



Framework for Enhancing Student Learning School Plan

Khowhemun Elementary School



Our Story

Khowhemun Elementary is located on the traditional territory of the Quw'utsun' people in the Cowichan Valley. The students and staff are grateful to learn, connect, and play on the land named Qw'ul'i'um', where the sun ripens the early berries. Khowhemun Elementary takes great pride in sharing and learning the culture of the Coast Salish people and the relationship we have with the students, their families, and the local community.

Khowhemun Elementary School is a StrongStart to Grade 7 school with an approximate enrolment of 270 Kindergarten to Grade 7 learners and 25 StrongStart learners for the 2021/2022 school year. Of the student population, 65% of the learners are Indigenous, with 35% of the Indigenous learners living on reserve. The Khowhemun Elementary catchment includes rural and urban areas with families of varying socio-economic backgrounds. Khowhemun provides a daily meal and weekend grocery program to ensure food security for every child while at school and over the weekend. Up to 50% of the school population participates in the food program. Khowhemun Elementary also operates an after-school program, which provides affordable after school programming for 20-30 students each day.

Khowhemun Elementary's mascot is the yuxwele' (eagle) and our tag line is "Watch Us Soar!" The acronym S-O-A-R stands for Strong, Open-minded, Adventurous and Respectful. This co-created set of descriptors describes the learners and the traits the learners strive to be.

At Khowhemun Elementary, the diversity of the learners is celebrated and great effort is put into developing a positive and safe learning environment where everyone feels included and welcome.

Our Learners

When staff, students, and family members were asked to describe the learners the following comment were made.

The learners at Khowhemun Elementary consistently show the following strengths:

- acceptance of others
- resiliency and a desire to learn
- caring nature towards their peers and the staff
- empathy and compassion towards others
- diversity in their identities, heritage, backgrounds and choices

Khowhemun learners are often observed helping, taking care of, and respecting one another. Similarly, the students continue to persevere, even when external factors may be impacting their day. The learners are often noted to be inclusive of others in all settings and willing to move forward and repair relationships when conflict arises. The learners appreciate and learn from the differences in each other.

The learners at Khowhemun Elementary continue to work towards:

- increasing achievement in literacy and numeracy
- building stamina for learning
- believing in their potential
- attending school regularly

Khowhemun learners have historically struggled to meet academic outcomes in literacy and numeracy and can require a lot of prompting, guidance, and encouragement to complete tasks and/or to participate in learning experiences. Some learners also struggle with goal setting and seeing the possibilities for their future. Attendance records show that approximately 25% of the learners do not consistently attend school.

Our Goals

Based on the strengths and stretches of the learners and the Cowichan Valley School District's Strategic Plan, Khowhemun has set the following three goals to further the success of the learners.

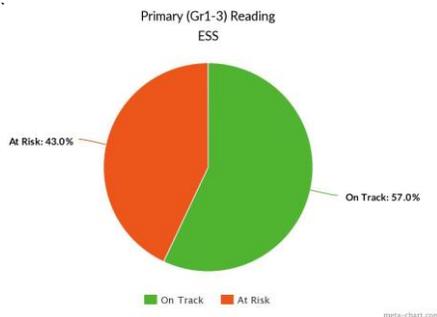
Goal #1: Learning

- To ensure all students become independent readers at their grade level.

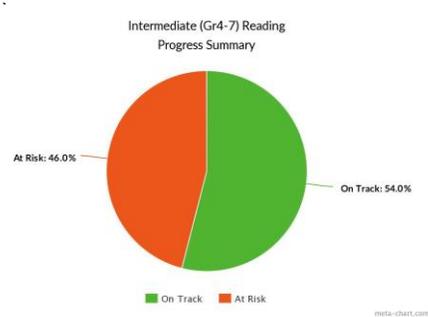
A review of Early Success Screen, Summary of Progress, and Foundational Skills Assessment data showed that approximately 50% of Khowhemun learners are on track in reading at grade level, while 50% are considered at risk. The Grade 4-7 Summary of Progress data indicates that non-Indigenous learner achievement rates are 10-20% higher in reading. The EDI Data from 2019/2020 also shows that 50% of the early learners from this data sample were considered to be at risk for Language and Cognitive Development.

Additionally, an informal review of attendance records of the 2020/2021 intermediate students suggests that low attendance impacts growth and achievement in reading and other curricular areas.

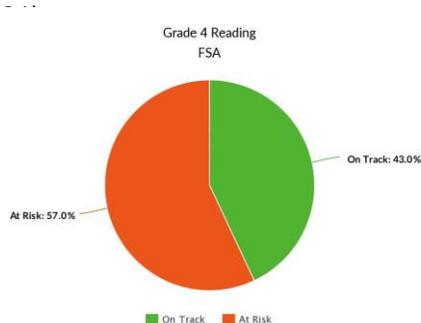
Early Success Screen (Gr.1-3 2020-



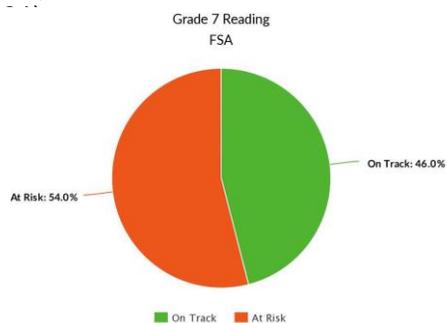
Summary of Progress (Gr.4-7 2020-



FSA (Gr. 4 2017-



FSA (Gr. 4 2017-



Actions/Strategies:

