



Vancouver School District

School Plan for Queen Elizabeth School

Year 3 (2021)

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

1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

Queen Elizabeth Elementary is a Kindergarten to Grade 7 school, located next to Pacific Spirit Park near the University of British Columbia Endowment Lands. Built in 1940, the school boasts a unique architecture, with three buildings on one level situated around an interior courtyard, and lots of green space adjacent. We have a very large field area and track that is used by our school and Lord Byng, the neighbourhood secondary school.

Our enrollment has been decreasing for the past several years, with more intermediate than primary classes but next year our numbers will be fairly similar to this year's. We will continue to have 13 enrolling divisions (plus a district class,) from Kindergarten to Grade 7, with 2 Kindergarten classes instead of one. The district ELSP (Elementary Learning Support Program) has been at QE and is part our school community. Next school year we will have approximately 330 students who will continue to enjoy the benefits of our neighbourhood, a family friendly community. Parents are welcomed as partners in their children's educational development. We have a very engaged PAC who work hard to enrich the learning and teaching experience for our students and staff. Queen Elizabeth has traditionally participated in the International Student program, welcoming students from many countries of the world, which enriches the diversity of our school community. Norma Rose Point and other neighbouring schools also send students to Queen Elizabeth when there is no space in the catchment school. The Code of Conduct emphasizes Cooperation, Courtesy, and Care: for self, others and the environment.

Approximately 4% of our students have Ministry of Education designations for additional support for various learning profiles: autism, learning disabilities, chronic and mental health and hearing. We also have several students with Gifted designations.

We have families from various ethnic backgrounds who report speaking several other languages other than English at home. The prevalent language is Chinese, both Cantonese and Mandarin, but we also have many Korean speaking families (both in part due to the International Education Program.)

Some families enroll their children in Queen Elizabeth in grade 6 or 7 as they are hoping to attend the neighbourhood secondary school, Lord Byng when they move to grade 8.

Many of our students take advantage of the various extra-curricular opportunities such as cross-country, choir, running club, volleyball, basketball, track & field and Ultimate Frisbee. Various leadership opportunities also arise during the year and include library monitors, AV crew and student announcers. We also worked with the CST – Byng Community School Team coordinator, who offered to help run Student Playground Monitor program; several gr. 6-7 students were trained, with regular touch back sessions. Students volunteered their time to be an extra friend during recess and lunch. We continued working with various outside groups and offered opportunities for families to register (for a fee) for several after school and lunch programs: Mad Science, soccer, Cross-Fit, Chess Club and Sea Smart environmental clubs and, this year we added Ukulele Kids. Queen Elizabeth operates as a "swing site" for other Vancouver elementary schools who are undergoing seismic upgrades. The on-site portables have already been used to house three schools during the construction work: what are now known as Norma Rose Point, Jules Quesnel and Gordon. In September 2019, we will be sharing our facility with Bayview students and their families. This will bring both challenges, such as scheduling, and of sharing common areas, but also many wonderful opportunities to collaborate, build relationships, friendships and grow together with another school community.

This year's goal:

What strategies, skills and resources best support the continual development of literacy skills for all students with an emphasis on all students meeting expectations in literacy by the end of grade 3?

Additional focus area:

How can direct teaching of SEL skills development and adoption of school-wide SEL programs, enhance the learning experience for all students, in both academic and non-academic areas of school?

2. WHAT DID WE SEE?

Literacy: Last year we kept literacy as a maintenance goal. Primaries continued to have regular meetings discussing student growth, students of concern, resources and strategies. Intermediates met with colleagues. A group also attended the CSL after school series led by Faye Brownlie on instruction and assessment. Reading recovery will also continue at our school. All these proven effective practices carry on as they are embedded in our curriculum and part of our effective practice.

SEL focus: We actually noticed an escalation in referrals and reports to the office, number of student reflection sheets, conversations about behavior, SEL, etc. The adults are more aware and are at different phases in their own learning and implementation but all have embraced the importance of SEL teaching and practices.

Staff completed the DESSA Mini. Data will be recorded and submitted. We are working with district staff, SEL district resource teacher Holly Vivier to help collate and work with the data. This will give us a general snapshot of our students' SEL.

We have begun to make the teaching of SEL intentional. We are at different phases of implementation but, everyone on staff, including SSSWs, and supervision aids have had some Zones of Regulation training. All classes have their own copy of the book, on-line access and various physical tools, chart, etc. This year, we dedicated 2 school professional development days led by district personnel to building staff skills and knowledge. Teachers engaged in valuable discussion, sharing of resources and also created materials. Other resources were purchased: chimes, posters, key visuals, puppets, etc. Some classes use other programs as well, Mind Up, (more details below), but all students are learning common language and opportunity to learn about their emotions and provided a safe place from which they can share.

