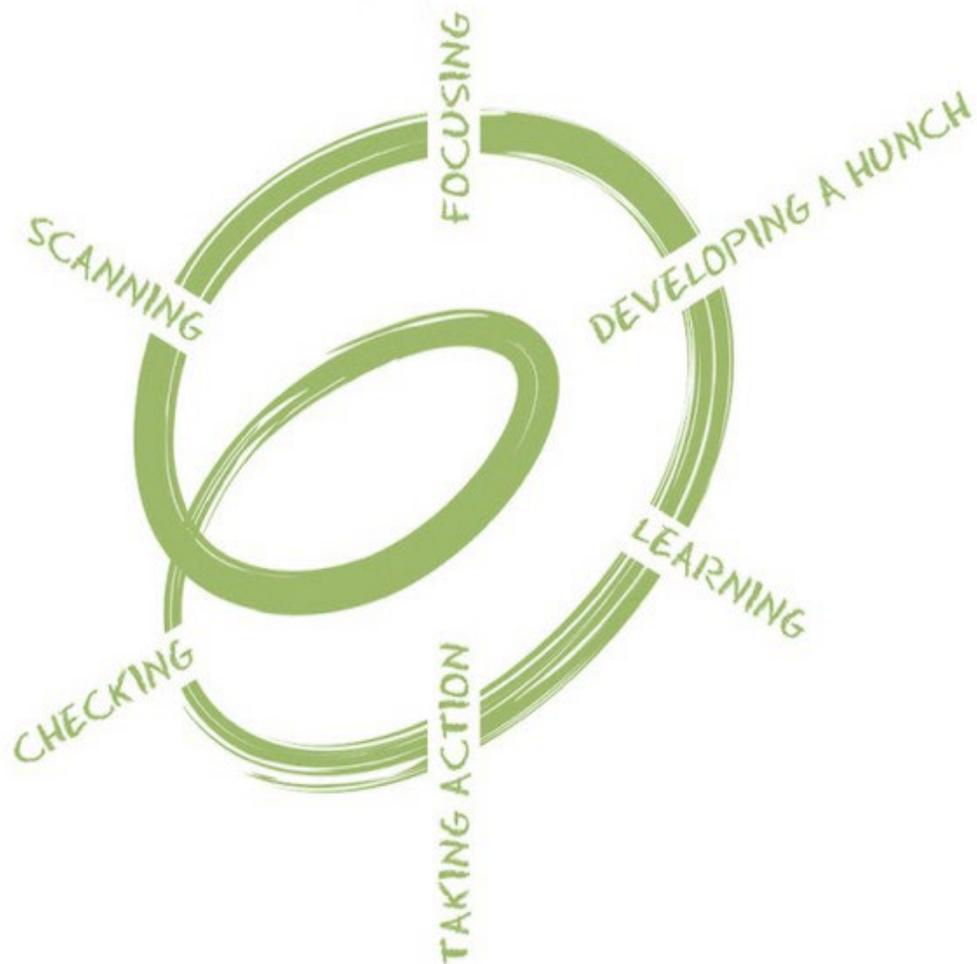


**Gordon Terrace Elementary School  
Action Plan for  
Improving Student  
Learning  
2021-2026**



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*"Spirals of Inquiry for equity and quality"*  
Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser

## **GORDON TERRACE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

### **Southeast Kootenay School District #5 Pathways to Learning:**

Vision	Mission	Values
Students love to learn here, staff love to work here, families love to gather here.	Our students will graduate with dignity, purpose and options.	Respect, Vision, Fairness, Collaboration, Integrity, Inclusion

### **Acknowledgement**

Gordon Terrace Elementary School respectfully honours and acknowledges that we live, work and learn on the unceded traditional territories of the Ktunaxa peoples.

### **School Context:**

Gordon Terrace has 268 students in 11 homerooms from kindergarten to grade 6. Gordon Terrace is an academic focused school with very experienced and knowledgeable staff. Currently, class sizes are large, and classrooms are small. This dynamic creates challenges unique to our school.

