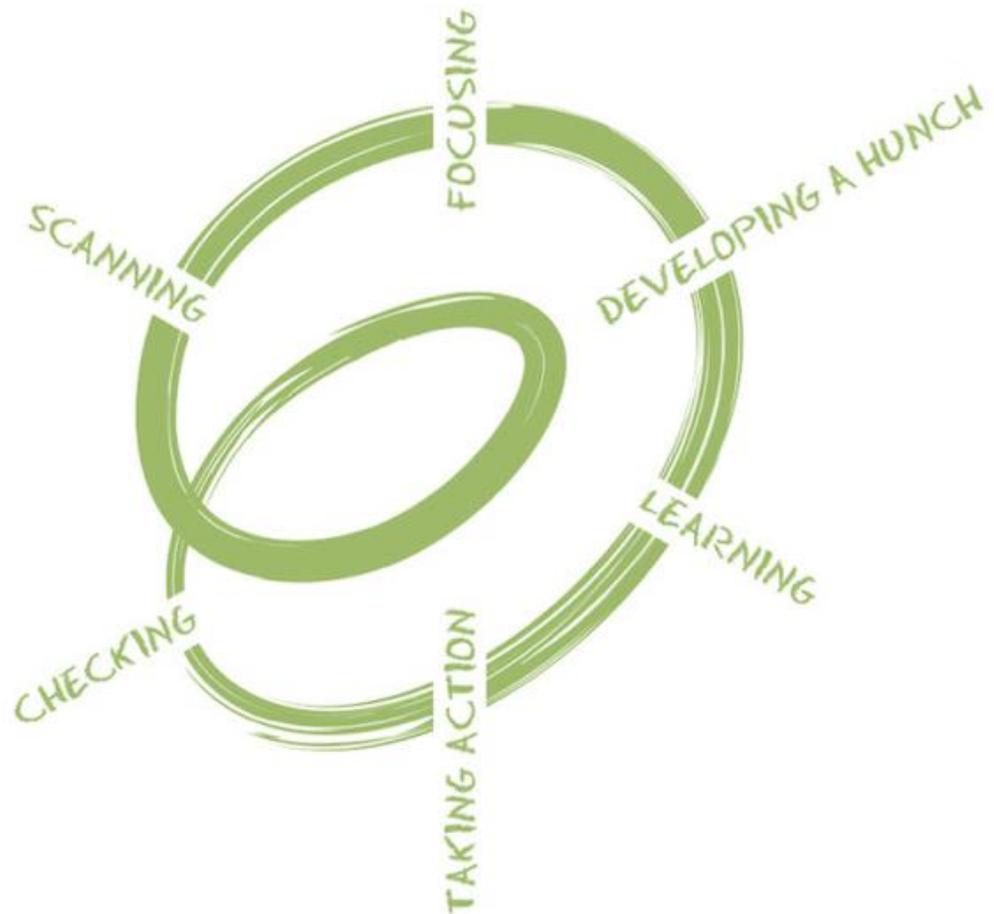


**School District 10 Arrow Lakes
School Growth Plan
2017-2020**



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



School: Nakusp Elementary School

School Context:

Nakusp Elementary School (NES) is located in the beautiful West Kootenay village of Nakusp, British Columbia. With its scenic views and endless outdoor opportunities, NES is surrounded by a pristine natural setting that provides excellent learning opportunities for its students. As such, the school motto "Learning is in our Nature" is very much a reality at NES.

NES serves a school population of 155 students from Kindergarten to Grade 7 in addition to the Strong Start students. NES has a professional staff of 24 educators each serving within different capacities. The current grade arrangement at NES is: a K, a K/1/2, a 2/3, a 3/4, a 4/5, two 5/6 classes, and a Gr. 7 class. The NES staff is a very vibrant pedagogical group that actively participates in Professional Development to hone their teaching skills. Students at NES benefit from a group of excellent and devoted educators.

