



Langdale Elementary

GROWTH PLAN



Principal Jenny Groves

2024-2025 School Year

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Langdale Elementary School Growth Plan

School Year: 2024/25

School Demographics and Community Context

Langdale is a small family school with a beautiful story. We have a vibrant community of students, staff and families, situated at the top of Átl'ka7tsem on lands and waters that have been home to the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw and shíshálh people for time immemorial. We feel grateful to be stewards of this land and learn and play in this place. We typically have between 90-100 students on average; this year we have grown to 121 students in grades Kindergarten to Seven. We have a diverse student population, with 10% of our students having Indigenous heritage. Culturally, we have families that have immigrated to Canada from across Asia and Europe. We are a part of a neighbourhood that has a variety of housing and therefore draws in diverse socioeconomic backgrounds in our families.

Langdale has a dedicated staff that is a mix of seasoned and new teachers, who all share a passion for collaboration, growth mindset and skill development in students. Langdale parents continue to be very active and an integral part of the school fabric. The Langdale PAC is committed to providing experiential learning opportunities, such as extended experiences and continues to support us in offerings that bring joy to our community. When asked 'what is the story of Langdale that you'd like the world to know' in a PAC meeting, the parents offered that they love that we are a community of acceptance, the students are all seen as leaders, the feel of the community is real, and that Langdale Elementary is the heartbeat of our small community.

Trends

Langdale has had a growth spurt over the past two years and enrollment has increased, namely due to the commencement of nature-based learning in primary grades last year and intermediate grades this year. A number of in-catchment students who were participating in alternative learning programs have joined the school and there has been an increase in cross-boundary requests.

Students experience curriculum at Langdale through nature's lens. This has laid a foundation for core competencies to be cultivated through curiosity, wonder and awe being recognized and celebrated. This approach sparks all of the core competencies and we will be looking for trends as we do a deep dive into two particular competencies this year.

Before the adoption of Spaces, Langdale was a Freshgrade school. The transition to Spaces was different for us than schools who were not yet using an online platform as we had already made the leap to online reporting. Spaces has still been a learning curve as a platform and we are navigating how to best use it for reporting, core competencies and parent communication. We invested in a cart of iPads in order for students to be involved in their Spaces posts at the intermediate level.



Strengths

Our commitment to nature-based learning and First Peoples Principles of Learning helps us excel in all areas of the core competencies. Langdale's greatest strengths lie in this pedagogy, which integrates outdoor experiences and Indigenous knowledge, as well as fostering a strong sense of community. Our families are deeply invested in community and take pride in our strong connections to each other as a learning community and this place.

Stretches (Areas for Growth)

A challenge in growing core competencies tends to be giving the space for students to be genuine critical and creative thinkers within their academic work at school. For many educators, it takes reframing the thinking of what a classroom looks like and how to create multidisciplinary lessons with choice for students. It requires all of us to let go slightly and, in a position where structure is a strength, this can be a stretch for all of us.

I think that parents are still learning with us that core competencies do look at the whole child and that truly, that is what all of us want: to develop strong and capable humans. It takes reframing what school may have looked like for parents and helping them see the possibilities. We have led some parent nights – two to share the pedagogy and practice of nature-based learning and one to model what learning looks like during the day-to-day for students. We intend on doing more of these this Spring, potentially during informal learning updates as well.

Reflections on Past Initiatives

Langdale set a goal in the last two growth plans to embrace land and nature-based learning in our school. Our primary grades (K-3) successfully transitioned to nature-based programming last year and the intermediates have begun this work this year. Our educators have had a focus on professional development in this area. Many of our staff completed the Certificate program run collaboratively between Simon Fraser University and School District 46 in nature and place-based learning in December of 2023. It has enabled us as a staff to gain the necessary skills and understanding that enhance our ability to deliver meaningful nature-based learning to students. As well, a number of our staff have taken a 50-hour Wilderness First Aid course in order to ensure that our forest and beach experiences are delivered with safety in mind. All of this is being integrated into our classrooms at this time while teachers participate in practice-based inquiry work.

It is a goal this year to rewild our school grounds. The school grounds mirroring the learning is an integral part of embedding our values for student learning. Last year we received an \$8000 grant toward rewilding and intend to create an Indigenous plant walk and planting native species and trees on the school grounds to begin the process of decolonizing the land as we decolonize our learning practices. Every Earth Day we have a community work party that focuses on school grounds. This year we will be planting a labyrinth of native plants, a willow arch, and building more play structures for our mud kitchen.



These two blended goals have led us to choose Nature-based learning and First People's Principles of Learning as our strands of focus in the new strategic plan.

