



JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE

A FOCUS ON ADVENTIST EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

North American Division Office of Education



Acknowledgments

The Journey to Excellence Model

Journey to Excellence is based on a model of school improvement developed by Paul Brantley. Please see: Brantley, Paul. "Can Education Be Adventist and Excellent, Too?" *Journal of Adventist Education*, Summer 1999.

NAD Curriculum Futures Commission (1997)

Jim Epperson & Dick Osborn — Co-chairs, Kelly Bock, Paul Brantley, George Bronson, Irma Hadley, Keith Hallam, Alan Hurlbert, Steve Pawluk, Gary Temple, Rosemary Tyrrell, Berit von Pohle, Don Walker, Don Weatherall, Cleon White

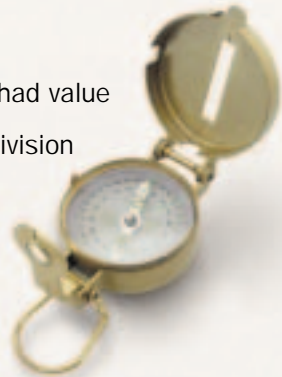
NAD K-12 Revision Committee (2002)

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Foreword ▶

In the mid-1990s, a North American Division Curriculum Futures Commission was established to create a renewed vision for curriculum in Seventh-day Adventist schools in the 21st century. That group focused on the 9–12 secondary program. Its report, titled *Focus on Adventist Curriculum for the 21st Century* and often referred to as the FACT-21 report, was approved by the North American Division Board of Education in 1997. Secondary schools across the Division began to develop initiatives for change based on this report. Educational leadership at all levels in the North American Division has determined that the content of this report is vital to the school improvement process in Adventist schools. Thus, the features of this program are being integrated into a variety of Adventist educational publications and resources such as curriculum guides and evaluation instruments.

Recognizing that the material in the FACT-21 report had value for Adventist education K–12, the North American Division appointed a committee to revise and update the report, developing a document that would be fully K–12 in scope and current in content. This work was subsequently approved for publication in 2002. The primary components of the FACT-21 report — Philosophy, Goals, Essential Core Elements, and Preferred Practices — have been revised, expanded and integrated into this model for school improvement: **Journey to Excellence.**



HOPE

JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE



Journey To Excellence ▶

In the 21st century Adventist education must build on the strengths of the past to create a dynamic future. With renewed purpose, effective plans for improvement, and innovative practices, schools and students will thrive in this new century.

Journey to Excellence is about change — innovative change that will result in school improvement. This publication should empower educational leaders to embark on a journey to excellence. It should be a catalyst to create the future now in Adventist schools.

Journey to Excellence will fulfill the vision of vibrant Adventist education in the 21st century. However, excellent schools are not produced by accident or as the result of a single change event. Excellence is an organizational culture that encourages continual, planned improvement. When all aspects of the educational environment foster ongoing innovation, quality schools will emerge.

***Journey to Excellence* includes:**

- ▶ a vision, shared values, and common goals.
- ▶ a clear understanding of the philosophy, history, and goals of Adventist education.
- ▶ utilization of the growing body of research on effective education.
- ▶ educational leaders and governing boards who create school cultures that encourage innovation without fear of failure.
- ▶ a renewing cycle of improvement in Adventist schools.

***Journey to Excellence* is illustrated in this model:**



PURPOSE Reasons



Exemplary schools and educational systems have clearly defined reasons for existence. Those specific to Adventist education are found in the Philosophy, Goals, and Essential Core Elements that identify the high expectations of what students should know and be able to do. A renewed focus on these ideals for Adventist schools will energize educators, students, parents, and constituents.



Philosophy

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes God as the ultimate source of existence and truth. In the beginning God created in His image a perfect humanity, a perfection later marred by sin. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God's character and purposes can be understood as revealed in nature, the Bible, and Jesus Christ. The distinctive characteristics of Adventist education, derived from the Bible and the inspired writings of Ellen G. White, point to the redemptive aim of true education: to restore human beings into the image of their Maker.

