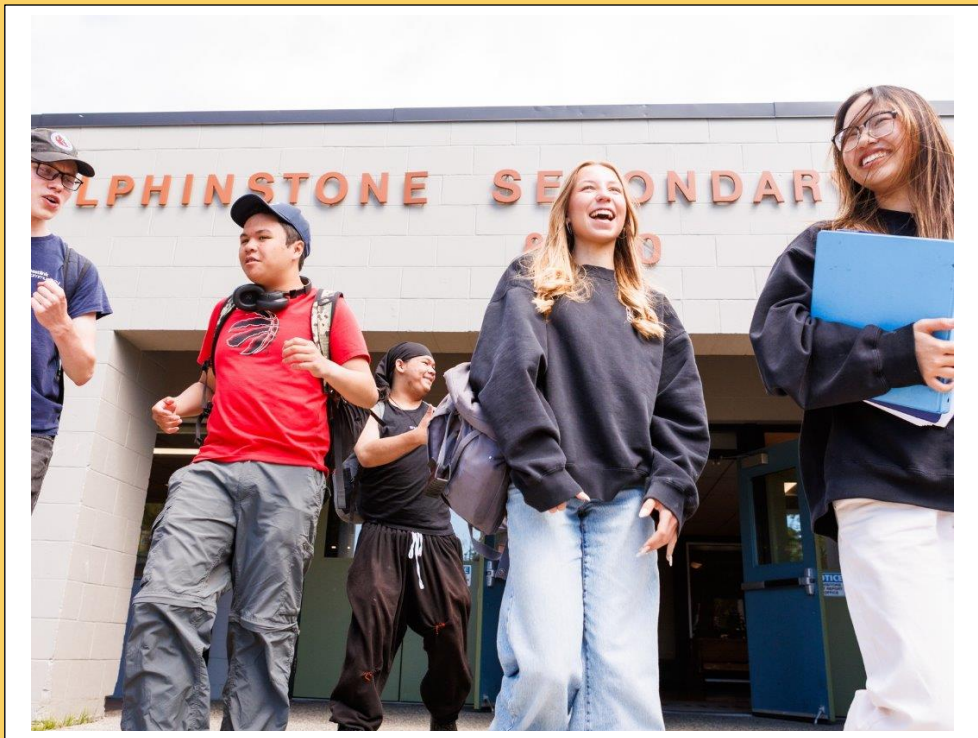Elphinstone Secondary

GROWTH PLAN

Administrators: J. Brisebois & H. Watt

2024-2025 School Year

Table of Contents

Elphinstone Secondary School Growth Plan

School Year: 2024-2025

School Demographics

Elphinstone Secondary School, located in Gibsons, BC, is a grade 8-12 school with a current population of 586.

The demographic makeup of the ESS community includes a wide range of family formats, representing all different levels of socioeconomic status. While different cultures are not readily obvious, there are a variety of cultural backgrounds and ethnicities represented, notably from Nigeria, Ukraine as well Indigenous students from a variety of Nations across Canada. Languages spoken include predominantly English, with French, Nigerian, Ukrainian, Russian spoken a little.

The staff is composed of a mixture of full-time and near full-time staff who offer a wide range of courses, including three different languages (French, Spanish, Russian), Outdoor Education courses, Leadership courses, as part of a wide range of elective course options. TV Production offers students the unique collaboration opportunity to work with Eastlink, the local cable company, and this program has produced award-winning film and television productions, in authentic, real-world learning contexts. The Pro Cooks Program offers exceptional training from Vancouver Community College, and there a dual-credit course – English 100 - is offered in conjunction with Capilano University.

Community Context

Elphinstone Secondary prides itself on creating an inclusive community, with many leadership opportunities for students to contribute to the school and wider community. From September's Fall Festival to cleaning the local cemetery before Remembrance Day, to remarkable food drives, the students witness the power of service. The community responds with outstanding support of the graduating class, with over $250,000 in scholarships and bursaries each year.

Every day, students acknowledge the land and welcome students in the language of Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw. Situated exclusively on the lands of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw, teachers seek to bring in local knowledge, and to reach out for experiential learning on field trips – both in nature and in urban settings.

Elphinstone is the beneficiary of numerous local partnerships. Work Experience students gain hands-on training at numerous businesses such as IGA, GBS, and others; our Art program exhibits student work for free at the Kube; and the Eastlink Cable company has helped many students build technical skills and a passion for media productions.

