Yukon
Education
Éducation

Elijah Smith Elementary

School Growth Plan

2016-2017

Last Updated: May 2016

PART 1: Context, Priorities, Response to School Review, Recommendations, Processes and Connections

Context:
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.

"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".

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.

Priorities:

The staff members at Elijah Smith School implement programming for students in diverse ways in order to reach as many students learning needs as possible. Since more than half of our students are First Nations, much of the programming has been focussed on providing culturally relevant resources and activities to benefit not only our First Nations students, but the entire student body. Our students arrive at the school with a wide range of abilities; one of our primary focuses is the literacy training available, especially to our younger learners. We have embarked on a three year project of developing Early Learning Profiles of our students from K to Grade 3. In the 2013/2014 school year we started with the K/1 students, in the 2014/2015 school year we added the grade 2 students and for the 2015/2016 school year we will add in the grade 3 students. The Early Learning Profile is leading the way in our data informed instruction to guide our teaching practices to individually meet the needs to each of the students. We are striving to ensure that each child achieves the skills to read by grade 3 and will then be set up for success in their future educational years. Our focus on building a sense of belonging and meeting the individual needs of all our students is the platform that we stand upon in our School Growth Planning Process.

What we Value:

- We value the academic, cultural, creative, social and economic diversities of our students;
- We value building community and relationships, while fostering positive connections between school and community;
- We value experiential education and the learning opportunities it brings to our students learning
- We value diversity in language and foster all of our students learning of French and Southern Tutchone
- We value daily Physical Education and developing healthy lifestyles;
- We value using technology in all classrooms to foster the 21st Century learning styles of our students;
- We value providing our students with the best evidence-based educational practices and opportunities;
- We value effort, perseverance, and hard work;
- We value environmental stewardship;
- We value strength-based learning and the individuality of every learner, educator, and member of our school and community.

Our Priorities:

- Maintaining a consistent team approach to move the school growth plan forward
- Continuing to use a model of consensus in our decision making
- Creating a safe, respectful, caring environment;
- Providing First Nations culturally relevant learning opportunities for our students
- Providing daily interactions with Elders in our school that will benefit our students learning
- Providing balanced literacy and numeracy instruction and learning;
- Deepening our understanding of, and connection to First Nations;
- Developing moral intelligence through character/spirit education and positive social conduct;
- Modelling the values and attitudes we want our students to adopt;
- Modelling and encouraging healthy living through daily physical education, nutritious eating habits, and varied activities;
- Building the school community, both internally and externally;
- Developing well-rounded, independent learners who will interact, in and out of school, as respectful, caring citizens;
- Fostering best teaching practices and utilizing Assessment For Learning throughout the curriculum

Response to School Review Recommendations:

ESES underwent a school review in 2014. Below are the recommendations from the school review team and our schools response to those recommendations over the past two school years. ESES will be up for a school review in 2017.

Norms & Culture:*Review team recommendations are in bold, *school response is in italics.*

- **Work as a staff with students to develop a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying (and what may not) in order to assist students and staff to reduce incidences of bullying-perceived or real. Regularly scheduled class meetings that take place not only when there are issues may be a helpful proactive strategy.**

We have worked with DOE consultant to incorporate our Circle of Courage learning with the PBIS model. We are focusing on positive behaviours being reinforced with explicit teaching through boot camps at the start of the year and reinforcement throughout the year. We have simplified our Circle of Courage rubric and staff collaboratively developed a matrix of behavior interventions differentiating what is classroom intervention and what is office referral intervention.

- **Continue to work consistently throughout the school year with students on the Eagles Code of Conduct to ensure that it is perceived by students as developmental rather than prescriptive or rules-based.**
  See above note about PBIS

- **Work to ensure that each student has at least one "go-to" adult in the school with whom they feel connected.**
  This is ongoing daily work with all of our staff.

