

Southern Okanagan Secondary School



School Plan 2024-25

Scanning: What do we as a staff know about our students – What is going on for them as learners?

SOSS has over five hundred students in grades 8-12. We know we have a high percentage of students significantly impacted by mental health concerns. For the last couple of years, our focus has been on building positive relationships with our students to maximize their potential. We have been scanning our data to determine what other supports are needed to ensure all our students, including our marginalized ones, find success in school. We are incorporating the Circle of Courage as a filter.

Over the last few years, we have created a Learning Centre to support students for many reasons. The Learning Centre provides an alternate workspace where students can focus on social emotional wellness and academic success. We have noted a progressive increase in the number of students who require an alternate setting for their learning.

Despite our efforts, the learning gap remains high for our Priority students due to sporadic attendance. Our Student Learning Survey revealed that only 50% of grade 10 students felt they had two or more people who cared about them, indicating room for improvement. Additionally, only 40% of our grade 12 students felt that they were being taught how to take ownership of their own learning. We are wondering if we focused on mastery and independence, we would see an improvement in this area. Evidence from the YDI stated that our students trended toward being more likely to rate their school’s attentiveness to student voices as “high” compared with students in other schools and districts (60% vs 25%) (page 55). This is encouraging as we have been working on this for the last few years.

The Equity Scan highlighted that inherent bias and racism affect our Indigenous students, making them feel unwelcome despite our efforts. Collecting 5- and 6-year completion data has helped us focus on ensuring that these students graduate. Data from the Community of Practice indicates that we must remove all barriers for Indigenous youth and create true equity using their student voice.

This year, we aim to deepen our focus on Independence and Mastery using Dr. Martin Brokenleg’s “Circle of Courage.” Our long-term goals will continue to emphasize both academic and social-emotional learning initiatives. We have noticed a trend of first-year post-secondary students returning home after just one year. We want to dig deeper into this to evaluate what other supports students need prior to graduating so they can be successful. We also recognize that there are many external factors affecting resilience.

Student Learning Survey Evidence 2018, 2023 & 2024

Question	2018		2023		2024	
	Grade 10/12	Grade 10/12	Grade 10/12	Grade 10/12	Grade 10/12	Grade 10/12
How many adults care about you? (students reporting 2 or more caring adults)	57	69	62	77	50	77
At school, I am learning how to care for my mental health. (agree & strongly agree)	28	24	31	33	27	10
At school, I am learning how to care for my physical health. (agree & strongly agree)	55	45	74	53	30	27

Is school a place where you feel like you belong? (many times & all of the time)	34	43	57	52	49	39
Does school make you feel stressed or anxious? (many times & all of the time)	66	50	46	57	45	50
Do you feel good about yourself? (at no time or few times)	34	34	19	20	16	18

Student Learning Survey Evidence 2023 & 2024

Question	2023		2024	
	Grade 10/12	Grade 10/12	Grade 10/12	Grade 10/12
At school, I have felt supported when I moved to a higher grade (course choices) strongly agree/ agree	67	69	60	64
When I am facing difficult tasks, I keep trying until I succeed (strongly agree/agree)	56	64	55	70
I believe I can be successful at almost anything I set my mind to (strongly agree/agree)	53	60	60	72
At school, are you taught to take ownership of your learning (all of time/most of the time)	43	50	42	40

From the MDI Well-Being Index for our grade 8's	2022-23	2023-24
Thriving- score in high range on 4/5 measures	28%	23%
Medium- score in high range fewer than 4/5 measures	25%	27%
Low - score in the low range on at least 1/5 measures	47%	51%

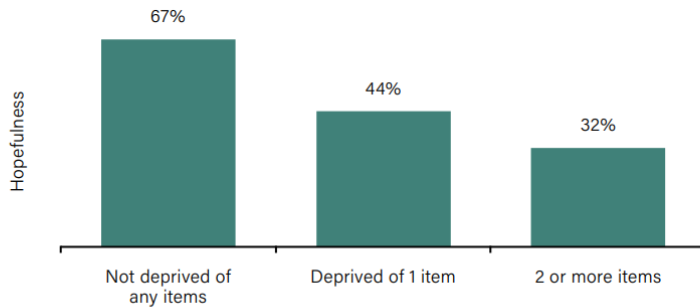
From the MDI Connectedness Data for grade 8's	Two +	One	None
Number of important adults at school-SOSS data	32%	15%	53%
Number of important adults at school –District data	41%	9%	50%

Adolescent Health Survey 2023

Why is economic well-being important?

Youth who experience poorer economic well-being are less likely than their peers to report positive health. For example, the more items from the Youth Deprivation Index that youth were deprived of, the less likely they were to report good or excellent mental health and to feel hopeful for their future.

