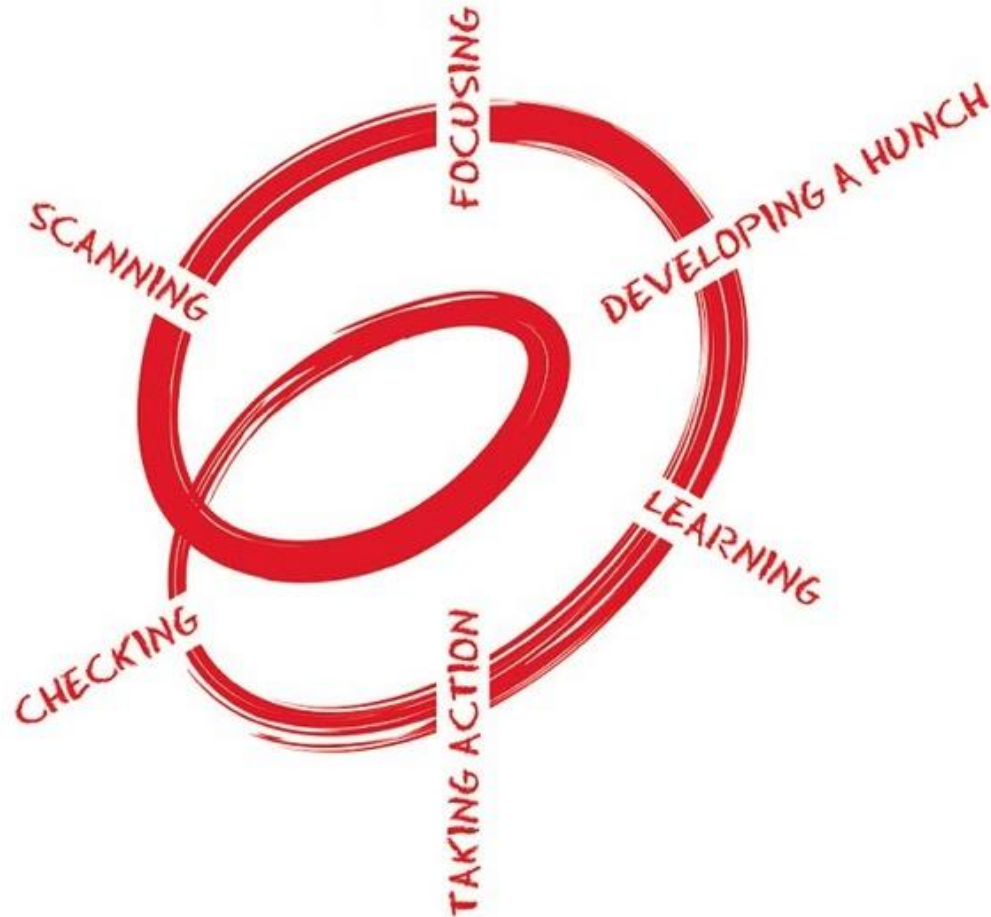




## School District No. 67 (Okanagan Skaha) School Growth Plan



*"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 twentieth year as a middle school and has an enrollment of 487 students. Our Grade 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 18 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.

Our current "Shark" feeder schools are Parkway, Kaleden, Columbia, Wiltse, and West Bench Elementary schools. As a feeder school, Skaha Lake Middle School is situated on Green Avenue East and sits adjacent 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."

The Skaha Lake staff have 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. The data collected helps 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 in working towards the goal of graduating high school with pride, purpose and options.

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

### **2017-19**

Over the past three years, the Skaha Lake staff have been very purposeful in creating a positive and productive school climate and culture. The Skaha Lake staff were interested in really knowing what was going on with the learners in our school. Questions we asked our students during the scan portion of our inquiry focused on social and emotional learning. The questions were selected based on current research 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. Student connectedness has a positive impact on school completion.

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. Our goal at Skaha Lake Middle School is for students to feel they are valued and cared through meaningful adult to student connections.

