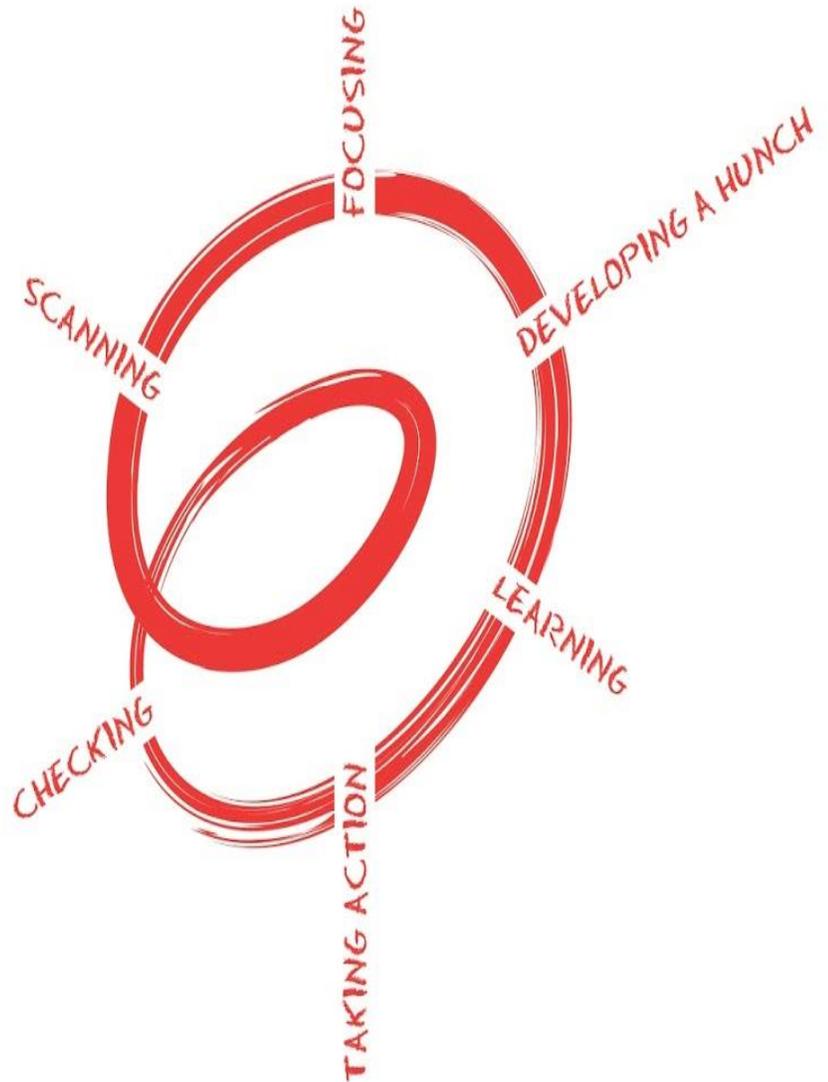




ELKFORD SECONDARY SCHOOL
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School Growth Plan: 2016-17

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



Scanning: What's going on for our learners?

As a staff we decided what we, as staff and community, know about our students and their successes and challenges.

We considered the following questions about our students:

- What factors contribute to our students' success in our classrooms?
- What factors contribute to our students' challenges in our classrooms?
- What factors contribute to our students' success in our school?
- What factors contribute to our students challenges in our school?
- Which of these factors are within our control as teachers?

Ultimately we realized what we already knew: Our students are most successful when they are engaged in their learning. All of our conversations as a staff about these questions came back to the engagement of our students in learning. With the re-designed curriculum, we want to understand the impact it will have on student learning and engagement.

Consequently we established our Focus for our inquiry:

Focus:

The key areas of learning and instruction we will focus on are as follows:

- engaging, hands-on learning activities
- understanding and implementing the revised curriculum and assessment practices that inform and guide learning

The most important work we can do to improve the success of our students is to build the capacity of our teachers to better meet the learning and achievement needs of our students.

Therefore, our driving question that underlies all that we do here at Elkford Secondary School is:

By using a whole school, integrated approach to using student inquiry as a method of integrating the redesigned curriculum into our classroom teaching practices, in what ways will student learning and achievement improve?

