

Is your child Globally Aware?

Students who are globally aware are empathetic and responsive in their contributions to the local and global community. They demonstrate cultural proficiency and act in a respectful, inclusive manner.

When we developed the [OCDSB Exit Outcomes](#), many students, staff, and parents told us that being Globally Aware is an important characteristic for all graduates leaving our school district. For students to develop a sense of global awareness, this must be a focus in our classrooms. Every day, teachers from kindergarten to grade 12 find creative ways to help students connect to the world around them across a variety of subjects. Think of the possibilities for rich learning in history, geography, music, science, languages, art, and physical education to name a few.

At the District level, we support these efforts as well. Here's a sampling of initiatives taking place this year:

Partnership with France

On October 17, the OCDSB signed a formal partnership agreement with the region of Aix-en-Provence, Marseille and Nice. This will mean enhanced cross-cultural interactions among students, teachers, and administrators. Merivale, Osgoode, Colonel By and Hillcrest high schools welcomed students from Marseille last week. The Recteur (similar to a regional Minister of Education) visited our schools. He was very impressed with our Immersion and Core French programs.

700 International Students Welcomed!

Our school district is fortunate to have an arm's length organization known as the [Ottawa-Carleton Education Network \(OCENET\)](#) that recruits international students to attend OCDSB schools. These students add to the richness and diversity in our secondary schools.

OCDSB International Certificate Program (ICP)

Four years ago we launched a [certificate program](#) for secondary school students in the District. The program is comprised of three components: a cluster of courses, language learning in addition to English or French, and an experiential piece outside of the classroom/school. Teachers volunteer their time to be lead teachers for the ICP. Last year, the program was in place in 23 secondary schools, involving 400 students. Since June 2013, 123 graduating students received the international certificate, and this year we are expecting up to 100 ICP graduates!

Elementary Students on the Move!

OCENET is now being approached by countries who are interested in having younger students experience learning in the OCDSB. Last spring students from Glashan Public School hosted an exchange with students from China. This year, Greenbank Middle School students will exchange with students in Korea. I was fortunate to meet with the Glashan students and Principal Jim Taylor after their return from China. They described the experience as life changing, one that opened their eyes to the world.

These are just a few of the many ways we are helping our 70,000 students achieve one of our ten exit outcomes. Most of the learning is embedded in the daily instructional practices of our teachers. We have another advantage: our diverse student population means that students can learn from each others' rich cultural experiences including First Nation, Métis, Inuit (FNMI), as well as the 22% of students who speak a language other than English or French in their homes. This is the perfect backdrop for learning to be globally aware.

A final comment. Heads of educational jurisdictions are interested in public education in Ontario. In the past month the OCDSB has hosted delegations from Sweden, France, Spain, Korea and Japan. We typically begin the visit with a presentation at the central office and then send our guests to see our schools in action. I try to meet with the delegates afterwards to hear their impressions of teaching and learning in the OCDSB. This is what I hear: they talk about our inclusion of all students; our programs for English language learners; our immersion programs; teaching strategies that engage students; and students who work collaboratively rather than a teacher-driven approach to instruction. But the comment that I hear most often is this: Our visitors remark on the joy they see in our classrooms and schools.

And this is what makes me most proud. It is a sign that our students, staff and parents are striking the right balance between student learning and student well-being. That's a wonderful place to be.

Sincerely
Jennifer