



GULF ISLANDS
SCHOOL
DISTRICT 64

EPIC SCHOOL PLAN
2023 – 2024



64GO

SIGNATURES

Lynell Riehlens
PRINCIPAL

Jenni Smith - Parent
PAC CHAIR

Kylie Van Eaton
TEACHER

Wren Mason
STUDENT

OUR SCHOOL

SCHOOL IDENTITY/CONTEXT

64GO is a new District Online Learning School (DOLS). The BC Ministry of Education opened the door for districts to provide local online learning options for their students. SD64 took the opportunity to be one of the early adopters. 64GO provides full-time, blended, and online learning options for students from Kindergarten to grade 12, including adult learners that reside in the Gulf Islands. Enrollment is fluid, with continuous registration throughout the school year. 64GO enrolled 88 students in 2022-23.

OUR STORY

64GO serves the unique needs of our local families seeking an alternative to in-class learning. We provide flexible online options and in-person support to learners. Students and families determine the time, place, path, and pace of their learning journey. 64GO students have access to school district facilities and learning resources to enhance their learning and support their pathway to success. 64GO meets provincial learning standards in ways best suited to students' individual strengths and interests. Gulf Islands students have participated in 64GO who have not otherwise been part of our school district, paving the way toward a Gulf Islands School District graduate. 64GO gives students the opportunity to learn and grow in a localized context with quality SD64 educators and robust curriculum and assessment to support learning.

GOAL STATEMENT

At 64GO we deliver a flexible, individualized learning option for students and families residing in the Gulf Islands school district that will support a successful learning experience leading toward graduation. All curriculum meets the BC Ministry of Education learning standards.

Students will engage in their learning and complete their individual programs, whether it's a single course or a full course load, within one year of registering.

AREAS OF STRENGTH/GROWTH

64GO offers both full online and blended programs to support all learners in the Gulf Islands. 64GO meets at the newly renovated SD64 Learning Hub ("the Hub"), which is a welcoming and enriching place for learners and their families, as well as our educators. We travel to the Outer Islands to meet personally with our students and families. Our teachers are well versed at adapting curriculum to meet students' needs and interests. We have developed strong, positive relationships with our learners and their families. Our small staff have learned a great deal about working with online learners and have provided a rich experience for them. We have taught students to read and we have supported students through numeracy and literacy assessments and provided pathways to graduation.

As we head into next year, we are actively pursuing ways to keep students consistently engaged through the year. Online learning is easy to put off, and we had a number of students who found it difficult to stay on target for course completion. We need to know who our learners are and how to support them, including engaging more with the home facilitator.

FOCUSING DIRECTION

PROCESS FOR REVIEWING/REVISING/DETERMINING

A team consisting of staff, an elementary parent, a secondary parent, and a student met to develop our first draft plan in the spring of 2023. All 64GO students and families were surveyed. The survey collected information about students' perception of themselves as independent learners and provided us with feedback about systems that worked for families. We also collected suggestions about changes that our families recommend. We took a deep dive into our completion data and focused on the number of disengaged students that did not complete courses after registration.

Teacher perception of student engagement was considered as we looked at our findings and developed our area of focus. The plan will be reviewed at monthly Learning Sprint meetings.

PURPOSE / DATA RATIONALE

As we learned about delivering online curriculum, it has become apparent that more support for learners and home facilitators is needed by many families. Online learners who complete their courses are generally proficient and many express that the course has provided a strong learning foundation. For others, disengagement led to many students not completing courses and for some not actually activating the course after registration. This is our area of concern and one that we are focused on to better understand how to support our learners and their home facilitators for successful engagement and course completion.

Specifically, we know that online learning requires a specific set of skills and a high degree of independence. The home facilitator is a key partner in encouraging engagement. This year we tried some different ways to help families plan toward successful completion. Some were more successful than others. In some cases it was possibly our delivery, or the tools, that helped or hindered student engagement. Our survey and professional learning has given us information and recommendations to apply to our practice next year.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS

Through the year, we have modified our intake process as we have learned more about what it takes to be an online learner. We are providing better information to learners and their families at the beginning of their online journey. We are working with the Brightspace coaching team to develop a more accountable approach to registration and ensure our learners are ready to engage toward completion. We are developing systems for tracking communication and engagement. This includes an individualized program plan that will be shared and monitored with families to ensure supports are in place. Additionally, staff will meet regularly to focus on our disengaged students and families and develop actions of support. We will continually review what is working with some students and families and share resources and expertise on best practices for our staff and learning partners.