Other strategies/activities tried this year:

- Class yoga sessions first thing in the morning, twice a week (some classes expanded activity to include setting mats in circle, read mindfulness card, deep, relaxation breathing)
- Intentional teaching of the body, physiological changes and emotions – focusing on recognizing signs of tension, moving from green to yellow, etc.
- Community sharing circles to begin the day – use of talking stick
- 2 minutes of silence daily after lunch to reset and transition into the afternoon
- “Brain breaks” interspersed throughout day – stretching, or on the spot exercise
- Creation of own “Feelings Dictionary”
- WITS, whole body listening
- Social Learning Stories (for both Special Needs students and whole class)
- Focus on proactively preparing students in advance for activities, tests to ease anxiety (studying, test taking and organizational strategies were taught)
- Regular movement breaks & Daily Physical Activity (DPA)
- Consistent use of (Zones or other) language
- 1-10 min check-ins
- “Restitution Training” – “What need are you to fill”
- Restorative Justice practices by the administration and counsellor
- SELC in-service provided to CT, RT, P team and working with the class
- Intergenerational program with seniors in our community
- Second Step
- Counsellor involvement: in-class co-teaching of Zones, girls'/boys' groups, “i-girl” friendship groups, etc.
- Making of stress balls
- Creation, instruction of and use of Ready Body Learning Mind room (RBLM)
- Wiggle cushions and other alternate seating provided
- Use of calm down strategies and safe places around the school
- Use of Indigenous teachings (connected to SEL)

3. WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

As a staff we discussed that the escalation in reported incidences, reflection sheets, etc. may be indicators that we are moving in the “right” direction. We have begun to understand that social emotional learning is at the heart of all we do. Students need to feel cared for, valued and safe in their bodies (physically), minds and hearts. What we also noticed was happening for our students:

- Students became more connected as a class/ mini-community
- Overall greater awareness of “self” and of others, more connections and community building
- Students reported to teachers that they felt “more relaxed, balanced, chill, zen”
- Yoga groups reported an increase in ability to focus, to self-regulate and students reported they felt their peers were calmer/ “calmer energy”
- Students starting to label their emotions with shared common terms and connecting their emotional state to their availability to be present and ready to learn
- More self-awareness, increase of the Zones “tools” to regulate, communicate
- Classroom teachers reported fewer after recess/lunch issues to deal with in the class
- Greater awareness and appreciation of others and their emotional needs/states – “growing understanding of one another”
- Students beginning to gauge their own feelings, not based on what their friends observe. Using this language amongst themselves. Beginning to recognize “size of the problem, identify own/others’ triggers and starting to respect boundaries
- Students more willing to speak about and share feelings/emotions/social “problems”
- Students connecting the Zones language to novel studies and other areas of curriculum/lessons

We have discussed the importance of continuing to embed SEL practices in all areas of the curriculum and throughout the school day and all school related activities. We realize that this journey may take on-going commitment and focus for several more years.

4. HOW HAVE WE SHARED?

In regards to SEL data, we have shared trends in general with our parents and big picture, what is happening for our students. We have listened to parent and staff concerns and observations and tried to be responsive. We brought in Renee Hock, the district Inclusion Resource Teacher to lead a lunch'n learn on racism. We have continued the conversation at staff meetings. Parents are informed of and provide feedback on what they are noticing and conversations that they are having with their children at home. Safe School Together presented to gr.4-7, on Digital Citizenship and the ERASE on-line reporting tool.

We send home regular newsletters and email important notices and reminders. Parents are invited to our school-wide, student led assemblies: Remembrance Day, Earth Day, Pink Day and others.

Our staff, (all but 3 divisions), continued being part of the new CSL (Communicating Student Learning) Pilot Project. Parents were given either 2 or 3 formal, written reports and 3 or more informal opportunities to discuss their children's progress.

We will also continue to use and incorporate established and new ideas:

- Professional development for staff (We have already started to plan our first school-wide Professional Day)
- Primary meetings, intermediate meetings, SAC and Staff meetings
- Report Cards and Conferences (various formats throughout the year)
- Student led assemblies: various topics including: Earth Day and environmental topics, Pink Day
- Bulletin board displays
- Front office showcases
- Regular newsletters and emailed messages, reminders
- PAC and School websites
- PAC meetings
- Sharing of student work and ideas throughout the school hallways and classrooms
- Case meetings; family meetings
- Presentations: Safer Schools Together
- School wide Celebration of Learning
- Staff "lunch'n learns" – with district staff and colleagues presenting

5. WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?

We have included discussion about SEL in various meetings and our school-wide professional days. We spent part of the May Professional Day reviewing this year's SGP. Some of the guiding questions we used:

- What have we tried in the two focus areas of SEL and Indigenous Education?
- What do you see happening for your students as a result of what you tried (in these 2 areas)?
- What was the effect on the student learning and well-being?
- What are you still wondering about?
- What do you hope to try next year?

As mentioned in Section 3, we have agreed that we need to carry on with this goal, and keep it a focus.

