

## 2022-2023 - Year 1 School Learning Plan

### 1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY

Edith Cavell Elementary School is located in Vancouver's Douglas Park neighbourhood, and serves around 328 Kindergarten to grade 7 students. Due to a seismic upgrade of the 1940s heritage building, the school operated from the Maple Grove swing site in Kerrisdale from January 2021 until May 2023.

This involved six buses transporting students from the Cavell site in the morning and returning them in the afternoon, a trip of about 15 minutes in each direction. This impacted the degree to which parents could be informally involved in school life; as drop off and pick up were happening 5km away from where their children were attending school. This separation also made it more difficult for parents to be formally involved in after school activities such as sports.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic was still a concern through the 2021-22 school year, and the apprehension, anxiety and social distancing protocols associated with it had a negative impact on the health, wellbeing and cohesion of our school community.

Through all this, we stuck with our motto: '**Cavell Cares**: Take care of yourself; Take care of others; Take care of this place'

We celebrate each other through our appreciation for diversity. Our current student population is spread across 14 divisions. Students who are learning English are integrated into our regular program with support from classroom and resource teaching staff. English language learners comprise approximately 17% of our population and speak a variety of home languages including Japanese, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Serbian, Arabic, Italian, German, Swedish, Ukrainian, French, Czech, Portuguese, Armenian, Turkish, Croatian, Hindi, Vietnamese, Hebrew and Russian.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated parent community who actively contribute to the educational experiences at our school in a variety of ways.

- Staff, students and parents work together to set high expectations in all areas of student learning. Goal setting meetings, held early in the year, are an important way to set the direction for the collaborative journey ahead. Throughout the year there are many opportunities for our students to plan, direct and take responsibility for their learning.
- We also provide experiences that showcase student learning including events such as Open Houses, Learning Celebrations, Science Fairs, Pop Up Markets, student voting, our Winter Concert, school wide art projects, etc.

- Participation in a wide variety of athletic pursuits is also celebrated. Our students are great athletes and appreciate the opportunity to play team sports. This year, students had many extra-curricular opportunities including volleyball, basketball, badminton, ultimate frisbee, soccer, Kilometre Club, Intramurals, skiing and Track and Field.
- Consistent with our motto, we encourage students to take care of others. The entire school is engaged in activities which encourage students to develop a broader sense of social responsibility and think about their place in the world. Some of these programs are at the classroom level, while others, such as Jump Rope for Heart, Kindness projects and the Terry Fox Run are school-wide. We have a very strong Buddy Class program.
- In addition to the indoor learning opportunities, once the new school grounds are available to students, Cavell will have numerous outdoor learning spaces with gardening and exploration in mind, inviting classes to extend learning beyond the classroom walls.
- Our school priority is uniting over the spirits of belonging, mastery, generosity and independence, and looking at these spirits through the lens of equity and excellence.
- We are also committed to ensuring our learners are strong readers; as well as being willing confident and active collaborators. We aim for shared decision making through collaborative inquiry.
- Our students are extremely responsible, strong in character, and appreciate leadership opportunities. They are also eager to build school spirit and (with the support of their teachers) raise awareness of current issues such as Climate Change, Anti-Racism, and all matters Indigenous. Our older students also assist younger students with inclusion and fair play, and partake in leadership opportunities for the benefit of our school community.

We celebrate music, art, sports, literacy – reading/ books. We are proud to have had 10 school wide guest performances at our school to create opportunities for community building and new ways of learning.

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

Most of the learners at Cavell demonstrate solid achievement on standardized tests as well as on school report cards, according to teacher assessment. With the change in reporting to include student voice and self-assessment of core competencies, our students are getting accustomed to thinking about their own learning from a critical growth perspective. Some students see themselves as active participants in the assessment of their own learning.

Scanning tells us that generally:

- Students are polite, courteous, respectful and cooperative.
- Students have strong family bonds
- Students are predominantly cared for by family and extended family members
- Students have diverse backgrounds and different life experiences
- Most students enter Kindergarten with school readiness skills, some learners however are not meeting learning targets in the early years
- There is a wide range of strengths and academic levels within individual classes

- Social and emotional wellness is very important as student stress and anxiety levels have increased since COVID.

What's going on for our learners?  
How do we know?  
Why does this matter?



