

Qwam Qwum Stuwixwulh 2020

STEP 1) GENERAL SCHOOL STORY (WHO WE ARE)

2020-11-26



WHAT ARE THE UNIQUE, POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR SCHOOL?

Qwam Qwum Stuwixwulh (QQS) represents the hopes and dreams of the Snuneymuxw First Nation; this proud community has achieved the remarkable feat of creating a state-of-the-art learning facility on their territory, for their children and the future of their community. The Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN) has partnered with Nanaimo-Ladysmith Public Schools (NLPS) to co-govern Qwam Qwum Stuwixwulh for the benefit of all students. Vision for this work is captured in the Syeyutsus Policy and Framework (attached). Our school is open-catchment, meaning any student in Nanaimo-Ladysmith Public Schools is welcome to attend.

Syeyutsus Policy



Syeyutsus Video



School Logo

WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT DEMOGRAPHICS OF OUR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY?

QQS serves 108 students, Kindergarten to Grade 7

Our students have Aboriginal ancestry from diverse backgrounds. As of January 2020, our demographics include:

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| SFN, Status, On Reserve | 36 |
|-------------------------|----|

| | |
|--|----|
| SFN, Status, Off-Reserve | 7 |
| Non SFN, Status, On Reserve | 11 |
| NON SFN, Status, Off Reserve** | 23 |
| Non-Status | 18 |
| No Aboriginal Ancestry | 3 |
| Metis | 2 |
| Undeclared Ancestry | 1 |
| We are also proud to serve status members of | |

We are proud to serve status members of 10 First Nations:

| 1701 Band Code | Associated Reserve |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 0649 | Snaw naw as |
| 0555 | Squamish |
| 0665 | Tseshah (Port Alberni) |
| 0642 | Cowichan |
| 0641 | Stzuminus |
| 0650 | Penelakut |
| 0647 | Malahat |
| 0550 | Musqueam |
| 0648 | Snuneymuxw |

Last year our enrollment reflected higher numbers in Kindergarten and the Intermediate grades, but this year our enrollment is more balanced across the grades. We have increased our numbers with incoming student transfers; we present a unique and desirable learning opportunity for students who may not have been comfortable or successful in other schools.

Many of our students and families experience high transience and instability of housing, food and/or safety. SFN leadership has identified education and housing as two key priorities for the enhancement of their community.

WHAT DO WE CELEBRATE?

We honour and celebrate the unique wisdom and teachings passed along from the old people (elders and ancestors), gifted from the land.

We honour the special and unique quality of every child and acknowledge that kids do well if they can.

We celebrate growth in all areas of development - spiritual, emotional, physical and mental.

We celebrate the gifts of life - we are grateful!

Step 1 Notes: [none]

Step 1 Completed: **2020-11-26**

STEP 2) WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT OUR LEARNERS? (SCANNING)

2020-11-26



WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND STRETCHES WE SEE IN OUR LEARNERS?

During our scanning process, we noticed that a significant number of our students are considered both emotionally and academically vulnerable. Previously staff had identified that students would struggle to identify QQS their community school - we are proud to say this is no longer the case!

Our students bring incredible resilience, strength and sense of community to school each day. They know the value of sticking together and supporting each other. They are learning to "plow ahead" in spite of the extreme circumstances they see, and some experience.

Our staff come from a diverse variety of backgrounds; we have staff that have worked with First Nations community their entire life, while others have little experience working in community; our diversity is a strength that we will use to collectively move forward, together!

An area of unique concern is whether our students have the words and understanding to share about themselves and their community - what does it mean to be Snuneymuxw? What does it mean to be an ally? How is our community stronger when we understand ourselves better?

WHAT EVIDENCE DO WE HAVE OF THESE STRENGTHS AND STRETCHES?

We have used the NLPS literacy screener to gain insight into the achievement levels of our learners; within this process we have identified relative strengths in rote literacy skills - word recall etc - however we have also identified significant gaps in phonemic awareness and decoding for many of our learners.

When looking at the intermediate students, we recognize that their foundation of rote learning has not prepared them for the comprehension demands of higher levels of learning. Many of our intermediate students are unable to comprehend the texts they read.

We know that routines and repetition are beneficial for our learners - they thrive in predictable, safe environments. With a foundation of connection, the creativity and gifts of our learners will be shared. However, increased risk-taking by our learners only happens in a community of belonging.

We continue to use the NLPS literacy screener and are looking forward to exploring the new numeracy screener.

