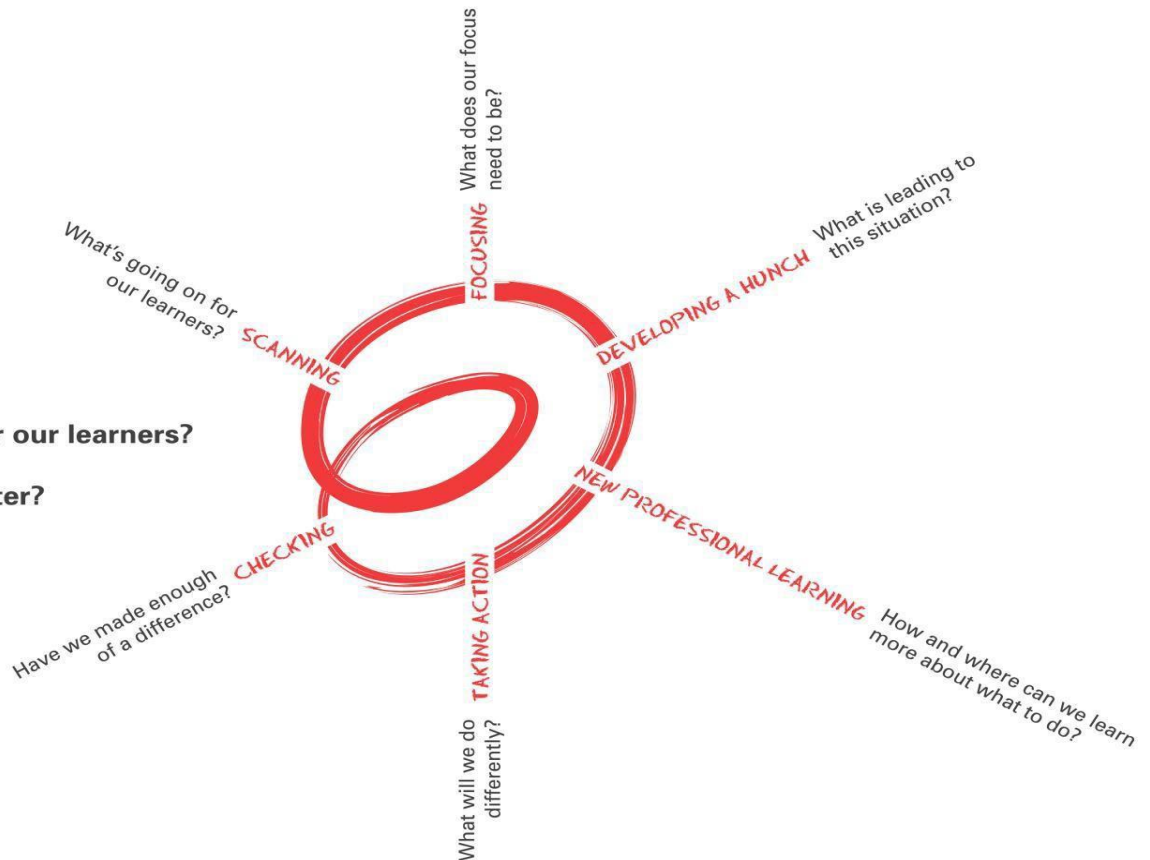




**Dewdney Elementary**  
**SCHOOL GROWTH PLAN - INQUIRY MODEL**  
**A multi-year plan for improvement year 2 in 2017**  
Dewdney Elementary School SD 75  
37151 Hawkins Pickle Road  
Dewdney, BC V0M1H0



\*Based on the book by  
Judy Halbert  
and Linda Kaser:  
“Spirals of Inquiry for  
equity and quality”