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

Students at Cavell are generally very well supported by their families. They often have access to multiple enriching opportunities outside of school. Data from the Middle Years Development Index, which surveyed grade six students at Cavell indicates that 81% of those students reported participating in organized after school activities at least once per week. Many students are eager to take up leadership opportunities at the school and there are very high participation rates in sports and other programs like clubs and primary, bus and library monitors.

Other observations and findings include:

- The environment at Cavell is caring and supportive and we are working well to engage students in lifelong learning. Data from the Middle Years Development Index supports this notion.
- Asked about feeling connected to and valued at Cavell, 73% of students indicated a high level of connection.
- 87% of students agree with the statement “I feel I have important things to do in the future”.
- Starting with the premise that many things are already working well for some Cavell students, we asked ourselves, “When do we see engaged, focused learning?”

During the 2021-22 school year, we were concerned to see an upward trend of students falling short of expectations and wanted to stop this trajectory.

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

As a staff, we agreed that our focus should be: Belonging - Students at the Centre

We began asking ourselves:

- How can teachers elicit and guide students towards their full potential?
- How can we narrow the achievement gap?
- How can we work towards equity and excellence for all?
- How can we ensure everyone thrives?
- Which learners and which areas will we be focusing on?
- Where are we connected?
- How does this focus connect to the District Strategic Plan?
- How does this focus connect to the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement?
- How does this focus connect to the redesigned curriculum including the big ideas, core competencies, curricular competencies, etc.?

The Redesigned curriculum (big ideas, core competencies, curricular competencies) asks that educators help students set goals for next steps, reflect on progress, self-assess, practice and begin again.

- Literacy is a foundational skill, essential to a child's ability to understand, pursue and accomplish their goals.
- Collaboration: We value strong relationships and open communication to promote the sharing of ideas and practice.
- Cavell teachers must continue to learn and work together to make a difference.
- Excellence: We strive for excellence in everything we do.

As for the goals of the Strategic Plan, we want to engage our learners through innovative teaching and learning practices to connect them to their learning and to achieve increased academic success and building capacity in our community by supporting physical and mental well-being, and **belonging**.

The Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement offers the Mastery goal (to ensure Aboriginal students achieve academic success in Vancouver schools and that they participate fully and successfully) as a key area of focus.

These discussions culminated in our Mission Statement: 'How can we foster and cultivate a culture of collaboration and belonging to enhance equity and achievement for all learners?'

The discussion around 'belonging' led in turn to the questions:

- What elements create the glue that keep us together as a school?
- What is our role as leaders in nurturing this?

Working collectively as a staff to develop a culture of collaboration is a way of creating opportunity for teachers and students to engage in deeper learning and foster belonging.

- How is our own well-being connected to the well-being of others in our learning

environments?

- What is important to us?

Creating a **warm, welcome** atmosphere filled with **joy**, positivity, **passion, knowledge** and **kindness**; a safe, BRAVE space where students can **explore** and **experiment** and where they have a **voice**; a place of curiosity and discovery; an opportunity for students to advocate from their own perspectives; a place where we can celebrate and respond to the diversity of learners; an environment that will nourish the whole learner, help learners to understand their gifts; support them in using their strengths to grow in other areas of their learning life and engender a passion for learning that they will carry with them when they leave the school system.

## 5. INQUIRY QUESTION

Staff pondered how we can foster and cultivate a culture of collaboration and belonging to enhance equity and achievement for all learners. The key questions are:

- How do we affect a sustainable and positive culture of collective action for deep learning, belonging and equity?
- How can we inspire and provide engaging learning opportunities that incorporate student voice and choice and influence their sense of belonging? How do we ensure that every child thrives?

Recognizing that COVID has had a negative impact on the mental health and wellbeing of many students, families and members of staff in our school community, we recognize that restoring and enhancing the self-confidence, comfort and sense of belonging upon which communities depend, will require patience, perseverance and empathy.

Our strategies must therefore include:

- Identify what we already have. Celebrate and amplify it. Can we broaden it and make it more inclusive?
- Recognizing that the most powerful force comes from having common goals, we looked at data as a staff.
- Create conditions for a growth mindset. Three staff members created a survey on “Belonging” for the whole school – we will measure improvements on an ongoing basis.

We looked at the MDI survey data.

