

2024-2025 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

With deep gratitude and respect, we are honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

Šx^wƏx^wAʔəs (sa-kwa-us) Thunderbird Elementary is a designated Enhanced Services school in the northeast quadrant of Vancouver, residing on the ancestral and unceded territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation). Šx^wƏx^wAʔəs Thunderbird has a significant Indigenous population and a long, rich relationship with the land it resides on, holding a strong commitment to truth and reconciliation.

For 2024-2025, Šx^wƏx^wAʔəs Thunderbird has 185 students from diverse cultural, linguistic, and economic backgrounds. Approximately 50% of our students are English Language Learners, with many newcomer families. Additionally, 12% of our students meet Ministry standards for requiring specialized support for their learning needs.

Šx^wƏx^wAʔəs Thunderbird has a Youth and Family Worker, Neighbourhood Assistant, and a Curriculum Enhancement Teacher to provide equitable access to supports and enriched learning opportunities. There is also an onsite food services coordinator, offering breakfast and lunch programs. These programs provide a variety of healthy snacks and meals to all learners. The hot breakfast program regularly serves over 30% of the school population, and the hot lunch program provides lunch to approximately 70% of the students. Additionally, Šx^wƏx^wAʔəs Thunderbird has a Strong Start site offering programming for preschool-aged children and a partnership with KidSafe, which provides out-of-school programming for school-aged children during school breaks, such as winter, spring, and summer.

The school shares the site with the Thunderbird Community Centre and works closely with community staff to plan after-school programs and day camps during breaks and professional development days. The community centre also provides before and after-school care services for Šx^wƏx^wAʔəs Thunderbird students, as well as a preschool program. Further, Šx^wƏx^wAʔəs Thunderbird collaborates with the Community Schools Team and other community organizations to forge partnerships that benefit students.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

Our learners represent a vibrant tapestry of cultural, spiritual, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity. Approximately half of our students speak a language other than English at home, qualifying them for additional English Language Learner (ELL) support.

ᓄᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂ Thunderbird is proud to have a significant Indigenous student population, deeply connected to place and culture. We collaborate closely with our Indigenous Enhancement Worker and external Indigenous partners to deepen our knowledge, awareness, and appreciation of Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures, and contributions. Through diverse cultural and historical teachings, we strive to foster respect and understanding.

Guided by the First Peoples Principles of Learning, ᓄᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂ Thunderbird is committed to reconciliation, embedding these principles into our daily practices and long-term goals.

Academically, we recognize the need to improve Language Arts outcomes, particularly in reading and writing, where scores currently range from low to moderate. This presents an opportunity to focus our collective efforts on strategies that support literacy development for all learners.

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 goal is to increase reading fluency and comprehension. As a staff, we are examining literacy strategies that introduce explicit instruction in phonics, reading, and writing. We are exploring best-practice strategies to learn and implement as a staff to increase student learning and achievement in reading.

Teachers are exploring approaches that highlight the importance of foundational skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, language, and vocabulary, with an emphasis on these skills in primary grades (K-3) to ensure a strong foundation for reading. These goals are integral to the VSB Responsive Literacy Framework K-7.

In response to the English Language Arts (CSL) and Reading data, we are focusing on student learning and achievement in the core curricular area of Language Arts. Specifically, we are looking at reading scores and exploring reading instruction and intervention that is both universal and targeted.

This goal links to the Vancouver School Board's Education Plan to improve student achievement, physical and mental well-being, and belonging by:

- Encouraging students to reach beyond previous boundaries in knowledge and experience.
- Increasing literacy, numeracy, and deep, critical, and creative thinking.
- Ensuring the alignment among school, district, and provincial education plans.

- Reporting student results about performance, well-being, and outcomes to the community and using the results to improve the quality and effectiveness of the education and support provided to students.

This also goal aligns with the First People's Principles of Learning in the following areas:

- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place)
- Learning involves patience and time
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Additionally, it connects to the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement:

- The Vancouver Board of Education will provide equity of opportunity for Aboriginal students and be committed to the ongoing development of best-practice strategies for instruction, improvement, and inclusion.

Improve equity

Our equity goal is to help eliminate gaps in achievement and outcomes among students who are struggling in reading, focussing on early intervention in kindergarten and grade one. This all aligns with the Vancouver School Board's Education Plan 2026 to increase equity by eliminating gaps in achievement and outcomes among students.

Through strategic and targeted intervention for vulnerable learners we will:

- Support learners using our Curriculum Enhancement Teacher support and resource team to provide targeted instruction, such as one-on-one support, small group instruction, and literacy-rich activities.
- Provide reading recovery support to grade one students who are identified at risk using the Kindergarten Protocol, Observation Survey, and classroom assessment data.

