



PLC AT WORK®

Success Story

Esther Starkman School (K-9) EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Esther Starkman School met the diverse needs of its students in grades K-9 by taking collective responsibility for the success of each learner.



Esther Starkman School (K-9)

EDMONTON, ALBERTA



► DEMOGRAPHICS

- 935 Students
- 3% Special education
- 14% Limited English proficient

Esther Starkman School is located in Edmonton, Alberta, a city of approximately 981,000 residents.



► CHALLENGE

With grades K-9 under a single roof, Principal Greg Kushnir and his staff at Esther Starkman School faced teaching challenges that were as diverse as the learners themselves.

Esther Starkman strived to close the achievement gap among its students by ensuring that those who struggled received the support they needed. And with 14 percent of his learners facing challenges with English as a second language across ten separate grades, Kushnir sought consistent, fair, and equitable assessment policies in each classroom throughout the school.

“We believe strongly that it is impossible to effectively monitor student learning unless every teacher is crystal-clear about what they want their students to learn,” Kushnir said.

Kushnir and Esther Starkman looked to the PLC at Work® process as a way to better meet the needs of students through effective, research-based teaching strategies.

“We want our students to think, problem-solve, and apply the knowledge they learn so they are exceptionally well-prepared to succeed in our ever-changing world,” Kushnir said.

► IMPLEMENTATION

The educators at Esther Starkman began by taking collective responsibility for the success of each student.

“It is the results of our efforts that we are concerned with,” Kushnir said. “If we are not getting the results in student achievement that we are expecting, then we will change our actions to get different results.”



“We are not an isolated collection of teachers under one roof. Rather, we are a team that works interdependently to achieve common goals.”

—Greg Kushnir, principal, Esther Starkman School, Edmonton, Alberta

► IMPLEMENTATION CONTINUED

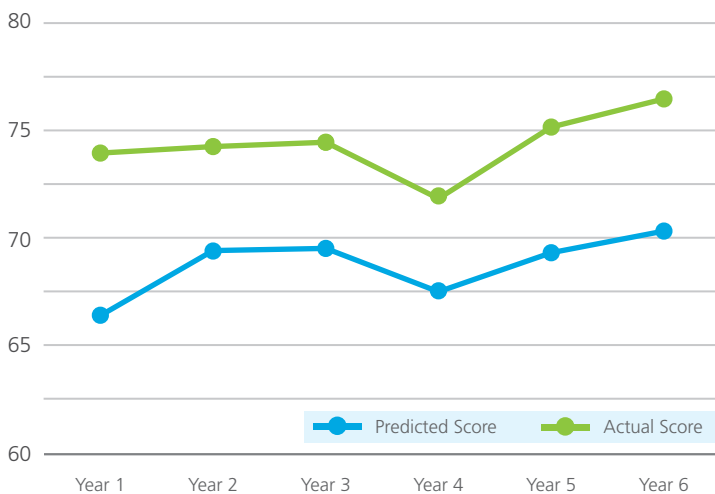
Through the PLC at Work process, Esther Starkman’s teachers collaborated to create common performative and summative assessments with agreed-upon standards. They performed data analysis on these assessments and started providing daily systemic intervention, determined by the student and their individual skill level.

To match the students’ diverse needs at each grade level, collaborative teams of teachers from Kindergarten to grade 9 created a shared understanding regarding which curricular outcomes were essential for all of their students to learn.

Additionally, the teams vertically aligned their outcomes to ensure that no gaps, overlaps, or omissions would impact student success. And in turn, the strategies are subject to a yearly review, where they are retained or discarded based on their effectiveness.

“We believe that a collective, systemic approach to at-risk students will allow us to succeed where a traditional individual approach has not,” Kushnir said.

**Grade 6 English Language Arts
Predicted vs. Actual Score on PAT**



► RESULTS

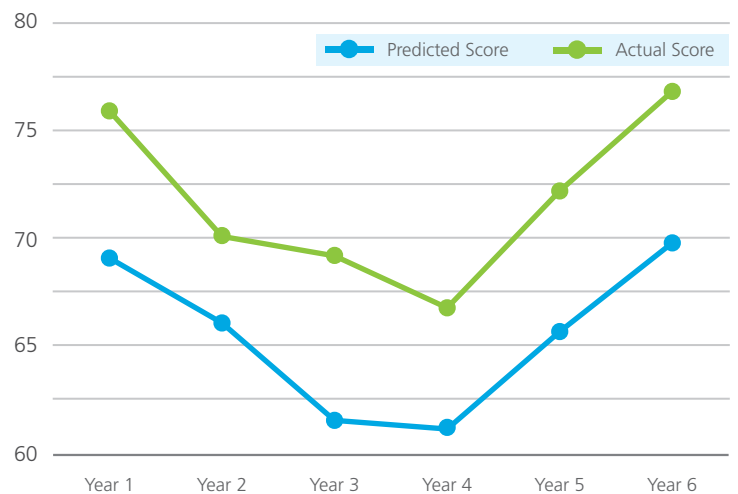
The PLC at Work process has dynamically helped Esther Starkman’s educators improve their instructional practices, allowing them to create a diverse and rewarding classroom experience.

“By collaborating both within the school and within our district, teachers have been able to learn, agree upon, and implement effective instructional strategies,” Kushnir said.

The data illustrates the school’s success with the process as well. For example, Esther Starkman out-performed the provincial averages in grade 6 English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies—both at the acceptable standard, as well as the standard of excellence—for seven consecutive years.

“Student learning, not adult comfort, drives the actions at our school,” Kushnir said. “We hope that all experiences at Esther Starkman are rewarding and will cause you to believe, as we do, that this is truly a school of excellence.”

**Grade 6 Math Predicted vs.
Actual Score on PAT**





Start Your Success Story

You have a vision for change and improvement in your school or district. You want to see results in the classroom for the lifelong betterment of your students. Like many educators, you may be doing more with less, and you are always looking for ways to improve.

At Solution Tree, we share your vision to transform education to ensure learning for all, and we can help you make this vision a reality.

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