While God presents His infinitely loving and wise character as the ultimate norm for human conduct, human motives, thinking, and behavior have fallen short of God's ideal. Education in its broadest sense is a means of returning human beings to their original relationship with God. Its time dimensions span eternity.

Adventist education seeks to develop a life of faith in God and respect for the dignity of all human beings; to build character akin to that of the Creator; to nurture thinkers rather than mere reflectors of others' thoughts; to promote loving service rather than selfish ambition; to ensure maximum development of each individual's potential; and to embrace all that is true, good, and beautiful.

An education of this kind imparts far more than academic knowledge. It fosters a balanced development of the whole person — physically, intellectually, socially, and spiritually. Working together, homes, schools, and churches cooperate with divine agencies in preparing learners for responsible citizenship in this world and in the world to come.

GOALS for Curriculum in Seventh-day Adventist Schools

1 ACCEPTANCE OF GOD

Each student will:

Surrender one's whole life to God; develop a relationship with Jesus Christ; and allow the Holy Spirit to work in one's life.

2 COMMITMENT TO THE CHURCH

Desire to know, live, and share the message and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3 INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Develop a sense of self-worth, skills in interpersonal relationships, an understanding of the responsibilities of family membership, and the ability to respond with sensitivity to the needs of others.

4 RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP

Develop an understanding of cultural and historical heritages, affirm a belief in the dignity and worth of others, and accept responsibility for local, national, and global environments.

5 HEALTHY BALANCED LIVING

Accept personal responsibility for achieving and maintaining optimum physical, mental, and spiritual health.

6 INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Adopt a systematic, logical, and biblically based approach to decision-making and problem-solving when applied to a developing body of knowledge.

7 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Recognize the importance of effective communication and develop the requisite skills.

8 PERSONAL MANAGEMENT

Function responsibly in the everyday world, using Christian principles of stewardship, economy, and personal management.

9 AESTHETIC APPRECIATION

Develop an appreciation of the beautiful, both in God's creation and in human expression, while nurturing individual ability in the fine arts.

10 CAREER AND SERVICE

Develop a Christian work ethic with an appreciation for the dignity of service.

GOALS AND ESSENTIAL CORE ELEMENTS for Curriculum in Seventh-day Adventist Schools

GOALS:

The following goals have been established to support the unique philosophy of Adventist education. Each student will:

ESSENTIAL CORE ELEMENTS:

Essential core elements clarify and expand the goal statements and are intentionally infused into a curriculum that teaches students to:

1 ACCEPTANCE OF GOD

Surrender one's whole life to God; develop a relationship with Jesus Christ; and allow the Holy Spirit to work in one's life.



- A. Accept God as the Creator and the Redeemer.
- B. Have a growing knowledge of God's Word and enjoyment in its study.
- C. Embrace God's gift of grace by accepting Christ as one's personal Savior.
- D. Discover the importance and power of prayer and faith in one's relationship with Jesus.
- E. Value God's revelation of Himself through inspired writings and creation.
- F. Respond to God's love by using one's spiritual gifts to serve others.
- G. Recognize that God gave the Ten Commandments to show us how to love Him and each other.
- H. Value and participate in worship alone and with others.

2 COMMITMENT TO THE CHURCH

Desire to know, live, and share the message and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.



- A. Be an active participant in one's local church.
- B. Understand how the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church facilitates its mission.
- C. Become involved in spreading the gospel throughout the world.
- D. Accept the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- E. Appreciate the heritage of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- F. Relate to lifestyle choices and cultural issues based on biblical principles.

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3 INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Develop a sense of self-worth, skills in interpersonal relationships, an understanding of the responsibilities of family membership, and the ability to respond with sensitivity to the needs of others.

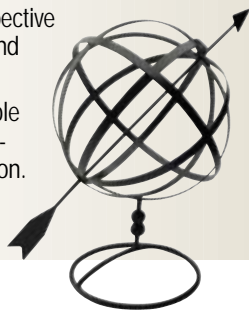


- A. Recognize that God's ideal for the basic unit of society is the family.
- B. Develop an appreciation for the diversity of individuals.
- C. Acquire knowledge, attitudes, and skills essential to meeting family responsibilities whether living alone or with others.
- D. Recognize that God's unconditional love gives one self-worth.
- E. Value sexuality in the context of God's ideal.

