



# PENDER ISLAND ELEMENTARY SECONDARY SCHOOL

## EPIC SCHOOL PLAN

### SUMMARY

At Pender School, we believe in encouraging learners to develop a love of learning and their full potential as confident, compassionate, and responsible citizens. We work collaboratively with students, staff, parents and community to provide a safe, caring and respectful learning environment where strengths are honoured and learning is engaging. PIES students will acquire and demonstrate academic, social, and behavioral skills to enable them in achieving their full potential as educated citizens, prepared for the future. Through explicit teaching, practice and reflection, our goal, in 2021/2022, is to increase student capacity in the core area of Math, while focusing on the development of students' Critical Thinking skills.

At Pender School, we believe that ALL students are curious learners capable of success as they develop their thinking skills through the *Curricular and Core Competencies*.

### SIGNATURES:

**PRINCIPAL** \_\_\_\_\_

**PAC CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_

**TEACHER** \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT** \_\_\_\_\_



# PENDER ISLAND ELEMENTARY SECONDARY SCHOOL

## SCHOOL IDENTITY/CONTEXT

Pender Islands Elementary Secondary School (PIESS) serves approximately 130 learners from North and South Pender Island, and middle and Junior Secondary learners from Galliano, Mayne and Saturna Island. The school has recently undergone changes to enrich the Junior Secondary experience through the addition of a Woodworking Shop space, Science Lab, Foods Classroom and Media Lab room. In addition, an outdoor classroom is under construction to accommodate outdoor learning opportunities for all students, K-9.

At PIESS, we value the core academic advancement of all our students. While classroom teachers provide a strong foundation in the Core Curriculum, we also recognize and value the importance and interconnectedness of personal wellbeing and Music for all. PIESS is committed to providing a caring and kind learning environment that nurtures multi-age relationships. PIESS works collaboratively with community groups, such as Ptarmigan Arts, to enrich student learning through in-school and afterschool workshops.

## OUR STORY

At Pender School, staff are committed to providing a respectful, safe and kind learning environment focused on engaging learners through rigorous learning for ALL students. Through Fall and Spring assessments in Reading, Writing and Math, staff work diligently to collect evidence of learning achievement and create individual and class learning profiles that direct instruction. Reflecting on our iPass data, we are able to provide targeted, specific and timely intervention to help learners build confidence and skills in the core areas of the curriculum. Overall, we noticed a need to further develop students' abilities to apply a variety of thinking skills to explain and justify thinking in Mathematics.

In the 2020/2021 school year, staff also committed to engaging students in a variety of ADST activities including woodworking, carving, electronics and 3-D printing. Our focus on student engagement through ADST was based on an understanding that *learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place (First Peoples Principles of Learning))*. Overall, staff noticed that our students felt a sense of pride and enjoyed working collaboratively to explore their curiosities and develop projects connected with curricular content taught in class. We observed the need for strengthening students' thinking skills and applying the design process to solve a myriad of challenges. Anecdotally, we noticed these exploratories provided unique opportunities for students to apply thinking skills in the curricular competencies of Mathematics. We look forward to further exploring this with learners.

## GOAL STATEMENT

Based on our quantitative and qualitative data for 2020/2021, we propose that a focus on evidence-based strategies and explicit instruction in thinking habits across the curriculum will help deepen our students' understanding of the world and better prepare them as flexible thinkers and educated citizens.

**Goal #1: All students can identify and apply age-appropriate Critical thinking habits in the curricular areas.**

**Connections to:**

FESL: Intellectual Development  
 Gulf Island School District Strategic Plan, Objective 1.1  
 Enhancement Agreement Goal 4: Success

**Goal #2: All students will extend their capabilities to MEET or EXCEED grade level expectations in Mathematics.**

**Connections to:**

FESL: Intellectual Development  
 Gulf Island School District Strategic Plan, Objective 1.1  
 Enhancement Agreement Goal 4: Success

## EPIC REFLECTIONS

For future input.

## AREAS OF STRENGTH/GROWTH

### *Intellectual Development-*

*Reading-* Evidence from ongoing reading assessments from all grades, triangulated with FSA data and classroom data indicates that Reading is an area of strength for our school. Over the past two years, our FSA data indicates that Pender students have demonstrated strong capabilities in Reading with 91% (Grade 4's) and 96% (Grade 7's) On Track or Exceeding grade level expectations. This data is corroborated by our Spring Reading assessments that indicate 88% of Primary students, 84% of Intermediate students and 82% of Junior Secondary students are Accomplished or Extending. Reading is an area of strength for Pender school. In the 2021/2022 year, we will continue to support ALL learners and provide targeted instruction for students who are Emerging or Developing.

