

2022-2023 - Year 1 School Learning Plan

1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY

Florence Nightingale Elementary School is located on Guelph Street on the corner of 12th Avenue, one block East of Kingsway. We have 260 students organized into twelve enrolling classes.

Some of the unique and positive characteristics of our school are:

The amazing school community - Nightingale promotes a safe, caring, and respectful climate within a neighborhood rich in multicultural diversity. Families report twenty-one different languages spoken at home and students come from sixteen different countries of origin. Seventy-nine percent of families report that English is their first language.

Nightingale is actively involved in the Collaborative Early Literacy Intervention, which targets support for our early learners in Kindergarten and Grade One by providing one-to-one support through Reading Recovery, small group instruction and strong classroom practice. We are also involved in the Leveled Literacy Intervention

Relationships with Community Partners - We work closely with our many and various community partners such as: Artists who support our Artist-in-Residence Studio Program, City of Vancouver Active Transportation, and Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House. Our students have access to after school care programs based on the availability, such as Mount Pleasant Before & After School Care, KIVAN Boys and Girls Club, This World's Ours, and Kid Safe, which runs during the winter, spring, and summer breaks. We host a Strong Start Centre and run a Welcome to Kindergarten event in the spring.

This year we have also started our after-school sports activities acknowledging that this is a particularly important part of the school day for children with respect to physical activity, belonging and sense of community and team spirit.

Our parents - We have an incredibly supportive and involved Parent Advisory Council (PAC). They organize school wide events such as our Hawks Night, Coffee Mornings, and fundraise to contribute to programs like our school garden, our wonderful Artist in Residence Studio (AIRS) Program and music program.

Our school garden – this is a place where everyone is welcome and encouraged to spend time. With the support of teachers and support staff, it is one of the favourite areas on the school grounds for many of our students.

Over the past number of years, the Nightingale community has worked towards helping students develop self-regulation skills and foster mental well-being. This is still an area that we will continue to work towards on a regular basis; however, we are going to shift one of our school goals to a new direction.

While many of the positives above make Nightingale a wonderful school, we know there is still work to be done to help our children become the best that they can be in many areas. Based on our daily observations, report cards, the student learning survey, and information gathered from the staff such as classroom assessments we identified that one of the major areas of need in our school is to help students improve in their writing skills while continuing to further our Indigenous goal. Our three-year inquiry goals are:

Inquiry Question #1: What strategies are successful in supporting writing and promoting the overall development and movement along the learning continuum for all students?

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

In general, Nightingale learners are kind, generous, friendly, helpful and are proud of their school community. When you walk into the school there is a feeling that you are welcome. Staff observations and discussions always recognize our older students who ask how they can help, from lending a helping hand to the adults in the school to helping out younger children and peers on the playground. While there will always be “missteps” as children learn to get along and work together in a school community, they are willing to problem solve with others and make amends for mistakes that have happened. The work that has been done over the past few years shows that there has been much progress in this area. Students know that the adults are there to help and support them and will lean on the adults when they need it but are also becoming more independent and trying to solve minor problems independently using strategies that have been and continue to be taught.

What staff have noticed over the past couple of years is that, during the most challenging times of the pandemic, a gap widened with respect to children’s progression along the writing learning continuum. With time out of school and on-line learning, to extended absences, the area that staff noticed was the most impacted was writing. During class reviews at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year, the common theme that teachers discussed was how many students were having difficulty with a variety of aspects of writing (fiction, non, fiction, sentence structure, syntax, expressive writing, spelling, etc.). They determined that we need to take a closer look at this aspect of the curriculum to determine how we can better support our learners.

During staff meetings staff discussed strengths and areas for growth and determined that they would work towards gaining quantitative data to support their observations as follows:

Some teachers chose to administer a “three day write” to document baseline skills, then administer again once or twice throughout the year to see progress that is made after specific writing skills/interventions have been implemented.

Teachers determined the needs in their classes with respect to the form of writing they would each focus on.

This resulted in a variety as follows:

Writing to communicate ideas.

Personal writing

Creative writing

Those who chose to focus on content writing decided they would assess the writing their students are doing on a daily basis for their curricular writing. Baseline information will be gathered in the fall and then again information will be gathered in the spring when specific writing skills/interventions have been implemented.

