



## Princess Margaret Secondary School

120 Green Avenue West  
Penticton, BC V2A 3T1  
(250) 770-7620

Principal: Don MacIntyre  
Vice Principal: Terry Grady  
Vice Principal: Trevor Robinson

## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (2009/10)

### Princess Margaret Secondary School Context

Welcome to Princess Margaret Secondary School!!!! “Home of the Mustangs”.

Princess Margaret officially opened its doors in September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1958 with 200 students enrolled in grades 8-10 along with 19 staff members. Our ‘new’ Princess Margaret Secondary School opened in October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2002 with our first graduating class in June 2004. Today, our school enrolls approximately 700 students in grades 9-12 with an excellent teaching staff comprised of 38 teachers, 13 educational assistants, a Pathways Counsellor and a Child Care Worker. Our school community includes a significant first nation’s population and is located within the traditional Okanagan Nation territory. Our school is fed from four elementary schools and one middle school.

### INQUIRY QUESTION

If our school places increased emphasis on improving student attendance, engagement and work completion rates will it result in increased graduation and school completion percentages?

#### **RATIONALE: (What evidence compelled us to ask this question?)**

Five years ago we began to analyze the factors that were preventing students from having success in school and ultimately graduating. We came up with two primary indicators: inconsistent attendance patterns and the resulting missing assignments. We began to structure our school to address these issues.

## ACTION PLAN

### **STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES: (What are we going to do?)**

We realized that the impact of missing work had a dramatic effect on academic performance. Assignments not submitted result in zeroes in the teacher gradebooks. We began to research grading and assessment practices. This resulted in the following changes:

1. Work assigned is work expected. Don't include zeroes in grade determination when evidence is missing or as punishment; use alternatives, such as reassessing to determine real achievement or use "I" for Incomplete or Insufficient Evidence.
  - Resist including homework in the gradebook
  - Resist reducing scores for late work
  - Resist using a mark of "zero" for work not handed in
  - Consider allowing students to re-write tests and quizzes
  - Consider exploring different grading practices and Assessment for Learning strategies
  - Intervention strategies were developed to support teachers and students in efforts to see required work submitted
  
2. We need to develop a culture of support at school that leads to improved student engagement and therefore improved attendance:
  - Review protocols, processes and communication regarding attendance policy to ensure that we develop partnerships with students and parents in emphasizing the importance of being in class and on time.
  - Reduce the use of "approved study" and encourage all students to assume a full course load.
  - Link Crew – brings together senior students and incoming grade 9 students. The focus is providing support on an ongoing basis for our new students. Fostering relationships between seniors and incoming students eases the transition from middle school to high school.
  - Peer Mentoring, Peer Tutoring, Peer Counselling are courses widely subscribed to by our grade 11 and 12 students. This helps to enhance the culture of support that is so critical to student success.
  - A.I.R. (Accountability, Integrity, Respect) are our core values. We teach our expectations in the area of social responsibility by delivering AIR lessons on a regular basis. These are short lessons with themes that reflect our core values. Many of these lessons are developed and delivered by our students.

- Leadership course credit is available to all students at Princess Margaret. The focus is on providing services to others. This can include anything from running a student activity to raising funds for an orphanage in Vietnam. We have a strong history of being service providers.
  - Our instructional practices are evolving to create more student engagement in lessons. More student-directed learning would increase value of attendance for students. We are experienced in SMART learning concepts and the uses of differentiated instruction.
3. We need to create predictable opportunities for our staff to engage in professional, reflective dialogue designed to improve the performance of all of our students.
- We have developed 11 structured 60 minute Collaborative Planning Meetings for staff. They are pursuing forms of action research or School Inquiry that are self-selected. These meetings take place during the bell schedule. Minor adjustments to the regular bell schedule have provided us with this opportunity.
  - The progress of Collaborative Groups is checked via Department Head and Staff meetings where we discuss what is being discovered during the meetings and any needs that might be arising. We have also established a WIKI sight were all group members can post updates and comments. This allows all staff to be kept aware of what is being pursued by the various groups.

### **RESOURCES: (What do we currently have an what do we need?)**

- We provide a variety of networking opportunities for staff to engage in reflective dialogue regarding best practice. We believe that privacy of practice produces isolation and isolation is the enemy of improvement. We subscribe to the theory that all the knowledge and skills we require to improve student achievement rests in the hearts and minds of our staff.
- We have had multiple staff members attend workshops on grading and assessment practices.
- We have accessed district support through workgroups in the areas of Assessment for Learning Strategies and School Completion.
- We conduct two book study groups each school year. Titles are selected based on our focus areas.

