well-being.
- TRIBES is a process that supports and aligns with Ministry of Education initiatives.

#### TVDSB EXAMPLE: PROMOTING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH ANGEL



The Angel video was created by a group of students at a TVDSB secondary school as an Increase the Peace Initiative. It was filmed, directed and edited by a secondary school teacher who recognized the need for students to tell their story and hopefully create positive change. Angel is a powerful video that follows the life of a high school student who is a victim of bullying at school. It promotes empathy through the facial expressions and body language expressed by a student who is bullied throughout his school day. Angel helps people to recognize the different types of bullying and the damage it can cause both mentally and physically. The importance of the role of the bystander is a clear element within the video. In the creation of the video students recognized the need to support one another and learned the value of healthy relationships. This video helps to generate discussion that can lead to positive action to reduce bullying. Angel has been utilized by many educators in TVDSB and across the province to teach young people what bullying is and how bullying can negatively impact their lives.



## TIPS FOR PROMOTING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

### An awareness of healthy versus unhealthy relationships is a core foundation

- Before you can build healthy relationships, all stakeholders need to know the characteristics of healthy versus unhealthy relationships.
- Students need opportunities to explore the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships in a developmentally appropriate manner throughout school.
- Staff need opportunities for awareness raising, particularly in emerging foci of Safe Schools, such as homophobia and transphobia.

### Beyond awareness, relationships skills are needed

- The most effective prevention programs include significant opportunities to build skills that support healthy relationships.
- Skills need to be taught over an extended period of time. Classroom-based programs such as WITS, Steps to Respect, and the Fourth R provide good structure for this type of skill development.
- Teachers need significant training to be able to implement skill-based programming and facilitate role plays effectively.

### Staff need support to be able to capitalize on teachable moments

- Most educators see the intuitive appeal in using teachable moments (i.e., addressing violence and harassment wherever they occur is a proactive and teaching manner); however, it takes considerable skill to do this.
- Training can offer specific procedures to help teachers capitalize on teachable moments, such as the How to Handle Inappropriate Behaviour protocol.

### Staff need to model healthy relationships with colleagues

- Educators have high expectations for students and similarly, need to model inclusivity with colleagues.
- Educators also need to incorporate safe teaching strategies in day to day teaching.

### Administrators need to lead by example and ensure accountability

- To create a culture that promotes healthy relationships, administrators need to ensure that educators are incorporating evidence-based programs such as Steps to Respect and the Fourth R into their teaching practices.
- Research with the Fourth R shows that perceived accountability (i.e., whether your administrator cares if you use the program) is a unique predictor of the fidelity with which the program is used.
- Administrators can promote TRIBES as a process for creating inclusive classrooms and schools.
- Administrators can promote the use of healthy relationships programs by allocating resources to train staff in evidence-based programs.
- Administrators can consider Safe Schools related experience and training in their hiring decisions.
- Administrators can model healthy relationships by using TRIBES as a process for creating inclusive staff teams.



**CHALLENGE 1: AN ONGOING NEED FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN TRIBES / FOURTH R / STEPS TO RESPECT**

Even with the board’s commitment to training teachers in healthy relationship programs, it is a challenge to maintain capacity for many reasons including to teacher turnover. Staff turnover can undermine a program, and in many cases staff change schools or jobs before they even implement a program once (Mihalic, Fagan & Argamaso, 2008). Studies with the Fourth R have consistently found that administrators identify teacher turnover and the need for ongoing training and support as the biggest challenge to sustainability for the program (Crooks et al., 2008; Crooks et al., 2012). Furthermore, there are limited resources and competing priorities for these resources; for example, only 50 educators can be trained in Steps to Respect each year. Strategies to maintain and build this capacity include:

- Developing a sustainable training plan to address training in an ongoing capacity (i.e., envisioning training cycles rather than one-time events).
- Development of Master Trainers within the board when possible to reduce the expense associated with bringing in external trainers.

**CHALLENGE 2: MORE SUPPORTS ARE NEEDED FOR STUDENTS**

With increased financial constraints, there is inadequate support for students with specific needs (e.g., counselling). As a result, there is an unrealistic expectation that prevention and healthy relationship promotion activities can meet all the needs of all students. Possible strategies to counter these resource limitations include:

- Creative supports for students, such as Restorative Approaches, peer tutoring and peer mediation.
- Adaptation of specific programs to be more accessible to a wider range of educational needs (such as a modified de-briefing program for higher needs students following the drama productions, and the Fourth R adaptation for Alternative Education).
- The use of volunteers where appropriate to assist students with moderate needs (such as through the Stand By Me mentoring program) to free up resources for those students with the most significant clinical needs.
- Capacity building among staff, such as the Collaborative Problem-Solving Model (Greene, 2009) that TVDSB has piloted in several schools and the U-Turn program.
- Make referrals to community agencies for support where appropriate.

**CHALLENGE 3: THE ADMINISTRATOR ROLE IS COMPREHENSIVE AND HAS MANY DEMANDS**

School administrators have a massive number of responsibilities in implementing curriculum, supervising staff and leading improvement initiatives, etc. In comparison to crises or specific structured tasks, promoting healthy relationships can fall into the ‘critical-but-not-urgent’ quadrant that is so often neglected (Covey, Merrill & Merrill, 1996). Strategies to support administrators in this role include:

- Mentoring of lead teachers to share the responsibility and build capacity of school staff for promoting healthy relationships.
- Support of Safe Schools Action Teams to build capacity such that the team can share these responsibilities.





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## PRINCIPLE 3: INTENTIONAL ALIGNMENT

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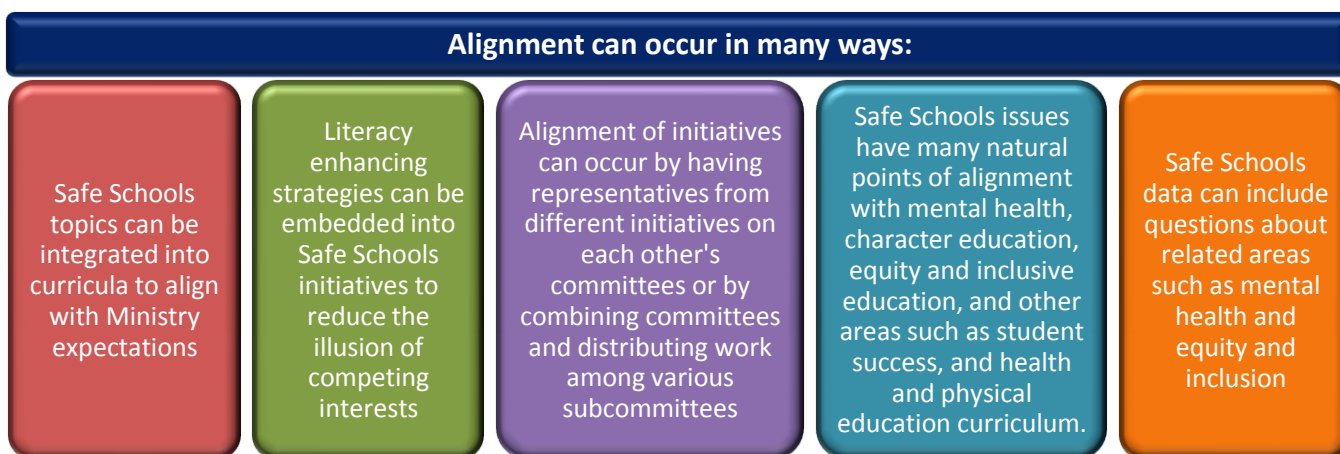
### Reflection Questions

- 1 Do we look for opportunities for Safe Schools, Equity and Inclusive Education, Mental Health, Character Education and FNMI initiatives to reinforce each other in terms of key messages to align the messages and the work?
- 2 Do successes in Safe Schools inform new initiatives in other areas and vice versa?
- 3 Are Safe Schools leaders aware of initiatives in related areas and vice versa?

School and system leaders are faced with many competing demands for their time and resources. Aligning Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools with other initiatives and outcomes at the board, school, and classroom levels is essential for ensuring the implementation and sustainability of these initiatives. Safe Schools must be integrated and aligned with other responsibilities for educators, or else it is simply impossible to meet all of the demands that have been outlined by various policies. Leaders must also model this alignment for their whole staff. *“...one defining attribute of effective leaders is their ability to carry out even the most routine and seemingly trivial tasks in such a way as to nudge their organizations toward their purposes. This is one of the ways in which the separate parts of their especially effective organizations come to be productively aligned”* (Leithwood, 2012).

Alignment at the board, school, and classroom levels can occur in a number of ways, as shown in Figure 4.3.

**Figure 4.3: Approaches to aligning Safe Schools with other initiatives and priorities**



### ALIGNMENT THROUGH COMMITTEE CROSSOVER

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Having a Safe Schools Coordinator represented on other TVDSB committees is important for alignment and contributes to a big picture understanding of Safe Schools within the TVDSB context. Safe Schools coordinators are active members on many committees: Equity and Inclusive Education, Character Development, Mental Health (Stigma) to name a few. Safe Schools Coordinators gain an understanding of the goals of each committee and can offer a Safe Schools perspective as well as support committee work thoughtfully. Often, the Safe Schools Coordinator can offer important background information as well as ideas to consider before moving forward. They act as a liaison to schools and communicate the breadth of programming taking place in school communities.



## TVDSB SAFE SCHOOLS

The TVDSB Safe Schools Committee is a partnership between members from the TVDSB and local community organizations. The group meets on a bi-monthly basis to have the opportunity to communicate current events and upcoming initiatives in the area of Safe Schools. Our community partners provide valuable resources and services to enhance the education for our staff and students. This committee also works collaboratively when new policies have to be created or existing ones revised. TVDSB membership includes representation from: Senior Administration, Program Services (Safe Schools, Health & Physical Education, Special Education, School Counselling & Social Work), Psychological Services, Principals, Vice-Principals, Teaching Staff, CUPE, and Research and Assessment. Community organizations represent important partnerships such as Police Services, Women's Services, Community Justice, CAS, CAMH and Western University.

## TVDSB CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

In 2006, the Ministry of Education formally introduced the Character Development Initiative for Ontario schools. By the end of the 2007-08 school year, they had released the document, *Finding Common Ground*, which outlines the foundation for Character Development programs in all boards across Ontario. During that same school year, Thames Valley DSB established a Character Development Team that would have the responsibility for implementing the key expectations in *Finding Common Ground*. The TVDSB Superintendent of Education responsible for Safe Schools was the lead for this team, and the Safe Schools Learning Coordinators were also part of the committee membership. This representation was valuable to help ensure we continued to enhance Safe Schools initiatives while incorporating Character through our programming.

The ministry encouraged each board to consult with the community through a survey to determine which Character Qualities are most important to each board. Respect is the character quality judged most important in a public survey by the TVDSB to find out what qualities people think young people need most to be successful students and develop into productive members of society. There were 8 character qualities selected in 2009 representing the TVDSB Character Qualities: Acceptance, Caring, Empathy, Honesty, Integrity, Perseverance, Respect, and Responsibility. The Character Development Team has developed a number of resources to enhance the initiatives at each school to embed character education across curriculum. In undertaking these initiatives, they were able to utilize an existing Safe Schools subcommittee made of up teacher-librarians, known as the Resource Selection Committee, to select mentor texts for elementary school students.

As a result of this process, the Grade 10 Civics curriculum has been re-written with a focus on Character Education to make it more engaging for students. TVDSB is in the process of writing resources for Grades 7 to 10 Literacy with a focus on Character Development and aligned with the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test requirements.

## ALIGNING MENTAL HEALTH AND SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAMMING

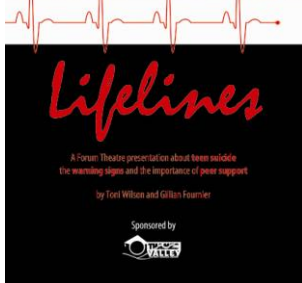
There is a natural point of intersection between Safe Schools and Mental Health programming, because healthy relationships are core to mental health, and mental health challenges can interfere with positive relationships. TVDSB has addressed this intersection through Safe Schools drama productions that deal with mental health issues. More recently, TVDSB has worked in partnership with CAMH Centre for Prevention Science to develop a program called Healthy Relationships Plus.

*There are universal attributes that schools and communities value. Character development is the deliberate effort to nurture these attributes and use them as a standard against which we hold ourselves accountable. They are key aspects of school life. They bind us together and form the basis of responsible citizenship. They are a foundation for excellence and equity in education and for school communities that are respectful, safe, caring, and inclusive.*

*(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, A Guide to Character Development in Schools, K-12)*



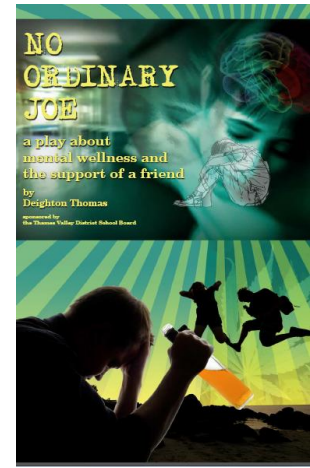
## TVDSB EXAMPLE: ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES THROUGH SAFE SCHOOLS DRAMA



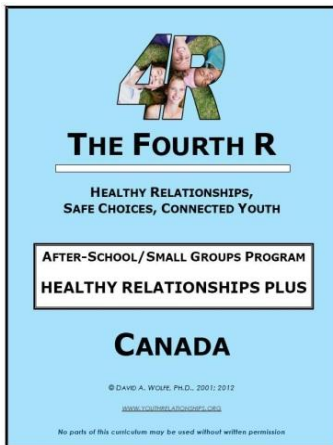
One programming approach used in TVDSB is to integrate mental health issues into the successful and longstanding Safe Schools Drama program. The Forum Theatre play, *Lifelines*, deals with teen suicide and the warning signs which lead to a teenager's tragic end. Student leaders from 28 secondary schools viewed the presentation. Before the play was performed, TVDSB psychologists gave an awareness presentation on teen suicide. Following this, students viewed the play and had the opportunity to practise skills as to how to help a friend who was showing signs of depression and possible suicide. Following the presentation, TVDSB and community partner psychologists were available in breakout sessions for follow-up discussion with student leaders.

The play, *No Ordinary Joe*, focuses on signs of mental illness displayed by the main character and the many opportunities that go by where someone could have stepped in to help. The follow-up discussion included discussion of substance use and mental health, how to recognize symptoms of mental illness, practise opportunities as to how to ask for help as well as reflection on each student's personal circle of support.

Although Safe Schools drama productions often tackle sensitive topics, we were especially careful with the planned debriefing following our first play that addressed suicide. As with other productions, we developed classroom-based activities to provide a structure for debriefing, immediately following the play. Although the debriefings all went smoothly and the need for crisis intervention did not arise, the extent of the preparations and support available provided a higher degree of comfort and confidence as we ventured into this new territory.



## TVDSB EXAMPLE: HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS PLUS PROGRAM

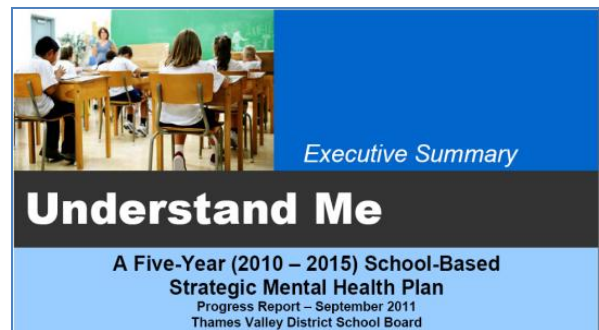


More recently, TVDSB has partnered with the CAMH Centre for Prevention Science on the development of the Healthy Relationships Plus program. This program builds on the successful 12 session small groups healthy relationship program already offered in TVDSB. The CAMH Centre for Prevention Science worked with a curriculum writer from [mindyourmind.ca](http://mindyourmind.ca) to add two additional sessions that address mental health specifically, and to integrate more mental health components throughout the existing sessions. In addition, several guidance counsellors and psychologists from TVDSB reviewed the program and offered feedback. The resulting program increases awareness about mental well-being and mental health challenges, thereby decreasing stigma. It also applies the Fourth R approach to building healthy relationships, with a focus on how to be a friend to someone facing mental health challenges, and how to know when to seek appropriate adult assistance. The program is anticipated to be piloted in a few schools in the 2012-2013 school year.



## ALIGNMENT THROUGH STRATEGIC PLANS

The intersection between the Mental Health Strategy and Safe Schools has been expressed in ways other than programming overlap. *Understand Me*, the five-year school based strategic mental health plan makes clear links to the success and innovation of the Safe Schools strategy in contributing to mental well-being. For example, in the Mental Health Strategic Plan, the section on characteristics of a mentally healthy school explicitly addresses the need for safety. A mentally healthy school is described as one that has anti-bullying, anti-stigma, anti-discrimination and positive inclusion strategies such as: peer mediation; celebration of diversity; reduction of stigma of mental illness; is welcoming to parents and families, especially newcomers. Another characteristic of mentally healthy schools is a culture of positive relationships among all. Clearly these descriptors of mentally healthy schools make a clear case for coordination between the Mental Health Strategy and Safe Schools.



Similarly, the First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Action Plan identified core areas that align with Safe Schools. For example, the Uniting Our Nations programs (see page 82) emphasize healthy relationships and violence prevention, but also address FNMI Transition Planning, which is a specific strategy in the Action Plan. The emphasis on providing culturally relevant Safe Schools programming for FNMI youth operationalizes another one of the strategies in the action plan; namely, increasing opportunities for FNMI students to access culturally appropriate programming.

## ALIGNMENT THROUGH AN EMPHASIS ON EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Equity and Inclusive Education is another natural alignment for Safe Schools. Creating an inclusive environment that feels welcoming to a diverse group of students is a key feature of a positive school climate and a foundation for Safe Schools. Promoting a sense of belonging for every student is a guiding principle of the Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy developed by the ministry. In TVDSB the overlap is evident through organization of resources on the website. For example, numerous Safe Schools video resources are listed on the EIE site, and the Safe Schools site includes the Diversity project, which directly promotes equity, inclusivity and understanding.

In addition to the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program, which promotes inclusivity and belonging by providing supports for newcomer families, TVDSB has developed additional strategies to support this potentially vulnerable group. The Newcomer Orientation Week (NOW) summer program is designed to prepare newcomer youth a head start in their school by teaching them how to navigate the school layout, familiarize them with the school's routines, connect them with Peer Leaders who can continue to support them once school starts, and orient them to sources of help as well as availability of extracurricular activities and the 'culture' of the Ontario Educational system. The program is delivered in partnership with Citizenship and Immigration Canada and three local settlement agencies, in both public and Catholic schools in London, Ontario.



## ALIGNMENT THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

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Another point of alignment is the opportunity to collect data about more than one area of interest at a time. TVDSB has made a concerted effort to move away from collecting data in silos and to look at underlying relationships among factors that create safe, inclusive and accepting schools. For example, the most recent version of the Elementary Students Safe Schools survey included specific questions about mental health. The items included are shown in the box below:

### Mental Health Questions on Elementary Safe Schools Survey 2012

#### •Student Feelings:

- I feel like I really belong at this school.
- I learn better at school when I'm not feeling worried, sad, or angry.
- People at this school are concerned about the feelings of others.
- I know where to get help if I am or a friend is feeling worried, sad, or angry.
- Students at my school are taught to care about the feelings of others.
- We talk at school about how we feel or how we handle stress.
- I feel worried, sad, or stressed at school.
- I feel angry or upset at school.
- Other students tease you, call you names, or gossip about you for feeling worried, sad, or angry.

Similar, the most recent Safe Schools Survey included the following question on equity and inclusivity:

### Equity and Inclusivity Questions on Elementary Safe Schools Survey 2012

#### •Do you ever feel unwelcome or uncomfortable at your school because of any of the following?

- No, I always feel welcome
- My sex (male/female)
- My ethnocultural or racial background
- My Aboriginal background (First Nation, Métis, Inuit)
- My appearance
- My religion or faith
- My language background (my first language)
- My grades or marks
- My family's level of income
- A disability that I have
- My sexual orientation

By embedding mental health and inclusivity questions into the elementary survey, TVDSB not only collects important data about these issues, but is also able to look at the intersection between mental health, inclusivity, and school safety. For example, youth with mental health challenges or who feel excluded at school can be compared to their peers to look at the relationship between these difficulties and feeling unsafe at school. These data provide the opportunity to track the impact of programs and policies that also address the overlap among these areas. Future versions of the survey for secondary students will include similar items.



## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL ALIGNMENT

### Connect key people with more than one initiative

- In small boards the same person might be responsible for Safe Schools, EIE, Character Development, FNMI students, and/or Mental Health, which leads to natural alignment.
- In large boards these initiatives might be diversified across people and divisions. Having a process for communication and connection among these people will highlight opportunities for alignment.

### Before launching a new initiative, refer to existing ones for alignment

- Before responding to a new initiative or opportunity, refer to or review initiatives in related areas.
- This review can identify existing resources and committed and creative staff who already have created momentum.
- There may be opportunities to learn from initiatives in other areas that were not overly successful, in addition to learning from the successes.

### Monitor the release of new curriculum documents by the Ministry

- The best time to make revisions to courses and align initiatives to curriculum documents is when new courses or expectations are released by the Ministry.

### Look for opportunities to participate on Ministry writing teams

- Boards may have opportunities to nominate staff to participate on writing teams or consultation. This is a good opportunity to influence policy and course expectations.

### Host webinars or create blogs to facilitate sharing among educators

- Every board has talented teachers who are integrating safe, inclusive and accepting initiatives at the classroom level. These lessons often do not go beyond the single classroom.
- Webinars and blogs provide opportunities for sharing lesson plans and success stories -- our Program Services staff started a blog called Program Ponderings (off the TVDSB web page) and many principals and teachers also have their own blogs.

### Partner with a Faculty of Education

- Faculties of Education might be in a position to provide expertise in the area of alignment and examples of curriculum integration.

### Review Ministry sources of funding and look for alignment opportunities

- Review Ministry sources of funding to identify opportunities to align initiatives (e.g., Education Programs, other grants, and GSN funding).



## SPECIFIC CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN ALIGNMENT

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### CHALLENGE 1: STAFF MAY FEEL RESISTANT ABOUT ALIGNMENT

Staff resistance can stem from different sources. Some staff at board and school levels may identify with a particular area and not want to expand to related areas. Getting educators to implement new curriculum requires an intentional implementation process and appropriate supports. Some teachers may feel they don't have the expertise and others may have something else that they are already using and like better.

- The benefits of aligning initiatives and the underlying reasons for doing so needs to be apparent to staff.
- Leadership plays an essential role in the messages given about the importance of alignment.
- To encourage and support teachers to use aligned curriculum, appropriate orientation, training and ongoing professional learning is needed.
- Administrators play a crucial role in modeling and supporting the use of aligned curricula by showing an awareness of the programs and an interest in whether educators are using them. Numerous researchers have identified the importance of support and accountability from administrators (Durlak & DuPre, 2008, Fagan & Mihalic, 2003).

### CHALLENGE 2: FUNDING MAY BE TARGETED AT ONE PARTICULAR AREA OR INITIATIVE

Special project money is often earmarked for a specific purpose such as Equity, Safe Schools, or FNMI initiatives.

- It may be necessary to make the case for aligning with other areas in the proposal.
- These situations provide an opportunity to dialogue with funding organizations about the importance of aligning initiatives with other areas and work being done.

### CHALLENGE 3: INTEGRATING SAFE SCHOOLS TOPICS/ISSUES INTO EXISTING CURRICULUM IS LABOUR INTENSIVE

It takes significant time, expertise, and resources to develop Safe Schools lesson plans that are aligned with ministry expectations.

- Strategically and proactively allocating resources to these writing activities is important.
- Encourage team writing to develop the skills of emerging leaders so that there is a broader capacity for writing lesson plans and not too heavy a reliance on a small number of educators with that particular expertise.
- Access and utilize where possible the resources (staff and other) from program / curriculum departments.

### CHALLENGE 4: ALIGNING INITIATIVES ACROSS AREAS IN BIG BOARDS CAN BE PARTICULARLY COMPLEX

Aligning with other initiatives can be very complex in a large board. There are sometimes many players and stakeholders whose interests need to be taken into account making it difficult for all these initiatives to get a single united effort underway.

- Look for opportunities for two or three areas to work together rather than trying to bring all relevant areas together at once.
- Start small with alignment initiatives (e.g., Equity and Inclusive Education and Safe Schools developing a student conference together) and build on successes.



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## PRINCIPLE 4: ADAPT TO DIVERSE CONTEXTS

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### Reflection Questions

- 1 Do we identify barriers to engagement for diverse groups of students or families and address those barriers by modifying our approaches to Safe Schools?
- 2 Do we modify our approaches to create culturally-relevant programming for diverse groups of youth?
- 3 Do we make every effort to provide access to Safe Schools programming and initiatives for linguistically diverse families and newcomers?

Safe Schools programming is not a one-size-fits all approach. Increasingly there is recognition that programming requires a balance between using evidence-based and data-informed approaches, and selecting or adapting programming to fit your students and school communities (Kerig, Volz, Moeddel, & Cuellar, 2010). Adaptation is important because the extent to which an intervention fits with an organization’s mission, priorities, and values is a predictor of the success with which it is implemented (Durlak & DuPre). Adaptations need to be undertaken intentionally and thoughtfully, because otherwise adaptation can become a euphemism for careless implementation of programs.