- Develop a plan for assessment gathering that includes common assessment tools, a timeline and an action plan for addressing results
- Focus Professional Learning Community conversations around reading instruction practices, assessment for learning, planning and collaboration
- Schedule weekly opportunities for staff members to collaborate in teams
- Explicitly teach the five fundamental components of literacy
- Utilize evidence-based literacy strategies in every classroom
- Provide targeted interventions for vulnerable readers in consultation with learning support, the INED team and classroom teacher
- Ensure all learners have the tools and strategies in place that will help them to access the reading material and strengthen their reading skills
- Create a study group for staff members taking the Reading Simplified course

Evidence of Learning:

- Report card data, ESS data, and FSA data show a steady improvement in reading achievement over the next three years
- Evidence based strategies are observed being taught in all classrooms
- Students identify reading as one of their strengths
- Students demonstrate improved engagement in and stamina for reading
- Students visibly show increased confidence when reading aloud to others

Goal #2: Indigenous Ways of Knowing

- To deepen our understanding of the history, culture, and language of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) and the local Indigenous Quw'utsun' community.

The Student Learning Survey indicates that most learners recognize that they are learning the Hul'q'umi'num' language and learning about the local Indigenous community and First Peoples of Canada. The data collected from the Khowhemun Indigenous Education Assessment for learning also shows that the students are developing basic Hul'q'umi'num' language skills and beginning to use the language with more confidence. The students also are learning an appreciation for and the importance of traditional practices, such as the use of cedar. Although the survey and assessment show growth in learning about the First People' of Canada and local Indigenous Community, there is much more learning and teaching to be done.

Actions/Strategies:

- Develop a scope and sequence for learning experiences and language development
- Teach and practice Nuts'a' maat Shqwaluwun (one heart, one mind)
- Continue to build a culturally responsive learning environment
- Maintain ongoing collaboration and co-planning between classroom teachers and the INED Team

- Increase the number of outdoor cultural experiences
- Encourage the daily use of basic Hul'q'umi'num' phrases in all classrooms
- Invite community members and special guests to share their knowledge, history and stories both in school and community on a continual basis
- Use the First People's Principles of Learning to guide all planning and learning experiences

Evidence of Learning:

- Students show a sense of pride in their identity and cultural history
- Staff and students show a strengthened understanding of the culture, history, experiences and contributions of the First Peoples of Canada
- Students and staff understand and communicate what Nuts'a' maat Shqwaluwun (one heart, one mind) means
- The Khowhemun Indigenous Education Assessment for learning indicates that more students are continuing to progress in their Hul'q'umi'num' language skills and knowledge of cultural practices
- When asked, learners confidently recite and respond to basic phrases, colours, seasons and numbers in Hul'q'umi'num'
- There is a visible presence of Indigenous culture present throughout the school

Goal #3: Culture of Care

- To continue to build strong relationships among the students, staff, families and local community, and to create a safe, welcoming and positive learning environment for everyone.

The Student Learning Survey indicates that Khowhemun Elementary's learners feel cared about by multiple adults that work at the school and that the students mostly feel like Khowhemun is a place where they belong. Families have shared that invitations to and participation in school events and activities have strengthened their connection and relationship with the school.

Actions/Strategies:

- Embed time into the school year and daily activities to build school culture and community
- Honour that learning takes patience and time
- Host events for students, staff, families and the local community
- Continue with community building activities, including assemblies, family BBQs, golden tickets, spirit days, etc.
- Celebrate, share, and make learning visible
- Establish and maintain clear expectations
- Complete student learning profiles each September

Evidence of Learning:

- Students share that they feel safe and welcome at school
- The Student Learning Survey indicates that “all” learners feel like they belong at Khowhemun
- The Student Learning Survey indicates that “all” students feel that 3 or more adults care about them at school
- Families express that they feel a strong connection to the school
- Families share that their child feels safe, welcome and has positive experiences at school

Our story is beyond . . .

Our story is beyond the walls of the school as Khowhemun Elementary builds relationships with students and families that continue for years after a student has left the school. Khowhemun Elementary is known for its sense of community and the relationships the students, staff and families build with each other. Often, students will return to visit with a teacher from their elementary years to share an accomplishment or celebration. Sometimes, students return to Khowhemun to invite a teacher as their special guest to their Grade 12 graduation ceremony. This is always an honour for the teacher and a demonstration of how important, impactful and long-lasting the relationships are. Similarly, a teacher will often teach multiple children from a family, including siblings, cousins, aunties and uncles, building years of memories together. Whenever a new student and family arrives, there is always a family connection that can quickly be found or a memory shared, which comforts and welcomes the student and family to Khowhemun. Our story continues to be written through the relationships formed in the past, today and into the future.