

## APPENDIX B

### TCDSB External Research Applications: Approved 2015 – 2016 Studies Completed

1. *Transnational practices and multilingual education of Portuguese speakers of Brazilian origin in Ontario, Canada*
  - **Purpose:** to explore educational experiences specific to students from Brazil
  - **Method:** ethnographic study; interview; students (Grade 7-12), families, staff
  - **Summary:** Within multicultural communities there is great value in understanding perceptions and experiences of student to inform programming. This study examined experiences of Portuguese-speakers of Brazilian origin currently living within the GTA. In the TCDSB, nine students (Grades 8-12+) and six teachers (elementary and secondary) from three TCDSB schools and one settlement worker were interviewed about their experiences in school and their communities. The students live within the Portuguese-Canadian social and economic networks and some of them affiliate with Latin American (Spanish) students. Most of these students see their identity as distinctly Brazilian; they do not seem to see their Portuguese-language skills as having much value (beyond communicating with family). They are proud to speak their language as part of their culture although they do not necessarily see potential economic benefits. As a group, these students tend to be engaged, take advantage of opportunities offered in school, and intend to pursue post-secondary education.
  - **Results and Application:** These findings are consistent with research conducted in the TCDSB that demonstrated an assets-based perspective among Portuguese-speaking students. The findings may inform the ongoing work in the area of equity and community relations and will be shared with the Superintendent of Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education and Community Relations.

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**2. *Efficacy of Outdoor Environmental Education***

- **Purpose:** to inform improvements in environmental awareness
- **Method:** pre- and post- surveys; Grade 6 students
- **Summary:** Increasingly, there is recognition of the value of integrating environmental awareness into education at earlier grades, including scientific knowledge, attitudes towards reducing, reusing, recycling, and the impact on the environment. This research examined student attitudes, perceptions, knowledge and behaviours with regard to the environment following an educational intervention. Grade 6 students participated in the study and completed pre- and post-program surveys. Results showed improvement in self-reported environmentally responsible behaviours without significant change in knowledge or environmental attitudes.
- **Results and Application:** These findings may inform future outdoor education programming and will be shared with the Superintendent of Curriculum Leadership and Innovation.

**3. *Resilient Adaptation of and Social Support for Unaccompanied, International High School Students: Intervention Project***

- **Purpose:** to support educational experiences of international students
- **Method:** cognitive, psycho-social measures; Chinese students (Grades 9 – 12)
- **Summary:** *Friendship Across Cultures* is a prevention program to support the integration of international Chinese students in Canadian secondary schools. The program involves 10 group sessions once per week for 90 minutes; 18 students were involved. Session topics included: acculturation and culture shock; learning a new language; home, homesickness and loneliness; family; friends; emotional education; mental health and symptoms; stress reduction, time management and relaxation; stereotypes and prejudice, differences and commonalities; identity and closure. Based on cognitive and psycho-social measures and exit interviews, results showed evidence of students learning about acculturation, psychology and social knowledge, developing social skills and new friends, practicing English and gaining self-awareness. Although the experience of acculturation can involve stress, students appreciate the supported encounters.
- **Results and Application:** This research may inform programming for international students at TCDSB. The findings will be shared with the Superintendent of International Education & Adult ESL, and the Mental Health Leader.

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**4. *(Re)Defining Success: Subjectivity and Schooling Among Portuguese-Speaking Youth in Toronto***

- **Purpose:** to inform practices that improve learning opportunities
- **Method:** workshops, surveys, interviews; case study; Portuguese-speaking secondary students
- **Summary:** A thorough understanding of our various communities is required to inform culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. This research examined the perceptions and experiences of students and teachers in one TCDSB secondary school with a high population of Portuguese-speaking students. Based on interviews, surveys and school visits, this case study demonstrated areas for growth within the study sample, specifically in the domain of disciplinary action, course selection, and expectations regarding achievement and schooling.
- **Results and Application:** The findings may inform ongoing work in the area of equity and culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy to support programming for positive perceptions and high expectations for all students. The results will be shared with the Superintendent of Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education and Community Relations and the Superintendent of Student Success.

**5. *Student Survey in Schools Offering French Immersion and/or Extended French Programs***

- **Purpose:** to explore interest in French immersion postsecondary education
- **Method:** online survey; Grade 11 and 12 students
- **Summary:** A large body of research on French Immersion programs has demonstrated positive effects on children's language development and academic achievement; economic, cognitive and cultural benefits. This research examined the effects of immersion programs on post-secondary pathways in seven Boards (864 students) across Ontario. Results of the survey indicate that most students (98%) were planning to attend post-secondary education (PSE), with the majority (69%) identifying university as their PSE choice, and 17% identifying college. Over half (52%) preferred PSE's that offered programs in both French and English.
- **Results and Application:** These results support the research base regarding strong academic achievement for students in French Immersion programs. These results will be shared with the Superintendent of Curriculum Leadership and Innovation and the Superintendent of Student Success and Alternative Education.

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**6. *Finding Assertive Solutions Together (FAST) Program Evaluation***

- **Purpose:** to provide feedback on how well the program meets student needs
- **Method:** questionnaires; teachers, parents, students (Grades 7 and 8)
- **Summary:** Self-regulation is an important skill for all students; programs are available for students requiring further support. The *Finding Assertive Solutions Together (FAST)* program focused on developing greater conflict resolution and problem-solving skills through self-regulation. The research, conducted as a case study, in one school found that the group sessions were helpful. Students made gains in their willingness to share with others, decreased frequency in losing their tempers and increased their ability to ‘think before acting’.
- **Results and Application:** The results may support programming for self-regulation and will be shared with the Superintendent of Special Services.

**7. *Bike to School Week 2016***

- **Purpose:** to promote cycling as a mode of transportation
- **Method:** all schools are invited; one survey per school to indicate whether the school participated
- **Summary:** Physical activity has been shown to improve well-being. *Bike to School* is a cycling promotion campaign through the City of Toronto to promote active, safe and sustainable transportation amongst students and teachers. In total 2,000 students from TCDSB participated (20 schools; both elementary and secondary). Top strengths reported by the teachers included: engaged teachers, bike parking (racks), community partnerships, engaging parent volunteers and supportive administration. Although limited barriers were mentioned, heavy traffic, students not owning bikes, lack of cycling education, inadequate bike parking and absence of bike culture (not cool) were cited. Outcomes included: increased awareness of cycling rules and safety, students more likely to bike in future, more students biking, improved cycling skills among students, and staff more likely to bike.
- **Results and Application:** These results support a coordinated approach to encouraging alternative modes of transportation. These results will be shared with the Superintendent of Curriculum Leadership and Innovation and the Superintendent of Student Success and Alternative Education.