



Vancouver School District

School Plan for Edith Cavell Elementary

Year 2 (2019) of 4 Year Plan, 2018 - 2021

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, current school plans have been carried forward to the 2021/22 school year.

1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

Edith Cavell Elementary is a place of caring staff and thoughtful students. Our motto is:

Cavell Cares

Take care of yourself

Take care of others

Take care of this place

We are part of the dynamic Douglas Park Community. Our current student population is 321 with fourteen class divisions. Students who are learning English are integrated into our regular program with support by classroom and resource teaching staff. English language learners comprise approximately 7% of our population and speak a variety of home languages including Japanese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Serbian, Arabic and Russian. Our students with special needs are similarly integrated into our classes with support from our resource team and school and student support workers. The Cavell community is very stable, with the large majority of our Grade Seven students having begun Kindergarten at Cavell.

We are proud of our warm, welcoming atmosphere. Parental involvement and support are highly valued at Cavell. We are fortunate to have a dedicated parent community who actively contribute to the educational experiences at Cavell 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 the Heritage Fair, science fairs, dance performances and our winter concert. Participation in a wide variety of athletic pursuits is also celebrated. This year, students had many extra-mural opportunities including volleyball, soccer, basketball, badminton, ultimate and track and field. We also continue the long-standing intramural tradition of a floor hockey tournament.

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, the Terry Fox Run and our Global Citizens Club are school-wide.

2A. WHAT DID WE SEE?

Students at Cavell are generally very well supported by their families. They often have access to many enriching opportunities outside of school. Data from the Middle Years Development Index, which surveyed Grade Seven students at Cavell in term one, indicates that 78% 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 programs like Global Citizens Club and Safety Patrol.

Using an appreciative approach, staff agreed that generally speaking, the environment at Cavell is caring and supportive and we are working well to engage students in life long 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. Other relevant indicators: 86% of students agree with the statement “I feel I have important things to do in the future” and 100% indicated that they plan to graduate from college, university or some other training after high school.

Starting with the premise that many things are already working well for Cavell students, we asked ourselves, “When do we see engaged, focused learning?” The answers to this question led us quickly to a focus on “doing” – our students are engaged and focused on learning when they are building things, creating things, working together, teaching each other.

Our second big idea is around risk taking. Thinking about our students’ mental and emotional well being, we are interested in promoting a culture of risk taking and resilience. Asking the question, “When do we see students willing to take risks?”, led us again to focus on “doing”. Students are able to try and try again often when working with their hands or when given the opportunity to choose or direct some aspect of their learning.

Looking at the results from the Ministry of Education’s Student Learning Survey which was completed by Grades 4 and 7 students in the spring of 2018, a strong sense of Cavell as a positive, nurturing place emerges. When Grade 4 students were asked, “is school a place where you feel like you belong?”, 61% reported most or all of the time. When asked “how many adults do you think care about you at your school?”, 51% reported 4 or more and a total of 72% reported more than two. When asked about the statement “I am happy at my school”, 87% reported yes, all or most of the time.

The Middle Years Development Index (completed by Grade Seven students at Cavell in the fall of 2017) provides useful information about the Social and Emotional Development of our students. Two of the social emotional measures on which they collectively scored the lowest are short term self-regulation – “I can calm myself down when I’m excited or upset” (39% below the district average of 50%) and perseverance – “Once I make a plan to get something done, I stick to it.” (41%). These findings, while just a snapshot, seem to support our staff concern about doing more to promote resilience and positive risk-taking in students.

Similarly, the results of the Student Learning Survey indicate that some Cavell students may have some social/emotional challenges that staff should focus on. For Grade Seven students, when asked “Does school make you feel stressed or anxious?”, 70% reported yes, some, most or all of the time. This is considerably higher than the Vancouver School District average of 51% to the same question. For Grade Four students asked the same question, the results were lower, with 40% answering yes, some, most or all of the time.

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

Overall, staff members express that good progress has been made following the commitments outlined in last year's plan. In particular, student experience and confidence with building and coding are well underway. The theme of "Doing, Making, Building" is a work in progress which will continue to require focus and development in year 3. No changes are needed to last year's plan. Additional activities which should further build on our goals are included in our new plan.

3. INQUIRY QUESTION (previously known as "Goal")

As stated above, evidence tells us that our original question is still valid and we are committed to continuing with it as outlined below:

"Can we create greater student engagement and encourage positive risk-taking through a school-wide focus on hands-on experience – doing, making, building?"

4. WHAT IS YOUR NEW PLAN?

Year One (2017-18)

- Staff discussions, planning for the purchase of resources

Year Two (2018-2019)

- Direct engagement with students and community about our focus (school-wide assemblies, newsletters & PAC meetings, bulletin board displays)
- Create and use “Doing Making Building” Kits throughout the grade levels
- Survey students at beginning and end of year about their engagement with “Doing Making Building”, asking for their input on our plan and their comfort level with trying new things (ongoing)
- Professional development for staff – at least one Professional Development day will be dedicated to engaging staff in “Doing Making Building”
- New library resources will be purchased – carpentry, sewing, coding, cooking
- Create posters explaining the Core Competencies featuring photos of Cavell students engaged in hands-on activities

Year Three + Four (2019 – 2021)

Our original activities included:

