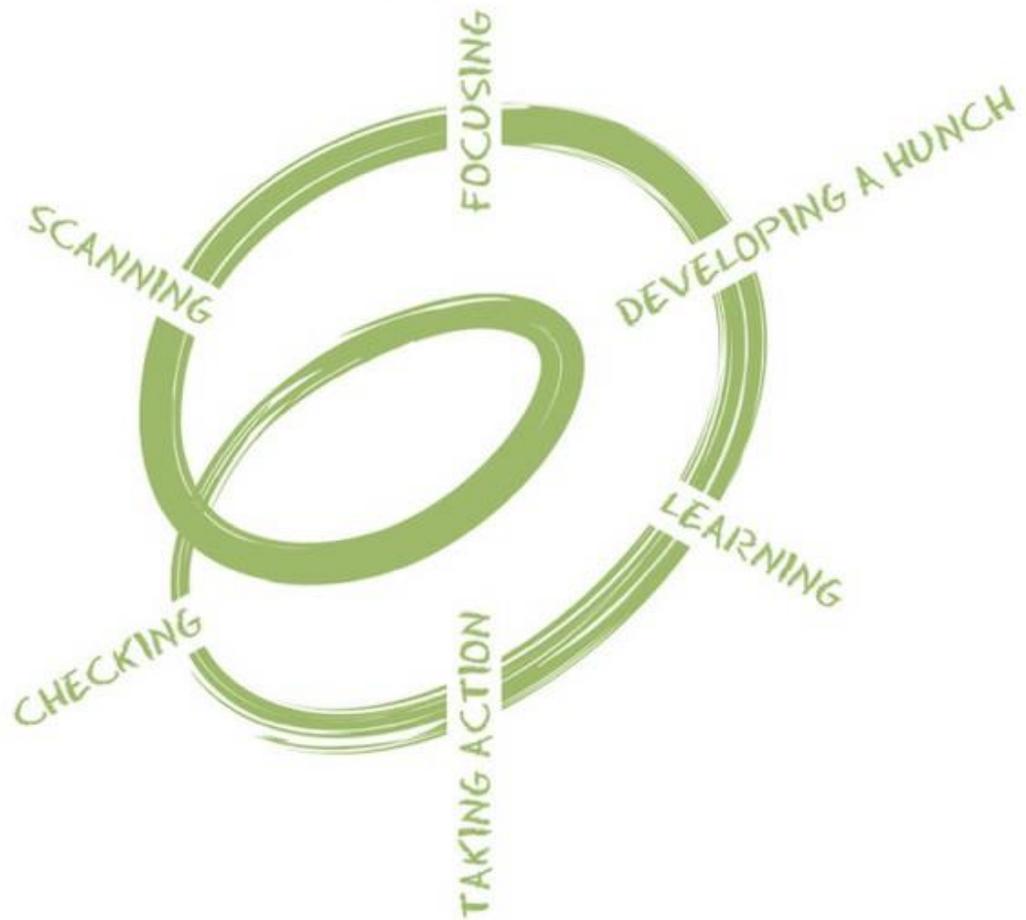


**School District 5 Southeast Kootenay
Action Plan for Enhancing Student Learning
ÉCOLE ISABELLA DICKEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 2018-2021**



"Spirals of Inquiry for equity and quality"
Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser

ÉCOLE ISABELLA DICKEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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School Context:

- École Isabella Dicken Elementary School is the only public elementary school in Fernie with 466 students, 29 teaching staff, and 21 support staff.
- Our school continues to grow in population every year. We have doubled in population in the last 10 years.
- Supports to our students are available from our Student Services Teachers, Teacher-Librarian, Education Assistants, School Counsellor, Youth Care Worker, Speech Pathologist, Speech and Language Assistant, French Teacher's Assistant, and a Music Specialist.
- EIDES offers a late French Immersion program, grade 6 band, music classes, primary grades early French Enhancement, and an early years Strong Start center.
- Among our 21 classrooms we have 7 blended classrooms, 14 primary classrooms, 1 3/4 blend, 4 French Immersion classrooms and 7 intermediate classrooms.
- We now have 7 classrooms and our Strong Start housed in a portable.
- The classrooms at EIDES have students with a variety of academic, social-emotional and behaviour supports/needs.
- Our Student Services department currently manages 35 IEP's as well as supporting 21 classrooms in the building.
- EIDES offers extracurricular opportunities such as Running Club, Glee Club, Chess Club, Leadership Club, Drama Club School Sports Teams, and morning drop in gym times. Extracurricular opportunities, performances and celebration assemblies provide opportunities for students, parents and families to participate and feel a sense of belonging at EIDES.
- At EIDES teachers provide a lot of opportunity for place-based environmental learning. Many classrooms are committed to weekly take me outside days.
- EIDES has a supportive Parent Advisory Council that provides significant financial support which adds additional resources, equipment and transportation helping to extend learning opportunities for all students beyond our school grounds and into our wider community and area.

