

## 2023-2024 - Year 1

# School Learning Plan

### 1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY

Lord Selkirk Elementary is one of the largest elementary schools in the Vancouver School District. For the 2023-2024 school year, the school has approximately 680 Kindergarten to Grade 7 students enrolled, with approximately 450 in our English mainstream program and 230 in our choice French Immersion program. Our French Immersion program continues to be an important part of the community. The French Immersion program at Selkirk is in its 15<sup>th</sup> year, and currently has 10 divisions from kindergarten to Grade 7.

Selkirk is in the Kensington Cedar Cottage neighbourhood. We are a diverse school community. The catchment has seen increasing development of townhomes and multi-family housing units. We have approximately 30 different languages represented in our school community, with 100 of our students receiving support as English Language Learners. Fifty-four students have special needs designations and twenty students have identified themselves as Indigenous.

Our school has three separate buildings containing classrooms (our “Main Building”, our “Frame Building” and our “South-Wing Building”, as well a fourth outbuilding which houses our Strong Start program and our music room. The Frame Building was recently seismically upgraded.

Selkirk continues to focus on diversity as part of creating a culture of belonging. We emphasize the strength that diversity brings in the community. We engaged in extensive work with our students on anti-racism, and with our Gr 6/7 learners on effective, kind, and respectful use of technology, particularly communication functions. Continuing this year, we have had a strong focus on SOGI initiatives to ensure all students and community members feel supported in an inclusive community environment. This has included ongoing work by our Primary and Intermediate Diversity Clubs, and much celebration and learning during our June Pride month and Pride parade in which the whole school took part!

We are fortunate to have a highly supportive and engaged parent community, represented by our Parent Advisory Council (PAC), who supports programs and helps enhance the experiences through both fundraising efforts and community building opportunities. The school views parents as partners in education and parents are keen participants in field trips, special events and general day-to-day life at the school. The PAC continues to generously support the purchasing of technology for the students at Lord Selkirk.

Our library commons functions as a collaborative literacy/STEM Hub with flexible furniture and a welcoming atmosphere for our community. Our school was the fortunate recipient of A Future Play Grant last school year, and we have been introducing this programming to our students. We have shared laptop carts, iPad carts, and STEM materials. Our Teacher-Librarian has worked collaboratively with classroom teachers to engage students in a variety of STEM activities ranging from coding to building to architecture. Our library commons has a Story Workshop, a part of our library space which holds thousands of fun manipulatives that help students to engage in creative writing.

This year, Selkirk has approximately 75 students who are identified as being vulnerable and continue to receive supports from the Enhanced Services and Community Schools Teams. We have a full-time Enhanced Services Student Support worker (SSW), as well as a Youth and Family Worker (YFW) three days per week. This year we were excited to see the return of a Hot chocolate and Movie Night in December. We have a Backpack Buddies Program through which we send home food each weekend with some families to help ensure they have access to food over the weekend. We provide daily snacks for students in need. We have a subsidized lunch program for approximately 35 students through Enhanced Services. Our breakfast program, well known in our community as “Books and Breakfast” resumed this year and hosted up to 50 students each morning before school. We have continued to connect our families with outside agencies for out-of-school activities and camps (however limited due to community health and outside agency staffing constraints), health care, food security, and family services.

Selkirk Elementary is an early intervention school (CELI) which focuses on early literacy development and interventions for struggling learners. We have a reading recovery program which includes a trained Reading Recovery Resource Teacher, and this year we have a District Literacy Teacher, providing extra support to our at-risk learners. This complements the work of our resource/learning assistance teacher team, our Speech-Language pathologist, district psychologist, and our Student Support workers. We have an early years Strong Start program; this is a Ministry of Education funded program that runs in the portable on site. This program provides educational classes for parents of preschool aged children. The StrongStart Facilitator welcomes students aged 0 to 4 and their caregivers for a variety of learning activities. The program averages a participation of about 20 to 50 children. StrongStart also hosted an afternoon program dedicated to preparing 4-year-olds for kindergarten during the spring months. Selkirk has an annual Ready Set Learn and a Welcome to Kindergarten program as part of the education series for upcoming families. In addition, we continued to provide the Roots of Empathy program that was run by our StrongStart Coordinator for a kindergarten class, and by the school’s Youth and Family Worker for a grade 6/7 class. Strong start works closely with our school on various activities throughout the year.

