

North Carolina Global Educator Digital Badge

Leadership Brief ❖ Capstone Project

Fall 2017

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<https://www.abss.k12.nc.us/ece>

EXECUTIVE COMPETENCY ALIGNMENT

Alignment to the School Administrator Evaluation Rubric

[Link to the School Administrator Evaluation Rubric](#)

[Link to School Executive Guide](#)

1. Strategic Leadership
2. Instructional Leadership
4. Human Resource Management

In my Professional Development Plan (PDP), global education is part of my plan to enhance strategic leadership and to enhance Instructional Leadership within my school. Details of my PDP include how I will create and support favorable conditions for a successful shift toward global teaching and learning. Professional development and the work of a global team supports the plans with activities to engage our students with meaningful experiences. The timeline of my plan spans the school year with opportunities to adjust as needed along the way. The alignment of my PDP with the district level strategic plan places me in a position to collaborate at the district level with other global schools to enhance what we are providing students and staff on a larger scale.

DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

Goal 1: Exemplary Classroom Teaching and Instructional Leadership

[Link to ABSS Strategic Plan](#)

DESCRIPTION

Elon Elementary began the global education journey in 2008 with its first Spanish Immersion class starting. With only a few years into the growth of the Immersion program the staff and school community felt as though something was missing. The perception was that something unique existed to enhance the school experience, and standards, but it was only available for those enrolled in the Immersion program. We began to see a school-within-a-school concept that we knew was not good. It was at this same time that I became principal of Elon. We began to look at the steps to unify our school and break down any barriers that were just beginning to emerge.

We looked to [Participate](#) (VIF at that time) for details of the Global Program, of which we had access to with training modules and pathways to enhance the school environment and to enrich lessons through a global lens. In small teams, we visited other global schools in the state to gain more information. Before we knew it, we were discussing it in a School Improvement Team meeting and making a critical decision. We knew this approach was what we needed to accomplish our goals.

The approach to globalization was not just something we desired in our school; it also aligned with our district strategic plan to implement specialized programs. Along with a few other schools in the district, we formed a planning team. We obtained leadership information and made some very important decisions that would shape how we implemented as a district, while at the same time gave autonomy at the school level to put a site based global plan into action.

At the school level, a global implementation team formed with representatives from across the school. We took the district level recommendations to shape the structural decisions that we needed to put into practice. Our goal was to ensure the conditions were right for success. We wanted to ensure there was a clear plan of how we would approach supporting professional development, globalizing our environment, involving our community and enriching the standards for instruction through a global lens. The alignment with district parameters, district strategic plan, teacher evaluation and state standards were areas we brought forward to support the initiative. The state endorsement for developing global competence reinforced our plans and provided opportunities for recognition for individual teachers and our school.

This Leadership Brief describes the path we took to implement a global learning program at our school to embed practices in our daily work to enrich state standards. The next section takes a more detailed look at how we approached implementation.



Figure #1

IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAY

As described in the previous section, district level support and a district global team put items into motion that allowed each site to get started. The district team did not micromanage what happened in each site, it simply provided guidance on the regions of study, opportunities for collaboration and professional development and hiring practices of International teachers.

After forming scout teams to visit other global schools within the state, our school improvement team discussed the opportunity, on multiple occasions, before the vote took place that solidified this approach being advantageous for our students and staff. The global leadership team formed among those that visited schools and had a good handle on what we would be experiencing.

The team developed specific plans to announce our *global school* transition to staff, to students and to our school community. The first step was to engage staff with a new direction towards transforming our school. The global team had a district guideline of the regions of study for each grade level and it grew from there.

The team developed a plan to host a “reveal” party. The plan included dropping global hints through morning announcements, bulletins and postings around the building with global facts from all regions. It built hype leading up to the *reveal* where staff were engaged with a Kahoot activity (<https://kahoot.com/what-is-kahoot/>) including all the “hints” as questions. As the questions related

to a particular region appeared in the gaming activity, the global team shared key facts before congratulating the grade level that would explore that region deeper in the coming school year. Excitement was in the air! We left the event understanding our global regions of focus and the world was now front of us was ready to explore!

We then celebrated with our school community by making official announcements in year-end assemblies. Parents were provided with a [flyer](#) describing the regions of focus for each grade level and an overview description of what we were going to be involved with in the coming school year. Students were provided with a [summer activity](#) sheet containing a variety of activities integrating global competencies that we would explore in the coming school year. It included projects that they could complete and present on opening days of school. We also posted items on our [school web site](#) and used our connect-ed system to make phone call and email announcements.

