



Vancouver School District

School Plan for Charles Dickens Elementary

Year 2 (2019) of 3 Year Plan, 2018 – 2021

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, current school plans have been carried forward to the 2021/22 school year. Nevertheless, Dickens staff have had several meetings to discuss the school philosophy and to reaffirm their commitment to Collaboration and Teaming. Next year we plan to continue the goal of collaboration through an inquiry question which focuses on improving student writing. We have already done Pro-D on writing, have had rich discussions about how this goal can be achieved and are excited to begin working and learning together.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the suspension of all in-class instruction on March 13, 2020, current school plans have been carried forward to the 2020/21 school year.

1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

Charles Dickens Elementary School is part of a community that is located in a vibrant area of East Vancouver that reflects the changes and growth of our dynamic city. We are home to a catchment that is comprised of two schools; Dickens Main and Dickens Annex. Presently Dickens has 478 students enrolled in 21 Divisions. In addition to the mainstream school community, Dickens is home to a district ELSP class supporting students with unique learning needs. For the 2019-20 school year, we will have fewer students which will result in one less division. Generally, enrolment is stable with our in-catchment families. The physical space of our school building is well utilized. With its wide corridors, sliding glass garage-style doorways, and adjoining classroom spaces, it is conducive to the child-centred, group learning philosophy that the community has embraced for many years. The multipurpose room and gym are additional community spaces that reinforce the multi-age group experiences that take place at Dickens. As well, the gym is widely used as an evening and weekend rental space by numerous outside organizations. At Charles Dickens, our child-centred program is based upon what we know about learning and optimum social and emotional development. The main tenets of our beliefs are that the child is the focus of education; that social responsibility and decision-making must be fostered; that learning is continuous and that the purpose of evaluation is to promote further authentic learning.

Dickens offers a variety of extracurricular activities, sponsoring cross-country, basketball, ultimate and track & field teams for both the primary and intermediate levels.. Primary and intermediate students also have opportunities to participate in other physical activities that may be offered throughout the year with invited guests (eg: Ultimate Frisbee, Dance, and Rugby).

Student leadership is supported and shared through a variety of school opportunities such as student-led assemblies, buddy reading, , library monitors, student council, green team and lunch monitors. Students come together to celebrate one another and the unique gifts we all bring by participating in winter concerts and the talent show.

To support our beliefs, the school is organized around four core principles:

1. Multi-age Learning: where possible, two or three age groups are organized together with the same teacher for two or more years.
2. Team Teaching: in many cases, multiple teachers are responsible for all aspects of programming for one group of multiage children.
3. Authentic Assessment: criterion-referenced, non-letter grade report cards (letter grades are available to parents upon request), portfolio assessment, student-led conferences, student self-assessment and goal setting. This aligns strongly with the Curriculum Redesign work we have completed as a staff highlighting Core Competencies and the importance of Student Self- Assessment.
4. Varied Instructional Learning Strategies: student-centered, cooperative learning, large and small group instruction and project-based learning.

The expectation is that students will make thoughtful, respectful decisions each day that align with our School's Code of Conduct of Cooperation, Safety & Respect. In addition, we recognize the value placed on the Vancouver School Board's Strategic Plan and acknowledge the Guiding Principles within the framework of the respected work we uphold within our community. Charles Dickens is a community built on collaboration, engagement, inclusion, excellence and transparency. "This establishes a clear and shared vision for the future of public education in the Vancouver School District."

At Dickens, there continues to be strong parent support and involvement, through the Parent Advisory Council and various community partnerships such as Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House and Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House which run Before and After School Care Programs. Parents work as active partners and are a part of our professional teaming community.

Our Parent Advisory Council (PAC) continues to be instrumental in implementing speaker and community events for parents around educational and parenting topics such as community engagement and technology. The Hop 'N Nosh Dance and Spring Fling bring together the families from both the Annex and the Main School. Additionally, members of our PAC lead a number of during and after school experiences for students (Chess / Singing).

2A. WHAT DID WE SEE?

As with any group of learners, Dickens students demonstrate diverse interests, strengths and needs. Students reside in a community that is very accepting of diversity. We anticipate our school population to grow slightly and include 38 students with identified special needs and approximately 50 who are English Language Learners (ELL). Ten students attending Dickens are self-identified as learners of Indigenous ancestry. Our student population is diverse and includes a number of immigrant and refugee families. While most families speak English at home, approximately 20% of our families identify with a different first language.

Survey results (MDI, Learning Survey) suggest that the vast majority of students are enjoying their school experience. Data collected from Tupper Secondary indicates former Dickens students are finding academic success in high school.

2B. WHAT DO WE NEED TO RE-ADJUST?