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

Our staff is a professional and committed group who connect with and care about our students. Our Interactions, assessments, and connection with our students is how we know about our learners.

This year we continued to engage in social-emotional learning and development, despite our three-year Social-Emotional Learning Goal coming to an end. Looking at the effects of the pandemic on social-emotional well-being and Mental Health, we mutually decided to continue this focus. Our counsellor, Youth and Family Worker, and our Enhanced Services Support worker brought the Open Parachute program to most classes in the school; this program works to develop capacity in this area for classroom teachers, support staff, and student. This year we also worked as a staff (in consultation with families) to look at other areas of focus for the new three-year goal.

Through all our work on Social Emotional Learning over the last three years we have universally noticed many students who are dysregulated in varying degrees and thought that a new school goal with a focus on Executive Function would build on our recent SEL work and help us understand and begin to address the dysregulation we are seeing.

Our new inquiry questions this year (and for the next two years are):

What does Executive Function look like through the lens of students in my classroom?

How can I improve my practice in ways that help students increase and improve their Executive Function Skills?

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

Conversations between colleagues about the increased dysregulation in classes and of individual students over the last few years have brought the staff to the realization that a focus on Executive Function would be beneficial for all our students and would be an appropriate follow-up to our work on Social Emotional Learning.

We appreciate that we are beginning this journey without any data other than information, or theories based on the observations and conversations that staff have had in recent months. Our plan is to gather some baseline data, using the assessments listed below, in early spring. We will follow up with the same assessments in the Spring to assess our progress.

- Student self-assessment of Executive Function Skills in early fall and again in the Spring
- Teacher's assessment of student Executive Function Skills in early fall and again in the Spring
- Parent assessment of their child's Executive Function Skills in early fall and again in the Spring

## 4. INQUIRY QUESTION

Anecdotal and observational data from staff suggests that students struggle with emotional control (SEL), sustained attention, time directed persistence and time management. While this could be related to three years of inconsistency with schooling for students (some at school, some at home, some in a hybrid), the school staff feels the need to focus their attention on supporting students through increased resilience and perseverance.

Executive Functioning is a goal the staff would like to pursue.

Our focus on Executive Function will support all three of the Goals in the VSB Education Plan 2026.

Next year, teachers will be encouraged to form groups to look at our school goal from various perspectives. The questions being investigated are:

- What does Executive Function look like through the lens of my students and my classroom?
- How can I improve my practice in ways that help students increase and improve their Executive Function Skills?

The inquiry groups will meet regularly throughout the year and use their release time to share, plan, investigate, and adjust their individual and collective practice based on their learning.

The various groups will share their learning at Staff and SAC Meetings. We will spend Professional Development time during the year planning and investigating our questions. We will spend Professional Development time early in the year envisioning and describing the ideal Selkirk student leaving us after grade seven with a focus on Executive Function Skills. Then, towards the end of the year we will revisit that description to see what we have done and discuss what supports need to be in place in the following areas: resources, assessment, reporting, home/school communication, technology, and teaching practice.

These discussions will provide a guide to reasonable next steps as we continue to embrace change individually and as a group.

Our focus on Executive Function will support the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement goals of:

- Belonging: To increase Aboriginal students' sense of pride, self-esteem, belonging, place, acceptance and caring in their schools.
- 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

For reference: [https://www.drclarenceperkins.com/what-are-executive-functions?gclid=EAlalQobChMIpsbBqceT\\_gIV8RitBh0\\_BAulEAYASAAEgLIxfD\\_BwE](https://www.drclarenceperkins.com/what-are-executive-functions?gclid=EAlalQobChMIpsbBqceT_gIV8RitBh0_BAulEAYASAAEgLIxfD_BwE)

All our learners are on an individual journey of discovery and learning. Our focus on Executive Function will help create an environment where students can make the best of their opportunities. We expect that there will be gains in academic achievement, physical and mental well-being, belonging, and create greater equity of opportunity. This then will contribute to our collective process of reconciliation.

