



Vancouver School District  
School Plan for Admiral Seymour  
Year 2 (2020-2021) of 3 Year Plan (2018 – 2021)

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, current school plans have been carried forward to the 2021/22 school year.

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## GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

**The school context remains the same as below but as we become a swing space, with an increase of 220 students on site, there will opportunities and challenges as our community evolves.**

Admiral Seymour Elementary is a small, urban school located on the downtown eastside of Vancouver. It is an eclectic neighbourhood of light industry, commercial shops, social housing, restaurants, apartments, and heritage housing. This year we have 160 students enrolled into 9 divisions. We have a multicultural student group who come from all over the world. There is a significant population of ELL students and many of these are refugees. A growing number of families are coming from countries affected by war such as Syria. Approximately 40 percent of our population identifies as Indigenous and 20 percent of our students have learning challenges.

Our school is an integral part of the greater community. Not only do we provide excellent educational opportunities, we have a wrap-around approach to supporting our students and their families. We also have numerous community partnerships that we can access if further help is needed.

Seymour houses a Strong Start Centre that provides support for preschoolers and their parents & caregivers. This provides a great connection to our future students. We work closely with Britannia Community Centre, Ray Cam Community Services, Saint James Music Academy and the Strathcona Community Centre. These relationships provide social/emotional support and learning opportunities for our students and their families. We are connected to the RICHER Health Initiative Clinic that is located at the Stamps Place BC Housing Project. A nurse practitioner comes weekly to the school to assist and support parents in addition to liaise with school staff.

There are many leadership opportunities for our students: lunch monitors, Big Buddies, Assembly speakers, daily bulletin announcers, school gardeners, library student purchase advisors, and recycling monitors.

Our focus is on the whole child, dealing with the social/emotional aspects, in order to be more successfully academically. As an Enhanced Services School, we have a Youth and Family Worker, a Neighbourhood Assistant, Early Childhood Educator to assist in Kindergarten, Aboriginal Enhancement Worker and a Student Behaviour Support Worker. We have a strong team that supports our children throughout their day at school – and beyond. We all work well as a team that celebrates Seymour's varied cultural backgrounds, intellectual strengths, and general resiliency of our entire community.

Recently, Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS workers) and VSB District Reception staff, have had English lessons for new Canadian parents from Syria. They also have a once a week program called "Shining Stars" for children who are English Language Learners.

We celebrate our children's learning by sharing work in newsletters, keeping up to date work in our hallways, posting work on our website, hosting the Seymour Student Art Sale, Winter and Spring music concerts, Meet the Teacher open house, Artist in Residence gallery & puppet show and our talent show. Admiral Seymour makes positive calls home and sends spontaneous notes of good news. Our school's mascot is the bee so we have daily celebrations of students who are Bee-ing Amazing. Their hard work and kindness is documented on the main floor bulletin board and announced daily with the morning messages.

## 2A. WHAT DID WE SEE?

- Our students and their families show an amazing resilience in often challenging circumstances. Our SES is lower than in many communities and a significant number of families have experienced loss, displacement, and other challenges. It is important, however, to highlight the strengths of our students – not just the challenges. As a school, we try to supply opportunities to strengthen our students' cultural literacy – including Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing.
- Last year, Social/Emotional issues were identified as one of the biggest stumbling blocks to learning. Poverty, displacement, and sometimes even hunger is an issue for many of our students. Admiral Seymour and its community partners do an amazing job assisting with the basic needs of daycare, food, and clothing. All field trips are free or a token amount so as not to prevent anyone from participating. Once those basic needs are taken care of we can go on with the learning. Students report that they LOVE Seymour and wish they could be here all year long!
- **In addition to SEL, we have been focusing on literacy.** We have taken on a school-wide assessment and regularly discuss how are students are improving. There are literacy coaches who assist. Our extra coaches are the Principal, Supervision Aides, and Administrative Assistant – everyone makes time to read with a student throughout the day. The children feel proud of their progress and they are developing relationships beyond the walls of their own classroom. We have assessed every student at the beginning of the year, middle and in June. This directs our practice as it is a part of the spirals of inquiry. Where are our students now? Where do they need to get to? How are we going to help them? Every adult at Seymour is working toward the academic growth and social/emotional resiliency of our students. As students feel more competent as learners their overall behaviour, attitude, and mental health improve.
- Continuation of MindUp practices and professional workshops helped a great deal for both students and staff.

