

Walking Together in the warm land of the Cowichan Valley

Mill Bay Nature School

Q'shintul

We acknowledge that for thousands of years the Malahat, Lake Cowichan, Quw'utsun, Halalt, Penelakut, Stz'uminus, & Lyackson Peoples have walked gently on the unceded territories where we now live, work, learn, and play. We seek a new relationship with the first peoples here, one based in honour and respect, and we thank them for their

3175 Cobble Hill Rd, Mill Bay, B.C. V0R 2P3

November 2019

Thank you for your questions. I admire your proactive approach to your children's education, and appreciate the opportunity to think deeply myself and consider your questions through the lenses of: B.C.'s mandated curriculum (*the competencies and content children in our culture need to develop in order to provide them with a strong core for future problem solving and development - becoming agile learners*); Mill Bay's Field Guide or philosophy (*the aspects of the curriculum, growth, development, assessment, and communication that we will emphasize or pay particular attention to*); as well as our emerging pedagogy (*the way in which we think about, nurture, provoke and inspire the development and growth of each one of our children (and adults) through the curricular competencies and knowledge introduced and practiced in particular ways*). Over all, I think it's important to know that an emerging vision for Mill Bay Nature School is that around eleven/twelve years of age, each child and their family will meet and discuss where they are in relation to the curriculum (core competencies, curricular competencies, and curricular content knowledge); explore the options available in the Cowichan Valley that best suit this particular child's unique strengths, interests, passions, and needs; and develop a plan to make this transition positive, successful, and as natural as possible. I imagine that our yearly spring MAPS reviews will support this process. Mill Bay Nature School will continue to be an option for children beyond twelve, if it's deemed the right place for a particular child. This structure/rhythm has yet to emerge, but from my experience with a middle years/high school program in Vernon (Vernon Community School - vernoncommunityschool.wordpress.com), I am familiar with hybrid programs that reach into the community and utilize community mentors to help teachers meet curricular expectations in rich, meaningful ways leading to graduation and post-secondary opportunities if desired. B.C. and other places in the world are moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach to education, and considering innovative solutions for the diverse strengths, interests, passions, and needs found in all human communities. Universities, too are working to understand how to evaluate student core competencies that are so critical to human thriving, but, because they are difficult to measure, have been set aside for efficiency's sake. How can we create a more robust learner profile? (For more information: *The Nature of Learning (OECD)*): <http://www.oecd.org/education/cei/50300814.pdf>

Here are some answers to some frequently asked questions about learning and development at MBNS. *Please note that I consider this a beginning to an ongoing conversation of how to best communicate student learning to parents at Mill Bay Nature School.*

i. How will I learn more about my child's development and growth, as well as needs, at Mill Bay Nature School? *(This page will be added to the second addition of our Field Guide.)*

Communicating Student Learning



Our educators are moving with purpose from a model of reporting TO parents to communicating WITH parents on an ongoing basis. We are moving toward a new model that is personalized; growth based; descriptive of actual learning; providing stronger student voice; allowing deeper home school connection; is learner focused; makes learning visible; and is meaningful, varied and responsive.

Communicating Student Learning (L-9) document, SD 79

At Mill Bay Nature School, we imagine our work called teaching and learning as connected to the images of seeds, growth, decay, pruning, seasons, diversity, interconnectedness. This organic, ecological metaphor acknowledges that to promote growth and development in every learner, we must see the unique living being of each; considering the unique growing conditions needed - rooted in both nature and nurture. What are their personalities, gifts, limits, fears, insecurities, experiences, passions. What is her heart to become? What is the knowledge he needs to develop more fully? We acknowledge these answers emerge *over time*. **We embed this philosophy in the renewed B.C. curriculum that is competency-driven: the skills, strategies, and processes that students develop within each aspect of learning in order to engage in deep and life-long learning.** Like brain development (from inside to outside, from back to front), Mill Bay Nature School imagines the curriculum emanating as tree rings beginning with the core competencies (creative, critical & reflective thinking; personal & social development; communication) growing as we engage in challenging & playful curricular competencies through inquiry providing the students with a growing collection of big ideas inside to access for new learning at school and beyond. The environment (as outlined in our Field Guide) is inclusive and seeks to provide learning opportunities to stimulate the growth of *each* child - attentive to diverse ways of learning, diverse ways of knowing, and diverse ways of expressing or representing. As a result, it is expected that each child will grow and develop at different rates and in different ways over time. This report documents where they are presently on their learning journey. September will begin from this place - *mindful of development and growth over the summer.*

2. What forms will communication take ? (This page will be added to the second addition of our Field Guide.)

A Guide

Draft

for documenting ongoing student learning
at Mill Bay Nature School

Fresh Grade is the digital platform we are using to share this information. It also provides an opportunity for parents to respond to the comments and/or to ask questions. We encourage you to take an active role in your child's education!

We received the technology required to use Fresh Grade early last week; you should be receiving Fresh Grade documentation now.

If not, please contact your child's Clan Leader.

(In the future, Fresh Grade communication should begin in early fall.)

Aspect of Competency Development	Quality of the Documentation	Frequency of Documentation (per child)
<p>Documentation of Core Competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinking Personal Social 	<p>A. A piece of evidence of the learning (photo, video, piece of work)</p> <p>B. A short story putting the evidence in context</p> <p>C. Descriptive feedback (using MBNS continuum)</p> <p>(D. Student Voice <i>when possible</i>)</p>	<p>At least once a week (Clan Teacher)</p> <p>At least once a month/cycle end (Playful Inquiry/Art & Applied Design/Learning Support Team)</p>
<p>Documentation of Communication Competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaking & Listening, Reading & Viewing Writing & Representing 	<p>A. A piece of evidence of the learning (photo, video, piece of work)</p> <p>B. A short story putting the evidence in context</p> <p>C. Descriptive feedback (using Performance Standards)</p> <p>D. Next steps</p> <p>(E. Student Voice <i>when possible</i>)</p>	<p>At least once a month (Clan Teacher)</p> <p>Optional (Playful Inquiry/Art & Applied Design/Learning Support Team)</p>
<p>Documentation of Mathematical/ Numeracy Competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasoning & Analyzing Understanding & Solving Communicating & Reflecting 	<p>A. A piece of evidence of the learning (photo, video, piece of work)</p> <p>B. A short story putting the evidence in context</p> <p>C. Descriptive feedback (using Performance Standards)</p> <p>D. Next steps</p> <p>(E. Student Voice <i>when possible</i>)</p>	<p>At least once a month (Clan Teacher)</p> <p>Optional (Playful Inquiry/Art & Applied Design/Learning Support Team)</p>

- February 2020
- We will also be writing a mid-year report (shortened version of our form from June 2019) and a summative year-end report. June 2020