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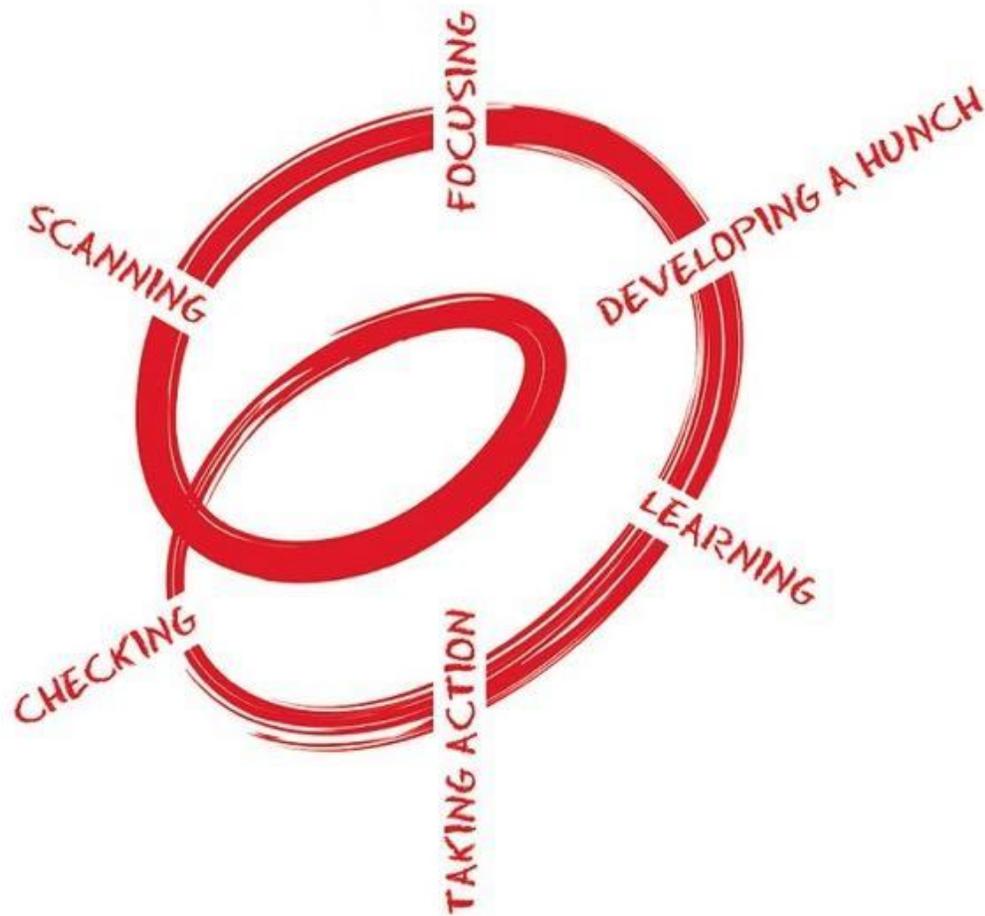# Penticton Secondary - School Growth Plan

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

School Context:

Founded in 1913, Penticton Secondary School is located in the heart of Penticton's downtown area. Referred to affectionately as Pen Hi, our school has a student population of approximately 1,200 housed in a building that was newly built and renovated in 2008. Penticton Secondary School offers students a wide variety of opportunities in the areas of academics, arts, athletics, and employment training. Not surprisingly, this large student body, guided by a committed staff of teachers, coaches and mentors, consistently wins numerous Provincial and national awards every year. Visitors to Pen High are often impressed by the student involvement and leadership in the community. Pen High is committed to promoting a learning culture that fosters a sense of personal and global responsibility and citizenship through teaching and promoting our core values of: integrity, respect, compassion, and commitment.

Penticton Secondary School:

- strives to develop students who are well-rounded and equipped to succeed following high school
- values open and timely communication with parents through a variety of methods
- values and encourages parental support and involvement at the school
- is dedicated to the preparation of caring and responsible learners
- values traditions and legacy, while embracing the innovations in education and technology
- is supported by an active Parent Advisory Council

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

Primary Focus Question: Will the implementation of a CORE 10 program have a positive impact both academically and socially on Grade 10 students at Penticton Secondary School?

Our goal(s); we will…

- improve the graduation potential for our most vulnerable Grade 10 students.
- ensure our most vulnerable Grade 10 students believe they have two or more adults that care about them and believe they will be successful.

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

Successes

During the past few school years, an emphasis has been put on continuing to build upon the progress made on previous inquiries specifically related to student-staff relationships and the implementation of core competency work and related student interviews. With recent changes to the leadership team at Pen High, a large focus has been on scanning the progress that has been made to understand the next steps needing to be made. We are very happy with the overall sense of belonging that students appear to have with Pen High. The vast majority of students feel connected to the staff and school and are experiencing success here at school. Our Advanced Placement program continues to grow and our extra-curricular opportunities for students are plentiful. Many students are finding success here and are proud to call Pen High their school.

Challenges

Last year, approximately 78% of Grade 10 and 12 students indicated that they could name two or more adults at Pen High who believe they will be successful in life. A cohort of last years' Grade 9 students was identified as being at-risk in terms of graduation potential. This cohort of students appeared to be vulnerable in terms of making positive staff relationships and successfully navigating academic requirements for graduation. The school decided to implement an academic support program that would include reducing the number of staff that these students interacted with and doubling the supports for 6 of their courses (English 10, Socials 10, CLE 10, Apprenticeship & Workplace Math 10, Science 10 and PE 10).

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:

- Penticton Secondary Parent Survey
- Penticton Secondary Student Survey
- Student Learning Survey data from Grade 10 students
- Grade 10 academic data from Core classes
- Grade 9 academic data from Core students

How happy are you with your child's educational experience at Penticton Secondary School?
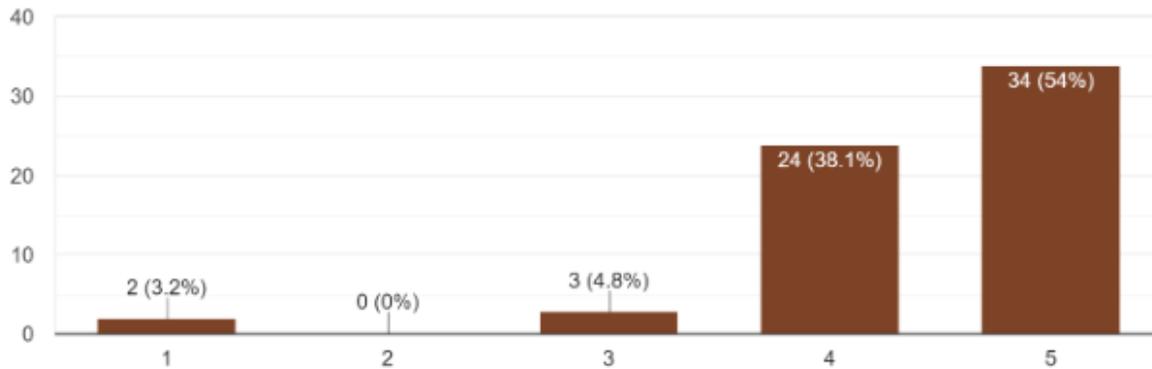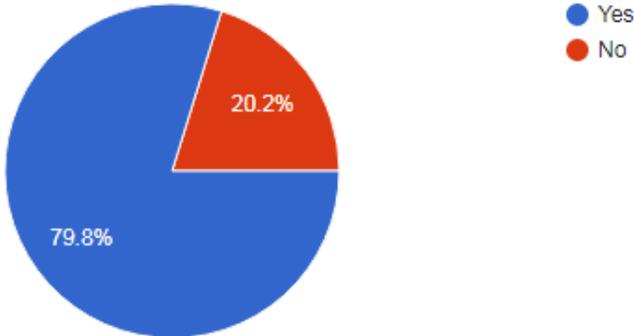

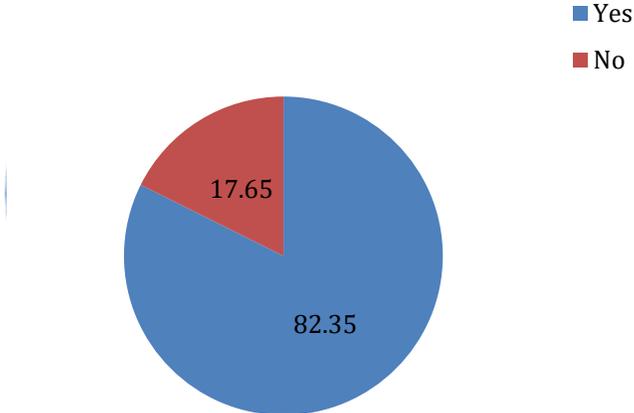Can you name two adults at Penticton Secondary that your child is connected to?
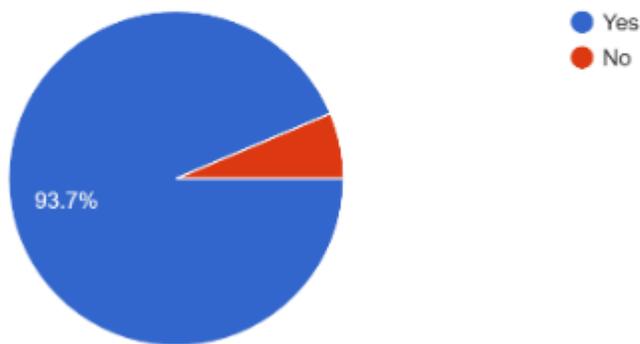
Supporting Data: PSS – ALL Student Survey 2019