- Celebrate successes with community at school assemblies, newsletters etc.
- Explicitly link the “Doing Making Building” focus with each core competency at all grade levels
- Review and refine “Doing Making Building” kits – possibly add different disciplines, change / update equipment, review how and when they are being used
- Professional development for staff – at least one professional development day dedicated to ADST (Applied Design Skills and Technologies)
- Lunch and Learns – by staff for staff. Interested teachers will share successful projects and student learning with each other
- Survey students at beginning and end of year about their engagement with “Doing Making Building”, asking for their input in our plan and their comfort level with trying new things

Additional activities added after reviewing our progress this year:

- Develop more textile kits for sewing and handwork
- Work on a school-wide curriculum related to “Most Magnificent School Wide Project” book focusing on Critical Thinking
- Develop and display a school-wide Core Competency timeline where teachers can display examples of work in ADST
- Further develop staff skills in using digital platforms to share student work and communicate with parents
- Maker Fair where students can share ADST projects

5. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED?

Our inquiry question links directly to the ADST curriculum. It is related to all the core competencies as we are interested in developing a greater sense of personal reliance in many of our students. Some supports we will need as we pursue our inquiry:

- Professional Development – guest speakers and workshops for staff
- Lunch and Learns which engage staff in “Doing, Making, Building” (possible led by Cavell staff to share our in-house expertise)
- Theme Kits to be shared school-wide. Ideally, we would like to create a shared resource with equipment and teacher resources for different project areas such as: Woodworking, Sewing, Cooking and Robotics – preferable located in a central location for effective sharing amongst teachers (“A Maker Space”).
- Access to professional development resources such as hands-on workshops, websites and print resources

6. HOW WILL WE KNOW WE’RE SUCCESSFUL?

We intend to engage selected grades of students in a self assessment tool at the beginning and end of each year looking at their comfort with risk-taking and learning through doing. Student self-assessment and year long work relating to the Core Competencies is also relevant to our inquiry. Finally, teacher observation about student engagement will be useful.

7. HOW WILL WE SHARE?

We will share our inquiry question and progress through:

- Celebrations of learning
- Conversations at Goal Setting conferences
- School-wide assemblies
- Bulletin board displays
- Engagement with our wider school community through our newsletter, Twitter feed and PAC meetings
- Classroom use of digital platforms such as FreshGrade and blogs to share information
- Teams have been developed through Office 365 to provide collaborative communication and sharing for staff as part of the district roll out
- Lunch and Learns to support expanded use of technology for communication



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?

There are eight Indigenous learners at Cavell, in a range of classes from Kindergarten to Grade Seven.

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

- Aboriginal acknowledgement is said at school assemblies, usually in an interactive way, asking students to name the Nations
- Resources to support the revised Social Studies curriculum were purchased for several grade levels
- Primary grades continued to use Indigenous books as part of the guided reading program
- Novel studies in intermediate grades included works by Indigenous authors
- Continue to add books by Indigenous authors to collection
- Classes were provided with BC Indigenous Language Maps
- Several classes participated in the Blanket Activity
- Continued commitment to Amanda White, Knowledge Keeper from the Haida Nation, visiting many classes
- Many field trips at a variety of grade levels supported learning about Indigenous cultures – the Museum of Anthropology, the Vancouver Art Gallery, Georgia Cannery, Carousel Theatre’s production of “Spirit Horse”, the Reconciliation Totem Pole at UBC , Why-ah-Wichen Park and the year-long Intergenerational Landed Learning Program at UBC
- Indigenous knowledge was incorporated into many different subject areas including science, mathematics and art
- Classes made use of a variety of resources including the “My Ancestors are Still Weaving” kit by the Museum of Anthropology, videos about smudging and salmon fishing and archival photos of Vancouver

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

- Continue to begin school gatherings with Aboriginal acknowledgement
- Continue to expand collection of Indigenous literature to our Library Resource Centre
- Monitor the progress of Indigenous students through Success Plans
- Further invest in culturally relevant materials for classroom use
- Further develop our understanding of Indigenous cultures as educators through professional development, lunch and learn sessions and a staff book club
- Incorporate student questions from May 2019 student survey as part of curriculum planning

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

In May of 2019, all students were asked to complete an open-ended survey comprised of two main questions: “What have you learned about First Nations cultures, traditions and contributions?” and “What do you wonder about First Nations cultures, traditions or histories?”

The results of the survey reveal that all students have a strong awareness of having learned about First Nations cultures, traditions and contributions. In their responses, they were able to provide examples of what they had learned and show a growing confidence in providing their personal impressions about their learnings. Students listed a wide variety of topics that had been explored including: Salmon, Interconnectiveness, Traditions and Values, Dance, Oral Storytelling, Potlatch, Spirituality, Cedar, Elders and Totem Poles. There was an emphasis and high level of interest in Aboriginal Art at the primary level and on Residential Schools and Reconciliation in the Intermediate grades.

Students are curious and wondering about: Life before the European Settlers, Origins of the First Peoples, Food, Population, Ceremonies, Education, Current life for Aboriginal people, the Role and Purpose of Colonization in History, Land ownership, Level of acceptance / reaction to Provincial and Federal apologies to Aboriginal people, and Justice Issues

Overall, there has been an expansion of student understanding and new depth shown regarding the impact of history on Aboriginal people. Students are still curious about historical issues / information but their questions reveal that they are seeking information related to impact and current life. We continue to see the need to pursue the two areas of focus identified last year:

- A conscious focus on modern Indigenous cultures
- The role of Indigenous people in today’s society related to government, science, literature and beyond