



“Bringing Learning to Life”

Alert Bay Elementary School

SCHOOL PLAN

2023-2024



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Principal: Roberta Harris

Introduction – School Context

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The village of Alert Bay is a small community situated on Cormorant Island located off the northeast tip of Vancouver Island, in the traditional territory of the Kwakwaka'wakw people. We are surrounded by water and nature and connected to our surroundings through our culture. Alert Bay Elementary School is located near the top of the island overlooking Johnstone Strait.

Enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year is approximately 33 students from kindergarten to grade 7. There are two classrooms: a grade K-3 at 12 students and a grade 4-7 with 21 students. Each classroom has a wide range of student abilities, with teachers and staff who are dedicated to meeting each child's needs. Ways of meeting those needs consist of differentiated instruction, Special Education Support, assistive technology, integrating Indigenous content into the curriculum, and hiring Indigenous and local employees that are connected to the community. These measures ensure that relationships and trust are built upon year after year.

Presently, 94 % of the students attending our school are of Indigenous ancestry, with the majority coming from the local Nations and areas. Alert Bay School's Cultural Program employs a Cultural Tutor 25 hours a week, and we have a First Nation Support Worker employed 15 hours a week. The Cultural Program consists of learning the protocols, language, dances, stories and the songs of the Kwak'wala speaking people and surrounding areas.

School Mission Statement	Maya'xala (Respect)
School Context	
Our school, Alert Bay Elementary is located on Cormorant Island in the community of Alert Bay which is serviced by a ferry from Port McNeill.	
Enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year is 34 students from kindergarten to grade 7. The majority of our students are of Aboriginal ancestry. We have a K/1/2/3 class and a 4/5/6/7 class.	
We are staffed at 3.00 FTE for the 2023-2024 school year. We also have 1 education assistant and an education assistant/child-youth care worker, a part-time First Nations education assistant and a cultural teacher who works throughout the week. The school will have on-site leadership with a teaching principal. The school also has an administrative	

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assistant who comes in daily.

Our school operates under the Kwak'wala word *Maya'xala*, which means respect. We believe in respecting each other in all aspects of our education and take special care to work as a school community and team to ensure that each and every person in our school feels respected and cared for.

Summary of Student Body Assets

The students have many opportunities to develop their leadership skills. This is evident in Cultural celebrations, learning celebrations and projects that focus on leaving a positive impact or legacy at our school, and in our community.

Educators and parents agree that students genuinely care for each other at the school, respect the individual learning plans of students, and strive to positively represent their school and community with integrity and respect.

Our school practices self-regulation based on our previous school inquiries. Self-regulated learning is a process that assists students in managing their thoughts, behaviours, and emotions in order to successfully navigate their learning experiences.

Summary of Student Body Needs

Our student needs reflect the goals of our Indigenous Enhancement Agreement. All students experience a sense of belonging and respect through the recognition and honouring of their culture, history, and values. In addition, our school community is committed to the work of language revitalization. Our school community partners work together to increase the level of academic success and mental well-being for all students in our care. Our students experience content in all subject areas and at all grade levels. Alert Bay School is committed to fostering relationship building and is developing partnerships with staff, parents, families, role models, and Elders within the community that help support our students.

Although our students practice *self-regulation* at school, review and reflection are always productive and help us to focus on areas which need to be re-taught. Being mindful of the impact Covid-19 has had on school attendance and learning, we have noticed that there has been an increase in counseling needs over the past year and expect this to continue next year as students regain control of behaviors, improve attendance, and practice self-regulation strategies. Some students and families may require additional support.

In addition, teachers have worked to target instruction to better support all students in achieving their learning goals with a focus on writing; personal narratives, fiction and non-fiction writing as a focus over the next year. Although this is our second year with this

inquiry, we feel that there is a continued need to spend more time building confidence, process and writing formats in the three areas mentioned. We will continue to use the curricular and core competencies to guide our work as well as student exemplars to help our students self-assess and set goals for their learning and growth.

Looking at our data we realized that due to a variety of factors; interruptions in learning due to Covid with high absenteeism, remote and on-line learning, and a slow returning to normal instruction, students have become less confident in their abilities with regard to their academics.

As a result, the focus on *writing*, which also incorporates reading and reading comprehension, is one of the directions staff want to take. With a continued focus on professional learning, teachers will share learning intentions with students, share or co-construct rubrics with success criteria, use descriptive feedback and engage students in peer and self-assessment of their learning.

