

Grant For School Inquiry (GSI)

“The Power of Networks for School Improvement”

Why networked collaborative inquiry?

“We are interested in groups of schools working together in intentional ways to enhance the quality of professional learning and to strengthen capacity for continuous improvement, in the service of enhanced student learning.” (Steven Katz, Lorna Earl, and Sonia Ben Jaafar, (2009) in *Building and Connecting Learning Communities: The Power of Networks for School Improvement*)

“...significant changes in student learning depend on major changes in the practices and the structures of schools, and these changes will emerge from the professional knowledge creation and sharing that occurs through interaction within and across schools in networks.” (Steven Katz, Lorna Earl, and Sonia Ben Jaafar, (2009) in *Building and Connecting Learning Communities: The Power of Networks for School Improvement*)

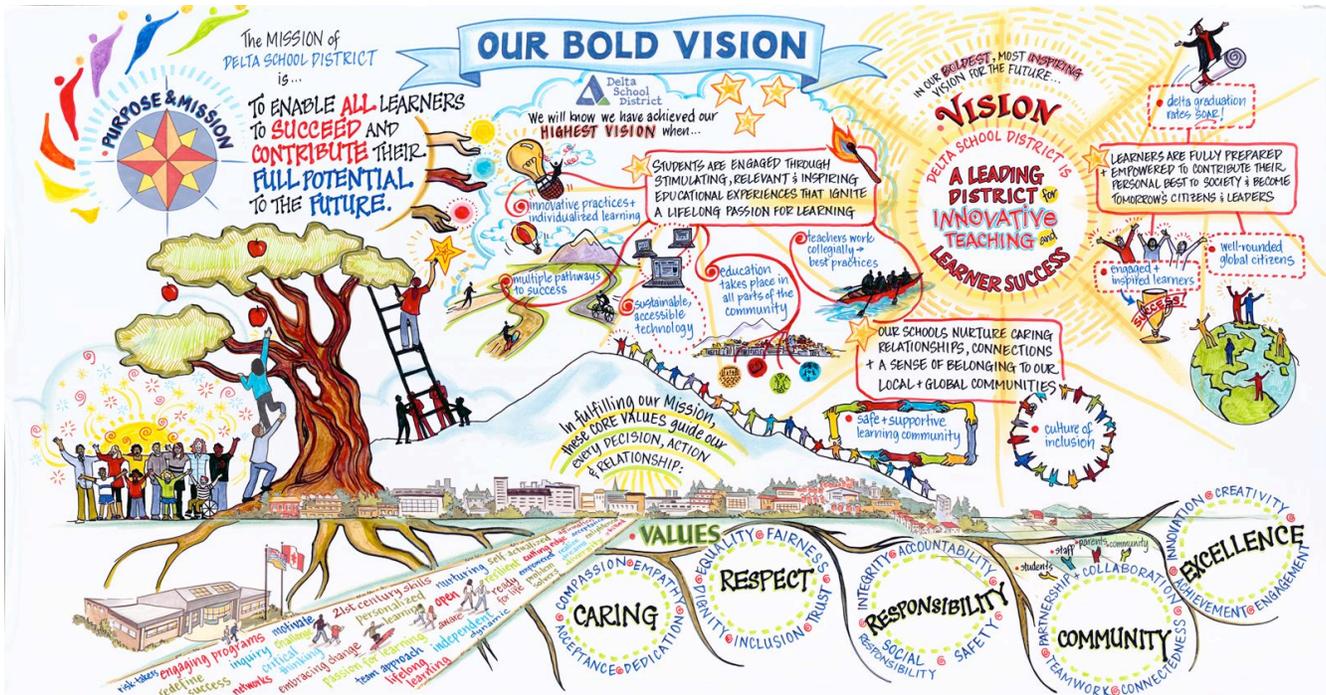
“Young people need to be innovative to succeed in work and life, and education can both model this requirement and support its development. For teachers, innovation is about learning to work differently in order to work better.” (Steven Katz, Lorna Earl, and Sonia Ben Jaafar, (2009) in *Building and Connecting Learning Communities: The Power of Networks for School Improvement*)

“It is one of life’s great ironies: schools are in the business of teaching and learning, yet they are terrible at learning from each other. If they ever discover how to do this, their future is assured.” (Michael Fullan, 2001, *Leading in a Culture of Change*)

“...the environments best suited to teach 21st century skills support professional learning communities that enable educators to collaborate, share best practices and integrate 21st century skills into classroom practices”
(Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009)

What does the Delta School District's vision of professional learning look like?

