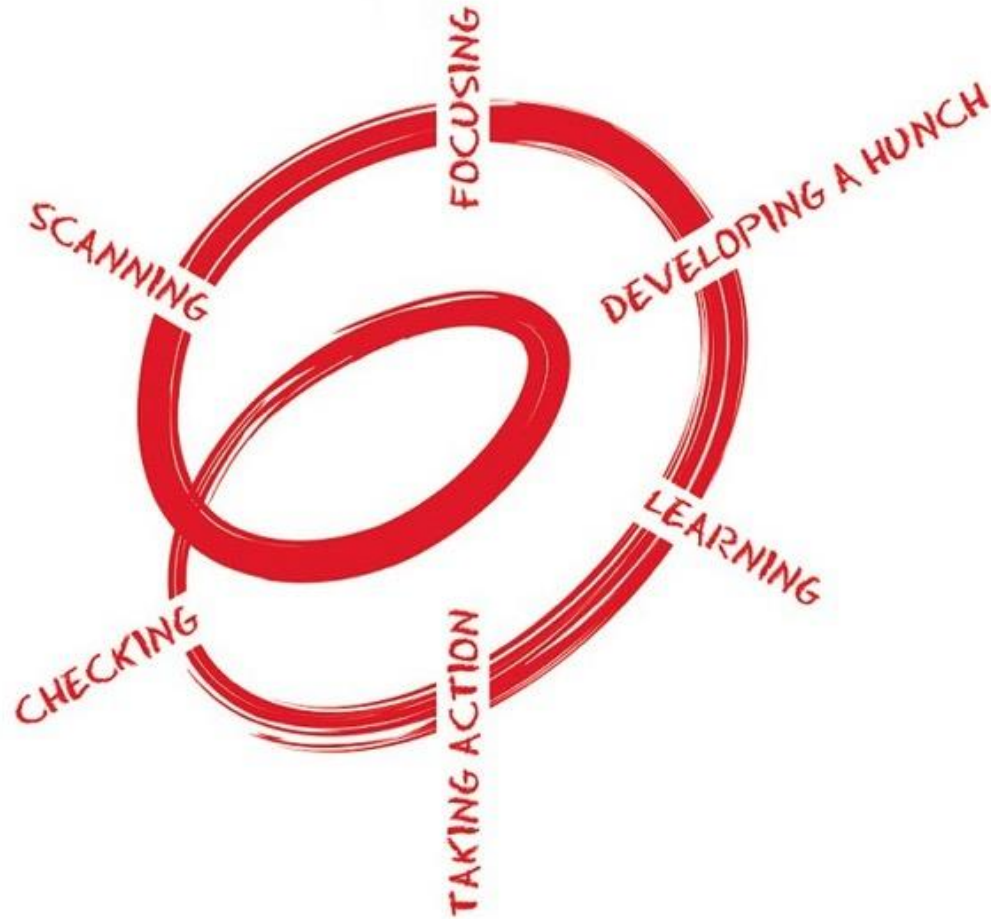




## School District No. 67 (Okanagan Skaha) Skaha Lake Middle - School Growth Plan



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



## School: Skaha Lake Middle School

### **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 nineteenth year as a middle school and has an enrollment of 480 students. Our Grades 6, 7 and 8 teams are culturally diverse, with a large First Nations and Sikh population, which enroll 18 divisions of advisory groupings. Skaha Lake Middle School has two administrators, 28 teaching staff, and 14 support staff.

The Skaha Lake School learning community is proud of our facility and enjoys the involvement of an 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, logo and shark theme in the gym as well as PAC sponsored class and school 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 and 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 to 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.

2019 - Continue to support Aboriginal students and at risk students at Skaha Lake Middle School. Have this selected student population believe there are two or more adults in the school who believe they will be successful in life.

Continue to support and provide opportunities to male students at Skaha Lake Middle School that will help them enjoy coming to school.

To increase the number of female Grade 8 students who say they like 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.

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%

## 2019 Scan

Our 2019 scan, when compared to the 2018 scan indicated a similar number of students believe there is two or more adults in the building who believe they will be successful in life.

