


Starting September 2012, Norman Cook Junior Public School will be a Model School. Below is some information from the TDSB explaining what it means to be a Model School.

Model Schools for Inner Cities

The school as the  of the community.
www.tdsb.on.ca/modelschools

The Toronto District School Board's (TDSB) goal is to make sure all of our students succeed. *The Model Schools for Inner Cities* program plays a critical part in reaching that goal. The programs and services developed in these schools ensure inner city students grow up with all the positive choices and opportunities they need to thrive in today's complex world.

The Five Essential Components of a Model School

1. Innovative teaching and learning practices.
2. Support Services to meet social, emotional and physical well-being of students.
3. School and the heart of the community.
4. Research, review and evaluation of students and programs.
5. Commitment to share successful practice.

The Vision

Not every family or community has access to the same economic opportunities and social supports, or even to the basics that children need to succeed. Challenges like poverty and language barriers can affect how well children do in school.

Model Schools for Inner Cities is an important Toronto District School Board (TDSB) program that support ALL the needs of the child.

By working together with students, families, community and government partners, schools can make a real difference.

Learning is not limited to the classroom!

The Goals

1. **Equity:** Achieving fairness and equity to ensure the lives and realities of our students are reflected and affirmed.
2. **Community:** The school becomes the heart of the community with education and school resources as pillars of the neighbourhood.
3. **Inclusiveness:** An inclusive culture that respects and reflects all aspects of the school, its community, students and staff.
4. **Expectations:** Achievement enhances self-esteem which in turn fuels achievement. Every child is expected to progress to the highest level of which they are capable, regardless of economic or cultural background.

How did *Model Schools for Inner Cities* start?

The Model Schools for Inner Cities (MSIC) Program was launched in 2006 with three “model schools” (Nelson Mandela Park, Firgrove and Willow Park). In 2007, four more model schools were selected (Bala Avenue, George Webster, Kingsview Village and Forest Manor).

Today, the program has over 100 schools in eight clusters, including middle and secondary schools. It now covers JK to Grade 12 across some of the most under-served areas of city.

Supporting our Inner Cities

The Model Schools for Inner Cities are located in many of the communities identified by the City of Toronto as “Priority Neighbourhoods.” These are communities that need more support and resources in order to thrive.

The factors used to identify inner city schools include: family income (measured different ways); level of parent education, and number of lone-parent families. The TDSB ranks all our schools according to these criteria to make up a list called the Learning Opportunities Index (LOI, see www.tdsb.on.ca/loi). The highest ranking schools on the LOI are those with the greatest needs.

There are nearly 600 schools in the TDSB. *The Model Schools for Inner Cities* and their Cluster schools have been chosen from the 150 highest-ranking schools on the LOI.

How does *Model Schools for Inner Cities* work?

Model Schools operate as lead schools within their clusters, or group of schools from the same neighbourhoods. Each Model School is linked to a group of nearby schools, known as “cluster” schools, to carry out the program’s five essential components. The Cluster Committees are made up of Principals, Lead Teachers, Superintendents, Community Support Workers, and community members. Each of the Cluster Committees meets monthly to plan how to carry out the *Model Schools for Inner Cities* vision, driving change by giving our inner city school communities a strong voice.

The MSIC program also brings together staff and community members to decide what programs or services each school community needs. Some of these key programs include:

- ♥Hearing and vision screening
- ♥Nutrition and Community Dining programs
- ♥Innovative curriculum with a focus on social justice
- ♥Tailored after school programs (i.e. Beyond 3:30)
- ♥Teaching/Learning Coaches, Community Support Workers, Lead Teachers and other specialized staff
- ♥Community partnerships
- ♥Parent workshops

Innovation is the Key

Innovation is the key to the success of the MSIC program. Each of the seven original model schools showed they were open to trying new things, which is one reason why they were selected. As a result, the cluster schools attached to each model school also benefit from new ways of teaching and learning.

As the program develops, keeping close ties with all level of government and neighbourhood partners will be important. This will allow school the flexibility to change programs to meet their community’s changing needs. As they do, *Model Schools* become the “**heart of the community**,” involving students, parents and community members.

What we've learned

Research on the MSIC Program shows that over the past four years, the original seven Model Schools have all:

- ♥Narrowed the opportunity gap by meeting students' basic needs, engaging parents, and partnering with the community.
- ♥Closed the achievement gap by bringing reading, writing and math basic skills from below standard to the expected level and even above. These are the key building blocks for continuous learning.
- ♥Increased student progress over time.
- ♥Improved attendance and reduced lateness in some schools.
- ♥Improved the physical, social and emotional well-being of their students.
- ♥Increased young students' readiness for schooling in their early years.
- ♥Enhanced opportunities for staff development and engagement with their school communities.
- ♥Improved school atmosphere for learning.

"Successful inner city school students grow up with positive choices."

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