The tool for assessing writing that was chosen by staff is the writing performance standards, the exception being Kindergarten where we will be using the kindergarten protocol.

The Kindergarten Protocol is a set of assessments and observations designed to identify children who may be at risk of experiencing difficulties in literacy during their early years of schooling. This protocol is typically administered in January of the kindergarten year and involves a range of tasks, such as identifying letters and sounds, blending sounds, rhyming, etc. The results can help teachers to identify children who may need to receive additional support and provide targeted instruction to address their individual needs.

Student's learning will be measured along the learning continuum for each individual child rather than for grades or classes as a whole – this enables staff to look at individuals rather than groups which may change based on students leaving the school or newly-arrived students.

Staff met in grade groups and as a whole to determine “plans of action.”

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

Initially during our scanning time, we used qualitative data in the forms of:

- Discussions from School Based Team
- Class review patterns in the fall
- Teachers' overall anecdotal comments about how children are doing throughout the school.

We also used specific quantitative data to support what we know about our learners in the forms of

- Learning surveys (student voice/parent voice)
- MDI (student voice)
- Class discussions/circle time/interviews/conferences/student self-reflections
- Performance standard scale ratings

Students were asked:

Why do we write?

To communicate, to express yourself and share learning.

To remember important things (notes, lists), to memorialize.

To learn new things, even when we make mistakes.

For freedom of expressions/creativity.

Because it makes you think and helps us understand.

Because it makes us happy and feel good when you spell something right.

To entertain others, for secret messages.

To vent/share feelings, connect with others/people you love, have fun.

Because you need to know how when you are older, to make money if we sell books, for our jobs.

What do they like about writing or what do they think they are “good at” in writing?

Poetry, creative writing.

Journals, reports, research.

Learning to spell correctly, with patterns and rules.

I can use the words around the classroom to help me.

I like drawing pictures to go with my story.

That is challenging in writing?

It is tiring and needs a lot of time and focus.

It is harder than just talking.

Creative writing is difficult because you have to think of an idea.

Reports are hard because you have to paraphrase instead of just copying information.

I need suggestions and help from an adult because it is hard.

Essays are hard.

I prefer typing to writing because writing is hard.

Answering questions is hard.

Spelling and punctuation are hard, understanding “strange” spelling and making words with the rules is hard.

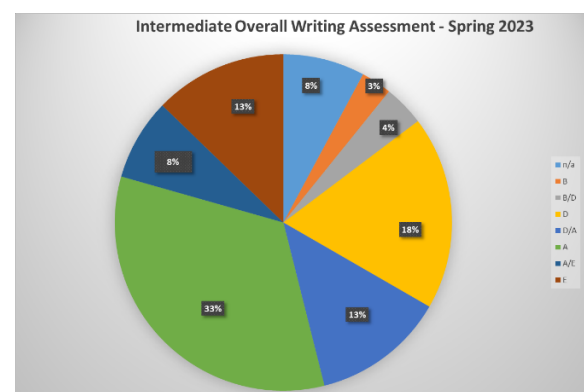
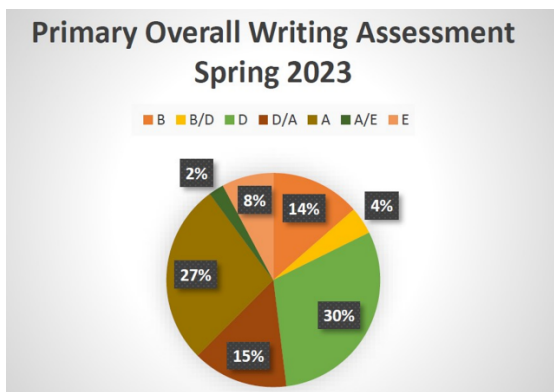
Making sentences is hard, changing thinking into sentences is hard.

If there is a lot to write it takes a long time to put all the ideas down.

- The above comments were repeated in various forms by a variety of children. The more common threads were producing ideas and conventions of print being most challenging. The student learning survey results showed the majority of grade 4 and 7 children believed they were getting better at writing. When asked which was more difficult, creative, or content writing, the responses were split almost 50/50 with difficulty level. Very few children simply wrote for pleasure.

The Kindergarten protocol gave us an indication of the students who were at risk of having difficulties in literacy and this protocol determines a specific plan of action for early intervention for the children most at risk.

Using the performance standards for students in grades one to seven the data showed that approximately 50% of our students were still at the beginning, beginning/developing, developing, or developing/applying stages of their learning in the spring. This was consistent overall **and**, when broken down, within each of the four aspects of writing for the primary students and within the five aspects of writing for the intermediate students. Intermediate students that were well below grade level expectations (n/a in the chart) are working on individual learning plans. As can be expected, intermediate students were slightly further along the learning continuum overall than primary students based on scaffolding their learning throughout the years.



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

Based on the evidence, our focus is going to be the curricular competency of writing for all learners, meeting them at their current level of learning. The big ideas the writing goal will connect with are understanding that language and text can be a source of creativity and joy and developing a growing understanding of how language works to allow it to be used purposefully. We will also endeavor to have students “understand the validity of First Peoples oral tradition in that they should recognize the similarities and differences between oral and written work, but that oral tradition has the same validity for First Peoples and written texts do for other cultures” (BC Curriculum). Each classroom teacher will determine if the focus will be creative, or content writing based on the baseline data and what they see as a specific need for their students. This focus clearly connects to Goal 1 of the Education Plan (improving literacy). When children are succeeding academically, it also impacts their mental well-being. As children move through the grades, they become more aware of their successes and their challenges.

With a focus on a writing goal, we can support Indigenous students and connect to the Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreement in a number of ways. First, setting a specific writing goal can help students develop the skills they need to communicate effectively in written form, which is a key component of academic success. This is particularly important for Indigenous students who may have experienced historical and ongoing marginalization within the education system. By providing targeted support for writing, we can help Indigenous students build confidence and agency in their learning.

Additionally, a focus on writing can be a way to connect students with their cultural heritage and support their identity development. In The Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreement is a commitment by the district to collaborate with Indigenous communities to create a learning environment that is inclusive and culturally responsive. Writing is an important way to express cultural identity and can be a powerful tool for self-expression and reflection. By incorporating Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing into the writing curriculum, we can support Indigenous students in connecting with their heritage and developing a strong sense of self.

Overall, a focus on a writing goal can be an important way to support Indigenous students and align with the goals of the Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreement. By providing targeted support for writing skills and incorporating Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum, we can create a learning environment that is more inclusive, culturally responsive, and empowering for all students.

5. INQUIRY QUESTION

As outlined above, what staff have noticed over the past couple of years is that, during the most difficult times of the pandemic, a gap widened with respect to children’s progression along the writing learning continuum. With time out of school and on-line learning, to extended absences, the area that staff saw as the most impacted was writing. During class reviews at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year, the common theme that teachers discussed was how many students were having difficulty with a variety of aspects of writing (fiction, non, fiction, sentence structure, syntax, expressive writing, spelling, etc.). The scanning that we did at the school throughout this year validated these initial observations. Staff

determined that we need to take a closer look at this aspect of the curriculum to determine how we can better support our learners.

The question for our school goal that we are now asking ourselves is:

What strategies are successful in supporting writing and promoting the overall development and movement along the learning continuum for all students?

6. WHAT IS OUR PLAN?

To support our plan, we will be focusing our attention on writing and will use some of our professional development time to improve our practice. We will meet regularly to discuss student progress and writing strategies that are working or need adjusting.

Year One (2022/23) – assessing writing to notice areas of strength, need, ways to support learning.

Year Two (2023/24) – implement strategies (determined in the fall of 2023) to support learning.

- Determine strategies and fall assessment (September/October)
- Implement Strategies (November-March with Interim assessment in December)
- Reassess (March)

Year Three (2024/25) – continue to implement strategies and adjust as needed based on ongoing assessment and student progress along the writing learning continuum. Determine if we will continue our goal into the following year or begin a new goal.

7. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED?

Professional development – some time will be spent on writing.

Staff meetings – we will continue to focus our discussions on the goal of writing.

Grade Group meetings – primary and intermediate teachers will work together to discuss progress, strategies, and ways to move forward with this goal

8. HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

We will be using on-going and summative assessments. Our baseline data and progress will be tracked using the performance standards for writing (Grade 1-7) and the kindergarten protocol. We will also include student voice based on class discussions and conferences/interviews to determine if student attitudes towards writing are changing. If we see no changes, we will meet in grade groups and as a staff to discuss adjustments that may need to be made to further student progress.

