

Queensborough Middle School Learning Plan

October 2019/20

CONTEXT: WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT OUR LEARNERS

- QMS is a diverse and growing community of learners comprised of 330 students in grades 5 through 8. Our students and their families come from 19 different countries, including Canada, and account for 28 different home languages. Punjabi as a Second Language (PSL) is offered to our students with 49 students enrolled. At QMS, there are strong connections among staff, students, parents and the community. Most of our students come to us from Queen Elizabeth Elementary; both schools and the Queensborough Community Centre work closely together to provide opportunities for the students in the community.
- Three years ago, we began a learning journey about growth mindset. We noticed that many of our students lacked confidence in their mathematical ability. Our hunch was that this belief system had an adverse impact on student achievement. This led us to focus our school learning plan on developing tools to enable students to have a growth mindset. Our hope was that once students learned about their brains (neuroplasticity) and how effort, perseverance, and strategy development positively impact success more than innate ability, we would see evidence of gains in student confidence and engagement, and ultimately achievement.
- After our first year learning the language and principles of growth mindset, our learning focus expanded to include “growth mindset assessment”, specifically how our assessment practices align with growth mindset and maximize student achievement. For the 2018.2019 school year, we focused on the role that feedback plays in student learning. ***We wondered what the impact would be on our students if we gave them timely and specific feedback, taught them strategies, and gave them multiple opportunities to apply those strategies to demonstrate what they know.***

2017.2018	FSA	MDI	STUDENT LEARNING SURVEY
2018.2019	FSA	MDI	STUDENT LEARNING SURVEY

GOAL: WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE

We believe that all students can achieve at high levels with effort, perseverance, resilience and the right set of strategies. We hope to continue to develop these skills in our students by ensuring that our classroom assessment practices:

- Provide specific and timely feedback to students (from teachers, peers and **student self-reflection/assessment**)
- Provide students with opportunities to learn, develop and assess their strategies
- Give students multiple opportunities to show what they know in multiple formats

Additionally, for the 2019.2020 school year, we will explore ways in which:

- the school responds to and acts upon feedback received from students, parents and community partners**
- meaningful and easily understood feedback is provided to students and parents**

PLAN: THE STEPS WE WILL TAKE

Key Results	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of and reflection upon data from 2018.2019 school year (FSA results, Student Learning Survey, MDI, report cards, Spring 2019 reflections from staff and students) and set School Learning Focus for 2019.2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> August/September
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review/explicit teaching of growth mindset concepts and language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> September and ongoing throughout the year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys of students and parents around mindset and feedback administered, reviewed and action items identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall and Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intentional learning opportunities provided for students to give and receive feedback, and improve their work over time (design process for whole school ADST Music and outdoor seating projects, whole school involvement in our annual Winter Production) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent opportunities for student voice/ownership/engagement in school initiatives and activities (Leadership Exploratory, School Clubs, School Wide assemblies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff collaboration with colleagues/teacher coach/district facilitators around feedback including communicating student learning (Wednesday collaboration block, learning staff meetings, collaboration days, Professional Development Days, Book Clubs, Feedback Cafe) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of and reflection upon data (once available) from current school year to inform next steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring

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

- Evidence of teachers trying new feedback strategies (teachers sharing examples: staff meetings, collaboration days, Pro D days)
- Evidence of students using the feedback they are given to improve their understanding and quality of their work over time (increased FSA scores)
- Time for students to act upon feedback (learn and practice new strategies), and multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate competency (re-tests, re-submissions of assignments, revisiting of curricular and core competencies over the course of the year)
- Various means of communicating student learning using parent/student friendly language, including FreshGrade, informal, and formal reporting
- Evidence of 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 improvement and increase perseverance
 - Communication skills will be developed through regular opportunities for self-reflection, peer assessment, student led conferences
- 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 (MDI, Student Learning Survey, attendance statistics) such as student led assemblies and activities (intramurals, Terry Fox Run, Sports Day, other student initiatives)

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

- Announcements, class discussions, student leadership initiatives including assemblies, posters, videos, school message on report cards
- Student Led Conferences & Self-Assessment of Competencies focussed on "I can" statements (e.g. I can get better by using feedback, developing strategies, evaluating my strategies. I can help my peers get better by providing specific and descriptive feedback)
- Parent engagement through email, newsletters, school website, PAC meetings, parent and student surveys
- Communicating student learning informally (student/parent/teacher conferences) and formally (report cards) in student and parent friendly language
- School Learning Focus visible in our school throughout common areas and classrooms; behaviours of staff and students