



# Quesnel Junior School School Growth Plan

2023-2024

*School growth plans are aligned with the District's [Strategic Plan](#) with priority measures represented in the Framework for [Enhancing Student Learning Report](#).*

*September 30<sup>th</sup> 2023*

# School District 28 rests on the traditional lands of the Lhtako Dene.



## SCHOOL INFORMATION

*What students like about our school...*

Students at Quesnel Junior School enjoy a bright, spacious learning environment. As young adolescents they appreciate the varied opportunities available for them to learn and play with peers.

*PAC Information...*

Our parent community is an active part of our school, supporting staff and students in many ways. Some examples are the fall clothing exchange "store" set up so students can shop for free, providing financial support for staff initiatives, and appreciation activities.

*What our parents say about our school...*

"I was worried about sending my child to QJS, but he is loving it. There are so many opportunities and so much going on. I am so happy we made the decision to go to QJS."

## OUR SCHOOL THE STORY/JOURNEY

Quesnel Junior School is located on the traditional territory of the Lhtako Dene at 950 Mountain Ash Rd. on the southern perimeter of Quesnel, B.C. Quesnel Junior School has 521 grade 8 and 9 students, 30% of those students identify as having Aboriginal ancestry.

Quesnel Junior School staff and students recently moved into our brand new, world class building. The building is intentionally designed to meet the particular needs of the adolescent learner with 8 smaller learning communities (called PODs) which allow for stronger relationship building over a 2-year learning journey. This school structure supports integrated, project-based learning for students which enhance student engagement.

Quesnel Junior School is working to develop stronger, deeper connections with our neighbourhood and local indigenous communities.



## SUPPORTIVE SPACES

A sense of belonging grows with shared interests in safe spaces. QJS is designed with many spaces for students to gather in smaller groups: POD areas, Welcome Center, Indigenous Center, Resource Center, Counselling Center, Library Learning Commons, Open Classrooms, and Open Gym. As students find supportive peers and adults a sense of community grows.

### RATIONALE

Young adolescent students at this age have many and varied interests. At this age, students shift from adults to peer when looking for approval. Young adolescents can sometimes lack the social or self-advocacy skills to problem solve independently.

At QJS we provide many spaces for students to connect with peers, with adult supports nearby to provide in the moment supports. Skilled adults actively help students learn to navigate the challenges of early adolescence.

### ACTIONS/STRATEGIES:

- Provide many opportunities for students to participate in the school community in positive ways, with adults available to support and facilitate growth: sports teams, clubs, activities for a broad range of interests
- Student Voice leadership group to gather input and feedback on school systems and issues – student informed solutions
- Promote student leadership and involvement and pride in being a member of the QJS school community

### MEASURES:

- Belonging Survey and Interviews (parents and students)
- Numbers of students involved in school activities, teams and clubs
- Number of student conflicts (most are resolved peacefully within the context of facilitated mediations)
- Incidents of intentional vandalism from within the school community

### SPEAK TO THE DATA:

Each year QJS welcomes approx. 250 new grade 8 students. It is critical that they quickly develop a sense of belonging and safety.

At QJS the sense of belonging, within each learning community (POD) is strong. Students quickly identify at least one adult they feel confident will support and help them.

The goal is for students to develop positive communication skills, successful conflict resolution skills, and comfortable peer and adult relationships during their two-year QJS journey. With this foundation students will be able to successfully make the transition to grade ten and the high school community.



## EQUITY & ENGAGEMENT - LITERACY

Students will improve their literacy skills over a two-year learning cycle, and develop an increased appreciation for literature and confidence in their ability as thinking readers and writers.

### RATIONALE

Adolescent learners need to be able to be critical thinkers when engaging in reading and need to be able to write in ways that enable them to communicate effectively with others.

QJS has Literacy Support built in to the learning structure to help teachers and students. Our Literacy Support teacher has 2 block daily to support targeted instruction and practice, and we have 1 block daily of additional Literacy support with a Resource teacher. When students have opportunities to practice skills on a daily basis, their skill and confidence both increase.

