

2022-2023 - Year 1 School Learning Plan

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

Queen Mary Elementary School is situated in the residential community of West Point Grey. The school is located within walking distance of many green spaces, beaches and community resources. The school's catchment also includes the Jericho Lands formally owned by the Department of National Defense and recently acquired by the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh nations. In 2016, Queen Mary completed a seismic upgrade which has enhanced learning opportunities for students through increased access to collaborative learning spaces and upgraded infrastructure.

Queen Mary supports the varied learning needs of approximately 315 students, including approximately 8% international students and 22% local students who speak English as a second language. Approximately 8% of our student population have identified special needs who are fully integrated into classes. Mental well-being is important at Queen Mary. Our school teaching teams work together with our school counsellor to integrate a variety of learning opportunities aimed at building on the skills and strategies students can use to become responsible and caring members of our school community. Our access to ample local green spaces support regular student connection to our natural environment, Indigenous education opportunities as well as a chance to be physically active outdoors. Our school grounds include a wide variety of spaces for both learning and play including a school garden where students build their understanding of indigenous plants, local ecological, food systems and sustainability. Students at Queen Mary have access to and regularly use a variety of different technology tools to support their learning. Multiple portable laptop and iPad carts ensure that all students have access to digital tools for learning and sharing their knowledge. Ozobots, Micro:bit, Spheros and soon Edison technologies provide opportunities for students to develop their understanding of computer programming and robotics. Music is also an important part of the Queen Mary experience for students. Students have opportunities throughout the year to learn and participate in small groups and whole school sing-a-longs to live music with school staff. Students also have access to a more formal music education program with our music specialist teacher. Musical learning opportunities now include choral music for primary students and beginning instruments such as recorders and ukelele for intermediate students.

Our parent community plays an active role supporting school programs. Parents volunteers offer their time to classroom activities, field trips and extra-curricular programs. They have also been active in a variety of school community functions and fund-raising initiatives to enrich the classroom and school facilities.

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

Throughout the 2022/23 school year, Queen Mary staff reviewed and considered a variety of sources for information about our students. Discussions with students as well as the shared observations of parents, support staff and teachers have all contributed to our anecdotal information collected as part of our School Learning Plan. In addition, we have considered assessment data (report card and Foundation Skills Assessment), Provincial survey data (Middle-years Development Instrument (MDI), Student Learning Surveys (SLS) and the Early-Years Development Index (EDI)), historical context, enrollment and anecdotal observations. Using these sources, we are able to share some of the observed strengths and the needs of our learners from 2022/23.

Strengths of our learners: Based on our survey of the data and observations, Queen Mary students are doing well in a number of areas. Academically, we see evidence that our students are being successful overall. There is also evidence to suggest our students have access to the assets they need to be successful, and many are thriving. Our students score well on measures such as optimism, self-esteem and happiness and score similarly to others in our District for health and well-being.

Needs of our learners: Some students seem to be having challenges with self-regulation and social problem solving. For example, many teachers have shared their frustration with the increases in the amounts of time spent supporting student's social conflicts following recess and lunch breaks and generally getting students back into their learning activities following transitions. Staff shared that some of our students were having more difficulty engaging at school and students expressed challenges with being or staying engaged in their learning.

While connections with adults seem to be improving, there are some indicators that our students are not feeling connected to one another. Many of our students are new to Queen Mary arriving within the last 2 years.

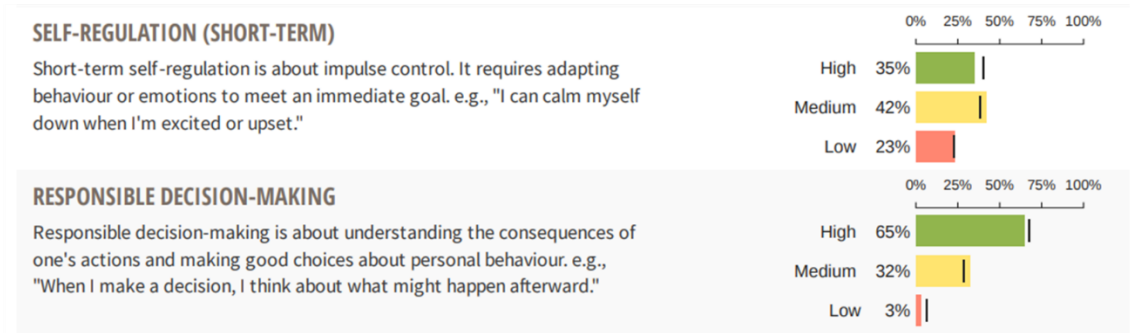
3. WHAT EVIDENCE SUPPORTS WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE LEARNERS?
(SCANNING)

Evidence of student strengths Data supports what we have observed about our student’s strengths. Despite many new faces at school, Queen Mary students were feeling more connected with adults in comparison to our 2021/22 data and current district averages. When shown a group picture of staff, most students recognize the staff, and many are able to name 90% of the group.