## EVIDENCE

### KEY FINDINGS (What did we find out?)

#### Number Of Courses Below 50%

Year	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Final Mark
2004/05	292	334	321	300	192
2005/06	215	272	265	291	118
2006/07	160	198	193	248	104
2007/08	5	33	40	53	36
2008/09	43	98	47	104	35

#### Results *Passport to Education*

	<u>Grade 10</u>	<u>Grade 11</u>	<u>Grade 12</u>
2005/06	78.3%	80.5%	83.6%
2006/07	84.8%	82.6%	84.3%
2007/08	87.3%	89.3%	89.5%
2008/09	89.67%	89.17%	91%

#### Results *Passport to Education*

	<u>Grade 10</u>	<u>Grade 11</u>	<u>Grade 12</u>
2005/06	78.3%	80.5%	83.6%
2006/07	84.8%	82.6%	84.3%
2007/08	87.3%	89.3%	89.5%

## Princess Margaret No Zero Policy

At Princess Margaret Secondary School, we value learning and education. We believe that assigned work gives teachers the opportunity to see if students understand what has been taught. It is on the basis of completed and marked work that teachers determine whether they need to re-teach a concept or whether they may move on to teach a new concept. Furthermore, assignments often emphasize learning that needs to take place before students can attempt, with confidence, the next level of learning.

For these reasons, we believe that it is imperative that students complete their assignments in a timely fashion. We recognize that not all assignments will be handed in on time; however in view of the importance of these assignments, we believe that work assigned needs to be completed. Students should not be given the option to “take a zero” by not handing in an assignment. Allowing students not to complete work is an educationally unsound policy and cannot be supported by the staff of Princess Margaret.

When a student fails to complete work on time, a teacher should implement the following procedures/interventions in a timely manner to encourage the student to hand in the incomplete work as soon as possible. A teacher does not need to follow every level of intervention outlined. They are listed as effective proactive steps to encourage the student to complete the assignment and to avoid issuing marks of zero.

If a student does not hand in an assignment on time, the following actions may be utilized by the teacher:

### School-Wide Expectations

\*Speak to the student to see why the assignment is late.

Sometimes it is as simple as they forgot it at home. Bring it the next day.



\*Agree upon another due date for the late assignment. **This level of support is crucial to the development of the student/teacher relationship.**

Personal issues may have hampered the completion of the assignment. Agree on a new due date or a course of action to help with the personal issues preventing the student from completing the work.



At any time an interim report can be issued making clear what assignment is late and when the new due date is.



\*Assign a grade 9 student to work with a peer mentor.



\*Contact the parents to inform them of the late assignment, and to help motivate the student to do the assignment.

Call or email the parents to inform them of the late assignment. Parents are sometimes able to communicate the importance of completing assignments in ways that teachers are not. Bottom line, the parents need to know.



\*Teacher keeps the students at lunch or after school to catch up on the missing work.



\*Teacher assigns the student a lunch time DT.

As a proactive way of getting the assignment done, assign a lunch hour catch-up session. ***See Lunch DT assignment procedure and sheet.***



\*If student “refuses” to go to the DT, refer the matter to the grade administrator.



\*If student does not attend the DT, the matter is referred to the grade administrator.



\*Refer to SBT (School Based Team) minutes to see if there are identified strategies that can be utilized to help.

\*Refer the matter to SBT (School Based Team)



\*Teacher assigns student to “I” session during collaborative planning time, supervised by the administration. ***See school calendar for school collaborative planning dates.***



\*For chronic “I”s, teacher to contact parent/counselor to arrange a meeting.



\*Teacher to contact parent/admin to arrange a meeting.



\*Refer the matter to the grade level school administration.



\*Jr. Students could be held after school until the work has been completed.



\*Jr. Students could be assigned in-school suspensions to get the work done.



\*Refer the student to Saturday School (1 per term).



\*Assign an "I" at report card time. Student has two weeks after receiving his or her report card to get the incomplete work done. After the two weeks, if the work has not been completed and many of the above interventions have been attempted, the "I"s are converted to zeros.

**"We make it tough for a student to get a zero"**



\*Sr. students could be sent home with the direction, "Don't come back to school until the work is completed."



\*Refer the student to Saturday School (1 per term).



\*Assign an "I" at report card time. Student has two weeks after receiving his or her report card to get the incomplete work done. After the two weeks, if the work has not been completed and many of the above interventions have been attempted, the "I"s are converted to zeros.

It is important to understand that this process MUST be pursued in a timely manner. In most cases, the assignment should not be more than two weeks late.

A new report card comment will be created that must be used when a mark of "I" (incomplete) is used. Incomplete means the course work is not done and the comment will state that a student has two weeks to complete the late work.

The intent of this policy is not to let late assignments "drag on", but to promote the completion of late work in a timely manner.

## REFLECTION AND SUMMARY

### **REFLECTIONS: (What did the team learn through this research? How did it make a difference?)**

To date we have learned how much capacity we have to affect student performance. We have discovered that all the knowledge and skills required to create success for all students resides within our staff. Through collaboration and inquiry we believe that we can continue to further the scaffolding requires to sustain improvement.

### **FUTURE PLANNING: Where do we go from here?**

Next year we will spend two professional development days establishing our new collaborative cohorts and mapping plans for improvement. We continue to seek opportunities to develop our capacity to learn together more effectively and move towards our vision of a school community were all students experience success.

### **School Planning Council:**

Name (Principal): \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Parent): \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Parent): \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Parent): \_\_\_\_\_