

SPRINGBANK COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

2009-2010 Annual Report

October 15, 2010



MESSAGE FROM SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Springbank Community High School will continue the work to build 21st century learning skills in our students. Our Mission Statement is the guide to decision making and is outlined in our foundational statements:

Today's educator is preparing students for a world they will not recognize. It is incumbent upon the teaching profession to ready students for a job market that cannot be predicted and tackle problems that haven't arisen. Citizens living in the world of the future will need more diverse skills and attributes than the generation before.

There has been a surge of research related to the role of technology in the daily lives of students. Dr. Sharon Friesen, a leading researcher in the area, believes five core principles must be followed to engage today's "millennials", a term used to describe the generation born in the 1980s and 1990s:

- Effective teaching practice begins with the thoughtful and intentional design of learning that engages students intellectually and academically.
- The work that students are asked to undertake is worthy of their time and attention, is personally relevant, and deeply connected to the world in which they live.
- Assessment practices are clearly focused on improving student learning and guiding teaching decisions and actions.
- Teachers foster a variety of interdependent relationships in classrooms that promote learning and create a strong culture around learning.
- Teachers improve their practice in the company of peers.

Surrounding and infused into each of these core principles is the effective use of the technologies. It is undeniable that the face of education and the role of technology are changing rapidly.

Beginning September 2010, Springbank Community High School will engage its entire learning community in a new ubiquitous computing project, entitled One to One. Specifically, on the first day of school, and every day thereafter, every SCHS student will be asked to bring a laptop to school to support his/her learning.

The goal of this initiative is improving and enhancing student learning through the implementation of ubiquitous computing. Ubiquitous computing makes use of a variety of digital devices and resources to engage students in critically analyzing information, creating new knowledge, communicating what they have learned, and choosing tools that are appropriate for a particular task. Springbank Community High School is well positioned to meet the needs of the 21st century learner. Our community is highly supportive; our students are bright, hard working, high achieving, and our staff has set goals to enhance the 21st century learner. We are fortunate to have a School Council/community who is supporting initiatives.

It is with both excitement and trepidation that we embark upon this journey. The road is unclear and muddy, but it is a road we must travel. The role of the teacher will change to be one of facilitator, mentor, guide and skill developer. They will be working side-by-side with students, focusing on attributes these future leaders will be able to use in any situation that comes their way.

SCHOOL PROFILE

School Name: Springbank Community High School

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School Profile

Grade Configuration: 9-12

Student Population: 756

No. of Teachers: 41

No. of Support Staff: 15

Foundation Statements

Mission:

Springbank Community High School endeavours to prepare students who will:

- Demonstrate leadership in civic, social and environmental concerns
- Balance academic, athletic and creative endeavors
- Demonstrate a commitment to life-long learning
- Exhibit creative and critical thinking
- Adapt to a continually changing information and media literate world.
- Become respectful and responsible adults
- Be prepared for post-secondary endeavors.

Key Learning Principles:

1. Meaning is essential to learning, hence it is essential to teaching and assessing. Learning goals must make sense to the teacher and to the learner. There must be regular opportunities to see the value of what we are asked to learn, how it relates to past learning and how it will relate to future learning.
2. Successful learning requires metacognition: learning how to reflect, self-assess, and use feedback to self adjust. These metacognitive processes can (and should) be taught explicitly.
3. The complexity of learning requires teachers to draw upon a rich repertoire of teaching and assessing strategies carefully matched to the learning goals.
4. Greater learning depends upon the right blend of challenge and comfort – knowing that success is attainable, and realizing that persistent effort will pay off.
5. To maximize learning, learners need multiple opportunities to practice in risk-free environments, to receive regular and specific feedback related to progress against standards, and timely opportunities to use the feedback to re-do and improve.

Beliefs/Principles:**Students:**

Students come first at Springbank Community High School. We strive to meet the “whole” student; helping them to maximize their learning potential.

Academic:

High standards are set for the students and they are encouraged to do their best. Students are encouraged to take a balance between academic and non-academic courses. Parents in this community are extremely supportive of the school and work to assist in their children’s academic and social and emotional development.

Relationships:

Relationships are key to the success of any school. Springbank Community High School prides itself on forming long-lasting relationships with its students, parents and the larger community. We believe that positive relationships extend beyond the school community to include the Rocky View Schools.

Opportunities:

Our students often go on to post-secondary education. We recognize the need for career assistance by providing career counselling that caters to the population. Through our Guidance department students are assisted in accessing information on university entrance across North American and Europe. Teachers are also cognizant of the fact that our student population needs to extend their field of vision and strives to provide opportunities for students to travel, participate in charity work and assist those in less fortunate circumstances.

Expectations:

High expectations are the cornerstone of the school/community culture. Most of our student body has future goals that require hard work, perseverance and on-going focused study. This culture is firmly entrenched in the school and is an expectation of parents.

Resources:

The school’s resources have been managed well. Further, the community provides for the extra items through the newly established fundraising arm, “Friends of Springbank Community High School.”

