GULF ISLANDS SCHOOL DISTRICT 64

SCHOOL PLAN
2024 – 2025

MAYNE ISLAND SCHOOL

SIGNATURES

PRINCIPAL

VICE- PRINCIPAL

PAC CHAIR

TEACHER

Student

SCHOOL IDENTITY/CONTEXT

Mayne Island School offers a distinctive educational experience due to its small student body and multi-age class structure. With approximately 40 students, including nearly 10 new kindergarteners this coming year, the school fosters a close-knit community. The two multi-age classes, combining Kindergarten to Grade 3 and Grade 3 to Grade 7, provide a unique learning environment. The school has three classrooms for just two classes, offering ample space, and a fully equipped workshop for Art and ADST. The school also includes a gymnasium, garden, library, kitchen with three ovens, and an outdoor playground surrounded by nature that helps contribute to nature connection and ample opportunities for outdoor physical activity.

OUR STORY

In recent years, the school faced challenges with staff stability, particularly in the upper elementary class, where frequent changes in homeroom teachers and several temporary teachers impacted students' experiences. Currently, we are promoting greater stability and consistency for our student population, helping to rebuild trust and provide a more reliable learning environment.
Student educational experience at Mayne Island School is enhanced by its strong community partnerships and expansive facilities.

Our collaboration with the Mayne Island Conservancy enriches place-based learning by seamlessly integrating the Social Studies and Science curriculum with the local environment. Recently, our partnership with the Mayne Island Little Theatre enabled upper elementary students to participate in a musical theatre production, fostering student agency and deepening community engagement. Local volunteers, including members of the Quilters Guild, contribute to our textiles education, while The Circle Education delivers innovative social-emotional programs monthly. The Gen Pals program, which connects students with island residents through school events and letter exchanges, strengthens intergenerational bonds and community ties. The school benefits from an active and influential Parent Advisory Council (PAC), with meetings that are well-attended by a large percentage of the school population. Additionally, our connections with the local Fire Department and the Early Childhood Society, whose graduates often transition into our K-7 program, further support our students and community.

Typically, students are picked up and dropped off at school with family members, who often greet and converse with teachers at the entrance. However, starting in 2024-2025, with the introduction of a school bus transporting many students to and from school, this daily connection between families and teachers will likely decrease, altering the beginning and end of the school day. Moving forward, the school will need to create more intentional opportunities to bring the community together, ensuring that families and teachers continue to have meaningful face-to-face interactions.

Mayne Island School cultivates a strong sense of belonging and community, supported by kind and caring staff, supportive families, and empathetic students. The learning environment is dynamic, social, and lively, with children engaging in hands-on, interactive activities. Students find their own paths, learning at multiple entry points alongside peers of different ages, fostering a collaborative and inclusive atmosphere. Our school also benefits from the involvement of dedicated community mentors who play a significant role in our students' learning experiences. Additionally, our programming is designed to foster creativity, providing ample opportunities for students to explore and express their creative talents.

GOAL STATEMENT

Goal 1: All students will ...

Use inquiry-based learning across all subject areas to develop deep, meaningful understanding.

Connections to:

Curriculum: All subject areas; Core Competencies (Communication, Personal and Social, & Thinking)

FESL: Ensures capacity building and a system-wide commitment to continuous improvement and life-long learning.
Recognizes the individual learning needs of students and fosters equitable and inclusive learning environments.

Gulf Island School District Strategic Plan: Integrity and Responsibility; promote collaboration that benefits the learning community and champion social justice.

Community Engagement and Support

- **Strengths**: Students demonstrate a strong sense of belonging and community engagement, supported by their empathy and active participation in initiatives like buddy reading and the Gen Pals program. This fosters inclusive relationships among peers and with the wider community, contributing to a positive school environment where students thrive academically and socially. Additionally, navigating a classroom setting that spans 4 or 5 grade levels throughout the school year cultivates valuable skills in collaboration, leadership, and mentorship among students of different ages.

Reading

- **Strengths**: 74% (26 out of 35 students) meeting or exceeding grade level expectations based on the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. Supported by anecdotal evidence and teacher observation.

Writing

- **Challenges**: 69% (24 out of 35 students) meeting or exceeding grade level expectations. Assessed through collaborative School Wide Writes and supported by anecdotal evidence and teacher observation.

Mathematics

- **Strengths**: 74% (26 out of 35 students) meeting or exceeding grade level expectations. Evaluated through anecdotal evidence and teacher observation, supplemented by the Diagnostic Math Assessment and Island Numeracy Assessment.

