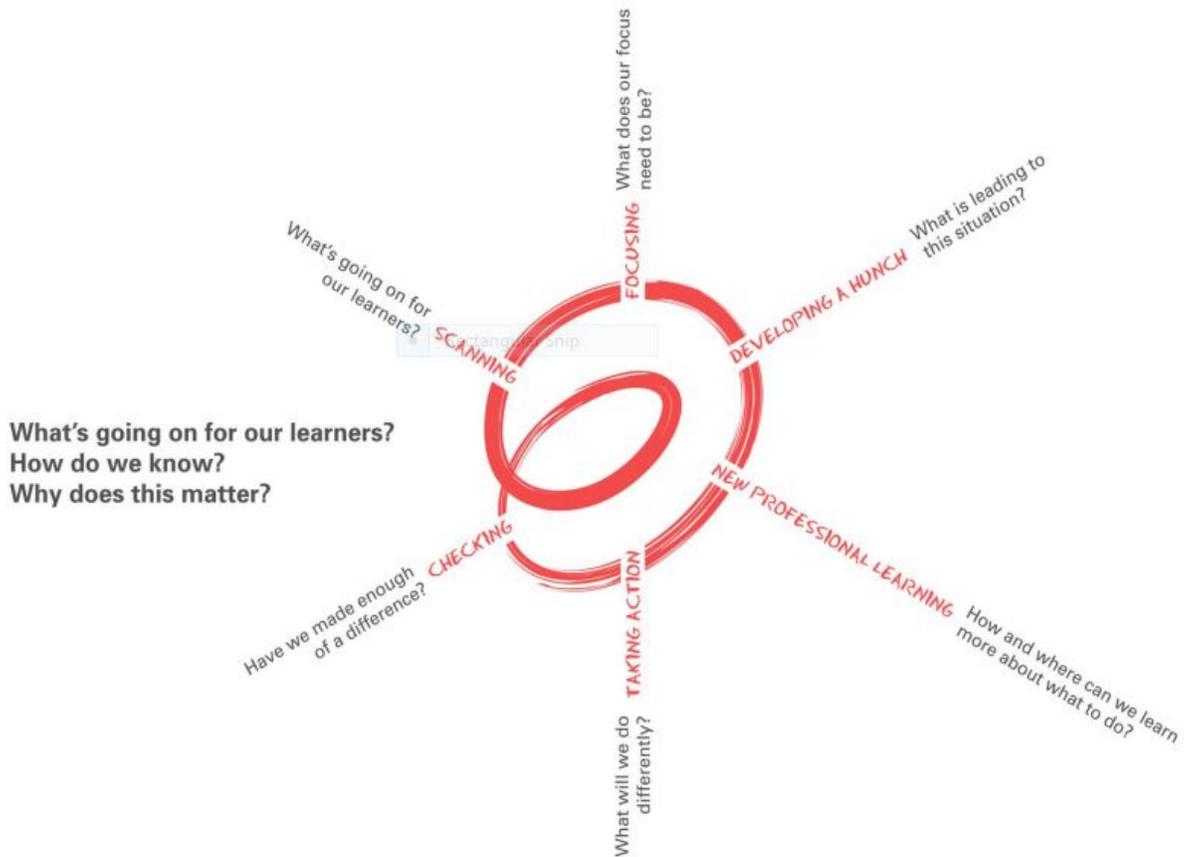


# SCHOOL GROWTH PLAN – INQUIRY MODEL

Saltspring Island Middle School  
School District 64 (Gulf Islands)



\*Based on the book by Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser:  
"Spirals of Inquiry for equity and quality"



**Saltspring Island Middle School**



# Saltspring Island Middle School

## SCHOOL CONTEXT

*School population*

*Vision/Values/*

*Mission*

*Program Offerings*

*Code of Conduct*

*Aboriginal Education*

*Technology*

*4Learning*

Saltspring Island Middle school is located on top of a rise in the village of Ganges- the cultural, commercial and social hub of Saltspring Island. We have an almost 360 degree view that includes Ganges Harbour, the village and the verdant nature that defines our island. From this vantage point, we are able to get a special perspective on the variety of unique learning experiences open to our students. We have 228 dynamic and energetic students in nine divisions from Gr. 6 to Gr. 8.

At SIMS, we have been working to develop and maintain a culture that focuses on learning in all of its dimensions. We feel that learning to play, work and live together is as important, if not more important than learning academically. We know from research sources that anxiety impedes cognition, so it follows that the emotional and social well being of our students should be paramount.

Our school motto is: Love Where You Learn. Our hopes and dreams for our students can be found in this simple statement. We would like our school culture to reflect 'love' in its many dimensions- the love that dedicated teachers have for their students; the bonds of friendship between classmates; loving a comfortable and safe learning environment where we can learn about ourselves; and above all, the love of learning in all ways. From our SIMS Behaviour Support Plan to our lesson plans, we acknowledge that learning is multi-dimensional in a school setting. We guide our students to be self- regulating, to learn from each other, to think creatively and to learn about themselves.