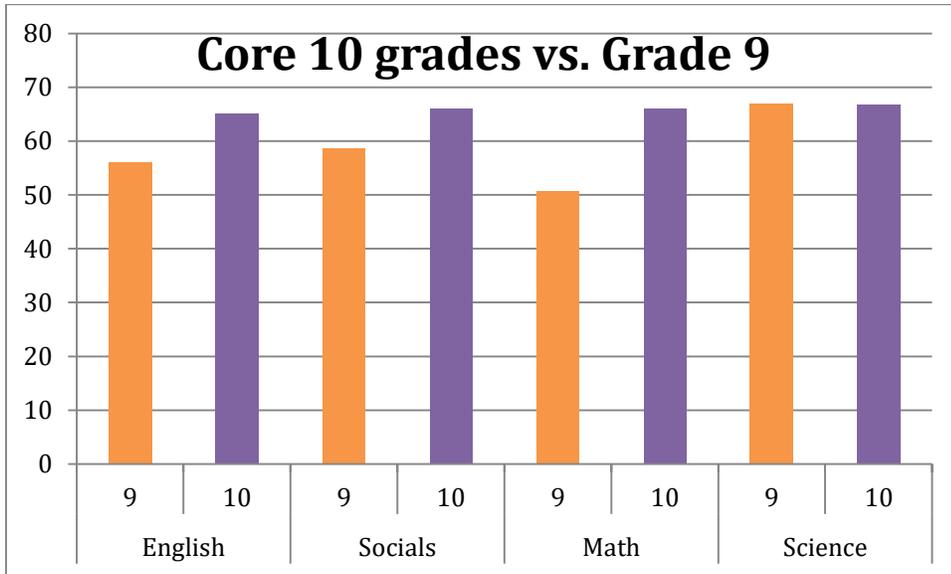Can you name two adults in this school who believe you will be a success in life?

● Yes
● No

20.2%

79.8%

Supporting Data: PSS – CORE 10 Student Survey 2019

Can you name two adults in this school who believe you will be a success in life?

■ Yes
■ No

17.65

82.35

Supporting Data: Academic data Core 10 vs Grade 9 data

Core 10 grades vs. Grade 9

	English		Socials		Math		Science	
	9	10	9	10	9	10	9	10

Supporting Data: Academic data Core 10 vs ALL grade 10 data

ALL Grade 10 vs. Grade 9

	English		Socials		Math			Science	
	9	10	9	10	9	10F&P	10A&W	9	10
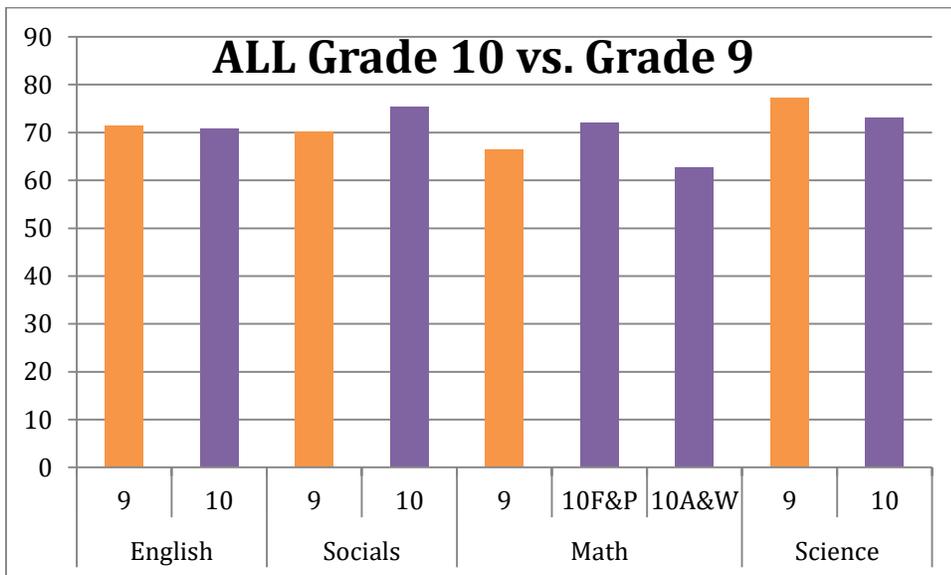
Key Learnings:

