

Goals and Objectives for 2016 and Beyond

Since opening in 2010, University Highlands has maintained school goals and objectives in relation to three themes: Community, Sustainability, and Inquiry-based Learning. Each year we have examined our progress and looked for ways to become more sophisticated and effective in our pedagogical practices in order to support each of the learners in our school. We understand that evidence-based practices take time to learn, implement and show results. We have implemented initiatives in each theme area focusing on key questions to guide our collaborative work, with the intent to build and grow an innovative and dynamic school culture that offers students multiple ways to engage with teaching and learning. We have welcomed the participation of five main stakeholder groups: Families, School District 41, the City of Burnaby, UniverCity and Simon Fraser University and we have strong partnerships with each.

Our plan is focused on ways of being in community that positively enhance student learning now and into the future, and therefore our measurement tools are largely qualitative, emphasizing teacher and student voice. Our School Planning and Parent Advisory Councils have been instrumental in refining our questions and providing appropriate measurement tools along the way. Their work in bringing teacher and student voices to the fore is invaluable.

As we refined our plan for the 2014-2015 school year it was decided that Social Emotional Learning begin to be a focus for staff and student learning. We see the importance of Social Emotional Learning in human development, as a foundation for our teaching and learning practices, and as a direct support for the growing success of each of our themes. Following Halbert and Kaser's Spirals of Inquiry model we used a professional development day in the Fall to *scan* our own knowledge along with emerging student needs. We have reviewed data that shows areas of student and staff need. We began to *focus*. In April and in September 2015 we worked with leaders in Social Emotional Learning determined to narrow our focus, enhance our learning and take action. The goals and objectives of our 2016 and beyond plan reflect the results of our scanning and focusing, and provide direction for taking action.

As a small school we have the luxury of knowing each child well. Our school-based team is highly effective and meetings always involve parents and when appropriate, outside resources (e.g. District Resource and/or Helping Teachers, MCF, medical professionals, behaviour analysts). Quality instruction is the foundation of our programming for all students and we use the Response to Intervention model to structure intensive, targeted intervention where needed. We have a collaborative, wrap-around approach to ensure our vulnerable students are well supported by many. English Language Learners have access to small group and whole class intervention via the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model.

It is worth noting that six teachers and the principal are involved in a joint Ministry of Education/School District project titled: Communicating Student Learning. Teachers and students are learning to document and reflect on learning and collaboratively create learning goals with parents. We are currently piloting a new way of reporting in 2 primary and 4 intermediate classrooms. This project contributes to our school plan as we learn to more tightly align our goals, instruction, assessment and reporting practices. Involving students in assessing their learning and setting academic goals promotes self-management, a core competency in the C.A.S.E.L. Model of Social and Emotional Learning.

We know that if we explicitly teach to the connection between self-awareness and management, all students, especially those struggling to build a success identity or regulate their emotions, will show improved academic progress. We will know our struggling learners are being positively impacted when we see them using strategies to self-manage, increased on-task behaviour and significant academic progress (i.e. moving toward or beyond meeting grade level expectations). See Goal 2 for specifics.

Goal 1: students will learn, and effectively implement, self-awareness and self-management strategies that maximize their learning potential.

