Steeples Elementary School
2013-2017 and 2017 – 2020
Growth Plan
An Inquiry Approach

What does our focus need to be?

FOCUSING

What is leading to this situation?

DEVELOPING A HUNCH

What's going on for our learners?

SCANNING

NEW PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

How and where can we learn more about what to do?

What's going on for our learners?
How do we know?
Why does this matter?

Have we made enough of a difference?

CHECKING

TAKING ACTION

What will we do differently?
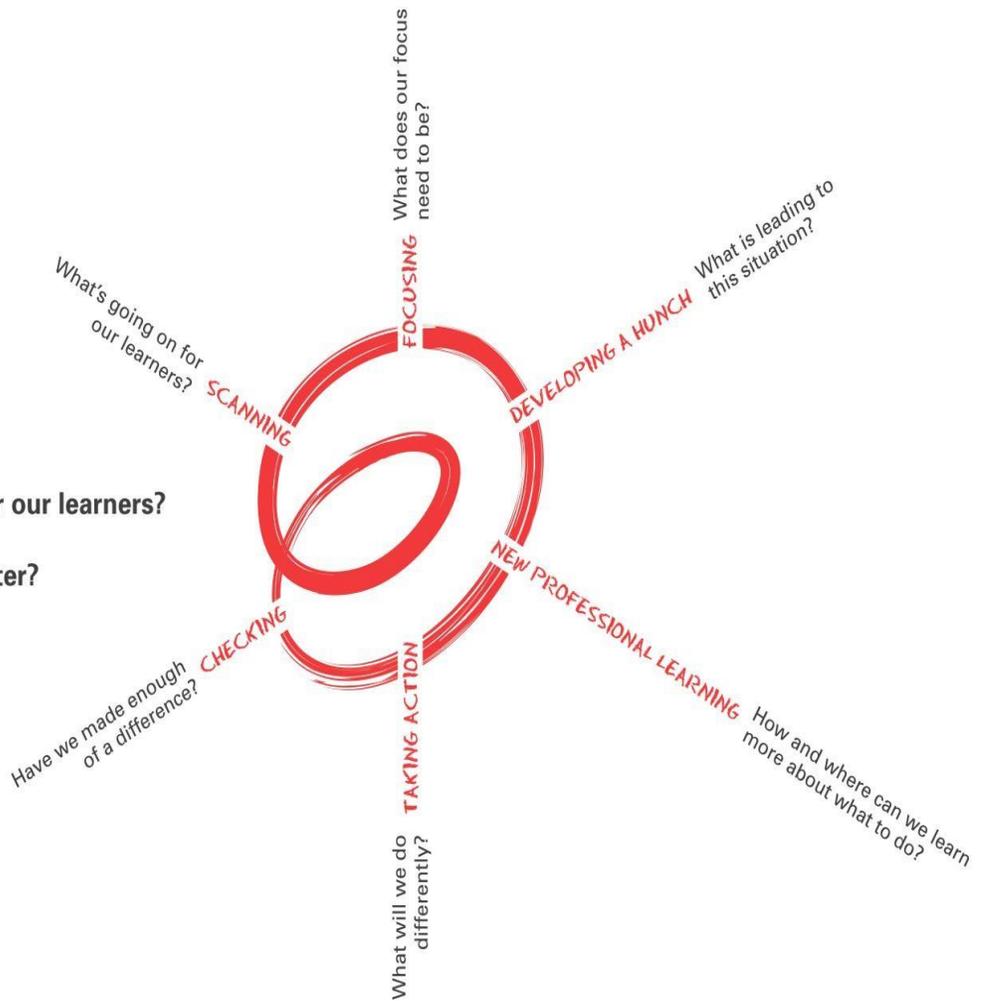
An Introduction to Steeples Elementary School

Steeples School, built in the mid 80's, is host to approximately 200 students and 30 staff. At Steeples we pride ourselves on our ability to offer high quality, well rounded, whole child educational experiences. Our dedicated staff caters to the needs of our diverse student population by layering academic achievement with team building, self-esteem, self-actualization, and instilling a strong sense of community responsibility.

