



Sunshine Coast Alternative School

GROWTH PLAN



Principal Chris Lekakis

2024-2025 School Year

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Sunshine Coast Alternative School Growth Plan

School Year: 2024/2025

School Demographics

Sunshine Coast Alternative School (SCAS)

At SCAS, we provide learner-centered programs designed to meet the diverse needs of students from Grade 5 to Grade 12. Our programs are district based and located at various sites along the Sunshine Coast, offering a nurturing and supportive environment for students. All our programs work on a Response to Intervention model in trying to meet the needs of the students through building their awareness, understanding, and celebration of the Ministry of Education's core competencies.

Programs Offered and Enrolment (Current # of students):

- **Horizons (41 students), Flex (21 students), Mangrove (25 students), and Oasis (23 students):** Small, individualized programs for high school students (Grades 8-12) that emphasize self-paced, independent learning. These programs include creative opportunities for personal growth through community fine arts, fitness programs, and career preparation seminars.
- **NDVR (7 Students) :** A program for students in Grades 5-7, providing a small, nurturing, learning environment with ample one-on-one learning opportunities. This program blends Ministry learning objectives with life skills, social emotional capacity building, physical exercise, and nature-based learning experiences.
- **Project SPIDER (8 Students):** For students in Grades 7-9, offering a flexible range of core courses and hands-on learning opportunities. This program fosters a supportive community of learners with group elective classes, studio art, humanities and STEM classes.
- **SPIDER 10-12:** Online courses for Grades 10-12 that cater to homeschooled students, local high school students, and adults completing high school diplomas or upgrading. These courses are developed through the BC Learning Network and taught by BC-certified subject specialists. There are currently 14 full time Senior SPIDER students and 167 students in the district taking one or more online courses through our Brightspace platform.

Community Context

SCAS is grateful and privileged to run its programs within the traditional and unceded lands of the Shíshálh (Sechelt) Nation and the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation). Our students live all over the coast and so placement into our programs is based on district referrals and student needs. We are fortunate to have excellent relationships with our community partners who support our students through agency, access, and aid.



Trends

- Our programs are increasingly requested/referred to as more students face attendance and engagement issues in traditional schools. We also are seeing a rise in mental health support requests. Our program sites are in high demand, and we are looking to create more spaces to offer appropriate tiered supports.
- More resources are needed to support school attendance and engagement. Intake data shows 65% of referred students lack peer or safe adult connections. We started an Engagement Team last year to provide tier 3 support for our most vulnerable students, fostering safety and belonging to re-engage them in schooling.
- SCAS has seen significant changes, including six new staff members and a new Principal. We transitioned from the Moodle platform to Brightspace for academic delivery, as recommended by the Ministry of Education. This change involves new learning for staff, students, and parents.

Strengths

- Our school staff and students value nature based learning opportunities and have implemented barrier free excursions as part of their weekly schedule.
- SCAS programs remove as many barriers for students as possible so that they can engage in their schooling without added stress (Breakfast/Lunch programs, on site mental health clinicians, Youth and Childcare Workers, ISTs and EAs for academic support)
- Staff and community partnerships provide excellent real world work and service experiences

Stretches (Areas for Growth)

- We have undergone many changes in our school community/learning program—we are in the process of taking inventory of what the needs of the students, staff, and parent group are in order to assess if the current school values, structures, practices and data are in line with our new strategic plan and current SCAS school vision/goals.
- We are seeing a rise in office referrals, peer issues, substance use and in school vandalism. Our wondering is how we can support students who are struggling in regulating their behaviour, attendance, and engagement in school. Wonderings: how do we build capacity for staff to support students in a trauma informed way-Is this lens present in how we support our priority learners?
- We are noticing that our SPIDER program needs to implement more inclusive systems of communication, technology and support in order to make sure SD46



students with a ministry designation who are taking an online course have access to all the supports available to them.

Reflections on Past Initiatives

- Some of our previous initiatives have included increasing the number of courses completed by all students to help our students be in a position to graduate with specific life skills to enable them to navigate their personal future directions.
- SCAS will provide opportunities for our students to develop and apply social and emotional skills to successfully live, work, and play together. This will foster the development of resilience and attitude to deal with life's challenges and to manage their mental health.
- SCAS partnered with District Support Services to pilot the creation of an Engagement Team to create interventions for students who are struggling with their attendance and engagement. We have completed our first year and have identified our students that are struggling to engage in their learning and now we are trying to add staffing and supports.

