# SCHOOL GROWTH PLAN – INQUIRY MODEL

## Gulf Islands Secondary School - School District 64 (Gulf Islands)



What's going on for our learners?
How do we know?
Why does this matter?
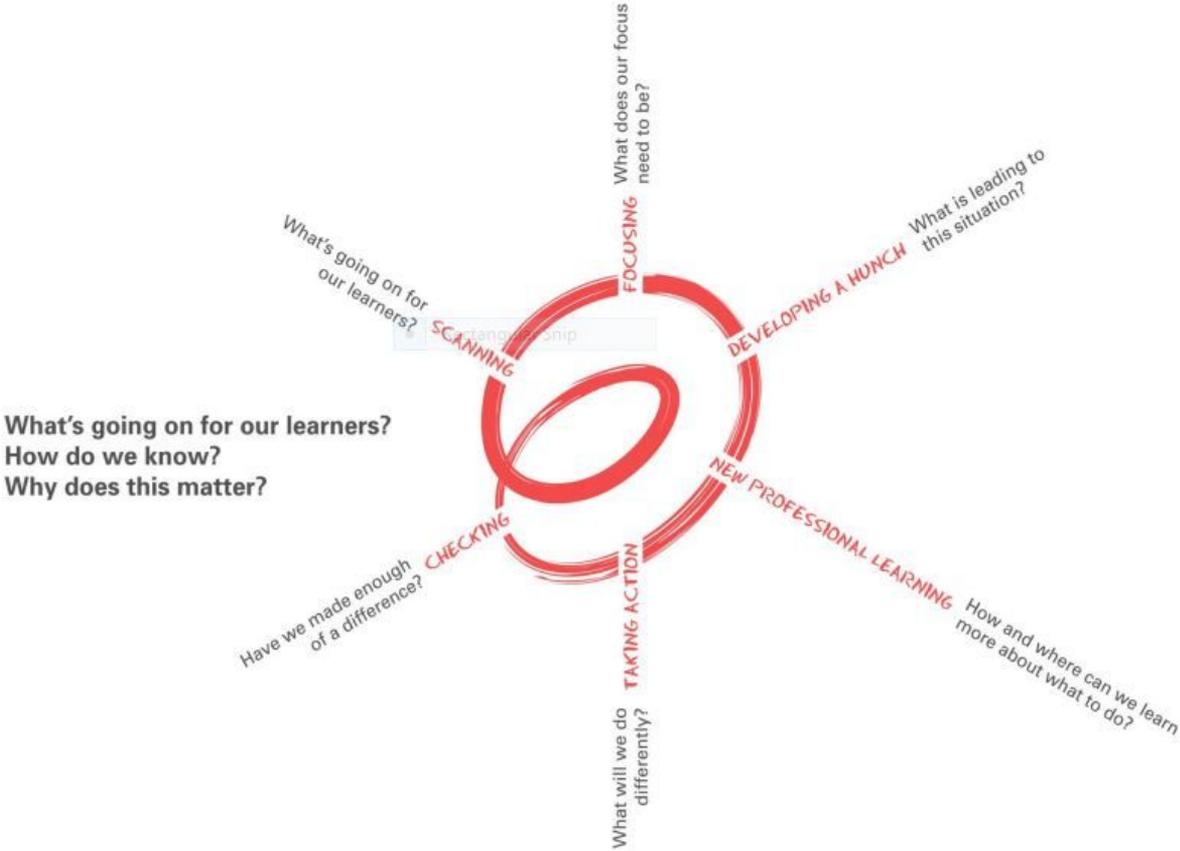
*Based on the book by Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser:
"Spirals of Inquiry for equity and quality"

# Gulf Islands Secondary School

**September 2016 – September 2017**

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| **SCHOOL CONTEXT** | Gulf Islands Secondary School is located on Salt Spring Island, the largest of Canada's famous Gulf Islands. We have a school population of 600 students including 70 international students. Our school enrolls students in grades 9 through grade 12 and offers a strong Adult Grad Program. We are a diverse school community as the main secondary school for the district, with students from Saturna, Pender, Mayne and Galiano Islands joining Salt Spring Island students at GISS. |
| | Our school staff comprises of three administrators, 40 teachers and a support staff of 18.  We have a fully functioning Parent Advisory Council and pride ourselves on the large number of partner groups working in and around our school to ensure our learners have a positive educational experience. |
| | What sets GISS apart from other high schools are the exceptional programs we offer. We have outstanding performing and visual art programs including Advanced Placement Studio Art, the Gulf Islands School of Performing Arts, as well as Media Arts, 3D Design and Robotics courses.  In addition, our learning services team, math support teacher, and science laboratory teacher all enhance learning opportunities for our students. |
| | Our Green Initiatives are recognized around the province: our living lettuce wall and growing towers in the cafeteria, which supply fresh greens for the daily salad bar; drinking water refill stations, the year-round greenhouse and farm to table program with the incentive "grow, harvest, prepare"; and of course, our solar energy project - the largest school-based solar array in BC - which supplements the school's energy needs and funds a $2000 annual scholarship. |

| | Flexible learning options include: SHIFT, a hybrid online learning program; Phoenix Place Alternate Program; Adult Grad; Home Learners; and Outreach, all encompassed in a district professional learning community known as Access 64.  Students enrolled in flexible learning options design the path for their learning in which time, place and pacing are personalized for their particular situation and needs.

