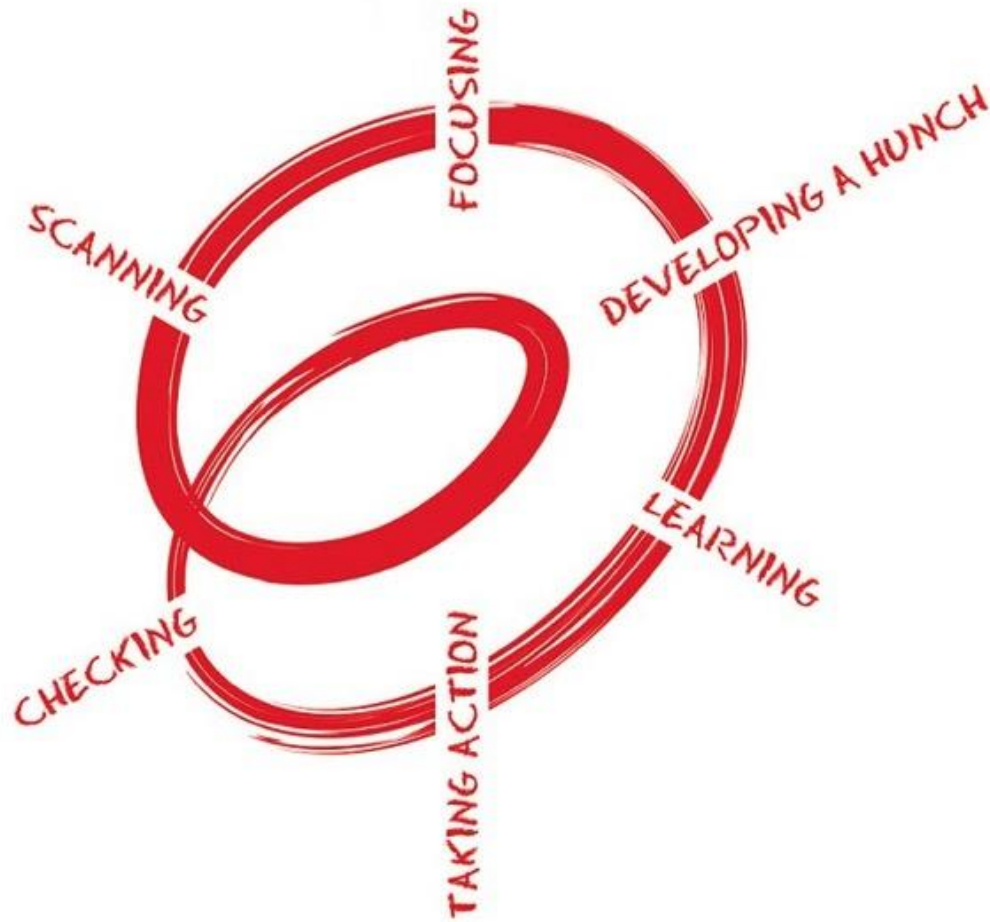




# School District No. 67 (Okanagan Skaha) School Growth Plan



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

Draft Plan developed by:



## **School: Skaha Lake Middle School**

### **School Context:**

#### **SCHOOL CONTEXT:**

School District 67 (Okanagan Skaha) and Skaha Lake Middle School wish to recognize the Okanagan (Syilx) People and our local nation, the Penticton Indian Band, on whose territories we live and do our work.

Skaha Lake Middle School is in its seventeenth year as a middle school and has an enrollment of 430 students. Our grade 6, 7 and 8 teams are culturally diverse, with a large First Nations and Sikh population, which enroll 16 divisions of advisory groupings. Skaha Lake Middle School has two administrators, 24 teaching staff, and 12 support staff.

The Skaha Lake School learning community is proud of our facility and enjoys the involvement of a large and active PAC which supports our school culture with a variety of exciting and unique initiatives. Examples include our Shark Tank (aquarium), Shark Sculpture, Shark Painting, Shark Logo and theme and PAC sponsored "class support funds". Skaha Lake Middle School offers a full range of co-curricular and extra-curricular sports, band and drama productions. The PAC continues to financially support our co-curricular and extra-curricular programs by purchasing school uniforms and paying for bus transportation when requested.

Our current "Shark" feeder schools are Parkway, Kaleden, Columbia, Wiltse, West Bench Elementary schools. Skaha Lake Middle School is a feeder school to Princess Margaret Secondary School. Princess Margaret Secondary continues to be supported and involved through a variety of transition activities and are an integral part of life in "the Shark Tank."