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## 5. WHAT IS OUR PLAN?

Year 1:

- Increase our understanding of Executive Function and identify areas requiring focus.

Collectively describe the Executive Functioning Skills of the ideal grade seven student leaving Selkirk for high school.

- Identify where we are doing a good job and where we can do better.

Year 2:

- Use some of the professional development opportunities to learn about, collaborate about best practice, and plan next steps.

Year 3:

- Re-examine where we have come together as a team in achieving our goals.
- Collect data from students to see what effects our efforts have had on student improvement.

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## 6. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED?

As our team gains a deeper understanding of Executive Functioning and begin to adjust our individual and collective practice to support student learning in this area, we will be able to bolster our in-school resources, invite guest speakers, plan together to identify next steps and schedule appropriate professional development.

Our learning will support student learning and development of Executive Functioning skills which in turn should result in higher achievement in all curricular areas and their development in the core competencies.

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## 7. HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

The staff will meet in their groups regularly to discuss their learning and progress towards our goals so that we can adjust and respond to developments as they present themselves. Groups investigating and meeting together will have opportunities to report out to the whole staff at staff meetings and on Professional Development Days. Hopefully, this will allow us to stay on a more meaningful path to our goal.

- Student self-assessment of Executive Function Skills in early fall and again in the Spring
- Teacher's assessment of student Executive Function Skills in early fall and again in the Spring
- Parent assessment of their child's Executive Function Skills in early fall and again in the Spring
- Gather data from FSA
- Gather data from Student Learning Survey
- Gather data from MDI
- Consider a focus group discussion for anecdotal input from students.

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## 8. HOW WILL WE SHARE THIS INFORMATION?

Making the community aware of and involved in our goal will help develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between Executive Functioning Skills and success at school and in life. We will inform the community about an opportunity for their children to participate in a UBC research project investigating the relationship between participating in music and balance activities and the development of Executive Functioning Skills. We will share at Staff and SAC Meetings, Parent Conferences, PAC Meetings, Professional Days, and in School Newsletters.



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

To support all learners with regards to this goal we have:

- Shared authentic life experiences with the Indigenous culture through family connections.
- Taught about residential schools.
- Recognized Orange Shirt Day virtually.
- Inuit units on the impact of immigration.
- Indigenous bracelet weaving.
- Gratitude circles and spirit animals.
- Focused on accepting differences.
- First Nations Art projects
- Lessons on First Nations values led by elders.
- Regularly discussing whiteness and eurocentrism and teaching critical thinking around our euro-centric world
- Stories (reading stories throughout the year, not just as a stand-alone unit) make references/connections to indigenous traditions/beliefs/ideas when teaching.
- First Nations science/social studies unit and six cedars (core competencies). Differences and similarities of first nation cultures compared to other cultures.
- Indigenous acknowledgement at all assemblies and events – IEW taught classes how to do this.
- Sharing stories about our own experiences with learning about indigenous culture.
- School resource purchases: strong nations kits, increased indigenous literature in the library.
- Posters in the school making First People's Principles visible.

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## 10. WHAT EVIDENCE OF UNDERSTANDING OF INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEWS AND KNOWLEDGE HAVE BEEN FOSTERED WITHIN YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY?

Indigenous artifacts, first peoples Principals of Learning, and Indigenous ways of Knowing and Being are prominently displayed around the school. It is reflected in student artwork throughout the year. Our Indigenous students move seamlessly through our school. We have supported a feeling of belonging over the years by offering support to them and their families through many of our programs.

We will continue to look for ways to imbed indigenous content, Principals of Learning, and ways of Knowing and Belonging into our lessons.

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

- Aboriginal acknowledgements at assemblies and as part of our morning messages.
- Aboriginal themed performances where appropriate.
- Guest speakers.
- Grade 7 Moving Forward Ceremony.
- Continue to Increase Aboriginal perspectives and ways of knowing in our lessons.
- Programming provided by our Indigenous Worker, Melissa Yellowknee.
- We will introduce the new resources, SEL Nature Kits, to teachers and use them to support this goal.
- We will acknowledge and teach about the negative effects of colonialization on Indigenous peoples.