

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

STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT: EARLY YEARS

Submitted by District Principal Kirsten Deasey
January 11, 2023

Goal 1b: Our students will thrive in their **early years**, and throughout their education, within schools, families, and communities that inspire learning, respect, and connection.

Overview:

The first five years of life have a tremendous influence over the entire lifespan, setting the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour, and health. School District No. 46 recognizes the importance of each of the ‘ensouled’ strands that are braided together to support these early, critical years of development. Attached and responsive relationships support co-regulation, social and emotional wellness, and have been proven to physically influence the growing brain. As a district, we support intergenerational involvement and value the role of parents, family and community in developing the core competencies of lifelong learners.

The environments children are raised in have incredible influence in the early years. These environments include homes that are resourced with books, toys, and information, high-quality child care centres, and opportunities to spend time in nature developing lifelong, reciprocal connections to land and place. Each of these strands of the braid impact the developing child, strengthening and supporting their growth and transformation, in the early and critical days of their learning journey.

School District No. 46 continues to be a provincial leader, through our partnerships and our dedication to serving children and families during these early years of life.

Synopsis of this Early 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. This team plays a critical role in developing the partnerships and the initiatives that support our youngest citizens. With our team and our partnerships, we continue to expand supports in the following areas:

- A) Child Care
- B) Early Years Supports

A) Child Care

Students are met by school staff to review expectations and to make connections. Last spring the Ministry of Education expanded to become the Ministry of Education and Child Care. A child care fact sheet prepared by the Ministry contains information on provincial progress in child care: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/child-care/9107_childcarebc_factsheet.pdf

School districts across the province were able to access additional funding through the Ministry to support the expansion of child care. As a result, this Fall the Sunshine Coast School District, officially added 'Child Care' to the title of the District Principal of Learning, Innovation & Child Care, and a new Vice Principal of Learning & Innovation was hired to support this department.

School District No. 46 Child Care Strategy - Foundational Components

- Strengthening connections between community & school district child care and early years 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.

Recent & Next Steps include:

- This past year we have led the province in the number of child care programs the school district is operating. Through funding from the Ministry of Education and Child Care the Sunshine Coast School District has launched more Seamless Day and Just B4 child care programs than any other district in BC. This speaks to the leadership the Sunshine Coast school district provides for the rest of the province. The district supports other districts in learning how to provide child care through participation in multiple Communities of Practice and through direct support to other district leads.

Creating New Child Care Spaces

- 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
 - Data on Neighbourhood vulnerability
 - Consultation and collaboration with community partners.
- In addition to the early years child care offered in Gibsons Elementary, this year the district has partnered with the YMCA to offer infant-toddler and preschool age care in the Sechelt Early Years Centre. The current Early Childhood Educator staffing shortage on the Sunshine Coast and across the province has

resulted in limited enrollment. This centre is currently staffed to provide child care for 8 three to five-year-old children and 4 infant/toddlers. More spaces will become available as more staff are hired.

- Additional spaces for after school care in the Sechelt site were built through New Spaces Grant funding. This Fall, the Sechelt and Area Community School expanded to offer additional after school care spaces located at this central site for children who attend school in Halfmoon Bay, West Sechelt, Kinnikinnick and Davis Bay.
- In order to address child care demand in our largest and most vulnerable neighbourhood, the district has received New Spaces grants and has partnered with the YMCA to provide additional child care spaces in West Sechelt Elementary. The district recently received an additional grant to provide equipment and playgrounds at this site. The equipment has been purchased. An RFEI&Q was issued and we are currently working with Habitat to build three playgrounds for child care in West Sechelt Elementary. We hope to start building playgrounds in the spring.
- Last May, after a community consultation process and grant application documenting high community need, the province announced a New Spaces grant to fund child care in Madeira Park Elementary. The district has surveyed this property and is investigating the underground stream to determine impact on the site plan. The district has also recently secured an architect to develop and submit permit applications.
- In order to continue to address the child care shortage, the district is communicating with the Sunshine Coast Regional District to explore whether land adjacent to Cedar Grove elementary school grounds might be a good location for a child care centre to be situated.

