



Armstrong Elementary School- School Plan- June 2024

At Armstrong we are working towards building a feeling of community that is enjoyed by students, parents, and staff. We nurture the connection between home and school. We are very fortunate to be a part of a Family of Schools model with Second Street Community School and Cariboo Hill Secondary. We have two school goals, one of which will be new for the 2024-25 school year: Literacy and Social-Emotional Learning.

Our staff and parent community support the idea that students need a wide range of opportunities to get involved in school events and activities. This involvement results in a great sense of school pride and school ownership. From Fine Arts, school performances, choir and band to extra-curricular teams, clubs and services for both primary and intermediate students, our students are involved.

We are also very proud of the work that we do in engaging in community partnerships. As part of the Family of Schools model we have partnerships with Eastside Opportunities, YMCA, Parks and Rec and Young Rembrandts. We continue to build our connection with Cariboo Hill Secondary by working with their staff and students in our mentoring program and ADST programming.

We are very proud of the close partnership that exists between the home and the school at Armstrong. Our parent involvement at the school is extensive. From our Parent-Teacher conferences to our Pancake Breakfast, the staff and students benefit from the community feel at Armstrong.

Our community is made up of 472 students, which include 15 Indigenous learners, 56 students who hold a ministry designation (25 of which are low incidence designations), and 50 students in Grade 6/7 who belong to our Late French Immersion co-hort. Approximately one third of our school also participates in the Hot Lunch program.

Scanning (What's going on for our learners?):

September 2023

Numeracy: Using a variety of classroom- based assessments (SNAP, Island Numeracy Diagnostic, Carole Fullerton's "What Do They Know", etc.) teachers gain a baseline understanding of where students are at. In previous years, this was done school-wide though that was discontinued last year in favour of classroom-based assessments. Emphasis this year was on using classroom-based diagnostic tasks, using the K-7 snapshot (resource) to give us a baseline/ common focus, and further exploration of the "First Steps in Math" Diagnostic Map to understand observable behaviours and/or what skills students are still missing.

Social and Emotional Learning: We started the year off talking about our goal of building "attuned relationships" and thinking about student behaviour relationally. Staff looked through resources that helped reiterate the 8 conditions that help support student success both academically and social-emotionally. We also reviewed learning done last year on the importance of making social and emotional learning culturally sustaining. Ideas were brainstormed as a staff around strategies that help support this relational approach, including understanding that behaviour is communication, reframing behaviour (from "won't" to "can't yet"), and exploring the various stressors in each domain (biological, emotional, cognitive, pro-social and social) that may contribute to challenging behaviours.

November 2023

Staff engaged in a Pro-D Day focused on how we create inclusive and welcoming spaces for all students, but specifically for students who are neurodivergent. Included in this Pro-D was information that helped bring better awareness to the experiences of neurodivergent students in our school; refocused our attention to the impact of trauma and the various kinds of trauma (sensory, social, compliance); and reinforced the steps to take when de-escalating a very challenging or charged situation.

April 2024

Staff were asked to reflect on our current school goals and determine our focus for the next year. Conversation was based on a collection of data in Reading, Writing and Numeracy. Based on the data, a decision was made to shift our focus away from Numeracy and towards Literacy, with some flexibility to include both Reading and Writing inquiries.

May/June 2023

Classroom data in Reading, Writing and Numeracy was collected and showed the following trends:

- Vast majority of students K-4 were proficient in Numeracy; students in grades 5-7 showed higher frequency of “developing” proficiency, however majority were “proficient” or “extending”, and very few students were “emerging”
- Comparatively, we had high numbers of students across all grade levels only showing a developing proficiency in Reading and Writing. Of note were grades 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 where the level of proficiency was almost split between “proficient” and “developing”, with very few students at these grade levels showing emerging or extending proficiency.

