



École Mountainview

School Growth Plan 2023-2024

I. School

Mission Statement

“École Mountainview seeks to create a challenging learning environment in a French language setting that encourages high expectations for success. Our school promotes a safe, orderly,



Figure 1. École Mountainview, Terrace, British Columbia

caring and supportive environment wherein all students are given equal opportunities to succeed. École Mountainview respects and recognizes the individual needs of children and emphasizes the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development of each child.”

Educational Programs

École Mountainview is a single-track French Immersion school – and the only one of its kind within Coast Mountains School District 82. We offer a quality bilingual education from kindergarten to grade six and accept families from Terrace and the surrounding areas. As we are a *school of choice* with no catchment area, all families are welcome and are afforded the same opportunities to have their children educated in a rich French environment by an incredible staff of passionate and dedicated professionals. Instruction is given largely in French though, at times, English may be used to help ensure comprehension at the primary and kindergarten level. Our school sits on Tsimshian territory. We are honoured to live and learn here and celebrate the local Tsimshian Indigenous language and culture.



Program Highlights

In addition to boasting Terrace's *only* single-track French Immersion program, delivered by a compliment of highly skilled and dedicated teachers and learning professionals, diligently leading and guiding their pupils through each of the Core Competencies, EMV also provides a rich music program as well as Band for Grade Six students. In keeping with the "*First People's Principles of Learning*", our Local Enhancement Agreement, BC Ministry of Education curriculum, and the Indigenous Language Revitalization mandate, EMV is moving toward embedding local Indigenous language and culture throughout the school. By enlisting the help of our FNSW, CMSD 82 Role Models and Elders; we prepare for and participate in visits; and explore the Tsimshian Seasonal Rounds, and this year, we once again will host our District Tsimshian Language and Culture Teacher.

Life experiences outside the classroom are not overlooked as few things compare to "learning by doing". Salmonid in the classroom; field trips to suit every taste and interest; extra-curricular sports teams will once again be a part of school, as well as student-led leadership clubs, lunchtime supervision and recycling programs all help our students to learn the value of hard work, respect and the satisfaction of doing a job well. Teachers are making use of our outside areas daily infusing instruction and play with the outdoors.

Our school library is home to thousands of engaging French books, accessible to all levels of readers from Kindergarten to Grade Six. In addition to the French texts, EMV also has an impressive – and growing – collection of English novels that students are also encouraged to borrow by our French-speaking Librarian, and "emergently-bilingual" pair of Library Assistants.

Helping our school grow and meet the need of our expanding population, EMV is currently seeing a revitalization of sorts with our already incredibly supportive PAC.



Attendance at monthly meetings is markedly increased over the years and many more events – some even becoming “regular” – being planned every month. From fundraisers, to hot-lunch, to helping out when we’re a little short on hands, PAC has proven repeatedly that they are very invested in the successful future of EMV.

We are very proud of a recently completed mural that now sits at the South end of our building highlighting inclusivity and reconciliation. Under the SOGI banner, our Rainbow club worked with local artist Carly Nabess and elders to highlight inclusivity and local plants during the 2021-2022 school year.



Student Demographics

École Mountainview welcomes, accepts and enrolls students from varying socio, cultural and economic backgrounds. We have approximately 192 students in Kindergarten to Grade 6. Currently, our Indigenous population makes up just under 25% of our total enrollment.



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We are proud to host nine divisions this year, with very little room for new students due to the popularity of the program.

In addition to our bilingual teaching staff, we are also able to provide students with Learner Support in French as well as Educational Assistance. Our Teacher-Librarian is also able to offer instruction in French and often collaborates with teachers in small group activities. We are fortunate to be able to offer student counselling support and speech language assistance to students. Our First Nations Support worker supports the wellbeing of all students with First Nations Ancestry and helps collaborate with classroom teachers to provide supports for instruction.

