



# Vancouver School District School Plan for Britannia Secondary Year 3 2022 - 2023

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, current school plans have been carried forward to the 2022/23 school year.

## 1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

Britannia Secondary opened in 1908 and is the oldest secondary school in Vancouver. It is situated on a 16 hectare site which includes Britannia Elementary School, Britannia Community Services Centre, Britannia Community Library (Vancouver Public Library Branch), and a host of recreational, educational, and community services. Site administration is done cooperatively with the Britannia Community Services Centre, through a partnership established in 1975 between the Grandview-Woodlands and Strathcona communities, Vancouver City Council, Vancouver School Board, Vancouver Parks Board, and the Vancouver Public Library Board.

Britannia is a comprehensive community school. The staff consists of 2.7 administrators, 42 full and part-time teachers and 26 support staff (which includes community education coordinator; drug and alcohol counselor, school support B program workers). 548 Students are enrolled in the main school and 61 in alternative programs attached to the secondary school; 239 students (39%) are Indigenous or Metis; 23 students are designated ESL students; and there are 9 International students. Since 2007, approximately one quarter of Britannia students have been ministry coded.

On the one hand, Britannia is an Inner City School. Everyday there are situations and circumstances, associated with low income urban communities, which are dealt with by staff. Recognition of the impact of income on educational attainment has been a consistent theme in the literature on school and community linkages since the Plowden and Rutter studies of the early 1970's. We feel this impact at Britannia where approximately 31% of our students live in households that receive income assistance or have MCF involvement; 33% of our families earn less than \$30 000 pa (19% District; 16% Province); 27% of our families are single parent (16% District; 15% Province) (City of Vancouver, 2018, Social Indicators and Trends: Grandview-Woodlands and Strathcona; HELP Early Development Indicators: Community Summary, 2017; EDI Wave 4 Summary; EDI 16/17)

On the other hand, Britannia serves a vibrant community of diverse cultures, interests and needs. Home languages of our students reveal that this diversity is reflected within our student population with at least 38 different languages spoken. The Britannia catchment area also has the highest concentration of indigenous peoples in Vancouver (9.5% in 2010; 20% in 2018 of the total Urban indigenous population) (HELP Early Development Indicators: Community Summary, 2010; City of Vancouver, 2018, Social Indicators and Trends: Grandview-Woodlands and Strathcona, p. 31).

As a comprehensive school, opportunities are provided to all students in Mathematics, English, Sciences, Social Studies, Modern Languages, Physical Education, Fine Arts, Technical Studies and Applied Skills curricula areas. Modified and challenged/enriched courses are offered in some of the core academic areas to meet our diverse student needs.

## Programs

Our staff initiate programs that give support, assistance and curricular instruction for Grade 8 students who need help in managing the transition from Grade 7 to 8. The school offers several district programs of which we are extremely proud.

- Our International Baccalaureate Program is a two-year program in Grades 11 and 12 that follow a rigorous curriculum leading to external examinations and an internationally recognized Diploma.
- Our Venture Program is an enriched, academic mini-school that offers a global education experience for motivated students in Grades 8, 9, and 10 and provides excellent preparation for entrance into the IB Program.
- In September 2007, Britannia implemented a Hockey Academy, the first in Vancouver, drawing students from Vancouver and Burnaby.
- Outreach and Streetfront are district alternative resource programs providing curricular and developmental support in alternative settings for 65 students. The programs are located on site. Students in the Alternative programs can be re-integrated into the regular school at the senior level.

Britannia also houses five on-site programs for students with special needs.

- The Learning Support Program is a district program designed to serve students with learning difficulties. Students take their core academics in a small, supported setting and are integrated into classes in the main school for their elective courses.
- The Junior Social Development (Gr 8 & 9) and the Senior Social Development programs are for students needing social and emotional support. Each program is staffed with a teacher, YFW and an SSW.
- The fourth and fifth programs are Learning Assistance and Life Skills (LALS) programs, one for grades 8 to 12 and one called GTA for students in their 6<sup>th</sup> year. Both programs opened at Britannia in September 2018.

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## 2. WHAT DID WE SEE?

The information that we know about our learners has come from school and district data, and data collected from surveys of students, parents, and staff. However, the data is over 3 years old but will be revised extensively in the 2023/24 school year which will guide our new multi year school growth plan.

The strengths of our Britannia students are varied. Britannia students, in general are community minded, caring, helpful, supportive, honest, truthful, generous, forgiving, loyal, creative, pragmatic, and independent. They also are resourceful and incredibly resilient.

The needs of our students are in the following areas and which have only been exacerbated as a result of Covid 19:

- Absenteeism and truancy remain a problem at Britannia.
- Increased levels of anxiety, moderate to high levels of depression and low levels of positive self esteem are prevalent. This is particularly pronounced in our female students compared to Canadian averages

Our school plan inquiry question has been:

*How can we address student's gender and racially based inequality of experience and engagement at Britannia?*

Women, and more specifically Indigenous women, bear the brunt of inequality in our society. This inequality is reflected at Britannia and needs to be addressed as part of our initiatives regarding reconciliation and innovation. At the school level these experiences are reflected in different attendance patterns. Attendance data has prompted a shift in the school level dialogue to a greater awareness of the gendered dimension of inclusion, access, and equity.

