

2022-2023 - Year 1 School Learning Plan

1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY

École Laura Secord Elementary is one of few schools in Vancouver to provide three different learning tracks for students; we offer early French Immersion from kindergarten through grade 7, late French Immersion for grades 6 and 7 and English from kindergarten through grade 7. For the 2022-2023 school year, 315 students are enrolled in the Early French Immersion program, 58 in the Late French Immersion program and 279 are enrolled in the English program. 58 of our students are designated English Language Learners (ELL) and we have 44 students with Ministry of Education designations. Our student population is stable and we do not see a significant number of students moving in or out of our school community each year. We take pride in the diversity at our school; students speak a variety of languages at home including but not limited to: English, French, Hindi, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, Cantonese and Mandarin. Our school is large, both physically and in population. We have 28 divisions, 67 staff members and 665 students. The original Laura Secord Elementary was built in 1913. In 2010, the school underwent seismic upgrading. During seismic upgrading staff, students and parents provided insight and input in designing our school's playscape and we have a dynamic playground, a running track and a field composed of both grass and turf. Geographically our school is located on the east side of Vancouver in a culturally rich and diverse community near Commercial Drive. École Laura Secord has an annex located at 3rd and Victoria Drive. Queen Victoria Annex has a dynamic population of 110 students in Kindergarten through grade 5. We have siblings attending both schools. We are a few blocks north of Trout Lake park and the Central Valley Greenway and we enjoy the large green space for our Fitness Fridays and we use the playground, lake and park for nature, activity and art-based field studies, athletics and class walks. The Broadway/Commercial Skytrain station is two blocks away and we have easy access to bus routes and walking routes. We offer many field studies in our community throughout the year and have close relationships with both Vancouver Technical Secondary School as well as the local bowling alley, ice skating rink and movie theatre. We created pollinator gardens and vegetable gardens on our school grounds to celebrate Earth Day and we value the green space at our school.

In-school programming for the 2022-2023 school year included curling, First Nations dancing, and the Maple Man. School-wide, our students experienced learning from experts on a variety of topics including: felting, knitting, embroidery, coding, choir, sewing, woodworking, and soap-making. UBC engineers led a Geering Up professional development workshop for teachers and subsequent workshops for primary classes. Intermediate students led assemblies for Earth Day and Pink Shirt Day to promote inclusion and climate action. Reel-to-Reel taught stop-motion animation workshops were held for several classes and a naturalist helped students learn about local bird identification. Every second year we bring in Saleema Noon to support the sexual health education curriculum.

Our students shine in experiential learning situations. This year's field studies included athletic, artistic and academic opportunities. Classes went ice skating, bowling, hiking, camping and dancing. Some classes went to a farm as part of Fresh Roots. We explored Vancouver with students learning at The Vancouver Police Museum, the Port of Vancouver, Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver Art Gallery, Museum of Vancouver, Macmillan Space Science Centre, Terra Nova, Children's Festival and the Carousel Theatre. Several teachers took their classes to Van Dusen Gardens to experience Indigenous teachings about local plant use, the medicine wheel and deepening our understanding of the Aboriginal Acknowledgement. Students in grades 4-6 appreciated learning about Indigenous plants as food and medicine at Trout Lake while intermediate classes had weekly exposure to nature through regular walks to Trout Lake, including using Outdoor Ed learning resource carts and an Orienteering workshop for staff at Trout Lake.

This year saw us thriving in our Applied Design, Skills and Technology (ADST) experiences; our students are demonstrating excellent progress in using the design process as part of ADST. A highlight was the December marketplace where each of our grade 6 and 7 students started their own business, conducted market research, designed a prototype, made a product then sold their wares at a marketplace open to all students, staff and parents. We are extremely proud of their effort and success. Each teacher and learning space now has a projector and we have added 20 recycled Mac Books and 5 iPads to our technology resource to promote use of technology in classrooms. We have also offered Tech support workshops to staff on Professional Development days. Across the grades, ADST projects included stop motion animation, personal interest projects, First Nations beading workshop, building the memorial garden, knitting, sewing, felting, weaving, designing, coding using Wobblebots, building and testing bridges, jewelry making, installing planter boxes, making soap and baking Bannock and other foods throughout the year. Several classes regularly engage in experiential learning opportunities through outdoor education and sustainability initiatives.

