



## **Our Story**

Palouse Prairie School of Expeditionary Learning (PPSEL) began with the desire of a small group of parents and educators to create a unique education opportunity in Moscow. After much careful thought they decided that the Expeditionary Learning model was the right choice to create the kind of education they envisioned. After several years of hard work and preparation, Palouse Prairie School opened its doors at its current location in the fall of 2007. We began with classrooms for Kindergarten through sixth grade, and ~70 students. Since then we've added a thriving middle school program, increased the student population by over 200%, and become one of only a handful of four-star rated charter schools in the state of Idaho. The students from our original Kindergarten class have proven how effective the EL model is. Standardized tests showed 96% were proficient or advanced in math and 92% in reading. In addition, four of our teachers have been invited to teach master's classes at the EL National Conference. Our students gain knowledge and experience through adventure and fieldwork (over 30 off-site trips in 2013-2014) while honing their CREW traits in a close-knit, character-building environment. Best of all, PPSEL families, faculty and staff have created the nurturing, inspiring educational environment every parent envisions for their children.

## **Our Guiding Principles**

We at PPSEL strive to hold ourselves to a high standard in the education we provide and in our treatment of each other.

## **Vision**

Palouse Prairie School will provide an inclusive, respectful and supportive learning environment that nurtures the individual as a thoughtful participant in our local and global community.

## **Mission**

The mission of Palouse Prairie School of Expeditionary Learning is to engage the children and the community of the Palouse in a rigorous and collaborative education of the highest standards by fostering a spirit of inquiry, a persistence towards excellence, a responsibility for learning, and an ethic of service.

## **Shared Values**

Our actions and decisions, as students, educators, and administrators, are guided by the following values:

- Civic engagement through local community-based projects teaches the joy that comes from participation and contribution.
- A physically safe and emotionally caring environment for students helps build mutual trust and respect.
- Discovery and reflection facilitate understanding and learning.
- Autonomy and the ability to collaborate in groups are an essential element of education.
- A connection with the natural world inspires learning.
- Responsibility to one another and to the world around us needs to be actively fostered.
- Diversity and multiple perspectives will be solicited and welcomed.
- Ethical and sustainable practices are essential to long-term success.
- On-going improvement through self-reflection and school-wide assessment leads to progress

## **Our Plan**

The PPSEL Board of Directors recognized the need for a strategic plan and created a committee to begin the process in January of 2013. A Visioning Session (called Post-its and Popcorn) was held to seek input from families. A separate forum was held with teachers, and the 7/8 grade Crew submitted their own priority list for PPSEL.

From this input four general priority areas emerged that captured the concerns and aspirations of our stakeholders. These were the areas of EL Culture and Principals, School Systems, Teacher Quality and Facilities. The Board was presented with the results of the committees work in May 2013. The Board was eventually able to devote time in a weekend workshop and in public meeting to refining the plan in January and February of 2014. The result is presented below.

## **Current Reality**

PPSEL has experienced much success since it began operation. Rapid growth coupled with highly motivated families willing to invest their time talent and treasure have been critical to this success. The school has a number of challenges and growth opportunities looking forward. We need better defined and implemented systems for governance and business help advance our education mission and so changes in personnel aren't as disruptive. We need to continue

to invest in our teacher’s professional development and find ways to reward them fairly. We need to improve our facility in line with our values and have a plan to address our long term needs. And finally, we need to do this while maintaining our commitment to our Expeditionary Learning model and the values of CREW that are our bedrock. The plan below is a working document to help us advance on all these fronts. Hard choices and tradeoffs will have to be made, but this document contains the steps to help PPSEL continue to grow and improve over the next 3 years.

### **Thanks**

Special thanks go out to Jessica Bearman for leading and facilitating throughout the planning process.

Thanks also to the members of the Strategic Planning Committee: Greg Larson, Kirsten LaPaglia, Collette DePhelps, Chris and Rachel Caudill, Paul Clark and Brian Gardner.

Finally, thanks to the Board members who worked to begin and conclude this process and all the stakeholders who shared their thoughts and hopes regarding the school.



# Strategic Plan

## Priority 1: EL Culture and Principles: Nurture the school's emphasis on CREW culture, EL principles, and the distinctive EL pedagogy.

### GOAL 1a: Active family engagement as CREW.

Objective(s)	Activities	Timeline	Resources needed	Success Measures	Who/RASCI*
Teachers are following EL common knowledge practices	<p>Common knowledge binder will be created</p> <p>Orientation for new staff to EL culture and practices.</p>	<p>August 2014 binder will be created</p> <p>August 2014 Orientation for new staff during PD days.</p>	Examples of binders from another EL school	<p>Referenced by staff members to successfully be aware of culture and practices.</p> <p>Mid year review shows new staff adopting EL culture/practices</p>	<p>R: Jeneille(DI)** A: Jeneille(DI) S: Jessie &amp; Lizzie C: Martha I: Board</p>
Families demonstrate an understanding of EL culture and practices through increase participation.	<p>Parent involvement policy</p> <p>Create a parent CREW meeting schedule</p> <p>Identify school wide events and put on a calendar</p> <p>Offer EL 101 &amp; 201</p> <p>Action plan for engaging all families of PPSEL students</p>	<p>February 2014-August 2014, policy will be written and communicated</p> <p>February 2014</p> <p>February -August 2014</p> <p>August 2013-May 2014</p> <p>February 2014-TBD</p>	<p>Examples from other schools</p> <p>Martha</p> <p>Research on engaging families</p>	<p>Parent involvement recorded and documented</p> <p>Completion of schedule and attendance percentile</p> <p>Classes offered, document attendance</p> <p>Document attendance, maybe survey?</p> <p>Plan presented to Board and stakeholders</p>	<p>R: Jacob(DO)** A: Board S: DI C: Teachers</p> <p>R: DO/DI A: Board</p> <p>R: Board A: Jeneille</p> <p>R: Jeneille A: Jacob S: Martha</p> <p>R: Della A: Board S: Jeneille</p>

- \* R = Responsible , A = Accountable, S = Source of Support, C= Consult with, I = Inform
- \*\* DI = Director of Instruction, DO = Director of Operations

### GOAL 1b: Continual growth in EL implementation aligned with EL work plan.

Objective(s)	Activities	Timeline	Resources needed	Success Measures	Who/RASCI
Document the HOS learning targets across grade levels	Teachers will track and communicate HOS to families.  There will be professional development focused on implementing HOS in the classrooms.  Identify HOS and teach them within lessons in the classrooms	August 2013-ongoing	Examples from other EL school	Teachers develop supporting targets that are scaffolded and developmentally appropriately  HOS targets are assessed and communicated in AR's	R: Jeneille A: Jeneille S: teachers C: Martha I: Board
Increase in student achievement in ELA as demonstrated by the SMARTER Balanced assessment.	Teachers are able to use workshop 1.0 and 2.0 appropriately and effectively to meet the Common Core Standards.	August 2013-2015	Planning time for teachers PD on workshop models		R: Jeneille A: Jeneille S: teachers C: Martha I: Board

**Priority 2: Systems: Cement and codify critical systems, including volunteer management, family involvement, fundraising and operations.**

**GOAL 2a: Improve systems that are of direct benefit to instruction.**

Objective(s)	Activities	Timeline	Resources needed	Success Measures	Who/RASCI
Improve the schools computing and Information Technology infrastructure to meet current instructional and standardized testing needs.	Survey teachers and administrators to make a comprehensive and prioritized list of current technology needs.  Recruit volunteer grant writers to identify potential funders to meet technology needs and write grants to fund these needs.  Budget to meet any urgent technology needs not met through grant funding	Prioritized list of needs complete by March 31st 2014.  Recruit Volunteer grant writers: April 2014.  Secure Grant funding: Ongoing  May 2015	None.  Willing volunteer grant writers.  Sufficient discretionary budget. Amount to be determined.	List completed  Secured funding to meet technology needs.  Computers and IT services purchased for 15/16 School Year.	R: Jacob Ellsworth(DO) A: Board C: Teachers  R: DO/DI A: Board S: Board  R: DO A: Board S: Teachers C: Business Mgr. I: Stakeholders

Identify and utilize assessment tools to effectively monitor student achievement.	Create prioritized list of assessment needs including costs to purchase or develop and any associated technology or material needs for inclusion in 2014/15 budget.	May 2014		Created list.	R: DI A: DO S: teachers C: EL designer I: Board
	Implement new assessment tools and train teachers in their use.	September 2014 and ongoing	TBD by prior activity	Improved measures of student achievement.	R: DI A: DO S: teachers I: Board
Review systems that serve struggling learners to assure that these systems both meet the needs of the students served, and comply with IDEA and Idaho State requirements.	Review implementation of and policies around RTI, Special Education, Sec. 504, and Title I to ensure that they comply with all Federal and State regulations and are meeting the needs of struggling learners.	July 2014	None	Completion of a summary report of adequacy of services provided and any systems and/or policy changes that need to be considered.	R: DO/DI A: Board
	Create a plan to address any improvements identified in 8/2014 report.	November 2014	None	Completion of work/improvement plan	R: DI A: Board S: DO, Teachers
	Professional Development for Board around IDEA and its legal requirements and ramifications.	July 2015	\$100	Every board member has basic understanding of IDEA	Brian Gardner or Board Chair

**GOAL 2b: Improve school governance and business practices.**

Objective(s)	Activities	Timeline	Resources needed	Success Measures	Who/RASCI
Create an annual timeline for board business.	Identify major recurring board business items and create a calendar for bringing such items before the board.	June 2014	None	2014/2015 Board activities are more timely. All board members aware of major business items to be discussed in advance of agenda.	R: Brian Gardner
Implement procedures for annual election of board members.	Use Tuesday Times to call for interested parties to fill empty board seats	April 2014	None	2 or more candidates indicate interest in serving on the board.	R: Elections Comm. A: Board (BG)
	Elections Committee and/or Board members recruit potential candidates to fill empty board seats if enough volunteers have not come forward.	May 2014	None	Enough candidates are recruited to fill vacant board seats.	R: Board A: Board S: Elections Comm.
	Conduct election of new board members from volunteer and recruited candidates	May 2014	None	Board is able to seat enough board members to fill all empty positions.	R: Elections Comm A: Board (BG)
Create Policies to ensure oversight of school accounting practices.	Work with business manager to create policies and procedures which ensure board oversight of school accounting practices	June 2014	None	Creation of a set of policies and procedures that are approved by the business manager, the Director of operations, and the board.	R: Board Treas. (Sarah Deming) A: Board C: Debbie B, Kade C.
	Create policy for capital purchases in excess of \$X	June 2014	None		
Make the PPSEL Co-Directorship model Sustainable.	Survey Co-Directors about challenges and solutions to sustainability.	April 2014	None	Board starts 2014 budgeting process with a clear understanding of the monetary needs to make co-directorship sustainable.	R: Board Chair (BG) A: Board C: DO/DI I: all stakeholders
	Create marketing plan to maximize enrollment and generate revenue for school.	April 2014 and ongoing	\$2000 annually	95% maximum enrollment for 2014/2015 100% enrollment thereafter.	R: Jacob Ellsworth A: Board