FOCUSING DIRECTION

PROCESS FOR REVIEWING/REVISING/DETERMINING

Influenced by our school's critical thinking goal for 2023-2024, the process for reviewing, revising, and determining our school goal was collaboratively shaped by Educational Assistants (EAs) and teachers. Recognizing inquiry to enhance critical thinking skills, we aimed to extend and embed this approach across all subjects. We understood the potential positive impact of inquiry-based learning on areas such as reading, writing, and mathematics. A recent survey of Grades 3-7 students revealed that 95% expressed neutrality or rated the musical theatre process and performance—integrating inquiry elements and cross-curricular connections—as very good or excellent. This robust feedback supports our commitment to developing future cross-curricular projects that are student-centered, foster student agency, and encourage exploration of individual interests.

PURPOSE / DATA RATIONALE

Building upon our strength in reading while addressing areas needing further development in mathematics and writing, we embrace inquiry-based strategies known to enrich student learning across a wide range of subject areas.

- **Reading**: Inquiry-based strategies such as reciprocal teaching and guided reading significantly enhance reading comprehension. Research by Wexler and Vaughan (2020) underscores that these approaches improve students' ability to ask questions, make predictions, and monitor their understanding during reading tasks.

- **Writing**: Inquiry-based writing instruction promotes writing fluency and quality across genres. Graham and Hebert (2010) highlight that such practices encourage critical thinking and self-regulation, essential for effective writing skills development.

- **Mathematics**: Inquiry-based learning in mathematics, including problem-based learning and mathematical investigations, fosters deeper conceptual understanding and enhances problem-solving abilities. Hattie (2017) emphasizes that these approaches lead to improved mathematical achievement and long-term retention of mathematical concepts.

Core Competences: Fostering a lens of inquiry can connect meaningfully and support students in their development of Communication, Thinking, and Personal and Social by guiding them to explore questions deeply, promoting critical and reflective thinking, and nurturing their abilities to interact meaningfully with others, both locally and globally. This approach empowers students to articulate and exchange ideas effectively, develop new insights through intellectual inquiry, and cultivate a strong sense of personal identity and social responsibility. Through inquiry-based learning, students enhance their communication skills, expand their capacity for complex thinking, and develop empathy and ethical decision-making, preparing them to engage positively and purposefully in their communities and the wider world.

Strategies for the goal: *Use inquiry-based learning across all subject areas to develop deep, meaningful understanding.*

- **Scaffold Inquiry Phases Gradually**: Start by breaking down the inquiry cycle into manageable phases (e.g., tuning in, finding out, sorting out, going further, making conclusions, and taking action).
- **Student-Led Inquiry Presentations**: Organize opportunities for students to present their inquiry projects to peers, teachers, and the community.
- **Expert Speakers:** Identify local community members, including parents, professionals, and local experts, who can share their inquiry experiences or knowledge in specific subject areas.
- **Inquiry Wall**: Dedicate a classroom space to display key terms, questions, and stages of the inquiry process.
- **Inquiry Stations**: Set up classroom stations dedicated to different stages of the inquiry cycle, where students can engage in specific activities (e.g., research station, question development station, reflection station).

COLLABORATIVE CULTURES

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS / STUDENT VOICE

Clear communication throughout the year is key to our success.

Parents/Families: Community Events: Open houses/information sessions/student-led conferences focused on inquiry-based learning, where parents/families are invited to participate.

Monthly Newsletter: outlining and sharing with families initiatives and learning related to inquiry-based learning.

Parent Advisory Council: Monthly Meetings: Schedule dedicated agenda items during PAC meetings to discuss updates and initiatives related to inquiry-based learning.

Community: Community Events: Host community events (e.g., open houses, information sessions) focused on inquiry-based learning, inviting community members to participate.

Student Voice:

- Surveys and Focus Groups: Conduct regular surveys and focus groups to gather student feedback on their experiences with inquiry-based learning.
- Showcase Student Work: Feature student projects and achievements related to inquiry-based learning in school assemblies, newsletters, and on school bulletin boards.

STAFF/SHARED WORK

Staff will work on together:
- Investigating and better understanding Kath Murdoch's Inquiry Cycle in the context of their classroom and teaching.
- Participating in collaborative inquiry planning sessions to design inquiry-based units.
- Observing others' inquiry teaching both within and outside of school to see how to best implement inquiry-based learning.
- Engaging in ongoing reflection and shared learning to enhance teaching with an inquiry lens.

