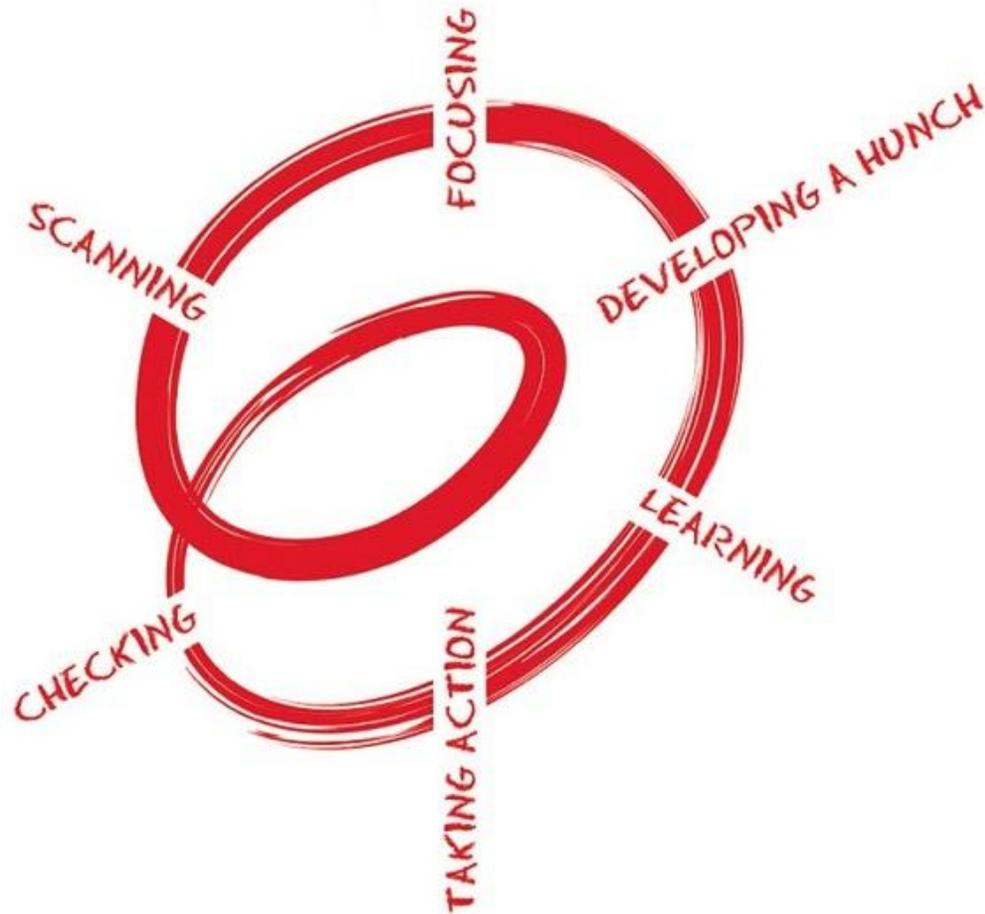




## School District No. 67 (Okanagan Skaha) Framework for Enhancing Student Learning



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

## District Context

School District No. 67 is located in the beautiful Okanagan Valley in the interior of British Columbia, Canada. The School District is centered around the cities of Penticton and Summerland – about a four hour drive east of Vancouver, B.C. and just north of the U.S. border. Our District supports approximately 5700 students in 18 schools (11 elementary, 3 middle, 3 secondary and 1 Distributed Learning School). We support a diverse population, including 15% of our student population who identify as having Aboriginal ancestry. ConnectEd, our Distributed Learning School, supports flexible education programs from K to 12. We have a proud history of supporting innovative teaching practice, focusing on teacher led inquiry, and leading progressive assessment conversations and practices.

Our School Plans reflect the use of a *Spirals of Inquiry* framework for school improvement. While the format of the plan is different from previous years, School Improvement Plans, and the subsequent inquiry questions, must still fall within one of the three District goals of LITERACY, NUMERACY, and SCHOOL COMPLETION.

