

2024-2025 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

About this place: With deep gratitude and respect, we are honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam Nation), Sk̓wxwú7mesh Úxwumix (Squamish Nation) & səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation). Sexsmith Elementary school is located near the Fraser River on the south side of Vancouver, on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wxwú7mesh (Squamish) & səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. Our school property runs adjacent to the Langara Trail where students often walk and we often use the nearby green space, Winona Park where students take part in diverse, land-based learning activities. The view to the south, seen from our second floor windows, includes YVR and students learn about nearby bike routes, as well as the Punjabi Market to the east. Our school is situated near the Sunset Community Centre and Gateway Skytrain Station.

About our learners:

There are 437 students at Sexsmith Elementary; a diverse group of kindergarten to grade 7 learners, from various socio-economic backgrounds and with a broad range of strengths and stretches make up our student body. Our learners are enthusiastic about their diverse cultural backgrounds and about celebrating each others' cultures at school. There are more than 21 language groups at Sexsmith, and many of our learners are new to Canada.

About our school program:

Our school program involves learners working with Sexsmith staff to meet their own personal learning goals through the [Core Competencies](#), and following the [BC Curriculum](#). We follow the VSB district calendar and offer a variety of programs to make our school the best it can be for students and over 45 regular staff members. We have many options for learners including athletics teams and a year-round Intramural program as well as a growing music program at Sexsmith. Students participate in service and volunteer roles, leadership training, student council, lunch clubs for chess, gardening, and other interests. Each term we work with community partners to offer a few recreational programs for students to register for, including areas such as STEM and coding, art, yoga and mindfulness, Punjabi Heritage Language classes, dance and music.

About our learning focus:

At Sexsmith, we strive to focus on individual student learning needs, especially with literacy and numeracy skills. To enhance our curriculum offerings, and to meet the social emotional learning

needs of all students, we provide project-based learning opportunities that focus on creating a strong sense of belonging. We share and connect with our community through annual events stemming from staff passions and expertise including athletics, science celebrations, Heritage fair events, sustainability programs and more.

We honour the Indigenous Principles of Learning and weave them into our classroom practices. Our staff create a learning environment focused on collaboration, including buddy and partnership classes as well as the use of technology for communication and representation. We engage in programs and activities that celebrate student achievement, physical and mental well-being, belonging, equity and Reconciliation.

About our PAC and community network:

Our parent/guardian community is strong and supportive. Caring volunteers provide an annual calendar of cultural events at Sexsmith, including many former parents and caregivers who come back each year to support the extracurricular engagement at our school. Our PAC (parent advisory council) hosts fundraisers to enhance our learning program, especially working to develop funds for technology, fieldtrips and extracurricular activities. There is a long tradition at Sexsmith of PAC working with the Arbutus Rotary Club as well as community volunteers to host events for Diwali, Christmas, Lunar New Year and Filipino Fiesta each year. Students of every culture get involved with learning traditional dances, games and ceremonies. Our PAC also creates opportunities for families to connect and foster a sense of community by hosting regular movie nights, which help strengthen bonds between students and families. Parent volunteers created a weekly hot lunch program and we strive to ensure each class has representation on the Sexsmith PAC. We coordinate with Sunset Community Centre, Marpole Neighbourhood House and the Churchill Family of Schools to provide support for families and opportunities for extracurricular involvement.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

J.W. Sexsmith Elementary staff and students are dedicated to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment that supports each child's unique learning journey. Our school community comprises 437 students from various cultural backgrounds, including over 160 English Language Learners and integrated support needs students, collectively speaking more than 20 languages.

Analysis of the Ministry of Education Student Learning Survey for 2023-2024, along with interim results for 2024-2025, reveals that the majority of our students report feeling happy at school and have a strong sense of belonging. They increasingly respect and acknowledge diversity. Anecdotal evidence highlights students' commitment to inclusion through initiatives such as buddy class programs, universal inclusion strategies for neurodivergent students, peer helper programs on the playground, and leadership roles in assemblies and announcements. Student participation in these programs and in volunteerism around our school has significantly increased, emphasizing the importance of giving back to the school community. Whether it's holding the door for others daily after recess, or speaking at monthly assemblies, students, particularly those in grades 3-7, demonstrate a growing focus on social-emotional learning and inclusion.