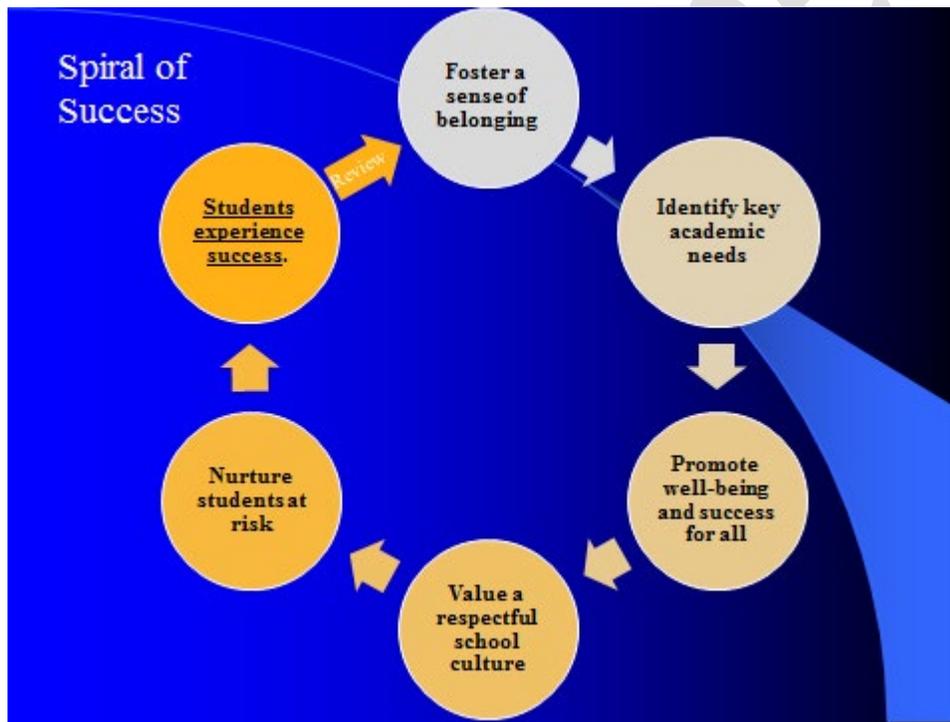
The previous school focus was on literacy, numeracy, place conscious learning, and student self-regulation. Our plan will take into consideration the best practices from the previous growth plans and meld them to our school growth plan. We will take a more focused approach during the next few years showing improvement through data analysis in primary literacy and human and social development.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, students participated in school and community activities, had a balance of experiences in sport, music, and outdoor pursuits. Since the pandemic, students have had less exposure to the above-mentioned areas and need more opportunities to reconnect and find balance in their lives. The pandemic has also significantly hindered student academic success in primary literacy, this is evident by teacher analysis, PM benchmark data and FSA results for 2021. As a school community we will emphasize primary literacy success and human social development.

## All Encompassing School Philosophy:

*“Curriculum and standards must first connect with the lives and spirits of our children if we’re to have any lasting success. Unless we reach into our students’ hearts, we have no entry into their minds. We can get students to pass tests and complete assignments. But there is a price to pay. We will never inspire our students to learn for their own sake and to love coming to school.” – Regie Routman*

GORDON TERRANCE ELEMENTARY “SPIRAL OF SUCCESS”: A GUIDE THAT WILL SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL GROWTH PLAN AND ULTIMATELY SUPPORT STUDENT ACADEMIC, BEHAVIORAL AND EMOTIONAL GROWTH



The Spiral of Success graphic has six key aspects:

- We will foster a sense of belonging by building authentic relationships with students, staff and members of the community. “The single factor common to success in education is relationships.” Michael Fullan
- We will identify learning needs based on data by evaluating strengths and weakness of student achievement. Data will be both qualitative and quantitative in nature.
- We will promote well-being and success for all by enriching the school community through ongoing structured, professional learning that focuses on improving student achievement based on areas of need.

- We will promote respectful school culture. Students and adults who feel valued, connected, understood, and appreciated will be more respectful of themselves, each other, and their environment.
- We will nurture students at risk by mobilizing the capacities of all staff. At risk students include students identified by PM benchmarks as being one year or more behind in literacy, students of aboriginal ancestry, and students with special needs.
- We will ensure students experience success by continually reviewing, reflecting and evaluating our school based goals.