## Spirals of Inquiry Framework

Our School Growth Plans are informed by the *Spirals of Inquiry* process. Our District has worked with Spirals leaders Judy Halbert and Linda Kaiser for the past two years to develop capacity within this framework as we develop school cultures that support inquiry based action plans. The inquiry-based model for school improvement is centered on a *critical question* developed by the school staff. Specifically, each school staff develops a question driven by three “big picture” questions that inform the “*Spiral of Inquiry*” process:

1. What is going on for our learners?
2. How do we know?
3. Why does it matter?



Our work with Spirals is centered on the OECD understanding of the “Educated Citizen”, with a focus on continuous improvement for all of our students. Our goal through this process is to ensure that student learning remains the focus of everything we do as an organization, with our emphasis being on ensuring that each of our students achieves his or her potential in a meaningful, flexible, realistic and sustainable framework. In this manner, our District Inquiry has connected our District goals to the Spirals process. Similarly, our School Growth Plans are rooted in the same *Spirals of Inquiry* process and understanding; that our ultimate goal is to support all of our students to be successful learners that embody attributes of the “Educated Citizen”.



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Thoughtful, able to learn and to think critically, and communicate information from a broad knowledge base</li> <li>✓ Creative, flexible, self-motivated with a positive self image</li> <li>✓ Capable of making independent decisions</li> <li>✓ Able to contribute to businesses and the community with the literacy and numeracy skills employers need</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Productive, who gain satisfaction through achievement and who strive for physical well-being</li> <li>✓ Cooperative, principled and respectful of others regardless of differences</li> <li>✓ Aware of the rights and prepared to exercise the responsibilities of an individual within the family, the community, and globally</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

\*taken from Ministry of Education – “BC’s Framework for Enhancing Student Learning” April 2017 presentation

### **The Spiral of Inquiry Involves Six Phases**

1. Scanning – *What is going on for our learners?*
2. Focusing – *What will have the biggest impact?*
3. Developing a hunch – *What is leading to this situation? How are we contributing to it?*
4. Engaging in new professional learning – *What do we need to learn? How will we learn it?*
5. Taking new professional action – *What can we do to make a meaningful difference?*
6. Checking that you’ve made a big enough difference – *Have we made enough of a difference?*

Depending on the size of the school and/or the interest of the staff, schools may develop more than one question. This is our Districts first formal year of having schools report their growth plans through the lens of the *Spiral of Inquiry*. School Growth Plans will look different, depending on what stage of the Spiral staff have been engaged with through this year. As schools engage deeper into the *Spirals of Inquiry* process, action plans will develop that will reflect all phases of the Spiral.

**Action Plan:** Outlining the action that schools will take in order to fully answer their question(s), this section could include the following:

- Objectives that outline specific steps to be taken or more specific questions to be explored.
- Structures and Strategies to be implemented for all students and/or the most vulnerable learners.

- The Assessment Tools and Process to be used in order to measure the school's success toward answering the question.
- A Professional Learning strategy designed to increase, through collaboration, the collective capacity of all staff.
- The Resources needed or to be used in order to increase the achievement of the students AND/OR supplement the professional learning of the staff.
- Parent involvement and how parents will become partners in the school's efforts to increase student achievement.

**Evidence:** This section will report any evidence/data related to answering the inquiry question. This evidence can be presented as both *statistical* and/or *narrative data*. While statistical data is a more traditional form of data, narrative data seeks to *tell the story beyond the numbers* for the entire school, a specific grade level, a small group, or an individual student.

### **BC's Framework for Enhancing Student Learning: Our District Plan.**

*Our District Plan follows the renewed Provincial Framework for Enhancing Student Learning. Our District and School Plans reflect multi-year plans that are updated annually, provide meaningful and effective evidence, and engage in school and system wide capacity building.*



## BC's Framework for Enhancing Student Learning: Our District Inquiry Question

**Inquiry Question: What is our District Plan to support student success?**

***If we focus on building inclusionary instruction and assessment practices that engage every learner, provide choice and flexibility and reflect First People's Principles of Learning, will we see all students complete school with a sense of dignity, purpose and options?***

**Our goal(s); we will...**

1. **Focus on inclusionary classroom and consistent assessment practices** – we have had school teams work with Randy Cranston and Penny Ketola to discuss best practices in RTI and Inclusion in 2013-15, and more recently with Shelley Moore in 2015-17, and will continue to have Shelley working with teams in 2017/18 to build capacity within the renewed curriculum around inclusionary instruction.

Our inclusionary practice will also focus in the area of providing support for students in the area of social and emotional development. We will work with Dr. Kim Schonert-Reichl and Dr. Ty Binfet as we take a major focus next year on student wellness. Our Board of Trustees has identified **health and wellness** as a key component of our Districts strategic plan, and we have allocated Helping Teacher time to oversee a number of wellness initiatives that support this objective. Some of these initiatives include professional learning around “trauma informed” teaching practice, exploring the connection to wellness through the renewed curriculum, both in Physical and Health Education as well as the connection to wellness through student voice, self-assessment and the core competencies. Our District has been involved with the McConnell Foundation and the [Well Ahead](#) Project over the past two years to explore research based practices in social-emotional learning, and we have recently re-established a Wellness Committee to ensure all District stakeholders have a voice in moving this work forward.

In addition, there has been on-going work in the District in the area of **assessment and sound grading practices** for many years. This work continues to evolve as we explore student voice in self-assessment of both the core and curricular competencies. Our Assessment for Learning team continues to explore innovative and engaging practices in how to best communicate student learning, including work with digital portfolios, student conferences and exit interviews that focus on highlighting student strengths through the core competencies. We will continue to focus on assessment for learning, self-assessment and reporting, and sound grading practices that promote academic confidence and student achievement during the 2017/18 school year.

2. **Focus on student choice, flexibility and engagement** – we have had teacher inquiry supported by our helping teacher team, including our *Through a Different Lens* project which has been strongly supported by the Vancouver Foundation for its work in social change. This work has also received second place distinction by Simon Fraser University and the Cmolik Foundation Award for the Enhancement of Public Education in BC in 2016 and 2017. Consistently, student feedback to this work has been that, when presented choice and flexibility in how they are taught and how they are able to “show what they know” in their learning, students have indicated a significant increase in their engagement with school as well as increased achievement levels. For 2017/18, we will be building on this work by working in partnership with Dr. Leyton Schnellert from UBCO and SD67 school teams through a “Network of Innovative Schools” project. This project will also include partnerships with school teams from SD53 Okanagan Similkameen and the Penticton Indian Band Outma Sqilw’x Cultural school.
  
3. **Continue to support and build on incorporating the First People’s Principles of Learning into our classroom practices and school culture** – we have identified and built upon numerous initiatives that support our [Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement](#) with the intention of continuing to create awareness, capacity and school cultures that embrace Aboriginal Principles of Learning into all of our teaching practices from K to 12. While there are many examples of engaging work being led by SD67 educators in this area, including presentations that help educators and students develop a better understanding of Aboriginal history, traditions and culture, and we have recently begun to look at the impact and challenges of Aboriginal English as a dialect (ESD). As we support the strengthening of Indigenous language as a School District, we are also aware that some of our students with ancestry require unique supports to help them embrace and strengthen multilingual skillsets.

### **District Context:**

#### ***Through a Different Lens***

**Vancouver Foundation** – The *Through a Different Lens* project has been supported by a grant from the Vancouver Foundation. Case studies from our district have been highlighted on their [website](#).

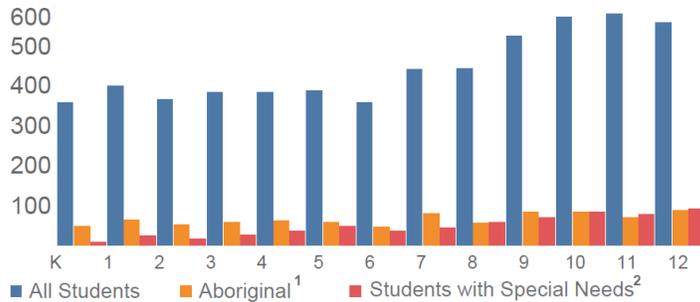
**Cmolik Award** – Our District has finished second in the SFU sponsored [Cmolik Prize](#) for the Enhancement of Public Education in both 2016 and 2017. This work has focused on teacher led inquiry and student case studies.

### **District Assessment:**

Over the past ten years, we have had District leaders present and publish many of the innovative teaching and assessment practices that the District has been involved with. Former SD67 Administrator and current Educational Consultant [Tom Schimmer](#), and current SD67 Administrator and Educational Consultant [Myron Dueck](#) have highlighted District work in many of their publications. A video highlighting SD67 innovative teaching and assessment practices was recently created through the ASCD Education Publishing Company. A link to this video can be found [here](#).

