



# Quesnel Junior School School Growth Plan

2024-2025

*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> 2024*

# 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. Students returning to visit say "at this school adults care and help so much".

*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 485 grade 8 and 9 students, 30% of those students identify as having Aboriginal ancestry. Quesnel Junior School also has a high number of designated students; 112, as of the fall designation date.

Quesnel Junior School staff and students recently moved into our new building, which is intentionally designed to meet the particular needs of the adolescent learner with 7 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. We are developing our inquiry instructional practices to better engage our 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners.

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



## SUPPORTIVE SPACES

QJS is designed with many spaces for students to gather in smaller groups: POD areas, Welcome Center, Indigenous Center and SMUDGE Room, 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 and vulnerabilities. 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 support students develop peaceful problem-solving skills.

This year will employ PreVenture, a program supported by the Foundry and aligned with the BC mental health curriculum, to help students understand their strengths, weaknesses, healthy choices and how they affect relationships and mental well-being. We also work in alignment with local CYMH staff to support students and families.

### 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
- PreVenture Program implementation to equip youth with self-efficacy and cognitive behavioural skills to help cope with the numerous developmental challenges that many youth face.

### 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)
- Improvement in student attendance rates

### 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. Students will demonstrate an improved relationship with digital and print text.

### 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.

At QJS there is an emphasis on employing UDL strategies and adaptations to allow for entry points into learning for all learners. Additionally, teachers provide as many relevant/practical applications for learning to increase engagement for adolescent learners.

When learners have opportunities to practice skills on a daily basis, their skills and confidence increase.

### ACTIONS/STRATEGIES:

- Use reading level data obtained from elementary classes to inform our entry points for literacy instruction
- Relevant materials used to engage students in their literacy development
- Using AI to adapt cross-curricular reading materials for student use and teaching students to use AI to help self-select good fit material and build independence.
- SORA- student access to digital library resources

### 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

### 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.

A goal to improve student success is to utilize different instruction tools (ex. AI tools, SORA) and by using a diverse selection of materials (Indigenous and varied content) to increase growth & engagement of all learners

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. Utilize the SNAP assessment tool data to inform instruction.
- 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. Explore SNAP numeracy assessment tool for use at the Grade 8 level.
- 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:

When learners 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. Learners significantly improve their numeracy skills over the two-year period of learning. At QJS we measure the number of students at grade level, and additionally, we can measure the number of students who demonstrate significant improvement.

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:

- Ensure family and student voice is heard and honored when planning for student success. Include Indigenous Elders in QJS events and ceremonies, for example, Remembrance Day, Memorial Walk, class activities.
- Daily Smudge opportunities for students and staff; Smudge room open to community members to use
- 2 IES workers who support students (academics, culture & SEL)
- 2 teachers with dedicated blocks to support Indigenous learners

### 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.

