

School Growth Planning Process

School name **Grey Mountain Primary School SEPT 2021 - JUNE 2022 (Feb 2022 update)**

Vision and mission **Mission Statement of GMP: We work together to be respectful, responsible, and reach for our best. We value lifelong learning, meaningful participation in our community and strong relationships between parents/guardians, students, and staff.**

School profile/
demographic

In a few paragraphs describe your school and the student population it serves

GMP is a small primary school serving approximately 55 students ranging from Kindergarten to Grade 3. Most of the children live in the Riverdale area of Whitehorse, Yukon. Twenty-six percent of our students have Aboriginal ancestry, with 16% self-identifying with a Yukon First Nation.

The school hosts a number of academic and community-building gatherings such as Bedtime Book Bonanza, Poetry Slam, Celebration of Learning, French plays performed by students, Back to School BBQ, January Welcome Back hot breakfast, Christmas Crafternoon, mini-Rendezvous that have traditionally been well attended. With the global pandemic, some of these events will not take place. Character education, empathy building, formative assessment practices, and Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS) are an integrated part of the school culture. The atmosphere is caring, safe, and welcoming. Over the past several years, the staff has remained fairly stable with low staff turnover.

Cultural inclusion
standards
(Yukon First Nations ways
of knowing and doing)

Cultural awareness **Cultural awareness continues to be a major focus at GMP. Currently, territorial recognition is visible in classrooms by way of posters and murals. Several staff members have participated in the Blanket exercise and engaged with in-servicing with Yukon Univeristy faculty around decolonizing the classroom.**

Access to knowledge **We continue to welcome Yukon First Nation Elders, parents, artists, and athletes into the school to share their knowledge in relation to curriculum and learning events as we seek to embed Yukon First Nations ways of knowing**

and doing into every part of the school day. Classroom teachers embed cultural activities into their classrooms as they are able and incorporate land based learning including forest schooling and land based experiences.

Relationships

GMP continues to strengthen their relationship with the First Nations Initiative branch and with local First Nations resource people. The Elijah Smith Elementary School dancers have regularly performed at our school. Restorative circles for problem-solving are used. Through the Yukon First Nations Education Directorate (YFNED), breakfast and lunch programs are offered to students. Food hampers have been delivered to Yukon First Nations families at our school.

Languages

A visual display of Grey Mountain Primary translated in Southern Tutchone (provided by Hazel Bunbury) is showcased in the front foyer upon entry into the school. A welcome song (by Linda Harvey) was given to the grade 1 class and has been shared with the whole school. There are Southern Tutchone labels in some areas of the school. Yukon-based guided reading books (Eaglecrest, Northwinds) are used in classrooms. All students learn O Canada in Southern Tutchone.

School Growth Plan Outline

1) Scanning: Briefly summarize your scanning process. How did you use the Class Review, observations, four key questions as part of the scanning process? What did you notice about the experiences of your learners that were most important to your team? How did you use the OECD 7 Principles of Learning and the First Peoples Principles of Learning in your scanning process?

There are many unique circumstances in play for the 2021-2022 school year including the continued global pandemic. Building upon the success of the 2020-2021 School Growth Plan, and using the Spiral of Inquiry framework, we continued to focus on operating the school in a healthy and safe way, and strengthening relationships. It may be necessary to pivot quickly to adjust to the health and safety of our school community.

Scanning has revealed a range in comfort levels among students, staff, and parents with respect to being at school during the pandemic as evidenced through conversations and school attendance. Realizing how fragile the situation is and how quickly things can change has reaffirmed that our focus for this year is the right area to direct our energies.

2) Focus: In a few sentences, explain why you have selected this area. What changes are you hoping to obtain for your teachers?

Considering the current unprecedented global situation, and the Department of Education priority on health and safety, we have focused on:

1. Opening and running the school in a healthy and safe manner with operational safety plans in place
2. Rebuilding relationships between and among students, parents, and staff

We believe focusing on these two areas will yield an improvement of academic outcomes for students, particularly with respect to literacy.

3) Hunch: Describe your hunches about the ways in which your practice or practices at the school may contribute to the experiences of your learners. Develop your hypothesis.

As the year progressed, there was an increase in COVID cases in our community and in our school. In November, there was a new requirement for staff and students to wear masks in all indoor areas. Our hunch is that as COVID cases increase, parents, students, and staff may become more unsettled. It will be increasingly important to focus on following the health and safety guidelines and to ensure that relationships are nurtured so that we can get on with the important work of improving academic outcomes for students.

The school is providing consistent messaging and communication around health and safety practices at the school. As staff learn and practice health and safety guidelines, they will be more relaxed and better able to teach. As staff are settled and unified, they co-regulate the students, and the students are more ready to learn.

4) New professional learning: What new areas of professional learning do you plan to explore? What resources may be helpful? What specific tools will you use for your professional learning to support the learning of your students?