Implementation:

1. School-based team identified 20-24 vulnerable learners for the Core 10 program.
2. Students completed English 10, Socials 10, CLE 10 in the first semester with two teachers. The cohort runs the full morning each day for half the year. Some students have a fourth class in the afternoon, others have a partial program.
3. Students completed A&W Math 10, Science 10 and PE 10 in the second semester with two different teachers following the same daily schedule.
4. Staff closely monitor students for attendance and success rates in courses.
5. Support offered to ensure academic success in all classes.
6. Staff emphasize creating positive relationships with students over the course of the program to increase connection to school.
7. Continue with the Scanning process by asking the following questions (Questions taken from Spirals of Inquiry by Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser p. 48-49):
    a. Do students report that they find their learning meaningful, relevant, and important?
    b. Do they know two adults within the school who believe they will be a success in life?
    c. Do they feel a sense of connection with their peers?
    d. Are they engaged in activities that give them a sense of community?
    e. Is there a sense of purpose and focus in their daily learning-related tasks?
    f. Are they able to articulate their strengths and the ways which they are able to regulate themselves as learners?
    g. Do they know what they need to do to improve in key areas?
    h. Are they motivated to do so?
    i. Do they have grit?
    j. Can they provide examples/artifacts related to their competency?

<u>**Developing a Hunch**</u>: **What is leading to this situation?**

The staff believes that providing a program that limits movement and variety of staff interactions will allow kids to feel more connected and supported. In turn, we believe students will find greater success and improve their graduation potential.

<u>**New Professional Learning**</u>: **(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).**

The Core 10 staff work in teams of two so built-in collaboration will assist the implementation of this new program. Department Head days and staff remedy time were used to allow for further planning and collaboration. Differentiation of instruction was a critical component of working with this diverse student group and staff spent considerable time collaborating on projects and instructional elements that would engage the entire cohort.

Taking Action: (Describe the actions that you propose to take related to your inquiry. What will you do more of, less of, or do differently to improve outcomes for your students)?

The Core 10 teachers and administration will meet over the course of the year to debrief on progress related to this cohort. After each term, report cards will be reviewed to check academic success. Students will be interviewed at the conclusion of each semester to provide feedback on program and ways to improve it moving forward.

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

By using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data we will be able to best tell the story. Comparing data from the past two years, we will look for trends in relation to the areas of focus. We would like to see an increase in students feeling supported and connected in the building, and an improvement in academic success rates for the Core 10 cohort.

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

The school plan, using the inquiry approach is a dynamic process that is completely integrated into meetings from the beginning of the school year. All initiatives related to this plan are vetted through staff and focus groups. Updates related to our school plan are published in our newsletters and/or on our website.

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

Teachers, students, and parents are invited to participate in inquiry based focus groups which support the school planning process. Their feedback is incorporated into the direction and initiatives that become formalized through the plan. Staff meetings and professional development days (specifically the school implementation day) represent opportunities to communicate these intentions with staff and provide further opportunities to refine/define the intentions as the plan evolves. Throughout the school year accommodations have to be made for introducing and combining new and innovative ideas into the plan that support the intentions and encourage improvement to student learning and achievement, and to school culture.

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

Ensuring that all students graduate with a sense of dignity, purpose and options is one of the primary District goals. By increasing students feeling of connectedness, and putting an emphasis on supporting our most vulnerable learners, we hope to see more student academic success and improved graduation rates down the road.

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 7 Principles of Learning in an innovative learning environment and by evaluating and contextualizing the data collected throughout the year along with all our stakeholder partners.

(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**

The implementation of our Core 10 program is based on the 7 Principles of Learning. The intent for this cohort of vulnerable learners is to 1) ensure they are central to our planning; 2) recognize and teach to the diversity of learners represented; 3) build connections with peers, staff and the community; 4) ensure students are learning both on and off campus, in a variety of settings.

In the first half of the program (English, Socials, CLE), a considerable amount of time and energy was devoted to fostering relationships and establishing parameters for the classroom. The teachers ensured that student attitudes, beliefs, and emotions were considered and cared for throughout the year.