

2023-2024 - Year 2 School Learning Plan

1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

John Henderson Elementary is school that enrolls 520 students from Kindergarten to Grade 7. Henderson is also a school that receives enhanced services support. The school community saw an increase in size this year due to higher enrollment in the district and for this reason our school population changed throughout the year. Students have continued to join us, with some having moved to their neighbourhood schools. The school population continues to be diverse and is now comprised of 31 different language groups and a wide variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. Our community consists of homeowners and renters. Approximately 58 % (300) of our students are English Language Learners (ELL), and 64% of our students are coming from homes where English is not the first language. The school is located in Southeast Vancouver, adjacent to Sunset Community Centre. This provides large, shared grounds, a playground, and many opportunities for partnership and programming.

Students at Henderson are keen to learn and embrace inquiry learning. They are well-supported at home, and this is evident in their enthusiasm to engage in learning activities. At times, their world knowledge is limited, not having had many experiences outside this community. We also have a growing number of students who are new to Canada and some of them are arriving as refugees. These students are not only learning a new language but are also learning the expectations of a new culture. Henderson students are accepting of others and welcome students both new to Canada and to Henderson. For many of our students entering kindergarten, this is their first experience in a formal school setting. To support our families and young learners before they arrive for kindergarten, we are fortunate to have a StrongStart Centre on site. Our StrongStart facilitator, with financial support from grants, is able to offer afternoon sessions in the latter half of the school year to work with families heading to kindergarten in the fall.

Henderson has onsite before and after-school care provided by the South Slope YMCA. Many families also use the school aged care program provided by Sunset Community Centre. As COVID pandemic restrictions lifted we were able to partner with South Vancouver Neighbourhood House (SVNH) to provide a program for intermediate, immigrant students. We continue to provide after- school programs through the John Oliver Community Links Team throughout the year. We are hoping to reconnect with more community partners next year.

We have a strong focus on supporting learners with diverse learning needs and will continue to work collaboratively with district staff to provide significant, targeted support for our most vulnerable learners. Our educator team is supported by over 13 student support workers who work closely with educators to support our learners with diverse learning needs. We also have two, Enhanced Service

Support Staff members to help support student learning, social emotional learning, and our meal programs. We have a vibrant library learning commons area supported by our teacher-librarian (TL).

Henderson has an involved and very supportive parent community that volunteers to support school and classroom activities such as school garden projects, outdoor education, the Artist-in-Residence program, and many other events, when the opportunity arises, to encourage parent and family involvement. A dedicated group of parents actively participate in monthly PAC meetings developing and implementing fundraising initiatives. Our PAC has been pivotal in supporting educational changes in the curriculum and reporting, in supporting new and emerging technologies, and in supporting playground and beautification plans.

Our Inquiry question is: What educational practices, strategies, programs, and school-wide common language might we implement to increase students' skill development in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to better self-regulate and be more equipped to engage in learning? How can we make First Peoples teaching and learning more authentic?

From our discussions at formal and informal staff meetings we see the need to continue to focus on Inquiry- Based learning practices and strategies to engage our students. We will be focusing on helping students develop a toolkit for use when they are having a difficult time self-regulating. We will explicitly teach strategies using The Second Step Program to help the students develop skills in Social Emotional Learning (SEL). We will also be exploring the Seven Grandfather Teachings and Character Traits. We hope children will develop to become well-balanced contributing members of society that value their own gifts and the gifts that others bring to our community.

This focus connects to the VSB value statement, equity statement and the following goals and objectives from the VSB Education Plan and our BC Core Competencies.

- From the value statement, “student should possess a strong educational foundation; be disposed to treat others with respect and work cooperatively with them; act upon the values and principles that make us human; care for themselves, for others, and for the planet; and exercise a critical intelligence adaptable to new situations.
- From the equity statement, “create an equitable learning environment where every child can experience a deep sense of belonging and is free to pursue pathways of learning in ways that are authentic to themselves.”
- Goal #1 of the Ed Plan is “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.”
- Goal #2 of the Ed Plan is to increase equity by evaluating and renewing plans for the improvement of Indigenous learners' education and improving stewardship of the district's resources by focusing on effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.
- Goal #3 of the Ed Plan is to continue the reconciliation journey by increasing knowledge, awareness, appreciation of and respect for Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures, and contributions.

2A. WHAT DID WE SEE?

Strengths:

- Well cared for at home.
- Kind, accepting of others.
- Skilled at using technology.
- Involved in a variety of out-of-school programs in the community.