Health and Safety:

PD Day- August 19, 2021: Health and Safety Guidelines at the school; Continuity of Learning requirements

Regular Staff meetings - regular check-ins with respect to the physical and emotional health and safety of the school

Rebuilding Relationships

PD Day - August 20, 2021: Territory Wide focus on Inclusive Education

PD Day - October 22, 2021: Inclusion PD with Shelley Moore

PD Day - November 12, 2021: Inclusive Education with Nikki Yee

PD Day - January 17, 2022: Mental Health and Wellness with Bonnie MacDonald and Stace Burnard

Literature provided to all staff: Kids These Days and From The Ashes

5) Taking action: Describe the strategies you and your team will use. How will learning rounds be structured and support your learning?

Health and Safety:

1. Following the K-12 safety guidelines for educational settings
2. Hand washing practices
3. Keeping students in each class as a 'bubble'
4. Students and staff staying home when ill
5. Keeping 2m apart where possible
6. As of November 15, 2021 mask use for adults and children in all indoor spaces at school the school
7. Mental/Physical Health: Wellness Pilates Classes offered to staff 2 times per week (September - June)

Rebuilding Relationships:

1. Frequent on-going communication with parents by way of email, newsletters, phone calls, zoom, website
2. School wide soft starts for students - staff making intentional connections with students
3. Keeping class and school routines consistent and predictable
4. Taking time at staff meetings to check-in with each other
5. Two in-person conferences with parents (September and April)

6) Checking (after taking action, or in debriefing in Learning Rounds): Summarize the differences you made. Were they enough? Were you satisfied? What did you use as baseline - and change - evidence? How much richer are your learners' answers to the four questions? How will you make learning visible?

As a result of our focus, here's what we're noticing so far:

- students, parents, and staff are generally comfortable to be in school, based on conversations
- parents are comfortable with the safety plans in place, given the COVID guidelines for K-12 school settings
- students are settled into the school as evidenced by very few office referrals for behaviour problems
- there is a sense of calm, perhaps due to whole-school soft starts, predictable routines, greater understanding of developmentally responsive practices, and limited extra events
- the expected slide in academic performance was not as severe as expected, given that in-class learning was suspended from March - June 2020

7) Reflections/advice: Finish by sharing what you learned from this inquiry, where you plan to go next, and what advice you would offer other schools with similar interest.

This is the second year of this particular growth plan focus. Qualitative data collected from staff in June 2021 indicates that the focus our school took for the 2020-2021 school year made a tremendous impact on their own wellness, which in turn had a positive impact on student learning. Highlighted quotes from staff include:

- Knowing that my wellness mattered made a huge difference in what could have been an extremely challenging year, given the global pandemic. I felt excited to come to work and up for what each day brought. I had assurance that our school was following safety protocols. Mostly, I was in a good position to make a difference for kids.
- I felt calm, regulated and able to best co-regulate my students. Win-win!
- Our focus on connection worked so well for not only the children but the staff as well. As team we came together and helped so many kids. I think going forward we keep connection as a priority.

- Considering this being the year of the pandemic, we as a school responded in a way that suited our primary aged students, with enough precautions to keep us conscious of the safety we needed to maintain but also with the humanity and care that students of this age need in terms of community and personal attention.
- I took advantage of the Pilates classes and that was very positive in terms of my personal physical well-being as well as it being a chance to release stress, challenge each other and be supportive of one another's weak areas. We had many good laughs.
- I felt very supported this year. I appreciated the books we were given as gifts. "From the Ashes" by Jesse Thistle was a good insight into the turmoil some kids are in and yet he left me hopeful for each one.
- It seems to me that kids and staff have been, for the most part, happy at school, and feeling very connected to their classroom cohort, well aware of the expectations - including the expectations regarding health and safety. This has resulted in opportunities to do lots of productive and creative class activities.
- Our soft start was very beneficial for our students. Not only did it give the students time for getting settled, it was a learning time to learn how to play with other students. I like that if students are late they are not missing out on some of the teacher's instructions.
- Relationship building at the start of the year was so important, as children had been out of school for so long, and had lost some of the friendship connections that bring confidence. We did a lot to foster a feeling of safety in the class, mostly in relation to expressing our feelings and being open about any fears that might exist around Covid19 for children. I am very pleased that we chose to focus on these two key school priorities, and I think there were definitely positive impacts on academic success for children as a result.
- I think it felt like the school growth plan really reflected and related to what people (staff and students) were experiencing. To me the school growth plan was a success. The measures taken were good but what I think was really exceptional was how these health and relationship strategies created an attitude of caring and an amplified atmosphere in the school of kindness and caring. We had that atmosphere before, but this growth plan really emphasized the importance of a safe and caring environment and helped to continually remind us.
- I feel certain that the gentleness and supportive environment in the school helped create the great year we are having. Kids are progressing in academics and there is a feeling of happiness and normalcy in the school. There is lots of laughter and lots of learning. I'm happy to go to work every day.
- Mental health was a top priority and I really needed to take care of myself, my students, and my co-workers by constantly checking in. The Pilates classes were essential to my well being this year.
- I can see that students were comfortable and regulated during school because of the school wide growth plan. They had less transitions, they were comfortable to share feelings and ask questions during sharing circles and I felt comfortable because we had clear plans in place. Each student progressed and it was a successful year.
- I feel that it has been long overdue examining the wellness of educators, in order to take care of students. Otherwise, there is a huge gap in how we deliver our curriculum and lead as a school. Because of this SGP I have never felt more

connected, supported and loved by my school team. I have also never felt more healthy, physically and mentally, as a full time educator. My work/life balance was really supported this year and that is so paramount to building a good life, for ones self and as an educator. I cant speak enough about how this SGP worked in positive ways. I really hope it is carried forward into next year, as a way to continue fostering these values in school for staff.