4 RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP

Develop an understanding of cultural and historical heritages, affirm a belief in the dignity and worth of others, and accept responsibility for local, national, and global environments.

- A. Exhibit concern and sensitivity for other peoples and cultures.
- B. Participate actively in local, national, and global communities.
- C. Understand the functions of governments and their impact on individuals and society.
- D. Use a Biblical perspective to analyze history and current events.
- E. Assume an active role in nurturing and preserving God's creation.



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5 HEALTHY BALANCED LIVING

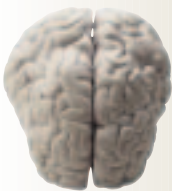
Accept personal responsibility for achieving and maintaining optimum physical, mental, and spiritual health.



- A. Recognize that God's ideal for quality living includes a healthy lifestyle.
- B. Incorporate into one's lifestyle the principles that promote health: nutrition, exercise, water, sunlight, temperance, air, rest, trust in God.
- C. Avoid at-risk behaviors.
- D. Apply Christian principles in recreation and sports.
- E. Achieve a balance in work and leisure; balancing physical, mental, social, and spiritual activities.
- F. Recognize the interaction of physical, mental, and spiritual health with emotional and social well-being.

6 INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Adopt a systematic, logical, and Biblically based approach to decision-making and problem-solving when applied to a developing body of knowledge.



- A. Broaden intellectual abilities through the study of God's Word.
- B. Use critical and creative thinking skills in "real-world" experiences.
- C. Develop one's intellectual potential in natural sciences and mathematics; arts and humanities; social sciences and applied arts.
- D. Utilize effective study techniques to locate, organize, and learn information.
- E. Apply the principles of life-long learning.
- F. Approach all intellectual pursuits from a Biblical perspective.

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ESSENTIAL CORE ELEMENTS:

Essential core elements clarify and expand the goal statements and are intentionally infused into a curriculum that teaches students to:

7 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Recognize the value and importance of effective communication and develop the requisite skills.



- A. Communicate effectively through the avenues of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and non-verbal language.
- B. Apply a Christ-centered perspective to all forms of personal expression and media.
- C. Understand how sensitivity to the differences of others affects communication.
- D. Recognize how media and information technology impacts communication.
- E. Utilize communication skills to enhance one's Christian witness.

8 PERSONAL MANAGEMENT

Function responsibly in the everyday world, using Christian principles of stewardship, economy, and personal management.



- A. Develop responsible decision-making skills.
- B. Appropriately manage one's personal finances.
- C. Acquire skill in the use of technologies.
- D. Develop basic home-management skills.
- E. Value cooperation and teamwork when interacting in groups.
- F. Develop conflict resolution skills.
- G. Manage time effectively.

GOALS:

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ESSENTIAL CORE ELEMENTS:

Essential core elements clarify and expand the goal statements and are intentionally infused into a curriculum that teaches students to:

9 AESTHETIC APPRECIATION

Develop an appreciation of the beautiful, both in God's creation and in human expression, while nurturing individual ability in the fine arts.



- A. View God as the Author of beauty both in His creation and in human expression.
- B. Employ biblical principles as the basis for appreciation and expression of creative and performing arts.
- C. Develop fine arts talents through practice, performance, and presentation.
- D. Use aesthetic expression as a means of communication and service.

10 CAREER AND SERVICE

Develop a Christian work ethic with an appreciation for the dignity of service.



- A. Develop an awareness of career options and opportunities in a changing world, as well as in the church.
- B. Recognize the role of useful work in personal development and maintaining self-worth.
- C. Develop skills that will enhance employability.
- D. Experience the joy of serving others.
- E. Identify one's interests, abilities, and values, understanding their relationship to career options.
- F. Always put forth one's best effort in every task.

PLAN Resources



An effective journey to excellence requires careful planning. Resources must be allocated at all organizational levels in new and creative ways to support school improvement initiatives. Based on educational trends and research, innovative changes are vital in the utilization of resources such as information technology and time.