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## 2B. WHAT DO WE NEED TO RE-ADJUST?

We have learned that the SEL of our students has a direct correlation with the SEL of our staff. Our staff has been involved in independently researching Trauma – informed practice. The VSB Wellness Department has also helped us with several Vicarious Trauma workshops that have helped all of the staff here. The staff is interested in working on this area in the future – as individuals and as an entire staff.

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## 3. INQUIRY QUESTION (previously known as “Goal”)

**Our inquiry question remains the same but we do need to focus, concurrently, on the SEL of the staff.**

We see that as new staff members arrive, not all have the mindfulness practices that we have traditionally felt helped our students. Next year we hope to have some experts sharing their knowledge with the staff and students.

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## 4. WHAT IS YOUR NEW PLAN?

**We will continue to do the ideas as noted above but the staff is more aware of the impact of vacarious trauma.** Our plans may change as the community changes somewhat as our population increases. Also, as we will become a swing site for another school, we will want to do work with our new neighbours – as deemed appropriate. Every school has the need for SEL skills.

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## 5. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED?

We will need to have Mindfulness trainers come in to support us – as a refresher. We have had district staff come to help us with Positive Behaviour workshops and we hope this will continue. Staff report that yoga and mindful breathing has helped some students so we may pursue this further.

As we will have many new staff members next year, we will need to review what works and what training is needed in September.

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## 7. HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE SUCCESSFUL?

Anecdotally – do we see an improvement in students' readiness to learn? Do we see improvement in overall behaviour as documented in classes and at the office? Do we see improvement in literacy attainment as measured by our asesements?

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## 8. HOW WILL WE SHARE?

We have our school goals on a bulletin board outside the office in the main hall. They are communicated to PAC members and shared with parents/guardians during conferences.



*District-wide Indigenous Goal: To increase knowledge, acceptance, empathy, awareness and appreciation of Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures and contributions among all students.*

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## 9. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE INDIGENOUS LEARNERS IN OUR SCHOOL?

There are approximately 50 Indigenous students in all grades at Admiral Seymour. The total population of the school this year is 150 within 98 divisions. Next year we will have 53 students with a total of 164 students altogether. As urban learners, indigenous backgrounds are very diverse. Some students are very aware of their traditions and cultures and others are not. We try to have diverse Indigenous guests to help us all with our awareness.

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## 10. WHAT HAVE WE DONE AT OUR SCHOOL TO SUPPORT ALL LEARNERS IN REGARDS TO THIS GOAL?

We have brought in **Maize Longboat** who is an indigeinous video game developer to have our grade 4/5 students beta test his video game about colonization. **Harlan Prudent** delivered a diversity workshop to our grade 1 class to talk about 2 spirit identity.

The school commissioned **KC Hall**, graffiti artist and former Britannia Secondary student to create a mural in our front hall reflecting the past, present and future contribution of indigenous people.

As we are the Seymour Sting, we commissioned a Haida artist, **Eric Prytula**, to create a bee that would be more representative of our school's indigenous past, present and future. It is now the school logo.

As part of our Artist in Residence project (AIRS), we had **Sho Sho Esquiro** come to share her designs that were shown in France this year as part of Indigenous Fashion Week in Paris. **Louise Profeit LeBlanc** of the Nah Nyak Dun First Nation came to share powerful stories on the Yukon with our students who were entranced by indigenous stories of the North.

Due to Covid – 19 many of the spring fieldtrips and workshops were cancelled.

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## 11. WHAT WILL WE CONTINUE TO DO IN THIS AREA?

We will continue to look for contemporary Indigenous people of all backgrounds and professions to show all of our students the important contributions that continue to be made by Indigenous people.

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## 12. HOW DO WE KNOW THAT WE ARE BEING SUCCESSFUL IN THIS AREA?

We have the empirical data of the Success Plans for individual students. Seymour is working hard to reflect the make up of our school but increasing everyone's knowledge and appreciation of a wide array of Indigenous cultures. There has been very positive feedback about our efforts to highlight Indigenous histories, cultures, and traditions – from all our stakeholders of all backgrounds.