South Canoe Elementary
School Learning Plan 2026-27

School Context:



OUTDOOR LEARNING IN SD 83

SOUTH CANOE

The Vision

Our aim is to develop a school that engages students with local ecosystems. The focus of learning is on inquiry, experience and reflection while teaching the full BC curriculum through nature's lens.

The Mission Statement

To implement a program that inspires a cultural shift that embraces, protects and connects meaningfully with the natural world.

Philosophy

The three pillars our philosophy is built on.

1) Connections to the Outdoors
2) Community supported and place-based education
3) Experiential Education

Outdoor Learning Vs Outdoor Education

Outdoor Learning- Learning from and with the surrounding natural ecosystems.
Outdoor Education- Adventure driven experiences.

Current Outdoor Learning in SD83

-7 **professional development** days per year, already offered for over 100 teachers.
-7 '**Outdoor Awesome**' events featuring whole-school-based outdoor learning stations for 14 elementary schools.
-Many individual educators around the district having their students engage with nature in meaningful ways.

Research

Over 500 peer-reviewed articles exist, exploring a range of topics. These topics include the positive impacts of time spent in nature regarding: ADHD, Autism, executive functioning, academic performance, obesity, myopia, depression, anger, socialization, creativity, critical thinking, resiliency, sleep, improved engagement/behaviour in school, increased focus, impulse control, reduced stress, cooperative play, and irritability, among many others.

Academics

-Boost performance in reading, writing, math, science and social studies.
-Enhances creativity and critical thinking
-Decreases ADHD symptoms.

Well-being

-Increased physical activity.
-Reduces stress, anger and aggression.
-Improves healthy relationships.

A Day at South Canoe

-Balance of academics/outdoor/social-emotional.
-Connections with the community

In September of 2018, South Canoe School re-opened its doors and began a new history as an Outdoor Learning Program in School District 83. South Canoe is nestled in a rural community within the Salmon Arm city limits. The school site is on 5.1 acres of land adjacent to private properties and includes 2 sports fields, a school garden and forested space. Currently, we have 7 divisions (K-8) with approximately 144 students. South Canoe is a 'program of choice' with no bussing provided and many families choose to drive to our location from all across the North Okanagan. Families seem to chose South Canoe for two predominant reasons: 1) because they value the concept of outdoor learning and nature-based education, and/or 2) because they have found more traditional learning environments have not met the needs of their child(ren).

The surrounding rural area has many hobby farms and is within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Klahani Park is a short 200-metre walk to the east and includes a forested area, playground, a ball field and sport courts. Generous and supportive neighbours allow classes permission to visit their private properties to do pond studies, observe creeks/watersheds and participate in gardening and harvesting. In addition to walking field trips, South Canoe staff is encouraged to do one weekly "offsite" day where learning takes place in locations other than our school property.

The student population of South Canoe is approximately 20% of Aboriginal Ancestry. Approximately 20% of the total student population has an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Currently we have 5 Certified Education Assistants (CEAs) who support teachers and monitor safety during outdoor learning and off-site experiences. Parent volunteers play a key role in supporting school initiatives and a weekly hot lunch program is provided to our school. A daily breakfast & lunch program supports student food access. For the 2026/27 school year we are fortunate to have been granted .4fte of Inclusion Resource Teacher time to help make the most of our Positive Behaviour Support Plans for students who are struggling with regulation, engagement, and behaviour.

Report to the North Okanagan-Shuswap School District No. 83 Board of Trustees

A proposal for an Outdoor Learning School at South Canoe Centre



Prepared by the SD83 Outdoor Learning Committee

December 19, 2017

Our Vision: Preparing students to become educated citizens who contribute to a dynamic, sustainable, and diverse world.

Our Mission: Empowering students to become confident, curious, and caring individuals who thrive in their learning, relationships, and community.

Our Values: Belonging, Respect, Empathy, Equity, Perseverance, Reconciliation

Strategic Priority: Intellectual Development

- In the School Learning Plan, the **Intellectual Development** goals must be connected to the School District No. 83 Strategic Priority goal – *Each student will develop their literacy skills, numeracy skills, and competencies to become their most capable self.*
- Goals must be specific, measurable, achievable, informed by and supported by data.
- Potential data sources may include FSA results, PM Benchmarks, SNACC results, School-wide writes, SD No. 73 Non-Fiction Writing Assessments…

Literacy Goal:

As we wrap up a three-year effort to achieve **70% of our grade 4s and grade 7s achieving "ON TRACK"** we will continue to hold this in our sights, while narrowing the specific focus of our efforts to see growth in the area of **writing** specifically. By targeting this important element of literacy, we hope to empower staff and students to make measurable gains in written expression.

This year's literacy focus is improving sentence structure in writing.

