



# Vancouver School District

## School Plan for MacCorkindale

### Year 3 (2020) of 3 Year Plan, 2018 - 2020

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the suspension of all in-class instruction on March 13, 2020, current school plans have been carried forward to the 2020/21 school year.

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## 1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

Dr. H. N. MacCorkindale is located in the southeast Fraserview area of Vancouver near Champlain Community Center and Champlain Park. The school was constructed in December 1967 as the first open-area concept school in British Columbia. The ample school grounds offer open areas, a variety of adventure playgrounds, attractive gardens and two lovely courtyards. Dr. H.N. MacCorkindale Elementary belongs to the Killarney family of schools.

For the 2019 – 2020 school year, the school will enroll approximately 260 students from Kindergarten to Grade 7, in 12 divisions. The school population reflects the rich multi-ethnic nature of the community. Students represent 21 language groups; a substantial portion of our students come from Chinese, Vietnamese, and Punjabi cultural backgrounds. Of our students, 8% have identified special needs and 44% are English Language Learners. We will have 8 Indigenous learners.

MacCorkindale School has a strong sense of community. A number of our parents were also students at the school in the past therefore supporting a sense of connection to the activities in the school. School traditions therefore are valued and supported such as the Bicycle Parade on Sports Day. There is an involved, dedicated PAC who work toward developing an inclusive environment through a variety of PAC sponsored events such as the Spring Fling Dance held last April and a school Carnival in June. Both events were well attended. The Staff work collaboratively in a variety of curricular areas and as a group are interesting in improving their practice as demonstrated by their unanimous involvement in the Communicating Student Learning Pilot and willingness to take advantage of school Pro-D funds to obtain release time to collaborate. Our primary teachers in particular are engaging in professional development together.

Enhancing learning and broadening the scope of possibilities for success for each student involves a collaborative and reflective approach. As a result, staff provide a variety of engaging learning experiences in different curricular areas with the use of technology and inquiry infused into the teaching and learning that takes place every day. Staff and students work successfully to live up to the standards as outlined in our Code of Conduct. The school maintains monthly 'Be Your Best' assemblies where achievements are acknowledged and celebrated particularly in the areas of work habits and ability to get along with each other. Near the Office, monthly updated pictures can be found of the most current recipients of 'Be Your Best' certificates.

Environmental awareness experiences include regular school clean-up, Earth Day activities and a recycling program monitored by our Kindergarten class. Gardening projects by other Primary classes will continue in the future giving students the opportunity to put into practice the notion of 'Taking Care of This Place.'

Student Leadership opportunities have included providing morning announcements, student-led assemblies, and monitor volunteerism such as Playground Buddies. A Student Council was created this year to further extend leadership opportunities throughout the grades. In the fall, Student Council will take on a greater role in directing school activities. The school encourages physical education and healthy living through participation in the Terry Fox Run, Hip Hop lessons, and extra-curricular activities such cross-country, basketball, volleyball, and track and field. We participate in the B.C. Fruits and Vegetable Snack Program which is well received by the students.

The partnership with the Killarney Community of School Team provide opportunities for after school programs for our students each term. The programs are well attended and appreciated by the parents.

## 2A. WHAT DID WE SEE?

At MacCorkindale, the students express a strong sense of acceptance and empathy towards others. Kindness is a term used by many staff members when describing the students at the school. Issues on the playground are usually minor in nature and quickly solved and remedied. Students can be seen in the classrooms helping each other and are eager to help out where needed. There is leadership across the grades resulting in a strong connection between children on the playground and during multi- grade activities.

Overall, the students are well motivated towards their learning and show enthusiasm when sharing their projects. Artistic expression is a strength of many students, as evident by their creative and thoughtful pieces of art proudly displayed in the hallways.

As in any educational setting the needs of the students vary, but a few themes are emerging over time. The steady increase in our E.L.L. student population at the school is leading staff to reflect and re-evaluate and on how best provide curricular experiences in an inclusive and meaningful manner. Concerns over completion of work on time and need for greater student independence is an area that the Intermediate staff find to be consistent.

Teachers want to find avenues in which to encourage students to be critical and creative thinkers as expressed in the re-designed curriculum. At times, students are content to work in a manner where quick and direct answers can be found. The teachers want to develop stronger approaches to supporting the core competency of critical thinking.

This year students participated in a number of critical thinking opportunities including centres, project based learning projects, class meetings, class elections, outdoor explorations, and use of the scientific method as a few approaches to developing deeper critical thinking skills.

