



Vancouver School District

School Plan for Norquay Elementary School

Year 1: 2021-2022 of 3 Year Plan, 2021 - 2024

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

Norquay continues to be one of the largest elementary schools in Vancouver. For 2021/2022 we have 632 students enrolled. Norquay is a diverse socio-economic community on the southeast side of Vancouver. Approximately 31% of our students are English Language Learners, with 28 different languages spoken at home and school. There is a multi-ethnic composition of students at Norquay, with the major cultural groups being Chinese, Filipino and Vietnamese. The school population of 630 students from Gr. K – 7 is enrolled in 29 divisions. Approximately 2% of our population is of Indigenous ancestry and approximately 4% of our students are designated with special needs. Norquay is wheelchair accessible with elevators to access our 3 floors.

Norquay has three District Programs: Elementary LSP (Learning Support Program) for Grades 4-7, SELC (Social Emotional Learning Centre) for Grades 1-3, and the Early Mandarin Bilingual Program (implementation 2011) for Grades K – 7. These three programs make up approximately 35% of our student population and are an integrated and integral part of our school community.

Norquay's Learning Support Team (LST) provides targeted intervention both in-class and in small group support with focused Individualized Education Plan support for some students using the Response to Intervention model and the Tiers of Intervention. The LST works collaboratively with enrolling teachers in assessment, evaluation and reporting of student programs and progress. The team, in collaboration with all staff, develops strategies and structures to support literacy, social-emotional competencies and inclusion. Norquay also continues to be an early intervention school (CELI) which focuses on the development of our youngest learners. We have a reading recovery program and a District Literacy Teacher supporting at risk early learners.

The Kindergarten Inclusion Project (KIP) continues to be a successful program. KIP involves all kindergarten students in weekly sessions with Administration, Supervision Aides, Teacher Librarian, and support workers. These sessions support our youngest students in building community, social emotional, and leadership skills. While the model of delivery of KIP sessions was modified for the 2020-2021 school year in order to meet PHO guidelines, we hope to move back to a similar delivery model for the Fall of 2021.

We look forward to reinstating pre-covid events and practices at Norquay, including the Annual Book Exchange, the Health and Wellness event and Lunar New Year (parade) events. Students once again will open our performances and learn skills that promote citizenship by participating in the Student Leadership Inclusive Playground Program, volunteering as library monitors and office monitors, and making morning announcements. "Ready, Set Learn and Welcome to Kindergarten Programs will return to the robust community events they were in the past. Norquay has a long-time association with the Rotary Club and continues to benefit from the One-to-One Literacy Volunteer program that was delivered using a virtual platform this year.

We are part of the Gladstone Family of Schools, though we are supported by the Windermere Community Links Team, which provides after-school programs each term and during each school break. We host

Kidsafe at Norquay during school holidays, and Rec & Read, a summer school program for referred vulnerable grade 1 students, will be hosted at Norquay this summer. Pre- and post-school daycare is available through Collingwood Neighbourhood House Child Care. Extracurricular sports (volleyball, basketball, ultimate frisbee and track & field) are traditionally offered each year. Our playground and outdoor classrooms are inclusive and were a major PAC initiative. Our playground and outdoor garden classrooms continue to grow. We were very fortunate to receive a substantial outdoor learning grant from the Vancouver School Board this year that enabled us to further develop our outdoor classrooms, and fence off the front of the school so the space could be more safely utilized. We were also able to purchase outdoor learning materials and wagons that allow us to more easily take our outdoor learning beyond our school grounds. We have an outdoor storage container for these classroom kits which makes them easily accessible. These continuous editions to our outdoor learning facilities ensure that outdoor learning and environmental stewardship are an integral part of learning for all classrooms.

We have a dedicated Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) who meet every other month and who value and encourage parental input and dialogue. Our PAC positively supports programs and helps to enhance student experiences through both fundraising efforts and community building opportunities. The PAC sponsors events such as the Halloween Fling on months when there is no formal meeting. PAC offers many diverse events including: waffle breakfast, pizza days, a Lunar New Years Celebration and the Norquay Spring Carnival. This year, PAC funds have been used to further enhance our school garden, implement a movement pathway, provide internet safety workshops, and sponsor our Grade 7 Graduation video so that families could enjoy this milestone with their child in a safe, virtual format. Our Indigenous Education Worker and Youth and Family Worker meet and build connections with families. Our families are invaluable resources and links to our community.

