

Dr. D. A. Perley Elementary School

2016-17 Growth Plan

1. Scanning: *What is going on for our learners?*

Through our scanning process, staff and parents looked at school and ministry satisfaction surveys, MDI results, FSA data (5 years trends) and teacher anecdotal comments on student learning. After looking at the data in small groups of teacher and parents, the whole group discussed the data and what it might mean for moving forward in our school growth plan. The issues discussed were:

- Writing results, particularly for boys, are low (FSA and teacher anecdotal)
- Writing is a cause of anxiety for many students (teacher anecdotal)
- Reading comprehension results also lower for boys (FSA and teacher anecdotal)
- Too many students are not reading at grade level (school based assessment)
- Kids are lacking organizational skills.....Self-regulation (teacher anecdotal)
- Lack of organizational skills/incomplete and missing work creates anxiety (anecdotal)
- Problem solving skills are weak for many students (teacher anecdotal)
- 41% of grade 7 students do feel the adults at school are important to them (MDI)
- Student anxiety continues to be an issue for many students (teacher anecdotal, student support services)

2. Focusing: *Using information from our scan, what do we need to focus on to support our students?*

Intellectual: We need to focus on developing the Executive Functioning skills in our students. We have identified reading and writing skills, organizational and problem solving as areas we need to work on improving for students. By working to develop Executive Functioning skills (such as following directions, controlling impulses, focusing, being patient, perseverance) we could see an improvement in overall student reading levels, writing levels and an improved ability to problem solve and stay organized. We have identified a number of areas for growth, and by teaching explicit

strategies to improve overall executive function, we may realize a growth in each of the areas.

Human/Social: We must continue our focus on developing a learning environment that is welcoming, makes students feel connected to each other and staff and helps to reduce anxiety that we know impacts many of our students

Career Development: Critical and creative thinking, communication and social responsibility competencies are important to career development choices as students get older. We can work on these competencies through our Learning in Depth program.

3. Developing a hunch: *What can you do about your focus?*

Perley students come to school with a wide variety of needs. Lack of sleep, hunger, anxiety, poor critical-thinking and problem solving skills and poor attention skills are some of the issues facing a growing number of students.

Human and Social: We need to continue to build a school community that is welcoming, kind and supportive so that students feel a greater connection to the school and the adults in it. We also need to build a better understanding of what life is like for students outside of school.

Intellectual: If we can provide opportunities for students to develop Executive Functioning skills, we should see an overall improvement in learning and achievement. Along with this, we need to provide some of our students with direct, specific reading interventions to improve their reading abilities. Improved executive function and improved reading abilities should lead to an improvement in writing levels.

Career Development: If we implement Learning in Depth across the school, we will provide students the opportunity to develop critical and creative thinking skills, problem solving skills and communication skills. It is these competencies that students need to develop as they look toward working and future careers.

Below are the sections the staff will be working on starting in August

4. Learning: *What professional learning will you pursue to positively impact your skills to deal with your hunch?*

Together at school NID times and staff meetings, teachers will be asked to research specific strategies that can improve Executive Function. They will be asked to focus on things such as:

Helping students keep track of progress and evaluate how they are doing

Improve emotional control (social situations and at school) and flexibility

Breaking tasks down and creating a plan to get started on things

Planning and Prioritizing and organizational skills

Avoiding/ignoring distractions

Staff will work together in grade groups to decide on strategies. The focus will change as the year progresses.

Dan Duncan will present to staff about ADHD. This fits exactly within Executive Function as many of our students exhibit many of the characteristics of ADHD students but have not diagnosis.

On the Provincial NID day in October, staff have been encouraged to attend workshops or seminars that have a focus on reducing student anxiety or a focus on Executive Functioning skills.

Staff who stay here for the NID day in October have the choice to attend and all day work shop on self-regulation presented by POPARD.

As the year progresses, staff will explore how the Core Competencies fit into our focus on Executive Function.

5. Taking Action: What will you do differently as school to have a positive impact on your students?

The key in this area is to teach specifically to a child's deficiency (rather than hoping they get it through osmosis). All of our students are at different developmental levels or levels of proficiency so some students will require greater teacher and support in some of these areas

Working in grade groups, staff chose two specific areas to work on over October/November.

K/1 will use the Mind Up program and Zones of Regulations to help our youngest students be more aware of their own bodies and staying focused and calm at school.

Primary teachers will be focusing on games that promote memory. Playing a variety of games that require concentration, quick response, strategy and attention help to develop Executive Function. They will also focus specifically on organization. Students will be taught about clean and tidy desks and lockers (not losing things), work that is organized and complete and agenda use.

Early intermediate teachers will focus specifically on organizational skills (class routines, organized personal items). They will also focus on self-control (regulation).

Upper intermediate teachers will focus on organizational skills such as keeping desks and lockers neat and tidy, and organizing work so that they have a plan for getting started and completing assignments. They will also teach problem solving skills.

At the September 30 NID, staff will share the conversations they had with students introducing Executive Function. They will also share the experience so far with the focus on the areas they chose. At a staff meeting in November, staff will again visit the areas of Executive Function and commit to two other areas to focus on with students.

For our Anxiety goal, staff will continue with the strategies they started last year. For some, the key was regular ongoing communication with home. This helped reduce parent and student anxiety around assignments and staying organized. Providing time and space (sensory room) for students

to regulate at different times in the day. Using regular exercise (brain breaks, walks, playground time) to help students stay regulated and focused. Using regular communication with Learning Support teachers and CYCCs to ensure student needs are met.

After meeting with Judy and Linda, items to consider

Carol Dweck Mindset lessons

YouTube video of Carol Dweck mindset – relates directly to EF

When I get stuck, I...

Vertical teaching...letting kids stand and write at the board or window or smart board.

Make the goals very public to kids...talk to classes about what they are working on...give kids the language.

Developing Self Regulated learning – Leyton Schnellert – Chapter 4 Goal setting

Ron Berger – “What does a great one look like?”

6. Checking: *Did your efforts make a positive difference for your students?*

How will you know if your actions had a positive impact on your students?

How will the work on the EF have an impact on student learning.

What is the impact on writing.