Parent and community involvement in the school is expanding, as the PAC is sponsoring parent workshops, and increasing communication between Elphinstone and families has resulted in greater awareness of programs and successes.

Trends

Recent changes in enrollment, demographic shifts, or community developments at ESS include:

- o A slow growth in our overall school populations, and increasing cultural diversity
- o More families experiencing significant financial need
- o Increase in student absenteeism

Trends in student achievement and outcomes related to the Core Competencies over the past years include:

- o A significant number of students needing academic support, development of executive functioning skills;
- o Students seeking a sense of belonging in their school community

Technological advancements and their integration into the school environment include:

- o Increased use of technology to access student voice and agency in surveys, such as the Foundry survey, MDI, and Student Learning Survey;
- o Flex registration has used Activity Messenger as a platform to increase student planning and accountability in their learning;
- o Teachers have been learning about, and integrating appropriate uses of AI into lessons to increase digital literacy and critical thinking

Strengths

- Elphinstone excels in the development of certain Core Competencies. The development of Communication and Personal and Social Core Competencies are demonstrated through the many opportunities for students to exercise agency and leadership. Participation in the District Student Leadership Team, Student Council, Town Council, Elphi Rangers, as well as classes in Athletic Leadership and School Leadership all contribute to students learning to work together collaboratively and to communicate effectively for a common purpose.

- Students are developing the agency to take control of their learning, and this is supported by structures such as planning blocks in the weekly schedule that occur on Tuesday and Friday for Flex registration.

- Unique programs, practices, or resources that contribute to student development include, to name a few: Try a Trade, Pro Cooks, TV Pro, Athletic Leadership Course, Work Experience, Flex time registration processes, attendance communication procedures, and collaboration time model used to bring staff together.

- Elphinstone staff bring considerable strengths to our school community. There are many clubs that run at lunch time or after school, and staff are committed to collaborating on a weekly basis to address the needs of vulnerable students. The historical knowledge staff hold about the student community is considerable and staff are quick to share ideas with each other. Staff are also willing to assist each other in difficult situations so that students have familiar faces working with them as much as possible.

- The inclusion support model at ESS is highly responsive and accountable. Structures such as Cougar Crossing and Marvel support students with greater needs while ensuring that integration into mainstream classes occurs whenever possible. Inclusion Support Teachers support a "push in" model to work with both students and teachers, and liaise with families regularly. The School Based

Team is highly effective, with ISTs, counsellors, and administrators meeting on Friday to review referrals for Tuesday morning meetings with teachers and support staff who work with referred students. Action plans are set and meetings on Fridays ensure these actions have occurred in a timely manner. The School Based Team model is reviewed yearly, and the cross curricular collaboration ensures that strategies for success are shared amongst colleagues.

- In a community of approximately 5000, Elphinstone collaborates closely with various community agencies and organizations, to support education and positive opportunities for learning in the community. There are efforts to bring the community into the classroom and the classroom into the community.

Stretches (Areas for Growth)

- Just as ESS has areas of strength, there are areas in which we would like to grow and realize positive outcomes. Attendance has been a considerable concern for schools in all North America, and Elphinstone is no exception. Increasing attendance and engagement in school remains a key focus of this school. The lack of importance placed on attending school and being punctual relates directly to the Core Competency of Personal Awareness and Responsibility. We have recently implemented a tiered system of support to improve attendance, with increasing levels of intervention that correspond to increased levels of absenteeism. As a school community, we recognize the complexity of absenteeism, and know that WE, the adults in the building, have a role in making sure our students want to be in our classes. We share the same goal with families, and all stakeholders in the ESS community: we want students to reach, and even exceed their potential.

- Anecdotally, evidence shows a declining emphasis on accountability and follow through with student learning. We want staff to reinforce high standards for students, and reignite passion and purpose in learning. This will require teachers to make real-world connections to activities inside the classroom.

- In addition to greater attendance and engagement in learning, Critical and Reflective Thinking is a Core Competency identified as a stretch for ESS This has been recognized in the results of the provincial Numeracy and Literacy assessments, and the lack of priority some students place upon their learning. In particular, the sub-competency of Analyzing and Critiquing was strongly noted as an area to target for improvement.