With a focus on the philosophy and goals of Adventist education, leaders at all levels will create ongoing professional development opportunities for all personnel. A sustained journey to excellence is enhanced by creative partnerships.

Administrators and governing boards must recognize that innovative practices will require additional time and funding.

The following **Preferred Practices** will support an effective ongoing school improvement process:

- ▶ **Educational Technology**
- ▶ **Partnerships**
- ▶ **Staff Development**
- ▶ **Time Utilization**

Educational Technology

A. All schools, conferences, unions, and the Division will develop a master plan addressing the needs of educational technology in such areas as:

- ▶ staff development
- ▶ curriculum
- ▶ hardware
- ▶ software
- ▶ multimedia
- ▶ internet access
- ▶ distance education
- ▶ witness/service potential
- ▶ acceptable use policies
- ▶ assistance and support



B. Schools will budget funds to provide and maintain current and emerging technologies

- C. Schools will provide students regular access to technology tools and online resources throughout the campus
- D. Educators will incorporate technology throughout the instructional program
- E. Schools may utilize distance learning to:
 - ▶ link schools together for relevant communication.
 - ▶ provide curriculum offerings otherwise unavailable.
 - ▶ access professional development opportunities.



Partnerships

School leaders will forge communication links to:

- ▶ develop a strong three-way partnership between the home, school, and churches which promotes and supports Christian education.
- ▶ involve parents, constituents, and the community in school improvement initiatives.
- ▶ foster partnerships with local community organizations which will encourage opportunities such as community-based learning and projects, work experience, financial grants, internships, and career awareness.
- ▶ cooperate with home-schooling parents and their children, neighboring schools, and other educational entities.

Professional Development

Professional development is an essential, on-going process that creates a collaborative school environment fostering student achievement.

- A. Effective professional development will focus on areas of identified need, innovative methods, and research-driven topics.
- B. Effective professional development includes clear and specific goals established by:
 - ▶ the teacher creating and implementing a personal professional development plan.
 - ▶ the school as outlined in the comprehensive school improvement plan.
 - ▶ the conference, union, and Division through improvement initiatives.
- C. Effective professional development will include on-going systematic activities such as:
 - ▶ attending seminars, workshops, and professional conventions
 - ▶ membership and participation in professional organizations
 - ▶ maintaining appropriate teaching certification
 - ▶ mentoring
 - ▶ peer coaching
 - ▶ participating in study groups
 - ▶ observing other teachers and other school programs
 - ▶ professional presentations
 - ▶ professional reading
 - ▶ studying for advanced degrees
- D. To promote exemplary schools, teachers schools, conferences and unions will ensure adequate time is available on an on-going basis for planning, implementation, and participation in specific professional development activities.

Time Utilization

- A. Administrators will create a school calendar that includes time throughout the year for on-going professional growth and planning activities.
- B. Teachers will be given release time for planning and pursuing professional development activities.
- C. Educators may create programs allowing students to progress toward graduation by demonstrating competency/mastery instead of fulfilling seat time.
- D. Administrators, teachers, and students will work to effectively balance the time demands of a strong co-curricular program with the academic program.
- E. Schools will creatively allocate instructional time to effectively meet the needs of students through the use of strategies such as:
 - ▶ team teaching
 - ▶ integrated curriculum
 - ▶ block scheduling
 - ▶ length of school day/year



PRACTICE Realities



A journey to excellence requires trained leaders who can assess existing educational practices and collaborate with others to develop and implement innovative plans in a recurring cycle of excellence. Effective schools are safe and nurturing environments where curriculum is delivered in a relevant and responsible manner. These schools will continue to improve assessment and evaluation procedures utilizing research-based methods.





The following **Preferred Practices** will generate new realities:

- ▶ **Administrative Leadership and Development**
- ▶ **Classroom Instruction**
- ▶ **Climate**
- ▶ **Diversity**
- ▶ **Integrated Curriculum**
- ▶ **Student Assessment**

Administrative Leadership and Development

A. Administrators will recognize the importance of the leadership role. The exemplary administrator will effectively relate with groups and individuals while maintaining a clear vision for the school program by:

- ▶ fostering a spiritual climate.
- ▶ creating a culture for learning.
- ▶ researching and implementing effective instructional strategies.
- ▶ developing a personal professional growth plan which includes activities such as:
 - a. membership in professional organizations.
 - b. attendance at relevant workshops.
 - c. professional reading.