### ACTIONS/STRATEGIES:

- Use reading level data obtained from elementary classes to provide appropriate access points for literacy instruction
- Relevant materials used to engage students in their literacy development
- Use pre/post assessment tools to identify learning needs and measures of success
- Literacy Support teachers (2 blocks daily and RT block)

### MEASURES:

- Classroom assessments measuring student growth in relation to the curricular competencies (reading and writing skills)
- Identify increased levels of student engagement in lessons and increased levels of confidence with reading and writing
- Using a diverse selection of materials (Indigenous and varied content) to increase growth of all learners

### SPEAK TO THE DATA:

We can identify differences in skill levels in various students as they enter QJS in grade 8. Identifying the skill levels and particular areas of interest of students will enable teachers and support staff to better match instruction to student needs.

The goal of this will be to ensure that all students demonstrate growth in skills and confidence, when examined over the two-year period.



## EQUITY & ENGAGEMENT - NUMERACY

Students will improve their numeracy skills over a two-year learning cycle, and develop an increased appreciation of numeracy across many subject areas: music, wood working, sewing, cooking, etc.

### RATIONALE:

A high number of students entering QJS have a lower level of confidence in their mathematical abilities, and, frequently, struggle to connect their classroom learning with their “real life” experiences.

When we are able to identify learning gaps and provide instruction to address those learning needs, students become more engaged and confident learners.

When adolescent learners see relevance and purpose to their learning, they are more engaged and active participants in their learning experiences.

### ACTIONS/STRATEGIES:

- Assess the entry level skills of grade 8 students in order to provide targeted instruction to students, and be able to measure the improvement over the two-year instructional period
- Numeracy support (RT instruction of small groups, and additional numeracy support teachers with 2 blocks daily to work with target students recommended by classroom teachers)
- Recognition of numeracy skills being used across the curriculum in various subject areas

### MEASURES:

- Classroom assessments measuring student growth in relation to curricular competencies
- Identify increased levels of student engagement in lessons and increased levels of confidence with math
- Participation in optional Math contests (Gauss and Pascal)

### SPEAK TO THE DATA:

We can measure the number of students at grade level, and additionally, we can measure the number of students who significantly improve their numeracy skills over the two-year period of learning. When students develop increased confidence in their ability to learn, they are able to become more resilient learners. With supportive targeted instruction, students see themselves as more capable and they become able to take on learning challenges with more skill.

At QJS, within the two-year POD model, teachers, with the help of the Numeracy Support teachers, can plan for, support, and measure numeracy growth in their students.



## CULTURAL COLLABORATION

We will work to develop stronger, deeper connections with neighbourhood and local indigenous communities in order to better support student success.

### RATIONALE

Stronger connections with the school provide opportunities to grow trust and understanding which allow for deeper communication. We are then better able to problem solve, plan, and celebrate together.

When students and families feel safe communicating with the school staff, we can more successfully support student needs: physical, academic and social/emotional.

When individuals feel their voice is heard, they are more willing to share and participate in all areas of the school community.

### ACTIONS/STRATEGIES:

- Include Indigenous Elders in QJS events and ceremonies: Lhtako Flag, School Grand Opening, Remembrance Day, Winter Games, Memorial Walk,
- Daily Smudge opportunities for students and staff; Smudge room open to community members to use
- Ensure family and student voice is heard and honored when planning for student success
- IESW and Indigenous Support Teacher to support students

### MEASURES:

- Numbers of participants joining in school events and activities
- Numbers of students/staff and community members participating in smudges and identifying the impact smudges have on the sense of wellness and connectedness
- Increase in student attendance and communication with school staff (particular attention to Indigenous on and off reserve)

### SPEAK TO THE DATA:

When everyone feels more welcome, accepted and comfortable in our school we hope to see more equitable representation in all areas of our school community: students participating in sports, clubs, leadership activities, representation on PAC, visits to school for meetings or gatherings, and student attendance.

Families and students will feel willing to participate in planning that helps us grow a more culturally sensitive and aware school community.