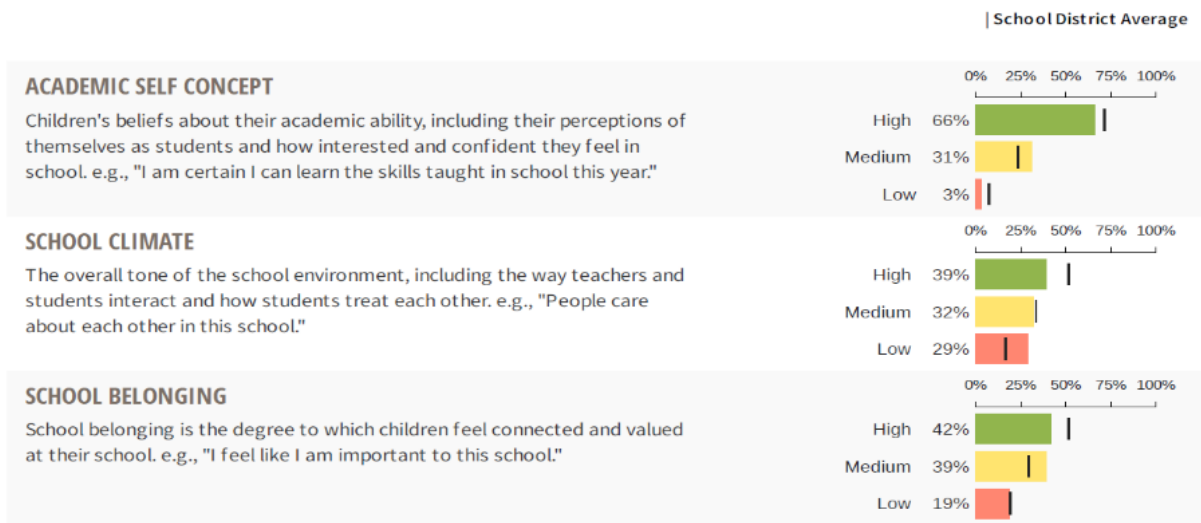
More than 75% of grade 4 and 7 students who participated in the FSA were “on track” as part of their on-line literacy and numeracy assessment and more than 85% were “on track” in their written assessment. Similarly, when looking at our report card data more than 75% of students were in the range of applying or extending for Language Arts and Numeracy.

Observations and Provincial data indicate that Queen Mary students have access to the resources and opportunities necessary for school success. For example, in the MDI report for 2022/23 for Queen Mary students demonstrated improvements over past years measures and our students scored higher than other students in the District on both the Well-Being Index (related to children’s physical health and social and emotional development) and Assets Index (the resources to promote children’s positive development and well-being).

Evidence supporting identified needs: Similar to adult observations, the MDI data for 2022/23 identifies self-regulation as a growth area, where only 35% of our students scored high for short term self-regulation and they lagged slightly behind District averages for responsible decision making.



The MDI report 2022/23 section on *School Experiences* draws a connection between school experiences and engagement, “when children have positive experiences at school, they are more likely to feel they belong withing their school, feel more motivated and engaged and have higher achievement”. The Queen Mary MDI School Experiences Data indicates that our students are below District average for their academic self-concept, school climate and school belonging.



As part of our Student Learning Survey for 2022/23, grade 4 and 7 students were both asked, “Do you feel welcome at your school?”. Grade 4 students answered, “most of the time” and “all of the time” more often than District average but grade 7 students scored below the District average.

We wondered if some of the reasons for these results may be linked to the recent experiences of Queen Mary students. The 2022/23 school year was the first year since March of 2020 where classroom and education environments in British Columbia were unmodified by health restrictions. Until this year, students currently in grade 3 and younger only experienced learning environments with limitations on collaborative activities (between students and other classes), modified attendance requirements at schools and changes in access to many social opportunities. Older students too had less opportunity for social learning compared to their early experiences at school.

Travel in and out of Canada also became less restrictive towards the end of 2022 and with this, Queen Mary experienced an increase in the number of new students enrolling. Looking more closely at the transiency of current students at Queen Mary, we observed that older grades had higher numbers of new students in comparison to students who had been with us since kindergarten. Of our grade 3 students, 48% started at QM in Kindergarten with 28% arriving after 2019. For our grade 7 students only 25% had been attending since Kindergarten and 29% arrived since 2019.

