



2022-2023 - Year 1 School Learning Plan

1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY

Located in a beautiful and quiet setting on the edge of Bobolink Park, David Oppenheimer Elementary services students in the River District and surrounding Fraserview area. We currently anticipate an enrollment for next year of 430 students from K-7. Our population is varied with about 5% of students with identified special needs and 21% English Language Learners. Students at Oppenheimer are academically focused, come to school ready to learn, and expect to be successful. Our community, students, and parents view the school with pride.

David Oppenheimer Elementary School currently enrolls approximately 420 students and employs 50 staff. We are a culturally diverse community of learners from Kindergarten to Grade 7. Our population is trending upwards, and we are currently organized into 18 divisions. Our 32 language groups create a broad multicultural mix. Our learners come from a vast array of countries and continents and have many cultural experiences. Oppenheimer Elementary receives support from the VSB enhanced services team. A small number of students participate in the VSB Food for Schools lunch program, and we are supported in-house by a CST Youth and Family Worker. This staff member provides our families with attendance support, food and mental health security and student behavioural support. We also receive services from the Community LINK Schools team to run after-school programming for students. In addition to our typical school-based clubs and sports, this year we were able to run art, science and sports-based extra curriculums free of charge through our Community Schools Coordinator.

As a school, Oppenheimer is characterized by a history of excellent teaching, successful traditions, and strong parental involvement. Our location alongside Bobolink Park allows for extensive outdoor educational experiences. Oppenheimer teachers and support staff bring a vast array of experience, knowledge, and teaching specialties to share with the learning community. The staff are committed to innovative teaching and Oppenheimer is known for having a strong academic program that sets students up for success. Many teachers make the BC curriculum and VSB Ed plan work in everyday ways in their classrooms by using collaboration, team-teaching and cross-grade and cross-curricular integration as mainstays. We are also proud of our extensive music/band program and athletics teachers who offer after-school sports experiences for a variety of grade levels.

Through the generosity of the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and their outstanding fundraising efforts, Oppenheimer students continue to enjoy enriched programs such as camp, visiting performers, authors and teachers, field trips, and dance. We have parent participation in many of our school events and parents actively participate in monthly PAC meetings. They have been pivotal in developing and supporting a variety of educational initiatives including shifts in curriculum, communicating student learning, supporting new and emerging technologies, supporting new families, and supporting playground and outdoor classroom beautification and improvement plans.

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

- Academic achievement, social-emotional development and physical health and wellness are all equally valued by our student population.
- Oppenheimer has an energetic and curious student body. We have strong learners who are kind, respectful and hard-working. Our student population represents many diverse backgrounds and cultures, a wide range of socioeconomic statuses, ethnicities, and family structures. Around 20% of students have learned English as an additional language at school. In many cases with dedicated support to develop their language skills, students' level out of English language learning support as they reach the intermediate grades.
- David Oppenheimer Elementary school students are in the initial stages of their academic journey and are focused on developing foundational skills in various subjects such as mathematics, language arts, science, social studies, and physical education. They engage in a variety of learning activities, including classroom instruction, group and individual project-based learning, and hands-on experiments. We have a strong tradition of inquiry learning and students are often engaged in projects and activities that are driven by their areas of interest and allow them to be creative, outside of the box thinkers. Teachers allow students to present and share their learning in a variety of styles and formats. In terms of self-assessment, students are given both choice and a voice in what they are learning and how they are doing at regular intervals throughout the year.
- The student population at Oppenheimer includes students with diverse learning abilities who may receive additional support or accommodations to ensure their academic success. We have several student support staff and resource teachers who provide individualized and small group assistance to these students.
- Oppenheimer Elementary school students are known for their curiosity, energy, and enthusiasm for learning. They are at a stage of rapid cognitive, emotional, and social development, and we often prioritize fostering their social skills, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. Extracurricular activities such as sports, arts, music, and clubs are highly valued and well attended, providing opportunities for students to explore their interests and talents beyond the core curriculum.
- David Oppenheimer Elementary is a safe learning environment where students and staff are welcoming and inclusive. The Code of Conduct for Oppenheimer is "ORCAS – at Oppenheimer we are Respectful, Caring and Safe" and this is how students are expected to conduct themselves in all areas of school life. Students do their best to learn; are well mannered; take care of each other; and protect the environment. To promote the Code of Conduct, we encourage our students to participate in leadership and school spirit-building activities. Students from various classes volunteer for school helping roles to become morning announcers, assembly hosts, reading and big buddies and helpers on the playground and lunch monitors. Intermediate students take part in our student council. We have several theme days and fundraising events throughout the year where students on Oppenheimer's Student Council rise to the occasion to willingly take on a variety of leadership roles. Our students value their charitable work and regularly raise money for worthy causes including Children's Hospital, the Greater Vancouver Food Bank and Cancer research.

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

(SCANNING)

For literacy progress the school is using school-wide assessments of 3 Step Write, DRA (Primary), Vernon (Intermediate), KTEA 3 (for struggling learners). We are also adding structured literacy assessments that delve into phonological and phonemic awareness and comprehension. These assessments not only help us guide teaching but also point to students who may be struggling and in need of extra support in resource, additional assessment or supports beyond Tier 2 supports (based on a Response to Intervention model) or counselling. Staff access programs such as, Wordly Wise, Read Theory, Heggerty and phonological awareness assessments, running records and other sources that share how our students are doing with reading and comprehending what they read to make meaning.

Teachers assess students in Writing from Grades 1-7 using a variety of assessment tools and sample pieces from each term of work. Assessment tools and strategies used for writing include assessing formal writing samples (3-day writes) using the BC performance standards to establish a baseline. Popular assessment evidence collected with intermediate grades includes writing checklists from Adrienne Gear, teacher/student writing conferences, self-assessments, timed writing and reading samples by grade to assess fluency and weekly practice writes, generated from picture books. Report card results are also collected and collated to provide additional evidence of how well students are doing in writing and comparing results from term to term.

All students not yet meeting expectations or approaching expectations get identified support through our resource team. These students were given supports for English as a Second Language, Learning Assistance, or more directed in-class or support using small group instruction, targeted resources, and specific strategies to improve reading and written fluency as well as output. Assessing our students in the latter half of the year (Jan-May of 2023) included the School Wide Write and Report Card information. Students who were absent or were unable to produce written work for assessment purposes were not included in the overall scanning of evidence. Partial data for School Wide Writes and FSA results from November 2022 were available as additional data collection points for Grades 4 and 7. Final report cards were not available at the time of submission for this school plan overview. They will be included in next year's school learning plan to build on our work from this year.

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

At Oppenheimer, we are in our first year of working on writing as a school learning goal. This focus on writing has been one of the key elements to our literacy planning, assessment, and professional development. The concept of moving students along a writing continuum until a larger number of them are meeting or exceeding expectations has been a primary objective for which we have seen measured success.

This goal relates to Goals 1 and 2 of the VSB Education plan 2026:

- GOAL 1: The Vancouver School Board will improve student achievement, physical and mental well-being, and belonging by increasing literacy, numeracy, and deep, critical, and creative thinking.
- GOAL 2: The Vancouver School Board will increase equity by eliminating gaps in achievement and outcomes among students.

Some of the creative practices that Oppenheimer teachers are using to teach and inspire students to write include:

- Using Story Workshop to spark creativity and begin teaching elements of good story telling.
- Peer editing and writing conferences with the teacher.
- Showing and sharing good writing (modeling and examples)
- Creating student friendly' rubrics to use during writer's workshop and referring to these to self-assess and check on editing.
- Creating a book of good literacy lessons to teach writing, comprehension, and vocabulary building.
- Exploring writing in different formats and lengths so all students, despite their level, experience success
- Providing both inspiration and motivation in writing lessons to spark ideas and encourage output.

Writing is an essential literacy skill that teachers spend a lot of time teaching. Along with the above strategies, writing programs in early primary classes go hand in hand with reading and reading instruction. Many of our primary teachers use the teaching of early reading skills to dovetail into teaching letter formation, labelling drawings with words, and teaching students to include every sound they hear when writing for activities such as story workshop or journal writing. Mid-year report card results for Grades 1 and 2 indicate to us that:

- 28% are not yet meeting (of those 9/12 or 83% are English Language Learners)
- 67% are minimally or fully meeting
- 5% are exceeding

These results show that we are building a strong and literate skill set into our primary students. We are also managing service to and support for our ELL learners as they build the foundation of their language learning journey.

Many students' self-assessment comments indicated that they enjoyed the challenge of reading and writing and the format of test taking in the assessment feedback for the Foundation Skills Assessments that took place in November for Grades 4 and 7.

62.5% of our Grade 4 students participated in the written component of the FSA. Overall, our Grade 4 learning group had strong results. 29% of learners were emerging, 44% were on-track, and 27% were exceeding in writing skills. These scores were compared with our end of year school wide writes where all students were included in the assessment. By the end of the year, 70% of students were meeting or fully meeting in writing, and 18% were exceeding expectations. This shows a marked growth in writing where we are improving outcomes and closing achievement gaps for students as they reach intermediate grades.

66% of our Grade 7 students participated in the written portion of the 2023 FSA. At the time of the assessment, none of our Grade 7 learners were in the emerging stages of writing. We had 86% that were 'on track' and 14% of our writers were 'exceeding expectations'. How this compares to end of year results in writing for Gr. 7 shows that focusing on writing as a school goal has an impact on the success of our learners. Grade 7 results of school wide writing (3 day write process) captured 97% of our Grade 7 population. The results of our end of year snapshot of writing were outstanding. We had an increase in the number of students 'exceeding' writing expectations for the end of Gr. 7 to 26%. Alternatively, the end of writing assessment showed that 74% of our Grade 7 learners fell into the 'meeting' or 'fully meeting' categories for writing according to the BC performance standards quickscales for personal writing.

What this data tells us as teachers is that as a school, we are already changing the landscape of our literacy teaching and student results. A renewed focus on literacy and an emphasis on teaching directly to skills such as reading, reading comprehension, vocabulary development and writing fluency is beginning to pay off. We will continue to expand on this goal to offer more and improved learning opportunities for our Oppenheimer students and our literacy goal evolves.

5. INQUIRY QUESTION (FOCUSING)

- Our Inquiry question: How do we develop and improve on writing fluency so that more students from K-7 meet or exceed expectations as measured by writing assessments and Language Arts report card marks.

The Ministry of Education defines literacy is the ability to understand, critically analyze, and create a variety of forms of communication, including oral, written, visual, digital, and multimedia, to accomplish one's goals. The fundamental components of literacy are applied in all areas of learning.

As educators, it is our responsibility to continually assess and refine our school goals to ensure the most effective education for our students. While social emotional learning (SEL) was a valuable focus for Oppenheimer in recent years, our learners are ready for a shift in school goals from SEL to learning goals, namely literacy with a first-year emphasis on writing. This shift is based on careful evaluation of our students' needs, the importance of literacy skills in today's information-driven society, and the potential long-term benefits it offers to students.

In today's rapidly changing world, literacy and writing skills are more important than ever before. As our society becomes increasingly reliant on technology and information, the ability to comprehend, analyze, and articulate ideas through written word is crucial. By focusing on literacy and writing, we empower our students to effectively navigate the digital age, engage with diverse perspectives, and communicate their own thoughts effectively.

Literacy and writing are not merely about reading and composing texts; they also cultivate critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Proficient readers and writers learn to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and form their own opinions based on evidence. These skills enable students to approach everyday challenges with creativity, logic, and well-developed patterns of thinking, enhancing their overall abilities in multiple areas of life.

Developing strong literacy and writing skills has lifelong benefits for students. Proficient readers and writers are more likely to pursue higher education, succeed in the world of work and related tasks, and actively participate in civic and community engagement. By prioritizing literacy and writing, we are equipping our students with skills that will serve them well beyond their school years, ensuring they are prepared for a future filled with literate opportunities.

6. WHAT IS OUR PLAN? (PLANNING)

Writing is simply the writer and the reader on opposite ends of a pencil; they should be as close together as that. - Jay R. Gould

Planning for and assessing our progress in writing remains a crucial goal, we believe the shift in our school learning plan to prioritize literacy learning (including reading, writing, speaking, and listening) is a necessary step to further address students' academic needs. The long-term benefits of this shift include reading instruction and an added focus on oral language allows us to prepare students for the demands of the future, enhance critical thinking skills, close achievement gaps, and target lagging skills.

As a focus and area of inquiry, a broader focus on literacy as our school learning goal aligns well with the VSB Education Plan and BC curriculum which places an emphasis on supporting deeper learning in concept-based and competency-driven approaches that focus on achievement in Literacy and Numeracy. (<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/rethinking-curriculum>). By changing our emphasis to include all areas of literacy learning, we are equipping our students with the essential skills and knowledge they need to thrive in the 21st century and become active, engaged citizens in our ever-changing world.

Some of the discussion around planning include:

How can the primary students improve on or expand writing skills to get ready for Intermediate grades?

- Free writing (based on a picture prompt for interest)
- Journal writing that is topical or in areas of interest to students.
- Expanding on and adding details to writing (e.g., juicy, and triple scoop words etc.)

What are the things we are doing that are working?

- Writing in/as a community of writers
- peer editing and conferencing.
- showing and sharing skillful writing to get models and examples.
- using 'kid friendly' rubrics adapted for the learners.
- exploring writing in a variety of genres and themes
- providing both inspiration and motivation to keep going with ideas.

What should we add next year?

- provide a venue/platform for performing with writing s/a- lunch clubs for poetry slams/cafes, plays, folktales, reader's theatre, storytelling.
- provide performance-based opportunities where students tour the school and show their writing to other classes and make a product (e.g., buddy classes or going on a writing tour)
- have monthly themes for writing that teachers can choose to use with classes (e.g., September is writing stories, October is poetry month etc.)

What Professional Development can we create in Year 2?

- Going over the new CSL info and showing how process and output are equally important.
- Add a deep dive into the sliding scale of writing rubrics and how teachers see this fitting into the CSL language and our own teaching and assessment.
- Professional Inquiry-based book clubs:



- “Powerful Writing Structures: Brain Pocket Strategies for Supporting a Year-Long Writing Program” by Adrienne Gear
- “This is How We Teach Reading...And It’s Working!” By Heather Willms
- Both book clubs will be open to teachers and support staff

The original “Writing Power” is well used in our school in many classes on an individual teaching basis. We would like to consolidate the ‘best of’ ideas from Adrienne Gear’s more recent book, “Powerful Writing Structures” and learn how this resource can help support and supplement writing instruction throughout the school. The Heather Willms book is new to our staff this year. Many of our primary staff are interested in this book after attending professional workshops on structured literacy. We would like to use this resource to develop and build on our knowledge of the 5 pillars of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension in K-3.

- Staff to continue attending workshops on literacy with Willms and Gear which will be available next year to teachers in Vancouver.
- Principal to provide support and guidance for assessment and tracking of literacy growth in primary and intermediate grades.

SSA’s work together through professional development and meetings to create supports for adapted literacy materials, visuals, and personalized programs to support literacy (steps to support success and increase equity for students who have unique needs and imposed conditions to learning).

7. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED? (PLANNING)

- Requesting funds for Professional Development (Collaborative Inquiry Fund) to purchase the resources for our literacy inquiry book clubs for staff.
- Providing opportunities to attend district and school-wide professional development on literacy.
- Support from SLP on working with oral language and students who struggle with language-based disorders.
- Support from School Psychologist to help with planning and programming for students with reading-based learning disabilities and written output difficulties.
- Renew our commitment to collaborative literacy support with a district mentor/staffing to explore and continue our journeys with Story Workshop, Writer’s workshop, and structured literacy topics. Working with District Staff to improve our comprehensive literacy programming across the school

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

- Follow-up with our reporting results from the end of year report cards in Grades 1-7
- Continue to collect and compare different data points (SWW, FSA, report card results and teacher assessments of literacy)
- Develop a writing and language arts scope and sequence that is school based as specific to our Oppenheimer learners.
- A growing awareness that reading and writing development are linked and progress together with practice.
- An increase in student self-assessment, growth in peer and self-editing skills and engagement in writing conferences
- Regular check-ins – primary and intermediate meetings to discuss next steps in the areas of Literacy development and what we are seeing/scanning at different grade levels.

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

- Newsletters
- Recognition for Literacy successes (classes, students, celebrations of learning)
- Bulletin Boards and displays.
- Student oral presentations and performances that share literacy learning.
- Assemblies and performances for parents
- PAC meetings
- Student report cards
- Assessments of learning
- District opportunities and calls for student writing or presenting oral language (public speaking etc.)



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?

- Regular territorial acknowledgment at assemblies, staff meetings and in our daily morning announcements.
- Classroom teachers integrated Indigenous cultural awareness into their units of study wherever possible across the curriculum.
- Exploration of the Indigenous resources that are part of the NFB of Canada and related resources online.
- Two art-based projects that involved whole school participation and recognition of the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation – creation of Cedar roses with a traditional cedar weaver from the Quatsino and Tlowitsis Nations and our Day of Dance with an Indigenous Hoop Dancer.
- Purchase of Indigenous literature-based units for K-7 that are housed in our library.
- Classroom visits from elders, artists, and Indigenous performers
- School Field trips to the Indigenous celebrations, practices, and sustainable practices (Indigenous Day of Drumming, visits to Pacific Spirit Park etc.)
- Implemented First Peoples Principles of Learning in the classrooms.
- Continuing to expand on our Indigenous collection of picture books and other literature in our school library that is consistently used in our classrooms (many books were added to this collection this year).
- School wide participation in Orange Shirt Day as well as cultural celebrations and school-wide activities to honour our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation
- This goal relates to Goal number 3 of the VSB Education Plan that calls for all of us to continue our Educational Journey with First Nations, Metis, and Inuit People's by:
 - Increasing knowledge, awareness, appreciation of, and respect for Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures, and contributions.
 - Aligning its policies and practices in a manner consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
 - Engaging and gathering with the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), S^kwxwú7mesh (Squamish) & səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

11. WHAT EVIDENCE OF UNDERSTANDING OF INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEWS AND KNOWLEDGE HAVE BEEN FOSTERED WITHIN YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY? PLEASE SHARE HOW IT IS EMBEDDED THROUGHOUT.

- There has been growth and participation in using as many integrated resources as possible to teach about residential schools and the tragedies that took place in our history with Indigenous children.
- Two of our Indigenous students participated in and helped create our new Indigenous Garden at Oppenheimer. They initiated art projects and painted signs for the garden in their traditional language to label plants and mark the creation of the garden in a meaningful way.
- Increased number of books by Indigenous authors in our library.
- Our Student Learning Survey showed an awareness of First people’s teachings and an appreciation for new ways of learning that bring richer experiences and sharing to the classes every day.
- Due to our consistent daily land acknowledgement, students and staff now have an understanding and appreciation of the history of the land on which our school was built.

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

- Online videos and resources
- Purchase new Indigenous focused library books.
- Professional Development (including our annual Aboriginal Focus Day).
- Revisioning the ORCA – working with a local Indigenous artist to re-brand and recommit our school to environmental awareness and protection of these important ocean animals that are integral to our Westcoast people’s culture and way of life.
- Art projects and classroom teaching that honours tradition but remains respectful and aware of cultural appropriation and theft.
- Working with our Indigenous allies and staff to spread Indigenous learning resources.
- Maintain and expand our Indigenous Garden that was created this year at our school.