Vision for Growth

- “All that we are is story. From the moment we are born to the time we continue on our spirit journey, we are involved in the creation of the story of our time here. It is what we arrive with. It is all we leave behind. We are not the things we accumulate. We are not the things we deem important. We are story. All of us. What comes to matter then is the creation of the best possible story we can while we're here; you, me, us, together. When we can do that and we take the time to share those stories with each other, we get bigger inside, we see each other, we recognize our kinship – we change the world, one story at a time...”
— **Richard Wagamese**
- This quote encompasses the vision that we have as a learning community. Our staff want our students to understand that the skills, experiences, and knowledge they choose to engage with will help create their story and that our job is to support them so that they can confidently be able to celebrate and share their stories when they move on.

Mission

Our school's purpose is to provide learner centred programmes that encourage knowledge, skills and academic success while fostering the social and emotional



growth necessary to build a healthy community – (Currently under review/working with staff to update it)

DRAFT: Our school will foster inclusive learning environments where all students feel that they are safe and belong – physically and emotionally –and where all students are inspired to explore their personal strengths, interests, and competencies.

Core Values

The school's values are Integrity, Flexibility and Respect. These values have been in place for over 12 years and so the staff and students are engaging in an assessment to see if any changes need to be made to better reflect the programs today. Two examples that are being considered are Belonging and Inclusion as core values. This aligns nicely with the new Strategic plan and our staff's introduction to Dr Martin Brokenleg's Circle of Courage.

Equity Considerations

How are you supporting and planning for the following priority learners?

Meeting the needs of our priority learners is at the core of how we run SCAS programming. Priority learners make up the majority of our student body and so we have excellent working relationships with Kerry Mahlman, District Principal of Indigenous Education and her team, our District Inclusion Support Services Team, and our MCFD and Sunshine Coast Community Support staff. These relationships help us advocate for our students as we try and remove barriers for them. One such barrier is our lower graduation rate in our district for our priority learners

- Indigenous students: SCAS staff work closely with our Indigenous Education Team to support Indigenous students in building self efficacy, engaging in First Peoples Principles of learning, nature and place based learning opportunities, connecting with our local nations, and educating all students in the historical wrongs that have occurred even in our local community.
- Students with disabilities or diverse abilities: Our Inclusion Support Teachers are strong advocates for our students with disabilities or diverse abilities. They also help remove barriers in accessing supports by creating strength based plans that scaffold and implement appropriate tiered interventions.
- Children and Youth in Care: Our entire team working together with the student and Ministry case managers to co-create a stable plan that addresses their school, home, and community.

Strategic Goals and Objectives



Outlining the broad goals the school aims to achieve in alignment with the Strategic Plan and specific objectives that will guide actions based on evidence.

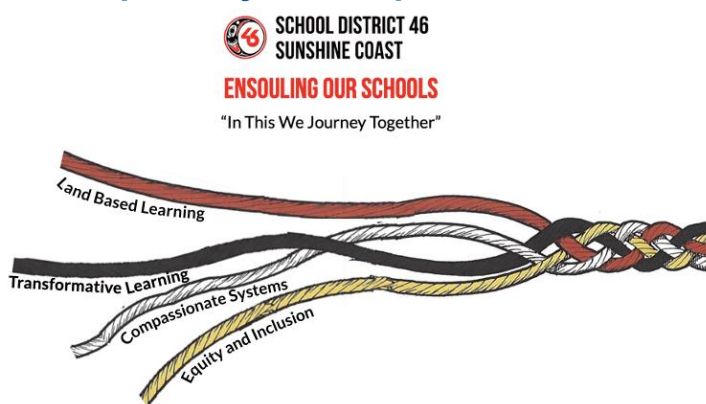
List 2-3 specific Core Competencies for targeted development: Choose from Personal and Social, Thinking, and Communication. (Not all three need to be targeted)

- Personal Awareness and Responsibility
- Critical and Reflective Thinking:

Selected Strands for Core Competency Development

Strands:

- Authentic Relationships
- Personalized Learning
- Nature-Based Learning
- Experiential Hands-On Learning
- Inclusion
- Authentic, Real-World Learning
- First Peoples Principles of Learning
- Transformative Assessment
- Flexible Learning Environments



If we are attuned educators who build connections with joy, passion, and respect, we can design an irresistible future for all learners through weaving the following strands...

1. Authentic Relationships
2. First Peoples Principles of Learning

...Then we believe students will authentically connect to and develop their core competencies; thus, nurturing their personal deep engagement, joy, and learning over time.

1. Core Competency Goal: Personal Awareness and Responsibility

- Facet we have chosen to focus on is WELL BEING.
Well-being • _Students who are personally aware and responsible recognize the factors that affect their holistic wellness and take increasing responsibility for caring for themselves. They keep themselves healthy and stay active, manage stress, and express a sense of personal well-being. They make choices that contribute to their safety in their communities, including their online communities and use of social media. They recognize their personal responsibility for their happiness and have strategies that help them find peace in challenging situations.