PAC Contributions

Thanks to the incredible hard work of EMV's Parent Advisory Council (PAC), École Mountainview has seen many changes and upgrades to its playground. The PAC has recently constructed two planter boxes with seating on the outside to help improve the curb appeal of the South entrance and provide gardening opportunities for students.



PAC has plans to construct an outdoor learning centre for our students, which will further support and promote engagement with the Land, Nature, and the Outdoors. Also on the immediate horizon is an interpretive walking trail featuring native plants and their traditional uses which winds its way around the school grounds. As well as plans for increased covered area that can be used as additional teaching space outside. We are incredibly lucky to have such a wonderful and skilled parent support network.



II. Scanning

École Mountainview students have the benefit and additional challenge of enjoying their foundational elementary education in a vibrant French Immersion environment that also celebrates the rich cultural history of our local Indigenous Peoples. Students not only receive instruction and experience the curriculum in a second language, but they also profit from the rich French-Canadian cultural events and presentations afforded by our hard-working staff, generous funding from CMSD 82 and the Federal government, and collaboration between community partners. In addition, students have the opportunity to work with EMV's First Nations Support worker who shares her culture, stories, history, and language with the students. Plans for the upcoming school year include reintroducing Tsimshian Seasonal Rounds into the classroom.





Evidence of Achievement

EMV student progress is currently tracked regularly via the following collection methods:

- Teacher anecdotal reporting and formal report cards
- GB+ school-wide reading program levels
- Anecdotal examination of French language proficiency with an emphasis on the presence and frequency of the use of students' first language – English, in particular.
- District numeracy assessment
- Scoring of School Wide Writes using standardised writing metrics

Through the utilization of these different tools, teachers, support staff, parents and students themselves have been able to adjust our teaching and learning strategies, identify potential areas for growth as well as strengths in terms of oral communication skills and reading proficiency. In addition to our own in-house data collection methods, student achievement is also measured, statistically at least, by means of FSA and DMA assessments.



i. Spoken French

Data collected over the past six years shows a gradual and continued improvement in *all* learners spoken French language proficiency. While the number of students meeting oral language expectations is increasing but still not where we want it to be. There are still challenges in this area that need to be met, such as increasing the amount of spontaneous French that is spoken by our students with their peers, adding to the level of French vocabulary that the students are using, and increasing the amount of French vocabulary students are exposed to.

ii. Reading

While our reading fluency scores quite high, student reading comprehension is lower than we would like it to be. Reading comprehension is directly tied to students knowledge of French vocabulary. Our data suggests that while there *is* a strong number of students who are meeting expectations in speaking and reading, there are still a significant number of students in our school who are struggling to meet expectations. For all of our students, we are continuing to move towards:

- an increased use of French by all students-fewer students at the lower end of our oral language evaluation tool;
- an increase in the spontaneous use of French by students-student-teacher and peer-peer;
- an increase in the reading abilities of all our students-overall the number of students reading (with comprehension) within their grade level to increase.