Below are results from one of the questions given to each student in a self-assessment survey this past spring based upon the Critical Thinking Profiles. It will be interesting to see any changes by Year Three.

Grades 4 - 7	Spring 2019– Critical Thinking Self-Assessment
I can explain and reflect on my thinking, products, and actions.	Most of the time – 43% All the time – 21%
Grades K - 3	Spring 2019– Critical Thinking Self-Assessment
I can reflect on and explain my choices and decide if they worked or not.	Often – 20% Always – 32%

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

As a group we are realizing that we need to take the time for ‘thinking about thinking’ with our students. We need to focus on the process of teaching and supporting critical thinking with our students, not just on outcomes or products. Developing thoughtful, open criteria that is created with input by students for assignments and projects can also help us not only in guiding students to think more critically without prescribing it for them, but also as an avenue that can lead to more relevant feedback by the teacher.

Staff also believe that a stronger focus on STEM in the curriculum would be beneficial in developing critical thinkers. Staff also believe that in some cases thinking skills need to be explicitly taught at this young age to better prepare them for high school and beyond. Some experienced teachers are noticing that students compared to 20 years ago are more challenged to think through a problem. The reasons for this observation can be attributed to a number of factors including the influence of technology and social media in our society.

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

In the past the school goal was to increase student achievement in all aspects of Literacy so that at least 75% of students are Meeting Expectations in Language Arts. At first, it was thought it should remain a School Plan focal point. While the staff will continue to keep literacy as a goal and continue to develop enhanced ways to improvement teaching practices and student learning in this area, it was determined through a number of informal and formal staff conversions that critical thinking and understanding its connection to the re-designed curriculum would become a more relevant way to develop a school wide goal where fruitful discussion, opportunities for reflection on our practice and professional development can be developed throughout the year and over the course of the next three years.

The question our staff are interested in considering is :

**How can we teach/engage students to apply critical thinking skills into creative and transforming learning experiences in response to events, problems, and various needs.**

## 4. WHAT IS YOUR NEW PLAN?

Action items:

- To understand and use the Critical Thinking Set of Profiles
- Continue to use a student self-assessment tool using the profiles
- Support and engage in opportunities for collaboration in grade groups
- Use two Professional Development Days to focus on critical thinking strategies, how to ask questions to support critical thinking, and ways to assess critical thinking that is relevant to each student's development
- Begin to create opportunities for students to engage in finding answers by themselves
- Be mindful of and learning to ask the appropriate questions in order to support critical thinking across the curriculum
- Communication of this goal through newsletters, conferences and PAC meetings
- Include student self-evaluation in our formal reporting process
- Possible Heritage and Science Fairs
- In Mathematics class, have students explain their thinking
- Providing persuasive writing opportunities
- More time for collaborative play and have another 'Play Day' like this year where students had to define their own activities under the supervision of staff

As we continue with our goal into the 2019 – 2020 school year, we will review 'where' staff currently are in incorporating critical thinking skills in their classroom through our first staff meeting and Pro-D Day discussions on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. We will discuss the pace of development for this goal and what can be reasonably attainable, particularly in year 2. We started this conversation at our April 29<sup>th</sup> Professional Development Day this year.

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## 5. WHAT SUPPORTS WILL WE NEED?

- At the first Staff Meeting in the school year we will review our thoughts on ‘What is critical thinking?’ Expanding our discussion toward ‘questioning for critical thinking’ will occur as well.
- Seek support from the Critical Thinking Consortium for resources and materials
- Identify a good resource for a second Critical Thinking Book Club (5 teachers attended sessions this year). Perhaps a book that focusses on questioning and creative thinking
- Find guest speakers for Lunch and Learns and Professional Development Days
- Continue to structure time available for teachers to collaborate in grade groups. (This has been a successful part of our programming this year)

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## 6. HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE SUCCESSFUL?

- Ensure there are structured opportunities to share our learning
- Student self-evaluation data on the critical thinking core competency
- Consistent use of the profiles
- Create and use a profiles rubric as an assessment
- Awareness and celebration of positive student engagement in critical thinking activities
- Awareness of the quality of responses toward challenging questions and activities

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## 7. HOW WILL WE SHARE?

- Parent Advisory Meetings
- School and class newsletters/blogs
- Email blasts that go out to our entire parent and staff community with information communicating regarding workshops and presentations offered by the VSB or community organizations that relate to our focus.
- Parent – Teacher Conferences in early November and Student-Led Conferences in March.
- Student self-assessment that will be included with June reporting
- Student work displayed on bulletin boards around the school and in our display case in the front hall.