Steeples centralized location supports a multifaceted education with easy access to educational activities at many of our community centers; for example, we regularly visit Memorial and Kinsmen arenas, Western Financial Place, Tamarac Mall, Juniper Lanes, and Key City Theater. Students at Steeples become well balanced individuals that are ready to tackle the challenges of middle school.

At Steeples School we strive to inspire our children. We foster a safe learning environment that elicits co-operation, positive self-esteem and respect for others. We recognize the importance of the collaboration role of both parents and staff in the total education of children. We encourage positive and on-going communication so that together parents and staff can work as partners towards the educational growth of each child.

Steeples in Review

In October of 2013 we asked the inquiry based question: "How can we elicit positive change at Steeples that will result in student academic, social and emotional growth?" All staff were tasked with the mission of helping to establish a process of positive change at Steeples. In November of 2013 and February of 2014 we met as a staff and decided a multi-faceted approach was required to establish positive change. We determined a number of school factors where interconnected and would need to be addressed to support student success. Our inquiry process was based on, Halbert & Kaser, Spirals of Inquiry. In 2013 we established our "Spiral of Success" graphic to further focus our needs based assessment and school growth. Each year the staff meets multiple times and reviews the Spirals of Inquiry approach by Halbert & Kaser. By reviewing our approach regularly we are able to make changes to our ever flowing growth plan document. Our focus since October of 2013 connects directly to our school goals.

The revised BC curriculum has introduced new core competencies. Those competencies are: Communication, Thinking and Personal and Social development. The intent is to interweave these competencies throughout the learning that occurs in a school environment. At Steeples we strive to educate the entire student so they may reach their greatest potential. The new competencies support our learning model.

STEEPLES ELEMENTARY "SPIRAL OF SUCCESS":   A GUIDE THAT WILL SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL GROWTH PLAN AND ULTIMATELY SUPPORT STUDENT ACADEMIC, BEHAVIORAL AND EMOTIONAL GROWTH
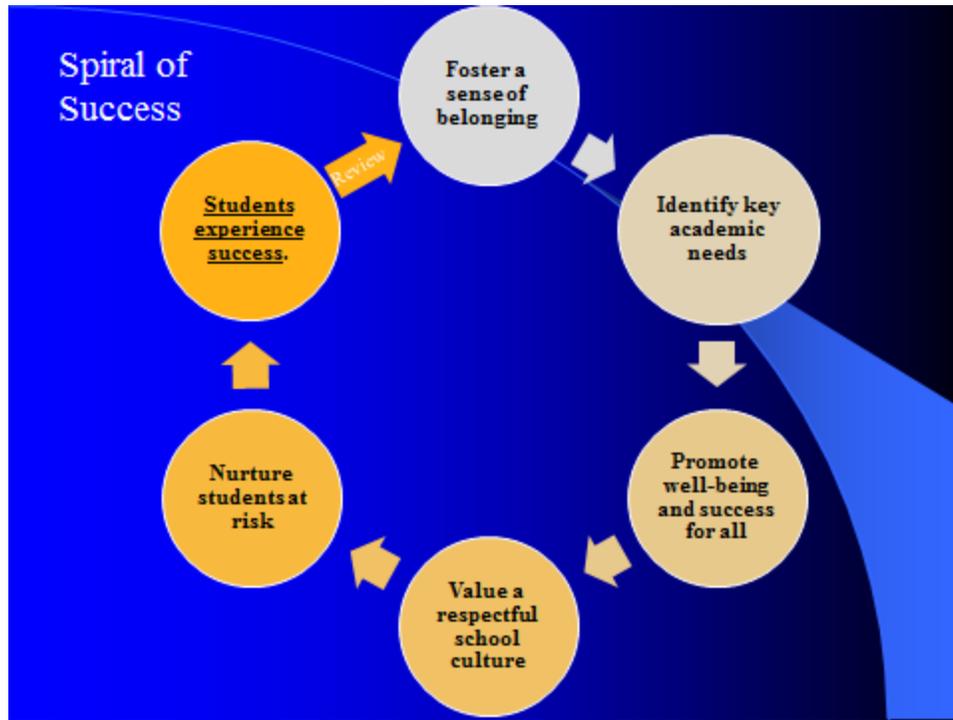
The Spiral of Success graphic has six key aspects:

- We will foster a sense of belonging by building authentic relationships with students, staff and members of the community.   "The single factor common to success in education is relationships." Michael Fullan

- We will identify learning needs based on data by evaluating strengths and weakness of student achievement. Data will be both qualitative and quantitative in nature.

