

EDI Networking Meeting Notes from Dac Presentations

Wednesday, May 11th

Getting Started in Your Community/Community Engagement and Approaching School Boards for their Support

- Make sure school boards and stakeholders know that the data will not be reported publicly at the school level
- Stress that you will be capturing readiness to learn and how they are going to perform in grade 1
- Present the results as a community profile
- Make sure there is no workload impact on the schools (DAC to help with resources – ex. DAC’s do the teacher training as opposed to putting the school boards or may have to assist schools where there are no resources for pulling raw data files together)
- DAC communication, to help build and sustain a relationship with the school board and other DACs
- Cross jurisdictional areas (more than one DAC in the same area) – can work together on a strategy – if one area agrees, others may fall into place
- Could be resistance from teachers due to workload of additional screening tools
- Funding, especially with transport travel issues – some more rural areas that cover large areas find that there is not enough funding to cover this
- Should be better communication between ministries and from ministries to the DACs so they know what their roles are
- Small samples for reporting – may have to group areas together to get at a larger sample size
- Difficult to sell to smaller schools (with smaller sample sizes) as they won’t get a report (are also worried about identification of students)
- Easier to get school boards onside when interpretive reports are made available (helps them in the future planning)
- Need to have a good data sharing agreement, must be clear and concise
- Consider doing training and implementation all at once – train then complete the EDI (back to back)
- Miscommunication between the 2 ministries (would help if both ministries firmly endorsed)
- Cost per child – 12\$ too low per child – increasing that number would help
- Influence that some people can have with promotion of the EDI (eg. A local champion with some expertise, credibility and power to influence)
- “Active Consent” – seeking parental consent to participate in the EDI resulted in a much reduced sample size
- Completion of EDI in one District School Board was voluntary on the teacher’s behalf – reduced response rates

- If a DAC can put together a really good presentation for District School Board it will increase likelihood of buy-in
- Emphasize how the data can be used and applied at the community/school board level
- Present data as part of a community profile – data is not used for ‘fixing schools’
- Eliminate misconceptions – it is a community analysis and not a diagnostic tool
- Tie the EDI into the school’s internal planning
- Having teacher buy in very important
- Have school directors present during teacher training – emphasizes the importance of the teachers to the board
- Niagara region paid honorarium to the teachers - outside the classroom time paid \$11 per questionnaire
- Halton also paid \$11 per survey – 85% choose pay
- Data sharing and ability for DACs to disseminate information are issues
- Give an appreciation gift (“goodie bags” to teachers)
- Other possible funding options for release time – how about offering boards lump sum and leave it up to them to distribute (depending on specific teachers involved, instead of per pupil amount)
- Indicate that Boards that have done the EDI before have easily jumped back on
- Poor access to good mapping programs is an issue
- Mandate the EDI survey so that everyone must do it which will eliminate the time spent trying to sell it to each school board
- Importance of working with cohorts in other areas, DACs work together utilizing their backgrounds
- Realtors use the EDI results to sell houses
- How about a self-taught one-hour lesson for teachers? – alternative to selling it each time
- Find a champion within the school board
- DACs help school boards in terms of resources, if possible – find out what they need and what can be given
- If a board covers more than one area DACs can approach boards together as a unified team
- DAC’s need to take lead role in organization
- Challenge of multiple initiatives occurring in the community at the same time
- Consider doing training and implementation of the EDI at the same time
- Work through your early years coalition to get things going
- Tie into other project cycles going on in the community
- EDI implementation and private schools – need to look into this
- Emphasize the focus on building stronger communities and not on fixing schools
- DAC communication is important– have good relationship with other DAC’s in the region, especially from other school boards (French and English)

- As the ministry does not talk to the teachers regarding the EDI, makes it difficult to get teachers to agree to it
- Can get assistance in budgeting from other sources
- Consider doing training and EDI implementation all at once –do in one full day
- Communication problems between schools and Early Learning Centers
- Getting signatures from parents for agreeing to EDI significantly reduces sample sizes
- Try to tie internal school plans with EDI – marketing strategy
- DAC's can work with other DAC's –can team up and work together, drawing on each other's resources/abilities
- Repetitive EDI implementation is an issue (overload)
- EDI has never been discussed with regards to private schools – so what if private schools fall in designated region?

