

Silverthorne School Growth Plan 2024-2025

School Mission

School Overview

Silverthorne Elementary is located on the traditional territory of the Witsuwit'en peoples in Houston, BC. Our primary school population is 130 students from kindergarten through to grade 3.

Over the past two years we have focused on increasing our school-wide emphasis on recognizing and honoring Witsuwit'en culture with the goal of increasing Indigenous students' feelings of belonging - a necessary component of academic success. By learning about authentic Witsuwit'en knowledge and worldviews from elders and knowledge holders and utilizing this knowledge to inform our perceptions and understandings of the Core Competencies, we anticipated an improvement in the social and emotional wellbeing of all students, particularly Indigenous students. By connecting the core competencies to characters defined by stories shared by Elders and knowledge holders, we were hoping to allow primary children will easily connect with and engage in the core competencies learning.

This project will continue to evolve this year as we will implement the competencies into the fabric of our daily school life with the aim of deepening the connections children have with this learning.

By implementing a systematic means to track early literacy and numeracy skills, we will be able to more effectively detect lagging skills that we are currently seeing in our students. We will be able to direct support and instruction in a more systematic way. We will be able to provide early intervention strategies in order to close the learning gaps we are currently seeing in our students' literacy skills.

Engaging in professional learning and inquiry about autism and neurodiversity will allow us to determine strategies and skills for addressing the social, emotional, and academic needs of our learners.

Our Goals

Goal #1

Increase the social and emotional awareness and wellbeing of our learners.

[Witsuwit'en learning & Core Competencies; Jocelyn Foidart learning]

Goal #2

Increase the academic success in early literacy and numeracy for our learners

[by continuing the school-wide Early Learning Portfolio & numeracy programming – Math Makes Sense?].

Goal #3

Weave Witsuwit'en and Indigenous knowledge and language into our daily and diverse ways of learning and being. Witsuwit'en language will be modeled daily during morning announcements and common words and phrases will become part of everyday Silverthorne vocabulary.

TRC Calls to Action we are addressing:

- Improve education attainment levels and success rates
- Develop culturally appropriate curricula
- Protect the right to Aboriginal languages
- Aboriginal languages are fundamental and valued element of Canadian Society, and there is an urgency to preserve them
- The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities

First Peoples Principles of Learning in our work:

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational.
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.
- Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.
- Learning is embedded in memory, history and story.
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity
- Learning involves patience and time
- Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations

Questions:

1. How will a focus on and learning about authentic knowledge and language from Witsuwit'en elders and knowledge holders as the foundation for our Core Competencies pedagogy improve the social emotional wellbeing of Silverthorne students, particularly Indigenous students?
2. How will staff learning about autism and neurodiversity and a case study approach to applying this learning to a student in our settings improve the social, emotional, and academic wellbeing of our learners?
3. How will using an Early Learning Portfolio that focusses on the fundamental skills of reading improve the academic achievements of our students?
4. How will a focus on numeracy and utilizing a school wide numeracy assessment improve the academic outcomes of our students?

School-Wide:

Goal #1

Goal #1 & #3

- All staff will be working together to develop, through an indigenous lens, an authentic resource that focuses on Witsuwit'en knowledge as a foundation for the Core Competencies
- Classroom teachers will continue with the learning in a variety of ways in their classrooms. As a staff we will reflect on each lesson taught at staff meetings.
- We will continue to work with Rita and Corrine George and include elders whenever we can to develop our resource as authentic and real.
- Work with Witsuwit'en artist, Jolene Andrew, to share learning about Witsuwit'en art and story which will inform our school-wide installation project.

