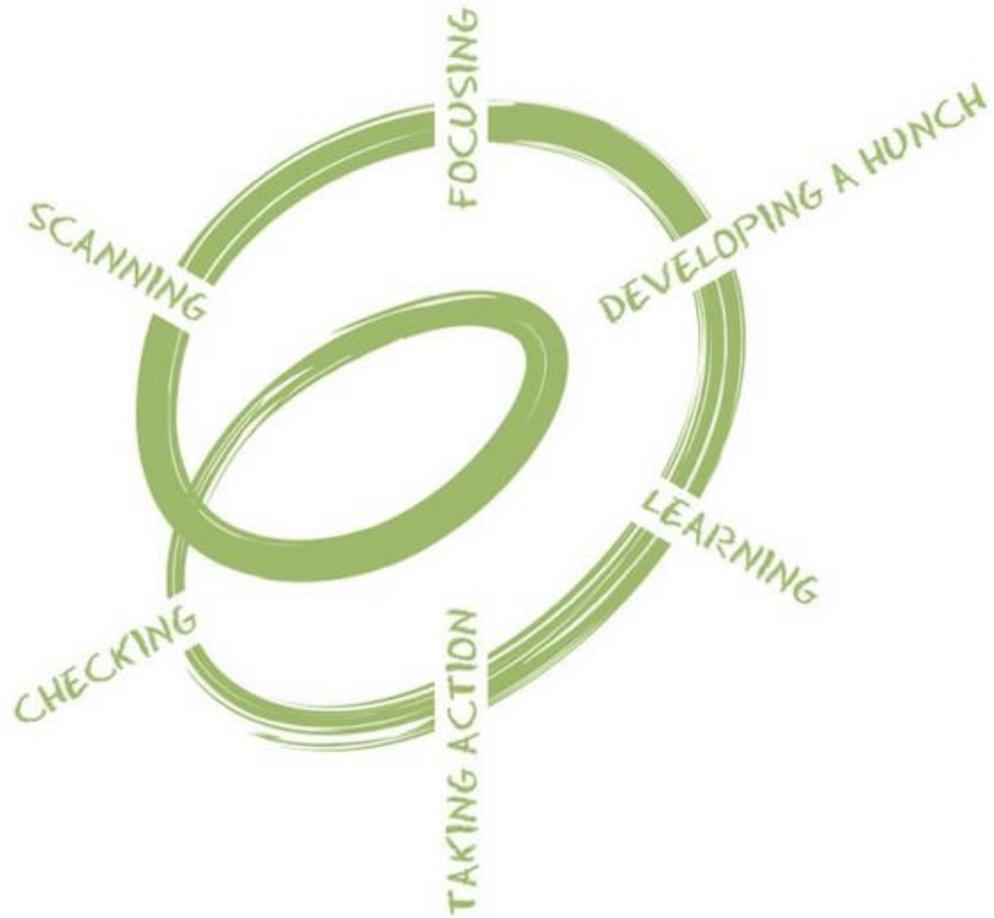


**School District 5 Southeast Kootenay  
School Growth Plan  
2016-2019**



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

Plan due to Superintendent: October 14, 2016

Presentation to Board of Education: To Be Determined

Laurie Middle School  
1808 2<sup>nd</sup> Street South  
Cranbrook BC  
V1C 1C5

**School Context:**

**Laurie Middle School**

- ~ is centrally located in the City of Cranbrook
- ~ 360 plus grade 7-9 students
- ~ school community that is created from diverse socio-economic backgrounds
- ~ our student population has a large number of kids who have unique learning, social and or emotional challenges
- ~ nearly 25% of our population identify as having Aboriginal ancestry
- ~ supported by an instructional staff of approximately 25 teachers
- ~ a plethora of support staff including a School Counselor, Aboriginal Support Worker, Youth Care Worker, 10 Educational Assistants, 2 clerical staff & 3 Custodians
- ~ the student services department consists of 3 teachers (an additional 1.0 FTE through the Learning Improvement Fund has proven to be a significant boost to services) who implement learning strategies for upward of 70 IEPs & are working to provide classroom teachers & students with strategies and assistance to support learning
- ~ hosts an academic transition program where students with complex academic needs intensified by emotional and behavioral challenges can come to school to work on a learning program intended to support and promote personal success and to work toward transitioning back into regular classroom settings