Appropriate flexibility can mean modifications to embrace the diversity of an audience by attending to issues such as ethnicity, sex, gender-identity, social class, culture, developmental level, and unique needs of at-risk youth (Kerig et al., 2010). Such changes might include modifying approaches for specific learning needs or literacy challenges. It can also mean extending or deepening successful initiatives in schools with particular needs. For example, the Urban and Priority High Schools funding has provided an excellent opportunity to expand and reinforce successful Safe Schools programming and apply a whole school approach to training the entire staff (page 86).

Adaptation can also refer to developing culturally relevant programming. Students feel most comfortable and are most likely to learn when program material reflects their reality, is relevant to their life, and makes them feel included (Resnicow, Soler, Braithwaite, Ahluwalia, & Butler, 2000). Culturally-appropriate materials also help students to feel more connected to educators or program facilitators; these programs are also more likely to be supported by the community. In TVDSB, much of our emphasis on culturally appropriate programming has been on developing relevant opportunities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) youth. Research with FNMI students indicates that learning about their culture plays a protective role (see Fleming & Ledogar, 2008). The research suggests that the more that Aboriginal peoples are connected to their own cultures, as opposed to the mainstream culture, the higher their resiliency against adversity.

### TVDSB EXAMPLE: UNITING OUR NATIONS PROGRAMS FOR FNMI YOUTH

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Uniting Our Nations includes a range of programs developed in partnership with the Fourth R team at the CAMH Centre for Prevention Science over the past eight years. Programs differ in terms of duration and format, and include mentoring and transition conferences for elementary students, as well as mentoring and a culture camp for secondary students. Although the programs range from one-day conferences to year-long weekly sessions and 3 day intensive experiences, there are underlying commonalities. Common themes include a focus on healthy relationship development, the provision of culturally-relevant experiences, and an emphasis on mentoring. The inclusion of culturally relevant experiences has been identified as a best practice in programming (Mussell, Cardiff, & White, 2004). Mentoring has also





been identified as an effective and important mechanism for supporting FNMI youth (Klinck, et al., 2005). The common elements help ensure that the programs are complementary and reinforce each other, but are not redundant for youth who choose to participate in multiple programs. The Uniting Our Nations programs are currently being evaluated in partnership with the CAMH Centre for Prevention Science. Quotes provided in this section are drawn from the first year of data (Crooks, et al., 2012).

### ELEMENTARY MENTORING PROGRAM



The elementary mentoring program is a year-long group mentoring program for grade 7 and 8 students. These are important transition years because grade 7 is one of the points at which students from one of the local First Nations communities enter TVDSB schools, and grade 8 is the foundation for the transition to secondary school. The program is based on the Medicine Wheel cycles. Beginning in the Fall (West/ **Spiritual** quadrant), the students participated in sessions to explore their own likes and interests, learned the Creation Story, and discussed how to create a positive attitude and atmosphere. Moving into the Winter (North/ **Physical** quadrant) the sessions covered topics such as bullying, healthy eating, and current representation of First Nations in media. After a break for holidays, the Spring (East/ **Emotional** quadrant) teaches students about sharing and listening, goal setting, healthy choices, and drug use and abuse. Finally, moving into the Summer (South/ **Mental** quadrant), there were sessions on communication skills, dealing with peer pressures, finding personal strengths, and dealing with peer conflicts. The Medicine Wheel format provides a holistic learning experience, integrating healthy relationship skills with cultural pride, and engaging students who may not otherwise feel a connection with their schools. Administrators view the program in an extremely positive light:



*“In our school Fourth R has been phenomenally successful... It turned non-leaders into leaders in our school.”*

~ Administrator #1



Educators commented on the reduction of negative behaviours such as bullying, even beyond the school setting:



*“Since Fourth R we have not had the problems on the bus, not to say it’s perfect but we don’t have nearly the problems on the busses and stuff with kids being teased and bullied. Not nearly the issues even with weekend stuff being brought into the schools.”*

~ Educator



### UNITING OUR NATIONS PEER MENTORING FOR FNMI SECONDARY STUDENTS

The peer mentoring program supports the development of healthy and positive relationships between younger secondary students and peer mentors from older grades. Pairs of students meet on a weekly basis during lunch time and engage in a range of activities together, sometimes with a cultural focus, and other times with general activities enjoyed by youth in this age group. The initial time commitment is once a week during the common lunch period, for one school semester, although most students choose to be involved for the whole year. The link with an older student helps smooth the transition from elementary to secondary school for the younger



individual, and connects two people with similar interests and backgrounds. Over the last few years, the training program has also evolved from a half-day session for the mentors, to a full-day of training prior to their involvement in the program. Training sessions provide students with information about the mentoring role, opportunities to role play, and a range of activities suitable to use with their mentee.

A unique aspect of the peer mentoring program is the involvement of an adult mentor from the First Nations community who comes into the school several times per semester, typically to facilitate a teaching circle with the mentoring participants. This community mentor helps provide support to the school mentors, incorporates cultural teachings into the program, provides a role model to all of the youth involved, and provides the opportunity for the youth to become connected to another healthy adult in their community. Students involved with the mentoring program identify specific benefits they have experienced in their relationships:



*“Yes, definitely I would recommend the program because it gives you that role model in your mentor like someone who can kind of guide you through your first year here... so you can make a good transition with your mentor from grade 8 to 9 cause your mentor has a lot knowledge about stuff like classes, work load and all that and you also to have someone to talk to if they are feeling like they are behind in school, they can talk to their mentor... The Fourth R helped me build relationships with my mentor and even the other mentors even if they weren't mine. And I kind of knew a lot of people after that and kind of like got to know their friends and make new friends myself.”*

~ Secondary student



#### GRADE 8 TRANSITION CONFERENCES

Two full day Transition Conferences are held annually for FNMI grade 8 students to provide them with information and resources to promote a successful transition from grade 8 to grade 9. This is a second transition point for FNMI students entering the TVDSB from schools in their FN communities. Guest speakers share cultural knowledge, support, guidance and thoughts on identity, which is a key element for FNMI youth. FNMI counsellors, teachers and secondary school students share knowledge about programs, and answer questions about high school. The youth have the opportunity to learn about school and community resources, opportunities to get involved, the FNMI Peer Mentoring Program, Cultural Camp and Student Advisory Council. Resource packages that summarize the information shared throughout the day are provided for students and staff to take with them.



*The Transition Conferences bring our urban FNMI students together with our First Nation students from the reserves prior to entry into secondary school. Students begin to form friendships and have an opportunity to meet school staff by participating in engaging activities which support their culture and identity. Students feel less anxious about starting secondary school when they have a chance to interact with school staff and meet new friends before the first day of school.*

~ Laura Elliott, Executive Superintendent, Program Services



UNITING OUR NATIONS CULTURAL LEADERSHIP CAMP

The Culture Camp is a three-day intensive program designed for FNMI Secondary School students who are responsible, willing to try new things, reliable, and active participants in school activities. Culture Camp is a wonderful opportunity for students to meet other FNMI students, develop their leadership potential, learn healthy relationship skills, and participate in experiential education, in a traditional, cultural and fun setting. This outdoor adventure develops student leadership skills through culturally significant, personally challenging, and fun activities. Elders, community leaders, and academic experts are invited to share traditional and contemporary teachings on hunting, land conservation, team building, creative arts, and healthy living strategies. The goals of this camp are: to increase leadership skills, to develop positive social relationships, to work successfully as part of a team, to experience the accomplishment of real challenges, to increase awareness of the natural environment, to enhance awareness of FNMI identity, and to build the strength of the FNMI student community in the TVDSB.



*The entire culture camp experience was very memorable and very important to me because it provided a sense of connection with my roots and a sense of community with FNMI youth and adults.*

~ Secondary student



Surveys from 47 students who participated in Uniting Our Nations programs during the 2011-2012 school year indicated a positive impact on feeling connected to school, student success, and relationship skills (see Table 4.1)

**Table 4.1: Survey Results from Youth in the Uniting Our Nations program**

| Item   | % Agree or Strongly Agree |
|--|---------------------------|
| I feel supported at school through these programs.                                       | 85%                       |
| What I learned from these programs helps me deal with challenges at school.              | 90%                       |
| These programs have made me a more successful student.                                   | 85%                       |
| The skills I learned in these programs have been useful for communicating with teachers. | 83%                       |
| I feel a sense of belonging while participating in these programs.                       | 90%                       |
| These programs have helped me feel involved at school.                                   | 85%                       |
| The skills I learned in these programs have been useful for communicating with friends.  | 95%                       |

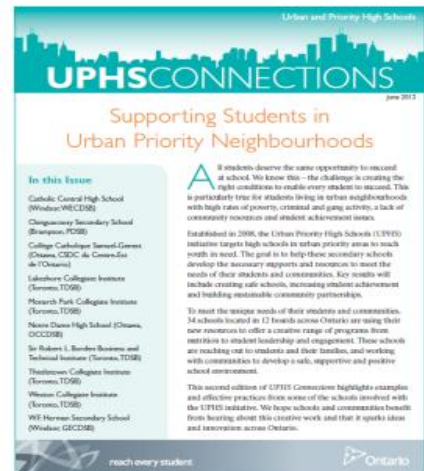


## EXPANDING SAFE SCHOOLS IN URBAN AND PRIORITY HIGH SCHOOLS PROJECTS

The Urban and Priority High Schools initiative was developed by the ministry to include school safety as one of the five areas. In TVDSB, the UPHS initiative has been aligned with existing Safe Schools efforts to expand successful initiatives in these high needs schools. Established in 2008, the Urban and Priority High Schools (UPHS) initiative targets high schools in urban neighbourhoods with high rates of poverty, criminal and gang activity, a lack of community resources, and student achievement issues. Thirty-four schools in 12 boards across Ontario receive UPHS support to enhance five core areas: student achievement, student leadership/engagement, student safety, parent/community engagement, and non-academic social supports. Ultimately, “the goal is to help these secondary schools develop the necessary supports and resources to meet the needs of their students and communities” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2012).

Three secondary schools in the TVDSB receive additional financial supports through the ministry’s UPHS initiative. Each of the schools has allocated a portion of their UPHS funding to issues related to student safety, such as offering speakers, awareness campaigns, and conferences related to violence prevention and Safe Schools and communities.

Two of the schools have also used funds from their UPHS grants to implement alternative to suspension programs. Through these programs, students who would have normally received an out-of-school suspension are instead required to report to the alternative to suspension room in which they serve the length of their suspension. The alternative to suspension rooms are controlled environments with a small staff-to-student ratio and students generally are not permitted to leave the room unless they are accompanied by a staff member. The clear advantage of alternative to suspension programs, and their underlying goal, is to provide a setting, in school, where students are able to keep up with their class work and maintain credit accumulation while still serving a suspension. Thus, these programs help to ensure that students will not miss school as a result of poor behaviour choices. At both schools, students also receive some guidance and counselling related to the issues that led to their suspension, and at one the program is intimately linked to their student success (credit rescue/recovery) program. As a result, the alternative to suspension programs are able to support both the student safety and student achievement pillars that are integral to the UPHS initiative.



UPHS funding has also been used to expand current Safe Schools initiatives to a whole school approach. These expanded versions include initiatives such as:

- Providing resources for the entire staff to participate in the 24 hours of TRIBES training (see page 71).
- Through the Urban Priorities Funding, an in-service for all teachers at a particular high school was developed and a training video specific to the school to be used by the administration for further training was created. These scenarios provided some of the materials that were later developed into the Win/Win Training Resource (see page 38).
- An opportunity for all staff to participate in Forum Theatre

In these ways, additional funding for priority schools provided the necessary resources to expand important Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools initiatives already in place. The opportunity to train all staff in the school setting is an important step towards shifting an entire school climate.

More information about the Urban and Priority High School program is available on the ministry website ([www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/urbanPriority.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/urbanPriority.html)) or in the program newsletters that highlight different sites and programs.



## THE UPSTANDER CAMPAIGN

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The Upstander campaign was the “Big Idea” of the 2011-2012 school year and is covered in more detail in a case study (see page 130). By design it was conceptualized to be general enough to fit the needs of a particular school. Schools were provided with templates and instructions, but could proceed in a particular direction that made sense for their student body, as long as they aligned with the big idea. It was also designed to be adapted to fit the whole developmental span from JK to grade 12. The quotes below from students of different ages depict how this concept was easily adapted to make sense to different aged students.



*It's important to be an Upstander to stand up against bullying.... Like say, 'stop it'... or tell a grown-up.*

~ Syd, JK



*An Upstander is someone who stands up against bullying and a bystander is someone who watches the bullying happen or sometimes joins the bullying.*

~ Finn, grade 1



*If there were no Upstanders everybody would be bullied... a bystander is someone that just watches someone being bullied and doesn't really care. Sometimes they think they should do something but they are too shy to do anything.*

~ Gillian, grade 3



*Upstanders are important in my life because they are friends who have cheered me up, other people who took a stand when others have not, and they are people that have educated others about my disability.*

~ Sydney, grade 7



*Through safe and healthy schools we learn that being an Upstander means being that person to go up and say, 'hey, that's not okay', but I think it is so much more than that... it's about staying true to your values.*

~ Maya, grade 12



*An Upstander's attitude is a mindset that anyone can have, because everyone has the power to change, lead, and love. Being an Upstander is not about condemning those that are considered bad. It is about bringing light to situations that have been shadowed by misled individuals.*

~ Moses, grade 12



Besides being an adaptable idea for different ages, schools were also able to modify the Upstander Campaign to fit specific needs and hot topics in their schools. Specifically, several schools used it as an opportunity to launch or strengthen initiatives promoting awareness of LGBTQ issues and combating homophobia. One school that had identified homophobia as an ongoing concern merged the issues by creating tie-dyed shirts that incorporated the Upstander theme with a rainbow motif, making a clear statement that being an Upstander means challenging homophobia too. This was a great opportunity for students to collaborate on a big idea that supported creating a



culture of caring in TVDSB schools. Student and staff representatives from Safe Schools and GSA Committees aligned their initiatives to support each other and promote the important Upstander message creatively.

Other adaptations for the Upstander Campaign included the pledge, a key component of the campaign, being available in 11 languages. Our co-terminus Catholic board made additional minor modifications to the pledge.

### *RELIGIOUS AND FAITH-BASED ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS*

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The TVDSB welcomes and values students from all cultures, religions, and faiths. Our school communities celebrate and protect each student's right to follow or not follow religious and/or spiritual beliefs and/or faith requirements. Freedom of religion is an individual right and a collective responsibility. TVDSB is committed to fostering an inclusive learning environment that promotes acceptance and protects religious freedom. TVDSB has an Equity and Inclusive Education Policy as well as a Religious and Faith-Based Accommodation of Students Procedure which was informed by the EIE Advisory Committee, by public input through the policy process and by Community Consultation from Religious Leaders. All accommodations are based on request and considered respectfully on a case-by-case basis.

TVDSB hosted a Religious Accommodation Learning Conference in the fall of 2011. School Teams including an administrator, teacher, student and parent from every school attended the conference. The agenda for the day included a ministry overview as well as a review of the TVDSB Religious and Faith-Based Accommodation of Students Procedure. A panel discussion where Religious Leaders had the opportunity to speak to the question, "From your perspective, what would an inclusive school look like?" followed by an opportunity for conference participants to ask questions was both respectful and informative. Break-out sessions were then offered to all participants. The break-out sessions included:

- Accommodating the Religious Needs of Students in a Public Education System
- Understanding Islam and the Muslim Community
- Accommodating First Nations Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Students
- Low German Mennonites: Culture Created – Culture Imposed
- Student Session – "How Can I Help Create an Inclusive School?"
- Resources and information related to Religious Accommodation are available on the TVDSB Equity and Inclusive Education website.

### *ADAPTING FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS*

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Another important adaptation area is meeting the needs of exceptional youth. The *Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario* document identifies the following school climate indicators that are of particular relevance to students with special educational needs.

- Programs and other supports are in place to enable staff to teach and reward the skills and attitudes that promote a caring and safe school.
- The physical environment of the school and classrooms is designed to help ensure students' safety and promote student engagement and emotional well-being.
- Mechanisms are in place for identifying the needs of individual students and matching them to available and/or potential strategies and resources for meeting those needs.
- Students with special education needs are included, welcomed, and valued in the school.
- Staff and parents are knowledgeable about the types of challenges faced by students with special education needs.
- School leaders and staff understand the concerns of parents of students with special education needs and work collaboratively with them.



## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL ADAPTATION

### The most successful adaptations arise from close partnerships with key stakeholders and community partners

- It is important to involve a range of stakeholders in a meaningful way.
- Token involvement can damage relationships and does not provide a foundation for successful adaptation.

### Allow for flexibility at the local community level but still maintain program fidelity

- Training for programs should include directions about what can be altered and what must be preserved for the program to work.
- Some programs have begun to articulate red light / yellow light / green light adaptation guidelines, such that red light adaptations should absolutely not be made, (i.e., dropping role plays out of a program) yellow light adaptations should be considered cautiously (i.e., changing video resources to choose something that delivers the same messages but fits the context of the students better), and green light adaptations are acceptable (i.e., adding extra role play practice).

### Strategies need to be respectful of cultural and religious differences

- Consult with relevant experts and community leaders to ensure that programming is relevant to the diverse student body.
- The religious accommodation protocol needs to be developed in partnership with key religious leaders, and clearly articulated and consistently applied.

### Adaptations should be piloted before full implementation

- Creating program adaptations is an iterative process and should not be attempted in one shot.
- New adaptations can be piloted with a small number of schools.
- As part of the pilot process it is essential to create a formative evaluation or feedback loop to inform further modifications, and to consider scalability across more schools or the district.

### Careful consideration to implementation is particularly important

- For adaptations to be appropriately and consistently implemented, there needs to be a number of supports beyond the actual policy
- For example, training school leaders and providing practical resources will support the implementation

### Identify innovators for early stages of adaptation

- Choose energetic and motivated educators for the initial development and pilot of program adaptations.
- To increase buy-in at the early stage of the process, start with your champions!



## SPECIFIC CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN ADAPTATION

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### CHALLENGE 1: CYNICISM OR LACK OF BUY IN AT THE BEGINNING

There may be stakeholders that put up barriers at the beginning of the process, (i.e., we don't have money to do this adaptation; I don't see how this will impact me directly; I don't have "those types of students" in my class/school; this is one more add-on for us).

- Strong senior leadership is important to set the tone for responding to diversity in a school or board.
- Sometimes awareness and professional development help educators understand the why of the process. For example, many educators view the need for culturally appropriate programming for FNMI youth in a different light once they learn more about the process and impacts of colonization.
- Similar to the suggestion with respect to alignment, it is important to start by inviting champions who have the conviction, expertise and energy to get an initiative launched. Issues of resistance and buy-in among the larger staff group can be addressed once there is some momentum.

### CHALLENGE 2: IT CAN SEEM OVERWHELMING TO HAVE TO ADAPT TO ALL ASPECTS OF DIVERSITY

In a time of decreasing funding, it is costly to provide adaptations of the same initiative to meet the needs of diverse families. Considerations and strategies include:

- Need to remember that we are providing education for "each student, every day"
- Equity does not mean equality
- Safe Schools are important for all students, regardless of race, culture, sexual orientation, economic situation, etc.
- Need to be creative with funding and collaborate among areas (e.g., Safe Schools, Equity and Inclusive Education, and Character Development) to provide resources that are relevant for a variety of diverse families.

### CHALLENGE 3: THE CONCERN THAT IF WE START MAKING SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR ONE GROUP OF STUDENTS WE HAVE TO DO IT FOR EVERYBODY

We have heard this challenge with respect to special programming for LGBTQ youth and FNMI youth. The challenge can be raised out of legitimate concern for the amount of work involved in adapting programs, but it can also be a subtle form of power and privilege being expressed.

- Providing responsive education experiences may require more work but it contributes to the well-being of diverse students.
- Some approaches (such as anti-racist and anti-oppression approaches) address the whole issue of diversity and power within one framework rather than making separate programs for each group of marginalized youth.
- There are clearly some groups of students and families who have been historically more marginalized than others, and providing additional supports for these groups does not take anything away from other groups who may also have challenges.
- Ontario Human Rights legislation requires boards to make accommodations for students and staff, except to the point of undue hardship (see Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Guidelines on Accessible Education and Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate* at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca)).







# Chapter 5

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## *Promoting a Whole School Approach*

*In this chapter, the idea of a whole school approach is introduced. Strategies are identified for engaging student, family and community stakeholders and program examples are included. The role of strong leadership is highlighted. Finally, the role of a strong unifying theme, or 'big idea', is illustrated.*

## CHAPTER 5: PROMOTING A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

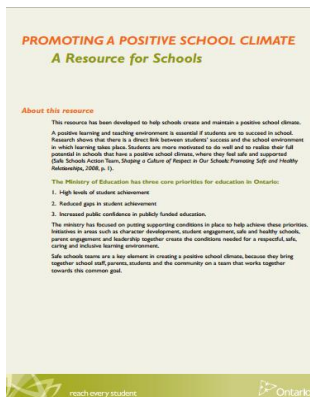
*The people of Ontario and the Legislative Assembly... recognize that a whole-school approach is required, and that everyone — government, educators, school staff, parents, students and the wider community — has a role to play in creating a positive school climate and preventing inappropriate behaviour, such as bullying, sexual assault, gender-based violence and incidents based on homophobia, transphobia or biphobia.*

~Preamble to Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act, 2012

With the passing of Bill 13, the ministry has made a clear statement that the responsibility for Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools extends far beyond the boundaries of schools. Everyone has a role to play in promoting healthy relationships, inclusivity and compassion among students. Similarly, everyone has the responsibility to think about the type of role model they present to young people and to intervene in teachable moments and clearly convey the unacceptability of harassment and violence. This shift to conceptualizing Safe Schools as a societal concern and not just the realm of the education system is consistent with the three core messages promoted by PREVNet (see Textbox 5.1).

### Textbox 5.1: PREVNet's 3 core messages

- 1. Bullying is a relationship problem**
- 2. Bullying requires relationship solutions**
- 3. Everyone has a role to play in preventing bullying**



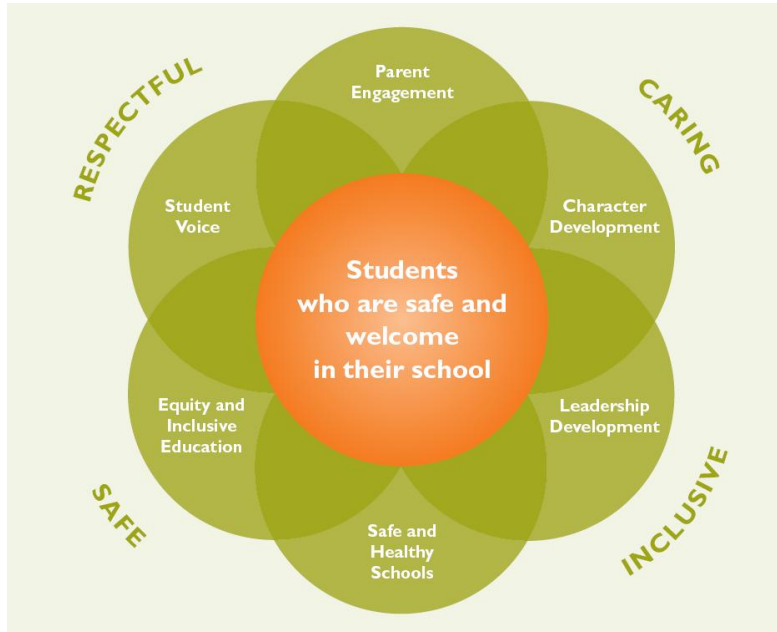
The importance of a whole school approach to create a positive school climate cannot be overstated. “Recent research indicates that a safe, orderly and positive environment makes important contributions to the school’s climate when it is the company of high academic expectations and good student and teacher morale. A safe, orderly, healthy, and accepting environment is necessary for student success; it is an environment in which bullying and other forms of violent, aggressive or biased behavior are not tolerated. Students cannot be expected to reach their potential in an environment where they feel insecure and intimidated” (Leithwood, 2012). The Promoting a Positive School Climate resource from the ministry provides numerous strategies and considerations for engaging all stakeholders in activities to move toward the goal of an environment where all members feel safe and accepted.

There are many considerations in shifting to a whole school approach to Safe Schools. A whole school approach implies all of the following:

1. Safe Schools initiatives are aligned with other related enterprises (such as Equity and Inclusive Education) to help ensure that common messages are put forward about the type of school climate that the community is working towards.
2. Specific programs involve the entire school community. There is a move away from expecting a one-time focused event (such as a bullying prevention speaker) to be sufficiently comprehensive to create change, although such events can be part of a comprehensive approach. For example, effective bullying prevention programs tend to have classroom-based curricula, professional development for all staff, home-school activities, training and supervision of peer mediators, an audit of the physical plant for under-supervised areas, increased supervision, and policy development and enhancement revisions if necessary.



- Whole school approaches have intentional strategies to engage and empower all stakeholder groups. This includes the traditional stakeholder groups of students, families, and educators, but also includes a growing emphasis on community partners, and non-traditional partners such as the media.
- While it is important to have strategies to include all stakeholders, a whole school approach to promoting a positive school climate transcends the piecemeal feel of many disjointed activities and creates a sense of a larger organizing framework or movement.



Leadership is crucial in creating positive school climate. This role is outlined clearly in the Ontario Leadership Framework 2012 (Leithwood, 2012).

