

2022-2023 - Year 1 School Learning Plan

1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY

Southlands is situated on the edge of Pacific Spirit Park in the Dunbar/Southlands neighbourhood of Vancouver, on the unceded and traditional lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people.

Our school has the privilege of being the catchment school for the members of the Musqueam community. Thirty-one percent of our students identify as Indigenous and most of these students reside on the Musqueam reserve. The Southlands staff is committed to bringing Indigenous knowledge, language and culture to all students with the support of parents, caregivers and Elders. Many items of art created by Musqueam weavers, carvers and printmakers are displayed in the halls of the school. Two years ago, the school was honoured to be given a Musqueam flag which stands proudly in front of the office along with the flags of Vancouver, British Columbia and Canada.

Currently, we are the only public school in Vancouver with the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program, K-7. Southlands has been an authorized IB school since 2013. All of the enrolling teachers and most of the non-enrolling teachers hold the Level 1 PYP Certificate. Students in the PYP program are given many opportunities to practice acts of local and global citizenship, to participate in transdisciplinary learning and to share their learning in a wide variety of ways. Students are instructed in French from Kindergarten to Grade 7. We celebrate the intellectual achievement of students through Exhibitions of Learning.

For the last three years, our school goal has been around **belonging**. We believe that we have created a strong sense of belonging as is evident through attendance data, the Student Learning Survey, and anecdotal evidence. We have prioritized students' mental health and well-being through adopting different approaches to social-emotional learning such as MindUp, Zones of Regulation, Open Parachute, and the Ruler Approach. We have been working toward reconciliation by acknowledging territory each day. We brought in a Musqueam elder to teach cedar weaving to every class. We meet monthly with the Education Department at Musqueam. This spring, we are having a house post carved by an artist from Musqueam in partnership with the VSB Indigenous Education Department.

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

(SCANNING)

- Our students' strengths are in their ability to welcome and integrate new students, to accept and celebrate individuals for who they are. Our diversity is our strength.
- We currently have 225 students enrolled. Nineteen percent of our students are learning English as an additional language. There are fifteen different home languages spoken.
- Student voice is collected through empathy interviews, our NOIE Inquiry project and the Student Learning Survey. For example, in the 2022 – 2023 results, 90% of grade 4's and 76% of grade 7's stated that school is a place where they feel they belong.
- We are also aware of a number of students whose literacy skills are below grade level, due in part to lack of attendance during the 2021 – 2022 school year because of COVID-19. **Therefore, our new school goal is in the area of literacy, particularly reading.**

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

(SCANNING)

Street data tells us that students want to be at school and want to learn. Students who join our school from other catchments usually prefer to stay at Southlands when their home school offers them a spot. Families who have been accepted cross boundary apply for their younger siblings to come to Southlands rather than their neighbourhood schools. Some students tell us that they did not feel included and did not have friends at other schools, but they do at Southlands. Referrals to the office for behaviour problems have decreased significantly over the past three years. Anecdotal data shows that students value reading, want to do well, and are increasing in their confidence.

Map Data: The CSL tool generates data reported by teachers. At the end of June, 2022, in Language Arts, 44% of students K – 7 are applying and extending, which means 62% are beginning and developing. This is a measure of both reading and writing. There was insufficient data to assess 2% of the students. In the fall of Sept. 2022, DRA results indicated that in K – 7, 52% of students were reading below grade level. Other data can be found in Library Statistics. Our 225 students currently have 609 books checked out. So far this school year there have been 8,173 books checked in and out.

Satellite Data: The Student Learning Survey indicates that 75% of grade 4s and 70% of grade 7s believe they are getting better at reading. All students have frequent access to the Southlands library which is open between 9:00 and 3:03 pm Monday – Friday.

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

Our focus is on all Southlands students, but in particular, those in grades 1, 2, and 3. Reading confidence is linked to wider school success and our hunch is that an investment in time and resources for students in these grades will increase the likelihood that they will achieve in intermediate grades. We believe that a student's reading proficiency impacts their mental well-being. We also believe that this is an equity issue to be addressed, as families with privilege may be more likely to support their child's reading development. For our Indigenous learners, it is our hope that by strengthening their literacy skills, we will increase their confidence in learning across the curriculum with a belief that they are working toward mastery. Establishing respectful relationships between students, their families and staff members is an essential part of this work.

This work connects to the AEEA goals of Mastery, Belonging Culture and Community. We believe that these goals are linked and inseparable. When a student feels that they belong, they feel safe enough to take risks in their learning. When their culture and community are represented and recognized, they feel supported in taking those risks to be a better reader.

This goal connects to the big ideas of the English Language Arts Curriculum in that we recognize that language and stories are a source of creativity and joy, playing with language helps us discover how language works, stories connect us, and curiosity and wonder lead us to new discoveries about ourselves and the world.

5. INQUIRY QUESTION (FOCUSING)

If we invest time and resources in our primary students' reading skills, will we see improved literacy results, school wide at all grade levels? Will improved literacy skills then lead to feelings of belonging and mental well-being as students are able to fully participate in their learning communities with peers?

Our learning community has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in that a significant number of students did not come to school between March 2020 and September 2021. As well, we believe that the stress and anxiety felt by students and their families during this time had a negative impact on learning.

6. WHAT IS OUR PLAN? (PLANNING)

Our resource and primary teachers have worked together to design and implement a literacy program for students in grades 1, 2, 3 in which students are grouped with others at their level and taught strategically. We as a staff also advocated for support with a District Resource teacher and are working collaboratively with that teacher. We also made reading the goal of our NOIE Inquiry project for the Intermediate grades, and used funds from that grant to purchase reading materials that are new and appealing to older students.

Year 1: Pilot the Primary Literacy Groups and the NOIE Inquiry. Establish a partnership with the One to One Literacy organization.

Year 2: Engage in professional development for reading instruction for all teachers. Expand the Literacy Groups to include grade 4. Continue to work with DRT. Evaluate the results with DRA and CSL tools. Continue with the One to One volunteers.

Year 3: Adjust the program as necessary.

7. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED? (PLANNING)

- Professional development for all teachers in learning to read, reading to learn, and reading to transform.
- Access reading materials that are culturally appropriate, engaging, and levelled appropriately.

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

- Baseline data will continue to be DRA results and CST results.
- Student Learning Survey results will also provide evidence.
- Anecdotal data will inform us about individual student's improved skill and confidence.

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

We will share this information with the community through bi-weekly school newsletters, assemblies and special events, classroom newsletters, conferences with families, collaboration with community groups like the Vancouver Public Library, One to One Reading, and the Network of Inquiry and Indigenous Education (NOIIE).



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?

- Drum-making with District VP of Indigenous Education and whole staff professional development on drumming
- Cedar weaving with an Elder from Musqueam
- Invitations to Elders from Musqueam to speak at assemblies
- Daily Land Acknowledgement read by students on Morning Announcements
- Wrap around support for Indigenous Learners
- The Indigenous Support Worker knows each student, Indigenous and non-Indigenous
- Indigenous Support Teacher teaches one day/week in classes
- NOIIE Project focusing on strengthening Indigenous students' literacy skills
- Partnership with the Fraser River Discovery Centre who have a Letter of Friendship agreement with Musqueam, and who are providing Southlands with professional development and student learning experiences for no cost.
- We will be having Sports Day at Musqueam this year

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

One form of evidence is on the interior and exterior walls of the school. We have a mural on the wall by the main entrance painted by students with the guidance of a Musqueam artist. The interior walls have many examples of Indigenous art, by both students and professional artists, including a carved model canoe and a child's woven shawl. We hold our Sports Day at Musqueam. We welcome families to the school for special events. We meet monthly with the Musqueam Education Department. This spring, a carver from Musqueam has begun a house post for our school, which will be installed in September.

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

- Continue to build relationships with families
- Continue to develop relationships between the school and the different departments at Musqueam, especially the Education Department, Language Department, Recreation and Health Departments.
- Continue to look for professional learning opportunities that will allow us to understand Indigenous perspective and knowledge more fully
- Continue to refer to the First Peoples Principles of Learning in our lessons, collaborative planning meetings.
- Book Club for staff with Jo Chrona's *Wayi Wah Indigenous Pedagogies: An Act for Reconciliation and Anti-Racist Education*
- Continue to work with all students and families to repair harm caused by racist acts or words
- Centre our marginalized students in our planning to ensure equity of resources as well as equity of representation, recognition, cultural sensitivity and social justice.