



# Vancouver School District

## School Plan for École Jules Quesnel

### Year 3 (2021) of 3 Year Plan, 2018-2021

#### 1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

L'École Jules Quesnel, is a single-track French Immersion school located on the unceded lands of the Musqueam People in West Point Grey near the University of British Columbia, Pacific Spirit Park, the ocean, and beaches. The building, erected in the 1920's, served both as an elementary school and as a wing of Lord Byng Secondary, before it became home to our community in 1978. Although most of our K-7 students come from English-speaking families, our community is enriched by a variety of other linguistic and cultural backgrounds, including 6 identified Indigenous learners. Multi-lingual students entering French Immersion kindergarten are not uncommon. Most students live in the vicinity and many enjoy the stability of a full eight years in the same environment. French Immersion students from our sister school Queen Elizabeth Annex (K-3) single-track French Immersion school, enter our school at the Grade 4 level. Our proximity to the University of British Columbia continues to see students transferring to the school from different parts of Canada and the world; this contributes to our diverse and largely academic community. École Jules Quesnel has an active and committed Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). They support the school and its community in a variety of ways. Parents contribute to all aspects of our school's life as helpers in the classrooms, in the library, as coaches in extra-curricular sports, and other committees. Parents also participate in and help supervise many field studies. They support in-class programs with their commitment in time and willingness to share their expertise and knowledge with the student population. Parents continue to be interested and curious about their children's learning and are supportive of teachers and their efforts to implement new initiatives. The school has been able to enhance French proficiency while maintaining English and general academic achievement through a seventy/thirty model (70% instruction in French) for Grades four to seven. Within our student population, we continue to have students with diverse learning needs and a wide range of abilities. We strive to provide students with a solid foundation of academic and social emotional learning through real life experiences and hands-on opportunities. We believe that all students should leave our school with a strong foundation in reading and writing in both official languages as well as a strong sense of identity and awareness of self and others. Approximately 70% of our students will continue in French Immersion in high school.

Our school is on the unceded Musqueam lands, near the Pacific Spirit Park. We began taking part in the Butterfly Way in 2019 and have healthy native pollinator gardens as well as insect hotels on our school grounds. We celebrate social emotional intelligence, practise restorative justice, foster growth mindset, all while using French Language Expression. As a single-track French Immersion school, we are developing love and appreciation for the French language and culture. We are inspired by the First Peoples Principles of Learning.

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## 2. WHAT DID WE SEE?

Our students know adults at school are there to support their growth and provide them with care. We know many of our learners are high achievers and some feel anxious about performing. They are developing their skills and becoming more creative, reflective, and action oriented. Our students are not yet able to confidently show and express their thinking. They continue having some disagreements on the playground, yet we have seen some of the main issues resolving faster or they have been reduced.

As street data, in late October, the Principal interviewed 364 of our 377 learners. The questions asked were in English, “What did you enjoy most about coming to school this fall?” and “What did you find difficult at school this fall?”. As we were returning to school in the midst of Covid-19 and we wanted to use trauma-informed practice, the questions were short and aimed at knowing more about the emotional well-being of our students. Most students identified enjoying being physically able to attend school and see teachers and friends. The main challenge described was re-adjusting to learning with stricter health and safety protocols in place. At the end of April 2021, 370 out of the 377 students were interviewed by our Principal. Similar questions were asked to students: “What did you enjoy at school this year so far?”, “What did you find difficult at school this year so far?”. The questions were asked in English. The results showed us that our K-3 students enjoyed seeing their friends and playing. Our Grades 4-7 students enjoyed learning, seeing their friends, doing physical activities, and the projects they worked on this year. When it comes to what was difficult, our K-5 students were highlighting academics (specifically math) and staying focused as their main challenges. Our Grade 6 and 7 students expressed finding wearing masks and following all the safety protocols as the hardest this year. They also said managing free-time and work time and staying focused was harder for them. Taking the time to talk with students allowed us to know that 50% of our students have strategies to overcome their challenges.

During this pandemic time, our staff has learned to manage their own emotions, in a very different context. With fear around us, we needed to find calmness from within and model it to students. Staff have also learned how to adjust their expectations, how to modify their teaching to fit in this context with the students and staff’s safety at the forefront. This year, more than any other, we have been able to share from the heart with our students, to listen to our own emotions and to be able to react with empathy and compassion when listening to our learners’ needs.