Based on the staff reflections and conversations with parents about this growth plan, we will continue to build on this work in the 21-22 school year, continuing to focus on those 2 priorities. Academic outcomes will continue to be measured.

8) Student achievement/Key indicators for success:

Baseline

Reading levels - data collected in September

Target

All students will be at or above grade level in reading, or meet their reading goal outlined in their Learning Plan, as measured by PM Benchmarks

Results

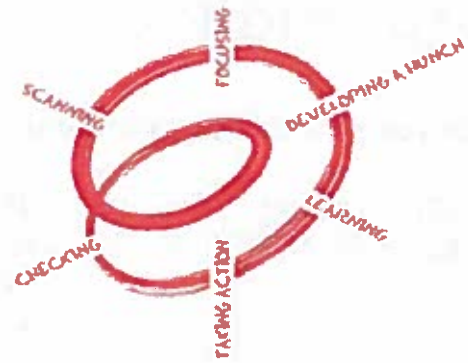
Based on June 2021 PM Benchmark data, 90% of our students (Grade 1-3) were reading at or above grade level at the end of the school year.

**This data does not include students who have either a Learning Support Plan or an IEP. Those students are making progress on their individual reading goals.

Appendix 1

School Growth Plan

The school develops a school growth plan for growth using the *Spiral of Inquiry* (Halbert, Kaser and Timperley, 2012) framework to inform the process.



Scanning: What's going on for our learners:

- Using data from a variety of sources including the initial Class Review, teacher observations and evidence of student learning, the team scans their learners.

Focusing: What will give us the greatest impact for student learning?

- Examining the scanning data, the team highlights areas of possible focus in professional learning.
- Begin by choosing one area of focus that will have the greatest impact on learners and learning.
- Is the area of focus big enough?
- Will it really make a difference?

Developing a Hunch: How are we contributing to the issue?

- The team considers the ways in which we, as educators, may be contributing to the selected area of focus.
- What are our biases?
- Are there other factors which contribute?
- What can we directly impact and change?

New Professional Learning: How and where can we learn more about what to do?

- What are the resources that can further my learning in the area I have chosen to focus?
- Books, research literature, professional learning networks and colleagues, Professional Development days are all possible sources of new professional learning.

Taking Action: What will we do differently?

- After the team develops the inquiry focus and considers new professional learning to help frame how to change teaching to better meet the needs of learners.
- This stage involves thoughtful planning and set up in the weeks before the Learning Round- what teaching and learning practices are being explored or deepened?
- A schedule is established for meetings and to consider how reflective practice will be incorporated.
- Roles for the team members are established, ensuring that the Principal or Vice-Principal is involved in supporting teacher professional growth.

Checking: Have we made enough of a difference?

- By examining evidence of student learning, and examining the initial focus and baseline observations and data, the teacher and the team, ask themselves: How have students improved? Has my teaching made (enough of) a difference? Using the spiral of inquiry, do we need to revisit the focus? The new learning?

Appendix 2

Seven principles of learning and the implications for inquiry-oriented leaders

What works for LEARNERS?	What this means for LEADERS
Put learners at the centre	Leaders must be relentlessly curious about what's going on for students in the system. Student learning is the driving force, but students aren't the only learners. In an innovative learning environment, everyone is a learner, including teachers, support staff, formal leaders, parents and others.
Emphasize the social nature of learning	Leaders collaborate, cooperate, and support networked learning.
Understand that emotions are central to learning	Leaders understand and apply the dynamics of social and emotional learning . They are attuned to their own emotions and motivations, and to the emotions and motivations of others—including the positives, like satisfaction and self-efficacy; and the negatives, like helplessness and anxiety. They understand how emotions affect performance.
Recognize individual differences	Leaders understand the dynamics of their team members, including their strengths, interests, experiences, and gaps in learning. They draw on these differences and help everyone in the system to develop through carefully designed professional learning.
Stretch all learners	Leaders stretch themselves and others, but they avoid overload or stress that diminishes performance.
Use assessment for learning	Leaders set clear expectations while being open to new possibilities. They continually assess what is working and where the gaps are. They always consider qualitative data as well as quantitative data. They seek and give meaningful feedback to promote learning.
Build horizontal connections	Leaders are connectors. They connect activities, ideas and people, in and out of school. Their connections include partnerships in the community, with other schools, and with organizations at a distance.