

2022-2023 - Year 1 School Learning Plan

1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY

Queen Victoria Annex is located at 1850 East 3rd Avenue in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Students, families, and staff refer to it as “QVA.” We are a school of five divisions from Kindergarten through Grade Five. We are the annex school to Laura Secord Elementary, which is a 10-minute walk away. Each year, our in-catchment Gr. 5 student transition to Laura Secord for Gr. 6. Other elementary schools in our area include Grandview, Britannia, Queen Alexandra, and Nelson.

QVA is in East Vancouver, a short walk from Commercial Drive. “The Drive” is a culturally rich and colourful neighborhood, replete with restaurants, coffee shops, and independent businesses. The school is close to many community venues such as McSpadden Park, Trout Lake, Garden and Victoria Parks, and the Commercial/Broadway SkyTrain station.

The school has an intimate outdoor space for playing and exploration. This includes a new playground (completed in 2020), eight garden boxes, a gravel field that is used actively for sports and play, a basketball court, and an under-covered area with a Sensory Path and games painted on the tarmac.

Our learning environment includes six classrooms, and open area classroom, library, gymnasium, lunchroom, staffroom, and a kitchen. We have two universal washrooms, a girls’ washroom, and a boys’ washroom.

While QVA has a solid foundation of indoor and outdoor learning spaces embedded within a dynamic neighborhood, the strongest asset of the school are the students, families, and staff. Here, the people truly do make the school.

QVA students are lively, creative, deeply curious about the world, and (above all!) love having fun. They are social and relational and enjoy spending time in each other’s company. QVA families are supportive, community-minded, keen to be involved in class and school events, and socially minded. QVA staff are deeply committed to the learning, growth, and wellbeing of their students. At the heart, QVA families and staff work to enliven and promote student achievement and positive experience, their physical and mental-wellbeing, and their sense of belonging.

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

(SCANNING)

Throughout the 2022/2023 academic year, QVA teachers and support staff met on a regular basis to reflect upon, discuss, and share their curiosity and learning about QVA students. Each staff meeting began with a pattern of expressing gratitude and observations from the school day followed by a written pedagogical reflection on students, learning, challenges, and opportunities. *Reflection*—both structured and informal—is valuable practice by educators to better illuminate clarity around what, how, and why we are teaching, and deepen understandings about *who* we teach.

Simple thematic analysis of written reflections and discussions identified the following *strengths* and *stretches* in response to the question: *Who is QVA? What do we know about the community of learners?*

1. Strengths

QVA students bring a strong capacity for learning to each day. Staff describe students as being curious, creative, caring, and fun. *Curious* and *creative* are two characteristics that appear regularly in staff reflections and conversations. Other characteristics describing QVA students that emerge in staff reflections regularly include *high-energy, fun-loving, joyful, kind, and supportive*.

QVA students are also highly physically active and enjoy a variety of sports and games. The field is used for kids' self-organized soccer games all year, the basketball court is well used, and extra-curricular Cross-Country in the Fall and Track and Field in the spring are well attended.

Lastly, a significant strength of QVA students is their social- and open-mindedness. This strength is shaped by the interest of the parent community, the local neighborhood, and QVA ROCKS!—the motto which is well embedded in the school ethos. Students readily engage in conversations about diversity, they quickly embrace gender fluidity and chosen pronouns, are concerned about anti-racism, Truth and Reconciliation, and the climate.

2. Stretches

Identifying *stretches* are key to learning. Whether in the domains of academics, personal and collective responsibility, social/emotional learning, or communication, stretches are the things we work on to improve and grow.

As described above, strengths of QVA students are their desire for relationships, in company with their high-energy and enthusiasm. QVA students enjoy friendships, they want to play, have fun, and learn, and they want to be successful. These strengths have companion stretches and holds opportunities for learning.

A stretch for QVA students is resilience, such as when trying new and challenging tasks.

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

Evidence to support decision-making about this School Learning Plan and that support the above observations about what we know about QVA students has been collected through the following strategies:

- Staff pedagogical reflections. September through May 2022/2023
- Staff Survey: Who is QVA? Spring 2023
- Gr. 4 Student Learning Surveys Spring 2022
- PAC discussions of priorities. September through May 2022/2023

To ascertain student growth over the 2023/2024 school year in relation to our goals and help guide instructional practice, we will use the following data collection strategies (see *What is Our Plan?*, below, for further details):

- Heggerty assessment tool (Fall/Spring) to identify student growth with phonological awareness,
- Student survey which will focus on social/emotional learning and resiliency (Fall/Spring), and
- Data from the BC Student Learning Survey (Winter 2023 and 2024)
- Continued practice of identifying themes of student learning and needs through thematic analysis of regular staff pedagogical reflections.