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### 3. WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

We have continued setting up monthly growth mindset goals, common messages, and language via our assemblies. The use of common language and themes shared on billboards has increased the sense of community throughout our school. Students have been engaged and have contributed to our common goals. Having classroom meetings on a regular basis has allowed us to develop problem-solving and/or self-regulation strategies. Community circles and gratitude circles to start the week have helped some classrooms to set the tone. Our Monthly Assemblies were on the first Monday of the month to begin the month united as we tried having our virtual assemblies as interactive as possible. Some classes started the day with a time to share stories or feelings and this allowed for a space to share.

In some classes, using growth mindset programs such as "In Focus" everyday has been very useful to the kids. "In Focus" is a teaching tool that teachers use to teach students to develop their social emotional Intelligence. The lessons allowed finding common language and normalizing open discussions regarding SEL. Teaching different SEL strategies on a regular basis are an approach much more powerful than only talking about problems when they arise.

From the office point of view, we have seen fewer big issues and conflicts brought up to us. As well, many groups of students have, since the beginning of the year, bonded and built stronger relationships with peers from their class and others. The time to resolve conflict and talk about them has reduced.

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### 3. HOW HAVE WE SHARED?

We have shared what is going on in our monthly Mme Eve's report- the report from the Principal, via our website, and by having teachers sharing their practices and learning highlights with the community. The use of online portfolios in some classes was also a way to share our growth. When adults were involved in building or contributing to our learning (props, supporting learning, practicing texts or presentations, etc.) they were part of our success and engaged in conversation about learning with their children. Students who used PowerPoint during their celebration of learning or presented prepared documents was another way to share learning. Another way to keep our community connected with us was by using virtual classrooms via Microsoft Teams.

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## 4. WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?

We want to bridge the gap between SEL and the importance of Growth Mindset into more of a critical thinking lens.

We want to create a culture of risk-takers, develop greater discussions about learning and mistakes, make the connections between learning and making those important mistakes. We want to increase the possibilities for engagement in discussions. Amongst other spheres, this directly applies to French Language, and to take the time to acknowledge our learners who are taking risks to speak in a language other than their home language(s).

We would like to review our teaching of critical thinking core competencies and include them in all we do. We are working to create small group discussions, as well as school-wide discussions to scaffold our next steps. We want to observe how mathematical thinking is taught and what are the best approaches for critical thinking. We could use sharing circle during staff meetings and have a topic where everyone is invited to share one strategy they use or staff highlights and rotate through staff to provide one another with mini pro-d. This way we remind ourselves that learning is symmetrical between adults and students. Community-wide conversations can include parents too; we are an ecosystem after all.



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

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

We attended two pro-d sessions as a staff; the Indigenous Pro-d, in which we held a sharing circle and everyone who was comfortable shared. We welcomed Davita Mardsen who taught us about the 7 Sacred Teachings. We will be using them as a guide for our assemblies in the year 2021-2022 so that we can focus on becoming the best possible human beings. In 2020, we created our school-based Indigenous Committee which meets monthly and reports during the Staff Committee Meetings during the Indigenous Education part, an added standing item on the agenda. During the school year 2020-2021, Dave Robinson, educator and sculptor, worked with some of our learners and we now have a healing and reconciliation sculpture in our main entrance. Our Grade 5 and Grade 6 Indigenous students participated in the sculpting project. During that same year, we have revamped our Code of Conduct, inspired by the works of Dr. Martin Brokenleg, and focused on restorative justice. Many teachers are using the sharing circle as their check-in practices and as problem-solving circles. District Knowledge Keeper, Amanda White, shared and spoke with a kindergarten class as well as with some Grade 6 students. Many teachers are integrating First Peoples' Perspectives and Principles of Learning across the curriculum (some examples include how the mining affect the Sto:lo People, how the fur trade and gold rush have affected First Peoples, reading about residential schools and Peoples' experiences, to only name a few). Staff are

seeking advice and support from one another as they plan and explore further Indigenous Perspectives. The meaning and importance of the land acknowledgement are being discussed at our school.

We have 8 students of Indigenous ancestry: one student in Grade 7, two students in Grade 6, one student in Grade 5, two students in Grade 3, one student in Grade 2, and one student in Kindergarten.

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## **6. HOW WILL WE SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE AND KNOWLEDGE?**

In 2021, inspired by Black History Month and our hope to be anti-racists, we will host our first Month of Celebration of Indigenous' People in June. We want to recognize and celebrate the existence and presence of the Indigenous People now. We will continue to explore and discuss together and live the message for ourselves. We are life-long learners. Our Indigenous Committee will be meeting to set up the next step for our School Growth Plan to enhance how we embrace Indigenous perspective and knowledge.