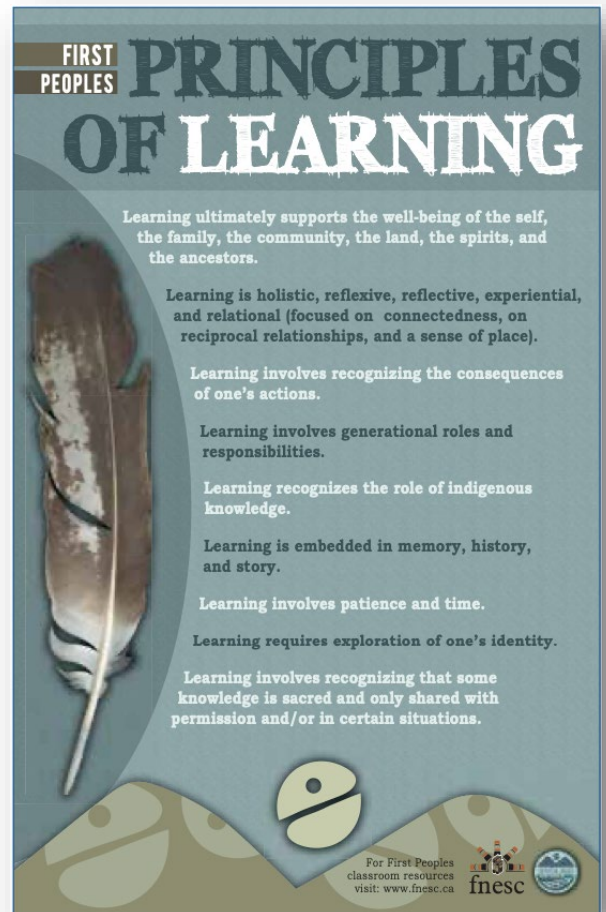


iii. Holistic Learning

Student Responses

Anecdotally speaking, in the past, students were quite candid during our Student-Led forums regarding the different elements regarding their health and wellness – even at the younger primary levels. Many of our students cited their expected numbers of hours of screen-time per day, and many students said that their households had rules in place to limit both the content and quantity of time allowed in front of digital devices. Information shared regarding dietary intake revealed that the vast majority of students are receiving well-balanced diets at home and, in passing through classrooms at lunchtime, most students had appropriate lunches. When asked, most students claimed to eat even the healthy stuff and not just rely on treats and snacks to get them through the school day.

Last year students and staff made mention that they felt that EMV, as a community, doesn't do enough things together as a whole. While interaction between classes does exist, it remains minimal and almost seasonal in nature – occurring only a handful of times a year. In keeping with the First People's Principles of Learning in that "learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place", it is essential that students are afforded increased opportunities to interact, both formally and informally, with other students.





III. Focusing

Shifting Focus

The gains and advancements made by Staff and students since the establishment of EMV as a single-track French Immersion school have been incredible. With a persistent and continued focus on improving student's reading and communication skills the results have been impressive to say the least. It has been noticed that there has been a dip in French language speaking ability within the last few years. While not looking to abandon the hard work and strategies employed in order to reap the academic improvements of all of our learners, it is time to add an additional goal to further enrich our students' experiences and broaden their grasp; increasing student connection to Aboriginal Worldviews, as well as local Indigenous language and culture opportunities.

Inquiry Question

Will a continued holistic approach to learning, being together, building community, being outside, help to increase our French language skills and reading levels and writing levels?

Justification

École Mountainview has had noticeable improvement in our students' spoken language due to the single-track school environment. There is pride and joy in speaking another language. We continue to establish our identity within the Terrace area and within the School District as a French Immersion single-track program of choice while aiming to maintain a student-centered learning environment that is holistic in nature. Through the data collected, EMV staff and parents see the need to continue to focus on improving students' language skills in French. We feel that if our students have a solid oral language and reading abilities that these skills will work in tandem to help



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improve their abilities to communicate in written form. To this end we are focusing on both oral language and reading abilities in French, and we will begin our focus on Local Indigenous Language use orally with the support of our Local First Nations Support Worker and Role Models. We are putting a focus on French vocabulary development with our primary students, focusing on phonics and high-frequency words. We believe this will give them the opportunity to build strong foundational language skills and the ability to communicate better in French. Due to the fact that our students are often second language learners and that we are the conduit by which they learn this language, we need to provide them with as much experience with the language as possible in as many different ways as possible. This approach of speaking first to foster language development will also be applied to our Indigenous language learning.

We are already using a whole school reading program (GB+), with a guided reading approach; as well as other reading resources such as *The Daily Five*, *Jolly Phonique* and *l'Alphabet de la forêt*, and now a focus on unpacking and using AIM language resources. It is important that our students continue to become excellent readers with continuous improvement in comprehension and communication strategies as a foundation for all other learning throughout their education. To provide Aboriginal content, our classrooms and library has Indigenous resources such as: Eagle Crest easy-reader books and a broad collection of First Nations books in our teacher resource section.