**School Context:**

- Dewdney Elementary is a central hub for the Dewdney Community
- Dewdney has a K – 6 population enrolling approximately 135 students both in-catchment and cross boundary
- There are many diverse learning needs (cultural, academic and social/emotional)
- There is a strong relationship with our Montessori preschool educators in the school
- Families live in a rural/semi-rural setting with a broad range of household incomes
- Environmental education has been the cornerstone of our school’s mission and ultimately the school’s identity. Dewdney is a “Wild BC School”
- Dewdney implemented a school wide community outdoor recreation and environment program with the creation of the **DEN** –an educational Naturescape, a **Wetland learning Centre** located on the school field with a focus on *place-based learning*
- Dewdney enjoys multiple partnerships and support from the Dewdney community and the broader Mission/Fraser Valley community
- Our Parent Advisory Council, School Planning Council and Community School Association are all actively involved in supporting the school in a variety of ways



**Scanning: (What do you, as staff and community, know about your students – their successes and challenges? What’s going on for them?)**

- Foundational skills as reported on various measures (FSA, DART, classroom based assessments) indicate that most students are minimally meeting expectations in literacy and numeracy; data from these various measures will continue to be tracked and monitored
- The Response to Intervention (RTI) model is utilized with many Tier 1 supports/adaptations being provided in the classroom and supported by the Learning Support Team (LST, ELL, S/L,OT). Tier 2 and 3 supports are provided as recommended through the School-Based Team (SBT)
- Teachers need continued support to successfully implement the RTI model to meet students’ needs
- **There is an increase of students with difficulty in regulating behaviour. Strategies that have been implemented to support students’ self-regulation skills need continued support and monitoring to ensure successful implementation; teachers need support from staff who specialize in this area. The addition of an integrated support program (ISP) is helping to support these students.**
- Some parents and staff report worrisome levels of anxiety in their children
- Staff report a high percentage of positive attitudes by students and parents regarding outdoor, place based education
- Staff report concerns about the level of effort and attitude towards academic output-especially in the area of writing
- Staff are concerned about the acquisition of basic skills amongst the students-especially basic math facts
- With the implementation of the new BC curriculum, staff are needing and acquiring support in competencies and content

- Teachers have begun to embrace an inquiry-based approach to learning with some positive results. Continued support for their professional learning will be important. Seeking out additional resources to support teachers' work to extend and deepen their learning and practice will help them with the challenge of implementing inquiry based learning.
- Teachers continue to seek out professional development support, and engage in collaboration to meet curriculum mandates in an outdoor environment.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of students with special needs in the classroom which creates a unique setting for the teachers and requires extra professional development.

**Focus: (From what you know, what is the most important work you can do to improve the success for your students? What key area of learning will you focus on?)**

- Continued focus on foundational skills (reading, writing, numeracy)
- Critical Thinking skills ("Thinking Competency") through an inquiry-based approach to learning – going deeper to increase student engagement ("Head" goal)
- Social and Emotional learning: continued focus on self-regulation skills, effort and pride to develop a healthy school climate ensuring students are calm, focused and alert in a positive school environment – foundational to academic learning ("Heart" goal)

**Inquiry Question: (State what your driving question will be.)**

- Will an increased focus on inquiry-based learning that places emphasis on foundational skills, developing students' critical thinking skills and self-regulation skills improve the level of student engagement, effort and academic achievement?

Reflection 2016 – We feel the major focus of 2016-2017 has been on self-regulation so that students were better able to learn. Specific foundational skills interventions were applied, especially in the intermediate grades. In 2017, we are tweaking and building on the skills and programs we have acquired towards supporting students in self-regulation and building our focus on academic foundational skill development – especially literacy and math.

