

2023-2024 - Year 1 School Learning Plan

1. **GENERAL SCHOOL STORY**

Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School is in south-central Vancouver at the intersection of West 54th Avenue and Heather Street. First opened in 1956, the school is home to approximately 2000 students. Our diverse community of learners come from a wide variety of cultures and backgrounds, travel here from across the school district, and include 160 International Education students joining us from countries around the world. In addition to the regular classes in standard departments, we also offer several District and school specialty programs:

French Immersion Program (Grade 8 – 12) – District Program

• Students take four classes taught in French: two French language classes, Social Studies, and Science; along with the remainder (English, Math, and electives) in English

<u>Autism Resource Centre (Grade 8 - 12) – District Program</u>

This Centre is designed for students diagnosed with autism and able to meet secondary school
expectations with minimal adaptations and support. The Centre provides a place for students to
enhance their social, executive functioning, and organizational skills.

Synergy Program (Grade 8 and 9)

- A Grade 8 and 9 learning cluster program designed for Churchill students who have demonstrated
 excellence, have a positive attitude toward learning, are highly motivated and reliable, are curious,
 critical, and creative thinkers and are open to learning in new ways and places.
- Courses are taught in an interdisciplinary manner, to meet the unique needs of highly capable learners and to foster curiosity, social responsibility, personal and intellectual growth, and leadership.



Prelude Program (Grade 10)

- This Churchill Grade 10 program consists of challenging courses that place emphasis on the skills of independent research, analysis, and communication in a variety of forms. Collaboration and self-motivation are key.
- At the heart of Prelude are two program-specific courses designed to promote international awareness, leadership, and community engagement: International Studies and Prelude Leadership.

International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (Grade 11 & 12) - District Program

- The IB (International Baccalaureate) Diploma Program is designed as an academically challenging and balanced program that encourages community involvement and service while also preparing students for success at university. The IB Program values 21st century learning, there is a focus on the development of specific approaches to learning: communication, social, self-management/executive, research and thinking.
- The IB Learner Profile and Approaches to Teaching and Learning are frameworks that encourage a holistic approach to education. All teachers and students strive to be:

Inquirers - curious

Knowledgeable - well-read, aware

Thinkers - rational, critical

Communicators - collaborative

Principled - honest, act with integrity

Open-Minded - non-judgmental, unprejudiced

Caring - compassionate

Risk-Takers - resilient

Balanced - mindful

Reflective - thoughtful

Ideal Mini (Grade 8 - 12) - District Program

This district program is a unique, self-contained, family like "school within a school" offering a safe, collaborative, and enriching cohort-based learning environment for academically motivated and creative students. The program fosters a school community which emphasizes social responsibility, collaboration, mentorship, and leadership. Ideal Mini is located in a self-contained space within the Churchill main building.

We are a community committed to learning and celebrating that learning!

Students' learning and accomplishments are celebrated at a variety of school and community shows, fairs, concerts, performances, competitions (fun and formal), tournaments, etc.... Staff make an effort to note and celebrate all kinds of student achievement, not just academic.

Diversity and inclusion are celebrated throughout the school year at Churchill, as we focus on equity and belonging for everyone in our school community.



2. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

The Youth Development Instrument (YDI) would indicate that our learners feel safe and connected to students and staff at Churchill and are very engaged in education and volunteering in and outside of school. Our students are less likely than others in the province to report a strong sense of belonging, purpose, empathy, gratitude, self-concept, and life satisfaction. General physical heath, mental health literacy and mental health attitudes were also below the provincial average.

The Student Learning Survey supports the above in indicating that our students feel safe and supported at school, but that in terms of learning how to deal with emotions, feeling like they belong, feeling good about themselves and having strategies to maintain physical health and wellness, learning basic life and social skills needed for the future, our Grade 10s do not report as positively as other students in the District do. Our Grade 12s feel much more positive and optimistic about their learning and the preparation for the future.

COMPASS Survey results for 2022-23 are not available yet, but our 2021-22 results indicated that Churchill students feel safe and close to people at school, spend more time than the BC average doing homework, and again, feel less purposeful, capable, engaged, and optimistic. Survey results suggested that our top priority should be student mental health (41% reported feeling nervous, anxious or on edge on most days in the last few weeks).

For the most part our learners do very well academically, on their report cards and on Ministry Assessments.

3. WHAT EVIDENCE SUPPORTS WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE LEARNERS?

We have completed the Ministry of Education and Child Care's Student Learning Survey (Grades 10 and 12) and the COMPASS Survey (Grades 9-12) annually, and the YDI (Grade 11) in 2022-23. See the results above.

