

# REPORT TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT NO.46 (SUNSHINE COAST)

## STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT: EARLY YEARS

Submitted by District Principal, Kirsten Deasey  
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Goal 1.b.: Our students will thrive in their early years, and throughout their education, within schools, families, and communities that inspire learning, respect, and connection.

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### OVERVIEW:

Healthy development in the early years, especially from newborn to age three, provides building blocks for educational achievement, responsible citizenship, lifelong health and strong communities. School District No. 46 understands the importance of early childhood development and works to provide comprehensive supports for children and families during this critical time. Grounded in the science that connects early experiences to future learning capacity, behaviours, and physical and mental health, our programs are inclusive, respectful and focus on increasing access to supports and services. School District No. 46 is a provincial leader in the early years and continues to model innovative strategies through partnerships with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Children & Families.

### SYNOPSIS OF THIS YEAR'S INITIATIVES:

To support the district in meeting the Early Years Goal (1b) articulated in the Strategic Plan, School District 46 has a vibrant Early Years team comprised of school age and early childhood educators.

The district has a well-established series of strategies that support children from birth through to the end of kindergarten including:

- **SPARK!** (Supporting Parents Along the Road to Kindergarten)
- **Imagination Library**
- **StrongStart Centres & Outreach** (WonderWheels)
- **KinderSPARK!**
- **Screening** of our newest students in September
- **Early Development Instrument (EDI)** research - completed by Kindergarten teachers

With the announcement that Child Care will move under the Ministry of Education and to meet the critical need for child care in our community, the school district early years team has developed a Child Care Strategy that includes:

- Strengthening connections between Early Years and School Age educators
- Supporting the implementation & pedagogy of the Early Learning Framework & Indigenous Ways of Knowing & Being including the First People's Principles of Learning.
- Strengthening transitions to Kindergarten
- Improving the quality and accessibility of child care on school board property.

School District No. 46 continues to lead the province in moving this Child Care Strategy forward.

## RECENT & NEXT STEPS:

### **Strengthening Early Years to Kindergarten**

#### **WonderFULL ME:**

- Through funding from the Ministry of Education, our district created innovative supports for families transitioning into Kindergarten. Inspired by CanChild (at McMaster University) our early years team created 'WonderFULL Me' posters. These posters surface the child's voice to celebrate their diversity and culture & present the fullness of every child's story to Kindergarten Teachers. This strategy is done through collaboration with community child care providers.

#### **SPARK! Community Connections**

- This 4-session series is designed to have regular opportunities to engage with child care providers, Early Childhood Educators and teachers.

### **Story Workshop Series – Changing Results for Young Children**

- Through funding from the Ministry of Education, an 8 session 'Story Workshop' series has been launched this year to support child care providers, Early Childhood Educators and teachers to collaborate to explore the principles of the Early Learning Framework & Indigenous Ways of Knowing & Being, including the First People's Principles of Learning.
- Educators from the Portland Opal School support the learning in this series. Triads of early years and school age educators are supported through experts who travel to schools to demonstrate Story Workshop in classrooms.
- Our district partners with Sea to Sky & West Vancouver school districts and provides the provincial facilitation of this series.

### **Creating New Child Care Spaces**

- With child care moving under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education by 2023, the district continues take a leadership role in addressing the need for child care in our community. The district has been actively addressing the child care crisis by applying for grants and creating additional child care spaces. Considerations in the roll out of the Child Care Strategy include:
  - Site capacity
  - Funding availability
  - Research on community need
  - Neighbourhood vulnerability
  - Consultation and collaboration with community partners.
- The district is adding to the child care offered in Gibsons Elementary by adding infant-toddler and preschool age care in both the Sechelt Early Years Centre and in the West Sechelt Elementary expansion. Additional after school care spaces were added to the Early Year Centre site. This strategy will address child care demand in our largest and most vulnerable neighbourhood. Through a formal request for proposals, the YMCA has been chosen as the provider in all three sites. The district is hoping to develop a fourth site at Madeira Park Elementary. Through a community consultation process and data on the high community need, the district applied for another New Spaces Grant to

place a modular purpose-built child care on this site. This application included adding infant-toddler, preschool age and school-age care. The district applied for an additional New Spaces Grant this past Fall to support equipment for the West Sechelt Child Care.