**GOAL 2c: Develop family engagement capabilities.**

Objective(s)	Activities	Timeline	Resources needed	Success Measures	Who/RASCI
All PPSEL families make monetary donations to the school.	<p>Annual giving drive will focus on increasing number of families participating.</p> <p>Create a system for tracking donations, and thanking donors.</p> <p>Board creates a fundraising plan for meeting gap between budgeted needs and income.</p>	<p>April 2014 and ongoing</p> <p>July 2014</p> <p>March 2014 and ongoing</p>	<p>Fundraising Committee.</p> <p>Unsure- are there any software requirements?</p> <p>None</p>	<p>June 2014 -75% of families make a gift to PPSEL June 2015- 90% families make a gift to PPSEL</p> <p>All donations and associated data are tracked and donors thanked in a timely manner.</p> <p>20% Increase in total donations annually in 2014 and 2015</p>	<p>R: Board /Fundraising Comm. A: Board S: Parent Crew C: DO/DI</p> <p>R: Board Treas. A: Board S: DO C: Business Mgr.</p> <p>R: Board Chair/Treas A: Board S: DO</p>
Develop an organized and functional Parent CREW	<p>Recruit parent volunteers to head committees focused on key volunteer functions including: Adventure Friday, Fundraising, Wellness, and Volunteer coordination. Consider offering a stipend</p> <p>Create the expectation that all parents volunteer time in some way.</p> <p>Create a more effective way to track and thank volunteers.</p> <p>Create a plan to engage low income parents.</p>	<p>May 2014</p> <p>August 2014</p> <p>August 2014</p> <p>August 2014</p>	<p>\$3000 for stipends</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>	<p>More effective management of volunteers and less time spent by directors on this task.</p> <p>More volunteer hours and more families volunteering</p> <p>Quarterly report on number volunteers and hours contributed</p> <p>25% increase in number of low income families volunteering time.</p>	<p>R: Board (Amy Ball) A: Board S: Parent Crew C: DO</p> <p>R: DO/DI A: Board</p> <p>R: DO/DI A: Board</p> <p>R: Board (Della Bayly) A: Board</p>
Improve systems for communication between the school and families	Test the various forms of communication used to reach families (Tuesday Times, notes home, teacher emails, notices on the door....) to determine their effectiveness.	May 2014 to May 2015	None	Improved responses on Parent Survey from 2014 to 2015.	R: DO (Jacob Ellsworth) A: Board S: DI, Teachers



**Priority 3: Highest quality teachers: Focus on teacher well-being, including compensation, support, professional development, and work environment.**

**GOAL 3a: Develop and retain high quality teachers.**

Objective(s)	Activities	Timeline	Resources needed	Success Measures	Who/RASCI
Identify and define "high quality / performance."	Establish clear, written expectations for effective teaching.	July 2015	Staff time (~2 hrs/person)	Expectations document approved by board and part of teacher handbook	R: DI A: Board S: Teachers, DO C: School designer I: Stakeholders
	Define the characteristics (profile) of an ideal PPSEL teacher.	July 2015	Staff time (~2 hrs/person)	Profile/description on file and used in hiring/evaluation decisions	
* Develop a competitive compensation scale.	Workgroup of teachers & leadership to develop scale.	July 2015	Budget resources for salary increases and incentives. Staff time from DO and Teachers	Pay scale developed and accepted by all parties	R: DO A: Board S: Business Mgr. C: Teachers, DI I: Stakeholders
	Tie career paths (obj. 4) to compensation.	July 2015		Career paths defined and used in PD plans and evaluation	
	Incentivize EL implementation, student achievement, expanded roles, and commitment to PPSEL.	July 2015		Incentive structure in place as part of contracts or stand alone program	
Integrate non-financial support for teaching staff	Increase release time - via reduced teaching time & time spent on non-instructional activities.	July 2014	Continued programs, i.e. Adventure Friday, PE, Art Camp	Teachers have minimum of X days release time per year	R: DI&DO A: Board C: Teachers I: Stakeholders
	Construct a continuous feedback/improvement mechanism between teachers and leadership.	July 2014	DI, DO & Staff time	Annual review shows composite score for communication >3 (on 1-4 scale)	
Create individual teacher PD plans – to include leadership roles.	Tie PD plans to career paths.	July 2015	DI, DO & Staff time	PD plans reflect PPSEL career pathways	R: DI&DO A: Board C: Teachers I: Stakeholders
	Train teachers on expectations (obj. 1).	July 2015		Annual review shows composite score >3 for shared leadership (on 1-4 scale)  Teacher expectations included in annual orientation	

*\* critical objective: achievement of goals under priorities 1, 2, & 3 depends – in large measure - on this.*

**Priority 4: Facilities: Stakeholders want a green, safe facility / grounds, realizing however that a new location and building may not be realistic at this time.**

**GOAL 4a: We have an affordable space suitable to all of the needs of the school.**

Objective(s)	Activities	Timeline	Resources	Success Measures	Who/RASCI
Short Term Plan: Plan to Meet Immediate Needs. (18 Mos.)	Form a facilities committee. Assess current needs (18 mos.) Develop Options to meet Future Needs	Mar 2014	Grants for Specific Improvements  Potential Reserve Funds  Potential bank loan \$500 for architectural services	Facilities Committee Notes/ Minutes  List of priorities presented  Options: Feasibility and Budget  Board selects options, begins arch. planning and bid process	R: Board (Brian Gardner)/Fac. Comm. A: Board C: Jacob Ellsworth, JE, Teachers I: Stakeholders
	<u>Address most critical needs:</u> Reduce Noise between classrooms Improve safety, Improve energy efficiency examples: Partitions Frame in or otherwise treat Picture Windows Wall that Separates 4th/ 5th from Middle School	August 2014	Grants for Specific Improvements  Potentially Funds from Reserve  Potentially a bank loan  up to \$50,000 for improvements	Facilities Committee Notes/ Minutes  Bids solicited/selected Work scheduled and completed  Completed Improvements	R: Board (Brian Gardner)/Fac. Comm. A: Board C: DO,DI, Teachers I: Stakeholders
	<u>Safe School:</u> Create a safe environment for staff and students. Review Safety Inspection Notes from 8/13 Assess other possible safety issues. Develop a plan to maintain a safe environment.	June 2014	SY 14 Maintenance and Repair Budget	Emergency Management Plan  Food Service Safety Plan  Pass Annual Safety Inspection (August 2014)	R: DO A: Board S: Fac. Comm. C: DI, Teachers I: Stakeholders
	<u>Computer Lab:</u> The school has infrastructure for high quality STEAM education. Technology infrastructure Network Firewall Webmaster Procedures for maintenance of Current Technology	August 2014	Grants  SY14 Tech Budget ~\$1,000 remain  Tech Committee	Tech Committee Notes/ Minutes  Options: Feasibility and Budget  Completed Improvements	R: DO A: Board S: Tech Committee C:DI, Teachers I: Stakeholders

Short term Plan (continued)	<p><b>Science Lab:</b> The school has infrastructure for high quality STEM education. Define a Science Lab Space Remodel Science Lab area to ensure students and equipment safety. Lab is up to date Students will have access for hands-on science instruction.</p>	August 2015	<p>Grants for Specific Improvements</p> <p>Potentially Funds from Reserve</p> <p>Potentially a bank loan</p>	<p>Facilities Committee Notes/ Minutes</p> <p>Options: Feasibility and Budget</p> <p>Completed Improvements</p>	<p>R: DO</p> <p>A: Board</p> <p>S: Tech Committee</p> <p>C:DI, Teachers</p> <p>I: Stakeholders</p>
	<p><b>Outdoor Space:</b> Maintain equipment maximize outdoor play and recreation space. New Equipment. Repaint Playground Surface Repair Fence</p> <p>Parking Lot – replace decayed parking curbs</p>	<p>June 2015</p> <p>May 2014</p>	<p>Wellness Grants</p> <p>2014 budget</p>	<p>Organized Volunteer Day</p> <p>Completed Improvements</p> <p>New curbs installed</p>	<p>R: DO</p> <p>A: Board</p> <p>S: Fac. Comm.</p> <p>C: DI, Teachers</p> <p>I: Stakeholders</p>
	<p><b>Maintenance:</b> Create structures to ensure regular maintenance and repairs for PPSEL. Develop a Maintenance Schedule Create Maintaince Contact List Procedures for scheduling maintenance and tracking</p>	June 2015	PPSEL Annual Budget	<p>Annual Maintenance Schedule</p> <p>Maintenance Contact List</p> <p>Maintenance Binder</p>	<p>R: DO</p> <p>A: Board</p> <p>S: Fac. Comm.</p> <p>C: DI, Teachers</p> <p>I: Stakeholders</p>
<p><b>Long Term Plan:</b> Plan to Meet Future Needs. (5 yrs.)</p>	<p>Identify options</p> <p>Set up meetings to gather information</p>	June 2015	None	<p>Facilities Committee Notes/ Minutes</p> <p>Options: Feasibility and Budget</p> <p>Board Approved Plan</p>	<p>R: DO</p> <p>A: Board</p> <p>S: Fac. Comm.</p> <p>C: DI, Teachers</p> <p>I: Stakeholders</p>