Several teachers worked together on a student-led initiative, alongside our Indigenous Enhancement Worker, to design a memorial garden to honour survivors and victims of residential schools. Funding was provided by PAC, alongside donations from the school community.

Our expert fine arts teachers enrich our students' lives with the opportunities they provide in visual arts, music creation and dance. We are committed to providing a diverse selection of artistic and cultural experiences; this year students enjoyed live theatre from Dufflebag Theatre, music with Will Stroet, body percussion with Rhythm Resource, a dynamic presentation from Ache Capoeira. All French and English classes enjoyed a French Canadian cultural presentation from Maple Man.

Laura Secord Elementary works with several partners in the community to support our students. The Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House operates a before and after school care center in the school. Many students attend nearby Frog Hollow before and after school care, City Reach and Saplings after school care as well. Gracie Barra also provides after school activities. The Community Schools Team from Vancouver Technical Secondary offers weekly band practices for our Grade 6 and 7 students. We are part of the Van Tech family of schools and our students who transition to Van Tech from Laura Secord return to our school for leadership throughout the year, beginning with the grade 7 camp in September. Students at Laura Secord enjoy using the Van Tech facilities for track and field and the Van Tech music department showcases their talents and opportunities through a music concert for Laura Secord students.

We have an active parent advisory council (PAC) and parent community which strives to enhance the experience for students through a variety of activities and programs. This includes monthly hot lunches, the addition of Mon Café Catering three times per week, organizing an autumn pumpkin patch, Winter Warmer Carnival, movie nights, book fairs and monthly Family Fun Fridays. The parents also assist in fundraising for enhanced classroom experiences, field studies, grade 7 camp and in-school programs.

The 2021-2023 school years saw increased parent involvement with coaching and volunteering. Parent volunteers, along with staff, joined teachers to coach multiple sports teams as well as a knitting club, drama club, debate club, book club, philosophy club as well as Dungeons and Dragons for interested students. We have expanded our track and field program to include grade 2 and 3 students thanks to a parent coach and two teacher sponsors. Our PAC held a workshop for our parent community on the topic of supporting neuro-diverse families, welcome to Kindergarten and Ready, Set, Learn. We asked our parents to provide feedback and they tell us they appreciate the open communication between parents and teachers and administrators. They value time to connect and have conversations about students and learning and the issues our students are contending with as 21st century learners. Our parents value the strong community we have at Secord and they prioritize events that build community over events that are mainly targeted for fundraising. Parents report that our monthly newsletter is a valuable form of communication. Many parents appreciate advance notice for field studies so they can adjust their schedules and attend as volunteer chaperones.

The staff at École Laura Secord Elementary are dynamic, diverse and dedicated. We strive to provide engaging, meaningful learning opportunities and we care deeply that each student has a strong sense of belonging in our classrooms and in our school. We work hard to bring the curriculum to life. We are also a staff that values ongoing professional development.

Inquiry Question

The social interactions among adults and students are not simply a means to some other end; rather “they are education itself”. The essence of looping is the promotion of strong, extended, meaningful, positive interpersonal relationships between teachers and students that foster increased student motivation and, in turn, stimulate improved learning outcomes for students. — Daniel Burke, [Looping: Adding Time, Strengthening Relationships](#).

Our inquiry question for our three-year plan is, “How can we support the well-being of students, staff and community in a holistic, reflective, experiential way, creating a sense of belonging and joy in learning and focusing on connectedness, reciprocal relationships and a sense of place?” This goal came from our experience of the pandemic and how it has created a disconnect among students, staff and community.

