

Sunnyside School 2025-2026



Sunnyside School Education Plan

Motto:

"Embracing kindness, play, creativity, and the outdoors to learn
and grow!"

Mission

"Once a Sunnysider, always a Sunnysider"

We encourage and value community. We love it when former Sunnysiders come back to the school to volunteer, to coach, to run a wellness group, or to be celebrated. We want students to understand that they are valued, even after they leave our school. The community support for this school is part of what makes it great. Whether someone has attended Sunnyside for years or is brand new to the school, we desire for all students to feel like they belong in our school community. We are small enough to allow everyone to be connected but big enough to make a difference!

"Weather warriors"

We believe that the outdoors, nature, and the land can be one of our greatest teachers. At Sunnyside, students spend close to 2 hours outside a day, learning, playing, discovering, and exploring. This time is vital to their success as students - whether they are participating in formal learning opportunities, playing on the playground, or participating in PE class, we believe that the outdoors enable students to grow and be healthy emotionally, physically, socially, and academically.

"Work hard, play hard"

We believe that when it's time to work, we work hard to grow as much as possible. This includes formal instruction in the classroom, field trips, instruction outside, and a wide variety of other creative learning opportunities. Growth, in all forms, is central to all that we do. We also believe that when it's time to play, we play hard as well! At Sunnyside, students are able to participate in a wide variety of excellent play opportunities - including building forts, skating on our outdoor rink, playing outside on our beautiful schoolyard, or spending time with friends in any of our great hang out spaces.

"Kind people are our kind of people"

We believe that kindness is key to a thriving and vibrant community. This doesn't mean that we have to be friends with everyone, but it does mean that we strive to treat everyone with kindness and respect. It starts with kindness and care from staff members to students and flows through every relationship - between staff, parents, students, bus drivers, volunteers, grandparents, and anyone who comes into our school. By encouraging and modeling kindness, we want to prioritize hope and joy through the ups and downs of life. Kindness and care is central to everything we do at Sunnyside.

Principal's Message

Sunnyside School is a small rural school that services a community just outside of Lethbridge, Alberta. There are approximately 150 students from Early Learning to grade 6. These numbers are steadily increasing. In 2021-2022, Sunnyside School had 126 students from Early Learning to grade 6. This is a 19% increase in just 4 years.

Sunnyside School has a dedicated staff of 7 teachers and 8 support staff. It is a special rural school that has a thriving School Council and a dedicated cadre of parents that regularly invest time and resources into the school. This is evidenced by the purchase of a 42 foot dome greenhouse that will be used to enhance student learning experiences.

At Sunnyside School, we pride ourselves on embracing student wellness and the outdoors. We believe that students who are active, connected to the land that they live and learn on, and regularly embrace all that the outdoors have to offer can more effectively learn, thrive, and be physically/mentally well. The majority of students at Sunnyside School spend close to two hours outside a day - this is something we are very proud of. Parents and students alike appreciate this additional time and we believe that it has a positive impact on student wellness and learning.



As a staff, we strongly believe that every child deserves a chance to learn and grow, every single day. One of our priorities to achieve this is to constantly be learning and growing. One example of the growth that our staff has demonstrated is the change in our math practices the last few years. We have integrated math fluency image/number talks, collaborative thinking tasks, and math journaling to our math pedagogy. The

result has been significantly more interest, buy-in, and achievement from students in math at Sunnyside.

Sunnyside students are also able to participate in a wide variety of sporting events. All students have the opportunity to join our running club, to participate in track and field events, and join different activities during our Friday Wellness time. Students in grade 5/6 can also join our mini-volleyball and mini-basketball teams - where they can improve their skills through friendly competition.



Sunnyside School is extremely fortunate to have an active and engaged parent body. They have fundraised hundreds of thousands of dollars to invest in the school - from a new playground to picnic tables, adjustable outdoor basketball hoops to numerous field trips, and extra

sports equipment to hammocks for our outdoor spaces. These upgrades and extras benefit ALL students to ensure that Sunnyside is an equitable and inclusive environment for students to learn and grow. As mentioned earlier, during the 2023-2024 school year, we built a 42-foot (diameter) dome-style greenhouse similar to the ones that are pictured above. During the 2024-2025 school year, we were able to use our greenhouse for the first time, growing plants and utilizing it as a flexible classroom space. We can't wait to see all the ways it enhances learning in 2025-2026!

As a school community, we are proud of how we are working together to meet the needs of students in our community. We recognize that there are still areas we would like to grow in, as demonstrated by our three goals for the

2025-2026 year. As we pursue excellence in all that we do, we believe that Sunnyside will continue to be an incredible place for students and staff to learn, grow, explore, and shine!

School Goals:

