ACTION PLAN FOR LEARNING

2015-2016

CACHE CREEK ELEMENTARY

School Community

Cache Creek Elementary School (CCES) is a unique building decorated with beautiful murals produced by students with the support of local artists. Our school garden provides students with the opportunity to grow vegetables and learn through hands on experiences.

The anticipated enrolment for 2015-2016 is 93 students in grades K to 7. Approximately forty-six per cent of our students are of Indigenous ancestry. Many of our students come to school by bus and arrive at 8:30 each morning. The school offers a daily breakfast program.

Our school continues to work together collaboratively with schools across our district and community groups. This year our Grade 6/7 class took part in the Connected Classrooms project, connecting regularly with schools in Lillooet and Ashcroft online and for community gatherings throughout the school year. Students have opportunities to take part in tennis, golf and art lessons taught by community members. We also work collaboratively with staff at the Bonaparte Band to provide our students with opportunities to learn about Secwepemc culture. This includes holding an annual Aboriginal Day celebration. Our student leadership group hosts monthly celebration of learning assemblies where students showcase their learning with the larger school community.

Our school facility is well used by the community. Preschool, piano lessons, karate, and hand-bells are offered in the building. Healthy Beginnings, a program for new mothers and babies, is also offered throughout the school year. The Bonaparte Band also uses our facility during the school year to offer youth nights and sports activities in the evenings to community members.

Our Parent Advisory Council supports many school events and contributes to our school community. Their work has helped to build our school community through organizing and providing a free monthly hot lunch program where the school community can eat together.

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"It is important for teachers to help students understand that assessments help them learn and that immediate perfection should not be their goal" - Carol Ann Tomlinson

Reflection on 2014-2015

As a staff, the focus of our professional learning was using Assessment for Learning strategies. We chose the book *Active Learning Through Formative Assessment* by Shirley Clarke to support our learning. This book stimulated rich professional conversations around the importance of creating a school culture that supports a growth mindset and emphasizes the process of learning. Teachers had opportunities to collaborate and co-teach to support students by providing them with feedback on what they were doing well and the next step for them in their learning.

Mrs. Patterson and Mrs. Miller worked together on a project supporting students with writing. They organized regular student/teacher and peer reading conferences with students to set individual goals to improve on their writing. Mrs. Martin and Ms. O'Connor worked together in their Grade 4 / 5 class on a Guided Reading program where students worked on goals in their reading to support individual needs. Time was scheduled regularly for students to talk with their teachers, review the strategies they were learning, and to set specific goals. As part of the new report card, students had opportunities to write their own comments including what they were doing well and what they were working on getting better at. This provided rich data for the teachers to learn about how their students felt about their learning and an understanding of how well they were able to understand their own strengths and their next steps in learning.

As a staff, we have learned a lot about assessment for learning strategies and we would like more time to go deeper with this work and professional learning as this is a way that we can work to support success and measure the progress for all learners in our school.

Long Term Goal

To use assessment for learning strategies so students are able to identify what they need to do next in their learning.

Inquiry Question

Will using assessment for learning strategies help students to understand the next steps in their learning and improve student progress in literacy?

Research Foundation

What is Assessment for Learning?

Assessment for learning is a way of helping learners to understand what they are able to do well, what the goal is, and what they need to do to get there (Wiliam, 2011). This involves explicitly sharing learning goals with students (Clark, 2008). Assessment for learning is an ongoing dialogue between teachers and students designed to help students grow in their learning Chappuis, 2014; Tomlinson, 2014). This process helps teachers to modify learning activities to meet the needs of individual students and at the same time, it helps students gain a better understanding of what they need to do to move forward in their learning (Tomlinson, 2014; Wiliam, 2014). Tomlinson (2014) argues that the goal of assessment should be to help students learn rather than strive for perfection and that making mistakes is part of what needs to happen in order to make progress. In doing so, it is necessary to work towards creating a classroom culture in which making mistakes is ok and learning is seen as a process. This process involves recognizing student success and providing opportunities for students to self assess and review feedback (Clarke, 2008; Tomlinson, 2014). Research shows that the use of assessment for learning strategies has a significant impact on student learning (Duckor, 2014; Wiliam, 2011).