COLLABORATIVE CULTURES

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS / STUDENT VOICE

We have an active group of students who regularly study at the Hub. These students have given us valuable feedback about courses and assignments throughout the year. Visits to the Outer Islands and online conferences have allowed us to meet with learners who are not able to attend at the Hub. We consciously ask students about their experience as they complete their courses.

A student survey and a home facilitator survey provided some information and recommendations.

This is an area of growth for us as we look to engage more with our students and partner groups for valuable feedback through the development of our PAC, Student Led Conferences and Surveys.

STAFF/SHARED WORK

Our staff meet regularly at the Hub and online to share strategies and insights about our learners. We share tracking documents with each other. We spend time discussing better ways to work. We have a focused intention when we meet to examine each student's progress and ways to support and follow up.

We have met with the Ministry of Education online staff to learn more about the D2L platform that supports our curriculum. We are part of the Online Learning Project LMS Technical Committee and work collaboratively with our District Tech team for a deeper understanding of Brightspace to ensure ease of on-boarding and log-ins for students and families.

We have partnered with WCLN for access to course content and are working with the Ministry to uphold the new Accountability and Quality Assurance framework.

Moving forward, we plan to continue our shared work and implement plans to support students who are struggling with engagement.

DEEPER LEARNING

WHAT WILL STAFF NEED TO KNOW TO LEAD/PERFORM THIS WORK?

We are learning about the important role of the home facilitator in guiding their child toward successful completion. We are learning about the Brightspace platform and how to adapt our curriculum as needed. We are learning how to support families with the technology they need to use to engage in online learning.

Excellent communication with learners and families is essential in an online environment. We are developing systems to ensure that no one is missed.

Next year we will develop an intake process for students who are leaving an SD64 school to move to online learning in order to better support the student's transition to our program.

We would like to know how our success rates compare to other online programs in BC.

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

Online success requires planning. A plan for the year, the month, the week, and the day is important. Our students and their families need support to set reasonable timeframes for their course work.

The ability to work independently is key for online learners, along with support from their home facilitator. Knowing our learners is going to be key to a successful online experience and we need to set up Student Learning Plans and Program Plans to help us build a student profile that will best support our learners and families.

Students who attend at the Hub have had a great deal of success. We encourage all of our students to come in or meet online face-to-face to work directly with us from time to time. Communication is key for the online learning experience.

All of these skills and attributes will be our focus for students to ensure they have a positive experience with 64GO and stay engaged and on target for course completion and graduation.



APPROACH TO PROFESSIONAL LEARNING?

Our professional learning has been multi-faceted. We are learning about the curriculum we provide through our online platform. We are learning about online learners' motivation and engagement. We are learning about Ministry systems and accountability.

Webinars about online learning are offered frequently, and we participate in many of them. Some staff have enrolled in university courses to learn about using technology to support online learning. They will bring us current best practice information about learning design and critical digital pedagogy.

We also have engaged the Brightspace coaching team for on going Pro-D and collaborative networking to ensure accountability and quality assurance in the online domain

* most recent example at the end of this plan . . . *

We will continue to collaborate with the Ministry, Brightspace coaches and other school districts regarding online learning in both curriculum development and student engagement.



TAKING ACTION

How will the school structure an approach that can be measured in short formative cycles?

How will the school foster a sense of partnership to achieve a common goal of increased student achievement?

LEARNING SPRINT APPROACH

Next year, we have planned a series of learning sprints to help us and our students know how to be successful with online learning. We will meet once each month to review student progress and share best practice for supporting online learning. Following the cycles of growth - collaborate, identify, define, implement.

What have we tried? Was it successful? Why did it work or not? What do our students and families have to say? How have we followed up? What will we try next?

Our first sprint is focused on reducing the number of students who register and do not engage in the course or program. This year 16% of students contacted us, registered, received the information to begin and did nothing more. How can we refine our registration process to ensure engagement and hold our students accountable? Part of this sprint is to review what happened with the 14 students who did not follow through, and identify ways to help and support our new learners.

Possible additional sprint questions are:

How do we understand who our learners are before they begin their journey with us?

How do we interface with SD64 schools to better support students who transition to online learning during the school year?

How do we meet the needs of our different age groupings? How can assessment and planning make a difference for each student? How can we know our primary learners early in the year?

Throughout the year we have had 88 students register with us in different capacities: dual-enrollment, full programs, single courses, adult upgrading, academic support, students who have left their SD64 school, and homeschool families wanting to dip their toe into school. We want to know each student, their strengths and stretches, and how to help them toward graduation.

ACCOUNTABILITY

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL?

A greater percentage of students will engage with their program.

Students will stay with us until their course or program is complete.

Students will transition successfully to the next grade or graduate or move to in-class learning.