Jurisdictional Desired State: Students will achieve prescribed provincial learning outcomes, demonstrating strengths in literacy and numeracy.		
School Goal:	Measures: including school developed measures.	Strategies:
Students will reinforce literacy skills for success in all areas of learning.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our School Survey 2. Benchmark Reading Assessments 3. Reading check-ins for students who are at risk. 4. Grade 6 PAT results 5. Mandatory Literacy assessments through Alberta Education. 6. Palliser Reading Assessment (for intervention) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom configurations that promote teacher/student relationships to “hit the ground running” • Increase collaboration time (during PD and informal) for teachers to share and build capacity • Ramp up the Reading Recovery model for intervention to improve reading skills and promote conversation about text • Every at risk child, every day • Emphasis on reading/writing every day in every subject • Sharing successful strategies with each other during staff meetings • Increase our book supply at the K-2 level to ensure ample supply of books for school and home, including investing significant funds into decodable texts • Targeted reading interventions daily for every student reading below grade level • Haggerty phonemic awareness utilized in K, 1,2. • Purchase and utilize LLI kits to enhance our ability to ramp up reading intervention for students below grade level, especially in grades 2-6
Data/evidence on how well the strategies worked	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utilize the Palliser Reading Assessment to identify and address gaps in learning for reading skills in Grade 1/2. This information will be used to respond immediately to learning needs and implement opportunities for intervention. 2. A quick response to assessing all students in grades 2-6 (Sept/October 2025) to determine literacy skills provided valuable and timely information for responsive teaching. 3. F and P benchmark data to determine growth. 4. Increased use of decodable texts for kindergarten and grade 1 5. Targeted intervention with trained educational assistants have made a significant impact on our students who need additional reading support. 6. Providing flexibility and accommodations for students who need additional writing support has been a positive contribution to assessing all children’s writing abilities. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue with the intervention model. Teachers and students have been utilizing the Leveled Literacy Intervention kits that we purchased. There has been a large amount of uptake (from grade 1-4). 2. Continue to promote explicit teaching of phonics and phonemic awareness in grades 1 and 2. 3. Utilize guided reading and guided reading groups more often, enabling students additional exposure to texts/strategies with an adult. 4. Continue to implement the writing workshop model to enhance student stamina, creativity, and passion for writing. 5. Effectively utilize additional teaching staff for next year to enable small group work to enhance reading and writing. 	

Jurisdictional Desired State: Students will achieve prescribed provincial learning outcomes, demonstrating strengths in literacy and numeracy.

School Goal:	Measures: including school developed measures.	Strategies:
Students will reinforce numeracy skills for success in all areas of learning.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher developed assessments (pre and post) to show growth 2. Mathematics PAT 3. Numeracy Screening Assessment for grades 1-3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom configurations that promote teacher/student relationships to “hit the ground running” • Integrate numeracy across the curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Provide opportunities for students to apply numeracy outside of the math class ◦ Use math vocabulary in all subject areas ◦ Provide opportunities for students to engage in regular mental math strategies • Participate in teacher professional development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Collaborating with colleagues ◦ Share best practice at staff meetings ◦ Share math fluency games, puzzles and tasks at staff meetings and PD. • Purchase teacher resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Mindset Mathematics - each grade level resource. ◦ Utilize Building Fact Fluency kits ◦ Continue implementing Peter Liljedahl's Building Thinking Classrooms • Work with staff to introduce daily math games and daily math word problems. • Work with staff to identify areas of need and have students participate in targeted intervention daily.
Data/evidence on how well the strategies worked.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The introduction of math fluency kits and Building Thinking Classrooms has improved student collaboration and problem solving, as well as their self-reported enjoyment of math (from student surveys). 2. Math PAT scores continue to be high. <p>Next Steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continued emphasis on math manipulatives 2. Explore assessment practices that support a growth mindset 3. Moving towards a model of open-ended problems, math games, and practice 4. Work with teachers to enhance efficacy through team-teaching and group collaboration 	

Jurisdictional Desired State: Students will be able to identify their emotions so they can react appropriately, helping them to self advocate and make good decisions.

School Goal:	Measures: including school developed measures.	Strategies:
Students will connect learning success with daily physical and mental health opportunities for optimal well-being	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School developed surveys to assess engagement and student wellness. 2. Assurance Survey results 3. Anecdotal information through surveys, conversations with students and parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each reporting period students will identify strategies that make them feel well and identify new strategies to try. • Increase outdoor learning opportunities • Outdoor recess--improve opportunities (sleds/shovels, hammocks, slack lines, outdoor rink) • Reimagine recess <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Embrace the idea of student leisure time ◦ Provide daily scheduled outdoor wellness time for increased play, sport, connecting with nature, physical activity and social/emotional learning • Provide opportunities to practice wellness beyond Wellness Friday • Staff will work together to create an understanding of social/emotional learning • Meet regularly with the Health Champions committee • Work together with bus drivers to provide safe and respectful spaces • Create opportunities for student leadership • Engage the larger community • Enhance outdoor physical spaces • Create school-wide opportunities for students to build relationships with the Indigenous community • Implement universal strategies (Southwest Collaborative Support Service) • Using University of Alberta's Developing Healthy Communities Handbook • Utilize greenhouse to enhance outdoor activities and opportunities for student wellness • Continue with targeted words of the month to enhance student understanding of social-emotional (SEL) objectives. • Utilize the counselor and making connections worker to enhance student mental health and wellness • Utilize the making connections worker to present on SEL outcomes. • Family groups (cross sections of the school broken into groups led by teachers) will meet monthly to build community. • "Shine" awards given out at monthly assemblies to celebrate SEL objectives. • Utilize bulletin board space to promote SEL objectives.

<p>Data/evidence on how well the strategies worked.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outdoor learning continued to grow in 2024-2025. This includes additional trips to Pavan Park and extended outdoor/wellness time for all grades. 2. Outdoor school wide activities built community and celebrated our school culture (Pumpkin Festival and family activities) 3. Land-based learning continues in Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 (using the Walking Curriculum and other Indigenous based resources) 4. The school office launched a “Care Curriculum” model where students could practice regulation and receive some extra TLC in order to be their best self in the classroom. 5. Students are able to regularly identify what makes them well. 6. Rates of behaviour incidences in class and outside have been declining for several years.
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