What an exciting year this has been in the Model Schools for Inner Cities program! A strong commitment to increasing academic press and closing the opportunity gap is at the heart of everything we do. Many new initiatives were put in place this year to support these goals. Join with me as we look back at some of the highlights in the Model Schools for Inner Cities program, 2010-2011.

► Innovation in Teaching and Learning
- Our Teaching and Learning Coaches are continuing to do some fabulous work with teachers, students and administrators. This year, they have created an on-line Resource Guide to support the creation of interdisciplinary units using best practices.

► Support Services to Meet the Social, Emotional and Physical Well-being of Students
- In addition to nutrition programs and hearing and vision screening, two pediatric clinics have been established in cluster schools this year with the intention of expanding to more schools.

► School as Heart of the Community
- This year we launched TDSB’s first ever Parent Academies —by parents, for parents—and highlighted the initiatives at TDSB’s Futures Conference this past May!

► Research, Review and Evaluation of Students and Programs
- In the fall, students from grades 2-8 wrote the Canadian Achievement Test (CAT-4). Our schools now have additional data to support student success.
- Perception surveys for staff, students and parents are being rolled out and will provide schools with a wealth of knowledge to improve student learning and well-being.

► Commitment to Share Successful Practices
- The MSIC team has hosted and presented its best practices to educators

As with all great initiatives, there is always change. With the release of the new Learning Opportunities Index, we will be saying goodbye to some of our current schools and welcoming new schools. The MSIC program is expanding to 125 schools in the 2011-2012 school year, and we are moving to 7 clusters, each comprised of both elementary and middle schools. We also welcome back the 7 schools in our Cluster Model Secondary and look forward to an exciting 2011-2012.

I would like to thank Vicky Branco, Central Coordinating Principal, MSIC, for her ongoing commitment to this program and to the students we serve. I would also like to thank the MSIC Resource Team, MSIC administrators and staff, the Inner City Advisory Committee and all of our community and corporate partners for their hard work and dedication to levelling the playing field for all of our students. We’ll see you next year.

Yours in Partnership,
Manon Gardner
Chief Academic Officer, School Improvement
MSIC UNIT FRAMEWORKS

As part of our ongoing professional learning, the MSIC coaches have created an on-line “Resource Guide” for use by teachers in our schools. This guide provides educators with a detailed, highly flexible and adaptable description of the practices and the pedagogy best known to enhance student learning and engagement. It uses the Model Schools for Inner Cities “Community, Character, Change” Units (2009/2010) to exemplify these practices and outlines the specific processes and resources used during the development of the units. The guide is intended to support teachers in planning interdisciplinary units that embed literacy and numeracy essential skills within current social justice inquiry topics. The planning framework can be adapted to the unique culture of all TDSB schools. The practices outlined in this guide can also be adapted to any unit/lesson/activity within any subject area or discipline. They are meant to enhance, not stifle, teacher creativity by enriching the level of in-class discussion and instruction and by actively engaging students in higher-level critical thinking.

Downloadable PDF files will be available for Grade 1 to 8 lesson plans from the 2009/2010 “Community, Character, Change” units with enhancements such as: the rationale for using specific instructional strategies, photographs and video clips of the strategy in action, examples of student work, and hyperlinks to additional resources.

There are a variety of focus areas that will be thoroughly addressed throughout the guide. They are as follows:

► Enduring Understandings
► Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy
► Assessment and Evaluation
► Interdisciplinary Approach
► Differentiated Instruction
► Inquiry-based Learning
► Professional Learning

During the 2011/2012 school year, MSIC coaches will work with teachers at adapting lessons according to their individual student needs using a Culturally Responsive framework and share these adaptations electronically on Sharepoint to provide ongoing support to all teachers in our cluster schools. We look forward to continually learning from and with each other.

MOBILE COMPUTING STRATEGY

Innovative Teaching is the first essential component of the Model Schools for Inner Cities program and the reason we continue to support the integration of interactive technology within the teaching and learning framework. The recent board-wide implementation of the Mobile Computing Strategy has allowed for a number of educators to be trained in the use of the Apple MacBook and its functionality in the math classroom. With its programs and applications, it has proven to be an effective tool for problem-solving and for student communication of processes and strategies. In collaboration with the Teaching and Learning with Technology Department, the Model Schools Coaches received two days of intensive professional development at Apple Canada. The customized training set out to familiarize them with the every-day essentials of the MacBook, working with digital images, Geometer’s Sketchpad, video and enhanced podcasting.

This was a valuable experience that has further equipped our coaches with innovative tools to continue supporting teachers with the integration of technology as a means for achieving student success.
**MSIC SUMMER SCHOOL**

For the month of July, students who attended Model Schools for Inner Cities (MSIC) schools and schools that have an Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership (OFIP) are eligible to attend the summer school program. Students are offered a comprehensive literacy and numeracy program, based on the MSIC curriculum units that have been developed by the Teaching and Learning Coaches. These units were designed to develop the skills in reading, writing and mathematics, while building interest and self confidence. This program will help students to be more prepared when they return in September.

There are 10 host schools across the city (Calico P.S. Crescent Town, Eastview, Firgrove, George Syme, H J Alexander, Kingsview Village, Lord Dufferin, Military Trail and Parkdale).

Bussing is also provided for students who have to travel to a host school. We are pleased to be able to offer this programming to support students in MSIC schools and OFIP schools.

MSIC Coaches will provide support to the schools, the staff and the students. They will co-teach lessons with staff and work with entire classes or individuals in the classroom.

We are pleased that we are able to support our students in the summer as well as throughout the school year.

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**EQUITY FRAMEWORK AND WALKTHROUGHS**

This past year, principals in the Model Schools for Inner Cities program have embarked on professional development as a part of the mandate of the Principal's Academy. The goal has been to develop a framework for evidence of Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy. In partnership with OISE's Centre for Urban Schooling (CUS), principals and the Model School Resource Team have delved into seven focus areas including:

1. Classroom climate and instruction
2. School climate
3. Student voice and space
4. Family/caregiver-school relations
5. School leadership
6. Community connections
7. Culture of professional development

Each cluster of schools embarked on a walk-through using a set of "look-fors" or indicators under each of the seven areas. One school from each of the clusters volunteered to have the administrators, trustees, and MSIC staff tour the classrooms, libraries, and other parts of the school to make observations and look for evidence using the framework as a guide.

In follow-up sessions, the findings were further analyzed in order to reach a deeper understanding of the framework. Revisions are currently underway to utilize the framework at each of the MSIC schools next year.
**PAUL STEINHAUER CLINIC AT GEORGE WEBSTER**

Paul Steinhauer was known throughout the world as “a children’s champion” and a “passionate advocate” for youth. Dr. Steinhauer worked to break down barriers and promote mental and physical health for children. In his memory, George Webster Elementary School established a Pediatric Health Clinic that is providing access to health services to children in its community. This is the second clinic to be established in the Model Schools Pediatric Health Initiative, which aims to make health care more accessible for students in the Model Schools program. Located in inner-city schools, each clinic provides comprehensive services to approximately 800 children. This exciting initiative is a partnership between the Model Schools for Inner Cities, the Toronto Foundation for Student Success and various community and health partners. The clinic is open to students at George Webster as well as students from surrounding cluster schools through specific referral streams. Medical professionals, together with inner-city community partners will provide primary care to children and youth within the school clinic. Initially, the Clinic is operating two half days per week. An International Medical Graduate will be hired as the Clinic Coordinator. Mental health is critical in the treatment of children, so at the Paul Steinhauer Pediatric Clinic, a Child Psychiatrist will play a consultative role. Schools in the cluster will also have access to professional development with a child psychiatrist.

**CEDARBRAE STUDENTS RECEIVE GLASSES FROM ONESIGHT**

As part of the Model Schools for Inner Cities program, all 1400 students at Cedarbrae Collegiate had their vision screened and more than 150 students received free glasses from the Vision Van this June.

The Vision Van was operated by OneSight, a Luxottica Group Foundation that is a non-profit corporation dedicated to improving vision worldwide through outreach, research and education. This partnership allowed us to provide students with eye exams and free glasses.

The students who received the glasses were from grades 9-12 and many of the students had serious vision impairment. As students left the Vision Van with their glasses they were shocked to see “a whole new world” before them and many remarked on how this would change their experience of school.
On May 4, 2011 the Model Schools for Inner Cities program highlighted the success of the first year of our Parent Academies at the TDSB FUTURES CONFERENCE. The conference was held at the Allstream Centre (Exhibition Place) and we had over 500 people in attendance – administrators, teachers and parents.

In preparation for the conference the CSW’s visited each of their schools taking pictures highlighting activities that demonstrated parent and community engagement. As they prepared their display boards the depth and breadth of the activities became evident, as examples were cluster-specific.

The Lead Teachers invited parents from the Cluster Parent Academies Committees (CPACs) to speak about their experiences and the role of CPAC on increasing student success.

The highlight of the afternoon involved parent presentations and the Carousel of Sharing.

Ventelyn Anderson, parent from North Albion C.I. spoke of the success of her Cluster Parent Academy Committee in recruiting parents to become involved. She then shared her belief that involved parents help to create successful students.

Diana Venier Snape and Jasmine McLeod talked about the successful parent conference that the Cluster E CPAC recently hosted. Their conference offered over forty workshops on eighteen topics to suit their parents’ needs from workforce development to supporting their children’s learning. They thanked MSIC for supporting this initiative.

The Community Support Workers (CSWs) then displayed their boards highlighting parent engagement initiatives in their schools. The audience had the opportunity to travel around the room, listen to presentations by the CSW’s and gather ideas to take back to their school and cluster. This part of the afternoon was so successful that the cluster boards are being taken to the upcoming CPAC meetings as parents requested more time to look at them and gather information.