- We will promote well-being and success for all by enriching the school community through ongoing structured, professional learning that focuses on improving student achievement based on areas of need.

- We will promote respectful school culture. Students and adults who feel valued, connected, understood, and appreciated will be more respectful of themselves, each other, and their environment.

- We will nurture students at risk by mobilizing the capacities of all staff. At risk students include students identified by teachers as potential failures, students of aboriginal ancestry, and students with special needs.

- We will ensure students experience success by continually reviewing, reflecting and evaluating our school based goals.

School Goals:

Through the development of the Spiral of Success we established key school goals. Over the past few years we have adapted our focus to ensure we are meeting the needs of our students. It is important to review our focus so we are constantly growing as school. Our focus has always had the below three goals as an emphasis for learning. During the first 4 years of our growth we placed a significant emphasis on Literacy growth at the primary level. We have had significant success in this area with improved student performance and increases staff learning. During the fourth and fifth year of our growth plan we slightly shifted our emphasis to ensure students were meeting their potential with numeracy learning. Midway through last year we decided as a staff to slight shift our resources to ensure improved social / emotional learning.

Goal #1:   Ensure all Primary Students are meeting or exceeding Grade level language arts by end of grade 3

Goal #2:   Foster a greater sense of connectedness within the school and community.

Goal #3   Ensure all Intermediate Students are meeting Grade level numeracy by the end of grade 6.

"Curriculum and standards must first connect with the lives and spirits of our children if we're to have any lasting success. Unless we reach into our students' hearts, we have no entry into their minds. We can get students to pass tests and complete assignments. But there is a price to pay. We will never inspire our students to learn for their own sake and to love coming to school." – Regie Routman

Goal #1: **Ensure all Primary Students are fully meeting Grade level language arts by end of grade 3**

Inquiry Question:

- Will strategies developed and implemented by a collaborative reflective literacy team improve student literacy performance as indicated by PM benchmarks and Kindergarten portfolio assessments? (3 – 5 year study length)

Yearly adjustments…

2015- Strategies mentioned in the inquiry question have worked to significantly improve student literacy performance. This year's goal will utilized last year's strategies and data analysis to better improve our approach to literacy learning.

2016 - Continued strategies around literacy have significantly increase student reading capability, however, we know realize we have to work on comprehension. How do we teach comprehension to primary students when some of them are reading at an intermediate level?

2017 - We have observed significant increase in student literacy capacity. For this year we will continue planned approaches to literacy success.

2017 (Fall) - Can we maintain our Primary literacy successes in an adapted literacy format?

2018 - This is the first year our cohort of literacy learnings, (as depicted in the graph below), will be writing the FSA exam. We hope the results will be indicative of our literacy successes.

Plan:

- ~~Greater emphasis on ability groupings using Co-Teachers, Principal, Student Services Teachers and other non-enrolling teachers to provide a more focused learning experience~~
- Emphasis on ability groupings for grade 1 and grade 2 students. Our 0.2 Library/Literacy teacher will support these groupings (*New Fall 2017)
- Cross Grade Curriculum projects to augment student literacy ☑
- Cross Grade Curriculum projects to enhance student interest and passion for literacy learning ☑
- Implement new curriculum to support deeper learning's in literacy through a greater emphasis on critical thinking, creative thinking and communication. ☑
- Work with SLP and SLP EA to ensure consistent instruction, assessment and vision ☑