We will measure success using data from Collaborative Early Literacy Intervention (CELI) data. This data will give us a longitudinal look at our interventions, provided to identified students and track their success and learning overtime.

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

At šx^wəx^waʔəs Thunderbird, our goal is to enhance knowledge, awareness, appreciation, and respect for Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures, and contributions through diverse cultural and historical teachings. We aim to actively involve students in these efforts, encouraging their participation and engagement in learning and sharing these important aspects within our school community.

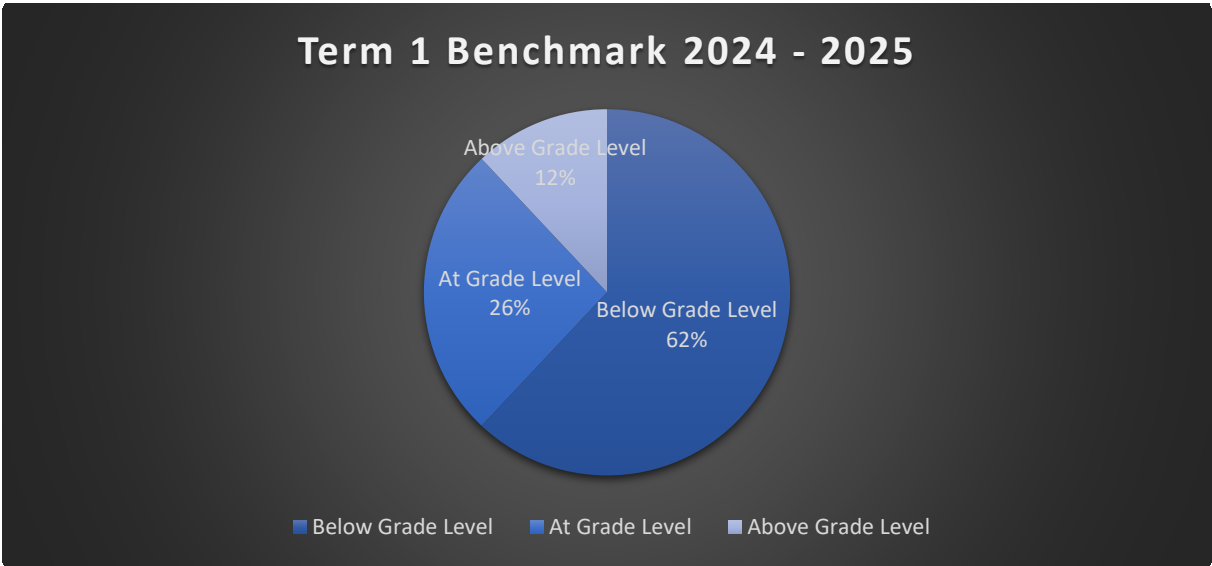
This goal aligns with the District's objectives but holds particular significance in our community, where many families are of Indigenous ancestry. We practice this goal daily through various

activities, engaging with community and district resources to deliver a comprehensive program. The First Peoples Principles of Learning remain central to all our efforts.

We have explored and provided a variety of experiences for students and the community to promote reconciliation and Indigenous enhancement. These include observing Orange Shirt Day to raise awareness of residential schools and the stories of survivors, and listening to and sharing personal stories. Students lead daily Indigenous acknowledgements at the beginning of the day, during whole school events, assemblies, and meetings. We also learn the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in child-friendly language, focusing on key messages during assemblies. We have purchased Indigenous resources and books to share with staff and students, and held assemblies for Truth and Reconciliation Day and National Indigenous Peoples Day. The First Peoples Principles of Learning are incorporated into all we do. Additionally, we drum the Coast Salish Anthem, maintain an Indigenous Garden, and develop and review Indigenous Success Plans for Indigenous students regularly in Grades 1, 2, 4, and 6.