Inquiry Question: Will a school wide focus on Social Emotional Learning improve student behaviours, engagement and academic performance?

We are at the beginning of a 3 year cycle of a new growth plan.

Our goals for our first year will be to:

1. Use Zones of Regulation to teach all our students self-regulation skills.
2. Foster a practice of gratitude.
3. When dealing with difficult behaviour, adopt an approach of Reframing the Behaviour "Kids do well if they can" according to Dr. Ross Greene.

Scanning: What we know about our students.

Successes:

- Many of our students have good communication skills, like to talk and are not afraid to ask questions.
- Most of our students like to read, are physically active both at school and away from school and are involved in many activities in the community.
- Students follow directions and routines relatively well.
- Students have the opportunity to engage in many activities at school including swimming, skating, skiing, tennis, field hockey, community library and garden visits. Students want to be, and work hard to be kind and empathetic.
- Students like to come to school and most feel safe and connected to their school community.
- Students enjoy being leaders and 'big buddies' to younger students through reading and other activities. We are seeing a growing and more diverse student community of varying socio-economic backgrounds.
- Our students enjoy using technology as a learning tool. They like to learn outside of the classroom and especially enjoy field trips.
- Students are eager to be helpers and be 'caught being good'. They readily volunteer to help and make a difference.
- At EIDES we have large participation rates in activities – Running club, Glee club, Leadership Club, Drama club, School Sports Teams and Clubs, and School Spirit Days.

Challenges:

- Many students are continuing to learn to regulate their emotions.
- Many students have difficulty with attention, staying calm, alert and focused.
- Many students struggle with peaceful conflict resolution and impulse control.
- Students are working on taking responsibility: for their belongings, actions and their learning
- Some students struggle with keeping a positive attitude toward learning and their listening skills.
- Building resilience for many students is an on-going goal. Students are still learning to feel empowered in the larger community.
- Growing anxiety is seen among some students.
- Challenges still exist connecting and supporting students between home and school.
- Changing and adapting to new expectations, curriculum and transitions can be a challenge for some students.
- Bullying behaviours still exist – in our school and on our playground.
- Many students at EIDES face challenges at home such as: single parent families, dysfunctional home situations, homes with minimal parent involvement in their child's educational experience and low income.
- Staff are noticing an increase in disruptive behaviours in their classrooms and throughout the school.
- Staff are concerned with regularity of hands-on unsafe play and use of impolite/disrespectful language during non instructional times (recess, lunch, before and after school)
- Many behaviour incidents can be related to a lack of empathy, and lack of self-regulation skills resulting in physical or verbal outbursts.

Focusing: the most important work we can do to improve the success of our students.

- We believe that our students need to learn effective social and emotional skills to calm the brain and thereby allow for improved focus on academic learning.
- We believe that the ability to self-regulate will help student to thrive in an environment where personalized and collaborative learning are promoted.
 - The ability to self-regulate is vital for students to become more engaged in their learning because it allows them to have strong executive functioning, develop self-awareness, coping mechanism and tools, social awareness, communication and relationship skills, and responsible decision making abilities.
 - Strong self-regulation skills are essential when working in a personalized learning environment and in collaborative partnerships.

