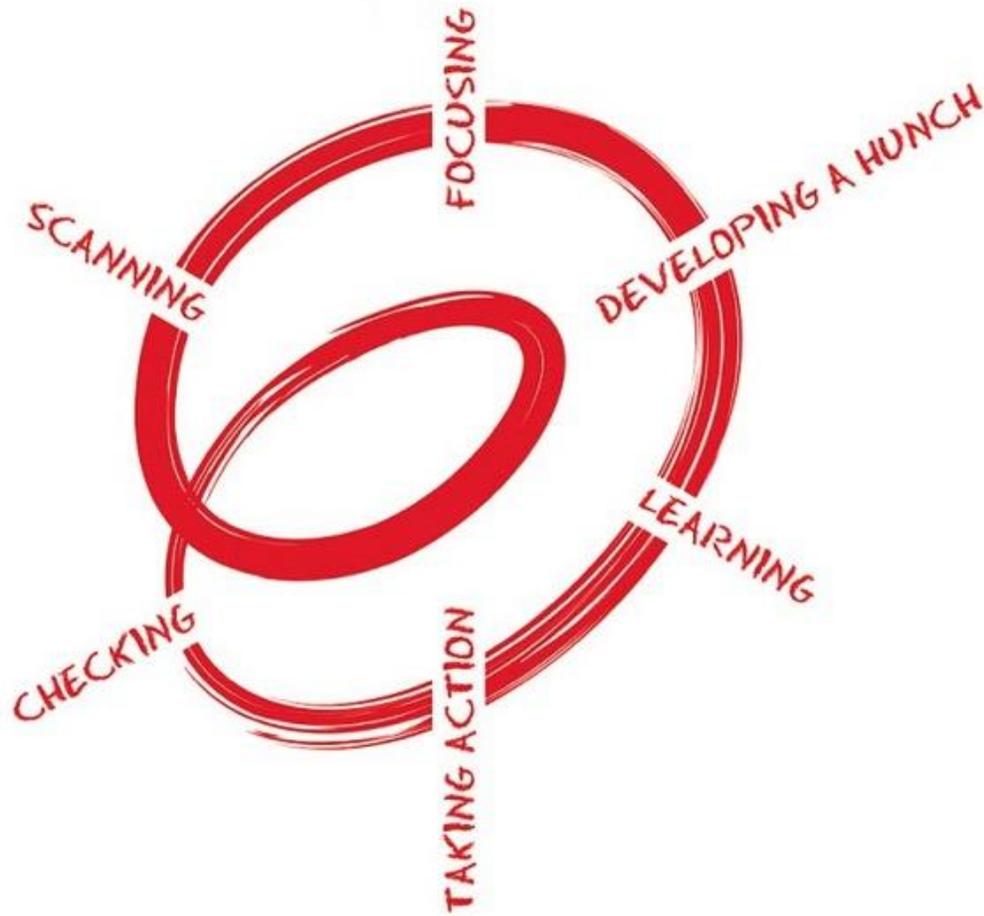




School District No. 67 (Okanagan Skaha) School Growth Plan



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



School: Wiltse



School Context:

Wiltse Elementary School serves a diverse catchment area that includes the Wiltse Flats neighbourhood, the area around the north shore of Skaha Lake, the orchard/hobby farms along Valleyview Road, and East Lakeside Road south to the new subdivisions of Lakeshore Highlands and Heritage Hills.

The school consists of sixteen classrooms, a computer lab with thirty stations, areas for small group instruction, a well-stocked Learning Commons (Library) and, a large multipurpose room and an excellent gymnasium. The school is very fortunate to have extensive grounds that provide students with excellent play and sporting areas.

The Parent Advisory Council is a key component of Wiltse School. The parents support student achievement through the One-to-One Reading Program, their funding of additional library and learning resources and through the annual Read-a-thon. The Wiltse PAC annually supports Accelerated Reader and Star Reading Programs plus Athletics. The parents have enriched the schooling of the students by funding extra-curricular events, co-curricular projects and the swimming, skating and cross country skiing programs as well as year-end trips for each grade level.

REVIEW of School Focus Question: Will select students feel more connected with school when they believe that two or more adults in the building believe that they will be successful?

RATIONALE: What evidence compelled us to ask this inquiry question?

Wiltse School Staff has been working on a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) inquiry focus from 2012 when staff noticed that more students are having difficulty socially and emotionally. It was believed and we continue to believe that it is important to develop the whole child; we need to include social and emotional learning. We have noticed that there are more and more children displaying anxieties which negatively affect their abilities to function and learn at school.

School connectedness is about creating a school community where everyone feels safe, seen, heard, supported, significant and cared for. BC students, who are highly connected to their

school engage in less risky behavior, are more likely to report good or excellent health, do well in school, and want to continue with lifelong learning.

We believe that students' sense of belonging and perception of safety can affect learning and students' academic performance.

We must ensure all Wiltse students feel a strong sense of belonging and that they are safe to take risks in their learning to achieve to be the best they can be. As a staff we identified students who we had a hunch were not strongly connected to the school. It was agreed that we teach all students pro-social skills and coping skills (Tier 1 Intervention).

SEL will continue to be part of developing healthy, happy successful children. Strategies and programs for teaching and supporting SEL will be part of the curriculum taught and reviewed throughout each school year.

