

Framework for Enhancing Student Learning

Brooklyn Elementary School 2018-19

Context:

Who are we? What is our story? What are we known for? What do we stand for?

- Brooklyn Elementary School has a population 360 K-gr 7 students. Formerly housed (year?) on Noel Ave, we slowly moved to Guthrie Road (former site of Cape Lazo Middle School) over two years, and had full population reunited eight years ago. Brooklyn School is over 50 years old. Brooklyn school has undergone a couple closure committees, movement from old site (beautiful large grounds, aged building) to our beautiful new building, small grounds and co-habitation with a francophone school for 2 years.
- Brooklyn Elementary School has faced a lot of emotional change as well as physical change. Despite the changes, Brooklyn has remained proud, flexible and demonstrated resilience. Key aspects of Brooklyn have remained intact: quality teaching, optimal learning opportunities for academics, active and artistic ventures along with environmental stewardship for the waterways and green spaces around us.
- We have noticed an increased population of designated special needs students (100% more than 2017) that includes more students with behavioural challenges and general population shift (23% of students new to Brooklyn this year) are creating the context for us to do things differently.

Focus:

What is our focus? (goals) How did we decide? What info (data) did we consider? Was our process inclusive? (who was involved?)

At our final staff meeting of the 2017-2018 school year, we started planning our August Pro D days by sharing the AP2003 document (shared decision making at the point of greatest impact). Staff were excited by being part of decisions around the school budget, so we carved out a big chunk of time in August for this conversation. They also wanted some time to dig back into our FESL, namely our Communication goal.

However, as staff are coming to terms with the changing landscape of our student population this year, a significant need for shifting our goals arose. Through a structured

conversation in November, the teachers articulated four areas that require our attention to move forward, related to, yet separate from, our communication goal from last year. These four identified areas address the bigger picture of an improved learning culture in order to move forward on the specifics and depth of student learning needs.

Further to the above, the following topics were determined through a Focusing Four strategy in which teachers shared their input on, “What needs our attention moving forward?” The ideas shared link to a primary emphasis on improving school culture with the hope that all student learning needs will ultimately be addressed.

Teachers decided that these areas were a top priority:

- 1) Build collective understanding and shared decision making.
- 2) Create an improved culture of caring and belonging.
- 3) Address challenging behaviours.
- 4) Create an understanding of Upper Management decision making in connection to designated students and support staff.

In light of this input from our teachers and our current challenges, the following outlines **OUR GOALS** for this year:

- 1) To build shared understanding and decision making to unify our approaches and build our collective ownership regarding our challenges. This includes:
 - i) Building our collective understanding, decisions and actions in order to address challenging behaviours.
 - ii) Creating shared understanding of Upper Management decision-making related to student designations and support staff allocations.
- 2) To improve our culture of caring and belonging so that every child feels they belong at Brooklyn and are engaged in meaningful learning.

Learning and Action:

What is our plan to enhance our student learning? What is our action plan to enhance student learning as well as to work toward our focus goals? What will we focus on in our professional learning that will support our student learning? What is our plan to address those struggling learners?

Through staff meeting engagement in Adaptive Schools strategies, how might we increase collective ownership, shared understanding and decision-making on our current challenges?

Goal # 1 -To build shared understanding and decision making to unify our approaches and build our collective ownership regarding our challenges. This includes:

- i) Addressing our collective understanding, decisions and actions to address challenging behaviours.
- ii) Creating shared understanding of Upper Management decision-making related to student designations and support staff allocations.

Actions:

- a) Because this goal is so tightly informed by our teachers' engagement in the strategies and processes, their input along the way is critical. Therefore, after each staff meeting session, teachers will be asked the below questions and we will track the results,
 - How did this process/strategy/meeting increase your understanding of our current reality?
 - In what ways did the process/strategy/meeting inform our goal of collaborative decision-making?
- b) We will use strategies to enlighten, inform, paint a picture of our current reality that includes alternative perspectives and the input from experts to better understand our reality. We will track the strategies used and invite reflection and input on our collective shared understanding. At this time, for example, we are in the process of engaging in a polarity management process. Inviting responses to this process, will help us to be responsive to what we need to do next.
- c) Based on our emerging and shifting collective understanding, we will engage in decisions to trial that address the challenging behaviours we are concerned about and adjust as necessary along the way.