In 2022-2023, teachers worked collaboratively to identify gaps and areas of growth for relational skills among our community. We discussed what we wanted to implement at Laura Secord Elementary as part of our three-year plan. This includes:

- developing a low-stakes collaborative model, understanding that learning takes time and patience
- building an atmosphere of comradery
- increasing students’ understanding and acceptance of differing races and cultures that make up our community
- having students see themselves and their communities in the curriculum and in the staff throughout the District
- eliminating racism and discrimination in all forms
- increasing student engagement in their learning
- increasing sense of belonging for both staff and students
- increasing understanding and respect for diversity
- further developing empathy
- increasing knowledge, awareness, appreciation of, and respect for Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures, and contributions.
- helping students understand that their actions affect others
- providing students with the skills and knowledge to solve problems in peaceful ways
- fostering positive behaviours
- enhancing the level of caring, safety and respect in the Secord community

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

Through informal surveys of staff and students as well as the MDI, we were able to identify a common desire for increased collaboration, feelings of belonging and seeing oneself reflected in the community. From the MDI, we were able to identify several areas for growth where our students below district average:

- Optimism (“I have more good times than bad times.”)
- Prosocial behaviour (“I helped someone who was hurt.”)
- Absence of sadness (“I feel unhappy a lot of the time.”)
- Responsible decision-making (“When I make a decision, I think about what might happen afterward.”)

The MDI results also showed us that our students have a strong sense of connectedness with the adults at our school. All of these findings together guided us towards working towards a model of collaboration. We want all students and staff to feel a strong sense of belonging, care and joy in their time here. Not only do we provide a strong academic program, we also value community-building. By introducing a

platooning model, we will increase students' feeling of belonging, teachers' sense of collaboration and enthusiasm with respect to education. For year one of our school plan, we will focus on introducing collaborative instruction through various forms. Our students demonstrate collective and individual strengths in a variety of areas, including: athletics, fine arts (dance, drama, music, visual arts), choir, mathematics, writing, public speaking, social justice and technology. Our students ask insightful questions to guide the learning process and have been taught to think while they learn. They are independent and keen to succeed. Our students are reliable, both in their attendance and in their learning. Second students tend to be confident, brave and willing to engage in new experiences. Teachers report that students come to school with strong world and background knowledge, gained from life experiences, travel and reading. Many students at Secord participate in school-sponsored activities, including philosophy club, peer leaders, choir, athletics (cross country, volleyball, basketball, track and field, floor hockey, handball) and volunteer as monitors (library, peer tutors). Our students need to feel included and involved. They need to communicate their likes and dislikes and passions. They need to show their learning in a variety of ways and let themselves be creative and use their imaginations. They need opportunities to practice making good choices and they need time to play. Our students need models for joy and engagement in learning and need the time and opportunity to practice interacting with members of the school community. We are a large school and each student needs to feel a sense of belonging and experience being part of a community each school day.

Our teaching staff recognizes that our students have strong relationships with their own teachers. As we revised our Code of Conduct with our previous Growth Plan, students and staff worked together to create a living document that guides our behaviour within our school community. We focused on our school motto, "we take care of ourselves, we take care of others, we take care of this place" and students generated desirable behaviours in each learning location and situation in our school. Our students need to understand and apply our Code of Conduct throughout their school experience.

Our students need to feel a greater connection to our community. As indicated in the Middle Years Developmental Instrument, while 57% of our grade 4 and grade 7 students indicate they have one or more important adults at school, 44% of our students do not feel connected to an adult at school. While 96% of these students recognize there is an adult at school who believes in them, there are 4% of our students who do not yet feel this way.