Leaders are key to the successful development and maintenance of safe, positive, and healthy environments. They promote such environments by:

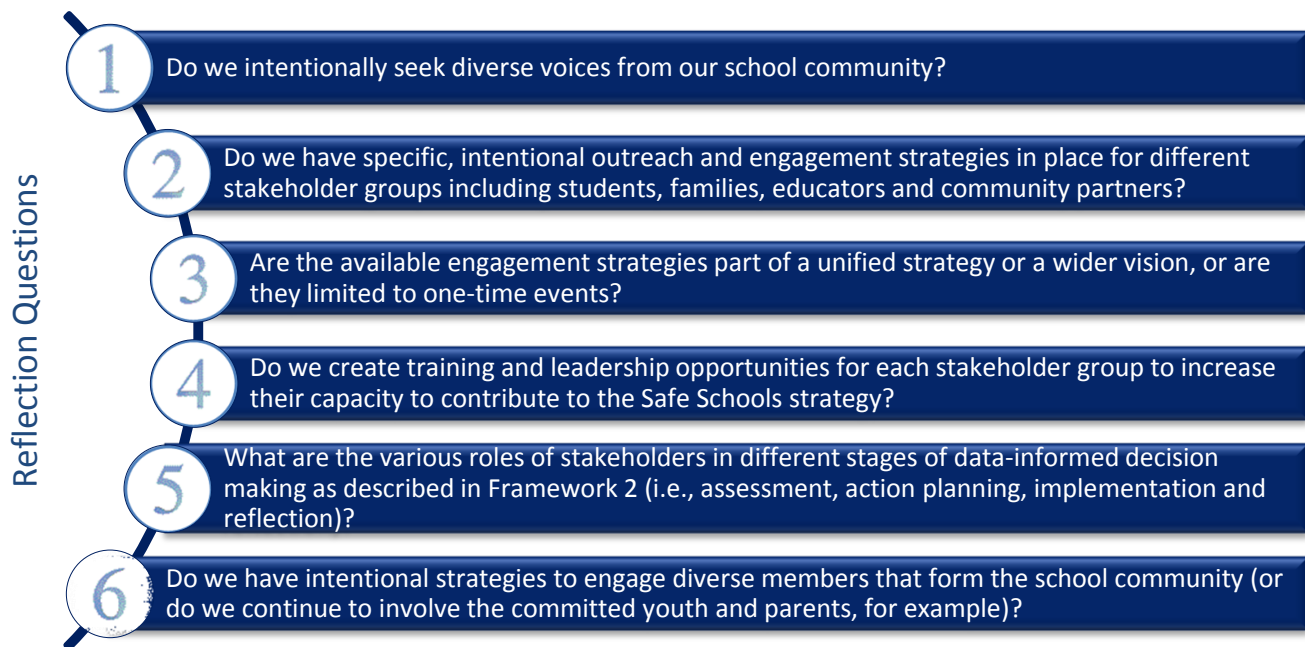
|  |   |   |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| Securing their schools' physical facilities from unwanted intrusions and intruders | Maintaining the physical facilities in a safe, healthy and attractive condition | Communicating standards for non-violent behavior and upholding those standards in an equitable manner | Empowering adults in the school to play a leadership role in promoting a positive, inclusive school climate and model appropriate behaviour | Implementing and monitoring the use of appropriate discipline practices not only in classrooms but in all other locations within their schools | Developing, with staff and students, processes to identify and resolve conflicts quickly and effectively | Providing opportunities for staff and students to learn about effective conflict resolution strategies |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|--|

In this final approach, TVDSB lessons are shared with a focus on engaging different stakeholders in innovative ways, and how to create a larger sense of movement towards a common or unifying goal. We begin again with some reflection questions, followed by discussion of innovative strategies to engage and empower youth, followed by strategies to engage families, guardians, and community. We end with a section on the importance of leadership and the use of a “big idea” to provide a unifying framework for Safe Schools efforts.



## ENGAGING DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS

Before looking at strategies for engaging and empowering specific stakeholders, it is helpful to look at the whole big picture. As with our effective principles described in Chapter 4, we begin with some reflection questions. These are intended to help administrators and other leaders step back and reflect on the extent to which their school communities are already involved in a process of intentionally engaging a range of stakeholders.



In the next sections we discuss engaging and empowering youth, followed by engaging and empowering families and community. Families and community are discussed jointly, because these groups overlap considerably in terms of membership and also in terms of strategies. We provide examples of TVDSB initiatives that have not yet been discussed in the toolkit, and specific strategies relevant to these different groups.

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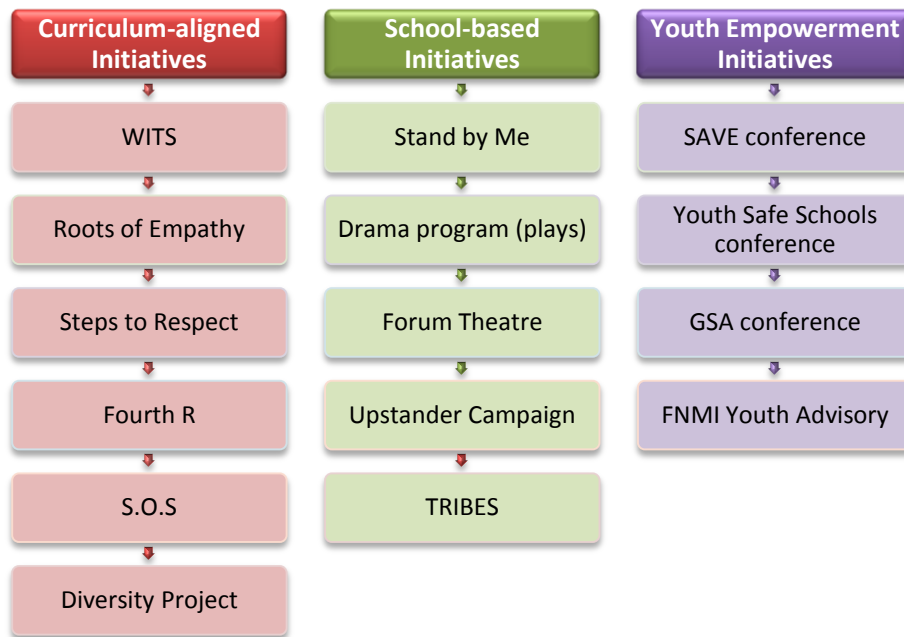
### ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING STUDENTS IN A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

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Engaging and empowering students is a major focus of Safe Schools in TVDSB. Throughout this toolkit we have described numerous strategies for promoting student involvement. We re-iterate that integrating healthy relationships and violence prevention awareness and education into classroom curricula is the single most important student strategy. In this regard, we advocate shifting to a model analogous to how students are taught to read. That is, students are taught to read in an age appropriate manner in each and every grade. So too, must healthy relationships be taught. As we teach students to read, we become aware through ongoing assessment that some students might require extra supports, and we make arrangements for those supports to be put in place. Similarly, ongoing monitoring and extra or different supports must be part of educating students to have healthy relationships. A pyramid of interventions is needed, similar to the different intensity of supports available for those struggling with reading.

In addition to our curriculum-aligned initiatives, we have numerous system-supported school-based and youth leadership initiatives, described elsewhere in this toolkit. Some are noted in the following figure. It is worth noting that many schools have individual initiatives that they have developed, but those are not included in the list of school-based initiatives below.





### ENGAGING YOUTH THROUGH FORUM THEATRE

TVDSB uses Forum Theatre (interactive theatre) to encourage students to put conflict resolution skills into practise. A drama teacher works closely with drama students and takes them through a process which leads to the creation of a 20 minute script. The plays are created through playmaking involving drama games to create a safe space where all participants feel respected and trusted. This is followed by discussion which leads to the creation of tableaux, then short scenarios demonstrating the inappropriate use of power, and finally a short play of approximately 20 minutes is developed through the use of improvisation. This creative process allows students to accurately and honestly dramatize what is happening in their lives and the difficulties they face in adolescence and play it out on stage. When the play is performed for a student audience, they will see it twice. The board provides support for Forum Theatre troupes to tour to different secondary schools across the system.

The first time an audience sees the play, the entire play is presented. Before the play starts the Teacher Facilitator of the play will ask the audience to watch for inappropriate behaviour and think of what could be said or done to make a positive difference. Students are prepared before going to the presentation – student leaders go to each classroom and prepare students by demonstrating a quick scenario and intervention and by giving suggestions as to possible strategies to use during an intervention.

The second presentation happens scene by scene. Members of the audience stop the actors in the play, go on stage to role play a moment and then the facilitator engages the participant in a brief discussion to reflect on whether a positive change in the story has in fact occurred. The facilitator points out the positive words and actions used by the intervener and provides a few suggestions for improvement if necessary, while preserving the dignity and safety of the intervener. In TVDSB we believe that it is important for students to practise skills and internalize them. The intent of Forum Theatre is for students to learn from the experience and take these skills into their own lives. At the end of the presentation there is a short de-briefing during which students are reminded that if they would like to talk to someone after the performance that guidance counsellors are available.

The last five years of plays, described below, provide a flavor of the types of difficult issues tackled with Forum Theatre. *Mask* was written by Bryan Tompkins (TVDSB English teacher). All other plays were written by Toni Wilson (TVDSB Learning Coordinator Safe Schools and secondary English and Dramatic Arts teacher) and Gillian Fournier (former TVDSB student).



| Title/Author         | SUMMARIES  |
|----------------------|--|
| I'LL BE WATCHING YOU | The play examines an unhealthy teenage relationship where a boy controls his girlfriend's behaviour through physical aggression and manipulation. He texts her constantly and controls her with gifts and affection.   |
| A DAY IN THE LIFE    | A young man who is openly gay in high school struggles to be accepted. His female friend is involved with an abusive boy so he tries his best to support her. A party is announced on Facebook and many uninvited guests arrive at the party. The aggressive boyfriend shows up with a bunch of his buddies and the situation gets out of hand.  |
| BODY LANGUAGE        | The play looks at relationships and how young people are often taken advantage of because they want to be popular and accepted. Unfortunately some of the so called popular people are also involved in very unhealthy behaviours involving inappropriate sexual behaviour, substance use and abuse, and physical and verbal abuse. Other young people in the play are trying their best to support the students who are dealing with difficulties in their home situation but are not sure how to help effectively. |
| MASK                 | The play examines the roles that young people play and the masks that they wear. The boys are influenced by sport culture and video games and imitate aggressive role models. They use homophobic and sexist language to gain power. The girls are influenced by music videos and pop culture. They give poor advice to one another and manipulate one another to get attention from the boys.   |
| "U LOSE: GAME OVER"  | This play deals with abusive relationships. The main male character is abusive toward his girlfriend and is involved with the drug culture. His girlfriend is dealing with her own mental health issues as well as difficulties at home. Her older sister takes advantage of her and her dad because dad is negligent since he is preoccupied by work. Friends try to be Upstanders to improve the situation.  |

Forum Theatre has a significant impact on the audiences who observe and participate in the plays, as well as the student actors involved, as demonstrated by the following quote:



*When I tour with our drama group, I understand the important role that I have as a student leader in Safe Schools. Consequently, when I return to my own school, I continue to be a leader in this area, while setting a good example for my peers to follow. Students are more likely to listen to important messages given by their peers regarding relationships. I feel that students who are trained peer leaders in violence prevention have a positive and lasting impact on students in their school.*

~ Eric Frank, Medway High School



Forum Theatre increases motivation and a sense of responsibility to respond to injustice, consistent with the Upstander Campaign (see page 130). By increasing a sense of personal responsibility, it directly counters moral disengagement, a cognitive process by which over time students who witness bullying can come to feel that it is not a big deal, or that somehow victims deserve it, or that there is nothing that they can do to stop bullying. Moral disengagement has been found to be associated with both perpetration of bullying and also ineffective bystanding (Hymel, Rocke-Henderson & Bonnano, 2005; Obermann, 2011a, Obermann, 2011b). By creating a sense of discomfort among the audience for passively standing by in the face of injustice and then providing an opportunity for youth to change the course of events, Forum Theatre directly tackles moral disengagement.



*Forum Theatre gives bystanders a second chance at missed opportunities. Through Forum Theatre, the play creates a sense of urgency among bystanders to take a risk and say or do something in a safe space to make a difference in the lives of those who are oppressed. It takes courage to make positive change.*

~ Toni Wilson, Safe Schools Learning Coordinator and Forum Theatre Director



## ENCOURAGING STUDENT VOICE

The ministry's SpeakUp initiative has provided important resources for TVDSB to engage in student-led initiatives. The SpeakUp initiative was designed to provide students with a voice in their learning and an opportunity to connect what's happening in the classroom to real-life experiences outside school. The ministry offers three opportunities for students to get involved: 1) Minister's Student Advisory Council (which TVDSB has had student representatives on); 2) Student forums; and 3) SpeakUp Projects. Funding is available for students to develop student-led (SpeakUp) projects that meet the needs of their particular community.

Thames Valley's elementary and secondary schools have been actively involved in the ministry funded *Speak Up* projects. *Speak Up* Projects are grants that provide opportunities for students to creatively address issues and express themselves with the goal of positively strengthening student engagement. They provide an opportunity for students to lead and/or participate academically or socially in order to strengthen their academic and social sense of belonging, connect with the world outside their school walls, or examine what helps or hinders their engagement in their learning. In 2011-12, the board received over \$40,000 in support of 16 secondary school and 14 elementary school student-led projects, including three projects organized by students through Alternative Education. Many of these student-led projects focused on healthy and inclusive schools. For example, one elementary school utilized their \$1000 grant to support an Upstander Day for anti-bullying. One of the secondary schools organized a GSA Awareness campaign, while a group of students in another secondary school organized a conference on Future Leaders, Influencing Peers. This is another example of how schools align their work in safe, inclusive and accepting schools using multiple sources of funding through ministry and board grants, while providing opportunities for student leadership and engagement.



### STUDENT VOICE

During the past three years, the TVDSB Program Services Department has initiated several opportunities to hear the views of students about how they want their teachers and other staff to engage them in their learning. Funded through board budgets and Student Pathways to Success grants, the following themes formed the basis of these student voice conferences:

- How I want teachers to use technology in my learning
- Supporting at-risk students in schools
- Student assessment and evaluation – how I expect my work to be assessed
- Student-teacher relationships – developing mutual respect
- Improving First Nations, Métis, Inuit student attendance
- Action plans to support a mentally healthy school

Each of these student voice conferences provided opportunities for student leadership, discussion and advocacy. A summary document captured the essence of the discussions for each of the conferences. These summaries were then distributed to schools for action and follow-up. Additionally, several secondary schools have also initiated their own student voice conferences, on a variety of themes pertinent to each school.



## ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING FNMI YOUTH: FNMI YOUTH ADVISORY

FNMI students have been identified as a group of students who have been historically marginalized. Although there are many individual exceptions, in general the voice of FNMI youth has not been well represented in board-wide youth leadership or Student Council structures in TVDSB (excluding those schools with FNMI Student Councils). In 2010 TVDSB formed an FNMI Youth Advisory Council to provide an opportunity for these youth specifically to have a stronger voice in the board and gain leadership experience.

The FNMI Student Advisory Council provides an excellent opportunity for students from across TVDSB to voice their opinions and concerns from a personal as well as a community perspective. The council for 2011-2012 was composed of 20 students from 8 different schools. Over the course of the school year, the group was supported through a process with an adult facilitator. Initially this group developed relationships, discussing the differences between their schools and their programs. They also discussed and addressed the struggles that their peer group is faced with each day, while enhancing their skills in communication in the process. The group determined that they would not use a structure of hierarchy within the council, but instead they would use the Circle of Equality, which they defined as:

**All will have an equal voice in meetings, and all will take ownership over projects and specific goals. However, depending on the specified project or goal, tasks will be volunteered for by members and any issues regarding fairness will be resolved by vote amongst the group; rock, paper, and scissors between individuals or; as a last resort the adult facilitator.**

The council then developed a Vision Statement and goals.

**Vision Statement: The First Nation, Métis and Inuit Student Advisory Council has come together to ensure that all students will have a voice. They will create change in a positive manner with care and concern for the culture and environment of all students. They will facilitate understanding between all peoples working in the field of education.**

### FNMI STUDENT ADVISORY SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Over the course of the academic year the Council held six meetings and facilitated the Student Voice Conference. The Student Voice Conference was a board-wide initiative for FNMI Secondary Students to provide youth with the opportunity to help educators and other community members better understand challenges facing FNMI youth in the system and to give voice to student solutions. The FNMI Student Advisory determined the questions that were asked around attendance during the focus groups at the Student Voice Conference. The council members also led the focus groups in the afternoon, with great success.

As an ongoing project the students worked on an abstract story quilt that was inspired by their positive thoughts moving forward into the future. During the second half of the year the students finalized a plan for their story quilt project and created the squares. The students completed all of their contributions and Amanda Aikens, a community mentor, prepared the quilt for mounting and presentation to TVDSB (see photo above). The FNMI Student Advisory also developed a set of recommendations to present to the board.





## ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING NEWCOMER STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Recognizing that newcomer families might experience more barriers to engagement than other families, a proactive plan to make them feel welcome is essential. In TVDSB we encourage schools to develop Newcomer welcoming teams to provide support (in addition to the Settlement Workers in Schools Program). We have adapted the checklist from the *Many Roots, Many Voices* document from the ministry to guide an effective welcome process. The considerations outlined in this checklist provide a useful starting point for ensuring that newcomer families feel welcome and connected to the school community. In addition to the checklist, each school completes an action plan that identifies the roles and responsibilities for the Newcomer Reception Team.



How effectively do you welcome newcomer students and parents to your school? What first impressions do they take away? These checklists will help identify your school's strengths, as well as areas for improvement.

### A WELL-DEFINED WELCOMING PROCESS

- Our school has a specific plan for welcoming newcomers.
- All staff members, including administrative staff, are aware of and understand the reception plan.
- Our school has a designated reception team.
- Multilingual welcome signs, in the languages of the community, are posted in the school.
- We have a designated area for welcoming and working with newcomer families.

### AN EFFECTIVE INTAKE INTERVIEW PROCESS

- Whenever possible, we have competent adult interpreters available to assist parents and help them fill out forms.
- We allow ample time for the intake interview, taking into consideration the needs for interpretation and for the explanation of unfamiliar school-related terminology (e.g., home room, field trip, ESL/ELD, and programming – accommodations and modifications).
- We strive to make newcomers and their parents feel comfortable, regardless of their proficiency in English.
- We ask parents to provide the name of a person, such as a relative or family friend, who speaks English and whom the school can contact in case of an emergency.

### EFFECTIVE ORIENTATION FOR PARENTS

- We provide parents with the TVDSB Welcome to Our School booklet and other essential information, such as the school year calendar and a student planner/handbook.
- We tell parents about basic school routines and expectations (e.g., routines for nutrition breaks/lunch, indoor and outdoor shoes, Phys Ed, etc.).
- We offer parents and students a tour of the school.
- We seek consent for referral to SWIS-London. SWIS will inform parents of community programs, supports, and resources that may interest them, such as local adult ESL classes.
- We strive to establish a positive relationship with parents so that their orientation to the school can continue over time.

### EFFECTIVE INITIAL ASSESSMENT FOR STUDENTS

- We complete an initial language assessment with each student who has a home language other than English.
- We complete a survey of the newcomer student's educational background.
- We complete an initial math assessment.
- The initial assessments and educational background are filed in an ELL portfolio and entered in ESL Tracker.
- We share the results of the initial assessments with each teacher who works with the newcomer student.

Adapted from: *Many Roots, Many Voices*, Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005

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## CELEBRATING YOUTH LEADERS THROUGH THE ANNUAL SAFE SCHOOLS AWARDS

An important element of fostering youth empowerment and leadership is creating opportunities to celebrate and recognize achievements. TVDSB has a longstanding award for student leaders in the area of Safe Schools – indeed 2012 marked the 11<sup>th</sup> annual event. The premise behind the idea is to bring the same celebration and profile to leadership in Safe Schools as is evident in other areas of student achievement (most notably athletics). Schools are invited to nominate two students (or three if they are involved with the Safe Schools drama initiative). Consistent with our commitment to aligning Safe Schools with other initiatives, schools are directed to consider initiatives such as Equity and Inclusive Education, and GSA Committees when selecting their award winners.

*Recognizing student leaders who are actively promoting safe and inclusive schools is as important as recognizing students for outstanding academic achievement or excellence in athletics or other extra-curricular activities. As the primary stakeholder group, students need to be meaningfully engaged in the process and formally recognized for their important and creative contributions.*

~ Ray Hughes, First TVDSB Safe Schools Coordinator

The following nomination request demonstrates how the award is positioned to schools and the details of the celebration:



The Thames Valley District School Board in partnership with the CAMH Centre for Prevention Science and the Centre for Children & Families in the Justice System will be presenting the 11th annual Student Leadership Awards in Safe Schools to two students from each qualifying secondary school throughout Thames Valley.

Schools are invited to choose deserving candidates, preferably one male and one female. When selecting the award winners for your school, please give consideration to the contribution made by your students in the following areas: assemblies, committees, peer facilitations, drama presentations, volunteer work, shelter work, mentoring programs, Youth Safe Schools Committees, GSA Committees, Equity Committees, and Crime Stoppers.

The secondary schools who have toured drama presentations this school year for Safe Schools are also invited to nominate a 3rd student from their school. This nomination is to recognize a student who has shown exceptional leadership throughout the Safe Schools drama initiative.

Award winners and their two chosen guests will be invited to attend an appreciation night at the Thames Valley DSB Education Centre in London. At this time, students will be recognized for their contributions and each one will receive a certificate and a plaque. In addition, students and guests will be treated to a dinner, video presentation and motivational speaker. The Principal of the school, and the Lead Teacher for the Violence Prevention, Youth Safe Schools and GSA Committees will be invited to attend.

This is an excellent opportunity to promote the outstanding accomplishments of our students in the area of Safe Schools.



**Strategically target diverse student leadership**

- Provide guidance to staff about why and how to select diverse leaders for Safe Schools initiatives.
- Specific leadership opportunities can be developed for marginalized youth to increase their voice -- for example, TVDSB has an FNMI Youth Advisory Council that can contribute to Safe Schools priorities and initiatives.

**Youth driven does not mean exclusively youth managed**

- Even youth with strong leadership abilities may not have as well developed project management skills.
- Adult allies can assist youth with logistics (such as scheduling meetings) and resources (such as access to meeting spaces and refreshments).
- Ideally youth will be mentored in project management roles and have opportunities to develop those skills with appropriate support.

**Youth appreciate opportunities to network with other youth leaders**

- Conferences provide a great opportunity for youth to be inspired, develop new plans, and invoke a sense of leadership responsibility.
- For the experience of youth delegates to have an impact on the school community, specific skill development and action planning should be built into the conference.
- It is important to schedule in time for youth to share ideas with each other and network and not have them in highly structured sessions for the entire duration.

**Action-oriented conferences require staff support for follow-up and transfer of skills and ideas**

- Even with renewed enthusiasm, most youth require the support of a staff person to transfer the new knowledge and skills back into their school.
- Ideally chaperoning staff are selected for their interest and enthusiasm in a topic and not merely for availability to supervise.
- Support can include assistance accessing resources and developing schedules, as well as just checking in with youth to see how plans are progressing and if there are any barriers.

**Youth Committees can provide valuable insight and provide strong leadership opportunities**

- Youth committees and councils provide important opportunities for youth to engage in governance and leadership activities.
- Providing a range of these opportunities increases the number of youth that can be involved.
- Youth can provide an impetus for strategic change within a school.

**Provide opportunities for student voice**

- Beyond leadership, creating opportunities for diverse youth to have a voice promotes a more inclusive and equitable school climate.
- Providing equitable opportunities to influence the school and school system's decision making by those whose voices typically have not been heard will lead to significantly improved educational experiences for diverse and disadvantaged students (Leithwood, 2012).



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## ENGAGING PARENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITY IN A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

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Families are an important ally in creating safe, inclusive and accepting schools. *“Building relations with families is encouraged by evidence demonstrating the very large contribution to student achievement of family or home characteristics (for example, parental expectations), the increase in public accountability of schools to their communities through current educational accountability policies and the growing need for schools to build public support”* (Leithwood, 2012).

Engaging parents, families, and communities can be a challenging endeavor. Families have so many competing priorities for their time, and many families face additional barriers such as transportation or language barriers. Furthermore, some parents may feel uncomfortable in the school setting, perhaps due to their own negative experiences as students. These barriers notwithstanding, including families and community is essential for many reasons. First, the extent to which students are given similar messages about healthy relationships in different contexts is important for those messages to be internalized. For example, if students hear positive messages from their teachers, coaches, parents, and community about what it means to be an Upstander instead of a bystander, the message is much more powerful than if it is only shared in school. Second, many parents are struggling with challenges of their own such as being isolated, or issues of poverty. Giving parents a place and opportunities to help share in creating safe and healthy school environments can help build self-efficacy among parents. Finally, as noted in the introduction to this section, Safe Schools is simply too big an undertaking for educators to address alone. The use of community volunteers, coaches and mentors are an integral part of a comprehensive whole school approach.

