



# School Growth Plan 2024/2025

## Purpose and Vision:

School Growth Plans are school specific strategic plans. They are:

- collaboratively developed;
- focused on student learning goals;
- aligned with the District Strategic Plan
- evidence-informed using a cycle of improvement;
- specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

## Our Story

We are very proud to provide a rich learning environment for students on the unceded traditional and treaty lands of the ƛaʔamun (Tla'amin) people. The Wildwood area where James Thomson School is located is commonly referred to as ƛiçəm (Thichum) which means "on the edge of the forest". In 1914, five-acre parcels of land were made available for people wanting to settle in the Wildwood area. James Thomson was one of the people who camped on the Vancouver courthouse steps for more than a month to ensure he received a land grant. The school property is part of the original grant. 101 years ago, the first school in Wildwood opened in 1923, with 30 pupils from Grades one to six. Additions were made and in 1931, the primary building was raised to allow for classrooms in the basement. In 1955 the main building was constructed, commencing with the Gymnasium and two classrooms. Further classrooms were added in 1958. The student population reached a peak in 1990, with approximately 375 students enrolled in Grade K through 7. The present enrollment is 266 students. In 1986, with the assistance of the Tla'amin Nation, an afternoon language enrichment class was begun at Tla'amin for Kindergarten students. We are committed to supporting ayajuthem language instruction in all classrooms. Through annual legacy projects, our students and school strengthen our connection to the Tla'amin Nation and heritage. In 2010, James Thomson welcomed its first French Immersion students to the school with a Kindergarten/Gr.1 class and now boasts a robust K-7 program with students graduating with a dual diploma from Brooks Secondary. Our May Day celebration is a part of our Wildwood tradition, and the Maypole Friendship dance and May Day parade are highlights of our year. James Thomson is fortunate to have strong parent involvement in the school's activities and traditions. Parent volunteers are an integral part of the school garden activity, Farm to School feasts, and the school's breakfast program. Our school mascot is the raven, and our motto is:

You Have to Believe to Achieve!  
klahsum kwath kwy yehgon ooksum kwol ee!  
Vous devez croire pour atteindre!

## Our Learners

James Thomson Elementary School is a tri-lingual (English, French, ayajuthem) Eco-Immersion school fostering rich learning experiences, environmental respect, and healthy living through exploring our outdoors and connecting children to nature. We are situated on the traditional and unceded territory of the Tla'amin People. Being the only French Immersion elementary school in Powell River, we draw students from all areas between Saltery Bay and Lund. We have 266 students spread throughout 12 divisions supported by 30 staff. We are a

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diverse student population, including 28% Indigenous learners as well as learners whose first language is French. We take pride in meeting our students where they are and helping them find their full potential.

## District Priority 1: Cultivating an Ethic of Learning

*Ensure early learners and students have the best possible learning experience (student success).*

### Goal 1

James Thomson Elementary will work on improving literacy achievement for all students by the end of the year.

#### Action 1

All students will have a reading assessment done at the beginning, middle, and end of the year using the DIBLES reading assessment (for English) and the IDAPEL (French). Following each assessment period, the school learning team will review the results with the District Director of Instruction. At least twice a year the student learning team, which consists of school administrations, the reading intervention teachers, and the classroom teachers, will meet to discuss classroom to review results and consider supports needed for the classroom.

#### Evidence 1

Evidence of growth will be seen through results of the DIBELS and IDAPEL, as well as additional evidence-based assessments such as Benchmarks, Jerry Johns etc. as required for individual students, to deliver effective classroom- based literary instruction.

#### Action 2

Staff will engage in classroom-based developmental, accelerated, and interventive reading programs. Teachers and intervention staff will assess students regularly to determine progress towards their individual goals.

#### Evidence 2

The school administration and Learning team will meet with teachers once a term to discuss their classroom-based programs. This discussion will be influenced by their reading assessment data, and programs will be adjusted based on needs and success. A portion of each staff meeting will be reserved for reviewing classroom-based literacy.

#### Action 3

James Thomson will foster student writing by giving opportunities for students to “publish” their writing to a larger audience.

#### Evidence 3

James Thomson will develop a student newsletter called ʔaʔaθəm (which means to sharing things/gifts) which will be published bi-monthly. ʔaʔaθəm will showcase student work focusing on the tla’amin taʔaw – school monthly themes. The school will look for ways to engage students in the creation of this Newsletter.

### District Priority 3: Cultivating Connection

*Prioritize mental health, community connections, and social-emotional learning.*

#### Goal 2

Staff at James Thomson Elementary feel it is important to foster a culture of respect and integrity to ensure every student feels physically, emotionally, and socially safe at school. As such the school will emphasize character education in both classroom and school-based activities to create students of moral and ethical courage. Growth will be measured through engagement surveys with students, families, and staff.

#### Action 1

James Thomson Staff will work with the λολορ (Student Council – the ρayajuθem meaning of λολορ is “healing”) to sponsor three events throughout the year. These events will be planned and delivered by the λολορ.

#### Evidence 1

The λολορ will be responsible for ensuring that the activities are based on building positive character traits and focus on increasing connections in the school. When possible, they will connect the activities to land based learning.

#### Evidence 2

The office will track office referrals from teachers and review during staff meetings.

#### Action 2

In addition to the tla’amin ta?aw, a committee of staff and parents will look into adopting a program for SEL that will be used to support the design of lessons and activities for daily classroom use. These resources will be connected to the Core Competencies and will be focused on character development. Teachers will also include Indigenous teachings and stories on how to be a good human in their lessons.

#### Evidence 2

Classes will periodically participate in surveys that gauge how students are feeling in regard to safety and belonging. Parents will also be sent surveys to review their perceptions as to the school climate.

#### Action 3

James Thomson will sponsor events to involve families and community members as part of the school. Events will include, but not be limited to: Welcome Back BBQ (Families), Spaghetti Dinner (Community), Christmas Lunch (School), Taco Tuesday (Community and School) and an end of Year BBQ.

#### Evidence 3

At the end of the year families will be given an opportunity to reflect through a survey regarding the activities that took place during the year. This will help us plan for future activities.

## District Priority 5: Cultivating Integrity/Responsibility

*(truth and reconciliation, climate change, organizational health and sustainability)*

### Goal 3

Improve Indigenous student success and/or a sense of belonging and presence for Indigenous learners. Staff will also work on delivering curriculum through an Indigenous lens helping to deepen understanding and create connections through the First Peoples Principles of Knowing

#### Action 1

James Thomson staff will continue to foster a deeper relationship with the Indigenous education department, working with our Indigenous success teachers, and čepθ, to create learning opportunities for students. Staff will also work to increase their use of ayajuthem in their classroom as part of their professional learning throughout the year. Additional opportunities that will be explored are:

- Introduce opportunities for students to carve - possibly connected with a knowledge keeper who could share stories with students as they carve.
- Purchase resources and materials to create Indigenous Ed kits for classrooms
- Book Clubs for staff that focus on decolonization of practice and relationship building.

#### Evidence 1

We will measure success through anecdotal and observational reviews of student engagement.

#### Action 2

James Thomson Elementary will find ways to engage with families in the Nation to create safe spaces, and additional opportunities to engage in learning as part of our continual efforts towards reconciliation.

#### Evidence 1

We will engage with parents and staff at the Nation to continually check our practice and look for better ways to engage with families and the Nation.

#### Action 3

Classroom teachers will look for ways to implement land-based learning into their curriculum using fieldtrips and outdoor teaching spaces. They will also engage with the Indigenous Education Department to access resources that lean on tla'amin teachings.

#### Evidence 1

Discussions will be had during staff meetings, and regular check-ins to measure the success of activities with the intention of continual improvements.

### Our Story is Beyond

In addition to our Academic and Social-Emotional goals for this upcoming year, we at James Thomson Elementary will also be engaging with the High School to find as many opportunities as possible to bring Brooks students into our classrooms. This may be through buddy ready, passion project presentations, sports days, and exploring growth within the performing arts. We will also be implementing a new Student Leadership program that provides students from K-7 with an opportunity to be an active member of the school community and continue to work with staff to continuously support students in developing a strong sense of self, and an inner moral compass.