- **“I statement” : I can make choices that help me meet my wants and needs and increase my feelings of well-being. I take responsibility for my actions.**
- I can take action toward meeting my own wants and needs and finding joy and satisfaction, and work toward a goal or solving a problem. I can use strategies that increase my feeling of well-being and help me manage my feelings and emotions. I can connect my actions with both positive and negative consequences and try to make adjustments; I accept feedback. I make decisions about my activities and take some responsibility for my physical and emotional well-being.

2. Evidence Analysis and Interpretation: Include satellite, map and street data.

- Direct Evidence:
- **Satellite:** 94% of our students are students with a ministry designation (Appendix A)- Data was resourced from the Ministry Sharepoint in Power BI) .
- **Map:** Attendance Data for SD46: High number of SCAS student Absences led to the creation of the Engagement Team (Appendix B)
- **Street:** Students participate in the development of their strength based IEP. Students identify their strengths, identify strategies for their success, and reflect on and communicate their progression within the core competency lens that they are focussing on.
- **Street:** All SCAS students complete Intake Interviews sharing their experiences of previous schooling experiences and the barriers that they face to engaging in school. The top three reasons given are: Mental health/traumatic history, Social/Peer Issues, and Addiction
- Indirect Evidence: ‘The Incremental Effect’: Students who start at SCAS with support and experience a small level of success with both their academics and their mental health needs gain traction and create positive connections to the program.
- All but one of SCAS’s data sets from the Ministry are masked because of

3. Rationale

- Explanation of why this goal is chosen and how the strands support development of this Core Competency.
- This goal was chosen because of the increase in students who are being referred to our program that are struggling in multiple areas of their life. As a school we want to create an environment that allows for supports to work together with a growth mindset lens that we can create the conditions for students to be successful despite any past or current barriers. This is done by creating a connection to SCAS through authentic relationships, a trauma informed approach, and equitable access to supports/services.



4. Implementation Plan

- Actions: One challenge is that as a school community (staff, students, and parents) we agree that we need to have a common vision and understanding of what our program will offer and the lens through which we approach our work. Staff and students will assess and co create the values that will create our foundation and common language. This will then help create and align our values to our artifacts across all our settings. Our school's artifacts: Code of Conduct, Suspension policy, School Based Team model, Inclusion practices, Referral processes, and professional development plans and Assessment structures will all align with our vision/Values. This will allow for collective efficacy to occur within our school community. Copy of current Code Of Conduct which is not aligned with initial Values assessments and Heritage Building Staff Visioning Documents (Appendix C,D,)
- Timeline: With so many changes in staff, we have been working in a sequential manner: Sept to November = observation of current practises, December to January = reflection + review with staff, February to March = staff and student co creation + collaboration, April to June = review data/conduct interviews and plan to review with students in September start up.
- Responsible Parties: All staff included

5. Resources Required

- Description of the resources (human, material, financial) required to implement the strand.
- **Human:**
- Jen Davey: Staff Inservice: (Nov. and Feb) Working with students with Brain Differences
- Bruce Perry: Virtual Staff presentation: Working with students who have suffered trauma
- Carolyn Picard: All Staff Pro D: Compassionate Systems Leadership Training
- TCO2 Student Presentation for students
- Staff Meetings: Ongoing: Dr Martin Brokenleg's Circle of Courage/Values Inventory/Dianne Gossen's Restitution Training.
- **Material:**

6. Success Indicators – consider staff, students and families

- A co-created Learning Community Values Statement
- Artifacts that align with our Values statement.: Student /Staff created Social Contract for Classrooms, Code Of Conduct,



- Methods for assessing the development of the Core Competency as a result of the strand.
- Exit Surveys of Students in June
- Student Learning Survey Results

7. Reflection and Evaluation of the Plan: Seasonal Round

- SBT meeting time
- Learning Guide Check ins at our weekly check in
- Staff Check ins

8. Core Competency Goal: Critical and Reflective Thinking

OF NOTE: Our Second competency has recently changed. We are still looking at further data points / metrics to be utilized and added into this living document.

- Facet we have chosen to work on : Reflecting and Assessing
Students apply critical, metacognitive, and reflective thinking in given situations, and relate this thinking to other experiences, using this process to identify ways to improve or adapt their approach to learning. They reflect on and assess their experiences, thinking, learning processes, work, and progress in relation to their purposes. Students give, receive, and act on feedback and set goals individually and collaboratively. They determine the extent to which they have met their goals and can set new ones.
- **I can ask questions and consider options. I can use my observations, experience, and imagination to draw conclusions and make judgments.**
- I can ask open-ended questions, explore, and gather information. I experiment purposefully to develop options. I can contribute to and use criteria. I use observation, experience, and imagination to draw conclusions, make judgments, and ask new questions. I can describe my thinking and how it is changing. I can establish goals individually and with others. I can connect my learning with my experiences, efforts, and goals. I give and receive constructive feedback.