School Approach to Indigenous Education and Reconciliation

Our school has a strong cultural program which includes a fall feast that is held in November and a cultural celebration in June. We practice protocols that are expected in our culture which include integrity, appreciation of wisdom that is passed down from generation to generation and respect for our knowledge keepers and our elders.

We follow the district's Indigenous Enhancement agreement and keep the goals in mind when planning school events and activities. We are mindful of the importance of meeting these goals and aspire to create a sense of belonging for all students, enhance academic achievement, integrate Indigenous content and participate in events that promote language revitalization.

Our school plans activities around Truth and Reconciliation Day, Orange Shirt Day and when possible we also participate in the "Murdered and Missing Women and Girls" events.

Teachers integrate Indigenous content throughout the year across all subject areas.

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Section 1 – Student Achievement Profile

School Wide Write Fall 2022

Using the BC Performance Standards for Assessment

	Fall 2022	Spring 2023
Primary K-1-2-3 Proficient and Extending	44%	46%
Intermediate 4-5-6-7 Proficient and Extending	22%	35%

The new reporting policy categories: Emergent, Developing, Proficient, Extending

FSA: Foundation Skills Assessment Fall 2022

Grade 4			
	Emerging	On-Track	Extending
Reading		100%	
Math	33%	66%	
Grade 7			
	Emerging	On-Track	Extending
Reading	66%	33%	
Math	100%		

DMA - Diagnostic Math Assessment

Percentage of students scoring 60% and above

	Fall 2022	Spring 2023
Grade 3	Masked	Masked
Intermediate	16%	17%

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DART - District Assessment of Reading Training

Percentage of students scoring 60% and above

	Fall 2022	Spring 2023
Primary	Masked	Masked
Intermediate	16%	17%

PM Benchmark

Proficient and Extending

	Fall 2022	Spring 2023
Primary K-3	6%	50%

Section 2 – School Goals

Briefly describe the school’s 3 goals for the year based on the broader areas identified in the Ministry’s [Policy for Student Success: The Educated Citizen](#).

Goal 1 - Intellectual Development

Goal:

To Improve Writing: Students will work on writing for a purpose – friendly and business letters.
 To learn to write both fiction and non-fiction stories.
 To learn to write in a narrative way as well as writing to share information through paragraphing.

Rationale:

Over the last couple of years, evidence shows that students’ ability to self-start on a writing project has diminished, in fact students are heard to say, “I can’t write”, “I don’t know where to start”.

Action Plan: Year 3: 2023-2024

This is going to be the focus of our inquiry next year; writing for a purpose.

Term One, the focus will be on journal writing to include mini lessons on grammar skills and spelling.

- Adrienne Gear's Powerful Writing Structures – No Excuse Spelling – p. 26
- Begin with introductory lessons from Powerful Writing Structures using anchor books recommended by Adrienne Gear

Term Two, the focus will move to fictional writing and providing scaffolded mini lessons for students to build on beginning with Adrienne Gear's:

1. Brain Pockets to engage and inspire – Powerful Writing Structures, p. 37
2. Walking Stories – p. 37
3. Event Stories – p. 57
4. How to be a.... writing activities – p. 110 (intermediate) p. 111 (primary)

These sections of fictional writing will be scaffolded with a variety of mini lessons from Gear's Powerful Writing Structures – including but not limited to: Word Choice (Triple Scoop Words), Organization Drawers, Sensory Details, Similes, Personification, and Six Senses Planning.

Teachers may pull from Ruth Culham's 6+1 Traits of Writing to supplement and support Gear's work

Term Three, the focus will move to non-fiction writing and research again using scaffolding with mini lessons from Gear's Powerful Writing Structures and her Nonfiction Writing Power:

1. Outlining Structured Writing is a scaled and scaffolded group of lessons which becomes the focus – Nonfiction Writing Power – detailed lessons for the six types of non-fiction writing
2. Fact Pocket writing: Non-Fiction – p. 67 Powerful Writing Structures

Resources:

- Adrienne Gear's professional development books
- Ruth Culham's professional development books
- Linda Kaser & Judy Halbert's Spiral of Inquiry
- Adrienne Gear's online professional development

Evidence/Data:

Use of writing rubrics; some from Adrienne Gear's books, some teacher made to focus on specific skills taught throughout the year. Rubrics could be pre-made from Gear and some will be collaboratively made by teachers to support specific lessons.

