



2022-2023 - Year 1 School Learning Plan

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

Dr. George M. Weir Elementary School is situated on 44th Street East between Killarney and Rupert Streets. This site enjoys close proximity to the Killarney Community Centre which includes the recently added Champlain Seniors Centre, as well as Killarney Secondary School. Many of our families have always been very involved in activities offered at the Community Centre.

Many of our students complete their entire elementary school years at Weir, as did their older siblings, and even some of their parents. The majority of Grade 7 students attend Killarney Secondary when they graduate from Weir. It is very typical for these graduates to regularly return to Weir to visit staff, volunteer for school functions, or play basketball. Additionally, many of the grandparents of our students participate in morning exercise programs on the Weir site under our covered area including Tai Chi, aerobics, and hackey sac. Generational connections at Weir are deeply-rooted within our larger community.

The home languages represented are predominantly English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Tagalog, with Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, and Punjabi also represented. Many of these students receive ELL support. Students with a Ministry Designation who have an IEP are fully integrated at all grade levels, some with support from SSA staff. We continuously seek opportunities to welcome these rich home cultures into our school.

Weir is committed to both the academic and holistic, socio-emotional development of all students. We strive to provide a supportive learning environment where students demonstrate social, emotional and academic growth. We value student agency and enjoy creating opportunities for school-wide leadership. We also recognize that school is an important part of a larger community that nurtures and supports our learners as they grow. **Our aim is for the entire Weir community to feel connected to our school and feel that they can participate and contribute in ways that highlight and nurture their unique identities and strengths.**

Since our return to Weir this past November, we have adopted the learning community model. Our school is divided by grade groups in learning communities. The staff within each community is provided with weekly release time. A large part of this collaborative time is dedicated to work on our school goals. This model is guided by research that consistently shows the most significant impact on student achievement at school is through staff collaboration. Details of this model at Weir will be described more fully in subsequent sections of this plan.

Weir is a digitally enhanced school, allowing students to thrive in this digital age. Grades K to 3 have access to school iPads. Grades 4 to 7 not only have access to school iPads but can bring their own mobile devices to school. Students are provided opportunities to engage with the B.C. Curriculum by designing and creating projects of their own. Weir has developed an inclusive program that allows students to engage in personalized

inquiry-based learning. Each year, online curriculum opportunities for students to access at school and home (e.g. Mathletics, Raz Kids) have been available, which many parents have come to appreciate.

Typically, our parent community has been active and present in the daily happenings at Weir. Since last fall when we returned to our newly rebuilt school, we have made great efforts to revive many of the past activities and practices with our parents through our Parent Advisory Council (PAC). **Their ongoing, meaningful support contributes greatly to the positive school climate and enriches the school experience for all students and their families, and staff members.** Their dedication is very much appreciated and their participation plays an important role in the cultural fabric of our community.

Further, we have brought a number of practices back from the past that supported our students and families including:

- Morning homework club where students are provided a quiet space and supervision to work on their assignments.
- Family reading mornings in our library commons.
- Chess club where intermediate student gather to play chess over several lunch times per week.

It can truly be said that the uniqueness of this period of time with all the challenges of being spread among three sites, as well as the implications and restrictions brought about by the global covid pandemic, have been a catalyst for change. This has been an opportunity to reflect on what we value most – to see things with a new perspective. **We look forward to this coming school year with renewed appreciation for being together as part of such a strong and positive school community.**

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

Weir historically has had learners that love to learn. Our kids show care and attention for learning and are motivated by growth and accomplishment. They are supported by families who place high value on education both in and out of school. Many of our staff remark that during our Scholastic Book Fairs, our kids are excited to buy books instead of erasers, pencils, and posters. It is not uncommon to see our students reading books during breaks or ‘sneaking’ extra books from classroom libraries into their book bins. Since good readers become good writers, it is not surprising that our students typically write thoughtful and articulate compositions during our Fall and Spring School-Wide Writes. Our teachers have high expectations for our students as readers and writers and in turn, the literacy experiences in our classrooms are comprehensive, responsive, and dynamic.

In a recent survey, Weir staff were asked to describe the overall strengths of our learners. Although many positive qualities were mentioned, three overall attributes emerged:

- **Kindness**
- **Collaboration**
- **Curiosity**

Anecdotally, we observe these qualities daily at our school. Our students regularly ask staff and each other questions about their learning, interests, and outside lives. Many students express interest in new

opportunities at our school. We also provide many opportunities for collaboration during group projects and school initiatives. Last fall, our grade six learners were surveyed using the **Middle Years Development Instrument Data (MDI)**. **72% of students surveyed identified two or more adults at school with whom they feel connected.** This is significantly higher than the district average and strongly indicates that our students trust our school team. Peer-reviewed research continually shows that outcomes of students who have two or more adults they trust at school are dramatically higher both academic and socio-emotionally. **However, it is interesting to note that our students fell significantly below the district average when asked about their self-esteem and sense of belonging at school.** Similar results, although slightly improved, were indicated in our Student Learning Survey data captured this February. When we discussed this data with our parent advisory council, many parents noted that the MDI data was collected while we were still separated into three seismic swing sites. **Since we have returned to Weir, our central focus has been on creating a sense of belonging for all members of our community.** We are all curious to see if our hard work this year will change the data in the same surveys in subsequent years.

3. WHAT EVIDENCE SUPPORTS WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE LEARNERS? (SCANNING)

As described above, we have collected evidence from many sources to support our understanding of our learners including:

- Middle Year Developmental Instrument (MDI)
- Grade 4 and 7 Student Learning Surveys
- Observational and anecdotal data collected by our staff
- Student Focus Groups (organized by grade level)
- Consultation with parents through our Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

We have closely examined all of this data and the information presented in this plan represents the themes that have emerged and span across all of our information sources.

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

In the updated reporting order for communicating student learning, the Core Competencies are required to be included in each of the three formal reports found throughout the year. We, as a staff, realized quite quickly that this is actually an opportunity to develop agency in our students both academically and holistically. Our data has shown that our students already have a high-level of trust and connectedness to our school staff. Through focusing on naming, describing, and noticing the Core Competencies throughout our building, our learners can develop greater skills to self-reflect, set goals, and understand themselves as people. Our hope is that this greater understanding will lead to increases in self-esteem, decision-making skills, empathy, social responsibility, and critical and creative thinking.

We believe very strongly that a powerful way to decolonize education is to centre our students as decision-makers and honour their own unique choices and goals. Our intention is that through weaving the core competency language into our daily lives at school with regular opportunities for students to meaningfully reflect on them, our students will take greater responsibility and pride for their learning and growth. We plan to deeply connect the core competencies to the Circle of Courage elements (Generosity, Belonging, Mastery, Independence). For more info see: [Circle of Courage](#)

5. INQUIRY QUESTION (FOCUSING)

How might we provide students with the skills and opportunities to reflect meaningfully on themselves as learners and people?

How might we weave the Core Competency language into our daily lives at Weir?

What strategies to notice, name, and nurture these competencies are the most effective?

The most important work we can do to improve our student success will be to spend time with our students helping them understand and unpack the language of the Core Competencies (e.g. communication, collaboration, social responsibility, critical thinking, creative thinking). In order for students to uncover examples of them in their learning and their lives, they need to deeply understand what these words mean. As a staff, we need to weave these words into our everyday language with students and model this reflective process ourselves.


6. WHAT IS OUR PLAN? (PLANNING)

Since our return to Weir this past November, we have organized our schools into learning communities by grade groups. We selected local animals as it was an opportunity to explore their significance to local Indigenous communities and learn about our local nations. We also created value statements that reflect the unique characteristics of each community. Our school is organized as follows:

- Turtle Community: Kindergarten classes
- Hummingbird Community: Grade 1/2 classes
- Wolf Community: Grade 2, 3 and 3/4 classes
- Otter Community: Grade 4, 5, and 5/6 classes
- Owl Community: Grade 6/7 and 7 classes

Learning communities are provided weekly release time to collaborate. A significant portion of that time is spent working on our school goals. At least one member of each community contributes to a shared document where we collate all of the unique work each community is doing in connection to our goals. Working in this way also models the collaboration that we want our students to adopt in their own learning. Next year, our Core Competency work will be the central focus of our collaboration time within our learning communities.

We have divided our work in the first year to align with each of the three reporting periods. In order for us as a staff team and our students to really deepen our understanding of each competency, we are going to focus on one particular competency as an entire school each term. At the end of the year, we will use the Spirals of Inquiry model to determine our next steps for year two. Listed in the right column are the specific plans we have at this time for year one:

<p>Term 1</p>  <p>Personal and Social</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and share activities for unpacking vocabulary with our students. • Explore what self reflection looks like, sounds like, feels like with our students. • Invite teacher consultants from our CAM team to work with each individual learning community during release team. • Develop a set of student read aloud texts and videos that support our competency work. • Include messages on competencies in our morning announcements (student led). • Create bulletin boards around the school that highlight examples of how the core competencies are woven into our curricular work in classrooms. • Ground our monthly Recognition Assemblies in the Core Competencies (including recognizing students for a particular competency as a way to notice, name, and nurture them). • Transform our parent-teacher fall conferences into three-way goal setting conferences. • Create a Core Competency tree in our central lobby that holds the goals for each student for the term. • Display the Core Competency 'I can' statements in every classroom. • Develop the following sub-skills of reflection: noticing, remembering, describing, relating, comparing, connecting.
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Term 2



Communication and Collaboration

- Continue work of term 1.
- Expand our approaches and strategies to document student goals and self-reflections
- Develop big buddy - little buddy mentorship opportunities.
- Create term two goals and place them on the Core Competency tree in the lobby. Students will turn over leaves from term 1 and reflect on their growth.
- Connect the Core Competencies with the four elements of the Circle of Courage.
- Develop the following subskills of reflection: predicting, visualizing, imagining, empathizing, forgiving.
- Regularly offer students the opportunity to practice self-reflection.
- Invite staff to model their own self-reflection at assemblies.

Term 3



Critical and Creative Thinking

- Continue work of Term 1 and Term 2.
- Develop the following subskills of reflection: decision-making, self-regulating, organizing, revising, revisiting.
- Add term three goals to our Core Competency tree and reflect on term 2 goals on back sides of leaves.
- Create a year-end celebration of learning for the Core Competencies.

7. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED? (PLANNING)

We have already invited teacher consultants from the district Curriculum and Assessment Mentors (CAM) team to work with two of our learning communities. Our plan is to have them return in the fall to help us establish our plans, suggest resources, and collaborate with our communities.

We will develop book tubs that support each competency and keep them in our school library commons for teachers to sign out.

We will create a school-wide comment bank related to the Core Competencies for our teachers to draw from when acknowledging students for our recognition certificates each month.

We will create a share document where we collate all of the work, activities, and resources that each learning community develops.

We plan to access professional development workshops with Katie White to focus and hone our skills at developing our students ability to self-assess and reflect. We will also have many teachers attend Adrienne Gear sessions to explore how to use curricular competencies in language arts to make the core competencies visible.

The school admin team will document the learning within each community by observing and participating in lessons and experiences.

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

We will use a variety of data sources and information to monitor our progress with our Core Competency goal including:

- Goal-setting and student self-reflections each term
- MDI data
- Student Learning Survey
- Student focus groups
- Teacher anecdotal observations
- Feedback from parents

Each term, we will reflect on the strategies we are using to explore vocabulary and methods for goal-setting and student reflection to monitor which are the most effective in developing student agency. As our hope is to foster student self-esteem and nurture belonging, we will use student focus groups to informally track how our students are doing and to shift our activities and approaches both in classrooms and around our school.

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

We believe in sharing the same message, multiple times, and in multiple modes.

Our staff meetings will include read only items so we can dedicate time to our collection vision and work.

We will continue with our School-Wide Monthly Assemblies to reflect the work in our learning communities and highlight important key messages related to our school goals.

Our School-Wide Read Alouds will continue each month and we will be sending links home to them in our newsletters. These read alouds intentionally focus on our core competency goals as well as issues on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Monthly newsletters will continue to go out to our community which will include updates, resources, information, and photos related to our collective work.

Our student—led morning announcements will continue to reflect our school goals. Each morning we will share suggestions for how students can develop each competency through examples based on the ‘I can’ statements.

We will continue to include our dedicated PAC in this collective work. We presented our vision for school growth at the year-end PAC meeting.



District-wide Indigenous Focus (worldviews): To increase knowledge, acceptance, empathy, awareness and appreciation of Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures and contributions among all learners.

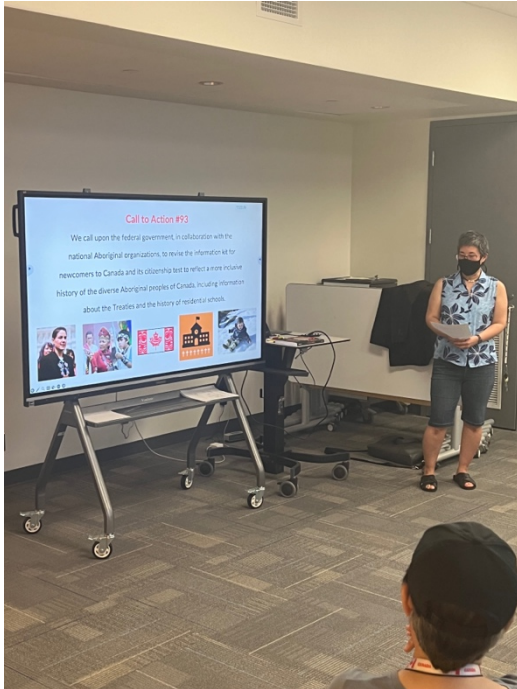
10. WHAT LEARNING HAVE WE DONE AT OUR SCHOOL TO SUPPORT AND ENHANCE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEWS AND KNOWLEDGE?

We currently have 6 Indigenous students at our school and we continually work towards establishing strong ties between home and school. We also have used Jordan’s Principle as a resource and support along with district staff. We believe that our work in anti-racism directly connects to deepening our understanding of Indigenous Worldviews.

Along with our Anti-Racism work, we will:

- Ensure meaningful land acknowledgments continue at staff meetings and school assemblies (staff and students)
- Continue classroom presentations
- Go beyond art (exploring areas of the curriculum where crucial issues can be addressed)
- Read School-Wide Read Alouds (Indigenous themes by Indigenous authors and artists)
- Share resources in small groups
- Explore our identities to identify experiences and bias as a staff through reflection work
- Invite district staff and elders into our community

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



At the beginning of each staff meeting, one of our educators shares one of the 94 Calls to Action. They describe what the Call to Action means and then connect their own understanding and worldview. We have also begun inviting student volunteers to do the same thing at our assemblies.

We will document our school-wide read alouds, photograph student work connected to them, and interview staff and students about their experiences.

Thoughtfully consider and listen to the personal stories of those who have experienced intergenerational trauma in residential and day schools - particularly those voices in our own Weir community.

Continue Inquiry projects – going through texts and understanding that language is important in developing cultural competency and humility

We will also continue to develop our resources (teacher resources and student books) that represent Indigenous cultures, voices, and authors.

In respect of the First People's Principle that 'learning involves patience and time,' we have eliminated a number of school bells in the day. We recognized as a staff that these bells were a part of a colonized education culture that did not necessarily serve our values and community. For example, there are no bells at the beginning of recess and lunch. Students and teachers find the appropriate reasonable time to go outside. There is also no end-of-day bell.

We have also implemented restorative practices as a school to support our students when conflicts arise. This ensures that the voices of all people involved are heard, different perspectives are considered, and decisions on the pathway forward are determined together. We strive to proactively build empathy and nurture relationships that encourage students to support one another rather than more punitive forms of discipline wherever possible and appropriate.

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

Examining school texts (library, literature circles, etc)

Reflecting on the stories we surface amongst staff and students

Exploring our own bias and identity as well as actions we take in our classrooms

Considering our educational practices and where we can decolonize embedded structures and systems within our school culture (e.g. reducing school bells, restorative practices to address conflict)