



School Priorities 2024-2025



Mission Statement:

We believe that learning is a lifelong process involving intellectual, aesthetic, physical, emotional, and social development; our mission is to provide a caring environment that develops the qualities of self-esteem, respect for self and others, creative and critical thinking, responsible citizenship, and a love for learning.

- Priority # 1 Improve writing skills in grades 1-5.
- Priority # 2 Continued reading success in grades 1-5.
- Priority # 3 Build social-emotional resiliency K-5.
- Priority # 4 Maintain positive relationships and connections amongst staff, students, parents, and the community (including our local Syilx people and Okanagan Indian Band).

Actions:

Priorities 1 and 2 – Writing and Reading

Writing: This year, our teaching staff have decided to focus on writing as our number one priority. Last year, teachers started collaborating around improving writing, especially in grades one and two. Our primary teachers have already started work on implementing Story Workshop to support this focus area. Staff have created a 'Loose Parts' library, with the help of the District's Early Learning Team. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many reluctant writers have benefitted from this approach. Staff are also implementing Adrienne Gear's Powerful Writing Structures and will be reviewing and updating our school-wide scope and sequence for writing. Teachers in grades 3-5 have been keen to start collaborating on writing for the last few years. We dedicated several lunch and learn sessions with a group of teachers and we dedicated our Implementation Day to this focus area. We will be looking at the district's draft *Intermediate Writing Continuum* as well as looking at the work of Melanie Meehan and her book "The Responsive Writing Teacher."

Reading: Teachers in Grades 1-5 assess each student's reading level in October using the PM Reading Assessment for English and GB Plus for French. Teachers enter this data into the Ed Plan Insight program and class summaries of this data are used by the SBT to guide our discussions about 'what is going on for our learners.' The target for Tier 3 students (our most vulnerable) is to have them read one on one with an adult at school at least 7 times per week. Thank you to the members of our SBT/RTI Team for helping all teachers implement structures (i.e., Daily 5) in the classroom to allow them to provide guided reading in every primary classroom. This is the work that changes life trajectories and ensures students reach their full learning potential so they can pursue their passions with dignity and purpose.

We are also implementing a new resource - the University of Florida Literacy Intervention (UFLI), an explicit and systematic program that teaches students the foundational skills necessary for proficient reading. It follows a carefully developed scope and sequence 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 or for intervention with struggling students in any grade.

We will continue our focus on core literacy skills to ensure the students have the skills needed to support the development of their core competencies. We will do this using a Response to Intervention (RTI) model to support guided reading in every primary classroom. Our team meets bi-weekly and collaboratively with classroom teachers, and district-based support staff to help facilitate informal discussions about student learning as well as more formal class reviews in October and again at the end of February. We feel this approach/structure will ensure that all students' needs are met and that they are prepared academically and socially to be successful in school and their chosen path in life. This approach also builds collective efficacy within the school as classroom teachers benefit from the various sources of expertise on the team. We also use this model/structure to determine support and resource allocations.

Priorities 3 & 4: Social-Emotional Learning and Relationships

Social-Emotional Learning: Students will acquire the tools to recognize and regulate their emotions, show empathy for others, show kindness to others, and establish and maintain relationships with others to support these goals. We have a SEL Team, under the leadership of our SEL Teacher, that meets monthly to work on this priority.

We will work alongside teachers to build structures and strategies whereby Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is integrated into instruction and daily practices. We will co-plan, co-teach, and co-assess self-regulation lessons, create resources, and explicitly teach SEL skills such as self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, strong decision-making, and positive relationship building.

Book Club - This year, a group of staff have been meeting bi-weekly to discuss the book "The Anxious Generation" and how that author's work can support our learning in this focus area.

Positive Relationships: PGE is located in the unceded, traditional, and ancestral territory of the Syilx Okanagan People and we are next door to the Okanagan Indian Band territory. It is important for our staff and students to maintain a positive relationship with these community members.

In March 2023, PGE admin presented the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) with an idea to collaborate with Syilx artist, David Wilson Sookinakin, to reimagine the clipart eagle image that dons the school gym, the uniforms and all the branded material—a reminder of the colonial present. Together they collaborated to apply for a grant from the Artist in the Classroom Program and were successfully awarded \$8,000 for the project.

The project is a collaborative effort between teachers, our Indigenous Advocate Rose Alexis, and our PAC. We hope that by weaving together art and story, students will come to gain a deeper appreciation not only about this space and place but also the importance of eagle. The deliberate scaffolding of the project will help students to work towards co-created projects and an opportunity to display their work in the school—a reminder of the student's and school's commitment to reconciliation.

Working with David, and local storytellers, we would like to introduce students to captikwł, a collection of teachings about Syilx Okanagan laws, customs, values, governance structures and principles that, together, define and inform Syilx Okanagan rights and responsibilities to the land. David will provide experiences that support students as they navigate the ideation process, providing technical instruction to realize their works. Students will also collaborate with peers, creating a cohesive body of work that intersects with the learnings from the captikwł. The students and artist will also co-create a piece of artwork that can be displayed at the school. Students will also have opportunities to hear stories about eagles from our Librarian, engage with provocations boxes and loose parts to explore their own understanding about eagle and their habitat. There will also be an exhibition where student artists will have the opportunity to speak about their work.

A big thanks to the PAC for their support with this grant! PGE was also the recipient of the Partnership Recognition and Exploration Fund from UBC in the amount of \$1,500 to bridge small resource gaps, enabling community partners to forge reciprocal relationships with the university. Funds from the Partnership Recognition and Exploration Fund will be used to support the Co-Creating a New Understanding of Eagles.

In June 2024, our team met to discuss a continuation of our work in this area. A new theme was chosen, and this year's school-wide inquiry is called "Welcoming the Salmon." **"Welcoming the Salmon"** builds off last year's inquiry titled "Change is in the Air." We will again collaborate with and alongside Syilx artists, chefs, and the Syilx community to deepen students' respect and reverence for the waterways and the salmon.

This work is a demonstration of our school's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, in particular call to action 63. Educators and leaders in education have a moral and legal obligation to take action for truth and reconciliation. This work shows that our students, our staff, and our community, alongside our Indigenous friends can make the call to action come to life, specifically:

- Engaging in learning about residential schools, treaties, and Indigenous Peoples' and their historical and contemporary contributions to Canada.
- Integrating Indigenous knowledge into our instruction and learning.
- Sharing our learning as we are doing together today
- And building cultural competency, empathy, and mutual respect among students.