Vision for Growth

Langdale continues to hold onto its strong community values as we vision forward.

At Langdale we are a community focused on embedding the First People's Principles of Learning into our practice and are looking to shift to these principles as our key words. Nature-based learning is an area of growth that we have focused on this year and been working to transition into the learning of our students. Our vision is to continue to create a culture of care and gratitude, that allows children the ability to thrive in their academic, artistic and athletic abilities. We have been successfully transitioning our teaching in the primary years to a nature-based framework, and are now looking to transition our intermediate grades as well, while continuing to embed all of our values and goals for student achievement into all grade levels.

The transitions to approach at Langdale began just as the new strategic goals were formulated and the alignment could not be more perfect for the work we are doing at our school.

Mission

Langdale is rooted in integrated learning that supports: the well-being of ourselves, our families and community and the land. We acknowledge that land is our teacher.

Core Values



Langdale values multi-aged, multidisciplinary learning that meets the needs of all learners. We believe in flexible learning spaces, including learning on, from and with the land. With enhancing core



competency growth being the goal for all students, we strive to create learning opportunities that are irresistible.

Equity Considerations

Our new focuses in the chosen strands have encouraged us to think about our priority learners and their needs in important and creative ways. Land based learning has opened a door for more Indigenous ways of knowing and being as we see learning as more cyclical instead of linear. Research shows time and again that time spent in nature is helpful for students being regulated and fostering a deeper connection to themselves, others and the more-than-human world. Here are some key ways we are addressing equity for Indigenous learners and students with disabilities. We do not currently have any students in care.

- Indigenous learners – Indigenous education embedded in classrooms, Indigenous cooking and stories shared as a school with Indigenous Educator, Gustav Guzek, Spirals of Inquiry, paying attention to attendance and supporting families as necessary, consistent school-based team meetings and IEPs for our Indigenous learners who need them.
- Students with disabilities – Close support from Inclusion support teacher, Kristen Martin, IEPs for all staff to follow with students as well as safety plans where relevant, working with the Inclusion support staff team for specified areas, universal design approaches in all classes.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

Targeted core competencies:

- **Thinking:** Critical and Reflective thinking – I can express my opinions respectfully, knowing that others may have different ideas than mine; I can try different ways of doing things; I can reflect on what I do and what I learn.
- **Communication:** Social awareness and Responsibility – I can advocate to take action for my communities and the natural world; I am kind to others and the environment.



Selected Strands for Core Competency Development

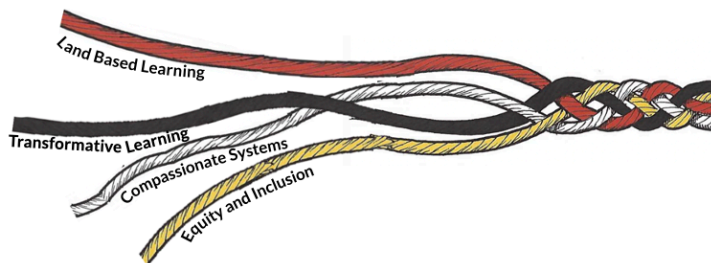


ENSOULING OUR SCHOOLS

"In This We Journey Together"

Strands:

- Authentic Relationships
- Personalized Learning
- Nature-Based Learning
- Experiential Hands-On Learning
- Inclusion
- Authentic, Real-World Learning
- First Peoples Principles of Learning
- Transformative Assessment
- Flexible Learning Environments



If we are attuned educators who build connections with joy, passion, and respect, we can design an irresistible future for all learners through weaving the following strands...

1. Nature-Based Learning
2. First Peoples Principles of Learning

...Then we believe students will authentically connect to and develop their core competencies; thus, nurturing their personal deep engagement, joy, and learning over time.

NATURE-BASED LEARNING

Core Competency Goals:

- Critical and Reflective thinking – I can express my opinions respectfully, knowing that others may have different ideas than mine; I can try different ways of doing things; I can reflect on what I do and what I learn.
- Social awareness and Responsibility – I can advocate to take action for my communities and the natural world; I am kind to others and the environment.

Evidence Analysis and Interpretation: See appendix A for Data and Evidence (derived from provided data package and your own chosen evidence). Include satellite, map and street data.

- Direct Evidence:
 - We will look to the SLS survey additional questions that we submitted this year and see what they offer us as insights into growth in the core competency areas.



