

**Graham Creighton Junior High
Planning for Improvement
Plan – June 2010**

1. What are we doing Well?

Graham Creighton Junior High School is located in the community of Cherry Brook. We have close to four hundred students from the surrounding communities of Cherry Brook, North Preston, East Preston, Lake Echo, Mineville, Westphal, and Cole Harbour. Our diverse student population comes from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds and experiences.

At Graham Creighton Junior High, we have thirty-six staff members. We offer English, Early and Late French Immersion programs. In addition to these regular programs, we provide inclusive support and opportunities for all students to learn by offering learning centre, resource and literacy support along with the expertise of guidance personnel.

When asked the question, ‘what are we doing well?’ our staff members provided a wide range of insight regarding our students’ success. As a staff we feel that we are able to identify and support, to the best of our abilities, the needs of all of our students. We are able to program individually for students who have a wide range of abilities, strengths and challenges. We have success providing interventions within the building for our students to experience success whenever possible. We have a matrix that outlines behaviour expectations in the form of the PEBS program which has been in place at Graham Creighton Junior High for the past three years. We celebrate student achievement and success, both academic, extra-curricular, and within the community. We provide learning centre support, resource support, and small group literacy instruction for our students. We also encourage community participation whenever possible such as presentations of academic interest by community members.

Our staff feels we have developed strong professional relationships and are very supportive of one another. We are cohesive and genuinely enjoy collaborating and working together in groups, therefore; we do not hesitate to seek out and provide assistance for each other. As a staff, we are energetic and take on a creative approach to lesson planning and technology integration; we have a newer building which facilitates this. We implement a cross-curricular approach to teaching which includes much teamwork and communication between staff members. We have a very involved administration that does their best to support teachers. We are also unique in the sense that nearly half of our teachers and staff live in the communities which we serve.

We celebrate and encourage positive choices and actions in school, in extra-curricular activities, outside of school as well as healthy lifestyle choices with programs and activities such as, Academic ribbons, Me-to-We, Positive Paws assemblies, dances, healthy choices in the cafeteria and daily announcements.

At Graham Creighton, we pride ourselves on our open-door policy and we encourage community and parent participation whenever possible. We excel at communication with parents whether through phone calls, emails, letters, and/or meetings. Parents are made aware with regards to the performance and progress of their child. Parents are encouraged to join the SAC or the Band-Parent Association and to be an active participant in their child's education.

In the specific area of Literacy, we have instilled a positive attitude towards learning; students at Graham Creighton Junior High feel confident that they are capable in learning in their English language arts class. Our students experienced success in the areas of reading comprehension on non-fiction text. We have more students expressing an interest in the reading material available in the library and over 80% of the students at our school know how to use the library. In the specific area of Mathematics, our students have improved in the areas of patterns and algebra and order of operations.

The reasons why these things are our strengths are both obvious yet ambiguous; in some situations, we have no data to reinforce these ideas. At Graham Creighton Junior High, we have a staff who are experienced, who actively seek out ways to improve best practice through collaboration with their peers. We have several teachers who have been at our school for several years who help new staff find their bearings and familiarize themselves with our school climate and students.

Our number one priority is student success and we are committed to doing everything within our means to help students achieve and experience success within the school community. There is a Nigerian proverb, 'Ora na azu nwa', which translates to 'it takes a community to raise a child' and at Graham Creighton Junior High; we embody this ideal in everything we do in our school. The students at our school are both literally and figurative our children and we go above and beyond what is required of us to help our students. We feed them, we drive them home when they have missed the bus, and we sometimes drive them to sporting and extracurricular events when their parents or guardians cannot. We will knock on their front doors when we cannot contact their

families any other way. We give extra help at night so parents can drive their children home afterwards. We as a school community are unique and as our principal reminds us every week in his newsletter to staff, 'There's no better place to be.'

2. What trends do you see in the data?

At Graham Creighton Junior High, school surveys and assessment data was reviewed by groups of teachers which included English Language Arts and Mathematics Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as well as all other specialty teachers and support staff. The reflection process is a collective endeavour in which all staff members are encouraged to participate and voice their opinions which has enabled us to gain varying points of view.

