

School Growth Planning Process

School name Elijah Smith Elementary School

Vision and mission "Our vision is to develop global citizens with a strong Northern identity by connecting the traditional teachings of Yukon First Nations to all of our students, families and communities through excellence in education".

School profile/
demographic Elijah Smith School is located directly across Hamilton Blvd. from the Kwanlin Dun First Nation Community and serves McIntyre, Hillcrest, Ingram, Logan, Arkell, Lobird, Copper Ridge and Granger. Elijah Smith School is very culturally diverse, and has a wide range of the social and economic issues that would arise from such a varied school community. It should also be noted that Elijah Smith School is operating at capacity numbers and has to turn away students because placement at the school is in high demand. Part of the reason for this is that our staff members try very hard to include the community in the life of the school consistently throughout the year. From its beginning, in 1992, Elijah Smith School was viewed as the school for Kwanlin Dun students. Therefore, the school has always emphasized First Nations Culture and History. This is expressed in various ways: our Open School, regular community feasts, dance group, Hand Games teams and competitions, and a wide assortment of First Nations cultural events. In addition, our philosophy has always been aimed towards an "open school", more along the lines of a community school. The school opens each day at 7:30, closes after 5:00 and is often open on weekends for related activities. Emphasis is

put on family as an organizing principle, consensus decision-making, and welcoming as a recurrent theme.

Cultural inclusion standards (Yukon First Nations ways of knowing and doing)	Cultural awareness	Our school is made up of roughly 40% of students who identify as being of First Nations ancestry. We have culture days and weeks. We also had a Bison Hunt at the school in cooperation with CYFN and Porter Creek Secondary School.
	Access to knowledge	We have access to knowledge. We had a PD day that was dedicated to working with KDFN. The PD day was held at the Potlatch House an run in conjunction with KDFN.
	Relationships	We have been working with Kwanlin dun on implementing the MOA into our school. This year we have set up an elders lounge and have had daily drumming in our main foyer to welcome students into our building. We continue to work with the CELC from KDFN who has an office at our school. We have started talks with the Taan Kwachan Council on best ways to move forward.
	Languages	We offer Core French from grades 5 to 7 and Southern Tutchone to all students in our school from grades kindergarten to 7.

School Growth Plan Outline

1) Scanning: Briefly summarize your scanning process. How did you use the Class Review, observations, four key questions as part of the scanning process? What did you notice about the experiences of your learners that were most important to your team? How did you use the OECD 7 Principles of Learning and the First Peoples Principles of Learning in your scanning process?

We wanted to see how we could make students feel welcome/sense of belonging at our school. Also wanted to put an emphasis on Forest School

2) Focus: In a few sentences, explain why you have selected this area. What changes are you hoping to obtain for your teachers?

We selected this area because many students in previous years let us know that they did not see themselves in our school or feel like they belonged in our school. We are hopeful to get our teachers more training and more comfortable

in how to use First Nations Ways of knowing and doing in the classroom. We are also hoping to get expanded training in Forest School delivery for our teachers.

3) Hunch: Describe your hunches about the ways in which your practice or practices at the school may contribute to the experiences of your learners. Develop your hypothesis.

We felt that by running family nights and groups at our school that we could help students feel welcome/a part of our school.

4) New professional learning: What new areas of professional learning do you plan to explore? What resources may be helpful? What specific tools will you use for your professional learning to support the learning of your students?

We will work with KDFN to continue implementing the MOA into our school. We will do this by having a joint PD day. We will also ask all teachers to pick one piece of First Nations Ways of Knowing and Doing and incorporate it into their long range plans.

5) Taking action: Describe the strategies you and your team will use. How will learning rounds be structured and support your learning?

We will set up collaborative learning groups. Get teachers extra training where needed and encourage teachers to pursue extra PD where they feel it is necessary. We had monthly School Growth Committee meetings.

6) Checking (after taking action, or in debriefing in Learning Rounds): Summarize the differences you made. Were they enough? Were you satisfied? What did you use as baseline - and change - evidence? How much richer are your learners' answers to the four questions? How will you make learning visible?