The school itself has a fully operational library, gymnasium, and computer lab. There is also one room that has been created into a "Sensory Room" that caters to our students with particular sensory needs. However, the room has been widely used across the school for students who need a kinesthetic opportunity within their days. Teachers have been excellent at incorporating these supervised sessions into some of their students' regular schedule. The school has also developed a STEAM room to offer an alternate learning space to engage all our learners in hands on learning. Attached to the building is a Strong Start classroom that provides a rich learning environment for our early learners aged 0-5. The Strong Start incorporates lots of resources within the school to diversify the program and to provide a helpful transition for early learners to have success in Kindergarten. A full auditorium is attached to the school called "The Bonnington". This space is used by the school daily and is also a venue for community events. The playground at NES provides a vast open field with an attached community forest. Nearest to the entrance of the school is an excellent community jungle gym that has just recently been upgraded thanks to an initiative from the NES Parent Association Council (PAC). There is also two large concrete play areas, one with tetherball poles and the other with basketball hoops.

Day to day, NES is a very busy place! Members of the community are in and out of the school constantly which really reflects the openness of the learning environment. Students are given ample opportunities to extend their learning outside of their classrooms. This is largely due to the staffs strong and positive connections within the community.

Scanning

Staff met together to discuss the direction of our three year School Growth Plan. The discussion was based around the *Spirals of Inquiry* framework by Linda Kaser and Judy Halbert.

Staff first began a scanning process by looking at their own classroom context. Through an inquiry lens, students were looked at to see what particular trends were particularly apparent within each classroom setting. In consideration of many different focus areas, this information was shared with the school principal to see what trends were popping up across the school. These trends were shared and became the basis of discussions moving forward.

In reflection of these trends, staff continued to collectively scan student clientele based on the following sources of information:

- District Assessments
- Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)
- Foundation Skills Assessments (FSA's)
- Classroom Assessments - both formative and summative
- School Based Team meetings

Focusing

After a careful and collaborative study of the data available, the staff determined that the three following areas that would be focused on for the upcoming School Growth Plan would be:

- Social and Emotional Well-Being
- Numeracy
- Literacy

As a way to narrow the focus further, three goals were derived from these areas which will become the inquiry-based study for the following three years. These goals have been further narrowed down to create a focus each year.

Goal #1

--Improve our students' social and emotional well-being according to the Core Competencies. *Each class will use the Class Review process to identify the competencies and apply strategies they will focus on. Evidence of growth will be reflected by classroom assessments and the annual administration of the Middle Year Developmental Instrument (MDI).*

Goal # 2

--Improve our students' mathematical thinking; specifically, understanding math in conceptual ways.

Students shall acquire numeracy skills and build proficiency in math language so they can apply their skills to solving problems and making real world connections. They will be able to express

their math understanding through words, numbers, symbols, real life problems, graphics, models, and manipulatives. Students will focus on Number Sense to give them the foundational skills they need to build their numeracy skills.

Goal # 3

--Improve our students' ability to write effectively across a range of genres.

Students shall focus on the seven writing traits through a genre based lens to build their writing skills and improve their ability to communicate their ideas effectively and purposefully.

Developing a Hunch

Social Emotional Well Being

What is leading to this situation? Staff has been very cognizant of the social/emotional challenges of our students. Staff are concerned around the high levels of anxiety displayed by some of our students, challenges being dealt with from home environments, and how a great population of our students need some support in creating healthy relationships.