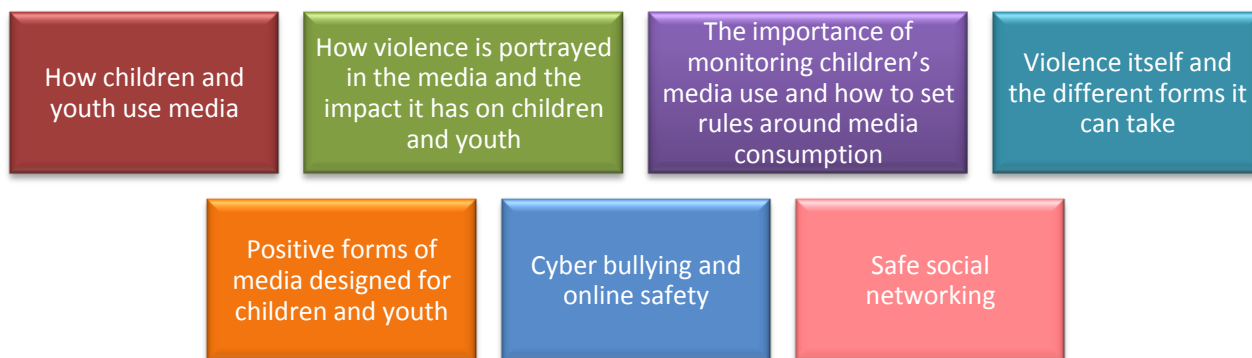
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## MEDIA LITERACY AND SOCIAL NETWORKING TRAINING

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TVDSB has identified media literacy and social networking as topics of interest to families and the larger community, and as areas where parents and guardians are looking for specific assistance and strategies. Different forums are used for awareness raising activities, including parent nights through school councils, often grouping a number of schools together. In 2011 TVDSB partnered with CAMH Centre for Prevention Science and Western University Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children for a much larger full day conference on media literacy and media violence. The conference was open to the public and educators.

The full day conference was designed to provide parents (and educators) with the resources to equip their children with the skills necessary to go beyond critical thinking and take on social responsibility and social action. It was also intended to help counter the negative socialization effects of media violence. The workshops covered a number of topics, including:



The CAMH Centre for Prevention Science conducted an evaluation of the full day conference by collecting surveys of participants at the end of the conference, and then followed up with 52 parents after a six-month interval to find out the extent to which changes had been sustained. The results suggested first and foremost that parents found the conference extremely useful. Directly following the conference, parents indicated gains in the following areas (see Table 5.1):

**Table 5.1: Survey Results from Parent Media Literacy Survey**

| I learned more about...                                     | % Agree or Strongly Agree |
|---|---------------------------|
| ...how children and youth use the media.                    | 93%                       |
| ...violence itself and the different forms it can take.     | 90%                       |
| ...how the media (TV, Internet, etc.) portrays violence.    | 90%                       |
| ...the messages being communicated by media violence.       | 90%                       |
| ...the impacts of media violence on children and youth.     | 90%                       |
| ...the importance of monitoring children’s media use.       | 91%                       |
| ...how to set rules around children’s media use.            | 90%                       |
| ...positive forms of media designed for children and youth. | 90%                       |
| ...video games and their impact on children.                | 88%                       |
| ...the impact celebrities/athletes have on children.        | 85%                       |

At the six-month follow-up:

- 98% of parents shared information they learned with others (e.g., friend, relative, co-worker).
- 92% of parents spoke with young people they know about safe media use.
- 90% of parents would recommend the workshop to somebody else.
- 96% of parents were more comfortable generating discussion about media with their children after having attended the workshop.

Furthermore, parents described real, practical changes in their behaviour with respect to monitoring and guiding their children’s media use. For example, as part of the workshop, participants learned about commonsensemedia.org, which is an excellent web resource that provides comprehensive information about different media and ranks all movies, TV shows, video games, etc. for specific age ranges. Although 91% of parents had never visited Common Sense Media at the time of the initial evaluation, at the six-month follow-up 71.2% of had visited Common Sense Media since the workshop. In addition, 55.8% of parents have also shared Common Sense Media with somebody else (i.e., friend, partner, co-worker).

Another area of growth was the implementation of rules related to media use. At the workshop, approximately two-thirds of parents acknowledged monitoring their children’s media use most of the time whereas one-third monitored some of the time. Likewise, 72% of families always had rules about media use and 23.2% of families sometimes had rules. Despite these high frequencies, following the workshop almost half (44.2%) of families created new rules about media use. At the six-month follow-up, of those who have created new rules, three-quarters had noticed changes in media use since these new rules were implemented.

These results are not exhaustive, but used to illustrate the salience of the topics for parents and the eagerness of parents to learn concrete skills and strategies regarding the use of media. Overall, the picture that has emerged is one where small numbers of parents attend, but the parents who do participate rate it as very valuable and show evidence of behaviour changes as a result.

Moving forward, the development of the Critical Media Literacy Committee (see page 40) further builds the capacity of TVDSB to engage families, community and other educators in these important issues.



## ENGAGING FNMI PARENTS THROUGH THE FNMI PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

In addition to the typical challenges faced by many parents, there have been a number of other barriers identified that may interfere with FNMI parents being engaged and involved partners in the education system. Some of these barriers relate to the parents' situations and experiences and others relate to characteristics of the school system. Personal barriers for parents may include negative educational experiences of FNMI parents, barriers to communication, poverty and illness in FNMI families, negative nature of parental contact, and the intimidation factor (R.A. Malatest and Associates, 2002). School factors include barriers such as a lack of understanding and cultural awareness on the part of educators, and a lack of specific strategies for engaging parents and families. In light of these challenges, TVDSB has identified engagement of FNMI parents as a critical component of their FNMI student engagement and achievement objectives.



Formed in 2010, the Committee meets on a bi-monthly basis and includes representatives from both the urban and First Nations communities, and educators from the Chippewas on the Thames Education Council and TVDSB. The TVDSB First Nations Trustee is also a member. The purpose of the FNMI PIC is to engage FNMI parents / guardians on matters relating to FNMI student achievement and well-being, as well as promote higher levels of engagement. The parent led and directed committee has been integral in; organizing family literacy events, creating resources for parents, and more recently, advising in the creation of a parent engagement brochure for FNMI parents / guardians. Members work together to identify and reduce barriers and co-ordinate strategic actions. There is an emphasis on initiatives whereby FNMI parents and partners can individually and collectively improve the engagement of parents in the educational success of FNMI students.

## FORUM THEATRE WITH TEACHERS, PARENTS, AND COMMUNITY

For many years TVDSB Safe Schools has used Forum Theatre to allow students to put conflict resolution skills into practise (see page 95). The success of this process has led to a wider application of the approach. More recently, Forum Theatre has been implemented with teachers, parents and the wider community.

### FORUM THEATRE WITH TEACHERS

After discussion with teachers and administrators, we came to realize that we should not assume that adults know what to do to effectively handle conflict or how to appropriately support students. It is important that teachers and administrators discuss effective ways to intervene and more importantly practise their skills. As a result of this discussion, Safe Schools decided to create Forum Theatre opportunities for teachers with the goal of ultimately producing a training video.

In January 2009, nine teachers at one of our secondary schools volunteered to be part of a project to learn how to more effectively deal with inappropriate student behaviour and provide appropriate support for students who are facing difficulties in their lives. Teachers met on two separate occasions for two hours each time. The first time teachers met, the purpose of the workshop was introduced. Participants then engaged in warm up drama activities to build a sense of trust so that teachers would feel comfortable creating scenes. Real situations faced by secondary teachers related to bullying, harassment, intimidation etc. were then discussed. Two scenes were assigned to each group of three teachers and they were asked to develop a short scenario or conflict of approximately 30 seconds to 1 minute. with a clear beginning, middle and ending. Each scene needed to have one teacher character who did nothing or said or did something ineffective to resolve the situation. The second time teachers met to polish scenes and discuss possible intervention strategies. The group of teachers then practised by role playing possible interventions.



In the end the principal arranged a one-hour workshop with the entire staff which was led by a trained facilitator. During this session the staff had the opportunity to practise the same scenarios and see their peers use effective strategies.

The rationale for training teachers to respond to inappropriate behaviour is provided below.

**It is important to practise some low level interventions dealing with typical conflict situations that all teachers face every day working with secondary school students. It is important to practise strategies so that situations don't escalate and become power struggles. It will help all of us if we have a better idea of what to do or what to say when these situations occur. Just like practising a sport or music we too need to practise conflict resolution so that we get better at it. There is no right way to do things but there are better ways of doing things. Practise and reflection is important for teachers and for students.**

The goal of the workshop was to create a DVD for teachers with a number of scenes that are handled unsuccessfully followed by discussion and a few examples of the same scene handled more effectively. The following instructions were provided:

**To create a positive school culture everyone has to work together. It is our collective responsibility to make positive change and to effectively discipline or teach students. As a staff we need to be consistent in our approach and we need to support one another. We should only send students to the office as a last step when everything else is not working. It is the way we talk to students that makes all the difference.**

**A number of scenarios have been created. The situations are not handled very well. Watch the scene and think about the teacher's role. You will be asked to take the place of the teacher and handle the situation a little better followed by reflection and discussion.**

To provide an effective response, educators were reminded to use the *How to Handle Inappropriate Behaviour* procedure described on page 30:



Similarly, educators were reminded to use the 4-A response (page 29) when faced with a student disclosure, to be sensitive to the student harmed:



In March 2010, the process was repeated at another secondary school. Through the Urban and Priority High School Funding, an in-service for all teachers at this particular school was developed and a training video specific to the school was created. In April of 2010, the process was repeated at an elementary school. The scenarios created were specific to the current needs of the school and responses applicable to younger students. In 2011, a training video called Win/Win Responses was developed based on these projects and subsequently distributed to all schools in TVDSB (see page 38).



## FORUM THEATRE IN THE COMMUNITY

In addition to Forum Theatre with teachers and youth, Forum Theatre has also been used extensively throughout the community to provide the opportunity for community members to participate in the discussion of issues and work together to find ways to deal with complex real life situations. For example, in *Missed Opportunities*, audiences witness how many adults connected to a family – friends, relatives, employers, faith leaders – can be concerned about woman abuse but not know how to intervene effectively. Through Forum Theatre participants had the opportunity to take the role of one of these bystander adults and practise a different type of intervention, similar to what they might actually do if faced with this situation.

Summaries of the Community Forum Theatre presentations are listed below which all were written by Toni Wilson (TVDSB Learning Coordinator Safe Schools and secondary English and Dramatic Arts teacher) and Gillian Fournier (former TVDSB student):

| Title/Author         | SUMMARIES   |
|----------------------|---|
| MISSED OPPORTUNITIES | A play designed for adults to think about their potential role in recognizing the warning signs of abusive relationships. There are many missed opportunities for bystanders to intervene on behalf of an abuse victim in an intimate relationship. |
| LIFELINES            | A play that deals with teen suicide and the warning signs leading up to a tragic end.   |
| THE DIVIDE           | A play that deals with racism and the lack of understanding among diverse cultures.   |
| TRUE COLOURS         | A play that deals with homophobia and the difficulties faced by a teenager who has two dads.  |
| SHADES OF GREY       | A play that deals with workplace violence where a student nurse practitioner is involved in an abusive relationship with a lead surgeon at the hospital.  |
| TUNED OUT            | A play that deals with the impact of media violence on teenagers and parents.   |



*A scene from 'Tuned Out'*





## COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PROCESSES – CRESS AND TASK FORCE

TVDSB has successfully engaged community partners through two different processes with two different mandates, in order to solicit community input into the board’s Safe Schools direction. The first of these was the Committee to Review the Environment of Safety in our Schools (known as CRESS), between 2004 and 2006. The emphasis of CRESS was on assessing and understanding a particular challenge; namely, why students do not report bullying or seek help. The second process was the Director’s Task Force Community Consultation, with a focus on engaging and mobilizing partners to end bullying (Fall 2010). The different mandates of the processes reflect the progress of the TVDSB – in 2004 we were in a position of trying to better assess and understand the problem of bullying, and more specifically why students do not report, whereas by 2010 we were looking for stakeholders to identify specific actions that each partner could undertake to prevent bullying. Parallel to the Safe Schools Consultations, an Equity and Inclusive Education Community Consultation was undertaken in the Spring of 2010. Each of these processes is detailed below:

### CONSULTATION BY THE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE ENVIRONMENT OF SAFETY IN OUR SCHOOLS

As noted in the introduction to this toolkit, the Committee to Review the Environment of Safety in Our Schools (CRESS) was struck in response to the tragic suicide of a student. CRESS included 20 TVDSB representatives (including administrators, educators, a Trustee, District School Council Parent Representative, OSSTF representative, and ETFO representative) plus four additional community experts. The mandate of CRESS was to determine:

1. Why youth do not report information regarding harassment (bullying)?; and,
2. What school communities can do to create a culture that encourages youth to report information regarding harassment (bullying)?

To answer the first question, the board undertook its first system-wide Safe Schools Survey in 2005 (see page 60). To answer the second question, CRESS had a facilitator engage in a consultation with each school community. A bullying awareness presentation was given and a brainstorming strategy, known as a “fishbone” was used to identify possible actions by key school stakeholders in preventing bullying and encouraging reports of incidents. At the end of the brainstorming session, participants (which included students, staff, administrators, parents and community members) identified what they felt were the most urgent actions for their school community. In October 2006, three community wide facilitations were held simultaneously in London, St. Thomas and Woodstock. A wide range of community partners were invited to participate and the results of the TVDSB Safe Schools survey and the work schools have undertaken so far were shared with participants. In addition, community partners and system staff had an opportunity to address the question: “Identify ways communities and schools can work together to enhance their efforts to prevent bullying and encourage the reporting of incidents”.

The key action ideas generated from the secondary, elementary and community facilitations provided the foundation for the development of the four system recommendations on bullying prevention established by CRESS. The recommendations were then aligned with *Shaping Safer Schools – A Bullying Prevention Action Plan* (November 2005). The CRESS recommendations included:

1. That the board develop a bullying prevention policy as part of the Safe Schools Policy & Procedures and create guidelines for procedures to investigate incidents of bullying, as well as procedures to deal with barriers to reporting incidents of bullying, including the following:
  - a. Each school to develop a mechanism that enables students and parents to report anonymously incidents of bullying to teachers and school administrators
  - b. Each school to develop a Safe Schools team, including a lead person, to review annually their Safe Schools Action Plan in dealing with Safe Schools and bullying prevention issues; and Safe Schools initiatives will be monitored on a regular basis by Superintendents of Education.



2. That the board enhance awareness and educational opportunities for parents, staff and students (including enhancing peer-led initiatives) in bullying prevention programming.
3. That the board reassess the school climate with respect to bullying every three years.
4. That the board enhance community partnerships towards enhancing Safer Schools.

#### DIRECTOR'S TASK FORCE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

The second Safe Schools Community Consultation (Fall 2010) was overseen by the Director's Anti-Bullying Task Force (now known as the Director's Bullying Awareness and Prevention Advisory Committee). The emphasis of this Forum was on mobilizing for action. The consultation was held in three locations, with nearly 600 participants. Some activities were linked by videoconference and others were facilitated separately at each location. The evening began with a keynote speaker who stressed that adults are essential in promoting healthy relationships and that adults can inadvertently promote bullying or actively discourage bullying in their everyday interactions. In a community, all community members, in whatever role, need to do their part to eliminate bullying. Everyone needs to be an active part of the solution, and not part of the problem.

In a second presentation (again linked by videoconference), the TVDSB Safe Schools Superintendent gave an overview of the integrated work the board, in conjunction with its many community partners, is doing to create a safe, inclusive and respectful culture of caring in its schools. In line with Ministry of Education direction, the board's sustainable strategies for Safe Schools were outlined including policies, codes and procedures developed specifically to deal with bullying, the array of evidence-based prevention programs and resources in place across all the grades, their established protocols for intervention including reporting, progressive discipline and Restorative Approaches, as well as their ongoing surveying and work with each school's Safe Schools Action Team and Action Plan to enhance school climate and safety.

In the third part of the evening, participants had the opportunity to view some abbreviated Forum Theatre presentations involving different bullying scenarios, such as: cyber-bullying, sexual bullying, homophobic bullying and physical/verbal bullying. Audience members had the chance to interrupt the scenarios and offer the characters a different solution to deal with the bullying portrayed.

As a final part to the evening, participants in each location gathered in mixed table groupings to brainstorm solutions and discuss what the eight various member groups of the community (students, parents, schools, media, police/justice, health, children and youth services and community organizations) could do to prevent and respond to bullying. The Task Force wanted to know what is and isn't working and what else needs to be done to eliminate bullying in our community. Recognizing that each participant brought an important yet different, perspective and voice to the issue, each table was equipped with a facilitator and a recorder. Over 2000 individual suggestions were recorded from this community consultation. A 22 page summary report of the community forum discussion has been prepared (available at [www.tvdsb.on.ca](http://www.tvdsb.on.ca); Anti-Bullying Task Force).



*The Director's Community Task Force on Anti-Bullying truly was many community voices coming together to work towards one vision to eliminate bullying. Through its community consultation forum called "Let's All End Bullying", the Task Force partners openly received over 2000 suggestions of ways they could enhance their community based actions to better address bullying in their communities. This broad community input has indeed shaped the future work of the Task Force and its member organizations.*

~ Barry Wagner, Former Superintendent and Chair of Director's Anti-Bullying Task Force





The Director's Task Force (now known as the Director's Bullying Awareness and Prevention Advisory Committee) continues to meet and work on the next steps in promoting a community-wide approach to bullying prevention. The community organizations represented on the committee include a wide and impressive range of agencies. The power of getting all of the key players together to work at the community level is viewed positively by the members of the Task Force:

● ● ●

*The London Anti-Bullying Coalition started 7 years ago for a reason. We pointed the finger with respect to where the gaps were within the educational system. Parents who were trying to keep their children safe were made to feel marginalized. I am really thankful that we have progressed to this point. While we believe in a community approach and give kudos to the TVDSB for getting all the players to the table, this type of collaboration must continue if we are going to change the way society views bullying.*

~ Corina Morrison, Founder and Director of LABC

● ● ●

#### EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FORUM

Parent and community engagement has been a major focus for Equity and Inclusive Education in the TVDSB. In 2009, TVDSB partnered with Simcoe County District School Board and the Antiracist Multicultural Education Networks of Ontario (AMENO), a network of diverse educators, community members and parents in Ontario who are active in Antiracist Education to produce a pamphlet on engaging parents and community with reference to Equity and Inclusive Education. The emerging tips for boards and schools are included on the following two pages.

As a further step for engaging parents, three Equity and Inclusive Education Parent and Community Workshops were hosted during May 2010 as part of a parent and community consultation process. The purpose of the workshops was to receive feedback from our parents, students, and community members about issues related to equity, diversity and inclusive education in our schools. An overview of the ministry's newly released Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy was also presented.

There were nearly 300 participants across the three consultation sessions, including: community members, parents, school council members, government employees, volunteer agencies, religious and cultural leaders, business members, and justice system employees. Furthermore, approximately 50 TVDSB staff members assisted as facilitators and/or recorders of discussions. The consultation was organized around discussion questions, and the resulting input played a critical role in developing the board's five-year Equity and Inclusive Education Action Plan ([www.tvdsb.ca/files/163030/eieactionplannovember2011.pdf](http://www.tvdsb.ca/files/163030/eieactionplannovember2011.pdf)).



**Figure 5.2: Tips for Boards (from Antiracist Multicultural Education Network of Ontario)**

### 1 Board Policies, Programs, Guidelines, and Practices

- Discuss key issues in the *OEIE Strategy* with diverse partners to review, revise, develop and implement aligned policies, programs, guidelines and practice.
- Identify and include the diversity of students, parents and communities in board/school partnerships.
- Develop an implementation process in collaboration with all partners, and plan ongoing communication.
- Share, with schools and communities, clear criteria to monitor the progress of implementation and the progress of opportunities.

### 2 Shared and Committed Leadership

- Respect different ways in which students, parents and communities choose to be partners.
- Establish programs and in-service to develop and maintain partnerships, focusing on leadership as essential to student success and well-being.
- Create opportunities for educators, parents and community members to exchange ideas and practices regarding the strengthening of partnerships.
- Monitor effective use of partnerships in decision-making, and the progress of opportunities for student leadership.

### 3 School-Community Relationships

- Emphasize importance of school-community partnerships to student and organizational success by creating central responsibility/accountability.
- Establish a consistent process for schools to act up on their specific needs and goals.
- Provide funded support for schools/communities to network, to have access to relevant training/resources, to improve communication, to determine responsibilities/accountability, to create a plan of action with expected results and to maintain focus on students.
- Implement ways to share and dialogue about outreach strategies with colleagues and monitor the progress.

### 4 Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices

- Provide in-service for educators, parents and communities on *PPM 119* and the *OEIE Strategy* (e.g., human rights, diverse identities and barriers to education).
- Establish an action committee to review curriculum policies to determine gaps, barriers, issues to be addressed and recommendations. (Role for *Parent Involvement Committee*)
- Establish an advisory committee of persons with expertise/experience in inclusive education to consult with action committee to ensure effective curriculum revision and development with aligned assessment/evaluation practices and strategies.
- Establish writing teams to revise and develop resources and assessment/evaluation.
- Implement curriculum, request feedback from all partners and create monitoring tools.

### 5 Religious Accommodation

- Identify diverse religious/faith communities, and individuals not belonging to a faith/religion or practising a specific faith/religion in order to ensure strong faith community partnerships.
- Create policy/guidelines to prescribe religious/faith accommodations.
- Provide training for board/school personnel to ensure respectful compliance.
- Include expert and community voices in religious/faith accommodation when revising, developing and implementing curriculum/assessment/evaluation.
- Establish central responsibility and accountability for monitoring progress.

### 6 School Climate and the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment

- Identify barriers to respectful board climate and determine action plan of improvement.
- Involve other boards/ministry personnel in in-service regarding discrimination and harassment in order to share understandings, information, and equitable practices and guidelines.
- Review, strengthen, and communicate widely the board policy on discrimination and harassment, and the process for safely registering complaints from students, parents, community members, and board/school personnel.
- Use all available data (e.g. school climate surveys) to determine gaps and barriers and inform action strategies.

### 7 Professional Learning

- Ensure that principles of equity and inclusive education are included in all aspects of the curriculum so that all diversity is reflected.
- Create policies/guidelines for a safe, respectful, yet challenging, learning environment for all.
- Identify learning needs of parents and community members and provide appropriate, requested professional development.
- Include parent and community expertise where appropriate.

### 8 Accountability and Transparency

- Develop a plan for communication of all policies, programs, guidelines and practice, monitoring receipt of communications to ensure accuracy of information.
- Demonstrate principles of equity and inclusive education in all aspects of curriculum, making effective use of student, parent and community expertise.
- Focus on student success and monitor student achievement.
- Create action teams with responsibility for assessing progress of board initiatives in equity and inclusive education.



**Figure 5.3: Tips for Schools – (from Antiracist Multicultural Education Network of Ontario)**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1 Board Policies, Programs, Guidelines, and Practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide in-service for school community to discuss key elements of equity and inclusive education, (e.g. at school/student council meetings).</li> <li>• Develop meaningful partnerships for school decision-making, (e.g., examine barriers to success for all students).</li> <li>• Identify school-specific issues, addressing these according to board/ministry directives on equity and inclusive education and <i>Human Rights Code</i>.</li> <li>• Monitor engagement of students, staff, parents and community members.</li> </ul>  | <p><b>5 Religious Accommodation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become familiar with the needs and rights of diverse religious/faith communities and of those persons not affiliated with religious/faith communities.</li> <li>• Become knowledgeable about the provisions of Ministry, Board and <i>Human Rights Code</i>, and provide in-service regarding religious accommodation.</li> <li>• Create a respectful school climate, incorporating the equity policy in relevant documentation (e.g., school agenda, school improvement plan, school rules, school newsletters).</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>2 Shared and Committed Leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate understanding and support of collaborative leadership by actively recruiting and training student, parent and community volunteers.</li> <li>• Improve communication (e.g., different languages) to involve the wider community and increase the exchange of equitable strategies for collaboration and leadership.</li> <li>• Include partners in the decision-making process, noting leadership ability and potential.</li> <li>• Create a welcoming and equitable school environment supportive of engaged students, parents and community members.</li> </ul>   | <p><b>6 School Climate and the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate equity policies that provide for safe reporting of incidents and timely response by board/school.</li> <li>• Devise strategies/practices to address discrimination and harassment issues (e.g., respectful communication, use of inclusive literature, restorative practice, human rights/anti-oppression training, anti-bullying training, progressive discipline).</li> <li>• Monitor incidents of discrimination and harassment, and the effects on members of the school community and use data to assess effectiveness of measures.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>3 School-Community Relationships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training opportunities to improve quality of partnerships (e.g., development and enrichment of the talents/expertise of staff, parents and community members).</li> <li>• Strengthen school-community relationships and cultures through careful planning and programming (e.g., meeting individual needs of ESL/ESD/ELL students; multilingual books).</li> <li>• Monitor implementation of the OEIE Strategy (e.g., Is school's improvement plan aligned?)</li> </ul>  | <p><b>7 Professional Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide in-service/training to address issues of equity and inclusive education (e.g., curriculum modification suggestions for teachers of students with special needs; the development and use of materials that reflect the diversity of the community).</li> <li>• Review/revise instructional and classroom strategies/practices to ensure compliance with principles of equity and inclusive education.</li> <li>• Invite parents/community members/community partners to share expertise/talents.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>4 Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment Practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide in-service in equity and inclusive education. Do resources reflect student identity, diverse experiences, situations and events?</li> <li>• Use instructional strategies to meet individual needs of students, and train staff in differentiated instruction.</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate assessment/evaluation, modifications and accommodations (e.g., comprehension tests in oral, pictorial, gesture, dramatic and written form).</li> <li>• Prepare frequent, varied and accessible communications, citing curriculum expectations, directions and resources, corresponding assessment and evaluation strategies and practices.</li> <li>• Communicate student achievement regularly, using clear language and providing translation as required.</li> </ul> | <p><b>8 Accountability and Transparency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness of, and implement, ways in which effective collaboration can be instrumental in school improvement.</li> <li>• Initiate challenging and thoughtful discussions on topics of discrimination (e.g., age, ability, class, faith, gender, race, sexual orientation) with all school partners.</li> <li>• Continue to address the elimination of identified barriers.</li> <li>• Align School Success plan with the OEIE Strategy and report progress to the board.</li> </ul>   |



## FATHER'S DAY BREAKFAST

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Part of a strong engagement strategy involved developing specific strategies for groups that have traditionally had lower engagement. With most Safe Schools initiatives, the vast majority of parents and caregivers who attend are female. Nonetheless, engaging fathers is viewed as a critical component of preventing gender-based violence (Crooks, Goodall, Hughes, Baker, & Jaffe, 2007). There is increasing recognition that engaging men and boys takes strategic efforts (see [www.futureswithoutviolence.org](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org) for example).