### **2019-20**

The 2019-20 school year was a year of transition as staff look to build on successes in order to move forward in our school planning. Our staff have done a lot of work this year exploring ways to incorporate learning opportunities that benefit our adolescent learners. By focusing on research around the Middle School philosophy, our staff look for links between our student data and best practice as it pertains to adolescent learners. We look forward to continuing where we left off this year as we transition within our inquiry.

### **Our past 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.

### **Moving forward 2020-21:**

Continuing to support all learners at SLMS with student connectedness through the lens of the Middle School Philosophy and First Peoples Principles of Learning.

**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.

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.

2019 Scan compared to the 2018 scan:

<b>Question:</b>	<b>February 2018 (347 students)</b>	<b>April 2019 (457 students)</b>
<b>Do you like coming to school?</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.

## **Scan for 2020**

We surveyed our Grade 6 students via student interviews. Results indicated that 89% of Grade 6 students reported that they could name 2 or more adults who cared for them in the building. Our Grade 7 students participated in the Middle Years Development Instrument survey as part of the School District initiative. This questionnaire assesses five areas of development that are strongly linked to well-being, health and academic achievement. Results compare the data from SLMS with Okanagan Skaha School District as a whole.



**High Well-Being (Thriving)**  
Children who score in the high range on at least 4 of the 5 measures of well-being and have no low-range scores.

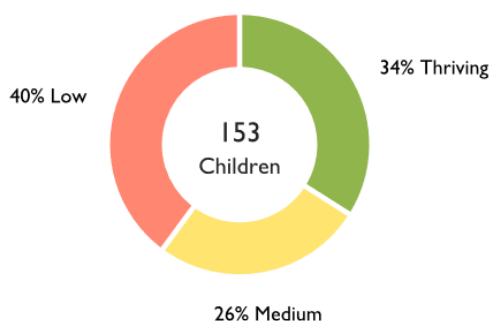


**Medium Well-Being**  
Children who score in the high range on fewer than 4 of the 5 measures of well-being, and have no low-range scores.

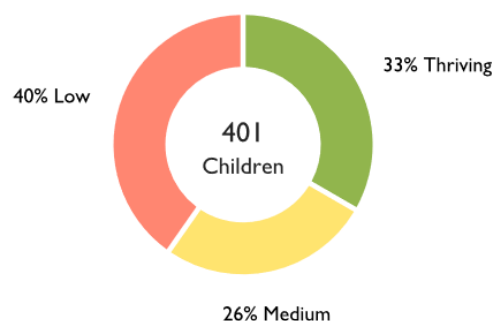


**Low Well-Being**  
Children who score in the low range on at least 1 of the 5 measures of well-being.

SKAHA LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL



OKANAGAN SKAHA



**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.

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.

Our 2020 data indicates that our new cohort of Grade 6 students entering the building feel a strong connection to our adults in the building. Our Grade 7 MDI data is comparable to our school district data.

**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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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%

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.

## 2020 Data

Our data indicates that our students have an overall positive connection with adults in our building. In exploring our MDI survey data, while our student cohort is at par with the district average, we have a large percent of students who scored Medium or Low in overall well-being. We will continue to delve into the indicators that lead to these results for many of our students.

## **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.

### 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.

### 2020- Hunch Moving Forward

With three years of data to reflect on, it is evident that there are many successes, as well as a lot of continued work that needs to be done when addressing student connectedness. As we move forward, we will continue to obtain data from our current students. In addition to having a base line of data to work from, we will be exploring our student programming through the lens of both, Middle School philosophy and the First Nations Principles of Learning as it pertains to academic achievement, mental health, and student connectedness for our students.

## **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.)**

### 2017 Professional Learning

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.

### 2018/19 Professional Learning

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.