Objectives	Strategies & Data Collection 2016 and beyond
<p>1. When we explicitly teach specific strategies to build self-awareness and self-management skills, then students will show an increased capacity to self-regulate, as measured by student self-assessments (gr. 4-7) and teacher assessments (gr. K-7).</p> <p>2. When we explicitly teach to the connection between self-awareness/management & learning, all students, especially those struggling to build a success identity and to regulate their emotions, will show improved academic progress as their capacity to learn will increase. We will know this is making a difference when we see students effectively using strategies to self-manage, increased on-task behaviour, and significant reading improvement. This will be measured by following specific students over time noting reading progress (Report Card &/or Benchmark Reading Assessment) and ability to self-regulate (Teacher Assessment of SEL).</p> <p><i>Appendix 1 shows summary data of concerning behaviours collected in May & Nov. 2015 and May 2016. Appendices 2 & 3 are the SEL rating tools used for objective 1. Data for Objective 2 is kept with the Principal.</i></p>	<p><u>Whole school strategies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All classes implementing MindUP lessons and core practice • Provide professional development days to explore the CASEL model (<i>Sept/15, Nov/15</i>) • Engage in professional development opportunities to explore a variety of resources to support learning in the 5 core competencies included in the CASEL model (e.g. Zones of Regulation, MindUP, Ruler) – <i>Note 3 teachers attending District RULER Training</i> • Send SEL information to parents via listserve (<i>Nov/15, Jan/16, April/16</i>) • Collect baseline data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nov. 27 – teacher and student self-assessments ○ Apr. 25 – repeat assessment & compare results • Invite speaker for parent information sessions – Michelle Srdanovic Feb. 29/16 • Continue to connect our 4 beliefs (respect, responsibility, kindness, safety) to SEL and the health of our community <p><u>Explicit teaching strategies to meet objective</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Practice at least once a day connecting calm mind & body with capacity to learn • Use an evidence-based program (RULER, Zones, MindUP) with opportunities to practice self-awareness/management, using stories, games, role play to learn skills. Practice in artificial and natural settings. • Explicitly connect SEL strategies to improved learning potential to help students understand its academic purpose.

Using Halbert & Kaser's Spirals of Inquiry Model to explore Social Emotional Learning

1. **Scanning** – what's going on for our learners?
 - May 2015: collected teacher observations of student social-emotional strengths and needs
 - Nov. 2015: sorted data collected in May into the 5 areas of the CASEL model and found that *social-awareness* and *self-management* were the two areas of highest concern for teachers
 - Dec. 2015: collected student self-assessment (gr. 4-7) and teacher assessments (gr. K-7) in the 5 CASEL areas
 - Jan. 2016: analyzed assessments and gave feedback to staff noting students who are struggling with SEL *and* with academic learning
 - April 2016: intermediate student self-assessments indicate support needed for relationships and responsible decision-making while teachers continue to have concerns regarding social-awareness and self-management
2. **Focusing** – Where are we going to place our attention?
 - Self-awareness and self-management will continue to be a focus using resources like MindUp, Zones of Regulation & RULER
 - Relationship skills and responsible decision-making will be addressed in intermediate classes
3. **Developing a hunch** – What's leading to this situation? How are we contributing to it?
 - Normal child development is reflected in some of the behaviours we see. We need to consider this in our SEL work for all ages.
 - High parent and teacher expectations may contribute to anxiety and perfectionism
 - Students' lives are highly structured in and out of school, leaving them little space to develop social skills
4. **New Professional Learning** – How and where can we learn more about what to do?
 - Engage with leaders in SEL in and outside of our district, attend district pro-d opportunities (e.g. RULER), investigate web sites (www.casel.org, www.selresources.com) and books to guide our practice
 - Collaborative conversations with colleagues
5. **Taking Action** – What will we do differently?
 - Involve our parent community via PAC, newsletters and parent information sessions
 - Implement core practice at least once/day in every classroom
 - Select a resource (e.g. RULER, Zones of Regulation, MindUP) and implement lessons at least once/week
 - Make explicit connections between regulated emotions and capacity to learn, help students understand that the two are linked
 - Incorporate SEL strategies in the classroom and in the Learning Support environment – explicitly teach and use language of Mindfulness, strategies like: take a breath, take a movement break, state your feelings
 - Teach positive language to struggling learners to build stamina and success identity (e.g. I can do it, This is hard but I can figure it out)
6. **Checking** – Have we made a big enough difference?
 - Re-assess & analyze (student self and teacher assessments over time. Is there a positive trend?)
 - Are students who frequently experience self-regulation challenges better able to manage themselves? This can be measured by teacher observation, grades, and/or frequency of office visits.