Goal # 2 - To improve our culture of caring and belonging so that every child feels they belong and are engaged in meaningful learning.

Actions:

- a) Currently there is a group of several teachers, in both primary and intermediate classes, who are engaged in a Network of Inquiry and Innovation Inquiry that is looking at student engagement. We will invite other classes to be further involved. The focus of this work supports goal #2. Please see below for the specifics of the collaborative effort initiated. You will notice how the inquiry weaves with our current process and other school goals.

Brooklyn Network of Inquiry and Innovation Collaboration Inquiry – 2019

1. *Scanning: In a few sentences, describe what you did during the scanning phase? How did you use the four questions? What did you learn as a result? What other questions did you find most helpful during this process? What stimulated your curiosity?**

As we begin using the new proficiency scale language from the ministry, we are also looking at ways to improve communication skills and learner engagement between students, with teachers and with parents.

Initial completion of the three learner questions with a few classes indicate that we have needs in building connections/relationships between teachers, parents and students, building learner ownership and providing explicit instruction on how to reflect on learning.

In addition, we are at a crossroads with a shift in our student population and increasing needs of our learners. We have had an influx of students requiring behavioural support which is our school culture.

2. *Focus: In two to three sentences, explain how you determined the focus for your team inquiry.*

Initially, teachers were interested in using the new proficiency language and engaging parents and students in understanding the new continuum. However, the bigger context for us at Brooklyn is that we identified a significant need for improving student engagement and sense of belonging, and improving shared decision making among staff. Furthermore, we acknowledged that involving parents in learning conversations with their children was necessary to engage both parents and students in improving communication about learning.

Our inquiry is: How might the use of structured, learner centered conversations with parents, teachers and students, through Celebration of Learning events, improve how we all communicate about and understand student learning and contribute to a positive, caring school culture?

3. *Hunch: In two to three sentences, describe your hunches about the ways in which practices at the school may be contributing to a need for change.*

There is a significant concern regarding what is happening to our school and we need to re-assess our collective decision making and unify our approaches with the needs of our learners as central. There is a need to address our fears about our students and adjust our classroom practices to be responsive to who our students are and what we are capable of doing together.

4. *New professional learning: In two to three sentences let us know about the new areas of professional learning you plan to explore connected to your focus area. Be as specific as possible.*

As a professional team of teachers, we want to improve learner-centered conversations. We want to explore how we can help our students identify their areas of success and next steps in a relevant, reflective, empowered way. We want to improve how we collectively use data to inform our professional decisions and have a positive impact school wide on developing ownership, a culture of caring and sense of belonging. This is an important step in a longer journey of collective ownership and engagement for all at Brooklyn Elementary School.

Evidence:

What is our plan to gather evidence of our student learning? What kind of information, facts, data, evidence will we use and why? How will we know when students are successful? How will we know we have made a difference? How will we communicate our evidence and our learning?

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Evidence: After engaging in shared understanding and collective decision making, we will make note of responses to teacher reflective questions adjust our plans accordingly. We seek positive, engaged feedback in 80% of responses from staff. We will theme the responses as well. We recognize that our approach is a new way of participation and may take some time to adjust.

Goal # 2 - To improve our culture of caring and belonging so that every child feels they belong and are engaged in meaningful learning.

Evidence: Through the NOII, we will be gathering data from students on the three learner centered questions as well as two people they identify as being adults that care for them. We will be doing a pre and post survey and analyzing the results. We will also be eliciting results from our parent community in response to the Celebration of Learning events.

Reflect:

Was our focus evident in our findings? Do we need to adjust our focus? Why or why not? What information (data used) did we consider when making this decision? What are our next steps? Next focus?

To be determined.