**The Teaching and Support Staff at Laurie Middle School**

- ~ are *invested* in the future; care deeply & are concerned about the well-being and success of all students
- ~ are working toward adopting a philosophy of a 30 month continuum of learning
- ~ believe that all students *can and will* learn and are committed to ensuring success for all
- ~ value student connectedness and engagement and dedicate themselves beyond the school day to ensure the students at LMS succeed
- ~ recognize and acknowledge the need for personalized learning and are beginning to explore ways to incorporate project based learning as well as digital media and technology as a means of individualizing instruction to further support and engage the needs of all student learners
- ~ recognize and value the fact that at the middle school level student socialization and healthy interactions are essential and are integrally connected to intellectual development
- ~ value social-emotional learning as key to student success
- ~ striving to further develop teacher collegiality, co-teaching and collaborative planning as part of day to day teaching practice
- ~ value and promote parental support and involvement

**Inquiry Question:** What do you think is driving your plan for student success?

#1. How do we support our students in becoming emotionally strong, globally literate citizens who are aware of a bigger picture that extends beyond their immediate world?

#2. How can Project Based Learning be incorporated into each grade level to compliment the goals of the revised curriculum and learning outcomes?

**Scanning:** (What do you know about your students – their successes and challenges - what's going on for them?)

**Successes**

- Strong Participation and enthusiasm at every grade level in school sports teams.
- Evidence of social responsibility – WeDay, DSAC, Terry Fox Run, Salvation Army Christmas Kettle Bell Ringing, student lead fundraiser to support our school sponsored Foster Children from Haiti and Tanzania, Social justice grade 6 bird house project with Amy woodland, Tree decorating @ Cranbrook Mall for Boys and Girls club auction, school-wide Food Bank collection.
- Enthusiastic participation at all grade levels in the Canada wide Mathematica Centrum Math contest.
- Annual Band and Choir performances & festival participation for adjudication and growth.
- Annual drama performance that includes any and all interested participants from props to lead roles in the performing arts.
- Team/Co-teaching and collaboration amongst staff in various departments.
- Learning rounds that have incorporated the combination of math, science, foods & textiles; English & Social Studies curricula combined and intertwined through project based learning, and Aboriginal/Residential teachings that promote and embed lessons into daily teaching, learning and conversations.

**Challenges**

#1

- Stress and anxiety, home-life is different, a growing number of parents are working 2 jobs and unable to be present to support and engage with their children for extended periods of time. Consequently, students who struggle and are under-supported tend to become disengaged and frustrated which equates to behaviour challenges and heightened outbursts.
- Societal expectations and levels of tolerance are changing; we are living in a world that is full of demands, complications and challenges, but our students are still simply kids who need guidelines, structure and adult support; in some instances they are growing up too fast and in other instances society is expecting them to grow up when they are simply not yet ready.
- Students who are sent to the office often find themselves in the time-out/suspension room where they sit waiting to be disciplined for their non-compliance or poor behaviour choices; the philosophy and use of this space has begun a transformation and is in the process of being re-worked to become a space that promotes pro-active, positively reinforced behaviour options and choices.
- It seems that many students have become complacent about the world in which they live and despite the promotion of recycling, composting and waste reduction there seems to be a lack of commitment toward these efforts.

- Global citizenship seems to be undervalued and is requiring attention and regard; our students need adult role-modeling and ongoing conversations and promotion of awareness.
- We have 11 and 12 year old kids who come from elementary schools where outdoor play is supported with activities, structures and options. These same students are suddenly placed into a world where there are limited opportunities to play and interact; essentially there is very little to do during break times. As a result we deal with increased social anxieties, tears, and overwhelmed children who are struggling with the expectation that they are to find their own ways to entertain themselves; Middle School is a tough, challenging time in a student's learning career we must ensure that we are looking after their entire being; socially, emotionally, physically AND academically.
- There is a perception in the community that Laurie Middle School tends to be more of an "inner city school"; this inaccurate account of LMS is unfounded and simply not true, consequently, we have work to do to change this less than positive account/perception within our community.

