

Inviting Student Voice: *OurSCHOOL* Survey Results 2018-19



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Saskatoon Public Schools' motto "Inspiring Learning" implies that we aspire to build a strong and vibrant learning community. When a high degree of learning community capacity is present, all members of the community feel valued, affirmed, and inspired.

Saskatoon Public Schools has been using *OurSCHOOL* (previously called Tell Them From Me) division-wide for the last several years. *OurSCHOOL* is now also mandatory for all schools in the province. The Ministry of Education facilitates the implementation of the survey and the Provincial Leadership Team sees this as a valuable source of data for schools and divisions.

OurSCHOOL – designed by Dr. Doug Willms and his colleagues at The Learning Bar – is an online survey measuring 50 indicators identified in recent research on school and classroom effectiveness as being important indicators of healthy learning communities. *OurSCHOOL* is a very important source of information for Collegiate Renewal progress. It has also become a foundational measure in our division- and school-based planning and responses.

Student Perception Results

OurSCHOOL measures provide a wide variety of indicators that are particularly useful for school-level decision making. This board update provides results for four key indicators that align closely with our division's project plans. These include:

- Interest and Motivation – Grades 4-12
- Formative Assessment (Rigor) – Grades 4-12,
- Intellectual Engagement – Grades 7-12, and
- "Flow" – Grades 7-12.

The commentary for each indicator refers only to this year's overall results. The graphs provide comparisons to previous years' results to give a more detailed picture of student perceptions over time to inform progress toward the goals in our strategic plan.

STUDENTS WHO ARE INTERESTED AND MOTIVATED – GRADES 4-12

This indicator is designed to determine the extent to which students are interested in their studies and feel motivated to keep up with the coursework in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science (results are not broken down by subject area).

Grades 4-6

- Overall, 84% of Grade 4-6 students were interested and motivated. (Canadian norm is 86%)
- 86% of girls (norm is 88%) and 81% of boys (norm is 83%) were interested and motivated.

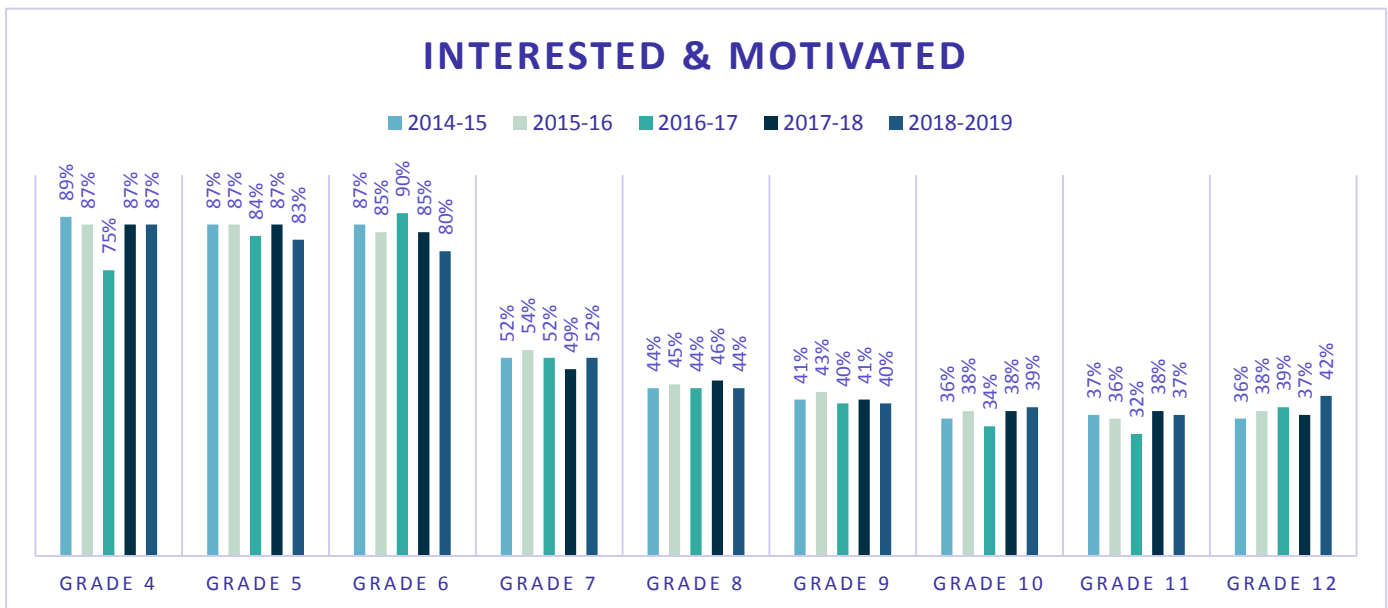
Grades 7-8

- Overall, 48% of Grade 7-8 students were interested and motivated.