Transition into, within, and out of GISS is big focus area for us.  Our Transition program is a four-year, eight-credit linear program that combines the learning outcomes of Career Ed 9 to 12 (previously Planning 10 and Grad Transitions).  The program develops the skills, knowledge and competencies to make educated decisions and identify strategies for future success.  Teams of teachers collaborate in REAL 9 to ease the transition into high school, while the grade 10 to 12 components are delivered outside the timetable and supported by the hybrid learning model of SHIFT.  Assessments include current practices of self reflection and a capstone project in grade twelve as students prepare to walk the stage.

Our career programs focus on supporting a strong and informed transition to life after high school. These include: Work Experience, the Secondary School Apprenticeship Program, Dual Credit programs, TASK, ACE-IT , Health Care Assistant, Community Support Worker, Educational Assistant and Computer Network Technician. These programs allow our students to sample or delve deeply into career areas individually suited to each student.  They are also a springboard into careers one to two years earlier than if they commenced after graduation.

Like our community, which places great value on education, Gulf Islands Secondary School sets a high standard for academic achievement, award winning sports teams and an amazing number of diverse programs.

In addition to our amazing number of diverse programs, GISS  supports our Aboriginal Learners, technology for learning, and adheres to our Code of Conduct.  Please see the links below:
    Code of Conduct: link to handbook
    Aboriginal Education: link to Ab Ed Enhancement Agreement
    Technology 4 Learning: link to GISS tech growth plan

In terms of our growth at GISS and areas in which we want to stretch learning, our Framework for Enhancing Student Learning will take an inquiry approach through the lens of assessment. |

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| **SCANNING**<br><br>**"What's going on for our learners?"** | Gulf Islands Secondary School's District Framework Day Prezi: http://prezi.com/1rlsdjgmhz1c/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy<br><br>This Prezi is a collection of the rich evidence about what is taking place at GISS. |
| **FOCUS**<br><br>**"What does our focus need to be?"** | As a school, Transition and Assessment were identified as areas of interest. At the fall class reviews teachers were asked:<br><br>● Do you have a strategy you can use in your classroom to acknowledge the competencies?<br>● What do you need from the school to become competent with the core competencies?<br>● Do you have an "action" item that you'd like to participate in re: core competencies?<br>● Do you have a strategy you use in your classroom to teach students how to reflect?<br>● What do you need from the school to help you learn more about implementing self reflection in the class?<br>● Do you have an "action" item that you'd like to participate in re: self reflection?<br><br>Still to be addressed as a staff: Conversations to be had on how to wrap meaningful assessment around final exams and exam week. |
| **HUNCH**<br><br>**"What factors are leading us to focus on assessment?"** | At District Framework Day, teachers responded to questions on three topics: meaningful assessment, self assessment, and assessing competencies:<br><br>**Meaningful Assessment:**<br>QUESTION: *How confident am I that the grades students get in my class are accurate, meaningful and consistent, and that they support learning?*<br><br>Some responses:<br><br>● Can we embed opportunities to explore– what does this grade actually *mean*?<br>● The pedagogy is changing, i.e. personalized learning, student reflection and consideration<br>● What does *meaningful* mean? Is it a different interpretation for |

all individuals?
- What we value as educators influences what students value.
- Current class grading systems are subjective...each teacher assesses in a personal way...how can we make this equal and meaningful?
- What would it be like to award a higher percentage for personal reflection and then assign a lower percentage for assignments/tests etc.
- How do you light the fire and spark them, without burning students out?
- Can we re-design our physical classrooms to facilitate meaningful learning spaces?

**Self Assessment:**
QUESTION: *How do we involve students in their own assessment in our classrooms?*

Some responses:

- How do we make self assessment meaningful?
- How can we make self assessment manageable and accessible?
- How do we build self reflecting skills in our students?
- How do we help students name and identify core competencies?
- How do we build more understanding about and practice with core competencies.
- How can we collaborate for holistic assessment of core competencies?
- How do we become the guides of *all* our students so that they can self reflect on these core competencies?

