

**CAULFEILD iDEC**  
**Mid-Implementation Evaluation Survey**  
**Results released May 2013**

**iDEC Steering Committee**

Brian Hornberg (librarian and primary teacher), Martin Andrews (Gr 6/7 teacher), Tricia Yurkowski (Vice-Principal and Gr 4/5 teacher) and Brad Lund (Principal and iDEC tech support teacher)

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Two years ago we started to investigate a new concept in schooling called iDEC (Inquiry-based Digitally Enhanced Community). This program uses the inquiry process to deliver curriculum content while enhancing the end-users' experience and the products of their work with digital tools. Soft skills called SUCCEED Skills are also taught and practiced as part of the whole experience.

The Caulfeild staff has worked extremely hard to develop our own, homegrown, version of an Inquiry Process, based on current research. Our final product can be found [here](#). While this model appears to be cyclical, it is actually more free flowing and adaptive to the students' needs and where their inquiry is leading.

When we opened the doors of the iDEC program in September 2011 we promised a mid-implementation evaluation. To that end, the iDEC Steering Committee created a survey for parents, students and staff. We received 349 responses: 257 responses from students, 79 from parents and 13 from staff.

The Steering Committee met to discuss the survey results and was extremely pleased with the impact this new program is having. Following are portions of the results:

### **Survey Results – Students**

Results from the student surveys demonstrated that the students generally see their teachers using technology throughout the day and that they are using technology themselves on a daily basis as needed. In using technology, they generally feel more focused, they do better work and they are having more fun doing their work at school. Determination and Empathy were viewed by students to be the most important SUCCEED skills, with Understanding a close third.

Comments revealed technology trends outlining the ease of access to information, ease with writing processes (editing and rewriting), and importance of on-line safety and independence. Overall, the comments were very positive from students across the grades.

## Inquiry - Overall iDEC Program

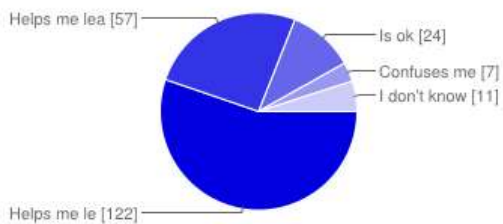
"I like school."

"It (the iDEC Program) teaches kids to have fun while doing work."

"They should get kids to partner up with a different class on the iPads."

"The iDEC program is fun and shows you different ways to learn."

"It helps your work and lets you improve in other directions that you wouldn't with just pencil and paper."



Helps me learn what I want to learn	122	55%
Helps me learn what the teacher wants me to learn	57	26%
Is ok	24	11%
Confuses me	7	3%
I don't know what inquiry is	11	5%

## SUCCEED

### EMPATHY

"I find it the greatest tool in the school because it shows you how to respect others."

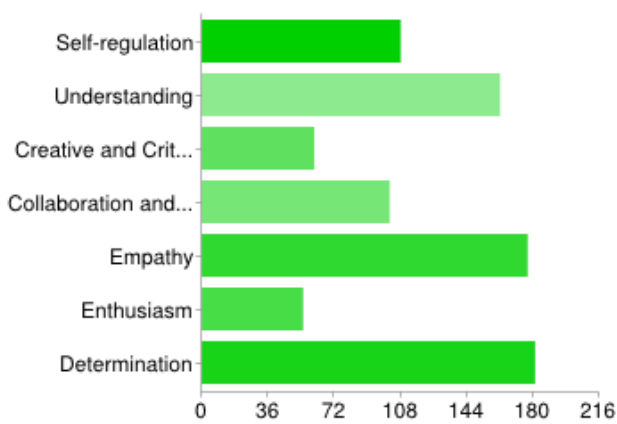
"...it is all about making you a better person. You can be great at math or great at LA (Language Arts), but some people need help being empathetic. It helps us understand what empathy really means, and it helps us use it. In some ways, learning to be empathetic is as important as learning how to add and subtract." "Without empathy everyone would be rough and no one will care."

### DETERMINATION

"Determination...is by far the most important SUCCEED skill. It gets you furthest in life. School (life) or in actual real life when you're an adult."