- In the MDI data from 2023/24, only 8 percent of our students ‘agreed a lot’ they could make a difference in the world. The results were the same for trying to make the world a different place. With a focus on agency and kindness for the world, we hope to see this number greatly increase. At the same time, 23-35 percent of our students said they cared about the state of the world (climate change, deforestation, pollution and species extinction) ‘very much’.
- Indirect Evidence:
 - Ecoliteracy checklist for grade 5/6s – designed by Simon Hocking
 - Street data from staff – on the kind actions and signs of supporting the belonging of other students in their actions

Rationale in strand choice, that will lead us to our core competency goal

- Based on research, we know that time spent outside with movement, flexible seating and space for curiosity, enhances student learning, focus and regulation. We want our students to be thinking critically about the world and their place in it. We want them to develop a deeper understanding of themselves, others and the more-than-human world.

Implementation Plan

- Actions: We have already begun to support the learning in all classrooms and for all students. Implementation like this is not finite. This is a journey that we hope to continue on for years. We have staff who have all been trained in nature-based learning, taken their Wilderness first aid, and continue to commit to developing professionally in this area. We implemented K-3 nature-based learning in the 2023-24 school year and began to implement 4-7 this 2024-25 school year. We intend on being a full-fledged nature-based school by the end of this school year and will continue into next school year. This has been an entire school effort – to the training we all received together over the past couple of years, to the commitment to broadening our practice to include many of the strands in the new strategic plan.

Resources Required

Continued support with visioning, team meetings and professional development are the pieces necessary to move us forward. Through creating scheduling that allows for some of this as well as using some of the budget for release time and professional development, we are growing our practice in community. We continue to apply for grants to support bigger projects and vision such as rewilding the school yard,



building a welcome pole and connecting in to other nature-based/outdoor education projects to further ours and our students learning.

Success Indicators

- Last year, we presented to the School Board on the transition. Two of my staff members spoke to how life changing the transition has been to them and their practice. We also had testimonial from a mother and her children on how this has transformed their learning, their family relationships to learning and land, and made them grow closer.
- Core competency reflections from students will be considered invaluable in seeing the growth happening in our students.
- Teachers have seen more engagement from students in lessons, better attendance, more agile and physically stronger students, more focused classroom time in the afternoons after mornings out, and many more subtleties and positive growth indicators from the shift to nature-based learning.

Reflection and Evaluation of the Plan: Seasonal Round

- Re-creating how we structure staff meeting time is giving us time in team to look at our growth and how we want to move forward. We are committing time in our staff meetings for reflecting and growing.
- The school will be collecting street data and sharing with one another in staff meetings, as well as looking at SLS data, core competency data and a classroom-based study in our grade 5/6 class using the Ecoliteracy Checklist (see below)
- The idea of ‘what’s next?’ being an integral question to all staff meetings and professional development opportunities we share.

FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

1. Core Competency Goals:

- Critical and Reflective thinking – I can express my opinions respectfully, knowing that others may have different ideas than mine; I can try different ways of doing things; I can reflect on what I do and what I learn.
- Social awareness and Responsibility – I can advocate to take action for my communities and the natural world; I am kind to others and the environment.

Evidence Analysis and Interpretation: See appendix A for Data and Evidence (derived from provided data package and your own chosen evidence). Include satellite, map and street data.



- Direct Evidence:
 - We will look to the SLS survey additional questions that we submitted this year and see what they offer us as insights into growth in the core competency areas.
 - In the MDI data from 2023/24, only 8 percent of our students ‘agreed a lot’ they could make a difference in the world. The results were the same for trying to make the world a different place. With a focus on agency and kindness for the world, we hope to see this number greatly increase. At the same time, 23-35 percent of our students said they cared about the state of the world (climate change, deforestation, pollution and species extinction) ‘very much’.
- Indirect Evidence:
 - Street Data – Students have more and more awareness about the land we are on, some Squamish stories and language, and traditional foods eaten by Indigenous people over time.

Rationale in strand choice, that will lead us to our core competency goal

- The First Peoples Principles are practices in teaching, being and learning that are highly valued at Langdale. Committing to putting them into practice is making a statement to work harder to decolonize and indigenize the learning for ourselves and our students.

Implementation Plan

- Actions: We are working to establish land-based learning practices in all of our classrooms. We are looking at the work of Dustin Louie, Robin Wall Kimmerer and Leigh Joseph to decolonize, indigenous, and make land connections for our students and staff.
- Timeline: The goal is to be making changes to our practice daily – relentless incrementalism – through small and bigger actions – that will connect ourselves and students to the First Peoples Principles of Learning. We would like this to be more than a one-year growth plan. We would like this to carry forward with us for the next five years as a continued goal and re-evaluate as we go where we still need to work.
- Responsible Parties: We are all responsible for this as humans and as a staff team.