Seamless Day Before & After School Care

- Our district continues to be a leader in the province for Seamless Day programs. Our West Sechelt Seamless Day program was the second to open in the province, serving as a pilot program and offering consultation and support to districts across the province. Seamless Day has now expanded to include 36 districts across the province.
- Our West Sechelt Seamless Day program continues to thrive and operates at full capacity on most days.
- This year our district was awarded three additional programs located in Gibsons, Cedar Grove and Kinnikinnick elementary schools. We have successfully licenced and staffed all Seamless Day programs for 12 children before and after school each day. Enrollment is slowly growing in each of these sites.
- Child care is provided for Grade 1 students at an affordable rate of \$10 a day and subsidy is available to low income families. With the new Fee Reduction Initiative measures brought in by the provincial government, Seamless Day Kindergarten families are now charged only \$2.50 per day, and the government subsidizes the remaining \$7.50 per day. 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 early dismissal days.

- In our Kinnikinnick program we are working with our community Supported Child Development Program and have hired additional staff to ensure the inclusion of children with special needs.
- Background Information: The Seamless Day program licenses the Kindergarten classroom to provide before and after school care. An Early Childhood Educator offers before school care, and then remains in the school until the end of the day. A second Early Childhood Educator joins the classroom in the early afternoon and stays after school to provide After School Care. The two Early Childhood educators work together with the teachers to support the students.

JUST B4 Early Childhood Education Program

- Once again, School District No. 46 led the province by launching the second Just B4 preschool program in BC, with the opening of the Halfmoon Bay program last January. Less than a year later we were awarded a second Ministry grant to support Just B4 in Gibsons Elementary. We have now successfully licensed, staffed and opened this site. Ten child care spaces are licensed at this site, and enrollment continues to grow.
- Due to the success of these pilot programs, the Ministry has expanded Just B4 programs to 26 other school districts. We offer consultation and support to districts new to this project, and continue to offer provincial leadership in child care.
- The benefits of providing opportunities for 4 year old children to develop independence, practice social skills and develop friendships in the year before Kindergarten was a highlight of this past September, as we saw our first 'Just B4' children transition into Kindergarten.
- Background Information: The JUST B4 Program provides an opportunity to strengthen early years to Kindergarten transitions for young children and their families. 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 are charged. Subsidies are available for lower income families and are based on cost recovery.

Child Care Staffing

Early Childhood Education Dual Credit Project

- The district, with the support of Director Bishop and our Careers Coordinator, is actively trying to address the Early Childhood Educator staffing shortage and raise the profile and access to this profession through the '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 11 & 12 students during the 2023 calendar year. The district is partnering with Northern Lights University to offer a clear, accessible career pathway for senior secondary students. The district will be able to further assist these students by providing practical work experience opportunities in StrongStart and Seamless Day programs here on the Sunshine Coast.

- We have also recently received provincial approval for school district Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) to receive the government 'Wage Enhancement'. This will provide a \$4.00 an hour income top-up for hours when ECEs are providing Child Care.

B) Early Years Supports

The district has a well-established 'Roadmap for Learning' designed to support parents and caregivers to develop relationships with educators and access the resources in these early years from birth to age 8. This roadmap includes supports such as:

- **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

Additional Early Years Supports

Early Years Centre

- In addition to offering parents the opportunity to access a myriad of supports under one roof, this year the Early Years Centre has offered:
 - In person SPARK! And Child Development Classes – with on-site childminding.
 - A lending library of books, toys & resources for families, ECEs, Child Care Providers, and teachers. Over 50 'Borrow Bins' with materials to support educators, students and children are now available at this site. These resources have been entered into the District Destiny Library system, and a catalogue was created and distributed this Fall. These materials are being borrowed at a high rate,
 - Child care for infant/toddlers and pre-school age children through the YMCA is now operating, and school age care through Community Schools has expanded the number of child care spaces (see above for more information).

Changing Results for Young Children

- Through funding from the Ministry of Education, our district has a partnership with Sea to Sky & West Vancouver school districts and provides the provincial facilitation of this 8-part series. Community and school district Early Childhood Educators and Teachers meet over the course of the year to participate in inquiry around social and emotional well-being and the pedagogy of the Early Learning Framework.
- A 3-part focus on 'Pedagogical Documentation' has been incorporated into this 2022-23 series, with the support of a provincial expert in this topic.

