

"Freedom with Responsibility"

School Plan for Student Success



Polaris Elementary is a school of some 210 students from Kindergarten to Grade Seven. It is a choice school within the public school system that is dedicated to the teachings of Maria Montessori and the Montessori Method. It houses a Montessori Preschool and feeds into the Montessori High School program offered at PGSS.

Because Polaris is part of School District #57 in Prince George, it complies with all the standards and expectations of any public school. There is no tuition charged for our K to 7 program. We are open to and inclusive of all members of our community that share the values of Montessori education.

For further information on Montessori education please check out our website at: [Polaris Montessori Choice School](#)

What is Montessori Education?

Five basic principles drive Montessori educators when implementing the Montessori Method in any of a variety of programs. These principles include:

1. **Respect for the child:** Instruction is based on the needs of the individual child, not on pre-supposed curriculum expectations.
2. **The absorbent mind:** Children want to learn if given a robust environment in which to do it. They must be an active agent of their own learning.
3. **Sensitive periods:** All children go through predictable stages of development that underpins their needs as learners. Any effective educational program needs to respect these stages.
4. **The prepared environment:** A prepared environment is a place in which children can do things for themselves. The prepared environment makes learning materials and experiences available to children in an orderly format
5. **Auto education:** Children are capable of educating themselves (also known as self-education). Children who are actively involved in a prepared environment and who exercise freedom of choice literally educate themselves. Montessori teachers prepare classrooms so that this can happen.



Data Summary

Data Summary Information

Literacy

Data collected in the area of Literacy includes the CAT assessment used by high schools to help in their placement of Gr. 7 students into Gr. 8 programs. This assessment is normed at a national level. It also includes the District Reading/Writing assessment known as DART and the Provincial Reading and Writing assessment known as FSA.

DRA for Gr. 2 is a measure of comprehension for early learners.

Numeracy

CAT and FSA assessments also include numeracy sections so they have been added as well.

All percentages are expressed in terms of the amount of students that were at or above the expectations for their given grade level. This way numbers can be used to compare results across a number of different assessment tools.

Because different assessments focus on somewhat different skills within a given area of study (e.g. Reading or Writing) the summary numbers can vary different from each other.

Literacy		
Assessment Measure	Grade Level	% of Student Meeting Expectations
CAT	6	83 (Reading)
DART	6	60
FSA	4	61 (Reading)
FSA	4	61 (Writing)
FSA	7	76(Reading)
FSA	7	70 (Writing)
DRA	2	72
CAT	4	86

Numeracy		
Assessment Measure	Grade Level	% of Student Meeting Expectations
CAT	3	95
FSA	4	62
FSA	7	41
CAT	6	72



Aboriginal Student Learning

Aboriginal Education or Ab. Ed. is an integral part of our educational program for all of our students. We have a full time Ab. Ed. Worker that is responsible for 62 self-identified children. Our staff seeks to embed First Nations history, cultural awareness and learning traditions within the regular instructional days as opposed to making presentations a “special event”. This includes using Ab. Ed. Resources for supplement reading and history classes as well as having students complete specific multi-disciplinary projects based on aboriginal themes. That being said we have celebrate specific events with in the community to like Orange Shirt Day, and The Arctic Games.

Skills, Trades and Careers

“Practical Life Skills” has a long tradition within the Montessori Method. At the earliest ages children are encouraged to use tools and materials in their environment to play with, build, take apart, fix, clean, cook, serve, etc. This is the first and most basic step towards creating both physical skills and core competencies related to the trades.

In addition to practical life, we have also have added a Maker Ed. Component to our Learning Commons. Students participate in specific projects such as Coding and Sewing but also have access to “hands-on Stations” on a daily basis. We also participate in the “Find Your Fit” program and have hosted the week-long District Elementary Trades program at Polaris.



Strengthening Parent Knowledge and Involvement

The strength of a choice program is in its ability to provide a bridge between the school's educational program and the home environment. Students benefit most when there is a strong connection between how things are done at school and how things are done at home. To strengthen the bond between school and home Polaris has put together a series of information nights called "Parent Discovery Nights". The format is to choose topics to explore based on the interests expressed by parents. Staff then present short interactive presentations covering each topic area. There is always plenty of time for socialization and questioning. These evening also included tea and baked goods supplied by the PAC and child-minding activities for parents who bring their children with them.

Environmental Awareness and Green Initiatives

Being connected to our physical world in a respectful way is a core feature of our program. We ensure that all students get to interact and care for both plants and animals on a daily basis. With this in mind we offer a series of assemblies based on "Green Education" that draw on organizations like the local R.E.A.P.S chapter. We also participate in the yearly release of salmon stock that is housed in our building over the school year.

In addition, we have a very active student-based Green Team that runs our in-house recycling program and helps with educating all students about ecological issues. Funding for green initiatives is often generated by student who are given time to work on "Passion Projects" as part of their daily studies.

New Teacher Training and Recruitment

Polaris Elementary is committed to ensuring that all teaching staff receive full certification by the North American Montessori Training Centre. We recognize that training facilities and specific Montessori-based Professional Development opportunities are generally not available in the Prince George area and that most new teachers will, therefore, not be coming to our program with extensive backgrounds in Montessori Method.

To lessen the burden for teachers wanting to pursue certified professional development opportunities, grants are made available from both School District 57 and The Prince George Montessori Education Society on a yearly basis. In addition, we offer in-house regular weekly Early Dismissal Professional Development and yearly attendance for all interested staff to the "Children Change the World" Montessori Teacher's Conference in Alberta.

