



SCHOOL PLAN

Saturna Ecological Education Centre (SEEC)

SD 64 – Gulf Islands

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OUR SCHOOL

SCHOOL IDENTITY/CURRENT REALITY

The Saturna Ecological Education Centre (SEEC) is located on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish Peoples in what is now known as the Southern Gulf Islands. The SEEC program prepares students in grades 10-12 to be independent, community-minded individuals who can apply the principles of ecological literacy to enhance their understanding of place and solve real-world problems. SEEC's identity is built around the following core themes:

- Community integration
- Place-based learning
- Environmental science

Students spend three nights per week for one full year at an off-grid education centre where they live and learn to connect these core themes to local and global contexts. A group of twelve SEEC students come to Saturna Island from school districts across BC, leading to a great opportunity to share knowledge, experience, and worldviews.

OUR STORY

Student Success

Looking to the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL), SEEC recognizes the importance of students' individual learning needs by providing choice of how, when, and where learning takes place. We encourage an inquiry mindset where students can pursue personal interests, take on challenging projects, and become leaders of an equitable and inclusive learning environment.

Despite its small size, SEEC is comprised of a diversity of students who each carry with them a unique educational background. We believe that a holistic approach to education that values inclusion, trust, and safety is key to building students' capacity to stretch their academic abilities and become dynamic young adults. With this firm foundation in place, SEEC aims to be a place where students can learn in diverse contexts, apply hands-on skills, and demonstrate conceptual understanding in ways that support the unique strengths of each individual learner.

Over the past year, the SEEC leadership team has come to understand the importance of quality partnerships in achieving its goals and the goals of the District's Strategic Direction and Indigenous Enhancement Agreement. We have seen first-hand that SEEC is better equipped to meet these goals when students are engaging with local partners that enrich their understanding and experience of place through the meaningful application of curriculum.

GOAL STATEMENT

Aspiration (School Goal): To build and maintain community partnerships that foster deeper learning

All students at SEEC will engage with local and regional partners to build an understanding of environmental science and how it is practically used to solve real-world issues. Emphasis will be put on the importance of braiding Indigenous Knowledge with Western science as a path towards a more socially and ecologically just education.

Due to the inherent nature of relationship building, we felt it was imperative that we continue to focus on our goal of building community partnerships for a **second year**. Many of our community partnerships are still forming and require intentional work to flourish and become rooted in reciprocity. Moreover, we felt that there were still many opportunities to build new partnerships, which will require patience, understanding, and organization.

Connections To:

Curricular Competencies:

- Co-operatively design projects with local and/or global connections and applications.
 - Apply First Peoples perspectives and knowledge, other ways of knowing, and local knowledge as sources of information.

Strategic Direction:

- Priority for Strategic Focus: **Understand – An Ethic of Learning**
 - Aspirations:
 - Empower student agency, engagement, and voice.
 - Foster deeper learning experiences.

Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL):

- Facilitates communication and ongoing, meaningful collaboration with local First Nation(s) in respectful, collaborative action.

Indigenous Enhancement Agreement:

- Goal #1 – Belonging & Goal #3 – Community

Drawing upon the District's [Indigenous Enhancement Agreement](#), SEEC aims to ensure that all its learners feel a sense of belonging, can think critically about the power of knowledge and can use a diversity of skills and tools to learn effectively from and with community.

This will be achieved by exposing students to local and regional partners that are engaged in ongoing projects that demonstrate HOW environmental science and a commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) can contribute to meaningful change. SEEC will look to maintain ongoing community partnerships and develop new community partnerships with the following organizations:

- Parks Canada
- Saturna Island Marine Research and Education Society (SIMRES)
- Stqeeye' Learning Society (Salt Spring Island)
- Cortes Island Academy (SD #72 – Campbell River)
- Pender Island Conservancy
- WSÁNEĆ Leadership School
- The Mother Tree Network
- UVic's Department of Environmental Studies

These community partnerships align with the [Strategic Direction's](#) *Priority for Strategic Focus: Know - Truths, Reparation, and Restoration*, by highlighting the importance of knowing the history and truths that have impacted these lands so that we can act towards healing and supporting Indigenous knowledge systems, land, language, and culture.