Unique Features of our school include:

- We promote a 21st Century learning environment that will include a one to one focus in September 2010
- The school culture is one that promotes high academic standards and consistently excels on Provincial Achievement and Diploma Exams
- We offer a variety of courses given the limits of the facility
- We have a strong staff who are very dedicated to student learning
- There is a strong guidance department that has extensive experience with career counselling
- Providing a variety of extra-curricular activities; full contingency of sports teams, drama, band, yearbook, student council, Christian Club, Free the Children, and debate club
- A connection to the “Park for All Seasons” and shares their facility
- A supportive community that provides funding for various initiatives
- A strong support from parents for their children’s academic journey
- A high number of students go on to post secondary education in Universities across North America
- Students who are committed to their learning and take their education seriously

OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Springbank Community High School is a flagship school that has, as its core principles, a Schooling By Design philosophy. We have much to be proud of in terms of our accomplishments. We offer an excellent program to students and are proud of the results we have achieved in both the Rocky View satisfaction survey and the Accountability Pillar results. The analysis of both survey documents is outlined in the accompanying pages. While we have much to be proud of, we also recognize that there are areas for growth. Our objective is to work with the data to improve our school in the 2010-2011 school year.

It should be noted that respondents were down substantially with student respondents on the RVS survey; from 370 to 87 (students), 276 to 121 (parents), however staff respondents increased from 18 to 46. Because of the small numbers of respondents in the student population, it makes the interpretation challenging. Parent respondent data is sufficient to give a reliable interpretation, with the exception of grade 12 parents. Staff data was analyzed as a cohort and no distinction between certificated and support staff was made.

Goal One – Learners have their basic and diverse needs met.

SCHS focused on a new support model to be more responsive to the needs of students. The end goal is, “to provide an accessible, equitable and inclusive environment for all students”. The model is being rolled out in the 2010-2011 school year.

With respect to the Accountability Pillar Survey results, Springbank Community High School scored in the excellent level with respect to safe and caring. 87% of those surveyed responded positively to this category. In the Program of Studies category, the result increased to 76.8%. Education quality rose slightly at 85.8%, Drop out rate was phenomenally low at .9% and our High School completion rate measured at a profoundly high 91.7%.

The Rocky View Schools survey suggests that overall the scores are in the acceptable range, with the exception of Safe and Caring Learning community. In the Non academic Barriers Recognized and Addressed, the school stayed the same from last year at 75% approval rate. In Access to Specialized Programming, the percentage dropped from 78% to 71%, which suggests an area for growth. Similarly, in the Safe and Caring Learning Community category, 81% of the respondents are in agreement that SCHS provides a safe and caring environment. This is down from last year by 7%.

Goal Two – Learners are competent, qualified and dedicated.

Academically, students at SCHS are successful as learners according to the Alberta Education Accountability Pillar Overall Summary. In all categories, we achieved good to excellent. SCHS exceeded the Alberta average on all categories. Some noteworthy data is in the Acceptable category for Provincial Achievement Exams (90.2%) and for the Diploma Exam Acceptable category (94.3%) where our students achieved well above the Provincial data. Further, in the category of Diploma Excellence, Students at our school achieve well above the province, scoring at 38.2%, twelve percent above Provincial average. Participation rates far exceeded the provincial standards by 27%.

Goal Three – Learners are civic, social and environmental stewards.

This goal is an important and integral component to the Springbank Community High School community. Teachers have infused concepts into the curricular areas and over 45 students signed up to be a part of “One Village”, the umbrella organization which houses civic, social and environmental activities and endeavors. In the Rocky View survey results, Springbank Community High School achieved in the intermediate category on Understand, Practice and Promote the Conservation of Resources (81%) and Understanding and Participating in Economic Responsibility (82%). Our accomplishments are as follows: The school pulled groups working in the areas of civic, social and environmental responsibility under one umbrella called, One Village. The universal focus for all of these groups is water and its vital importance to sustainability and health. Major strides in the area of shared resources and common planning have created a sense of collaboration amongst the groups. In addition, students initiated a “30- hour famine” and they raised in excess of \$7000.00. A delegation of students went to the annual Me to We Conference in Vancouver and plans began for a trip to Botswana through Habitat for Humanity. Initial plans to host a half-day workshop on civic, social and environmental themes is underway for the 2010-2011 school year

Goal Four – Learning opportunities are distinct, continuous and systematic.

In the Rocky View survey results, 91% of respondents approved of the types of professional learning opportunities open to them. In the area of building leadership capacity, 84% responded positively to the survey. In the APORI results with respect to drop out rates (.9%), completion rates (91.7%) and Rutherford Scholarship recipients (79%); SCHS continues to be well above the Provincial standards.

Last year, in a collaboratively planned transition process with our feeder school, a focus on making the grade 8-9 transition more comfortable with the high school setting was initiated and implemented. Instead of having all students come on the same day to the high school for transition, they were invited to the school on a class-by-class basis. Although this was a more expensive endeavor, extremely favorable feedback was received from both parents and students.

Goal Five – Instruction challenges and engages the learner.

