

memo

to ATA Members

from
David Stevenson
Chief Superintendent
June 2015

C2 Implementation Committee Update

I would like to provide you with one final update before summer vacation begins regarding system progress to date on C2 recommendations. As you know, the CBE is charged with responding to recommendations made by a joint ATA/CBE committee established under the auspices of the current collective agreement framework for teachers. Known as the C2 committee, its members created 16 recommendations in response to feedback provided by teachers that address the impact of jurisdictional tasks on teacher workload and efficacy. Here is a summary of the CBE response to date and intentions going forward.

Recommendation 1 – The establishment of a jurisdictional congruity in expectations between school-based administrators to address the volume and content of Results Reporting comments.

This recommendation is important to both student success and teacher workload. I am committed to moving in a direction that meets both interests. In order to build a response that improves our ability to assess and report on citizenship, personal development and character, and creates jurisdictional congruity, we have established a working group made up of system personnel and seven school principals. This group has met regularly and produced recommendations to change the way we do results reporting. These recommendations include the embedding of results in the current stems along with guidelines for teachers and administrators regarding the volume and content of appropriate comments. I anticipate the recommendations will be introduced system-wide by January 2016.

Recommendation 2 – Parameters for report card comments need to respect teacher professionalism and judgement.

Recommendation 3 – Reasonable expectations need to be created such that report cards have greater consistency and system congruence in terms of expectations when it comes to report card comment writing.

Recommendation 4 – Clear direction needs to be provided regarding interim reports. Setting clear parameters might ensure congruity between schools regarding teacher/parent expectations regarding written reports.

The CBE Vision for Assessment and Reporting: Guiding Principles, along with a companion guide, have recently been updated and are in the final stages of approval. They will be ready for the start of the 2015-16 modified calendar school year. In addition to improvements already introduced (e.g. two formal report cards per year, common indicator stems and a common numerical scale for all K-9 schools), new developments in the companion guide will clarify system expectations for all aspects of reporting including interim progress reports, report card comment parameters, and IPP expectations.



Recommendation 5 – The Calgary Board of Education implement smart forms with drop down menus related to the educational outcomes, particularly when A-Trips are occurring to common educational venues.

The online system for off-site activities proposals is anticipated to reduce teacher workload, encourage more off-site activity opportunities for students and provide efficiencies at the system level.

- It is expected the target date of September 2015 will be met in seeing all off-site activities proposal forms (A, B1, B2, C and D) available in the online system.
- Off-site Activities is planning on holding a number of face-to-face information and training sessions for both teachers and administrators as the transition to the online system is implemented for the 2015-2016 school year.

Recommendation 6 – A simple change to make the dates/deadline for updating IPP information the same as the report card is highly supportive of reducing teacher workload and supporting efficacy.

This recommendation has been actioned. The guiding principles of assessment and reporting will fully integrate IPP pedagogical and logistic alignments within those topics.

Recommendation 7 – The IPP templates need to be modified and can be streamlined. In addition, the IPP templates should be standardized to be similar to the kindergarten Code 30 IPP template.

This recommendation has been partially actioned based on improvements that have been made to Iris IPPs, V2.0 to be rolled out this summer. For reasons of data integrity, security and privacy, there will be a focus on supporting the work of developing IPPs using Iris or SPED as opposed to developing a stand-alone template for IPPs.

Recommendation 8 – Creation of a digital on-line companion resource guide regarding most promising practices related to common issues or diagnosis. Such a companion resource would be of great benefit to teachers and/or administrators encountering some complex student concerns for the first time.

- Learning Services has identified an Alberta Education resource that may meet the needs of teachers and administrators in the preparation of IPPs.
- Before the start of the 2015-16 modified calendar school year a communication will be sent to schools from the Chief Superintendent alerting schools to the availability of the resource.
- Teachers and administrators will be asked to complete a survey to determine whether or not they find the resource provides the type of information requested in the C2 recommendation.

Recommendation 9 – The Chief Superintendent and the Calgary Board of Education Trustees continue to advocate Alberta Education to provide predictable, sustainable funding to address class size and composition.

This is an ongoing process and work that Trustees take very seriously. I believe that over the past year trustees have provided very public examples of their commitment to advocacy on behalf of students and teachers.

Recommendation 10 – An integrated technological environment to simplify and improve the efficiency of the daily work of teachers and administrators. As such, this recommendation is seen as a priority.

Recommendation 11 – Wherever and whenever possible, teacher judgement be supported by practices and policies as a means to reduce workload and better support efficacy. Specifically, the electronic information submitted as well as the processes utilized should reflect teacher judgment rather than emphasize standardized data entry.

- There is ongoing work in the technology environment; specifically the core infrastructure and system upgrades.
- SIRS replacement is underway. Implementation will occur in the 2017/18 school year.
- Respect for workload impact and teacher judgment are primary filters for all technology decisions and initiatives

Recommendation 12 – School wide discussion and understanding of what constitutes "reasonable expectations" about teacher workload, efficacy and involvement in matters related to learning, assessment and culture occur. Reinforcing the use of the Staff Involvement in School Decisions form is a significant aspect of this recommendation.

Recommendation 13 – All schools include in their School Development and Renewal Plan (SDRP) that teacher efficacy receives significant attention and discussion. School strategies to address efficacy and attend to teacher workload within the school context are the intended outcomes of this recommendation.

Recommendation 14 – Teachers have increased influence and direction over time allocation within the jurisdiction over the school year as an opportunity to exercise professional judgement.

Recommendation 15 – The promising practices gathered and identified through the ThoughtStream process be shared at divisional, Area, role related and /or self-selected professional learning communities (PLCs).

- Recommendations 12 – 15 are being addressed together through the development of shared expectations among school leaders especially through regular meetings with Area Directors
- Area Directors have begun the work with principals to build capacity in the area of engagement; specifically to discuss what it means to engage staff in conversations and how to gather feedback from staff.
- Principals are expected to consult with staff around the RAM budget deployment.
- Principals are working with Area Directors to review and discuss best practices for staff engagement in school decision-making.

Recommendation 16 – The sharing of promising practices be given dedicated time, attention and support within the jurisdiction to foster greater efficacy and understanding of how to reduce teacher workload while better supporting student learning and achievement.

This recommendation did not lend itself to specific goals or strategies; however, it seems that regular updates at system meetings, CSR meetings and communications directed at ATA staff members is supportive of the desired outcomes of this recommendation.

As you can see, addressing teacher workload is a large body of work. Please accept my assurance that the issue is front and centre in every initiative we consider at the CBE. While our focus is always on students first, we recognize that teachers are the primary

influence on our students. Our commitment to positive and supportive working conditions for our teachers is essential to the ongoing success of students.

In closing, thank you for your immense efforts this school year, and I wish you a safe and restful summer vacation.