Interim Student Learning Survey (SLS) data for grade 7 indicates that students are still developing resilience and the belief that they can make a difference in the world. To address this, we are prioritizing student voice and choice as key areas of focus. The SLS data also shows that more than 80% of students feel a sense of belonging at Sexsmith.

The SLS data from 2023-2024 and the current school year's interim data show that students have a clear understanding of school expectations and use social-emotional learning (SEL) program language to express themselves. We recognize that students across all grades have unique social-emotional needs. To gather insights, we employ various engagement strategies, including teachers' observations, the Middle Years' Developmental Instrument (MDI), parent feedback from the Student Learning Survey, and conversations at PAC-sponsored events.

Through staff and parent meetings, we have observed potential concerns regarding reduced social interactions and increased screen time among students. We are committed to addressing these issues to ensure the well-being of our learners. We continue to create opportunities for parent conversations about these important issues such as at morning coffee events, PAC meetings, at our PAC bookclub and other moments of connection.

At Sexsmith, we are dedicated to supporting our students in meeting grade-level expectations for literacy, encompassing reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and representing. Our students exhibit a strong sense of belonging and connection to each other and the school culture. Overall, we believe in the following about our student needs and community focus:

- we have a Cohesive Learning Approach: Over the past three years, the school has worked on creating a unified approach to school expectations and learning goals.
- we monitor Student Support Needs: Ongoing support is needed for problem-solving skills, personal awareness, emotional regulation, and social media safety.
- we believe in Experiential Learning: Increasing opportunities for hands-on learning and strengthening connections with adults at school.
- we value Social Emotional Learning (SEL): We are collecting data about the students who require SEL interventions; our classrooms engage with SEL programs including: Second Step, MindUp, The Little Spot, TAPS, Consent Program, Strong Bodies Strong Kids, The Social Thinking Curriculum and the Zones of Regulation. We are seeking to create common language across grade levels so students can connect their learning over the years.

Specific Learning Groups and our Target Areas:

At J.W. Sexsmith Elementary, 9.5% of students have identified support needs, each with an Individual Education Plan and many with positive behavior support plans. Additionally, 34% of students are identified as English Language Learners, speaking more than one language and requiring support with English language learning. Our school is committed to Reconciliation and educating both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students about the land and community.

Engaging literacy programs for younger students, including read-alouds, family and buddy reading, phonemic awareness lessons and bookmaking projects, are woven into daily life at Sexsmith. Our primary teachers focus on phonemic awareness using the UFLI (University of

Florida Institute) program and other targeted approaches to teaching reading fluency. UFLI literacy program focuses on improving literacy outcomes for children through systematic instruction and professional development for educators. Our staff have a renewed focus on creating updated writing rubrics for assessing our School-wide write, especially at the grade 1-3 level, and we will continue to develop our assessment strategies for literacy in the coming school year. Culturally responsive teaching methods and literacy programs are important to our teaching staff, and efforts such as cultural celebration read-alouds and exposure to multicultural perspectives are commonly practiced in the classrooms.

Our Parent Advisory Council (PAC) remains actively engaged in supporting student programming and fostering a positive school culture. Parents and caregivers are actively involved with our school community, volunteering for field trips, cooking lessons with students in our TEGS program, creating cultural events, and participating in various fundraisers and school events. We are exploring innovative ways to enhance playground interactions for our youngest students, including the development of new playground structures and activities. Additionally, we are initiating a book club for parents, caregivers, and staff to discuss topics such as digital citizenship and "The Anxious Generation," followed by other books of interest to our community.

Trusted Adults: Students at JW Sexsmith Elementary have trusted adults they can turn to when they have concerns, fostering a supportive and open environment. The 2023 Student Learning Survey responses indicate that a significant majority of students, averaging 60% between Grades 4 and 7, feel genuinely cared for by the adults at school. Additionally, an average of 74% of students feel that their questions and concerns are valued and welcomed by these trusted adults.