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 to present the fullness of every child's story to Kindergarten Teachers. This strategy is done through collaboration with community child care providers.
- This summer CanChild worked with the District Principal of Learning, Innovation & Child Care and has incorporated these video interviews into the modules of CanChild's national training program.

Creative Connections

- This 4-session series is designed to provide regular opportunities to interact to strengthen connections between school district and community child care educators.
- This year we are exploring the Arts together as a strategy for creating 'generative spaces' and strengthened relationships with our early years community partners.

Story Workshop

- We have also launched a three-part Story Workshop dinner series through Ministry funding. We are working with a facilitator from Portland's Opal School.
- Classroom Visitations have been organized to help educators see Story Workshop in action. Early Childhood Educators and Teachers are invited to visit classrooms to observe students engage in Story Workshop. Educators collaborate before and after the observation in order to reflect and learn together.
- Early years and school age educators are supported through experts who travel to schools to demonstrate Story Workshop in classrooms.
- We are also bringing Story Workshop out into our community. The Early Years Team is visiting community Child Care centres to bring Story

Workshop materials and explore the pedagogy with the educators and children in community child care centres.

**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.



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.



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.



41



EMOTIONAL MATURITY

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



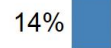
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2020-2021



SOCIAL COMPETENCE

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



28



EMOTIONAL MATURITY

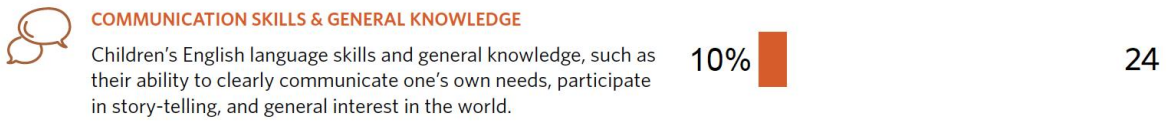
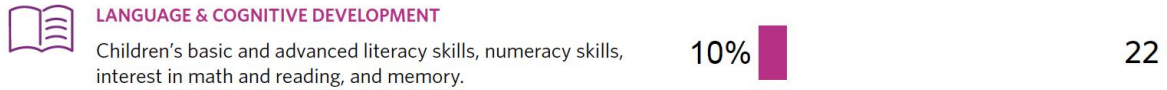
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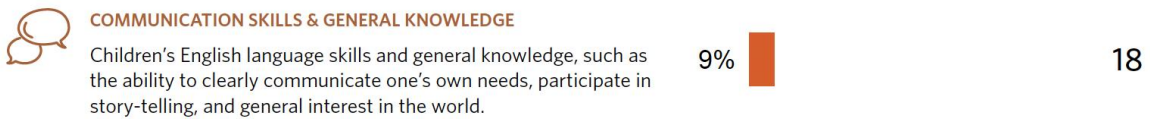
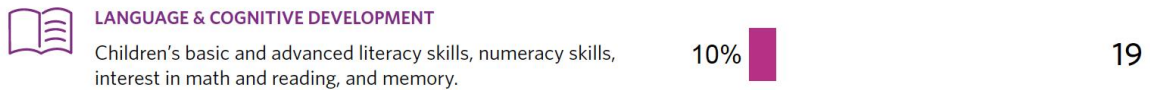
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We also see some improvements on both of these domains.

Language & Cognitive Development / Communication & General Knowledge 2019-2020

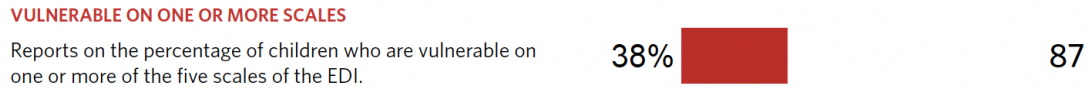


2020-2021

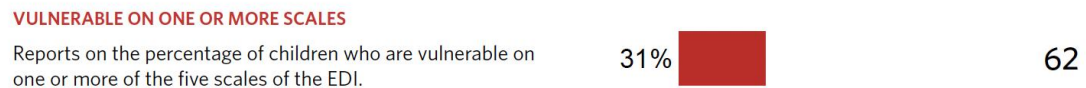


EDI results remain stable in the Communication and Language & Cognitive Development domains of the EDI. These continue to be domains where Sunshine Coast children do very well.