### **School Goals:**

Through the development of the Spiral of Success, we established key school goals. It is important to review our goals, so we are constantly reflecting on success and needed change:

Goal #1: Ensure all Primary Students are Proficient or Exceeding in language arts by end of grade 3

Goal #2: Foster human and social development with our students, staff, and community. We will use aspects of First People Principles of Learning to support this goal.

**Goal #1:** Work towards all Primary Students being Proficient or Exceeding Language Arts by End of Grade 3

#### **Specific Targets of Goal #1:**

- 1) Reduce the percentage of students emerging and/or developing, (report card data), at the end of grade 3 by 2-4% a year over the next 5 years.
- 2) Increase the percentage of students On Track or Extending on FSA Literacy by 2-4% a year over the next 5 years.
- 3) Increase the number of students reaching grade level expectations using literacy assessments (PM benchmarks or Fountas and Pinnell Literacy) by 2-4% a year over the next 5 years.

**Inquiry Question:**

- Will strategies developed and implemented by a collaborative reflective literacy team

improve student literacy performance as indicated by PM benchmarks / Fountas & Pinnell and teacher performance standards?

Strategies:

- District literacy supports include: Grade 2 balanced literacy project; funding for literacy supports to be implemented upon acceptance of application. Funding to focus on resources and TTOC time for students reading well below levels. (in progress)
- Access to district literacy support teacher (in progress)
- Emphasis on ability groupings using Co-Teachers, Vice Principal, Student Services Teachers and other non-enrolling teachers to provide a more focused learning experience (was very successful for the 2021-22 school year, but may not be as successful for the 2022-23 school year as financial cuts have significantly reduced teacher, vice-principal, students services and other non-enrolling teacher time)
- Emphasis on ability groupings for grade 1 and grade 2 students (2021 school year we grouped students into grade 1 and grade 2 blends so we could utilize co-teaching and ability groupings in all subject areas) (continuing 2022-2023)
- Emphasis on Heggerty Phonemic Awareness
- Greater emphasis on teacher lead sound connections in the younger grades
- Targeted support of sound connections with SLP-EA (2022 – 23, waiting for SLP-EA time)
- Cross Grade Curriculum projects to augment student literacy – (buddy classes read and work with younger students)
- Cross Grade Curriculum projects to enhance student interest and passion for literacy learning
- Implement new curriculum to support deeper learning's in literacy through a greater emphasis on critical thinking, creative thinking and communication (in progress, primary)
- Work with SLP and SLP EA to ensure consistent instruction, assessment and vision
- Grade wide level readers – “Turtle Island Voices” 3 – 6 and “Strong Nations” K-2 guided reading kits
- Turtle Island Voices:
  - Gordon Terrace is very fortunate to have literacy resources that support Indigenous Learning, First Peoples Principals of Learning and Indigenous Ways of Knowing & Being. Turtle Island Voices are guided/leveled readers that include science, social responsibility, numeracy, language and oral language teaching that supports both Indigenous Learning and literacy. The Turtle Island Voices literacy resource compliments the PM Bench Mark assessments used throughout the school, and the

## PM Literature guided reading resources.

- First Nations Education and Steering Committee:
  - <http://www.fnesc.ca/>
- Primary Teacher training around Reading Assessment such as Running Records and PM benchmarks (district initiative 2021-22 completed)
- Team Development of common Literacy Goals (completed 2021 – 22; continue with new teachers 2022-23)
- Significant work to create similar approaches to assessment (continuing 2022-23)
- Assessment of each grade one, two and three students by the end of October to determine bench mark level
- Two additional assessment periods, February and May
- Strategies to include 'reading for meaning' and 'reading in context'
- Student Service Teacher Model to include more inclusive support at primary level – (budget cuts may result in this being postponed for a year)
- Student Services Model to reduce student pull out and focus on ability grouping
- Cross grade grouping
- Smaller literacy groupings
- Reduce skill and drill – for example flash cards
- Un-interrupt school wide literacy time - to include:
  - Guided reading groups
  - Buddy reading groups
  - Whole class modeling and teaching
  - Independent reading
  - Ability groupings
  - Writing
  - Talking about reading and writing

