



Vancouver School District

School Plan for J. W. Sexsmith Elementary

Year 2 (2020-21) of 3 Year Plan, 2018 - 2022

1. **GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:** *DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, CURRENT SCHOOL PLANS HAVE BEEN CARRIED FORWARD TO THE 2021/22 SCHOOL YEAR*

Sexsmith School is a diverse community of approximately 420 students. Fifty percent of our students speak a language other than English at home. Twenty-one different languages are spoken, with Chinese Punjabi, and Tagalog as the predominant home languages. Our vision of success for our students focuses on building self-esteem by providing opportunities for success in all areas: academic, physical, artistic, social emotional and social responsibility. Our Code of Conduct encourages students to REACH for the Stars:

R- Respect myself, others and our school

E – Excel in all that we do

A – Accept ourselves and others

C – Care for each other

H – Help when help is needed

We hold regular assemblies where we recognize students for their efforts in academics or citizenship by awarding our Sexsmith Awards certificates.

Our fine arts program, under the direction of our specialist teacher, provides students with instruction in music, dance and drama. Music is taught in Term 1 with a focus on preparing vocal pieces for several performances throughout the year. Dance is the focus in Term 2 with students creating their own choreography for small groups and performing it in class and school wide assemblies. Drama is emphasized in Term 3 as all students learn various dramatic techniques such as interacting with scripts, improvisation and creating their own dramatic performances. Additionally, every two years the school puts on a school musical – students learn acting, singing, dancing, and performance skills.

Sexsmith is a TEGS school. TEGS stand for Think, Eat, Green. The program provides the students with the opportunity to be part of a cooking program in class that accentuates growing, preparing and eating nutritional foods.

For many years we have been a Science Celebration school. Each child in Gr. 4-7 chooses a science topic and individually or with a partner does the research and follows the scientific method to learn more about their topic. This project-based learning culminates in an evening of science at our school. The students with the best projects from each class have the privilege of taking their project board to Science World for the District Science Celebration. The students' excitement in sharing their learning and investigating topics done by other students is a wonderful motivator for learning.

Many of our intermediate students are also involved in the Heritage Fair. As with the Science Celebration our students do an in-depth research project on a topic that has had a significant impact on our country.

The diversity of projects is amazing and all the students learn from one another's work while gaining insight and knowledge into stories, people, and events that make up Canada's past.

In typical years, a variety of extracurricular athletic activities are offered to intermediate students in cross country, basketball, soccer, track and volleyball with several staff members coaching these teams. Staff also support a noon hour intramural games program for our intermediate students. Throughout the year, special events are provided for our students with the goal to get as many of them involved in our school spirit as possible.

We encourage and provide opportunities for individual student leadership including Student Council, daily PA Announcers, Playground Buddies, Office, Hallway, and Library Monitors, and Safety Patrol.

To assist our youngest learners and their families make the transition into Kindergarten as positive as possible we typically host a Ready Set Learn event in the winter as well as a Welcome to Kindergarten event in the spring. Both events are well attended by our school community members and our school staff collaborate with our on-site pre-school program and community partners in the organization and presentation of these programs.

Parents are actively involved as partners in our school. They meet monthly to discuss school programs and typically plan a variety of annual school activities. In the fall, with the assistance of our Multicultural Worker, parents organize a Diwali dance performance with participants from all grades and cultural backgrounds. In December, they partner with the South Vancouver Rotary Club to present a Breakfast with Santa. In winter, the Lunar New Year event involves parents, student and staff providing a dance performance for our student body. In the spring the Filipino parents come together to organize a festival for students and staff to learn about Filipino culture through games, song, and dance. Also, in the spring the parents organize a Family Fun Fair of carnival games and food for the whole family. During the year parent volunteers typically organize and serve hot lunch two days a week. This year many events have had to be modified in order to follow all health and safety guidelines.

2A. WHAT DID WE SEE?

Strengths:

- Supportive families
- Students Joyful and happy, enjoy coming to school, enthusiastic
- Generally respectful and responsive to adults
- Willing to use learned tools and skills
- Able to approach adults for support
- Demonstrate kindness towards each other, sense of justice, accepting of differences
- General understanding that physical violence is not a means for conflict resolution
- Sense of community and consistently willing to volunteer to support school programs

Needs:

- Problem solving skills
- Need support with conflict resolution, sharing, turn taking (primary)
- Recognizing own social emotional skills
- Social media safety awareness
- Friendship development
- Self-advocacy
- Lack of background knowledge/experiences outside of the home
- Increase opportunities for experiential learning

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

Staff will continue to utilize lessons from Powerful Understandings but also make use of a variety of recognized programs to support student development in social emotional skills.

We will be using the Mini-Dessa assessment tool to gather more direct information on student progress with key social emotional skills. Additionally, we will be utilizing data from Heart and Mind surveys for intermediate students and parents to continue to inform our practice.

