



Hornby Island Community School

School Demographics

Hornby Island Community School is a small, rural school catering for learners from Kindergarten to Grade 9. According to the 2021 Census, 1225 people lived on Hornby Island. 6.31 % of Hornby Island's residents identified as Indigenous. Less than 15% of our current learners identify as Indigenous and we have several students on Individualized Education Plans. In addition to our local learners, we have itinerant families with learners attending school from Norway, Japan and the United States.

Our school is fortunate to be surrounded by nature. We have a large playing field, a covered outdoor area suitable for basketball and hockey, a large playground, a swing set, gaga ball pit, and a forest where students can build forts and be natural explorers! Our classes utilize our outdoor spaces on a regular basis. The playcentre is adjacent to the school (through a forest walk) and our future learners come to the school regularly to use the gym and library. We also offer a Toddler Drop-In program every Thursday, so our families are part of the school from before their children can walk!

HICS keep the community well informed through weekly newsletters, a monthly article in the Hornby *First Edition*, and through email correspondence. The school provides feedback to parents through three-way conferences, report cards and Celebrations of Learning afternoons where we welcome families and community to come and see what we've been up to. We have many community events where we welcome our families and communities to join in with our school (Halloween pumpkin carving, sports days, assemblies, Winter Holiday Fair and Concerts and more). Our staff also make themselves available for daily, informal interactions with families.

Decolonizing, Indigenizing Commitment

At Hornby Island Community School, we are committed to supporting the [National Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada \(TRC\) Calls to Action](#), our [Local Education Agreement](#), and the [Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreement](#).

Presently:

As an act of support, we are continually learning, embracing and integrating Indigenous ways of knowing and being in all areas of the school. Examples of our learning and commitment are related to *Calls to Action 62 & 63 - Education for Reconciliation* as seen in how we:

- Use the curriculum and field trips to focus on relationships, history, land, story, and identity within our school community and the land around us.
- Provide every class a weekly opportunity to participate in place-based and outdoor learning opportunities that celebrate traditional Indigenous knowledge.
- Engage in personalized land acknowledgements, storytelling, inquiry, and shared experiences which honour memory, history, and multiple perspectives.
- Participate in school wide recognitions of Indigenous People's Excellence Day and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

In alignment with the Local Education Agreement, we continue to build meaningful relationships with the K'ómoks Nation. We create space for community voice and connection which includes opportunities to learn from local knowledge holders.

Next Steps

We understand that the foundational principle of reconciliation centres around relationships; to people, to knowledge, and to the land. To further our learning and support of truth and reconciliation, we will:

- Enhance school connections with local knowledge holders, members of the K'ómoks Nation, and other Indigenous people within the land we refer to as Canada.
- Make the invisible visible by actively identifying Indigenous ways of knowing and learning and providing Indigenous students the opportunity to see themselves reflected in our halls and our learning
- Support the use of the local languages ʔayʔaj̓uθəm and Kwakwala in all age classrooms.

Our Learners: What the Evidence Tells Us

From the FSA, our data shows that we are slightly below the district average in both Grade 4 and 7 literacy and numeracy.

Our recent literacy and numeracy district assessments for Kindergarten and Grade 2 show us that we are on par with the district. With a very strong push in literacy and numeracy in our K-3 classes in 2025/2026, we are excited to see how this affects our data moving forward.

Due to insufficient data from FSA, MDI and the SLS because of limited enrolment, we are using a comprehensive example of two Grade 4 students' learning stories:

Student A Profile: (Grade 4)

About Me & Interests

- Interests: Loves music, make-up, and hanging out with her friends
- Self-Description: Friendly, imaginative, and energetic.

Strengths

- Accessing Information: Strong visual-spatial learner; grasps complex math concepts quickly when using physical manipulatives or charts.
- Expressing Learning: Highly creative and an excellent verbal communicator who excels in storytelling and group presentations.

Challenges

- Accessing Information: Struggles with decoding long words and reading comprehension.
- Expressing Learning: Finds writing long paragraphs or taking notes on paper frustrating and overwhelming.
- Engagement: Can become easily distracted during quiet, text-heavy reading sessions and requires redirection. [\[1\]](#)

Preferences and Accommodations

- Reading/Comprehension: Needs access to Read&Write text-to-speech tools to assist with reading comprehension.
- Writing: Prefers digital graphic organizers (such as Canva) to map out thoughts before writing.
- Environment: Works best in a seating arrangement near the front of the classroom (to reduce visual/auditory distractions) and benefits from frequent movement breaks.