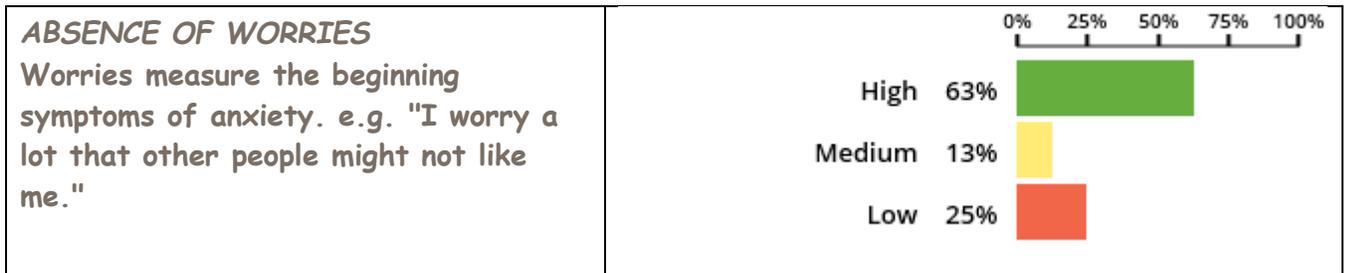
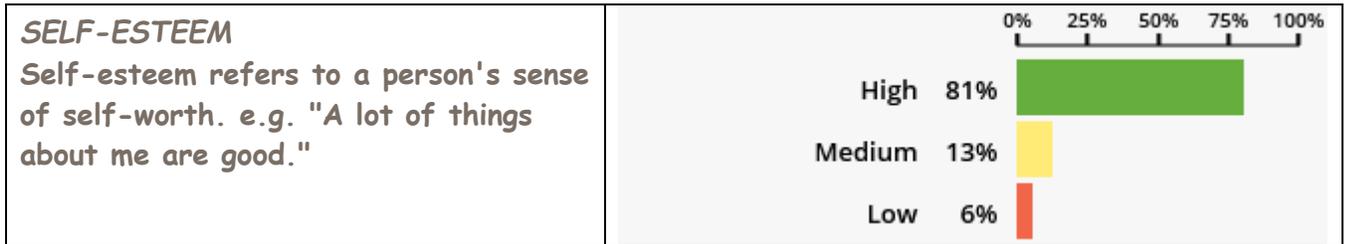
NES has been working with the WITS/LEADS program for the last two years and it has been met with varying levels of success. Students have been equipped with the WITS language as a part of their daily social toolkit, but staff are wondering about its overall effectiveness with the areas of concern stated above.

Our staff have also been working with the "Zones of Regulation", "MindUp", and "FRIENDS" programs. The Zones of regulation builds a foundation for understanding a recognizing emotions. It focuses on building a healthy understanding of their emotions while equipping students with strategies for emotional self-regulation. MindUp ad FRIENDS both use research based methods rooted in neuroscience and counselling psychology to teach students how to gain control and have an understanding of their own mental health and the well-being of others.

The MDI assessment will be used as a general baseline next year. As interventions are provided through the exploration of the curricular Core Competencies, staff will review information on an annual basis to see where greater interventions need to be in place for positive growth in the subsequent year.

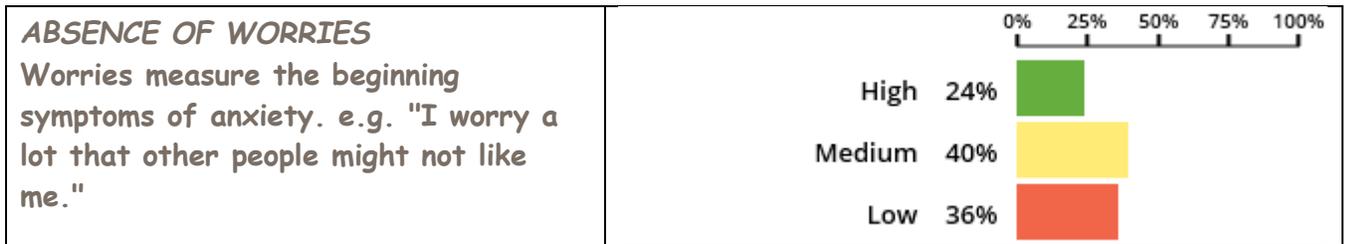
For the reader's consideration, here are some strengths and stretches revealed by the MDI assessment from the 2016/2017 school year. A green indication means a positive measure where red means an area of concern:

Grade 4



As what one can see from the table above, while our Gr. 4 cohort is generally content there is a high percentage of students feeling some levels of worry. There is also a positive percentage of students who feel that "there is an adult who believes I will be a success." The same tables for the Grade 7 cohort are shared below:

Grade 7



Numeracy

As stated above, the staff is interested on making our students stronger 'math thinkers'. The complicated task at this point is what source of information will be most supportive and telling to help show growth in this area over time. According to 2015/16 FSA results, students are doing quite well with their numeracy skills:

