



ćuumaŝas Tsuma-as Elementary Growth Plan 2023/2024



Ms. Maghen Girard – Principal

Ms. Stephanie Spring – Vice-Principal

Land Statement

Tsuma-as Elementary School is situated on the ha-houlthees of the ćiŝaaŝath, hupačasath, tla-o-qui-aht, Yuuŝuŝiŝath, and Huu-ay-aht First Nations and acknowledge that we work alongside all Nuu-chah-nulth nations as well as the Métis Nation of British Columbia to serve the children and youth of the Alberni-Clayoquot region.

The district strives to increase awareness, understanding and integration of Nuu-chah-nulth culture, history and language in all SD70 schools. It is part of our ongoing commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.





Our School Story

c̓uumaŋas Tsuma-as Elementary School Characteristics

Our school's catchment area represents a diverse geographic region. Many of our students live in rural areas and are bussed to and from school. Tsuma-as elementary school is in close proximity to trails, streams, forest areas and a community walkway, providing our school community with easy access to nature for both enjoyment and learning.

Our early years center is a special feature of our school community with daycare, before and after school care, preschool and Strong Start programs all available. Within our school building children from birth to grade 7 receive care and education. This provides us with a unique opportunity to ease the transition into school for children and their families.

We are the first public school in the Alberni Valley to proudly hold an Indigenous name. It highlights our geographical location and our direct connection to the land. Our school logo is an indigenous design created by Ray Sim featuring an image of a wolf. It is from this design that we have built our school identity as the Wolf Pack and our Code of Conduct was established. As members of the Wolf Pack, we continue to strive to strengthen relationships in our school community, develop our connections to the land, and imbed indigenous cultural learning into our school.

c̓uumaŋas Tsuma-as Elementary School Demographics

c̓uumaŋas Tsuma-as Elementary is a Kindergarten to Grade 7 school with an enrollment of approximately 350 students. We are organized into 15 divisions consisting of both straight and split-grade classes. c̓uumaŋas Tsuma-as Elementary students represent diverse family structures, socio-economic backgrounds, ethnic and cultural groups. Our school is located on the ha-houlthees of the c̓iŋaaʔath, hupačasath First Nations, and we are grateful to work, learn, and play on this beautiful land. We have approximately 70 (20%) students of Indigenous Ancestry attending our school. We believe in embedding cultural teachings and integrating Indigenous understandings in our school and our learning.

Our school community encompasses a variety of early years programs including the Mighty Learners Childcare Center, Strong Start & Just B4 preschool programs. Students in our school also have access to before & after school care through Mighty Learners. Many students in the early years' programs are future Tsuma-as Elementary School students building their connections to our school community from an early age.



Our School Goals

1. To maintain literacy as a top priority for achievement by supporting students in the growth and development of literacy-based skills.

Target Strategies:

- Explore evidence based instructional practices including Readers' Workshop and Literature Circles models
- Engage professional development around creating a balanced literacy program encompassing both phonics skills and comprehension strategies
- Work towards creating a learning commons model in the school library
- Purchase of library materials to appeal to a range of learners and interests
- Update literacy resources for reading intervention and assessment tools
- Collaboration with district resource teachers around best practices in literacy instruction
- Examination of district writing assessments and identification of specific areas to target
- Targeted reading intervention model of support as an early intervention strategy in Grades 2 and 3
- Regular assessment of student reading levels to monitor progress and guide instruction.

2. To maintain numeracy as a top priority for achievement by supporting students in the growth and development of numeracy-based skills.

Target Strategies:

- Expand our collection of learning materials and manipulatives to support student learning in numeracy
- Focus on strategies to develop strong number sense in students
- Model lesson activities and instructional strategies at staff meetings
- Provide support time dedicated to numeracy skill building
- Use of fall district math assessments to guide numeracy instruction
- Professional development with the work of Carole Fullerton around best practices in numeracy instruction

3. To develop a safe and welcoming learning environment where students experience connections to others and feel a sense of belonging.