- Emphasis on the Core Competencies in general is an area of growth for ESS. The Core Competencies need to be prioritized AS the learning; being overt when teaching Core Competencies will reinforce their importance. Protocols such as Notice, Name, & Nurture are effective and should be embedded in lessons.

- Students do have voice and agency in the Elphinstone community, and this is a good thing. This student voice has identified a significant need for education around consent and mental health literacy. Community feedback from our neigbours (Sunnycrest Mall, Soames Place, etc.) have led us to gather data about how students are interacting with our close neighbours.

Reflections on Past Initiatives

Elphinstone has a history of nurturing strong connections between staff and students. These strong connections have promoted caring and thoughtfulness, and encouraged a sense of belonging to the Elphinstone community. With belonging comes the confidence to branch out and navigate the greater world with curiosity.

Connections between staff and students is exemplified in the Student Service Model. The SBT is the heartbeat of our school, and demonstrates commitment to supporting the most vulnerable students in our community. This team operates in an efficient manner and families to experience caring and support as the school collaborates to remove obstacles from student learning and well-being.

Beginning in June 2023-2024, staff came together to review every grade 8 student: strengths, stretches, connections to community, adult support, social network, and academic challenges were all noted. This initiative clearly demonstrated the deep caring

of the staff for every student, and informed counselors and administrators of further steps needed to support learning and well-being.

Previous School Growth Plans have prioritized authentic meaningful relationships, and the belief in the primacy of positive relationships and belonging continues to stand as a foundation for the 2024-2025 SGP.

The Distraction Policy, developed in 2023-2024, reflects a commitment to supporting students to focus on being present for their learning every day, while recognizing the need to learn to use technology as responsible digital citizens.

Previous School Growth Plans have recognized the need for more student voice, and this has happened. Student Council has provided cross-grade input into the establishment of initiatives such as Flex, and voiced the need for more education on issues such as consent. Student representation on the DSLT has only involved one student, but this has increased to include two student reps for the rest of this year and next. Moving forward, consultation with student groups will inquire about attendance, and the reasons why some students do not attend regularly.

Vision for Growth

With reflection and intentional goals for growth, Elphinstone can enrich academic excellence and engagement through personal agency, real-world learning, and the development of critical thinking skills.

Mission

With a shared expectation between families and school that attendance matters for academic success, students are developing the skills to be resilient learners, with responsibility and agency to advocate for, and demonstrate their learning; as critical consumers, students commit to supporting an equitable environment in school, and the greater community.

Core Values

Elphinstone is a learning community supported and enhanced by the values of Learning, Agency, and Equity. These values will guide our work, and are closely aligned with the district values of Integrity, Equity, Learning, and Belonging.

Equity Considerations

How is ESS supporting and planning for the following priority learners?

Indigenous students

- o Using the Spiral of Indicators document, students from K-12 will have updates every year. As supports are needed/removed, this tracking document is organic, and intended to **actively** support Indigenous students.
- o Indigenous Education Teachers are invited to our SBT meetings when appropriate
- o With the support of the Indigenous Education Team, Indigenous students are supported by two Indigenous Success Teachers, a Youth Engagement Worker, and the committed staff who seek to incorporate First Peoples Principles of Learning in all curriculum.

Students with disabilities or diverse abilities

- o Students with disabilities or diverse abilities are supported through an individualized case management system, where case managers spearhead the IEPs and regularly monitor the progression of IEP goals for each student. ISTs work closely with classroom teachers to provide support and offer help adapting work to align with IEP goals.

Children and Youth in Care

- o Students in Care receive regular check-ins with school counselors, and if needed, are referred to the School Based Team for discussion and strategy plans to support these students closely.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

Elphinstone will focus on the following Core Competencies for the 2024-2025 year:

- Personal and Social: Personal and Social Awareness
- Thinking: Critical Thinking

Selected Strands for Core Competency Development

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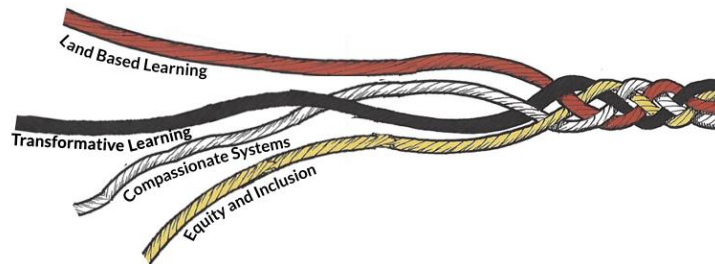
Strands:
- Authentic Relationships
- Personalized Learning
- Nature-Based Learning
- Experiential Hands-On Learning
- Inclusion
- Authentic, Real-World Learning
- First Peoples Principles of Learning
- Transformative Assessment
- Flexible Learning Environments