Grades 9-12

- Overall, 40% of secondary students were interested and motivated.

**The Canadian norm for grades 7-12 combined is 40%. In SPS, the norm is 42% for girls and 43% for boys. The Canadian norm for girls is 40% and for boys it is 40%.



FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT (RIGOR) – GRADES 4-12

The importance of formative assessment (*OurSCHOOL* refers to this concept as “rigor”) in supporting student learning cannot be overstated. Research has repeatedly shown that when teachers provide students with ongoing and effective formative assessment in the classroom (student-to-student feedback is also very effective), learning improves and students feel more capable and confident as learners.

Grades 4-6

- Overall rating was 8.2 out of 10. (Canadian norm is 8.3)
- Girls’ rating was 8.3 out of 10 (norm is 8.3) and boys’ rating was 8.1 out of 10 (norm is 8.2).

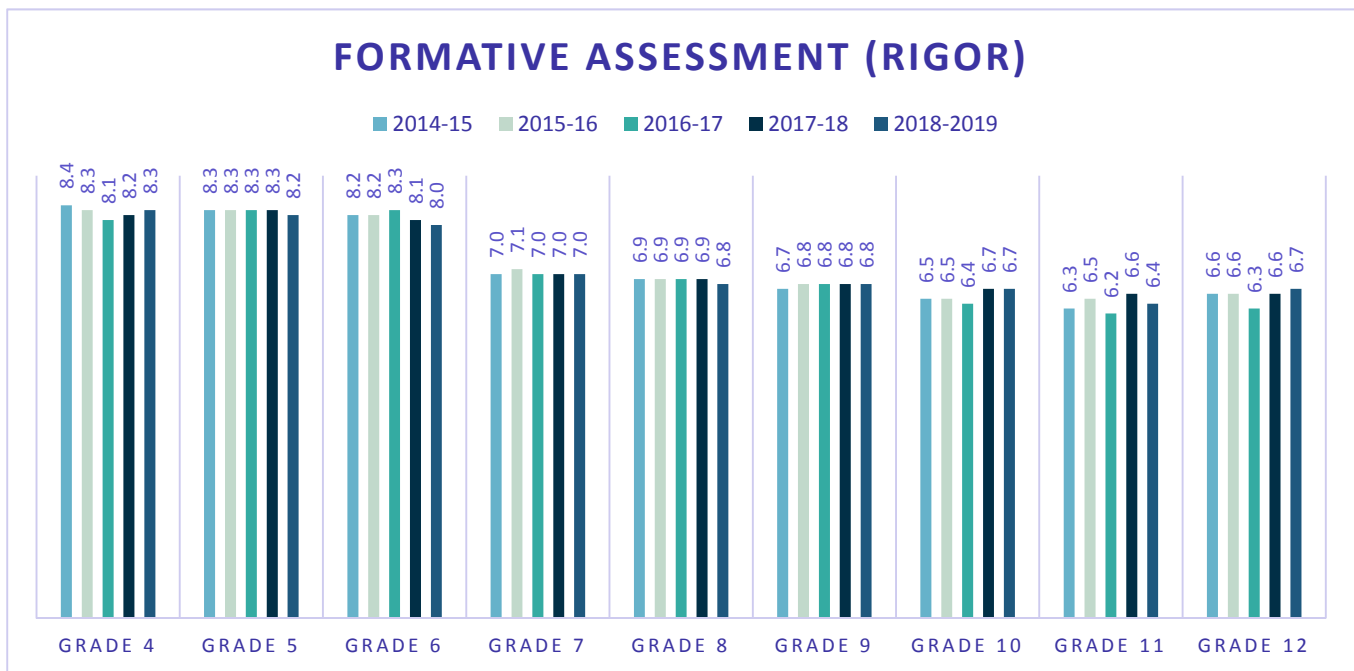
Grades 7-8

- Overall, students in Grades 7 and 8 rated this measure at 6.9 out of 10.