- The Professional Development Committee has already begun to plan the first day in September to include a focus on staff team building while looking at overall wellness and continue our journey together towards developing a school-wide approach to SEL practices, even beyond Zones. Many teachers expressed this when asked, "What are you still wondering about in this area?"
- Several teachers attended EASE workshops (focused on anxiety) and would like to continue incorporating the strategies into their daily teaching.
- Staff have also recognized a need to be even more intentional in our SEL teachings, weaving them daily throughout all areas of the curriculum, including the development of the core competencies.
- Looking at creating "breathing spaces" within classrooms (calm down baskets)
- Looking at better use of our RBLM room and the possibility of creating a "Sensory Path"
- Adding to our resources: developing a resource library with kits for EASE, SEL games in the class that can also be used at recess, class fidget toys, calm down kits, exploration of SEL sites and resources (CASEL, Heart Mind, etc. –
- School team that attended the SELC workshops will share ideas, new strategies and resources with other staff
- We will explore ways to develop school-wide, common SEL practices (Zones and others) across the entire school and find ways to include families
- We plan to incorporate mindful or positive sharing messages and practices throughout the school day – such as PA messages to begin the day or after lunch (student birthdays might be announced as well)



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

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

This year we had seven indigenous students in grades 2, 4 and 5.

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

Staff continue to expand their own knowledge, understanding and comfort with teaching and weaving Indigenous content and ways of learning into their teaching.

Professional Development included:

- Indigenous Storytelling workshops
- Most teachers attended various sessions of the Indigenous Education Professional Day and Indigenous Focus Day and brought those teachings into their classrooms
- A variety of resources & literature were explored; we have added both teacher resources and children's books to our library
- Dance and culture
- 8 teachers and principal formed a Book Study group using: *Ensouling our Schools* by Jennifer Katz

Class activities integrated throughout curricular areas, included:

- Sharing circles
- welcoming and land acknowledgment at all gatherings, including staff meetings, some class meetings and discussions
- weaving the "First Nations Way of Knowing"- 7 Sacred teachings – David Bouchard – Metis - students make personal connections to own life
- the Residential School experience and study of "Truth & Reconciliation" , current events, novel studies
- visited and studied history of UBC Reconciliation Pole – sketch and study
- visited and spoke with the carvers at the VSB (the carving of the Reconciliation pole)
- Fort Langley and the Indigenous perspective on settlement
- Project of the Heart
- Hiwus House at Grouse Mountain – with elder talk and connections to the land
- continued and explicit teachings of the Truth and Reconciliation journey, the Residential School Experience
- study of Indigenous music – studied song "Fire Makers"
- study of importance of "place"
- MOA field trips
- Carousel Theatre field trip – "Salmon Girl"
- cultural art projects
- Raven Tales films
- read-alouds and discussions of other literature: loss of Indigenous languages, why?
- art projects, and animal research through Indigenous perspective
- School garden projects – focusing on local and wild plants and how they were/are used for food, medicine and ceremony
- Cultural aspects project: Heritage Fair
- Reading books by Indigenous authors
- Writing their own legends
- Many classes are planning on attending the totem raising ceremony on June 21

Resources included:

- set of videos "Raven's Tales" and accompanying library books (myths and Creation stories), our own teacher compiled a Resource Binder of activities and lesson plans for K-7 information, contacts (ie Susan Point, the Knowledge Keeper, Loretta Williams, weaver,) and further resources, French First Nations, First Nations Reading Recovery books, "Fatty Legs" Novel study/ class set, using Sarah Hudson's resources
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
- N'we Jihan- non-profit groups working with Canadian Youth, empowering and giving a voice/platform thru music
- Purchase of more Indigenous focus books at the primary level
- FNEESC publication – integrating indigenous views in science
- Ray Vickers books (connections and importance to 'place')

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

We will continue building on our own practice and adding to the many activities and resources listed above while supporting all our learners. (tools, on-line sources, websites, novels and other literature, etc.)

Staff are committed to continue developing their own knowledge and understanding and working with one another to share their learning and experiences. We will continue to provide opportunities for students to do the same.

We hope to involve VSB district personnel, elders, story-tellers, authors, artists, and speakers in our school journey towards greater understanding and appreciation. We have spoken to district personnel and other schools to share their stories. Next year, we hope to include a Smudging Ceremony.

Teachers will continue to learn about the land and take advantage of our surrounding forest (Pacific Spirit) - its history and the native species plants and their uses.

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

Staff report that all students are more engaged and interested in learning more about Indigenous and other cultures. Staff commented that it's okay to learn alongside their students. They are conscious of bringing in & accessing authentic resources. Students have begun to ask more critical and deep-thinking questions about what they read, see and hear. They are interested in learning more from the students who have begun to share their community activities and traditions. They feel more comfortable being part of sensitive conversations surrounding the many topics, ie Truth & Reconciliation. Teachers shared that senior students had many deep, meaningful conversations surrounding many topics listed in section 7. They were able to make connections to current events, share stories and communicate their connections without provocation. Students shared that they felt a feeling of empowerment in their new-found knowledge; they felt an ability to be part of solutions in a real world/current way.

Our Indigenous learners continue to develop in all areas of the curriculum. We continue to monitor all our learners ensuring that we all continue to move forward, learning from one another. We invite all students, staff and parents to share in their understanding and provide opportunities for input and respective feedback. For the students in the LSP class, they have shown pride in their heritage and eagerness to share with peers. They have also demonstrated growth in development of their core competencies.