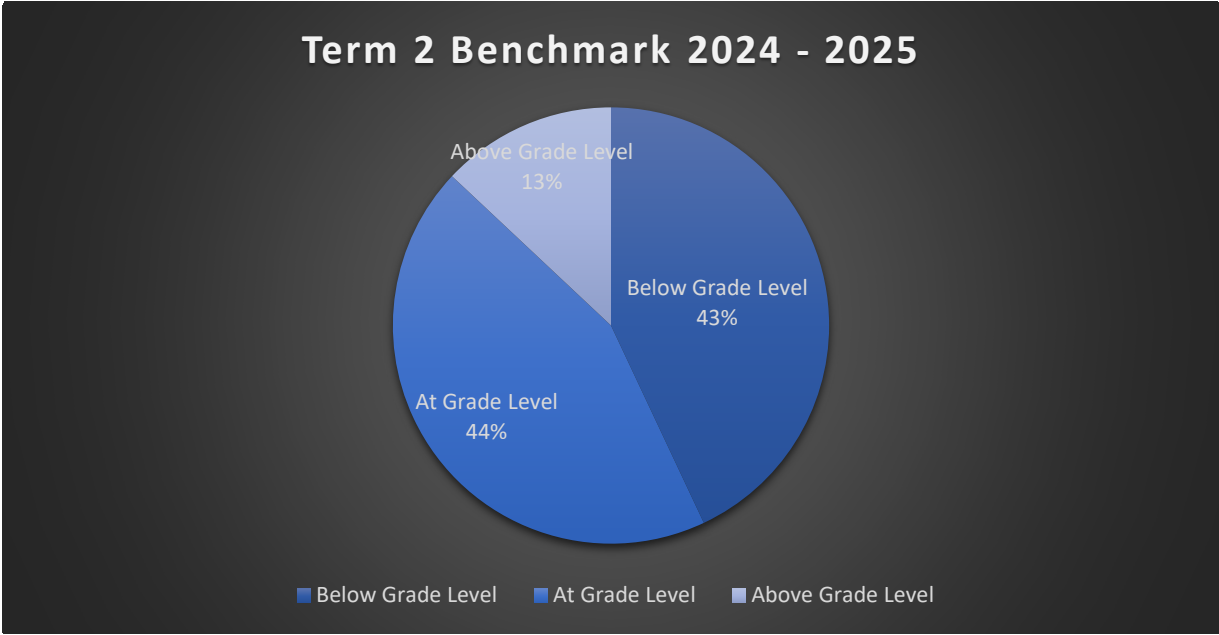
HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

Through the collection of year-over-year Learning Update data and the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment, we will create a baseline for achievement in reading scores and English Language Arts and examine subsequent scores to analyze and gauge student learning and progression throughout the year, and year-over-year, at šxʷəxʷaʔəs Thunderbird.

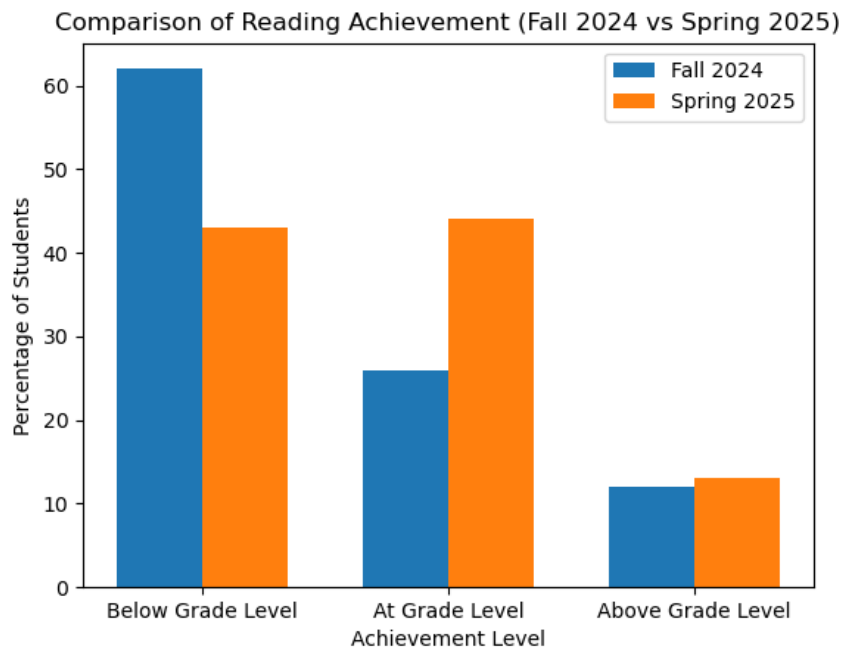


As we transition into a new reporting format, we examined our reading levels through the lens of the standardized assessment, the Benchmark. Using this tool, we had an accurate understanding of our students, baseline achievement, and how to implement strategies to move them towards developing the skills they need in language arts.

When examining Fall 2024 reading achievement using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment, we found that 62.0% of students were below grade level expectations, 26.0% of students were at grade level, and 12.0% of students were above grade level, during the same period. The data indicates a need for targeted and consistent efforts in literacy instruction and best-practice strategies. Knowing this data, we are working using multiple strategies to help kids move forward in their learning. As a school, we have early literacy intervention through our Reading Recovery Program, focused resource support for students who are needing extra help, and are working to implement the science of reading to compliment what is currently being done in classrooms.



Reviewing Spring 2025 reading achievement, using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment, we found that 43% of students were below grade level expectations, 44% of students were at grade level, and 13% of students were above grade level.