### Process

1. Identify instructional practice challenges and vulnerable students (in progress)
2. Create school teams and set dates (completed 2022)
3. First meeting for professional learning and planning: what skills and strategies do our vulnerable students need to succeed and what pedagogical practices will we try to address their needs? (in progress)
4. Implement Phonemic Awareness programs (new 2022)

5. Celebration and reflection: What worked, what didn't, what's next?
6. Review and revisit. (June 2023)

**Indicators of Success:**

Success will be evaluated with many different tools:

- Reading ability will be assessed using PM benchmarks. Students reading ability should improve as we move through the literacy learning process from kindergarten to grade 3.
- Literacy performance on FSA exam should improve once students have been through the program for 2 or 3 years.
- The percentage of all students proficient or exceeding with literacy report card data should increase during the next 5 years.

## DATA:

### Key Findings By Grade and Year End

#### 2020 - 2021

##### Grade 1:

- 24% of students were meeting end of grade level expectations based on PM benchmark data.
- 75% of students not meeting grade level expectations at the end of grade one based on PM benchmark data.
- 30% of students were at least half a year behind in expectations based on PM benchmark data.
- Literacy report card data indicated very few emerging students with only 3 students emerging representing 7.89%.

##### Grade 2:

- 25% of students were meeting end of grade level expectations based on PM benchmark data
- We have approximately 75% of students not meeting grade level expectations at the end of grade two based on PM benchmark data.
- 64% of students were at least half a year behind in expectations based on PM benchmark data.
- Literacy report card data indicated very few emerging students with only 2 students emerging representing 5.41%.

##### Grade 3:

- 52% of students were meeting end of grade level expectations based on PM benchmark Data.

- 48% of students not meeting grade level expectations at the end of grade three based on PM benchmark data.
- 48% of students were at least half a year behind in expectations based on PM benchmark data.
- Literacy report card data indicated 1 student emerging representing 2.94%.

## **2021-2022**

### Grade 1:

- 24% of students were meeting end of grade level expectations based on PM benchmark data.
- 76% of students not meeting grade level expectations at the end of grade one based on PM benchmark data.
- 44% of students were at least half a year behind in expectations based on PM benchmark data.
- Literacy report card data indicated 60% of students emerging or developing.

### Grade 2:

- 70% of students were meeting end of grade level expectations based on PM benchmark Data
- 30% of students not meeting grade level expectations at the end of grade two based on PM benchmark data.
- 22% of students were at least half a year behind in expectations based on PM benchmark data.
- Literacy report card data indicated 40% of students emerging or developing at year end

### Grade 3:

- 63% of students were meeting end of grade level expectations based on PM benchmark Data.
- 37% of students meeting grade level expectations at the end of grade three based on PM benchmark data.
- 21% of students were at least half a year behind in expectations based on PM benchmark data.
- Literacy report card data indicated 35% of students emerging or developing.

#### **Comparison of Year end PM Benchmarks to Year end Report Card Data:**

At the end of the 2021 school year:

- 44% of grade 1 students emerging or developing based on report card data and 75% of students not meeting PM benchmark year end expectations.
- 37% of grade 2 students were emerging or developing based on report card data but 75% were not meeting end of year expectations based on PM benchmark data
- Approximately 32% of grade 3 students were emerging or developing based on report card data but 48% were not meeting based on PM benchmark assessment

At the end of the 2022 school year:

- 60% of grade 1 students emerging or developing based on report card data, 75% of students not meeting PM benchmarks year end expectations.
- 40% of grade 2 students were emerging or developing based on report card data, 30% were not meeting end of year expectations based on PM benchmark data
- 36% of grade 3 students were emerging or developing based on report card data, 37% were not meeting based on PM benchmark assessment