9. Evidence Analysis and Interpretation:

- Direct Evidence: All but one of SCAS's data sets from the Ministry are masked because of the likelihood of identifying a group of students. We are looking at Street Data and how we can complete interviews with students and use Core Competency Spaces reflections in order to demonstrate real life examples of growth in the students ability to reflect.
- **Street:** Similar to our Personal Awareness and Responsibility Competency, SCAS' Students' participation in the development, review, and goal setting of their strength based IEP three times a year demonstrates critical thinking and reflection. Students identify their strengths, identify strategies for their success, and reflect on and communicate their progression within the core competency lens that they



are focussing on. See Appendix (E) for an example of a student's January IEP reflection on their Intellectual Competency on Critical Thinking..

- **Street:** All SCAS students complete Intake Interviews sharing their stories of previous schooling experiences and the barriers that they face to engaging in school. The top three reasons given are: Mental health/traumatic history, social/peer issues, and addiction.
- Indirect Evidence: SCAS Students are learning the language of Dr Martin Brokenleg's Circle of Courage to describe their progression through the Wheel: Specifically, Creating Authentic Relationships with our staff in order to Create a sense of Belonging. Our preliminary data suggests that they can clearly give examples of how they have moved through the Circle of Courage Quadrants from Belonging to Mastery to Generosity to Independence.



Dr Martin Brokenleg's Circle of Courage

10. Rationale

- This goal was chosen because of the growth that students demonstrate by sharing their story. Reflective thinking is used to identify ways to improve or adapt their approach to learning and living. SCAS teaching philosophy is based on the First People's Principles of Learning where learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place). This is done by creating a connection to SCAS through authentic relationships and engaging with any of the supports available. We have seen an increase in student Mental Health concerns and have added an extra 0.6 FTE Counsellor and extra 0.2 FTE teacher in order to increase time and adults in our buildings.

11. Implementation Plan

- Actions: Having our students co create our Code of Conduct allows for their experiences, reflections, and their story to be present and heard.
- Timeline: SAME AS ABOVE: With so many changes in staff, we have been working in a sequential manner: Sept to November = observation of current practises, December to January = reflection + review with staff, February to March = staff co creation + collaboration, April to May = co creation with students, June = review and plan to review in September.
- Responsible Parties: Individuals or teams responsible for each action.
- Increasing the size of our engagement team in order to expand the scope of services

12. Resources Required

- **Human:**
- Jen Davey: Staff Inservice: (Nov. and Feb) Working with students with Brain Differences
- Bruce Perry : Virtual Staff presentation: Working with students who have suffered trauma
- Carolyn Picard: All Staff Pro D: Compassionate Systems Leadership Training
- TCO2 Student Presentation for students
- Staff Meetings: Ongoing: Dr Martin Brokenleg's Circle of Courage/Values Inventory/Dianne Gossen's Restitution Training.
- **Material:**

13. Success Indicators – consider staff, students and families

- A co-created Learning Community Values Statement



- Artifacts that align with our Values statement.: Student /Staff created Social Contract for Classrooms, Code Of Conduct,
- Methods for assessing the development of the Core Competency as a result of the strand.
- Exit Surveys of Students in June
- Student Learning Survey Results

14. Reflection and Evaluation of the Plan: Seasonal Round

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- IEP Competency based review meetings (3x a year)
- Learning Guide Check ins at our weekly check in
- Staff Check ins

Engagement and Communication Plan

How the school will communicate its Growth Plan to the community and engage partners (students, parents, staff, community partners) in the process.

- Parents: PAC Meetings; Learning Community Dinner with Community Supports
- Staff: Professional Development; Staff Meetings; School Based Team
- Students: Bi Weekly - Program assemblies; Monthly Building Assemblies with staff

Professional Learning

Professional learning activities planned to support staff in implementing the Growth Plan and fostering the Core Competencies.

- Values Assessment Team Exercise by Chris Lekakis for staff, students, and PAC
- Restitution Training with Chris Lekakis through Lunch and Learns
- Virtual Conference on Trauma and the effect on children with Bruce Perry (April 30th/May 1st)
- Dr Martin Brokenleg's Circle of Courage Seminar to staff and students
- Implementing the First Peoples Principles of Learning in Assessment Assessment Practices

Budget Considerations



- Most of our costs will be to allow staff (and students) to come together (release time/collab time) and create/co create what their interactions, relationships will look like moving forward.
- Release time for staff to visit other Alt schools and create

Conclusion

At SCAS we are excited about the possibilities of aligning our School Growth plan with our SD46 Strategic Plan by highlighting the growth through the Core Competencies. The strands are creating opportunities for us to share some of the great work that has been occurring in our programs and more importantly helps surface areas where we can do more. These opportunities are so valuable as they enrich our students' self worth, identities, and ultimately - create better stories.