TVDSB is a founding partner in the Father's Day Breakfast initiative. Originating in 2006, the initiative was designed to help coach boys into men by celebrating the role of fathers, mentors, coaches, and significant men in the lives of boys. This initiative encourages and inspires young men and boys to become a generation of men who stand up to violence against women. Boys are inundated daily with negative messages about what it means to be a man from sources such as media, peers, and society. The goal of the Father's Day Breakfast is to counterbalance this stereotypical image of men as tough, in control, and sometimes disrespectful toward women, which is commonly portrayed in the media and popular culture and sometimes expected and normalized by society.

This event takes place annually and men and boys from the community get together for a morning of education and discussion around what constitutes positive, healthy relationships with women. The Father's Day Breakfast provides men with an opportunity to become positive role models for young men and boys, who will see and learn that violence has no place in relationships with women and that characteristics such as honour, respect, and responsibility are valued. They are learning that violence does not equal strength, and that there is honour in taking a stand for respect and against violence. Every secondary school in TVDSB is invited to send a group of male students with an educator to attend the morning.

● ● ●  
*I'm sure it can help us stand up a bit more and keep an eye out for what's going on...  
Sometimes we'll see things, but not realize the significance of it.*

~ Drew, a grade 9 TVDSB participant at the 2012 Father's Day Breakfast

● ● ●  
Each year, well-respected advocates for promoting healthy relationships give a compelling and interesting keynote address. Speakers address various topics that address violence against women, including the impact of media, becoming a role model, how we socialize boys and young men, and the role of sports in defining masculinity. The Father's Day Breakfast has been a good vehicle for strengthening community partnerships. It is co-sponsored annually by a variety of organizations; including the London Police Service, the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, London Urban Services Organization, London District Catholic School Board, Middlesex-London Health Unit, and Western University.

● ● ●  
*These boys are leaders in their grade. Kids look up to them. We want to get this message to kids when they're young and have them carry it with them through their four years of high school. I'm hoping this will encourage these guys to stand up. When they're in the dressing room and someone's talking inappropriately about a girl, that's when these guys can say 'hey, that's not the way we should be talking.'*

– Greg Jenny, TVDSB educator and coach

● ● ●  
Each year a survey is administered to participants. The feedback has been consistently positive and attendees indicate that they intend to apply the information and awareness gained at the event.



**Evaluation Comments from Participants of the 2012 Father's Day Breakfast:**

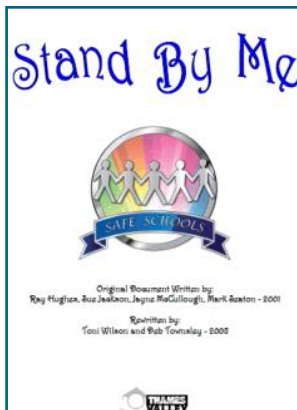
● ● ●  
*"Excellent choice of speakers. WOW! The speaker was incredible!!!"*

● ● ●  
*"I loved both speakers and it made me think about what I'm doing."*

● ● ●  
*"An excellent opportunity to increase male student's awareness of their roles and responsibilities."*

● ● ●  
*"It was great – an amazing experience that changed me."*

**STAND BY ME MENTORING PROGRAM**



In comparison to the Father's Day Breakfast, which is a high-profile, once-a-year event, TVDSB also provides opportunity for community volunteer engagement in an ongoing way. The Stand by Me program is a mentoring program that partners with community members to provide a healthy relationship for children who could benefit from such a relationship. Students are typically referred by their Learning Support Teacher and can be selected due to behavioural concerns, victimization experiences, or lack of a healthy adult role model. It is not academic tutoring, but instead emphasizes relationship building. Mentors span a wide age group from college and university students to grandparents and retirees. They commit to a weekly one-hour meeting for the entire school year with their assigned child at the school. They are provided with a manual that includes strategies for developing positive mentoring relationships, developmental information about children, pertinent TVDSB policies, and a range of effective activities for relationship building. Stand by Me mentors

receive a 2-hour orientation that addresses the roles and responsibilities of a mentor, and includes several scenarios for discussion.

Stand by Me began as a pilot in 2000 with 10 mentors paired with children identified to have significant behavioural problems. The pilot was extremely successful in that all 10 children had been receiving frequent referrals to the office prior to commencing the mentoring program, but during the pilot from February until the end of the school year, office referrals were negligible for the group. The group has expanded over the past 10 years and in the 2011-2012 school year approximately 120 pairs were meeting weekly. Qualitative feedback from the teachers of students involved in the program continues to be very positive, as demonstrated by feedback from educators who work with the students involved in the program.

● ● ●  
*I would like to say "thank you" first off for providing us with 2 terrific girls. A walks on water as far as her protégée is concerned. He breaks into a big grin when she arrives and feels very important to have such a special friend.*

~ Laurie Newell, LST



## RESPECT IN SPORT

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Another way that significant community involvement occurs in TVDSB is through volunteer athletic coaches. These coaches play an important role in the lives of their student athletes and provide an excellent opportunity for the reinforcement of Safe Schools messages. To help ensure that these coaches are aware of their responsibilities and roles as collaborators in creating safe schools, TVDSB has implemented the Respect in Sport program.



Respect in Sport Inc., founded in 2004 by Wayne McNeil and Sheldon Kennedy, was developed in consultation with the Canadian Red Cross to "protect youth, inform leaders, and mitigate an organization's liability on matters of bullying, abuse, harassment and neglect prevention". The program has been adopted in several Provincial and National organizations, including Hockey Canada, Gymnastics Canada, and Sport Manitoba.

Respect in Sport for coaches is a 5 module interactive online training program that delivers both instructional content and sport related vignettes for coaches to apply their understandings of the material. The topics included in the program are: The Use of Power, Leadership Styles and Emotional Development of Athletes, Bullying and Harassment, Neglect and Abuse, and Legal/Moral Responsibilities for Responding and Reporting.

In 2008, Respect in Sport was piloted in two TVDSB secondary schools, with a very favourable response from coaches and activity leaders, representing staff, community members, and support staff. As well, information about Respect in Sport was presented to Athletic Directors from both the TVDSB and the London District Catholic School Board.

The information embedded in Respect in Sport aligns with both the TVDSB and provincial initiatives in the area of Safe Schools, Healthy Schools, and Character Development. Specifically, this program fits nicely within the ministry report "Shaping a Culture of Respect in Our Schools" as it targets sexual abuse as one of the modules, along with bullying and harassment. The advantage of this program is that it provides consistent and up-to-date messaging for our organization, ensuring a baseline level of understanding for our teacher and community coaches.

During the 1st year of implementation in 2009-2010, it was recommended that secondary coaches complete the online training program. During this year, approximately 60 coaches voluntarily completed the training. However, during the 2010-2011 school year, TVDSB supported the implementation of Respect in Sport for all secondary coaches, with the expectation that all coaches (including community volunteers) would complete the on-line program by September 2011. Time was provided during a scheduled PD day in April 2011 for secondary teachers to complete this two hour training. This is now a mandatory training for all secondary teacher and community coaches. There are currently 1100 secondary teacher coaches who have completed the Respect in Sport program. Our next step will be to broaden the program to include elementary volunteer-coaches as well.



*"Respect In Sport is effective because it empowers our school community to establish a united understanding of the concept of "respect, civility and responsible citizenship." This leads to healthy and equal relationships amongst our staff and students at Parkside and, ultimately, an optimal learning environment."*

*~ Francie Johnston, Teacher, Parkside Collegiate Institute*



As of 2012, Thames Valley District School Board is the only school district to mandate the Respect in Sport training for all coaches.





## ENGAGING THE MEDIA: THE PLEDGE

In May, 2010, following the tragic death of a student, where bullying was considered a factor, the TVDSB Director of Education, established the Director's Community Task Force on Anti-Bullying. A Report to the Community, released in June 2011, summarized their coordinated strategies and initiatives to take action against bullying today and in the future. Among the recommendations was raising awareness about bullying and bullying prevention in the community.



CTV London, as a member organization of the Task Force, pitched the idea of the community-wide campaign. “We proposed the idea of *The Pledge* in an effort to empower the community to do something about the problem of bullying,” says Mandi Fields, Community Relations Coordinator and Co-Chair of *The Pledge*. Julie Maltby, Public Affairs Officer with TVDSB, also served as Co-Chair. The co-chairs believe *The Pledge* is the first campaign of its kind to engage the entire community. While organizers recognize that an awareness raising campaign isn't enough to eliminate bullying, they are encouraged by feedback that indicates *The Pledge* has people talking about the issue. *The Pledge* campaign was implemented with unprecedented media collaboration and direct connections with individuals representing schools, not-for-profit organizations and businesses.

*It is important to come up with a key message – it may get implemented differently, but the fundamental core is the same. You need an umbrella message that local initiatives can fall under.*

~ Don Mumford, Regional VP, CTV and Pledge Partner

The time was right for this project. *The Pledge* was a follow-up to the final report from the Director's Community Task Force on Anti-Bullying, which called for a community-wide awareness raising campaign. In 2010, the Ontario Government designated the third week of November as Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week to help promote safer schools and a positive learning environment. During Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week, November 13-19, 2011, Ontario students, school staff and parents were encouraged to learn more about bullying and its effects on student learning and well-being. This initiative builds on the Safe Schools education and activities already taking place in schools across the province.

In conjunction with *The Pledge*, TVDSB Safe Schools coordinated a campaign to raise awareness about the power of the “Upstander” throughout the 2011-2012 school year (see page 130). Defined as an individual who acts to make a positive difference in the life of an individual or inspires change in the community, the message of the Upstander Campaign coincided well with *The Pledge*. Together, these campaigns encourage people in Thames Valley schools to take the words spoken in *The Pledge* and put them into positive action as an Upstander.



*The Pledge*, in its two versions, is the key message in the campaign. *The Pledge* is an inclusive initiative that seeks to raise the public’s consciousness about bullying in schools, at work and at home, by bringing the community together to recite the words that represent its commitment to help end bullying.

**Secondary School Students  
(aged 14+) and Adults:**

“I believe that everybody has the right to live in a community where they feel safe, included, valued and accepted regardless of differences. I pledge to be respectful of others and stand up against bullying whenever and wherever I see it.”

**Elementary School Students  
(aged 4 – 13):**

“I believe that everybody has the right to feel safe, included, valued and accepted. I pledge to respect others and to stand up against and report bullying whenever and wherever I see it.”



The wording of *The Pledge* drove other key messages presented in media releases and public service announcements, such as the negative impact of bullying on the community, the availability of resources and efforts being made by TVDSB to address the issue in our schools.

In collaboration with CTV London, *The Pledge* logo was designed for all media and correspondence. A website ([www.ctvnewslondon.ca/thepledge](http://www.ctvnewslondon.ca/thepledge)) was developed to inform the community about *The Pledge*, to provide helpful resources, to give a forum for communication exchange, to track the number of people who have taken *The Pledge* and to recognize community and media partners. Facebook and Twitter were used to raise awareness and to

drive traffic to the official website where people could register their *Pledge*. CTV London committed to developing and airing Public Service Announcements (PSAs), hosting the website and managing the Facebook page, all of which assisted tremendously with reaching our audience without financial resources. As of June 2012, over 74,000 people have registered their Pledge to end bullying.

*The Pledge* (community-based) and the Upstander (school-based) campaign were coordinated in school assemblies and other activities involving the majority of TVDSB students. Schools were encouraged to take *The Pledge* as a community on Monday, November 14 at 10 a.m. All 166 TVDSB schools took *The Pledge* with their students during Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week in November. 103 schools reported that they held assemblies and a variety of other activities to support *The Pledge* and Upstander campaigns.



### Reduce barriers to engagement for families and community members

- Engaging guardians and community members is a challenge for most school communities.
- Decrease barriers such as providing child care at events if possible.
- Engaging community members may require going to the community and at times convenient to them rather than expecting school-based meetings during school hours.
- If multiple community consultations are being conducted, hold the sessions at different times such as weekday during the day, weekday evening, and weekend, to facilitate attendance for participants with different schedules.
- Terminology can pose a barrier -- consider the use of the term family or caregiver rather than parent to avoid inadvertently discouraging other caregivers and invested adults.

### Include a minimum of two members of a particular stakeholder group on a committee

- Being the only student, parent, or member of a particular group on a committee can be intimidating and / or isolating.
- Endeavoring to have a minimum of two such representatives can increase comfort and buy in.
- Invite representatives to weigh in on all committee matters (i.e., don't turn to youth representatives only for "youth issues").

### Be aware of the setting of a meeting or initiative and make it as comfortable as possible

- Choosing locations where stakeholders already congregate or are more comfortable will increase attendance for meetings and events
- Students may feel more comfortable in some locations within a school than others - our attendance at our FNMI secondary peer mentoring tripled when it was moved from the guidance office to a more auspicious location (in this case, a portable classroom). Similarly, community engagement events held in a First Nation community centre or at the Friendship Centre have been well attended.

### Engagement needs to be a process not an event

- Stakeholders will feel more authentically engaged when they are part of an ongoing process with specific intent or to achieve specific outcomes.
- Relationship building over time will result in stronger partnerships for future collaborative work.
- It is important to have goals during this relationship building process (i.e., avoid meeting just for the sake of meeting), so that people feel that their time is valued.

### School Councils can be strong allies for Safe Schools

- There is wide variability in the engagement of school councils with respect to Safe Schools.
- Effective school councils have identified some useful strategies, such as ensuring that Safe Schools is an agenda item on every school council meeting and designating at least one parent event annually related to Safe Schools where the organization and funds are provided by school councils.
- Exceptional school councils also often have a Safe Schools champion, who in many cases, might have additional expertise and interest because of their professional role in the community.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF STRONG LEADERSHIP FOR A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

Creating a whole school approach to Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools requires vision, resources, and commitment. Strong leadership is essential in shifting away from viewing Safe Schools as a number of unrelated silos of projects, problem behaviours and demands. As noted throughout this toolkit, one of the biggest challenges facing Safe Schools is the vast number of competing priorities faced by all stakeholders. In this climate of multiple competing demands, committed leadership is crucial. Leadership in Safe Schools needs to come from all levels of a board. In TVDSB, the Director has made Safe Schools a primary foci, and the positive impact has been enormous. For example, his oversight and continued commitment to *The Pledge* have helped shift it from a one-time event to an ongoing philosophy:

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*It is not just taking the Pledge, but living the Pledge... and what does it look like in our schools? What does it look like in our communities? How do we grow what we planted? How do we nurture it? It is not just the concept but commitment that needs to continue.*

~ Bill Tucker, TVDSB Director of Education

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In addition to the leadership of the Director, the Trustees play an important role in recognizing the importance of Safe Schools, in part through the continued allocation of resources. The board receives annual updates on programming and research related to Safe Schools and allocates significant time to the review process. In particular, the board reviews each year's student survey data in comparison to previous years as well as the board action plan. The Board Leadership Development Strategy provides a good framework for promoting the leadership of Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools (see below).

| THE BOARD LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (BLDS)   |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| As part of the Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS), each district in the province is provided with funding and support to develop and implement a Board Leadership Development Strategy (BLDS).                  |   |   |
| A well-planned and well-executed BLDS:   |   |   |
| Helps build coherence by supporting the achievement of goals outlined in the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA) and the development of a positive climate in the district and its schools; | Develops collective leadership capacity through collaborative learning, deprivatization of practice, and frontline-led improvement; | Focuses on four key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• recruiting and selecting leaders through structured and innovative succession planning</li><li>• placing and transferring leaders in ways that sustain school and system improvement</li><li>• developing leaders through mentoring, performance appraisal, and differentiated learning opportunities that meet the needs of leaders in diverse contexts and at various stages of their careers</li><li>• coordinating support for leaders to buffer them from distractions, make information easily accessible, and assist them in building coherence across different initiatives.</li></ul> |



The Superintendent of Safe Schools and Safe Schools Learning Coordinators provide leadership to educators across the board. They meet as a group for a half day monthly to review progress and future directions. This scheduled meeting is critical in that it maintains a balance between being proactive and responding to incidents, in an area where it is easy to get drawn into a perpetually reactive state. Furthermore, as noted in the quote below by the Superintendent of Safe Schools, it is not a top-down leadership model, but one where expertise from colleagues, community partners, and administrators is valued.



*As a leader in Safe Schools, I have valued and learned so much from the expertise of our Learning Coordinators, Administrators, TVDSB Research and Assessment, Western University, and CAMH. I have also valued the support of our Director. My role has been to ensure that our priorities are aligned with research, our vision in Safe Schools, the vision of the TVDSB and other initiatives within the Board such as Character Development, Equity and Inclusive Education, Mental Health, etc. as well as the Ministry's vision.*

~ Barb Sonier, TVDSB Superintendent of Education



Successful implementation of Safe Schools initiatives requires support from other senior administration in addition to the Superintendent responsible for the portfolio. With competing ministry and board priorities it is imperative that all work is focused on the goal of improved student achievement and well-being. Schools must see that initiatives are aligned with board goals through the board's Strategic Plan, as well as the board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA). The 'Community, Culture and Caring' strand of the BIPSA is where boards are able to embed Safe Schools work as part of their plan to improve student achievement and close the gap for disadvantaged and marginalized students. Creating these links will help ensure that schools do not view Safe Schools as a stand-alone initiative, but rather, and integral part of raising achievement.

Finally, school level leaders play an important role. School administrators can make a significant difference in the policies they introduce and in the support and accountability they provide for programming. With respect to policies, the Egale Canada study (Canada's first national survey of homophobia in schools) compared experiences of students at schools with and without policies (Taylor et al, 2008). This survey asked the students whether there were anti-homophobia policies, so it is possible that the policies could exist and students not know about them; however, policies that do not have awareness and enforcement cannot be expected to have an impact. Based on students' perceptions of whether or not their schools had anti-homophobia policies, results clearly indicated that youth at schools with such policies experienced lower rates of homophobic bullying and harassment and felt safer in their schools. Furthermore, 87% of respondents in schools with policies felt that teachers and staff intervene on some level (compared to 59% in schools without policies). Policies also play an important role in shifting school climate and culture. In the same survey, 85% of students who thought their schools had anti-homophobia policies felt that their school was becoming less homophobic compared to 59% of students who thought their schools did not have such policies.

Administrator support and involvement also affects the uptake and sustainability of evidence-based practices. Numerous researchers have identified the importance of support and accountability from administrators (see Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Fagan & Mihalic, 2003; Mihalic et al., 2008). Teachers are more likely to maintain implementation momentum if they have support from their peers, administrative support, and continuous reminders of aligning priorities (Langley, Nadeem, Kataoka, Stein & Jaycox, 2010). Furthermore, they need to know that someone notices whether or not they use a program, and that it matters. In a study of 197 educators across Canada trained in the Fourth R between two and eight years previously, the biggest difference between those who reported that they continued to implement 80% or more of the program and those who did not, was



that the high-fidelity implementers reported more support and accountability from system and school administrators (Crooks et al., 2012).

Given the significant role of administrators as role models, and leaders in Safe Schools, it is crucial that they be supported in this role through the types of training initiatives and data-informed decision-making processes outlined in this toolkit.

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## CREATING A UNIFYING THEME

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With so many Safe Schools requirements and considerations, it is easy to lose the forest for the trees. Effective leadership monitors the effectiveness of the Safe Schools strategies at the system level, and looks beyond the sum of the parts. An annual review process can be an effective way to track progress and identify gaps. System leadership can also build a unifying vision for the entire area of Safe Schools. In TVDSB, this theme is selected annually and referred to as the ‘big idea.’ The process for annual review and the purpose of the big idea are both reviewed in the following pages, as examples of how system leadership can be effective in Safe Schools.

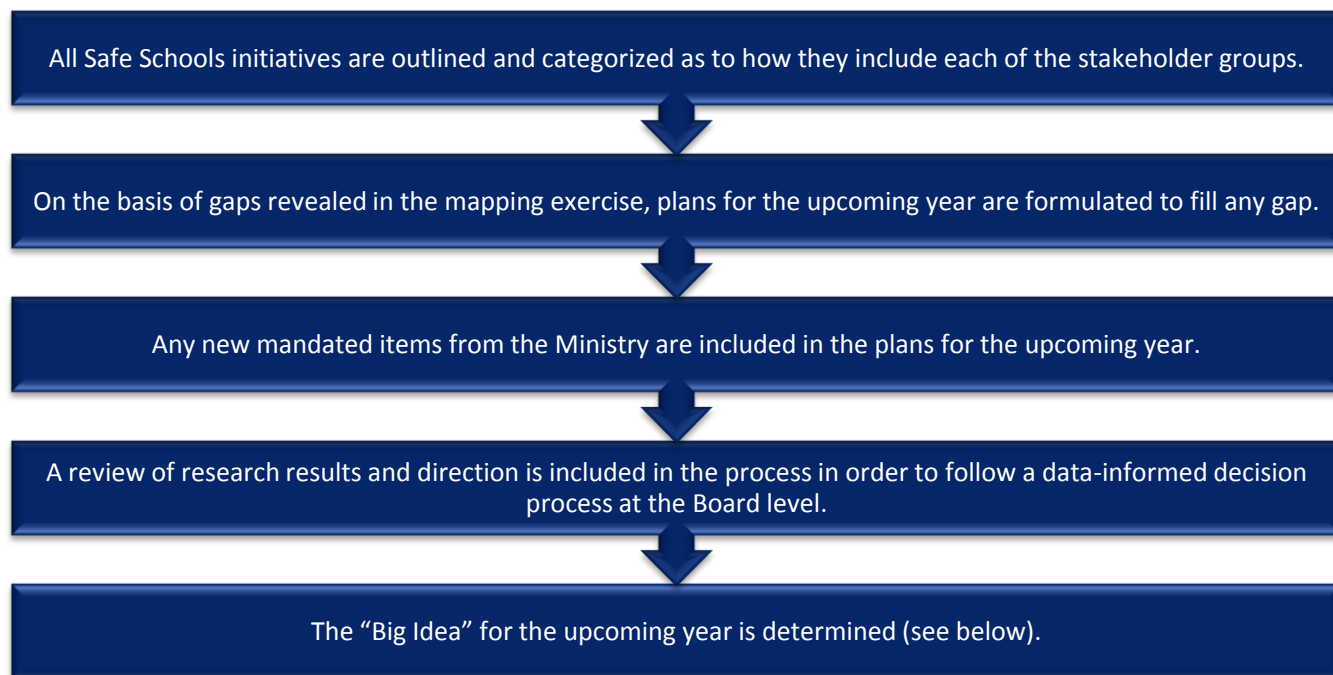
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## ANNUAL SAFE SCHOOLS THINK TANK

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One way that the strong leadership in Safe Schools is evident in TVDSB is through the Safe Schools Think Tank, which was first held in 2008 and has subsequently become an annual undertaking. It is a half-day meeting involving the TVDSB Safe Schools team, the Research and Assessment Services Manager, two external partners with expertise in Safe Schools (one was a member of the inaugural Ministry Safe Schools Action Team and the other was recently named to the Minister’s Expert Panel), an Elementary principal and a Secondary principal. It started out as a Start, Stop, Continue exercise and has evolved into an annual review of the whole Safe Schools portfolio. The Superintendent of Safe Schools began the process as a mechanism for a yearly reflection of TVDSB programs and direction. Other objectives of the process are to connect with the expertise of leaders in the system and the community. Finally, the think tank process was undertaken to broaden Safe Schools to encompass a larger perspective; namely, that of building an inclusive culture of caring in our schools. Moving forward, student representatives will be included in the think tank process.

Although the process has evolved over the past four years, it follows a similar sequence:



## THE BIG IDEA

As part of the annual think tank we determine our big idea for the year. The premise of a single big idea is to provide a theme upon which we build initiatives for the coming school year. It is not about starting over every year, but about providing a sense of focus and renewed energy for Safe Schools. The themes differ each year but share an emphasis on mobilizing the entire community to prevent bullying and promote healthy relationships. The big idea starts in schools, but there is encouragement for schools to reach out to their stakeholder communities and engage them in the initiative. The idea starts with empowering students to create the type of school community they want to have. Our vision always places students first.



Successful big ideas such as Sea of Pink, 1000 Acts of Kindness, the Upstander Campaign and Lead out Loud are inclusive, inspiring and encourage initiatives both big and small (see Table 5.2). Safe Schools wants elementary and secondary school communities to host initiatives throughout the school year and take every opportunity to reinforce the Safe Schools' big idea. It gives schools and communities focus and a positive reason to do the right thing for students. Schools address their individual needs and engage their school community in the process. Youth conferences are held at the system level giving young people ideas and assistance in creating action plans. The big

idea is always addressed through drama presentations and follow-up discussion as well as through Forum Theatre. Safe Schools encourages teachers, parents and administrators to incorporate the big idea in everything they do. Alignment with each School's Improvement Plan provides greater opportunity for success.