Supportive Feedback

"An effective feedback system begins with feedback to the teacher from the students about what they have and have not learned (Chappuis, 2014, p. 25). This provides teachers with information about how to support students in setting goals to move forward in their learning. Feedback that enhances student learning is based on clear learning goals and provide students with an understanding of how to move forward in their learning (Clarke, 2008; Wiggins, 2012). It also involves students assessing their own learning (Tomlinson, 2014). To support student learning, it is important for feedback to be specific, actionable, timely, and ongoing (Duckor, 2014; Wiggins, 2012). It is critical that this feedback is supportive in a way that helps to invite a positive and ongoing relationship between teachers and their students (Duckor, 2014).

"Assessment for learning helps students to become lifelong learners with transferrable skills" Shirley Clarke

"An effective feedback system begins with feedback to the teacher from the student about what they have and have not learned" Jan Chappuis

References

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Action Plan for 2015-2016

Professional Development

- Provide professional development focusing on Assessment for Learning strategies through staff meetings and school based non -instructional days
- Continue using *Active Learning through Formative Assessment* to support professional learning
- Provide opportunities for team teaching and collaboration on the implementation of assessment for learning strategies in the classroom
- Pilot the Gold Trail Reading Continuum to support the use of assessment for learning strategies in reading

"Students need to be involved in thoughtfully examining teacher feedback and developing plans on how they will use that feedback"
Shirley Clarke

School Based Actions

- Maintain a school focus on learning through highlighting student learning on the display board in our entry way
- Continue to hold Celebration of Learning Assemblies where students can share their learning with the wider school community

Assessment of Action Plan for Learning

- Collect qualitative data asking students about their learning and what steps they need to take to move forward in their writing at the beginning and at the end of the school year
- Collect student report card comments to show their understanding of their own strengths and their next steps in learning

Evidence

We will create a baseline of evidence in the fall:

- Data on student achievement in literacy based on teacher assessments (using the Gold Trail Reading Continuum
- Gathering qualitative data on what students believe they need to do to improve in writing (report card comments and interviews with students)

Current Achievement Data

FSA Grade 4

FSA Grade 7

Student Comments / Qualitative Data

Primary Student Report Card Comments—November 2014

- At school I like playing in the house. I am good at reading books and writing in my journal.
- I like that we get to do crafts at school. I am good at writing in my journal.
- My favorite thing at school is gym. I am really good at spelling but I would like to get better at reading.

Primary Student Report Card Comments—February 2015

- My goal for 2015 is to get better at reading.
- I am proud of participating in PE. I need to work on reading big words. I am good at writing. I need to work on writing bigger words.
- I like to play with the animals with my friends. I am good at illustrating my stories.

Intermediate Student Report Card Comments—November 2014

- In writing I think I am doing great because I have long, creative stories. I like to write because I get to express my ideas. I have improved on using proper punctuation, but I still need to work on writing neatly.
- In writing I am really focused. I need to work on my spelling a little bit.
- In reading I am doing pretty good. I can read more quickly and I am finding it easy to understand the stories. I enjoy reading but it depends on the type of book. If I'm really into a book, I can see a movie playing in my mind.

Intermediate Student Report Card Comments—February 2014

- In writing I am trying to use more descriptive language. It is not always easy for me to come up with ideas to write about. I need some help adding details to my writing once I know what I want to write about. Using the computer helps a lot.
- In reading I can find specific information in a text. I know I can do this because that is my reading goal that I have been working on and I have been able to find or retell any information I am asked.
- In writing I am improving on how to put ideas into paragraphs. I use my background knowledge to come up with ideas and then sometimes I need help to write them down on paper. I think I am getting better at using proper punctuation and capitalization.
- In writing I have been working really hard at improving my spelling. I like writing the "If" stories because I can use my imagination.

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Support and Connections for Success

How will we provide for staff development and collaboration?

- Use of school collaboration funds to provide time for teacher collaboration and team teaching
- Engage in professional discussions based on a staff book club on Assessment for Learning strategies
- Dedicate staff meeting time and school based non-instructional days to professional development

How will we involve parents and caregivers?

- School newsletter
- School webpage
- Share information at school events, parent coffee gatherings, and Parent Advisory Council meetings
- Parents will be invited to attend monthly celebration of learning assemblies where student share their learning
- Display of our school goal at the front entrance of the school

How will we communicate our work in the school and community?

- School newsletter
- Report cards with students comments
- Information on bulletin boards and TV screen at the school entrance
- Showcase the work at Student-led conferences and celebration of learning assemblies