Grade	Total number	Started in K	Arrived in or before 2019 (2yrs+)	Arrived after 2019
7	51	25%	45%	29%
3	49	48%	22%	28%

Through discussions with our students, many shared observations about the challenges facing “new” kids when they try to make friends. Students who had been at Queen Mary for their whole school career could name many close friends but observed that new students would not have an easy time making connections.

Considering all the data collected, we wonder if feelings of disconnection expressed by students could be related to the newness of their relationships with each other, the school and school community as a whole. We also are interested in addressing the gaps in a student's sense of belonging, self-regulation, social problem solving and their engagement at school.

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

We want to focus on the Personal and Social Core Competencies of our students. We want to help them to become more connected to one another and to further develop their interpersonal and social skills. In doing so, we hope to improve our students' abilities to engage in their own learning as well as learn from and with one another more effectively.

A student's school experience is important, and we want to know what we can change to help students build better and stronger connections at school whether they have been at Queen Mary since kindergarten or if they have just arrived. As suggested in the MDI 2022/23 – "Understanding children's school experiences improves the ability to both create and cultivate school environments that are safe, caring and supportive."

As part of our focus, we acknowledge the VSB Education Plan for 2026 and will endeavor to improve student achievement, physical and mental well-being and belonging. We see the importance of this goal and want to ensure Queen Mary is a safe, caring, welcoming, and inclusive place for all students and families. Our focus also aligns with the goal of *belonging* as stated in the VSBs Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement: "To increase Aboriginal students' sense of pride, self-esteem, belonging, place, acceptance and caring in their schools."

5. INQUIRY QUESTION (FOCUSING)

How does focusing on the Personal/ Social Core Competencies improve student feelings of belonging and engagement in their learning?

6. WHAT IS OUR PLAN? (PLANNING)

The focus of our plan will be on building our students Personal and Social competencies through a variety of school wide and classroom initiatives such as:

- Increased opportunities for students to connect and build relationships with staff and each other earlier in the school year through mixed age, grade and division groupings.
- Returning to regular (monthly) student led school wide assemblies with themes connected to the school code of conduct and Personal and Social Responsibility
- School wide use of a self-reporting tool to support students in identifying their level engagement and their ability to employ strategies to increase their engagement.
- School wide focus on Personal and Social Core Competencies as part of student self-reflections
- Exploring and implementing school wide Social Emotional Learning initiatives to facilitate growth in self-regulation skills (e.g., TAPs program, Bystander, Zones of Regulation and Engagement goals)
- Increase connections and collaboration between classes within Professional Learning Communities including within POD events, nature walks, gardening, field studies, body breaks, hands-on projects, platooned activities across grades etc.
- Building on the existing student leadership programs to include grade targeted groups with focused training and new opportunities such as playground help, lunch monitors.
- Continue our connection and responsibility to our local environment through student led sustainability initiatives, community clean-ups, continued investment in classroom gardens, car-free weeks
- Continue to highlight First Peoples Principles of Learning with particular attention to their emphasis on the interconnections of our relationships with others and our world
- Use our school learning plan focus to shape our decisions about school event planning – taking care to select events that promote equity, connection and well-being.
- Tracking and seeking more information from students related to their levels of engagement in their learning activities and opportunities.
- Provide new and novel opportunities to connect new and existing students to the school and our greater community.

We propose that our three-year plan will be broken into three phases to match the three years of inquiry:

- 1) Year 1 – Building our understanding and familiarity with the Personal and Social Core Competencies and how these skills support belonging and connection.
- 2) Year 2 – School wide initiatives
- 3) Year 3 – School and grade/age related initiatives

7. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED? (PLANNING)

Our new area of learning will focus on building student skills related to the Personal and Social Core Competencies. We will support this new learning through:

- Continued connection with our parents to support and plan initiatives that welcome new families and provide opportunities for connections
- Continued PAC support/funding for school collaborative initiatives such as gardening, field studies and speakers/artists for assemblies
- Ongoing professional development related to student engagement, sense of belonging and Personal and Social Core competencies
- Collaboration time for age related groups and PODs
- On-going access to collaborative spaces within the school
- Resources to purchase learning materials to promote student engagement, connection, belonging and well-being.
- Opportunities for staff for professional learning through school based and/or District funding

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

- Monitoring student engagement in classrooms using the Engagement Scale for self-reflection
- Students will be able to identify and employ ways to engage in their learning
- Classes will be working together
- Continue to monitor/track changes in MDI and Student Learning survey data
- Anecdotal observations of staff and parents
- Students' self-reflections on their Personal and Social Core Competencies goals
- Monitoring/tracking changes in student experience through student surveys
- We will be responsive/make changes and/or try new strategies to support student connection, belonging and engagement to support positive change.