## #2

- Many students attending Laurie Middle School have moved homes and schools a number of times in their school career and or missed a great deal of school which leaves holes in their learning.
- We have many students who have an IEP created to support their learning needs and we have students who struggle for various reasons and require additional support to ensure they are successful at school. Relying on stand and deliver teaching styles will not meet the needs of these kids; and as a result we know that pedagogical change is essential and valuable.
- In the past some teachers have worked in isolation but as learning standards and outcomes are changing so too is their practice; more staff are accessing learning rounds which is promoting and allowing for collaboration and co-teaching experiences, time to investigate new curriculum, opportunities to design lessons and projects and to acquire powerful and current teaching resources.
- While teachers are being provided the opportunity to explore and deliver new and revised curriculum, they at the same time want to ensure that their students continue to remain grounded in the basic, necessary skills for successful learning. Project based learning is exciting, but is also a major risk for traditional, subject focused teachers. We are going to work on investigating ways to incorporate sound past practice with the more loosely structured design of the curriculum revisions and expected outcomes.

**Focusing:** (Identify the most important work you can do to improve the success of your students. On which key areas of learning will you focus?)

**#1.** We want to help our student community/population move toward greater respect, greater self-control and greater motivation for success; to develop awareness and ownership of their own moral compass and develop a sense of strong character; to help our students recognize that all that they do and say is interconnected and one action affects another; in the words of Dr. Bob Cutler, "ripple effects".

**#2.** We want to hook our middle school students with new and creative teaching techniques that integrate current knowledge with big questions of inquiry that is steered by them and promoted and supported by the adults in their world. Current research indicates that project and inquiry based learning will allow for us to better meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. The new curriculum focus on big ideas of learning promotes the inquiry process based on curiosity and interest of individual learners.

## Evidence/Data to support:

### #1 - It is expected that we will see an increase in the following:

Community Outreach Service, Food bank collection, Me to We participation, Peer Support, Acts of Kindness, displays of Empathy toward peers, supporting and growing awareness around our foster children, self-regulation and a growing awareness regarding MindUp strategies, changes in the philosophy of “time out” to a “time to win room”, Salvation Army support, Green Home & Joseph Creek Village visits, Street Angels awareness and contributions of support, respectful cell Phone and social media use, gardening, composting, and general school ground care and an overall increased show of pride and school spirit. Continued acknowledgment, recognition and appreciation expressed from students regarding the overall tone/vibe within our school community.

The Social Responsibility Performance Scale will be used as a means to concretely gather an assessment of status and growth.

### #2

- Provide guidance and direction to assist students in identifying their own personal learning styles & strengths.
- As a result of self-assessment students will develop a greater sense of their own skills and abilities, set yearly learning goals and identify ways in which they will further acquire, develop and increase personal strengths in relation to the core competencies.
- Decrease in the number of students receiving In Progress status “I” on all reporting terms.
- Increase the positive results of report cards for each of the 3 reporting terms.  
Track the number of students maintaining a “B” average on their report cards; which currently equates to Honour Roll standing.

Criteria: A = 5 points; B = 4 points. C+ = 3

SWELL LIST - SCHOOL WORK EFFORT LAURIE LIST - Maintaining a “G” average work habit attains SWELL standing. Work habit of “N” disqualifies a student from being on the SWELL list.

Criteria: E = 6 points; G = 5 points; S = 3 points.

## Key Learnings:

As we grow and work within the guidance of this growth plan, our learning will evolve and over time will have moments of “a ha” and moments of “seriously, how am I ever going to get there?” but in the end, what is so very important is the fact that we will all continue to learn, we will all continue to strive for our own excellence and we will all continue to do what’s best for kids.