1. Authentic Real-World Learning
2. Authentic Relationships
3. Flexible Learning Environments

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

1. **Core Competency Goal: Improve critical thinking through analyzing and critiquing skill sets in Numeracy and Literacy and the use of Flex blocks**
2. **Evidence Analysis and Interpretation: See appendix A for Data and Evidence and Analysis**

Direct Evidence: Numeracy and Literacy Assessments, Flex block registration

- The Numeracy 10 Assessments indicate a baseline level of data to be used for comparison in future years. While gains in Numeracy 10 have been made for Resident Students with Designations and Resident Indigenous Students, inequities persist, and these students have consistently lagged behind Resident students over the last three years.

- Literacy 10 Assessments indicate a baseline level of data to be used for comparison in future years. Literacy 10 assessments have shown a worrisome decline in proficiency over the last three years.

Indirect Evidence:

- Anecdotally, teachers have reported a decline in the amount of work that is completed in a term, and students struggle to engage. This issue brings up the complex issue of academic rigour and which comes first: students disengage because of lack of rigour, or is there a decrease in rigour due to the lack of engagement.
- While self-assessment skills and self-reflection in subject areas has increased somewhat with the use of Spaces, this remains an area of growth, and development for critical thinking skills. Most students and teachers engage with Spaces at a minimal level, and more robust engagement would enhance critical thinking.

3. **Rationale**
    - Authentic real-world learning will increase engagement with community and relevance to the students' lives, and motivate them to engage
    - Flexible Learning Environments will occur every day during Flex blocks
    - Personalized Learning will involve assessment practices that are more individualized through the triangulation of product, conversation and observations.

4. **Implementation Plan**
    - Experiential learning will be supported. Connecting Science students to marine biologists, the Model UN Club, the Culinary Arts Program, TV Pro, and multidisciplinary field trips are a few examples of innovative teaching practices the school takes to implement this strand currently, and future initiatives will be encouraged.
    - Timeline: yearlong
    - Responsible Parties: administrators and teachers will connect with experts that can explore real-world learning and bring greater relevance to students.

5. **Resources Required**
    - Direct teaching of the Core Competencies and how to do effective self-assessment. (Learning Guides, staff, Desiree Harris)
    - Sharing resources of lesson plans on how to teach students self-assessment. (Learning Guides)

- Work of Katie White on self-assessment will be made available to teachers. (<u>Student Self-Assessment: Data Notebooks, Portfolios, & Other Tools to Advance Learning</u>)

6. **Success Indicators – consider staff, students and families**
    - Provincial Assessment metrics in Numeracy and Literacy will show improvement compared to the last three years.
    - Self Assessment methods will become more sophisticated and will involve more student involvement in Student Learning Conferences.
    - Staff (Math & Science teachers) will attend in assessment conferences by Tom Schimmer and will share learning with other staff
    - Assessment methods will become more varied, and will involve self-assessment that demonstrates critical analysis and reflection
    - Families will engage more fully with Student Learning Conferences, and will seek this opportunity to review student work
    - Staff meetings can involve discussion of Core Competency Critical Thinking strategies that have worked

7. **Reflection and Evaluation of the Plan: Seasonal Round**
    - Data on Literacy and Numeracy assessments will be collected two times per year
    - Methods teachers used to help students get ready for Numeracy and Literacy assessments should be noted, so these methods can be replicated or discarded, depending on efficacy
    - Anecdotal sharing of work done by teachers to develop critical thinking, and analysis and critiquing skills will be shared at staff meetings and during collaboration times (Street Data)
    - Adjustments can be made depending on the seasonal results from Numeracy and Literacy assessments

1. **Core Competency Goal: Improve Personal Awareness and Social Responsibility – specifically through the facets of Well-Being, Self-Regulation, and Self-Advocacy.**
2. **Evidence Analysis and Interpretation: See appendix A for Data and Evidence and Analysis**

Direct Evidence: Attendance Data and Flex Registration – See Addendum A

- January 2025 results will provide baseline data, against which, future data can be shared. In summary, there is a high percentage (58%) of Elphinstone students who meet the Ministry of Education criteria for chronic absenteeism.