According to the surveys conducted, there are some positive trends that are identified at Graham Creighton. Our students feel that their instruction, in literacy and numeracy, is challenging yet comprehensive. The majority of students recognize the real world applications of literacy and numeracy regardless of whether or not they are enjoying learning in those areas. Students increasingly feel that they are learning more about discrimination and other cultures as well as what good quality work looks like as well as goal setting, however, there is a low percentage of students who report acting on this, i.e. students know how to set goals and what good quality works looks like but do not take the steps needed to achieve these things.

Teachers attempt to and successfully communicate with parents regarding their child's performance; however, it should be pointed out that in all categories there exist gaps between what parents feel and what teachers feel, particularly in terms of communication. For example teachers feel that information is being communicated while parents feel it is not.

With regards to literacy and numeracy, internal and external data echo each other. Our challenges have remained somewhat constant. This can be attributed to the fact that our areas of greatest weakness are in basic skills, upon which others are built. This data also reflects the high number of students who are identified as having gaps in their learning, in need of Individual Program Plans and who receive other academic supports such as resource and literacy support.

At Graham Creighton Junior High, all staff members were provided the opportunity to participate in the PFI process. The PFI Lead Team have encouraged leadership opportunities to a larger group of people. We also encouraged students and their parents to participate in the process as well, although we had a small number of parents complete

the survey. We have a multi-talented staff with the ability to identify our areas of need and create the plan which will enable us as a school to improve.

NOTE

After examining the data provided by the JHLA, we are pleased to report that there was a 7% overall increase in how many students met the expectations over the last three years in writing overall but on the other hand, there was a 7% drop with regards to who met the expectations in reading over the last three years. The data from the CAT 4 include the same type of trends. Students who did not meet expectations with regards to reading consistently increased with the exception of only one category (specialized vocabulary).

In Mathematics, trends in CAT 3 data indicated that students were meeting expectations in some areas of Number Operations (algebraic number operations and integer operations), however, based on teacher observations and more recent CAT 4 data, the greatest area of need is in Number Operations. School observations also indicate this is an area of concern. Student success indicated by CAT 4 data (2008-2009) is not reflective of classroom observations of the same students now in Grade 9 (2009-2010).

Our data indicates that writing and reading are both areas of concern for our students. While some modest gains have been made in relation to writing, reading data indicates small regressions. All other things being relatively equal, we as a staff felt that reading was the area to focus our efforts.

3. What challenges do you need to address in order to make the greatest difference in student achievement?

This past winter, teachers at Graham Creighton Junior High School were asked to reflect on the challenges that need to be addressed in our school in order to affect positive changes in student achievement within our school. The members of our staff were given the attached check list and were asked to identify the areas of greatest need based on their observations of school operation so that we could collectively identify area of need. This site-generated survey was based on eight of the ten correlates in the PFI frame work.

This survey showed that teachers at Graham Creighton Junior High felt that challenges related to safe learning environment, mathematics, literacy and administrative leadership would need to be addressed in order to affect the greatest changes in student achievement. Within the category of safe learning environment, the challenges identified were consistent adherence to school policy and Code of Conduct, unsupervised students, student awareness about our hands-off policy, consistently discouraging horse-play, and lunch time supervision. Within the category of mathematics, the challenges identified were number operations, multiplication of basic facts, and the lack of common PLC time. Within the category of literacy, the challenges identified involve increasing comprehension for a range of texts and cultivating a love of reading. Within the category of Administrative Leadership, the challenges identified were the need for new staff orientation due to high staff turnover and consistent and clear communication between staff and administration.

In order to experience any kind of appreciable change in student achievement, we need to first address the issue of maximizing the use of instructional time. By restructuring the PEBS Matrix at Graham Creighton Junior High, we will be better able to celebrate the positive behaviors which support student learning and achievement as well as address those which deter from this. By creating a matrix model which can be consistently modeled and implemented in our school, students will receive a consistent message from staff which demonstrates the expectations for students in the school setting. By having clear behavioral expectations, we will have more success in addressing the other two goals in our PFI outline.

Number operation is a corner stone in the Mathematics curriculum at the junior high level. By implementing strategies to teach this in all subject areas, students will not

only receive added practice, but also see real life application of this skill set. As example, some students may struggle with concept of percentages in the math class setting but may have success in the applying this concept to sport statistics in Physical Education or statistics covered in a Social Studies or English project on global warming.