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

### Total Students Across All Grades (2016/17)



Data from BC Ministry of Ed: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/systemperformance/pdf/Enhanced-Report-for-Province-of-BC.pdf>

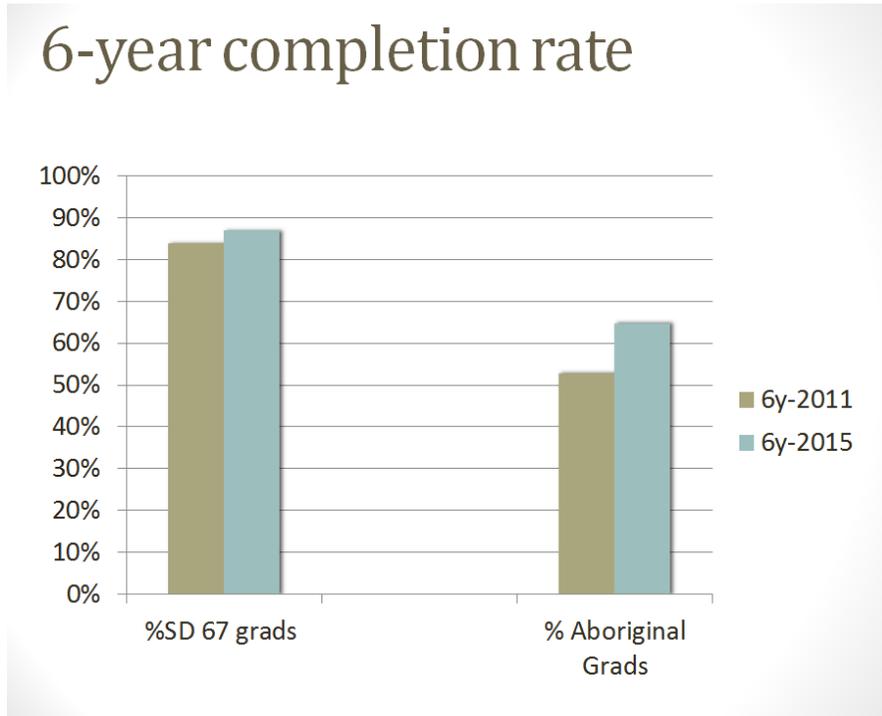
### Successes:

#### A. Comparison of 2011 and 2015 cohort data

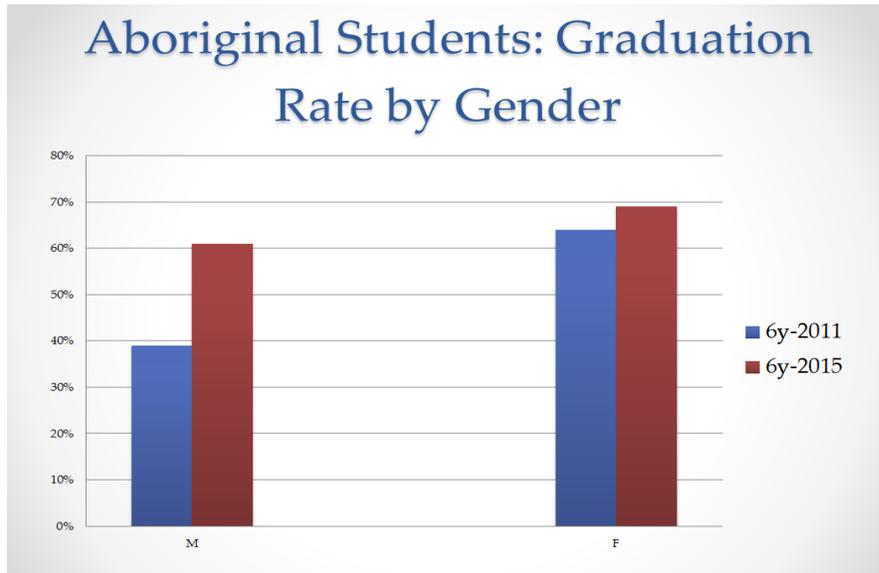
We recently had independent research group Horizon Research (lead by Sharon Jeroski) review our 6 year graduation rate. This was a follow up report to Horizon Research's 2011 Study of School Completion Rates in SD67. In comparing the two cohorts (2010/11 and 2014/15), the following highlights were noted:

- *For students who had enrolled in a SD67 secondary school in Grade 9 ...*
  - In 2011- the rate was 84% -- **In 2015 it had increased by 3%**
  - The completion rate for Aboriginal students showed a greater increase than for the overall population
  - Our Aboriginal students' 6-year completion rate increased from 53% in the 2011 cohort to 65% in the 2015 cohort.
  - During that time, the population of Aboriginal students who entered high school in Grade 9 increased from 43 to 75.
  - However, Aboriginal students who are vulnerable because of mental health or language issues continue to be less successful than their Aboriginal peers (not unlike general population).