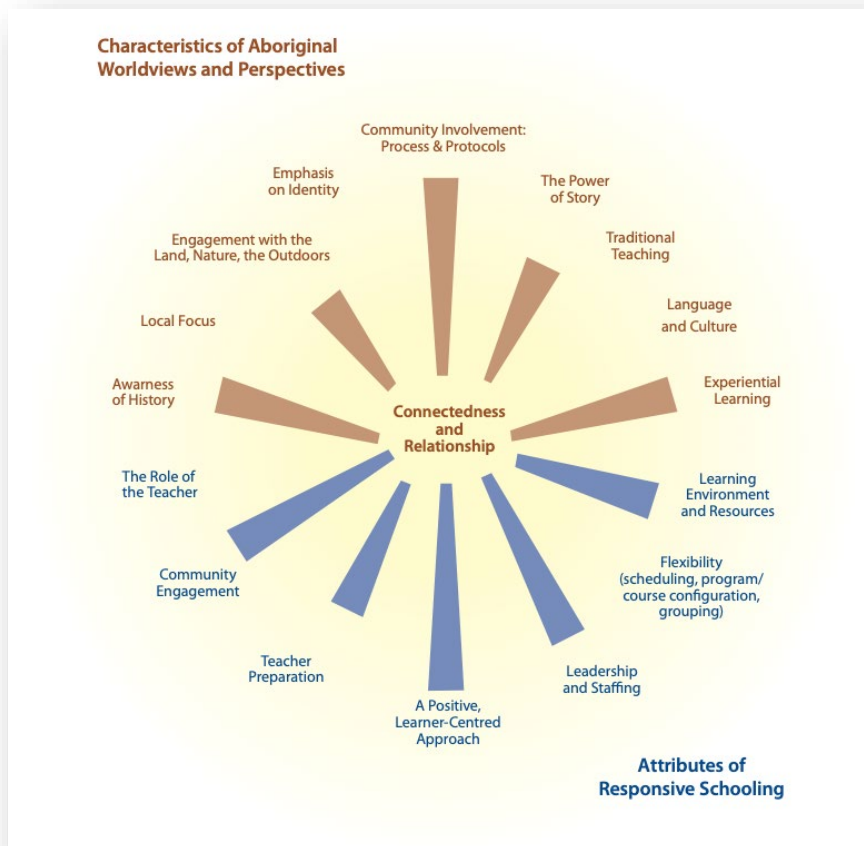
The Staff of École Mountainview are proud of the students' success and dedication to learning in an immersive French environment. Students' collective attitudes and work-ethics – as evidenced by responses during *Student-Led forums*, indicate that not only do they *welcome* the challenge of learning in French, but that they embrace and enjoy it. In the years since opening its doors, École Mountainview has *always* stressed the need to establish a strong fundamental knowledge base on which to help build and shape students' understanding of the French language. While the job is certainly far from over, we feel it is time to expand our horizons and issue a new learning challenge



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to our students by offering them more authentic local and Indigenous language and cultural opportunities. Furthermore, Québec and other French-speaking parts of Canada have a rich history that unites the French-Canadian culture and language with that of Canada's Indigenous Peoples, linking the cultural bridge between the two languages and cultures.

By continuing to support learners in their communicative skills with their teachers – as well as through the relentless pursuit of authentic, meaningful spontaneous language interactions with their peers – the Staff at EMV hope that this more holistic and *fully* immersive approach will continue to yield positive results from our students. In addition to looking to raise the literacy levels for all of our learners, EMV endeavors to enhance learner engagement, opportunities and choice through continued joint efforts with community partners and developing meaningful, and reciprocal, relationships with alumni at Skeena Middle School, Caledonia Secondary, and local Indigenous Peoples.



In order to support and share acquisition of local Indigenous language and culture, staff will meet in the next school year, 2023-2024, to continue to discuss ways in which we can further support our students in this area here at EMV. As a staff in September, we will discuss which components we will use to evaluate the level of success of implementing local Indigenous language and culture learning at EMV.