AREAS OF STRENGTH/GROWTH

SEEC takes great pride in its ability to provide its students with rich hands-on learning experiences. Students complete their year at SEEC with a newfound appreciation for environmental science and a greater understanding of the complex histories that have shaped Coast Salish territory. Field-based experiences, such as wetland restoration with the Stqeeye' Learning Society and learning from researchers at the Hakai Institute on Quadra Island, give students the opportunity to see environmental science in action and to be able to make connections between their education and future career-life goals.

While these partnerships have been integral to facilitating deeper learning experiences for students, we have come to realize that we must prioritize building a stronger internal community at SEEC in order for these partnerships to be fully embraced.

Reflective Action: To strengthen the student community so that each child is prepared to engage in deeper learning

Attending SEEC as a young learner comes with inherent challenges. Substantial travel times, living in close proximity to peers, and navigating student differences all pose an opportunity to learn and grow. For this growth to occur, there must be learning and living spaces that foster a sense of safety, joy, and belonging. It is our priority to provide these spaces so that students have the necessary supports to cultivate a strong sense of community with their peers and adult leaders.

Strategic Direction:

- **Priority for Strategic Focus: Be - Relationships and Belonging**
 - **Aspiration: Create and maintain strong community partnerships/relations.**
 - **"We ensure everyone is connected, supported, and seen. We relate to each other with kindness, care, love and compassion, nurturing environments where everyone belongs and contributes."**

This reflective action will be achieved through multiple means:

- Developing a coherent plan with our school-based team that puts student relationships as a top priority.
 - Weekly meetings between Vice Principal and Evening Supervisor ("temperature checks").
 - Monthly meetings between SBT to review student needs, access to resources, and SEL strategies.
- Collaborating with the [Neufeld Institute Foundation](#) to implement community building strategies.
 - Student workshops with Tamara Strijack (Clinical Counselor at the Neufeld Foundation).
 - Monthly meetings with Tamara Strijack to review strategies and progress/failures.
- Partnering with [The Circle Education](#) to foster social-emotional wellness among students.
 - Monthly student circle sessions that explore SEL strategies, inspire student voice, and create space to build community.

Culture & Structures

Our school goal engages everyone with shared moral purpose through its community-driven focus. We want everyone involved in SEEC, including, students, staff, and community members to benefit from the shared vision of **fostering deeper learning through quality partnerships**. We believe that everyone can learn from gaining an awareness of Indigenous Knowledge and its role in maintaining the wellbeing of land, culture, and community. These actions will connect SEEC and the Saturna Island community to numerous initiatives, expanding our capacity in science education and our ability to share valuable insight and experiences with the Gulf Islands School District.

Classroom: At the classroom level, SEEC will develop a strategic and targeted plan to support all students in engaging fully with each other and community partners. Students will be given an opportunity to become familiar with concepts and skills in the classroom before being asked to apply them during partner collaborations. Social-emotional learning opportunities will be provided regularly as a way of nurturing SEEC's internal community. Throughout the year students will reflect on their growth in competency-based areas (including social-emotional competence) and discuss how community partnerships are contributing to their learning goals.

SBT: The school-based team will meet regularly to discuss how community partnerships are contributing to student success, how individual student needs are being met, and how our focused direction might change or adjust. These meetings may involve community partners to ensure that meaningful learning is taking place, and our interests and objectives are aligned.

Please see the section titled "Associated Actions" for information on our process to develop initial and continuous engagement towards our school goal.

PURPOSE / DATA RATIONALE

When considering student feedback in the spring of 2025, it was made apparent that the SEEC year is highlighted by hands-on learning experiences that involve community partners. 75% of SEEC students said that our field-based science partnerships highlighted their year of learning. This encouraging feedback indicates that current partnerships have had a positive impact on the student experience. Moving forward, we will continue to track how our current and future partnerships impact student engagement and uphold the District's Indigenous Enhancement Agreement. Furthermore, we would like to continue to better represent diverse voices in our community partnerships and ensure that our focus on environmental science celebrates the importance of Indigenous Knowledge.