**Comparison of 2011 and 2015 cohort data**

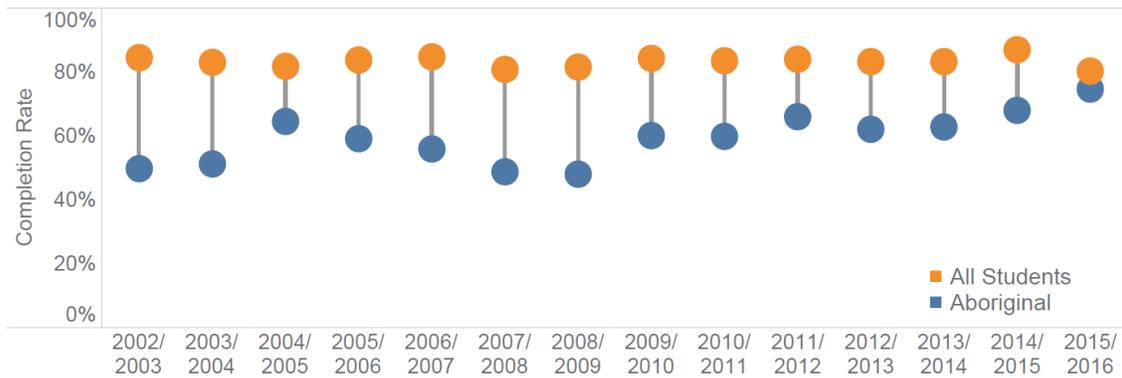


**Aboriginal Students – Graduation Rates by Gender – Comparison of 2011 and 2015 cohort data**



## B. Recent Data 2015/2016

### Completion Rates Over Time for Aboriginal and All Students



Data from BC Ministry of Ed: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/systemperformance/pdf/Enhanced-Report-for-Province-of-BC.pdf>

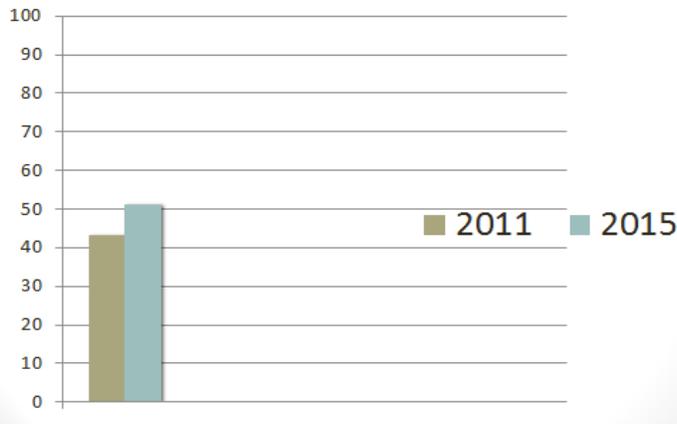
### Challenges

Our most recent school completion data has identified many successes; however, there are clear challenges that we must continue to work on:

#### The 2011 and the 2015 cohort data showed:

- While completion rates for students with identified behavior challenges has increased, students who have ever received a behavior designation continued to be identified as being significantly at risk for not completing school.
- Approximately half of students who did not graduate within the 6-year window had a recent special needs designation – most often, behaviour.

## Students with behaviour designations: 6 year completion rate



- FSA results are strong predictors of student academic success. For our Grade 7 numeracy cohort the difference is substantial and significant. 37% of the 75 Aboriginal students in these data met expectations on the Grade 7 numeracy test, compared with 60% of the general population. We have allocated Numeracy Helping Teacher time back to the District for the 2017/18 school year to support continued professional learning around numeracy instruction.