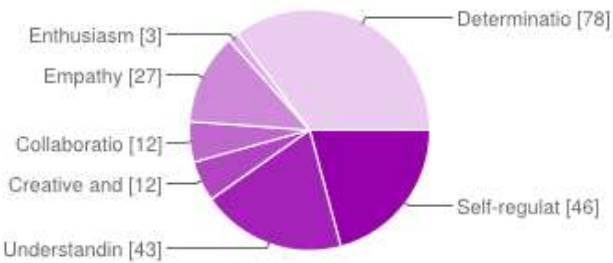
"...being determined can help you practice all the other skills."

**This year I have learned about (check all that apply):**



Self-regulation	108	13%
Understanding	162	19%
Creative and Critical thinking	61	7%
Collaboration and Cooperation	102	12%
Empathy	177	21%
Enthusiasm	55	7%
Determination	181	21%

**The SUCCEED skill that I think is most important is:**



Self-regulation	46	21%
Understanding	43	19%
Creative and Critical thinking	12	5%
Collaboration and Cooperation	12	5%
Empathy	27	12%
Enthusiasm	3	1%
Determination	78	35%

**Technology**

“Working on an electronic (device) for everything doesn’t mean that you should fool around. It means that the iDEC program is trying to make you work better and have more fun doing so.”

“You can also find pictures to help to explain what you are talking about.”

“When you first start it is a little confusing, but after the first few times it actually helps with learning.”

“I think a lot of people would think that iDEC isn’t the best thing for kids, but I think it spreads our mind wider so we can research more than just basic things.”

“I find it much easier to learn and write with my own computer and a more frequent use of technology.”

“...with the technology we learn with, we also learn about personal independence with our individual uses of our personal software or computer. We need to learn to be trusted on our computers.”

“...we are usually using technology to learn new stuff and gather information for projects.”

“Proper use... it’s not just about the technology, it’s about using it to help you learn more.”

“...it’s a big change from writing on paper all the time, but it also teaches you more about being safe on the internet, and you learn more every minute while using it because you’re always searching up inquiries or new thoughts.”

“Using computers to complete most assignments is really helpful because not only does it allow us to freely edit, check spelling and grammar in our writing, but it also gives us the opportunity to enhance our already vast knowledge of technology, which is critical if you want to do well in our modern society.”

“I think that people should know that we are not on technology for the whole day.”

“You have to be prepared to use technology, but we don’t do everything with computers.”

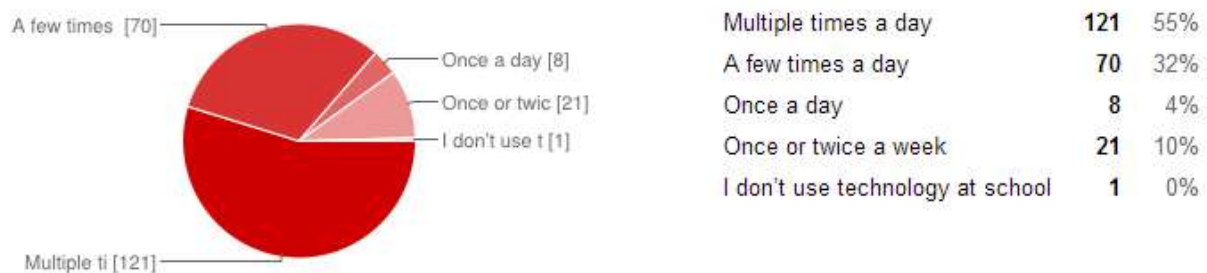
“We are NOT goofing off on electronics. We are learning more and having more fun.”

“I think we should have more time to learn how to type.”