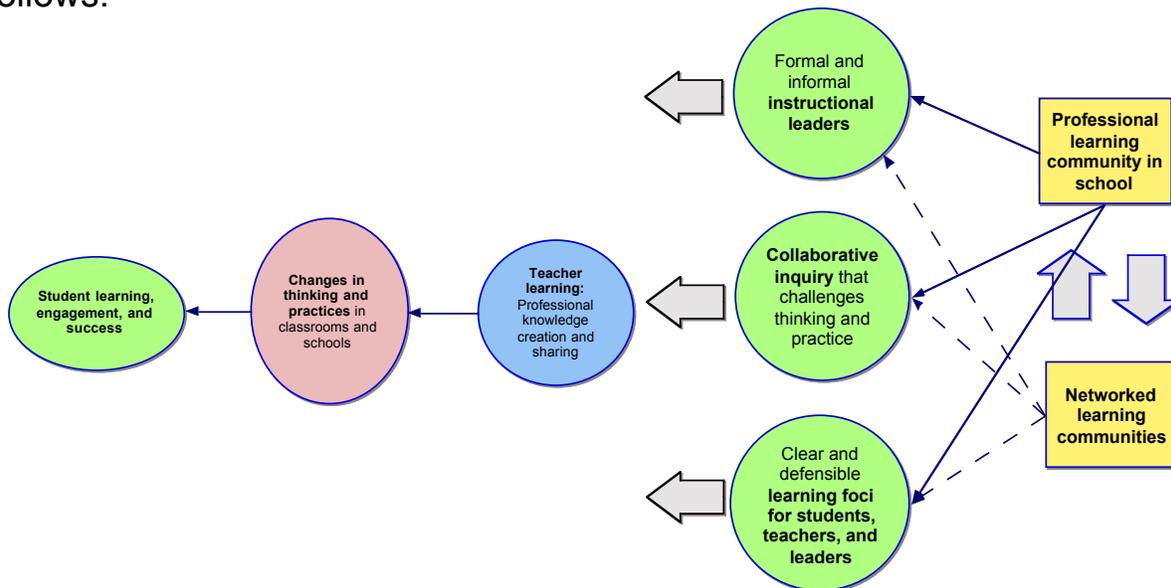
The District's model of professional learning is based on a belief in life-long learning. The model provides an opportunity for educators to work together to develop innovative teaching and learning experiences for all. Using a collaborative approach, schools will develop questions of inquiry, which will be focused on student learning and related to one of the three themes of the District Vision of being a leading district for innovative teaching and learner success:



Every school in Delta will receive staffing to provide for a school-based “Coordinator of Inquiry”. The person assigned to this role will:

- support the development of school-based critical questions of inquiry
- facilitate staff involvement in collaborative inquiry related to their school’s question(s)
- attend inter-school networking meetings to not only share their school’s progress, but also to learn about other schools’ inquiries
- assist with the school’s application for a Grant for School Inquiry (GSI) to support collaborative inquiry
- assist with a District year-end event which will allow schools to share their learning

The Delta School District’s model of professional learning is centered around professional knowledge creation and sharing, and can be represented visually as follows:



(taken from Steven Katz, Lorna Earl, and Sonia Ben Jaafar, (2009) in *Building and Connecting Learning Communities: The Power of Networks for School Improvement*)

Developing an Inquiry Question:

A powerful question of inquiry should not feel like an "add on" to staff. Rather, it should reflect pre-existing interests/curiosities around promising practices that will have a positive impact on learner engagement and achievement. The inquiry is focused on solving a specific problem related to student engagement, learning or well-being identified as a result of analysis of evidence (see the attached Cycle of Inquiry).

There are many positive and innovative practices already happening in our schools. Questions of inquiry should recognize these promising practices in the form of a question that asks, **“What will happen to (an aspect of student learning) when (an element in the learning environment is changed or enhanced)?”** **The inquiry must outline the assessment(s) that will be used to evaluate improved student achievement.**

Stems that might be helpful include:

If we _____ then students will _____ and we will know there has been a positive change because _____.

OR

What effect does _____ have on improving student learning, and how will we know?

How much can a school apply for?

Maximum Application for Grant Funding:

School Size	Maximum Application for Funding
0 – 249	\$2000
250 – 399	\$2500
400 – 549	\$3000
550 – 999	\$3500
1000+	\$4000

PLEASE NOTE:

- In order to support multiple inquiries, a School may choose to apply for more than one GSI grant. ***Please note, however, that the total school allotment (based on school size) will be divided amongst the number of grants applied for.***

GRANT FOR SCHOOL INQUIRY (GSI)

School: _____

Date: _____

Title of Project: _____

Critical Question for Collaborative Inquiry (State the question that staff will be pursuing. It must relate to the District Vision and be focused on improving student achievement):

Coordinator of Inquiry for Innovation: _____

Collaborative Inquiry Team Members:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Project focus (How will the project promote/extend innovative teaching and learner success?):

Structures for Collaborative Inquiry (Describe the means by which team members will work together to address their critical inquiry question throughout this project):

Action Plan (Describe how this project will transform learning. How will learning be different for students and teachers as a result of this work?):

Connection to School Growth Plan (How will the team members' work on this project connect to and extend ongoing priorities at your school?):

Evidence of student and teacher learning: How will this work improve teaching and learning? *How will you measure the impact of your interventions?*

Materials/resources that will be developed/implemented through the project:

Timeline:

Grant for School Inquiry (GSI) Request for Teacher Collaboration:

1) TOC

_____ TOC days x \$271.00 = \$ _____

2) Contract (Use District Contract Form)

A contract can only be used for weekends/holidays or where a teacher is part-time and chooses to attend on his/her day off. \$ _____

3) Meal/Food Expenses (e.g. if teachers attend sessions before or after school)

\$ _____

4) Other: _____

_____ \$ _____

Total Grant Request \$ _____

Contributions to the Inquiry from the School

1) School Funds for _____ \$ _____

2) PAC Funds for _____ \$ _____

3) Other _____

_____ \$ _____

Total Contributions by the School \$ _____

***The GSI is intended to support a full year of collaborative inquiry for innovation. Depending on availability of funding, schools are invited to apply for a second GSI to support the second year of inquiry.**

Participating schools are expected to:

- Share their learning with Delta colleagues at appropriate venues (eg. Department Head Meetings, Principal Meetings, District Day, etc.)
- Submit a reflective summary at the end of each year of the process

Signatures:

Project Leader

Date

Principal

Date

Please return your completed grant application to Nancy Gordon, Director of Learning Services, by emailing as an attachment to ngordon@deltasd.bc.ca