**Table 5.2: Big Ideas used by TVDSB as organizing themes**

| Year      | Big Idea               | Description  |
|-----------|------------------------|--|
| 2008-2009 | Sea of Pink            | The Sea of Pink campaign was based on the moving story of two Nova Scotia students who encouraged their fellow students to wear pink in support of a grade 9 boy that had been bullied for wearing a pink shirt to school. Individual schools created their own activities. More than 11,000 pink shirts were purchased by students and staff with the slogans, "Be a Someone" on one side and "Take a Stand" on the other.  |
| 2009-2011 | 1,000 Acts of Kindness | The 1,000 Acts of Kindness Challenge was a community-wide initiative during the month of October that aimed to end hate by spreading kindness – one generous act at a time. The campaign was so successful in its first year that it was extended to a two-year big idea. During the second year, a community partner challenged the TVDSB students and staff to get at least 100 schools to perform a minimum of 1,000 acts of kindness, for a staggering 100,000 acts of kindness in just one month. |
| 2011-2012 | Upstander Campaign     | The premise of the Upstander Campaign was to raise awareness about the difference between being a bystander (who witnessed bullying and harassment but does nothing), and an Upstander, who takes a stand. Student-led initiatives across the board approached this issue in different ways (see case study on page 130).  |
| 2012-2013 | Lead out Loud          | Safe Schools encourages all of our Upstanders to go the extra mile and Lead out Loud. Students, teachers, parents and community members need to lead by example. To Lead out Loud is to model good behaviour, invite others to take part in initiatives, empower everyone to do what is right, take action, and show empathy and compassion for others.  |





# Chapter 6

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## *Comprehensive case studies: Innovating, expanding, and sustaining*

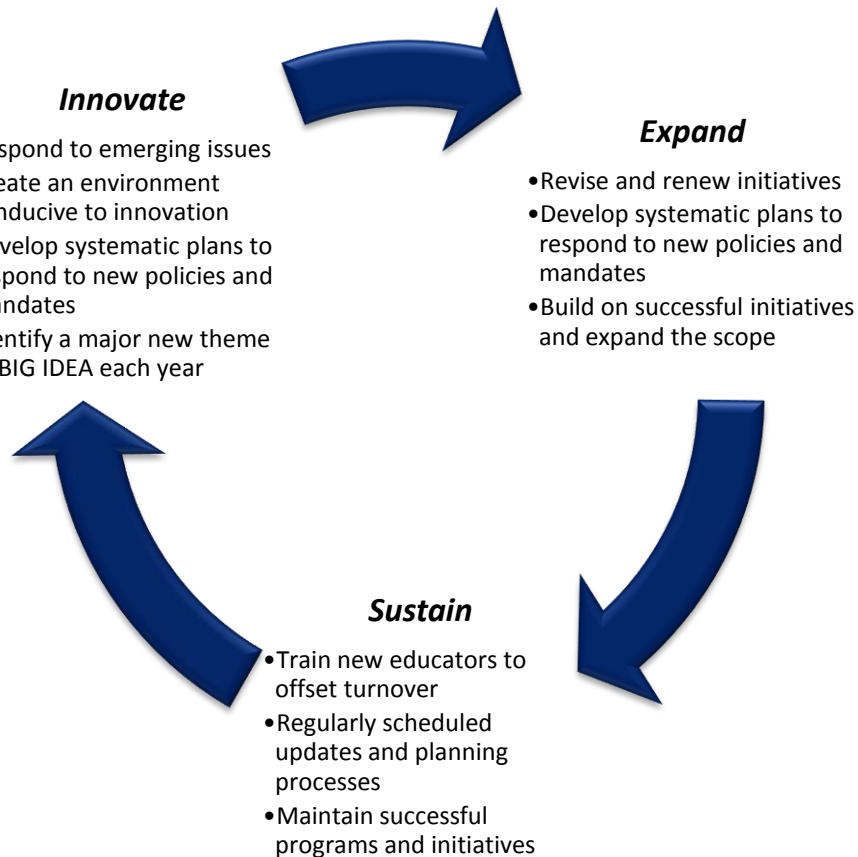
*In this section we discuss the continuous cycle of innovating, expanding and sustaining Safe Schools initiatives. Four case studies are provided to highlight effective sustainable practices and emerging innovation. In each case we provide an analysis of challenges we have experienced and factors that have created success. Specific next steps are outlined for other boards who may wish to launch similar initiatives.*



## CHAPTER 6: COMPREHENSIVE CASE STUDIES – INNOVATING, EXPANDING, AND SUSTAINING

Continually moving towards a comprehensive approach to Safe Schools requires a process of innovating to create new initiatives, expanding existing successful initiatives, and stabilizing and sustaining effective practices. This ongoing cycle is depicted in Figure 6.1

**Figure 6.1: Continuous cycle of innovating, expanding and sustaining**

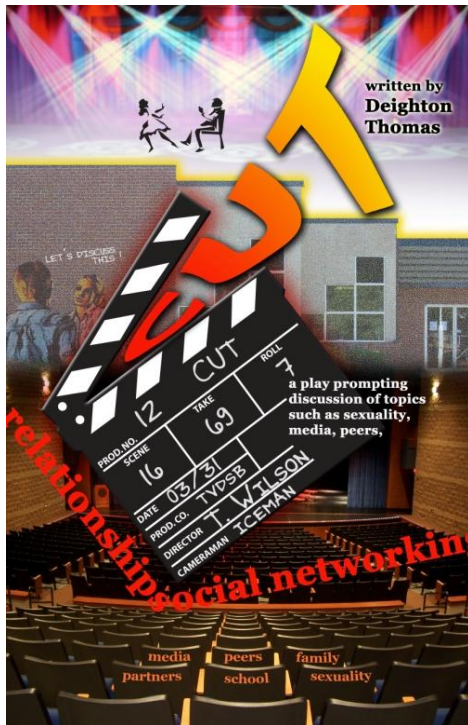


TVDSB has Safe Schools programs that have been operating successfully for years. These effective practices have achieved a degree of stability in part because they continually innovate and expand. It is by staying relevant and cutting edge that they have become sustainable rather than stagnant. At the same time, it has exciting new initiatives being incubated to meet newly identified needs, such as the current strategic planning about providing a safe space for transgendered youth. However, these new innovations are also rooted in previous initiatives and directions such that they are really an expansion of existing ideas and programs and not something that started out of the blue. An additional consideration is knowing which initiatives should not be expanded – it is through the process of review and data-informed decision-making that TVDSB can identify those initiatives that are worth growing. In this section we provide four case examples that highlight the role of innovation, expansion, and sustainability, including Safe Schools Drama, the Diversity Project, the Upstander Campaign, and The Fourth R.



## CASE STUDY #1: SAFE SCHOOLS DRAMA

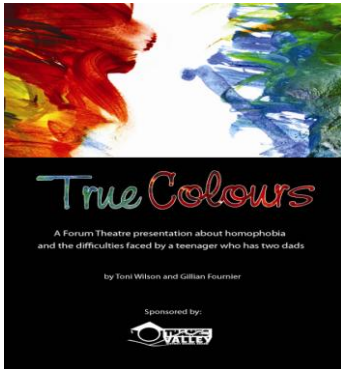
In TVDSB drama has been used extensively as an educational tool to encourage discussion and positive change. Engaging both teachers and students in the creation and performance of plays related to Safe Schools' issues is fundamental to success. Follow-up materials developed by teachers and delivered by both teachers and students are also necessary to sustain change. TVDSB has a long history of successful use of drama in Safe Schools.



In the early 1990's The Middlesex County Board of Education, as part of the bullying prevention and dating violence programming, commissioned a visiting drama troupe from Toronto to perform an issue-based play which was then followed by intensive discussion. It became apparent that theatre was an excellent catalyst for discussion. Through conversations with the violence prevention consultant and drama teachers it was decided that it would be both possible and effective to have our teachers write, produce and direct plays using our drama students as the actors. An important part of the implementation is the development and provision of appropriate follow-up materials created by teachers to facilitate discussion led by peer leaders. These plays differ from Forum Theatre in that there is not the second interactive run-through, and the audiences are younger than the secondary students involved with Forum Theatre. **Bombs** was the first play written and was toured across the board and throughout southwestern Ontario over a two year period. At the same time The London Board of Education was also using drama in their violence prevention work to address dating violence and bullying. Since the amalgamation of 4 boards in 1998, drama has been used extensively to inform students and provide a platform for crucial conversations and skills development.

As of 2012, TVDSB has written and produced over 20 plays dealing with current teen issues. Drama teachers have collaborated with students to understand and write about the real concerns of young people and make sure that the plays are realistic and relevant. TVDSB has made this possible and sustainable by financially supporting 3 drama lines in TVDSB each year. The 3 drama teachers write and tour plays in each of our 28 high schools every November and April. Although many important issues are brought forth in the plays, it is very important that the play is not left to speak for itself. After students experience the play, students return to class where senior students who have been trained by teachers facilitate activities and lead discussion. Together they examine the issues in the play and leave the students with sound strategies to use in their day-to-day lives. High schools also invite grade 7 and 8 classes from their feeder schools to come to their respective high school to watch a play and participate in discussion following the play led by high school student leaders who have been trained to facilitate discussion by their teachers. This helps to educate elementary students and also builds ongoing relationships among elementary and secondary school students.





The use of drama to educate students is valued strongly by TVDSB. Funding is allocated to Safe Schools to provide excellent programming for students including the necessary transportation costs so that schools across TVDSB have an equitable opportunity to participate in the same initiatives. A system Violence Prevention Committee with a teacher representative from each secondary school is responsible for planning the Safe Schools program including a drama presentation and follow-up in each school. Significant time and energy goes into training senior students to be able to facilitate the follow-up discussion and activities in every school. The ongoing effectiveness of the drama program is also maintained through the leadership of the Safe Schools Learning Coordinators.

## SAMPLE TVDSB PLAYS

Safe Schools plays address a range of topics. They are an excellent way to explore emerging types of violence (such as cyberbullying), and the intersection between Safe Schools and other issues such as mental health and diversity. In the table below, brief summaries are provided of the plays from the past 6 years. *Own It* was written by Bronwyn Powell (TVDSB Dramatic Arts teacher), and the other plays listed below were written by Deighton Thomas (TVDSB Dramatic Arts teacher).

| Title/Author           | Summaries   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Own It</b>          | The main issues in this play are social bullying and electronic bullying. By watching the play, students will recognize the importance of taking action to prevent all forms of bullying.   |
| <b>Reaction</b>        | The main issues in this play are social bullying and electronic bullying. By watching the play, the students will recognize the importance of taking action and being a someone to prevent all forms of bullying  |
| <b>The Trial</b>       | This play focuses on social rights and responsibilities at school, and the powerful role of the bystander. The play occurs in a court room, where two students, a male and a female, are on “trial” for their inappropriate behaviour towards other students. The inappropriate actions are played out in the court room through flashback memories from the students who were victimized.                                |
| <b>Blue</b>            | The play takes place in a high school where a new student has arrived. Students are unsure of him as he speaks up and questions the behaviour around him. This encourages peers/classmates to think before they act. This play focuses on stereotypes, accepting differences and the powerful role of the bystander. The play asks us to carefully respond to inappropriate behaviour which will lead to positive change. |
| <b>Cut</b>             | This play focuses on stereotypes, relationships and sexuality. This play asks us to carefully consider the many influences in our society that help us to form our ideas about relationships and about sexuality within relationships. We also want to be able to appropriately support a friend who may be in an unhealthy relationship.   |
| <b>No Ordinary Joe</b> | This play focuses on issues related to Mental Health. It is important to pay close attention to identify some of the missed opportunities where the main character could have been helped. Situations are presented which show signs of mental illness. The play will help us to appropriately support a friend and their mental well being whenever possible.  |



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## CHALLENGES THAT HAVE EMERGED WITH SAFE SCHOOLS DRAMA

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Numerous challenges have emerged over the course of our experience with Safe Schools Drama:

- Providing a drama line or financial payment may be necessary to engage drama teachers to write plays for Safe Schools.
- It is challenging to enlist a lead teacher in each secondary school to organize Safe Schools drama initiatives and encourage a teacher and group of students to lead facilitation and class discussion
- Financial resources are required to help ensure equitable opportunities for all schools to experience the drama initiatives and follow-up discussion.
- It is a challenge to ensure that the quality of the drama presentations and follow-up materials meets high expectations.
- The buy-in of the classroom teacher is required to allocate the classroom time and help ensure that student facilitators are trained effectively to lead their peers in classroom discussion.

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## SUCCESS FACTORS FOR USING DRAMA IN SAFE SCHOOLS EDUCATION

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Using drama for Safe Schools education has been successful in TVDSB for the following reasons.

- Innovative plays are created through teacher and student collaboration to help ensure realism and relevancy of the topics.
- Connection to the curriculum is highlighted in all follow-up materials.
- Numerous drama teachers are involved in the program, which provides stability and momentum (compared to initiatives that have only one or two champions).
- Students who perform in the dramas as well as students who facilitate the follow-up become advocates for Safe Schools.
- Funding is allocated to Safe Schools to provide excellent programming for students including costs for drama lines, transportation, Learning Coordinators, etc.
- Significant resources and planning go into developing de-briefing activities, especially around sensitive issues. For example, following the first play to address suicide, the Safe Schools team engaged community partners, in addition to board psychologists and social workers, to help ensure that every classroom had a mental health professional present for the de-brief.

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## NEXT STEPS FOR DEVELOPING DRAMA INITIATIVES AS PART OF YOUR SAFE SCHOOLS APPROACH

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There are several tips for beginning a Safe Schools drama initiative. As an initial step it is important to engage drama teachers who are interested in creating issue-based theatre as part of their work. It is recommended that students be engaged to be part of the discussion and creation of Safe Schools drama from the beginning. Identifying administrator support can serve as a catalyst for seeing value in drama as part of Safe Schools education. Any preliminary work requires time and support for the lead teachers to organize and implement Safe Schools drama initiatives.

Contact TVDSB Safe Schools ([www.tvdsb.ca/safeschools](http://www.tvdsb.ca/safeschools)) for further information about Safe Schools drama.



## CASE STUDY #2: THE DIVERSITY PROJECT



The development of our newest resource “*Diversity: Embracing Who We Are*” was a long winding road which covered a span of 10 years. Although it was a long process, it was a valuable one where voices were heard and responded to while creating a culture of caring and acceptance. The historical context of this project shows how consensus was built and momentum encouraged the creation of a readiness for the current project. The following timeline illustrates the process by which this project emerged:

In August 2002, a group of gay and lesbian students made a presentation to our Board of Trustees telling them that they felt unsafe at school. They also made recommendations on how to make schools safer for gay and lesbian youth. The trustees recommended an Ad Hoc Committee to Address Concerns of Gay/Lesbian students be created. This committee membership included board trustees, student trustee, board administrative support and school administrators. This committee had the opportunity to talk with gay and lesbian students, parents, teachers and peers to hear their actual experiences in our school system. As a result, the Ad Hoc Committee developed a list of recommendations to make schools safer for gay and lesbian students.

In May 2003, trustees moved that a Subcommittee of the Safe Schools Steering Committee (including students, community partners, and others) be struck to develop a work plan including feasibility, implementation time-lines, evaluation, and costs for the various strategies identified by the Ad Hoc Committee to Address Gay/Lesbian Student Concerns.

In March 2004, an update was presented to the Trustees on the Action Plan to Address Issues of Sexual Diversity within Safe Schools programming. As well, the Subcommittee's Action Plan was posted to the TVDSB website. A petition signed by 2000 students, teachers, parents and community members was presented to the board in support of the Action Plan. A special meeting for public input was set for March 30, 2004. A large volume of telephone calls and e-mails were received by trustees and board personnel in the three week period prior to the Public Input Session. Forty-one presentations were given with a balance between the "for" and "against" views relating to the action plan.

The Action Plan to Address Discrimination based on Sexual Orientation was presented to the board in April 2004. It was agreed that the recommendations from the LGBT Ad Hoc Committee would be divided into four clusters: student awareness and education, resource sharing, school based planning, and staff professional development.

In order to follow through with the commitment related to Resource Sharing, the "Resource Selection Committee" was created in 2005 to coordinate, review and share lists of appropriate library resources. Six teacher-librarians (3 elementary and 3 secondary) comprised this committee. The committee reviewed books on the topic of discrimination based on sexual orientation and more recently has included discrimination based on gender identity. They have developed resource kits of books on the topics. In 2006 the kits were only available for teacher-librarians and principals to preview to determine if they would like to purchase selections to include in their library collection. They were stored at Media Services to be signed out upon request. In 2010 the resource kits were made available for teachers to incorporate into their teaching.

That brings us to 2012. In order to continue to promote a culture of caring and inclusivity in our schools, we were pleased to offer the training [\*\*\*DIVERSITY - Embracing Who We Are\*\*\*](#). This workshop included some background



information on the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, the nine dimensions of Diversity, supporting legislation, a list and description of the mentor texts, and an understanding of the literacy and curriculum connections. While developing the teacher resource binder, Safe Schools appreciated having the opportunity to work with Literacy Learning Coordinators from our Program Services department. Their specific knowledge of Gender Studies and Critical Literacy, along with our experience in Safe Schools was complementary in creating a useful resource.

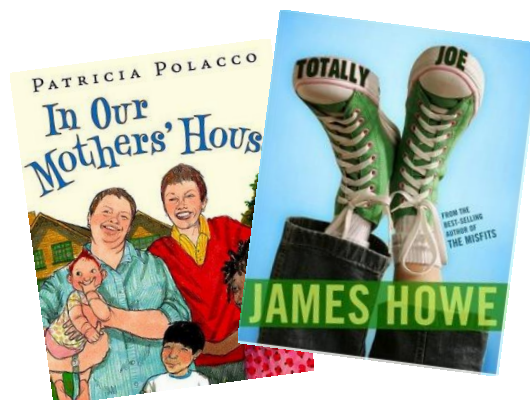
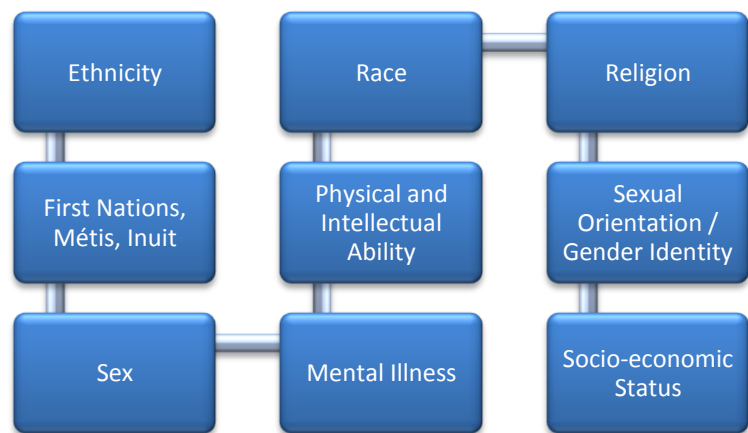
Here is an excerpt from the Teacher Resource Binder:

### Embracing Who We Are: INTRODUCTION

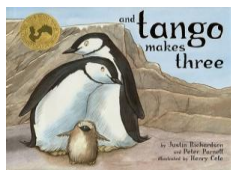
**According to the Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools – Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, schools are expected to give students and staff authentic and relevant opportunities to learn about diverse histories, cultures, and perspectives. Lessons, projects, and related resources should allow students to see themselves reflected in the curriculum. Students need to feel engaged in and empowered by what they are learning, and welcomed in the environment in which they are learning.**

**To validate and honour our diverse and ever changing population, the TVDSB is committed to ensuring that all students see themselves represented and reflected in text. As a result, a variety of texts that address the dimensions of diversity have been purchased for all schools to be part of school library collections.**

#### Dimensions of Diversity:



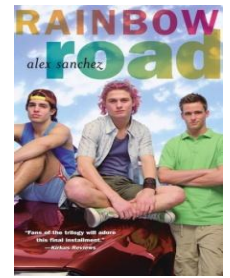
Ultimately, the *Diversity: Embracing Who We Are* resource is to include mentor texts and supporting teacher resources from each of the 9 dimensions of diversity. Since there had been a number of years of collaboration in determining a list of suggested mentor texts for the dimension Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity, this was chosen as the first dimension to be addressed in the resource. It is hoped that as funding becomes available, mentor texts representing a new dimension of diversity can be added to the resource on an annual basis.



During our training at the elementary level, a teacher-librarian from each of our schools attended a half day workshop. Each school library received 10 mentor texts related to the first dimension of diversity to be addressed - Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. Each school also received a teacher resource binder including curriculum expectations and literacy connections to support the Diversity Mentor Text selections.



At the secondary level, each school sent a team of 4 teachers (Teacher-Librarian, English, Health & Physical Education, and Social Science) to attend a half day workshop. Each school library received 30 mentor texts related to the first dimension of diversity to be addressed – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. Each school also received teacher resource binders including curriculum expectations and literacy connections to support the Diversity Mentor Text selections in three subject areas.



The TVDSB Safe Schools website now includes a link for *Diversity: Embracing Who We Are*. This website includes background information on why the resource was developed and also pictorially lists the elementary and secondary mentor texts. In addition, a parent from one of our elementary schools has been videotaped outlining her personal story and why these mentor texts are so important to her family.

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### CHALLENGES THAT HAVE EMERGED WITH THE DIVERSITY PROJECT

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- Consistent messaging in schools and school communities as to the value of the Diversity Project can be difficult to achieve.
- It can be challenging to achieve thoughtful use of mentor texts by teachers when programming for students. The manner in which the texts are presented and the discussion and de-briefing are as important as the texts themselves. Otherwise, the texts can be presented as something that has to be shared with students, but is not supported by the teacher (e.g., “I am supposed to read these books but I am not really sure why or don’t see the importance.”).
- The role of the teacher-librarian in making books available to all students is paramount. For example, children could be denied access to some books that are generally considered age-appropriate, but are offered only to older students because individual staff feel or decide they are too mature (i.e., books about same sex parents).
- The bias of some staff members and parents at times interferes with the intent of the Diversity Project, which is to include all students in text.

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### SUCCESS FACTORS FOR THE DIVERSITY PROJECT

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- Collaboration between the Program Services Literacy Learning Coordinators and Safe Schools team in selecting the mentor texts and developing the teacher resource to help ensure literacy and curriculum connections.
- Having teacher representation from each elementary and secondary school at an in-service to discuss the Safe Schools legislation and Inclusive Education Strategy which supports the use of diversity mentor texts in the classroom.
- Distribution of mentor texts among school libraries and placed in general circulation, rather than a specified area, helps to ensure that texts are seen as part of a larger collection.
- The resource allows our diverse student population to see themselves represented and reflected in text.

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### NEXT STEPS FOR UNDERTAKING A DIVERSITY PROJECT IN OTHER BOARDS

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It is important to begin with a core group of educators who can review books on selected topics. However, this process needs to be embedded in a larger recognition of the value of having all students reflected in texts. Furthermore, the extent to which there is recognition by system leaders of the value of having mentor texts on all dimensions of diversity for students can provide a strong foundation for the project. It might be useful to spend time at the beginning getting buy-in from stakeholders and clarifying the purpose of such a project, as there may be concerns and misconceptions about the objectives. Finally, an extensive financial commitment is required to provide resources to all schools.



## CASE STUDY #3: THE UPSTANDER CAMPAIGN

The UPSTANDER Campaign was the “big idea” for the 2011-2012 school year. Safe Schools coordinated a communication kick off blitz during the month of November to raise awareness of the power of the Upstander and encourage all schools to be part of this district wide initiative.

The first key to a successful campaign was to understand the concept of an *Upstander*. Most people are familiar with the term *bystander*. As the word says, bystanders stand by when inappropriate things are done. We don't want to be passive bystanders, rather, we want to encourage active Upstanders. An *Upstander* is an individual who acts to make a positive difference in the life of an individual or inspire change in the community.

The Upstander Campaign in TVDSB is twofold. On one level, we want students to speak up or stand up when they see inappropriate behaviour. We want students to do this safely. It is imperative that they report to a trusted adult who can take the appropriate steps, which will be followed up by realistic consequences and support to the student who caused the harm and support for the student harmed. Students need to continue to learn how to de-escalate situations and practise skills of negotiation, delay, and refusal through education provided by the Fourth R, Steps to Respect, and TRIBES to name a few.

On another level, we want students with the help of teachers to take the lead. The Upstander Campaign should be student driven. We want to start the dialogue in schools. What do you stand up for? What do you as a school community care about? We want student leaders from the various groups in the school to start talking together about what their school should look like. Students need to model the kind of behaviour they want to see in the whole student population. They can publicly celebrate positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour. We want student leaders to mentor the younger students in an authentic way to create an on-going inclusive culture.



Change needs to occur from the inside out. We asked student leaders to dialogue together and create an action plan which is to be carried out during the school year not just by a few, but by representatives from different grades and with different interests and abilities (e.g. sports, music, drama, academics, skate boarders, at risk, special needs, diverse groups). Students will need the commitment of teachers to help them develop the school's Upstander Action Plan (see next page) and the support of teachers, parents and community members to carry out their plan.







**ACTION PLAN ORGANIZER**

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Names of Student Leaders: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Staff Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

**An UPSTANDER is an individual who acts to make a positive difference in the life of an individual or inspires change in the community.**

1. Engage a group of enthusiastic students
2. Discuss what you care about
3. Determine how to motivate your school community

**We have agreed to focus our initiative on:**

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**To help make our initiative inspiring, we have decided to:**

(eg. Video presentation, community night, assembly, photo essay ...)

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**Outline a detailed description of your initiative to show how it will demonstrate what your school community stands up for:**

Safe Schools is very interested in this positive initiative. We want to identify schools that have unique initiatives planned for their "Upstander" campaign. Please highlight your awareness campaign initiatives to persuade us that your initiative is the one that should be recognized.