Norquay has a dedicated, committed, and stable staff who provide an academically and socially rich environment for our students. Their focus is always on meeting the needs of our students. Norquay is a school that develops and highlights the many talents and strengths of our students. Our teachers collaborate to develop strong academic programs balanced with specialty teaching in the fine arts and athletics. All of our programs accommodate our English Language Learners (ELL) and the inclusion of special needs students. We are committed to meeting the needs of all of our student learners. We are very proud of our school and school learning community.

Our School Code of Conduct is: Be Kind, Be Safe, Be the Best Learner and Leader You Can Be (no matter your age)

At Norquay, we are currently transitioning from our previous three year goal of, ***“How do we track and promote math fluency skills to improve basic number sense for our diverse learners?”*** At this point, we are initiating engagement of all our stakeholders to scan and explore what we feel our next inquiry should focus on. We want to take the time to amplify the voices of our students and families after this time of forced limitations to school community connection.

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

(SCANNING)

We have a community of learners that are eager to do well. When presented with learning opportunities, our students work hard to display their understanding of curricular concepts and competencies. We have come to notice through projects, class discussions, and self-assessments, that, while our students want to do well, they need further support in developing their critical and creative thinking, communication and personal and social skills in order to deepen their learning. A coordinated, school wide plan that will focus on these core competencies would be beneficial for all of our students from Kindergarten to Grade Seven.

Our entire school community, students, staff, and families, are missing the community connection and engagement that was evident at Norquay prior to Covid. Our Norquay Community banded together and embraced and enforced all of the PHO required Health and Safety measures, including learning cohorts, play zones outside, and the cancellation of all face to face gatherings, whether they were for assemblies, community building events ,or leadership and learning opportunities. Prior to Covid, we had already completed Staff and Student surveys that provided evidence that Social Emotional Learning would be a valid and important focus for us to engage in through our school plan.

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

(SCANNING)

Prior to Covid 19, we were in the 3rd year of our Math goal and had just begun the progress of scanning to identify our new focus. During the pandemic, with most of our energies going towards adapting our regular practices and procedures at school in order to keep everyone safe and healthy, we remain in the very early stages of the knowledge gathering needed to develop our new School Plan.

Evidence that supports what we know about our learners and our learning community are based on:

- SEL Surveys completed by staff and students prior to Covid
- Common themes from the staff survey included a desire for a school wide SEL program with consistent language and further resources to use to implement SEL consistently
- Student surveys showed that up to 15% of students wanted support with making friends, calming strategies, perspective taking, developing a growth mindset, identifying feelings, getting along with others, feeling safe, and connecting with adults. 46% reported having been bullied before and 60% stated that they witnessed others being bullied
- Formal and informal conversations with staff and students
- Classroom discussions and meetings
- Comments from families about the impact of the Pandemic on their mental well-being and connection to the school community
- Student work, projects, and self assessments
- Behavioural referrals to the office

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

As an entire school community, we have, understandably, been struggling to stay connected during these trying times. We are looking forward to re-instating and re-envisioning practices that help build community and connection. At the same time, we know that, while we are known by those who visit Norquay, to be a warm and welcoming community, there are still areas and ways that we can build upon our community connection and culture of belonging.

We feel our evolving focus on some or all aspects of the core competencies will link seamlessly with the District Education Plan currently being developed which will focus on “reconnection, renewal and re-imagining.” It also ties into our current education plan which has us focusing on a “community of equity and excellence.” When we can focus on a unified, whole school approach to developing the core competencies of all of our learners, we empower them to develop the communication, thinking and personal and social skills needed to develop to their full potential as a lifelong learner. When we strategically support our learners in developing their core competencies, they become more in tune to themselves, and the strengths and skills that they contribute to their community. This directly addresses the goal of **Belonging** in the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Plan, to, “Increase Aboriginal students’ sense of pride, self-esteem, belonging, place, acceptance and caring in their schools.”

