

**School**

Bowen Island Community School

**FESL Year**

Year One, 2022-2023

**School Context**

Bowen Island Community School is located on beautiful Nexwlélexwm, Bowen Island, on the traditional lands of the Squamish Nation.

Bowen Island is at the mouth of Átl'ka7tsem, Howe Sound, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, and our school borders Metro Vancouver's Crippen Regional Park and is within walking distance of meadows, creeks, Killarney Lake, and several beaches.

Many people move to Bowen Island for the tranquility of its forests, the peacefulness of its beaches, and the strong sense of community here, and so, learning about this place and community has been central to the identity of the school for decades.

Students learn about, and from their place, and the ecological, economic, and governmental relationships that connect Bowen Island to the South Coast and beyond.

Play-based learning is also a central tenet of our classrooms to help students learn communication and collaboration skills and make meaning from their experiences, and most importantly, find learning joyful.

The beautiful murals on our grounds that artists have created with our students reflect our community's value of the arts. Our students love collaborating with others on grand art projects and creating their own works of art that they are proud to have displayed throughout the school.

We also have an outstanding Music and Band Program where students can develop a love of playing and appreciating music, and significant skill development from kindergarten through grade 7 and by participating in band with our grade 6 and 7 students.

Not only is our school a reflection of this community, but it is also often described as its hub. Over the years, investments from West Vancouver Schools, Bowen Island Municipality, the Parent Advisory Council, the Community School Association, and many supportive community organizations and people, have made our site an asset to our students and the residents of Bowen Island: an outdoor classroom, two playgrounds with accessible features, gardens, tennis court, two huge playing fields including an all-season artificial turf field, a large gym, and beautiful classrooms.

Our setting is outstanding but what makes Bowen Island Community School a great place to learn is our dedicated, innovative, and caring staff, our kind and curious students, and our wonderful BICS families who are not only committed to the vitality of their own children but also honour the proverb that *it takes a village to raise a child*.

**Identified Goal:**

Is your goal specific, meaningful, measurable and evidence informed?

Students, staff, and families will feel they belong at BICS. We will facilitate this sense of belonging in the following ways:

1. Build Connection and Character by incorporating the Seven Sacred Teachings into classrooms and our school culture.
2. Improve academic achievement of students focusing specifically on K-4 Reading and 5-7 Numeracy so students feel successful in key areas of our School's purpose.
3. Develop leadership skills and interests of our Grades 5-7 students, with a focus on Grade 5s engaging and empowering them to contribute to students' positive experiences at school.

**Rationale for Goal****Why is this goal important to your school community?**

The school experience is a significant part of a child's life. In order to enjoy childhood to the full extent, one must enjoy school. We want students to feel they belong at school to enjoy their lives, and also because a sense of belonging is foundational to academic success. A sense of belonging can improve a student's academic performance and that sense of scholastic growth also contributes to a student's feeling of inclusion in the school community. When people feel connected to the school's mission, which includes academic successes for students, they gain a sense of belonging. This goal is contextually relevant for four reasons.

1. Increasing awareness of barriers to inclusion of historically oppressed and/or currently oppressed peoples and the moral imperative to ensure all children feel they belong at school.
2. Addressing the Climate Emergency is acutely urgent and learning about how to belong in our communities and participate in shared problem solving and service and live in a sustainable relationship with the ecosystems we contribute to and rely upon is vital.
3. The isolation that some children and families encountered during COVID makes participating in and belonging to communities especially important.
4. Our School District's Framework for Enhancing Student Learning has identified increasing "the number and percentage of students in grades 4, 7, and 10 reporting a sense of belonging on the Student Learning Survey, within 2 years," as a key goal, and our School Goal supports this.

**How will this goal improve educational outcomes for students?**

The foundation for learning is feeling secure and happy at school, so developing a sense of belonging to classrooms and to BICS is key. Further, our goal has specific learning targets focused on

improving the reading skills of our Kindergarten to Grade 4 students and Numeracy abilities for our Grades 5-7 students.

### Evidence/Data

What evidence/data is leading your school to this goal?

What student success data do you want to improve? What are your measures of success?

Several pieces of data and provincial initiatives have led to the three areas of our school goals.