- ▶ assisting staff in professional development.
- ▶ supporting staff in innovative practices.
- ▶ maintaining appropriate certification.
- ▶ promoting the school to its various constituencies.
- ▶ managing the variety of school functions.

B. Administrators will enhance their professional performance through practices such as reviewing current literature, seeking regular evaluations, keeping time logs, and conducting constituent surveys to assist in self-evaluation

C. Administrators will identify potential candidates for administrative positions and provide opportunities for leadership development. The fostering of new leaders may include the use of resources for:

- ▶ internships
- ▶ mentoring
- ▶ release time
- ▶ professional development



Classroom Instruction

A. Educators will utilize instructional designs that create a school environment that promotes student achievement and engenders enthusiasm for life-long learning.

B. In order to effectively deliver instruction in the classroom teachers will:

- ▶ be knowledgeable about the theories of learning styles and will continue to be aware of the needs of learners through current research and professional growth activities.
- ▶ help students identify their dominant learning styles and provide opportunities to strengthen less-developed learning styles.
- ▶ employ a variety of instructional strategies to meet the learning styles of individual students.

C. Teachers will develop a community of learners by effectively balancing major instructional strategies which include:

- ▶ experiential learning
 - a. faith-sharing activities
 - b. service projects
 - c. community-based activities
 - d. field trips
 - e. outdoor education/expeditionary schools
- ▶ direct instruction
 - a. interesting and engaging lectures of an age-appropriate length
 - b. individualized instruction
- ▶ problem-based learning
 - a. critical thinking instruction
 - b. case studies
 - c. extended projects
 - d. laboratory experiences
- ▶ social learning
 - a. cooperative learning methods
 - b. leadership activities
 - c. role playing
 - d. affective education (i.e., social skills training, conflict resolution, anger management, character training)
 - e. partnerships
- ▶ remediation and enrichment activities
 - a. on-going assessment of individual needs
 - b. student mentoring/tutoring
 - c. activities and resources for exceptional students

Climate

A school's community will provide a nurturing and safe environment which:

- ▶ encourages recognition and respect for the value and worth of each individual.
- ▶ provides a variety of positive examples and experiences.
- ▶ enables individuals to attain the highest level of achievement.
- ▶ encourages individuals to accept personal responsibility for their behavior and choices.

Diversity

A. Adventist schools will recognize that individuals come from diverse backgrounds such as:

- ▶ race
- ▶ culture
- ▶ gender
- ▶ physical ability
- ▶ family structure
- ▶ age or generation
- ▶ value system and beliefs
- ▶ personal learning styles
- ▶ socioeconomic group
- ▶ religion



B. Adventist schools will demonstrate a respect for diversity and teach that acceptance leads to unity through the love of Jesus.

C. Schools will promote an environment that appropriately celebrates the diversity found among God's children.

D. Schools will employ instructional methods which are sensitive to diversity.

Integrated Curriculum

Teachers will offer a cohesive curriculum enabling students to see connections between the many fields of learning by:

- ▶ integrating faith throughout the curriculum.
- ▶ building connections within a discipline/subject area and to other related areas including co-curricular activities.
- ▶ cooperating with other teachers in integrating curriculum between disciplines/subject areas and grade levels.

Student Assessment

A. Teachers and school systems will measure student progress and development in a variety of meaningful ways such as:

- ▶ traditional written assessments
 - a. true/false
 - b. multiple choice
 - c. essay/short answer
- ▶ standardized tests
 - a. criterion referenced
 - b. norm referenced
- ▶ performance-based assessments
 - a. demonstrations and performances
 - b. peer assessments
 - c. portfolios
 - d. products
 - e. rubrics
 - f. self-assessments
 - g. simulations
 - h. student-led conferences



B. Educators will use assessment as the basis for:

- ▶ enrichment and remediation
- ▶ individualized instruction
- ▶ curricular instructional modifications
- ▶ reporting student progress and mastery of objectives
- ▶ teacher self-evaluation

PRODUCT Results



A benchmark of an exemplary Adventist school is the regular evaluation of all aspects of its educational program. The school must examine its total effect on each student to determine if a quality product has been produced and if desired results have been achieved. This assessment may be informal or formal, resulting in data that measures goal attainment. Excellence is not a single accomplishment or a one-time event; it is a continuous cycle that pervades the classroom, the school, and the entire system.



