

NWSS School Learning Plan 2019/20

CONTEXT: WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT OUR LEARNERS

- NWSS is the only secondary school in New Westminister, BC, with roughly 2100 students between the grades of 9-12. We service a very diverse population. Being the only high school in the city, NWSS offers many different types of programs for students including International Baccalaureate, Construction Diplomas, Red Seal Apprenticeships, Alternate Education, French Immersion, Sports Academies, and one of the largest online virtual schools in BC. At NWSS, there are many strong connections among staff, students, parents and the community.
- Two years ago, we began a learning journey towards Collective Teacher Efficacy (CTE). In essence, CTE refers to a staff's shared belief that through their collective action, they are capable of developing students' critical thinking skills, creativity, and engagement. One of the most important aspects of collective efficacy is the use of student data as evidence to monitor improvement. Staff analyzed student learning data provided by the Ministry of Education in order to make an informed decision about the Growth Plan. This process was combined with the results of the June 2018 meeting where teachers were also involved in decision making by narrowing down our goal options to three areas of Professional Learning for the following year. Through this process of focused conversations, student data analysis, and interest in the three focal areas of Indigenous Perspectives, Communicating Student Learning, and Experiential Learning, the latter emerged as our school goal. Indeed, how experiential learning is defined depends on context. Experiential learning encompasses learning from peers, teachers, family, the land, and members of the local community. From our work this past year, staff found that a high focus on real-life learning inside and outside the classroom increases engagement and ownership of learning. Moreover, when participants are immersed in investigating and problem solving real life issues and events, the level of student ownership of learning is high.
- This year we began developing our school learning plan during our September Pro D Day, where we explored what our ideal school would look like. In table groups staff brainstormed, discussed and prioritized the values and characteristics of their ideal school. Next, we unpacked some of last year's data (i.e. Student Learning Survey results) and examined two key aspects: how we progressed with respect to our school goal (last year), and how does the data align with our desire to make NWSS our ideal school. We finished this larger conversation by soliciting staff feedback about what they would like to focus on during the 2019-20 school year. From their feedback, three key themes arose: student ownership of learning, engagement, and community.

GOAL: WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE

- After our September Pro D, we revisited the staff feedback at the following staff meeting, and from there a group of teachers met to sift through the feedback results and to refine our school goal. From our conversations, it became clear from staff that they wanted to continue to build off of the work that was done last year in creating experiential learning opportunities; and also to gear our efforts towards enhancing student ownership and engagement. With this in mind, our staff moved towards pursuing the following goal: veer
- * To improve the student experience in order to increase student engagement and student ownership of learning.**

PLAN: THE STEPS WE WILL TAKE

Key Results

- Review of, and reflection upon, data from the current school year (Student Learning Survey, report cards, attendance records).
- Review/explicit teaching of concepts and language that are consistent with experiential learning, student engagement and ownership of learning.
- Surveys of students and parents administered, reviewed and action items identified.
- Intentional learning opportunities and experiences provided for students to demonstrate what it means to be an engaged and active learner.

Timeline

- August/September
- Fall/Spring (October-April; ongoing throughout the year): celebration of learning shared at monthly staff meetings, collaboration days, professional development days, etc.
- May/June: Review and acknowledgement of our progress, and future considerations for adapting our School Learning Plan.

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Sample strategies include:

- Involve students in the learning process by allowing choice in assignments, and what they study; involve students in the assessment process.
- Create opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and feedback. Use more rubrics - if we are teaching differently, we have to assess differently.
- Explicit teaching of self-assessment in the Core Competencies to help students see the relevance of learning in school to their future beyond school.
- Organize field trips in order to connect learning to a sense of place.
- Invite local elders, members of the community, leaders, to speak to students.

- Frequent opportunities for student voice/ownership/engagement in school initiatives and activities (such as school clubs, student-led campaigns, community engagement, etc.)
- Staff collaboration with colleagues/teacher coach/district facilitators around experiential learning, cross-curricular lesson planning, communicating student learning.

SUCCESS INDICATORS: HOW WE WILL KNOW THAT OUR ACTIONS ARE HAVING THE DESIRED IMPACT

- Evidence of teachers trying new strategies:
 - teachers sharing examples at monthly staff meetings, collaboration days, Pro D days;
 - compilation of teacher lessons and resources (that focus on student engagement and ownership) on our shared drive;
 - teacher participation/enrolment in professional learning opportunities.
- Evidence of students demonstrating qualities of an engaged learner (i.e. An engaged learner: takes responsibility for their own learning, thinks critically about their learning by asking questions, etc.)
For example, ongoing Core Competency development:
 - Reflection and goal setting will encourage students to take responsibility and ownership of their learning.
 - Goal attainment will strengthen our students' sense of accomplishment
 - Self and peer assessment will develop students' critical thinking skills as well as their ability to identify their strengths and challenges
 - Effective feedback will encourage student reflection, help students to direct their efforts toward greater engagement and control over their learning
 - Communication skills will be developed through regular opportunities for self-reflection, peer assessment,
- Feedback from parents and students pertaining to our objectives considered and incorporated into our implementation of the School Learning Plan throughout the year.
- Evidence of student voice and engagement within the school (Student Learning Survey, attendance data)

COMMUNICATION: HOW WE WILL SHARE OUR LEARNING JOURNEY WITH OUR COMMUNITY

- Announcements, class discussions, and student leadership initiatives
- Self-Assessment of Core Competencies
- Parent engagement through email, school messenger, school website, social media, PAC meetings, and parent and student surveys
- Communicating student learning informally (parent/teacher interviews) and formally (report cards) in student and parent friendly language
- Make our school learning focus visible in our school