### **Early Years Centre**

- Through a capital New Spaces grant 'The Early Years Centre' in Sechelt has been developed this past year. This centre houses StrongStart, continuous SPARK! & Child Development Classes, and many resources and supports including:
  - Family Navigators – who provide on-site child development classes: Lunch & Learn, Being-Present Parenting; One-Hour Parenting Solutions.
  - Many early Intervention therapists offer on-site assessments and supports for families, including Vancouver Coastal Health's Speech & Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist and Community Services Infant Development Program and Supported Child Development.
  - On-site offices provide spaces for counselling, navigation, education and assessments.
  - A lending library of books, toys, resources and supports for families, ECEs, Child Care Providers, and teachers.
  - Child care for both infant/toddlers and pre-school age children through the YMCA and school age care through Community Schools is set to open as soon as staffing is secured.

### **Seamless Day**

- The Seamless Day Child Care program at West Sechelt was the second in the province to open its doors to families of Kindergarten and early primary students. Housed in our newly licensed Kindergarten room, Early Childhood Educators provide before and after school care, and overlap within the school day to work collaboratively with Kindergarten Teachers. Goals of Seamless Day include:
  - Improve the quality and accessibility of child care on school board property.
  - Increase support for the classroom learning environment.
  - Improve children's transitions with seamless support and communication.
- The program has been highly successful. The Kindergarten room is licensed and staffed to support 12 children before & after school each day, and all spaces are full on most days. Care is provided at an affordable rate of \$10 a day and subsidy is available to low income families. Children and families benefit from strong collaboration of educators during the school day and the extended hours of care, including during Kindergarten Gradual Entry and professional development days.

### **Early Childhood Education Dual Credit Project**

- In partnership with the Sea to Sky school district, the district was successful in receiving a grant to offer a dual credit Early Childhood Education program to grade 12 student during the 2022 calendar year. This strategy is designed to offer university level courses and a clear, accessible career pathway for senior secondary students. The district is exploring a partnership with Capilano University.

### **UST B4 Early Childhood Education Program**

- School District No. 46 was recently awarded funding to pilot the 'JUST B4' Early Childhood Education Program. Only one other program is currently operating in the province.

- The JUST B4 Program provides an opportunity to strengthen early years to Kindergarten transitions for young children and their families. The JUST B4 Early Childhood Education Pilot is a 2022 early year’s initiative which is offered in a licensed StrongStart BC environment. StrongStart BC takes place in the morning and the JUST B4 program is offered in the afternoon for 2 hours to four-year-old children. The School District No. 46 ‘JUST B4’ Program will be offered in the Halfmoon Bay StrongStart site. JUST B4 utilizes the StrongStart BC space in the afternoon, with the same StrongStart Educator (Facilitator) who leads the StrongStart BC program in the morning. The Early Childhood Educator is employed full-time by the School District: StrongStart BC in the morning and JUST B4 in the afternoon. Parents pre-register for the JUST B4 afternoon program and choose the days of the week they would like their children to attend. JUST B4 is a licensed pre-school program and therefore parents do not need to attend. Parent fees of \$10 a day will be charged. Subsidies are available for lower income families and are based on cost recovery.

**DATA ANALYSIS & REVIEW:**

**Early Development Instrument (EDI) Research Results**

***Physical Health & Well-Being***

2019-2020



**PHYSICAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING**

Children’s gross and fine motor skills, physical independence and readiness for the school day such as, motor control, energy level, and daily preparedness for school.

19%



43

2020-2021



**PHYSICAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING**

Children’s gross and fine motor skills, physical independence and readiness for the school day such as, motor control, energy level, and daily preparedness for school.

15%



29

We see some improvements on this domain.

***Social Competence & Emotional Maturity***

2019-2020



**SOCIAL COMPETENCE**

Children’s overall social competencies, capacity for respect and responsibility, approaches to learning, and readiness to explore new things.

18%



41



**EMOTIONAL MATURITY**

Children’s prosocial and helping behaviours, as well as hyperactivity and inattention, and aggressive, anxious and fearful behaviour.

22%



51

2020-2021



**SOCIAL COMPETENCE**

Children’s overall social competencies, capacity for respect and responsibility, approaches to learning, and readiness to explore new things.



28



**EMOTIONAL MATURITY**

Children’s prosocial and helping behaviours, as well as hyperactivity and inattention, and aggressive, anxious and fearful behaviour.



36

We also see some improvements on both of these domains.