Reading comprehension could, arguably, be considered the corner stone of education at the junior high level. If students have difficulty understanding what they are reading, they will invariably experience difficulty in all of their core subjects. Science, Mathematics, Social Studies and Language Arts rely heavily on the notion that students can read at or above grade level as well as consistently understand reading content. By addressing the issue of reading comprehension of non-fiction texts in all subject areas, students will not only have consistent re-enforcement of reading strategies and language associated with those strategies but also see the cross-curricular application of these strategies.

The success of our focus on areas of need in Numeracy and Literacy will be greatly impacted by our ability to maximize instructional time with students.

4. Based on the challenges we identified, what are your goals for student achievement?

<p>Goal 1: Staff at Graham Creighton Junior High will demonstrate improvement in developing a positive learning environment.</p>	
<p>Strategies to achieve the goal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff will revise and update the school Code of Conduct to ensure it aligns with board and provincial guidelines. 2. Staff will revise, implement and reinforce the PEBS Matrix. 3. School administration will review operational procedures. 4. Staff will work to reduce interruptions to learning due to announcements, visitors to the door and assemblies, co-curricular and/or extra-curricular. 5. Student successes will be acknowledged and celebrated during monthly grade-level assemblies. 	
<p>Professional development to support achievement of the goal:</p>	
Staff will learn	Learning Environment
<p>All staff will learn and model consistent implementation of the PEBS matrix.</p> <p>All staff will use consistent language that supports the PEBS philosophy.</p> <p>All staff will model and teach expected behaviours.</p>	<p>GEM Sessions</p> <p>Safe Schools Leadership team</p> <p>PEBS lead team</p> <p>School Administration</p> <p>September 24, 2010 – attending PD presented by Ronald G. Morrish, author of “With All Due Respect”</p>
<p>PD opportunities for all staff to help with the implementation of PEBS.</p>	<p>PD sessions provided throughout the year</p>
<p>Staff will develop and reach consensus on major and minor infractions and consequences.</p>	<p>School administration</p> <p>GEMS sessions</p>
<p>Staff will complete Non-violent Crisis Intervention training.</p>	<p>December 23, 2010</p> <p>School based PD day</p>

Data sources:

What data will you collect?	When will you collect the data?	Who will be responsible for collecting the data?
Teachers will collect data on Positive Paws.	Monthly	Homeroom/ specialty teachers
Teachers will track minor infractions and make necessary home contact.	On-going basis	Homeroom teachers
Administration will track major infractions and make necessary home contact	On-going basis	Administration
Getting to Great Survey results	Yearly	Administration
Phone Logs (Positive/negative/teacher concerns)	Weekly	Teachers, Administration

Goal 2 : Mathematics

Students at Graham Creighton Junior High will demonstrate an improvement in Number Operations with a focus relevant to each grade level.

Strategies to achieve the goal:

1. Teachers will develop grade level assessments to monitor student achievement in operations and use results to inform instruction and provide feedback to students.
2. Teachers will develop a common understanding of the three-part lesson model to support instruction in number operations.
3. Content area teachers will incorporate number operations and use consistent language in their classrooms when appropriate.
4. Teachers will develop a common understanding of the five representations (pictorial, symbolical, concrete, contextual, and verbal) and incorporate them into their lessons.
5. Teachers will develop a common understanding of instructional practices in mental math and incorporate them into their daily practice.

Professional development to support achievement of the goal:

Staff will learn	Learning Environment
Teachers will learn how to develop grade level assessments and common scoring rubrics.	Dialogue in grade level PLCs Work with math coach Support from Central Office Staff
Teachers will learn how to use the common rubric to develop common scoring practices.	Dialogue in grade level PLCs Work with math coach
Teachers will learn about the three part lesson model.	Dialogue in grade level PLCs Work with math coach In class support by math coach Book study (Elementary and Middle School Mathematics: Teaching Developmentally by Van de Walle, chapter 4)
Teachers will learn how to incorporate mathematical concepts and language into their classrooms.	Dialogue in grade level PLCs Work with math coach In class support by math coach Work with Math Teachers School Based PD
Teachers will learn what the five representations are and how to use them.	Dialogue in grade level PLCs Work with math coach In class support by math coach School Based PD
Teachers will learn instructional practices in mental math.	Dialogue in grade level PLCs Work with math coach In class support by math coach

School Based PD
 Print Resources (Mental Math Yearly Plans)
 P-9 Mathematics Videos

Data sources:

What data will you collect?	When will you collect the data?	Who will be responsible for collecting the data?
Grade level assessment	On-going throughout the year Submitted to administration twice per year	Math Teachers
HRSB CAT 4 Assessment	October and January	HRSB and Administration
PLC reflection sheets	Weekly	Math PLC leader

Goal 3 : Literacy

Students at Graham Creighton Junior High will demonstrate improvement in reading comprehension of non-fiction texts.