While the decision of the regions of focus for each grade level may vary from school to school, Elon Elementary aligned with our district plans for the regions of study. The rationale evolved out of our district level planning as we considered student and staff needs. The transient student that could move between schools would have consistency. The opportunity for teachers to collaborate across the district on standards based global lessons would exist as a support pathway. Our regions of focus are: **Oceania/Kindergarten**; **Asia/1st**; **South America/2nd**; **Africa/3rd**; **Europe/4th**; **North America/5th**.



Figure 2

Figure 3

As we began, we knew right away that this specific focus of “going global” addressed one important, underlying concern that we had a school-within-a-school phenomenon occurring. Our Spanish Immersion program appealed to a cohort of students and families, but not all students were able to benefit from a global experience. We knew that global learning was something we could infuse in every classroom setting to bring more equity and access to a global education.

We looked at our staffing and thought; perhaps we could hire additional International teachers beyond those who were already teaching in an Immersion setting. We had a few vacancies that year and we explored this idea further with our district leadership. This trickled into our Human Resource Development plan. We continued to seek and hire highly qualified staff as we always have; we just now looked



Figure 4

internationally with the support of *Participate* (formerly VIF). In our first year, we had the great experience to hire teachers from Australia, Jamaica and Scotland. That added more diversity to our teaching staff among our teachers from Colombia, Honduras, India and Romania. We were very excited about this and knew it would help to move our global efforts forward in a profound way.

We knew our environment needed to change with vibrant and dramatic displays. We knew that come the first day of the new school year everyone needed to know there was something different about this particular year. The work began to modify environments towards an authentic look and feel. The work began with the first transformation of our main entrance. We developed the concept of “**Welcome to Elon Elementary, your Window to the World**”. We relocated four book



Figure 5

cases that were divided into nine equal squares each. This gave thirty-six sections or “windows” to fill with a variety of global artifacts. On the wall space above we hung poster sized frames containing informational images of various regions. The artifacts came from kits we had in the school, teacher and parent donations, library books, flyers and pictures from all over the world. The display is ever changing and frequently yields display space to globally themed student projects.

We also had other areas of the building that needed enhanced with displays to capture attention of students and visitors. As classrooms typically have a room indicator sign outside the door, we gave our room indicators a global feel by designing them with a watermark background reflecting the region of focus for that classroom. Common areas such as the gym, cafeteria, specialists’ room, and offices had an expanded world as a watermark. Common locations also had the name of that area in both English and Spanish.



Figure 6

Among one of the first training modules, teachers learned about creating a cultural corner in their classroom. Taking a preview of that module, I developed a training session around it to bring our staff into the task of globalizing our environment. On our opening day, teachers were provided three empty frames with directions to fill them with items from their region of study. This was the first collaborative activity for grade level teams of the year. I provided a fact poster to fill one of the frames. Before we knew it, we had our cafeteria walls filled with vibrant displays from each region of study.



Figure 7

Following that opening event, teachers began setting up their classrooms. They put up thematic displays in the classroom, developed cultural corners and created bulletin boards in the main halls capturing the global concept they would be exploring. As time moved along the displays became more powerful and reflective of student work rooted in standards. The displays accompanied the grade level standard the work supported. Before we knew it, our school had the look and feel well under way.



Figure 8

The next critical area our global team explored included the professional development offerings with **Participate** and we mapped out a plan. We also explored the details of teachers earning a digital badge through the state of North Carolina. We saw no other option than to go for it all! We completed the appropriate state documents and put that into motion. The professional development began and our world began to transform little by little in compelling ways.

We looked at each of these areas and considered the input from staff to develop our plans. One specific area identified was support with training, time to explore modules and to collaborate. The support in this area was critical for staff to have buy-in to the work that was going to be necessary for success to occur. As we built globalization into our school improvement plan, we were also able to designate funds to support the goal. We decided to use professional development funds to provide subs for full and half-day work sessions. We also used teacher work days built into the calendar for professional development with global modules. The thing was, even though the modules were online, we did not just send everyone to work alone in silos; we made it very interactive and collaborative. The global team and school leadership modeled to guide staff through the training modules. Additionally, the team established a quarterly timeline to keep everyone on track for success. Teachers infused this into their professional development plans.

The staffing steps and the environmental changes came together moving our implementation plan forward very quickly. The investment and motivation out of teachers, support staff, students, parents and our community built momentum and we very quickly noticed the impact on developing deeper cultural understanding and respect.



Figure 9

We embraced the ideas of teachers to try new things and through each module, we learned new approaches to make our instruction more authentic and more engaging. We looked at our resources differently; we began to use technology in ways we never dreamed of; we built deeper relationships with more of our school community and with one another as we explored our cultural heritage. The training pulled us together in multiple ways as we developed a new understanding and appreciation for the diversity that existed among us.

