Title and a brief description of L4All K-12 Regional Project

Program Evaluation: Implementation Science Research Project
“GETTING FROM HERE TO THERE: PROGRAM SELECTION, IMPLEMENTATION, AND ASSESSMENT”

Project Context:
Implementation Science is the systematic practice for acquiring and disseminating research-based knowledge regarding implementation endeavours. Learning For All K-12 (Draft 2009) makes reference to this concept. Knowledge mobilization includes the study of influences on professional and organization behaviour. All the Boards in the London Region are implementing many aspects of Learning For All K-12 (Draft 2009).

Project Learning Goals:
Through this project, the London Regional Special Education Council is working collaboratively to examine three questions that we hope will assist us in program selection and implementation methodology, and ultimately assessing the effectiveness of the selected programs:
1. Are the programs/practices research-based?
2. How do we know that the programs/practices are having the effect that we want them to have in our local context?
3. Are we able to measure the validity of the implementation? Are we using the best strategies for implementation? How do we measure implementation success or failure?

Project Success Criteria:
A framework for evaluating new/existing/proposed programs or strategies will be developed which will enable all boards/school authorities in the region to evaluate the effectiveness of the chosen intervention, no matter the specifics of the project or the organizational context.

Program Framework:
A framework for program evaluation, implementation, and assessment was developed through collaboration and feedback from the participating Regional Special Education Council (RSEC) members and the assistance of a researcher hired to support the project.

A brief description of 2011-12 and 2012-13 Teacher-Led L4All K-12 Projects

Following the compilation of a report on the relevant research in this area and interviews with all participants a framework was developed and piloted by participants. At regional RSEC meetings, additional feedback on the framework and the process was collected, as well as interim reports posted on the regional website and collated by the researcher. Revisions were made to the framework as suggested by the members.
A brief description of L4All K-12 professional learning activities

Following revisions to the framework based on initial implementation, the region hosted a professional development event as a culminating activity. The session was titled: “Connecting Professional Learning and Implementation Science for School Boards”, and was held at the White Oaks Conference Centre in Niagara-on-the-Lake on May 22 and 23, 2013. Sessions included:

The Problems with Educator Professional Development and Professional Learning with Dr. Steven Katz from OISE, and Overcoming Implementation Challenges in Evidenced-Based Prevention and Intervention in Schools with Dr. Mark Weist from the University of South Carolina. In addition, those attending on Day 1 participated in round table discussions on:

- How do we, as system leaders, influence the behavior and learning of others?
- How do we influence the learning of schools/districts through a professional inquiry process?

Additionally, on Day 2, attendees participated in discussions regarding the framework in the following areas:

How does the Framework Support:

- Planning (Evidence-based Program Selection – Making Research Matter in What We Do);
- Acting (Implementation – Doing What We Do with Integrity and Fidelity);
- Assessing (Selection of Success Criteria – Knowing that What We Do Makes a Difference); and
- Reflecting (What have we learned? How can we use the framework to support effective change/program implementation in our districts?).

Assessment

This project, as well as other previous regional projects, reflects the continuation of the London RSEC’s commitment to professional learning as a regional group. Regional collaborative projects have included:

- Connections Project
- Assessing Achievement in Alternative Areas (A4) Project
- Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) Learning 4 All Project
- CODE JK-1 Project
- Special Equipment Amount (SEA) Consortium
- Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) Mapping Tool for School Boards
- Regional Website
- Logic Model process
- On-line Surveys – collaborative data collection on agreed performance indicators
• Learning for All K-12: Program Evaluation – Implementation Science Research Project

The continued use and examination of the effectiveness of the framework (along with other professional development) may be able to demonstrate that measuring the implementation of a program is as effective an indicator of a program’s success as assessing via outcomes. It may prove an effective accountability tool for programs involving students with special education needs, or any program where standard measures/trailing indicators are not appropriate. The group will continue to work collectively to best support each other and special education and Learning For All initiatives in the region.

Additional Comments

The London Region RSEC appreciates the support of the Ministry of Education, both through funding and Ministry staff support, which has allowed us collectively to pursue regional professional development endeavours to support our most vulnerable students. We look forward to additional opportunities to continue this work.