



### Context

Queen Elizabeth Elementary is a K-4 Elementary School in a growing and diverse community. Currently the school has 440 students across 22 divisions. Our vision is to “build a caring and inclusive community where children, staff and families learn together.”

In 2018-19 we have worked to refine specific objectives that support this vision and aim to make measurable gains in our student’s acquisition of core competencies, overall achievement and the development of collaborative practice amongst staff.

### What we hope to achieve:

Our work has identified the following 3 key objectives/goals for 2018-19:

- 1) **Collaborative Practice:** The effective use of teacher collaboration time to strengthen our practice, further develop working relationships and our learning culture, and increase student and teacher engagement to make learning joyful, meaningful and celebratory.
- 2) **Core Competencies:** The further development of common Core Competency language and instruction. Bringing growth mindset, “I Can” learning intentions to our lessons and more effective formative assessment practices into our teaching.
- 3) **Student Ownership:** Specifically, more explicit development of Social Responsibility and Personal Awareness for all learners to reflect on/develop awareness on where they’re at in their learning, where they want to be, and steps they need to take to be the best they could be.

### Competency Development

- 1) Emphasis on our Learning Culture through increased Collaborative practice in classrooms, grade group meetings, shared interest groups, book clubs, sharing learning successes and challenges, sharing best practice, celebrating learning and supporting one another through challenges.
- 2) Goal setting, SMART, “I can” to “I am”, framing learning intentions, students communicating understanding, formative assessment, authentic learning opportunities where competencies are the focus, process over content, explicit and direct teaching of core competencies.
- 3) A focus on Personal Awareness and Social Responsibility for all learners. The use of community standards in the classroom for helping students develop ownership of their own learning. Programs may include: S.H.A.R.P (Safe, Helpful, Accountable, Responsible, Positive) to further develop socially responsible, kind, compassionate and collaborative students that are able think outside of themselves; be empathetic; problem solvers; collaborative; and develop a greater self-awareness of individual strengths and challenges. Our oldest learners would work to set this example throughout the school, redefine our School’s Code of Conduct to include core competency language and learning expectations. As well as introduction of growth mindset, use of the Mind-Up program, Peer Pals, etc.

### Strategies

**Teacher Coach Time:** Schools in our district have been afforded “Teacher Coach time” this year to support professional development and instructional leadership within our schools. The allotment of time is a function of each individual school’s size and student enrolment. Queen Elizabeth has received a day and a half each week, and the current schedule for this time is Wednesday afternoons and all day Thursday.

We are pleased to announce that Marlin Toftager (Grade 1), will be fulfilling the role of teacher coach at QE this year. Marlin brings a wealth of experience, energy and enthusiasm to the position and we are excited as a staff to utilize this additional time to develop our collaborative practice and instructional development.



Time is used as a combination of collaborative and co-teaching opportunities and release time for teachers to plan and work together on instructional initiatives within the school.

**Professional Development, interest groups and learning initiatives:** Staff will engage in a variety of professional development opportunities as an extension of their busy teaching days. Lunch and Learn sessions, Learning focussed staff meetings after school, and Book Club group meetings at Lunch or afterschool. Currently we have a Math Book Club that is exploring the book: “Becoming the Math teacher You Wish You’d Had”. This particular book may resonate with many of our parents as we explore concepts associated with [Growth Mindset](#), taking risks with their learning, and not fearing mistakes but accept them as necessary and important steps in the learning process. Perhaps even more importantly is not allowing the idea that “I’m just not good at Math”, or “my parents weren’t good at math either” to define how some of our students feel about themselves as mathematical learners.

Please let us know if you have any interest in learning more about these ideas as we are happy to discuss and to share the resources from our learning library should you wish to borrow them.

**Growth Mindset language and Principles** - Over 30 years ago, Carol Dweck and her colleagues became interested in students' attitudes about failure. They noticed that some students rebounded while other students seemed devastated by even the smallest setbacks. After studying the behavior of thousands of children, Dr. Dweck coined the terms fixed mindset and [growth mindset](#) to describe the underlying beliefs people have about learning and intelligence. When students believe they can get smarter, they understand that effort makes them stronger. Therefore, they put in extra time and effort, and that leads to higher achievement. Dr. Dweck’s presentation on the “The Power of Yet” has also gained popularity as the word ‘yet’ focuses on the learning process. This powerful word teaches all of us that it is not that you *can’t* do something, but you *can’t do it yet*.

**Core Competency Development:** “I can” statements, building grade specific learning intentions, and making core competencies more visible in our hallways and classrooms.

**Zones of Regulation:** Helping students identify what colour zones they are in, and learning strategies to get back to the ‘green’ zone (happy, focused, and calm) is where we learn at our best. Our district has been using the Zones of Regulation program in many classrooms with the support and leadership of Julie Principe, our district Resource teacher. Many of our classrooms use the Zones program and you may have heard your child talk about colours, or what zone they were in today, or how they are working on self regulation to help them learn at their best! More information about the [Zones Program](#) is available here.

**Mind Up Program:** This program is used in many of your child’s classrooms, where students are learning what ‘mindfulness’ really means, and teachers are using the chime to transition students to a calm, focused state for learning. The other component of the program is to introduce students on how our brains work. Three parts of the brain: prefrontal cortex, amygdala, and hippocampus. Students are developing an understanding of how negative thoughts/feelings (amygdala) could hinder them from learning at their best, and the importance of learning to use their Prefrontal cortex to make wise decisions. In doing so, students can make the connection between their brain and growth mindset.



**Peer Pals and Student Leadership:** Queen Elizabeth has collaborated with Queensborough Middle School on a peer mediation program we are calling Peer Pals. Middle school students have been trained as peer mediators in a combined initiative between the Counselling Teams and our Child and Youth Care Worker and they are putting their training to work on the QE playground every day at lunch supporting the development of positive relationships and conflict resolution. Our goal is to bring this training and mentorship to our Student Leadership students as the year progresses.

**Communicating Student Learning Assessment Team:** QE has a team of teachers, Rod Dominguez, Rosa Celis and Rachel McClelland who will be leading conversations on the transformative shift to communicating student learning in ways that are more meaningful for students, parents, and teachers.

**Code of Conduct:** Our goal is to revamp our Code of Conduct this year and make it align more closely with core competencies and the new curriculum as well as using language that is more easily internalized and appropriate for our students. We plan to rewrite the code and make it a central component to our schools learning plan making our code of conduct more explicit in classrooms and visible in our school.

- Sharing out community standards in our classroom for developing socially responsible students. E.g. Programs like S.H.A.R.P being used in our intermediate classrooms
- Journaling about learning and developing more authentic and deeper Self-Reflection in relation to core competencies

### Success Indicators

- More joy in our teaching roles, and a team approach to learning. A love for learning amongst staff, students and our community.
- Shifting from traditional performance events to more emphasis on inclusive school wide events – QE Showcase (curriculum evening), multicultural events, curriculum-based performances and displays.
- Targeted funding and better use of curriculum resources, enthusiastic uptake of collaborative initiatives, effective use of scheduled collaborative time, joy in the room, excitement and conversation in hallways, staffroom, and classrooms about learning and for learning.
- The language of “I can” to “I am” in our classrooms, hallways and the playground.
- More meaningful and authentic personal reflection amongst students towards greater, deeper understandings of themselves and their learning.
- Documenting student reflection through audio recording/video recording and sharing them at staff meetings.
- A template that reflects student progress in relation to an assignment (3 parts): How they started, the progress, and the end goal (success) using pictures and language. Posting this on our school bulletin boards.
- Reduced conflict, greater role models, improved self-esteem, more risk taking.
- Greater self-regulation, and use of SHARP language
- Mood metres
- Improved self esteem
- Buddy systems
- Zones of Regulation
- Greater emphasis/shift on cultivating learning behaviours from the need to change self regulation behaviours



### Communication

We plan to make learning and community engagement more visible in our school, as well as share and celebrate our learning with our entire learning community (Staff, Students and Families).

- The use of visual displays to promote our development of core competencies, and sharing of our classroom initiatives and successes through collaborative practice.
- Through our website and newsletters, we will share the learning that is taking place in classrooms.
- Family Fridays will continue to show case our classrooms and connect our families.
- Shift from traditional performance events to broader school events that show case learning and collaboration.
- A focus on Celebrations of learning.
- Continued/additional learning meetings, book clubs and initiatives that bring us together as a learning culture to share our practice and strengthen our understandings.
- Documenting learning, newsletters, Remind, Freshgrade, shared folders, reporting, website, school displays and billboards

Ideas we are working towards but not there “yet”

- Collaborative practice video and/or learning newsletters, share outs at staff meetings
- Increased Parent involvement, teacher collaboration and sharing stories, school skits and videos to the whole school; K parent mixer night
- Collaboration Blog
- Staff meeting shares – sharing an ‘aha’ moment with staff