*District-wide Indigenous Goal: To increase knowledge, acceptance, empathy, awareness and appreciation of Indigenous histories, traditions, cultures and contributions among all students.*

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## **8. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE INDIGENOUS LEARNERS IN OUR SCHOOL?**

This goal is essential in encouraging student understanding about the place where we all live and the first peoples that have lived and continue to live here. Indigenous cultural enhancement teaching practices further enrich the learning of all of our students as we embrace the traditional teachings of our West Coast Indigenous peoples through dance, art, storytelling, and field experiences.

This goal was a focus for all staff, including both enrolling and non-enrolling teachers, our SSA's, Administration, and our Indigenous Education Enhancement Worker, Family and Youth Worker, and School Counsellor.

Our eleven students with Indigenous ancestry will be in Kindergarten as well as in Grade 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

All of the learners in our school are diverse with varying needs. Our Indigenous students are no exception. Most are meeting expectations in Language Arts and Math, with only one exception. The student will be in Grade 6 in the fall.

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## 9. WHAT HAVE WE DONE AT OUR SCHOOL TO SUPPORT ALL LEARNERS IN REGARDS TO THIS GOAL?

- Examining Northwest Coast First Nations cultures, traditional lifestyles, and storytelling
- Investigating Northwest Coast First Nations connection with nature and respect of living things
- Focus of a class meeting changed to one called gratitude circles or sharing circles
- Field trips to the Museum of Anthropology, Grouse Mountain (led by an Elder), and the Museum of Vancouver
- Incorporating Indigenous stories and legends in Language Arts programs
- Use of Raven Tales
- Use of Squamish Atlas Online which highlights Indigenous place names
- One performance this year reflecting an Indigenous theme: Turtle Island
- Continued work with our Indigenous Education Enhancement Worker
- Teacher Professional Development at the Museum of Anthropology at UBC and another with Adrienne Gear with a focus on Indigenous learning
- Targeted funds given to build primary classroom Indigenous book collections
- Aboriginal acknowledgement at all assemblies and school events
- Discuss with students the significance of Orange Shirt Day
- School-wide acknowledgement and celebration of National Aboriginal Day on June 21<sup>st</sup>



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## 10. WHAT WILL WE CONTINUE TO DO IN THIS AREA?

We will continue as above, with the desire to see a greater number of school and class-wide activities that have an Indigenous focus next year.

Examples of Indigenous Education-focused activities that we would like to see more of at our school next year:

- Increased collaboration with our Indigenous Education Enhancement Worker
- Guest speakers and storytellers; in particular invite an Elder to visit
- Performances such as those offered by 3 Crows Productions who can visit this year.
- Artist-in-Residence project
- Class collaboration projects
- Access the Musqueam teaching kit and corresponding resources
- Art projects
- Continuation with the procurement of additional library and class resources
- Field trips to the Museum of Anthropology and Grouse Mountain
- Incorporating some First Nations music during morning our Music Listening Program
- Include time for discussion and reflection on Indigenous content and education at Staff Meetings, particularly the 'First Nations Principles of Learning.'
- District Professional Development Day on May 15, 2020 with an Indigenous focus

## 11. HOW DO WE KNOW THAT WE ARE BEING SUCCESSFUL IN THIS AREA?

Many of our students have demonstrated appreciation for and knowledge of Indigenous culture through the activities described above. All divisions have had Indigenous content taught this school year. Student learning in this area has taken a variety of forms including units of study in class, storytelling, field trips, art projects, and performances. However, this is an area for greater focus next year given the sample survey shared below. We will discuss and endeavor to infuse more Indigenous content into our curriculum.

Our Indigenous Education Enhancement Worker worked closely with some of our classes this year sharing core values of Indigenous people. For instance, she read traditional stories, shared her own experiences in Learning Circles, and providing a different perspective on European exploration. Students were engaged and appreciated her visits and asked more questions as time went on working with her. We hope to involve our AEEW in more classes next year.

The PAC is very supportive of our school goals and has provided funding for Indigenous resources in the school. Our Teacher Librarian continues to purchase Indigenous-content resources for our school library that are being widely used.

Sample: Grades 3, 4, and 5 students	Spring 2019 – Indigenous Education Student Self-Assessment
I have an understanding of Indigenous culture and traditions	2019 - 63.4 % responded “a fair bit or a lot” (2018 - 64.4 % responded “a fair bit or a lot”)
It is important to learn about Indigenous culture, traditions, and histories	2019 – 82.2 % responded “agree” or “strongly agree” (2018 - 75.3 % responded “agree” or “strongly agree”) 0 % responded “not at all or not that important”