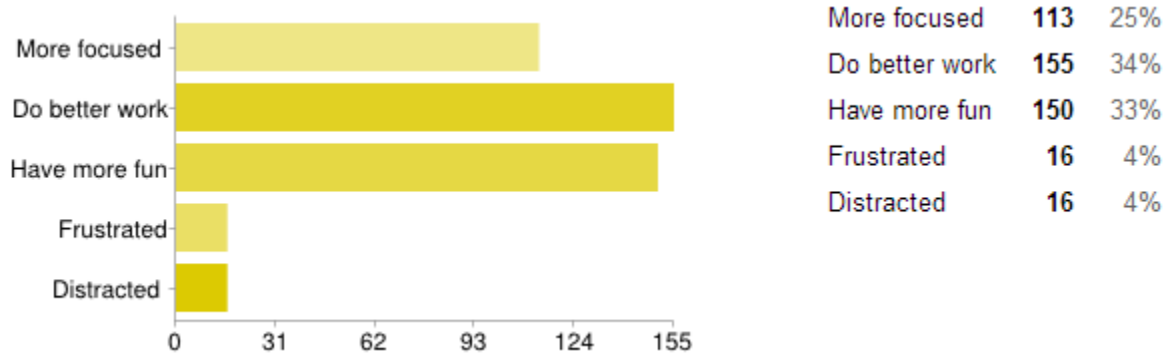
“I think this is a very great program! It lets you not have a pencil every second and it is also very fun to have one too. Who would not like a computer! I can make ideas go way farther than they would if you have pencil and paper. It also can let you open up to new things like instead of just looking in a book you have access to the internet.”

“The iDEC program is good for messy writers and is faster to write things and is more neat instead of taking all your stuff out of your desk.”

### **I use technology (ie. computer, projector, ipads, smartboards, etc):**



**When I use technology (ie. computer, projector, ipads, smartboard, etc) I am (check all that apply)**



### Survey Results – Parents

The backbone of the school, the parents, had the largest growth curve. They had to trust us, the school staff, to interpret the research and communicate it in such a way as to relay confidence in the program that we were creating. Then they had to entrust their children to us and believe that this new way of learning and working would be a good fit.

The PAC continues to support the iDEC program with wish list items and moral support. We have implemented many new aspects with in the program such as the Digital Art component of the Fine Arts curriculum. **The Digital Art was evaluated separately by intermediate students who overwhelmingly stated that they would prefer to continue with this new aspect of the Fine Arts Curriculum (78%).**

Results from the parent surveys showed that parents are generally happy with the iDEC program and both the level of what their children are learning and how they are learning.

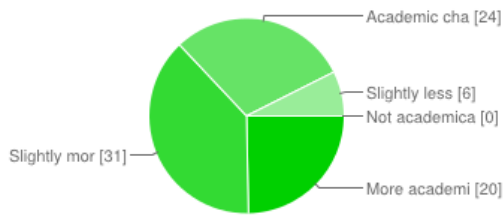
**My overall impression of the iDEC program 1.5 years into its implementation is:**



**Academic Rigor and Inquiry**

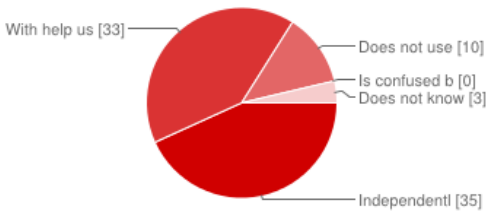
Parents have a general feeling that their children are going deeper in their learning, and more able to explore learning topics. Students are using critical thinking and are, often, engaging in projects that have similarities with challenge programs. **The main concern centers on parents not fully understanding the inquiry process and what it means. Many stated they would like more “education” about it.** Lastly, some expressed concerns about the Wednesday block, stating that students need more direction as many view it as a “study block”.

**Since the beginning of the iDEC program I believe my child has been:**

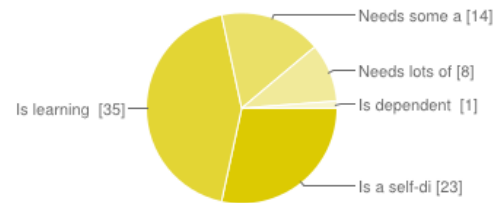


More academically challenged	20	25%
Slightly more academically challenged	31	38%
Academic challenge has neither increased or decreased	24	30%
Slightly less academically challenged	6	7%
Not academically challenged	0	0%

**With respect to inquiry, my child:**



Independently uses the Inquiry Cycle and language	35	43%
With help uses the Inquiry Cycle and language	33	41%
Does not use the Inquiry cycle and language	10	12%
Is confused by the Inquiry cycle and language	0	0%
Does not know the Inquiry cycle and language	3	4%