Grades 9-12

- Overall, students in Grades 9 to 12 rated this measure at 6.7 out of 10.

**The Canadian norm for grades 7-12 combined is 6.6. In SPS, the norm is 6.8 for girls and 6.7 for boys. The Canadian norm for girls is 6.6 and for boys it is 6.6.



INTELLECTUAL ENGAGEMENT COMPOSITE

When students are intellectually engaged, they find learning interesting, enjoyable, and relevant. This measure is a composite of five aspects of student engagement including:

- Interest and motivation,
- Effort,
- Effective learning time,
- Relevance, and
- Rigor.

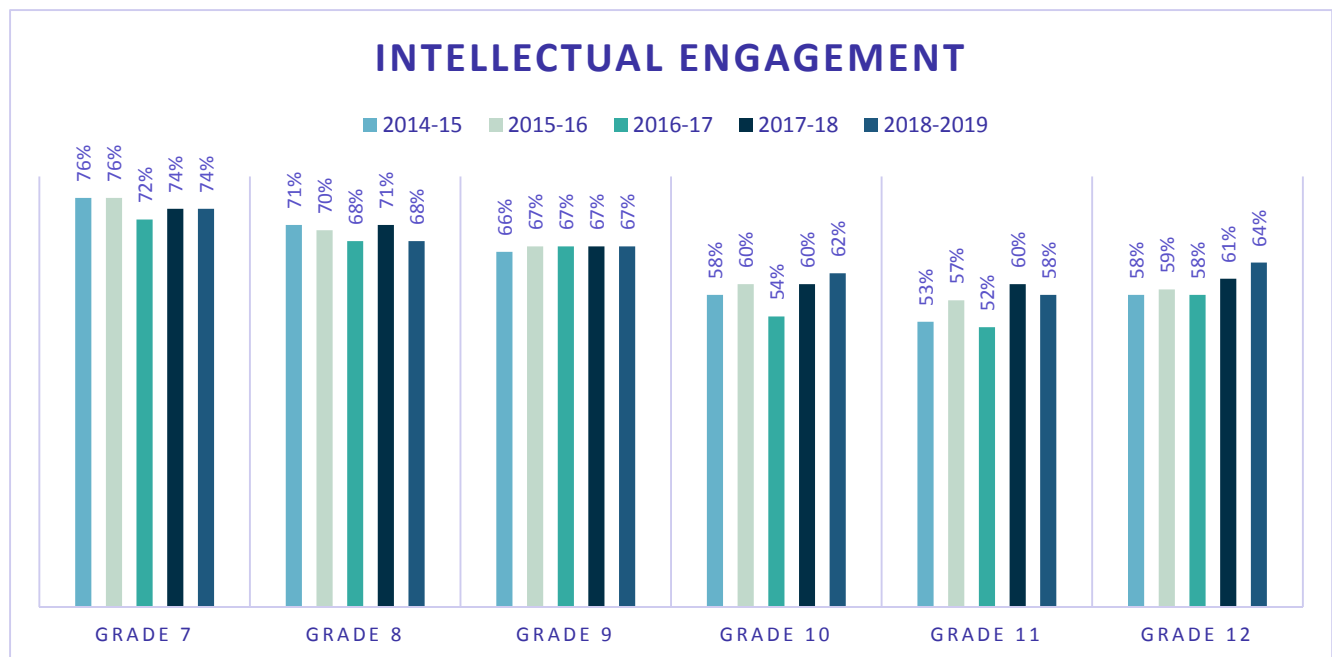
Grades 7-8

- Overall 71% of Grades 7-8 students were intellectually engaged.

Grades 9-12

- Overall 63% of secondary students were intellectually engaged.