Shared learning on the following resources:
- A Model for Designing a Journey of Inquiry by Kath Murdoch
- Project Zero's Thinking Routines Toolbox
- Professional reading on inquiry-based learning and related pedagogical approaches
  - Kimberly Mitchell's "Experience Inquiry"
  - Kath Murdoch's "Getting Personal with Personal Inquiry"

DEEPER LEARNING

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

GOAL 1: To lead/perform this work around inquiry-based learning, staff will need to know:

1) **Understanding of Inquiry Frameworks:** Familiarity with different inquiry models and frameworks, such as Kath Murdoch's "Cycle of Inquiry," to guide the planning and implementation of inquiry-based units.

2) **Curriculum Integration:** Knowledge of how to integrate inquiry practices across various subject areas, aligning with curriculum standards and learning outcomes.

3) **Questioning Techniques:** Skills in developing and using open-ended and probing questions to stimulate student curiosity and drive inquiry.

4) **Assessment Strategies:** Ability to use formative assessment techniques throughout the inquiry process to gauge student understanding, identify misconceptions, and inform instructional adjustments.

5) **Collaborative Planning:** Capacity to collaborate with colleagues to design cohesive inquiry units that scaffold learning, incorporate diverse perspectives, and meet the needs of all learners.

6) **Reflection and Adaptation:** Competence in facilitating student reflection on learning processes and outcomes, and readiness to adapt teaching strategies based on student responses and evolving inquiry paths.

7) **Resource Management:** Recognition that resources may not always be readily available (e.g., building), making pre-planning essential to ensure different aspects of a concept can be explored in various ways.

8) **Early Years Inquiry:** Need for more information and strategies to effectively implement inquiry-based learning for our youngest learners.

9) **Flexibility in Inquiry:** Willingness to be flexible and open to student-initiated and student-led inquiry, in addition to teacher-led initiatives.

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

Goal 1: To be successful in ensuring student success in inquiry-based learning, we will foster the following skills:

1) **Critical Thinking:** Encouraging students to analyze information, make connections, and draw conclusions based on evidence gathered through inquiry.
2) **Questioning Skills:** Teaching students to ask thoughtful, open-ended questions to guide their inquiry and deepen their understanding of concepts.
3) **Research and Information Literacy:** Equipping students with skills to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively from various sources to support their inquiries.
4) **Communication:** Developing students' ability to articulate their thoughts, ideas, and findings clearly and coherently through various mediums such as writing, speaking, and multimedia presentations.
5) **Collaboration:** Promoting teamwork and collaboration skills as students engage in shared inquiry experiences, discuss findings, and work together to solve problems or explore complex topics, while also incorporating student mentoring to support peer learning.
6) **Advocacy and Taking Action:** Empowering students to advocate for issues they are passionate about, take meaningful action based on their inquiry findings and insights, and advocate for themselves as learners and individuals.
7) **Self-Regulation and Reflection:** Supporting students in managing their own learning processes, setting goals, monitoring progress, and reflecting on their learning experiences to enhance future inquiries.
8) **Intuition and Diverse Learning:** Recognizing and nurturing students' ability to learn through intuition and diverse approaches, acknowledging that each student may learn in unique ways and encouraging exploration of different learning methods.

1) **Collaborative Planning and Team Collaboration:** Facilitate collaborative planning sessions where teachers work together to design inquiry-based units. These sessions promote the sharing of ideas, resources, and best practices across grade levels and subjects, ensuring consistency and alignment in teaching approaches. Teachers will also reflect on the effectiveness of teaching strategies within the context of their classrooms during these sessions.

2) **Modelling and Peer Learning Experiences:** Provide opportunities for teachers to observe and learn from exemplary inquiry-based teaching practices through peer observations or model lessons.

3) **Professional Development Integration:** Integrate professional learning opportunities into staff meetings by allocating dedicated time for sharing and reflecting on inquiry-based practices and incorporate these into school-based professional development days.

ACCOUNTABILITY

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL?

We will know we are successful in implementing inquiry-based learning when students:

Know:

- Demonstrate a deep understanding of core concepts and content knowledge across various subject areas.
- Articulate key facts, theories, and principles related to their inquiry topics.
- Explain how different pieces of information and ideas connect and relate to each other within their inquiries.
- Articulate what inquiry entails and recognize their position within the inquiry cycle.

