

Lowell Elementary/Mary Sepler Entry Plan Themes and Outcomes

Theme: Community

Commendations:

- Lowell is a neighborhood school with strong history in terms of family and community attendance.
- Lowell is known as a school of high achievement.
- Families gather after school and before school and are connected in a variety of ways.
- Teachers are all responsive, warm and caring.
- Students are known by all teachers and celebrated by all teachers.
- Lowell has a large degree of family involvement and a strong volunteer base.
- The Lowell PTA is highly supportive and responsive to the school needs.
- The Lowell site, architecture and new construction have significant and impressive impact.
- The Bridges program is highly valued in our school.

Areas for Growth and Opportunity:

- Lowell is viewed as an entitled or privileged school by some families and, as a result, families are feeling disengaged and/or unrepresented.
- Students at or below grade level do not always feel part of the community.
- There are barriers to involvement based on economics and transportation.
- “Labels” can have a negative effect in our school. There can be an “in” and “out” feeling in terms of belonging and success.

Connections:

Promise:

- *One Schoolhouse Approach*

CEL:

- *Professional Responsibilities, Ethics and Advocacy*

Next Steps toward building Community:

- All-School Professional Development, Inclusive Practices, 4/28/16
- Creating Student Mentorship/Jobs Program spring 2016
- Extend school access to downtown locations through Principal meetings and PTA efforts
- Move toward more individualized student growth emphasis

Theme: Collaboration

Commendations:

- The “Buddy Systems” in our school are highly valued.
- The PTA is highly supportive and responsive to our school.
- Bridges teams are collaborative and supportive of each other.
- Informally, we are supportive and collaborative people.

Areas for Growth and Opportunity:

- At the grade and school level, classroom opportunities are viewed as “uneven” and to varying degrees different learning opportunities exist in different classrooms. Collaboration at the grade level and between grade levels will build and communicate common learning experiences in our classrooms. Vertical communication will support continuity of program for our students.
- School-wide building teams such as Student Growth, Student Assistance and Building Leadership Team will support our work and our students and families.
- We want our students to have some designated time to “be” together without strong adult direction and control in order to learn to collaborate and communicate in authentic and positive ways. Lunch and recess opportunities should provide adequate opportunity for students to collaborate in a variety of ways in order to practice problem solving and communicating with each other.
- Community partnerships have been somewhat limited to short one or two time experiences versus ongoing instructional/learning opportunities. We want to create outdoor classrooms with community partners that will be used throughout the school year for a variety of ongoing learning opportunities.

Connections:

Promise:

- *Authentic partnerships are essential in order to deliver upon our promise. We actively seek input from and work together with all stakeholders to cultivate both existing and new partnerships.*
- *We will develop students and graduates who are leaders, collaborators and team players.*

CEL:

- *Student Engagement Strategies and Student Talk*
- *Classroom Environment and Culture/ Discourse and respect for thinking, collaboration*
- *Professional Collaboration and Communication*

Steps Taken toward building higher levels of effective Collaboration:

- Established Fall 2015: Building Leadership Team, Student Growth Teams, Recess/Lunch Team and Student Assistance Team
- Creating Student Mentorship/Jobs Program spring 2016
- Thursday weekly “News” from the principal to all families via email

Next Steps toward building higher levels of Collaboration:

- Continue to build collaborative stance and expectations into all appropriate professional development and school routines/structures at the community, district, school and classroom levels.
- Increase use of student engagement strategies that give ownership of learning to students, promote quality student talk and high levels of student collaboration in our classrooms.
- Establish outdoor classrooms with Common Threads (garden) and with City Parks (Fairhaven Stewardship Land)
- Extend school access to downtown locations through Principal meetings and possible PTA efforts
- Move toward more individualized student growth emphasis
- Re-design mid-day block including recess-lunch to better promote community and health consciousness
- Promote strong communication with PTA and parents at large

Theme: Student-Owned Learning

Commendations:

- The *Leader in Me* provides a common language and framework from which our students benefit. Leadership opportunities are important for our students and we value them highly.
- Teachers have deep passion, interest and skill in a variety of areas.
- Counseling, Reading Intervention and Special Education Teachers all highly support our students in need.
- *Kelso's Choice* language is something the students use regularly and is used at home as well as at school for social problem solving.
- Lowell maintains strong instruction and a strong support system in literacy.

Areas for Growth and Opportunity:

- The *Leader in Me* is viewed as “jargon” and both teachers and parents would like more authentic leadership opportunity and instruction to emerge.
- We want our students to take (have) more control over the learning process in terms of asking questions, self-assessing and determining topics of interest. We want to see more hands-on service or project based learning opportunities that extend into the community.
- We want all students to be highly engaged and challenged appropriately in learning.
- Reframed as an inquiry model, the *Leader in Me* (or similar substitute) could support student-designed and community based service projects that explore what it means to be a leader in school, in our community and in the world.

Connections:

Promise:

- *We will empower every child to discover and develop a passion, contribute to their community, and achieve a fulfilling and productive life.*
- *We will develop students and graduates who are: confident individuals who continuously challenge themselves.*
- *We will develop students and graduates who are: well-rounded community members engaged with the broader world.*
- *Priorities for Progress: Continue to support staff in teaching diverse learners, including highly capable learners and implementing committee recommendations.*

CEL:

- *Student Engagement, Assessment for Student Learning, Purpose*

Next Steps toward increasing Student-Owned Learning:

- Identify qualities of a “culture of inquiry” and take steps to create such a culture in our school.
- Increase use of student engagement strategies that give ownership of learning to students, promote quality student talk and high levels of student collaboration in our classrooms.
- Explore and Select an Engineering-Technology strand of study K-5 for the next school year that will support school-wide efforts toward a culture of inquiry.
- Create school-wide shared spaces and experiences in the form of outdoor classrooms that support service and project based learning opportunities.