Our activities and events reflect this motto in a myriad of ways.

SIMS programs are designed to address the learning needs of our students in diverse ways. They give students a variety of opportunities by which they can explore their passions, stretch academically and take learning risks in safe environments.

We have a late French Immersion Program and two classes engaged in nature, environmental and place-based learning. Our Exploratory program offers students activities and lessons in both the practical and the fine arts. The Band program includes classes for beginner and advanced band students as well as a jazz band class. We have an inclusive wellness and athletic program with opportunities for all students to engage comfortably in a variety of both conventional PE as well as alternate physical activities. The grade eight students compete in central island tournaments and games in both volleyball and basketball. Our dynamic Circus program gives students the opportunity to take safe risks and learn life lessons such as perseverance in an atmosphere of camaraderie, inclusion, and acceptance.

SIMS Vision, Goal, and Mission can be found here: [add link](#)

SIMS Code of Conduct can be found here: [add link](#)

[SIMS Technology for Learning plan can be found here:](#) [click on title](#)

	SIMS Aboriginal Learning opportunities can be found here: <a href="#">add link</a>
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<p><b>SCANNING</b></p> <p>“What’s going on for our learners?”</p> <p>Useful information is gathered on key areas of learning</p>	<p>In the middle of the last school year, we got together with our staff and started an inquiry about student and staff learning at SIMS. We started the inquiry by posing a question to staff: what is your vision of the best learning situation for our students? Our staff was led through a consensus process that included individual reflection, small group discussion, and whole group discussion. We were able to create a ‘big picture’ vision of what was important for our learners that we could reference when we scanned the specifics about what was going on for our learners.</p> <p>To do this, we looked at report card data from two terms, FSA data, and anecdotal data. We then had a session where we looked at our assessment practices with the ‘why’ as our reference point. All of us watched Simon Sinek’s TED Talk, “Start With Why” as the springboard for our conversation. When the question became, ‘why do we assess our students?’, the discussion focussed on the importance of formative assessment in all of its forms.</p> <p>This process culminated in the staff discussion on Planning Day where we identified the two ‘big areas’ that we wanted to focus on for the following year: <b>Best Practices</b> and <b>Addressing the learning needs for all of our students</b>. In the latter, we decided that personalizing learning at its most basic was of paramount importance. While we have been doing the assessments for many years, we needed to be united on ‘why’ we were doing them and, most importantly, how we can use the results to benefit our students. The other key point that was missing was how to get significant, relevant student input into the process of goal-setting so as to be able to truly personalize their learning.</p>
<p><b>FOCUS</b></p> <p>“What does our focus need to be?”</p> <p>Goal statements help to focus priorities for improving student learning.</p> <p>Objectives help to focus goals into more specific areas of attention.</p>	<p><b>Best Practices: personalizing learning</b> Our focus has been to make effective assessment practices more efficient and convenient so that teachers will be able to address the specific learning needs of all of our students. As well, we need to create opportunities for teachers to be able to have dedicated, committed time to have individual conferences with their students. DARTS, DMA, School-wide writes</p> <p><b>Addressing the learning needs of all of our students:</b> creating strategies, adjusting structures, opening up innovative opportunities – We have been working to create programs within programs and other opportunities within the existing structures at our school and developing strategies that will better address the needs of those students who are not as engaged as we want them to be. We focussed specifically on those students who have learning and behavioural challenges; with the understanding that effective strategies work for all students.</p>
<p><b>HUNCH</b></p> <p>“What factors are leading to the situation?”</p>	<p><u>Assessment practices:</u> Although the main assessments provide valuable information about our students, they have three steps: write assessment; mark assessment; conference with students re: results to set goals</p> <p>Teachers do not have an appropriate time within their days/weeks when</p>

