



School Improvement Plan 2023 – 2024

THORNHILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Coast Mountains School District #82
2906 Clark Street
Terrace, BC V8G 3S1



MISSION STATEMENT

Thornhill Elementary School provides equal opportunity for the growth of the individual's intellectual, physical, emotional and social development. We believe in and support each student as they take responsibility for their learning. In keeping with the First Peoples Principles of Learning we believe, "Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits and the ancestors".

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Thornhill Elementary has a student population of approximately 140 students in grades 4, 5 and 6. There are six regular enrolling teachers, a Learner Support Teacher, a Band/Music Teacher, a Teacher-Librarian, a Teacher-Counselor, 4 Support Staff and 1 First Nations Support Worker. Approximately 37% of the students are of Aboriginal ancestry. There is a strong connection amongst students, parents/guardian, and staff within our school community. Our school PAC is very active and helps our school with fundraising ventures to acquire resources and opportunities for students. We have a breakfast, snack and lunch program for students. Our school also has a school garden that helps provide enough food to make soup and muffins for the school year. Our school is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all.

1. **Scanning: What's going on for your learners? How do you know?**

- Performance in literacy continues to be an area of focus in our school's improvement plan. School Wide Writes, incorporating specific attention with formative assessment yielded notable results, as 20% of students increased at least one category using the Performance Standards Model for writing. The school will continue to conduct a School Wide Write in the upcoming year to draw greater attention to students' levels of performance in writing. Our School Wide Write results indicated this year that 50% of our students that in grade 4 are not yet meeting expectations.
- GATES-MacGinitie tests indicate that approximately 30% of students are reading below grade level. The results from our PM Benchmarks are consistent with the results from our GATES MacGinitie tests.
- For many reading and writing is difficult, and their indifference is likely due to their struggles interpreting text and an inability to express their thoughts in written form.
- Skills in numeracy have been a problem for a number of our learners. Our numeracy assessment results indicated that 40 % of our students are not yet meeting expectations.
- Beyond the need to improve student performance in numeracy and literacy there is a need for our struggling learners to engage in their learning and take ownership of their *learning*.

What are the daily experiences for the learners?

- Students are welcomed to school every morning
- We provide a homework club every morning
- We have Breakfast Club every Tuesday and Thursday
- There are lunch time activities every day (Lego Club, Kids Group, Intramurals, First Nations Art)
- Teachers are committed to supporting student's academic, social, emotional and behavioral needs on a daily basis

What are the opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing?

- We are committed to infusing Aboriginal content and perspectives in all subject areas, as well as, worldviews and First People's Principles of Learning.
- Accessing support from our Director of Instruction Indigenous Education
- Using role models in our classrooms (include role models from different groups in our region)
- First Nations Support Worker provides opportunities for students to participate in cultural art, drumming, cooking, and celebrations
- First Nations Support Worker provides support in classroom throughout our entire school
- Provide Professional Development days to support, train and educate teachers, support workers and administration with Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives
- Collaborate with staff on a regular basis
- Accessing resources at the First Nations Resource centre
- Recognize important aboriginal events and celebrate them as a school
- Build strong relationships with our Indigenous community
- Support student's absences for Cultural events

2. Focus:

Inquiry#1: To what extent can the learning of metacognitive skills, strategies instruction and formative assessment improve student performance in literacy?

Inquiry #2: To what extent can student performance in numeracy improve by focussing on assessment, and adopting a problem based model of learning when interventions need to occur for individual students?

Writing and reading skills among many of our learners indicate a need to focus on what is being assessed. The students need to understand the process of evaluation, so that they can monitor their own achievement and become active in their learning. By focussing upon the Performance Standards Rubrics for reading and writing students will acquire the specific skills they need for improvement. The teaching of metacognitive strategies in reading is needed. FSA results indicate that there is a need to focus on literacy in the forms of writing, reading and oral language. The students will develop self-assessing skills that will enable them to set and achieve literacy goals.