The more items that students were deprived of, the less likely they were to feel quite/very hopeful for their future



Similarly, youth who went to bed hungry at least sometimes because there was not enough money for food were less likely than those who never went to bed hungry to report good or excellent overall health (47% vs. 75%) and to feel quite or very hopeful for their future (35% vs. 64%). They were also more likely to experience extreme stress in the past month (31% vs. 13%).

Specific conditions and disabilities

	Okanagan		BC
	2018	2023	2023
Anxiety disorder	24%	30%	22%
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD/ADD)	10%	25%	18%
Depression	19%	17%	14%
Eating disorder	N/A	10%	7%
Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)	N/A	8%	6%
Alcohol or other substance use addiction	4%	7%	5%
Autism spectrum disorder	2%	6%	4%
Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	3%	6%	5%
Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD/FAS/FAE)	<1%	1%	1%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Note: In the Okanagan, the differences between 2018 and 2023 were not statistically significant for depression and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

Note: In 2023, the difference between the local rate and the provincial rate was not statistically significant for OCD and PTSD.

N/A: Not applicable as the item was not included on the 2018 BC AHS.

Reasons youth did not access mental health services in the past 12 months
(among those who felt they needed these services)

Thought or hoped the problem would go away	56%
Didn't want parent/guardian to know	54%
Worried their information wouldn't be kept confidential	45%
Didn't know where to go	41%
Afraid of what they would be told	40%
Too busy to go	33%
Afraid someone they knew might see them	31%
Didn't think they could afford it	29%
Had negative experience(s) before	23%
Parent/guardian wouldn't take them	19%
On a waiting list	10%
Had no transportation	7%
Couldn't go when it was open	6%
The service was not available in their community	3%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Focusing: What are the key areas of learning we will focus on?

Driving Question:

To what extent will embedding the Circle of Courage in our daily practices lead to a more resilient and engaged learning community?

From the Circle of Courage, the two focus areas are Mastery and Independence.

Developing a Hunch: What is leading us to this focus for our learners?

- ✓ More than 25% of our students exhibit feelings of isolation and anxiety which may contribute to more challenges with Mastery and Independence
- ✓ A large percentage of our students are deeply affected by external factors which impact their resilience
- ✓ Our hunch is that if we use student voice with a focus on mastery and independence, it will lead to more resilience and success for our students.

Learning: What new areas of professional learning are we engaging in and how will we design new learning for our staff that will have an impact on our students?

- ✓ Professional Development being accessed by staff:
 - Truth & Reconciliation and Intergenerational Trauma and White Privilege
 - Indigenous Ways of Knowing: Learning with and from the Okanagan Syilx Nation
 - Local Knowledge Keepers sharing their knowledge
- ✓ Calls to Action- Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada
- ✓ Dr. Martin Brokenleg – Circle of Courage (website and video)
- ✓ Reminders and tools being shared in the Weekly Update, at staff meetings and Inquiry
- ✓ More understanding about Empathy Interviews and Student Voice as part of our practice
- ✓ Learning from past grads – knowing their story and understanding the barriers to success
- ✓ Books being accessed by staff and faculty members:
 - Leading Through Spirals of Inquiry for Equity and Quality – Halbert & Kaser
 - Speaking Our Truth – A Journey of Reconciliation – Gray Smith
 - Listening Leader – Shane Safir
 - Street Data- Shane Safir/ Jamila Dugan
 - The Anxious Generation – Jonathan Haidt

Taking Action: What strategies will we implement? (focus on Mastery and Independence)

- Increasing opportunities to use specialized technology to further student independence (ie speech to text)
- Provide more opportunities for student leadership to show independence and mastery (groups such as Student Voice, Hornet Homies, AEAC)
- Pay more attention to equity concerns
 - Graduation rates
 - Food security (Breakfast club; Starfish Program, lunch program)
 - Access to Technology
- Increase connections with the Osoyoos Indian Band and parents to support our kids- academically, culturally and socially which will hopefully foster independence
- Learner Centre and Mental Health Boost- focus on SEL & specialized supports

- More inclusive activities so all students feel safe and cared for and more confident in their independence
- Using common language of Circle of Courage with students
- Providing leadership opportunities for students with the development of our Indigenous Garden- Mastery over the planning and implementation of it
- Giving students more choice will encourage independence
- From the Community Practice data, it is important to move away from a deficit model to a refocusing on the positive.

Checking: How will we know if we have made enough of a difference?

- Anecdotal check-ins with present students and past grads
- Student Forums, Student Learning Surveys
- Equity Scan, 5- & 6-year completion rates
- Capstone Presentation; exit interviews
- What evidence do we see throughout our campus?
- Qualitative and quantitative feedback from Inquiry Groups
- Check in with community partners – Jessica Stelkia (Indigenous Grad Coach); Sonja Jensen (OIB Council member & Youth Coordinator); Shan Peltier Youth Coordinator for OIB Jenny Martin (District teacher supporting transitions and Healthy Schools)