Our staff engages in collaborative conversations to build support teams around students in need, prioritizing emotional well-being above all else. This commitment ensures that every student receives the care and support necessary to thrive. Students shared:

- "I think the most important things about our school are being inclusive, respecting everyone, making sure everyone is equal and learning about our community." – Grade 6 Student
- "I like how I feel safe around adults or my teachers and I think that what is the most important." – Grade 4 Student
- "The teachers are always gonna include u even tho you don't want to participate and the people there would always welcome u even tho u don't know them." – Grade 7 Student

These testimonials reflect the positive experiences of our students and underscore our dedication to creating a nurturing and inclusive school environment full of trusted adults.

Engaged Students: The 2023 Student Learning Survey responses reveal that students at JW Sexsmith Elementary feel a strong connection to the adults at school, see themselves as active learners, and feel safe within the school environment. Through classroom conversations, observations, and small focus group sessions with our principal, we are actively gathering student voices to understand their needs and ideas. We recognize the immense value of these insights and are committed to continually enhancing student agency.

As educators, we understand the critical importance of knowing our impact and evaluating our effect on students, as emphasized by John Hattie (2011). This focus on understanding and improving our influence on student outcomes is a growing priority for the staff at Sexsmith.

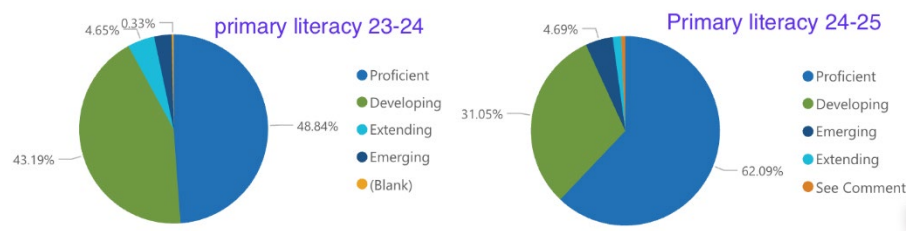
Our students express a positive attitude towards school and value their educational experience. Additionally, many students reported having a flexible mindset, a concept we frequently emphasize and will continue to promote.

AS A SCHOOL COMMUNITY, WE ARE WORKING ON THE FOLLOWING TO:

Improve student achievement in literacy and numeracy, physical and mental well-being, and belonging

Our school is committed to improving student achievement in literacy and numeracy, physical and mental well-being, and fostering a strong sense of belonging through a comprehensive and intentional approach. In literacy, we focus on building both skill and confidence by supporting students in achieving grade-level reading comprehension and written output. A school-wide writing assessment framework has been implemented, including bi-annual assessments and the development of grade-specific rubrics for consistent evaluation. This structured approach allows us to collect and analyze data on literacy development, which in turn informs targeted interventions to support student growth.

We have seen growth with our K-3 literacy assessments. When analyzing literacy data from term 2 and 3 learning updates for 2024 and 2025, we can see a gradual increase in proficiency. We can attribute some of this improvement to the collaboration of our primary team teachers and the focus on phonemic awareness programs and teaching strategies. We plan to continue our focus on literacy assessment, introducing the new provincial assessment tools for K-3, in the next school year. Our staff will be increasingly intentional about the curricular content and methods of instruction for literacy at Sexsmith.



To enhance students' physical and mental well-being, we incorporate real-life, interactive learning experiences that emphasize identity and self-value. Programs like STARS lessons and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) activities are used to teach respect, healthy habits, and emotional regulation. These initiatives help students build resilience and develop a positive self-image. By integrating SEL into daily learning and fostering inclusive, hands-on experiences, we create a supportive environment where students feel valued and connected. This holistic strategy ensures that every student has the opportunity to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

To further support students' physical wellness, our school offers a range of extracurricular and intramural sports opportunities that encourage active lifestyles and foster teamwork. Competitive teams such as volleyball, basketball, and track and field provide students with regular opportunities to participate in meets with neighbouring schools, promoting physical fitness, school pride, and community engagement. For students who prefer a more recreational approach, we offer inclusive in-house intramural games and a badminton club for students in grades 4 to 7, ensuring that all students have access to enjoyable and meaningful physical activity regardless of skill level or competitive interest.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is deeply embedded in our school culture, guided by the STARS framework—**Safety, Teamwork, Acceptance, Respect, and Sharing**. These core values shape our expectations for behaviour and communication, helping students build confidence, problem-solving skills, and a strong sense of community. STARS is not just a framework; it's a daily practice reinforced through school-wide assemblies, classroom instruction, and grade-level activities.