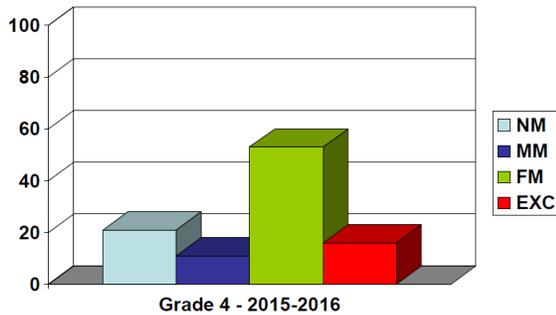
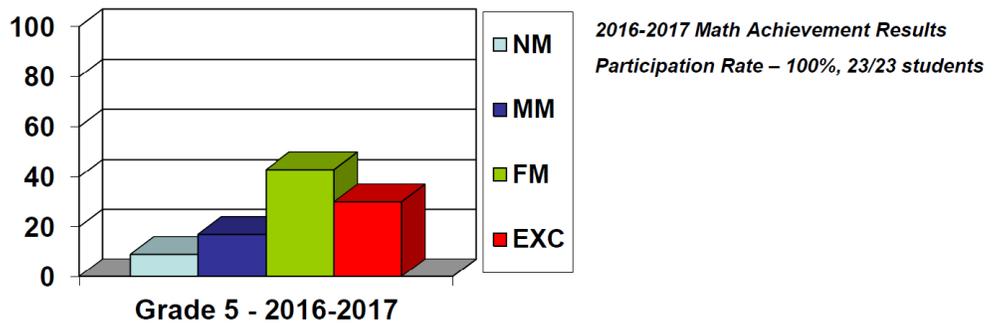
FSA 2015/16
Numeracy Results

	Not Yet Meeting	Meeting	Exceeding
Grade 4	6%	28%	67%

Grade 7	15%	63%	22%
---------	-----	-----	-----

Over the last two years staff have also been using the district math assessment to gather information. The District Math Assessment is effective for gathering information on how students are able to represent their Math knowledge in discrete areas in a number of ways. Through this assessment we can see that many of our students are not meeting expectations.

School District 10 (Arrow Lakes) NES Math Writing



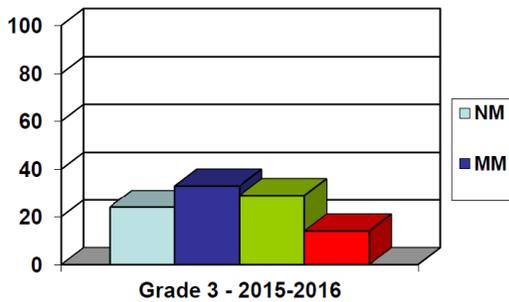
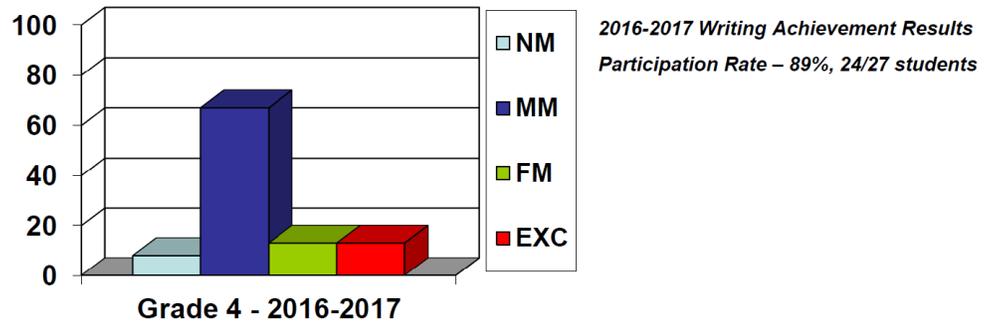
2015-2016 Math Achievement Results
Participation Rate - 95%, 19/20 students