*Writing-* A similar exploration of data in Writing indicates that Writing is an area of continued growth for our school. Over the past two years, our FSA data indicates that Pender students have demonstrated strong capabilities in Writing with 83% (Grade 4's) and 95% (Grade 7's) On Track or Exceeding grade level expectations. Our Spring Writing assessments supports this trend, while also indicating a need to focus on shifting our students from Developing to Accomplished. 75% of Primary students 63% of Intermediate students and 83% of Junior Secondary students are Accomplished or Extending. We will continue to provide targeted instruction for students who are Emerging or Developing.

*Numeracy-* As we turn to our Numeracy assessment, we note that Math is an area of continued growth for our students. Our FSA results over the past two years indicate that 84% of Grade 4's and 79% of Grade 7's are On Track or Exceeding grade level expectations. Our Spring Numeracy assessment supports this trend, while also indicating a need to focus on shifting our students from Developing to Accomplished. 79% of Primary students, 72% of Intermediate students and 64% of Junior Secondary students are Accomplished or Extending. Our goal is to provide targeted instruction to Emerging and Developing students, while simultaneously moving our Accomplished learners into Extending. When we dig deeper into our Spring Assessments, we notice that "Strategies" is an area of growth for our students. This year, we will focus our efforts on developing students' critical thinking as they develop capabilities in analyzing problems, developing strategies and verifying solutions. Numeracy will be a significant area of focus for us in 2021/2022.

### *Human and Social Development-*

Developing a sense of self-worth and personal initiative is a key focus as staff work to ensure that all students feel safe, cared for and respected at Pender School. Our *Grade 4 and 7 Student Satisfaction Survey* indicated that feeling a sense of welcome and belonging are areas of growth for us at Pender School. Interestingly, this data is in contrast to the majority of responses indicating that students feel they have 4 or more adults that care about them. Our data in this area has us curious about the general sense of welcome and belonging amongst other grade levels. This Fall, we plan on exploring ways to ensure students feel welcome and supported. With increased opportunities in after-school clubs and an implementation of the REAL Course at the Grade 4 through 9 level, we hope to engage our older students and ensure that students are developing social emotional resilience, a strong sense well-being and belonging.

### *Career Development-*

At Pender School, we pride ourselves in developing a strong foundation of academic, social, and behavioral skills that will enable students to act as positive, contributing citizens in our ever-changing world. Based on our *Grade 4 and 7 Student Satisfaction Survey*, many students feel a need for greater control of their learning. For example, they would like more opportunities to choose homework assignments and make decisions about what they want to study. Our continued focus on the ADST curriculum is one way staff plan on providing more choice for students. Students will have opportunities to think critically and creatively to design projects of their interest. In addition, our Grade 7 through 9 students will have increased opportunities of exploring various career opportunities through afternoon Exploratories and continue to participate in career exploration programs like *Find Your Fit*.

## EPIC REFLECTIONS

# FOCUSING DIRECTION

## PROCESS FOR REVIEW/REVISING/DETERMINING

Cultivating critical thinkers with a strong Mathematical understanding is the work of all staff at PIES. We know that students need these important skills as they navigate daily life and their futures. A continued focus on Literacy and Math, coupled with a concentrated effort to develop strong thinking habits are the foundation of the Educated Citizen.

Our team will continue to utilize *Assessment for Learning* practices to gather data on student strengths and areas of growth in the Core Curricular areas. Each classroom teacher will develop a strategic and targeted plan for supporting all students to achieve their fullest capabilities. These plans will be shared with Administration at class meetings in early Fall. As part of classroom *assessment for learning* practices, teachers will engage students in routine reflections connected to daily assignments or larger projects. The data from these conversations will help to inform and drive our monthly discussions at Staff Meetings.

At the school level, we will implement school wide surveys to gather evidence and monitor growth in students' critical thinking habits. These surveys will ensure student voice plays an important role going forward. In addition to the work of classroom teachers, the School Based Team will meet bi-weekly to ensure that effective and timely supports are identified and delivered for students with significant needs.