- This year, 100% of SEEC students said that our Indigenous partnerships made their learning experiences more meaningful.
- One student reflected upon their experience with community partners by saying, "I always feel really honored to learn more about Indigenous practices and culture. I've really liked all of our opportunities to work with Indigenous communities and I feel like I've learned a lot about the history of the land and a lot about the land itself."

While our community partnerships will continue to be a priority, it has become apparent that strengthening the internal community at SEEC is integral to making the most of these unique learning experiences.

- This year, 40% of SEEC students mentioned that they would like to have support with solving student conflicts and creating a more cohesive community.
- One student reflected upon their experience by saying, "having someone

like [The Circle Education facilitator] come more regularly could help us solve conflicts more effectively.”

- Another student mentioned, “There are times when student behaviors take away from the living/learning experience ... maybe some stricter consequences could help.”

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS

The following strategies will be put into action to achieve our school aspirations:

1. Building Community Partnerships:

- **Identify Key Partners:** Create a list of local and regional organizations, environmental groups, and First Nations communities that align with your goals. Consider entities like Parks Canada, local conservation groups, universities, and First Nation schools (see list above).
- **Identify Common Interests:** Identify areas of overlap between your school’s objectives and the interests of potential partners. Highlight how collaboration can address shared challenges or goals.
- **Request Meeting:** Establish regular communication with these partners to discuss potential collaboration opportunities and to build trust and mutual understanding.

2. Curriculum Integration:

- **Co-Develop Curriculum:** Work with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and local scientists to co-develop a curriculum that integrates Indigenous perspectives and Western scientific approaches.
- **Field-Based Learning:** Design field trips and hands-on learning experiences that involve local ecosystems, allowing students to see real-world applications of environmental science.
- **Interdisciplinary Projects:** Create projects that require students to address social and environmental issues using both Indigenous Knowledge and Western science.

3. Community Engagement:

- **Community Events:** Host community events that showcase student projects and involve local partners, schools, and Indigenous communities.
- **Guest Speakers:** Invite local experts, including Indigenous Elders and environmental scientists, to speak to students about their work and perspectives.

5. Student Involvement:

- **Student Research Projects:** Encourage students to undertake research projects that involve local environmental issues, emphasizing the use of both Indigenous Knowledge and Western science.
- **Student Leadership Opportunities:** Create opportunities for students to lead initiatives and present their findings to the community and partners.

7. Evaluation and Feedback:

- **Ongoing Assessment:** Continuously assess the effectiveness of your strategies through student and family feedback, partner input, and academic outcomes.
- **Adapt and Improve:** Be prepared to adapt our strategies based on feedback and changing circumstances to ensure they remain effective and relevant.

Community Building

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS (Students, Families, Community)

Parents/Families: We will continue to encourage conversations at home that focus on SEEC's core themes: community integration, place-based learning, and environmental science, with an emphasis on student learning and curiosity. We will host a SEEC orientation/welcome event in September on Saturna Island that gives all students and families an opportunity to meet the school team and local community members. During this event, we will discuss ongoing and prospective partnerships and detail how they will enhance student learning. We will also send students and families home with a school survey that allows them to share their voice regarding the SEEC experience.

Community: We are grateful to have the support of local community members including Parks Canada, the Saturna Heritage Centre, the Saturna Island Marine Research and Education Society, the Women's Service Club, and many others who play a key role in enriching the learning experience at SEEC. We will be in active communication with these partners to ensure that student experiences are aligned with school values, goals, and curriculum. We will also be in contact with organizations and schools throughout the Gulf Islands School District with the intention of establishing new partnerships that extend the student experience beyond Saturna Island. This may include sharing our SEEC learning journey in the Pender Post, collaborating with GISS, and engaging with local conservancies on Galiano, Mayne, and Pender Islands.

Student Voice: In developing our school goal, we relied upon anecdotal observations, conversations, and formal feedback from students. Student feedback will continue to be part of an ongoing process that helps shape the SEEC learning journey. We will be collecting student feedback throughout the year in the following ways:

- School experience surveys
- Class journal writing
- Core and curricular competency reflections
- Monthly "Student Stories" submitted to the Saturna Island Scribbler

DEEPER LEARNING

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

School Goal: *To lead/perform this work in building and maintaining community partnerships that foster deeper learning, staff will need to:*

- Identify practical lessons and activities that increase student knowledge, skills, and understanding related to partnership collaborations.
- Understand each community partner's story (values, goals, local/global impact etc.)
- Consider students' strengths, stretches, and interests when planning learning activities.
- Understand and respect cultural protocol, sensitivities, and knowledge.
- Engage students in goal setting and learning through reflection.