- Grade wide level readers – "Strong Readers" program ☑
- Primary Teacher training around Reading Assessment such as Running Records and PM benchmarks ☑
- Team Development of common Literacy Goals ☑
- Assessment of each grade two and three student by the end of October to determine bench mark level ☑
- Two additional assessment periods , February 2015 and May 2015 ☑
- Continue to use PM benchmarks as an assessment method to establish baseline and learning in literacy September 2018 – June 2019
- Strategies include reading for meaning and reading in context ☑
- ~~Student Service Teacher Model to include significantly more inclusive support~~ ☑
- Student Services Model to reduce student pull outs and focus more on ability grouping ☑
- Cross grade grouping ☑
- Smaller literacy groupings ☑
- Limited Skill and Drill – for example flash cards ☑
- Un-interrupt school wide literacy time - to include: ☑
  - Guided reading groups
  - Buddy reading groups
  - Whole class modeling and teaching
  - Independent reading
  - Ability groupings
  - Writing
  - Talking about reading and writing

Process

1. Identify instructional practice challenges and vulnerable students ☑
2. Create school teams and set dates ☑
3. Submit application for Learning Rounds grant funding ☑
4. First meeting for professional learning and planning: what skills and strategies do our vulnerable students need to succeed and what pedagogical practices will we try to address their needs?
5. Learning Rounds ☑
6. Celebration and reflection: What worked, what didn't, what's next? ☑

Indicators of Success:

Success will be evaluated with many different tools:

- Reading ability will be assed with PM benchmarks. Student results from PM benchmarks will allow us to track cohorts of students. Students reading ability should improve as the move through the literacy learning process from kindergarten to grade (~~3~~) 4 (new 2018).

- The percentage of ~~primary~~ all (addition 2018) students meeting or exceeding expectations in literacy related assessment should increase as we progress through our literacy plan.

   - Teacher literacy assessment – Report Cards

- Indicators will be developed to match the new assessment reporting tools

2016 Final Report Information:

Grade 1 Final Report Card   74 % meeting or exceeding

Grade 2 Final Report Card   73 % meeting or exceeding

Grade 3 Final Report Card   80% meeting or exceeding

2017 Final Report Information:

Grade 1 Final Report Card   54 % meeting or exceeding

Grade 2 Final Report Card   59 % meeting or exceeding

Grade 3 Final Report Card   83% meeting or exceeding

2018 Final Report Information:

Data comparison:

Steeples had a significant number of additional enrolments for the fall of 2016, approximately a 20% increase in students. Many of these student increases where in grade 2 which could account for the discrepancy from final report card 2016 and final report card 2017.

Below is data for a two year cohort not including students that entered the literacy program at a later date:
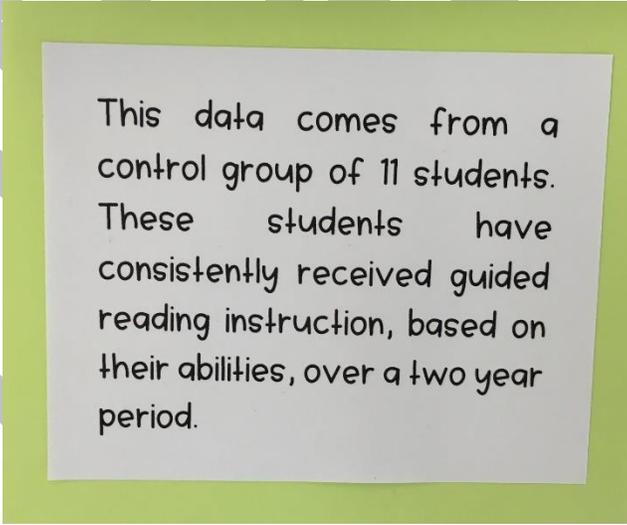
This data comes from a control group of 11 students. These students have consistently received guided reading instruction, based on their abilities, over a two year period.