Students and families will be comfortable and in continuous contact with 64GO.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA

Year One Data (Course Completion)

88 students registered with 64GO over the 2022/23 school year (September to June)

51 (58%) successful engagement and completion of course or program

Example: grade 6 student is with us all year and completed all courses to move to grade 7

Example: grade 10 student completes Chemistry 11

12 (14%) limited engagement and continuing program at 64GO or transfer to bricks and mortar

Example: disengaged grade 6 student from SD64 school joins 64GO for academic support

Example: grade 10 student starts a course later in the year and will continue next year to complete

11 (13%) engaged and did not complete

Example: grade 10 student starts Chem 11 and progresses well but becomes overwhelmed

14 (16%) registered but did not engage

Example: an adult student registers then discontinues with no communication

STUDENT EXPERIENCE EVIDENCE

Survey results provide insight into online learner profiles and home facilitator support strategies:

How would you describe yourself as an independent learner?

- mostly independent - 33% student, 25% parent

- sometimes independent - 50% student, 42% parent

- not very independent - 17% student, 33% parent

What strategy was most helpful to you as an independent learner this year?

- having a weekly plan - 80% student, 27% parent

- coming into the Hub - 20% student, 9% parent

- contacting teachers for one-on-one help - 0 student, 27% parent

- regular communication with teachers - 0 student, 36% parent

EPIC STORY

STORY

Online learning is a lifeline for so many learners. It provides options and possibilities to those who face challenges that might otherwise limit their futures – learning options and graduation possibilities that they need to succeed. Some say that online schools are schools of “First Choice and Last Resort”. There are as many reasons to choose online learning as there are students who choose it. Already, in our first year, we have heard “I wish I had known about this sooner” from students and families who are experiencing success.

In our first year, we have enjoyed many successes. Each case resulted in students joining SD64 or remaining in SD64 instead of leaving for an out-of-district Provincial online school. Some of our success stories . . .

A grade 5 student joined us with weak skills across the curriculum. They were able to review gaps in grade 4 before completing grade 5 with excellent results. This student moved from a student at risk to a confident student working well at grade level. The student went from RED to GREEN in iPass and will continue with us for grade 6 next year.

A graduating student was able to take their final courses required for graduation while also taking online courses at college.

An elementary student was able to work online while travelling for most of the year. This student achieved excellent results and will return to Fernwood Elementary on track and at grade level.

A high school student was able to work in an international acting career, while completing their academics at their pace, while keeping their 5 year graduation trajectory.

A family was able to work with both of their children at home knowing the curriculum was robust and at grade level. This enabled them to keep a family schedule that fit their work.

Two students joined us late in the year from Provincial online schools. Both experienced the same immediate success with 64GO, which they had not experienced in their previous programs. They were failing. Their success was a result of direct contact with teachers at the Hub in a blended learning environment. Both students have enrolled in 64GO for this upcoming school year.

Feedback from a home facilitator:

“This is the best school year my child has ever experienced. She came alive with curiosity because she was no longer blocked with anxiety. My child needs to learn in a different way than in a typical school environment and we felt so supported by you and all the teachers to explore a unique path for her.”

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

NOTES

Other information from our Student and Home Facilitator surveys:

Thinking of next year, what other strategies could support your online learning?

- debating sessions
- learning based games
- monitored deadlines
- communicating more with teachers
- making a schedule
- more group activities
- extra Math tutoring
- group sporting activities
- scheduled check-ins
- group activities for primary students

Continued Professional Development - example of how the staff continue to network and reach out to engage in learning opportunities for the betterment of 64GO and our learners in the Gulf Islands . . .

Hi, Judy and Lyall!