Our financial resources were utilized in more creative ways to purchase tools and supplies through a global lens to further enhance standards. We tapped into our community resources to bring in parent guest speakers on information they were able to share with us about different parts of the world they had experienced. Our own experiences and cultural heritage surfaced as a powerful classroom resource. That expanded to local agencies and organizations in our community to bring us a new range of supports to call upon to further the concepts of global learning – for example international businesses, university departments and local restaurants. Finally, the technology tools we had on site were being put to use in even more powerful ways to connect beyond the classroom through skype, google hangouts and social media tools. We began sharing and learning from others through these modes. The reevaluation of our resources also evolved into grant writing. Most recently, we have been awarded a grant to use virtual reality cameras to take, and create our own, virtual trips – anywhere in the world. The grant also includes the creation of our own global artifact kits to accentuate some of the virtual trips and experiences students are able to have. Another grant written by our music teacher obtained ukuleles for our next musical experience to begin!



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12

PERSONAL LEARNING DIMENSIONS

Implementation has been measured through a variety of modes. The first was observational with the delivery of globally themed lessons. The content was enriched with the global theme of the specified region. The grade level collaboration also evidenced focus on the approach and the integration of the module concepts under exploration to build embedded practices. The observational data also included the dramatic change in our environment with displays of student work, cultural corners and the inspiration for themed activities like field trips and celebrations. Student displays of work accompanied a state standard to ensure focus emphasized the standards and not just on a global concept.

Measuring implementation also comes into the data of completed hours of professional development. In our first two years our staff have logged over 120 hours. Eighty of these hours were completed through a series of online global training modules through [Participate](#). The additional hours were through site based professional development, district level activities, global school collaborations and activities that were individually initiated by teachers.

The professional development measure was monitored with the pace established by the global team with target completion dates through the school year. We accomplished the completion of four, ten-hour modules annually for two years and continue into the third year with focus on capstone work and additional modules. Through **Participate**, we have been able to monitor completion through easy access reports. We are also creating Continuing Education Unit plans for each module for licensure renewal. Finally, teachers have aligned global goals with their teacher evaluation process by creating Professional Development Plans detailing plans for implementation and professional growth.

Another way we gauge the impact of our efforts is through the attention we capture locally with interest in enrollment, with site visits and schools seeking ideas to help move their global programs along. We have provided many supports with tours and sharing ideas on ways to increase a global presence within a school. We have expanded our network to schools and global leaders across the county, the state and the nation. We further see this in the way the global themes, concepts and competencies have been woven into our typical activities. Each year we have an annual book character parade. Once we made a shift to a global school, more “characters” have come to life in our building



Figure 13

through books with an international theme. Our *Positive Behavior Intervention Support* (PBIS) assemblies have taken on a global feel with games from around the world; dance around the world; we have also featured African drummers, storytellers and musicians, including a bagpiper and an accordion player. We held our version of Highland games and had an international play of holidays around the world. Finally, our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) has had an annual spring fling event for several years. They had pizza, burgers, inflatables and yard games. This past year they wanted to make it global. We had six regions with related activities for each including: international games, crafts, artifacts in a “museum walk”, student art show, music, artists and even international food trucks.



Figure 14



Figure 15

Recognition was very important for us to embed in our plans. Upon completion of each module, we celebrated teacher success during our faculty meetings by providing certificates in front of peers. Special decals for the individual modules were adhered to the teacher nameplate outside their classroom door. Our newsletters boasted the accomplishments of teachers as the training modules took place. Teachers were also recognized in our weekly bulletins.

In order to fully understand what our teachers needed to do, it was critically important that I was able to model by completing the training modules alongside teachers. To appropriately initiate activities, I previewed each module and developed my own lesson plans using the school as my classroom and teachers as the students. The delivery of my global lessons took the shape of guided professional development. The modules I completed within the *Participate* platform captures my work in this area. This specific approach had a significant impact on me with developing my own global competence; beyond that, it helped me to be a stronger leader with the implementation of our globalization efforts. I had a deep understanding of what teachers were trying to do. I was able to appreciate the displays of student work. I was able to recognize frustrations and provide guidance, praise and time to complete modules as needed. What I learned through this process was transformational for me as a leader and with building relationships within our school.

One significant impact this effort has had on our staff brings us back to the perception of, “us and them”, with traditional staff and Immersion staff – that “school within a school” concept. There were barriers and walls that took time to come down. After working on this over a period of time the negative impression faded. In 2016, our school recognized one of our International Immersion teachers as our Teacher of the Year! In addition, as we recently elected our School Improvement Team for 2017-18, three of our six grade levels are represented by our International teaching staff! This is a truly significant indicator to me and our school community that the barriers are down and we are more of a unified school than ever before.