Goal 2 - Human and Social Development

Goal:

To become a more inclusive school where all participants feel safe and respected.

“Inclusive education is based on the values of equality, social justice and the acceptance of diversity and equal opportunities in education. It involves all pupils, including pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs or disabilities (SEN or SEN(D)) students, as well as disadvantaged pupils from vulnerable social groups (refugees, Roma and etc.)” Retrieved from:

https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/fr/pub/teacher_academy/catalogue/detail.cfm?id=84086

Rationale:

Over the last school year it has become evident that there are misunderstandings and lack of knowledge around the topic of equality and the right for all cultures and diverse groups to be recognized, respected and represented.

Action Plan:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the ERASE website and the resources it contains
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/erase>
- Plan for presentations that teach inclusion, understanding and respect with Charlene Purdey our school district counsellor in collaboration with Angela Hagen, our former school counsellor
- Have regular meetings that discuss/plan for school inclusion using Street Data: A Next-Generation Model for Equity, Pedagogy, and School Transformation by Shane Safir and Jamila Dugan
- Discuss areas of further discussion: based on discourse from previous meetings
- Create cultural class lessons that cover a wider variety of Nations and cultural practices

Evidence/Data:

A change in the school atmosphere, a change in behaviours, a change to be able to take healthy risks, signs of emerging leadership, supporting student behaviours, using the skills of Empathy, Emotion Management and Problem Solving effectively with or without adult supports.

Goal 3 - Career Development

Goal:

To understand what it means to have a career.
To begin to learn some of the skills necessary to present selves in a positive way.
To become more knowledgeable about the skills needed to be successful in a chosen field.

Rationale:

In order to be successful either during high school, or once out of school, students need to be able to present themselves in a positive way. People have roughly 30 seconds to make a good first impression, either on paper, in person, or through social media. Students need to understand the impact their writing and presentation skills have when they are considering applying for work; what does that look like, how do they prepare for an interview, how do they produce a cover letter and a resume and why do they matter.

Action Plan:

As part of the writing inquiry, students will learn how to write a friendly letter, as well as a business letter. The friendly letters could be done weekly with the teacher writing to the class and the students responding. Once students are comfortable with writing letters, the teacher can move onto how to set up a business letter – leading into a letter to apply for a classroom job. This then leads to writing a short resume and include household chores as experience, etc. Which then leads to an interview, how to dress for success, how to present oneself for that interview etc.

In order for students to fully understand the necessity of the preparation steps to career development and preparation, they should experience the process and take on a classroom job for which they are responsible. This could also lead to a classroom economy where students are ‘paid’ in tokens, pay rent for their desk and chairs, learn how to keep a bank account, with deposits and withdrawals, etc. Bringing math into classes in this experiential way will also build math confidence in students and help to increase their self-confidence in their mathematical abilities.

They would also experience probationary periods, have job reviews, be laid off and given a pink slip at the end of the term, and then reapply each term. Experience shows that students can embrace the skills and become proficient with them, solidifying these skills for the future.

Students would also explore and research career choices of interest and they could write up a resume and cover letter to ‘apply’ for the job – researching needed skills to include as part of the resume process.

Evidence/Data:

Success would be measured throughout the year as students become more comfortable with the job application process, which would become evident each time they reapply for a classroom job through their updated resume, interview process, and responsibility as they complete their chosen and assigned job in the classroom.

Students would also share their research on a chosen field, their mock resume and cover letter. Student 'bank books' would be audited to check for accuracy in their deposits and withdrawals and students would be able to either move forward to develop a business model (senior students) and/or use their tokens to 'purchase' supplies, etc. both throughout and at the end of the year.

Collaboratively made rubrics would be used to support assessment of student application package; cover letter, application, and resume.

Section 3 – Professional Inquiry

School Inquiry Project Application (2022-2023)

School: Alert Bay Elementary

School Team: Roberta Harris, Sheila Bragan, Jennifer Rowell, Karen Reece, Anne Dalton, Steven Wong, Ernest Alfred,

2. Scanning:

In the 2020-2021 school year we noticed our students, from K – 7, are not always risk-taking when writing or know how to begin a write. Some don't even see themselves as writers, and need a lot of adult help to even get started with their writing. When asked 'How is it going with your learning? Your writing?' some will respond "I can't write." "I don't know how to write." ("I don't know what to write" and "I'm not a writer.")