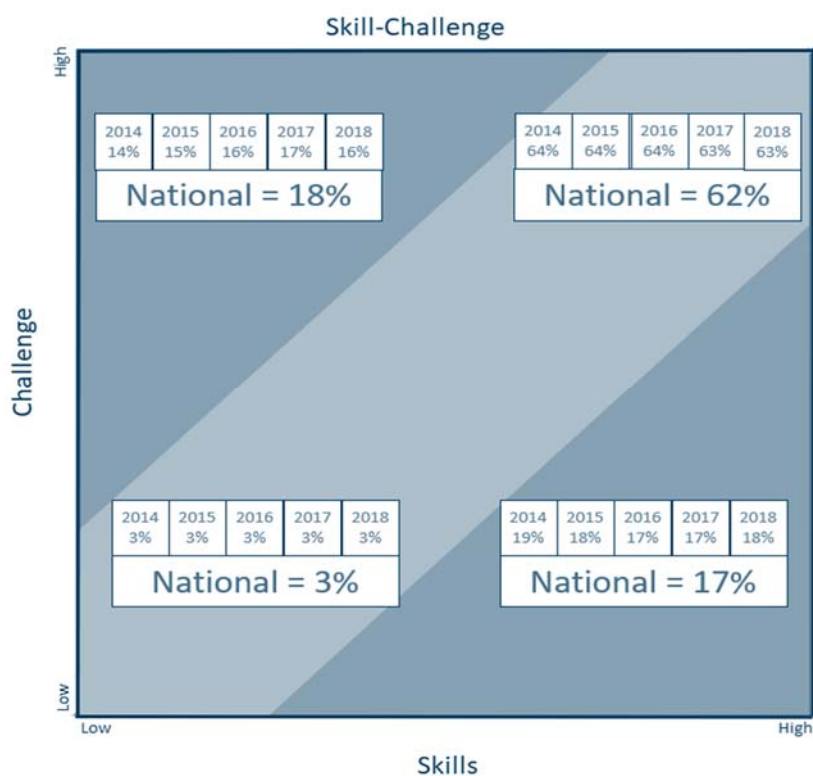
**The Canadian norm for grades 7-12 combined is 62%. In SPS, the norm is 67% for girls and 65% for boys. The Canadian norm for girls is 63% and for boys it is 61%.



SKILL VS CHALLENGE (“FLOW”)

Students feel challenged in their English language arts, mathematics, and science classes and feel confident of their skills in these subjects. When they feel highly skilled and highly challenged, they become so focused on their learning activities that they almost lose track of time.

- 63% of students had scores that placed them in the desirable quadrant with high skills and high challenge (top right corner); the Canadian norm is 62%.
- 18% of students were confident of their skills but did not find classes challenging; the Canadian norm is 17%.
- 16% of students were not confident of their skills but found their classes challenging; the norm is 18%.
- 3% of students were not confident of their skills and were not challenged; the norm is 3%.



DIVISION-SPECIFIC MEASURES

The *OurSCHOOL* system also has provisions for division- and school-specific questions. Presently we have two division-specific questions as reported below.

Responsive Instruction

Over the last several years, teachers have enhanced their skillsets related to formative assessment and responsive instruction. Teachers are asked to check students’ learning frequently and, based on these checks, adjust instruction – often multiple times – to ensure their students learn what is being taught. Specifically, students are asked the following question:

How often does this happen? When I don’t understand something, my teacher teaches me in a different way that helps.

(i) All the time (ii) Most of the time (iii) Sometimes (iv) Rarely or never

Over the last several years, our students tell us that this aspect of responsive instruction has become more frequent. For example, the percentage of students who say that their teacher never adjusts instruction based on whether students “get it” has fallen from 13% in 2014-15 to 8% this year in our high schools. Further, the percentage of students in high schools who say that their teacher uses multiple ways to teach that help them learn experience this all or most of the time has increased from 47% in 2014-15 to 60% this year. In our elementary schools, the trends are moving in the right direction.



