

2022-2023 - Year 1

School Learning Plan

1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY? (TO BE UPDATED EACH YEAR)

Strathcona Elementary is located on the stolen traditional lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm | Musqueam, Skwxwú7mesh | Squamish, and səliwətał | Tsleil-Waututh Nations where our staff and students learn, work, and play.

Strathcona is a large, enhanced services, dual track (English and French Immersion) school located on the Downtown Eastside and near the heart of Chinatown. It is Vancouver's oldest elementary school and has a diverse population that greatly adds to the vibrancy of the school community. There are 32 self-identified language or cultural groups that make up the population of students. The school enrolls approximately 475 students from kindergarten to grade 7; 70% of our students are enrolled in our English program and 30% are in the French Immersion program.

Structurally, architecture accounts for a good deal of Strathcona's charm and some of Vancouver's oldest and most unique buildings. Currently the school occupies 3 buildings; the junior, senior and some parts of the E building. Within these, there is a cafeteria and auditorium. The school and community centre share a gym space, while other parts of the E building are used by preschool/daycare and out-of-school care.

The school consists of over 30% students with Indigenous heritage. Our school's population reflects the urban Indigenous population of Vancouver which draws from a diversity of cultures from across Turtle Island. One central aim is to continue to provide meaningful connections to Indigenous culture and practices by listening and amplifying Indigenous voices within the school as well as the broader community at large. We do this by organizing and hosting relevant cultural assemblies and events throughout the year, as well as incorporate Indigenous teachings in our classrooms.

In addition to participating in cultural activities at our school, many of our students are connected and involved with programs and activities at The Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA), Red Fox Healthy Living Society, Vancouver Urban Ministries, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Kidsafe, Britannia Secondary school, as well as various Indigenous Childcare centres in the area. The VSB Community Schools Team (CST) is also actively supporting students with out of school programs.

To support the complex needs and challenges many of our family's face, due to systemic racism, intergenerational trauma, and poverty, the school is supported through enhanced services. These services include: a lunch program, social/emotional support for students and families, as well as onsite medical consultations through the RICHER program (Responsive Intersectoral Child and Community Health Education and Research), the Strathcona Community Dental Clinic, and a partnership with CYMH (Child and Youth Mental Health) and VCC (Vancouver Community College) Dental Hygiene Program.

The school is connected to the Strathcona Community Centre, which provides onside before and after school care programs as well as a breakfast program in the morning, a food program weekly to support neighbourhood families, and a Dental Clinic. Our ongoing relationship with Strathcona Community Centre allows us to build strong recreational and educational programs for our students and their families. Additionally, our Seamless Day before and after school care program for kindergarten students provides a stable, supportive, consistent, routine for new students and families that eliminates transitions to unfamiliar adults and environments.

Music and school athletics are prominent fixtures of the school with high levels of student participation. At Strathcona, we value parent/caregiver involvement and the creation of a safe school environment where all students and families feel a sense of belonging and connection. There is a tremendous sense of community in our neighbourhood and we strongly value this community involvement in the creation of a safe and caring school environment.

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

The strength of Strathcona Elementary school is its community, connections and utilizing resources to maximize support for our students. Many of our students come from a culturally rich and diverse community. Our students engage in the school community as they participate as peer helpers, big buddies, library monitors, cafeteria and office monitors and are active in the Red Fox drumming group. Strathcona students respond to many forms of learning for example, STEM, Story Studio, inquiry-based learning, cooperative learning and project-based learning.

Relationships are the foundation from which we are understanding our community of learners. Within these relationships and connections, assessments are used to gain further knowledge about how our students learn. Through these avenues we have identified complex and multidimensional needs. Many of our students are vulnerable in several domains and at risk for learning challenges. Most of our vulnerable students and families have experienced significant levels of trauma in their lives, and this impacts their learning, behaviour, and social-emotional well-being. Many students entering kindergarten lack school readiness skills. Social emotional learning and self-regulation are key areas of focus and support for our learners, as these lagging skills in many students are impeding academic achievement, primarily in literacy. A core group of students are plagued by chronic absenteeism and tardiness.

We have created a student voice survey to identify student feelings of safety, engagement, belonging and learning whilst at school. This will provide valuable data to Strathcona staff which will help guide our instruction and support for our students.

3. WHAT EVIDENCE SUPPORTS WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE LEARNERS? (SCANNING)

Evidence collected from writing samples and reading assessments using Benchmarks, Phonological Awareness, Heggerty, DIBELS, Jerry Johns decoding and reading comprehension are used to collect data about our learners. The literacy data collected indicates 65% of our primary students from grades 1-3 are below grade level, 61% of students from grades 4/5 are below grade level, and 46% of students from grades 6/7 are below grade level.

Attendance is closely monitored by our staff, and with the assistance of our safe arrival folks.

Our student voice survey has been adapted to include both primary and intermediate students. We have the results from just under half of our student population with 211 responses so far.

Of the 118 intermediate students who responded:

- 66% of students reported feeling safe at school during unstructured times
- 85% reported feeling safe during class time
- 61% feel there are staff who can help them.
- 47% enjoy reading and writing.
- 69% are proud to be Strathcona Dragon
- 83% can name 2 adults who believe they will be successful.

Of the 93 primary students who responded:

- 71% feel safe during unstructured time.
- 77% feel safe during class time.
- 76% feel there are staff who can help them.
- 52% enjoy reading and writing.
- 71% are proud to be a Strathcona Dragon.
- 86% can name 2 adults who believe they will be successful.

This preliminary data points to the great work with regards to having strong connections with adults and creating a sense of safety and belonging in our classrooms. Combining both primary and intermediate data as a whole school, most students are proud to be members of the Strathcona Dragon community. One notable area of improvement is only half of the students enjoy reading and writing. This highlights the need for a comprehensive literacy approach targeting tier one interventions.

For 2023/2024 we will look more at EDI, MDI and student learning surveys and how to increase participation and ease accessibility for our families and gain reliable valid data.

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

The primary area that we will be focusing on are Engagement, Belonging, and Community Building.

Within these broad areas are literacy, social emotional well-being, parent and student engagement and community building. All these areas connect with the larger goals of the VSB in equity, inclusion and Indigenous education.

We are striving to improve student achievement in literacy and through this increase engagement in wider curriculum goals and opportunities.

We are striving to create a safe, calm, and connected school environment.

We are doing these things through a lense of trauma informed practice.

Regarding the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement, we are touching on all 3 areas.

These are the 3 areas:

1. Belonging to increase Aboriginal students' sense of pride, self-esteem, belonging, place, acceptance and caring in their schools.
2. Mastery to ensure Aboriginal students achieve increased academic success in Vancouver schools and that they participate fully and successfully from kindergarten through the completion of Grade 12.
3. Culture and community to increase knowledge, awareness, appreciation of, and respect for Aboriginal histories, traditions, cultures and contributions by all students through eliminating institutional, cultural and individual racism within the Vancouver school district learning communities.

5. INQUIRY QUESTION (FOCUSING)

Inquiry question:

How do we increase student engagement, feeling of belonging and build our community so that it will be strong, stable and provide a wraparound educational continuum of care and support?

It is evident from attendance, report card data, behavioural observations, and learning assessments that our learners are struggling in various areas including engagement, mental health, and literacy skills. One major contributing factor to this disengagement and mental health crises, is the COVID pandemic. The impact of this on children's social emotional wellbeing has been profound, especially in our community where there already exists many socio-economic, and racial barriers.

Because of the profound effect the COVID pandemic had on an already marginalized and stressed community, there is a need to implement school-wide initiatives focusing on trauma-informed practice, restorative justice, positive behaviour supports, and a systematic comprehensive literacy program. In addition to this, we are strengthening our relationships with community partners to establish a community of care for our students and families. We have added a targeted and consistent SEL component including community connections to Watari, and CYMH to our practice as we recognize students' need additional support in this area in order to have improved academic achievement. Ensuring that students feel connected and part of the Strathcona school community, that their basic needs are met and that learning is individualized for every student is just some of the important work that we do to improve success for students. These factors are prerequisites to learning for our vulnerable students. All teaching is responsive and targeted and teaching practice is research based and consistent.

A key piece of this work will be an emphasis on parent and family engagement in our community. We recognize having home support is vital to the success and well-being of our students. We will do this by holding community building activities such as:

- Coffee and cookies in the mornings
- Sports day
- Pride parade
- Lunar New Year celebration
- National Indigenous Day
- Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women event
- Walking School bus
- Safe arrival
- PAC led events such as bingo nights
- School Streets Program which is a partnership between the PAC and City of Vancouver.

Through ongoing dialogue, reflection, and Professional Development, our school staff have collectively analyzed the literacy program at Strathcona in terms of strengths, areas of need and future focus. The intense literacy needs for our students have not changed. Our Response to Intervention (RTI) Model is an effective strategy (as shown by student data) in the primary and intermediate grades and will continue to be utilized. To support reading improvement, an ongoing focus on an early intervention model in the primary grades will continue. We continue to have a significant need to ensure Kindergarten readiness skills are acquired with the ability to self-regulate as a prerequisite to developing these early literacy skills.

