



E.J. Dunn Elementary ḥaaḥuupaquwił Growth Plan - 2025/2026



Principal – Darrin Olson
Vice-Principal – Jeannette Badovinac

Land Acknowledge:

E.J. Dunn Elementary School ḥaaḥuupaquwił is situated on the ḥaḥuuli of the čišaaʔath and huupačasath First Nations. We acknowledge that we work alongside all nuucăaḥuł nations as well as the Métis Nation of British Columbia to serve the children and youth of our school community.

E. J. Dunn Elementary School ḥaaḥuupaquwił strives to increase awareness, understanding and integration of nuucăaḥuł history and language in our school. It is part of our ongoing commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.



Our School Story

E.J. Dunn Elementary School ḥaaḥuupaquwiḥ Characteristics

At E.J. Dunn Elementary School ḥaaḥuupaquwiḥ, our school culture is deeply rooted in connection—to one another, to the land, and to the values that guide us. Grounded in the First Peoples Principles of Learning, we understand that learning is holistic, relational, and nurtured through a strong sense of community. Social-emotional learning is at the heart of all we do. It is intentionally taught in classrooms and continuously modeled by staff. Each week begins with our Monday Morning Meeting, where our school community gathers in a welcoming circle. Together, we lift our voices in drum circle to honour our district song, *našukʔaʔin* ('We are strong'), and receive warm, grounding messages from our Principal and Vice-Principal to guide us into the week. Our school support team plays a key role in strengthening our community by helping staff recognize and respond to student needs quickly and compassionately. We work in partnership with families, embracing a trauma-informed approach that acknowledges and supports the lived experiences of those we serve. We understand that care for children includes care for the family unit. Guided by the teachings of *isaaks naas* ('Walking with respect') and *našukʔaʔin* ('We are strong'), we help students develop a shared language of resilience, respect, and self-awareness. These mantras are interwoven into every gathering and celebration, reinforcing belonging and inner strength. Our proximity to the forest is an integral part of our identity as a school. The land is our teacher. We regularly engage in outdoor learning rooted in Indigenous knowledge systems and local cultural practices. The forest is a space for mindfulness, reflection, storytelling, exploration, and relationship-building—an extension of the classroom that allows us to slow down, connect, and learn in harmony with the natural world. **At E.J. Dunn Elementary School ḥaaḥuupaquwiḥ**, learning is a shared journey grounded in respect, place, and community.

E.J. Dunn Elementary School ḥaaḥuupaquwiḥ Demographics

E.J. Dunn Elementary School ḥaaḥuupaquwiḥ is a vibrant and inclusive learning community that honours the diverse strengths and stories of its learners. With an enrolment of approximately 260 students from Kindergarten to Grade 7 across 13 divisions, our school places a strong emphasis on relationships and a sense of belonging. Our smaller school size allows us to build meaningful connections with students and families, creating a strong foundation for collaborative learning. Currently, 40% of our students self-identify as having Indigenous ancestry, and we are committed to focusing Indigenous perspectives and the First Peoples Principles of Learning in our daily practice. Our dedicated staff includes 17.5 FTE teachers, 12 educational assistants, and a full-time Indigenous Support Worker, all working together to support the whole child—intellectually, emotionally, and physically. We are deeply connected to the land and make regular use of the nearby forest to support learning through place-based experiences. The forest provides opportunities for outdoor exploration, storytelling, inquiry, and cultural learning, aligning closely with Indigenous ways of knowing and doing. Our school is further enriched by early years programming such as Strong Start and the Family Hub, helping to weave community from the earliest stages of a child's educational journey. Many children in these programs are future E.J. Dunn learners, already forming relationships within our school community. Saplings before and after school care also supports families and extends opportunities for connection and growth beyond the school day.

A Message to Our Families:

At EJ Dunn, we are deeply committed to creating a school where every student feels a strong sense of belonging, is supported to reach their full potential, and learns in ways that are meaningful, inclusive, and connected to community and land.

This year, instead of having a separate school goal focused solely on Indigenous Culture (Goal #1 – 2024–2025), we've chosen to fully embed Indigenous perspectives into all of our academic goals—especially in literacy and numeracy. This shift reflects our belief that learning should be holistic, connected, and grounded in the First Peoples Principles of Learning. These principles remind us that learning is not just about knowledge, but also about relationships, respect, patience, and well-being—for ourselves, our families, our community, and the land.

