



When Children Succeed, We Break the Cycle of Poverty

A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS IN NEW BRUNSWICK SCHOOLS

This demonstration project was established to close the education achievement gap for children who live in poverty, and improve education outcomes in New Brunswick. Seven schools that serve Saint John's poorest neighbourhoods have been provided additional teachers in the early grades (K to 2) to help the children acquire the foundational academic and social skills that are essential for progressive school success. The project aims to help 1,000 disadvantaged children to succeed in school, in the near term, and pave the way for children throughout New Brunswick to benefit.

This update provides highlights from year one of the project, key results, learnings and go-forward priorities.

PROJECT UPDATE #2 FALL 2019
3-YEAR DEMONSTRATION PROJECT





BY THE NUMBERS

GOALS

WITHIN 3 YEARS:

1. 9 out of 10 students will achieve NB literacy standards.
2. 8 out of 10 students will achieve NB numeracy standards.
3. Chronic absenteeism and behavior incidents will be reduced.
4. Parent confidence, working with the school and helping their child progress, will increase.
5. Teacher confidence in their ability to help each child succeed will increase.

BEYOND 3 YEARS:

Beyond year three of the project, based on results, the Government of New Brunswick will be well positioned to:

1. Fully fund, on an ongoing basis, the additional teachers in our 7 project schools.
2. Introduce a new 'needs-based' funding model for New Brunswick schools to better address the diversity of children's learning needs and ensure every child has equitable opportunity to succeed.

7 SCHOOLS serving Saint John's poorest neighbourhoods are the project sites.

21 ADDITIONAL STAFF were hired to reduce the teacher-student ratio for Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 students.

YEAR ONE PROJECT PARTICIPANTS:

758 students, **60** teachers, **54** classes (K-2)
Average student-teacher ratio: 12:1*

YEAR TWO PROJECT PARTICIPANTS:

720 students, **62** teachers, **55** classes (K-2)
Average student-teacher ratio: 11:1*

**NB standard: maximum student-teacher ratio for K-2 is 21:1*

SUMMARY

1015 students have thus far benefited from this project (year 1 and 2).

- **257** Kindergarten students entered the project in September (year 2).
- **256** Grade 2 students exited the project in June (after year 1).

YEAR ONE RESULTS

GOAL

1

9 out of 10 students will achieve NB literacy standards

HOW WE'RE DOING:

LITERACY:

Oral Language

From the very beginning, literacy assessments showed the majority of children lacked basic oral language skills that are pre-requisites for reading and writing. Project staff immediately focused on oral language development, and a

full-time speech language pathologist was added, to train the teachers and families in effective ways to build children's vocabulary and conversation skills. The children's progress, after one year, is currently being evaluated and will be reported in our next update.

Reading

- The Kindergarten students made major gains in their reading skills, compared to students from the previous year, and came very close to matching the school district's average for meeting or exceeding the year end reading benchmark.
- Although the Grade 1 and 2 students demonstrated growth in their reading levels throughout the year, many were not yet able to meet the year-end benchmark for their grade. Results indicate Grade 1 and 2 students need more time to catch up to their peer age group (their achievement gap is wider).
- OF NOTE: Overall, the students met or exceeded the expected rate of growth in their reading levels for their grade.

Percentage of students who achieved year-end reading benchmarks
Project schools compared to school district averages – Grades K to 2

	Kindergarten		
	2018	2019	+ / (-)
Project Schools' Average	53%	63%	+10
ASD-South	67%	64%	(-3)
	Grade 1		
	2018	2019	+ / (-)
Project Schools' Average	56%	55%	-1
ASD-South	72%	66%	(-6)
	Grade 2		
	2018	2019	+ / (-)
Project Schools' Average	62%	58%	(-4)
ASD-South	76%	72%	(-4)

The chart below shows the literacy gains the children made in the first year of the project, compared to students from the previous year, and the progress in each of the 7 schools. One must take into consideration that the level of student need varies from class to class and year to year. However, the variances also signal emerging best practices in specific schools and classes. The smaller student-teacher ratio requires the staff to teach differently – with a more individualized approach to help each student overcome barriers and realize their potential. For the initial year of the project, the teachers were encouraged to experiment and learn what works best for each student. Staff development and sharing best practices are a big part of this project.