- **Open School needs a broad "rethink" with respect to its intended purposes and target audience. This should include School Council, school administration, teachers and support staff, and the CELC. Once defined, its rationale and the reasons for its structure should be clearly communicated to parents and students.**
  Discussions at school council have clearly identified that Open School is a good thing and sets a positive picture for ESES. Administration has worked toward recruiting more parent volunteers to support this initiative. This year we have five consistent parent volunteers that have supported Open School and the Breakfast program

  School and Community:

- **Continue to create opportunities which see educators visiting and engaging with KDFN and the McIntyre community.**
  Well established and ongoing work.

- **Continue the thoughtful, student-centered efforts to offer clubs and activities which meet the needs of ESES students.**
  Clubs over the past years have been are: Kwanlin Eagles Boys Club, Pink Eagles Girls Club, Family Nights, Traditional Sewing Club, Knitting Club, Traditional Dance (Seniors & Juniors), Traditional Carving and Choir.

- **Consider an event at the beginning of the school year which brings in the community and aims to broaden the school's volunteer base- such as a volunteer fair whereby volunteer commitments to specific events/activities can be arranged early in the school year.**
  Open House and Feast is done every year.

- **Communicate to ensure that all staff are aware of school initiatives (i.e. the outdoor classroom, new playground upgrades) in order that they may plan ahead and work to incorporate them into their teaching.**
  Administration sends out the Week at a Glance every Friday.

- **Given the emphasis being placed on outdoor and experiential education, consider arranging a visitation with Golden Horn Elementary School which has successfully instituted a K-7 philosophy of outdoor and experiential education.**

Staff and parent population were not on board with this recommendation as they feel the ESES philosophy has a different perspective and we would prefer to maintain the course our school has had great success with.

School Organization:

- **Continue to ensure that SBT has a clearly defined process and structure, though consider making one meeting an "open" meeting where teachers can come to seek advice/insight on working with a student or group of students without necessarily triggering a paperwork 'process'.**
  SBT is a line item in our monthly staff meetings. Staff are reminded that SBT referrals are a process that requires documentation but should not inhibit our responsibility to refer a student. Admin and SBT members reassure staff on a regular basis that staff can come to SBT to discuss and get recommendations for in class supports before going through the full referral process. The least to most interventions is the philosophy of SBT.

- **Re-evaluate, in consultation with school staff and consultants from TAL/ITSS, the school's computer lab in light of the current classroom space constraints (and resultant portable) at ESES and the future of Ipad technology and mobile labs in schools.**
  Our computer lab has been converted back into a classroom for the 2016/17 school year. We now have an Ipad cart, COW and Epson Bright Links being installed in four of the intermediate classrooms.

- **Continue the strong work and efforts to develop the Eagles Code of Conduct consistently throughout the year, in ways that ensure it is understood as a series of virtues and attributes by students in the manner intended by Dr. Brokenleg (distinct from a perceived list of rules).**
  Ongoing and staff have worked to integrate the PBIS model with our Circle of Courage learning.

  School Processes and Progress:

- **Continue to develop the Early Years Profile, expanding what is known about ESES students in the higher grades.**
  ELP portfolios of students are built and intermediate teachers have full access to them as the students move on. Our ELP is showing great success and we move out of the "pilot" stage to "this is what we do at ESES" in the 2016/2017 school year.

- **Continue the use of Reading Power and related strategies in support of student literacy at ESES.**
  This is well established in the daily working of ESES and will be maintained.

- **Build in a data/evidence piece into the Principal's Report which provides a data 'snapshot' for School Council, combined with the context or "story" behind what is being reported.**
  This has been ongoing for all data in the school. School council receives all reporting from the Administration team.

- **Consider the development and inclusion of a growth plan goal which has an academic focus, given the attention already being given to literacy and data/evidence gathering in the primary grades.**

In our 2015/2016 school year we changed our SGP goal to an academic goal in the area of writing.