GUIDED READING GROWTH
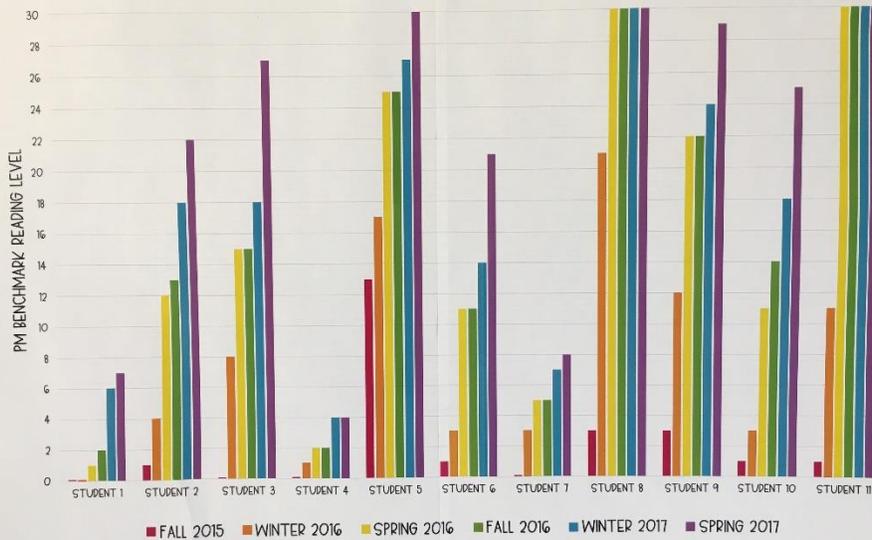
Goal #2: **Foster a greater sense of connectedness within the school and community.**

(note* - We have successfully implemented a greater sense of connectedness within the community but have decided that we need to increase our sense of connectedness within the school) (New fall 2017) ☑

Circle of Life

- Continue with our theme of environment and life. All students are participating in various outdoor learning environments. (Place based learning) ☑
- seasons/lifecycles/social emotional learning/ personal awareness ☑
- Garden Program – Including a new green house for spring of 2018
- Adopting a Family / Child ☑
- Grade 6 class to research and present to all classes social issues pertaining to immigration, racism, ageism ☑
- Significant increase in "Take me outside" new 2018

Caught You Rocking

- Steeples Stars Program to recognize Steeples Behaviour Expectations: ☑

  K   Kind & Cooperative - We are thinking of others and we work together

  S Safe - We are careful in work and play

  R Respectful - We care for people, property and the environment

  R Responsible - We take ownership for our own actions
- Various community donations for prizes will be drawn weekly based on "caught you rocking" i.e. Ice Tickets (*New 2017) ☑

Joint Project with COTR on Physical Literacy ☑

- All students will be assessed as to their physical literacy proficiency
- All students will work on their physical literacy at noon hours

Continue and expand school wide buddy program ☑

- Reading time

- Playground support

- Event support

- Split Recess Primary and Intermediate: Creates greater opportunities for intermediate students to work with and guide primary students

Continue to develop student leader program ☑

- Peer support

- Help supervise at recess

- Increased sense of ownership

Expand school activities ☑

- Swim Days

- Skate Days

- Ski Days (intermediate)

- School assemblies focusing on team building and culture

- School multi grade teams

- Music Video Dance afternoon(s)

School Families Program (*New fall 2017) ☑

- Each Friday around 11:00am teachers will work with their *family*. Families will consist of an equal number of students K through 6. Teachers and EA's will implement social activities to help build positive relationships between students within each family. The idea is to foster more positive student relationships cross grade.

Social Thinking Curriculum (*New January 2018)

- Steeples had a significant number of office referrals for behavior challenges during the 2017 – 2018 academic year. (500 + written office

referrals for the year.) This 250% increase in office referrals was a result of many factors. Some of these factors were out of our control, some were not. We believe the main changeable factor that we these challenges helped the staff determine our students needed more learning in the areas of social emotional learning.

