

syuwéñct Elementary

Year: 2023-2024

Principal: Diane Charles



Our School Story

What are the unique, positive characteristics that we celebrate in our school/community?

Welcome to syuwéñct Elementary, where we acknowledge and honour that we are learning, growing, and playing on the traditional and unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw people. The name, syuwéñct, was gifted to our community from Snuneymuxw First Nations, and it means “our history, our traditions”. A two-year process focusing on Truth and Reconciliation concluded with the official renaming of the school in 2022.

Situated in the fast-growing Diver’s Lake area of Nanaimo, our school community is well supported by a dedicated group of parent volunteers through the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). We continue to work directly with NALT (Nanaimo Area Land Trust) and the City of Nanaimo on our shared goal of stewardship of the Northfield Marsh and surrounding areas. Our “English Garden” is a key outdoor learning space, and we are blessed to have community volunteers that help keep this space thriving throughout the year.

We are a school focused on caring and inclusive practices, welcoming students where they are at and helping them grow. “At syuwéñct we ...” is a language frame heard daily as we build common expectations for how we treat each other. Building a strong sense of connection to the land is integral to our way of being.

What are the important demographics of our school and community?

Slightly smaller than in previous years, syuwéñct currently has approximately 340 students, with 20% of our learners identifying as indigenous. We are a K-7 school, with 15 divisions including 2 portable classrooms. We have a growing number of families from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including many who are English language learners. Families either walk or drive to bring their children to school. Several before and after school care providers support families, both onsite and via bus transportation to their own facilities. Supporting the needs of our community is important. To that end, we provide snacks and lunches for those dealing with food insecurity, and work to ensure that all students have access to the supports and materials needed to feel connected, safe, and valued.

Our School Goals

1. Continuing with our focus on explicit instruction following the “Science of Reading”, and guided by assessment for learning data, will the implementation of UFLI (primary) and Morpheme Magic, in addition to Heggerty and the 6 Minute Solution, positively impact student proficiency in reading, listening, and viewing, particularly for learners who are not yet meeting grade level expectations as measured by PARS, DIBELS, and Report Card Data?
2. Continuing with our focus on TRC Calls to Action #57 and #63, while focusing on developing a sense of connection to the land and the Indigenous ways of knowing, how will our stewardship work NALT and the Northfield Marsh, and our AIC (Artist in the Classroom) grant impact our students’ feeling of connectedness to syuwéñct?

Our School Celebration Story

Our celebration story from 2022-23 is linked to our second goal on Truth and Reconciliation and developing a strong connection to place for our students. The land acknowledgement has become a staple of our day. Being stewards of the land, particularly through our continued partnership with NALT, is creating a growing awareness of the shared responsibility of caring for Mother Earth.

At the end of June, students were given an opportunity to participate in a short survey on school connectedness. The results were promising! Just over 60% of the students in grades k-7 responded to the survey. Looking at the data for students who responded “always” or “usually”,

- **75% of the students said proud to be a student at syuwéñct**, referencing specifically the name change process.
- **61% of the students reported feeling connected to syuwéñct** with a sense of purpose, respect and caring.

The biggest celebration, though, is our students feeling that they are connected to the adults at syuwéñct. Students were asked to respond to the following:

Feeling connected to school also comes from having strong connections with the adults who work here. Thinking about this school year, please answer the following: I can name at least two adults at syuwéñct that I feel connected to.

88% of our students responded yes that they can name at least two adults in the school they feel connected to!

We are continuing our work on building a strong sense of connection with all students so that everyone feels proud, respected, and valued here at syuwéñct Elementary School.