Data was gathered in the Spring of 2023 and, 65% of our students didn't know what to write about or needed help getting started on the school wide write. We noticed our School Wide write data was lower than it has been in a few years. We noticed a significant drop in the number of students that could write descriptively without any help.

3. Focusing:

Continuing to work together in a focused way as a school on these strategies will have an impact on students' view of themselves as successful writers. We'd like to see confident, excited writers, eager to share their writing with various audiences, as well as classmates and younger children, sharing in the library.

Over the last three years, Covid protocols of home schooling, online learning and being absent as a result of illness, has greatly impacted both student confidence in their ability as writers as well as in their written output and we recognize the continuing need to build strategies and skill in the areas of literacy, specifically writing.

4. Developing a Hunch:

In the past, there was not a lot of subject matter choice – we all wrote about the same thing. And students all wrote for one audience – the teacher. We feel that’s not authentic, and does not connect to student interest or passion.

We have a hunch that students are placing too much emphasis on spelling, neatness, the ‘look’ of the writing instead of the content. We feel shifting that focus will free them up to take risks and be real writers. This hunch about student concerns regarding spelling, and the overall ‘look’ of a page continues to be evident with many wanting to copy and paste to a word document instead of using their own words to restate the information.

5. Professional Learning:

During structured professional learning time we would like to continue to explore “Writing Power” by Adrienne Gear as a school team, continuing to use it as a framework for our weekly writing plan. Writing Power is a resource that shows teachers how to encourage students to consider the reader's thinking as they write.

Writing Power will guide teachers through lessons focusing on each of the strategies and includes scripted, sequential lessons, recommended anchor books, reproducible, and formative assessment rubrics. In addition to Writing Power, Gear’s other resource books; Powerful Writing Structures and Non-Fiction Writing will provide scaffolded lessons to use to merge with the ideas to be found in Step-Up to Writing – which will provide the structure to format well written paragraphs for both fiction and non-fiction writing.

During monthly staff meetings, staff will discuss progress with the writing lessons, how the webinar is impacting teacher lesson crafting and student progress – to maintain an understanding of successes and challenges for our students.

In order to better understand student successes, and celebrate them, staff will determine when school wide writes will take place (per term) in order to compare results of student successes and challenges at monthly staff meetings. Staff can then brainstorm how to overcome possible challenges in order to move students forward.

6. Taking Action:

What are you doing about it?

Set up a Base-line Data:

In September, our school will complete a school wide write to gather a baseline for the year. In year 1 our School Wide Write results were again lower in the Spring than they had been in previous years.

What will staff do differently?

Our staff will begin by watching the 4 part webinar series *A Powerful Year of Writing, Building an Effective Process-Based Writing Program Throughout the Year*.

Due to a change in staff, this Webinar did not take place September of 2022, so this fall, September/October 2023, we will begin the four-part series and complete the 4 components throughout the year.

The webinar is based on Adrienne's new book **Powerful Writing Structures** and participants will learn how to develop an effective process-based writing program while exploring writing structures including personal narrative, non-fiction, and story writing, supported by the Step-Up to Writing program along with Gear's other resource books.

7. Checking:

How will you know if it's working?

What are the roles of Teachers, Support Staff and Principal in the inquiry?

During monthly staff meetings, staff will check in and report on the progress of the writing inquiry in the classrooms. In addition to checking in during monthly staff meetings, during School Based In-Service days we will spend time comparing our School Wide Write results for the term to see how our learners are doing, what successes and challenges they are experiencing and if anything needs adjusting for the next term.

What it will look like:

Term 1

Introduction and Planning Your Year

- Weekly Writing Routine - Plan Draft Revise
 - Brain Pocket Writing
 - Formative Assessment
-

Term 2

Story Writing

- Check-in and Questions
 - Writing Structure Focus: Story Writing
 - Elements of Story - Setting, Character, B-M-E, Problem-Solution, Ending
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Term 3

Nonfiction Writing

- Writing Structure Focus: Nonfiction Writing
- Anchor Books, Mini Lessons, Student samples, links to content - including Indigenous content

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As we discovered, consistency is important with writing in the classroom. This understanding also connects with one of the most important aspects of an effective writing program: that of the established writing routine.

Since students work better when they know what is expected of them, the weekly writing routine is based on three stages of the writing process: Plan, Draft, and Revise. Each week, over the course of three days, the students will spend time working on a short practice write, focusing on one stage of the writing process per day.