5. INQUIRY QUESTION (FOCUSING)

Prior to summer of 2021, we plan to have teachers meet in grade groups to further explore and communicate the needs of our learners in order to help us identify our inquiry question. A possible inquiry question that is being suggested is :

How can we use the theme of connection to implement school wide, strategic programming to strengthen the core competency profiles of our students?

The idea of having monthly sub-themes, with identified resources that teachers can access, related to the theme of connection has been explored:

Connection to Self (personal awareness), **Connection to others** (social awareness, SEL), **Connection to community** (positive personal and cultural identity, social awareness, diversity and antiracism), **Connection to the World** (Critical Thinking and social awareness), **Connection to Learning** (Critical Thinking, reflective thinking and self assessment, and communication), **Connection to Big Ideas** (Critical and Creative Thinking and communication), **Connection through Collaboration** (Collaborating), **Connection through core values** (antiracism, diversity, Indigenous Ways of Knowing, belonging, mastery and a culture of community)

By focusing on these sub-themes we can identify the big ideas that we can continue to build on in year 2 and 3 of the plan.

6. WHAT IS OUR PLAN? (PLANNING)

Our current plan has us deeply engaged with exploring and knowledge gathering. This pandemic has simultaneously drained us and ignited us. As a staff, we find ourselves exhausted by the constant vigilance needed to keep each other healthy and safe. Being limited in our social and physical connection with loved ones and our extended community strips us of our opportunity to recharge through community connection. However, at the same time, the pandemic has helped us to crystalize what is important to us, and what we need more of or less of in our daily lives, our community, and our world. We have large and lofty goals that we would like to take on, ranging from working towards antiracism, to decolonizing our school system, to Universal Design for learning and Social Emotional Learning and mental well-being. We want learners who are self-aware, knowing where they are at in their learning, what their next steps are, and how they can get there.

Using sub-themes of connection, we can delve deeply into developing the core competencies of our students in a unified way, developing some common language and practice around the competencies. We can then begin to enter into deeper learning around areas of mutual interest and need and explore what we want to maintain, adapt and change in our practices in order to improve the learning experiences of our students while developing their sense of belonging.

Year 1: Connection and the core competencies

Year 2: Diving Deeper

Year 3: Honing in on best practices

7. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED? (PLANNING)

We will actively engage in Pro-D and resource gathering that will support us in strengthening the core competencies of all our learners from K-7. Some resources that we know we will utilize, and are already sourcing out include:

- ProD and a strategies bank to support the implementation of UDL in all of our classes (Powerful Understanding and Powerful Writing Structures by Adrienne Gear, Jennifer Katz books and Pro-D resources, and other UDL resources)
- Ministry resources related to the core competencies, including, “Developing and Supporting K-12 Student Reflection and Self-Assessment of Core Competencies”
- Core competencies rubrics and profiles
- Resources to support the development of the core competencies
- Self and peer assessment tools and strategies
- Resources around SEL and Mental well-being (we have a SEL collaborative inquiry group that is currently creating an SEL resource catalog)
- Dessa Mini and other SEL assessment tools
- Use of Student Satisfaction Survey Data

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

We will use student reflection and self assessment as both a baseline and a formative assessment tool to track student growth in their thinking and communication skills and personal and social awareness.

- If students are able to answer questions about what they are learning, why they are learning it and what their next steps are, we will know that they are engaged with their own learning.
- Surveys and focus groups will be used to gather input from various stakeholders (students, staff, families) to gauge the levels of acceptance, belonging and community connections
- If students report that they want to come to school each day, they take pride in where they come from, and they participate in community activities and engage their peers, we will know that they feel a sense of belonging

Use of the core competency profiles and rubrics for self, peer and teacher assessment will help us track growth and change over time

Use of response patterns in the Student Learning Surveys and the Satisfaction surveys over the 3 years will inform us

Use of the Dessa Mini will inform us on students levels of SEL

As we are in the initial stages of knowledge gathering at this point, we are poised to adjust and change course as needed when and if we see unanticipated changes or no changes to our implementations.