We also recognize and celebrate the many contributions of our PAC and community volunteers, who model these values through their daily involvement. Their presence reinforces the importance of connection, generosity, and shared responsibility, making our school a safe, inclusive, and supportive place for all.

At Sexsmith, we are committed to fostering equity and inclusion through intentional actions that support all learners. Staff engage in ongoing professional development focused on equity, inclusion, and culturally responsive practices. We ensure that resources are distributed equitably so that every student has access to special programming and school activities without barriers. Our programs are designed to be welcoming and responsive to diverse learning needs and cultural backgrounds, with additional support services such as counseling and community connections available as needed.

We emphasize differentiated instruction and Universal Design for Learning by planning lessons that accommodate a variety of learning styles and abilities. Flexible grouping strategies and the integration of assistive technologies help ensure that all students can access and engage with the curriculum. Activities that celebrate identity and culture are embedded throughout the year, including student-led cultural projects and visits from guest speakers and performers who share their lived experiences and talents.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is a foundational part of our approach, supported by a comprehensive SEL curriculum, mindfulness practices, and clear safety expectations rooted in our STARS motto and school code of conduct. Classrooms are intentionally structured to feel like supportive, family-like communities where students feel a strong sense of belonging and pride. Through these collective efforts, we continue to build an inclusive school environment where every student is seen, valued, and supported.

Improve equity

At Sexsmith, we are committed to creating an inclusive, supportive, and equitable learning environment that meets the diverse needs of our students and families. Individual Education Plans and Positive Behaviour Support Plans are thoughtfully developed and implemented for students requiring additional support. Many of our learners are English Language Learners who speak multiple languages, and we provide targeted English language instruction to ensure their success. Our commitment to Reconciliation is reflected in our efforts to educate both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students about the land, community, and Indigenous ways of knowing. This includes a focus on contemporary Indigenous leaders and voices, helping students understand the ongoing contributions of Indigenous peoples today.



Literacy is a central focus at our school. Engaging programs such as read-alouds, family and buddy reading, phonemic awareness lessons and bookmaking projects are part of daily routines, particularly in the primary grades. Teachers use the UFLI program and other targeted strategies to build foundational reading skills. Grade 1 teachers also collaborate with district Curriculum Enhancement Teacher in literacy to initiate a bookmaking project, where they create a supportive environment, model the writing process and use effective strategies to engage younger writers. Additionally, we have renewed our focus on writing, especially in grades 1–3, with updated rubrics for our School-Wide Write and continued development of assessment strategies. Our approach to literacy is culturally responsive, incorporating expressive writing, storytelling, and texts that reflect a wide range of cultures, beliefs, and experiences. The Responsive Literacy Framework is being implemented school-wide to support this work.

We foster a strong sense of belonging through peer support initiatives such as buddy programs and peer helpers, and we use positive reinforcement strategies like STARS tickets to build pride and community. Classrooms are designed to feel like supportive families, and morning soft starts help ease students into the day with calm, purposeful activities. Clubs such as the Green Team, Rainbow Club, Chess Club, Band Club, and our new Library Monitor Club provide opportunities for leadership, creativity, and connection. Student leadership is further encouraged through roles like safety patrol, lunch monitors, and peer mentors.

Our Parent Advisory Council (PAC) plays an active role in supporting student programming and school culture. Parents and caregivers volunteer for field trips, cooking lessons in our TEGS program, cultural events, and fundraisers. This year, we introduced a book club for parents, caregivers, and staff, beginning with *The Anxious Generation* and exploring topics like digital citizenship. We are also exploring new ways to enhance playground experiences for our youngest learners through the development of new structures and activities.

To support student well-being, we are developing surveys and focus groups to gather student voice around their sense of belonging and mental health. Restorative justice circles are used for conflict resolution and healing, and mindfulness practices are integrated into classroom routines. Students have access to mental health resources through SEL programming, our school counselor,

and community partnerships. Perspective-taking activities and reflective practices help students build personal and social awareness, and core competencies are integrated across all areas of learning. These collective efforts ensure that every student at Sexsmith feels seen, supported, and empowered to thrive.

Continue on our journey of reconciliation with First Nations, Metis, and Inuit

Our school continues to deepen its Reconciliation journey through a holistic and evolving approach that includes professional learning, curriculum integration, student engagement, and community involvement. Staff are supported with ongoing opportunities to explore the Seven Grandfather Teachings and the First Peoples Principles of Learning, including through workshops led by Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers when possible. These teachings are embedded into classroom lessons and interdisciplinary projects, helping students connect meaningfully with Indigenous perspectives and values.



As we analyzed data from the SLS and through classroom conversations with students, we realized that much of the teaching and learning happening about Indigenous peoples was largely historic, about Residential schools and to do with trauma and past experiences. We wanted to still teach this important information but also highlight contemporary Indigenous leaders and ways of knowing and being with students. We wanted to begin to place a stronger emphasis on learning about contemporary Indigenous people and leaders, helping students understand the ongoing contributions and voices of Indigenous communities today. In the spring of 2025, we introduced theme words aligned with our STARS framework—Safety, Teamwork, Acceptance, Respect, and Sharing—that connect with Indigenous principles such as *respect* and *listening*. These words were explicitly taught to students and became a foundation for classroom discussions and activities.

This initiative blossomed into the creation of classroom word walls featuring translations of these values in various Halkomelem dialects, which were then compared with words in other languages spoken by students and families. This multilingual exploration fostered a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity and linguistic richness. The conversation extended beyond classrooms, as parents engaged in these discussions during our spring conferences, contributing their perspectives and strengthening the home-school connection. We plan to continue this Reconciliation work in the coming school year.

Our Indigenous resource development continues to grow, with tools like the Orange Shirt Day kit, Reconciliation Blanket information, and a dedicated Truth and Reconciliation library section. Staff also engage in reflective practices using texts such as *“Wahi-Wah: Indigenous Pedagogies”* and *“ReStorying Education”*, supporting both personal and collective growth. Through these efforts, we aim to create an inclusive, respectful, and equitable school environment where Indigenous perspectives are visible, valued, and celebrated.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

At our school, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is woven into daily life through the STARS framework—Safety, Teamwork, Acceptance, Respect, and Sharing—which guides student behaviour, communication, and community building. These values are brought to life in our assemblies, where they are meaningfully connected with the Seven Grandfather Teachings—Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth, and with recognizing the importance of Heritage Languages in our school and with learning about Halkomelem languages as well. Together, these teachings help students reflect on how to care for themselves, each other, and our shared environment, while valuing where we have come from. We also highlight the contributions of our PAC and community volunteers, who model these values and help strengthen our school culture.

To ensure we're on track, we are committed to ongoing monitoring and reflection. We gather both qualitative and quantitative data to assess our progress. This includes student self-reflections, stories, and anecdotal evidence, as well as feedback from staff, students, and families. Tools like our evolving writing rubrics for the School Wide Write help us track growth in literacy skills over time. In the coming year, we plan to focus our community engagement on literacy, bringing parents and caregivers into the conversation early in the year with a "Camp Read" event and book sharing at our annual Meet the Staff and PAC Open House. We plan to collect data at these events that can help us understand our students' areas of need and current level of engagement with literacy not just in the Language Arts classroom but also in their lives holistically.

We will continue to analyze data from the Foundation Skills Assessment (gr. 4 & 7), Learning Updates (3 terms per year), the annual Ministry of Education Student Learning Survey, the Middle Years Developmental Instrument, and Early Years Developmental Instrument, to monitor both academic and social-emotional development. Anecdotal observation notes and both verbal and written student surveys also inform our staff about student connectedness, engagement and trust in our adult team.

We are increasing opportunities for student voice and community feedback, ensuring that our planning and practices reflect the needs and experiences of those we serve. The strong bonds among students, staff, and families at our school are testament to our success in fostering a welcoming, inclusive, and engaging learning environment. We celebrate our progress through newsletters, assemblies, PAC meetings, community meetings and events, reinforcing a shared sense of pride and belonging.