Needs:

- Social emotional issues frequently get in the way of learning.
- Due to the pandemic, we see the need to make social emotional learning a focus to help our students adjust to the routines of school and address the signs of anxiety and trauma we see (factors: pandemic, intergenerational trauma, and trauma from current social justice issues here in Canada and in their countries of origin).
- Integration of many new immigrant and refugee families from different parts of the world.
- For many students, school is their only social connection and only opportunity to socialize and socialize with peers (same age group).
- We have previously noted that we have felt the need to increase student engagement for all our learners through inquiry.
- Experiential learning outside of immediate community and outdoor learning.
- Ability to reflect on personal values/beliefs with respect to others.
- School readiness for students entering Kindergarten (i.e. at-risk in literacy: weak in phonemic awareness and pre-reading skills) and students new to Canada.
- Engagement and interest in deepening and strengthening their learning and understanding.
- Knowledge and experiential learning focused on Indigenous People and Indigenous culture and history.

After three years of the pandemic, changes to staffing, and a change and growth in the school populations, our social-emotional learning goal continues to be our focus. Our focus on social-emotional learning is driven by feedback from staff, students, and parents. Our SEL learning evidence is staff observations, an SEL assessment rubric, referrals from parents and staff to see the school counsellor and/or Youth and Family Worker, and behavior referrals to the office. We have been seeing an increase in children who are: unable to focus, needing help navigating social situations, requiring guidance with their emotions, learning to deal with anxiety, trauma, and stress in their daily lives (especially for many of our new students who have arrived as immigrant or refugees), etc. We also have continued to look at student self-reflections, MDI, and EDI data, as well as Student Learning Survey data

2B. WHAT DO WE NEED TO RE-ADJUST?

We will continue with the strategies we had outlined previously for year 2 and 3 for our SEL goal.

Year 2:

- Continue with strategies: Continue to scan, assess, and adjust practice; Re-design to increase student engagement and choice; Continue to communicate explicitly about expectations and to ensure that expectations are implemented and enforced; Evaluate progress to identify areas of success and areas where further growth are necessary; Reflect back in order to determine best course of action; refine process and modify goals, as necessary.

Year 3:

- Evaluate progress and determine new School Growth goals, based on student needs and district context.

Because of changes to our staffing and the addition of two new divisions in December 2022, we were not able to execute the strategies we had intended to implement or for the ones we did, with the frequency we had hoped. We will continue to learn and utilize strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners through the Response to Intervention (RTI) Model and inclusion practices in Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Our staff will continue to be given opportunities to learn with and from one another, focusing on research-based best practices in SEL. Our staff exploration and discussions of different SEL programs has led us to decide as a team to use Second Step, school wide. We are looking to start September of 2023 with a school calendar that has built-in time for primary/intermediate classes to work together on common lessons and using common language throughout the year through stations, collaboration time, assemblies, daily morning announcements and newsletters. Students have expressed that they would like more opportunities to work outside their classrooms, with students in other classes and in different grades.

We are still hopeful that as a staff, we will be able to create a scope and sequence for all of the SEL programs that we are currently using in the school and come up with a multi-year plan that we can maintain. We also want to make sure that all students have not only learned SEL strategies, but that they also have access to the many SEL tools available in the school to assist with self-regulation. We continue to look at how we can provide support more consistently across the grades.

We have updated our Code of Conduct to reflect the VSB standardized Code of Conduct and we will engage the students in making it accessible for them. We know students connect more with their own or other students' work and so we will be updating the student artwork in the Code of Conduct charts posted around the school. We will continue to focus communicating explicitly school wide expectations.

We are also looking at how we can connect our SEL work with the Indigenous Teachings or Character Traits in the Seven Sacred Grandfather Teachings. Many classes have been exploring these teachings with the TL.

We will continue to connect our SEL practices and teaching practices for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Many classes work on Identity Inquiry Projects, and this contributed greatly to increased student engagement, student confidence, and well-being. We will continue with these inquiry projects. We will continue to scan, assess, and adjust practices, based on student needs and the school context.

3. INQUIRY QUESTION (previously known as “Goal”)

Our inquiry question is: What educational practices, strategies, programs, and school wide common language might we implement to increase students’ skill development in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to better self-regulate and thus be more equipped to engage in learning?

How can we make First Peoples teaching and learning more authentic?

Our inquiry question will stay the same, but we will adjust our approach.

Our school context has changed with the removal of our District Excellence in Social Emotional Learning (ExSEL) program and changes to our demographics. In the past we had daily office and SEL referrals for intense physical outbursts and dysregulation. This is no longer the case. However, we have seen a new influx of students, many are ELL, and some with unidentified diverse needs. We are now needing to shift our focus to the language being used on the playground and expected behaviours/social norms. As we continue to focus on SEL and EDI (equity, diversity, and inclusion), we are going to build common language and strategies to be used school wide.

SEL continues to be a focus and teachers are using research-based programs and we have decided as a school that we will use the Second Step Program, in order to develop common language and common SEL expectations. Currently, we also have the following programs being used in classrooms: (the number of classes using the program is in brackets after the program name): Play Is the Way (1), Mindful Practice (4) , Zen Activities (1), Zones of Regulation (5), Second Step (4), Open Parachute (1), Online Counsellor resources (1), Videos on the brain (1), Daily Exercise (1), Daily Running (1), Yoga/breathing exercises (2), Daily reflections (1), Storybooks (1), How to Fill Bucket (1), Friendship (1), SELC program teachers (1), Calm corner (2), Feeling exploration (1), Affirmation cards (1), Behaviour Intervention, Whole body listening (1), Mind Up (1), Social Stories (1)

We need to make sure that all students are given equal access to SEL instruction and time to reflect on a daily basis. This learning needs to be shared more regularly with classes, staff, and families so that the learning is supported both around the school and continues at home.

This year and for the past 2 years we have recognized, taught about, and celebrated the diverse community we are in by highlighting the histories, holidays, and cultures of all equity-deserving groups. We have committed to using story and picture books as described by Rudine Sims Bishop as “windows, mirrors and sliding glass doors”. Children need to see others like themselves and their community within the curriculum. We have spent the last two years acquiring diverse books.

4. WHAT IS OUR NEW PLAN?

In the new plan we have established a yearlong plan for teacher collaboration, student SEL theme centres, monthly SEL theme assemblies and corresponding SEL theme morning messages.

The SEL Staff Team will also be the Professional Development Team as teachers have expressed in conversations and surveys that they would like more professional development around SEL. Staff are also wanting to have more school wide initiatives next year to support SEL. To foster a more collaborative effort we will be creating strategies to allow for more collaborative time for grade groups, the intermediate team, the primary team, and the staff as a whole to meet, share, and plan.

Students have expressed that they would like more opportunities to work together as grade groups and with other classes. Students would also like learning experiences outside of the classroom, learning from various adults, and the opportunity for more inquiry projects.

By allowing for more collaborative time and sharing of ideas and practices we hope to address any inequities that might exist for students and help improve the learning experiences for all.

We also need more opportunities to have parents engaged in supporting SEL strategies. We will continue to share information, but we will attempt to schedule learning opportunities each month for families with either in-person or online workshops that support the SEL happening within school.

5. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED?

- Henderson students and staff will be working together to create an environment of a safe, caring, and creative space for children to improve their social-emotional skills. We are looking at widening our approach by creating more opportunities for students to connect with other students and teachers outside of their assigned divisions. We are looking to add station days around SEL at the beginning of the year and once a month to create stronger connections and a sense of belonging for all learners.
- Professional Development and mentoring sessions dedicated to the continued exploration of resources available and exploration of SEL programs and the Core Competencies: Positive Personal and Cultural Identity, Personal Awareness and Responsibility and Social Responsibility.
- We have been slowly redesigning our Sensory Room and Sensory Halls. Unfortunately, this year we were not able to work as closely with the OT as we could have liked, but we are hoping to be able to work with the OT on the Ready Body, Learning Minds program. We have also been working with the SLP to help make Communication Boards more accessible for our diverse learners to use to express their needs.
- We have shared articles on important Social Emotional/Wellness topics: nutrition, screen time, on-line awareness, exposure to age-appropriate content, etc. with our parent community. We are hoping next year to add in-person sessions, and, with the aid of our multicultural workers, we hope to share this information with families in their home language as well.
- We will continue to connect with the Indigenous Education Department staff, seek out more Professional Development opportunities and continue to have CT and TL collaborate on lessons of the Seven Sacred Grandfather teachings.
- Create yearly schedules and structures to promote not only school wide connections but also collaboration opportunities for grade groups, primary/intermediate teams, and buddy classes to build their SEL skills and growth in the core competencies.

6. HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

- Along with our current practice of collecting data through anecdotal observations of all staff, we are exploring available assessments like the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment-mini (DESSA-mini) which has 4 forms looking at various aspects of Social-Emotional Learning in students. It was our intention to compare last year's DESSA-mini results by administering the DESSA once again this year. However, staff are interested in using an SEL Inquiry rubric to be able to monitor each child's individual progress. Next year we will set up 3 times to complete the rubric for comparison to provide further evidence that we are successfully helping our children internalize and what we are working towards.
- We will analyze the data collected from the school wide assessments, classroom/resource room assessment and report card data. These results will be compared from term to term and year to year.
- We will set up a yearlong schedule to analyze results during structured collaboration time and during Staff Committee meetings to help adjust our plans as we continue to proceed. (Ongoing scans)
- Student success may further be monitored by the sharing of student success stories in improved understanding of concepts through application; increased student participation in inquiry-based learning and increased personal connection in student learning.
- Success will be measured by providing educational experiences for students, increasing student engagement in their own learning, demonstrating good citizenship in the school community, and by consistently implementing the school code of conduct "Be Safe, Be Fair, Be Kind" as a means to guide expectations around being a socially responsible community member.

7. HOW WILL WE SHARE?

- All progress and achievement made on our focus will be shared through: Conferences (Goal Setting, Student-Led, Parent-Teacher), Formal Reporting, Celebrations of Learning, Social Media/Digital Platforms (tweets, emails, school website, class blogs, MyBlueprint, TEAMS), PAC meetings and Parent Information Nights/Workshops, School Assemblies, School Displays and Bulletin Boards, and School Newsletters.



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

8. WHAT HAVE WE DONE AT OUR SCHOOL TO SUPPORT ALL LEARNERS IN REGARDS TO THIS FOCUS?

- Some staff have attended Professional Development: Indigenous Ways of Knowing, 7 Sacred Teachings, personalized stories/workshops of residential school experiences, school-wide participation in Curriculum Implementation Days: integrating Indigenous content, reviewing available Indigenous materials for both teachers and students, purchasing new materials (both paper-based and digital)
- Teacher-librarians working with classes.
- School and community participation in “Orange Shirt Day” activities
- Investigating experiential learning practices
- Exploring diverse Indigenous Peoples’ voices (Inuit, Metis, global and local) in readings and other resource selections
- Celebrating diversity and recognizing cultural identity. By celebrating the similar but unique aspects of cultures represented in our school we are able to relate to the experiences of others. This includes relating our family immigrant history to that of the First Peoples’ experience with Early European Settlers. We can relate, compare, and contrast the experiences.
- Continuing to focus on the Principles of the Aboriginal Ways of Knowing: Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors. Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place.) Learning involves recognizing the consequence of one’s actions. Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities. Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge. Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story. Learning involves patience and time. Learning requires exploration of one’s identity. Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.
- All school-wide events begin with the acknowledgement that we learn, work, and play on the traditional and unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples – the Musqueam, the Tsleil-Waututh, and the Squamish Nations.
- The Aboriginal Information Management System (AIMS) is used to provide anecdotal comments for supports in place, work habit comments, and general comments on the learners’ progress. The Indigenous Education department staff has been helping track the kinds of interventions in place for each learner to better plan for their success. We have learned that not only is the sense of belonging for each child important, but a sense of belonging for their families is equally so. Getting to know each learner, their families, and what makes them feel a better sense of belonging is critical.

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

- School Staff will continue to facilitate the following initiatives:
- Artistic initiatives (welcome art, drumming, classroom cultural experiences, weaving, soap carving, form line animals)
- Participating in Orange Shirt Day in October, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) week in May and Indigenous Day in June
- All gatherings, assemblies and our daily morning announcements will begin with the Indigenous Land Acknowledgement.
- Experiential learning opportunities that build connections and relationships with Indigenous culture (salmon raising, field trips, nature walks and sharing circles)
- Student leadership opportunities (community, school service, school initiatives)
- Building family connections and community outreach (PAC support, Welcome to Kindergarten, StrongStart, parent and student focus groups)
- Instructional strategies and accessing cultural resources. Our Librarian has purchased more Aboriginal focused material based on VSB lists.
- Continue to complete Aboriginal Success Plan for all our Aboriginal students.
- Indigenous Education professional development—Lunch and Learn sessions, focusing on Aboriginal Principles of Learning and the Seven Sacred Teachings
- Creating more connections with our local, Aboriginal communities
- Identify ways to help students, staff and parents see that our Aboriginal goal goes beyond serving Indigenous students only and is designed to develop everyone’s understanding of all Indigenous contributions to Canadian culture as a whole.

We will continue to increase knowledge and awareness by continuing to engage in the activities listed above. We will move towards acceptance and appreciation by engaging our learners beyond one-time activities to ongoing interactions and exchanges with Indigenous people. This aligns well with our school plan as we focus on engagement, social and emotional learning and further explore innovative learning spaces in our FuturePlay Lab, Maker Space and most recently in outdoor learning spaces. For the later we would love to be able to reach out and invite Indigenous elders to guide the learning in those spaces.

We will continue to connect as a community to the First People’s Principles of Learning:

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one’s actions.
- Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.
- Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge. Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.
- Learning involves patience and time.
- Learning requires exploration of one’s identity.
- Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.