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

What impact do focused lessons and instruction in social emotional skills have on academic performance and school success?

A wide body of research suggests that student learning is improved when social emotional skills become a focus in schools. Our interest lies in dedicating instructional time at each grade level to support growth in these skills.

*Short term Outcomes:

- Positive attitudes towards oneself, others and school
- Confidence, persistence and a sense of purpose
- Positive social behaviours with adults and peers
- Decreased behavioural issues and risky behaviour
- Increased school success

*Long Term Outcomes:

- Better chance of high school graduation
- Readiness for post-secondary education
- Career success
- Positive family and work relationships
- Reduced criminal behaviour
- Better mental health
- Engaged citizenship

*Note: excerpt from MDI Human Learning Partnership (see Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovitch, & Gullotta, 2015)

4. WHAT IS YOUR NEW PLAN?

Our plan is to continue to have school wide initiatives as well as dedicated instructional time to support skill development. We will add some focused classroom-based lessons to support student skill development.

School Wide:

- Big idea presentations at monthly assemblies focusing on virtues that support social emotional development (Inclusion, gratitude, honesty, peace, generosity, forgiveness, acceptance, kindness, perseverance, collaboration, hope, etc.)
- Special focus on Heart and Mind language across the grades- Gets Along with Others, Compassionate and Kind , Solves Problems Peacefully, Secure and Calm, Alert and Engaged
- Reminder messages in the daily announcements focused on self, others, and community
- Bulletin board devoted to SEL concepts on display for students
- Opportunities for students to contribute to school bulletin board with personal messages
- Support material provided to classroom teachers to facilitate direct instruction of the monthly virtue/Heart and Mind concepts
- Weekly lunchtime problem solving sessions facilitated by the school counsellor and MCW
- YWCA Grade 7 Welcome to My Life/Boys 4 Real online afterschool program to support SEL skills
- Grade group collaboration identifying specific SEL expectations at each age level

Classroom Instruction:

- Use of recognized programs (Zones of Regulation, Second Step, Roots of Empathy, whole body listening, mind up, Incredible Flexible You, mindfulness, etc.)
- Utilize Powerful Understanding lesson plans to teach SEL skills through focusing on self, others, and the world.
- Class meetings, empowering student voice
- Lessons on growth vs fixed mindset
- Teaching character through literature
- Roots of Empathy program (when available)

5. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED?

- Ongoing professional development opportunities for staff
- Participate in the Heart-Mind Well Being in Schools Program – January 2021
- Provide support and information to parents to support family involvement in strengthening SEL skills
- Powerful Understanding by Adrienne Gear
- Teaching Values – Reaching Kids by Linda Schwartz
- Canadian Character Education Activities (2-3, 4-6) by Demetra Turnbull
- We Thinkers Kit by R. Hendrix, K. Zweber Palmer, N. Tashis, M. Garcia Winner

6. HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE SUCCESSFUL?

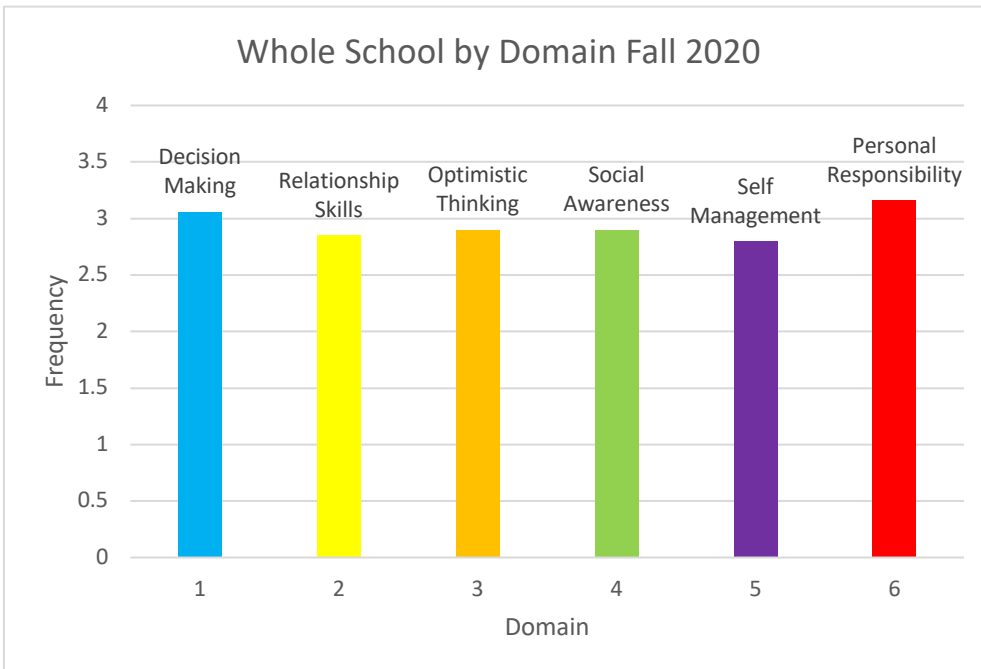
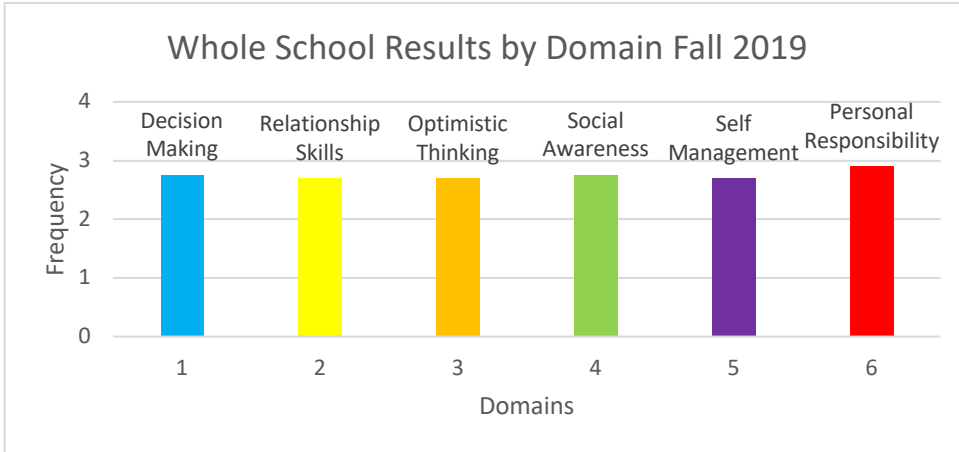
Literacy data – January 2020/2021

Mini Dessa – November 2019/2020

Heart and Mind Survey –parents, intermediate students (Fall)

Student feedback – I can statements on SEL key skills

Mini Dessa Fall 2019/2020 results for each division were distributed to teachers. Whole school by domain results are below.



Literacy Data January 2020 (percentage of students at each level)

Grade	Beginning	Developing	Applying	Extending
7	6	54	40	
6	2	56	36	8
5	22	38	34	6
4	25	66	7	2
3	9	30	49	12
2	22	27	41	10
1	33	55	12	
K	29	45	25	
Whole School	19	46	30	5

Literacy Data January 2021 (percentage of students at each level)

Grade	Beginning	Developing	Applying	Extending
7	4	60	36	0
6	11	46	41	2
5	6	20	49	24
4	3	25	56	17
3	0	18	70	13
2	5	20	67	8
1	8	40	48	4
K	11	38	42	9
Whole School	6	33	51	9

Looking at the two highest levels of Applying and Extending there is a noticeable improvement from January 2020 to 2021. This is extremely encouraging and will be interesting to monitor to see if it continues.

To further track student progress in acquiring social emotional skills, teachers will conclude lessons by giving students an opportunity to identify their learning. Utilizing relevant “I can” statements from the Core Competencies of the BC curriculum, teachers will facilitate opportunities for students to identify new learning. A sample of these statements are below.

Grade 7- focused on collaborating by working collectively, supporting group interactions, and determining common purposes.

I can step out of my comfort zone and work together with unfamiliar groups.

I can test my ideas with others and take feedback from fellow group members like I did during readers theatre.

I can work with others towards a goal. For our play we all worked together by helping each other learn their lines.

I can express my ideas and encourage others to share. I demonstrated this while making a movie in music class.

I can participate in group activities. I can take other people's ideas and cooperate with others.

I can reflect on and adjust plans with my group. When we disagree, I can adjust my plans so everyone is happy.

I can see multiple points of view. I am not limited to just my opinion and point of view.

Grade 6

I can improve myself by looking back at past mistakes and correcting it next time.

I can share my opinion more.

I can ask questions when I do not understand and ask for help if I need it.

I can think more about others and not just about myself.

I can solve problems and I can take different points of view.

I can try to understand how I think and what others think.

I can be more confident when I make presentations.

Grade 5

I can recognize when someone is having a bad day.

I can be responsible for my emotions.

I can sustain a healthy lifestyle by eating healthy foods and drinks.

I can use strategies to find peace in stressful times.

I can recognize emotions in others.

I can use strategies that help me with my feelings and emotions.

I can show a sense of accomplishment and joy.

Grade 3/4

I can wait for others to talk.

I can include others in games.

I can apologize if I am mean.

I can speak respectfully.

I can treat everyone fairly.

Grade 2

I can solve some problems and ask for help if I need it.

I am learning to agree on somethings to make it work.

I am learning to be fair.