A literacy committee has formed and is committed to providing a school-wide tier one initiative aimed at evidence-based practice for the 5 pillars of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension). Systematic scope and sequence will be utilized with help from the new District resources and guided by our team of passionate and knowledgeable staff members. The team will explore resources including Jolly Phonics, Heather Willms, University of Florida Phonics and others. A literacy channel is created where resources can be accessed, and ongoing conversations will ignite the evolution of this project. Caregivers will be engaged in supporting these initiatives through open dialogue between families and classroom teachers, home reading initiatives, school newsletters and literacy events hosted by the school.

6. WHAT IS OUR PLAN? (PLANNING)

- The school has rolled out a school-wide Positive Behaviour Intervention Supports framework in order to address the growing needs within our community and to enhance student engagement and belonging. Within this framework trauma-informed and restorative justice practices are used as a basis for creating a safe and caring community at Strathcona for all students. Major parts of this include the introduction of Strathcona Dragon training days where the focus is on key challenging areas within the school and laying the groundwork for common language and expectations where all students can experience success. Using Dragon tickets and initiatives such as this reinforce these expectations and create a sense of community, belonging and allow students to take ownership over themselves and contribute positively to their community.
- Additionally, parent engagement is a large part of this piece, whereby we will hold activities and events that involve families and the broader community. One example of this is our coffee and cookies in the mornings.
- Strengthening our connections with community partners and outside agencies is imperative to our continued work.
- Multiple contact points for food and support will be available for our families.
- Walking school bus will continue.
- Safe arrival is an important component to monitoring attendance and using this to follow up with families in need of more support to get to school.
- Staff connections and collaboration will increase.
- A comprehensive literacy program targeted to the needs of our students has been conceived and will include grade by grade scope and sequence for 5 pillars with resources for ease of use.

YEAR 1

- Needs assessment- ongoing needs assessments will be accurately updated to reflect the current climate of the school. This process includes continuously reflecting and evaluating the needs in the school via behavioural and learning observations, assessment data, and conversations with all staff.
- Pro-D to support staff
- Initial implementation of initiatives as mentioned above.
- Assessment and reflection is continuous
- Staff feedback will be collected
- Student voice survey roll out

YEAR 2

- Refining Pro-D opportunities to support goals and leadership opportunities
- Specific committee work that leads to school-wide implementation e.g., PBIS, Literacy and SEL

YEAR 3

- Continuation of pro-d support and committee work
- Build in further student voice with a focus on the Indigenous perspective.
- Parent voice survey implementation

7. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED? (PLANNING)

- New areas of learning will be around literacy interventions for all levels and Universal Design for Learning, and SEL strategies
- Staff will need ongoing professional development, inquiry opportunities and resources to support literacy, as well as support from district staff and District Literacy Teacher.
- School-wide interventions Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Trauma-informed practice, restorative justice.
- School-wide Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) training
- Pro-d related to literacy practice and trauma informed practice
- Targeted SEL interventions- backpacks, collaboration with SEL team, resource team, admin, teachers
- Implementation of RBLM space as well as an additional sensory space.
- Ongoing development of community connections through Strathcona Community Centre, CYMH, Britannia Community of Schools, RayCam, UNYA and RICHER as agencies to support Strathcona's Indigenous students and families.
- Bringing in more resources for parents.
- Ongoing mentorship and professional development opportunities for our Resource Team to develop and refine interventions.
- Story Studio: ongoing opportunities for teachers to engage in professional learning experiences and a learning environment for students that facilitates exploring, living, teaching and learning new the curriculum, core competencies and First Peoples Principles of Learning.

8. HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK? (CHECKING)

We will monitor attendance data as one measure of student engagement. Our student survey can be conducted yearly. We will assess family and parent engagement using observations of behaviour and attendance at our events, as well as conversations with parents and families. We will be reflective in our practice as we will meet often to discuss progress and improvements to our initiatives.

For literacy, we will track our success by collecting assessment data in the fall, winter and in the spring. For some children, physiological, medical, or attendance issues interfere with the goal of grade level reading. We will chart growth using this data. Our goal is to improve success for all students by providing them with comprehensive, systematic, evidence-based reading practices so that all children have the ability to learn to read. We will document the instruction provided, and to clearly indicate student progress towards reading at grade level. Students will be provided with rich speaking, reading and writing opportunities and rich conversations about their practice.

