

PLC AT WORK[®]

Success Story

École Mission Senior Secondary School

MISSION, BRITISH COLUMBIA

École Mission Senior Secondary School met the challenges of a school district reconfiguration, graduating more students and increasing AP performance through the PLC at Work[®] process.



École Mission Senior Secondary School

BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

► DEMOGRAPHICS

- › **1,325** Students
- › **15%** Special Education
- › **2%** Limited English proficient
- › **70%** White
- › **30%** Other

École Mission Senior Secondary School is located in Mission, British Columbia, a community of approximately 39,000 residents.



► CHALLENGE

After School District 75 Mission underwent structural reconfiguration in 2014, École Mission Senior Secondary School knew it needed to take vital action to ensure the success of its students as the district's only remaining secondary school.

With approximately 1,300 students in grades 10, 11, and 12, École's needs were as abundant and diverse as the learners themselves.

"We as a staff needed to become proactive rather than reactive in our approach to meeting the needs of our vulnerable learners," Principal Jim Pearce said.

École's staff of 75 educators embraced the structural change and aimed high: They wanted to improve the school's graduation rates, as well as student satisfaction. They also wanted to offer students more Advanced Placement courses, increase their postsecondary enrollment rates, and prepare them to be critical thinkers for the future.

A consensus was reached: École knew it needed to form a professional learning community through the PLC at Work[®] process to reach these goals and ensure high levels of learning for all students.

► IMPLEMENTATION

The PLC at Work process inspired École's teachers to collaborate early and often.

Starting in June, École's professional learning community met as a team to discuss plans for the coming school year, as well as how to help its most vulnerable learners. Parents, counselors, youth care workers, outside agencies, and even students themselves were invited to contribute to the planning process.

Monthly big-picture meetings helped the school align its departments through common prep time, allowing staff to work on SMART goals and assessment conversations and to discuss teaching strategies. Entire-staff sessions with PLC experts Mike Mattos and Anthony Muhammad also helped the teachers collaborate more effectively.

“Teaching is very isolated, and if an administration does not give time for teachers to talk in the regular school day, there may be very little improvement ... The [PLC at Work®] process is working, and we are building outstanding relationships with each other.”

—Jim Pearce, principal, École Mission Senior Secondary School, Mission, British Columbia, Canada

► IMPLEMENTATION CONTINUED

Two schoolwide professional development days were scheduled for teachers to foster conversations with each other. This time allowed École’s instructors to collaborate with intermediate schools and postsecondary institutions as well, maximizing student achievement and college enrollment through vertical alignment.

École’s PLC built common summative assessments for all core academic courses for midterms and final exams, allowing staff to make teaching adjustments. Students were also brought to a group called the School Intervention Team (SIT), which created an individualized plan for their success at École and shared their specific needs with intervention teams on staff.

“Our PLC process has become more refined and streamlined to meet the needs of all our students,” Pearce said.

► RESULTS

Since beginning its PLC journey, École has succeeded in providing enriched learning opportunities for its learners, increasing graduation rates, and preparing seniors for postsecondary enrollment.

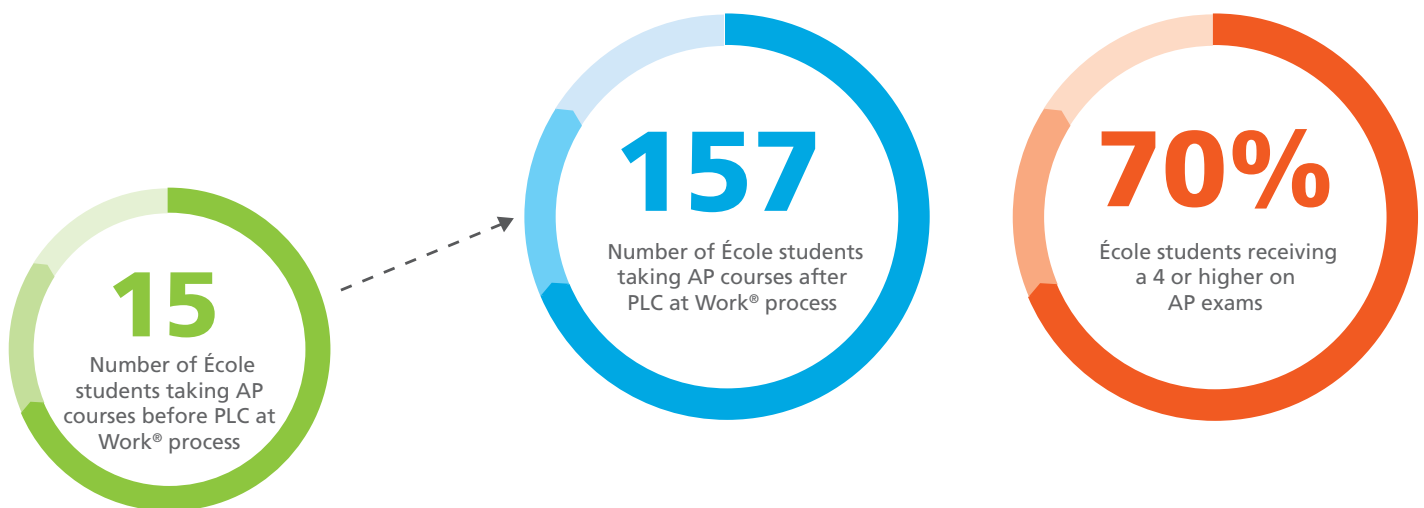
In its first year as a PLC, École graduated 340 of its 353 seniors, a statistic Pearce attributes to educational assistants providing extra support to struggling learners, as well as a PLC-formed peer tutoring program.

“These types of interventions have increased transition rates grade-to-grade, and we are graduating more than we did prior to reconfiguration,” Pearce said. “We are certain that with the innovative programs and interventions we have in place, our graduation rate will continue to improve.”

With only 15 students enrolled in AP courses before the district reconfiguration, École also enrolled more than 150 students in AP programs in its second year as a PLC, many in new AP course offerings. More than 70 percent of those students recorded a four on an AP exam.

In all, École now offers 475 courses for its students, compared to just 320 before the change—a change made possible by the PLC at Work process.

“These new courses that we were able to offer directly link to university acceptance, or were qualifying courses for the trades,” Pearce said. “This will certainly have a positive impact for every child being successful.”





Start Your Success Story

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