Through collaborative dialogue and staff meeting discussions, we will engage in conversations around current pedagogy and determine ways to weave critical thinking throughout all areas of the curriculum, with a focus on Numeracy. We will explore Differentiated Instruction, Powerful Learning and assessment practices that set clear expectations and allow for greater student ownership. For continuous engagement, we will create shared spaces, on-line and in the Staff room, where staff may share current and valued resources connected with our focus areas on Critical Thinking and Numeracy.

## EPIC REFLECTIONS

## PURPOSE - DATA RATIONALE

The collected data below provides our rationale for concentrating staff efforts to develop Critical Thinking habits and strengthening students' skills in Numeracy.

### GOAL #1: CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Our focus on Critical Thinking skills stems from a two-year long inquiry aimed at cultivating student engagement and ownership through the exploration of the ADST curriculum. In the late Spring of 2021, staff reflected on areas of student strength and growth for K-9. Staff observations were delineated into what students "Can do" and are on the "Verge of" (see chart 1.0).

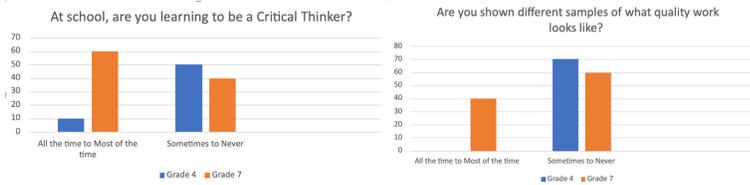
	STUDENTS Can...	STUDENTS- Verge of...
<p><b>WE NOTICED...</b></p> <p>What are you noticing about your students thinking and learning as they engage in Maker activities?</p>	<p><b>WORK HABITS/PERSONAL &amp; SOCIAL Core Competencies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Sense of pride and accomplishment</li> <li>-Enjoy hands-on activities</li> <li>-Excited over discoveries</li> <li>-follow instructional prompts</li> <li>-Willing to take risks at the K-6 level</li> <li>-Enjoying teamwork</li> </ul>	<p><b>WORK HABITS/PERSONAL &amp; SOCIAL Core Competencies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-working collaboratively as a small group through the stages of the design process</li> <li>- willingness to take risks at the Intermediate level and beyond</li> </ul>
	<p><b>THINKING CC/CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increased curiosity</li> <li>-Creative thinkers get ideas from each other</li> <li>-good observation skills</li> <li>-Students offer constructive peer-feedback with regards to "appearance"</li> <li>-Applying curricular concepts</li> <li>-Connecting cross curricular concepts</li> <li>-Increased confidence and knowledge in Maker skills</li> </ul>	<p><b>THINKING CC/CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Generating ideas for independent projects</li> <li>-Exploring curricular concepts through deep curiosities</li> <li>-acting on feedback or improving prototypes based on feedback</li> </ul>

Staff noticed that students are beginning to implement strategies for creative and critical thinking. Students' overall comfort with risk taking depended largely on their grade level, with Primary grades more likely to take risks and make mistakes. Teachers reflected that students across the grades enjoyed working with their hands and applying new skills as they explored the *Design Process*. As staff turned their thoughts to areas of growth, they noted the need for quality exemplars to aid students in self-reflection, allowing them to evaluate and adjust their work or thinking to meet criteria for good quality.

An exploration of the *Grade 4 and 7 Student Satisfaction Survey* for 2020/2021 further corroborated staff observations (see next page). In particular, 50% of Grade 4's noted that they are *Sometimes to Never* engaged in critical thinking. Most notable, was the need for clear exemplars. According to the *Student*

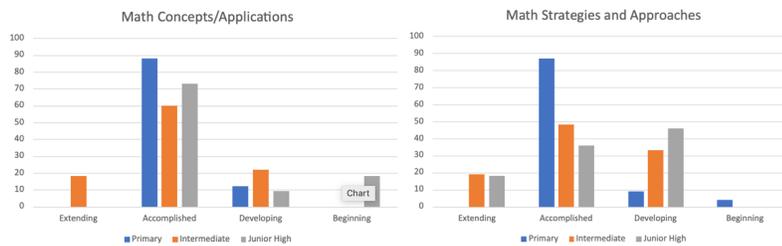
**PURPOSE - DATA RATIONALE *continued***

Satisfaction Survey, 20% of Grade 4's and 50% of Grade 7's noted a lack of familiarity with clear exemplars. While these reflections represent a small student sample, we believe that staff and students, alike, see these as areas of growth: Our students will benefit from increased opportunities to engage in critical thinking and the use of clear examples of quality work.