2014-2015 Grade 3
Incomplete Data

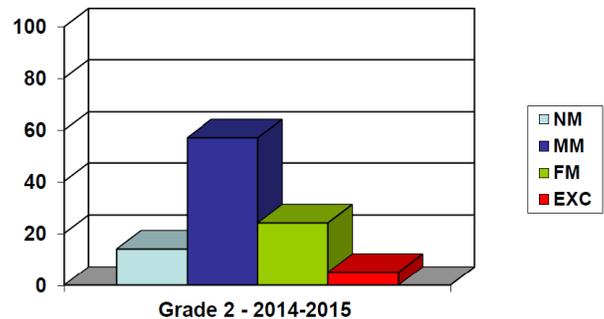
Literacy

During the 2017/2018 school year, staff noticed a distinct lag in our students Literacy performance, particularly in the area of writing. This was clear by examining FSA data as well as the District Writing Assessment. It was identified that students have little understanding of how to produce effective written evidence of their ideas in a variety of genres.

School District 10 (Arrow Lakes) NES District Writing



*2015-2016 Writing Achievement Results
Participation Rate – 100%, 21/21 students*



*2014-2015 Writing Achievement Results
Participation Rate – 95%, 21/22 students*

Taking Action

The following specific actions will be taken as initiatives moving forward on the school goals come in place:

Social and Emotional Well Being of Students

- Use of formative assessment to provide insights on students' social/emotional needs
- Creating school clubs that help students build a sense of belonging
- Focus on curricular Core Competencies. Discuss and collaborate on connecting these students with the competencies through various instructional means. Check in's throughout the year on how students are connecting with these competencies will provide 'fuel' for discussions during staff meetings.

Numeracy

- Use of formative assessment to guide instruction.
- Continue to emphasize instructing math in more conceptual ways.
- Focus on building Number Sense and school wide Vocabulary
- Fluency in operational and mental math

Literacy

- Collaborate between grade levels to implement a genre based language arts program
- Build rubrics connected to the curricular competencies and performance standards to help students self-assess their work and create learning goals to reach for throughout the year

Parental/Community Involvement

As it is always encouraged and promoted at NES, parents are always welcome to help with any school initiatives. NES will continue to collaborate with parents (based on whatever situation) as they have always done so.

Communication about happenings at NES will continue to be sent home via individual teacher communicative practices, through social media, and newsletters.

Connection to the 7 Principles of Learning:

1. Learners at the center

- Students are, entirely, the focus of the School Growth Plan. All conversations within this plan have been crafted with NES students in mind and how we, as a staff, can better serve them to meet their educational needs.

2. Social nature of learning

- For students to function well at school, they need to feel safe and secure. They need to know that the adults in the building are there for them. The focus area of this growth plan is meeting the social and emotional needs of our students. We know as a staff that learning can more adequately take place when students are in a healthier state of mind and are connecting well with their peers.

3. Emotions are integral to learning

- As mentioned above, efforts will be taken to consider the emotional state of our students day to day as they enter the building and assess and instruct as needed.

4. Recognizing individual differences

- Classrooms within the public school system are filled with a diversity of learners. This growth plan recognizes the spectrum of students at NES, with a particular focus on social and emotional well-being and numeracy. NES staff are very cognizant of this and are very aware of the individual needs within the school. The focus areas of this plan were based in full recognition of diversity of clientele we serve at this school.

5. Stretching all students

- Efforts will be taken to stretch student both academically (looking at different ways students can be supported and challenged with their numeracy skills) and socially (how to interact with their peers in positives ways).

6. Assessment for learning

- Formative assessment practices will be used within both of these focus areas. In terms of building a greater numeracy capacity, assessments will be used to determine next best instructional steps. Being aware of how students understand curricular Core Competencies will be a central focus next year.

7. Building horizontal connections

- This plan was created as a collaborative, reflective, and student minded approach to meeting educational and emotional needs of our students.

Signing Off Page

	Name	Signature
Principal:		
Parent:		
Parent:		
Student:		
ALTA Representative		
CUPE Representative		

Date:

Approval of the Board and Superintendent:

Board Chair:

Signature

Superintendent:

Signature