SLMS is situated on Green Avenue East and sits adjacent to Princess Margaret Secondary School.

The Skaha Lake staff has focused on creating a positive and productive school climate and culture. Our inquiry helps us determine what was really going on with the learners in our school. Some of our eight questions we asked our students during the scan portion of our inquiry were questions drawn from sound research on social and emotional learning. The questions we used were selected to help us determine to what extent all our learners are connected to their school community. Our belief is that students connected to school and the adults in the school will be more successful while in school. Ultimately, students that are connected to school will stay in school and will ultimately leave high school with pride, purpose and options. This is a school district goal.

**Inquiry Question: What do you think is driving your plan for student success?**

The Skaha Lake staff has been very purposeful in creating a positive and productive school climate and culture. The Skaha Lake staff was interested in really knowing what was going on with the learners in our school. Some of our eight questions we asked our students during the scan portion of our inquiry were questions drawn from sound research on social and emotional learning. The questions we used were selected to help us determine to what extent all our learners are connected to their school community. In particular, how connected they were to the adults in the building. Research shows that students connected to school and the adults in the school will be more successful while in school. Students that are connected to adults in school and to school, will stay in school and will ultimately leave high school with pride, purpose and options, a school district goal.

The staff at Skaha Lake Middle School recognizes the importance of the middle school years and how these years are so crucial in the social, emotional and academic development of students. The staff also believes that successful middle school years are part of the developmental foundation that will help students be successful at the next level of education. Research indicates that students are successful at school when they like coming to school and when they believe there are two or more adults in the building who believe they will be successful in life. The Skaha Lake staff will focus on these two factors of student success. We have a desire to help students enjoy school and their educational experience. It is also the desire of the Skaha Lake Middle staff to help students feel they are valued and cared for by the entire Skaha Lake staff through meaningful adult to student connections.

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

2017 - Increase the number of Aboriginal students at Skaha Lake Middle School who can name two or more adults in the school who believe they will be successful in life.

2018 - Increase the number of male students at Skaha Lake Middle School who enjoy coming to school.

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

**Successes:**

2017 Scan

In our 2017 scan, almost 75% of our students felt there were two or more adults in the building that believe they will be successful in life. In general we were pleased with this number. It indicated that relationships between staff and students was strong, something the staff values and believes is important for students to be successful at school.

Over 85% of our students indicated that they felt they were being successful in school. We felt that it was important for students to believe they are being successful at school. Again, this feeling of being successful at school adds to the student connectedness to school.

2017 Scan

Scan question:

Can you name two or more adults in this school who believe you will be successful in life?

<b>STUDENT SAMPLE</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>
All students	268 or 73.42% YES
All students	97 or 26.58% NO
Grade 8	93 or 69.92% YES
Grade 8	40 or 30.08% NO
Grade 7	74 or 71.15% YES
Grade 7	30 or 28.85% NO
Grade 6	100 or 79.37% YES
Grade 6	26 or 20.63% NO
New grade 7 and 8's	41 or 65.08% YES
New grade 7 and 8's	22 or 34.92% NO
<b>Aboriginal students</b>	<b>37 or 56.92% YES</b>
Aboriginal students	28 or 43.08% NO
Returning to SLMS grade 7 or 8 Aboriginal student	19 or 52.78% YES

2018 Scan

Our 2018 scan, when compared to the 2017 scan indicated a slight increase in the total number of students believing there are two or more adults in the building who believe they will be successful in life.

<b>Question:</b>	<b>February 2017 (268 students)</b>	<b>February 2018 (347 students)</b>
<b>Can you name 2 or more adults in this school who believe you will be successful in life?</b>		
<b>Response by</b>		
All responses	73%	75%
All girls	75%	77%
All boys	72%	73%
All grade 6	79%	79%
Female grade 6	82%	80%
Male grade 6	76%	78%
All grade 7	71%	74%
Female grade 7	65%	76%
Male grade 7	77%	72%
All grade 8	71%	67%
Female grade 8	76%	77%
Male grade 8	65%	58%

Another area of success in our February 2018 scan was that we have made a positive change on our target group. 11% more of our Aboriginal students believe there are 2 or more adults in this building that believe they will be successful in life. We are very pleased to see the increase in connectedness to school for our Aboriginal learners.