Is a self-directed learner	23	28%
Is learning to be a self-directed learner	35	43%
Needs some adult intervention to be self-directed learner	14	17%
Needs lots of adult supervision to be a self-directed learner	8	10%
Is dependent on adults when engaged in the learning process	1	1%

“She has been able to go deeper into topics, pose more questions and explore the answers”

“Wonderful to see students moving away from textbook Q and A to real world problems and explorations”

“I like that the inquiry model somewhat looks like what the challenge program looked like years ago”

“The one area I have noticed is an increased effectiveness in my son “connecting the dots.” I believe this is influenced by the inquiry based model which I believe is a great approach as it fosters critical thinking”

“Inquiry work or homework should be given for the early dismissal time...”

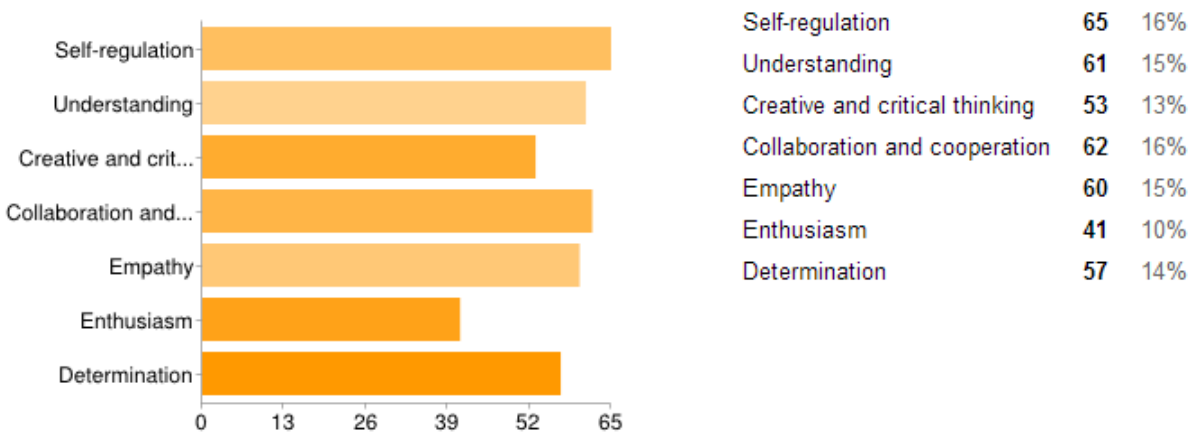
“I have to admit I don’t fully understand the inquiry part myself...”

“I need more education on iDEC...”