## FSA Student Growth Over Time - Numeracy School District 67 - Okanagan Skaha

**Students' 2015/16 Results in Grade 7, Compared to their Grade 4 results**

Student Performance Levels in Grade 4 (2012/13)	Number of Students	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Not Yet Within Expectations	Did Not Participate
Exceeds Expectations	37	16%	78%	5%	
Meets Expectations	224	0%	75%	24%	1%
Not Yet Within Expectations	59		20%	80%	
Did Not Participate	23		35%	43%	22%

Percent of students with the same performance levels in grades 4 and 7

Percent of students with a higher level of performance in grade 7 than 4

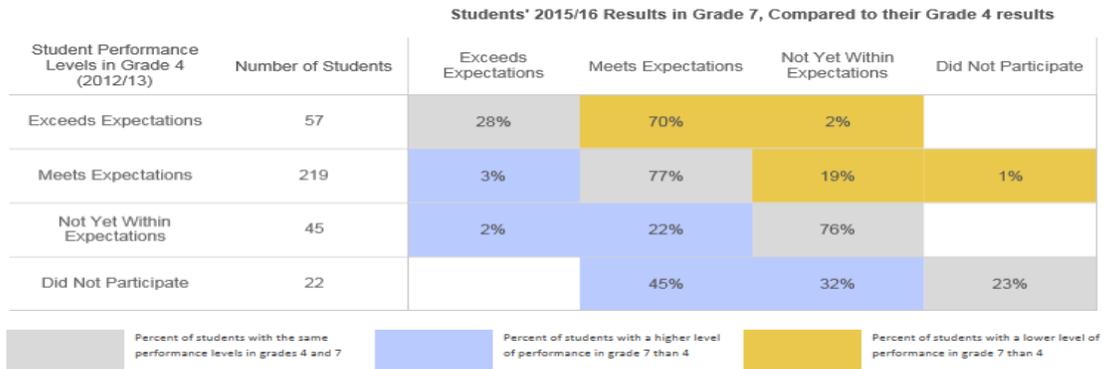
Percent of students with a lower level of performance in grade 7 than 4

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/systemperformance/?sd=067&evidence=fsa>

- Our Early Intervention and Early Literacy focus will continue in 2017/18. We are excited to be working with Maureen Dockendorf and Judith King as a pilot District for **Changing Results for Young Children**. This initiative will include Carmi and Giant's Head Elementary as lead schools as our team looks to build on the success of the [Changing Results for Young Readers](#) initiative. We continue to have focused literacy intervention time allocated to our middle schools, and have had professional learning conversations to support a "learning commons" initiative with our school librarians this year. We are

excited to continue to build on all of these initiatives as we continue to promote student growth through literacy as we move into the 2017/18 school year.

## FSA Student Growth Over Time - Reading School District 67 - Okanagan Skaha



<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/systemperformance/?sd=067&evidence=fsa>

### The 2015/16 Ministry of Education data showed:

- While our Aboriginal Grad rates have increased, our overall grad rate dropped in 2015/16. Our non-aboriginal boy's grad rate was not as successful in this cohort. As we look more closely at this data over our 5 year trend, we notice that our completion rate for non-aboriginal males has moved from 84% 2011/12, 86% 2012/13 - 84% 2013/14 - 90% 2014/15 to 78% in 2015/16. As noted later in this report, our District "hunch" and inquiry question is informed in part by our questions around this 5 year trend.
- Our International Program has increased substantially over the past 5 years. While the program provides tremendous opportunities for both the participants and our community, International Programs and their students by nature have a higher number of students who, for a variety of reasons, do not complete the Ministry of Education requirements for graduation in B.C. We are wondering how we can highlight the significantly positive impact this program has had on our community, while at the same time illustrating that non-completion rates from this cohort are impacting our overall grad rate, which doesn't tell the whole story of these students' success in Canada and in SD67.

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/reporting-on-k-12>

**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?*

**Evidence/Data to Support:**

We will continue to work with a focus on increasing student engagement and achievement through the Lens of Inquiry. Using the 4 key questions from the *Spiral of Inquiry*, schools will continue to engage students through surveys and case studies to determine if their “scanning and action” is leading to the positive impact we are looking to achieve for our learners. The 4 key questions that are driving our work in this process include:

1. *Can you name two people in this setting who believe you will be a success in life?*
2. *What are you learning and why is it important?*
3. *How is it going with your learning?*
4. *What are your next steps?*

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

We are engaged in the first year of a renewed curriculum K-9, with an additional renewed 10-12 curriculum planned to move from draft to legislation in the 2018/19 school year. Our District hunch is informed by our curiosity around how we can best support our students and staff through this system transformation. Our hunch is also informed by our six year completion data, that has identified our Districts strengths and areas that need support. This hunch has informed our District inquiry question.