Cavell staff are creating opportunities for students to advocate from their own perspectives through:

- Passion Projects
- Genius hour, Science Fair, Heritage Fair, Pop-Up Markets, Class Plays, etc.
- Leading Through Spirals of Inquiry: For Equity and Quality. Authors Judy and Linda worked with a group of school teams, including a team from Cavell, offering their mentorship. The Cavell group created a school wide student survey
- Group projects – all intermediates together - all 6/7's together, all primaries, etc.
- Buddy classes

- We created group art projects (Lunar New Year Dragon), kindness group projects and statements regarding what we love about Cavell.

Staff will continue monthly Primary and Intermediate Conversations at lunch time to share successes and resources and to brainstorm together as a group. Staff is also encouraged to have regular Class Meetings with students (Jillian Katz). We have also initiated a staff Book club: Thrivers: 'The Surprising Reasons Why Some Kids Struggle and Others Shine' by Borba, ED D., Michele. We shared this resource with our parent community and recognized that we have lots of expertise in our community. We can work together, share and draw on each other's strengths to ensure students become the best they can be.

- Engaging Hearts, Minds and Feet.
- Creating a space where students can learn and THRIVE!
- The combined power of Character Strengths nurtured by a community of caring adults.

As per the "Thrivers" book we will focus on the intentional efforts of empathetic adults and the Key Character Strengths needed to thrive: self-confidence, empathy, self-control, integrity, curiosity perseverance and optimism.



## 6. WHAT IS OUR PLAN?

Since we want to ensure that every child belongs and thrives, we realize the word WE is the operative word. We can only succeed as a team. Better Together! The additional spaces at the Maple Grove swing site building allowed us to work collaboratively as a pod of teachers and learning support staff. However, the architectural space only provides for a collaborative learning experience if teachers are willing to

demonstrate symmetry and are willing to learn from each other and support each other as they embark on new learning. Back at our smaller Cavell site we will continue to find creative and collaborative ways of working together. This level of unity allows staff to work together towards a collective goal.

It is difficult to say what will happen in each subsequent year because change does not occur in a linear fashion but in iterative cycles. Therefore, a yearly plan will be to:

- Continue with the “Belonging” goals.
- Implement systemic, structured programs.
- Continue conversations and collaborations to create scope and sequence.
- Work towards a collective and shared foundation.
- Work with our parent community to build understanding and to enlist support.
- Continue offering many opportunities for student voice
- Continue to monitor the levels for each student
- Continue to learn together as a Cavell Team through informal collaboration and during professional learning days.
- Share and document day to day simple stories of success.
- Celebrate successes.
- Ask ourselves, “What is going on for our learners? How do we know? Why does it matter? What are we prepared to do about it?”
- Check and alter plan for improvement.

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## 7. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED?

The Cavell staff discovered that our at risk and anxious learners do not currently have enough confidence or enough character strengths and that we must create more positive opportunities for students to participate, build confidence and find their voice. Through new professional knowledge, the staff realized that this was one area to build on and expand in their classrooms.

Funds were made available for taking programs, joining inquiry projects, group projects, training, and buying books for interested teachers.

In our attempt to ensure each of our learners can thrive, and to narrow the achievement gap, we must focus on the foundation of literacy, a core skill to better ensure academic success in all areas of learning and focus on belonging and kindness. With success in literacy, acceptance and a sense of belonging, individuals can better control their social, emotional and behavioural demands. As educators, we know that it is not about what we want to do but what our students need of us. It is important to meet the students where they are at.

We are focusing on building capacity in the following areas:

- Staff professional development
- Creating high visibility for our successes, celebrations
- Use of outdoor classroom learning, fieldtrips and guest speakers and performances
- Incorporating elements of First Nations Principles of Learning and experiences.

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

The Cavell Team will work through the first four stages of the Spiral of Inquiry in preparation for taking action. Working through ongoing professional learning, teachers will take action through inquiries.

- We still have work to do to better ensure success for every learner.
- We look forward to continuing to collect both quantitative and street level data, ensuring that student voice is heard.

We plan to respond by being adaptive experts. If we see that our efforts are not making a difference, we will scan by observing and listening to our learners to develop another hunch, engage in professional learning and take action again.



## 9. HOW WILL WE SHARE THIS INFORMATION?

We will share our successes in celebrations, school public announcements, assemblies, parent newsletters, displays, installations and sharing stories with each other.

