

## 2022-2023 - Year 3 School Learning Plan

### 1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

Queen Alexandra School sits on the traditional and unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Coast Salish located at Broadway and Clark. Students feed into Vancouver Technical Secondary School. Our school receives supports from the Enhanced Services and Community Schools Teams. Our vision is to develop skills in students like critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration and communication skills through inquiry and tech integration/STEAM. QA is known for its innovative learning environment, flexible learning spaces, and the desire to authentically integrate Indigenous ways of knowing into the school. We foster students' creativity, self-expression and respect for diversity, and we make every effort to nurture students to develop into successful global citizens.

Queen Alexandra has approximately 145 students in Kindergarten to grade 7 and a vigorous Strong Start program. The school community is culturally diverse and representative of the city of Vancouver. 31% of our students are English Language Learners, 20% of our students have been identified as having Special Educational Needs and 42% of our students identify as Indigenous. There is considerable socio-economic diversity in the school community. The Parent Advisory Council is active in fundraising and supporting our school. The students, families and staff of Queen Alexandra Elementary School work together in an emotionally nurturing environment so all students can succeed academically and socially.

Queen Alexandra makes significant effort to provide diverse curricular and non-curricular opportunities for students. Sports and sportsmanship play a significant role at our school - we provide daily physical activity and encourage students to participate in our team and individual sports. During the 2022-2023 school year, the following sports teams were offered: soccer, volleyball, basketball, badminton and ultimate Frisbee.

Queen Alexandra has developed a number of diverse community partnerships which offer programming for our students during and after school. Partnerships include: Artists in Residence, Equal Play, Right to Play, York House and Stratford Hall Schools, Vancouver Arts Umbrella, Writers' Room/Writer's Exchange, and the Sarah McLaughlan School of Music (SOM). KidSafe, a long-time community partner, offers winter, spring and summer break programs and Cedar Cottage provides daily on site Out of School Care programming. Our school is grateful to our community partners and proud of each students' learning journey.

The focus of our school's literacy goal is to make gains in student reading by using direct and targeted reading instruction in all grades. The staff collaborated to form the following inquiry question: ***How does school-wide direct, targeted reading instruction positively impact primary and intermediate student achievement?*** Support for this inquiry is demonstrated by our continued collaborative commitment to implementing a school-wide balanced literacy program, regular and ongoing assessment, utilizing the Literacy Enhancement Teacher (LET), employing the Science of Reading and regular meetings to explicitly discuss "best practice" in teaching literacy.

Equal care is taken to address the emotional and social learning of the students through a variety of classroom programs. Queen Alexandra is a safe and caring school that places the highest priority on the needs of the students and their families. The QA staff has devoted professional development and individual learning time to educate themselves on the causes, effects and legacies of trauma and inter-generational trauma and how to best serve the needs of our students and the community at large. The QA staff is devoted to creating a respectful, caring and understanding school environment. Our code of conduct is to care for ourselves, others, our school and our community. Together, staff, families and the community strive to meet the learning and social emotional needs of each student.

We celebrate our community and learning with events and activities which include: school-wide themes with activities like Multi Cultural Day, Literacy Day and Orange Shirt Day, drumming and singing the Coast Salish Anthem at events and assemblies, daily “shout outs”, newsletters, school website, social media, PAC meetings, Friday Morning Family Coffee, and Winter and Spring Celebrations. Students’ work is displayed in the hallways and samples of their work is included in Learning Folders to share with families during student conferences. Queen Alexandra aligns our practice with the overarching goals as set out by the Vancouver School Board Education Plan. QA students see themselves and their communities in the curriculum. Numerous resources from the library to the playground display this inclusiveness. For example, books celebrating the Potlatch and other Indigenous cultures and traditions are abundant in our library. Meanwhile, our outside garden is an area to learn about “sense of place” to enhance their understanding of curricular knowledge.