Objectives:

- To review Tier 1, 2 and 3 structures and strategies at Wiltse School
- To review discuss our school needs
- To review and discuss students considered not connected with school or adults in the school
- To use regular collaborative meeting time at staff meetings and assemblies to
 - Discuss inquiry questions
 - Share successes and challenges
 - Reflect on the impact on student attitudes, engagement and achievement

Strategies and Structures:

- Even with significant changes in staff, staff continues to meet and greet students by name every morning as students and families arrive at first bell.
- Staff members volunteer to make regular and purposeful connections with those students who are not connected to at least one adult in the school.
- Create house teams of students of different ages and provide opportunities (i.e. team lunches, team field trips) to build connections between peers. This year we had students in their family groupings.
- Build stronger relationships with feeder schools to support student transitions.
- For students showing a lack of connection to school, develop a trusting relationship that enables understanding of the root causes (e.g. lack of sleep from overcrowded home, food, insecurity, etc.) and provide support where possible. Using staff meeting time to review specific student needs (Clipboard Kids).
- To review effective strategies and programs to support Student Learning
- To introduce and/or review resources
- To explore and implement the Re-designed Curriculum and Core Competencies

Wiltse Elementary Staff is involved in Inquiry Questions with other colleagues in school and throughout the School District (Wiltse Team involvement at: Shelley Moore, Spirals of Learning and Place Conscience Learning; staff support Innovative and Inquiry grants).

Staff continues to implement Literacy strategies and programs in the classrooms:

- School-wide use of common language
 - Core Competencies, teachers provided with Core Competency posters for student learning and discussions
 - Connect Through Chat
 - Spirals of Inquiry
 - Four Questions for Students
 - Growth Mindset has been introduced
 - Mindfulness YOGA with Tammy Semple was provided for all Wiltse divisions
 - WITS
 - First Peoples Principles of Learning
 - Wiltse Wild Cat House Teams; student focused
 - Wiltse Leadership Program for Intermediate Students
 - Fun FRIENDS and FRIENDS
 - TRIBES
- In-class support from: Learning Assistance Teacher, Learning Support Teacher (LIFund and Priority Measures Funds), Speech and Language Pathologist, Play-based Intervention Teacher Support and School Counsellor Support from other programs assist in improving student success and achievement
- Use Staff Meeting time, Professional Development and self-directed learning time to investigate strategies and initiatives
- Continue to use SEL strategies and programs to meet the needs of all students (WITS Program, Social Detective work, TRIBES, FRIENDS and FUN FRIENDS Program/activities, *Restorative Practice* strategies and structures, *The Zones of Regulation* resource, Building Growth Mindsets in the Class, and Core Competency exploration and implementation.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND TOOLS: What will we use to measure our success?

- Assessment of student work using Performance Standards for Social Responsibility to gain baseline data
- Each staff meeting an agenda item is "Clipboard Kids", a review of specific students and their needs
- Each term at school staff meeting Connect Thru Chat is reviewed (agenda item, PowerPoint presentations on students, student and staff reflections, data collection, school survey, individual student interviews)
- Informal and formal teacher planning and reflecting meeting

- Staff attended in-district and out-of-district workshops that supported Social Emotional learning and shared learnings with others
- Flex Funds were used to release teacher to join inquiry groups, workshops and professional development initiatives as well as Class Review Meetings

RESOURCES:

- Wiltse Team participation in "Spirals of Inquiry" District Initiative with Linda Kazer and Judy Halbert
- Time spent with focus on the Renewed Curriculum and Core Competencies (Staff Meetings, Professional Development Day, Curriculum Days and School Improvement Days)
- Core Competency to guide Wiltse's Student Self-Assessment
- Kirsten Odian – Early Learning Support Teacher
- Shelley Moore – Inclusive Classrooms
- Tammy Semple – Mindfulness Yoga
- Interested staff was provided with a copy of *Growth Mindsets in the Classroom*

PARENT INVOLVEMENT:

- Yearly support of student activities and support materials
- Review at Wiltse Parent Advisory Council Meetings throughout the school year
- Informal updates to parents of most students involved in school initiatives to connect with all students
- One to One Reading with parent and community partners

REFLECTIONS: Successes and Challenges

This year was a time to expose staff, parents and students to the Re-designed Curriculum and Core Competencies. Wiltse continues to be actively involved with "Connect Through Chat" and "Spirals of Inquiry". Staff has become familiar with ideas and concepts to support students accepting responsibility for their learning while being encouraged by their teacher as well as other staff members. Having a collaborative team approach for children has shown an increase in student connectedness to adults in the school. Together (staff, students and parents) there are many opportunities to learn and teach.

Staff members continue to:

- Integrate the Re-designed Curriculum and Core Competencies into their teaching and student learning
- Look for ways to connect children to school
- Involve students in Self-assessment
- Understand the importance of teaching and implementing social emotional learning
- See the benefits of a whole school approach which supports all children-both academically and emotionally
- Be open to meeting the needs of students by using growth mindset, mindfulness and yoga strategies

FUTURE PLANNING:

To be discussed at May Staff Meeting to determine if there is support for continuing to work on Social Emotional Learning as a School Goal.

Some suggestions for future planning may include:

- Consideration of breaking into smaller groups that have an inquiry question that would lead to improvement in student achievement in an area of growth mindset
- Staff will be invited to participate in book clubs and article reading to further develop ways to support student learning and having students connected to adults at the school
- Explore further the Spirals of Inquiry Four Key Questions and how to implement them
- Continue with Wiltse Wild Cat House Teams with more of a focus on multi-age group and individual House Team activities