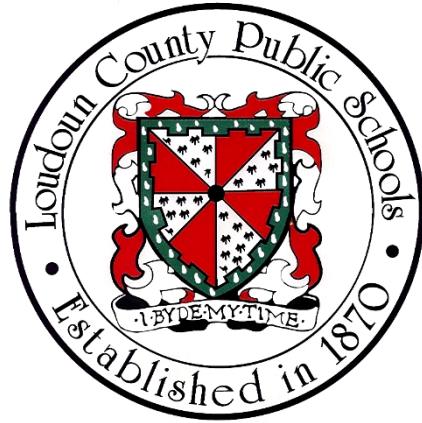


Program Evaluation

One to the World Initiative (2015-2017)



Research Office

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Executive Summary

One to the World (OttW) is a division-wide instructional initiative that addresses what a Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) graduate should know and be able to do. The four key elements of OttW are:

- **Significant Content and Important Competencies:** Tying directly to the LCPS curriculum, OttW work develops students into knowledgeable critical thinkers, communicators, collaborators, creators, and contributors.
- **Authentic Challenging Problems in the World:** Student work is framed by an authentic, challenging problem featuring real-world context, tasks, tools and/or impact.
- **Public Product for the World:** Students share their work with audiences beyond the classroom in the form of products, performances, services, and/or exhibitions.
- **Connected with the World:** Students improve the quality and impact of their work through connections to: (a) valuable tools and information; (b) others with whom they collaborate; and (c) audiences beyond the teacher. Students use technology to make these connections as appropriate.

The 2016-17 school year marked the second year of implementation of the OttW Common Expectations for all teachers, schools and central office staff. For example, three key provisions required that: (a) every teacher complete an introductory OttW professional development module (PBL 101), (b) every teacher implement at least two OttW learning experiences for students, and (c) every school host at least one exhibition of student work. To support teachers and principals in attaining these division-wide goals, the OttW Working Group coordinated the delivery of the following professional learning opportunities: three-day, PBL 101 introductory workshops (2015-2017); Loudoun Creates initiative to showcase student digital content (2015-17); six OttW Leadership Modules on the LCPS VISION website (2015-16); job-embedded “Leading the Learning” sessions during monthly principals’ meetings (2015-17); and workshops on the PBL Professional Learning Loop protocols (2015-16).

To facilitate the collection of evidence for this study, evaluators from the Research Office followed a collaborative approach in which key stakeholders from the OttW Working Group participated directly in the planning and implementation of the evaluation. After constructing the evaluation questions, the evaluation team opted to survey K-12 teachers and principals on the purpose, usefulness and effectiveness of the OttW training series over the last two years.

Evidence collected from the survey data yielded insights into the strengths of the OttW initiative and potential areas of growth for the 2017-18 school year. More specifically, analyses of the data highlighted the following strengths: (a) high participation rate in the monthly Leading the Learning sessions (2015-17) and OttW Leadership Modules (2015-16) for principals, (b) sufficient support and resources for OttW leadership provided to principals, (c) strong awareness of the OttW Common Expectations for both principals and teachers, (d) clear understanding of the purpose of OttW and its alignment with the mission of LCPS for principals, (e) widespread integration of OttW concepts into school improvement planning and other building priorities, (f) opportunities for students to exhibit their work products at most schools, and (g) promising results in the quality of student work products (Significant Content & Important Competencies).

Potential areas of growth included: (a) low participation rate in the PBL 101 workshops (2015-17) for teachers, (b) low participation rate in the Loudoun Creates initiative (2015-17) for both principals and teachers, (c) insufficient support and resources for OttW implementation provided to teachers, (d) low use of collaborative PBL protocols by both principals and teachers, (e) limited implementation of all four elements of OttW in instruction, (f) unclear vision of effective school support for teacher collaboration and coordination across the disciplines, and (g) lack of student choice in their learning experiences

(Authentic Problems in the World). Given the low response rate for the teacher survey, however, the teacher data may not be representative of the total LCPS population.

After sharing the aforementioned results with the OttW Working Group, the evaluation team developed the following recommendations for continued improvement into the 2017-18 school year:

1. **Boost attendance in PBL 101 workshops:** This study found limited participation in the PBL 101 workshops for teachers. Since project-based learning, offered in partnership with the Buck Institute for Education, is one of the primary instructional initiatives for OttW, efforts could be made to build local capacity in delivering these introductory workshops to both new and experienced teachers. In addition, the percentage of trained teachers in PBL could be tabulated and monitored for each school to determine the level of coaching support needed for principals who are championing this initiative.
2. **Assist the principals with knowledge transfer strategies:** While most principals felt prepared to lead the implementation of OttW in their schools, their capacity to translate the innovations into changes in practice appeared to be in the early stages of development. To address this potential “know-do” gap, the results from this study could be shared during a monthly principals meeting to initiate a discussion on successful strategies for knowledge transfer in the schools. For example, what are the barriers to sustaining job-embedded staff development on OttW throughout the school year? Which structures, tools, or processes have been most effective toward placing authentic challenging problems at the center of teachers’ daily practices? How have the school’s most effective professional learning communities (PLCs) exhibited leadership in OttW implementation (e.g., through the use of the Professional Learning Loop protocol)?
3. **Investigate school barriers to teacher collaboration across disciplinary boundaries:** With respect to the schools’ capacity to implement OttW, the principals and teachers diverged the most on the perceived flexibility of their school’s schedules and processes to promote teacher coordination across the disciplines. To probe the validity of these responses, a follow-up study could be conducted to identify specific school barriers along with their root causes. Success stories could also be collected through a review of extant research.
4. **Collect more frequent formative feedback:** This formative evaluation was conducted toward the end of the second year of implementation of the OttW/PBL/Loudoun Creates training series. Given the complexity of this division-wide initiative, the OttW Working Group could collect formative feedback after each training session to understand the evolution of stakeholder engagement with PBL and the four key elements of OttW.
5. **Conduct research on element two of OttW:** The OttW key element that received the lowest rating from both principals and teachers concerned the opportunities for students to have a choice in their learning experiences. To build system-wide capacity in this area, the OttW Working Group could identify K-12 teachers who have been successful in embedding authentic challenging problems into their daily instructional practices. For example, case studies on these teachers could be documented and incorporated into staff development to increase knowledge of promising practices.