## 2020 Professional Learning

Our staff have participated in many professional learning opportunities throughout the year:

- Connecting Middle years and Indigenous Pedagogies learning series put on by Judith King and Leyton Schnellert
- Work group focused on creating Learning Maps and Data Tally for our learners
- Work group focused on SLMS and the environment
- Staffed a CITS support teacher to work with staff on Assessment and Grading strategies that focused on the new curriculum and core competencies
- Staff Participated in a one-day workshop focusing on Restorative Practices for Indigenous Youth in our community
- During monthly staff meetings, staff focused on 'Circle Pedagogy and Building Community in classrooms' led by Corrie Goessman
- Ongoing participation in the district 'Through a Different Lens' program
- Teacher Collaboration with Shona Becker- the district Numeracy Helping teacher
- Ongoing participation in the School District 67 teacher mentorship program
- Ongoing professional learning in work groups focused on Mental Health

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

The following are examples of learning opportunities and collaborations that took place at SLMS:

- Schoolyard Enhancement Project: to support many of the initiatives the school is moving forward with, this project includes revitalizing our physical space around our school to promote wellness; painting of 4 Food Chiefs in Common Area; Indigenous Flag Raising Ceremony
- Reflecting on and analyzing the MDI data
- Cross Country Skiing program (Ab Ed program) with Spirit North
- Outdoor Learning opportunities
- 'Okanagan Song' sung by students at the opening of school wide assemblies
- Staff collaboration on a framework to establish 'School Values' to drive decision making
- Cross grade activities such as the 'Amazing Race'
- Clubs at noon hour for students: Coding, Games Club, We Club and Pride Club
- Delivery of the EASE program in classes to focus on Mental Health
- Sr. Buddies program organized by Mrs. Dietrich
- Peer Listening group composed of grade 7 and 8 students organized by Ms. MacDonald
- Indigenous Cultural themed activities throughout the year
- Grade 6 students participated in the DARE program and Pathways Lessons
- Developed a working relationship with Pathways Addiction counsellors to work in our building
- Developed a working relationship with the RCMP Youth Liaison Officer
- Grade level activities and learning opportunities such as the Grade 7 Reading Expo fair

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

Based on data from this school year, our staff continue to be pleased with the results from student surveys. Staff do feel that we are ready to explore new ways to increase student connectedness which will be a focus for the 2020-21 school year.

**Measures for next year:**

- ongoing reflections at monthly staff meetings
- utilizing the MDI data
- using student interviews as a structure to allow for student voice
- self-assessment on Aboriginal Education for All Rubric

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

- School goals, vision and student data will be an ongoing topic for discussion at monthly PAC meetings
- Continued use of school website, newsletters and social media
- District Celebration of Learning

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

- Parent Evening Occurred in September 2019
- Parents are invited into our school for various events and school functions
- Parental and family participation in joint programs
- Community members participated in the Grade 7 Reading Expo

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

The questions we used in our school survey in combination with the MDI data 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 center**

- Activities are focused on cognition and growth
- Working towards improving self-regulation
- Outdoor activities centered around exploration and inquiry
- Seeking opportunities for student voice into our school Vision

### **2. Social nature of learning**

- Teacher Collaboration
- Use of 'Circles' in the classroom and staff meetings
- Activities include cross-grade interactions
- Inquiry based model
- Learning opportunities with Elders and community
- Middle School Philosophy for Adolescent Learners

### **3. Emotions are integral to learning**

- Focus on Social Emotional Learning
- Growth Mindset
- EASE program
- PARK program
- Advisory groupings
- Connection to the land

### **4. Recognizing individual differences**

- Partake in various cultural programs
- Focuses on Core Competency: My Blueprint Portfolio
- Incorporates First Peoples Principles of Learning

### **5. Stretching all students**

- Outdoor Learning opportunities
- Exploratory Program
- Grade 7 Reading Expo Fair
- Implementing new curriculum (Core Competencies)

### **6. Assessment for learning**

- Reflective practices
- Ongoing feedback
- My Blueprint
- Data driven goals
- Assessment for learning practices embedded in teaching strategies

## **7. Building horizontal connections**

- Cross curricular/multi age level activities
- Leadership opportunities for students
- Amazing Race Event

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