The Formative five – Fostering Grit, Empathy and other SUCCESS SKILLS Every Student Needs by Thomas R. Hoerr:

*“Culture is the key to our effectiveness and growth. Like the water in which fish live, it is all around us, all of the time; a school’s culture affects how we feel, think and act. Educators must work collaboratively and tenaciously to create a school culture that prepares students for a future in which the only constant will be change.”*

## **Developing a Hunch: What is leading to this situation?**

- Learning about the diversity within the staff; their strengths and passions
- Listening and talking with staff; sharing and discussing common concerns AND celebrations of the many good things occurring at LMS
- Meeting and conversing with staff regarding the use/purpose of the “time-out” room
- Hearing from and observing students; learning and understanding their concerns, frustrations, challenges and struggles AND hearing from them about what they celebrate about Laurie Middle School
- Student conferences as a result of office referrals (pink slips)
- Student involvement in Peer Support, WeDay, DSAC and Student Council
- Former LMS School Growth Plans that indicated areas of work and direction for the school as a whole

## **New Professional Learning: (Summarize new areas for professional learning and how you will go about designing new learning for yourself and your staff that will impact your learners.)**

- Setting our school climate/culture so that all students feels safe, curious to learn and possess a deep desire to be at school; utilizing announcements and TAG classes to share messages.
- Increase awareness and give greater attention to acceptable behaviour and provide positive reinforcement to promote the good in all.
- Refer to and give greater attention to our school code of conduct in an attempt to provide the same clear consistent message to all students.
- Encourage and promote the acquisition of Pro D funds and School Growth funds to further develop professional learning for staff to gain deeper understanding of concepts.
- Provide time for staff who have utilized Pro D, Growth Plan funds or Learning Rounds to share their learning, interests and goals (staff meetings, department meetings).
- Staff meeting time set aside for conversation and planning; provide time to explore and investigate the revised curriculum.
- Integrating/transitioning students as much as possible into all areas of learning; providing learning opportunities for students of all abilities to positively affect and impact their peers.
- Encouraging Maggie Lindsay-Tadey to continue to provide mini-lessons on integration, planning for modification and adaptation of all students in our building.

### **Taking Action: What will you do differently?**

- Promote the concept of explorations, clubs, summer days, passion days (Fun Fridays), MindUp, Implementation of a Virtues focus, play areas on our school yard that include slack line supports, an outdoor volleyball net, a basketball/pickleball court, acquisition of equipment for students to take outside and use during the lunch break and added picnic tables for kids to eat as well as socialize at.
- Encourage teams of teachers to work collaboratively both in and out of their curricular areas of strength/interest and to embrace the possibilities that project based learning could provide.
- Provide release time for teachers to collaborate, generate, create and dream! The big ideas are the end, but the journey needs to start and the taking a leap of faith alone is far less scary when shared with a partner!
- The addition of a Co-Teacher to our school team is allowing for teachers to collaborate and plan ongoing projects and to share personal skills and strengths with one another which is in turn creating a ripple effect of pedagogical growth; we will endeavor to continue to promote the co-teaching model of instruction.
- A team of staff members who attended a Mean Girls conference are working to promote and share their learning within the community and are taking action to promote healthy, positive relationships amongst students.
- A school wide novel reading is a concept that is being explored as a means of pulling all learners in a common direction with common themes of exploration that can be shared across the grade levels in order to promote cross grade sharing and learning.

### **Communication Strategies: (How will you communicate your inquiry and your results to the school community?)**

#### Newsletters

Open House - sharing and celebrating of our successes by including the community

Assemblies where community members are invited to be a part of the learning/sharing

PAC support

Daily Townsman Articles and Photos - promote positive messaging to the community

Reader Board messages

### **Parental/Community Involvement: (How will you work together as a school community to do this work?)**

- PAC meetings as a venue to share, learn and collaborate; a dedicated group of parents are wanting to see increased opportunities and successes for their children and they have made a commitment and are dedicated to supporting the work going on at LMS
- Community Groups; we have amazing groups and leaders who just need to be asked for their support - there are many organizations who will be more than willing to support the journey of our students and participate in their growing successes
- District Support, leadership and guidance from our directors as well as Joe Pierre
- Teams of staff working as "champions" to guide and support school-wide initiatives and Professional Development that can be shared school-wide in order to promote greater buy in and staff participation and engagement
- Learning Rounds; the ongoing participation and professional growth amongst staff members will provide infectious curiosity, investigation & pedagogical risk-taking

