

Puzzle Peace: Education about Equity, Inclusion, Character and the Environment

About the project ...

The Trillium Lakelands District School Board recently updated its character development initiative with a new visual identity, the *Puzzle Peace*. Its new direction was supported by the belief statement that peace will be achieved through education about equity, inclusion, character and protection of the environment. In addition, the board established the goal of heightening student, staff and community awareness of the relationship among initiatives beginning by introducing all schools and their communities to the new visual. This project became the next step in the strategy by providing educators in all schools with resources and opportunities to incorporate *Puzzle Peace* into classroom instruction. The resources were centred on direct connections across all grades and curriculum areas among character development, equity, inclusion, anti-bullying, student success, Aboriginal and environmental education learning. To introduce the resource, teachers from all schools participated in a professional learning community meeting and worked with it in small groups. They returned to their schools with new learning to share with colleagues as they developed school-specific implementation plans together. The *Puzzle Peace* curriculum resource is readily accessible on the board's website and has been shared regionally to support a range of initiatives.

Impact on student learning and school culture ...

- The *Puzzle Peace* project contributed to improved student learning and achievement as students and staff gained access to electronic information, lessons and tools to help them build a solid foundation for thoughtful decision-making and problem-solving. Students use these skills to influence positive outcomes in their lives and across the elements of the *Puzzle Peace* initiative.
- The project also addressed higher-order thinking skills such as critical and analytical thinking, questioning, anticipating problems and contributing to solutions and served as a foundational piece in the creation and maintenance of respectful, safe, caring and inclusive learning cultures.

Lessons learned for moving forward ...

- Based upon the success of the *Puzzle Peace* website, the use of collaborative board processes that engage a diverse cross-section of the school and board community in the development, implementation and review of curriculum will be repeated.
- Due to the overwhelming interest in and support for the *Puzzle Peace* at the regional, board, and school levels, TLDSB's board and school plans will continue to have a deliberate focus on character development and will be aligned with other ministry documents and expectations.