IV. Developing a Hunch

Previous Practices

We believe that when learning in a second language, some students' struggling with meeting expectations in oral language and reading abilities can be attributed to the fact that by entering a French Immersion program, students are not only learning the basics of reading, writing and mathematics but they are learning all this in a second language. In learning a new language, students first need to learn French vocabulary before learning to read. If students do not have a strong foundation in vocabulary words, speaking French and reading in French is more challenging. In turn, without abilities to recognize and decode words makes the transfer of knowledge to creating sentences and paragraphs of their own highly improbable. EMV recognized the need to allocate additional resources to students who are struggling in this area and provide educators with new and innovative strategies for addressing language skills and reading abilities. Particular attention should be focused on providing strategies to educators of Grades 1-3 to encourage a strong foundation in reading and speaking early on. Our resource teacher regularly has a primary language development group to work with. Our First Nations Support Worker connects not only with Indigenous students on her case-load, but also with all students in classrooms to share her own cultural and language practices through stories, art, and conversations. As well, our Educational Assistant works both in the classroom with the teachers and with groups of students to augment the students' oral and reading abilities.

Living in an English community, with the majority of parents as English speakers, impacts students' exposure to the French language and French vocabulary. Although this in itself is not something that educators can alter, it is a factor that needs to be recognized so that strategies can be put in place to assist learners to incorporate the French language and culture that they learn in school to their home and social activities.



Chart 5. EMV student achievement - Writing

New Focus

There is a marked difference in our learners' abilities in terms of writing when compared to their communication and reading skills. At all grade levels students' abilities are scattered in nearly perfect *Normal Distribution* pattern. With dedicated practice and time, results will, hopefully, begin to shift away from the normal distribution and be skewed similarly to our students' Reading and Communication skills.

Pursuant to addressing and meeting the needs of our students in terms of the creation of original compositions and essays, more time will be dedicated in classrooms to the often "reverse nature" of French when compared to English and the structure of coherent and well-crafted sentences in the Primary classrooms whereas the intricacies and nuances of French grammar as well as the conjugation of verbs in the "passé composé", "present", and "future simple" tenses will be explored at the Intermediate level.

Many of our students presently have difficulty spelling correctly, opting instead to spell phonetically to make themselves understood. While the use of classroom "dictées" has shown *some* improvement in some students' abilities, the vocabulary selected for these spelling quizzes (dictées) must be at an appropriate level for, and meaningful to, the learner to be able to use in context outside of simply being able to spell the word correctly. Therefore, high-frequency words should be selected and promoted in lieu of more novel and seldom used vocabulary.

V. Professional Learning

Learning Professionals

The teachers and staff in our building are continuously developing their strategies for building the capacity for our students' use of oral French language as well as the evaluation of these abilities. We were using two sections from the "*Référentiel de*



compétences orales”: “*capacité globale à communiquer*” (General Communication Skills) and “*degré de présence de l’anglais*” (Presence of First Language). We have decided as a staff that this fits with our school and our students. Additionally, we have created our own oral language evaluation tool based on the *Référentiel de compétences orales*. We felt that while the *Référentiel de compétences orales* was a good starting point for us it needed to be refined to make it more applicable to our students. We created an evaluation tool that was not too unwieldy and connected better to what we saw for our students.

Our in-house GB+ rubric has undergone a number of adjustments and fine-tuning to better reflect the abilities and increased expectations our Teaching Staff have of our learners. There is not a standardized conversion chart for the GB+ reading evaluation. We used our professional judgement at the time to create one, and we will continue to revisit this rubric to ensure our levels reflect Grade-appropriate achievement goals. We have also found documentation permitting for the direct transfer of reading scores from our School-wide GB+ reading program to that of the PMB scores used across the CMSD82 district, and we will continue to evaluate its accuracy.