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

We have identified the following focus for QVA:

Domain: Social/Emotional Learning
Focus: Building student resilience and growth mindset.

Domain: Literacy
Focus: Phonological awareness and comprehension.

Note: While the skill of phonological awareness might lean more towards primary grades (i.e., *learn to read*) and the development of comprehension might lean more towards intermediate grades (i.e., *read to learn*), both skills are applicable across all grades, and attention to both skills will benefit all students.

5. INQUIRY QUESTION

The questions guiding this Learning Plan have emerged from numerous touch points throughout the 2022/2023 school year. These touch points have taken place in the form of staff meetings, pedagogical reflections, hallway discussions, conversations with parents about student progress and needs, and discoveries shared by staff after ProD sessions.

The QVA Learning Plan inquiry questions highlight the VSB Learning Plan priorities in the key areas of (a) mental wellbeing and belonging, and (b) achievement.

The questions are, as follows:

Social/Emotional Learning

How can fostering resilience and growth mindset in QVA students contribute to their wellbeing and development?

Literacy

How can the cross-grade, intentional integration of phonological awareness and comprehension activities enhance students' literacy growth?

6. WHAT IS OUR PLAN?

2023–2024 is the first year of this three-year School Learning Plan. During this first year, the QVA staff will seek out the following supports:

Broadly, we will focus the first year on:

- Identifying and implementing growth-mindset resources, amplifying both knowledge and use of growth mindset thinking and language, and continuing the established work of creating a school ethos of resiliency and wellbeing.
- Continuing with the implementation of current literacy practices (e.g., literacy groups, implementation of Heggerty, phonemic awareness, developing professional knowledge about current trends in literacy instruction).

Specifically, we will:

- Engage in Professional Learning: Planning two ProD Days, each with a session to address each of the inquiry question domains.
- Gather evidence: Implementing Pre/Mid/Post year data collection to gather baseline and progress data.
- Focus Practice: Imbedding strategies directly into daily practice, both at the classroom and school-wide levels.
- Review and re-shape our plan for Years 2 and 3 in Spring of 2024, based on our assessment of student progress throughout the year.

Students

School Practice: Resilience

- Amplify the ethos of growth mindset at QVA. Examples of ways to amplify growth mindset include assemblies, display boards, and newsletters.
- Promote the language that informs a resilient, growth-mindset amongst adult/student and adult/adult interactions on the playground, classrooms, and conversations.

School Practice: Literacy

- Continue with the cross-grade implementation of *Heggerty* to promote the development of children’s Phonological Awareness. Utilize the assessment features through our My Heggerty subscription to track student progress.
- Continue with the cross-grade implementation of *Spelfabet* to promote core sound/symbol, phonetic knowledge.
- Continue to plan and implement the cross-grade Literacy Groups, with a focus on comprehension.

Staff

Professional Learning (ProD)

- Dedicate each of the annual two school-based ProD sessions to focus resiliency and literacy. Year 1, QVA-focused ProD dates are: Sept. 22, 2023 & Jan. 24, 2024
- Create a three-part, staff lunch-and-learn series (one per term) to highlight student progress, professional learning, and practical strategies in each of the areas of focus of literacy and resilience.

Assessment and Progress: Resilience and Growth Mindset

On-going staff observations and discussions

Student Learning Survey data (annual)

Identification and implementation of other SEL survey’s available through the VSB

Assessment and Progress: Literacy

Track year-end MyEd PSR grading scales (by grade)

Heggerty assessments: Pre/Post assessments at the beginning and end of year to identify student growth, utilizing the assessment tools provided in MyHeggerty

School-wide literacy assessments (school-wide write or reading)

Continued regular, pedagogical reflections during Staff meetings

7. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED?

- Opportunities for ProD that to promote knowledge and capacity with both the growth mindset and literacy goals. Currently, we are in the planning phase for 2023–2024
- We will continue to monitor student learning and staff understandings through staff meetings and discussions.

8. HOW WILL WE KNOW WE’RE ON TRACK?

We will use the following strategies and indicators to help us assess our progress, learning, and next steps:

1. Literacy

We will assess K–3 students’ phonological awareness using the Heggerty assessment tools at three key points in the year: September 2023, February 2024 and May 2024. We will assess Gr.

4–5 students' comprehension through a variety of assessment practices, including the DIBELS 8 Maze Benchmark assessment tool. These assessments will provide us with data through which to adapt and plan for emerging student needs.