You'll see these values in action through:

- **Culturally responsive math and literacy lessons**
- **Stories, language, and teachings shared by Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers**
- **Land-based learning experiences and seasonal activities**
- **A focus on student voice, leadership, and community building**

We believe this approach strengthens our whole school community and supports all learners in meaningful, lasting ways. As always, we look forward to partnering with you throughout the year.

Warmly,
The EJ Dunn Team

Our School Goals

E.J. Dunn Elementary School ɥaɥɥuupaquwił goals for the 2025-2026 school year are in alignment with School District #70 – Pacific Rim Strategic Plan of maintaining literacy and numeracy achievement as top priorities as well as a focus on student engagement/connectiveness to community.

Goal #1
To nurture confident, engaged readers by connecting literacy to identity, community, and culture—ensuring all learners feel seen, supported, and successful.

Strategies for Inclusive, Community-Based Literacy Growth:

- 1. Improve attendance rates for students**
 - Track attendance bi-weekly (Support Team)
 - Ensure initial contacts are made by teachers, followed up by administration.
 - Implement strategies/resources to support priority learners including District and Community resources.
- 2. Target Early Support and Intervention**
 - Use screening tools and classroom assessments to identify students needing support in Grades 2, 3, and 7.
 - Provide small-group, phonics-based and comprehension-focused interventions with EAs, LATs, and classroom teachers.
 - Ensure all support is culturally responsive and relationship based.
 - Continue using literacy games to build foundational skills in fun, inclusive ways.
- 3. Create Literacy-Rich, Identity-Affirming Spaces**
 - Expand classroom and library collections to include diverse voices—especially Indigenous stories.
 - Use graphic novels, audiobooks, and high-interest texts to meet diverse reading needs and preferences.
 - Encourage book talks, peer recommendations, and student-led displays to build a culture of reading.
- 4. Strengthen Comprehension and Connection**
 - Use Book Clubs and Literature Circles (Grades 5–7) with texts that reflect student experiences and deepen critical thinking.
 - Integrate local Indigenous stories and language into literacy lessons.
 - Use journals, discussions, and art to help students reflect on and express what they read.
- 5. Ground Literacy in Relationships and Land**
 - Invite Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers to share stories and co-teach lessons.
 - Connect learning to seasonal land-based experiences.
 - Honor Indigenous languages through classroom routines and signage.

Our Belief:
At EJ Dunn, literacy is more than reading and writing—it’s about voice, identity, and belonging. Rooted in the First Peoples Principles of Learning, we believe that learning is holistic, takes time, and happens best in connection with others. By honoring diverse stories and supporting each learner’s path, we are growing a community of lifelong readers and storytellers.

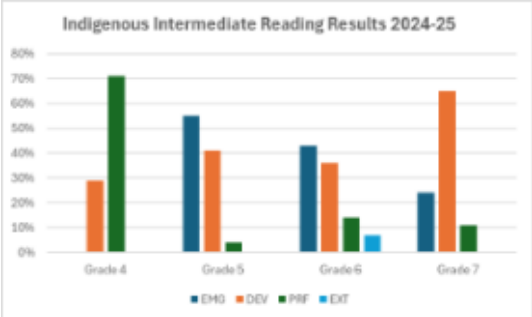
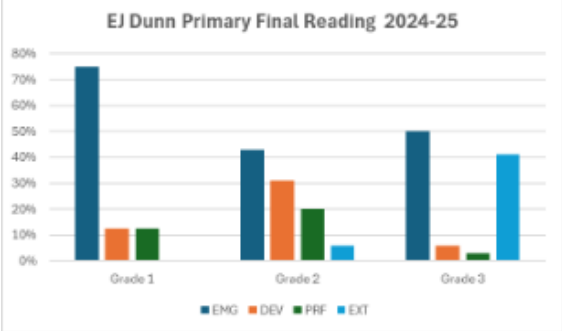
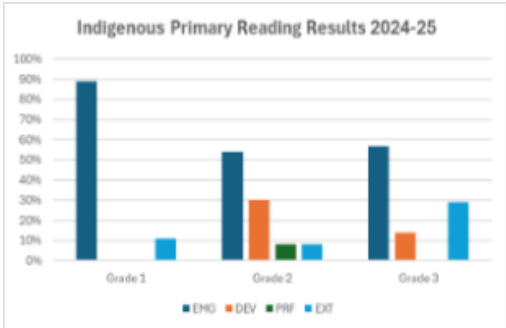
Goal #2:
To grow confident, capable math learners by connecting numeracy to real life, community, and culture—ensuring every student feels supported, challenged, and valued.