- We determined our students struggle with communication in social situations needed to be taught and we therefore introduced a social thinking curriculum in January of 2018.
- In the fall of 2018 we decided we needed to expand our learning in this area to better support our students learning and have also made this our school focus for the next two to three years.
- Our SLP and school counselor in conjunction with our classroom teachers are delivering a social thinking and emotional regulation programs. Our programs are focused around the idea that improved social thinking and emotional regulation will help students develop their social competencies to better connect with others and live happier, more meaningful lives.
- Social thinking revised September 2018 – Entire School
- The Zones of Regulation, new 2018 – Entire School

Growth Plan Focus 2018 – 2020 "Social Emotional Learning"

Inquiry Question:

Will strategies developed and implemented by a collaborative reflective social emotional learning team improve student academic performance as indicated by a reduction in the number of discipline referral's and a resulting increase in teaching and learning time.

<u>Social Thinking and Zones of Regulation (background information)</u>

Social Thinking → **Academics**

Students must use social thinking constantly at school

- to work effectively as part of a group
- To stay on task
- To figure out the expected times to talk in class
- To share space well with others in the classroom, lunch room, and on the playground.
- To read stories to understand the deeper meaning behind the actions of the characters and their relationships
- To write an effective essay and take the perspective of the reader

Fall 2018

- Continue Social Thinking (Support from SLP)
    - 1 classroom session per month
    - Additional activities for classroom learning
- Zones of Regulation (Support from Counselling)
    - 1 classroom session per month
    - Additional activates for classroom learning
- Growth Plan funding and Professional Learning Rounds Funding
    - Teaching staff will meet a minimum of 5 times throughout the year to increase knowledge and understanding in the social emotional domain of learning.
- Add positive thinking supports
    - Mindfulness to start the day
    - Gratitude board
- Add concrete learning around emotional regulation strategies
    - Zones of regulation school wide
    - Go Noodle

Indicators of Success:

We have been very successful changing school culture and creating a positive sense of wellbeing for students, staff and the Community.

1) We have ~~ebbed~~ eliminated the flow of staff and students out of the building. ☑

2) We have significantly increased enrolment from a low of approximately 138 students (2013) to the current high of approximately 190 students (2018). ☑

3) We have created a culture of respect and tolerance. ☑

4) Staff, students and the community **work** cooperatively to enhance student education as demonstrated not only by our fabulous school production "The Lion King" but also the many community based activities our staff and student undertake. ☑

5) (New 2018) We are now the <u>official</u> teaching school for the U-Vic / College of the Rockies East Kootenay Teacher Education Program. (College instructors are working jointly with our staff to foster improved learning opportunities for Steeples Staff, Steeples Students, College Instructors and College Students.)

6) (New 2018) We will track the number of discipline referral's monthly which will be an indicator of success around for our social emotional learning plan. Currently, (as of October 2018) we have reduced our discipline referral's for September and October of 2018 by over 100%.

7) Staff observational data: time spent addressing discipline challenges versus increased opportunities for academic learning.

Goal #3   Ensure all Intermediate Students meeting Grade level numeracy by the end of grade 6. (*New Fall 2016 and adapted Fall 2017) ☑

Rationale for Goal:
We would like to utilize a similar structure we have in our Primary Literacy classes for our Intermediate Numeracy Classes. Our successes in primary literacy have lead us to believe we can do better with intermediate numeracy. ☑

Inquiry for Goal:
Will a framework for intermediate numeracy based on ability groupings not grade increase the success our students experience with numeracy. ☑

Inquiry Description:
All Students will graduate grade 6 with a foundation in numeracy that will elicit their best opportunities for numeracy success in middle school. (In Progress fall 2018)

Plan:

- Team development and refining of common numeracy goals ☑
- Begin with the end in mind, establish a numeracy plan for grades 4 – 6 using the curriculum as a guide. Establish an understanding of where students should be by the end of grade 6. Establish an understanding of core competencies, (the must haves), for success in middle school…   Still in progress fall 2018
- ~~Develop a common benchmark tool to assess numeracy understandings for grades 4 – 6~~
- ~~Assessment of each student in grade 4 – 6 for numeracy understanding~~
- ~~Re asses February 2015 and May 2015~~
- Student Service Teacher Model to include significantly more inclusive support ☑
- Student Services Model to reduce student pull outs and focus more on ability grouping ☑
- ~~Cross grade grouping based on assessment tool~~
- Smaller numeracy groupings ☑