Resources Required

- We need more connections to Squamish Nation to be able to ask for permission, ensure we are making accurate decisions in rewilding, to learn language.



Success Indicators

- Often, we use informal conversations with staff, students and families as an indicator of success. These conversations from these ‘on the ground’ offer us valuable feedback on how we are doing.
- To evaluate the growth of the core competency through the work on the strand, we are looking to the reflections from students on how they see their own growth, connected to the deep learning happening at Langdale.

Reflection and Evaluation of the Plan: Seasonal Round

- Re-creating how we structure staff meeting time is giving us time in team to look at our growth and how we want to move forward. We are committing time in our staff meetings for reflecting and growing.
- The school will be collecting street data and sharing with one another in staff meetings, as well as looking at SLS data, core competency data and a classroom-based study in our grade 5/6 class using the Ecoliteracy Checklist (see below)
- The idea of ‘what’s next?’ being an integral question to all staff meetings and professional development opportunities we share.

Engagement and Communication Plan

The image created last year serves as a conduit into the growth plan. It is accessible to parents and students, and I include it in my weekly communication with them. I will bring the latest edition of the growth plan to the PAC meeting for review. I often provide an update with all happenings, including staff visioning at each of the PAC meetings to ensure they understand the direction we are taking as a team. As a staff team, we are reviewing our goals during extended staff meetings as well as visioning days which are organized as a part of our school development efforts. Students are a part of the growth of our school as well, in conversation around rewilding, core competency development and their hopes and dreams for their school.

Professional Learning

Feedback from teachers in visioning days last year was that collaborative time within the schedule would be a golden opportunity. Working together with the music teacher and school counsellor, we were able to free up teachers to work in team to vision forward. As well, on principal morning meeting days, myself and my TIC would cover two teachers to meet after I returned from meetings. We put money aside in the school growth budget line to release primary and intermediate teams to do work one day a week.



We still have growing to do in terms of fostering the core competencies. Each classroom completes standalone activities but it has not yet become a part of a collaborative effort or some school-wide event. This would be something for us to explore more as we vision forward.

Our learning guides have been supporting our professional learning in staff meetings and cultivating ideas based on what staff want and need toward implementing our strands into the school fabric. We continue to look for more ways to support learning for us all through staff dialogue, wish lists and findings to enhance our learning.

Budget Considerations

We are looking at spending money in ways that can reflect our values and grow the students in their core competencies. We have been focusing our school growth budget on professional learning and development for us as a staff. We have had various guests facilitate us in visioning sessions, support in creating our guiding ethics and imagining whole school approaches to curriculum. As a staff team, we value opportunities to step back from the daily events and think bigger picture. We have put money towards staff attending Squamish nation pro-d on Gambier Island this year as well to learn from Squamish Elders.

Conclusion

In transitioning to nature-based learning and continuing to reimagine how we teach and learn, Langdale staff continue to transform the school experience for all students and families. We strive for irresistible learning for our students through co-creating meaningful and inspired learning opportunities for all.



Guiding Ethics of Langdale



1. Well-being

We believe in care of self, others and the more-than-human world and cultivating care for these in the teaching that we do. We support our students becoming resilient, taking risks and honouring curiosity, awe and wonder within them and honouring the gifts of all.

2. Land as Teacher

We are teaching to the seasonal changes around us and following the cycles of nature. We see the land as a co-teacher and root our teaching in indigenous knowledge promoting slow learning

3. First Peoples Principles

Reflected in all that we do, we recognize that learning takes patience and time, connections to all are critical, and we learn through story.

4. Systems Thinking

Holding our value of community close, we focus on connected systems - both as humans (connecting to self and others) and with nature - looking at interdependence and intergenerational learning. We connect as staff through team teaching, planning and collaborating.





Langdale, rooted in integrated learning that supports...

- the well-being of our selves
- the wellbeing of our families and community
- the wellbeing of the land, and acknowledgment that land is our teacher.



Measuring growth and impact:

Core Competencies and the Learning Surveys – possible additional questions

Social Awareness and Responsibility:

- a) I can advocate and take action for my community and the natural world

Possible question for the learning surveys:

How can you help take care of your community and the Earth? What actions can you take to make a difference?

- b) I am kind to others and the environment

Possible question for the learning surveys:

How do you show kindness to the people around you and the world around you?

Or

What are some ways you can be kind to others and the Earth?

Potential answers include:

-I show kindness to the people around me by listening to them, offering help when they need it, and saying kind things

- I show kindness to the world by taking care of nature e.g. picking up litter, recycling, cleaning up after myself, being gentle, calm and quiet with animals

Critical and Reflective Thinking:

- a) I can try different ways of doing things

Possible question for the learning surveys:

What are some new ways you could try doing things today? How do you think it might help?