- o Flex Registration data will provide a direct measure of students practicing regular agency of their learning. While this system is new this year, and some of the implementation challenges have occurred for a few students, the overall system provides a sound snapshot of how students are using Flex.

Indirect Evidence: Distraction Policy and Student Self-Regulation

- o While there is no baseline data against which a comparison can be made, anecdotal evidence suggests students are struggling to self-regulate themselves with devices. As of semester 2, students have been reminded about our Distraction Policy and how it will be enforced.

3. Rationale

The facets of self-advocating, self-regulating and well-being have been identified equally as important contributors to Personal Awareness and Responsibility. This Core Competency is aligned well with the previous School Growth plan, and fundamental belief in the primacy of positive relationships to students learning and thriving. While interconnected, the facets of well-being, self-regulating, and self-advocating will be approached in distinct ways. The strands of Personalized Learning, Authentic Relationships and Authentic Real-world Learning support this Core Competency as students develop agency over their learning and how to best demonstrate evidence of their learning. Authentic Relationships has, and will continue to support student learning, as the trust built between students, teachers, support staff and families, allows students to take risks to learn new skills.

4. Implementation Plan

Actions: Personalized Learning

- o Students will learn to self-advocate for the manner in which they can best demonstrate their learning. Flex Block Registration, Attendance, extra-curricular activities are examples of areas where this will happen. The facet of self-regulation will be tracked primarily through the use of registration for Flex and daily attendance. These metrics demonstrate how consistency and the development of academic routines will improve confidence and academic standing.

Actions: Authentic Relationships

- o Students can choose who they connect with and how they can solve problems, recognizing that different people will offer different capacities. This will occur primarily in Flex blocks.

Actions: Authentic Real-world Learning

- o Students practice more self-regulation in public spaces, and experience real consequences for meeting the expectations of attending classes, and meeting responsibilities. Teachers teach models of organization that students can learn.

Timeline: ongoing throughout the year, but particularly during periods of self-assessment in Spaces and other avenues for self-assessment

Responsible Parties: teachers, students, and families

5. **Resources Required**
   - o Attendance Clerk
   - o ProD around the implementation of executive functioning strategies, particularly for junior students
   - o Database of real-world expertise that can be accessed to bring to our students (initiative begun by J. Brisebois in September 2024)
6. **Success Indicators – consider staff, students and families**
   - o Registration numbers for Flex
   - o Attendance tracking through weekly reports generated by Attendance Clerk
   - o Survey of student involvement in extra-curricular activities, connection to adults in the school
   - o Sharing experiences (street data) at staff meetings about personalized and real-world learning
7. **Reflection and Evaluation of the Plan: Seasonal Round**
   - o Data on attendance and Flex registration will be ongoing through the work of the Attendance Clerk. Families and students will receive data weekly.
   - o The Attendance Clerk will create reports that will allow quarterly comparisons for attendance, for analysis by staff
   - o Data obtained through MDI, Student Learning Surveys, and school-based surveys will provide map and satellite data to assess how adjustments should be made.

Engagement and Communication Plan

The Elphinstone School Growth Plan will need the engagement of all stakeholders. A draft of the SGP will be sent to PAC for review before final publication, and PAC

members have been invited to sit on the Engagement Council, which will track attendance and tiers of support.

Members of the ESS Student Council and DSLT will be invited to review the SGP and make suggestions before final publication.

The monthly ESS Family Newsletter will include a link to the SGP, and our school website will include a link to the SGP.

Professional Learning

Professional learning activities planned to support staff in implementing the Growth Plan and fostering the Core Competencies will be ongoing. Professional learning opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- Feb. 7 SCTA Pro-D Day (Indigenous Learning, AI, and Inclusion)
- Staff presentation by Ray Clayton on the District Engagement Team
- Spaces Workshops
- Microsoft Office 365 Workshops (particularly Teams workshops to promote collaboration between staff)
- Feb. 12 Seminar with Tom Schimmer to focus on assessment practices with Math and Science teachers.