Queen Alexandra ensures a school environment which is safe, caring, welcoming, and inclusive places for students and families. Each year we evaluate and renew plans for the improvement for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners and increase our knowledge, awareness, appreciation of, and respect for Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures, and contributions. Some actions and activities used include: hosting an Indigenous Day in June where families are invited to partake in teaching and learning sessions. We hang banners in recognition of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Two Spirited Peoples and march around the neighbourhood in September to raise awareness on Orange Shirt Day.

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## 2. WHAT DID WE SEE?

The strengths of our Queen Alexandra students vary among individuals, grade levels and groupings. The following strengths are most evident:

- **Academic Achievement:** Many learners excel in their academic pursuits and demonstrate strong skills in subjects such as mathematics, science, languages, and the humanities. QA’s Multi-Cultural Day is a prime example of this.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** Students often demonstrate a strong understanding and control of their emotions, as well as empathy and compassion for others.
- **Technological Proficiency:** In today’s digital age, many learners possess a high level of technological proficiency. They are adept at utilizing various digital tools, software, and platforms to enhance their learning experiences. Coding, Ozobots and maker-space opportunities happen regularly.
- **Creativity:** Students frequently exhibit creativity in various forms, including artistic expression, innovative thinking, and problem-solving.
- **Collaboration and Communication:** Learners often demonstrate strong teamwork and communication skills, allowing them to effectively collaborate with their peers, participate in group projects, and express their ideas and opinions clearly.
- **Resilience and Perseverance:** Many students exhibit resilience, which enable them to bounce back from setbacks, overcome challenges, and maintain their motivation and dedication to learning.

- **Curiosity and Eagerness to Learn:** Learners often display a natural curiosity and a genuine desire to acquire knowledge. They ask questions, seek information, and actively engage in the learning process.
- **Critical Thinking:** Learners often possess the ability to analyze information, solve problems, and think critically. They can evaluate different perspectives, draw logical conclusions, and make informed decisions.
- **Leadership Potential:** Some learners exhibit leadership qualities, including the ability to motivate and inspire others, take initiative, and assume responsibility. They take on leadership roles within student organizations like student leaders, and QA's extracurricular activities.

The needs of QA students varies, but those that are common include:

- Varying levels of academic readiness and a wide range of diverse learning needs that are supported with strategies like individualized instruction, differentiated learning strategies, and targeted support through interventions.
- Some of our students face socio-economic challenges and food insecurity. Meeting their basic needs, such as providing nutritious meals, and support with clothing and supplies, is crucial to ensure their well-being and readiness to learn.
- Barriers to success for some students which include oral language development delays, Self-Regulation and a need to feel safe with a sense of belonging.
- Due to recent global events, some of our students lack stamina and focus during structured activities (lessons and work time). Many of our students require individual attention and support.

The evidence from our school tells a story of a diverse range of learners who come from varied backgrounds and are finding their way through their education and schooling with academic, technological and social supports that are tailored to meet their individual needs. Strategic planning that offers student voice along with supports from the school and community at large prop up to support the needs of the students and build upon their successes.

Given that targeted reading interventions is a main school goal, some of the data reflects positive outcomes in this area. It's important to note that success in targeted reading instruction will vary among students, and progress should be assessed individually based on each student's starting point, goals, and specific needs. To that end, providing data that is quantitative generalized is not an authentic representation of the overall student growth in this curricular area. However, some of the data does support the goals intention to elevate students' literacy skills. Our school staff work in grade cohorts and meet regularly with the admin, resource team and learning enhancement teacher. These teams work to meet the needs of all our students. We constantly adjust our schedules and groups to ensure all needs are met. We participate in collaborative inquiries, check in daily with one another and identify next steps.

The students confidently voice their needs and wants. They can articulate their reading, writing and spelling needs. They ask for help when needed. We encourage growth-mindset and independence in our youngest students, as well as supporting one another.