**FSA Literacy Data 2021:**

Literacy		Participation Rate		Emerging		On Track		Extending	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
	<b>Writers Only</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>83.3</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>56.7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3.3</b>
	Female	20	70	5	35.7	8	57.1	1	7.1
	Male	16	100	12	75	4	25	0	0
	Indigenous	6	100	2	33.3	3	50	1	16.7
	ELL	2	100	2	100	0	0	0	0
	Diverse Needs*	4	100	2	50	2	50	0	0

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## Discussion:

Based on the research that indicates the benefits of focusing literacy interventions before the end of grade 3, the district focus on literacy improvement, the significant impact the pandemic appears to be having on student academic performance as shown by grade 1, 2 and 3 PM benchmark data from 2021, and FSA data from the previous two years, we decided to focus our energy on improving primary literacy.

We are tracking cohorts to better assess success in literacy. We are looking at general trends for each reporting year, but cohort analysis should provide a better tool for identifying success. Our focused targets for literacy are:

1. Reduce the percentage of students emerging and/or developing, (report card data), at the end of grade 3 by 2-4% a year over the next 5 years.
2. Increase the percentage of students On Track or Extending on FSA Literacy by 2-4% a year over the next 5 years.
3. Increase the number of students reaching grade level expectations using literacy assessments (PM benchmarks or Fountas and Pinnell Literacy) by 2-4% a year over the next 5 years.

### Achievement target one:

Last year we noticed significant discrepancies between PM benchmark data and report card data. In general, students were not being successful based on PM benchmark data but report card data did not reflect this lack of success.

During our fall 2021 staff discussions we determined significant variance in literacy assessment practices. Teachers were assessing using a variety of methods: 1) end of grade level expectations, 2) improvement regardless of grade level expectations, 3) current grade level expectations regardless of improvement, and 4) using a combination of some or all three previous aspects.

We worked collaboratively as a staff to unify teacher assessment for reporting. Not only did we analyze the discrepancies between PM benchmark data and reporting but also, we analyzed discrepancies between how various teachers reported. We worked diligently to align our reporting

and create positive results. Our teachers are now reporting emerging and developing based on similar expectations and achievements. 2022 data indicates significant alignment between teacher reporting of emerging and developing and PM benchmark scores. With reporting better aligned, we will be able to determine with greater accuracy the percentage of students that are emerging or developing using report card data.

Currently, our report card data, from tracking cohorts, shows an increase in the number of students emerging or developing over a two-year period. We surmise the increase in the number of students emerging or developing with final reporting data is because of our realigned assessment practices. Student literacy success has significantly improved this year even though it is not necessarily reflected in the report card data. What is reflected in the data is an alignment of report card data and PM benchmark data.

Achievement target two:

The FSA assessment for literacy was changed for the 2021-2022 school year. Previously, literacy was broken into two assessment streams, reading and writing. For the 2021-2022 school year and future years, literacy was and will be assessed in one stream, literacy.

The data for the 2021 – 2022 school assessment indicates a significant number of students are emerging, 57.6%. Of note in the data: males are 70% emerging, ELL students are 100% emerging, indigenous students are 33% emerging. We anticipate our literacy strategies will significantly reduce the number of students emerging on the FSA assessment.

Achievement target three:

Comparing cohorts is the most accurate way to assess improvement in literacy success. We were hoping to see a 1-2% increase in the number of students achieving grade level expectations based on PM benchmark data. For the cohort from grade 1 to grade 2 we saw a 46% increase in the number of students attaining grade level. For the cohort from grade 2 to grade 3 we saw a 38% increase in the number of students attaining grade level. The significant improvement in PM benchmark success is a direct result of our implemented procedures. It is difficult to point to the major contributing factor of our student success but grade level teachers subjectively noted improvement because of: 1) Literacy support person hired to help the readers that were the most vulnerable, (\$5000 grant from district); 2) Providing teachers the opportunity to work collaboratively in the primary grades by creating two grade

one and two classes instead of a single grade one and a single grade two; 3) Student services teachers working and supporting teachers in an inclusive model versus a removal model; 4) Librarian focusing on teaching literacy skills in collaboration with teachers.