Vulnerable on One or More Scales 2019-2020



2020-2021



Overall vulnerability on one or more scale has improved.

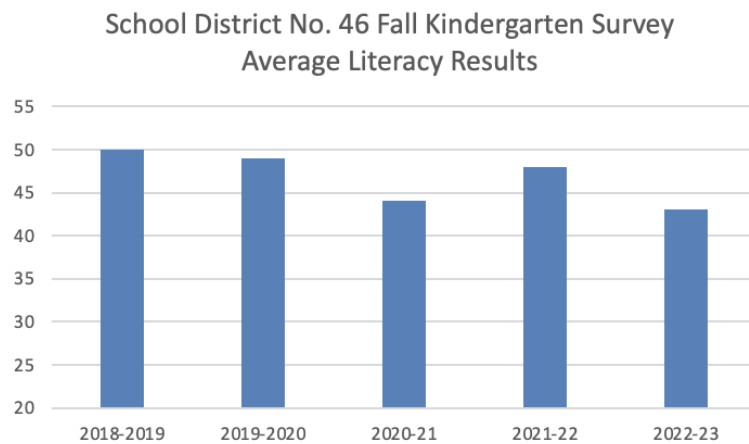
**Multiple Vulnerabilities
2019-2020**

	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%

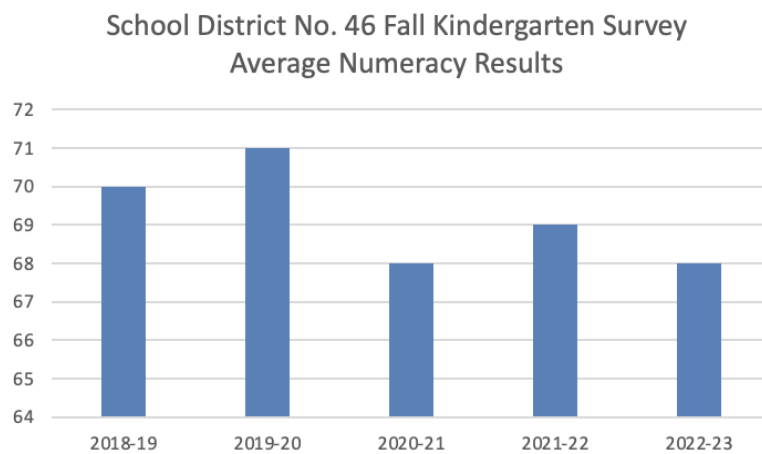
2020-2021

	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), a bit of a return last fall, and another drop again.



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Resources/Budget:

SPARK! & Child Development Classes

The .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: Documentation.

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

These four Ministry of Education grants provide before and after school care in the Kindergarten classroom at West Sechelt, Kinnikinnick, Cedar Grove and Gibsons Elementary Schools. This program 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

These two Ministry of Education grants support 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.

West Sechelt & Madeira Park New Spaces Child Care Grants

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 shortages in our communities.

Early Childhood Education Dual Credit Project

This ministry grant will support a dual credit Early Childhood Education program to grade 12 students during the 2022-23 calendar year. Funding supports resources, including an educator, resources and materials, through a partnership with Northern Lights University.

Emerging Areas of Need:

- With child care moving to the Ministry of Education and Child Care, strengthening relationships with community child care providers is an emerging area of need.
- Supporting the new Early Learning & Child Care educators in their new roles with districts across the province is an area the Sunshine Coast can continue to lead.
- 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.
- The indigenization of the work we do in the early years, and support for Indigenous culture, language and competency.

Adaptations/Next Steps:

Provide support for young children and their families and caregivers by:

- Supporting the pedagogy of the Early Learning Framework, including infusing indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being as fundamental braids woven into the district-wide Ensouling Our Schools series.
- Strengthening relationships between community child care providers and school district educators.
- Expanding our capacity to support child care through community and provincial networks and innovative resourcing such as the Lending Library & Borrow Bins.
- Building more child care spaces on the Sunshine Coast – Next steps: Madeira Park & Cedar Grove
- Using innovative practices to address the staffing shortage in the child care sector.
- Expanding our experience and capacity to provide child care.