After listening to the parent presenters, members of other clusters took the information back to their next cluster meetings. The enthusiasm has spread and we have several parent conferences being organized by other clusters to occur before the end of the school year.
The launch of Cluster Parent Academy Committees (CPAC) has been a huge success in the Model Schools program this year. Each cluster CPAC has been able to make decisions on the types of events or initiatives that they feel would be beneficial to them. Events were developed around the three goals of the CPAC: parenting and child development; workforce development; and learning to navigate the education system. The types of events and seminars offered were dependent upon the needs of each community. In some clusters the Parent Academy events occurred locally at each individual school while in other clusters, school communities came together to host parent conferences. A wide range of workshop topics have been offered to parents including Healthy Eating, Diabetes Awareness, Kindergarten-Full Day Learning, Introduction to Computers, Internet Safety, Job Search, Resume Writing, and Family Fitness. Parents were provided with the necessary supports to engage fully, such as translations, transportation, food, and child minding.

Regardless of the workshop or format of the CPAC, the end result was the same; groups of parents engaging in learning and discussions on topics that were chosen directly by them, for them.

The next academic year is on the horizon, and with that there are groups of parents within the Model Schools program eagerly anticipating next year’s events and activities. Congratulations to our fantastic parents!

**Ontario Place 2011**

For the third year in a row, the MSIC community (students, parents, staff and community partners) had the opportunity to purchase a Play All Day pass to Ontario Place for either Saturday, May 14th or Sunday, May 15th for only $7.00 per person. (Children 3 and under were FREE). This pass gave ticket holders entrance to the park, and access to all the rides, as well as the water park and Cinesphere IMAX® 3D films. This was a fantastic offer for our students, their families and our community partners, as the regular price is usually over $30 per person. What a great deal! In addition, with proof of purchase of a Play All Day Pass, participants were also able to purchase a 2011 Play All Summer Pass for only $20.00 + tax. The 2011 Play All Summer Pass gives the pass holder unlimited access to Ontario Place until mid-November.

Thousands of people were able to experience a fun day at Ontario Place with their family and friends. Given the poor weather conditions that weekend, Ontario Place agreed to honour the MSIC Play All Day Passes until June 30th, 2011. This means that our families are able to select any day before June 30th to redeem their tickets and purchase the $20.00 + tax Play All Summer Pass. Through this invaluable partnership with Ontario Place, the Model Schools for Inner Cities program helps to level the playing field, by giving inner city children and their families access to the same opportunities and experiences as others across the city. Thank you to the Ontario Place Corporation.
MSIC SURVEYS

As the school year winds down, and students and families prepare for summer break, we have asked students, parents and staff to give us feedback on how well we did this year. We are interested in knowing more about students’ experiences in school. Here are examples of questions on the survey:

- Do you participate in workshops?
- Do you see yourselves reflected in the books and curriculum?
- How much time do you spend doing homework?
- Do you read at home?
- What programs or activities do they participate in?
- Are you satisfied with the programs offered at the school?

We also asked students about their experiences outside of school. Questions included:

- Do you like coming to school?
- Do you feel safe at school?
- Do you come to school events?
- Do you participate in workshops/activities?

We asked parents about their experiences with the school as well. Parent surveys were translated into the 15 most commonly spoken languages among TDSB families. Questions included:

- Do you like coming to school?
- Do you feel safe at school?
- Do you come to school events?
- Do you participate in workshops/activities?

We also asked teachers and staff to give us input on their experiences this year. All of this information will be used for strategic planning to support our schools. The surveys will provide our schools with rich data to inform our decisions and focus our goals.

MSIC SHARES BEST PRACTICES

Model Schools is committed to sharing best practices in urban education and learning about some of the exciting things happening internationally. Take a look at some of the presentations we have made and delegations of visitors we have hosted.

September 2010
- Presented at the Hospital For Sick Children Bioethics Conference

October 2010
- Presented at the International Conference on Urban Health, New York, NY

December 2010
- Presented to a delegation of Japanese principals

January 2011
- Recognized by the Bertelsmann Foundation and asked to present best practices on equity in education in Germany

February 2011
- Presented to a delegation of visitors from the Commonwealth Educational Exchange, Torbay, UK

March 2011
- Presented to a delegation including the French Minister of Education and Consular
- Presented to a delegation of Chinese educators

April 2011
- Presented at the Family and Literacy Conference, London, ON
- Presented at the Toronto School Administrators Association Conference

May 2011
- Presented at the Ontario Healthy School Coalition Conference, Sudbury, ON

June 2011
- Presented to a delegation of educators from Iceland

August 2011
- Presenting at the International Conference, Ontario Principals Council

August and September, 2011
- Presenting to a delegation of educators from Germany