**Summary:**

We were able to focus on literacy throughout the previous year and the strategies we implemented resulted in dramatic increases in literacy competence throughout the cohorts. We will continue to implement our literacy strategies, reflect using the spiral of inquiry and continue to increasing the percentage of students meeting grade level assessments for PM benchmarks and report card data. We will begin to analyze reporting data for grades 4 and 5 in core subject areas to identify if we see transference of literacy learning in primary to success in intermediate grades. We will also analyze data from the FSA literacy assessment to see if we find a correlation between improved literacy success at the primary level and improved literacy success on the FSA assessment in grade 4.

**Goal #2: Foster human and social development with our students, staff, and community. We will use aspects of First People Principles of Learning to support this goal.**

History: When I came to this school for the fall of 2019 I observed passionate learning, dedicated staff and enthusiastic learners. I observed quality educational achievements but they were happening in isolation. I also observed when students were not under the direct supervision of an adult they became less kind, more prone towards physical interactions, and unable to manage social interactions. Newer staff described the school as closed pockets of brilliant isolation.

As leaders in the school, we need to bridge the gap between successful teaching in isolation and begin to work and learn as a school community. There are many difficulties with overcoming the sense of isolation, Covid-19 and impacts from the forced isolation is still one of the paramount challenges. We will work hard during the next few years to re-kindle authentic school and community connectedness.

Note\* (Fostering human and social development with our students, staff, and community begins with fostering those relationships among the staff. We will place an emphasis on staff connections and healthy relationships)

## Strategies:

- First Peoples Principles of Learning embedded in school culture to support cultural change
  - Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
  - Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
  - Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.
  - Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.
  - Learning involves patience and time.
  - Learning requires exploration of one's identity.
- Creation of “The Gathering Place” yaqakiᑭ ᑭitqawxaxamki (Place Where People Gather)



- This location is dedicated to creating a sense of belonging for all member of the school community. The room will be used to focus first people principals of learning through embedding holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational learning practices.
- Social Thinking Curriculum
    - We determined our students struggle with communication in social situations.

Students need to be taught how to manage complex relationships. We will provide a focused strategies to teach social thinking curriculum.

- Our SLP, school counselor, student services teachers and youth care worker will work in conjunction with classroom teachers to delivering social thinking and emotional regulation programs. Our programs will focus on the idea that improved social thinking and emotional regulation will help students develop their social competencies to better connect with others and live happier, more meaningful lives.
  
- Place-Conscious Education:
  - Place conscious education is learning that is local and based on local context. Place conscious education promotes learning that involves local history, environment, culture and economy. Place conscious education eliminates barriers between schools and communities. Community involvement can include service learning or leadership, activism, action learning, school or community greenhouses and gardens.
  
- Expand school wide buddy program – Den Program new 2022-23
  
- Increased Playground Support
  
- Split Recess Primary and Intermediate: Creates greater opportunities for intermediate students to work with and guide primary students (successful 2021)
- Develop student leader program (implemented 2021 and we have seen success)
  - Peer support
  - Help supervise at recess and lunch
  - Increased sense of ownership
  
- Expand whole school activities
  - Swim Days
  - Skate Days
  - Ski Days (intermediate)
  - School assemblies focusing on team building and culture

- School multi grade teams
- Etc.
  
- Den Days
  - Each Friday teachers will work with their *family*. Families will consist of an equal number of students K through 6. Teachers and EA's will implement social activities to help build positive relationships between students within each family. The idea is to foster more positive student relationships cross grade.
  
- Grade 6 Leadership development
  - New 2022 -2023. The principal will take an active role in developing leadership skills with the two grade 6 classes. Each grade 6 class will travel to Blue Lake and partake in leadership development coordinated by Columbia Outdoor School. The grade 6's will then continue leadership development by working with the principal once per week during instructional time. Students will then implement their leadership skills to improve connections with the staff, students, and the community.
  
- Continue with the "Gordon Terrace Little Pink School in Nepal" project
  - Gordon Terrace came on board in 2011. The 3 room school was started in 2013 and opened in 2014 and has been helping the families in Kuttal Village and the neighbouring area since then. Gordon Terrace School has maintained the running of the school since it opened. It is a vital part of village life and Gordon Terrace Staff, students, and community keep it up and running.



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