Numeracy Goal:

Our numeracy goal at South Canoe is to ensure all learners participate in meaningful and fun math activities, so that self-concept, confidence, and engagement in daily lessons result in at least **60% of our grade 4s and grade 7s achieve "ON TRACK"** in their numeracy evaluation through annual provincial standardized assessment (FSAs).

Strategies and Actions:

Action Items to Achieve Our Literacy Goal:

- Introduce a structured approach to School Wide Writes, with meaningful assessment and reflection on how to help students increase their skills as writers.
- Provide release time for primary and intermediate teacher teams to collaborate on instructional strategies, examine resources and share best practices.
- Commit to integration of literacy into out outdoor learning instruction through relevant Pro-D and school-wide learning activities outdoors.
- Encourage teachers to attend the Adrienne Gear professional development session
- Ensure 90-120 minutes a day of literacy instruction.
- Prioritize CEA support for literacy blocks.
- Ongoing use of Heggerty and UFLI to provide evidence-based early phonemic awareness and foundational skills

Strategies and Actions:

Action Items to Achieve Our Numeracy Goal:

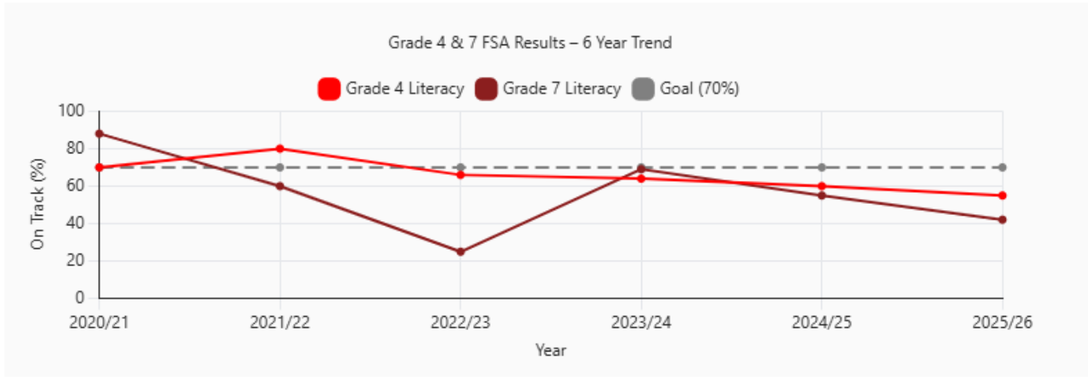
- Re-commit to engaging students in 60 minutes per day of numeracy instruction
- Encourage teacher engagement in professional learning around numeracy topics and inter-staff sharing of highly effective instructional strategies.
- Examine SNACC data by grade and explore strategies to address lagging skills areas of note prior to the spring SNACCs.
- Commit to having all students re-assessed with SNACC by April 30th
- Ongoing – provide weekly reminders to use numeracy resources from the district channel
- Teachers can use collaboration time to align curriculum and instruction (particularly for "split grades") and collaborate on effective numeracy instruction techniques/strategies during monthly primary and intermediate collaboration time.
- Review the Ministry's new K-12 Learning Progressions as part of ongoing numeracy conversations
- Commit to engaging in instruction using the district's Comprehensive Numeracy Framework's five major building blocks:

Comprehensive Math Program

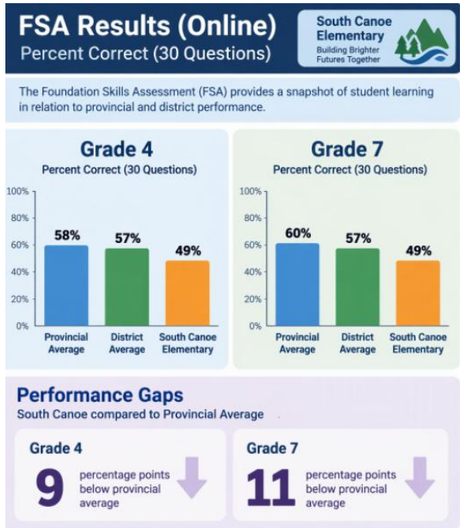
A comprehensive math program has five major building blocks:

a) Problem Solving (daily and weekly)
b) Curricular and core concept work
c) Concept work: main lesson (Daily)
d) Number routines
e) Fluency practice

Data to Inform/Support Literacy Goal:



Specific Grade 4 and Grade 7 Online Literacy Results from 2025/26 to note:



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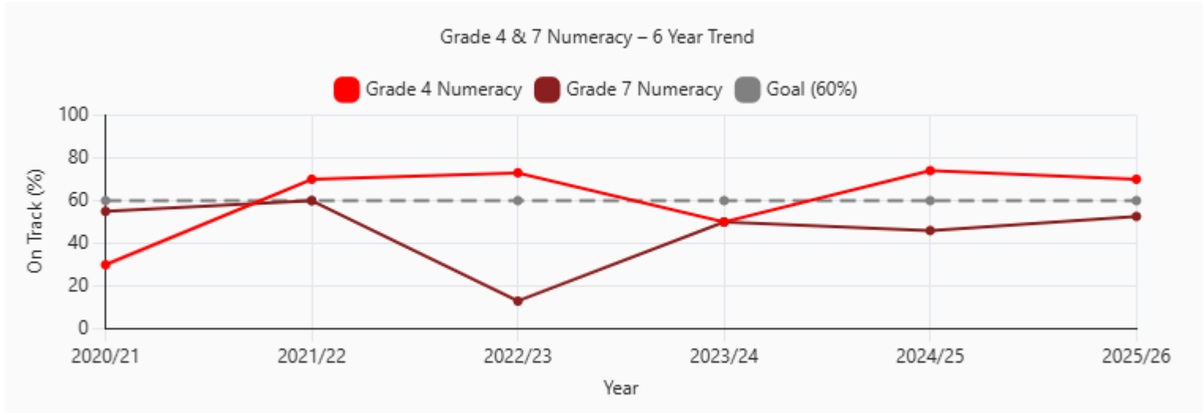
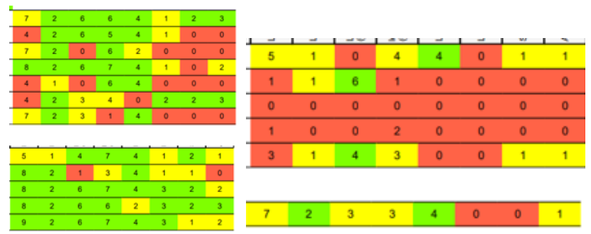


Fall SNACC Data 2026 – Areas of Focus

Grade 8:



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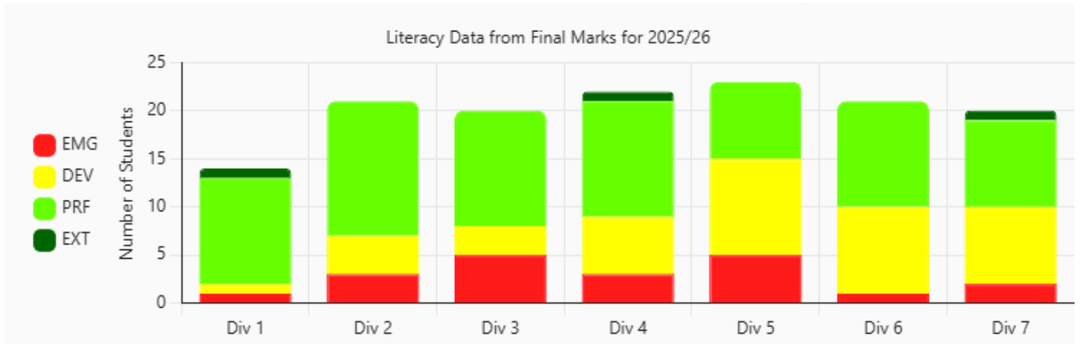
Overall Literacy Data from Final Grades 2025/26 by division



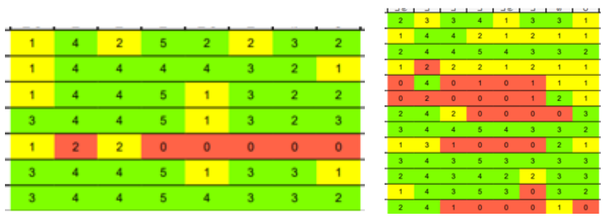
School Wide Write Data

Coming soon!

Grade 8 – “applying the concepts”



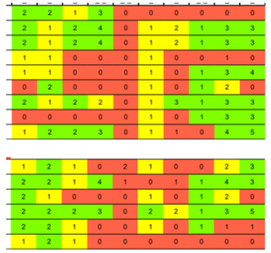
Grade 7:



Grade 7 – “factors and multiples”



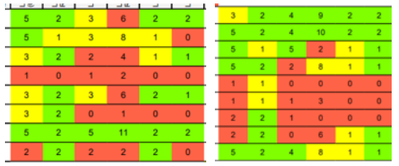
Grade 6:



Grade 6 – “Area & Perimeter & Division”



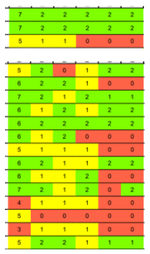
Grade 5:



Grade 5 – “Proportional Reasoning”



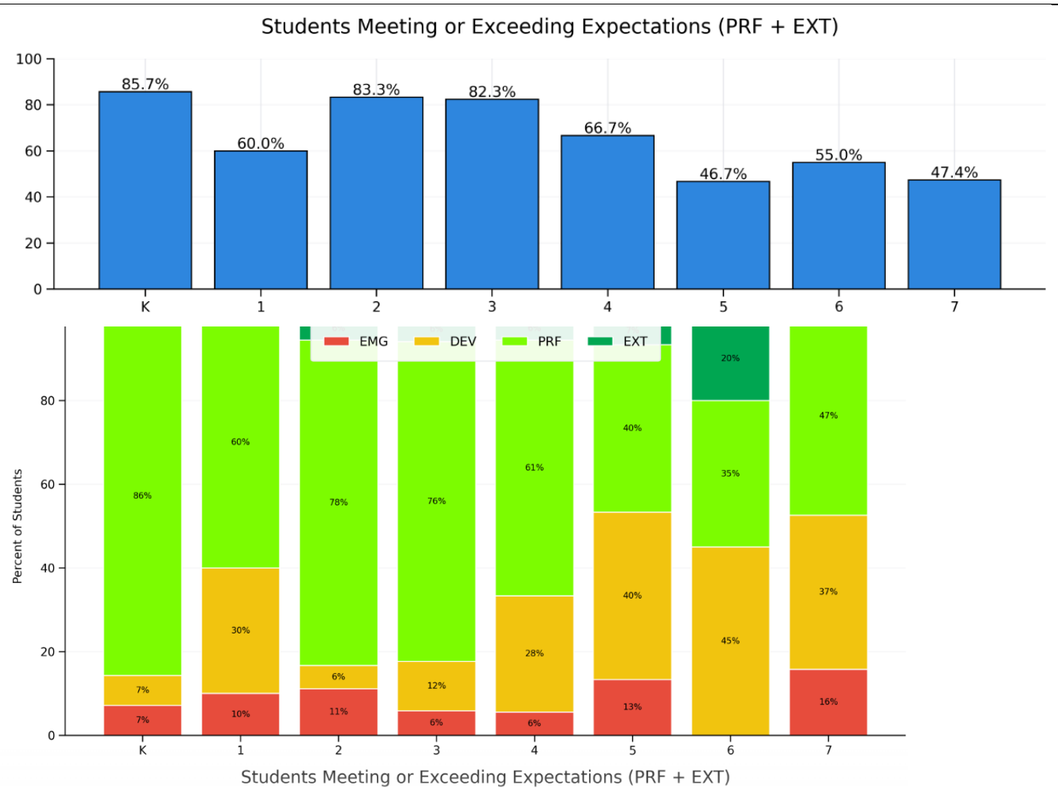
Grade 4:



Grade 4 – “Applying the Concepts”



Final “Marks” from 2025/26 Learning Updates:



Data Analysis/Narrative:

FSA results reflect an overall impression of our school’s performance in literacy when tracked over time. We have chosen a realistic and attainable goal of having at least 70% of our students to be “ON TRACK” in literacy and this has remained our focus for the past three years. Despite efforts, literacy outcomes have declined over the past few years and thus a shift to a more targeted approach will be made this year. With a district expectation to utilize School Wide Writes coming into effect, we feel this is the perfect opportunity to dive into the area of writing specifically and see if collective efforts (professional learning, resource acquisition, collaboration, and reflection) can improve our literacy achievement overall.

Learning Updates have also provided a data set that can be evaluated. We can see cohorts that are particularly concerning and/or successful. Over time, as we prepare to support the academic learning for these students, teachers are working to find best practices and use a team-based approach to instruction. Through the 2025/26 school year we implemented “class mapping” so that the CRT, LRT, LST, and PVP had insight into the class make-up and areas of concern for SEL, Academic,

Data Analysis/Narrative:

As a program of choice, our aim is to provide rich academic learning in addition to a wonderful outdoor learning experience for students. As we examine our numeracy results, it is heartening to see that we are making progress toward our goals. With ongoing emphasis on numeracy, we hope to maintain and improve the outcomes for students who attend South Canoe.

In the spring of 2026 our teacher did a deeper dive into the spring SNACC data and looked more carefully at what specific skills our students are lacking. It would seem that there are a broad range of skills that students have not yet achieved mastery on. It will take more work to develop approaches that merge outdoor learning and strong numeracy instruction so that our learners feel confident and capable as they engage with numeracy tasks. Vertical math remains a possible approach that would help our students to feel more capable and connected to math tasks in collaborative and engaging ways. It may also be helpful to host some parent/student learning nights so that families can learn to support students at home through fun and simple activities that build basic skills and increase engagement.

attendance and other areas that impact learning. With new staff (new LST, new LRT, new IRT) at our school for 26/27, it will be more valuable than ever to build off a base of understanding about who makes up each class and how to support their needs.

Strategic Priority: Human and Social Development

- In the School Learning Plan, the **Human and Social Development** goals must be connected to the School District No. 83 Strategic Priority goal – *Each student will feel welcome, safe, and connected to peers and adults in their schools.*
- Goals must be focused on measuring a sense of belonging.
- Potential data sources may include the School District No. 83 EDI Environmental Scan, the Student Learning Survey, and student focus groups.

Sense of Belonging Goal:

A sense of belonging allows one to feel connected and at ease in themselves and their environment. A sense of belonging is what helps a student to thrive in their learning and enjoy coming to school everyday. School belonging – difficult to quantify, but immeasurably important. *"If children feel safe, they can take risks, ask questions, make mistakes, learn to trust, share their feelings, and grow." – Alfie Kohn*

Goal: **90% of students** at South Canoe will articulate a sense of belonging (connection to adults, peers and programming) as measured by teacher rating and the Student Learning Survey.

Strategies and Actions:

Strategies to promote belonging at SCA:

- Continue to make time weekly for meaningful morning circle (whole school gatherings)
- Continue to streamline outdoor experiential learning opportunities both off site and on site, enabling authentic and meaningful experiences and team building
- Continue to make meaningful connections to local environmental groups and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers to further develop student connection to the land and traditional cultural practices of the Secwepemc people.

Strategic Priority: Organizational Development

- In the School Learning Plan, the **Developing a Culture of Well-Being** goal must be connected to the School District No. 83 Strategic Priority goal – *Each student will feel socially, emotionally, and mentally supported within their schools and the district.*
- The goal must be focused on STUDENT well-being.
- Potential data sources may include the School District No. 83 EDI Environmental Scan, the Student Learning Survey, and student focus groups.

Student Well-Being Goal:

Our goal for student well-being is to have the necessary supports in place (Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3) so that **all students** can productively and with joy engage in learning with their peers in classrooms, outdoors, and on the playground.

Well-being is understood as a balanced state of being that provides a foundation for resilience, health, and purpose in life. Students who are healthy, safe, rested and cared for are ready to learn. Acknowledging health as a precondition for learning locates well-being as an important component of the universal scope of practice at South Canoe.

Strategies and Actions:

A number of families have expressed that it is challenging to get their child to come to school. It is sometimes difficult to separate actual physical symptoms from worries/anxiety related to coming. Staff works very hard to provide a variety of supports to assist with helping kids feel happy and connected at school:

-team sports
-soft starts
-school trips (day trips and overnights)
-leadership opportunities
-differentiated learning

- Participation in the Moose Hide Walk, Orange Shirt Day and other important days that relate to Truth and Reconciliation.
- Provide opportunities for clubs to be run at school for students to develop interests and relationships with peers and adults (mt. biking, crocheting club, coding club, leadership, chess…)
- Provide team sports (volleyball, basketball, track & field, cross-country running).
- Engage with support staff, teachers and parents to consider best practices for outdoor learning, specifically related to differentiated learning and inclusion.

In April of 2026 we launched PAUSE, OWN, FIX as a whole school approach to a "respect reset" so that students and staff felt more connected to respectful practices. The program was launched with a staff meeting discussion and then individuals classes used an opening script to dive in. Part of the work included the following discussion points: **"Many of us have noticed something important. This school works best when everyone feels safe, heard, and respected. Lately, some of those things have been slipping. So we're all starting something new – this is meant to make things better for us all."**



Then ask:

- **What makes a place feel good to be in?**
- **What makes you feel respected?**

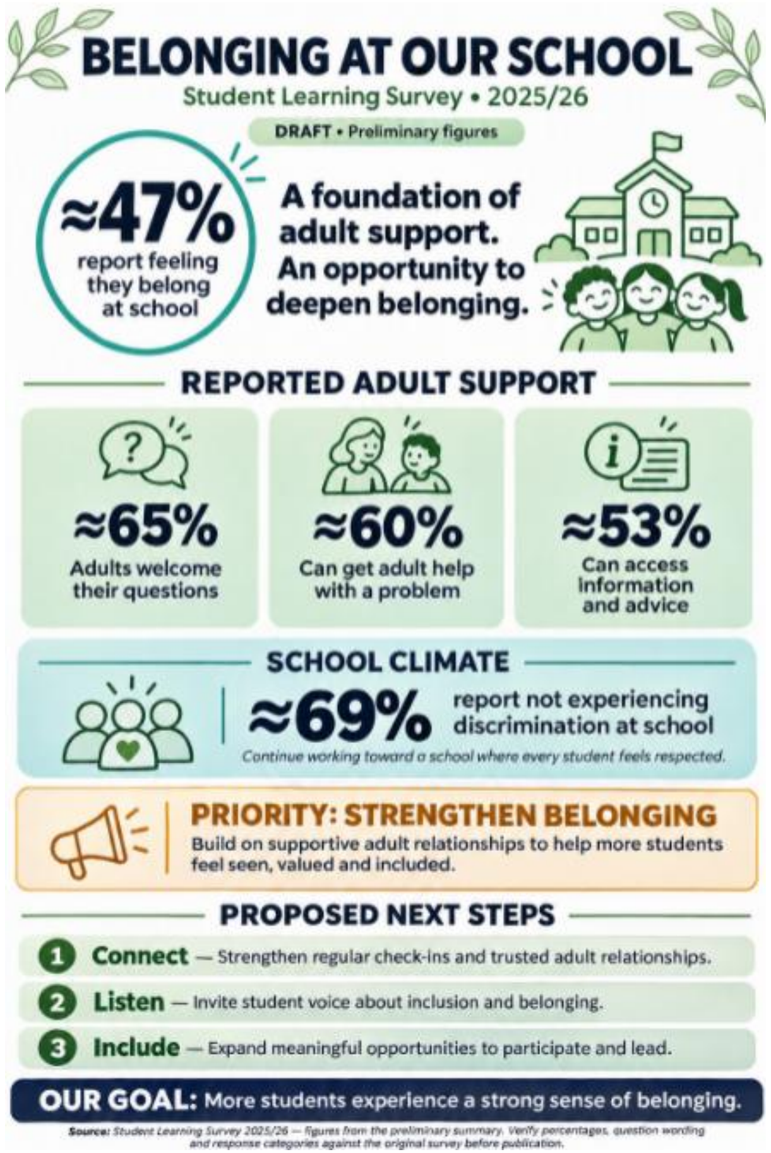
With our breakfast program, we are endeavoring to ensure students are starting their day with a healthy breakfast. We hope this makes a morning routine easier for families and encourages an on time arrival. A new process for providing universally accessible access (stigma-free) to additional lunch options in each class through lunch baskets is being trialed.

Having acquired the program "Second Step" 3 years ago as part of our SLP, we are now in the third year of implementation at the grade 1, 3, & 5 levels. Second Step is an evidence-based program that provides a foundation for a positive, inclusive culture through developing social-emotional competencies and includes perspective-taking, understanding and resolving conflicts and positive relationship building skills.

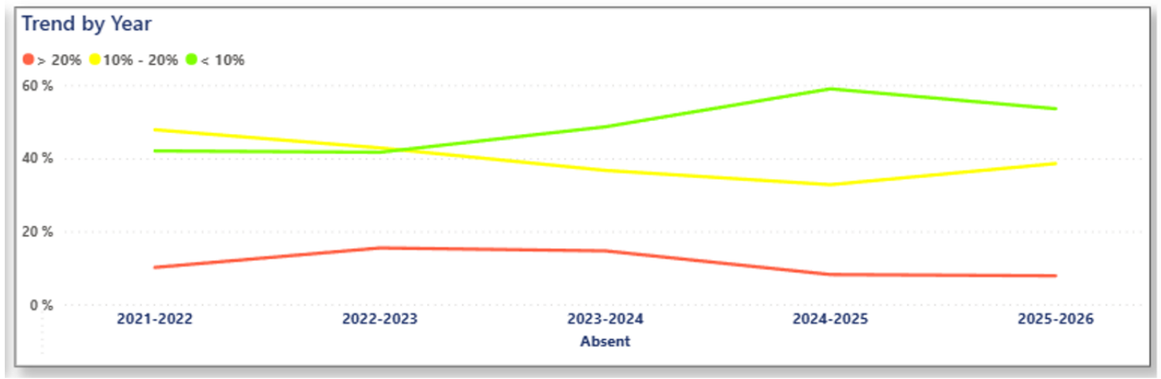
Through reminders and requests, teachers are working to embed the Supporting Student Health Guidelines into their planning and instruction each year. They key health topics in the PHE curriculum can sometimes be overlooked when considering the subject of "PE" and it takes effort and intention to ensure they are taught. We believe that health and wellness is an important part of student success.

