

## 2022-2023 - Year 3 School Learning Plan

### 1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

Sir Wilfred Grenfell Elementary is situated in East Vancouver and has a population of approximately 370 students. The school is ethnically diverse with most students learning English as an additional language. The school integrates and supports children with a variety of learning needs and talents. To support the diverse learners in our community Sir Wilfred Grenfell has a wide range of programs that are available before, during and after school. In addition to the extra-curricular activities offered by staff, Grenfell students are able to access the programs offered by the Windermere Family of Schools Community Link Team (including Arts Umbrella after school) and Collingwood Neighborhood House.

Our Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) supports the school through fundraisers and by organizing various school community events (for example: School Beautification Project, Walkathon etc.). The PAC has been supporting the school by funding various projects such as Indigenous drum making and subsidizes school purchases such as laptops and sports equipment. Grenfell School is proud to work in conjunction with our community partners to offer programs such as on-site childcare (before and after school) and Strong Start for preschool age children. The Grenfell staff is committed to collaborative planning, goal setting and assessment in an ongoing effort to work together and share our knowledge and resources in order to create a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment in which every learner can reach their full potential.

Prior to my arrival at Grenfell, the staff decided to improve students' writing as a school goal. They have started to explore ways to communicate student successes through writing and how to inform parents as well as the wider community of their achievements.

This year is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year that staff are working on this goal. Our focus has shifted from personal writing to non-fiction writing this year. In the context of supporting students to excel in non-fiction, we are looking at this inquiry question: What new learning might help me improve student non-fiction writing?

Teachers' Professional Development activities and professional learning were organized around this inquiry question.

We tie in celebration and events in writing throughout the year. For example, in September, we worked on two themes: Residential Schools and Terry Fox. In November, students explored the theme "peace" in poetry. In February, students wrote about kindness and friendship. In April, students wrote science reports to celebrate Earth Day.

Students' work is displayed in the hallway. Samples of work are included in their Learning Folders to share with families at parent-teacher conferences.

## 2. WHAT DID WE SEE?

The strength of our school lies in the community. Our families and staff are heavily invested in the neighborhood where neighbors have strong ties and families help each other. The parents are connected with each other and adults care about the success of all learners.

A real strength our learners can draw from is that education and school are highly valued among our families. Many of our parents are new to the country and have moved for a better education for their child(ren). Parents look toward the school, teachers and support staff for help and guidance in raising their children to adulthood. Parent conferences – whether they be regularly scheduled or ad hoc, are productive and valued by both the school and the families. Grenfell students are the benefactors of this cooperation. Grenfell is also a welcoming place for new Canadians. We have many students who have arrived from other countries. Although learning the language may be a challenge for the first few years, the community is very kind and embraces its newer members.

Student voices are encouraged and fostered at the school. Students use post-it notes to share thoughts and opinions on topics from reaction to social situations to kindness messages.

Throughout the school year, students are given opportunities to work on passion projects. They identify a topic that they love and would like to learn more about. Students' passion projects are shared with families and are proudly displayed at the school.

A group of Grade 6 and 7 students were involved in Urban Explorers, a project sponsored by the City of Vancouver. Students had an opportunity to explore different playgrounds and parks in the downtown core. They then built a model of their own version of the ideal playground and presented their models in the final showcase at Creekside Community Center.

We have an active Student Council that includes Primary and Intermediate students. They meet regularly to plan fun celebrations at school. They also coordinate fundraising activities to support the local charities such as the Food Bank. They write student announcements and scripts to promote their activities.

Our students love playing outside. In response, a group of teachers formed an Outdoor Education Committee to look for ways for students to enhance their learning through outdoor activities. Students plant all year round and work in the garden. They write about nature and gardening. They draw and sketch about plants and insects.

For the September Professional Development Day, all teachers went to VanDusen Gardens to learn about outdoor education and how to incorporate outdoor learning into writing (nature journaling).

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### 3. WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

- We have continued to work on strengthening our students' writing ability. We ran "cold write" twice a year. Teachers have worked with their grade group colleagues to mark student writing together. This allowed conversations among colleagues to support students. Resource Teachers worked with Classroom teachers to implement writing support for students.
- All Intermediate students were given opportunities to work on persuasive writing in class. Some classes made short TV commercial skits by "selling" inventive products to expand their skills to persuade their audience to buy their products. Videos were shared with parents.
- Students participated in the Orange Shirt Day project by writing about the residential school system. Students are encouraged to share their thoughts by posting messages shared with residential school survivors.
- Primary teachers engaged their students in writing activities around Adrienne Gear's *Writing Power* and *Powerful Poetry*. Students are encouraged to write with a purpose. One of the favorite activities this year was to make Valentine cards and deliver them to neighbours around the school. The response was very positive. Neighbours phoned and emailed the school thanking the students for their lovely messages.
- To support student learning, staff have actively engaged in professional development and book clubs. Staff have worked as a team to invite Adrienne Gear to work on non-fiction writing. The Pro-D Committee purchased *6 Ways to Bring the Science of Reading into the Balanced Literacy Classroom* by Jan Miller Burkins and Kari Yates. Teachers formed an after school book club to study the books.
- Our teachers continue to learn by forming small discussion groups. They make good use of the Professional Development support by purchasing professional books. This year, three copies of *The Next Step Forward in Reading Intervention* and three copies of *The Next Step Forward in Guided Reading* by Jan Richardson and Ellen Lweis were purchased.