Examining baseline data from fall 2024 to spring 2025 for the 2024-2025 academic school year, we can see there is a significant decrease in the percentage of students below grade level expectations, from 62.0% in Fall 2024 to 43.0% in Spring 2025. This indicates a positive trend in reading achievement over the year. Further, the percentage of students at grade level increased from 26.0% in Fall 2024 to 44.0% in Spring 2025. This suggests that many students improved their reading skills to meet grade level expectations. We also observe that the percentage of students above grade level expectations increased slightly from 12.0% in Fall 2024 to 13.0% in Spring 2025. While the increase is modest, it still indicates progress in higher reading achievement.

Overall, the data shows a positive trend in reading achievement over the year. The significant decrease in students below grade level and the increase in students at grade level suggest effective interventions and improvements in reading instruction. The slight increase in students above grade level also indicates that some students are excelling beyond expectations.

Improve equity

Ŗxʷəxʷaʔəs Thunderbird's School Learning Plan and the VSB Education Plan both focus on creating equity within the school and the school district at large. At Ŗxʷəxʷaʔəs Thunderbird, in line with the Vancouver School Board, we aspire to increase equity by eliminating gaps in achievement and outcomes among students, eliminating racism and discrimination in all forms, evaluating and renewing plans for the improvement of Indigenous learners' education, and improving stewardship of the district's resources by focusing on effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

While keeping all of these goals in focus, we are examining strategies to eliminate gaps in achievement and outcomes among students at risk, specifically looking at reading in the early years. To help achieve greater success in outcomes, the school is provided with a curriculum enhancement teacher to help with skills and strategies for all students in English Language Arts and a Reading Recovery teacher who specifically works with younger students. With this help, our teachers offer initiatives and opportunities targeting literacy throughout the year. Examples of these are Family Literacy Night and Books for Breakfast, which engage both students and caregivers and are intended to increase the joy of reading and help parents engage in strategies at home. Additionally, we provide equal and equitable access to books in the library and an online reading program, IXL, to track student progress.

The Reading Recovery program is a cornerstone of our support for students identified as at risk entering grade one. In kindergarten, students are assessed using the kindergarten protocol to determine who is at risk for not meeting early literacy skills. These identified students receive pull-out support to build their capacity.

Through the work in kindergarten and the Grade One Observation Survey, as well as teacher evaluation, students are identified and offered extra support through one-to-one instruction in the grade one year. Follow-up reading assessments are repeated with these students in grades two and three to track progression and student outcomes. Students not receiving one-to-one reading recovery support, who are below grade level, are supported through small group instruction.

Using the most current Collaborative Early Literacy Intervention (CELI) data from 2023-2024, we see that scores in reading for grade one students receiving one-to-one support through reading recovery were initially well below grade level expectations (level 0) at the beginning of grade one. After reading recovery instruction, scores indicate that 50% of the students are solidly at grade level, and the other 50% are just shy of grade level expectations (levels 16 and 14, respectively).

The data also indicates significant growth in students that receive small group pull-out support. Initially, these students were at level 0. After small group support, 88% of students in this group were at or near grade level reading expectations.

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

We are committed to deepening our understanding of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge by actively seeking opportunities to collaborate with local Indigenous people and experts. Their guidance will help us expand our knowledge, awareness, appreciation, and respect for Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures, and contributions. We will continue to align our efforts with the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement, First Peoples Principles of Learning, Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, and the VSB's Education Plan 2026 to advance reconciliation at šxʷəxʷaʔəs Thunderbird.

As a school, we have committed to increasing education around Indigenous cultures and incorporating the First Peoples Principles of Learning as a cornerstone for lessons across the

curriculum. By analyzing Student Learning Survey data, we can stay on course and understand where our students are in their learning journeys.

Currently, our understanding of Indigenous worldviews and knowledge is reflected in student self-reports from the 2024 Student Learning Survey. According to the survey, 82% of grade 4 students and 49% of grade 7 students recognize that they are learning about Indigenous people at least some of the time. These figures indicate that while we have made significant strides—such as engaging with storytellers, creating Indigenous art, and exploring Indigenous culture and ways of knowing—there is still much work to be done. We are committed to continuing this engagement and weaving Indigenous perspectives into all aspects of our education, particularly among our intermediate students.

Over the past three years, from the 2021-2022 school year to the 2023-2024 school year, we see a general trend indicating that students are seeing themselves as learners of Indigenous culture, local First Nations, and are more aware that celebrations, activities, and reconciliation are embedded in the daily learning we do. When asked at school regarding their learning about Indigenous and First Nations, students reported over the three-year period that they are learning about Indigenous people's education approximately 56% of the time in 2021-2022, 43% of the time in 2022-2023, and 65% of the time in 2023-2024. This shows an increase in student awareness regarding the teaching of Indigenous and First Nations education.

As a school, we will continue to support and work on increasing and deepening our understanding of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge with efforts to enhance Indigenous education. Indigenous education is woven into the fabric of all we do.