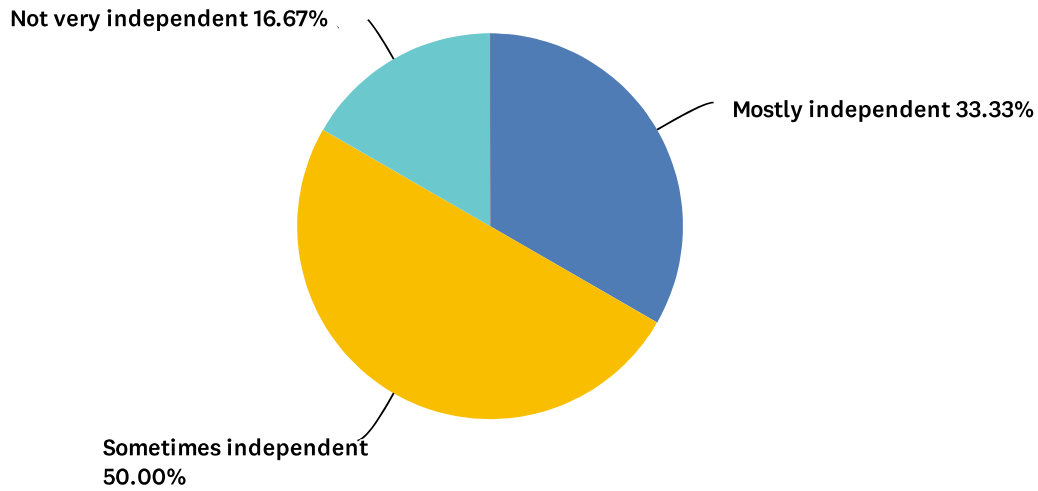
It was great to have a zoom with you both last week. I have cc'd Sean and Suzanne, Principal and Vice Principal at SIDES, into the thread so that you may connect with them regarding best practice in online Elementary course creation. They are supporting some amazing and super effective work in this area. They are happy to chat with you •

Please, feel free to connect with them directly.

Thanks,

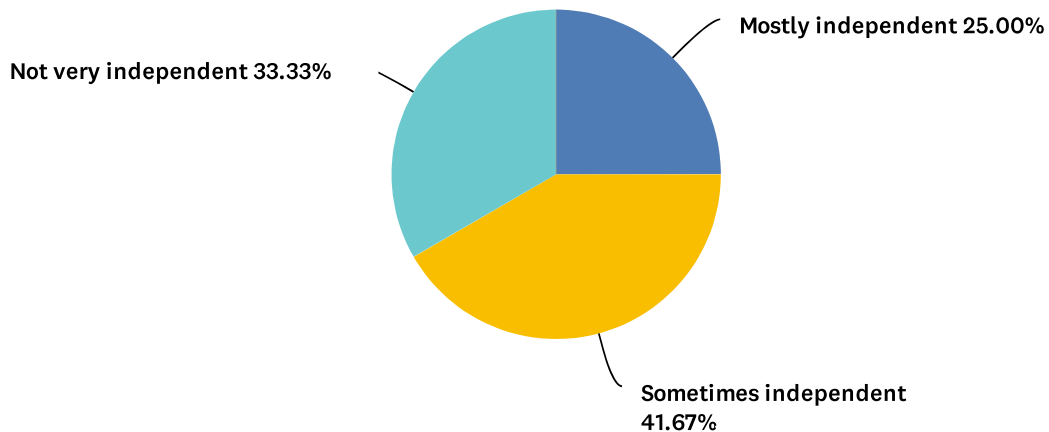
Whitney Williams, B. Ed, Cert. SPED (she/her)
Customer Success Specialist/Coach, K-12 (BC)
D2L

Q2 How would you describe yourself as an independent learner?



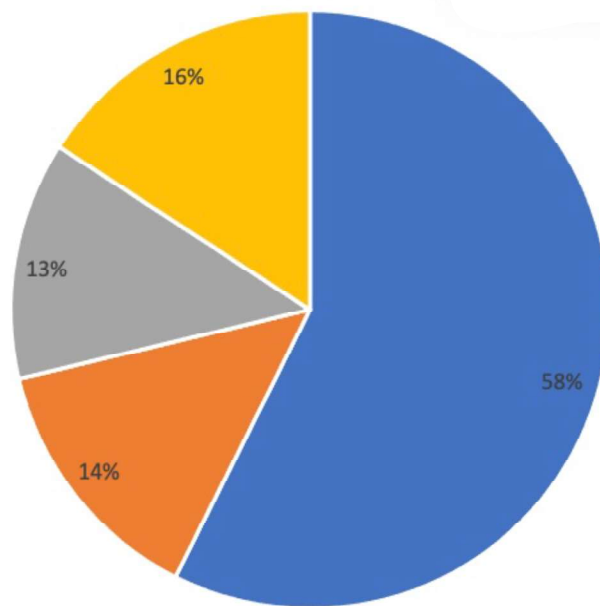
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Completely independent	0.00%
Mostly independent	33.33%
Sometime independent	50.00%
Not very independent	16.67%
Never independent	0.00%

Q2 How would you describe your child as an independent learner?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Completely independent (1)	0.00%
Mostly independent (2)	25.00%
Sometimes independent (3)	41.67%
Not very independent (4)	33.33%
Never independent (5)	0.00%

'64GO 2022-23 Engagement'



- successful engagement and completion of course or program
- limited engagement and continuing program at 64GO or transfer to bricks and mortar
- limited engagement and did not complete
- registered but did not engage