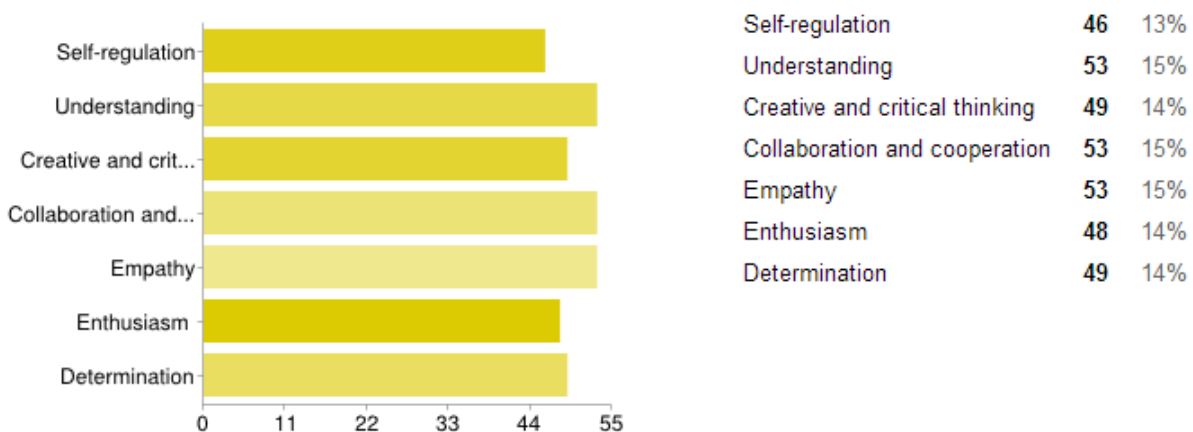
### **SUCCEED**

**Parents value the teaching of these skills and see that students apply SUCCEED skills language in their everyday life.** They see a move whereby students are using the correct language and terminology to identify their own behaviour and the behaviour of others. They are also using the skills to frame their academic goals. **They expressed concerns about being able to distinguish what the students are learning at home and as a part of their family culture, from what they are learning at school.** Teachers have the challenge of teaching these concepts in an authentic manner.

**Please check the skill(s) you feel your child has been taught (check all that apply):**



**Please check the skill(s) you feel your child demonstrates regularly (check all that apply):**



“Very impressive to have this understanding at such a young age (12) and so amazing to have going to high school”

“Our daughter was new to the school this year. SUCCEED skills have helped her adapt and become part of the class”

“She has mentioned attending school assemblies discussing these skills”

“Am very pleased to see all the skills being applied in school as school is much more than the children just learning their ABCs”

“I have seen examples of critical and creative thinking in how my son has approached some of his projects; both on the content side and also on how he would structure the actual presentation”

“Self-regulation was the first skill taught and was discussed and referenced extensively at the time...”

“They are expected to use all these skills and have been improving them as they age”

“...hard to determine if he was taught or not taught the skill because teaching it doesn’t always translate into the ability to really learn and apply the skill”

“I think these skills are things that mature along with them but at least the reinforcement at school allows for my child to be fully aware”

“The difference between school teaching SUCCEED skills and general personality/family ethics are hard to distinguish...”

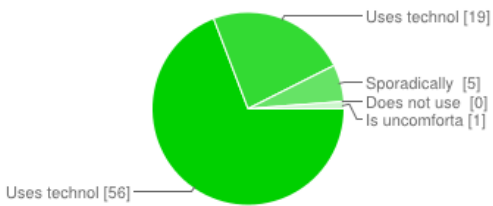
### **Technology Use**

**Parents see their children using technology more independently and efficiently.** Many understand that technology is being used a tool to further student learning, and is not taking the place of “the basics”. They recognize there was a learning curve for the children as they entered grade 4, but have seen progression throughout the year. Teachers must not assume children have the computer and keyboarding skills prior to the beginning the school year.

**Many agreed that using technology has resulted in more engagement with the learning at hand.** There are concerns that students are spending too much time on presentation and need more direction to ensure the learning focus is on content. **Also, some concerns that the writing process was not as meaningful and/or effective as a writing program using paper only.** Lastly, there are concerns over the time and money it takes to buy, maintain, and troubleshoot their children’s laptops when issues arise.

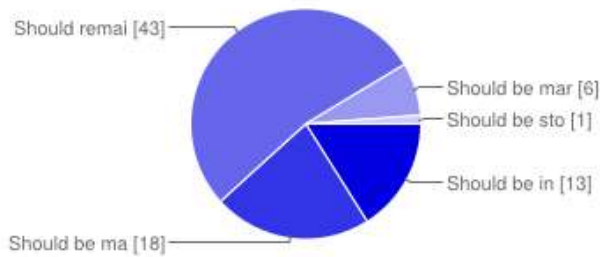


**With respect to technology, my child:**



Uses technology independently for school work	56	69%
Uses technology with help for school work	19	23%
Sporadically uses technology for school work	5	6%
Does not use technology for school work	0	0%
Is uncomfortable using technology for school work	1	1%

**The school’s effort to use technology to enhance students’ educational experience:**



Should be increased	13	16%
Should be marginally increased	18	22%
Should remain the same	43	53%
Should be marginally decreased	6	7%
Should be stopped	1	1%

“She is more enthusiastic and interested in school through the use of technology”

“She has certain independence when using the laptops for homework and research. I admire her new found skills and confidence”

“... I was somewhat hesitant about the role Technology in the Classroom, as I feared that traditional academics would take a backseat. I can only say that I am extremely impressed with not only what my child has been learning, but also HOW she is learning, and I see for myself that technology is used as a TOOL to enhance and support her learning”

“I believe the use of technology platforms makes the projects more engaging to my son, and opens venues of creativity that stimulate his male brain better.”