2. Resiliency/Growth Mindset

The need for this area of focus emerged from staff perceptions and awareness of—and discussions about—students' increased need of support for the daily demands of school, including managing conflict, the need for patience, and the flexibility needed to try new things, and the resilience needed to try new things. We will assess progress in this learning focus through staff conversations and reflections on school tone and student needs during our many formal and informal meetings.

3. Pedagogical Reflections

As a staff, we will continue to engage in regular pedagogical reflections at the beginning of Staff Meetings. These reflections will take place in the form of both written and conversational reflection.

9. HOW WILL WE SHARE THIS INFORMATION?

We will continue to share information with the QVA family community through newsletters, the QVA website, parent/guardian information nights, and PAC meetings. We will highlight student success through assemblies, notice boards in the school, learning conferences (e.g., student-led conferences) and through other celebrations of student learning and growth.



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?

A selection of learning experiences at QVA in the past year designed to support and enhance our understanding of Indigenous worldviews and knowledge:

Student Learning (2022/2023)

Student leadership providing land acknowledgments to honour all community gatherings.

Sasquatch Family Dancers (April 2023) The Sasquatch Family Dancers travelled from Sts'ailes Nation to share traditional songs, drumming, dancing, and regalia with students. Students had an opportunity to try out dance moves.

Cedar Mat weaving with Jessica Silvey. Jessica Silvey is a Coast Salish Weaver, of Coast Salish and Portuguese descent. Students learned wove small, cedar mats using natural materials and traditional techniques (October 2022).

Peter White, Storyteller and Dancer of the Ktunaxa Nation (June 2022). Peter shared the story of the history of his regalia and performed a style of dance called *men's traditional*. Students had an opportunity to try out the dance.

Tracy Healy. Memory Bags and Shi-Shi-Etko (June 2022).

Growing our library collection of Indigenous fiction and non-fiction literature.

Engaging in land- and nature-based learning experiences, including a school-wide field to Stanley Park to learn about the forest and pond ecosystems, raising and releasing salmon, and nurturing and tending to the school garden boxes.

Orange Shirt Day assembly and classroom learning.

Indigenous books and storytelling in classrooms.

Salmon study: salmonids the importance to Indigenous peoples.

Place-based nature walks around the schoolyard and neighbourhood.

Nurturing of and tending to the school garden boxes to promote student experiences with nature.

Professional Learning (2022/2023)

District Indigenous Day Professional Learning (Fall 2022).

Several staff members participated in the Winter 2023 series of six on-line workshops titled, *Paddling Together: Connecting to Indigenous Learning*, led by Carolyn Roberts.

Staff created a self-directed professional learning day in which they explored a variety of on-line, Indigenous learning resources, to better familiarize themselves with the wealth of resources and determine what they might use in the future.

A staff commitment to support each other as we each step from where we each are in the journey of truth and reconciliation. We are working together to raise curiosity, have conversations, and develop our own understandings to better promote students' learning about Indigenous worldviews and knowledge.

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

Results from the 2022 Student Learning Survey are that the majority of the QVA students who completed the survey indicated they have they have "sometimes" or "almost never" participated in Indigenous Activities, both at school and outside of school. This is aligned with results from across the district. While numerous opportunities have been created for students to learn about Indigenous perspectives and knowledge in the past couple of years, this result highlights the need for us to help students make stronger connections between the experience, itself, and specific learning outcomes. This is a learning opportunity. Going forward, we will work to increase these connections.

We have been intentionally boosting the library collection of Indigenous fiction and non-fiction books. Students lead land acknowledgements at all gatherings and assemblies.

We will continue to weave First People's Principles of Learning into classroom practice.

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

The Learning about Indigenous perspectives and knowledge is guided in the VSB by the metaphor of paddling a canoe. A canoe trip is most powerful when all canoers paddle in sync, together. This metaphor is also guided by the reminder that we each step forth on our journey from where we are at. The QVA students, families, and staff are stepping from different places in their journey, but we are all working together to better understand, support, and enhance Indigenous knowledge and perspectives at our school.

We will continue paddling the canoe together—each from where we are at—by:

Continuing to begin all gatherings with land acknowledgments: student-led for student assemblies and gatherings and staff-led for staff meetings and gatherings.

Continuing to engage in the learning loop of highlighting Indigenous perspectives and knowledge before, during, and after experiences. Students often reflect upon and communicate their learning through drawing and writing activities (e.g., journals). This provides staff opportunities to assess student understanding about Indigenous perspectives and knowledge.

Participating in the VSB District Fall Indigenous Learning ProD (November 2023).

Continuing to support each other with questions, ideas, and sharing resources to support student learning.

Accessing and applying resources from the Indigenous Department to boost Indigenous perspectives and knowledge at QVA.