Budget Considerations

The implementation of the ESS School Growth Plan will require significant budgetary considerations. These include, but are not limited to:

- The creation of the position of Attendance Clerk,
- the costs of using platforms such as Activity Messenger,
- teacher Lunch n Learns to build capacity in rigorous pedagogy and ways to use technology
- costs associated with implementation of real-world learning, whether through experiential field studies, guest speaker costs, or resources
- conference attendance, both in-person and online
- learning resources, from books on self-assessment and to materials for vertical learning and executive functioning skill development
- the exploration of resources, such as granite benches to create an outdoor Learning Circle, so that teachers could book an outdoor space for learning.

For this School Growth Plan to be assessed effectively, the actions and strategies implemented will require budgetary support for a minimum of two years.

Conclusion

Elphinstone Secondary is committed to the positive development of every student in our building; all stakeholders support student development and their skills to think critically, enrich their well-being, and practice self-regulation and agency. Working together, students will flourish in our complex society.

Appendix A: Data Supporting Implementation of Core Competency Goals

Goal 1:   Improve critical thinking through analyzing and critiquing skill sets in Numeracy and Literacy and the use of Flex blocks.

Goal 2: Improve Personal and Social Awareness and Responsibility specifically through the facets of Well-Being, Self-Regulation, and Self-Advocacy.

Source: SDO46_ESLR_SECTION A. UPDATED0620-1:

Measure 2.2: Grade 10 Numeracy Expectations
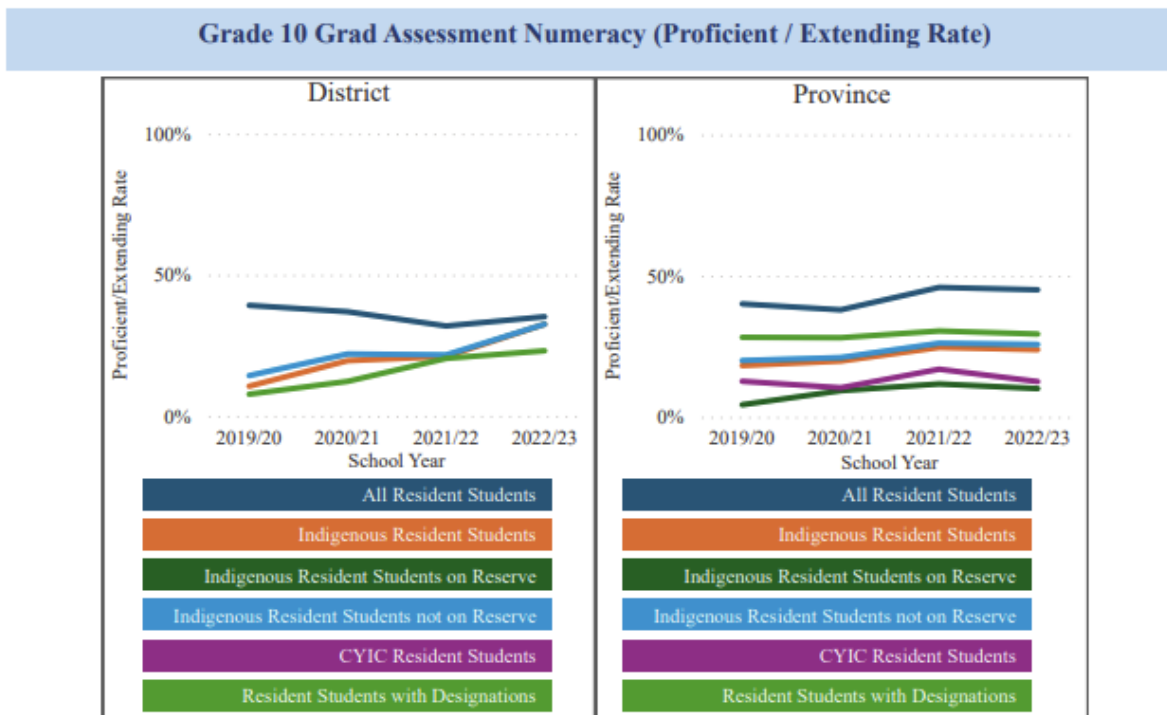
Analysis: All Resident Student results declined until 2022/23, when a slight improvement was noted, though they remain well below the provincial average. Resident Students with Designations, while also below the provincial average, have shown steady improvement. District results for Indigenous Resident Students, significantly higher since 2019/20, are now approaching those of All Resident Students.