Student B Profile: (Grade 4)

About Me & Interests

- Interests: Enjoys outdoor education, nature exploration, math, spelling and interactive technology.
- Self-Description: Confident in sports and outdoors, feels “dumb” in academic subjects.

Strengths

- Accessing Information: Highly visual learner; excellent communication skills when it's something he enjoys; excellent physical education, outdoor learning skills, reading, spelling and math.
- Expressing Learning: Excellent verbal expression and reasoning in small groups. Confident when he knows the content.

Challenges

- Accessing Information: An excellent reader and conversationalist but struggles with written output.

- Expressing Learning: Writing is illegible with little punctuation. Easily frustrated when he gets something incorrect or feels pressured.
- Engagement: Easily distracted. Works well in small groups but needs to be monitored to stay on track.

Preferences and Accommodations

- Reading/Comprehension: Excellent reader with very good comprehension.
- Writing: Writing can be illegible as he reverts to writing in all capitals with little punctuation and minimal finger spaces if given the chance.
- Environment: Works well in small groups. Occasionally needs support with self-regulation and focus. Does not work well seated next to his friends.

This information shows that both students are capable and have strong strengths, but they need different ways to access and demonstrate their learning. Student A thrives with creative, visual, and verbal tasks but struggles with reading and writing demands, while Student B has strong academic skills but is limited by writing difficulties and low confidence. Both learners benefit from interactive, visual, and flexible approaches rather than traditional text-heavy instruction, and both require support with focus, engagement, and self-regulation.

Moving forward, instruction should focus on differentiation by offering multiple ways to access content (e.g., visuals, audio, hands-on learning) and express understanding (e.g., oral presentations, digital tools, graphic organizers). Writing should be supported through scaffolding rather than avoided, and classroom structures should promote engagement, confidence, and success using each student's strengths. Overall, the goal is to keep learning goals consistent while allowing flexible pathways for students to achieve them.

Priority learners are served by a learning support teacher (LST) once a week, a counsellor two days a month, a speech and language teacher two days per month, an indigenous support worker (ISW) once a week as well as by educational assistants who work with students both 1:1 and in small group settings. Volunteers also come in to support our learners in classrooms (listening to students read, supporting Learning Through Play programs, and supporting teachers in special projects). End of year LST assessments showed growth across the board for our priority learners.

Attendance is a very big issue for HICS. The data provided shows that Hornby continues to have substantially higher absence rates than that of other schools in the district. In addition to student absences, the number of students arriving significantly late each day is a huge concern. Students who arrive an hour late each day miss the equivalent of six weeks of school per year. We have several students missing over an hour of school each day. Educating families on the importance of getting to school on time is a priority for us.

Summary:

Although our FSA data has shown that we are below the district average, we are optimistic that a strong push in our early years literacy and numeracy programs will show a noticeable increase in the next couple of years. Because we have several students arriving chronically late each day, they are missing the crucial literacy and numeracy lessons that occur before lunch, making it more difficult for them to show improvement. Attendance will be a goal for us moving forward.