1. For Area 1, *Build Connection and Character by incorporating the Seven Sacred Teachings into classrooms and our school culture*, we do not have data suggesting that BIPOC students and families feel they do not belong at BICS; however, stakeholders of the BC Education system recognize colonialism and systemic racism in the system, and it is essential that efforts are made for all students to belong, but particularly Indigenous peoples and racialized peoples.
2. For Area 2, to *Improve academic achievement of students with a specific focus on K-4 Reading and 5-7 Numeracy*, the last several years of DIBELS (reading assessments) and Foundational Skills Assessments (literacy and numeracy assessment) have indicated that we have many students who struggle with learning to read, and while they are identified early and supported, we wish to reduce the time and stress on students that currently occurs, for them to develop reading fluency and comprehension. For Grades 5-7 numeracy, for the last several years, we have identified some concerns with Grade 7 students' abilities to apply math understandings in new situations. Most recently, our 2022 FSA data indicates that 23% of our students scored Emerging, 68% were On Track, and only 9% were Extending (performance scale explanation is [here](#)). These results align with the previous 3 years as well, so we have room to improve with our Grade 5-7 students' abilities to master math concepts and apply them to unique situations that uses their problem solving and critical thinking skills.
3. For Area 3, *Develop leadership skills and interests of our Grades 5-7 students, with a focus on Grade 5s engaging and empowering them to contribute to students' positive experiences at school*, we consistently have terrific groups of Grade 7 students who are often keen, when provided, to take on leadership opportunities; however, we would like to further build a school culture where helping others is both expected and desired; where taking initiative and having the leadership skills to bring others onboard, is common; and where our intermediate students consistently, and with decreasing support and prompting, take ownership of the culture of our school.

### Stakeholder Engagement

**How have you included the perspectives/voice of all stakeholders in your school community?**

Various stakeholders were consulted in the following ways.

Parents/Guardians:

- Student Learning Survey

- Class Placement Survey questions: for example, “What do you believe is an ideal learning environment for your child?”

School Staff:

- Staff Meeting Consultations
- Staff Advisory Group invitation and planning meetings

**How will you ensure ongoing collaboration with all your different stakeholders?**

We will create a focus group for students to gage the same students in their sense of engagement, belonging, and empowerment, as they move from Grades 5-7.

Parents/Guardians will be consulted on their child’s feeling of their sense of belonging at BICS via the Student Learning Survey and other questionnaires.

Staff will continue to use Professional Development Days and Staff Meetings to assess progress in our three goal areas.

**Connection to the District FESL Goals**

The School District’s Framework for Enhancing Student Learning has identified increasing “the number and percentage of students in grades 4, 7, and 10 reporting a sense of belonging on the Student Learning Survey, within 2 years,” as a key goal, and our School Goal supports that.

**Action Plan**

What is your action plan for your FESL goal?

What specific strategies will you implement each year?

What resources, supports, and professional learning will you need to meet your goal?

What structures will you put in place to ensure an ongoing focus towards your goal?

Year 1

Area 1: Incorporate the 7 Sacred Teachings

- We will learn about implementing the Seven Sacred Teachings.
- Book Club on *Ensouling our Schools* by Jennifer Katz, with Kevin Lamoureux. The book is described as weaving “together methods of creating schools that engender mental, spiritual, and emotional health while developing intellectual thought and critical analysis. Kevin Lamoureux contributes his expertise regarding Indigenous approaches to mental and spiritual health that benefit all students and address the TRC Calls to Action.”
- The Indigenous Education Committee will meet to suggest ways of sharing the Seven Sacred Teachings in ways that are culturally relevant to students.

## Area 2: Academic Achievement

- We will update our Learning Portfolios to better track literacy and numeracy development, including response to interventions.
- We will survey teachers to gauge strengths and challenges of our early literacy program to identify what instructional strategies and interventions are effective and what we can do differently.
- We will invest in learning resources that support and harmonize early literacy instruction among primary students.

## Area 3: Leadership

- We will assign Grade 5 students in groups of 4-5 to be matched with a staff mentor. The mentor will support students to take on various leadership roles within the school providing service to others and the development of leadership qualities such as responsibility/organization, inclusion/connection, commitment, and positive outlook.
- Twice per month for most of the year, leadership groups will meet with mentors and implement their service projects.

## Year 2

## Area 1: Incorporate the 7 Sacred Teachings

- We will begin to incorporate the 7 Sacred Teachings in classrooms, focusing on one teaching per grade.
- We will feature these attributes in classroom and school recognitions of positive character.

## Area 2: Academic Achievement

- Using the resources acquired during the 2022-2023 school year, we will align literacy practices in our primary grades.
- We will improve the numeracy skills of students by focusing on Critical Thinking and problem solving skills embedded in the curriculum supported by the work of the West Vancouver Schools Numeracy Network.

## Area 3: Leadership

- We will likely take on another cohort of Grade 5s and support them with staff mentors, similar to Year One.
- We will engage in assessments of whether the enhanced leadership skills of our Grade 5s have an impact on school culture using the Student Learning Survey and focus groups as sources of information.

## Year 3

This is an important year to pause, reflect on successes and challenges, and prepare for further action. Questions to guide our progress in year 3 include:

Is what we are doing making a difference?  
What would be undeniable proof of success? \*  
What is getting in the way of success? \*  
In reflecting on the first two years, what will we leave behind that has not worked? \*  
What should we be doing instead?  
Is the sense of belonging we are building in students also felt by families and staff?

\*Source: Ian Chisolm, ROY Group

**Reflection/Summary of Learning/Next Steps (End of each year))**

What are the highlights of your learning journey for this year?  
What progress have you made? How do you know this?  
What aspects of your plan do you need to refine or adjust?