Student Surveys were also conducted, identifying the following trends:

Students in primary and early intermediate grades were able to identify many adults (teachers, EAs, Principal) as well as friends who they felt cared about/ supported them at school. Our upper intermediate students tended to focus on peers/ friends as people who care about/ supported them at school, and less frequently named adults.

All students indicated that hearing affirmative words from adults and peers; being helped and encouraged by teachers; having adults reinforcing boundaries; having adults ask them about their day; having adults say hi in the hallways; having adults know their names; and having adults make connections with them were things that helped them feel safe, supported and cared for at school.

Based on these various sources of data, our goal next year will be to better identify students who are developing in their literacy skills and collect data that helps determine whether interventions are helping move students towards full proficiency.

Based on student surveys, we will continue work on our goal of building attuned relationships, using information from students to focus implementation of strategies that continue to build safety and a sense of belonging within classrooms as well as across classrooms.

Focusing (What does our focus need to be?):

***Literacy:** How does the direct teaching of specific Literacy strategies (reading or writing) impact the yearly growth in proficiency of students who are currently emerging or developing in Reading or Writing?*

***Social and Emotional Learning:** How does a focus on attuned relationships and explicit connections between adults/ staff and vulnerable students improve an overall sense of student belonging and school connectedness?*

Developing a Hunch:

Higher numbers of students, particularly at grade 2 and in grades 4-7, who are at a “developing” level of proficiency in both Reading and Writing. Interventions are required to support the development of skills that move students towards full proficiency in these curricular areas.

Students continue to require considerable adult support in solving problems, even minor, amongst peers/ friends/ classmates. There seems to be an increase in the intensity of even minor conflicts. Particularly in our upper intermediate classes, students are more peer-oriented/ influenced by external factors (social media in particular). This creates challenges in our classroom communities and requires more focused and deliberate effort from adults to ensure students stay connected and attached to them.

Learning- How and Where Can we Learn More?

Pro-D opportunities

Each other– what’s going well, what could we try?

Exploring our “Wonder Child”

Book Resources (Jen’s office and Library)

District Support Teachers

The Third Path

Indigenous Trauma and Equity Informed Practice

Culturally Sustaining SEL Pro-D- Robyn Ilten-Gee

Compassionate Systems Leadership

UFLI (many Primary teachers here now using it)

Reading/ Writing Power- Adrienne Gear

District Literacy Framework

Taking Action- What Will We Do Differently?

- Explicit teaching of self-regulation, perspective-taking strategies
- Explicit teaching of Literacy strategies (reading and writing)- differentiated based on classroom needs
- Targeted learning support for Literacy, using diagnostic approach
- Collecting regular and varied data regarding students’ literacy progress, particularly for targeted groups
- Focus on structures and strategies that help create strong conditions for self-regulation (safety, regulation, belonging)
- Refine/ revise our “wonder child” focus– how can our “wonder child” help us determine efficacy of various strategies/ interventions
- Use both qualitative and quantitative data to assess effectiveness in both SEL and Literacy
- Build selection of picture books in the library that can support teaching of concepts (ie. Executive functioning, self– regulation, growth mindset, emotional intelligence, compassion and kindness)
- “Parents as Partners” series at PAC- parent education opportunities
- Collaboration teams to take a closer look at our Literacy instruction practices
- Exploring the number of clubs students have access to (eg. Diversity Club, Best Buddies, Chess, Dungeons and Dragons, Melanin)
- Broadening our social and emotional work to include awareness of and action around equity, diversity, inclusivity and reconciliation
- Deepening our understanding of, and action around, a relational approach to students– understanding what motivates and affects our students, and using targeted strategies to bridge that, in support of more confident, motivated, self-reliant learners

Checking

- Compare anecdotal information with concrete Literacy data (stamina, improvement in assignments, more focused group work/ collaborations, engagement)
- Wonder Child templates to track specific students who have difficulty with Literacy, perspective-taking/

- emotional regulation, or both
- Specific tracking of students who are “emerging” in their literacy development in September
- Student and teacher surveys