The % of students who met or exceeded reading benchmarks, by school:

School	Kindergarten 2018 → Grade 1 2019	+ / (-)
1	49% → 57%	+8%
2	56% → 70%	+14%
3	21% → 33%	+12 %
4	82% → 89%	+7%
5	18% → 36%	+18%
6	59% → 44%	(-15%)
7	75% → 60%	(-15%)
School	Grade 1 2018 → Grade 2 2019	+ / (-)
1	67% → 54%	(-13%)
2	43% → 51%	+ 8%
3	20% → 37%	+ 17%
4	70% → 70%	No change
5	59% → 55%	(- 4%)
6	67% → 56%	(- 11%)
7	65% → 74%	+ 9%



GOAL
2

8 out of 10 students will achieve NB numeracy standards

HOW WE'RE DOING:

Overall the students did very well in meeting numeracy benchmarks, compared to the school district averages. A similar achievement pattern emerged in both numeracy and reading, where Kindergarten students made the most progress, and Grade 2 students the least.

% of correct answers on the year-end numeracy benchmark tests
The project schools compared to school district averages – Grades K to 2

	Kindergarten		
	2018	2019	+ / (-)
Project Schools' Average	83%	87%	+4
ASD-South	87%	90%	+3
	Grade 1		
	2018	2019	+ / (-)
Project Schools' Average	70%	71%	+1
ASD-South	76%	75%	(-1)
	Grade 2		
	2018	2019	+ / (-)
Project Schools' Average	72%	69%	(-3)
ASD-South	75%	73%	(-2)



GOAL
3

Chronic absenteeism and behaviour incidents will be reduced

HOW WE'RE DOING:

SOCIAL SKILLS

Smaller classes and additional supports are allowing the teachers to have more significant interactions with each child. Teacher interviews described more time for conversation, role-playing and problem-solving, as well as providing more time to help children develop social-emotional skills. This translated into greater student confidence in their abilities. From survey

data, 79% of teachers reported their students were more motivated to do well than in previous years.

BEHAVIOUR

Principals reported a considerable reduction in behaviour incidents at the K-2 level in their schools, and 82% of teachers reported that the reduced student-teacher ratio enabled them to be more proactive in recognizing and effectively addressing student behaviour issues.

ABSENTEEISM AND FAMILY MOBILITY

The project revealed two serious social issues that require greater attention:

- 25% of students were chronically absent (10% or more days missed in the school year), compared to the school district average of 9%.
- A concerning number of students changed schools during the school year (some more than once) because their family moved to a new location.
- OF NOTE: a strong correlation between absenteeism and report card results was documented. Children who were chronically absent had lower grades on their report cards than students with good attendance.

Both issues seriously affect the children's ability to progress and will be given greater scrutiny and new strategies, going forward.



IN THEIR WORDS
TEACHER PERSPECTIVE

We say it's challenging, but at the same time it's extremely rewarding. At the end of the day no matter what the challenge was, you feel you are truly making a difference in the lives of these kids. They are developing that bond, that trust. We are giving them something they are not getting elsewhere.

GOAL 4

Parent confidence, working with the school and helping their child progress, will increase

HOW WE'RE DOING:

Teachers reported significant improvement in building trusted relationships with their students' families. The reduced class size gave each teacher more time to regularly interact with each family.

- 71% of the teachers reported more frequent communication with each child's family, compared to previous years. The parents were more engaged – asking questions, texting with them, and chatting with them before and after school.
- Schools reported much higher K-2 parent attendance at special events in the classroom and school.
- A survey distributed to K-2 parents revealed that 97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel welcome at their child's school, and that their child enjoys school. (60% of the students' families responded to the survey). The school staff did not expect this high level of positive feedback but agreed that more frequent and positive interactions with each parent and child made a difference.

Greater focus on parent engagement will be an ongoing priority for the project.

GOAL 5

Teacher confidence in their ability to help each child succeed will increase

HOW WE'RE DOING:

Hear directly from the teachers themselves by watching the short video we have added to our website (<https://www.bcapi.ca/when-children-succeed>).

Year one of the project has been filled with experimentation, new measurements and professional development that will undoubtedly drive continuous improvement and project success. Our teachers have worked extremely hard to teach differently (using individual and small-group instruction,

as well as project-based learning techniques) and to help one another find the best ways to address the unique learning needs of each student.

The project's partners are very grateful for the full commitment of the staff, their continuous assessments and adjustments, and their strong belief that the children are benefiting in ways that are multi-dimensional and lasting.



