

2026-2027 UHE – School Plan

Our Story

Who we are? *(With considerations for ELL, Inclusive Ed, CYOC, Indigenous students)*

At University Highlands Elementary, we are a collaborative, compassionate, and committed learning community. Our staff describe themselves as connected, respectful, and supportive- working together as a cohesive team to create a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all learners.

We serve a dynamic and diverse student population, including many learners with complex needs. Our strength lies in our ability to adapt, stay grounded, and meet students where they are- fostering strong relationships, emotional regulation, and growing independence. We take pride in validating all learners and creating meaningful opportunities for them to connect with both peers and adults.

Since opening in 2010 with just six divisions, UHE has experienced steady and significant growth- expanding to 20 divisions in 2025. Our community is incredibly diverse: more than 30 languages are spoken in our students' homes, and approximately 50% of our learners are developing English language proficiency. Currently, nine families identify as having Indigenous ancestry, and about 10% of our students have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Our school's unique location- situated atop Burnaby Mountain within the SFU campus- contributes to a high level of student mobility, with frequent arrivals and departures throughout the school year. This ongoing turnover (42 registrations/20 withdrawals over the year) has highlighted the importance of fostering connection and belonging within our school, and has directly shaped the focus of our current school plan goals.

What are we doing well?

At University Highlands Elementary, we are doing well in creating multiple, meaningful opportunities for students to build connections- with peers, adults, and the broader school community. Staff highlighted a variety of strategies and structures that support both student connectedness and literacy growth, including:

- **Pods and Tree Pods:** These cross-grade groupings have helped foster relationships across divisions and build a stronger sense of school community. Assemblies and activities organized by pod are especially valued and help create shared experiences.
- **Leadership Opportunities:** Students have taken on meaningful roles through student ambassadors, music leadership, green team, and other leadership activities. These roles empower students and increase their sense of belonging and purpose.
- **Clubs and Extracurriculars:** A variety of extracurricular clubs (e.g., sports club, Green Team, Diversity Club, intramurals, Friends of Simon, Rock Band, etc.) provide students with structured, inclusive ways to engage with others and explore their interests.
- **Social-Emotional Learning:** Programs like Everyday Speech, Zones of Regulation, RULER, and community circles have helped students develop communication, regulation, and relationship-building skills. These approaches are used consistently across classrooms and support a culture of care.
- **Inclusive Support Structures:** Staff noted the importance of shared support models, where EAs and classroom teachers collaborate to provide flexible, student-centered care. Open communication, flexibility, and trust among staff help ensure that students' social and emotional needs are met.
- **Individualized Supports:** For students with diverse needs, the use of tools such as TouchChat, usage of our new sensory room, and the intentional reduction of pressure have made a noticeable impact on student confidence, communication, and independence.
- **Targeted, intensive literacy interventions in primary:** consistent small-group instruction and progress monitoring
- **Welcoming and integration supports for new students:** eg. student ambassadors and classroom-based strategies that help students connect quickly to peers and routines
- **Use of student voice and school-based connection surveys** to inform planning and respond to student needs

Overall, we feel that the strength of our school lies in our collaborative team, our commitment to inclusive practice, and the wide range of opportunities for students to feel seen, supported, and connected. These strategies are having a positive effect and should be sustained and built upon in the coming year.

How do we know?

We use multiple sources of data to monitor student learning and well-being and to identify areas for growth:

- New school-based student connection surveys (fall and spring)
- MDI data (2023 most recent)
- Literacy assessments (DIBELS, Lexia, district assessments)
- Teacher observations and classroom-based assessments
- FSA Scores
- Report Card Assessments
- Kindergarten Screening
- ELL Testing

Our focus:

Goal 1: **SEL**: How can we ensure every student experiences a strong sense of belonging through consistent student-to-student and student-to-adult connections across the school community?

Goal 2: **Literacy**: How can we strengthen early identification and provide targeted, consistent literacy support to develop foundational decoding and comprehension skills for students, particularly in grades 3/4, who are not yet reading proficiently?

STRATEGIES: (to support Focus)

Goal 1: A number of supports, strategies and initiatives have begun, and we will continue to focus on and implement the following:

- **Cross-grade and whole-school connection structures:**
Continue and strengthen Pod/Tree Pod activities, cross-grade experiences, and school-wide initiatives (e.g., assemblies, house teams, community events, spirit days, shared activities, and teacher swaps such as read-alouds) to build a strong sense of community across the school.
- **Student leadership and peer connection opportunities:**
Expand leadership opportunities including Student Ambassadors, school jobs, and the Grade 7 service program. Increase peer support structures (e.g., buddies, student-led activities, leadership in classrooms and during recess) to promote inclusion, responsibility, and connection.
- **Consistent Social-Emotional Learning practices:**
Continue using common SEL language and approaches (Growth Mindset, Zones of Regulation, RULER, Everyday Speech) to support communication, problem-solving, and positive peer interactions across all classrooms.
- **Intentional student–adult connection:** Using early-year check-ins, ensure every student is connected to a trusted adult through intentional monitoring and relationship-building opportunities.
- **Expanded opportunities and equitable access to connection:**
Increase the visibility, variety, and accessibility of clubs, activities, and leadership opportunities to ensure all students have meaningful ways to connect within the school community.
- **Focused support for unstructured times:**
Strengthen structures for recess and lunch to support positive play and inclusion, including increased activity options, student leadership, and proactive supervision strategies (e.g., student-led games, Buddy Bench).
- **Ongoing use of data to inform practice:**
Collect and review connection data throughout the year (early-year and ongoing student reflections/surveys) to identify students who may be experiencing disconnection and respond in a timely and targeted way.

Goal 2: Based on assessment data and in the spirit of individualizing support to meet student needs, we will focus on the following interventions to support grade 3/4 students who are not yet reading:

- **Early identification and ongoing assessment:**
Use consistent, school-wide screening and diagnostic tools (e.g., DIBELS, PM Benchmarks, UFLI assessments, DART) to identify students early and monitor progress over time.
- **Targeted and intensive intervention:**
Provide small-group and individualized literacy support through programs such as ReadWell, DLIT intervention (particularly in Grades 2–3), and targeted support for Grade 3–4 students not yet reading proficiently. Prioritize frequency, consistency, and intensity of intervention to support student growth.
- **Structured literacy instruction in classrooms:**
Continue implementing evidence-based classroom practices (e.g., UFLI, Heggerty, Sounds to Spelling, guided reading, Daily 5) to support the development of foundational decoding, fluency, and comprehension skills across all grades.
- **Use of intervention programs and tools:**
Continue to use Lexia to support individualized skill development and progress monitoring, alongside teacher-led instruction to ensure meaningful connection and engagement for students.
- **Coordinated and collaborative support:**
Work collaboratively with Literacy Intervention and Enhancement teachers, classroom teachers, and LSS staff to ensure consistent, aligned approaches to instruction and intervention across the school.
- **Protected literacy time and consistency of practice:**
Maintain protected, grade-group literacy blocks to support targeted instruction and flexible grouping, ensuring students receive consistent and focused literacy support.
- **Extending support across grades:**
Build on successful primary interventions while strengthening supports for intermediate students who continue to require foundational literacy development, ensuring continuity of support over time.