

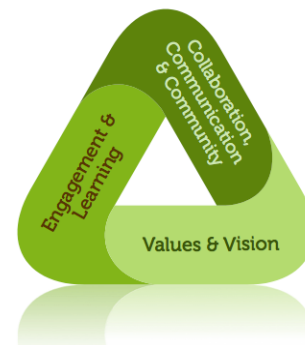
Vibrant Learning Communities

In its simplest form, the School Planning Process is simply strategic planning for a school. It is a collaborative process whereby the school community identifies its highest priorities to enhance student learning and engagement.

In North Vancouver we are committed to supporting and enabling 'Vibrant Learning Communities' defined by the following core attributes:

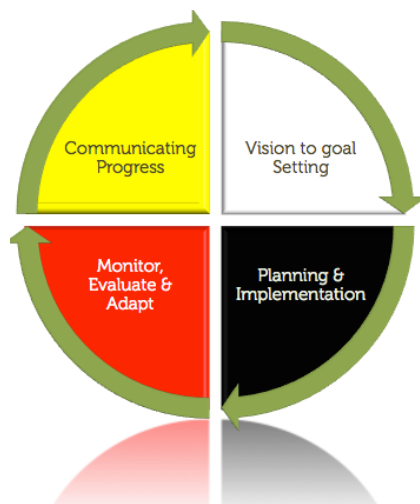
- A focus on student engagement and learning
- A culture of teamwork and collaboration
- Respect for adult and student diversity
- A strong sense of community and collective responsibility
- Strong Systemic Structures (e.g., SBRT, Collaboration Time, Staff Meetings)
- Ongoing and relevant communication of student learning

Although some words may change over time, it is our shared belief that a good school is defined by the expression of these attributes. Meaningful school planning should focus on an appreciative inquiry process highlighting our areas of strength as well as determining future areas for focus. It is through a school-wide inclusive process that we further build our relationships, shared values, and our commitment to our school and community as a whole. Please consider these attributes as part of your planning process. Do we at this school have a shared understanding or definition of each attribute? Where do we see ourselves on each attribute? What would we see as an area for enhancement?



Vision to Goal Setting

Establishing clarity with regards to shared values and a vision for teaching and learning at a school is essential to meaningful planning. A school is a community of students, teachers, educational assistants, support staff and parents, with each group wanting what is best for our children.



As part of the visioning process it is important to ensure all voices within each school community have the opportunity to provide input in accordance with their respective responsibility.

One way schools have approached this is to simply ask the question 'What makes a good school?' It is not only refreshing but rewarding to see students and educators grappling with this question as it reveals a great passion for not only their school but their joy of learning. With regards to meaningful consultation with parents and community, it is important that the school planning process looks at ways to capture their parent's insights into areas of future focus. The areas of focus need to be related to enhancing student learning, and importantly bring parents into the discussion of a great school.

Each school community may differ in how they establish their future goals for enhancing

student learning but these goals need to be informed by our core mandate and purpose (e.g., intellectual development, human and social development, and career development), as well as emerging priorities in the field of education. Teachers are professionals trained in Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Managing the learning environment. Educational Assistants are Para-professionals and have a good knowledge of working with complex learners. Students have knowledge of how their school is working. Parents have a commitment to their child's learning experience. Each stake-holder has a valuable lens to share on their 'school' and some future areas of development.

It is important that any visioning process is intended to further support a comprehensive culture of appreciation and commitment, and thoughtful goals that reflect a school community's vision of the future.

To have balance, all 4 directions must work in harmony. Unless you have this, you only have a physical presence, and the walls between us are as high as the mountain range.

~Chief Dan George, Tsleil Waututh

School Planning: a framework for enhancing learning

Establishing a Timeline: Activities, Guiding Questions and Dates

The following timeline is intended to provide a linear perspective of the stages of the school planning process in 2015-2016. Corresponding questions for each stage in the section below may provide you with a helpful framework.



“A culture focused on learning that motivates staff and students is ... a place of cohesion, passion, commitment, and extensive interactions among teachers.”
~McLaughlin (1995)



Vision to Goal-Setting

Guiding Questions

Situating

- ▶ What is our school narrative?
- ▶ How did we get here?
- ▶ What educational and social experiences do we offer as a school?
- ▶ What does our school community value?

Visioning

- ▶ What is working well in our school?
- ▶ What are areas for growth at our school?
- ▶ What are our unique strengths?
- ▶ What values do you bring into your classroom or school experiences?

Goal-Setting

- ▶ If you could effect one change in our school what would it be?
- ▶ What kind of school do we hope to be ?
- ▶ How can we get to where we want to be?
- ▶ How do we identify priorities moving forward?

Roles & Responsibilities

Everyone involved in or interested in the operation of schools has a role to play in the strategic planning process. The most important work, however, takes place within the school community itself. To be effective, all partners must have a clear understanding of their role and be committed to contributing to the development of a vibrant community of learners. To this end, planning teams must be purposeful in defining roles and responsibilities of those who will work as a team to establish priorities, set goals for improvement, implement strategies to achieve those goals, evaluate and communicate progress.

Schools are working to articulate their unique planning processes which will be different at each school. While many stakeholders may be involved in the *Vision to Goal Setting* stage, in most cases, a representative core team comprised of school based members will develop the school plan and monitor its success.

Parent liaison(s) are affiliated with the core team. Depending upon the process determined at each school, parents may or may not attend core team meetings. Their key responsibility is to liaise with the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) in order to garner feedback and consult with the parent community at large in relation to identifying and supporting the school's highest priorities for learning and engagement.

During this phase, the key responsibility of the core team is to publish the school's strategic planning process and progress.

“Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes time. Vision with action can change the world.”
~Joel Barker