9. HOW WILL WE SHARE THIS INFORMATION? (CHECKING)

- Strathcona School Website
- School newsletters: highlights in student showcase
- Learning Celebration events, parent teacher conferences, goal setting conferences
- Report Cards
- Communicating Student Learning reports and events
- Connections with community organizations through our Community Schools Coordinator
- Working closely with RICHER
- Meetings and opportunities to plan with Vancouver Coastal Health school nurse
- Ongoing planning, support and implementation of Ready Bodies, Learning Minds with our Vancouver Coastal Occupational Therapist and district staff
- Student Self Assessments
- Celebration during monthly assemblies
- Community engagement events
- Students showcases
- Presentations at PAC meetings
- Peer and staff recognition in class, at school and during community events
- Online through class, teacher and student blogs and communications
- Meetings with and among staff, students, parents, community partners



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?

Strathcona Elementary has a diverse population of Urban Indigenous learners across many different Nations, including Squamish, Musqueam, Tsleil Waututh, Haida, Nisga'a, Cree, Objibway, Dakelh, Piapot, Kwakwaka'wakw, Namgis, Kwaqitl, Tsimshian and Metis.

Infusion of Indigenous themes, resources and ways of knowing across all curriculum areas and not limited to a single grade or curriculum strand.

- Land Acknowledgement read at the beginning of daily PA announcements and made at the beginning of all assemblies by students.
- Personalized Land Acknowledgements written by students and shared whenever possible.
- Indigenous Education Enhancement Worker (IEEW) parent room – Building family connections and support - Morning family drop in for parents to connect with other parents, IEEW, and IEET.
- Indigenous Education Enhancement Teacher (IEET) supporting students through collaborative teaching and in-class support. Project based and literature-based learning supported throughout school. District-wide Indigenous Goal: To increase knowledge, acceptance, empathy, awareness and appreciation of Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures and contributions among all students.
- Artistic/cultural initiatives – weaving, drum making, carving, classroom cultural connections with IEEW
- Bring in elders to share their knowledge and expertise on a variety of topics.
- Red Fox Drumming and Dance group and Pow Wow Dancing
- Red Fox Family Feasting and after school recreation program. Led by youth for youth
- Accessing cultural resources: First Nations library collection and expansion of resources and literature sets in classrooms (home reading books, guided reading sets).
- School library having a intentional focus on acquiring good quality indigenous literature for example, Strong Nations and Celebrate Canada reading materials; indigenous reading materials; awareness of what is happening and what is new in terms of First Nations resources.
- Story Studio: ongoing opportunities for teachers to engage in professional learning experiences and a learning environment for students that facilitates exploring, living, teaching and learning new the curriculum, core competencies and First Peoples Principles of Learning.
- IEET and IEEW connections with families – supporting attendance, home, health, food security and connectedness
- Indigenous parents as artists working with students
- Experiential learning opportunities that build connections and relationships with Indigenous culture and ways – urban gardening, UBC farm partnership, Museum of Anthropology, Story Studio, Legacy Carving Project at Britannia Secondary School and the VSB
- Provision of additional support - IEEW as member of student and family support team – YFWs, Area Counselor
- Student leadership opportunities – Strathcona garden & chefs, Red Fox drummers, peer helpers, Indigenous acknowledgements daily, cafeteria monitors, peer helpers, library monitors
- Building family connections and support – Ready Set Learn, WTK, PAC, school community celebrations and events

- Yearly Multicultural Fair and opportunity for all students to participate in workshops provided by Indigenous Community members
- Staff workshops to deepen our understanding of Indigenous histories and culture
- Hands-on learning opportunities for all students with the support of our Indigenous community leaders/parents throughout the year
- Week of reflection and learning connected to Red Dress Day.
- Indigenous Day Celebrations / Assemblies
- Group tutoring and homework club, Indigenous student mentorship opportunities
- Spring Break, Winter Break, and summer programing support
- Traditional foods cooking program with IEEW
- Parent weaving and sewing groups which provide opportunities for students to connect with elders in the community (eg: shawl making)
- Information board outside the IEEW and IET workspace to make our learning and commitment to learning more visible to the community
- Ongoing support with food security, basic needs and winter hampers

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

- Evidence collected from multiple sources including attendance data, increased participation in EDI, MDI and Strathcona student voice survey
- Introduction of a parent voice survey

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

The foundation of reconciliation at Strathcona will be authentic, personalized, and student-centred. This is a continuous and collective process where our staff and community are learning together with Strathcona students. We will draw upon the strengths of community members to share their stories and knowledge. We will embed Indigenous perspectives and knowledge throughout all aspects of learning that are relevant to our students at a developmentally appropriate level. We will engage family members in a variety of teaching and learning opportunities to build relationships and community. Examples include sharing their knowledge and traditions through dance, art, weaving, storytelling and carving. Reconciliation is a continuous, evolving practice at Strathcona and one which is embedded into everything we do and how we support our students and families.