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Schools are welcome to promote the campaign in a variety of ways to encourage students to stand up for what they care about. As an option, there are black and white t-shirts, with the slogans "UPSTANDER" and "What do YOU stand up for" printed on them, available for under \$5 each. This is a starting point which will promote discussion among our students and the school community. Schools are provided with handouts that outline the process for ordering and information for parents. Over 10,000 t-shirts have been sold throughout TVDSB in support of the Upstander Campaign.



TVDSB Safe Schools has added a link to their website [www.tvdsb.ca/Upstander](http://www.tvdsb.ca/Upstander) listing a variety of resources specific to the Upstander campaign. This site will be updated on a regular basis. A QR code has been created which will link directly to this website. The QR code will appear on many of the handouts associated with the campaign, as well as on the back of the t-shirt.



## **Monday, November 14th, 2011 - The Pledge**

### ***Bullying Awareness & Prevention Week***

All residents in Elgin, Middlesex and Oxford counties are being encouraged to take *The Pledge* to address bullying in schools, at work and at home and to register their pledge on a website just launched. TVDSB and CTV London are working with local partners, including the LDCSB and London and St. Thomas anti-bullying coalitions, to lead this awareness raising campaign to help address bullying in our community. Monday, November 14th was chosen as it is the start of Bullying Awareness & Prevention Week. Although it is important to recognize bullying awareness every day, we would like to focus our energy through this collaborative effort. The Pledge is an important awareness campaign to begin the conversation, and the Upstander Campaign is the complementary action to carry the message forward.



The Upstander Campaign was integrated into many of our Safe Schools initiatives throughout the school year. A poster campaign (sample provided on next page) provided a consistent message in each of our schools. It was the theme for our elementary SAVE Conference, as well as our secondary Youth Safe Schools Conference. Our drama presentations focused on empowering youth to make a positive difference in the lives of others. We were thrilled when our drama students were featured on the front page of the Globe & Mail newspaper (picture to left) to highlight the outstanding work they were doing to prevent violence while actively being Upstanders!

The positive response from our students and staff to creatively promote the Upstander Campaign in their school communities was evident in feedback from staff members:



*The Upstander campaign was a tremendous success at our school. It empowered us to address the role of the Upstander and gave us the common language we needed to help us teach students about bullying and how to create a safe community for all. The impact of this campaign on our school community this year has been significant. We believe that students and staff understand more clearly our individual responsibility to stand up for what is right and how we can work collaboratively to create a safe learning community at Forest Park.*

~ Esther Wendel-Caraher, Vice Principal, Forest Park Public School



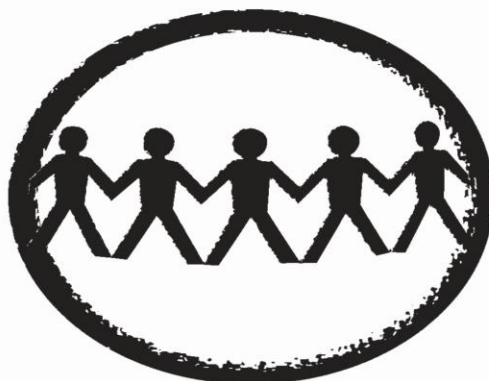
*As a teacher-advisor to the Safe Schools Committee, I really appreciated the flexibility of the Upstander campaign. It gave schools an opportunity to highlight an important message, but yet tailor it to the needs and priorities of the individual schools. In some ways it felt more student-driven than previous initiatives.*

~ Susan Kudelka, Teacher, Woodstock Collegiate Institute



# UPSTANDER

It's time to be an **UPSTANDER**



## What do YOU stand up for?

An **UPSTANDER** is an individual who **acts** to make a **positive difference** in the life of an individual or **inspires change** in the community.

[www.tvdsb.ca/upstander](http://www.tvdsb.ca/upstander)



Each school used a different approach to engage their community in the Upstander campaign. Highlighted below is a brief description of how one elementary school moved forward to promote the campaign proactively.



### **Sir George Etienne Cartier PS**

*Two students and the Principal attended the S.A.V.E. conference this fall. Following the conference, the three met to chat some more about the Upstander campaign. The student reps, and many staff members already had the Upstander shirts. And we had randomly placed small Upstander posters around the school. But we were concerned that being an Upstander would be considered only as a response to an action; we wanted to promote Upstanding behaviour as something that Upstanders do actively, not reactively.*

*The students and Principal decided on a photo shoot, with Cartier students posing in shots of Upstanding behaviour. In a word, we would show explicitly the Upstanding behaviour we hoped to reinforce. Each photograph would have two words: “Upstander”, and a verb. Upstanding was action. Our verb choices were: grow, play, assist, learn, care, help, share, include, help, welcome, and the one exception, community.*

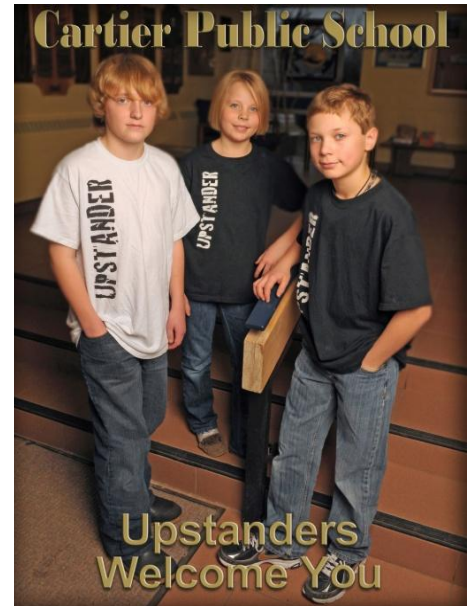
*TVDSB media staff visited the school on two occasions, and took photographs of our students to reflect these verbs. The “community” shot was a student opening our school doors, and welcoming others to “Cartier: an Upstanding Community”.*

*The ten photos were mounted on large boards, and were on display during our Open House Writers’ Fair. They have since been mounted around the school. Upon the completion of our Library renovation, an entire set will be made, and mounted in the new Library space, giving that resource centre a sense of being an art gallery. Next year, our school’s monthly character focus will be the ten Upstanding verbs, which will be explicitly described and shared with students as success criteria on announcements, on monthly bookmarks for personal goals, on larger posters in classrooms and halls, and recognized at monthly assemblies.*

*With the Upstander concept visible around the school, we hope to promote Upstander T-shirt sales next year, and wear those at our monthly assemblies.*

*Thanks go to our student representatives for their leadership of this campaign, and for always modelling Upstander behaviour.*

*~ Rick Wood, Principal, Sir George Etienne Cartier PS*



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## CHALLENGES FACED WITH THE UPSTANDER CAMPAIGN

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- The Upstander events were so successful and popular that it could be challenging to ensure that the message was clearly conveyed in the campaign and not lost in the promotion of the event. With all the excitement about t-shirts and events, it was possible for the focus of the event to be less clear.
- The scale of the campaign and number of schools involved created challenges in mobilization, resourcing, and ensuring activity across the system.
- Additional challenges included finding staff and leaders across the system.
- Because the campaign was the big idea for the year, the degree of system support was only available for that year. The next big idea (Lead out Loud) builds on the Upstander theme, but if school leaders want to continue the Upstander campaign specifically in their schools, it will be without the same level of support from the system.

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## SUCCESS FACTORS FOR THE UPSTANDER CAMPAIGN

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A number of factors have contributed to the success of the Upstander Campaign. These include:

- Although naming the Upstander role was innovative and new, the focus on prosocial bystanders mobilizing to take action has been a longstanding theme in the board, dating back to the results of the first system wide Safe Schools survey.
- Communication regarding what an Upstander is helped ensure a consistent message among all 165 TVDSB schools.
- Annual youth conferences reinforced the “big idea” of being an Upstander to actively promote the campaign throughout the school year.
- Student leaders were provided guidance at youth conferences in moving forward with school based action plans. Staff advisors used their experience to help lead their students in effective campaigns.
- Media releases from TVDSB regularly used the Upstander term to infuse the proactive message among a variety of initiatives.
- The t-shirt and poster campaigns were effective to raise the awareness level of the Upstander and initiate conversation about how to move forward with positive actions.

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## NEXT STEPS FOR UNDERTAKING AN UPSTANDER CAMPAIGN

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A highly successful component of the Upstander Campaign (and other big idea campaigns) is having a high profile kick-off event with promotion (e.g., t-shirts, QR code, website, press releases). In addition, schools need guidance about how to integrate the campaign with existing initiatives throughout the school year to prevent the campaign being viewed as yet another additional undertaking for educators who already feel stretched. Furthermore, it is important to integrate the Upstander campaign into existing initiatives so that the message can be conveyed through a variety of means to reach more students. A system Safe Schools team can play a big role in continuing the momentum by celebrating and profiling successful campaigns at the school level throughout the year.



## CASE STUDY #4: THE FOURTH R

The Fourth R began as a healthy relationship program integrated into classroom curriculum to meet the ministry expectations. The cornerstone of the original grade 9 version of the *Fourth R* is a 21-lesson skill based curriculum that promotes healthy relationships and targets violence, high risk sexual behaviour, and substance use among adolescents. This curriculum has been evaluated by Curriculum Services Canada and meets the Ontario provincial expectations for the Healthy Active Living strand in grade 9 Health and Physical Education. It is delivered by teachers who receive specialized training. Our contention is that relationship skills can be taught in much the same way as the other “three R’s” (Reading, ‘Riting, and ‘Rithmetic), and establishing these skills as a fundamental part of the high school curriculum is



equally essential. Furthermore, given the abundance of negative relationship models available to teens, it is crucial that they be exposed to healthy alternatives and equipped with the skills to develop healthy relationships themselves. Healthy relationships and skills should be seen as complementary to, not competitive with, success in basic academic skills of numeracy and literacy (Greenberg, Domitrovich, Graczyk, & Zins, 2005). The *Fourth R* is comprised of three units to address violence, substance use, and healthy sexuality/sexual behaviour. Together, these three units address the triad of adolescent risk behaviours that are connected to each other in terms of co-occurrence, but are also jointly rooted in peer and dating relationships experienced by youth.

Each unit includes value clarification, provision of information, decision-making and an extensive skill development component. Connections among the three units (i.e., behaviour domains) are emphasized throughout. Accurate information and value clarification allow adolescents the opportunity to think about their own boundaries and comfort levels, and about the decisional balances involved in each of these behaviour areas. These processes are ongoing and integrated into skill development. Adolescents receive ample practise role playing ways to resolve conflict, both as participants and in the role of bystander. Furthermore, they have the opportunity to apply the skills in each of the three areas. For example, instead of learning assertive communication in general, they practise assertive communication during realistic scenarios of dating and peer conflict, pressure to use drugs or alcohol, and pressure to engage in sexual behaviour.



*The Fourth R Health Program provides students with an opportunity to discuss current health-related issues that are important to them while meeting all of the Ministry Expectations for Health. The most effective part of the program is that it provides students with an opportunity to actually practise skills. There is no other place where students have an opportunity to practise these interpersonal skills that they will use throughout their lives. Students buy into the activities provided in the Fourth R and I believe they see the value in what they are learning.*

~ Deb Townsley, Guidance Counsellor and Health and Physical Education teacher



In addition to the classroom the *Fourth R* has school wide components. School interventions include staff and teacher awareness education and supplementary activities by the student led Youth Safe Schools Committee (YSSC) to increase links between community partners. A YSSC is developed in each school with guidance from a teacher, based on a manual that provides guidance in recruitment, training, planning and conducting activities, and evaluating success (Gibbins, Crooks, & Hughes, 2005). Committees vary in how often they meet, but the ideal is a minimum of monthly meetings and a specific number of activities. For example, YSSC organize guest speakers, school-wide media campaigns, field trips and agency open houses to raise the profile of violence prevention in their school. At some schools, the YSSC have undertaken ambitious multi-year projects. For example, in one school



the committee produced a violence prevention publication, *Echoes in the Wind*, in conjunction with its gifted program. The editorial team invited system wide contributions from students at other schools. In addition, the annual Youth Safe Schools Conference brings system student leaders together to develop leadership skills and share ideas and successes.

The *Fourth R* has strong evidence supporting its effectiveness. On the basis of a Randomized Controlled Trial with 20 schools in TVDSB, it was found to both increase positive skills and reduce dating violence. Following the program, a role play evaluation with 200 students (half of whom had participated in the *Fourth R*) demonstrated increased peer resistance and communication skills (Wolfe, Crooks, Chiodo, Hughes, & Ellis, 2012). In addition, youth with histories of child maltreatment were much less likely to perpetrate violent delinquency than if they did not participate in the *Fourth R* (Crooks, Scott, Wolfe, Chiodo, & Killip, 2007). At two year follow-up, *Fourth R* students perpetrated less physical dating violence and reported increased condom use relative to their peers in other schools (Wolfe et al., 2009). The protective impact for maltreated youth was still evident at the follow-up point (Crooks, Scott, Ellis, & Wolfe, 2011).

The core *Fourth R* program was developed for delivery in a universal setting with grade 9 students. There are several adaptations and extensions to fulfill two additional purposes. First, several adaptations were developed for specific groups of youth based on the core program, in recognition that specific subgroups or settings have more distinct needs than can be met with a universal approach. These adaptations include a version for use in Alternative Education settings, an Aboriginal Perspective *Fourth R* version, and a version that matches the Ontario Catholic curriculum expectations, a small groups version and a small groups version with an enhanced focus on promoting mental health (see table 6.1 for details).

**Table 6.1: Adaptations of the *Fourth R* curriculum for different contexts and populations**

| Adaptation                        | Number of Lessons | Differences from Original Program  |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| <b>Alternative Education</b>      | 24 lessons        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More examples and role plays to illustrate concepts and practise skills</li> <li>Additional lesson addressing Ecstasy use</li> <li>Matches academic needs of students in Alternative Education settings with a variety of instructional strategies</li> <li>Additional lessons on bullying</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Aboriginal Perspectives</b>    | 33 lessons        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporates focus on cultural identity and bicultural competence</li> <li>Opportunities to bring community members and Elders into the classroom</li> <li>Provides historical context for some risk behaviours – most notably tracing the multigenerational trauma impact of residential schools and the link to substance use and sexual abuse</li> <li>Specific lesson on suicide prevention</li> <li>Incorporation of culturally relevant learning experiences (such as sharing circles)</li> <li>Additional strength-based programs available (see page 82)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Ontario Catholic</b>           | 20 lessons        | Matches Ontario curriculum expectations for Health and Physical Education in Catholic Schools  |
| <b>Small Groups</b>               | 12 lessons        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly interactive program for groups of 8-15 youth</li> <li>Can include a wider age range of students</li> <li>Complementary to the classroom-based versions</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Healthy Relationships Plus</b> | 14 lessons        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Builds on the Small Groups <i>Fourth R</i> with an enhanced emphasis on promoting mental health</li> <li>Focus on building skills to recognize, support, and seek help for friends and peers who might be experiencing mental health difficulties (page 77)</li> </ul>  |



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*I felt the Fourth R English Unit was worthwhile. The stories were interesting and easy to read. I liked how they were realistic. It really shows what teenagers go through every day.*

~ Grade 10 TVDSB student

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The second type of expansion is predicated on the finding that the most effective programs are delivered over the course of several years, with each year being tailored to the specific developmental stage of the youth. Expansions in this vein include a Grade 7 and 8 curriculum for Healthy Living, and Grades 9 to 12 English Curriculum versions. The decision to use English classes was based in part on the fact that English is a required course in Ontario (whereas Health and Physical Education is optional after Grade 9). In addition, switching from Health and Physical Education to English offers a shift in focus and learning modalities. The emphasis on critical analysis skills and literacy in the English curriculum versions helps to generalize the skills-based instruction received in Grade 9 Health. Table 6.2 shows the expansions across grades and subject areas as of 2012.

**Table 6.2: Expansion of Fourth R to different grades and subject areas**

| Expansion                             | Number of Lessons   | Description of Program  |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Grade 7<br/>Healthy<br/>Living</b> | 26 lessons on the following units of study:<br>violence prevention<br>substance use<br>healthy growth and development<br>healthy eating | Specific instruction in social problem solving<br>Skill development through a playbook to set the stage for more demanding role plays in Grade 9<br>Topics include developing and maintaining friendships, conflict resolution, electronic/cyber bullying and gangs, decision-making, stress and emotional regulation, and benefits and dangers of technology |
| <b>Grade 8<br/>Healthy<br/>Living</b> | 28 lessons on the following units of study:<br>violence prevention<br>substance use<br>healthy growth and development<br>healthy eating | Specific instruction in social problem solving<br>Skill development through a playbook to set the stage for more demanding role plays in Grade 9<br>Topics include developing and maintaining friendships, conflict resolution, electronic/cyber bullying and gangs, media, and skill development   |
| <b>Grade 9<br/>English</b>            | Up to 30 lessons to complete book club  | Lessons based on 6 novels addressing critical issues for youth<br>Variety of literacy strategies to encourage exploration of material and critical thinking<br>Activities designed to encourage personal reflection and application of material   |
| <b>Grade 10<br/>English</b>           | Up to 30 lessons  | Lessons based on 6 fictional short stories addressing critical issues for youth<br>Variety of literacy strategies to encourage exploration of material and critical thinking<br>Activities designed to encourage personal reflection and application of material  |
| <b>Grade 11<br/>English</b>           | Up to 29 lessons depending on academic level of class   | Lessons based on between 20-30 non-fiction readings (depending on academic level of class)<br>Variety of literacy strategies to encourage critical analysis<br>Activities designed to encourage personal reflection and application of material   |
| <b>Grade 12<br/>English</b>           | Up to 30 lessons to complete book club  | Lessons based on 9 novels addressing critical issues for youth<br>Variety of literacy strategies to encourage critical analysis<br>Activities designed to encourage personal reflection and application of material   |





## IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE OF THE FOURTH R

The growth of the number of Fourth R programs and the implementation system-wide has occurred over a number of years. Typically, the pattern involves TVDSB educators working with the Fourth R team to develop new resources during the summer. Following the resource development, a small pilot is undertaken and revisions are made based on the pilot. Next, a system-wide implementation is put in place. Table 6.3 indicates the sequence of the development, piloting, and full implementation of the Fourth R programs. It is critical to note that implementation does not happen on a one-time basis; rather, once a program has been implemented then training and resources are offered on an annual basis for new teachers.

**Table 6.3: Pilot and implementation sequence of Fourth R programs across TVDSB**

| Year      | Pilot  | Full Implementation   |  |
|-----------|--|---|--|
| 2003-2004 | Grade 9 Health (4 schools)   |   |  |
| 2004-2005 | Grade 9 Health (12 schools as part of Randomized Controlled Trial) |   |  |
| 2005-2006 | Grade 10 English   | Grade 9 Health  |  |
| 2006-2007 | Grade 8 Health<br>Alternative Education<br>Grade 11 C/U English    | Grade 9 Health<br>Grade 10 English  |  |
| 2007-2008 | Aboriginal Perspectives<br>Grade 9 English<br>Grade 12 English     | Grade 8 Health<br>Grade 9 Health<br>Grade 10 English  | Grade 11 C/U English<br>Alternative Education  |
| 2008-2009 |  | Grade 8 Health<br>Grade 9 Health<br>Grade 9 English<br>Grade 10 English                         | Grade 11 C/U English<br>Grade 12 English<br>Alternative Education<br>Aboriginal Perspectives                         |
| 2009-2010 | Small Groups Program   | Grade 8 Health<br>Grade 9 Health<br>Grade 9 English<br>Grade 10 English                         | Grade 11 C/U English<br>Grade 12 English<br>Alternative Education<br>Aboriginal Perspectives                         |
| 2010-2011 | Grade 7 Health   | Grade 8 Health<br>Grade 9 Health<br>Grade 9 English<br>Grade 10 English<br>Grade 11 C/U English | Grade 12 English<br>Alternative Education<br>Aboriginal Perspectives<br>Small Groups Program                         |
| 2011-2012 | Healthy Relationships Plus   | Grade 7 Health<br>Grade 8 Health<br>Grade 9 Health<br>Grade 9 English<br>Grade 10 English       | Grade 11 C/U English<br>Grade 12 English<br>Alternative Education<br>Aboriginal Perspectives<br>Small Groups Program |





*The Fourth R program is a valuable resource for English teachers. Fourth R lessons are aligned with English curriculum expectations; topics and texts are well-selected, and are relevant and engaging for students. I particularly appreciate the program's flexibility for teachers; the classroom teacher can use lessons and activities "as is" or can modify them to address student diversity.*

~ Connie Bray, Principal and English Teacher, Thames Valley District School Board



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## CHALLENGES THAT HAVE EMERGED WITH IMPLEMENTING THE FOURTH R

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- Training new teachers on an annual basis is a big undertaking and requires significant resources.
- Although much training and support has been put in place for the use of the Fourth R, it is still very much up to individual teachers regarding its use. There is not a system-level accountability that requires educators to use the program (or an alternative evidence-based program in its place).
- Even among teachers who are trained and implementing the program, it is difficult to monitor or encourage the fidelity with which the program is used. Research indicates that there is “program drift,” even among motivated and well-meaning implementers.
- There is wide variability in the quality and quantity of school wide components and the activity level of the Youth Safe Schools Committees. Furthermore, it can be difficult to find an educator to champion this group in every secondary school given competing priorities.

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## SUCCESS FACTORS FOR THE FOURTH R

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The Fourth R has been successful in TVDSB for the following reasons:

- It is an evidence-based, integrated program and not an add-on.
- Lesson plans are well written and include current high quality, engaging teaching strategies.
- Accessible, prepared teaching plans and accompanying resources.
- Commitment by Safe Schools to provide training and resources to teachers on an annual basis. Having a core group of Master Trainers facilitates this ongoing training.
- The Fourth R team has made a commitment to continuous innovation through creating additional training resources, addressing emerging issues, and expanding to develop new programs for more grades and areas.
- On-going support by CAMH and Fourth R.
- Champion teachers who believe in the importance of the Fourth R curriculum and continue to sustain the program and encourage other teachers to implement it.

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## NEXT STEPS FOR EXPLORING THE FOURTH R AS PART OF YOUR SAFE SCHOOLS APPROACH

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Information about available Fourth R programs and training can be obtained from the CAMH Centre for Prevention Science website: [www.youthrelationships.org](http://www.youthrelationships.org). Specific inquiries can be made through the website too. More information about the Fourth R is also available through the Public Health Agency of Canada's Best Practices Portal at: <http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/intervention/617/view-eng.html>.





# Chapter 7

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*Summary, References, Recommended  
Resources, Appendices*

## CHAPTER 7: TOOLKIT SUMMARY

This toolkit represents the range of initiatives and processes developed to ensure that TVDSB schools are committed to maintaining safe, inclusive, and accepting environments. We have used different approaches throughout this resource to show how Safe Schools can be addressed from different vantage points. At the end of the day, all roads lead to the same destination of safe, inclusive and accepting schools. Reflecting on these different approaches, there are a number of major themes that emerge as success factors, regardless of the approach being discussed. Although each board will need to navigate the path to Safe Schools in a way that fits the unique character, strengths and challenges of their board, there are some key factors that should be addressed, whatever the size, location, and specifics of the board. We conclude this resource with the identification of ten general success factors that can support effective Safe Schools in any board:

### SUCCESS FACTOR #1: STRONG SENIOR LEADERSHIP

*“School leaders are pivotal to the development of excellent teaching, excellent schools and ultimately, enhanced student achievement and well-being. System leaders play an essential role by putting in place supportive system practices and procedures for school leaders and providing system-wide leadership” (Leithwood, 2012).*

At the school level, administrators and other leaders play a major role in developing Safe Schools initiatives and promoting a positive school climate. School leaders are essential in providing professional development to their entire staff, monitoring the implementation of new policies and procedures, and providing support and encouragement for the use of evidence-based programs. One area where administrators have significant influence is in the selection and hiring of new staff. The hiring process provides a unique window of opportunity for selecting staff with experience, commitment, and enthusiasm in the area of Safe Schools.

The leadership provided by Trustees, the Director and rest of the leadership team provides a context for the success of Safe Schools throughout the system. For example, the presentation of Safe Schools data and initiatives to the board provides an important opportunity for those in senior positions to ask questions and identify gaps. In addition, making time to review all activities and plan for the upcoming year on an annual basis has helped ensure that TVDSB is proactive in its approach to Safe Schools, rather than having the direction set through reaction to events. Finally, the prioritization of Safe Schools by senior leadership helps to ensure that the funds are available to conduct Safe Schools professional development and make resources available to implement evidence-based programming. The degree of involvement in Safe Schools by the senior leadership team leads to resources for all stages of programming, from resource development, to resource distribution and implementation, to training, to celebration of success.

### SUCCESS FACTOR #2: BALANCING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Effective Safe Schools is a balancing act between prevention and intervention. Clearly, good intervention protocols grounded in progressive discipline are required and these protocols need to be implemented consistently. However, to truly move towards safe, inclusive and accepting schools, a larger framework is needed that promotes healthy relationships and positive school climates and prevents violence. Because of the competing demands on all educators and the shortage of time, promoting prevention requires intentional strategies and prioritization. Without a clear commitment to prevention, the default tends to be a focus on responding to incidents.