Resources

Presently the Staff at EMV are utilizing the BC Writing Performance standards to help direct and inform instruction. With an increased focus on writing at all levels, there will no doubt be a need to expand our toolkits and resources. There are several “Trait Crates” in the Intermediate levels, the signage and materials found within these resources are all in English and require extensive retooling to be meaningfully used in a French lesson as our over-arching School-wide goal remains to learn French *in* French.

Indigenous Education in BC is supported by the Government Document titled: *Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom*: [PDF](#). Our FNSW is



continuing to develop the Seasonal Rounds resources and materials and we are building our language resources, such as tri-lingual signage throughout the school. Our teachers work with our FNSW to provide opportunities for students to be on the land and for hands on learning with Elders. We hope to include our local Elders to help us move forward with supporting local Tshimshan language development in our school, as well. We will also better utilize the First Nations Resource Centre to embed local Indigenous content within our classrooms. We will also seek out further Indigenous resources in French. As well, we are excited to have found orange shirts for Orange Shirt Day in French.

Opportunities

While it continues to be a struggle to find available professional learning opportunities for our staff that focus on French Immersion, there is a renewed sense of unity and comradery amongst French Immersion teachers. In response to this, teachers have been enthusiastic for increased collaboration opportunities. Talk has already begun between colleagues about how to meet the needs of learners, and the Staff was energized and invigorated to accept and meet this newly issued challenge we had set for ourselves.



VI. Taking Action

Rationale

Oral language development and reading abilities have been our focus for the past few years. Satisfied with the results – though with no intent of abandoning the practices that garnered these improvements – the Staff of École Mountainview are looking to broaden our expectations and focus on the final dimension of learning a new language: writing. As educators we believe that our students need a firm oral language basis in French as they are learning in this second language. Our goals remain on promoting the use of oral French with the additional focus on the connection between oral language and reading comprehension and ultimately the creation of original and authentic writing pieces. All the members of our Staff are confident that the impressive, yet still developing, reading and speaking abilities of our students bodes well for this new chapter, and that the inclusions of Local Indigenous Language practices will be a positive addition to our learning culture.

Interventions

We want to catch the oral language concerns early to be able to structure in timely interventions as a strong foundation in conversing and reading in French are instrumental in learning to write. We generally speak to our students in French as well as with each other so that we are modeling for the students. Our Learning Assistance Teacher regularly takes small groups of students to work on vocabulary development, phonemic awareness, and reading skills. There are many different methods that the staff use to assist in the oral language development-speaking, visual and oral together, kinesthetic and oral together, and modeling to name a few. Fortunately, our Educational Assistant is also fluently bilingual and works in conjunction with the Classroom Teachers and Learning Assistance teacher.



The 2023-2024 school year will be planned around a theory that returning to a rich school life will improve student outcomes. The belief that planning hosting more events together as a school will bring us together and increase our sense of community and students' sense of belonging. This along with being outside connecting with the land, practicing our language acquisition will lead to meaningful improvements in oral language, reading achievement and writing achievement.

VII. Checking

The goal moving forwards for the Staff and students of École Mountainview is to improve the quality of oral French language output while also honouring and embracing Local Indigenous Language and Cultural knowledge. The often counterintuitive nature of the language poses problems for learners who have not yet been sufficiently exposed to it. Everyone involved in the process will do well to remember that we are in the infancy of this new academic pursuit and that patience, practice, and time will be essential in much the same way they were as we worked to improve our students' speaking and reading abilities.

The strong collaborative nature of our Staff will likely play a significant role in the early stages of the implementation of our Growth Plan. Teachers of similar grades are regularly and informally looking to one another for ideas, resources and strategies to reach students who are not meeting their perceived potential, and all staff members may feel confident to approach our First Nations Support Worker for culture and language activities that are appropriate for them to use for their Grade-level teaching. The Staff at École Mountainview are wholly and passionately dedicated to providing the finest French Immersion education we can while still ensuring that we are promoting student-centered and holistic education opportunities for our students.



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Continuous dialogue, continuous checking and revising what we are doing, and looking at the big school picture is important for the success of this plan.

School Principal Signature