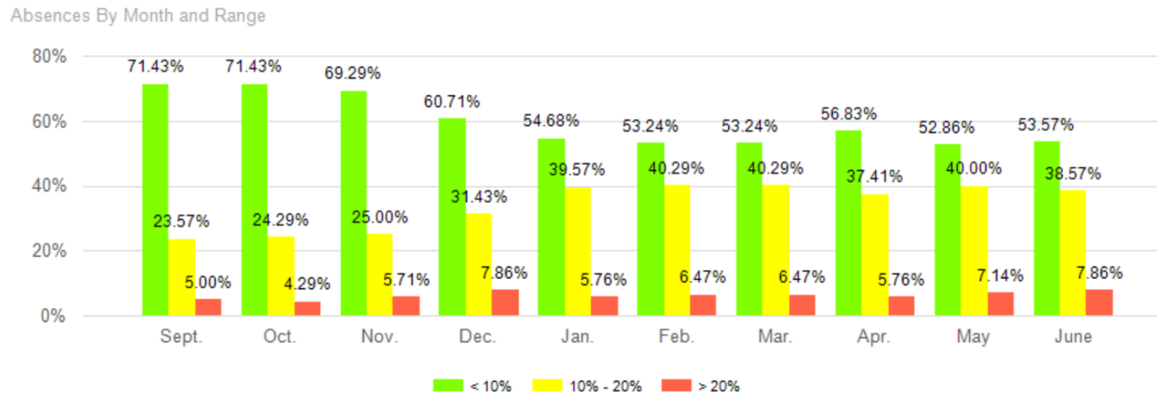
We are thrilled to learn that this year our school will be getting an increase in counselling time (up to .4fte) which is amazing! We hope that having greater access to this support will result in more kids having the skills and capacity to attend, find resilience and learn strategies to overcome the challenges they are facing at home or here at school.

Data to Inform/Support Sense of Belonging Goal:	Data to Inform/Support Student Well-Being Goal:



Attendance Data Over Time:





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Data Analysis/Narrative:

Despite efforts to help our students feel a strong sense of 'belonging' at SCA we have work to do in this area. As a school of choice, our school begins with the intention of attracting students and families who want to be engaged with our community of outdoor learners. With our school enrollment at an all time high, it could be argued that simply wanting to be here demonstrates that our students and their families want to belong as part of our South Canoe family.

As an action item last year, we had each staff member select a student who just needs a little boost/connection and make them their **"secret student"** to check in on, celebrate and notice throughout the year. The "secret student" program was aimed to help ensure that our most likely to slip through the cracks get the attention and support they need.



Data Analysis/Narrative:

Physical and mental health challenges can lead to absenteeism for students. As we emerged from the pandemic, student attendance remained a challenge over time. In addition, it is possible that the perception of some families, that our outdoor program is not fully rigorous and/or that attendance might be less important is a factor in our student attendance. On a positive note, overall attendance is mostly trending in the right direction. Despite this, we have a number of students who find it challenging to attend regularly.

As we more closely examine absences we may be able to provide support for students and families.

We can further flesh out the data by examining the times in the school year when attendance is lowest. What we notice is that our students start the school year strong and then, over time, seem to attend less and less. This concerning pattern is something we can address as we begin the 2026/27 school year and begin new relationships and set new expectations with our classes and families. We need to increase the understanding that attendance matters.

Strategic Priority: Career Development

- In the School Learning Plan, the **Human and Social Development** goals must be connected to the School District No. 83 Strategic Priority goal *Each student will develop the skills and competencies to be successful in a career pathway of their choice.*
- In the elementary/middle years, schools should be implementing strategies to help student learn about potential career pathways and providing opportunities for career exploration.

Strategies and Opportunities for Career Development:

At South Canoe, ongoing connections to local people and businesses through our regular "off-site" experiences provides students with many authentic opportunities to better understand a variety of careers, particularly those that related to the outdoors, parks, agriculture, gardening, conservation, science, wildlife biology, food sustainability and more. Our incredible staff works hard to keep key connections with local "experts" up and to coordinate visits and learning experiences so that kids get to interact with members of our community in a variety of roles.

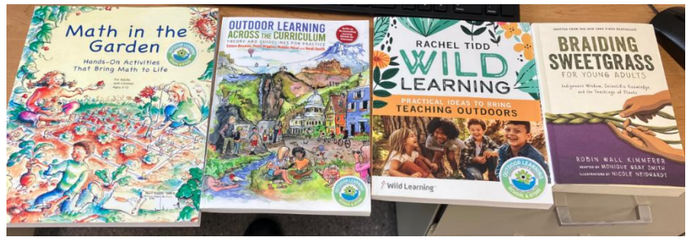
In addition to paid employment/careers, our school proudly supports volunteerism and community support through collaborations and events that are free, open to all and serve to improve the community as a whole. We want our students to learn to be part of the working world and also part of the unpaid labour force that supports the many important initiatives that make communities like Salmon Arm strong.

Resources and Professional Learning

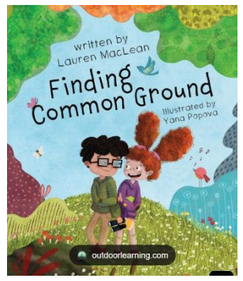
Identify specific learning, resources, or initiatives at the school and/or district level that will build staff capacity to work toward school goals.

