

2022-2023 - Year 1 School Learning Plan

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

Thunderbird, šx^wəx^waʔəs (swok-kvos) Elementary has 212 students whose families come from diverse cultural, linguistic, and economic backgrounds. It is a proud school that is designated as an Enhanced Services site, on the north-east side of the city. Approximately 50% of our students are English Language Learners and 12% of our students meet the requirements for specialized supports for their learning needs. We have a variety of programming to support all our students in the regular classroom setting, such as a well-equipped sensory room, a fine motor area, and our newest collaborative space - the Learning Lab.

Thunderbird has a full-time Youth and Family Worker, Neighbourhood Assistant, and Literacy Teacher. We also have a full-time onsite food services coordinator. We offer a breakfast and a lunch program and provide a variety of healthy snacks to all our learners. Our hot breakfast program regularly serves over 20% of our school population and the hot lunch program caters to approximately 70% of our students. Additionally, KidSafe provides out of school programming for a limited number of referred students during prolonged breaks.

The school shares the site with the Thunderbird Community Centre and works closely with community center staff to plan after school programs and day camps during prolonged breaks and on professional development days. The community center also has before and after school care, as well as a pre-school program. We work collaboratively with the Community Schools Team and have many close partnerships with community groups and agencies such as Society Promoting Environmental Conservation (SPEC), the Sarah McLachlan School of Music, and the Learning Disabilities Society (LDS) of Greater Vancouver.

Coming out of COVID into our first year with relaxed restrictions, our students were able to enjoy presentations on environmental issues from the City of Vancouver and worked closely with our Artist in Residence, Tami Murray, exploring the commonalities shared between us, looking at how the differences between us can forge a deeper community connection through the discovery of self and how we fit together. Further, we were able to provide leadership opportunities through participation in Student Council, PA announcers, playground leaders and equipment monitors. Also, our sports program is back to its regular schedule, offering many opportunities to participate in team and individual sports.

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

(SCANNING)

Our learners come from diverse and rich cultural, spiritual, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds. Approximately half of our learners speak a language other than English at home, and thus qualify for additional English Language Learner supports.

Thunderbird also has a significant Indigenous population with a proud connection to place and culture. We work with our Indigenous Enhancement Worker and outside Indigenous supports to increase our knowledge, awareness, appreciation of, and respect for Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures, and contributions through a variety of cultural and historical teachings. Thunderbird has a strong commitment to reconciliation and works within the lens of the First Peoples Principles of Learning to guide our work.

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

(SCANNING)

Coming out of COVID, schools and other institutions are noticing gaps in connection between themselves and the people they serve; the education system and Thunderbird is no exception. Using 2022 Student Learning Survey Data at the grade 4 and grade 7 level, and the 2021-2022 Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) at the and grade 7 level, we can see a need to increase students feeling of belonging, safety, and security as learners under our care.

Student Learning Survey:

At grade 4, 38% of our learners most of the time, or all the time reported school was a place where they felt like they belong.

At grade 7, 45% of our most of the time, or all the time reported school was a place where they felt like they belong.

At grade 4, 49% of our learners most of the time, or all the time reported school was a place where they felt welcome.

At grade 7, 52% of our learners most of the time, or all the time reported school was a place where they welcome.

At grade 4, 47% of our learners reported they had no adults or did not know if there was an adult who cared for them at school.

At grade 7, 45% of our learners reported had no adults or did not know if there was an adult who cared for them at school.

Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI):

At grade 7, only 5% of our learners are thriving in the Well Being Index, measuring Optimism, Happiness, Self-Esteem, Absence of Sadness, and General Health, as compared to the district average of 24%

At grade 7, 47% of our learners reported a high connectedness to adults at school, as compared to district average of 63%

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

As a school, we will be focusing on increasing the sense of belonging and community building to foster a better learning experience for all learners. We know when learners feel safe, connected, and cared for, they learn better.

This goal links to the Vancouver School Board's Education Plan to improve student achievement, physical and mental well-being, and belonging by ...

- Improving school environments to ensure they are safe, caring, welcoming, and inclusive places for students and families.
- Reporting student results about performance, well-being, and outcomes to the community and using the results to improve the quality and effectiveness of the education and supports provided to students.

This also goal aligns with the First People's Principles of Learning in the following areas:

- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships and a sense of place)
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity.
- Learning involves patience and time.

And it connects to the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement by:

- Working to increase Aboriginal students' sense of pride, self-esteem, belonging, place, acceptance and caring in their schools.

5. INQUIRY QUESTION (FOCUSING)

What strategies and activities can we engage in as a staff to increase student and staff connection and promote a sense of belonging and community to improve student well-being and achievement?

6. WHAT IS OUR PLAN? (PLANNING)

As a staff, we are examining our relationships and interactions with our students on a daily basis to see where we can change and tweak school practice to improve the experience for our learners. We will focus on creating a sense of belonging with the school community at large, and fostering a sense of care, where our learners know the adults in the building are there to help them.

While welcoming, belonging, trust and the general feeling of well-being and positivity about school are intricately linked, we will break our focus down into a three-year plan. Year 1 we will focus specifically on student connection and welcoming and belonging. Year two will focusing on examining student/adult relationships with a goal to improve trust and relationships where all students have an adult whom they can turn to for help. And lastly, for Year 3, we will focus on positive student behaviours and student safety, focusing on promoting pro social behaviours and empathy, while lessening bullying type and mean behaviours.

7. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED? (PLANNING)

In the first year, for our focus on student connection and sense of welcoming and belonging, staff will be engaging in collegial and professional learning, to reflect on what we do now that is working or not working, and to learn and try new strategies and ideas focused on belonging and care. Teachers will explore a professional book and check in with one another throughout the year to share in their strategies, successes and areas that need further stretching.

Teachers will create opportunities linked to the Personal and Social competencies which are a set of abilities that relate to students' identity in the world, both as individuals and as members of their community and society. Personal and social competencies encompass what students need to thrive as individuals, to understand and care about themselves and others, and to find and achieve their purposes in the world. We hope that students will have a strong connection to Thunderbird, staff, and most importantly, their learning.

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

Through the collection of year over year data, using the Ministry of Education and Child Care's Student Learning Survey, we will track key data points, looking at sense of belonging, welcoming, and trusted adults, to determine if we are making a difference for our learners and if we are achieving longitudinal success. We will also take a snapshot of the entire school, using a short school-based survey looking at students' beliefs of safety, connectedness, and belonging at Thunderbird.

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

We will share this information with parents/guardians, students, staff, and other members of the community in numerous ways. Parents will have opportunities for input into the school's goals and to participate in activities that support it through PAC meetings and school events. We will work with the parent community to create joint opportunities that connect students to their peers, teachers, and community. This year, with PAC support, we hosted a Family Literacy Night, a gingerbread making afternoon, a Family Fun Bingo Night, a Bike Fest, and monthly student treat days. Student voice is captured through the student learning survey to help determine goals. Through monthly Superstars assemblies, students will highlight the efforts, achievements, and accomplishments of our students. Also, students deliver monthly messages that are meant to reinforce positive behaviours and expectations. Staff collaborate regularly on the plan. As a staff, we meet frequently to develop goals and strategies, and discuss successes and setbacks to the plan, adjusting when needed.



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?

At Thunderbird, we are working as a team to increase our knowledge, awareness, appreciation of, and respect for Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures, and contributions through a variety of cultural and historical teachings. This goal aligns with District goals but particularly significant in our school community because our many of our community members are of Indigenous ancestry. This goal is practiced each day in a variety of ways, from the daily student acknowledgement of the land we reside during our morning message, to more robust cultural activities. We engage with the community and VSB resources to deliver a rounded program and keep the First Peoples Principles of Learning focal to all we do. In the first half of the year, we welcomed an elder Indigenous member community and parent to our school teach the significance of the Dream Catcher to Indigenous culture, and all students had the opportunity to create their own. During the second half of the year, we worked with the VSB's district Vice Principal for Indigenous Education and our own Indigenous Enhancement Worker to build drums and rattles with our students and have teaching around their use in Indigenous culture. At the end of the year, intermediate students will have the opportunity to canoe in the Tsleil-Waututh territory, connecting with local Indigenous guides to learn about place and the significance of the canoe.

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

Evidence of understanding of Indigenous worldviews and knowledge that has been fostered within the Thunderbird School Community can be seen through the student's acknowledgement of their own learning regarding Indigenous matters, especially with our younger students. The 2022 Student Learning Survey indicates 82% of grade 4 students and 49% grade 7 students see that they are sometimes, most of the time, or all of the time, learning about Indigenous People. These numbers show us that while we are doing many great things, such as listening to story tellers, creating Indigenous art, and learning of Indigenous culture and ways of knowing, there is work to be done. As school we have and will continue to engage Indigenous perspectives and weave them into all we do.

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

We will sustain and enhance our understanding of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge by seeking out opportunities to work with local Indigenous people and experts to guide us in our journey of increasing our knowledge, awareness, appreciation of, and respect for Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures, and contributions. We will continue to work with in framework Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement, First Peoples Principles of Learning, Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, and the VSB's Education Plan 2026 to lead us in the work need to move reconciliation forward at Thunderbird.