New writing skills are introduced or reinforced through weekly mini lessons and students will apply the new skill or technique to their weekly practice writes.

We are also committed to check-ins throughout the school year at monthly staff meetings and in school professional days where marking sessions will take place to discuss how the year in writing is going for our learners and for us as teachers.

As we build writing capacity in our learners, we also hope to encourage them to build the so important Growth Mindset as they learn the power of positive thinking. As they build capacity– they will then become adept at building skills which will allow them to confidently pursue their learning goals and hopefully lead them toward being lifelong learners.

School Principal

Staff Rep

Adapted from Dr. Judy Halbert and Dr. Linda Kaser “Spirals of Inquiry: For Equity and Quality”

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Section 4 – Focus on Learning

Summary of Priorities based on selected data						
1. Student Learning	Target	Interventions/Actions	2. Professional Learning/Supports	Monitoring Plan	3. Roles and Responsibilities	4. Resources
Grade K-7 focus on improving literacy/writing with a focus on personal narrative, fictional/story writing, non-fiction writing and a sense of connection and enjoyment to their writing	All	Inquiry Project Targeted Writing Strategies Lessons using Writing Power and 6+1 Traits in Writing -Students will use Performance Standards and student exemplars to self-assess and set goals -increased individualized writing opportunities - Peer editing opportunities - Peer editing opportunities - Teaching of craft and conventions mini-lessons in the content of real writing - One on one conferring with all students regularly (students identify strengths as writers, goal setting)	-Targeted EA time -Common Literacy block to allow flexibility -LART Support -RTI -Monthly SBT Team meetings - Increased use of formative assessment Staff will work with LART teacher or other staff member to develop instructional plan to improve writing skills. Staff will reassess students at least once a term to determine student progress. Use of Adrienne Gear books to support teacher lesson planning and assessment rubrics as well as anchor books to increase student interest in writing.	P or VP will monitor staff progress in assessing reading and also what changes staff will make to reading instruction through the year. Staff will check in with P/VP at monthly staff meetings to update progress successes and challenges – staff will brainstorm options to address challenges. P/VP may also teach mini lessons to class/small groups to support classroom instruction Teachers will monitor student progress through the year using PM Benchmarks and assessment rubrics	LARTs will either give or arrange for tutorial for new staff on conducting PM Benchmarks, webinar by Adrienne Gear P/VP will help coordinate time for teachers to meet during class time regarding lesson planning for team teaching similar areas of writing focus in the classroom so that all students are working on the same focus area -Teachers to be well versed in the use of formative assessment (sharing learning intentions, co-constructing criteria, engineering effective classroom learning, peer and self-assessment etc.) -Teachers will use RTI to support all students	Adrienne Gear Books: Powerful Writing Structures, Writing Power, Non-Fiction Writing Power, Step-Up to Writing (purchased), 6+1 Traits of Writing Adrienne Gear Webinar series: <u>A Powerful Year of Writing</u> Anchor Books to support Adrienne Gear’s Writing Lessons needed to introduce new ways of looking at writing - Performance standards and exemplars - Apps (simplex spelling, sight words, Word Wizard, etc.) - Graphic organizers - Readwrite.org

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teachers to have a system for tracking conferring sessions with students (strengths, areas of growth, goals etc.) - Teachers to be familiar with performance standards and use them with students before, during and after writing - Teachers to share exemplars of student work with students 	
Grade K-5 Grade Level Reading - Ongoing	All (K-7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased individualized reading opportunities ensuring students are reading “good fit” books - Daily 5 framework CAFÉ strategies (comprehension, accuracy fluency, expand vocabulary) - One on one conferring with all students regularly (guided by teachers, students will self-assess, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targeted EA time - Common literacy block to allow flexibility - LA/RT support - Monthly SBT meetings - Increased use of formative assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing benchmarking - Recording of regular conferring sessions with each child (identifying strengths, areas for growth, goals, strategies to be focused on, progress made, etc.) - DART assessment fall and spring grade 3-7 - Performance standards used with students - Item at Staff Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers to be well versed in the use of formative assessment (sharing learning intentions, co-constructing success criteria, engineering effective classroom learning opportunities, providing feedback, peer and self-assessment, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily 5 and CAFÉ – Gail Boushey and Joan Moser - DART - Performance standards - PM Benchmarks - Reading A-Z - Science A-Z - Headsprout Reading - Leveled Readers - Jerry Johns - Comprehension Card Sets for Intermediate Students