

Title of Project: How Can a Multidisciplinary Team Take the Knowledge and the Research Results of a Proven Evidence-Based Initiative and Mobilize this Knowledge to Strengthen Tier 1 Reading Instruction in the Kindergarten Classroom.

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Lead Institution: York Catholic District School Board, Student Services

Project Partners: York Catholic District School Board, Student Services

Ministry Priority: Teaching and Learning, Equity, Engagement

Brief Background: The Early Literacy Intervention Program (ELIP), based on the RTI approach, is a small group intervention program that includes: (a) instruction and practice designed to support the development of fluent reading and writing; (b) direct and explicit instruction in decoding and comprehension strategies; (c) continuous monitoring of student growth through Curriculum Based Measures (CBM); and (d) systematic teaching and practice of phonological awareness and phonics. As a result of implementing ELIP across 83 schools in the board, a base of research has been built and the project has developed a reputation that has led to requests from other school boards in Ontario. Most recently, a multidisciplinary team has begun to extend this single phase initiative and pilot a second phase whereby components of ELIP have been introduced to Tier 1. Delivered in a fun, planned, and purposeful manner, the activities increase student engagement and ensure that every student has access to rigorous, grade-level curriculum and highly effective initial teaching. Three schools have been involved thus far and have had measurable success.

Research Context: In 2006-2008, York Catholic District School Board participated in the Ontario Psychological Assessment (OPA) Student Assessment Project. The project draws from research conducted on prediction of reading problems (e.g., Burns, Appleton, & Stehouwer, 2005; Shaywitz, Escobar, & Shaywitz, 1996; Stanovich, 1986; Vaughn, Gersten, & Chard, 2000). These findings provide strong evidence that research-based instruction beginning in Kindergarten significantly reduces the number of children who would otherwise experience reading difficulty. This project led to the development of the Early Literacy Intervention Program (ELIP). This Program is a 12-week Tier 2 prevention, delivered to groups of 2 to 4 children and has proven to take struggling readers out of the 'at-risk' range.

Knowledge Mobilization Activities: Knowledge mobilization is inherent to this project. Kindergarten teachers and ECE staff will be trained using the materials already available and will work as a collective enterprise within their Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Teacher teams, supported by the multidisciplinary team, will work collaboratively to define essential student outcomes, identify prior skills necessary to master the expectations, and add to our existing network. This networking has already proven successful as a means to build teacher capacity and support the production and use of research results to reduce the proportion of children being referred for special education. Currently available are **online teacher-made resources, training videos, and access to support staff**. This project will extend the knowledge mobilization plan to make this project's research findings known to and useful for other Ontario education partners through digital innovative ways of sharing, namely **social interactive media such as Webinars and Live-streaming**.

Outcomes: By extending the resource base so other Ontario education partners can access this program at Tier 1, enhanced student success in early literacy can be achieved.