Do:

- Apply critical thinking skills to analyze information, solve problems, and make informed decisions.
- Show proficiency in the language and process of inquiry; and displaying skills such as critical thinking, asking probing questions, and effectively investigating topics through structured inquiry frameworks.
- Collaborate effectively with peers, sharing ideas, listening to others, and contributing constructively to group discussions and activities.
- Engage in questioning, exploring, and reflecting to make connections, apply knowledge, and solve problems creatively and critically.
- Demonstrate perseverance in overcoming challenges, taking personal responsibility for completing their inquiries, and engaging in self-starting and student-led learning rather than relying solely on teacher direction.

Understand:

- Grasp the significance and relevance of their learning within real-world contexts and personal experiences, showing understanding when learning is personally relevant and has real-world applications.
- Evaluate the reliability and credibility of sources used in their inquiries and make informed judgments.
- Reflect on their learning journey, identifying strengths, areas for growth, and strategies for improvement in future inquiries.

We will know we are successful as a staff in implementing inquiry-based learning when we:

1) **Design and Implement Inquiry Units:**
- Teachers effectively design and implement inquiry-based units that are cross-curricular and aligned with curriculum outcomes.

2) **Facilitate Meaningful Inquiry Discussions:**
- Educators skillfully facilitate inquiry discussions that encourage critical thinking and collaboration. Teachers facilitate discussions, guiding students to analyze primary sources, evaluate multiple perspectives, and draw connections to foster deep understanding and intellectual engagement.

3) **Use Formative Assessment to Guide Instruction:**
- Teachers adeptly use formative assessment strategies to monitor student progress and adjust instruction. Educators employ ongoing assessments such as peer reviews and self-reflections to gauge understanding of concepts, identify learning gaps, and provide timely feedback to enhance student learning outcomes.
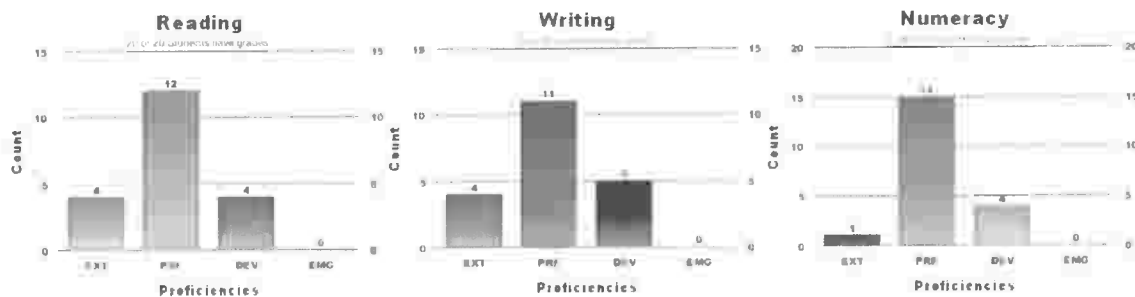
OUR STORY (TO BE TOLD DURING THE UPCOMING YEAR)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (APPENDIX)
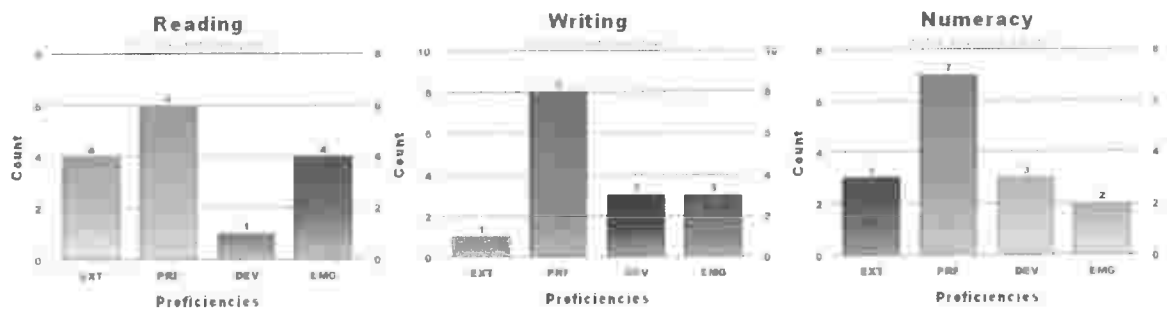
K-2 STUDENTS

GRADE 3-7 STUDENTS

NOTES