Data to Support:

- Incident behavior reports (quick reports) and conduct reports in MyEd are recorded all year and show that students experience misbehavior related to the inability to control their emotions and impulses. We have a baseline set of data for the 2017-18 school year. (see appendix)
- Some of the results from the 2017-18 Grade 4 Student Learning Survey are concerning and we feel could be improved (see appendix)
- We have seen an increase in referrals to our school counselor and an increase in students on her caseload. (see appendix)
- Data from the Middle Years Data Instrument will be used, starting from the first year of use (2018).
- Report card data and Foundation Skills Assessments (FSA's) can be used to track academic performance and inform instruction.

Research to Support:

- Key findings shared by Dr. Kimberly Schonert-Reichl support teaching social emotional skills
 1. Children with strong social skills in kindergarten are more likely to thrive as adults
 2. Social and emotional skills such as empathy, compassion, trust, kindness and gratitude can be cultivated through everyday experiences (can be taught)
 3. Childhood self-control predicts health, wealth and public safety
 4. Being kind creates a kind environment, promotes group cohesion and reduces aggression
 5. Adult well-being is contagious and influences the well-being and happiness of the children with whom they interact.
- We know that stress interferes with learning; fear and anxiety shut down higher order thinking. Children who experience stress over time are at risk for developing learning and behaviour problems.
- We are familiar with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and know that people need to feel safe and secure (physically, emotionally and psychologically) before they can put their time and attention into achievement and to self-actualize (our ultimate goal for everyone)
- We know that kids do well if they can. (Dr. Ross Green).
- Studies have documented that positive relationships and improved school satisfaction can result from introducing the practice of gratitude in schools. The benefits of gratitude for children include increased feelings of well-being, fewer aggressive behaviors, more pro social behaviour, reduced feelings of depression and more positive relationships (Layous and Lyubomirsky 2014).

Key Learnings:

- Our students need more opportunities to learn and to develop social emotional skills in order to experience more success academically and in other domains (social, emotional, physical, behavioural)

Developing a Hunch:

- Our hunch is that many students lack the social skills needed to work well and play well with others. Many children are busy after school engaged in sports and other programs, or are occupied with a digital distraction and have less free time to play alone or with others. There is an expectation from many families that basic social skills should be taught at school and we question if these skills being taught at home for many of our students. Many parents work and spend decreasing amounts of time with their children. It could be that there are fewer boundaries set by parents and children have less responsibility at home. Children who struggle with their emotions cannot easily self-regulate. Students who are anxious do not feel safe and nurtured at school and lack confidence to take risks, are afraid to fail and disappoint.
- Our hunch is that when staff are not calm, alert and ready to teach then students are less likely to respond and learn from them. We need to encourage a belief that staff wellness is a priority.

New Professional Learning: Areas of learning our staff will grow from.

- June (2018) staff retreat with a focus on Social Emotional Learning in schools and Staff Wellness.
- School based professional development day (September 2018) with a focus on Social Emotional Learning. An introduction to the work of Dr. Ross Greene, MindUp Curriculum and Zones of Regulation.
- Participation in RSA Professional Development day with Dr. O'Neil with learning on Trauma Informed Practice.
- Teacher collaboration time needs to be supported to "keep the conversation going" and to celebrate successes and discuss concerns.
- Training for all staff in Zones of Regulation program (Dec 2018 Pro. Dev. Day).
- Staff wellness will be an important part of our learning and will be embedded in our daily practices, staff meetings and Professional Development Days.
- Continue to encourage all staff to receive training in The MANDT System (through our District Student Services department or on Professional Development Days)

Taking Action: What we are going to do.

School Wide Focus

- Review and reinforce school-wide language and framework to promote being an active, attentive and focused learner (based on Zones of Regulation- GREEN Zone).
- Create a library of social emotional learning resources for teachers (housed in the library and in digital format in our staffroom portal) will be created.
- Monthly assemblies to develop connectedness and practice Gratitude.
- School Bucket Filler Assembly (Sept) Create Bucket Filler Gotchas to celebrate bucket fillers.
- Teach and promote the Attitude of Gratitude (school assembly, announcements, bulletin boards, role modeling).
- Create multi-grade level house teams (Totem Teams) to promote connectedness amongst our students, develop empathy and encourage leadership with our older students.
- Offer lunch activities such as Yoga, Lego Club, Lunch club where students have the chance to build connections and also develop self-regulation strategies.