This goal is an area of continued focus for SCHS. 71% of respondents agree that SCHS delivers curriculum in a student-centered manner. 74% agree that instructional practice meets the needs of the 21st century learner. 81% agree that RVS operates as a community of learners. All of this data is relatively stable when compared to last year's results. SCHS continues to use Schooling by Design as the philosophical underpinning of how we work as a school. Further, Universal Design for Learning is the research documentation used for the "Learning for All project". The school continues to make strides in the area of project-based learning and the use of ubiquitous computing in the 21st century classroom.

Goal Six – Learning environments enable the acquisition of 21st Century skills.

The results in the following areas appear to be stable when compared to previous survey results: Contemporary Technology is Accessible to all Learners (75%), Budgets are Driven by Three Year Plan Outcomes (81%) and Education Centre Enables 21st Century Learning Environments (76%). As mentioned previously, engagement continues to be a focus for this school. In addition, Cornerstone Assessment is a focus and the One to One project will contribute to a body of research that encompasses student engagement and how technology plays a role in 21st century learning.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

The data indicates that the challenges facing Springbank Community High School in the 2010-2011 school year involve:

1. Enhancing the safe and caring atmosphere of the school
2. Improving opportunities for stakeholder decision making
3. Enhancing access to and support for technology
4. Enhancing programming for students at risk
5. Ensuring PL opportunities for staff are focused on key improvement areas under consideration.

There exists the possibility of linking the above priorities in a strategic approach to improving program opportunities for students.

Goal One – Learners have their basic and diverse needs met.

With respect to the RVS surveys, there indicates a growing, statistically significant concern among students and staff regarding the desired outcome of a safe and caring school. 13% fewer parents were satisfied with opportunities to be involved in school decision-making. It is interesting to note that in the Accountability Pillar Survey, “Safe and caring” was in the excellent range with the result at 87.6%. Even though the results are incongruent between the RVS survey and the APORI, this is an area we will be focusing on for the 2010-2011. Enhancing programs for students at risk and enhancing the safe and caring atmosphere of the school will be an area to focus on at Springbank Community High School. In phase II of the “Learning for All” initiative, the school has changed the model for support services to mirror the direction RVS is taking and to be more responsive to the needs of students in a timely manner.

Goal Two – Learners are competent, qualified and dedicated.

In the RVS results, the school scored in the concern range in the area of Success as 21st century learners (81%) and 21st Century Learning Culture (66%). Interesting to note is significant declines with respect to access to quality technology. Since this survey, Springbank has become the first one to one (student owned devices) with full school participation. It will be very interesting to see how these results change for the 2010-2011 school year

Goal Three – Learners are civic, social and environmental stewards.

While strides continue to be made and this goal still continues to be front row and centre at this school, the results in, “Work Independently and Collaboratively to Build a Vibrant Community” was down from 81% to 78%. Clearly, more work needs to be done in this area and that students still do not view themselves as a part of the larger whole that work together to effect change. Although the area of civic, social and environmental stewardship continues to be a passionate area for the school, students may not see themselves as a part of this. A move in the area of changing the model for student leadership should glean some positive results in this area. Teachers will continue to infuse these concepts into their practice. A Community of Practice, in which many of SCHS staff is a part of, has been established in the area of Digital Citizenship. This is a proactive way to build additional citizenship in the digital world.

Goal Four – Learning opportunities are distinct, continuous and systematic.

While the results for SCHS in this area are notable, there continues to exist concern (students and staff) regarding adequately preparing students for the future or post-school options. To this end, SCHS will be piloting a Mahara student portfolio that contains the following: learning profile, four year academic plan, student work and career planning components. This move is in response to a more comprehensive way for students, staff and parents to chart progress and assist in helping teachers to assist students in their endeavors.

When comparing results with the RVS summary, teacher opinion showed lower satisfaction by 10% or more compared to other RVS schools. Thematic analysis suggests issues exist around opportunities in the area of leadership. As we venture more into the digital world and continue our work with 21st century principles, it becomes incumbent upon our staff to take on more leadership roles and be a part of decision-making in the areas of 21st century environments. To build leadership capacity, more staff will be invited to assist in decisions than

ever before. Curriculum leaders are working through processes to build leadership capacity within their areas. A workshop in mentoring/coaching has already been offered and well received. Through extensive input via discussion groups and online discussion forums, staff assisted in “shaping” the PL opportunities for the 2010-2011 school year.

Goal Five – Instruction challenges and engages the learner.

There appears to be no significant difference in survey results in comparison to data collected from the previous school year, but there is an indication that there needs to be better communication around how teachers determine and/or calculate marks. With the emphasis on cornerstone assessment, this can easily be addressed at the curriculum level.

Goal Six – Learning environments enable the acquisition of 21st Century skills.

Overall, there is no significant difference when survey results are compared, but one item indicates a desire for better access to quality technology. The One to One project should address this concern.

MODIFICATIONS TO SCHOOL EDUCATION PLAN

Digital citizenship will be added to the area of Civic, Social and Environmental stewardship. Because of the emphasis of technology use in the school, students need to know how to be a citizen in this medium
Big Idea to be added to School Education Plan, 21st century learning environment is integral to the philosophy and operation of Springbank Community High School”.