### SUCCESS FACTOR #3: ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER MANDATES AND INITIATIVES

Throughout this toolkit we have emphasized the importance of aligning Safe Schools with other initiatives. There are many natural points of alignment with Equity and Inclusive Education, Mental Health, and Character Education, among others. This alignment can create efficiency of resources and allow leaders in one area to benefit from the expertise and experiences of leaders in another area. Alignment also reduces the appearance of competing or cumulative requirements by helping all members of the education system see that these directions are complementary and all combine to create safe, inclusive and accepting schools. Finally, the extent to which alignment leads to common language and key messages increase the likelihood of this language and messaging being adopted by all members of the school community.

### SUCCESS FACTOR #4: RESEARCH-BASED AND DATA-INFORMED

The Ontario Leadership Framework 2012 identifies affective use of evidence as a best practice, specifically high performing school systems (Leithwood, 2012):

- Have efficient and effective information management systems;
- Provide schools with relevant evidence about their performance;
- Assist schools in using evidence to improve their performance;
- Create collaborative structures and opportunities for the interpretation of evidence in schools;
- Call on expertise from outside the school system for help with data interpretation when needed;
- Use appropriate evidence for accounting to stakeholders;
- Make effective use of existing research to guide policy making and planning.

TVDSB has made a commitment to implement evidence-based programming where possible through the use of the Fourth R, WITS, Steps to Respect, and Roots of Empathy. These programs are supported to differing extents through the provision of training and resources. Beyond specific programs, TVDSB has set the expectation and provided support for school leaders to engage in data-informed decision-making. Using data from Safe Schools surveys and other assessment approaches to develop Safe Schools action plans and track progress is consistent with the leadership best practices outlined in the Ontario Leadership Framework. TVDSB has supported the development of this capacity with school leaders through the provision of training and tools to use data to inform decisions.

### SUCCESS FACTOR #5: DEFINED CLEAR EXPECTATIONS FOR SCHOOLS AND STAFF

A strong communication plan helps to ensure that school leaders are aware of the expectations with respect to Safe Schools. Part of success in Safe Schools is having effective and consistently applied policies and procedures for responding to violence (e.g., threat assessment protocols, responding to incidents). The extent to which school leaders fully understand the ministry and board requirements for responding to violence provides the background against which school leaders in turn provide professional development to all their staff, including educators, support staff, bus drivers, custodial staff, and anyone else working with students or in the school setting. Clear expectations are required for all staff, such that the response to an incident should be consistent regardless of the viewpoint of the individual staff member who observes it. Finally, clear expectations about reporting (such as requiring schools to submit the names of their Safe Schools Action Team and their meeting dates) creates accountability.



#### SUCCESS FACTOR #6: ENGAGING PARTNERS

Effective Safe Schools requires that all stakeholders play a role. Different strategies and opportunities are required for mobilizing students, educators, families, and community members. A comprehensive Safe Schools Action Plan considers the needs of each of these stakeholder groups and develops intentional strategies to engage them. Furthermore, extra efforts are required to help ensure involvement of diverse members of stakeholder groups rather than simply engaging student and parent leaders, for example.

#### SUCCESS FACTOR #7: EFFECTIVE USE OF COMMITTEES

Even with two designated Safe Schools Learning Coordinators, the vast number of programs, policies, special events, and resource development opportunities in a board the size of TVDSB requires the involvement of many people. The use of committees and ensuring that there is crossover in committee membership has been a critical component of the TVDSB Safe Schools strategy. Collaboration with psychology and social work professionals through these committees has also been successful. Beyond the internal committees, the committee structure has been an effective way to engage community and help ensure a wide range of stakeholders are involved in an ongoing manner to determine the direction of Safe Schools.

#### SUCCESS FACTOR #8: INNOVATIVE MULTI-FACETED APPROACHES

One of the hallmarks of programming in TVDSB is that innovation is encouraged and supported, but there is an expectation of comprehensive and multi-faceted approaches. Typically, the board does not provide support for simple one-time events, unless they are part of a larger approach. For example, the use of dramatic plays is part of a comprehensive approach that includes training for facilitators to provide de-briefing activities, and curriculum connections. Innovation is required to respond to the constantly changing landscape, such as the emergency of technology-enabled forms of bullying and harassment.

#### SUCCESS FACTOR #9: IMPLEMENTING WITH SUSTAINABILITY IN MIND

Some of the most successful programs in TVDSB have been implemented for more than a decade. This sustainability and renewal of programs does not happen automatically, but rather requires a plan and resources from the outset. One of the most important strategies for ensuring sustainability is a plan for the provision of training on an annual basis. Ongoing training builds capacity among educators, develops emerging leaders, and helps combat sustainability challenges such as teacher and administrator turnover. A combination of elective and mandatory training opportunities recognizes the fact that educators are juggling numerous priorities, while ensuring that important changes in policies and procedures are implemented effectively throughout the system. Ensuring that programs align with curriculum connections following ministry revisions to curriculum documents is another way in which the sustainability of effective programs can be promoted.

#### SUCCESS FACTOR #10: EMPHASIZING CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

The extent to which Safe Schools can be woven into curriculum increases the implementation and sustainability of efforts. Furthermore, it creates more impact by being able to address key literacy requirements (for example) while providing important education on healthy relationships and related issues. Embedding Safe Schools activities into curriculum makes it more efficient for educators to provide these opportunities to their students. It also helps to ensure that students will receive these critical messages about relationships and violence throughout their academic journey and from different sources, rather than leaving it to one special topic in one particular class.



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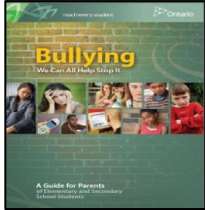
## APPENDIX A: RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

The following resources were selected because they are Canadian, practical, easily accessible, and come from credible sources. This list is in no way intended to be exhaustive.

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### BULLYING

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#### **ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION – *Bullying: We Can All Help Stop It***

This document is designed for parents to help them identify and address bullying. It is a guide to help parents know what to watch for, what they can do, and where they can go to get help. This resource can be accessed at: [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/bullying.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/bullying.pdf).

#### **PREVNET – *Facts About Bullying***

Fact sheets are available on the PREVNet website about prevalent topics in bullying. Research is provided, when applicable. Recent fact sheets include *Age Trends in the Prevalence of Bullying*, *Bullying and School Climate*, and *Bullying Prevention and Intervention*. These resources can be accessed at:

[www.prevnet.ca/BullyingResources/ResourcesForEveryone/tabid/392/Default.aspx](http://www.prevnet.ca/BullyingResources/ResourcesForEveryone/tabid/392/Default.aspx).

#### **PREVNET – *Summaries of Recent Studies***

Short synopses of published research articles are provided on the PREVNet website. Some recent research topics include *Bullying from Early to Late Adolescence*, *Bullying in Canada*, and *Bullying Experiences for Sexual Minorities*. These resources can be accessed at: [www.prevnet.ca/BullyingResources/ResourcesForEveryone/tabid/392/Default.aspx](http://www.prevnet.ca/BullyingResources/ResourcesForEveryone/tabid/392/Default.aspx).



#### **PREVNET – *Resources for Parents***

A variety of resources are available for parents on the PREVNet website. They offer tip sheets on topics such as cyber bullying and how to stand up to bullying, information sheets about cyber bullying, bullying at different ages, and bullying of LGBTQ youth, and lastly, information about how to develop formative consequences. There are also brief videos available that address similar topics. These resources can be accessed at:

[www.prevnet.ca/BullyingResources/ResourcesForParents/tabid/390/Default.aspx](http://www.prevnet.ca/BullyingResources/ResourcesForParents/tabid/390/Default.aspx).

#### **PREVNET – *Resources for Educators and Other Adults who Work With Children***

A variety of resources are available for educators and adults who work with youth. Information is included for a selection of specific occupations that deal primarily with youth, as well as tip sheets and checklists. These resources can be accessed at:

[www.prevnet.ca/BullyingResources/ResourcesForEducatorsOthers/tabid/391/Default.aspx](http://www.prevnet.ca/BullyingResources/ResourcesForEducatorsOthers/tabid/391/Default.aspx).



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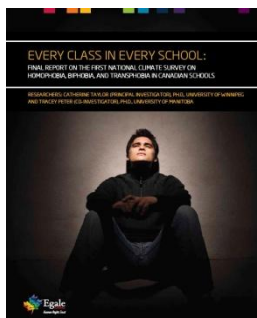
## HOMOPHOBIA

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### *ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION – Forging Safer Learning Environments: Addressing Homophobic Bullying In Schools*

This document was released as part of a research-into-practice series produced by a partnership between the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat and the Ontario Association of Deans of Education. This particular issue looked at homophobic bullying in schools and the consequences on all students, with an emphasis on LGBTQ youth. This resource can be accessed at:

[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW\\_safe\\_learning\\_environments.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW_safe_learning_environments.pdf).



### *EGALE – Every Class in Every School: The first national climate survey on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Canadian schools*

This report discusses the results of a national survey of Canadian high school students undertaken in order to investigate what life at school is like for students with sexual or gender minority status. Egale Canada conducted a study that sought to identify the forms and extent of students' experiences of homophobic and transphobic incidents at school, the impact of those experiences, and the efficacy of measures being taken by schools to combat these common forms of bullying. This resource can be accessed at:

<http://archive.egale.ca/EgaleFinalReport-web.pdf>.

### *SAFE AT SCHOOL – Professional Learning Modules*

Professional learning modules on Equity and Inclusion and Bullying Prevention are offered for Educators and other members of the school staff. These modules are designed to provide education workers with resources and proven strategies to assist them in handling the overall issue of bullying, homophobia, racism and sexism in schools, and the specific incidents that schools must deal with daily. These resources are accessible at:

[www.safeatschool.ca/index.php?q=plm](http://www.safeatschool.ca/index.php?q=plm).



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## MEDIA VIOLENCE

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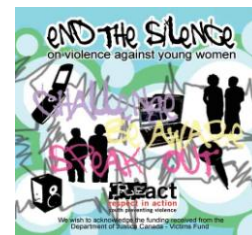
### *CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN / CAMH CENTRE FOR PREVENTION – Critical Media Literacy: Resources for JK-Gr 12 Addressing Violence in the Media*

The Critical Media Literacy initiative was a project made possible by the following organizations: Ontario Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat, Elementary Teachers Federation, Ontario Secondary Schools Teachers' Federation, Ontario Principals Council, Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association, Ontario Public School Boards' Association, and Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association. Two editions of this resource were released, in total containing 13 units of study to address violence to help educators develop critical media literacy in youth. All units are integrated with Ontario's curriculum for grades JK-12. This resource is accessible at: [www.crvawc.ca/CritMedLitCD/index.html](http://www.crvawc.ca/CritMedLitCD/index.html).

### *METROPOLITAN ACTION COMMITTEE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN – "End the Silence!" Respect in Action*

This resource provides youth-friendly information on different forms of violence, media literacy, power, oppression, challenging stereo types, and critical thinking around violence against women, girls, and youth. The magazine also provides information youth can access if they or a friend need help. This resource is accessible at:

[www.metrac.org/resources/resources.htm](http://www.metrac.org/resources/resources.htm).



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## CYBER BULLYING

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### **ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION – Safe Schools: Cyber Bullying**

The Ontario Ministry of Education has information pertaining to cyber bullying, specifically. The topics include online respect and responsibility, how to learn more, and what students think. Information is accessible at: [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/respect.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/respect.html).

### **ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION – Get Connected, Get in the Know: Online Respect and Responsibility**

Students attended a forum to discuss cyber bullying, online respect, and online responsibility. Ontario students had critical perspectives to share. A summary of the findings was produced. This resource is accessible at:

[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/pdfs/OnLineRespect.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/pdfs/OnLineRespect.pdf).



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## FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT

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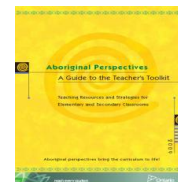
### **CAMH CENTRE FOR PREVENTION – Engaging and Empowering Aboriginal Youth: A Toolkit for Service Providers**



This toolkit presents a wide range of guidelines, strategies, templates and case studies for those who work with Aboriginal youth. Throughout the toolkit a mix of conceptual guidelines and practical strategies are presented in the following five key sections: Background and Overview, Guiding Principles, Working with Schools, Research and Evaluation, and Assessment. This resource is accessible in English and French at: [www.youthrelationships.org/research\\_consulting/toolkit.html](http://www.youthrelationships.org/research_consulting/toolkit.html).

### **ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION – Aboriginal Perspectives: A Guide To The Teacher's Toolkit**

The Teacher's Toolkit is a new collection of electronic resources from the Ministry of Education to help elementary and secondary teachers bring Aboriginal perspectives into their classrooms. This resource is accessible at: [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/Guide\\_Toolkit2009.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/Guide_Toolkit2009.pdf).



### **ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION – Ontario's Aboriginal Education Strategy**

Ontario's Aboriginal Education Strategy is helping First Nations, Métis and Inuit students achieve their full potential. The strategy includes initiatives that support learning and achievement for Aboriginal students. It also raises awareness about First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures, histories and perspectives in classrooms across Ontario. Information is accessible at: [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal).

### **ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION – Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework**

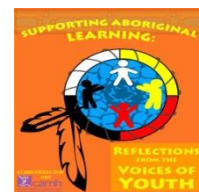


The First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy framework includes approaches for schools and school boards that will boost Aboriginal student achievement, help close the gap in achievement between Aboriginal and non- Aboriginal students, and increase public confidence in publicly funded education. This resource is accessible at: [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/fnmiFramework.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/fnmiFramework.pdf).

### **CAMH CENTRE FOR PREVENTION SCIENCE – Supporting Aboriginal Learning: Reflections from the Voices of Our Youth**

Supporting Aboriginal Learning: Reflections from the Voices of Youth was created to highlight the unique experiences of Aboriginal youth during the transition from elementary school to high school. Information is available at:

[www.youthrelationships.org/school\\_based\\_projects/video%20projects/aboriginal\\_reflections\\_video.html](http://www.youthrelationships.org/school_based_projects/video%20projects/aboriginal_reflections_video.html)



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## MENTAL HEALTH

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### *MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION – Evergreen Report: A Child and Youth Mental Health Framework for Canada*

The proposed framework, entitled Evergreen, provides a child and youth context to the Mental Health Strategy for Canada. Evergreen is a collaborative project that was constructed by professionals, youth, parents and members of the public from across Canada who have expertise, interest or experience with mental health and mental illness. This resource is accessible at: [www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/family/Evergreen\\_Framework\\_Summary\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/family/Evergreen_Framework_Summary_ENG.pdf).



### *MyHealth Interactive Magazine*

MyHealth Magazine is a health and wellness program delivered through a series of interactive, online resources for young people, educators, and college students. As a resource, MyHealth Magazine functions as a unique broker of high-quality health information presented in a variety of interactive formats (for example, info sheets, Q&As, and quizzes) that can be customized to meet the individual needs of local schools and groups. This resource is accessible at: [www.myhealthmagazine.net](http://www.myhealthmagazine.net).



### *Centre for Addiction and Mental Health*

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

The CAMH website provides health information about mental health and addiction. There are resources for parents, children and youth, and older adults. Information is accessible via: [www.camh.ca/en/hospital/health\\_information/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/health_information/Pages/default.aspx).

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## SELECTING EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

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### *Public Health Agency of Canada's Best Practices Portal*

The Public Health Agency of Canada has created a Best Practice portal that provides resources and solutions to plan programs for promoting health and preventing diseases in your community. The site consolidates multiple sources of trusted and credible information in one place, making it a one-stop shop for busy health professionals and decision-makers. Information is accessible at: <http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca>.

### *Ontario Ministry of Education Registry of Resources for Safe and Inclusive Schools*

This is a registry that compiles resources that meet the registry classification checklist, as standardized by the Ministry of Education. Information is accessible at: [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/bullyprevention/registry.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/bullyprevention/registry.html).

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## PROGRAM EVALUATION

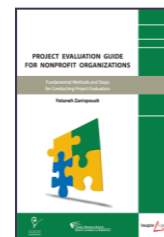
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### *Imagine Canada's Non-profit Library*

Imagine Canada's non-profit library is the largest online resource centre for people who work in Canada's charities and non-profits. Their program evaluation guide includes a host of tips and practical tools.

### *Public Health Agency of Canada's Evidence-Informed Decision-Making: Information and Tools*

The Public Health Agency of Canada has provided information and tools pertaining to evidence-informed decision-making to distil and disseminate the best available evidence from research, practice and experience. Information is accessible at: <http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/resources/evidence-informed-decision-making>.



## APPENDIX B: TVDSB TOOLKIT TEAM

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### TOOLKIT TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

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#### DR. CLAIRE CROOKS

Dr. Claire Crooks is the Associate Director of the CAMH Centre for Prevention Science and an Adjunct Professor at the Centre for Research and Education in Violence Against Women and Children at Western University. Her main focus is the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Fourth R, with an emphasis on strengths-based programming for Aboriginal youth. She is the Principal Investigator of the Public Health Agency of Canada-funded Fourth R project which is a 4 year project on adaptation and evaluation of the Fourth R, with sites in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Northwest Territories. Dr. Crooks is the author of more than 50 articles, chapters and books on child abuse, domestic violence, programming for Aboriginal youth, dating violence, custody, and bullying. In addition to the training she does with educators, she provides professional development for judges and other court personnel as a Faculty member for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.



#### BARB SONIER

Barb Sonier has been Superintendent of Education in Operations with the Thames Valley District School Board since February 2008. She is responsible for supervising twenty schools and her system portfolios are Safe Schools and Character Development. In her role, she provides professional development and training related to Safe Schools issues to administrators, teachers, parents and students. She chairs the Safe Schools' Committee which involves over thirty board employee groups and community partners. She sits on the Mayor's Council to End Woman Abuse and the Board of Directors for the Community Services Coordination Network (CSCN) and Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) South West Region.



#### TONI WILSON

Toni Wilson is a Learning Coordinator for the Thames Valley District School Board. She has been a secondary school teacher of English and Dramatic Arts for 25 years. She has been involved in violence prevention and Forum Theatre for the past 20 years. She has used interactive theatre extensively to allow the practice of effective strategies for dealing with adversity. Currently she is responsible for coordinating and implementing Safe Schools programs for 165 schools across Thames Valley. She also provides professional development to school administrators, teachers, parents and students related to Safe Schools. She continues to work to develop new initiatives and build community partnerships that help schools address issues such as bullying, gender-based violence and homophobia and encourages students to make positive change. Toni brings people together to create inclusive, accepting, and safe school environments.





#### SUSAN DALE

Susan Dale has 16 years of experience in education. She has been a teacher and Department Head of Health and Physical Education, and is currently the Learning Coordinator for Safe Schools in the Thames Valley District School Board. In this role, Susan coordinates Safe Schools initiatives for students from JK to Grade 12 in 165 schools. As well, Susan provides professional development to superintendents, school administrators, teachers, parents and students on general information related to bullying and the various TVDSB Safe Schools programs that are available. Susan is also a Master Trainer for the Fourth R Project, as well as a certified TRIBES Trainer for her school board. She has trained hundreds of teachers to integrate safe schools issues within the curriculum and has helped them to create cultures of caring within their classrooms.



#### LAURA ELLIOTT

Laura Elliott is the Executive Superintendent, Program Services, with the Thames Valley District School Board and a member of IEL representing OPSOA. Laura leads a very large team of educators and professional staff in curriculum, special education and information technology. She also chairs the board's Equity and Inclusive Education Committee. Prior to the TVDSB, she worked in the capacity of Superintendent of Education with the Durham District School Board and held multiple portfolios including information technology, safe schools, as well as school improvement. Her provincial work has included working with the Ontario College of Teachers in the area of teacher certification and assisting internationally educated teachers in the certification process, as well as with the Ontario Ministry of Education in the Student Success/Learning to 18 Branch. In September 2012, Laura will be the President of the Ontario Public Supervisory Officials' Association, which is the professional organization representing 300 Directors of Education and Superintendents from the thirty-one English language public school boards in Ontario.



#### RAY HUGHES

Ray obtained his B.Ed. and M.Ed. from the University of Western Ontario and has over 30 years of experience in education as a teacher, Department Head, and Consultant. He is currently the National Education Coordinator for the Fourth R at the CAMH Centre for Prevention Science. He has developed and implemented school-based programs related to substance abuse, domestic violence, gender equity, dating violence, human sexuality, interpersonal violence, conflict resolution, and anti-bullying, and he provides regular professional development to superintendents, school administrators, teachers, parents and students on violence prevention and safe schools initiatives. He was an inaugural member of the Ontario Safe Schools Action Team.



#### DR. PETER JAFFE

Dr. Peter Jaffe is Academic Director of the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, and a Professor in the Faculty of Education at Western University where he teaches Safe Schools to B.Ed. and M.Ed. students. He is also the Founding Director for the Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System of the London Family Court Clinic. Dr. Jaffe has been a trustee for the Thames Valley District School Board since 1980, and has served two terms as Chairperson. He was recently named to the ministry's Expert Panel for Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools.



## APPENDIX C: RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON ACCOMPANYING DVD

### TVDSB PROGRAMS

#### Stand by Me Mentoring Program

- Manual

#### U-Turn Program

- Student Action Plans

#### Safe Schools Action Plan

- Action Plan
- Reflection

#### Intervention

- 4A Response
- How to Handle Inappropriate Behaviour

#### Bullying Prevention & Intervention: A Whole School Approach

- Website

#### Respect in Sport

- Website

#### WITS

- Website

#### Roots of Empathy

- Website

#### Steps to Respect

- Website

#### Fourth R

- Website
- Grade 7-9 Health Program sample lesson plans
- Alternative Education Program sample lesson plans
- Aboriginal Perspectives Program sample lesson plans
- English Program sample lesson plans
- 8e-9e Année plan des leçons
- Grade 7 Health Faith-Based sample lesson plan
- Engaging and Empowering Aboriginal Youth: Toolkit for Service Providers
- Engagement et responsabilisation des jeunes autochtones : trousse d'outils destinée aux fournisseurs de services
- Aboriginal Cultural Leadership Course
- Aboriginal Peer Mentoring Program (secondary)
- Aboriginal Group Mentoring (elementary)
- Fourth R Small Groups Program sample session
- Healthy Relationships Plus Program





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## TVDSB INITIATIVES & PROGRAMS

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### Diversity: Embracing Who We Are

- Website
- Video Clip – Parent Perspective (Elem/Sec)
- Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity

### Critical Media Literacy

- Website

### Upstander Campaign

- website
- Video Clip – Dave Wilson (Sound Minds)
- Video Clip – Northridge PS (song)
- Video Clip – 6 student perceptions being an Upstander

### Safe Schools Survey

- Website

### TRIBES

- Website
- Evaluation

### Character Development

- Website

### Mental Health

- 5 year Mental Health Strategic Plan

### Equity & Inclusive Education

- Website

### Forum Theatre

- Summary of all Forum Theatre
- Video Clip from “Lifelines”

### Drama

- Summary of all Plays
- Video Clip: “Blue”
- Video Clip: “No Ordinary Joe”

### First Nations, Métis & Inuit

- Website

### Director’s Task Force to End Bullying

- Report to the Community

### The Pledge

- Website

### Conferences

- SAVE Conference
- sample PowerPoint presentation
- YSSC Conference
- sample PowerPoint presentation
- GSA Conference
- sample PowerPoint presentation

### Homophobia Sensitivity Training

- Facilitator Manual
- Video Clip – Homophobia Hurts

### Stop Bullying Training

- Facilitator Manual
- Video Clip – Director’s Message
- Video Clip – WIN WIN Responses

### Restorative Approaches

- Poster
- Pamphlet
- Video Clip – Administrator narrative

### Safe Schools

- Pamphlet



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## TVDSB VIDEO RESOURCES

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### Video Resources

- Homophobia Hurts
- WIN WIN Responses
- S.O.S.
- Good Intentions
- Angel
- Drama “Blue”
- Drama “No Ordinary Joe”
- Forum Theatre “Lifelines”
- Upstander – Dave Wilson (Sound Minds)
- Upstander – Northridge PS (song)
- Upstander – 6 student perceptions being an Upstander
- Restorative Approaches – Connie Bray – administrator narrative
- Diversity: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity – A Parent’s Perspective (Elementary)
- Diversity: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity – A Parent’s Perspective (Secondary)
- Stop Bullying – Director’s Message

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## ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION DOCUMENTS

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| Safe Schools Action Team Reports  | Ministry of Education – Bills  | Ministry of Education – Policy/Program Memoranda  | Ministry of Education – Resources  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaping Safer Schools: A Bullying Prevention Action Plan, 2005</li> <li>• Safe Schools Policy and Practice: An Agenda for Action, 2006</li> <li>• Shaping a Culture of Respect in our Schools: Promoting Safe &amp; Healthy Relationships, 2008</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bill 81 – Safe Schools Act, 2000</li> <li>• Bill 212 – Progressive Discipline and School Safety Act, 2007</li> <li>• Bill 157 – Keeping our Kids Safe at School Act, 2009</li> <li>• Bill 13 – Accepting Schools Act, 2012</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPM 141 – School Board Programs for Students on Long-Term Suspensions</li> <li>• PPM 142 – School Board Programs for Expelled Students</li> <li>• PPM 144 – Bullying Prevention &amp; Intervention</li> <li>• PPM 145 – Progressive Discipline &amp; Promoting Positive Student Behaviour</li> <li>• PPM 119 – Developing and implementing equity and inclusive education policies in Ontario schools</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe, Inclusive and Accepting Schools resources</li> <li>• School Climate Surveys</li> <li>• Safe and Caring Schools document</li> <li>• Promoting a Positive School Climate document</li> <li>• Finding Common Ground document</li> <li>• SpeakUp initiative</li> <li>• Many Roots, Many Voices document</li> <li>• Parent Engagement Policy</li> <li>• Equity and Inclusive Education Guidelines</li> </ul> |

