



School: James Thomson Elementary

Principal: Bill Rounis

School Growth Plan 2022/2023

Our Story

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. 99 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 enrolment is approximately 250 students.

In 1986, with the assistance of the Tla'amin Nation, an afternoon language enrichment class was begun at Tla'amin for Kindergarten students. Our First Nations language instruction and culture are vital components of our community; we are unique in our inclusion of elementary Ayajuthum language instruction for our students. 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. This program grew to span Grades K through 7 in the 2016-2017 school year and continues into this year offering instruction to students in either French or English along with additional Ayajuthem language instruction throughout their years at the school.

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. The school has four house teams which are the eagles, falcons, osprey, and hawks. Our school mascot is the eagle, 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 dual-track 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 school in Powell River, we draw students from all areas between Saltery Bay and Lund. We have approximately 250 students and 40 staff, with 12 divisions and 2 portable classrooms. We are a K-7 school, with a 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 at and helping them grow to be the best they can be.

Goal 1

Increasing our culture of acceptance, tolerance, mindfulness, and respect through social emotional learning.

Action

1. Provide SEL to classes with a lens using a multi-layered approach.
2. Create a school-wide cohesive program (age based) eg: monthly themes in classes and with school teams that span across grade levels.
3. Offer a school wide structured program like “Zones of Regulation” to teach students the skills they need to better regulate their actions and emotions and help them increase their personal control of situations through problem solving.
4. Creating a safe space/sensory room
5. Providing classrooms with sensory resources.
6. Collaboration with EAs and teaching staff.
7. Create an SEL committee to oversee the implementation of these goals.



Evidence

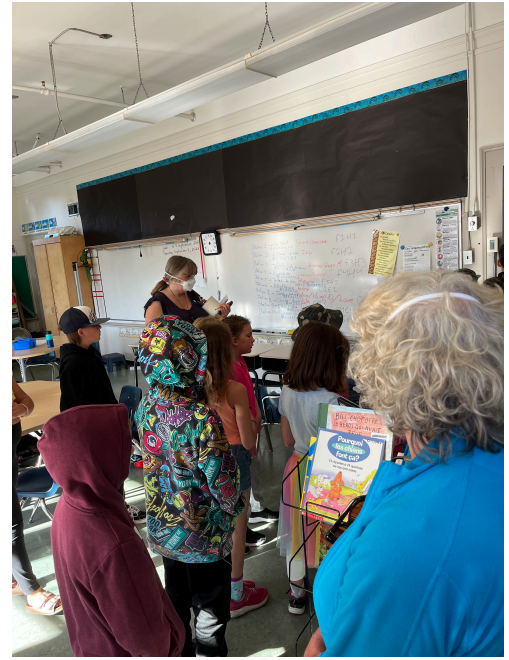
1. To integrate all programs introduced to the school such as the orientation and use of common language throughout the building.
2. Anecdotal evidence from staff that students are struggling with taking personal responsibility for their actions out on the playground.
3. Provide space for trauma-informed care for staff
4. To provide a safe space for escalated students to return to a baseline
5. To improve communication between EAs (school district and Nation EAs) and Teachers

Goal 2

Increasing achievement in student literacy.

Action

- Consistent weekly schedule for whole school for reading supports
- Strength based assignments for EAs and Intervention staff
- Whole school “Book a Day” to encourage conversations
- Develop a school wide scope and sequence, common language
- Schedule Guided Reading and Intervention to coincide with the classroom schedules
- Train teachers and EAs in Guided Reading and phonemic awareness
- Haggerty type specialized teacher or staff training to offer in every class
- Choose a common program Implement Odyssey Program again and/or Implement SDAR/DEAR school wide again
- Implement comprehensive parent reading volunteer program again



Evidence

- Support to review data (Dibels)
- Parent involvement and peer readers
- School in-service on phonemic awareness and guided reading so all staff can teach this
- Establish a school wide reading intervention program
- School in-service for primary staff (and intermediate?) on Haggerty style reading program
- School in-service to use data (dibels) to inform instruction
- Incorporate strengths of EAs into supporting programs
- Staff meetings to include practical UDL strategies

Our Story is Beyond

In addition to our Academic and Social Emotional goals for this upcoming year we at James Thomson Elementary School promote the use of the outdoor environment to motivate and enhance student learning. We believe in using our surrounding natural environments to motivate and enhance the curriculum (marine, forest, freshwater). We believe that students should be able to use a play based, imaginative outdoor learning space that encourages active learning in the outdoors including regular use of our outdoor classroom in the forest. We also believe that students should learn about and contribute to the continued success of our composting and recycling programs, and that our students should be active participants in our school garden.

We have a strong desire to be immersed in the culture, land, and language of our Tla'amin Nation. At James Thomson we embrace Indigenous perspectives and knowledge as part of our daily learning and recognize that Indigenous teachings benefit all our learners. Mostly, we believe in learning through experience!