- b) I can reflect on what I do and what I learn

Possible question for the learning surveys:


What is something you learned today, and how did it make you feel?

How can you use that to do better next time?

Or

What can you do differently/better next time?



 **Ecoliteracy Assessment:** Education for Sustainable Todays and Tomorrows

Ecoliteracy is understanding and appreciating the complex web of life, and acting to reconcile and sustain our relationships with ourselves, each other and the natural world. An ecoliterate person seeks to ‘read the book of nature’, and put its lessons into action.

Over the course of this year, insert name here has participated in the following activities to foster their ecoliteracy, and has demonstrated the following ecoliterate behaviours.

	Learning WITHIN Nature	Learning ALONGSIDE Nature	Learning ABOUT Nature	Learning FOR Nature
ACTIVITIES	<p>Weekly immersion in nature</p> <p>Modelling care for self while in nature (dressing for the weather, packing food and water, staying safe, etc.)</p> <p>Modelling care for others (walking well with a buddy, helping each other, being kind and respectful, etc.)</p> <p>Modelling care for nature (picking up trash, moving creatures off the trail and leaving them in their homes, not picking leaves, etc.)</p> <p>Regular opportunities for unstructured free play in a variety of natural environments</p>	<p>Reflective solitude time in nature (writing, sketching, calming, observing, etc.)</p> <p>Regular exposure to place-based Indigenous histories, languages, practices</p> <p>Observing nature carefully</p> <p>Exploring the rights of more-than-humans</p> <p>Exploring traditional Indigenous uses for plants</p> <p>Learning from nature as a teacher</p>	<p>Exploring the local bioregion through native plants, animals, geology, geography, etc.</p> <p>Participating in growing and gardening</p> <p>Exploring interconnections between species, including human relationships with the complex web of life</p> <p>Participating in a citizen science initiative (bird counts, weather monitoring, intertidal surveys, etc.)</p> <p>Exploring life cycles of local living beings</p> <p>Exploring life cycles of consumer products</p>	<p>Exploring threats to nature such as the climate crisis, overconsumption, species extinction, war, inequality, etc.</p> <p>Daily opportunities to compost / recycle</p> <p>Celebrating active transportation</p> <p>Regular opportunities to conserve materials</p> <p>Opportunities to participate in creative action / problem solving towards sustainability and social justice (attend a march, write letters, help with fundraisers, etc.)</p> <p>Visiting and exploring the importance of protected natural spaces</p>
STUDENT BEHAVIOURS	<p>Demonstrates a commitment to ‘Leave No Trace’ when in nature</p> <p>Demonstrates care for self while in nature (dressing for the weather, packing food and water, staying safe, etc.)</p> <p>Demonstrates care for others while in nature (walking well with a buddy, helping each other, being kind and respectful, etc.)</p> <p>Demonstrates care for plants, animals, land (picking up trash, moving creatures off the trail and leaving them in their homes, not picking off leaves, etc.)</p> <p>Demonstrates comfort, creativity and sensitivity during unstructured free play in nature (willingness to play, get dirty, create fun, art, novelty, etc.)</p>	<p>Demonstrates an appreciation for nature (through writing, sketching, ability to calm, observations, etc.)</p> <p>Uses appropriate Indigenous language</p> <p>Observations yield surprising or thoughtful results</p> <p>Expresses importance of the rights of nature</p> <p>Uses plants appropriately (honourable harvest, etc.)</p> <p>Demonstrates an appreciation for nature’s lessons (notices changes to local spaces and species and infers meaning from these changes)</p> <p>Uses language that includes nature</p>	<p>Recognizes and names native plants, animals, geological and geographical features within the local bioregion</p> <p>Demonstrates interest in growing and gardening</p> <p>Demonstrates an understanding of the interconnectedness of all life, including human dependence upon the complex web of life</p> <p>Demonstrates an understanding of local life cycles</p> <p>Creates a project or product that mimics natural life cycles (i.e. Waste = Food)</p>	<p>Shows concern and can explain age appropriate concepts related to threats to nature (climate crisis, overconsumption, species extinction, war, inequality, etc.)</p> <p>Ensures proper composting and recycling and encourages others to do the same</p> <p>Chooses active transportation if possible</p> <p>Takes care of belongings, reuses and minimizes waste (water bottles, paper, lunch kit, etc.). Fixes things.</p> <p>Generates creative contributions toward sustainability and social justice (attend a march, write letters, help with fundraisers, etc.)</p> <p>Demonstrates an understanding of the importance of protected natural spaces</p>