Individualized attention is needed to address weaknesses in Numeracy. Many students struggle because they have not learned the prerequisite skills to advance to the next numeric concept to be covered. Though for many it is the fundamental math skills that are weak, there are a great many that do not know how to apply the basic skills to solve problems. The role of problem based learning and inquiry should be practiced as a means to solving equations.

3. *Developing a Hunch:*

Frequently students are given opportunities to read without knowing what they are looking for. Reading instruction is needed to help students recognize the aspects of *form*, and organization of the *text*, in order to understand the content. Students cannot just simply read and hope to decipher the material without guidance.

When writing, students need to know how to develop their sense of voice and descriptive skills, while organizing their contents in a coherent manner. They need to know how to employ grammatical concepts and linking words so that their writing flows logically and thoughtfully. These are all skills that need to emphasize on a regular basis. A School Wide Write provides a good opportunity to spotlight the specific written skills needed.

With regard to instruction in numeracy, our students are provided with many opportunities to practice basic math skills. Frequently time is given to drill multiplication tables and basic computations. The transference of those basic skills to word problems appears to be a weakness, as evidenced in the FSA's and classroom evaluations. Perhaps not enough time is given to exam problem based learning and inquiry. Opportunities for critical thinking are needed.

This past year the staff decided to use our learner support teacher for additional Numeracy Support. The Teacher addressed targeted deficiencies among some students. In some cases, this teacher was used to provide enrichment, while the regular classroom teacher gave extra practice time to the rest of the class. This level of support was welcomed by the staff so much that they would like to continue with a Numeracy Support Teacher for the upcoming year. It is hoped that this level of intervention enables more students to keep up with the curriculum and attain mastery of the concepts covered on the District Numeracy Math Assessment.

4. *Professional Learning:*

- Teachers will be released to meet with a facilitator. Each session will move teachers through an understanding of the Numeracy Performance Standards.
- Teachers will be given the opportunity to gather student data, analyze data, and share learning experiences.
- Teachers will create an understanding of the next steps to take in their professional development, the creation of tools that address specific needs, and become comfortable with formative assessment.
- Teachers will learn strategies to offer more instruction that employs the application of math skills. Planning will occur to decide the intervention process for each student, and how to best employ the use of the Numeracy Support Teacher.
- Computer based program shall be explored as an option for providing additional practice for students.

- Teachers will be offered collaboration time to meet with their colleagues to share strategies that are proving to be successful and brainstorm strategies that need to be explored.
- Teachers can access the expertise and support of our Director of Instruction Aboriginal Education.

5. Taking Action:

- The School Team and Response to Intervention Teams will need to closely monitor the allocation of EA support and Numeracy Support Teacher use, and be creative in finding ways to meet diverse learning needs;
- Learner Support time will need to be active in all classes, assessing literacy and numeracy for identified students;
- Seek to promote innovative practices through the use of digital technologies to promote individualized learning (SUM DOG, RAZ KIDS) in mathematics;
- Expand and build upon the use of Performance Standards Assessment Models
- Provide training and opportunities to promote the use of Inquiry;
- Provide time for teachers to share teaching experiences and reflect upon their practices in numeracy and literacy.
- Administration will meet with the staff to discuss assessments and practices related to the goals of the Growth Plan, and highlight progress to parents in the school newsletters.

6. Checking:

- The new Numeracy Assessment shall be conducted again in the Fall and Spring to look for trends and skill attainment, and be used as a vehicle to inform instructional practice;
- The School Wide Write Assessments (B.C. Performance Standards) will allow us to see where adjustments need to be made to address specific skill deficiencies;
- Use FSA results to monitor reading writing and numeracy progress;
- Assess levels of student engagement by asking, "Where are we now? What can we do better? How did we do?"
- Use collaboration to reflect on practice, and determine the planning and implementation of strategies to meet student needs

School Principal Signature: 