### **Hunch: (What is leading to this situation for your learners?)**

- Exploring opportunities to deepen students' engagement with their learning continues to be a challenge for all educators as we look at how we are preparing today's learners for a changing world. The shift towards an inquiry-based approach is evolving for teachers given the need to incorporate curricula into key essential understandings. Early results from our first year of working with this new model have shown benefits for students and an increased need for teacher collaboration. Our ultimate goal is to enhance students' critical thinking skills through an inquiry-based approach. This closely aligns with the current focus and direction of curriculum transformation at the ministry level (e.g., "Thinking Competencies"). Teachers are looking for tools and opportunities to deepen their own professional learning to extend this work.
- Self-regulation has become a very important focus at Dewdney. With support and guidance from our Counselling Team, we have begun to implement new self-regulation strategies that only target students in need, but which also provide clear benefits for the broader student population. We have been learning about Leah M Kuyper's *Zones of Regulation* model. Although there is still much work to be done in terms of deepening our knowledge and implementing practices related to these zones, we recognize that when students are able to better self-regulate to attain the desired green zone "calm, alert and focused" state, learning is optimized. Educators understand that this state is critical and foundational to students' academic learning.
- Developing fluency in numeracy and literacy skills is a purposeful focus this coming year as a pre-requisite to rich conversations and deep understandings in an inquiry-based classroom.
- We recognize that the quick recall of facts and fluent computational skills in numeracy build a solid foundation for higher order problem solving and hands-on math constructs. In light of the focus on math application and purposeful math life skills, the staff is committed to collaborate with parents to improve foundational math concepts and understanding.
- The ability to communicate fluently and with detail in oral and written form is imperative to expressing thoughts, reason and ideas within an academic context, but also to a broader audience. Expressing oneself clearly both individually, and as part of a team, is essential to the expectations of our changing society. Educators are aware of the need to develop and provide opportunities for meaningful, purposeful writing and oral communication in the context of the real world. We recognize that reading strategies and fluency contribute to the development of deeper understanding of text and the ability to transform thought and engage in critical thinking. We surmise that the development of capabilities in foundational skills, will lead to confidence and thoughtful, meaningful engagement in an inquiry setting.



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

- Collaborate at staff meetings to engage in valuable conversations to create educational experiences that deepen learning
- Develop a systematic and school wide continuum and plan, inclusive of parents, students and teachers, to acquire, strengthen and reinforce fluency in foundational skills
- Prepare a “Network of Inquiry” focus project to address the administration of inquiry learning in the classroom
- Engage in a professional development day workshop to provide teachers with an opportunity to explore resources and tools available to develop understanding of an inquiry practice in the classroom. The remainder of the day will be collaboration time as teachers work together to infuse their new learning in the designs of units of inquiry.
- Offer coaching sessions during collaboration times so that teachers have support following workshops as they begin to implement critical thinking into their inquiry based units. This will provide ongoing and sustained support for this focused professional learning.
- Use the Counselling Team to provide ongoing support facilitated by the Primary and Intermediate Team structure (opportunities for sharing, reflecting and planning)
- Seek to include the support of a the counselling department and CYMH advice to enhance and build on the professional learning of staff to advance self-regulation practices in the classroom
- Work with other schools that have been involved in the Zones of Regulation to learn more about how we can deepen our learning and extend our practices related to self-regulation

***Year 1 Reflection – Professional Learning: How did we do?***

Every month our staff got together during staff meeting with specific learning opportunities to further our school goals. We had speakers share about ADHD and self-regulation, our district aboriginal principal shared with us, we watched videos on outdoor education in Haida Gwaii, inquiry process and using technology to support and enhance the fundamentals. Our staff members attended 2 district pro –d’s about the new curriculum – competencies, formative and summative assessment process, inclusion. Our YCW and Counselor have collaborated with staff members on the Zones of Regulation program and How Does Your Engine Run? The Integrated Support Program teacher directly teaches students about the zones and strategies that they can use to self-regulate. The district is supporting the Jump Math program in the school to address the learning of math foundational skills. One Pro-D has been offered this year and more PRO-D supporting math is scheduled in the fall.



Teachers set up inquiry boards in their classroom and have been learning as they apply it. This area needs continuous learning and perhaps an action research group would benefit the teachers. Professional Learning and application in the areas of math games, ipad apps, and makerspace opportunities have supported our critical thinking and foundational skills goals.