EVALUATE Improve

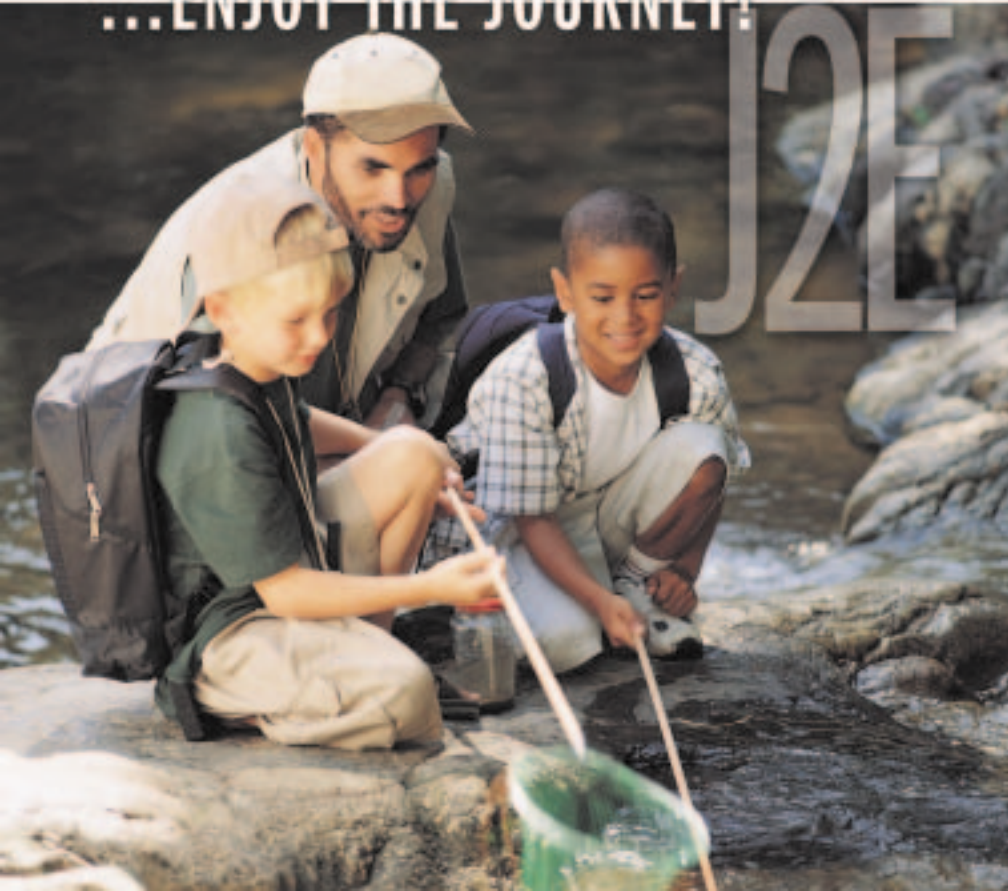


Journey to Excellence for Adventist schools is founded on a unique philosophy and purpose, requires carefully developed plans for improvement, adopts innovative changes in educational practice, and regularly assesses the attainment of goals and essential elements of the Adventist curriculum. At every step educators must evaluate progress and product to make improvements for the ultimate benefit of students.



Exemplary Adventist schools and educators will be noted for continuous improvement throughout all areas of the program. Schools will develop and implement school improvement plans aligned with excellence. Educators will maintain certification and participate in professional training to prepare for a journey to excellence. Regular evaluation will provide feedback for improving the journey and will communicate the importance of excellence in Adventist schools.

...ENJOY THE JOURNEY!





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