

School :

Bowen Island Community School

FESL Year

Year 3

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.

Our school reflects this community and is 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. Improve academic achievement of students focusing specifically on emergent literacy skills (reading instruction).
2. Develop leadership skills of Grades 5-7 students, engaging and empowering them to contribute to the community and enhance students' positive experiences at school.

Rationale for Goal

Why is this goal important to your school community?

How will this goal improve educational outcomes for students?

A sense of belonging may improve a student's academic performance and academic growth also contributes to a student's feeling of inclusion in the school community.

Currently, a significant section of our student population (over 35% on average) is reading below grade level. Increasing literacy skills has both short-term and long-term advantages. Short-term advantages are communication skills, academic success, access to information and personal development. Long-term advantages are lifelong literacy, secondary school success, civic engagement, and employability.

Targeting leadership skills as an important goal for our school starting in Gr 4 and 5 can benefit school and community growth for students in all intermediate grades. As students are in a community school and are often together in and out of school, it is important that they develop communication, critical thinking, teamwork and collaboration with one another.

How will this goal improve educational outcomes for students?

With a focus on early literacy and reading skills, students will learn and consolidate skills that will aid in improving confidence, exploring curriculum, and enhancing critical thinking skills. Stronger literacy skills may lead to more confidence in deconstructing written math concepts and applying them to new situations.

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. 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. Dibels scores in 2023 (Grades 1-7) reveal approximately 30% of our students are struggling with reading (below expected grade level). FSA data has also identified concerns with Grade 7 students' abilities to apply math understanding in new situations. Our 2022 FSA data indicates that 23% of our

students scored Emerging, 68% were On Track, and only 9% were Extending. Math FSA scores for Grades 4 and 7 in 2023 scored 25% Emerging, indicating a trend in this area.

2. We would like to build a school culture where helping others is both expected and desired; where taking initiative and having the leadership skills to bring others on board, is common; and where our intermediate students consistently, and with decreasing support and prompting, take pride in the culture of our school.

Stakeholder Engagement
 How have you included the perspectives/voice of all stakeholders in your school community?
 How will you ensure ongoing collaboration with all your different stakeholders?

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?”
- Indigenous families invited to committee and email feedback process
- PAC meeting presentations and discussions; invitation to join FESL committee

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 (student council) to gauge the same students in their sense of engagement, belonging, and empowerment, as they move from Grades 5-7. Families will be consulted on their child’s 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.

Connection to the District FESL Goals (Sense of Belonging, Literacy, Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity, Parent Learning opportunities)

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 to enhance student success and positive mental health on the Student Learning Survey, within 2 years,” as a key goal, and our School Goal supports that.

We are building a sense of belonging through pods and core values, parent and guardian learning opportunities, and the improvement of literacy skills and confidence (UFLI).

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 (3 Areas in initial FESL)

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 (2 areas of focus)

We will narrow the focus of our FESL to include primary areas of need:

Literacy:

- Look at literacy, and reading specifically, programs across the grades:
 - Strengthen our knowledge of how kids learn to read
 - Incorporate explicit reading instruction at all grades
 - Early years: Letter Recognition and Sounds, Site Words, Fluency, Comprehension

- Upper years: Consolidation of these skills, fluency and comprehension
- Use assessments for planning: DIBELS, differentiating instruction
- Beginning of the year DIBELS assessments for fluency completed by classroom teachers to help inform their practice
- Dec 2023: District Literacy support specialists met with our teachers to support literacy instruction and practices. Some themes emerged around intentional practice, communicating learning intentions and “I can” reflections, cross-curricular practices and classroom management.
- Learning Sprints – Using Dr Simon Breakspear’s research, teachers are encouraged to plan and execute a literacy goal for a 4–6-week timeframe and then reflect and assess
- May: evaluate the effectiveness of reading instruction and create a literacy road map for BICS; target specific programs, dates, and check-ins for goals that will be followed next year

Student Leadership

- Spring leadership learning sprint for Grade 5s and 6s. Students will work with teachers and mentors to explore leadership skills. This will culminate in a service project for school or community.
- 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.

