



2015-2016 AESN TRANSITIONS CASE STUDY

School: W L Seaton Secondary

District: Vernon #22

Inquiry Team Members:

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Our focus for this year: What do our students say that they need in order to be successful? What will help them to continue on to further education?

Scanning: We conducted a positive inquiry with grade 10, 11 and 12 students. We met one on one, and with small groups. We used the four questions, but also asked what was going well, what we needed more of, what we needed to get rid of, and what else we could do to encourage students to go on to further education.

Focus: This was a follow up to a positive inquiry that was done five years ago around increasing graduation rates. That inquiry has guided our Aboriginal programming at Seaton, and the further education positive inquiry was a natural step. Our graduation rate is now much higher after we followed the input of students, so we wanted to ask them to guide us as we encourage them to go on to further education.

Hunch: We worried that students could not envision themselves going on to further education. This would send them into non-academic streams, and they would “check out” when it came to postsecondary information sessions, scholarship information.

New professional learning: We found that although there is a great deal of information on postsecondary opportunities, it is not getting to students. Also, students indicated that our school counselors are often very busy, they asked if they could have their own counselor with dedicated time to meet with Aboriginal students.

Taking action: Community involvement and support is critical. We have reached a point where we are gaining trust and community members feel welcome in the school and have a safe place in the Welcome Room. They are eager to meet with students in the Welcome Room and share information and enthusiasm for postsecondary and further education. We plan to invite more community members, such as Advisors from Colleges and Universities, Education support workers from local bands. We will ask the District Student Services Team, and the Aboriginal Department if there is funding for a dedicated Aboriginal counselor. If we cannot find more funds, we will look at ways to make our school counselors more available to Aboriginal students.

Checking: We have made huge gains in retaining students in the last five years. We have had gains in students choosing academic streams. We are beginning to send more students to further education. Last year 13 of 20 Graduates were accepted by postsecondary and had

funding in place. We plan to check on them to ensure that the support continues as they begin their postsecondary journeys.

Reflections/Advice: We need to continue to develop Community relationships and build trust. We need to inundate students with information and encouragement. We plan to continue to speak to students about “when” they go to further education and not “if” you go!

Summary of W L Seaton Secondary’s Positive Inquiry-Following their Lead

Our inquiry focused on what W.L. Seaton students themselves said needs to be included in any plan for their success. Aboriginal students from grades 10-12 were surveyed about what they believed Seaton is doing well and is leading to their success, and what they believe needs to be improved upon.

We learned that what we are doing well is:

- First and foremost, Students appreciate the Welcome Room and the involvement of their community members in the everyday activities of the school. The Welcome Room is a safe space where students are encouraged and motivated to be the best that they can be. We have the right people in the right place.
- Many teachers have made conscious efforts to embed First Nations content into their classes.
- We have breakfast in the Welcome Room and a breakfast program for everyone- kids appreciate this help.

We learned that things we need to work on are:

- We learned that our connection to universities and colleges is making a difference and that we need to expand these connections. More counselling time (focused on First Nations’ student transitions) in the school setting is needed.
- Communication is key- we have some supports in place, but some kids don’t know they exist.
- Some staff are still emergent learners when it comes to embedding Aboriginal content into their subject area, so we must continue to make this a Professional Learning priority.
- We learned that we are well connected with some of our students, but we need to reach out and inform all. Communication/connections.
- We need to work on creating a lunch program.

Our plan for next year: To address the areas in need of improvement, to maintain the graduation levels of our First Nations students (consistently mid 90’s for the last few years) and to increase the number of students attending and remaining in further education.

2015-16 Aboriginal Impact Study Positive Inquiry

W L Seaton Secondary, School District #22 Vernon, is one of 10 high schools in the province that has been asked to do an inquiry into transitioning students to further education such as college, university, and trades programs. As part of our inquiry, we are asking students what they think so that we can meet their needs and provide the necessary resources and supports to successfully transition them to further education. Thank-you for participating in this inquiry. Your thoughts, ideas and suggestions will lead the way for Seaton students for years to come. We will create a plan for the next 5 years from your answers.

Do you feel supported at Seaton? Academically? Socially? Emotionally? Culturally?

What has worked well?

What do we need more of?

What do we need to keep?

What could do better?

What do we need to get rid of?

What hurdles have we overcome?

What do we still need to overcome?

What courses are you taking or planning to take to prepare you for further education?

Do Aboriginal students at Seaton have more/less/the same opportunities to go on to further education?

What are some of the factors that affect this?

What do we do well at Seaton to encourage/help Aboriginal students to transition to further education?

What do we need more of?

What do we need to keep?

What could do better?

What do we need to get rid of?

What hurdles have we overcome?

What do we still need to overcome?

What would you like to see at Seaton in 5 years that would help every Aboriginal student transition to further education?

Other comments: