

Lawston Primary School Plan 2025-26

INQUIRY QUESTION:

How will our students be impacted if our school team actively supports literacy, either through direct instruction or by promoting literacy within their role?

SCANNING: What is going on for our learners?

In August 2025, we reviewed year-end data to better understand the scope of our students' literacy challenges. Currently, only 28% of students in grades 1–4 demonstrate proficiency in reading, with just 18% of Indigenous students represented in this group. Our students are below our district and provincial averages in literacy.

These numbers align with what we see in classrooms. Last year, only about 22% of students entering grade 2 were reading at grade level, down from roughly 65% in previous years. PM Benchmark assessments show that most students are reading below, or significantly below, grade level. In practice, this means many students require one-to-one support and small-group instruction just to approach independent reading levels. Teachers report that a large proportion of students cannot yet read independently, creating overreliance on read-alouds and guided reading. This year, at least 37% of students will receive targeted learner support to build reading fluency.

We also suspect a connection between reading challenges and attentiveness. Many students are entering school with lower oral language abilities, speech difficulties, and attention regulation issues. Without foundational literacy skills, academic struggles are likely to intensify as they move to SESS in grade 5. For these students, reading becomes harder, and school increasingly disconnected.

FOCUSING: What is going to give us the biggest impact?

We know our students deserve to learn to read during their time with us. Literacy is not optional — it is a foundational life skill that every student must have to thrive as an adult. The focus of our school plan is literacy.

DEVELOPING A HUNCH: What is leading to this situation? How are we contributing to it?

It has become evident that some students transition from Grade 4 without the level of preparedness needed for success in the intermediate classroom. In previous years, our school has placed greater emphasis on nurturing emotional well-being and developing social regulation skills. We believe the best path forward is to provide multiple access points for literacy. Every learner has unique needs, which may require movement breaks, calming activities, co-regulation, or integrating hands-on, oral, and action-based elements into literacy learning.

LEARNING: What do we need to learn? How will we design new learning?

We need a clear picture of each student's specific literacy challenges. Start-of-year assessments are providing this data. We also need to understand the prime learning conditions for our students — conditions that vary between classes and among individuals. Once identified, we will aim to provide literacy instruction during each learner's most optimal times for engagement.

As we incorporate decolonizing approaches into our literacy interventions and lessons, we will look to our Indigenous Education Advocates and remain open to their guidance. Indigenous ways of knowing will be intentionally considered in the design of our literacy classrooms.

TAKING ACTION: What can we do differently to make enough of a difference?

We believe the greatest impact will come from a non-colonial approach that considers the whole child. Students need consistent, intensive support to regulate and fully engage in learning. Alongside literacy, we must continue to foster self-regulation strategies that make learning possible.

With so many students struggling, last year we examined our literacy programs closely and explored new resources to strengthen our practice. This year, we will continue utilizing a range of programs, ensuring thoughtful matches between each program and individual students, while also introducing a school-wide Home Reading initiative. Our literacy coordinator will support teachers and EAs to apply targeted strategies with both individual students and entire classes — a model of differentiated literacy support. We are also giving ourselves permission to devote more instructional minutes to literacy. Literacy must remain our top priority because it is what our students need most.

To maximize the value of our monthly inquiry time, we will collaborate in teams of staff who serve the same students. Teams may include EAs, IEAs, LSTs, and classroom teachers. Teacher meetings will provide time to share strategies, discuss classroom experiences, and examine how we are reaching learners. Formative assessment data — gathered in classrooms and through learner support — will guide these conversations.

CHECKING: Have we made enough of a difference?

We will measure progress using Kindergarten Screener (language and early literacy skills), PM Benchmark assessment (grades 1–4), and the Non-Fiction Reading Assessment (grade 4) . These assessments allow us to meet individually with students, listen to them read, ask comprehension questions, and collect data on their growth. Our grade 4 teachers will use the Foundation Skills Assessment to assess reading comprehension.

Our Learner Support teacher will track individual student progress in literacy with CORE assessment (Assessing Reading, Multiple Measures). Student voice and staff perspectives will guide the evaluation and effectiveness of classroom-based literacy programs, while parent voice will help ensure the home reading program achieves maximum impact.