Processes and Connections:

Throughout the 2015/2016 school year the staff have worked with the new goal that focussing on developing our students writing skills. Two areas of focus have been:

a) The scheduled block of time for the intermediate classes, where the classroom teachers and LAT's have been collaboratively providing small group instruction using Writing Power and Non Fiction Writing Power strategies.

b) The Early Learning Profile in our primary grades. The Early Learning Profile was a three year pilot that began in the 2013/2014 school year.

PART 2: Focus

Progress and Evidence:

Looking back to 2015/2016:

1. Our school data (SWW) show that the students are making progress in the area of writing.
2. Our Collaborative Vertical Teams was challenging this year because of acquiring substitute teachers. We were only able to have one round of CVT.
3. Our intention was to add a Writing Rocks to our Reading Rocks incentive. We were unable to do this at this time.
4. One school assigned PD was focussed on developing better writing connections to our students. How can we further engage our students to the writing process? Classroom teachers had some time with Dr. Judy Arnold to discuss school-wide implementation of writing initiatives. The strongest theme for all the staff was to not make writing an exclusive agenda item but rather focus on embedding the writing process in all the daily instruction that happens in the classroom.
5. We decided for our SWW we would ensure that all classroom teachers would be consistently using a personal write from the choice of three topics or a self-choice topic by the student.
6. We also were able to provide more experiential and culturally relevant writing opportunities for our students. Some of our Experiential teacher's time was designated to supporting classroom teachers in this.
7. Staff are well versed in Assessment for Learning practices and continue to develop their skills to inform their instruction.
8. Our intermediate classroom teachers collaborated with LAT's to provide small group instruction based around Writing Power and Non Fiction Writing Power strategies.
9. Both our Primary and Intermediate Literacy Committees were active and met on a monthly basis. The committees were both utilizing AFL practices to inform best practices and develop consistency for classroom instruction.

Looking Forward to 2016/2017:

1. Our SWW data shows that within the school year we are making progress.
2. In the fall of 2017 when we are able to access the data from the AMS portal we will be able to look at the spring to spring data – 2014/2015 to 2015/2016. This will enable us to continue with

our AFL practices and use the data to inform instruction and deepen the students' participation in the AFL processes.

3. We want to continue the Collaborative Vertical Team process although we have discussed at length with the SGP committee members options to effectively do this and not have to rely on the substitute teacher availability. In the 2016/2017 school year we would like to try an incorporate a school wide swim (primary/intermediate) as part of the CVT.

4. We are working toward the library being more of a "hub" in the school with opportunity to have targeted interactive literacy activities accessible to students.

5. We will continue to maintain the focus of using Writing Power and Non Fiction Writing Power strategies in the intermediate assigned literacy block.