<p>“Are we contributing to it?”</p>	<p>they can: mark the assessments or have deep meaningful conferences with their team members about planning; or with students where they can make decisions to optimize their learning experience.</p> <p><u>Addressing learning needs:</u> While we have been using strategies to focus on behaviour/learning needs, they have been more reactive and not specific, embedded strategies so have had limited or spotty success.</p>
<p><b>LEARNING</b></p> <p>“How and where can we learn more about what to do?”</p>	<p><u>Assessment practices-</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analyzing assessment results</li> <li>▪ Using results to: address curriculum planning for term/year; create personalized plans for individual students; planning directed assessments to track learning throughout the year</li> </ul> <p><u>Personalizing learning-</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learning how to teach students self-regulation strategies</li> <li>▪ Learning how to teach students to set realistic and thoughtful goals; how to address problems along the way; how to create do-able timelines</li> <li>▪ Learning how to enhance metacognitive and reflection skills</li> </ul> <p><u>Place-based learning/outdoor programs-</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learning how to enhance our current place-based program to incorporate the needs of some of our vulnerable students</li> </ul>
<p><b>TAKING ACTION</b></p> <p>“What will we do differently?”</p> <p>“With what and how?”</p> <p>Strategies: Clearly articulated strategies connect school efforts and activities with desired student results. Strategies are presented as succinct statements outlining actions and activities, directed toward student learning, that clearly link to achieving school goals and objectives.</p> <p>Structures: Structures focus on activities that align school resources, time, personnel and</p>	<p><u>Making assessment process more effective:</u> Create timetable that has dedicated time for: teacher marking time and teacher/student conference time Plan for teams to work together on assessments to mark and plan units together- with support from SBT- Tom, Keiko, Tiff, Jude</p> <p>During exploratory rotations, we will use the rotating schedule to free up teachers whose students are not in exporatories so that they can have additional conference time with their students after assessments are written and marked. This time can also be used for teams to collaboratively plan units, mark assessments or discuss students of note. This will involve the school-based team to: group students to address specific needs; give advice and resources about how to support these students; review Class Reviews to stay abreast of specific student issues.</p> <p><u>Personalizing learning more effectively:</u> Focus as a staff on enhancing opportunities for students to reflect on their own learning; and to be metacognitive about their thinking and learning. This will include: Pro-D opportunities, staff meeting conversations and individual conversations.</p> <p>Structural change: we have created a 20 minute block just before lunch when teachers can conference with individual students. The class will be engaged in silent reading or other concerted activities during this time. We have non-enrolling staff who will be supervising class while the conferences go on.</p>

<p>organizational planning to support achievement of goals and objectives.</p>	<p><u>Create program for students with behaviour/learning needs within an existing/new program:</u>          We have created a second MYSEEC program that has, as an enhancement to the original vision, an applied skills component. The outdoor, active nature of the original program will allow for additional opportunities for active learning for those students who are kinaesthetic learners. As well, the hands on nature of the applied skills component will allow these students to learn in a way that better aligns with their interests.</p>
<p><b>CHECKING</b></p> <p>“Have we made enough of a difference?”</p> <p>Changes in practice don’t always lead to substantive improvement or useful innovations- in this part of the inquiry that asks whether we are making <i>enough</i> of a difference</p> <p>Go back to evidence gathered at Scanning portion of inquiry to determine if the goal areas have been focused on as well as the level of success that was <u>hoped for</u> was achieved.</p>	<p>We will use existing structures to check for substantive improvement over the course of the year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Best practices- learning-</li> <li>▪ Class Review review</li> <li>▪ DART summative assessment</li> <li>▪ Numeracy summative assessment</li> <li>▪ Summative assessment based on school-wide write results from beginning of the year</li> <li>▪ Report card data</li> </ul> <p>Addressing learning/behavioural needs-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Satisfaction survey data</li> <li>▪ Student survey</li> <li>▪ Student culminating conferences</li> <li>▪ Teacher reflection</li> </ul>

<p><b>CONNECTIONS</b></p> <p>“How are we part of a bigger whole?”</p>	<p><b>Alignment with district goals</b></p> <p>GOAL ONE          All students are progressing toward greater competency in foundation skills.</p> <p>GOAL TWO          All students experience a successful transition from school to their adult lives.</p> <p>GOAL THREE          To pursue the goals of the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement district-wide.</p> <p>Our district's goals form the ‘big picture’ for SIMS goals. Through scanning, we have found that in order to engage the students in their learning, such areas such as the assessment of foundation skills, and the students’ active planning with these as reference points is key. We are hoping that with the structural</p>
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	<p>supports put into place, this can happen in a more relevant way.</p> <p>Through our focus on personalizing learning for our students, they will be learning such valuable life-long skills such as metacognition and self regulation, which will hold them in good stead as they progress through our schools and into their adult lives.</p> <p>At SIMS, we have been embedding Aboriginal themes into our curriculum.</p> <p>To be completed:  <b>Community Involvement</b>  <b>Communication Strategies</b></p>
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**Summary of Inquiry Question:**  
 Will our focus on personalizing learning, including: metacognition, self-regulation, flexible programming and the effective use of assessment practices, significantly enhance the quality of the learning for our students?

**Plan submitted by:**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature(s)</b>
<b>Principal</b>	Keiko Taylor	
<b>Teacher(s)</b>	Tom Langdon Valeskca San Martin	
<b>PAC Chair</b>	Ted Bartrim	
<b>(Student(s))</b>		

**Date:** \_\_\_\_ **Oct. 31, 2016.** \_\_\_\_\_