Teachers note that students need support and guidance in being flexible and adapting to change in routine. We also recognize that students can improve in kindness and being polite to others. Our Kindergarten students are exploring how to play and how to learn. We take pride in keeping all our students safe, especially our youngest members of our school community. Our newest kindergarten students wear green vests when they are moving throughout the school and when they are outside at recess and lunch so the other children and the adults will be able to identify them and extend extra care and kindness. Our primary students benefit from our early literacy initiatives such as Reading Recovery and daily structured literacy teaching. All our primary classes visit the Ready Bodies Learning Minds room at least once each week, where students develop their sensory integration, motor learning and academic success through reflexive, vestibular, proprioceptive and tactile systems. Our intermediate students thrive with the diverse opportunities in athletics and leadership. Students enjoy cross country, volleyball, basketball and track and field. Our teacher librarian sponsors and facilitates a dynamic philosophy club at lunch time. This year, we have a strong We Team through the Me to We program where students engage in learning and leadership through local and global citizenship. Many of our classes have a buddy class, so students are establishing multi grade and multi-program friendships and relationships.

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

Using evidence from the Middle Years Development Index, we know that 83% of our students feel a sense of belonging and they consider their relationships with adults to be an asset. Not only are our students connected to the adults at our school (96% felt a medium-high connection with adults), the majority (61%) feel they have a connection to their peers while another 21% report their connections with their classmates is at a medium level. While our goal is to support our students and staff to create a community of caring and belonging, for year one we are focusing on creating an atmosphere of collaboration to help staff and students feel more comfortable with this.

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

Based on the extensive reflective process in which we engaged as a staff, anecdotal evidence, parent surveys as well as concrete data from the Middle Years Development Instrument as well as the Ministry of Education Student Learning Survey, we are pursuing this inquiry question. While the question is a continuation of our previous social-emotional learning inquiry question, we have adjusted our goals and objectives to best meet student, staff and parent needs and we are increasing our focus on well-being and collaboration. This is connected to the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement goal *to increase Aboriginal students' sense of pride, belonging, place, acceptance and caring in their schools.*

5. INQUIRY QUESTION

Our inquiry question for our three-year plan is “How can we support the well-being of students, staff and community in a holistic, reflective, experiential way, creating a sense of belonging and joy in learning, focusing on connectedness, reciprocal relationships and a sense of place?”

6. WHAT IS OUR PLAN?

Action Item	Next Steps and What We Need
Implement monthly platooning session for students across grade levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a list of resources to support collaborative model • staff book club and/or literature reviews • survey staff and determine interest level and subject areas • consider a half-day session on this topic for our first Professional Development Day in September 2023 • draft a proposed schedule for monthly collaborative time and propose to staff • offer Lunch and Learn to help support the transition for staff

Monthly 'elective' time for students across grade levels	Involving students in daily announcements
Collaborative soft plastics program at the school	Peer tutoring
Memorial garden, run by several teachers	Student-run winter market
Fitness Friday	Spring student-run school gala
Student-led monthly assemblies	Knitting club
Increased exposure to nature	Cross-grade SOGI committee
Fresh Roots	Student Council
Curling program	Sports Day
PAC and student-run Winter Warmer	Grade 6/7 Dance
Grade 7 camp	Cross-grade and -program collaboration

To better know and understand our students, we will work collaboratively with teachers in the fall to develop a survey for students. We will ask students how they felt on a scale ranging from never to always (never, sometimes, often, always), asking them to provide feedback in areas such as:

1. I feel welcome at school.
2. I feel Indigenous culture is valued at school.
3. I feel that I know how to solve a small problem by myself.
4. I feel that I know where to go when I need help from an adult.
5. I feel like I am an important part of the school community.
6. I look forward to coming to school.
7. I feel like I belong at school and people think about me.

7. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED?

New areas of learning will be executive functioning and implementing a kindness program throughout our school. Learning will occur in teaching and providing opportunities for responsible decision making, relationship skills and social awareness. We need professional development in executive functioning and

we need time to meet as a staff to determine our scope and sequence in social emotional learning for each grade. Staff need training and experience using the executive functioning framework.

What do we need?

Resources	Professional Development	Time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kindness curriculum lesson plans Develop Code of Conduct visuals for each classroom and the hallways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training in PBIS (invite Bryce from our annex, Queen Victoria, to work with us on a professional development day Training in executive functioning teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To collaborate with each other and with our area counsellor and youth and family worker To develop a scope and sequence for K-7 social emotional learning

Our commitment to building community, connections and feelings of belonging aligns with the redesigned curriculum, especially in the areas of Career Education and Physical and Health Education.

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

We will know we are successful when we observe and feel a shift in our school culture. It will feel like a welcoming place where everyone belongs and thrives. We will see a decrease in staff and student absences and increased well-being of our staff and students. We will also see increased interaction among students as well as staff with their respective peers. We will see less anxious behaviours about unstructured social time at school among students. We will also see an increase in our MDI and SLS results. We will track the MDI questions related to optimism, prosocial behaviour, happiness, absence of sadness, self-awareness and responsible decision-making.

9. HOW WILL WE SHARE THIS INFORMATION?

- Upload this school plan to our school website
- Work with students to create community-building bulletin boards
- Use our student-run assemblies to share what is happening in our community and build a sense of connection and belonging
- Continue to work with students on ongoing self-assessments of core competencies. These are sent home to parents with the June written report.



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?

To support all learners at our school in embracing the district-wide goal to increase knowledge, acceptance, empathy, awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal histories, traditions, cultures and contributions of indigenous people today and throughout history, our students engaged in diverse learning opportunities. These included but were not limited to:

- Classrooms have posters and maps of First Nations communities in British Columbia
- Métis dance guest instructor
- Field studies to the Museum of Anthropology
- Use of the Museum of Anthropology website as a resource for teachers to integrate indigenous content
- Teams channel dedicated to sharing indigenous learning resources
- Indigenous support worker visits classes and groups of students to share stories and family histories
- Indigenous support worker worked with a class on the topic of indigenous plants and seven Sacred Teachings
- Musqueam elder worked with students to make bannock (PAC Event)
- Indigenous read alouds
- Métis Seven Sacred Teachings integrated into intermediate art curriculum
- Northwest coast traditional art images integrated into grade 3/4 art
- Using maps with indigenous languages
- Many staff members choose to include the Aboriginal Acknowledgment as part of their VSB email signature
- Begin our assemblies with gratitude and acknowledgement for the Coast Salish, Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil Waututh people
- Significant increase in Aboriginal content to the Social Studies, Science, Math and Language Arts curriculum
- Including First Peoples perspective in studies of Canadian history and explorers
- Many classes attend National Aboriginal Day celebrations at Trout Lake

Laura Secord Elementary uses a house team approach to increase belonging and provide contextual teaching about Aboriginal culture. Each student and staff member belongs to one of four houses: orcas, wolves, ravens and grizzlies. We have events to celebrate each house.

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

Students, staff and community understand and discuss the significance and ongoing impact of the residential school experience on Aboriginal people and society as a whole. We see increased numbers of non-Indigenous people taking direct personal responsibility for their own decolonization and reconciliation, such as our school's residential school memorial garden. We see more Indigenous individuals in leadership, with student led projects. Current issues (such as land-related issues) are not seen as contentious but as resolvable and are often discussed. Our school library has purchased additional Indigenous content, material and resources as allocated in our budget.

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

Our first step is to gather baseline data through survey format. A new initiative for us was to develop an Indigenous Awareness and Appreciation survey, inviting all students to share with us what they learned about Indigenous people this year. Students also asked one question they have about Indigenous people. Questions included but were not limited to:

- I want to know how many canoes each group needed to make.
- Do the canoes get ruined?
- Who invented the canoe?
- How did Indigenous people survive?
- Why do Indigenous people use all parts of the animals?

Teachers are interested in increasing Indigenous content in our mathematics learning experiences. We will continue to invite guest speakers, performing arts group and elders to our school. We are committed to acquiring more Turtle Island Voices literature to increase indigenous content in science, social studies, mathematics and language arts. Staff will continue to plan and organize spirit house team events and learning opportunities. We need more maps in our classrooms of indigenous peoples in British Columbia, Canada and the World.