In December 2020, Using the Red-Yellow-Green Aboriginal Education Quick Assessment, our students were broken down as follows:

Green - Little Vulnerability - 30%

Yellow - Moderate Vulnerability - 39%

Red - Significant Vulnerability - 31%

Step 2 Notes: [none]

Step 2 Completed:

2020-11-26

STEP 3) WHAT ARE OUR GOALS? (FOCUSING)

2021-02-27



WHAT AREAS WILL WE FOCUS ON TO IMPROVE OR ENHANCE SUCCESS FOR OUR LEARNERS BASED ON WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THEM?

We are focusing on being a relevant, helpful and excellent learning environment for all students and staff.

In recognition of the strength of this land and the Snuneymuxw people, we seek to align the quality and underlying values of our school structures and systems; in doing so we aim to disrupt the troubling trajectory of student outcomes and achievement.

Last year we asked the following:

As a staff, if we continue to strengthen our understanding of the Snuneymuxw culture and language, will our learners feel more connected to THEIR community and the land?

This year, we are adding that we would our learners to see themselves as Qwam Qwum (Strong) spiritual, physical, emotional and mental - community members.

To achieve this, we want to offer:

- World-Class Literacy & Numeracy Instruction and
- Diverse and Holistic Learning - Core Competency Development



WHAT ARE OUR SPECIFIC GOALS?

- Create spaces that are culturally safe, full of Hulquminum language and connected to the land and community.

- Leverage safety for high-quality literacy and numeracy instruction
- Monitor and support every learner - know their Spiritual, Emotional, Physical and Intellectual development in order to guide and support next steps.

Step 3 Notes:

February Family Advisory Council Meeting - Families expressed the desire for more language and culture in the school - desire to see language taught daily.

Step 3 Completed:

2021-02-27

STEP 4) WHAT LEARNING AND ACTION WILL WE TAKE?

2021-01-14



WHAT WILL TEACHERS LEARN MORE ABOUT TO SUPPORT OUR GOALS?

It is imperative that all staff in the building continue their personal and professional journey towards understanding Snuneymuxw and, more broadly, First Nations values and perspectives. This journey of understanding involves both learning and un-learning; we must become comfortable walking in both worlds as allies in mutual respect, harmony with creation and true wellness.

As a staff, we ask: If we continue to strengthen our understanding of the Snuneymuxw culture and language, will our learners feel more connected to THEIR community and the land?

WHAT ACTIONS/STRATEGIES WILL WE TAKE/USE (TEACHERS, PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS) TO SUPPORT OUR GOALS?

Community & Parents

- Trust their children to our care
- Collaborate on shared goals/plans
- Communicate wants/needs and strengths of children
- Support Elder participation and presence in the school
- Reinforce values at home and in the community

Teachers

- Engage, as family, in community
- Adopt First Nations Values as outlined in First Nations Traditional Values (Pepper & White 1996)
- Learn and use Hulquminuxw language for daily instruction and interaction
- Engage in professional learning for literacy instruction
- Engage in professional learning for numeracy instruction

Students

- Seek success in a safe and respectful community
- Participate in restorative responses when things go wrong

Step 4 Notes: [none]

Step 4 Completed:

2021-01-14

STEP 5) HOW WILL WE KNOW WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE? (CHECKING)

2021-01-14



WHAT EVIDENCE OF LEARNING WILL WE COLLECT TO CHECK THE PROGRESS ON OUR GOALS?

Our progress will appear in many forms:

- Increased academic achievement
- Increased attendance
- Increased engagement
- Increased community involvement, including parents, elders and stakeholders.

Step 5 Notes: [none]

Step 5 Completed: 2021-01-14

STEP 6) HOW WILL WE SHARE THIS INFORMATION?

2021-01-14



HOW WILL WE SHARE OUR PLAN WITH STAFF?

Daily, through supportive conversations and actions.
Intentionally, through staff meetings and digital communication.
Regularly, at PLC and other learning opportunities.

HOW WILL WE SHARE OUR GOALS WITH STUDENTS?

Daily, through morning gatherings and classroom discussions.
Specifically, through individual conversations and interactions.
Universally, with all staff!

HOW WILL WE SHARE OUR GOALS AND PROGRESS WITH PARENTS?

Regular emails and formal communications.
Regular PAC meetings - to be established
Informal gatherings - luncheons, celebrations of learning etc.

Step 6 Notes: [none]

Step 6 Completed: **2021-01-14**