Over the past few years we have continued to purchase resources that support both outdoor learning and expected BC Curriculum Outcomes.

Four new Outdoor Learning Resources Sandra purchased at the Outdoor Learning Leadership Conference in Banff 2025.



Purchased in Banff 2026:





The Growing Writing Collection will be purchased before end of September for primary teaches (mostly K) to support early writing. Other resources for middle/upper primary and intermediate teachers will be discussed and explored in the fall so that we have adequate options for teachers who are striving to develop effective writing programs.

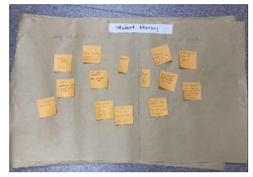




In 2024/25 we purchased a school set of Math Makes Sense textbooks (K-9) so that each teacher had access to a recommended textbook and options for how specific units of mathematical learning might be laid out.

School Learning Plan Consultation Process

Please describe the consultative process with rights holders and stakeholders in the development of this School Learning Plan.

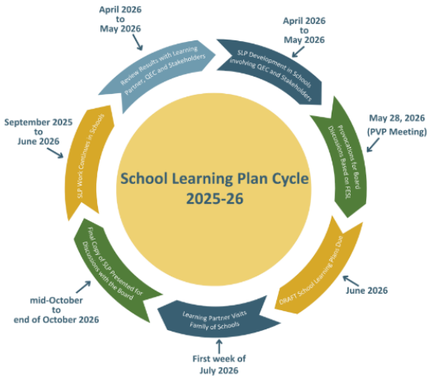


This learning plan was developed in consultation with staff **beginning in February 2024** when the key pillars of this learning plan were shared with staff and a rational for why our school will be aligning with both our district's strategic plan and the goals of the Ministry. From here, individuals were given an opportunity to contribute to each pillar with comments about what is "going well at SCA" and what "areas of growth" do we yet have.

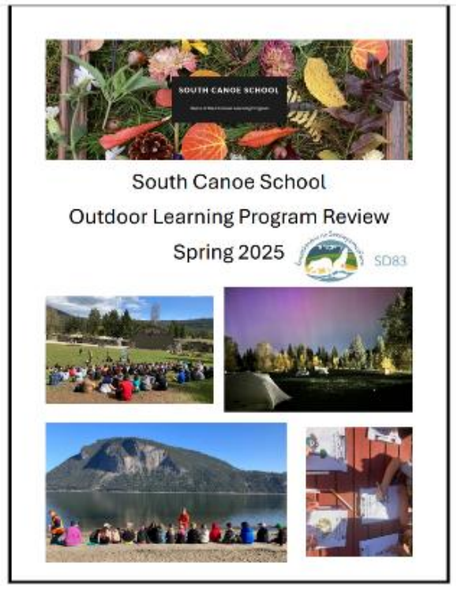
In reviewing these contributions, proposed goals were drafted by the principal and shared with staff for feedback at the March 2024 staff meeting.

At the March PAC meeting, parents were made aware of the new school learning plan and invited to attend an additional meeting in early April to explore the draft goals and provide input/feedback. Following these meetings, the final draft plan was shared again with staff and additional contributions were requested. Feedback taken from this consultation included combining 'on track' and 'extending' markers from the FSA data analysis process. The plan was then completed on April 10th and submitted to the Board.

Last year, staff discussed the direction of our School Learning Plan, the data being selected and the strategies in place. Staff suggestions to insert more focussed outdoor learning language and direction in the SLP were then added into this current draft of the plan. The staff was next invited to work on the SLP goals and strategies three additional times in 2024/25. The result of these discussions was that staff wanted our SLP to be 1) easy, 2) reliable data and 3) replicable data.



In 2026/27, we have undertaken an effort to examine, prepare and use an outdoor learning rubric to help teachers, students and parents quantify our successes as we provide an outdoor learning program. Teachers are using admin provided "collaboration time" this fall to dig into some ideas.





Swings! (belonging) – we are pleased to announce that the swings have been purchased and the district Operations department will begin installation in the coming school year!



The October PAC meeting’s principal’s report included a mini-presentation on our most recent FSA results in numeracy and literacy and an invitation to meet again to dig further into this data and explore ways to supporting growth. Approximately 10 parents joined an early November online parent info session about the SLP with great engagement and many good questions.

To ensure our SLP is front and centre as we plan the instruction and programming, 1/3 of each monthly staff meeting is focused on the SLP. By regularly and intentionally going back to these goals, the plan felt more alive and present in our work.

Parent Input Meeting

School Learning Plan 2026/27

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