- For our struggling learners, we will continue to communicate with families about their progress and celebrate the little wins. Teachers will document student learning in different forms: video, portfolios, presentations, booklets, etc. By doing so, students reflect on their learning and consciously recognize their level of growth.
- We also plan to host Celebrations of Learning, to highlight the process students undertake to achieve their work of excellence. For the benefit of the parents and the great community at large, it will provide a window into schools of today, highlight the strength of our learners, and increase Cavell pride!





*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?

Cavell supports 8 Indigenous students across all grades. Our Indigenous learners are proud of their culture and are kind, thoughtful and loving community members.

- Our collective efforts have been focused on integrating Indigenous ways each and every day. We are helping others and ourselves with learning and living.
- Staff attend Indigenous Focus Days of Learning and participate in discussions and brainstorming sessions.
- We are learning more about the land we live on and connect learning to the land. Learners of all ages, and in any curricular area, can benefit from connecting to the land. We create opportunities to learn on the land, and from the land. Cavell will support learners in developing an understanding of how the land they are on connects to, or informs, what they are learning. We had to stay off our fields for a long period of time to enable the grass to grow – students saw a direct correlation between their actions and results. We insured that we were supporting the health of the land while we were learning on, and from the land.
- Indigenous Ed resources in library - librarian always has great resources and books available for staff. We acquired more books for the library.
- Speaker: Kung Jaadee (Roberta Kennedy) a professional storyteller, educator and published author belonging to the X̱aayda (Haida), x̱w̱məθkʷəy̱ əm (Musqueam) and Sḵw̱x̱w̱7mesh (Squamish) First Nations did a school wide presentation at Cavell.
- Staff examined their goals in anti-racism and reconciliation, for their own learning and in supporting others.
- We had District Resource Teacher, Indigenous Education & Culture, Tracy Healy visit Cavell. She worked with teachers and intermediate and primary classes. She shared stories and artifacts with our students. She also facilitated a ProD session “Indigenous Education in BC”, which is a three-part module video series. Another session was “Infusing Indigenous Content”, which is a BCTF Indigenous Education Workshop. We also had Cedar Basket weaving sessions with staff and students with Red Cedar Woman, Jessica Silvey.

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

Indigenous acknowledgement at the beginning of all gatherings and acknowledging our commitment to participate in ongoing acts of reconciliation.

- Targeted age-appropriate lessons for all grades on Indigenous views.
- Create learning opportunities where students can connect what they are learning to who they are. Acknowledging that effective learning environments are ones where teachers know learners well, and can explicitly link what is being taught and learned to their lives. This ensures that learners, see relevance, in what they are learning.
- On-going professional development and collaboration with District Indigenous Team Consultant, Mentor and Enhancement Worker, and District Indigenous Knowledge Keepers to work with staff to further develop our understanding of Indigenous people and culture and to support classroom/school-wide projects and programs.
- Increased focused classroom/school-wide workshops and activities for students dedicated to awareness about Indigenous people. We will continue to visit Museums, BC Artifacts Mobile Museum and invite performers and guest speakers.
- We will continue to collaborate with the District Indigenous Team to embed Indigenous content in units of study across the curriculum (Indigenous perspectives in literature, Social Studies curriculum)
- Guest speakers will continue to visit Cavell.
- Continuation of class/grade group field trips such as: Anthropology Museum, Grouse Mountain, district events, Indigenous perspectives Peoples Festival at UBC.
- Incorporating Dr. Martin Brokenleg and Larry Brendtro's philosophy of the "Circle of Courage" into our code of conduct.
- Continue to record Indigenous student learning through the use of the Indigenous Information Management System (AIMS) in collaboration with counsellor and staff members.

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

Cavell staff are committed to continued learning. Learn, reflect, share, repeat. We will be patient but not complacent with our learning. We will educate ourselves further about local Indigenous Peoples and Nations. We will continue to recognize that there is always something new that we can learn, and/or understand at a deeper level.

We understand that learning means creating the space to examine previously held knowledge and understandings. We will connect new ideas and information to currently held understandings and be open to change as needed. We will be mindful, aware and awake regarding the stories we will tell about our role in Reconciliation through education.

We will continue to learn about our learners, both inside and outside of school. Learn where they come from and what they are passionate about. We will continue to develop relationships with learners' families, connect early and often. We will make learners aware of a positive relationship between the teachers and families to create a strong sense of community and belonging for the learner.

We will continue to create systems that support every learner to leave our system with "dignity, purpose, and options". (Networks of Inquiry and Indigenous Education, 2022)