Developing a Hunch:

We considered the possible factors that contribute to the engagement of our learners. We realized that students in a secondary school setting have a complex dichotomy of expectations placed upon them:

- they are still young, but are learning to be more independent
- they are expected to be creative in their learning yet compliant in their classrooms
- they are figuring out their independence and individuality, but have social pressures to conform
- we want them to be critical thinkers, but compliant
- we want them to be creative, but compliant
- we want them to be healthy people and active learners, but they are required to sit for several hours per day in classrooms
- we want them to use technology as a tool to enhance their learning, and must constantly make technology renewal a priority to keep up with current practices

Our students experience these contrasts (and more) regularly at our school, just like many students around School District #5 and our province.

The result of these contrasts can be frustration and a perceived lack of understanding by some of our students about their schools. This frustration and misconception leads to a lack of engagement in their learning and the desire to ‘just do the work’.

The lack of engagement in learning that teachers observe is detrimental to student learning and achievement and frustrating for educators.

Although many of the issues facing our students are beyond our control as classroom teachers and principals, there are some areas that we do have control to change and improve.

Improving the capacity of classroom teachers in instruction and assessment is proven (Black & Wiliam, Allington, Hattie, Close, Stiggins, Shimmer) to enhance student learning and achievement. Improving the capacity of teachers to meet the needs of our students results in more opportunities for greater student engagement in learning. We hope to see improved learning and achievement for our students.

Therefore, the area we have chosen to focus on is improving student engagement through instruction and assessment in the context of the re-designed curriculum.

New Professional Learning: How and where can we learn more about what to do?

The new areas of professional learning for our staff and administration consist of working together as a staff to learn how to effectively implement the re-designed curriculum through a whole school approach. We plan to begin with a structured inquiry that all staff will facilitate for their students. Teachers will pair up for each grade (we have two teachers for grades 7-10 and grades 11 and 12 will be combined). Then, based on feedback from that experience, we will have regular Friday inquiry days that will be collaboratively planned by our planning committee. The inquiry days include all students, teachers, EAs, YCW and AESW. We will integrate the redesigned curriculum into our inquiries and provide opportunities for cross-curricular connections. As a staff, we will determine a theme that will be present in the various inquiries our students will engage in. We will form a planning committee (the Inquiry Team Members) who will do some of the legwork for framing the inquiries, determine our inquiry process, locate resources, propose ideas for inquiries and provide examples if possible.

Taking Action: What will we do differently?

All teaching staff have joined the inquiry project. We will be taking time from the Fridays we have in session and use this as an opportunity to innovate with ideas, methods and the re-designed curriculum. To initiate this school wide inquiry we have been granted access to additional funds to support any release time for collaborative planning.

We want to support teachers with enhancing their practice to better engage our students in their learning and consequently raise their levels of achievement as well as support the process of implementation of the re-designed curriculum in all of our classrooms.

Checking: Have we made enough of a difference?

We will know if we have made a difference based on the outcome of our inquiry project. Establishing the criteria for our success, a focus for teacher learning, our methods and focus for assessment (this can be behavioural observations, student self assessments or through surveys) will provide the opportunity for students and teachers to reflect about their learning experience. We will gather reflections from students based on their core competencies and teachers will reflect about the process of teaching inquiry in the context of the re-designed curriculum.

Communication Strategies: It is important to communicate the outcomes and efforts of our inquiry based approach to the Elkford Secondary's community of stakeholders. We will communicate in the following ways:

- Regular updates with the PAC
- Time set aside at each staff meeting for teachers to have table talk, grade level talk, and reflections about our efforts

- Release time, through the collaborative inquiry fund, to plan and communicate with all staff members.
- Greater use of our school website to share ideas, plans, and information with our parents and other stakeholders.

School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay)
Plan 2016-2017
School: Elkford Secondary School

CERTIFICATION BY SCHOOL PLANNING COUNCIL:

We certify that, to the best of our knowledge, the information provided in this growth plan is accurate and reflects the needs of our school.

_____ Parent Member's Name	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Parent Member's Name	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Parent Member's Name	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Teacher Member's Name	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Student Member's Name	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Vice Principal's Name	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Principal's Name	_____ Signature	_____ Date

Board Authorization

School Plan for _____ approved by
the Board of Education of School District No. 5 (Southeast Kootenay).

Board Chair

Date