



Engaged students
High levels of achievement
Quality teaching

Conversation Guide

Rethinking High School: Intentional Conversations Around Moving Forward With High School Redesign

High School Redesign Strategies that Support Student Learning in a Large School

Dave Bouma, Principal, Archbishop O'Leary High School, Edmonton, AB, 1,500 students, Phase 1

Implementing school wide collaborative structures and practices to bring about systemic changes that support student learning in a large school community.

We invite you to use this conversation guide along with this presentation to engage in a dialogue about innovative high school practice.

Consider using this recording with staff, parents and/or students. What might be some of the outcomes you would highlight as you consider these different audiences?

Moving Forward with High School Redesign is about more than simply shifting a timetable. It's about shifting mindsets. The shift in mindset to a focus on student-centered learning happens as a number of key practices are put in place, including personalizing learning, intentionally developing meaningful relationships, creating rigorous and relevant learning opportunities, and supporting mastery learning. Schools that are focused on innovative, collaborative, comprehensive, and meaningful learning opportunities, are showing evidence of increasing student engagement and success.

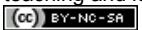
Key Understandings:

- We began with a defined vision that was developed through input from all stakeholders.
- We invited all interested members of our teaching staff to be involved in the planning process (not just department heads).
- Emphasize the focus on student learning.
- We have more time built into our timetable for collaboration (flexible to allow organic groups and collaborations).
- Instructional coach as a liaison between admin and staff to ensure that our professional learning is specific and appropriate.
- We have enabled more teacher leadership in having teachers leading breakout sessions at PD days.
- More student accountability as students become more active decision-makers about how they spend their time.
- Increased awareness from staff about what's happening outside their classroom and department.
- Data collected through Tell Them From Me surveys, Breakfast meetings with students, small group discussions at staff meetings, soliciting feedback through Teaching Advisory.
- Dialogue with staff have followed this format: (1) celebrate our victories (2) identify areas of growth (3) solutions for moving forward – this prevents dialogue from dissolving into complaints.
- Implementation dip – early buy-in but declining attendance from students and declining enthusiasm from staff.
- Continue to message that the system only works if everyone participates and supports it – teachers, students and parents.

Questions for Discussion:

- What processes have been implemented to create a common vision towards more student centered approaches at your school?
- What structures have been implemented to support *collaboration, professional learning and teacher leadership* at your site?
- What changes in culture have resulted within your school community from school wide changes in pedagogy and policies pertaining to student learning?
- What role has data collection, communication and dialogue played with students and the community in supporting large scale change at your school?
- What implementation challenges have been encountered at your school? How were these challenges addressed?

Acknowledgement: This guide was developed by the Central Alberta Regional Consortium and funded through a grant from Alberta Education to support implementation. It is freely provided in support of improved teaching and learning under the following Creative Commons license.



Central Alberta
Regional Consortium



Alberta Regional Consortia