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### 4. HOW HAVE WE SHARED?

- We hold monthly assemblies to celebrate successes with students and staff. The school sends out monthly electronic newsletters to inform parents of activities at school and student successes (samples of writing). Most teachers send out monthly emails to parents to keep them informed of classroom programs and activities. PAC meetings have been a great way to share information with parents. The principal does a report at every PAC meeting to share updates and news with parents. There is a Q & A session at every PAC meeting for parents to ask questions.
- Students have learning folders in the classroom to share with parents at conferences. Folders are sent home at the end of each term.
- Students have been learning to make movies to share their learning with families. Younger students use *myBlueprint* to share learning.
- As mentioned in the previous question, students made valentine cards and wrote kindness messages and delivered their cards door to door in the school community.

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## 5. WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?

When assessing the goals identified by students and families through conferencing, we see the need to continue to support our students to improve writing and communication skills. Staff have agreed on one of the Core Competencies - Communication - as a goal for the next three years. As outlined in the Redesigned Curriculum document, “Communicating encompasses the set of abilities that people use to impart and exchange information, experiences, and ideas; to explore the world around them”. We would like to support students’ work to articulate thoughts and express ideas effectively using oral, written, visual and non-verbal communication skills, as well as listening skills to gain understanding.

We would like to have two focuses when supporting student communication. The first focus is to provide a safe and supported environment where students can respond meaningfully when communicating with adults and peers. The second focus is to support students to foster their ability to deliver information in speaking and in writing.

To reach these two focuses, we will support students’ Social Emotional Development and skills in writing and oral presentation. The latest focus would allow us to continue to support the current school goal which is Writing.



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

Grenfell has Indigenous students in primary and intermediate grades. The students come from various backgrounds with some Lower Mainland Nations as well as other BC and Canadian Nations represented. Our Indigenous students, as a group, are representative of the general student population in terms of academic achievement – with some requiring help and other very successful in their studies. Our Indigenous Enhancement Worker is available to work with our Indigenous students and families, as well as with teachers and classes once a week.

Each Indigenous student has a profile in the Aboriginal Success Plan. We hold meetings (2 to 3 times a year) to track their progress and discuss plans to support those students. We will continue to involve our IEW to work with our students on cultural projects and cultural understanding to foster appreciation and understanding of Indigenous cultures.

We have invited two Indigenous story tellers (Dallas Yellowknee and Kung Jaadee) to the school to share Indigenous stories with all students.

At the school, we strive to connect with our Indigenous parents and caregivers. School staff reach out to Indigenous families on a regular basis. Our Indigenous families feel that they belong at the school. They reach out to the school to discuss student learning and seek support from the school when they need it.

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

Throughout this year, students were given learning opportunities to participate in the following:

- Indigenous acknowledgement at the beginning of all assemblies, meetings and daily announcements
- Bannock making in the lunchroom with Indigenous Education Enhancement Worker Melissa Yellowknee
- Making ribbon skirts with our IEW
- Oral learning of Indigenous stories/legends. Joyful Literacy workshops for students (online) with Indigenous authors and artists giving art lessons in drawing with Indigenous shapes, themes and designs. Highlight Indigenous perspectives and contributions in all subject areas.
- Art: long house, totem pole, canoe, moccasin shoes, button blanket, ribbon skirts, Indigenous inspired salmon art.
- Feature an indigenous person/story in school assemblies
- Seven sacred teachings- animal mosaic
- Discussion of Indigenous tales and their use in connecting people to the land
- Drum making project with Indigenous teacher Megan Hanna. Students participated in a ceremony to wake up the drums and gift the drums to the school
- Start a school assembly by drumming along the Coast Salish anthem
- Indigenous French language books, videos
- Research and completion of projects on Canadian Indigenous Groups
- Study of Pacific Northwest Indigenous culture and the Inuit peoples
- Orange Shirt Day Assembly
- Learning of the residential school system. Some classes constructed a school house, researched and wrote about the Residential Schools and the impact on the Indigenous communities

What will we continue to do in this area:

- To continue our Reconciliation journey, staff are encouraged to continue to learn more about Indigenous history and the Residential School System, identify and acknowledge the Territory where we live.
- The staff will continue to look for opportunities to enhance students learning and appreciation of Indigenous cultures and contributions. Many of the activities from this year will be repeated, and new activities and opportunities will be added. As a staff we will share amongst ourselves successes and opportunities that went well so that more students from different classes may access them.
- The staff will continue to work on increasing their communication with our Indigenous families. Staff will continue to increase their learning of Indigenous cultures and ways of learning as well as incorporating First Nations Principles of Learning in their teaching.