Informal observations have been shared and discussed at Staff Meetings and Department Head Meetings, in addition to smaller, more focused groups (i.e. Team 2027, CST, Counselling-Admin Team, SBT, Student Council, Student Voice). These observations confirm and support the data gathered through more formal means.

When asked "What is going on for our learners?" staff answered (in order): anxiety, tired, excitement, fatigue; and commented that they find our students to be very grade conscious. When students were asked what one word best described their experience of school over Semester #1, they most often answered "stress" or "stressful" followed by "tiring" and "exhausting".

As a result of our scanning, we will continue our focus beyond academics, on building belonging and supporting students' social and emotional learning and growth.



4. WHAT IS THE FOCUS FOR OUR COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS BASED ON THE EVIDENCE?

After sharing our observations and reviewing the data, we have decided that we will continue our focus on well-being. We will also focus on belonging for all members of our community!

Our school's focus directly supports the VSB's Education Plan goals to improve student achievement, physical and mental well-being and belonging and to increase equity for students. It is also linked to the Education Plan's Equity Statement – "The VSB (Vancouver School Board) will create an equitable learning environment where every child can experience a deep sense of belonging and is free to pursue pathways of learning in ways that are authentic to themselves."

This focus is also supports the VSB's Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement goal of belonging for students of Indigenous heritage.

A focus on belonging and well-being directly supports students' development of personal and social competencies.

As a staff, we feel a sense of urgency regarding this focus, believe it is good for all and see it as manageable, despite its complexity.

5. INQUIRY QUESTION

We will focus on developing a strong(er), deep(er) sense of belonging for our students, in addition to their physical and mental well-being.

As a staff we have considered what comes after DIVERSITY, EQUITY, and INCLUSION... and have decided that it is BELONGING. As suggested by Susie Wise in <u>Design for Belonging: How to Build Inclusion and Collaboration in Your Communities</u>, we will take advantage of design levers (space, roles, events, rituals, grouping, communications, curriculum, visuals, online experiences, policies and procedures, schedules and rhythms) to shape and create moments of belonging at our school.

All of our learners will benefit from a sustained focus on social and emotional learning, mental health, and well-being. A 2022 research summary on well-being in education prepared for IB World Schools provides a modern, student-centred view and exceptional guidance in this regard, indicating:

- The subjective well-being approach suggests that the young person's own positive experience or appraisal is the overarching good to strive for and the most important indicator.
- Three key areas of subjective well-being are: life satisfaction, affect and meaning or purpose.
- Improving student well-being will have a positive impact on student outcomes in the present and the future.
- Working together, school, home, and community, is impactful.
- There is a need for whole-school and targeted interventions.
- There is a link between physical activity and well-being, social support is also key.
- Well-being is for everyone (and is good for everyone) in the school community!



6. WHAT IS OUR PLAN?

The Leading for Equity Framework (from the National Equity Project) provides a very simple formula for this work – see, engage, act. This set of habits guide work at the community and individual level.

As we consider September, the start of a new school year, and Year 1 of our School Learning Plan, we will look to build belonging and well-being whenever and wherever we can (communication, school opening plans, course outlines, classroom expectations and procedures, classroom design and decoration, school-wide expectations, welcome back activities, grade assemblies, homerooms, Clubs Day, new student orientation activities, community events, etc...). We will continually ask ourselves:

- How might we support more belonging (or well-being) for (person/people you are thinking about)
- By focusing on (a moment or opportunity that might matter to them)
- Using (a design lever that is interesting to you/them)?

And we will enact ideas (as individuals and as a community) that are intended to build belonging and well-being. If they are successful, we will celebrate, if they are not, we will keep trying new ideas.

As we act on our plan, we will be open to doing more of something, less of something and/or something differently if the result could be increased belonging and well-being.

7. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED?

Professional development will continue to be offered to staff through pro-d days, collaborative time, book clubs, lunch and learns, staff meetings, Teams channels, chats, and the purchase of professional resources. The focus on belonging and well-being will continue throughout, as will the encouragement to see the system, empathize, inquire, collaborate, imagine, try, notice, and reflect. We will capitalize on opportunities (paying attention to design levers: space, roles, events, rituals, grouping, communications, schedules, and rhythms) to build belonging and well-being in our community.

Staff have worked to connect these concepts to new assessment practices, the curricular and core competencies, and their everyday practice.

8. HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

Our students, staff, and PAC (Parent Advisory Council) will provide feedback (formal and informal) on our progress.

Data obtained through continued administration of the Student Learning Survey and the COMPASS Survey will be analyzed and presented to groups of staff, students, and parents for discussion about the difference we are making.

