



# Framework for Enhancing Student Learning School Plan



## Our Story

*Our school community is grateful to be located on the unceded traditional tumuhw of the Quw'utsun Mistimuhw. We are proud to be a group of Positive, Accepting, Cooperative, and Kind learners, staff, and families. We are a kindergarten through to Grade 7 school, with an enrollment of approximately 218 for the 2020-2021 school year. This is a significant drop in enrollment for us; our population was hovering around 260-270 for the previous 5+ years.*

*The Alexander Wolf PACK has a unique and diverse population, which has a direct impact to our school's story:*

- 77% of our smun'eem are Indigenous – We take pride in our Culture and Language program; students hear and speak Hul q'umi'num regularly throughout the day. Each morning, we hear the sound of a Quw'utsun drumbeat, as we acknowledge the unceded traditional tumuhw of the Quw'utsun Mistimuhw during our Morning Messages*
- 23% of our smun'eem have been identified with a Ministry of Education Special Ed Identification – With nearly one quarter of our population having a SPED Identification, we believe it is important for these learners to be truly included in our classrooms; all of our learners spend almost 100% of their time at school in their classroom, with their Wolf PACK peers.*
- 41% receive CFS/ELL support – our ELL teachers, while “itinerant” in name, are housed right out of our school; they are a part of our Wolf PACK*
- 31% receive SLP support - our Speech and Language Pathologist is only at Alexander a few days per week, but our school community sees her as a member of the Wolf PACK; she works in classrooms, with teachers; she plays with learners at recess; she attends SBT and IEP meetings.*
- 12% are either in, or have been in, foster care – our staff all work hard to have a collaborative relationship with our local organizations connected with the Ministry of Children and Families*
- 3% are recent immigrants to Canada – while this percentage may be low, we take pride in ensuring that these learners see themselves reflected in the Wolf PACK; we celebrate international holidays; we learn new languages; we share and learn different customs.*

*Because of the complexity of our smun'eem, our drop in enrollment has not changed some of our resource allocations in the areas of administrative time, Learning Assistance, Counselling, School Psychology, and Speech and Language.*

*Our smun'eem are currently organized into 13 divisions, but we will see that drop to 11 divisions for the 2021-2022 school year. All of our divisions include combination grades; some span up to 3 different grades. This year, our community benefited from an additional division: our Alexander Outreach Program. Two additional teachers worked with up to 80 smun'eem as they stayed safe at home during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. A Strong Start program is housed in our building. It is open 4 mornings per week and sees many families outside of our catchment area. Our facilitator works collaboratively with many of our staff and students; she and her families are an important part of our school Wolf PACK.*

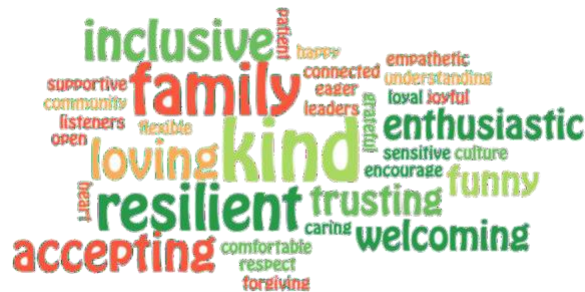
*Relationships are the heart of our story; community and family connections matter. Over the last 5 years, we have carefully nurtured our Wolf PACK community, through continuous work, practice, and knowledge-building around the tenants of PBIS. Our smun'eem identify as being important members*

of the PACK, and we are proud to include our nearby community and our families as a part of this PACK too. Even through COVID, we have celebrated our Wolf PACK in different ways: Wolf PACK Wednesdays see many smun'eem donning their Wolf PACK spirit wear; Wolf PACK assemblies via Zoom have not been as fun as in-person, but they have been equally as joyful; Grade 7s sign their Wolf Paws, which are proudly displayed outside of our school. Sometimes, we even stumble across some Wolf PACK graffiti!

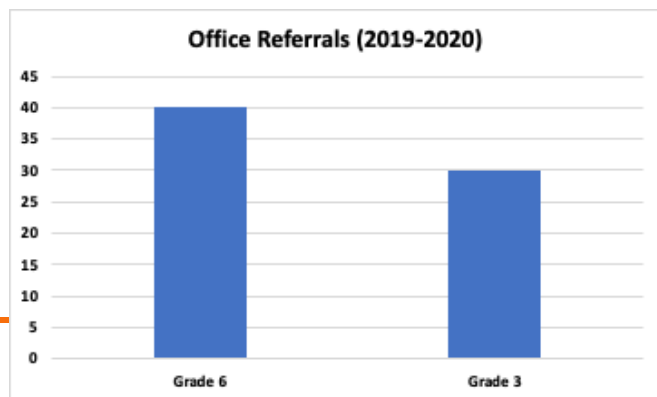
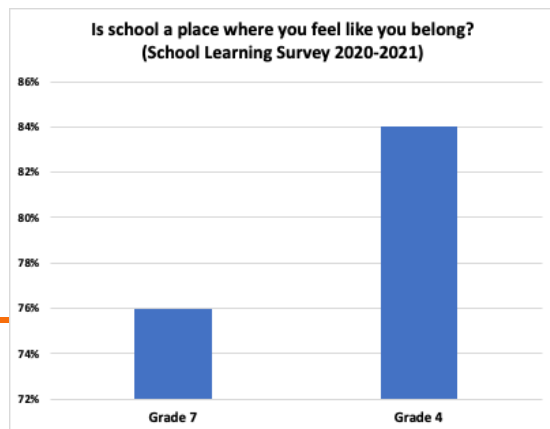