We were able to have Thursday night family nights. These included a movie night with over 190 people going to watch a movie. We also had drumming in the front foyer everyday and we noticed that a lot of students showed up on time to be a part of this. We are really just in the scanning stage. Our goal for next year is to look at attendance. See if our whole child approach is working and what we can do to improve it.

7) Reflections/advice: Finish by sharing what you learned from this inquiry, where you plan to go next, and what advice you would offer other schools with similar interest.

We would advise other schools not to be afraid to work with your First Nations partners. We have found that KDFN is more than willing to work with us. It moves very slowly but we are seeing positive progress in our relationship with KDFN, which in turn pays dividends at the school.

8) Student achievement/Key indicators for success:

Baseline

Attendance/Feeling welcome in school

Target

Improve the amount of students attendance and feeling a part of the school. We did not pick any target numbers for this year but will for the Fall.

Results

We say great attendance at our Family Nights and noticed more families were coming to Student Conferences as well. We also noticed that less students transfered during the year to other schools like would happen in the past.

Appendix 1

School Growth Plan

The school develops a school growth plan for growth using the *Spiral of Inquiry* (Halbert, Kaser and Timperley, 2012) framework to inform the process.



Scanning: What's going on for our learners:

- Using data from a variety of sources including the initial Class Review, teacher observations and evidence of student learning, the team scans their learners.

Focusing: What will give us the greatest impact for student learning?

- Examining the scanning data, the team highlights areas of possible focus in professional learning.
- Begin by choosing one area of focus that will have the greatest impact on learners and learning.
- Is the area of focus big enough?
- Will it really make a difference?

Developing a Hunch: How are we contributing to the issue?

- The team considers the ways in which we, as educators, may be contributing to the selected area of focus.
- What are our biases?
- Are there other factors which contribute?
- What can we directly impact and change?

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

- What are the resources that can further my learning in the area I have chosen to focus?
- Books, research literature, professional learning networks and colleagues, Professional Development days are all possible sources of new professional learning.

Taking Action: What will we do differently?

- After the team develops the inquiry focus and considers new professional learning to help frame how to change teaching to better meet the needs of learners.
- This stage involves thoughtful planning and set up in the weeks before the Learning Round- what teaching and learning practices are being explored or deepened?
- A schedule is established for meetings and to consider how reflective practice will be incorporated.
- Roles for the team members are established, ensuring that the Principal or Vice-Principal is involved in supporting teacher professional growth.

Checking: Have we made enough of a difference?

- By examining evidence of student learning, and examining the initial focus and baseline observations and data, the teacher and the team, ask themselves: How have students improved? Has my teaching made (enough of) a difference? Using the spiral of inquiry, do we need to revisit the focus? The new learning?

Appendix 2

Seven principles of learning and the implications for inquiry-oriented leaders

What works for LEARNERS?	What this means for LEADERS
Put learners at the centre	Leaders must be relentlessly curious about what's going on for students in the system. Student learning is the driving force, but students aren't the only learners. In an innovative learning environment, everyone is a learner, including teachers, support staff, formal leaders, parents and others.
Emphasize the social nature of learning	Leaders collaborate, cooperate, and support networked learning.
Understand that emotions are central to learning	Leaders understand and apply the dynamics of social and emotional learning . They are attuned to their own emotions and motivations, and to the emotions and motivations of others—including the positives, like satisfaction and self-efficacy; and the negatives, like helplessness and anxiety. They understand how emotions affect performance.
Recognize individual differences	Leaders understand the dynamics of their team members, including their strengths, interests, experiences, and gaps in learning. They draw on these differences and help everyone in the system to develop through carefully designed professional learning.
Stretch all learners	Leaders stretch themselves and others, but they avoid overload or stress that diminishes performance.
Use assessment for learning	Leaders set clear expectations while being open to new possibilities. They continually assess what is working and where the gaps are. They always consider qualitative data as well as quantitative data. They seek and give meaningful feedback to promote learning.
Build horizontal connections	Leaders are connectors. They connect activities, ideas and people, in and out of school. Their connections include partnerships in the community, with other schools, and with organizations at a distance.