9. HOW WILL WE SHARE THIS INFORMATION?

Information will be shared via PAC meeting updates, newsletters, and report card and interim reporting to parents.



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?

Making historical connections and importance of Indigenous peoples that live in Canada, development of the province of B.C., discussing and creating a personal land acknowledgment, lessons on reconciliation and resilience, Indigenous connections to the land and sustainability.

Staff are learning to slow things down and not rush through learning, so children understand things before having to “move on” using Indigenous Principles of Learning.

Exploring the history of Indigenous nations in Canada and how they have intersected with “Canada’s” history. Supporting the well-being of self of the students we work with.

Studying History, First Peoples Principles implemented throughout curriculum.

Using picture books, videos, creating oral language stories, sharing, outdoor math using found materials, gardening, all of which led to further discussions.

Some classes use the Medicine Wheel model, which is referred to as the Cycle of Life. It is used as a natural organizer, to tie in many of our learning concepts such as weather/seasons, stages of life, plants, animals, people.

The Talking Circle is used by some as a way to extend the practice of working within the Circle to learn respectful communication, problem solving and cooperation.

Announcements have been made around such issues as the Doctrine of Discovery and Red Dress Day.

In monthly staff advisory committee meetings, we always visit the “Calls to Action” and read and/or discuss one of the ninety-four action items.

When teaching about history and globalization, discussion is brought back to how things did not “start” with colonization but were happening long before with First Peoples.

One class worked with Fisheries and Oceans on the Salmon Enhancement Program and made connections to Indigenous practices and history.

- Working with our Indigenous Education Enhancement Worker on a variety of learning activities including inviting a knowledge keeper into the school to work with some classes.

Enacting reconciliation is an ongoing process at Nightingale, some of the activities above clearly outline our journey as we create a safe, inclusive, and culturally responsive learning environment where Indigenous students feel valued and respected. This is an ongoing process that requires our continuous learning, open dialogue, and commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable society. We believe that our school plays a crucial role in the process of addressing the historical injustices and promoting meaningful relationships.

11. What Evidence of understanding of indigenous worldviews and knowledge have been fostered within your school community? Staff believe that students are understanding and eager to learn more about Canada's history and the injustices that have (and continue) to happen due to colonization. Children as young as Kindergarten are able to understand injustices regarding missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people. They can engage in discussions around unmarked graves found in residential schools, and they can participate in discussions around the Doctrine of Discovery. When discussed in developmentally appropriate ways, children easily see (oftentimes more easily than adults) that things must change if we are to enact reconciliation.

At Nightingale, we have done this through curriculum integration. Integrating Indigenous perspectives, histories, and worldviews into the curriculum in different subject areas. We have invited an Indigenous knowledge keeper into the school to work with classes and have worked with our Indigenous Education Enhancement Worker who is at our school once a week to help support and lead our work.

We are incorporating more Indigenous literature and resources in our work to expose student to Indigenous perspective. This practice can also help challenge stereotypes and provide a more accurate representative of Indigenous cultures than those that have been portrayed in literature in the past.

Many classes incorporate land-based learning into their teaching. Connecting students with the land and its significance in Indigenous cultures can deepen their understanding. Outdoor education and field trips that focus on Indigenous history, traditional practices and land stewardship are being incorporated into their teaching.

The learning survey that students in grades 4 and 7 complete showed that the majority of the students recognized that they were learning about Indigenous peoples and local First Nations on a regular basis.

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

Staff will continue to use the activities above to move forward in enhancing our understanding of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge. In the 2023 – 2024 school year, we also plan on the following:

- Working on creating unique Indigenous acknowledgements for events, gatherings, meetings, etc. Our Indigenous Education Enhancement Worker will support us in this work.
- While we did invite an Indigenous knowledge keeper to our school in the 2022 – 2023 school year, we would like to be able to invite more Indigenous people from our community into the school to share their knowledge, experiences, stories with our students.
- Staff are interested in professional development to help support their learning and we hope to be able to increase these opportunities in the coming years.
- We have also committed some funding to support our efforts and enable us to provide honorariums for guest speakers and to build our school-based resources.
- We will continue to have ongoing dialogue as a staff to hold ourselves accountable to the Calls to Action and reflect on our journey towards reconciliation.