6. We will continue with the Early Learning Profile in our primary grades. The data from the ELP is informing and driving teachers' instruction. Below is the SWW data of the Grade Two classes which were the first cohort of students from the 2013/2014 ELP. Of the possible 34 students from the original cohort there are no students that are not meeting grade level expectations (See chart B/ Early Learning Profile – Grade 2).
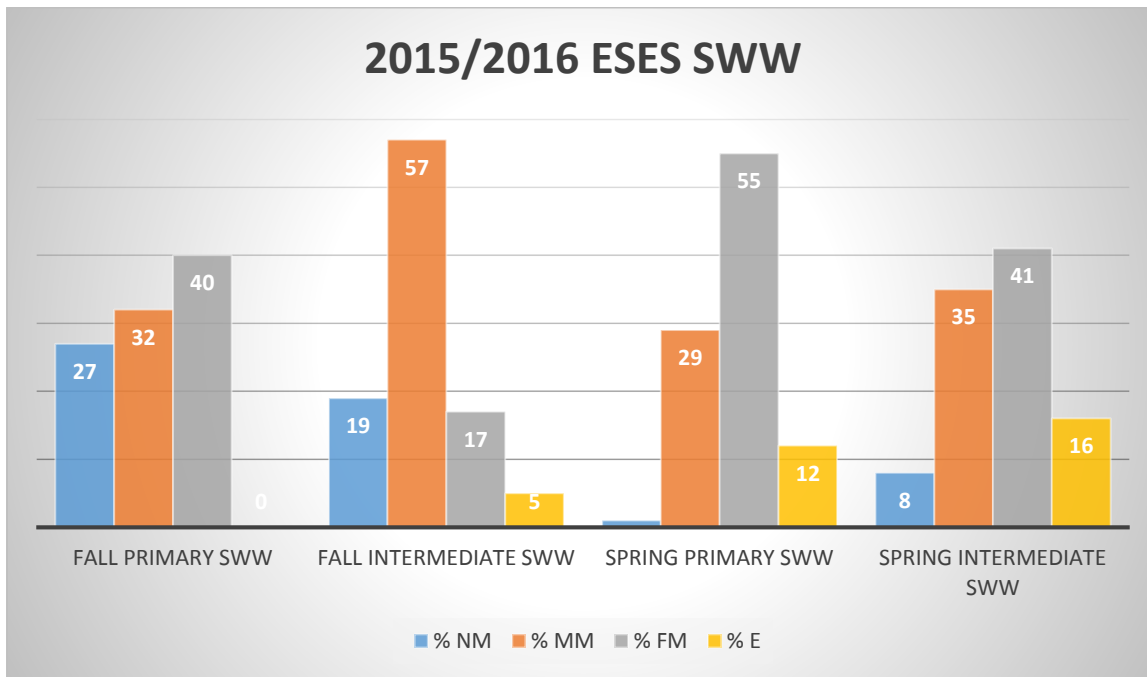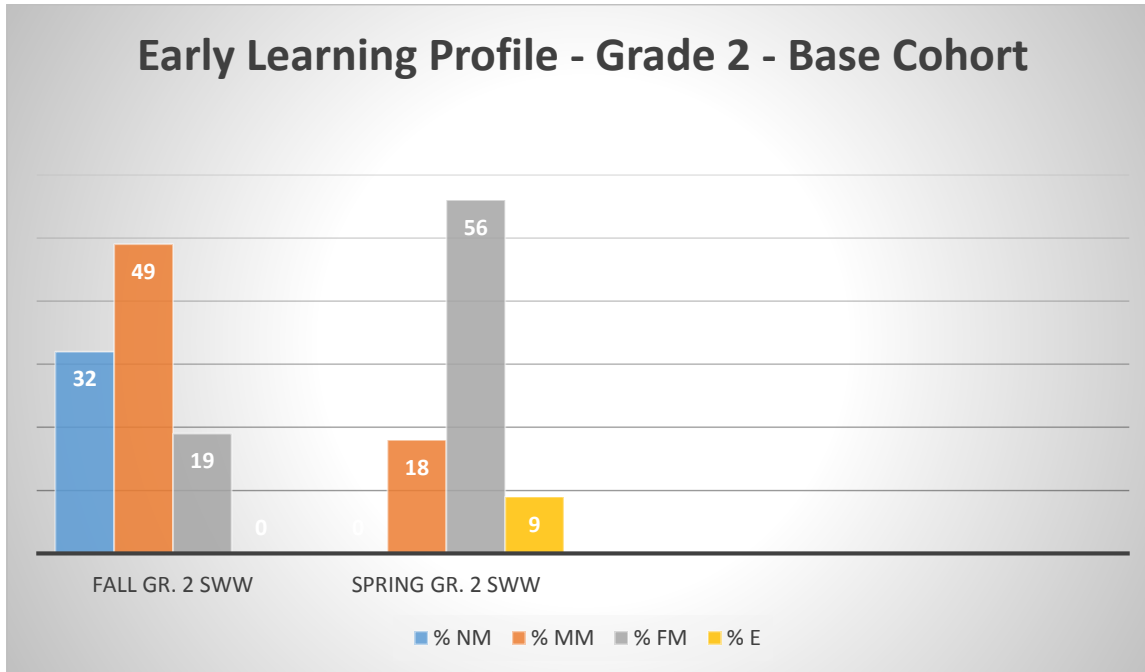
Chart A

Chart B

Early Learning Profile - Grade 2 - Base Cohort

Chart showing Fall Gr. 2 SWW: % NM 32, % MM 49, % FM 19, % E 0; Spring Gr. 2 SWW: % NM 0, % MM 18, % FM 56, % E 9.