This question needs to be top of mind and we hope to do this by:

- making collaboration a standing item for monthly SAC meetings which focus on Pro-D
- establishing scheduled collaboration times with pre-determined topics so that momentum is maintained
- using Pro-D days to focus on collaboration allowing teams to meet along with expanded groups
- collaborating with the Annex staff and considering the notion continuity for our students
- focusing on core competencies that support this goal

3. INQUIRY QUESTION (previously known as “Goal”)

The question will remain the same but we will try to bring greater clarity to the connection between collaboration and continuous learning.

4. WHAT IS YOUR NEW PLAN?

We would like to:

- Host a school-wide learning celebration fueled by staff and student collaboration
- Dedicate two school-based professional days to the notion of professional collaboration
- Assign one SAC meeting per month to collaborate on professional development
- Review and develop structures for regular professional collaboration

5. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED?

- ProD committee will meet with staff (June 3 2019) to plan pro-d for next school year with a focus on student and staff collaboration
- Scheduling once a month Pro-d SAC Meetings to focus on classroom and collective team sharing
- BCTF workshops
- Leveraging professional capital in the building to mentor new teachers
- Development of knowledge of skills needed by students to work in groups.

6. HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE SUCCESSFUL?

- Student Learning Survey question regarding working with others.
- Insert school created questions focusing on collaborative goal into the Student Learning Survey
- Student reflection sheets post group work
- Authentic sharing and teaching by students
- Establishment of school created survey to assess engagement with collaborative learning opportunities.

7. HOW WILL WE SHARE?

- Weekly assemblies
- School Blog
- Learning celebrations (Term 2)
- Community celebration



District-wide Indigenous Goal: To increase knowledge, acceptance, empathy, awareness and appreciation of Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures and contributions among all students.

8. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE INDIGENOUS LEARNERS IN OUR SCHOOL?

- 2% of Charles Dickens students identify as Indigenous
- Classrooms are working to embed Indigenous content into learning
- Our indigenous student are from a variety of nations
- We have an Indigenous Education Enhancement Worker supports Dickens once a week

WHAT HAVE WE DONE AT OUR SCHOOL TO SUPPORT ALL LEARNERS IN REGARDS TO THIS GOAL?

To honour the history of the First Nations People and support the learning of all students within the Charles Dicken's community, as a collective group we have:

- We have established an Indigenous Plant garden focusing on traditional plants used for food and healing.
- Developed a strong network of support to strengthen the growth of our learners.
- Viewed and shared performances by authentic Indigenous artists e.g. Hoop Dancer Dallas Arcand Jr.
 - a. Celebrated student success with our Indigenous Enhancement Worker, whose work has proved to be invaluable to our school community.
 - b. Some staff members have participated in Dedicated Professional Days, Curriculum Implementation Days and In-Service Days to strengthen our understanding and recognition of Indigenous contributions to Canada and the world.
- Themes covered within classes this year: histories; cultural knowledge for a variety of Indigenous Nations; celebrations and traditions; impact and history of residential schools: Truth and Reconciliation; Participation in Orange Shirt Day; fieldtrips to Indigenous sites; acknowledgement; Highway of Tears understanding;
- Purchasing of authentic literature.
- Discussed how we can access more district support and resources in order to learn how teaching professionals can authentically and meaningfully weave Indigenous heritage, teaching and culture into BC's Redesigned Curriculum.
- Celebrated the success and achievements of our Grade 7 students with Indigenous heritage at the Grade 7 Moving Forward Ceremony.

- Completed Aboriginal Success Plans collaborative through our School Based Team.
- Requested student leaders give the Traditional Indigenous Acknowledgement at our weekly assemblies and at all school and community gatherings.
- Provided safe, nurturing learning environments for all learners.

9. WHAT WILL WE CONTINUE TO DO IN THIS AREA?

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We will continue to:

- honour the history, traditions and culture of the First Nations People and support the learning of all students within the Charles Dicken's community.
- Integrate indigenous education into our schedules collaborations times
- Look for ProD opportunities to continue to build our skills and knowledge in an authentic way.
- Consult with district staff regarding reference material and resources lists for different grade levels
- Purchase literature that supports Indigenous learning.
- Consider local field trip opportunities (Longhouse at Main and 6th) and cultural festivals (Trout Lake)

10. HOW DO WE KNOW THAT WE ARE BEING SUCCESSFUL IN THIS AREA?

- Student assembly leaders are able to state the Indigenous acknowledgment from memory.
- Students will demonstrate an increased awareness of local Indigenous languages.
- Completion of learning projects that illustrate the history and teaching of Indigenous culture.
- Invest in authentic performances by Indigenous artists.
- Data collected through related questions on the student learning survey