Target Strategies:

- Weekly announcements incorporating Nuu-chah-nulth phrase of the week, recognition of student birthdays, school teams, upcoming events, student achievements etc.
- Monthly celebration assemblies focused on student success, cultural learning and school connection
- Creation of staff-led clubs to build connections and inspire exploration of interests
- Strengthening our Wolf Pack identity (howler of the week, home reading Wolf visual, bulletin boards and school displays, school clothing and regalia with logo)
- Returning to our Fall Open House/Hee Haw event to build community early in the year
- Regular school-wide activities: Theme Days, Special Events – Jump Rope for Heart, Activity Days, Holiday Celebrations, Lunch Activities - bubbles, chalk, dance parties, drumming, etc.
- Consideration of student voice in planning school theme days



Data/Evidence

We have established our school goals after reviewing data from a variety of assessments that were administered in the 2022/2023 school year. We will use the data we gather from these same assessments throughout this school year, along with our red/yellow/green tracking of our Indigenous students as an indication of progress that has been made in relation to our school goals.

Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA) Results

73% of Grade 4 and Grade 7 students were on track or extending in Literacy and 27% of Grade 4 and Grade 7 students were emerging in Literacy.

49% of Grade 4 and Grade 7 students were on track or extending in Numeracy and 51% of Grade 4 and Grade 7 students were emerging in Numeracy.

District Assessment Benchmark Data for Reading

Last year we shifted to a reading intervention model that targeted Grade 2 and 3 students who were not yet at grade level in reading.

In September of 2022, 47% of Grade 2 students were reading at or above grade level. By June 2023, 69% of Grade 2 students were reading at or above grade level.

In September of 2022, 43% of Grade 3 students were reading at or above grade level. By June 2023, 67% of Grade 3 students were reading at or above grade level.

Middle Years Development Data (MDI)

In 2022/2023, 59% of Grade 4 students reported feeling a sense of connectedness to 2 or more adults at school. In relation to their school experiences, 68% of Grade 4 students reported a high-level sense of belonging at their school.

In 2022/2023, 36% of Grade 7 students reported feeling a sense of connectedness to 2 or more adults at school. In relation to their school experiences, 37% of Grade 7 students reported a high-level sense of belonging at their school.



Our School Celebration Story

At Tsuma-as Elementary school we take pride in the work we have done to authentically embrace and celebrate our local Indigenous learning and culture. Reflecting upon the past year, we celebrate several highlights.

In September, we held our first school-wide Truth and Reconciliation Day assembly that focused on extending our learning of local First Nations history and leading with our “Orange Heart” theme of care and support. This set the groundwork for powerful actions all year long.

Our Nuu-chah-nulth Education Worker, Miss Jean, continued to expand our knowledge and fluency in local Barclay Dialect words and phrases, as well as leading us through how to carry ourselves with proper introductions and land acknowledgements.

We also celebrate our success in our Fine Arts classes, as all students learned to sing and drum our school district song. This was the first year our drumming and song group performed the district song at various assemblies and showcases. Our group included students of all ages.

In the new year, Tsuma-as Elementary School community grew. We were fortunate to have Ms. Esther Thomas, as our Elder in Residence. Ms. Esther visited our school multiple times a week to work in classrooms with students on Language and cultural Art projects. She led many cooking classes in our school as she taught us how to make fry bread and Bannock. Miss Jean and Ms. Esther designed school regalia with our school logo and worked with students and staff to sew shawls for our performance group. This was very exciting to show off at the District Spring Festival in May.



One of our biggest celebrations is the development of our drumming, song and dance group. This past year, Mr. Martin Watts partnered with our school to help us prepare for Spring Festival. Initially, Martin was brought in to help lead our learning around drumming and song, but what he brought to our school was so much more. Martin Watts taught our students (Kindergarten to Grade 7) how powerful our voices are. He led us through the importance and significance of song and how we use this as a tool to celebrate ourselves, our story, our family and community. Not only did Martin lead by example, but truly became part of our school Wolf Pack.

As we look forward, we are excited to continue with our commitment to building our Wolf Pack identity, imbedding cultural learning, and striving to maintain an inclusive school community where we all feel a sense of connection and belonging.