IN THEIR WORDS TEACHER PERSPECTIVE

When the children leave on Friday, they say, 'How many days 'till I come back?' It's rewarding to know we've created that safe environment and they want to be here with us.



GO FORWARD PLAN

The project team is committed to achieving our goals, and as such we are working together to take advantage of lessons learned and to improve our processes.

These are the areas we are moving quickly to address in Year Two:

- **Learning from best practices** – evaluation by the schools reveal that there are emerging best practices that will be shared with all teachers. A process to facilitate this is currently being implemented.
- **Comparing apples to apples** – there is wide variation between classes and even between cohorts (year over year). We will be seeking additional support to look deeper at our data in an effort to provide meaningful comparisons and a reliable measure of success.
- **Managing risk** – some classrooms have higher concentrations of students with significant learning barriers, and other classrooms experienced class size increases throughout the year. We will be monitoring both situations to ensure appropriate resources are applied to these classrooms, and that class size remains stable.
- We will place a **stronger focus on improving student attendance and parent involvement**.
- There will be **more frequent collaboration time** for our principals, and more **targeted professional development opportunities** for staff.



PROJECT INVESTORS

Total budget: \$4.5 million (\$1.5 million per year).

THE FUNDING PARTNERS:

New Brunswick Dept. of Education & Early Childhood Development + Anglophone School District South
\$1.5 M

Living SJ (Social Innovation Fund, NB Government)
\$1.5 M

Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative (BCAPI) fundraising campaign, launched September 2018
\$1.5 M

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Please note this is a partial list – some donors have chosen to remain anonymous.

Brice Belyea
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IN THEIR WORDS INVESTOR PERSPECTIVE

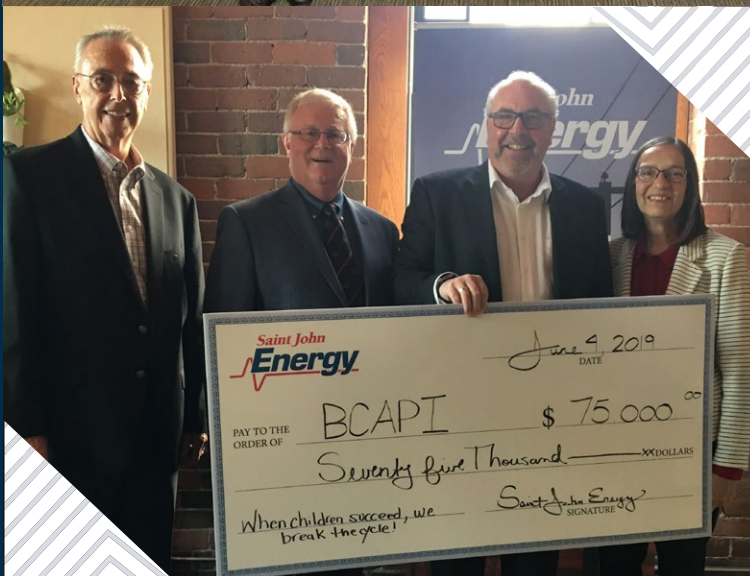
Children living in poverty face challenges that demand additional academic support. We know the benefits of this from previous privately funded programs. The results are not only an improvement in math and reading scores but also a vital change in the child’s self-esteem and ability to see a brighter future. An investment in helping a child to read by Grade 3 is lifechanging. ~ J.K Irving





PROJECT INVESTORS

At left:
Thank you to CN, who generously donated \$50,000 to the When Children Succeed project in May.



At left:
Thank you to Saint John Energy, who generously donated \$75,000 to the When Children Succeed project in June.



At left:
Thank you to RBC, who generously donated \$50,000 to the When Children Succeed project in June.

PROJECT INVESTORS



At left:
Thank you to the New Brunswick Children's Foundation for their generous contribution of \$150,000 to the When Children Succeed Project and their 1st installment of \$50,000 donated in September.

ADDITIONAL READING

- Full Evaluation Report
- Short video - Year one teacher perspective (<https://www.bcapi.ca/when-children-succeed>)
- Short Story - Giving Students What they Need (<https://www.livingsj.ca/copy-of-a-voice-for-change>)

Monica Chaperlin
BCAPI Coordinator

506 633 5588
chaperlin.monica@jdirving.com

Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative
P.O. Box 5777, Saint John, NB E2L 4M3

Charitable #: 881866529 RR0001

We welcome your questions and feedback.
Thank you for being a part of this important project.

Our next update - Winter/Spring 2020.

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