Adjustments will be made based on this feedback.



9. HOW WILL WE SHARE THIS INFORMATION?

We will continue to communicate with our community through regular meetings of formal and informal groups, our school website, PAC meetings, information evenings, Teams, and assemblies. We will communicate with staff through Teams, our monthly Staff Meetings, informal groups that gather around a common interest or concern, and through Department Heads, who will in turn communicate with their departments.

We will communicate about new initiatives, our progress toward our goals, and about new challenges as they arise.





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

10. WHAT LEARNING HAVE WE DONE AT OUR SCHOOL TO SUPPORT AND ENHANCE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEWS AND KNOWLEDGE?

Learning that has supported and enhanced our understanding of Indigenous worldviews and knowledge has come from active participation in on-going professional development, recognizing and honouring key Indigenous issues, and expanding student involvement in sharing their learning.

Professional development has not stopped at the district Indigenous Focus Day but has expanded into a working group of teachers reading Jo Chrona's, *Wayi Wah! Indigenous Pedagogies: An Act for Reconciliation and Anti-Racist Education* and sharing ideas of strengthening implementation of Indigenous knowledge throughout our curriculum. Additionally, with the Indigenous graduation requirement, we have supported teachers who have started teaching BC First People's 12 and Contemporary Indigenous Studies 11, in their professional inquiry group. As we expand our course offerings for the 2023-2024 school year, we invited the district DRT (District Resource Teachers) mentors to provide workshops for staff guiding the implementation in genuine and thoughtful ways.

In classes, teachers have brought in Indigenous artists and authors to work with students throughout the school year. Our school honours key days of remembrance and action through school wide recognition of Orange Shirt Day, the Walk for Wenjack, MMWIWG2S, the Moose Hide Campaign, and a full month celebration of Indigenous History Month. At our annual Diversity Week, Indigenous knowledge is highlighted through guest speakers and artists such as Christie Lee Charles, The Coastal Wolf Pack, David Robertson, and DJ OShow. During Indigenous History month, we will host our 2nd Indigenous Film Festival for the whole school. Furthermore, students who are studying BC First Peoples are sharing their learning with the student body during this month to demonstrate their individual acts of reconciliation.

Our school's story about enacting reconciliation not only is witnessed through actions and learning within the classroom, but can be physically seen on the school campus, starting with Deb Sparrow's 7 Sister's mural on the south side of the school: it literally supports the south wing of the school and welcomes students to the school that is situated on traditional Musqueam territory. Nearby is our Indigenous Reconciliation Garden that was started by one of our former SSAs in which tobacco, cedar, corn, and sage is grown. At the front of the school, we have our learning circle, symbolic of Indigenous forms of learning, where students may gather with their classes to share knowledge. Finally, we are also commissioning a woven art piece by Deb Sparrow for our main foyer's display case. At every point of the school, we want students, staff, and the community to know that we acknowledge, respect and honour Indigenous peoples and on whose land we learn.

As stated, our diverse community of learners come from a wide variety of cultures and backgrounds, travel here from across the school district, and include 160 International Education students joining us from a countries around the world; yet, we have a small Indigenous student population, and based on Student Learning Survey results discussed in the next section, we have more work to be done around Indigenous education.



11. WHAT EVIDENCE OF UNDERSTANDING OF INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEWS AND KNOWLEDGE HAVE BEEN FOSTERED WITHIN YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY? PLEASE SHARE HOW IT IS EMBEDDED THROUGHOUT.

With the physical manifestations in and on our school, property demonstrating understanding of indigenous world views and knowledge to staff, students, and the community, we strive to strengthen learning for all.

The Grade 10 2023 School Learning Survey data demonstrates that while some students acknowledge we share local Indigenous knowledge, we need to strengthen this area of learning. This survey also demonstrates that we need to amplify student participation and opportunities in Indigenous activities and celebrations as only a quarter of the respondents believed they participated in these events; and half of the respondents state that they are being taught about Indigenous Peoples in Canada. At the grade 12 level, the percentage increases to 70%; thus, we need to provide more opportunities for younger grades.

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

We will continue to build on the learning opportunities listed above as teacher and student knowledge grows. The school will support teachers in their professional development through resources, encourage students to share their knowledge, invite opportunities for elders and Indigenous speakers to be a regular part of the school experience, and make Indigenous ways of learning part of the everyday, making it part of the school culture.

Sharing the School Learning Survey results with staff will highlight the need to continue building this knowledge and learning, and to facilitate continued acts of reconciliation.

"Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors -- This principle refers to the understanding that ultimately, the primary purpose of learning is for well-being." (J. Chrona).