Grade 10 Grad Assessment Literacy (Proficient / Extending Rate)
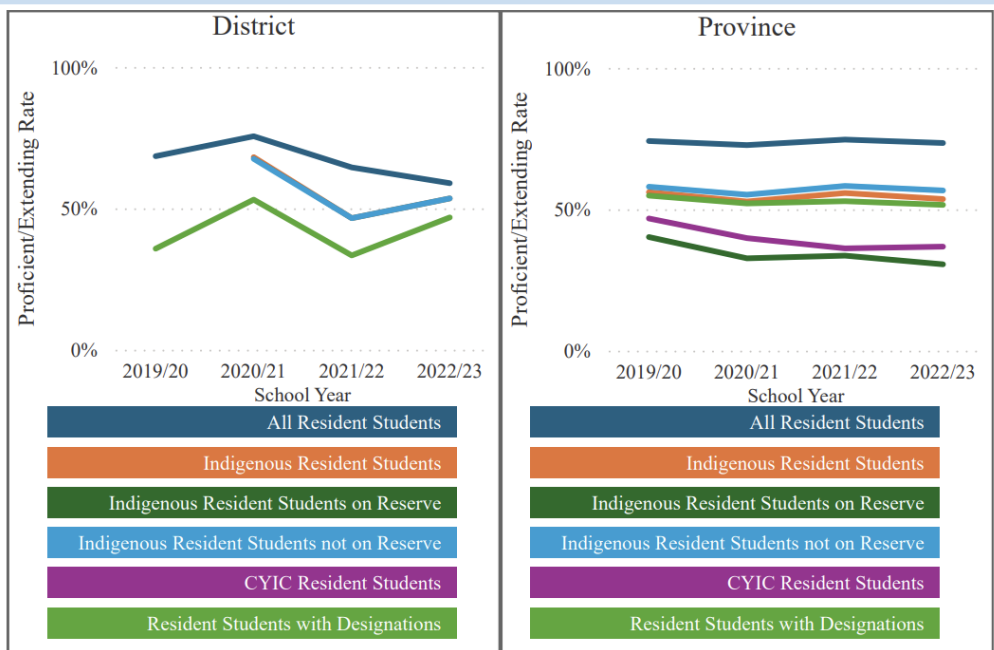
Analysis: Literacy is an area of concern as Results dropped in 2021/22. This decline continued in 2023/24 for All Resident Students, however, Indigenous Resident Students and Resident Students with Designations showed improvement. It is concerning that all three groups are significantly below the provincial average, and goals must prioritize support for our priority learners, enhancing teaching methodology, and removing barriers to learning.

Flex Registration Statistics

ESS uses a platform called Activity Messenger for students to register their choices for the Flex blocks, which occur from 10:01 – 10:43 every Monday to Friday. We are able to gather data that indicates the number of students who have registered for Flex Block, and then we ask teachers to take attendance in Flex Block. This data is being compiled by Andrea Thomas, our new Attendance Clerk, and we WILL have fulsome data to draw upon when analyzing the efficacy of the new Flex initiative. This data will be reviewed in March and June 2025.

Students with Chronic Absenteeism

Green: 10% absenteeism, Pink: 30% adsenteeism

		Total number of students	Students with 28 or more class absences (chronic absenteeism)	Percentage	Students with 84 or more class absences (3x chronic absenteeism)	Percentage
	8	123	65	52.8	17	13.8
	9	110	66	60.0	20	18.2
Grade	10	117	83	70.9	27	23.1
	11	125	68	54.4	17	13.6
	12	110	57	51.8	19	17.3
	ALL	585	339	58	100	17.1

* From September to December 20, we have had ~280 classes in session

Analysis: Absenteeism is the biggest barrier to learning. We cannot address learning barriers if we cannot get students to school and ready to learn. The reasons for absenteeism are being explored through student surveys, parent discussions, and staff meetings, but this factor cannot be overlooked as a major barrier to improving the Core Competency of Critical Thinking. As well, absenteeism is a major factor to consider when addressing our second goal of improving Core Competency Personal and Social: Well-Being, Self-Regulation, and Self-Advocacy. When students develop the resilience and grit to attend school despite challenges that arise, increased well-being, confidence, and success will follow.