With this in mind the most important work that we can do is to build an explicit focus on narratives of inclusion and exclusion into our planning; a focus on understanding how gendered narratives of inclusion continue to exclude. This work has begun at the leadership team level and teachers across the spectrum are increasingly building gendered, feminist, and LGBTQ narratives into their curricula.

The work will continue within the realm of teacher autonomy and leadership. Nevertheless, more broadly at the school level specific initiatives can also be identified.

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### 3. HOW DO WE KNOW WE WERE SUCCESSFUL?

During the past school year, we have continued to monitor attendance and intervene when student attendance impedes their academic progress.

Other initiatives staff collaborated on include but are not limited to, the following:

- Gr 8 Inquiry wellness project,
- Restructuring learning services,
- BMC online TEAMS communication, and
- Literacy project

The above items highlight some of the ways we continue to address student's gender and racially based equity and inequality of experience and engagement.

Increasingly we are recognized as being a school that 'defies the expectations' and last year our students received over \$900,000 in scholarships.

Students will be surveyed each year by the Student Learning Survey, as well as this year the McCreary Survey (administered every five years to randomly selected students in the district) and the YDI (Youth Developmental Survey) to all grade 11's, will also provide baseline data. Student self-assessment of the core competencies will provide anecdotal data on personal values and choices, self-regulation, relationship building and well-being. Student focus groups, staff and student interviews and "street data" will provide us with student narratives that are personable and reflective.

We expect to see and will strive to lower anxiety, loneliness and reports of bullying. We expect higher grades and lower absenteeism. And we expect higher enrolment.

If no change is seen, we will refer to the District Education Plan to complete further scanning and focusing in order to plan for further strategies and practices that support student well-being.

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## 4. HOW HAVE WE SHARED?

Success has been communicated through and recognized by CSL (Communicating Student Learning) reports, student bulletin, staff and parent WAAG (Week at a Glance), the PAC, daily PA announcements, school newsletters, weekly BLT (Bruin Leadership Team) recognition, school website, pep rallies, awards night and our District Indigenous and School Graduation ceremonies.

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## 5. WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?

Next year, staff will engage in a new cycle of school growth planning by using quantitative, qualitative and narrative data in order to plan for strategies and practices that support the holistic needs of all of our students. Plans are now afoot in creating a school growth plan template that is symmetrical with the new District Education plan <https://www.vsb.bc.ca/page/4996/education-plan-2026>



District-wide Indigenous Focus (worldviews): To increase knowledge, acceptance, empathy, awareness and appreciation of Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures and contributions among all learners.

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## 6. WHAT HAVE WE DONE AT OUR SCHOOL TO SUPPORT ALL LEARNERS IN REGARD TO THIS FOCUS?

Britannia Secondary is honoured in having 40% of students enrolled in our school identifying as Indigenous. The number of Indigenous students has doubled the past eight years and continues to grow.

The staff are in the process of reflecting and revisiting the current support systems in place for our students so that it is not just about finding better ways to support students, but recognizing lack of engagement by students is a type of feedback about the health of our school community especially post Covid. However, it should be noted that our Indigenous student graduation rates are among the highest in the district and Province; First Nation's athletes are leaders in our school and we encourage these students to assume leadership roles on our student council. Lastly, we are consistently identified as an Indigenous "magnet school" from across coastal British Columbia.

Assemblies that honor First Nation's experience and place such as the Veteran's day assembly in November and remembering MMWIG in February and June, included participation in school and community events of our Indigenous students whose voices were heard and represented.

Our Indigenous education teacher and support worker have continued to play a vital role connecting Indigenous students and families to school through daily phone calls and follow-up meetings, liaison with community based agencies, and providing a vibrant and safe All Nations room where students can gather as a community.

Guided by district policy and national and provincial initiatives regarding Reconciliation we intend to continue this work.

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## 7. HOW WILL WE SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE AND KNOWLEDGE?

Building on collaborative inquiry into supporting indigenous learners and integrating themes of Reconciliation into the classroom, several important school-district collaborations have occurred, and will continue. The following courses: Media Arts, First Peoples 11/12, and Indigenous Studies 12, are at the center of student excellence and achievement, and are paralleled by innovative and collaborative lesson planning and unit delivery that focuses on Indigenous and settler relations and Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing.

We are reminded on a continual basis that if we center those that are and have been at the margins it benefits all learners. Therefore, the staff are in a continual process of learning and unlearning in order to deepen our understanding of Indigenous perspective and knowledge. We will continue to focus on

Reconciliation, and will revise our school plan in order to become more articulate about our intentions regarding Reconciliation in the 23/24 school year.