**Language & Cognitive Development / Communication & General Knowledge**

2019-2020



**LANGUAGE & COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Children’s basic and advanced literacy skills, numeracy skills, interest in math and reading, and memory.



22



**COMMUNICATION SKILLS & GENERAL KNOWLEDGE**

Children’s English language skills and general knowledge, such as their ability to clearly communicate one’s own needs, participate in story-telling, and general interest in the world.



24

2020-2021



**LANGUAGE & COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Children’s basic and advanced literacy skills, numeracy skills, interest in math and reading, and memory.



19



**COMMUNICATION SKILLS & GENERAL KNOWLEDGE**

Children’s English language skills and general knowledge, such as the ability to clearly communicate one’s own needs, participate in story-telling, and general interest in the world.



18

EDI results remain stable in the Communication and Language & Cognitive Development domains of the EDI. These continue to be domains where Sunshine Coast children do very well.

**Vulnerable on One or More Scales**

2019-2020

**VULNERABLE ON ONE OR MORE SCALES**

Reports on the percentage of children who are vulnerable on one or more of the five scales of the EDI.



87

2020-2021

**VULNERABLE ON ONE OR MORE SCALES**

Reports on the percentage of children who are vulnerable on one or more of the five scales of the EDI.

31%



62

Overall vulnerability on one or more scale has improved.

**Multiple Vulnerabilities**

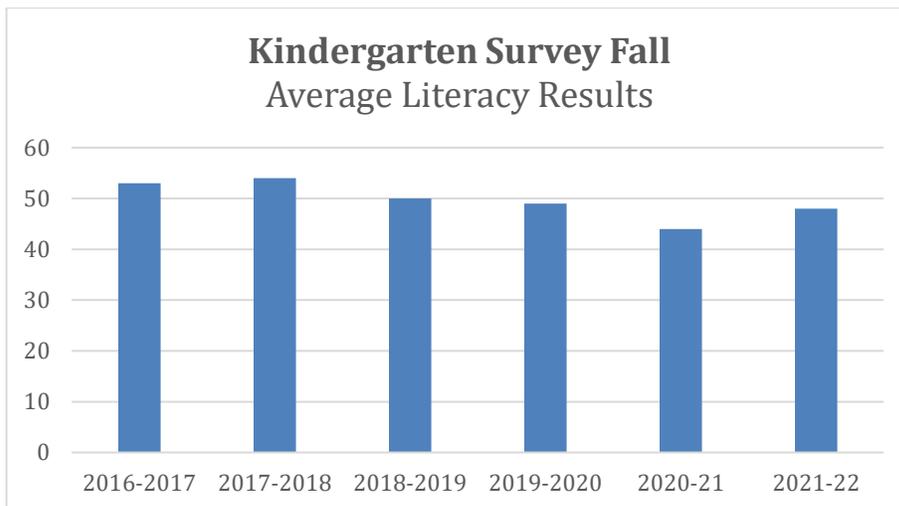
2019-2020

	NO SCALES	1 SCALE	2 SCALES	3 SCALES	4 SCALES	5 SCALES
# Children	145	37	24	14	6	6
% Children	62.5%	15.9%	10.3%	6%	2.6%	2.6%

2020-2021

	NO SCALES	1 SCALE	2 SCALES	3 SCALES	4 SCALES	5 SCALES
# Students	136	28	17	6	5	6
% Students	68.7%	14.1%	8.6%	3%	2.5%	3%

**Kindergarten Survey of Skills**



Our analysis of the Fall Kindergarten Survey Literacy Results reveals that there was a drop in 2020-21 (perhaps due to the pandemic shut-down), and yet a return to near normal scores this past Fall.

**RESOURCES/BUDGET:**

- SPARK! & Child Development Classes**  
 The 0.5 Early Years Teacher facilitates classes year-round to support parents with children 6 and under. Resources include handouts, toys and books for participating families
- Imagination Library**

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library is supported by district funds and community donations. It provides a free book for children under five every month mailed to their homes, in order to support early literacy and learning.