Strategies for Inclusive, Community-Centered Numeracy Growth:

- 1. Improve attendance rates for students**
 - Track attendance bi-weekly (Support Team)
 - Ensure initial contacts are made by teachers, followed up by administration.
 - Implement strategies/resources to support priority learners including District and Community resources.
- 2. Personalized Support Where It’s Needed Most**
 - Provide small-group, strengths-based support in Grades 2, 5, 6, and 7.
 - Use visual tools, hands-on materials, and culturally meaningful math examples.
 - Build relationships and trust to help students feel safe making mistakes and taking risks.
- 3. Celebrate Challenge and Inquiry for All**
 - Offer open-ended, engaging problems that invite multiple ways of thinking.
 - Include tiered tasks and school-wide math challenges to foster perseverance.
 - Encourage student voice and confidence through math journals and class discussions.
- 4. Connect Math to Land, Culture, and Story**
 - Use Indigenous ways of knowing—like traditional measurement, patterns, and estimation.
 - Invite Elders and Knowledge Holders to co-create learning rooted in place and story.
- 5. Support Educators in Meaningful Practice**
 - Provide ongoing learning in trauma-informed, culturally responsive teaching.
 - Use tools like Number Talks, Math Journals, and vertical whiteboards to deepen understanding.
 - Grow our resource collection to support a balanced, hands-on approach.
- 6. Build a Culture of Belonging in Math**
 - Normalize mistakes as part of learning— “Mistakes help our brains grow.”
 - Celebrate growth and effort alongside achievement.
 - Create classroom spaces where every student feels seen, respected, and capable.
 - Utilize math games to build skills and improve student growth mindset related to numeracy

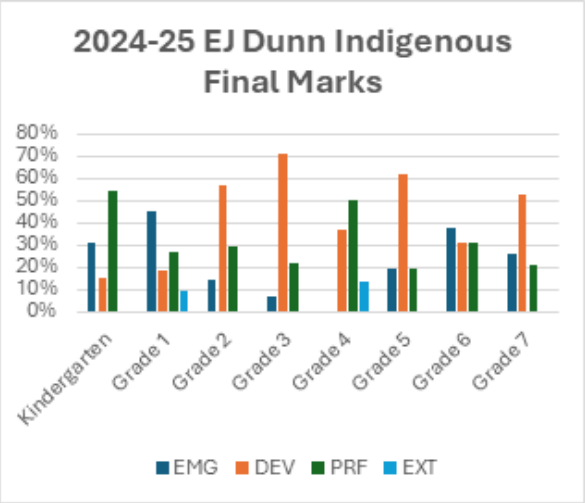
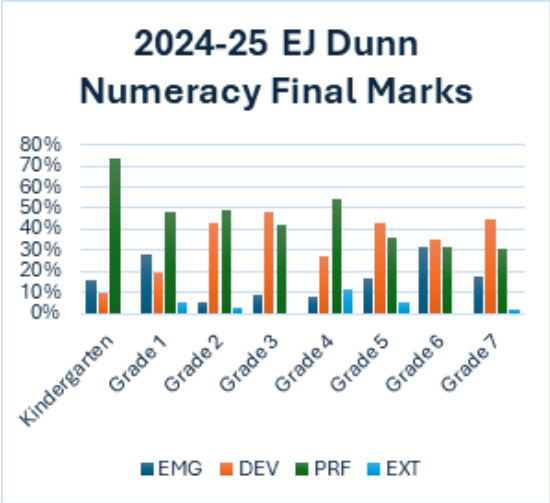
Rationales for Goals Enhancing Student Learning:

Literacy:
In 2024-2025, most grades showed improvement in reading progress with movement from EMG/DEV to PRF/EXT. Of note, grade 4 students showed a dramatic increase with Proficiency jumping from 4% to 72% and grade 6 students increased in Proficiency from 16% to 31%. While there was some growth with our grade 1 students (increase in proficiency of 13%), 75% are still Emergent readers. This cohort will remain a focus for targeted interventions in the 2025-26 school year.