Legend: ■ % NM   ■ % MM   ■ % FM   ■ % E

Rationale for goals and objectives:

We value all learners and support all learners' academic (Mastery), social (Generosity), emotional (Belonging), and physical (Independence) development. By holding high expectations for student success, based on BC Performance Standards, we expect to demonstrate progress in all areas. The assessment results from ESES show that generally students' writing skills are weak with   *Conventions* being the lowest skill, followed by *Style, Meaning* and *Form*.

Goal(s):

Using a common framework (K-7), will an emphasis on the writing processes and use of conventions improve the students' ability to communicate in writing?

Objective(s) to support the goal:

Objective #1: To improve the students' achievement in aspects of written communication.

Objective #2: To improve the students' achievement in the use of conventions in written communication.

Target(s):

Using our SWW data we will track and see measurable improvements of our students writing.

PART 3: ACT

Goal: Using a common framework (K-7), will an emphasis on the writing processes and use of conventions improve the students' ability to communicate in writing?

Objectives:

1. To improve the students' achievement in aspects of written communication.
2. To improve the students' achievement in the use of conventions in written communication.

Actions: Strategies/Interventions	Evidence to Track Progress	Person(s) Responsible
Strategies to engage students: a) Utilize more opportunities to engage learners with technology (eg. iPads, Promethean Boards and Bright Link Boards) b) Regular feedback using performance standard quickscales for different writing genres c) Have weekly Writing Rocks prizes d) Consistent topic (from a choice of three) for personal writing of SWW for all grades e) Provide opportunities for the students to have a voice and choice in use of technology for writing **Strategies to support staff:**	a) Students using technology to complete the SWW assessment b) Quickscales/Report Card Marks/SWW data/ELP data/ FSA data c) Tracking number of slips turned in for prizes d) SWW results e) Descriptive feedback from the students	a) Admin, Classroom teacher & LAT teacher b) Admin & Classroom Teachers c) Primary Literacy Committee d) Classroom Teachers & Students e) Students & Classroom Teachers

a) Focussed large blocks of instructional time consistently in the week		a) Admin & Staff
	a) Schedules & Timetables	
		b) Admin & Staff
b) PD on the Balanced Literacy Approach/Building a school writing continuum	b) Assignment of PD day	
		c) Admin & Staff
c) Collaborative Teams for marking SWW	c) Scheduling 2 CVT in the year	
		d) Admin & Staff
d) Collaborative Vertical Teams to discuss consistency of SWW, writing process and use of common framework	d) Minutes from the meetings	
		e) Staff & Admin
e) Use of Nelson Literacy Resource across the grades to build consistency of language	e) Commitment from all staff to use and noted in their long range plans	
		f) Classroom teachers & Admin
f) Use of AFL embedded into the teachers daily writing instruction	f) Teachers note AFL in their long range plans; Admin monitoring and supporting AFL through Staff meeting learning times; observable student work displays throughout the school	

PART 4: Monitoring and Adjusting the Plan

Dates for monitoring progress:

Dates for discussions of progress and sharing of current evidence including discussions with staff, parents, and school council:

- Staff Meeting collaborative discussions; PD day reflections;

- Growth plan progress reviews as part of staff meetings—September, November, January, February, April;
- Regular school council meetings

Communications Plan:

How will progress be communicated to parents and students?

- personal contact—ie; interviews, class meetings, parent-teacher-student conferences, phone calls home, book fairs, home visits, etc.
- weekly school newsletters; SGP updates in monthly newsletters;
- e-mailings to parents;
- school website for information to parents and their children;
- school council meetings;
- parent information evenings, performances, and celebrations;
- news reports to press, radio, and tv outlets;
- in class discussion with students and teachers