Strategies to achieve the goal:

1. Teachers will develop a common understanding and explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies in all subject areas.
2. ELA and FLA teachers will collect classroom data that assesses reading comprehension. Data will be analyzed to inform instruction.
3. ELA and FLA teachers will develop a common understanding of the workshop framework for instruction to support reading comprehension.

Professional development to support achievement of the goal:

Staff will learn (knowledge, skills, and professional practices)?

Learning Environment

How will the learning take place (ex. PLCs, PD, time with coach, etc.)?

All teachers will learn instructional practices to explicitly teach reading comprehension strategies in their subject area

- Teachers will identify a specific bank of reading comprehension strategies to be taught and practiced in all subject areas.
- Teachers will develop a common vocabulary related to the selected reading comprehension strategies.

- Literacy coach support
- PLCs and GEMS sessions
- Professional Development days to instruct teachers on use of strategies
- Co-teaching
- Board support staff

Teachers will develop a common understanding of classroom assessment practices that inform instruction.

- Teachers, in collaboration with the literacy coach, will create grade-level assessments for reading comprehension.
- Teachers will administer grade-level assessments throughout the school year.

- PLC time
- Literacy Coach support
- Board support staff

ELA and FLA teachers will be provided with resources, strategies and the support to implement workshop framework.

- PLC Time
- Professional Development days to instruct teachers on use of strategies
- Co-teaching
- Teaching in Action resource
- ELA desk blotter
- Literacy coach
- Strategies That Work – Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis

- Strategies gagnantes en lecture
- Board support staff

Data sources:

What data will you collect?	When will you collect the data?	Who will be responsible for collecting the data?
Grade-level assessments of reading comprehension.	On-going throughout the year Submitted to administration twice per year	All classroom teachers grades seven through nine.
PLC Reflection Sheets	Filed in the English PLC binder after the weekly meeting	English PLC leader
HRSB CAT-4 Results	October 2010	HRSB and Principal
JHLA Results	February 2011	DOE and Principal

6. How will you involve the SAC, the students and the wider community?

At Graham Creighton Junior High, we feel that everyone has a role to play in improving our school. With this in mind, we have created an action plan so that we may be more inclusive with regards to community involvement.

We are planning a major change in our approach with the PEBS philosophy. It is our intention to make not only the SAC aware of these changes but they will be communicated to parents by way of school newsletters, website, and letters home. We also plan to inform the SAC by regular, monthly updates to increase awareness of school activities. SAC members will be formally invited to celebrations of student success such as Positive Paws assemblies, academic tea, sports awards and music concerts within the school.

Parent involvement is key for any school; it demonstrates global support for students and dedication to student success. We plan to continue to invite parents to the academic tea and to extend invitations to school assemblies, especially when children are awarded student of the month prizes. We will continue to improve communication between parents and the school through such means as the school website, newsletters, and bulletin board.

Student involvement will be formalized and extended in the coming years. Students will be included in awarding student of the month awards by choosing a member of their homeroom who exemplifies the standards outlined in the school Code of Conduct. Students will also be permitted, with teacher approval, to give their classmates Positive Paws. Student leaders will have specific roles within the school, organizing activities and helping implement programs such as planning Winter Carnival and running the Environmental Team

Our students will be made aware of these changes through classroom discussion and activities conducted within the first few weeks of the new school year.

Graham Creighton Junior High

PFI Budget

Total Allotment: \$4960.00

\$3000.00 + \$5.00 x 392 students* = \$4960.00

Budget Item	Planned Cost	Actual Cost
Year 2 2010-2011 High interest/low-level books (Administration to match) 11 sub days	\$500.00 \$1870.00	
Year 3 2011-2012 9 sub days	\$1530.00	
Year 4 2012-2013 4 sub days	\$680.00	
Year 5 2013-2014 2 Sub days to prepare for DOE presentation	\$340.00	
Miscellaneous – copies, supplies	\$40.00	
Total \$	\$4960.00	

* based on student enrollment during 2009-2010 academic year