<b>Question:</b>	<b>February 2017 (268 students)</b>	<b>February 2018 (347 students)</b>
<b>Can you name 2 or more adults in this school who believe you will be successful in life?</b>		
<b>Response by</b>		
Students with Aboriginal ancestry (58) (65)	56%	67%
Female students with Aboriginal ancestry	57%	74%
Male students with Aboriginal ancestry	56%	62%

**Challenges:**

Our February 2018 scan indicated a challenge our staff will address. Male students in grades 6, 7 and 8 do not like coming to school as much as female students do.

February 2018 Scan

Scan question:

Do you like coming to school?

<b>Question:</b>	<b>February 2018 (347 students)</b>
<b>Response by</b>	
All responses	74%
All girls	83%
All boys	68%
All grade 6	85%
Female grade 6	84%
Male grade 6	83%
All grade 7	68%
Female grade 7	88%
Male grade 7	56%
All grade 8	66%
Female grade 8	74%
Male grade 8	61%

**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 focus on making connections with both “at risk” and Aboriginal learners. We will continue to survey the students to find out if they believe there are two or more adults in the building who believe they will be successful in life. Again our staff believes it is connectedness to staff and school that will help students be successful in school.

Our 2018 data indicates that male students like coming to school less than female students of the same grade. Our school focus will be on our male students. We want all students to like attending school.

## Key Learnings:

### 2017 Data

Students who identified as Aboriginal also indicated as a group, they had the fewest number of students who believed there were two or more adults in the building who believed they would be successful in life.

To make a better connection with this particular student group the Skaha Lake Middle School staff focused on making purposeful “connections” with students that were identified by the staff as “at risk’ and/or Aboriginal.

### 2018 Data

While our data indicates our actions has positively influenced the connectedness of our “at risk” Aboriginal learners have with two or more adults in our building, it also indicates that boys in grade 6, 7 and 8 like coming to school as much as girls in the same grade do.

<b>Question:</b>	<b>February 2018 (347 students)</b>
<b>Do you like coming to school?</b>	
<b>Response by</b>	
All responses	74%
All girls	83%
All boys	68%
All grade 6	85%
Female grade 6	84%
Male grade 6	83%
All grade 7	68%
Female grade 7	88%
Male grade 7	56%
All grade 8	66%
Female grade 8	74%
Male grade 8	61%

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

### From the 2017 data

The staff wants all students to feel there are adults at Skaha Lake Middle School who believe they will be successful in life, in particular, our “at risk” and Aboriginal students. As a staff we narrowed down the number of “hunches” and focused on the importance of making connections. We decided we wanted to get to know these students. We wanted to get to know their likes and dislikes, what they like at school, what they like outside of school. Most

importantly we wanted the students to feel adults believe in them. We made a purposeful effort to make relationships with the students who we identify as Aboriginal or “at risk”.

#### From the 2018 data

The Skaha Lake staff believes males students like coming to school less than female students for a number of reasons. Our staff believes that sitting in a class room and doing school work is more conducive for girls. The staff further believes that male students prefer more “hands on learning” opportunities. Males prefer more outdoor learning activities. Male students cannot sit and focus as long as female students can. Therefore, we need to focus more on giving male students “brain breaks” at appropriate times.

#### **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.)**

#### Following the 2017 Data Collection

After analyzing the data from the 2017 scanning process, the Skaha Lake Middle School staff has developed a variety of hunches. As a follow up to these hunches, the staff has come up with a variety of strategies and professional learning that we believe will affect students in a positive way. It is our hope that following up on these hunches we will see positive changes in students that will help move them towards achieving our stated goals.

In September 2017 the entire Skaha Lake Middle School staff participated in an interactive “blanket exercise”. This was an interactive activity that depicted the life of Aboriginal people and the interactions they had with the European settlers. This European invasion in to Canada had a huge impact on the Aboriginal people. Perhaps the most negative experience the Aboriginal people experienced was residential school. This interactive exercise the entire staff experienced helped create a better understanding as to why Aboriginal people struggled with relationships with schools and school officials in the past. It also helped participants understand the past still has a tremendous effect on those in school today.

The staff felt it was important to be reminded of the value of the adult student connections that were being created. Staff journaled the meetings they had with their selected students. They shared their stories and experiences they had when meeting with the students they selected with the rest of the Skaha Lake Middle School staff.

#### Following the 2018 Data Collection

Staff will be given the opportunity to learn how to code and how to teach students how to code. Current staff members who know how to code will be given the opportunity to share their knowledge with other staff. We will create opportunities for staff to share their coding knowledge with staff who are unfamiliar with coding.

Coding will be introduced to students in both the Math and Science curriculum.

Coding club will be created for any student who wishes to join this “hands on” club.

More “hands on” activities will be created for students at lunch time.



Staff will be mindful of the male students need to have “brain breaks” and will utilize these when needed.

Outdoor teaching will be modelled for staff and staff will be encouraged to utilize the outdoors whenever possible

Our school will provide a number of boys groups to help make positive adult connects at school as well as to engage in activities the participants would call fun.

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

In August 2018 the Skaha Lake Middle School staff will again identify our “at risk” and Aboriginal “at risk” learners. We also included new to Skaha Lake Middle School students coming to us in grade 6 students who had teachers when they were in grade 5 who identified them as “at risk”. Photos of these students will again be posted in the library. The staff and our CEA’s will select two of these students. The adults will purposefully established relationships with their selected students. The adults will make a point in connecting with these students and getting to know them at a deeper level. The adults will log their interactions with these students. The positive interactions they have with these students were also reported out at our staff meetings.

Skaha Lake now offers both a girls and boys group that will focus on teaching social skills to the participating students. Again these groups will be meeting with Skaha lake Middle School staff and forging stronger relationships with the adults.

To help address our February 2018 data findings, our staff is focusing on continued development of relationships with “at risk” Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. As well, to better connect boys to school our staff will focus on offering more outdoor education opportunities, increase the number of inside and outside lunch time activities and create more hands-on-learning opportunities like coding club as well as embedding coding in science and math class.

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

Our staff and school community was very pleased with our findings from our 2018 scan. After surveying our students we found that more Aboriginal students in 2018, both male and female reported that they could name 2 or more adults in the building who believed they would be successful in life. This data tells us that our purposeful relationship building with our identified Aboriginal and “at risk” students helped forge relationships and helped instill a belief in our students that adults believe they can be successful in life.

While our check indicated some positive changes in the area of our focus, making “at risk” and Aboriginal students believe there are 2 or more adults in this school who believe they will be successful in life, it also identified an area in need of attention. The boys in grade 6, 7 and 8 indicated they like coming to school less than girls did when compared by the same grade.

Our focus will be to come up with strategies and a plan that will help make boys like coming to school.

Our checks on “have we made enough of a difference” will be informed by the data provided to use from the results of the scanning student surveys we do.

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

Our PAC has been made aware of our current inquiry. We have also been sharing our inquiry findings in our school newsletter. We will continue sharing results as we move throughout the spirals process. [Click here to enter text.](#)

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

We will continue to work with our PAC. As well, we will continue to advertise the opportunities being a member of PAC affords parents, including the opportunity to involve our parents with our Spirals work. Our school based Aboriginal Support Team and community Aboriginal Youth & Family Counsellor helped establish a girls group involving our struggling Aboriginal female students. In the spring of 2018 we will also start a “traditional” boys group.

**Connection to the District Goals: (How does this plan connect to our district goals?)**

The questions we used were selected to help us determine to what extent all our learners are connected to their school community. In particular, how connected they were to the adults in the building. Research shows that students connected to school and the adults in the school will be more successful while in school. Students that are connected to adults in school and to school, will stay in school and will ultimately leave high school with pride, purpose and options, a school district goal.

To help further create a student connectedness to Skaha Lake Middle School and to help forge relationships between staff and students, the grade 6 team took all the grade 6 students swimming at the local public pool twice this school year. Time away from the formal school setting allows staff and students to get to know each other on a different level. Our grade 7 team took all grade 7 students on three Apex mountain ski trips. Again, time away from the formal school setting allows staff and students to experience each other in a less formal and structured environment. Our grade 8 team takes all grade 8 students to Rockridge camp. For three days and two nights the staff and student participate in a variety of fun activities that help create opportunities for staff and students to grow in relationship.

Our WE Club participated in many events and activities throughout the year that also helped promote relationship between staff and students. To mention one event, We Stand Together was a WE Club event that helped high-light and promote Aboriginal culture and awareness. The entire school participated in this event that featured Aboriginal dance at a Pow Wow in our school gym as well as bannock for everyone.

The entire grade 7 student population participated in a grade wide Literacy Expo in our school gymnasium. Teachers reviewed Core Competencies with students, preparing the students to answer questions from fellow students and adults, specific to the book they read and were sharing at the Expo.

All students in grade 8 participated in an outdoor science class. Students were collecting water samples from a local pond and analyzing results of the water samples. Again, the opportunity to take learning out of a formal class room setting not only creates a new learning environment it allows staff student relations to grow outside of the confinement of the formal classroom.

**Connection to the 7 Principles of Learning:**

**(How do each of these principles align with your plan?)**

- 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**

Click here to enter text.