- **KinderSPARK!**  
KinderSPARK! educators are supported by Community School – Community Link funding, to provide transition supports for families with children entering kindergarten. Families attend programs in their neighbourhood school designed to provide holistic support for children and parents.
- **Ready, Set, Learn Grant**  
This Ministry of Education grant supports early years initiatives including:
  - Additional support for our SPARK! and KinderSPARK! and early years transitioning programs.
  - It also provides resources, staffing, equipment, systems and supplies for the lending library under development in the Early Years Centre.
- **Strengthening Early Years to Kindergarten (SEY2K)**  
This Ministry of Education grant supports initiatives such as release for child care providers, early years, primary teachers and community partners to strengthen our annual cycle of support, including implementing the WonderFULL Me initiative district-wide.
- **Changing Results for Young Children (CR4YC)**  
This Ministry of Education grant supports release and resources for child care providers, early years educators, primary teachers and community partners to focus on improving Social & Emotional outcomes for young children. Support for participants to attend eight half day collaborative inquiry-based sessions per year. This year's focus: Story Workshop.
- **Early Learning Framework Implementation (ELF)**  
This Ministry of Education grant provides resources and learning opportunities for early years educators and families and that support the implementation of the Early Learning Framework.
- **StrongStart BC / StrongStart BC Outreach Programs**  
This Ministry of Education grant provides high quality school and community-based StrongStart early learning parent/family participation programs for children who are not yet eligible for Kindergarten. These programs are designed to improve children's social-emotional skills, enhance numeracy and language acquisition, and improve transitions to school. Funding supports Early Childhood Educators, resources, food, equipment and materials.
- **Seamless Day**  
This Ministry of Education grant provides before and after school care in the Kindergarten classroom at West Sechelt Elementary. This provides children and families with a quality early care and learning experience in one location, for the full workday, with the same caring adults in their local school. The model also puts certified Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) in classrooms with teachers to improve transitions, communicate with families, and partner in providing high quality learning experiences.

- **JUST B4**  
This Ministry of Education grant supports an Early Childhood Educator to provide child care in the afternoon to four-year-old children. JUST B4 utilizes the StrongStart BC space in the afternoon, with the same StrongStart Educator who leads the StrongStart BC program in the morning.
- **Early Years Services**  
This Ministry of Children and Family Development grant supports early years educators and Family Navigators. This grant supports families by providing navigation, increased community belonging, early learning and support for Indigenous culture and cultural competency.
- **Sechelt Early Years Centre and West Sechelt Child Care**  
New Spaces Grants from the Ministry of Children and Families provided the resources to develop infant/toddler, preschool and after school care spaces. These spaces are critical for addressing the child care shortage in our most vulnerable community.
- **Early Childhood Education Dual Credit Project**  
This ministry grant will support a dual credit Early Childhood Education program to grade 12 students during the 2022 calendar year. Funding supports resources, including an educator, resources and materials, through a partnership with Capilano University.

#### EMERGING AREAS OF NEED:

- Addressing the child care crisis in our community – including the associated costs to families, shortage of spaces and staff and complicated systems that families must currently navigate.
- Reducing the fragmentation of early year services and supports is an emerging area of need. This includes:
  - Reducing the barriers families face in accessing early intervention supports.
  - Strengthening community partnerships to provide clear pathways to early years supports.
- Reducing child vulnerability that exists in our district and across the province and may be exacerbated by the pandemic.
- The indigenization of the work we do in the early years, and support for Indigenous culture, language and competency.

#### ADAPTATIONS/NEXT STEPS:

- Child Care is scheduled to move under the Ministry of Education in 2023, and will require significant systemic shifts. The school district will work with families, community partners, and government in order to adapt to this new role.
- Connections with community child care providers, early years and primary educators will be strengthened through collaborative learning and programming opportunities, including 'WonderFULL Me', 'SPARK! to Kindergarten' & Story Workshop.
- Supporting the pedagogy of the Early Learning Framework in educators of children newborn to eight will be a continued focus.

- Addressing the child care shortage in Pender Harbour: A New Spaces Grant has been submitted with the goal of providing infant/toddler, preschool and school age care on the school grounds of Madeira Park Elementary.
- The Early Childhood Education Dual Credit program is an innovative strategy to address the shortage of Early Childhood Educators in our district.
- The JUST B4 Program will be launched to provide child care for preschool-age children.
- Increase support for families to access early intervention supports by encouraging partners to provide services in our early years centres.
- Early Years networks will be strengthened and 'lever points' in the year will be leveraged to optimize support for families.
- Direct links to early years practices and Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being, as a fundamental braid woven into the district-wide Ensouling Our Schools series.
- A continued focus on Social & Emotional Well-Being and reducing child vulnerabilities will be important as we educate within the context of a global pandemic.