**Connection to the District Goals: (How does this plan connect to our district vision?)  
Improving achievement of all students – each and every student!**

- To enable all students to graduate with purpose, options and hope by developing a sense of belonging in all students and enhancing the engagement in learning***
- To develop literacy performance by purposefully engaging diverse learners in the process of reading to understand across all subject areas AND to improve the knowledge, skills and attitudes in numeracy***

By reading through the learning round applications, and the two inquiry questions within this document, I believe it is quite apparent that this plan directly aligns with the district vision which is what we should all be striving for. However, at Laurie Middle School we will also be continuing the work that is underway to focus on the emotional stability of our students as well as re-establishing and building a stronger, more unified school culture.

The guide post and big questions steering our path and pushing us along, the questions that will cause pause and reflection come from the book **The Formative five – Fostering Grit, Empathy and other SUCCESS SKILLS Every Student Needs** by Thomas R. Hoerr:

***“you should be asking yourselves whether your students are going to be productive and happy citizens at age 25, 45 and 65. What kinds of adults will they be? Will they be good spouses, good friends, and good parents? Will they be respectful and honest, and will they work to make the world a better place? Those are the qualities that we should be valuing and pursuing in our schools. And those are the measures of your school’s effectiveness.”***

**Connection to the 7 Principles of Learning: (Which of these principles align with your plan?)**

1. **Learners at the centre** ✓ – if our learners are not at the centre, then we really need to think about who we are coming to school for and what our purpose as educators is all about
2. **Social nature of learning** ✓ - “Culture is the key to our effectiveness and growth. Like the water in which fish live, it is all around us, all of the time; a school’s culture affects how we feel, think and act. Educators must work collaboratively and tenaciously to create a school culture that prepares students for a future in which the only constant will be change.”
3. **Emotions are integral to learning** ✓ - Middle School is a tough, challenging time in a student’s learning career we must ensure that we are looking after their entire being. (socially, emotionally, physically AND academically)
4. **Recognizing individual differences** ✓ - Societal expectations and levels of tolerance are changing; we are living in a world that is full of demands, complications and challenges, but our students are still simply kids who need guidelines, structure and adult support; in some instances they are growing up too fast and in other instances society is expecting them to grow up when they are simply not yet ready.
5. **Stretching all students** ✓ - We want to hook our middle school students with new and creative teaching techniques that integrate current knowledge with big questions of inquiry that is steered by them and promoted and supported by the adults in their world. Current research indicates that project and inquiry based learning will allow for us to better meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. The new curriculum focus on big ideas of learning promotes the inquiry process based on curiosity and interest of individual learners.
6. **Assessment for learning** ✓ - It is our job as educators to be providing guidance and direction to assist students in identifying their own personal learning styles & strengths. The ongoing practice of assessment and evaluation for growth and success is a part of sound practice is integral to helping students know what they can be working on to improve and strive for personal satisfaction.
7. **Building horizontal connections** ✓ - We want to help our student community/population move toward greater respect, greater self-control and greater motivation for success; to develop awareness and ownership of their own moral compass and develop a sense of strong character; to help our students recognize that all that they do and say is interconnected and one action affects another and that they all affect life.

# Signing Off Page

	Name	Signature
<b>Principal:</b>	Michelle Sartorel - Principal Jill Carley - VP	<i>Ms. Michelle Sartorel</i> <i>Ms. Jill Carley</i>
<b>Parent:</b>		
<b>Parent:</b>		
<b>Student:</b>		
<b>CFTA Representative</b>		
<b>CUPE Representative</b>		

**Date:**

**Approval of the Board and Superintendent:**

**Board Chair:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**

**Superintendent:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**