“She is confident using any technology at home and often shows me new things that she has learnt or continues to use her new skills at home on her own motivated projects”

“He is exposed to so many more tools to become self-sufficient”

“A hesitant adopter of new technology myself, I must admit that I am impressed by the way in which technology is used to supplement the learning ( I was initially skeptical/suspicious at how technology could be THAT much of a benefit, and was a bit afraid that she would no longer be learning “the basics”). So far, I think there a good balance.

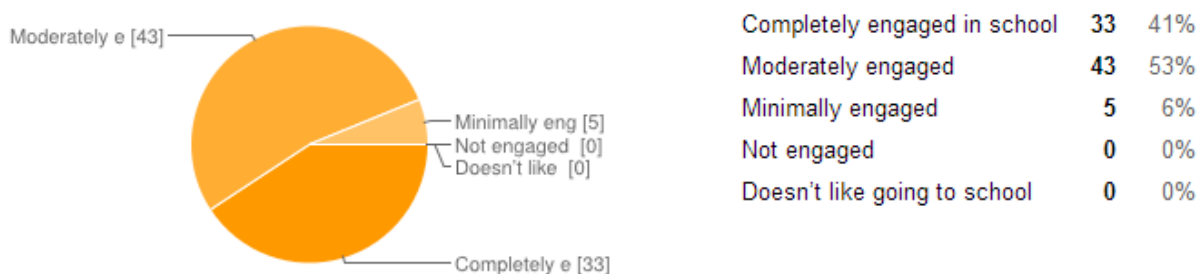
“At times I feel more time and energy is spent formatting...”

“I am concerned about my child’s handwriting and ability to write without autocorrect.”

One area that was apparent to staff was that students were generally more engaged in their school work. We wanted to see if parents noticed a difference as well.

**94% of the parents surveyed felt that engagement had improved since the program was implemented.**

#### My child's level of engagement this year compared to last year:



## Survey Results - Staff

If parents are the backbone of the iDEC program, the staff is the muscles and ligaments that hold the organization together. The staff embarked on this journey two years ago knowing it would be a huge change to their teaching styles and a reevaluation of their pedagogy. They had the choice to stay and begin this journey or transfer to another more traditional school. They choose to stay and have been amazing showing commitment and determination over and above what is generally expected.

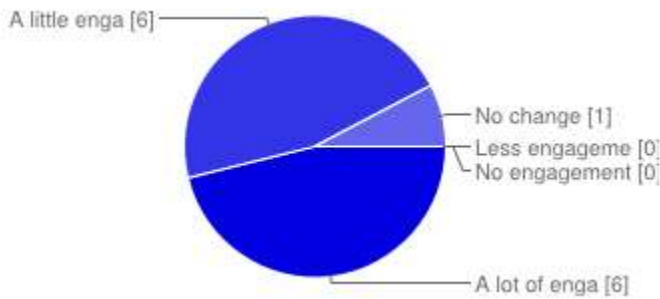
### Staff Overview of Results

**Staff surveys indicated that teachers have seen an increase in student engagement with the iDEC program.** Working with technology is becoming more comfortable for staff and the collaboration time is a valued part of the program.

**In respect to using inquiry, the staff has recognized that we have not been implementing the new inquiry cycle language long enough for the students to be using it independently and some admit that the students do not know the entire cycle yet.**

All responding staff agree that they believe students are usually using the technology appropriately at school.

### Change in overall student engagement:



A lot of engagement	6	46%
A little engagement	6	46%
No change	1	8%
Less engagement	0	0%
No engagement	0	0%

One quote from staff that summed up the experience so far was,

*"I love how everyone on staff has been willing to share ideas, expertise, and support as we learn new processes and methods of teaching."*

Based on the feedback from this survey it is clear to the authors that the iDEC program is making the positive impact that was intended. We will continue to evaluate the iDEC program as we finish its three year implementation phase. Any changes that are recommended will be investigated and implemented as necessary.

We are thrilled with the community support for the iDEC Program and the success shown by our students. We look forward to a successful final year of implementation.