Figure 16

OUTCOMES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The impact of the professional development sequence was pivotal in our transformation to a global school. Our students and staff were guided through rich experiences that not only changed the view of the world; it changed how we interacted with one another. We were able to see a shift in how we approached one another. We were able to see more diversity in our school – not just with displays and actives, but also experienced with thought and actions. We began to listen to one another differently. We began to accept more of the differences in one another by realizing that it is our differences that make us so much alike. It allowed us to look at things as they are and just because someone did something in a different way did not mean it was wrong – it simply meant it was different – and that was okay.

When I reflect over the path we have taken, I do not think I would have done anything differently as each was a learning experience that brought our school forward together. Even though we know more about global learning now than we did at the onset, I am so pleased with the way it has developed up to this point. I am especially satisfied with how organic it was. Each activity and idea seemed to lead us right to the next one. It became contagious as we explored new areas of global competence. New leaders emerged through the year with the different modules and experiences they brought forward.

The one area that I would suggest to others would be to capture as much detail in pictures and in documents to organize for use at later dates for acknowledgement or to complete applications for global program recognition, licensure, accreditation, etc. A possible way to organize global activity is to sort by areas of global competence. If a school was looking toward the Global Ready Designation, I would suggest looking at the application in advance so items could be organized in that format as well for easy access.

NEXT OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT (district/school level)

For continued growth, I anticipate honing our embedded practices and revisiting concepts explored as time goes on. Our staff continues to take an active role in the completion of global modules. Our global team has been instrumental in developing pathways to support staff and to keep our vision alive with global learning in our school. We have plans to seek national recognition as a global school.

We are moving into a new area through a recent grant to integrate the use of Virtual Reality. We have obtained viewers and cameras. The concept of this project is to bring students to distant lands with virtual field trips. Cultural artifact kits will be created for students to examine items before or after the virtual trip. A relationship is being built with a local university and their study abroad program to assist in the creation of our own virtual reality tours to share with the world.

The staff at Elon Elementary are completing global capstone projects and completing training modules. We have a pathway mapped for the coming years to continue learning, growing and enhancing our level of global competence! This will continue to influence our typical events including awards, celebrations, assemblies and parent nights. Infusing the global lens has inspired many global events to occur in our school - more than we imagined and we will continue to bring experiences as the opportunities arise.

Our school will continue to serve as host to visitors and those interested in pursuing global learning approaches in their schools through sharing our experiences and successes.

~~Submitted September 28, 2017~~
REVISED November 17, 2017



Figure 17

Credits for Visuals:

Page 2 – photo taken by *Participate* staff and used with permission – see attached letter

Figure 1: ***Elon Elementary Global Team***. This captures us as we organized a panel for visitors to our school exploring ways they could globalize their school.

Page 3 – photos taken by Jack Davern

Figure 2: ***Elon Elementary entrance before***. Environmental transformation

Figure 3: ***Elon Elementary entrance after***. Environmental transformation

Page 4 - photo taken by Sandra Bays and used with permission – see attached email

Figure 4: ***Elon Elementary International Staff*** - “Spotlight on International Educator” night.

Page 4 – photos taken by Jack Davern

Figure 5: Our ***“Windows to the World”*** display of global artifacts that transformed our lobby.

Figure 6: ***Sample signs*** indicating locations within our school

Page 5 – photo taken by Jack Davern

Figure 7: Frame it staff development activity to engage teachers with globalizing the environment. This is a sample of the six displays found in our cafeteria.

Page 5 – photo taken by Tracy Pennington and used with permission – see attached email

Figure 8: Professional Development – Elon staff uses Google Hangout to connect with teachers in another school to discuss global learning and ideas for new activities

Page 6 – photos taken by Jack Davern

Figure 9: 4th Grade Classroom Cultural corner

Figure 10: ***Parent guest speaker*** presenting on Asian culture

Page 6 – Photo Taken by *Participate* Staff and used with permission – see attached letter

Figure 11: ***1st grade class skype*** with student and glimpse of themed classroom

Page 6 – photo taken by Jack Davern

Figure 12: ***Cinco de Mayo celebration*** - Elon University guest chefs prepared fiesta lunch

Page 7 – photos taken by Jack Davern

Figure 13: Highland Games signage

Figure 14: Highland Games opening presentation by guest ***Bagpiper***

Page 8 – photos taken by Jack Davern

Figure 15: Teacher Recognition Certificates

Figure 16: our Teacher of the Year

Page 9 – photo taken by Jack Davern

Figure 17: 2017 Welcome Back ***Bulletin Board***

RESOURCE:

Participate – www.participate.com