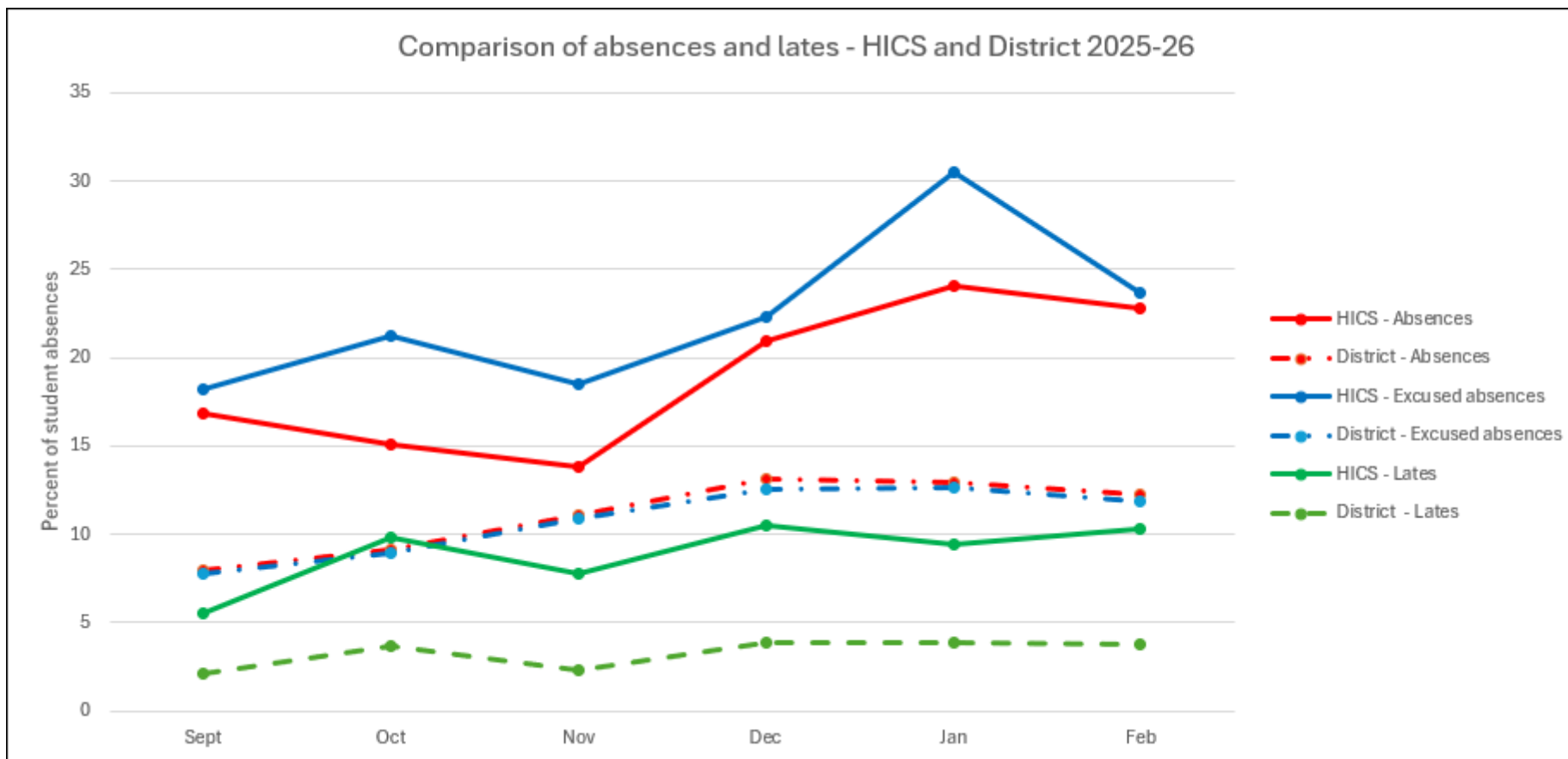


Figure 1: Chronic Absenteeism and lates

Analysis: The province defines chronic absenteeism as missing more than 10% of school time. Attendance and chronic lates at Hornby Island Community School are almost triple that of the district. With such a small sampling, it only takes a few chronically late and absent students to impact our attendance and late percentages. With our chronic lates, we would like to collaborate with families on how we can support them so that their children are not missing out on valuable learning time. Investigation is needed around this so that we do not come across as accusatory or judgmental.

District Context:

Every school will uphold and support literacy and numeracy development.

Our school's core competency focus area for this year is

Social Awareness and Responsibility

Student Outcome Shift: We will know we are making progress when we see our learners demonstrating understanding of others' feelings and perspectives. They'll be active listeners and participate regularly in class, work cooperatively with their peers, use inclusive language and treat others with kindness and respect.

Adult Practice Shift: We will know we are making progress when we see strong staff/student relationships where students feel seen and heard and where their interests are known and celebrated. Staff will create welcoming environments that foster safe spaces and teaching environments that cater for all abilities.

We will measure progress through observations, conversations, peer feedback and self-assessments. We will also see a reduction in behaviour incidents or conflicts and an improvement in attendance.

Our school's design principle chosen to positively impact our core competency focus is

Experiential Learning

We are moving into our third year of experiential learning for the senior grades and our second year with the rest of the school. Experiential learning involves collaboration, communication, cooperation, patience, connectedness, reflection and hands-on, real-world learning that engages all of our learners (staff, students and families). Our experiential learning incorporates the First Peoples Principles of Learning and is inclusive of diversity and abilities.

Our K-3 classrooms provide daily opportunities for learning through play where our students explore ideas, solve problems and think creatively. Decision-making skills are strengthened and hands-on activities are encouraged, supported and observed (but not interfered with unless absolutely necessary). Literacy and numeracy skills are integrated naturally and students are more engaged and motivated to get out of their comfort zones and experience new ways of learning that are fun, relevant and meaningful.