#### *2017-2018 Next Steps in Professional Learning*

- Attend Jump Math Professional Development
- Attend Professional Development around Inquiry Learning
- Initiate an Action Research Group Project with a neighbouring school
- Collaboration and PRO-D around the Daily 5 Café, Reading/Writing Power and 6+1 Traits
- Allow time and development of mentorship/coaching teacher partnerships

**Checking Up: (Describe how you will know what you are doing works and that you have made a difference for your students? What are you using as your baseline evidence? Please be clear on what you will be using as evidence of growth. How will you respond if you see no changes?)**

- Each collaborative team (typically organized by grade cohorts) will prepare a plan in the fall that will include an overview for the year outlining the inquiry units to be developed. As part of this work, a template will be developed by teachers that will document their instructional planning and assessment methods; minutes from collaborative sessions will be reviewed for sharing and tracking progress

#### *Reflection Checking up 2016-2017*

This is an area that we can be more intentional and strategic in our approach. Although we had many conversations around inquiry and we can state anecdotal comments about how the students were engaged in the inquiry process, we can improve on collecting data. We had staff changes throughout the year that affected the cohesiveness of the group. Inquiry projects happened but the collaboration and reflection piece did not follow as a staff. When we did set up inquiry projects, we noticed that we had to start with direct teaching on questioning and reflecting.

- Assessment (formative and summative) is embedded in these units of inquiry and plays a key role in the cycle of inquiry so student learning will be carefully monitored
- Assessment (formative and summative) of foundational skills as a complement to successful implementation of inquiry models (classroom and District)

#### *2016-2017 Reflection Checking Up*

Staff is committed to ongoing assessment of students in a variety of ways to inform their practice within their classroom. They share informally between themselves often, glean ideas and apply new assessment formats, but we have not yet been able to collaborate and record information.

- Developing a baseline regarding students' critical thinking skills will be part of our professional learning plan. "Assessing for Thinking" is a key component of the work we will be doing and will explore this topic through a common book study during staff meetings.

#### *2016-2017 Year 1 Reflection – Checking up*

As we moved to address the critical thinking competency we noticed that students had great difficulty asking great questions in order to move to critical thinking, especially in the intermediate grades. We felt we had to take a step back and spend time focusing on how to ask questions that deepen the learning....we call them "thick" questions.



We will continue this concentration as we address the critical thinking component. In this year of implementation, we are still learning the competencies and therefore we are not confident in tackling one competency together, but rather experimenting with learning opportunities that address all the competencies within the classroom, so as to get a better handle on what it looks like.

Participating teachers will initiate work with the focus on our collective inquiry regarding student engagement (What is it? How do we know when students are authentically ‘engaged’? How do you measure it?)

- Establishing a baseline to gauge student engagement will be a focus for collaborative teams as they develop their plan for their inquiry-based units for the school year
- Develop/Utilize a School Climate Survey to provide measurable and comparable data regarding some elements related to student engagement (e.g., “Student Commitment” and “School Bonding”)

#### ***2016-2017 Reflection -Checking Up***

We realized that it was ambitious to try and create a survey and was redundant when there is an aboriginal student belonging survey and the student satisfaction survey already in existence. Our thoughts were that the satisfaction survey was only for grade 4 parents and students and we hope to have one that is useful for all parents and students in our school community and give an opportunity for feedback.

- Our work related to self-regulation will also need to include plans for establishing baseline measures (e.g, tracking tools). This work will need to be done in consultation with the Counselling department.

#### ***2016-2017 Reflection -Checking Up***

When it comes to self-regulation, we have noticed that students are using the language of the Zones of Regulation and trying strategies. They are saying they are in the red zone and finding a place to apply their strategy. For example, a student ran to his safe spot when he was in the “red” zone. He took the timer with him and after he had de-escalated back to the “green” learning zone, he was able to return to class. A sticker chart is monitoring good self -regulation decisions. We are hopeful that as students continue with this program they will become more able to regulate their emotions and be ready to learn. The School-Based Team (referral process) is a helpful structure and process for monitoring how well students are responding to new strategies

#### ***2017-2018 Next Steps -Checking up***

- First collaboration meeting in the fall talk about an inquiry project we will do and how we will record and share information
- In May, 2017 – During our collaboration meeting, talk about the critical thinking competency –challenges and successes and how to move forward next year remembering the connection to the outdoor environment. Ask staff where they think they need to go to develop this competency in their students and record answers
- Engagement –We will look at the satisfaction survey and the Aboriginal student survey to gauge student engagement in the coming year. We do hope that eventually something will be created that all parents can respond to and is given consistently across the district.
- The SBT is much more effective this year, but we still feel we can tweak it. Time and staffing constraints of all parties have been challenging. We will continue to engage others to make it more efficient and effective.