I am learning to share.

I am learning to use my words to tell my brother not to bother me.

Grade 1

I can get along with others because I am kind and never fight.

I can be kind because I really care about others.

I can be kind when I help when others are hurt.

I can be kind by taking turns when we play with the ball.

I can solve problems by playing with someone else.

I can be kind to others by using nice words.

Kindergarten – social responsibility

I can listen to others.

I share ideas.

I am kind to others and our environment.

I can keep trying when something is hard.

I can share my feelings.

I can solve problems and ask for help when I need it.

7. HOW WILL WE SHARE?

The school newsletter and website are the primary means we communicate our successes. We also discuss the results at PAC Meetings and acknowledge students for their improvements at our monthly Sexsmith assemblies. Through involvement in the new Communicating Student Learning reporting system, parents will be informed of individual student progress through conferences and written reports. Many classes are also using online apps to share information about student successes on a regular basis with parents.



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

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

We currently have 4 students of Indigenous heritage enrolled at Sexsmith in: Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5, and Grade 7. As with all our students, Indigenous learners have diverse needs and staff work to support them. The school receives support from district staff on a consultative basis, including professional development for teachers and special programming for students. As we work to support their individual needs, we are also focused on creating an inclusive and informed community with regards to Indigenous culture and practices.

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

Integrating Indigenous ways of knowing, histories, and traditions into curriculum whenever possible
Sharing Indigenous legends and stories in class and incorporating them in writing activities
Oral story telling units, cultural research projects, Indigenous art making activities
Recognizing Orange Shirt Day – with age-appropriate class discussions
Professional Development for Staff on Infusing Aboriginal Content into the curriculum- Feb. 2021

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

- Integrating recognition activities into the daily announcements as well as regular school assemblies
- Lessons focused on understanding different aspects of Indigenous culture and beliefs and comparing ways of knowing weaved throughout the curriculum
- Art making activities with an Indigenous focus
- Utilizing the talking stick in class discussions and sharing circles
- Building up classroom and library collections with First Nations resources and traditional tales
- Utilizing community resources (speakers, artifacts, field trips, etc.) to support classroom lessons
- Integrating new Core French resources with an Indigenous focus into lessons (grades 5-7)
- Survey students on their retention of information from previous years
- Have students identify questions they have about Indigenous culture and use those questions to drive lessons and activities

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

- Include both data-driven and anecdotal examples
- Give opportunities for student, staff and parent voice

In November 2020, students from grades 2-7 were surveyed on what they had learned about Indigenous culture, both in the present year and from past years. They were also asked if they had any further questions related to Indigenous culture and traditions. This data was shared with staff to address student questions during future lessons and activities. The following is a sample of some of those comments and questions:

First Nations people used cedar to make things.

They are carvers. They have a big history.

Totem poles tell a story.

They respect nature and take what they need.

Their grandma and grandpa are called elders.

They call the cedar tree the "Tree of Life".

I learned that they would sometimes put fish over a tree to smoke and put it in a building to preserve it.

They hunted in groups to stay safe.

They put their creative minds to good use.

We took their land.

They speak different languages.

They used plants to make medicine.

Different groups have different names like Metis and Haida.

The First Nations have something called "The Three Sisters".

I have learned about dancing and how it is a big part of their culture.

I learned that Europeans once put kids into schools and did not let them see their families.

My great grandma was born on an Indian Reserve, she told me it was beautiful but not always peaceful.

We are on First people's land.

I know about hunting, totem poles, dance, fishing, Inuit, and trading.

Some people had to go to schools to learn how to be "regular" including a girl with an orange shirt.

I learned about potlatches. I learned about residential schools.

I learned about how First Nations invented math, and gym games.

I learned about how they used to work in canneries.

The following is a sample of the questions that students continue to have about Indigenous culture:

Why did they take kids to residential schools?

How did they make their houses?

How do they make string to sew with?

How long ago did the first people come to Canada?

How did they have lots of knowledge about nature?

Why did Canadian treat the First Nations badly?

I want to learn about what traditions the First Nations had and more about their history and culture.

How did they cure themselves when they got sick?

What are First Nations people like in 2020?

What are some of their celebrations? I want to learn more about the Metis.

Why did the Europeans want the First Nations to be like them? Why did they hurt children?

Why do they paint their face?

What did they do for fun?

I want to learn more about their legends and history.

Does the First Nation's history affect them now? What did they do when people invaded their territory?

Why are residential schools called "residential schools"?

How do we know the history of early peoples? I want to learn about their art.

How many groups of First Nations people are there in the world?

Did a lot of people survive residential schools? I would like to learn more about Orange Shirt Day.

How did they feel when they were kicked out of their land?

I would like to learn more about the water issues that they are having, I heard about it on the radio.

Why did people think that they could not raise their children?