**GOAL #2: NUMERACY**

The data below shows our strengths and areas of growth in Numeracy as identified in our Spring Numeracy assessment through iPass.



As noted earlier, our classroom Spring assessment indicates 79% of Primary students, 72% of Intermediate students and 64% of Junior Secondary students are Accomplished or Extending. Further analysis of the data shows that the application of *Math Concepts/Applications* is an area of strength, while *Math Strategies/Approaches* is an area of growth, particularly amongst our Grade 4-9 students. In other words, recognizing and applying relevant math concepts, skills and strategies (*Math Concepts/Applications*) is an area of strength; while analyzing problems, developing an efficient plan and verifying results (*Math Strategies/Approaches*) is an area of growth.

We propose that an increased focus on critical thinking will help students develop the skills needed to improve their capabilities in Numeracy. Why? When students think critically about the world, they ask questions; generate new ideas; make judgements based on reasoning; consider their options; and analyze them according to set criteria before drawing final conclusions. (See [Core Competencies for Thinking](#)) An increased focus on these skills, within the context of the Curricular Competencies for Numeracy should better prepare them for meeting grade level expectations in Numeracy.

**EPIC REFLECTIONS**

**ASSOCIATED ACTIONS**

**GOAL #1 Strategies for Success in Developing Critical Thinkers**

Staff will:

- provide explicit instruction of the skills and attributes associated with critical thinking habits within the scope of a selected curricular area and specifically, the *Curricular Competencies*
- provide consistent and strategic ways of weaving the *Critical Thinking Competencies* into daily practice, including the regular use of self-reflections and the *Critical Thinking Profiles*
- provide opportunities for working collaboratively with peers in solving shared learning tasks
- provide explicit instruction of the Design Process as they engage students in ADST activities
- connect our Grade 7-9 ADST teacher to all intermediate grades with an explicit focus on critical thinking related to the design process
- provide exemplars of excellence to ensure students understand criteria for a given assignment
- provide increased opportunities to develop decision making skills both in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities
- engage in related professional learning conversations at staff meetings

**ASSOCIATED ACTIONS** *continued*

**Goal #2 Strategies for Success in Increasing Numeracy Skills**

Staff will:

- provide explicit instruction to develop students' skills and abilities in communicating, reasoning about and justifying ideas
- explore opportunities to apply Numeracy skills in ADST projects
- increase student engagement by varying lesson delivery to include short Math Talks, games, and collaborative problem solving activities that are "real life" and relevant to students
- continue to support consistent review and practice of basic Math skills, such as subitizing and Multiplication Tables
- develop financial literacy through two Entrepreneur Fairs (Winter and Spring)
- use low-floor, high ceiling tasks that allow learners of all abilities to engage in open ended problem solving challenges
- engage in on-going *Assessment for Learning* practices focused on providing strategic instruction for the purpose of improving students' Numeracy skills
- tailor activities for all grades in the new Maker Space that require the application of grade level numeracy skills
- engage in related professional learning conversations at staff meetings

**ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS**

Helping students develop essential skills, global competencies and citizenship are an important part of our extra-curricular activities at PIESS.

In 2021/2022, we will continue to develop students thinking skills and strategies through special interest groups like the *Gay Straight Alliance*, the *Student Leadership Council* and the *School Newspaper*. Through critical thinking, we will help students act on their ideas and bring about change at the school and community level.

Clear communication with parents is key. This year, we will be organizing a School Newspaper aimed at sharing "What's happening?" at Pender School. This monthly publication will help create a picture for parents of how our school growth plan is unfolding throughout the year. We will continue to encourage conversations at home that focus on the Big Three: What are you learning? How is it going? Where to next?

Finally, we are grateful to have the support of community members and Ptarmigan Arts, who play a key role in enriching the learning experience at PIESS. This year, we will be expanding on this partnership to invite local experts, such as entrepreneurs, carpenters and architects to share their knowledge. Drawing upon the wealth of expertise in our island community will help students develop a better understanding of future career opportunities and thus, prepare them for the future. In addition, we will continue to collaborate with Ptarmigan Arts to provide creative extra-curricular activities in the area of Fine Arts.

**STAFF/SHARED WORK**

Pender staff plan to collaborate through informal and staff meeting discussions.

Staff Meeting discussions will focus on developing a deeper understanding of Critical Thinking and Numeracy through the exploration of resources such as:

- [Ron Ritchhart's Creating Cultures of Thinking](#)
- [The Critical Thinking Consortium](#)
- [Youcubed](#)

Staff will collaborate as they unpack current pedagogy around thinking skills and explore ways to create meaningful opportunities for skill development. The use of collaborative time for the purpose of exploring, planning and assessing will be encouraged.

Classroom assessment and end of term reflections will help teachers measure the impact of their teaching and create short term goals throughout the school year. Areas of focus will be shared and discussed at monthly staff meetings, along with exemplars in teaching that draw on the work being done elsewhere in the province.

**EPIC REFLECTIONS**

**STUDENT VOICE**

In developing these goals, we drew heavily on anecdotal observations and conversations with students, as well as Grade 4 and 7 responses to the Student satisfaction survey.

As we move forward, gathering student feedback is an important part of our own goal setting and planning at PIESS. We will be collecting student feedback through a School Wide Survey, future Satisfaction Survey and Core Competencies reflections. We have begun to gather data already, indicating that some students have set goals around building and using class criteria; setting goals and making a plan; and working towards meeting their goal.

**DEEPER LEARNING**

**WHAT WILL STAFF NEED TO KNOW TO LEAD/PERFORM**

**THIS WORK?**

**GOAL #1 Critical Thinking**

Staff will need:

- An increased theoretical understanding of critical thinking habits as they pertain to the various Curricular Competencies
- innovative ways to engage learners and assess growth through self-reflection
- Practical ways to provide choice in the Design Process of ADST projects

**GOAL #2 Numeracy**

Staff will need to:

- Identify practical lessons to increase student knowledge, skills and strategies
- Identify and plan low floor, high ceiling activities that allow for and promote differentiation
- Collaborate with Learning Integration Support Teacher (LIST) to support at-risk learners in Numeracy and provide strategic and targeted instruction

**WHAT SKILLS WILL WE FOSTER WITH STUDENTS FOR THEM TO EXPERIENCE SUCCESS?**

In order to develop students' Critical Thinking and Numeracy skills, we will foster the following skills:

- identification of an issue or understanding of a task
- asking powerful questions gathering information and evidence
- making informed decisions and reflecting on the process/decision/or work
- create a plan with steps to solve a novel problem
- utilizing and reflecting on common class criteria
- effective collaboration and communication skills with peers

**APPROACH TO PROFESSIONAL LEARNING?**

As we shift our focus and our practice, we will work collaboratively to further nurture a culture of thinking at PIESS. *What's working? What's not? what's next?* will be a foundational piece as we collaborate each month.

At monthly staff meeting, we will explore articles and video clips, while sharing strategies tried in order to develop our own professional learning. The exploration of Ron Ritchhart's work, *Creating Cultures of Thinking*, The Critical Thinking Consortium and Youcubed will be valuable starting points as we deepen our pedagogical understanding of thinking habits.

At the root of our school goal is an understanding that "*learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place)*" (*First Peoples Principles of Learning*). At PIESS, we have begun the important work of *Reconciliation*. As we develop a deeper understanding of Coast Salish customs, culture and ways of being, all staff will work to weave these teachings into our daily practice. For some of our classes, that will mean connecting critical thinking with the animal teachings of our District Enhancement Agreement.

**EPIC REFLECTIONS**

# ACCOUNTABILITY

## HOW WILL WE KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL?

We will know we are successful when students can:

- communicate their thoughts, plans, and outcomes clearly
- confidently work through the stages of the Design Process, making adaptations as needed
- provide evidence to support their thinking through self-reflections
- engage in challenges with a growth mindset
- take ownership and engage in calculated risks

We will use the following data to help assess students' growth:

- Improvement in Fall/Spring Numeracy assessment (iPass)
- Improvement in FSA data to meet FESL goals
- Improvement in # of students meeting/exceeding grade level expectations in Numeracy
- Student self-reflections using the Core Competencies for Thinking

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA

To be completed throughout the school year as data and evidence of growth occurs.

## STUDENT EXPERIENCE EVIDENCE

To be completed throughout the school year as data and evidence of growth occurs.

## EPIC REFLECTIONS