



Diploma Plus (DP) schools chart a new path to success for young people who have not reached their potential in a traditional secondary school setting. Diploma Plus combines high expectations for every student, a competency-based approach, a small personalized learning environment, and opportunities to make connections between classroom learning and the world outside the school walls. Diploma Plus students gain strong academic and life skills, valuable work experience, and college experience that prepare them for the transition to post-secondary education and careers. Diploma Plus schools create and support a positive and innovative learning environment, providing four essential elements that support student success. The following Four Essentials and their corresponding quality elements, are fully implemented in all Diploma Plus schools: Performance-Based System; Supportive School Culture; Future Focus; and Effective Supports.

Performance-Based System

Diploma Plus schools provide curriculum, instruction, and assessment that are focused on knowledge, skills, and understandings – on students “uncovering” meaning at their own pace, not on teachers “covering” a set of content standards in a prescribed period of time. In Diploma Plus, rigorous curriculum, effective instructional practices, and authentic assessment are competency-based and standards aligned; and built into a performance-based grading, promotion, and graduation structure. In addition, the Diploma Plus model calls for the use of student-centered instructional strategies to engage students in learning and facilitate their skill development.

This self-assessment is part of an integrated set of tools designed to help Diploma Plus school leadership, design teams, and Student Achievement Support teams determine progress, document success, prioritize activities, and plan for improvements as they implement schools activities to promote and ensure youth success. Diploma Plus staff and Student Achievement Support (SAS) teams should review the *Diploma Plus Four Essentials Narrative* prior to conducting this assessment. The left hand column in this assessment lists indicators or goals that are drawn from the *Four Diploma Plus Essentials Framework*. Teams may wish to add a specific goal or indicator in the blank row. Teams then identify progress towards meeting these goals. They then prioritize areas of focus for inclusion in the *Diploma Plus Work Plan*.

Instructions:

- Have each team member individually complete the progress section of the self-assessment. For each indicator or statement, each team member should rate the team’s progress in addressing each of the DP Essentials using the following scale:
○ = Not on our radar screen ◐ = Just started ◑ = Pretty far along in implementation or practice ● = Fully integrated in system
- Each person should then briefly note the evidence used to determine progress for each indicator.
- Post all team member responses on a large, wall-sized version of the self assessment and discuss the group’s responses, especially where there are wide differences of opinion on progress.
- Next, have each team member complete the priority section of the self-assessment in the context of a discreet time frame (e.g. the next 12 months). It is helpful to limit the number of high priority activities and to force the identification of lows in each section.
- Again post all team member responses on the wall chart and discuss. Identify priority actions for inclusion in the *Diploma Plus Workplan*.

Rigorous Curriculum <i>A strong level of academic rigor is evident throughout the curriculum.</i>			
Indicators / Goals	Progress	Evidence	Priority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum being used throughout the school provides a rigorous, competency-based and standards-aligned framework for student learning. 	○ ◐ ● ●		■ ■■ ■■■
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum is developed and identified using backwards planning across the school. 	○ ◐ ● ●		■ ■■ ■■■
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources and materials that support student-centered learning, the DP Competencies and Prioritized Standards are being used in every classroom. 	○ ◐ ● ●		■ ■■ ■■■
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	○ ◐ ● ●		■ ■■ ■■■

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Priority: ■ = Low priority ■■ = Medium priority ■■■ = High priority

Effective Instructional Practices			
<i>High quality, effective instructional practices are supported and provided in all areas.</i>			
Indicators / Goals	Progress	Evidence	Priority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instruction is consistently competency-based and standards aligned in every classroom. 	○ ◐ ◑ ●		■ ■■ ■■■
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All teachers are effectively using student-centered instructional practices (culturally responsive teaching and learning, inquiry- or project-based instruction, etc.). 	○ ◐ ◑ ●		■ ■■ ■■■
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students are engaged in rigorous learning. 	○ ◐ ◑ ●		■ ■■ ■■■
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All teachers are consistently implementing a whole school teaching and learning strategy. 	○ ◐ ◑ ●		■ ■■ ■■■
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	○ ◐ ◑ ●		■ ■■ ■■■

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Authentic Assessment			
<i>Authentic assessment is emphasized and based on competencies and discipline specific skills.</i>			
Indicators / Goals	Progress	Evidence	Priority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across the school, all assessments are competency-based and standards-aligned. 	○ ◐ ◑ ●		■ ■■ ■■■
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All classes are regularly creating authentic products and performances that allow students to show what they know. 	○ ◐ ◑ ●		■ ■■ ■■■
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students in all classes use Developmental portfolios to document work and show academic progress, and Gateway portfolios to show understanding of the Prioritized Standards through the DP Competencies. 	○ ◐ ◑ ●		■ ■■ ■■■
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students in all classes are regularly evaluated in a variety of ways in order to provide feedback for students and teachers. 	○ ◐ ◑ ●		■ ■■ ■■■
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	○ ◐ ◑ ●		■ ■■ ■■■

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Promotion & Graduation Structure <i>The promotion & graduation structure is designed to support the Performance-based System.</i>			
Indicators / Goals	Progress	Evidence	Priority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has clear and documented promotion and graduation criteria that include Gateway portfolios and presentations. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student pace and progress is connected to his or her demonstrated understanding of the Prioritized Standards through the DP Competencies and not tied to seat-time, age, etc. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's scope and sequence is aligned to the DP phases (including phase-specific experiences) and connects to the promotion criteria. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is using a competency tracking and reporting system (i.e. DP.net). 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The entire school community uses DP phases to identify and group students. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school implements and documents an intake assessment system that is linked to Prioritized Standards. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a school-wide portfolio system to collect, house, refine, and present portfolios. 			

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