Goal 2: students will be engaged in meaningful learning with an emphasis on inquiry-based learning

Objective	Objective & Strategies/Data Collection 2016 & beyond
<p>In an inquiry-based learning environment, where learning is personalized, self-paced and socially constructed, students will effectively use metacognitive strategies (e.g. think aloud, self-question, noticing & naming what is happening) to participate in assessing their own learning.</p> <p>This will be measured by <i>teacher analysis of exit slips, conference observations, portfolio reviews.</i></p> <p>Possible reflective & goal setting language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K/1: I use pictures to help me learn the words. • 3/4: I used to read word for word but now I read fluently and with expression. • 6/7: I used to believe all the information on the internet but now I know how to check a source for validity and I look at many sources to see if they agree. • Any age: I notice new words and have ways to figure them out. My next reading goal is... 	<p><u>Whole School Strategies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 teachers to continue participating in <i>Communicating Student Learning</i> project, focused on aligning assessment and reporting practices with instruction – students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ engage in reflective practices to show and deepen their ability to think critically and creatively as they investigate essential questions ○ accurately assess and report their learning progress to parents using documentation ○ make learning visible to parents, encouraging meaningful dialogue about what happens in school • All teachers to evolve the ideas, strategies, ways of thinking & being that Learning in Depth has illuminated across the curriculum. Consider the paradigm shift in the revised curriculum that allows for in-depth inquiry of content and student passions <p><u>Explicit teaching strategies to meet objective</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make lesson purpose clear and explicit to students • Teach & practice reflective & goal language (I noticed, I learned, I used to think/but now, This is important because, My new goals are...) • Provide timely, descriptive feedback. • See Meeting the Needs of Each Learner Plan for additional details (Appendix 5). • Resources: <u>Making Thinking Visible</u>, <u>How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students</u>, <u>BC Ministry of Education Redesigned Curriculum</u>, <u>Creating Thinking Classrooms</u>

Descriptive Feedback Examples:

Effective	Not Effective
Next time you write a paragraph, make the first sentence an introduction to the rest of the sentences.	6/10
Your topic sentence and concluding sentence are clear and go together well.	Good job.
This lower case “u” needs a straighter stick.	Those are crooked, try again.
Your letters touch the top and bottom lines.	Great, you are finished.

Using Halbert & Kaser's Spirals of Inquiry Model to explore Inquiry

1. **Scanning** – what's going on for our learners?
 - Students are excited about inquiry and anxious to create but we notice a tendency to rush the beginning and a lack of ability to follow through. Students need **thinking strategies** to effectively plan an inquiry and to be able to use those skills to re-think and complete an inquiry. Once an obstacle is encountered students need **strategies to persevere** and to enjoy the sense of accomplishment and self-efficacy that comes from solving a problem. We are looking to the new Curriculum Competencies (Thinking) to inform our response to these needs.
2. **Focusing** – Where are we going to place our attention?
 - Inquiry is a process not a product – focus student attention on the “road to learning”
 - Make learning intentions explicit to students
 - Provide timely and effective descriptive feedback
3. **Developing a hunch** – What's leading to this situation? How are we contributing to it?
 - Students do not always know the purpose or relevance of their learning. Sometimes the teacher isn't clear or is unable to clearly articulate a purpose.
 - Our practice is often product focused thus the hidden message to students is that the product matters most. Whether with letter grades or marks, rubrics or comments, it is usually the final product that gets the summative feedback. Students focus on the end rather than the journey.
4. **New Professional Learning** – How and where can we learn more about what to do?
 - What are some ways to make learning visible to the student and to the teacher? What evidence of learning might we see during the learning process and beyond a finished product?
 - What are some observation and facilitation strategies (e.g. descriptive feedback, engaging with community experts) we need to learn & practice to move students forward – students who are seemingly unproductive, those who appear stuck, those who appear uninterested or disengaged, and those who need an expert?
 - How might using documentation help us with this objective? *Documentation is “the practice of observing, recording, interpreting, and sharing, through a variety of media, the processes and products of teaching and learning in order to deepen learning”* (Making Thinking Visible, p. 38).
 - Resources to consider: [Making Thinking Visible](#) by Pritchard, Church, & Morrison, Critical Thinking Consortium (www.tc2.ca)
 - Continued participation in Communicating Student Learning project
5. **Taking Action** – What will we do differently?
 - State the purpose of learning before a lesson in the classroom and in a learning support environment. For example: Today we are going to work on inference. Inferencing is important because it helps us to more fully understand a story. Here is an example of an inference. Teacher provides an example using think-aloud, works through examples with students. At end of lesson review lesson purpose, clarify the relevance of the learning and check for understanding.
6. **Checking** – Have we made a big enough difference?
 - Assess students' ability to use reflective and goal setting language to further their own learning.