

2025-2026 Annual School Development Report

St. Francis School



Vision Statement

St. Francis School endeavors to provide a safe, caring, inclusive, and healthy environment. We encourage leadership, collaboration, and excellence in learning amongst all members of the school community.

Strategic Issue: Student Efficacy and Engagement - The failure of students to perceive or employ effective learning strategies is driving low student self-efficacy and pervasive school disengagement.

How did you know this was a Strategic Issue? What evidence did you have?

Data collected throughout the school year revealed a pressing strategic challenge: a distinct failure among students to perceive or employ effective learning strategies. This gap is driving critically low student self-efficacy and a pervasive sense of school disengagement.

The school identified this issue by triangulating several quantitative and qualitative data points:

- **The Confidence Gap:** A distinct contrast exists between staff and students. While 100% of the instructional staff report positive teaching efficacy, only 25.6% of students feel positive about their own self-efficacy and ability to succeed.
- **Targeted Engagement Deficit:** Overall school engagement stands at a low 26.5% positive, with a critical downward trend as students age. Positive engagement drops drastically in the intermediate years, sitting at just 4.8% for Grade 7 and 11.1% for Grade 8—percentages that fall significantly below historical school averages and provincial baselines.
- **Belonging Data:** Only 45.1% of students feel they are valued members of the school community. This sense of school belonging drops to 23.8% in Grade 7 and 22.2% in Grade 8, as compared to 60% in Grades 4 and 5.
- **Internal Interventions:** A review of report card comments, Teaching and Learning Team (TLT) minutes, and Record of Intervention (ROI) documents confirmed that students regularly struggle with self-regulation. Furthermore, 48.2% of students do not employ effective learning strategies when faced with challenging content.
- **Attendance Data:** Irregular attendance coincides with some students who feel disengagement and low student self-efficacy.
- **Review 360 Reports:** Actively tracked the behavioral and social-emotional needs in our building which indicates

self-regulation strategies are needed to address engagement and further support student learning.

Year-end Summary of Progress. What evidence do you have to support this progress? (What progress has been made on addressing the identified strategic issue? Have the actions taken moved the school forward in addressing the issue? What evidence have you used to determine this?)

To address these critical challenges, St. Francis School successfully mobilized its entire staff and established a dedicated, unified focus. The Teaching and Learning Team (TLT) and the School Development Team (SDT) rigorously reviewed survey data to place the intermediate engagement crisis at the absolute center of the school's annual goals. This collaborative effort was greatly accelerated by the instructional staff, who demonstrated a high level of professional readiness and an authentic commitment to shifting toward a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) mindset. Recognizing that meeting diverse classroom needs requires moving away from rigid, traditional routines, the staff actively embraced highly flexible instructional and assessment practices throughout the school year.

A major victory resulting from this shift was the strategic implementation of UDL principles across various subjects. Teachers have moved away from a one-size-fits-all approach, offering students choice boards and alternative methods to demonstrate their understanding through the use of digital tools, flexible assessments and allowing time for skill building and reflection.

Alongside these academic adjustments, the school heavily prioritized student well-being by expanding its mental health and emotional support frameworks. A key milestone was the introduction of the DoorWays counseling program, providing students with accessible, targeted mental health support directly within the school environment. To further accommodate diverse emotional and sensory needs, the school developed a new sensory room, offering a dedicated, calming space designed to support student self-regulation, alongside a variety of other targeted wellness initiatives.

Lastly, to help students build friendly, non-academic connections, the school introduced new interest groups designed to boost belonging. This included launching a student-led Games Club, forming an active backstage setup crew for school events, and adding brand new music and athletic opportunities alongside the activities the school already offers.

While we acknowledge that our issue will continue to need staff focus and dedication, the attendance and enthusiasm of our students in these programs and groups indicate that staff actions have made progress addressing the issue.

Distribution of Responsibilities

This widespread progress was made possible by a shared and purposeful distribution of responsibilities across the entire school team:

Administration: Reshaped the structural environment by scheduling common learning and planning blocks to enable seamless co-teaching, while consistently supporting staff and students as they transition toward UDL principles and flexible assessments.

Instructional & Specialty Staff: Actively embraced flexible pedagogy by implementing student-centered choice boards, utilizing digital tools, and building reflection time into their lessons. They also collaborated closely with administration to map out alternative learning environments and expanded school spirit by leading new extracurricular initiatives.

School Counsellor: Partnered with teachers and administration to increase student leadership opportunities, managed the integration of the new DoorWays counseling program to provide targeted mental health support, and oversaw the utilization of the newly improved sensory room to help students regulate their emotional and sensory needs. Throughout all initiatives, they focused on building meaningful, supportive connections with students outside the traditional classroom setting.

All Staff: Actively involved in school-wide social-emotional learning by leading wellness activities, reinforcing self-regulation strategies across all classrooms, and working together to model positive engagement and community spirit.

Next Steps...

To build on this year, St. Francis School has outlined a comprehensive action plan aimed at driving student independence, deepening engagement, and fostering a stronger sense of belonging. Academically, the school will continue to use instruction techniques through a school-wide, structured scaffolding model, which breaks complex tasks down into clear, achievable steps to build genuine student independence. Alongside this, a clear communication strategy for student choice will be developed to teach students the "why" behind choice-based assessments, ensuring they know how to select strategies tailored to their personal learning needs. To specifically re-engage intermediate students with the core curriculum, staff will intentionally increase opportunities for authentic, deep learning through experiential and outdoor

instructional activities.

The school will narrow in on the data to design targeted belonging interventions, allowing staff to pinpoint specific sub-groups experiencing low belonging—particularly in the intermediate grades, and create dedicated mentorship or leadership programs for them. To boost school spirit and build a more positive atmosphere, the school will strengthen community connections by hosting regular, non-academic activities such as Theme Days, monthly celebrations, and student-led committees/activities (Ex: School Wellness Day). To help support this effort of belonging, a list of staff groups, teams, and committees will be created, based on feedback from students, to help foster these student connections and ensure every student has a trusted point of contact.

Supporting these student-centered goals requires continuous professional growth and teamwork; therefore, administration will seek explicit staff input to provide individualized professional development that includes relevant subject training, inclusive practices, and restorative justice. Furthermore, collaborative practice will remain a structural priority, with common learning and planning blocks scheduled to facilitate seamless co-teaching among classroom teachers, Instructional Resource Teachers (IRTs), and Teaching and Learning Assistants (TLAs).