<b>Question:</b>	<b>February 2018 (347 students)</b>	<b>April 2019 (457 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	75%	74%
All girls	77%	72%
All boys	71%	76%
All Grade 6	77%	86%
Female Grade 6	77%	87%
Male Grade 6	75%	85%
All Grade 7	74%	74.5%
Female Grade 7	76%	79%
Male Grade 7	72%	71%
All Grade 8	67%	71%
Female Grade 8	77%	74.5%
Male Grade 8	58%	67%
Students with Aboriginal ancestry (58) (65)	67%	76%
Female students with Aboriginal ancestry	74%	65%
Male students with Aboriginal ancestry	62%	84%

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:

<b>Question:</b>	<b>February 2018 (347 students)</b>
Do you like coming to school?	
<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%

2019 Scan compared to the 2018 Scan:

<b>Question:</b> Do you like coming to school?	<b>February 2018</b> <b>(347 students)</b>	<b>April 2019</b> <b>(457 students)</b>
<b>Response by</b>		
All responses	74%	74%
All girls	83%	72%
All boys	68%	75%
All Grade 6	85%	85.5%
Female Grade 6	84%	87%
Male Grade 6	83%	85%
All Grade 7	68%	74%
Female Grade 7	88%	79%
Male Grade 7	56%	71%
All Grade 8	66%	59%
Female Grade 8	74%	52%
Male Grade 8	61%	67%
Students with Aboriginal ancestry (58) (65)	69%	76%
Female students with Aboriginal ancestry	74%	65.5%
Male students with Aboriginal ancestry	65%	84.5%

Our 2019 scan indicates more male students like coming to school when compared to the 2018 scan. In particular, male students in Grades 6, 7 and 8 as well as our self-identified male Aboriginal students.

**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.

Our 2019 data indicates we have more boys at Grades 6, 7 and 8 as well as Aboriginal male students who like coming to school. We have implemented teaching strategies and programs that helped connect male students to 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 Grades 6, 7 and 8 like coming to school less than girls in the same grade.

<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%

## 2019 Data

The data in our 2019 scan indicates boys like coming to school more than the scan indicated in 2018. In fact, boys in Grades 6, 7 and 8 as well as aboriginal boys all indicated liking school more than they did in the 2018 scan.

<b>Question:</b> <b>Do you like coming to school?</b>	<b>February 2018</b> <b>(347 students)</b>	<b>April 2019</b> <b>(457 students)</b>
<b>Response by</b>		
All responses	74%	74%
All girls	83%	72%
All boys	68%	75%
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All Grade 8	66%	59%
Female Grade 8	74%	52%
Male Grade 8	61%	67%
Students with Aboriginal ancestry (58) (65)	69%	76%
Female students with Aboriginal ancestry	74%	65.5%
Male students with Aboriginal ancestry	65%	84.5%

However, girls in Grade 8 indicate they like coming to school less than males at the same grade level. In fact, Grade 8 girls identify liking school less than any other cohort.

### **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 male 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.

#### From the 2019 data

Our 2019 data indicates male students in Grades 6, 7, 8 as well as Aboriginal male students all like coming to school more than the data indicated they did in 2018. Changes that were initiated for 2018 – 2019 school year that included more “hands on learning” opportunities, more outdoor learning opportunities and more “brain breaks” had a positive influence on the Skaha Lake Middle School male population.

#### **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 that is 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 such as guitar club and games club.

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. Pro-D opportunities will also be made available to staff that will teach staff how to use the outdoors as a class room. Staff will be supported and encouraged to utilize the outdoors whenever possible.

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

Our staff will participate in a book read – Boys Smart by Barry McDonald.

Our staff also participated in a second book read – Teach Like Finland by Timothy D. Walker.

### Following the 2019 Data Collection

Our 2019 data indicated that our hunch of offering opportunities, lesson and class room structure that appeals to male students will make them like school more was accurate. The 2019 data provided by male students at every grade level as well as our self-identified Aboriginal male students indicated a greater liking of school compared to the data in 2018.

Our 2019 data indicated that 71% of our Grade 8 female population could identify 2 or more adults in this school who believe they will be successful in life. However, only 52% of this population indicated they liked coming to school.

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

***For the past three years our data has indicated our actions have made a positive change in certain areas. As a result, our staff is committed to continue doing the following:***

In August 2019 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 Skaha Lake Middle School staff will select two of these students. The adults will purposefully establish 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.

To better connect boys to school, our staff will continue to focus on offering outdoor education opportunities, increase the number of inside and outside lunch time activities and create more hands-on-learning opportunities like coding club and games club.

In the spring of 2019 we will interview a sample of our female Grade 8 population. This group will be asked, “without changing the rules of the school, what would you like to see changed at school to make it more enjoyable”. Our staff will develop hunches from the feedback and add these to our spirals focus in the 2019-2020 school year.

### **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 2019 scan. After surveying our students, we found that more in Grades 6, 7, 8 as well as self-identified male Aboriginal students like coming to school compared to the result in our 2018 scan.

While our check indicated positive changes in the area of our focus, make boys like coming to school, we discovered that Grade 8 girls who have connections with two or more adults in the school (71%), indicated they didn’t like coming to school (52%).

Our focus will be to come up with strategies and a plan that will help make Grade 8 girls 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.

**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.

**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.

**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