## Our Learners

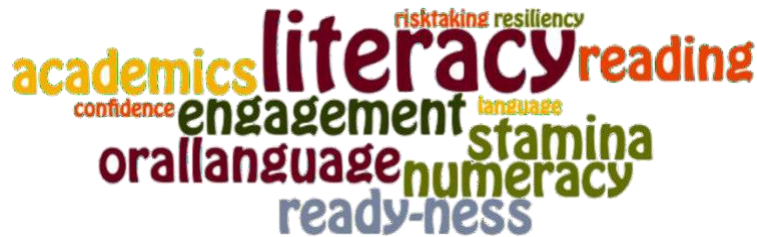
Our strengths: Our community is positive, accepting, cooperative, and kind; we show resilience, we value relationships, and we are proud of the connections that we create and nurture. When asked to reflect on the strengths of our smun'eem, our staff shared many, many positive words:



Evidence of our strengths: Our quantitative data (2021 Student Learning Survey results) shows that Grade 4 smun'eem feel a sense of belonging at Alexander School more than our Grade 7 smun'eem do. Our qualitative data (Wolf Paw referrals, office behaviour referrals, attendance) reflects the same sentiment; we have found that, the younger our learners are when they are first exposed to the essence of the Wolf PACK, the more they buy-in to it. Our current Grade 7s were in Grade 4 when we launched the Alexander Wolf PACK; our current Grade 4s were in Grade 1. The attendance challenges of 2020-2021 impacted some of our qualitative data collection: Wolf Paw referrals stayed within classrooms, to keep hallway and traffic down; attendance data became moot, as so many families stayed safe at home for much of the school year. As a result, we only pulled data from the Grade 3s and 6s of 2019-2020 to compare to the Grade 4s and 7s of this year.

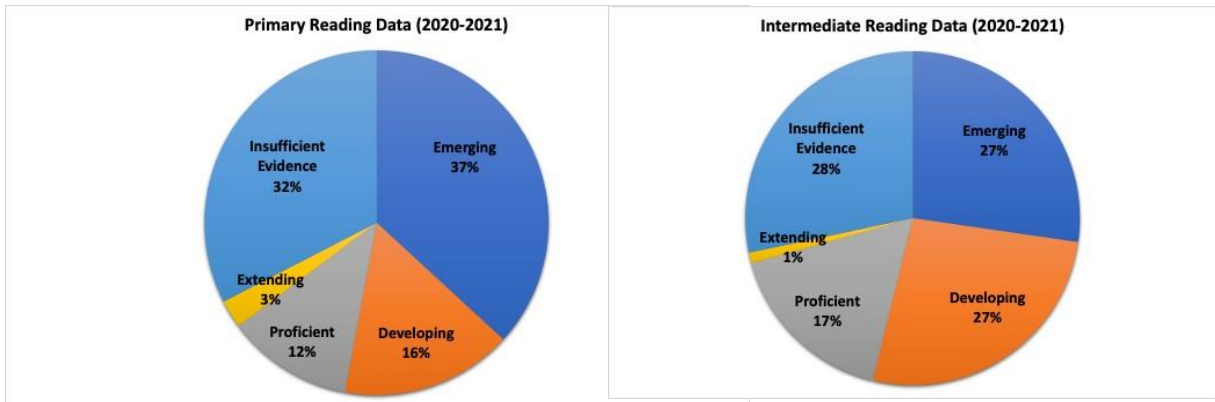


*Our stretches: Many of our smun'eem struggle with their speech/language, literacy, and numeracy; many are still developing their confidence & stamina; and many are overcoming experiences in poverty, trauma, and diverse family dynamics. These stretches likely play a significant role in the attendance patterns of some of our smun'eem, which often results in attendance also becoming a stretch for some.*



Evidence of our stretches:

*Our quantitative data not only shows that all of our smun'eem have room for improvement with their literacy skills, but it also suggests that many of our primary learners are not ready to begin their literacy learning journey yet. As per our K-3 Early Success Screening, only 21% of our K-3 learners are proficient in their phonological awareness; 28% are proficient in their Oral Language.*