Classroom Strategies

- Continue with the Roots of Empathy program at the grade 1 level.
- Continue with teaching Friendology Program (focus on developing friendship skills)
- Purchase classroom tools for self regulation (Zones of Regulation Posters and chimes).
- Our school counselor will teach stress management and boundaries/consent to grade 6 students.
- Various classroom activities and lesson plans with gratitude activities.
- Many classrooms are using the MindUp Curriculum to strengthen social and emotional well-being while creating a cohesive, caring classroom environment.

Communication Strategies: How we will be sharing our goal and results.

- As a staff we will focus on our school goal during staff meetings, teacher release time and collaboration opportunities, at School Based Team meetings and during Pro-D opportunities.
 - Use of the portal staffroom to share lesson plans and activities for practicing gratitude, social emotional learning resources and links.
- Collaborative and professional conversations that occur daily in our staffroom and among staff and during staff initiated planning meetings also provide invaluable communication and sharing opportunities.
- Students will participate in school and classroom lessons and activities (Zones of Regulations, Gratitude, Totem Teams, etc.)
- We will provide parents with information on our Action Plan via a range of means and media (PAC meetings, school website, monthly newsletters, Facebook posts, and during student led/parent-teacher meetings and open houses)

Parental/Community Involvement: How we will involve our school community.

- Parent support is vital to achieving our goal. We are interested in having a parent information night and parent presentations on social-emotional learning. We will continue to share resources and links (websites, videos) with information for parents on social-emotional learning.

Connection to the District Goals:

- Since the purpose of our goal is to support each child at EIDES to develop social emotional skills so that they can be successful in all areas of school (academics and social responsibility), we are directly connected to the district goals to:
 1. to enable all students to graduate with a sense of belonging, purpose, choice, and hope for their future
 2. to foster the growth and development of literate, numerate and **socially responsible** students in all areas of their education.

Connection to the 7 Principles of Learning

As we move forward we believe that our school goal connects directly with the following principles of learning

- **Learners at the center**
- **Social nature of learning**
- **Emotions are integral to learning**
- **Recognizing individual differences**
- **Stretching all students.**
- **Building horizontal connections**

Appendix: Data

Results (of concern) from Student Learning Survey Feb 2018

| Survey Question | Response: Never | Response: Few Times | Response: Sometimes | Response: Most of the Time | Response: All the time |
|---|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Do you feel good about yourself? | 2% | 4% | 22% | | |
| Does school make you feel stressed or worried? | | | 35% | 8% | 10% |
| Are you learning how to solve problems in peaceful ways? | 4% | 9% | 21% | | |
| When you make a choice do you think about how it might affect others? | 6% | 6% | 17% | | |
| Are you learning how to care for your mental health? | 13% | 13% | 24% | | |
| Have you ever felt teased or picked on at school? | | 25% | 31% | 10% | 0 |
| Have you ever been bullied at school? | | | 20% | 8% | 6% |
| Do you like school? | 10% | 8% | 12% | | |
| Do you feel welcome at your school? | 2% | 4% | 10% | | |
| I am happy at my school. | 4% | 2% | 16% | | |
| Is school a place where you feel like you belong? | 8% | 6% | 20% | | |

Caseload for EIDES Student Counselor

| Year | Students On School Counselors Caseload | School Population | % of students |
|---------|--|-------------------|---------------|
| 2014-15 | 39 | 380 | %10 |
| 2015-16 | 49 | 403 | %12 |
| 2016-17 | 68 | 408 | %16.6 |
| 2017-18 | 68 | 427 | %16 |
| 2018-19 | 67 | 466 | %14 |

Office Referrals 2017-18

| Behaviour | total |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| choking | 2 |
| rude/inappropriate language | 26 |
| kicking | 5 |
| pushing | 16 |
| fighting | 18 |
| hands on behaviour | 42 |
| theft | 2 |
| vandalism | 1 |

The ZONES of Regulation®

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | | | |
| BLUE ZONE | GREEN ZONE | YELLOW ZONE | RED ZONE |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mad/Angry Terrified Yelling/Hitting Elated Out of Control |

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