**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.**

As noted in our District “Inquiry Question”, our District’s professional learning will focus on supporting our hunch:

1. Our District focus will continue to **focus on inclusionary classroom practices and consistent assessment practices** by continuing to:
  - have Shelley Moore work with teams in 2017/18 to build capacity within the renewed curriculum around inclusionary instruction.
  - work on student wellness through on going professional learning opportunities, including our first District Pro-D day on September 29 focus solely on wellness with Dr. Kim Schonert-Reichel and Dr. Ty Binfet.
2. Continued work on sound grading, reporting and assessment practices.
3. Our District will focus on **student choice, flexibility and engagement** in partnership with Dr. Leyton Schnellert from UBCO and SD67 school teams through a “Network of Innovative Schools” project. This project is part of *Through A Different Lens* which will continue to focus

on students at risk of not completing school. Schools will be involved in doing case studies to see if their practice makes a difference for students at risk of not completing school.

4. Our District will continue to support and build on incorporating the **First People's Principles of Learning** into our classroom practices and school culture – we have identified and built upon numerous initiatives that support our Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement with the intention of continuing to create awareness, capacity and school cultures that embrace Aboriginal Principles of Learning into all of our teaching practices from K - 12.

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

1. We are looking to create professional learning opportunities that support co-planning and co-teaching (through Shelley Moore) that will support teachers as they engage in the renewed curriculum.
2. We are also building collaborative structures to support school communities through our partnership with Dr. Schnellert in our "Network of Innovative Schools" project in *Through a Different Lens*.
3. We will continue to dig deeper into our data of students not completing school and look at how we can meet these student's needs.
4. We will be hosting a full day on teacher and student wellness to raise awareness of how wellness is connected to both teacher and student autonomy to focus on their passions. We plan to help put structures into our school systems to support educators and students to build on their personal and social competencies and to focus on how we can have all members of our learning community to flourish.
5. We will continue to work on assessment practices that support student learning through sound grading, reporting and assessment practices that focus on student voice and self-assessment.
6. We are going to begin two new early learning projects which focus on the whole child. These projects will weave in social emotional learning, Aboriginal pedagogy and Reggio inspired Inquiry.

**Check: *Have we made enough of a difference? How do we know?***

As we are in the first year of formally creating growth plans that follow the Spirals process, we will be looking to measure our "hunch" and action plans through the checking process of the Spiral as we move into the 2017/18 school year. Our "checks" will be informed by school completion data as well as the anecdotal surveying of students around the four key questions for learners that inform the Spiral:

1. *Can you name two people in this setting who believe you will be a success in life?*
2. *What are you learning and why is it important?*
3. *How is it going with your learning?*
4. *What are your next steps?*

In addition, we will continue to collect case study data of students at risk of not completing school in a number of projects: the work with Shelley Moore, Leyton Schnellert and several early learning case studies.

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

Plans will be shared through PAC (and DPAC) meetings, and will be posted to our District website. We plan to go deeper with communication strategies as we move into the 2017/18 school year.

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

Our Board of Trustees has created a renewed District [Strategic Plan](#) that included opportunities for all partner groups to have input. This plan has been posted to our District website. Our District growth plan for this year has been initially informed by the feedback received from partner groups through the strategic planning process. As we move into the 2017/18 school year, the District plan will continue to receive feedback through DPAC, and look to be informed by our District goals and be responsive to the needs of schools. Our Board of Trustees will look at engaging a process to create a District Mission and Values statement during the 2017/18 school year, which will also require feedback from all partner groups as it is shaped.

**Connection to the 7 Principles of Learning: *As we check on the effectiveness of our plan, we will continue to measure its success through the lens of the seven principals of learning in an innovative learning environment***

1. Learners at the centre
2. Social nature of learning
3. Emotions are integral to learning
4. Recognizing individual differences
5. Stretching all students
6. Assessment for learning
7. Building horizontal connections

More information on the 7 Principles of Learning and the OECD can be found [here](#).