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### 3. WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

Students have shown progress in their writing this year. In the beginning of the year, the primary assessments showed the lack of early literacy skills (letter recognition, letter-sound relationships, rhyming, blending, segmenting, syllables) as well as lack of attention and focus. This guided our literacy practice for the year. We complete regular assessment to guide our teaching.

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At the intermediate level, where children begin to refine their reading strategies and become more adept at using context clues, inferencing and predicting to understand the meaning behind the words on the page, the data represents a significant leap in the reading abilities of many QA students.

The overall growth in this area for the students in these grades is encouraging. Over 70 percent of QA intermediate students have met or exceed the expectations for their grade levels in reading at this point in the school year. At this stage, they develop the ability to identify main ideas, supporting details, and author's purpose, enabling them to engage with texts on a deeper level and draw connections between different ideas and perspectives. It is worth noting that while each child progresses at their own pace, teachers and parents/guardians play a vital role in fostering reading growth during this period. Providing engaging and diverse reading materials, encouraging regular reading habits, and facilitating discussions about the texts, educators and parents/guardians can help children further refine their reading abilities, expand their knowledge, and develop a lifelong love for learning through the power of reading.

We look forward to continued growth for our students in the upcoming years ahead.

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### 4. HOW HAVE WE SHARED?

Taking time to acknowledge success can be a powerful motivator. This can help to build momentum and keep everyone motivated and engaged in the process. Recognizing and acknowledging individual achievements or celebrating school-wide progress, QA shares students' learning using the following approaches:

- The Communicating Student Learning (CSL) tool is sent home 2 times per year. It is a combined formative and summative tool that evaluates the learning outcomes for each student.
- Students have learning folders in most classrooms to share with parents/guardians at conferences. These folders include work samples, photo documentation, portfolios, formal writing assessments, and journals to demonstrate the progression of student work over time.
- The school sends out monthly electronic newsletters and teachers send regular emails to parent/guardians to keep them updated on the progress of the students' programs and activities.

- Monthly PAC meetings and weekly informal parent coffee gatherings has been a great way to share with families and for them to ask questions.
- The “QA Daily News”, a 3-4 minute daily update reports on the day to day activities of the school includes student participation and student contributions is available for staff, students and families.

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## 5. WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?

Staff have agreed on one of the core competencies – communication – as a goal for the next 3 years. As outlined in the redesigned curriculum document, “Through their communication, students acquire, develop and transform ideas and information, and make connections with others to share their ideas, express their individuality, further their learning, and get things done” and “communicating encompasses the set of abilities that use. People used to impart the exchange of information, experiences and ideas to explore the world around them.”

To begin planning the school goal for the next 3 year phase, QA staff will embark on the following phases:

- Ongoing collaboration and consultation amongst staff, and the QA community, to determine which areas of growth in communication are of particular interest. Given the past 3 years have been focused on reading instruction and achievement, the desire to build on this goal is an admirable one; and one that will continue to be of primary focus. In sum, continuing the reading goal using the current success levels of our students as a baseline and move forward from there.
- Provide scheduled collaborative preparation time for all teachers and continue to timetable regular grade-alike meetings to celebrate student and classroom successes while building on those successes in planning for more innovative methods.
- Support all classroom teachers with Resource Team specialists, the Learning Enhancement Teacher, the school-based Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) and professional development opportunities for reading instruction (in school and in district) and lunch and learn sessions with local professional literacy and reading specialists.



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

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

Queen Alexandra Elementary School recognizes the importance of Indigenous Education and its role in supporting the success of our Indigenous students along with the rest of our school community. For our school growth plan, we considered the following attributes to support our Indigenous education goal. These qualities include evidence from multiple sources on who our learners are and the opportunities for everyone - students, staff and parent/guardians – to share their voices and take part in this learning goal.