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

- An important goal for our school has been to make our learning more visible and accessible to everyone. Through our website, visuals, conferencing, PAC meetings and assemblies, we will endeavor to communicate the unfolding, implementation, monitoring and success of the plan.
- Parent engagement is an important element and the PAC will continue to play a key role in developing opportunities to keep parents informed and to consult with them regarding how, when and where they would like to learn more and engage with our inquiry question
- The “Meet the Teacher” evening in September will provide the principal with an opportunity to share with the school community highlights regarding our inquiry question and Learning Plan; parents will be invited to complete a short questionnaire after the parent evening that will provide feedback to the community to help plan opportunities for parent engagement based on topics of interest
- The Dewdney Website and Parent Facebook page will continue to play an important role in telling our “story” about learning related to our inquiry question and how all members of the community are engaged with this work
- The newsletter will provide a framework for the Learning Plan and will continue to provide weekly highlights in relation to our inquiry question
- Regular updates will be provided to the PAC

***2016-2017 Reflection- Communication Strategies***

We have continued to have continuous communication with our parent and partner groups as outlined. District and DPAC workshops gave the opportunity for parents to learn about self-regulation. Family place parent support groups were continuously shared and promoted to support parents in emotional regulation strategies for their children. Parents were informed of community supports such as CYMH and how to access them. Library reading and tutoring programs were consistently shared. We did not pose the inquiry question in the newsletter.

***2017-2018 Next steps – Communication***

- We will organize our digital communication in a different way. Rather than just putting pictures of student learning, we will add captions and titles that relate to our goals. For example – Our wetland inquiry project – What effect does snow have on our wetland habitat? This will be followed by student pictures exploring the wetland and what they discovered.
- With our new Apple TV in the hallway, parents will also be able to view student learning if they do not have continuous access to internet as is so common in our rural area.



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

- Many of the Communication Strategies also serve to provide opportunities for parental and community involvement
- Students and parents will have the opportunity to complete satisfaction surveys and engagement surveys to help drive our plan
- The PAC will help to coordinate opportunities to support parental engagement by supporting workshops and sessions that are aligned to our inquiry question.
- Parents will have the opportunity to use their skills alongside the teacher to provide activities and expertise to promote critical thinking and problem solving i.e. building bird houses/wilderness survival

***Reflection 2016-2017 Parent/Community Involvement***

We are very fortunate to have a helpful, involved and generous community. With the creation of our DEN and Wetland Learning Centre we involved many parents, relatives and partner groups that we might not have involved otherwise. They relayed their expertise in planting, building garden boxes, maintaining areas, measuring for a greenhouse to our students and staff. Our aboriginal community, students and parents are heavily involved in the installation of the tipi and the education around traditional uses of the wetland flora. Parents are working with teachers and students on outdoor experiences as it relates to the curriculum. Many of our parents and partner organizations have provided the hands-on learning sessions and the applied questioning and problem solving in the outdoor context. The DPAC provided supporting workshops around the social emotional regulation for parents and the school invited parents to learn about the new curriculum together.

***2017-2018 Next Steps Parent/Community Involvement***

- *Continue to expand and engage our community in the applied skills area of our school, especially as it pertains to outdoor education*
- *Be more intentional in the purpose of the skill - i.e. critical thinking as it pertains to building a bridge over the swale. Record and share the learning outcomes alongside the photos*
- *Collaborate on the assessment piece of these learning activities in the context of the competencies*



**School Growth Plan –  
Inquiry  
Dewdney Elementary  
School  
September 2016**



## Signing Off Page

Submitted by School Planning Council:

	Name	Signature
Principal:		
Teacher:		
Parent:		
Parent:		

**Date: April 2016**

**Approval of the Board and Superintendent:**

**Board Chair**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

**Superintendent**

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**Signature**