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

School Goal: To be successful in building and maintaining community partnerships that foster deeper learning, we will need to nurture the following skills and understandings:

- Effective communication strategies
- Effective documentation of learning (note taking, photography, voice memo's etc.)
- Higher-order questioning (throughout learning process)
- Impacts of colonization on Indigenous ways of knowing and being
- Respecting diverse worldviews
- Principles of ecological processes
- Scientific inquiry (asking questions that promote curiosity, establish hypotheses, and build upon personal interests).
- Scientific field methods (conducting experiments, data collection, cultural protocols etc.)
- Community building (focus on core competencies)

These skills and understandings will be integrated into the curriculum as part of the core and curricular competencies with an emphasis on the [Strategic Direction's Priority for Strategic Focus: **Understand - An Ethic of Learning**](#). Here, our focus will be on the *Aspirations - Nurture/foster curious, critical and creative learners so that every student is prepared and ready for the world beyond PreK to 12.*

Capacity Building

Professional learning will be woven into our year at SEEC in multiple ways. Through ongoing conversations with our leadership team, our goal will be to engage in professional learning that prepares SEEC educators to better implement Indigenous pedagogy and the First Peoples Principles of Learning, as well as to foster a deeper sense of community among students. As outlined in the [Strategic Direction's Priority for Strategic Focus: **Do - Integrity & Responsibility**](#), we will focus on opportunities to apply this learning in ways that promote culturally responsive environmental stewardship and leadership.

Professional learning could take place in the following ways:

Aspiration (School Goal)

- Utilize district resources that support the application of Indigenous Knowledge to science education.
- Engage in professional development opportunities that build capacity to collaborate and learn with Indigenous communities.
- Network with organizations that are doing "the work" in the field of environmental science.
- Co-develop curriculum that fosters the braiding of Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science.
- Connect with local school districts to share curriculum developments and learning opportunities.

Reflective Action

- Engage in professional development opportunities that focus on conflict resolution, leadership, and/or social-emotional learning (SEL).
- Work with the Neufeld Institute Foundation as part of a reflexive practice that focuses on community building, communication, childhood development etc.
- Participate in learning opportunities related to Compassionate Systems Leadership (CSL).

ASSESSMENT - STAYING ON COURSE

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL?

We will use the following framework to measure our success in achieving our school aspirations:



1. Ongoing student feedback will provide insights on the value of community partnerships and future considerations.
2. Demonstrations of learning will be assessed to see how community partners enhanced students' understanding of Indigenous Knowledge and Western science.
3. Ongoing input and feedback from community partners will aim to align interests and ensure student success.
4. Families will be provided with an opportunity to share how their child has connected their learning to their personal life through ongoing check-ins and surveys.

At SEEC, we hope that students will know that they have achieved the school goal through their ability to engage in meaningful discussions about their learning that demonstrate confidence, critical thinking, and curiosity. They will have evidence of this learning in the form of scientific data, group projects, artwork, journal entries etc. Students will take pride in their evidence of learning and will be able to share it throughout the community as a way of celebrating their success.

At the beginning of the year students will document where they are at along a continuum of understanding that relates to specific curricular outcomes. These outcomes will align with our school goal by drawing upon competencies that highlight Indigenous Knowledge and Western science. This will allow students to track their learning throughout the year as their ability to KNOW, DO, and UNDERSTAND evolves.

Once students have lived our school aspirations, they will be able to demonstrate proficiency in the following areas (this is a sample of some of the targeted learning outcomes):

- **UNDERSTAND:** Humans can play a role in stewardship and restoration of ecosystems.
- **KNOW:** First Peoples knowledge and other traditional ecological knowledge in sustaining biodiversity.
- **DO:** Implement multiple strategies to solve problems in real-life, applied, and conceptual situations.