**Promoting Cultural Understanding:** Our goal provided all students and staff with the opportunity to learn about Indigenous cultures, traditions, and perspectives. We promoted cultural understanding and respect in our community in the following ways:

**Teacher and Support staff took part in Professional Development opportunities including:**

- A "Cultural Canoe" tour with guide - interpretive paddles through Tsleil-Waututh waters in replica ocean-going canoes, similar to those used historically by the Tsleil-Waututh Nation with First Nation Guides who shared songs, legends and ancient village sites.
- Learning session with presenter, Cease Wyss, an Indigenous ethnobotanist who elaborated and taught the staff about traditional knowledge in remediating our relationship to land.
- QA Indigenous Day.
- Members of the Parent Community speaking in school about Indigenous cultures, traditions, and histories.

**Fostering Inclusion and Equity:** Queen Alexandra strives to create a learning environment that is welcoming and supportive for all students. Indigenous education promotes inclusion and equity by acknowledging and addressing the unique needs and experiences of Indigenous students. Some ways we have embedded this in our school's practice includes:

- Hobiye Field Trip
- Conversations and lessons with IEEW

**Encouraging Student Engagement:** Indigenous education provides students with opportunities for experiential learning and engagement. This encourages students to take an active role in their education and enhances their overall academic success.

- The Daily News, a short daily video production that has replaced the traditional daily announcements, includes a section where the school community bears witness to the accomplishments of our students who have displayed one or some of the 7 Sacred Teachings. Students receive a card that is deposited into a jar each time they are recognized for displaying one of the 7 traits and receive a "Shout Out" in the QA Daily News. These traits include-Humility, Courage, Respect, Wisdom, Love, Honesty, and Truth.
- Playing and singing the Coast Salish Anthem during school assemblies and other gatherings

**Developing Critical Thinking Skills:** Indigenous education often involves examining historical and contemporary issues facing Indigenous communities. This develops critical thinking skills and encourages students to think critically about social justice issues.

- Our Artist in Residence (AIRS) – Christine – collaborated with students to create a “shadow-play” (an ancient form of storytelling) and present a celebration of art and Indigenous narratives for our school community.
- Schoolwide Literacy Day – discussing Indigenous themes and exposing Indigenous literatures.

**Supporting Reconciliation:** A successful Indigenous education by acknowledging the past and working towards a better future for all Canadians. Examples of our school supporting Reconciliation include:

- Orange Shirt Day and Community Awareness March – arranged by staff and administration, this day includes all students and staff wearing orange and marching in our local community to raise awareness for and honour Indigenous children who went to Residential Schools in Canada.
- MMIW2SG is acknowledged with raising banners outside the school, lessons in school, assemblies and a public awareness campaign that includes staff and students singing outside to passing vehicles and pedestrians.

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

Sustaining and enhancing our understanding of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge requires a multifaceted approach that involves collaboration, education, and respectful engagement. We promote diversity of learning and ongoing reconciliation using the following strategies:

**Collaboration with Indigenous Families in our Community:** This collaborative approach ensures that their perspectives are taken into account and that their knowledge is valued and respected.

**Education and Awareness:** Incorporating Indigenous perspectives and knowledge into educational curricula at all levels helps foster understanding and respect for Indigenous cultures. This includes teaching about Indigenous history, languages, traditions, and contemporary issues. We invite Indigenous elders, knowledge keepers, and community members to share their experiences and wisdom.

**Networking and Knowledge Sharing:** Creating platforms for Indigenous families and community members to share their knowledge and experiences with each other and the wider world is essential. This has been facilitated at the school and community level with events that promote dialogue, exchange, and collaboration including Multi-Cultural Day activities, Indigenous Day at QA, Orange Shirt Day and Community Walk to acknowledge the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and 2 Spirited Individual and Girls in our community.

Queen Alexandra recognizes that Indigenous knowledge systems are diverse, complex, and deeply rooted in their respective cultures. By embracing a collaborative and respectful approach, we try to sustain and enhance our understanding of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.