We observed an increase in on track Foundation Skills Assessment literacy scores for both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous when we compared the 2021 grade 4 cohort with the 2024 grade 7 cohort. There was an 18% increase of on track students overall and a 9% increase in on track literacy scores for Indigenous students. Despite the long-term growth, 75% of our grade 4 and 62% of our grade 7 are still at the emerging stage of their literacy skills related to the Foundation Skills Assessment.

Numeracy:
74% of kindergarten students are proficient in their numeracy skills, however, the grade 1 cohort does not have the same strong baseline for numeracy skills. 29% of grade 1's are emergent in their numeric thinking and will be the focus of targeted interventions in the 2025-26 school year. Intermediate grades 5-7 will also receive targeted interventions as there was a noted decrease in movement towards proficiency, which is more pronounced in Indigenous results.



We observed an increase in on-track Foundation Skills Assessment numeracy scores for both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous when we compared the 2021 grade 4 cohort with the 2024 grade 7 cohort. There was a 31% increase in on-track scores for non-indigenous students and a 19% increase in on-track scores for Indigenous students from 2021 to 2024.

EJ Dunn continues implement targeted, inclusive strategies to support the continued literacy and numeracy growth of students with diverse learning needs who are not yet at grade level but are demonstrating progress. Through responsive instruction, data-informed interventions, and collaborative support plans, we foster accelerated learning while celebrating each student's growth trajectory.

Our School Celebration Story

E.J. Dunn Elementary School *haahuupaquwił* stands as a model of holistic, culturally grounded education, where academic achievement and emotional wellness are nurtured in tandem. Our clear commitment to community, land-based learning, and Indigenous perspectives creates a rich and supportive environment for learners of all backgrounds.

Celebration Summary:

- Deepened cultural integration and SEL practices.
- Strong literacy growth in key grades.
- Emerging student leadership and voice.
- A unified community culture centered around belonging and shared purpose.

Strong Cultural and Community Foundations

- Deep integration of First Peoples Principles of Learning, especially the concepts of relational, land-based, and holistic education.
- Weekly Monday Morning Meetings reinforce community, cultural pride, and consistent routines, featuring land acknowledgements, drumming, and singing.

Strengths:

- The intentional weaving of Indigenous knowledge and language into daily routines and academic goals shows deep respect and commitment.
- Cultural expressions like *isaaks naas* (walking with respect) and *našukʔaλin* (we are strong) provide shared language for values and behavior.

Emphasis on Social-Emotional Learning and Well-being

- Social-emotional learning (SEL) is intentionally embedded and modeled daily.
- A trauma-informed, family-centered approach reflects care not just for students, but their families as well.

Strengths:

- The school’s support team plays a vital role in early intervention and compassionate response.
- SEL is reinforced through land-based learning and classroom instruction.

Academic Growth

Literacy Insights:

- Overall improvement across most grades.
- Grade 4: Remarkable growth (Proficiency from 4% to 72%).
- Grade 6: Proficiency increased from 16% to 31%.

Numeracy Insights:

- Kindergarten: Strong foundational skills (74% proficient).

Embedding Indigenous Perspectives Across the Curriculum

- Indigenous culture is not siloed but integrated into all academic goals.
- Learning includes culturally responsive teaching in literacy and numeracy, not just cultural events.

Strengths:

- Presence of Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and local stories makes learning authentic and connected.
- Outdoor, land-based experiences make the forest an extension of the classroom.
- Supports place-conscious learning that is rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing and fosters a deep connection to the land.

Student Voice and Leadership

- Increased focus on student agency and inclusive decision-making.
- Student insights are shaping school experiences.

Strengths:

- Growth in student engagement and leadership reflects an evolving, responsive school culture.
- Celebrations, student birthdays, and achievements are embedded in the school’s weekly rhythm.

Early Years and Family Engagement

- Programs like Strong Start, Family Hub, and Saplings care provide seamless support from early childhood onward.

Strengths:

- These initiatives promote continuity, early connection, and wraparound support.
- Reinforces the belief that learning starts well before formal schooling and continues beyond the classroom.