Our 4-8 classroom provides opportunities for actively engaging with the material rather than passively receiving it. They learn by "doing" and connect theory to real-life situations, preparing them for real-life challenges. Experiential learning increases engagement and motivation and provides opportunities for more meaningful and interesting projects, activities and learning. Learning takes place throughout Hornby Island (and beyond), not just in their classroom, and students are provided experiences that improve communication, team-work, independence, confidence and growth.

Monitoring and Evidence Cycle

We will provide opportunities at each staff meeting for progress and well-being updates. Staff will be given time to reflect on their own practice and will be provided with mentorship, release time and additional support where required. Evidence will be collected throughout the year, including:

SNAP numeracy assessments, literacy assessments, Foundational Skills Assessments, Student Learning Surveys and through daily, informal observations and conversations with our students.

Impact Indicators

Success in education is about more than just gaining knowledge - it also gives opportunities for understanding inequality, diversity and issues affecting us globally. Students who may not shine in the core academic subjects can showcase their knowledge and talents in other domains. We will use the student learning survey as our main source of evidence for our core competency of Social Awareness and Responsibility and will also monitor assessment, behaviour reports, incident reports and observations of classroom and playground behaviour.

The questions we will be focusing on for 2026/2027 are:

I feel safe at school

More than two adults at school care for me, and

School is a place where I feel I belong.

Implementation, Capacity Building & Resource Alignment

Professional Learning

We will provide opportunities for learning and sharing knowledge during next year's professional development days in September and April. We will be focusing on:

- Increasing Student attendance and reducing our chronic lates
- Student Well-being and Behaviour
- Inclusion, Equity & Anti-racism
- Indigenous Knowledge and Land Based Learning

Collaboration Structures

Being such a small school, we have a high turnover of staff who come from off-island (due to travel constraints). As such, each year we rebuild and integrate new staff into our team. We have bi-weekly staff meetings which focus on our growth plan goals, with opportunities for staff to discuss what's working well, what isn't, and where to from here. We incorporate opportunities for school-wide activities, including the wider community as much as possible, so that they are aware of our school goals and the learning that is taking place both within our school grounds and outside of them.

Resource, Budget and Staffing

Staffing is our number one resource. We use LIF funds to ensure that support staff are paid to attend our meetings as their input is valued and integral to our success. A large portion of our budget is utilized to ensure that our students receive the same opportunities as their counterparts off island and we send students to the Comox Valley for sporting events, camping trips, skating, swimming and more.

Monitoring and Reflection Commitments

Fall:

- School planning time on the afternoon of the first day to build relationships, momentum and to introduce our growth plan.
- Bi-Weekly staff meetings
- Classroom teachers and EAs meeting regularly with our in-school LST.
- Literacy and Numeracy assessments by classroom teachers
- Grade 7 FSA
- School based professional development day led by principal

Winter:

- Bi-weekly staff meetings
- Three-way conferences in November
- Analysis of FSA and classroom assessment data

Spring:

- Celebration of Learning afternoon to share our learning throughout the school with families and community
- Student Learning Survey
- Year-end assessment by classroom teachers
- Review of the school growth plan with school staff and PAC
- Bi-weekly staff meetings

Community Communication

Methods of Communication:

We communicate with our community through weekly newsletters, monthly newspaper articles (First Edition), the school website, PAC correspondence and through email correspondence. Although we promote our newsletters and events through assemblies, notices and posters, many families still do not read them. We have taken to sending out mass emails for important events so that we can ensure that our families know what is happening at school.

How success will be measured:

We will measure academics through assessment and are always looking for ways to improve, but we will also be measuring success through:

- Increased attendance and a reduction in chronic lates
- Reduction in behaviour incidents and classroom disruptions
- By monitoring our three statements:
I feel safe at school

*More than two adults at school care for me, and
School is a place where I feel I belong.*

- Sharing our successes with families and the community and encouraging more community involvement in the school.

How families can support learning:

Families are one of our most important assets and we wouldn't be who or what we are without them. We will continue to encourage punctuality in the mornings and work with families who are chronically absent or late. Students who attend regularly have stronger relationships, are more connected to their peers and are more involved in day-to-day activities at school simply by being informed and knowing what is happening at school. Parent communication is crucial to success and we will endeavour to send important updates out in a timely manner, seek consultation when required and encourage parental and community involvement in the school. We also continue to encourage families or community members who have concerns to reach out to us immediately so that we can address issues as they arise.