OUTCOMES-BASED ASSESSMENT

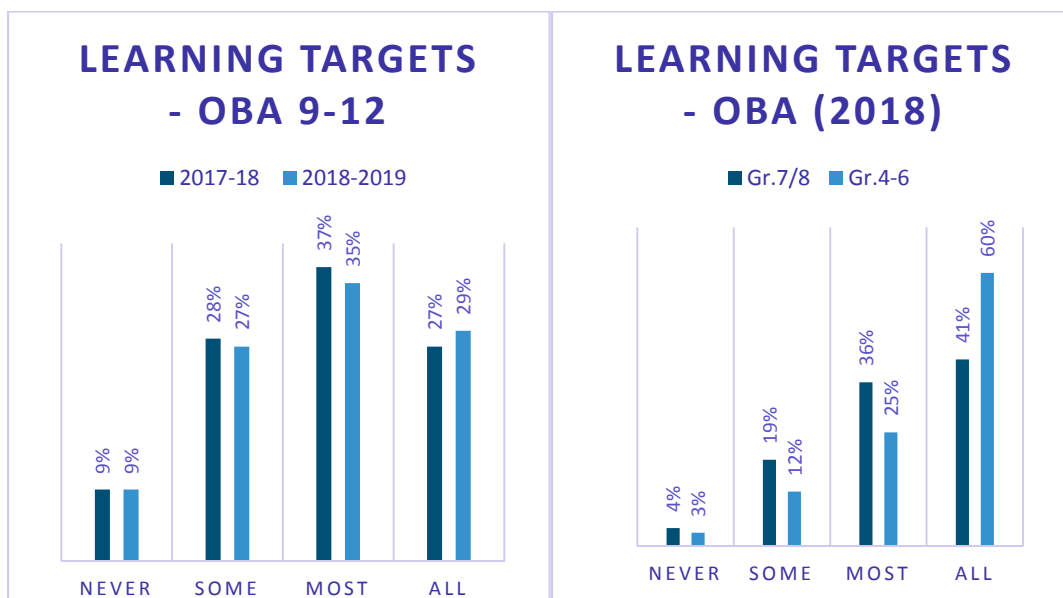
All renewed curricula in the province identify specific outcomes or skills that students must be able to demonstrate. When we assess students' progress based on outcomes, we design learning tasks that target specific outcomes and keep track of how well a student is able to show his or her mastery of the particular skill. One key piece of this process is that students should be made aware of the outcome(s) they will be working on so that they can be sure to show their teacher what they know and can do in relation to that outcome.

This year, all collegiate teachers are expected to implement outcomes-based assessment (OBA) in at least one course each semester with the target of full implementation by 2019-2020. The question about OBA was also included in this year's *OurSCHOOL* survey to establish a baseline for future growth and the question was added in our middle years and elementary surveys as well. All students in grades were asked:

How often does this happen? My teacher tells us at the beginning of class what skill(s) we will be working on that day.

(i) All the time (ii) Most of the time (iii) Sometimes (iv) Rarely or never

In collegiates, nearly all of our students (91%) indicated their teachers tell them at least sometimes what outcomes/skills they will be working on that day, in a particular class. It is noted that 64% of students said that it is true at least most of the time with a slight increase this year in how many experience it all the time. This indicator will continue to be tracked in these grades. Moving forward and through the hard work of our teachers and administrators, it is expected that this measure will improve over time. This was the first year this question was asked of students in grades 4-8 and will create a baseline moving forward.



REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS:

In broad terms, Saskatoon Public Schools' students tend to be positive about their school experiences. For example:

1. In general, this year's results were similar to results from previous years.
2. Girls tended to be more positive about their school experiences as compared to boys in several measures. However, the differences in most cases were not significant.
3. Elementary students tended to be more positive than high school students – both nationally and in Saskatoon Public Schools – on most measures.

As has been highlighted in other reports, multiple measures of specific initiatives are developed whenever possible to provide a robust picture of progress and guide next steps. Given that OBA is a significant new focus for professional development through Collegiate Renewal in particular, administrators are supported through professional development about decoding high school course outlines for evidence of OBA planning. Our recently-renewed Secondary Assessment Handbook also has a substantial section on OBA and all collegiates spent significant professional development time at the start of the semester to learn about and plan for implementing OBA.

These data are powerful sources of student voice. In some respects, the data confirm what school-based staff expected to see. However, there were instances of either improvement or decline that was unexpected by school staff. When this happens, it opens the door to further investigation and conversation with students not only to find out the reasons for their perceptions but also learn what can be done to improve students' school experiences over time.