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

To share our learning and successes, we may celebrate through some or all of the following avenues:

- Stakeholder surveys and focus groups
- Monthly recognition assemblies
- Staff meetings
- Bulletin boards highlighting student work and learning
- Portfolios sent home to parent (both paper and electronic) that include a self assessment component
- Morning announcements shared by student teams over the PA system. This could include daily theme messages written by students in classes throughout the school.
- Communications home to parents via teacher
- Progress reports and parent-teacher conferences
- Teachers regularly engaging parents in conversations related to student social emotional development, communication skills, thinking and achievement.

- Goal-setting conferences where students work with parents to set goals and to develop corresponding strategies for the remainder of the term/year.
- Student work shared between buddy classes
 - Opportunity to practice and showcase social emotional learning with their buddies. One class currently has a relationship with Gladstone Secondary leadership students and we could explore the possible extension of this program.
- Newsletters, website, weekly memos to families
 - Each newsletter can highlight an aspect of the core competencies that we are focusing on



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?

Norquay staff and students continue on our shared learning journey towards a better understanding of Indigenous worldviews and knowledge. With the support of our IEW, our district wide Indigenous Education professional development day in May, 2020, and our ever growing library of professional and student resources, we are growing in our understanding of and respect for Indigenous Ways of Knowing and the importance of steadfastly moving towards the decolonization of our school system. We have a very high participation rate during Orange Shirt Day, and staff are sharing lesson plan ideas and resources with each other to ensure that everyone feels comfortable with continuing our teaching and learning . The May 2020 Indigenous Education Day was a powerful learning experience for our staff as we explored the systemic racism towards our Indigenous peoples inherent in our Canadian History. We made personal connections between our Canadian history and current acts of racism being experienced by our BIPOC communities. The personal connections of staff, particularly our staff of Asian decent who were directly experiencing microaggressions and racist comments through covid, ignited a collaborative desire to work on our path towards anti-racism.

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

Students actively participate in Orange Shirt Day and learning about the history of Canada from the Indigenous perspective, learning about the legacy of the residential school system. Students are also learning how to make connections between past acts of oppression and racism in Canada with current acts of racism, acknowledging that racism is far from a thing from our past. For example, students promoted and participated in Black Shirt Day this year at Norquay and made posters to acknowledge the rise in anti-asian racism in Vancouver. Indigenous knowledge is shared in our SS classes, through our outdoor learning and through our use of storytelling. Our students are learning about their own personal heritage through inquiries happening as early as Kindergarten, and this sense of self and place are helping them understand Indigenous ways of knowing and learning in community.

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

We will continue to:

- Integrate the Indigenous Acknowledgement and stories into assemblies
- Improve resources in our library that have Indigenous content
- Make Indigenous culture visible in the school through art
- Arrange field trips and outdoor learning to deepen learning
- Recognize Orange Shirt Day and use this day as a launching off point for continuous and deeper learning about Indigenous Ways of Knowing and our the effects of colonization on our Indigenous peoples
- Use storytelling as a way of sharing traditions across the school
- Celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day
- Reflect on Indigenous ways of knowing and ensure we are being respectful in our approaches

New initiatives for 2021-2022 could include:

- First People's Principles lunch and learn for staff
- Invite elders in to share culture and personal stories
- Book more field trips to MOA and Longhouses
- Integrate indigenous plants into our garden education; learning about native plants and their uses in Indigenous communities
- Use artifacts as a way to learn about culture and experience
- Use gratitude circles and spirit animals as ways of connecting
- Invite a professional to lead the blanket project or teachings about the medicine wheel
- Use a "pineapple chart," Intermediate and Primary collaborative time during weekly assemblies, lunch and learns, informal knowledge fairs and other strategies to support staff in learning what each other are doing around indigenous education
- Book indigenous dance or workshop for whole school
- Have IEW visit all classes to help teach about indigenous ways
- Focus on oral story telling. Use story workshop as a jumping off point
- Investigate critical thinking questions related to oppression, colonization etc. with intermediate grades