Goal #2

- Implementation of The Early Learning Portfolio from SD#23
- Reflection of tool
- Develop a tool that considers data as a whole class so results can guide classroom instruction

Goal #3

Rational

Goal #1

- Considering the relatively high number of aboriginal students at Silverthorne, Witsuwit'en culture has not been highly observable in our building. That is changing with our new goal from last year, but we still have not reached the point of feeling that aboriginal culture is ingrained in who we are. Creating a language that we can use to support the social emotional wellbeing of our students will add to the observable tributes that we will continue to implement.
- As a newly configured school, we have an opportunity to create a vision that is valued by all members of the learning community. Research supports the use of common language and vision to close learning gaps and support social emotional wellbeing. Both the Core Competencies and the First Principles of Learning address who each student is as an individual. Teachers agree this would be useful as a means to build a schoolwide resource that can be used to support students into respectful, confident, empathetic and reflective members of our community.

Goal #2

- There appears to be a gap in early literacy skills across the grades
- There is not a systematic way to track primary students' early literacy skills that will help inform instruction and ensure they are reading at the appropriate level prior to moving on to the intermediate school.

Strategies:

Goal #1

- Resource for teaching the Core Competencies through an indigenous lens
 - Posters of animals identified by Rita and Corrina George that can represent the values of each core competencies
 - Jolene Andrews has been approached to commission art work for our posters
 - Include Witsuwit'en language on the posters as well as language of the CC. ie: use the Witsuwit'en language for kind along with the English word
 - Lessons will be developed to introduce and reinforce animal characteristics that are linked to the CC
 - 'I can...' statements will be included as a part of the resource
 - Staff will seek indigenous resources that complement the lessons
 - Whenever possible we will use indigenous stories in our lessons to teach about each Animal/CC character
 - Create assessment resources for children to reflect on and set personal goals based on the animals/CC
 - Staff will plan two schoolwide activities that will complement the particular animal we are introducing – we will aim to include TEK

- A pro-D committee has been struck to lead this project

- The language developed through this resource, will be used across grades and throughout the school to create a common culture that will support students in all areas of growth
- Guest speakers will be invited in to share their Witsuwit'en knowledge, stories and language.
- Classroom teachers will continue with the learning in a variety of ways in their classrooms. As a staff we will reflect on each lesson taught at staff meetings and discuss next steps.
- We will continue to work with Rita and Corrine George and include elders whenever we can to develop our resource as authentic and real.
- Each teacher will plan learning and activities that stem from our resource and include experiences on the land, writing, reading, stories and hands-on learning. These will be shared out and potentially included in the resource.

Goal #2

- Provide coverage for teachers so a team can gather a baseline of data from the ELP
- Regular data collection – each reporting period
- Reflect on the ELP as a tool throughout the year
- Use ELP to inform IEP goals, classroom instruction, guided reading and Talking Tables where appropriate
- Use ELP to inform reporting to parents
- Create a resource that culminates the data so it is easily accessible for a whole class. This will provide a lens to consider potential learning gaps that can then be addressed.
- Add ELP to the current tracking system to move with each individual student over time.

Evidence

Goal #1

- Survey for social emotional well being?
- Qualitative data – stories from the classroom

Goal #2

- EPRA
- DART
- DRA
- ELP

Year-End Reflection:

As we move forward with a new staff and configuration, we will revisit what we want to carry forward from the past growth plan and create a common vision about what we believe Silverthorne Elementary should strive towards. We will be doing an Indigenous Inquiry Project that will be attached to the school learning plan. We will be creating a resource based on Witsuwit'en knowledge collected from their knowledge holders that will weave the Core Competencies and Self Regulation throughout. We began this journey on the May NID by spending time with Corrina and Rita George as they shared their understanding of animals and how they could represent the Core Competencies. This is the very beginning of the project and the resource will be used across the grades and curriculum.

Building on the current focus on Indigenous knowing and ways of addressing mental health will be an important focus moving forward. We will be piloting the use of a new Early Literacy Assessment Portfolio, so we can better target student learning needs and ensure we are meeting the academic needs of our students. This will allow us to assess and track student progress for all early literacy skills from kindergarten through to grade three and beyond.