*Note: The above data graphs show assessments of the reading skills of our smun'eem, based on Grade Level criteria. We are still working on finding ways to capture the gains that many of our smun'eem will make over the course of a school year, even if they are not yet at Grade level. We did a small "test-run" of this in the Spring of 2021: our LA teacher spent some focused time on eight students in Grade 7 who were not reading at Grade Level. For 12 weeks, she worked closely with them and while they are still not reading at a Grade 7 Reading Level, they have improved:*

Student Names -->	P.T.	M.T.	K.S.	B.S-C.	M-E-S-S.	L.G.	J.S.	J.P.
March 2021 - Reading @ Gr. Level (F&P)	Gr 3	Gr 3	Gr 4	Gr 4	Gr 4	Gr 5	Gr 5	Gr 5
June 2021 - Reading @ Gr. Level (F&P)	Gr 4	Gr 4	Gr 5	Gr 6	Gr 5	Gr 6	Gr 6	Gr 6

## Our Goals

Our stretches, along with the Cowichan Valley School District's Strategic Plan, are at the heart of our goals:

1. *Literacy: We will see an improvement in literacy achievement over the next 3 years, especially for smun'eem in Grade 4-7. This aligns with the 1<sup>st</sup> priority in the District's Strategic Plan: Learning. Specifically, the priority to "...focus on foundational learning in literacy..."*

*Starting in the fall of 2020, our Intermediate teachers began to explore their own knowledge and understanding of teaching students how to read. Most of our intermediate teachers are secondary-trained, and, as a result, have never learned how to teach someone how to read. They are committed to expanding their skillset through additional course-work (Reading Simplified), and collaborations with district supports (Rich Ready, Kelly McManus, Corina Fitznar, etc), as well as each other.*

*We will continue to track our learners' literacy skills through the following measures:*

- *Reading Assessments (4-7) in the fall, mid-year, and spring*
- *Writing assessments in the fall, and spring*
- *Oral Language assessments (K-3) in the fall and spring*
- *Indigenous Education "Snapshot Data" (Red, Yellow, Green)*

*We will also continue to work with Reading Simplified, district support staff, and each other to expand our "toolbox" of teaching strategies for literacy. We will use some of our PLC days to share strategies, data, and action plans as they develop throughout the 2021-2022 school year.*

2. *Indigenous Ways of Knowing: Our smun'eem will feel a positive sense of personal and cultural identity. This aligns with the 2<sup>nd</sup> priority in the District's Strategic Plan: Indigenous Ways of Knowing. Specifically, the priority of "...creat[ing]...culturally-responsive learning environments..."*

*In the Spring of 2021, three unexpected events contributed to our commitment to this goal:*

- i) Our school received a significant grant to create some outdoor learning spaces.*
- ii) Our Wolf PACK members who had been staying safe at home (due to COVID) began joining their classes on their culture and land-based learning opportunities. We noticed that, after participating in these land-based learning days, many smun'eem began to come back to school more regularly. We saw our attendance soar in May and June (from 70-90 students attending each day, to 110-130 students attending each day).*
- iii) We saw feedback from our Grade 7s as they reflected on their time at Alexander: the majority of them identified culture and land-based learning days with local knowledge keepers as some of their favorite memories of Alexander.*

*Starting in the fall of 2021, our smun'eem will be given opportunities to*

- *Participate in pre-and post- self-assessments regarding Personal and Cultural Identity (throughout the year, and before and after Land Based Learning Days).*
- *Participate in multiple Culture and Land Based Learning Days throughout the year.*
- *Make connections between land-based learning and in-class learning (the stamina it takes to hike up a mountain trail is similar to the stamina it takes to practice a literacy skill).*

*Our staff are eager to not only take their learners outside, but also to learn more themselves about our local lands and cultures. It is our hope that continuing to further embrace Indigenous Ways of Learning, we will see improvements in our attendance data, as well as in our literacy data. We will continue to use a significant portion of our monthly staff meeting time to learn from Ms. Claudia. We will also use a portion of our PLC days to share strategies, data, and action plans about connecting the land to our identity.*

## Our story is beyond . . . The Wolf PACK

*At our May staff meetings (teacher staff meeting, and EA staff meeting), we asked staff to reflect on our Framework for Enhancing Student Learning. They had the opportunity to share their thoughts about our strengths, our stretches, and our stories. We asked each of our staff to share a favorite story, and one particular student was mentioned in multiple reflections. She is an indigenous Grade 7 girl who has autism. She began her school journey when she was 8 years old and we have worked hard to provide her with structure and routine during her years at Alexander. She has a difficult time communicating, but we are learning how to understand her. One day, an EA was sitting with her outside the office. The student was holding the EA's hand, and the student pointed to the board and clearly said, "Alexander School Wolfpack". The EA was shocked at the communication and connection. Tears came to the EA's eyes and she responded, "Yes you're part of the Wolf PACK"*