Linking results to other data sources – Problems, issues, experiences in linking to other data sources

- Importance of collaboration with other groups or private businesses in the community
- Gap analysis – need to use EDI and link it back to the CSI
- In the North, rural nature of geography poses a lot to overcome – along with the high number of First Nation communities
- Some success in linking EDI with health data (from service providers)
- Not much mapping done, CSI is incomplete
- Need software and training to do the mapping and there are costs for buying, concerns about sharing and releasing data
- DACs are all at different places at linking their data together
- Sitting on your Regional Advisory Committee is a good vehicle to get data
- In some communities there aren't a lot of data sources in a database format that can be accessed
- Piece missing from the parents – therefore need to use Kindergarten Parent Survey (KPS) to fill in that gap
- Look at the community and look at what the data is being used for and not being used for
- Proximity does not equal accessibility re: services
- Many DACs are only part-time, so it is difficult to spend so much time solely on the EDI
- No channels of communication for DACs to outside agencies
- Communicate a good understanding of the EDI to teachers since they seem to have recurring issues with the EDI overlapping with other surveys the teachers use
- Having access to data is difficult in rural areas; also to purchase statistics is expensive
- Getting certain conversion files is difficult in rural areas, and expensive
- Can approach Statistics Canada as a group which will save money

Defining neighbourhoods: Issues & problems in defining and assigning neighbourhoods

- Rural areas must be big enough so data from Stats Can is meaningful
- Combine different data sets where numbers are low
- Urban neighborhoods change frequently (high mobility rate and rapid changes in communities)
- Income tax data purchased for use in mapping is a possibility?
- Investigate who is doing what in your community – they may already have boundaries in place
- Postal codes and 911 addresses can be useful in mapping
- School boundaries often too large, especially French immersion boundaries
- When mapping by census tract postal codes overlap the boundaries if numbers are too low
- Possibility of using kindergarten registration time to your advantage to gather information on children and families
- When combining data sets, hard to know if different data sets mean the same thing - every dataset is defined based on a different neighborhood
- There is so much data defined for each neighborhood, but often need to bring it back to basic table form to use it
- So much data – what is needed on the map?
- Need EDI scores to map – one school board has declined for 4 years now to share the data
- Defining communities – but postal codes don't always indicate where a person lives (eg., First Nation Communities, people who go to post office to pick up mail because don't have a fixed address)
- Some communities successfully made report cards and then defined communities
- Smaller the sample, larger the area
- Rapid population increases made the census data useless, because so much of the population was unaccounted for – have to wait for next year's data to be collected
- Find out the natural boundaries and neighborhoods that exist already and whether the naturally named neighborhood is the best defining method – use highways, rivers, escarpments
- Ethnic and moral standards about how data is shared – can be misused to stereotype specific communities
- Network – partner with other DAC's to help with training and purchasing software and statistics
- Using postal codes can be hard – same street and even condo buildings can have different postal codes
- Use health unit and 911 addresses to determine neighborhoods

General Notes

- The EDI promotes a population-Based approach, therefore there should be a shared decision-making approach in communities around data, dissemination of results, etc.

- The goal is to produce equitable access to results in order to produce equal outcomes
- Regarding setting up neighbourhoods and looking at service accessibility, we should look at access through “everyday lives” - “walk a day in the shoes of...”
- We want to really look at how well communities serve the population of people who live there
- For whom do neighbourhoods matter more than others? There are those who don’t really have a need to care or be concerned about their neighbourhood
- School boards should have a standard cheat sheet for teachers which could be filled out a kindergarten registration time re: Section E of the EDI
- Can obtain some social demographics from the CD Howe Institute
- Association of Education Researcher of Ontario (data available here as well)
- There is a need to have DAC roles defined to the OEYCs (– some DACs, depending on the host agency, are expected to use their time to do too much for the OEYCs)
- The Ministry should develop a DAC priority list and could work with the host agency (locally) to define what the DAC roles should be. This could be a guideline and could be tailored to communities. These guidelines (if laid out by the ministry) could provide leverage to DACs to state their priorities to host agencies.
- There is a DAC web board which existed in the earlier days of OEY. This was a useful way for DACs to network

BEST Start Initiative

- Evaluation model of Best Start has been outlined for the demonstration sites only at this point (Jeff Wright, director of research MCYS)
- The role of the Ontario Early Years Centres and their relationship to Best Start will be defined by local Best Start networks at the community (won’t be prescriptive)
- The OEYCs and Best Start will work together (will be integrated and under the same umbrella)
- HUBS (not the same as OEYCs) preferably located in a school (will be tied to JK/SK)
- Ministry recognizes that CSI is not user friendly as it exists, therefore there is a low response rate
- CSI can be modified to suit community needs
- They need to look at possibilities of funding for the CSI and also investigate the quality of CSI as a tool
- There is a focus from the new ministry on research and evaluation