Professional Development:

- Fall 2023: UFLI resources for all teaching staff. Shifting the balance and literacy instruction with Lisa Thomas from [POPEY](#). She shared many resources and invited us to consider multiple facets of our literacy instruction.
- Fall 2023: Shelley Moore – inclusive practices and universal design. Topics have included needs assessments, Strengths-based IEPs, inclusive philosophy and practices (e.g. How can we teach to all learners?)
- Lunch and Learn topics: literature circles, small group novel study, centres with a literacy focus
- Explore oral reading fluency program [6 Minute Reading Solution](#)
- Staff Meeting and team meeting discussions:
 - What are we doing currently that is working-why, what is tricky- why?
 - What do we know about our student’s literacy skills? How do we know this?
 - What shifts can we make to increase growth and development? What do we need?

Year 3

We continue to narrow the focus of our FESL based on these primary areas of need:

Literacy:

- UFLI (University of Florida Literacy Institute) Foundations program was chosen as a direct instruction reading program and implemented K-5; materials and resources purchased along with timetable allocation to ensure support
- UFLI follows a carefully developed [scope and sequence](#) which is designed to ensure that students systematically acquire each skill needed and learn to apply each skill with automaticity and confidence. The program is designed to be used for core instruction in the primary grades. At school, students are placed in groups based on their current skill level and receive targeted instruction 3 times a week.
- Two parent workshops given for reading at home and UFLI strategies.
- Roll and Read is a game that is a part of the UFLI program that may be sent home. The roll and reads that come home are to reinforce skills learned each week at school.
- Organizing and purchasing leveled books for home reading resources
- District Literacy support specialists continue to meet with our teachers to support literacy instruction and practices.
- Learning Sprints – Using Dr Simon Breakspear’s research, teachers continue to plan and execute literacy goals for a 4–6-week timeframe and then reflect and assess

Student Leadership and Sense of Belonging:

- Creation of our school pods or houses based on the cardinal directions
- Implementation of pods and activities that are multi-age
- BICS values words: connected, confident, compassionate, curious will be explored and given definitions that work for the community
- Intramurals (pods)
- Playground leadership for grades 4 and 5
- Grade 6 and 7 leaders for pod activities supporting each BICS value

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?

Year 1:**Highlights:**

- Staff studied Jo Chrona’s book Wayi Wah as a staff team. One highlight is that our learning informed the National Indigenous day K-7 activities.
- Staff participated in multiple sessions to consider the best practices and learning resources we could purchase for Literacy. We studied Scarborough’s reading rope, read balanced literacy research, and researched a variety of reading resources. We purchased UFLI manuals for all staff and primary reading resources from Fly Leaf Publishing [Emergent Readers](#) and '[Decodable Literature](#)' K-3. We began to consider shared language in a literacy program over multiple years.

- We scheduled bimonthly school-wide buddy reading. Gr 5 students met with teacher mentors in small groups. Students brainstormed, planned and executed leadership initiatives.
- Three highlights of our targeted Gr 5 student leadership activities are: student initiatives planned and executed, connections with mentor teachers in small groups, increased ownership and responsibility for in-school activities, increased student voice

Year 2:

Highlights:

- Staff conducted their own DIBELS testing to better understand areas of need and gaps in emergent literacy skills
- Professional development: Shifting the balance and literacy instruction with Lisa Thomas from [POPEY](#) and Shelley Moore – inclusive practices and universal design, district literacy support specialists
- Teachers utilizing reading fluency program [6 Minute Reading Solution](#)
- Staff decision to implement UFLI targeted reading instruction in Grades K-5 next year
- Learning Sprints dedicated to literacy goals in classrooms

Next steps:

- Implementation of UFLI in school-wide platooning; timetable to allow for support; each teacher with one group to build confidence in program for both staff and students