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

- Student self-reflections as part of Communicating Student Learning through written and/or informal means
- Integration into classroom curriculum
- PAC meetings
- Class communications
- School newsletters
- Open house presentations
- Slide shows at assemblies
- Trustee communications



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.

Our school is excited to enhance our collective understanding of Indigenous worldviews and knowledge. We move towards this collective goal using approaches that support students, staff and members of our community. We acknowledge and share our gratitude for the opportunity to attend our school site located on the shared territories of the Musquem, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

Students have had many opportunities to build on existing understanding as individuals, in classes and as part of their school community. We continue to add to our library of reading and resource materials. Our library book collection contains both fiction and non-fiction materials by Indigenous authors that are available for loan to students. In addition, we have a growing collection of books for borrow for students in a variety of Indigenous languages. Resources in-class sets and for professional use are also available

for our staff to borrow as part of our library collection. In addition, our primary team, with the use of PAC funds has been able to add books with Indigenous themes and/or by Indigenous authors to our home reading collections.

Within classrooms, students across grades had opportunities to expand their understanding through field study, social studies lessons and personal writing. For example, Gr 1 and 2 classes participated in guided nature walks and learned about the appearance and traditional uses of local indigenous plants. Grade 3 students explored and learned more about traditional fishing methods, read *Orca Chief* by Roy Henry Vickers and Robert Budd and used their new knowledge to write engaging non-fiction summaries of their knowledge. And Grade 5 and 6 students visited Grouse Mountain and spent time at the hiwas Feasthouse hearing stories and songs presented by Squamish elders. Many of our classes regularly use the custom of sharing and appreciation circles to acknowledge and welcome each other.

As a whole school we came together for assemblies that supported student's growing awareness of Indigenous knowledge, culture and our shared history. This year, we began using a horseshoe shape to assemble in classes to more resemble a sharing circle when we are together. The change acknowledges the need for us to come together as one and to see each other equally. In late September, students and staff spent the week leading up to the National Day of Reconciliation preparing for our Orange shirt day assembly through rich discussions about BC's history of residential schools and the inspiring story of Phyllis Webstad. Students then came together on September 29 to acknowledge this shared history but also to share our mutual commitment to reconciliation. During the assembly, many students inspired us with their own personal plans for reconciliation during an open mic time. The assembly closed with our Gr 6 and 7 classes singing and dancing us out of the gym to contemporary Indigenous hip hop artists Snotty Nose Rez Kids. In May, we invited Kung Jaadee to share her Haida stories with our school community. Staff and students practiced counting in Haida, heard traditional stories and were empowered by positive messages of love and the value of Raven's gifts.

Staff explored professional learning opportunities as a group during Professional Development Days, our Indigenous Focus day and as individuals throughout the year. During our September school based professional development day, we shared a school wide opportunity to participate together in a guided nature walk "Intention is the Beginning of Devotion" as presented by Lori Snyder. Her presentation focused on building our awareness and attention to Indigenous flora and fauna. She shared her knowledge about some of the traditional uses for these plants by First Nations and Inuit peoples. Following the walk, staff shared a meal together which highlighted a variety of traditional Indigenous foods as provided by Cedar Feast House. In November, our Indigenous Focus day gave us another opportunity to come together as a staff group to dig deeper into what it means to decolonialize education. Teachers also continued to make use of resources from last year's professional book club on Natural Curiosity. Throughout the year, we revisit First Peoples Principles of Learning regularly through communication and discussions.

As a community we ensure that all of our gatherings begin with an acknowledgement of the traditional territories where Queen Mary is located. At our September Open House, a scavenger hunt item required families to seek out posted maps and names of the territories. Throughout the year our land acknowledgements have varied at school assemblies and professional meetings. We strive to ensure our words of acknowledgement go beyond a series of words to include information referencing current affairs, shared experiences and appreciation of the gifts we have been given by living, working, learning and unlearning on the unceded and traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) & səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Queen Mary currently has three students who identify as Indigenous.

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

We see evidence that Indigenous worldviews and knowledge have been fostered in our students through their participation and engagement in the following:



As part of the student learning survey data from 2023, Grade 4 and 7 students both acknowledged learning about First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples and about local First Nations at similar levels to students in our district. We will continue to embed this learning throughout the year and hope to build on students understanding of the diversity of local Indigenous languages.

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



Our goals for building on our learning opportunities for students, staff and our community are to explore the following together: