

2022-2023 - Year 1 School Learning Plan

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

Dr. R.E. McKechnie Elementary School enrolls a diverse student population of 288 students from K-7. All students, including those with diverse needs and English language learners, are well integrated into a sound learning environment that reflects their individual and group needs.

We provide opportunities for all students to get involved in extra curricular activities including sports and clubs both before school, during school and after school. Not only does this provide a multitude of learning opportunities, it also contributes to a welcoming and inclusive learning environment for our entire school community. The clubs and after school programs provided to our students cover a wide variety of disciplines from gardening, to knitting, coding, drawing, acting, singing, creative writing, baking and of course a multitude of sports including track, cross country, soccer, volleyball, basketball, ultimate and badminton.

All students are offered many ways to develop physically and mentally in our school community. Our teachers often work in collaboration in similar grade groups or buddy classes to help provide our students with diverse learning opportunities from a variety of educators to help improve student achievement in academics as well.

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

Our students meet or exceed expectations in all academic areas. A noticeable change in student population is surfacing, with higher needs in social emotional learning and overall independence and responsibility.

Middle Years Development Index (MDI) data collected from grade 6 students suggests that intermediate students at our school perform well in areas such as self-awareness, responsible decision making and self-regulation but are trailing the district average in optimism, pro-social behaviour and the absence of worries.

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

(SCANNING)

In addition to data collected through the MDI survey conducted by UBC, individual classroom teachers have identified areas of focus for their students through direct observation, student written work, class discussions and assessment. Many teachers have also collected data from students themselves through self-assessment, asking them “Which domains do you (the students) find most challenging?”

The 11 domains of Executive Functioning are: Planning, Time Management, Task Initiation, Organization, Problem Solving, Flexibility, Working Memory, Emotional Control, Impulse Control, Self-Monitoring, Attentional Control.

In our two grade 6/7 classes, teachers focused on Time Management, Impulse Control, Attentional Control and Task Initiation through a series of lessons. Students kept weekly journal entries, tracked their progress, identified strengths and challenges, and outlined strategies for improvement. They then completed a self-evaluation to see what they had learned, how improvements/challenges impacted their daily life, and what needed continued attention. This is just one example of how individual teachers used student voice to guide their work.

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

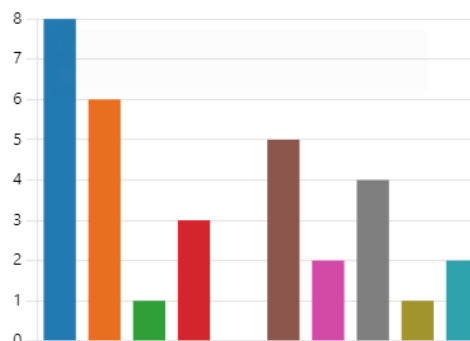
The Professional Development committee polled staff at the end of last year on emerging areas of concern in their classrooms. Executive Functioning was identified as an area of challenge for students and thus has become the focus for our community of learners.

2. What theme or topic would you like to see professional development offered on next year? (0 point)

Please choose your top 3 priorities.

[More Details](#)

Executive Function awareness a...	8
Self-regulation	6
Anxiety	1
SEL (Social Emotional Learning)	3
Awareness of autism spectrum ...	0
ADST ideas and integration into...	5
Writing focus	2
Reading focus	4
Math and Numeracy focus	1
Art and art projects	2

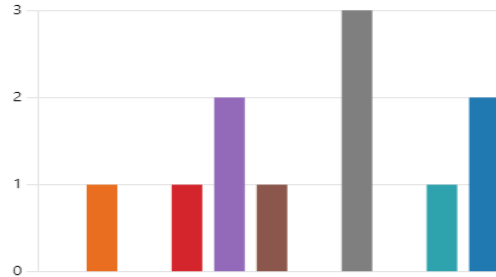


Through both student self-assessment and through teacher observation, each class chose one of the eleven domains to focus on.

1. In alignment with our school goal focusing on Executive Functioning, my class focus this year is in the area of:

[More Details](#)

Planning	0
Time Management	1
Task Initiation	0
Organization	1
Problem Solving	2
Flexibility	1
Working Memory	0
Emotional Control	3
Impulse Control	0
Self Monitoring	1
Attentional Control	2



As you can see by the data, multiple classes had shared areas of focus in the areas of Problem Solving, Emotional Control and Attentional Control. A key piece will be comparing and contrasting strategies used in each class, to see what worked and where challenges remained. Sharing out will be a focal point for year 2 as we navigate the next steps in our school plan.

The end goal is that improvements in Executive Functioning as a school, will help all students reach their academic, social and emotional goals. When students feel good about coming to school, they will strive to do their best improving student achievement and helping them feel a sense of belonging in our school community. It ties in well with the Core Competency of Personal Awareness and Responsibility because a personally aware and responsible student will take the necessary steps to ensure their well-being. They're able to set goals and monitor their progress, can regulate emotions and manage their stress, and recognize and advocate for their own rights

5. INQUIRY QUESTION (FOCUSING)

Executive Functioning was identified by the staff at our school as a major area of focus for our students. Our plan is designed to emphasize and develop executive functioning skills among elementary school students. This comprehensive plan aims to foster their cognitive abilities, self-regulation, and organizational skills, enabling them to succeed academically and in their personal lives. By providing targeted instruction, practice, and support, this program ensures that students develop strong executive functioning skills as a foundation for lifelong learning and success. Our inquiry question is ***"How can we best develop Executive Functioning skills in our students to help improve their academic achievement, physical and mental well being?"***

6. WHAT IS OUR PLAN? (PLANNING)

In year 1, as a school community the first step is identifying an area of need. The staff at the school have done this and have included the students in choosing an area of focus. Each teacher will use specific strategies throughout the year to help address the needs of the students. At the conclusion of the year, each teacher will reflect on what worked and what didn't work and be prepared to share these strategies with the rest of the staff.

Early in year 2, we will meet as a staff and share out which specific strategies worked, what didn't and why. This will be an important discussion as each teacher can share successes, strategies and insights as to what they think was effective in helping each class reach their class goal. Sharing in small groups and then sharing strategies as an entire group will help build a network of support moving forward. Some teachers may choose the same goal and others may choose new goals depending on the needs of their new class. Students will also have a say in what their Executive Functioning class goal will be. As a staff we will also look to include input from parents to help them reach their goals at home and also to help students have consistent strategies used both at home and at school.

The focus for year 3 is yet to be determined, but it will most definitely reflect back on the progress made from the first two years of our plan and to see if our direct interventions have made a difference in our school community.

7. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED? (PLANNING)

School staff participated in a school based Professional Development Day in January 2023, where each teacher took a survey to help identify areas of need in their particular class and for themselves. In small groups, staff completed a life-boat activity where we debated the importance of various domains within the Executive Functioning umbrella. This resulted in a very meaningful discussion about how various skills were interpreted and how in different situations, age level and ability level were major factors in determining relative importance of a particular executive functioning skill. Staff then worked in grade groups to discuss specific strategies that worked well in teaching grade specific skills throughout the year. Teachers then brought this information to students in their class and mutually agreed on a target area for the year. These topics and strategies will be revisited in September of 2023 and will be shared out as a staff to determine our next steps.

Resources included:

- 12 Self-Regulation Strategies for Young Children from heartmindonline.org
- Executive Functioning Assessment
- The Real Life Executive Functioning Workbook by Chris Hanson and Amy Sippl
- New Cutting Edge Executive Functioning Skills by Sarah Ward

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

Professional Development:

- Teachers and staff will receive training on executive functioning skills, their importance, and strategies for fostering these skills in the classroom.
- Professional development workshops that focus on identifying and addressing executive functioning challenges, implementing effective interventions, and adapting instruction to support diverse learners.

Curriculum Integration:

- Executive functioning skills will be integrated into the existing curriculum across subject areas, ensuring regular reinforcement and practice.
- Lessons and activities will be designed to explicitly teach skills such as time management, organization, goal-setting, task initiation, planning, problem-solving, flexible thinking, self-control, and working memory.

Explicit Instruction:

- Teachers will deliver explicit instruction on executive functioning skills through targeted lessons.
- Concepts and strategies will be broken down into manageable steps, with modeling and guided practice to support skill development.
- Students will be provided with opportunities for self-reflection and self-assessment to enhance their awareness of their own executive functioning abilities and areas for growth.

Scaffolded Support:

- Students who require additional support will receive targeted interventions and accommodations tailored to their individual needs.
- This may include visual aids, checklists, timers, and other assistive technologies to facilitate planning, organization, and time management.
- Small-group or one-on-one sessions with specialists, such as counselors or learning support teachers, are available for students who require intensive support.

Classroom Environment:

- The classroom environment will be structured to promote executive functioning skills.
- Clear routines, visual schedules, and well-organized physical spaces will help students develop organization, time management, and task initiation skills.
- Students will be encouraged to set personal goals and track their progress, fostering a sense of responsibility and self-motivation.

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

Collaboration with Parents and Guardians:

- Regular communication will be established with parents to share information about executive functioning skills and strategies.
- Workshops or informational sessions will be conducted to provide parents with tools and resources to support their child's development of executive functioning skills at home.

Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation:

- Periodic assessments will be conducted to monitor students' progress in developing executive functioning skills.
- Data from assessments, classroom observations, and teacher feedback inform instructional decisions and individualized support plans.



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?

School Wide Events

- Indigenous Acknowledgement by students at assemblies & PAC Functions
- Orange Shirt Day display in the display cabinet in the front hallway, activities in classes, discussions around reconciliation
- Announcements on National Indigenous Veterans' Day as well as a display cabinet and newsletter article
- Indigenous Focus Professional Development day for school staff

Classroom Based Events:

- learned more about the experiences of residential school survivors, studied parts of the Witness Blanket, connected with Indigenous knowledge around the environment, habitats and communities, visited Hiwus Lodge on Grouse Mountain, made connections between the land and people, learned about impact of Metis culture on the francophone culture in Quebec via Carnaval de Quebec, learned about traditional (simple and complex) machines from Indigenous culture, studied about Indigenous resource management and knowledge, studied about Founding Peoples history and impact on Canadian culture through essay writing, had hands on experience with the influence of Indigenous artistic style in Burnaby Museum art presentation, and Indigenous knowledge of land and food through UBC LFS workshop. We also have a growing collection of books in our class library that connect class members with the lives and experiences of Indigenous people in Canada, past and present.

- Studying the 8th fire series on CBC
- we have completed a novel study with an Indigenous focus on the book "Ghost Canoe." While reading, students researched different Indigenous traditions such as potlatch and wrote about the importance of these traditions to Indigenous culture and how they are still carried on today
- Indigenous art techniques with form lines and symbols. Stories about relevant indigenous myths about the creation of land and sky
- Field trip to the Camosun Bog, outdoor explorations and the emphasis on taking care of the environment
- Canadian Aboriginal Unit on Haida and Coast Salish Unit for Social Studies
- Hiwus Feasthouse visit, read "When I was Eight", learned about the residential school system in Canada, followed by an Orange Shirt activity, Early Contact - perspective taking lesson to consider French vs Indigenous views of land ownership and compared timeline of events from Carter's 3 voyages with Haudenosaunee perspective of same events. Indigenous technologies - the birchbark canoe. Scheduled for May/June: The Beaver Wars and the Great Peace of Montreal lessons, wampum belt activity, focus on Indigenous contributions (knowledge/technology) to fur trade and survival of early Europeans in North America
- Incorporated some First Nations songs in music classes, with singing in Indigenous languages
- The Grade 3 Social Studies curriculum is focused on Indigenous cultures. Our class learned about the Haida and Salish including virtual museum tours and used the resource Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults for a interdisciplinary SS/Science unit on Indigenous ceremonial plants
- discussed the impact of colonialism on Indigenous communities in relation to the topic being studied, discussed Indigenous place names vs places named after settlers, Indigenous resource used connected to physical geography and flora/fauna of the region, Indigenous stories included in Language Arts

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

As noted in the previous section, each teacher is embedding Indigenous content in various subjects from Social Studies, Language Arts, Music, Science, Geography in addition to several field trips and school visits. It is interesting that results coming back from the Student Learning Survey which collected data from gr.4 and gr.7 students at our school reflected that about 40% of students felt that they never participated in Indigenous celebrations or activities, 30% said they almost never participated and 30% said that they sometimes participated in Indigenous celebrations and activities. Not only are individual classes infusing this content in their instruction, but we also have many school wide events that recognize and celebrate Indigenous culture and celebrations. As a result of embedding the content in all areas of learning, some students may have trouble discerning specific Indigenous content or celebrations because it is interwoven in all areas of their learning.

This year we have just completed the installation of four garden boxes. Gardening can be a powerful tool for fostering the learning of Indigenous content, as it provides a hands-on and experiential approach to understanding and connecting with Indigenous cultures, histories, and traditional knowledge.

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

Acknowledge and respect Indigenous knowledge: Begin by recognizing the unique knowledge systems, worldviews, and cultural practices of Indigenous communities. It is crucial to approach indigenous knowledge with respect, valuing its authenticity and depth.

Involve Indigenous communities: Collaboration with local Indigenous communities is essential. Engage in meaningful dialogue with community members, elders, and knowledge keepers to understand their perspectives and ensure their active participation in the curriculum development process.

Embed Indigenous perspectives across subjects: Infuse Indigenous perspectives throughout the curriculum, not just in specific subjects like history or social studies. Indigenous knowledge can be relevant to science, mathematics, literature, art, and other disciplines. This integration helps students recognize the value of Indigenous knowledge in multiple contexts.

Professional development for teachers: Support teachers in developing their knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cultures and ways of knowing. Provide professional development opportunities, resources, and guidance to equip them with the necessary skills to teach about Indigenous perspectives authentically.

Remember that the integration of Indigenous ways of knowing is an ongoing process that requires respectful engagement, collaboration, and continuous learning. By incorporating diverse perspectives, we can create more inclusive educational environments that celebrate Indigenous knowledge and promote cultural understanding.