**Assessing Competencies:**
QUESTION: *How do we, and students, assess core and curricular competencies?*

Some responses:

- Students need to have language and understand what is involved in the learning.
- As teachers, we can help by naming the competencies that we see in our classrooms.
- We need to make the competencies transparent and explicit.
- We need to work with colleagues to develop criteria for what success in our classes look like.
- We need to help students collect evidence to go along with their regular reflections.
- We need to make sure the ePortfolio is a meaningful resource for students.

| PROFESSIONAL LEARNING<br><br>**"How and where can we learn more about what to do?"** | ● Through the Innovation Partnership and the plans for core competency workshops to be held in December.<br><br>● Making a commitment to a professional development session on reflection/self assessment.<br><br>● Developing the student self reflective piece school-wide. Then getting baseline data to be able to see in 1,2, 3, years if this has enhanced student learning and help in transitions through and out of the school.<br><br>● Provide time for teachers to collaborate: to define and understand competencies, and to develop criteria in order to make competencies an integral part of learning and assessment.<br><br>There is a school wide need for tech help and time to become familiar with e-portfolios as a teacher AND to show students how to use them. |
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| TAKING ACTION<br><br>**"What will we do differently?"**<br><br>**"With what and how?"** | ● Form a small working group to create cheat sheets on the core competencies that teachers can use to become more confident and familiar with the language.<br><br>● Ask staff to be part of working groups on core competencies, self reflection, and collaboration.<br><br>● Investigate how best to capture student learning through evidence.<br><br>● Staff Meetings–keep the core competencies at the forefront with presentations:<br>    Have teachers share what they are doing in class with core competencies. For example: REAL 9 teachers can talk about what they are doing with the core competencies, and what e-portfolios look like.<br><br>● Teachers pair-share at staff meetings about what is happening in their classrooms.<br><br>● Encourage staff to form thought partners.<br><br>● Admin explores ways to support increased collaboration time.<br><br>● Create easy ways to share information (e.g. a blog) |

| CHECKING<br><br>**"Have we made *enough* of a difference?"** | Evidence will need to be collected on how the core competencies and self reflection through the year has made a difference for student learning.<br><br>Spring Class Reviews - teachers sharing strategies they are using to support assessment:<br>● Gradeless reporting in Robotics Course<br>● Science Fair event for assessment in Biology 12<br>● Cafeteria class now doing student self-reflections on food documentaries<br>● Student self-reflection binders in Shop class as a means for students to take ownership of the learning throughout the projects they produce<br>● Adaptive PE class using posters and visuals for naming core and curricular competencies<br>● Use of rubric sheet to self-assess student participation and use of video (IPAD) to self-assess skill development<br>● TASK - self-reflection binders to incorporate Ministry language as part of their progress of skill development - exemplars. |
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| CONNECTIONS<br><br>**"How are we part of a bigger whole?"** | **Our inquiry question relates directly to our school district's strategic plan:**<br>● Enhance and expand methods of instruction and assessment practices that promote success for all learners<br>● Enhance learning through accessible and appropriate technology<br>● Foster opportunities in the greater community for students to deepen their learning experiences and engage in real world inquiry<br><br>**Community Involvement:**<br>● Parent information nights (new curriculum and assessment practices–new reporting order on the core competencies and self reflection)<br>● Meet the teacher night in which all parents are invited to walk in the shoes of their child and attend all their classes on a mock block rotation<br>● Connecting generations–having adults work with our students on projects of mutual interest<br>● Volunteer coaches and trainers for our student athletes<br>● RCMP liaison officers helping in the building with clubs and teams<br>● Fire and paramedics working with all grade 9 students to attain |
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| | their CPR<br>● Mock interviews in which representatives from community businesses are invited into our REAL 9 class to hold interviews and provide valuable feedback to our students<br>● GISS Planning Group (formerly School Planning Council) made up of parents, students and school staff meet once a month to discuss items of interest and school plans<br>● A number of guest speakers, community workshops and seminars are on-going in our classrooms and whole school meetings<br>**Communication Strategies:**<br>● Weekly emails to parents<br>● Use of school website to promote our inquiry<br>● Continue to communicate with parents on a regular basis when students are struggling: email communication, interim reports, phone calls, report cards<br>● Assemblies: whole school, grade wide, parent/student events<br>● Parent/teacher/student conferences<br>● Continue conversations at regular and ongoing meetings<br>● Use of blogs, Facebook, school app, and other social media outlets |

**Summary of Inquiry Question:**

**How is focusing on the Core Competencies and Self Reflection as a different form of assessment going to make a difference and enhance the learning opportunity for all of our students?**

## Plan submitted by:

| | Name | Signature |
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| **Principal** | | |
| **Teacher(s)** | | |
| **PAC Chair** | | |
| **[Student(s)]** | | |

**Date: _____**