

## 2022-2023 - Year 3 School Learning Plan

### 1. GENERAL SCHOOL STORY:

False Creek Elementary School is a Vancouver public school on the unceded lands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. It has approximately 306 students from Kindergarten to Grade Seven and is in a densely populated urban setting near the False Creek seawall and Charleson Park. Most families reside in condominiums, apartments, townhomes, cooperatives, or on boats moored in the area. Our school population is diverse with more than 24 language groups and approximately a quarter of students having a first language other than English.<sup>1</sup> We fully integrate the approximately 7.5% of our students with a Ministry Designation that represents their diverse learning requirements.

We are entering Year 3 of a school plan focused on improving Applied Design, Skills and Technology (ADST). We, as a staff, acknowledge that we want to continue to improve our ADST skills to enhance the experiences of students already thriving and challenge and instruct students who may need support in this area.

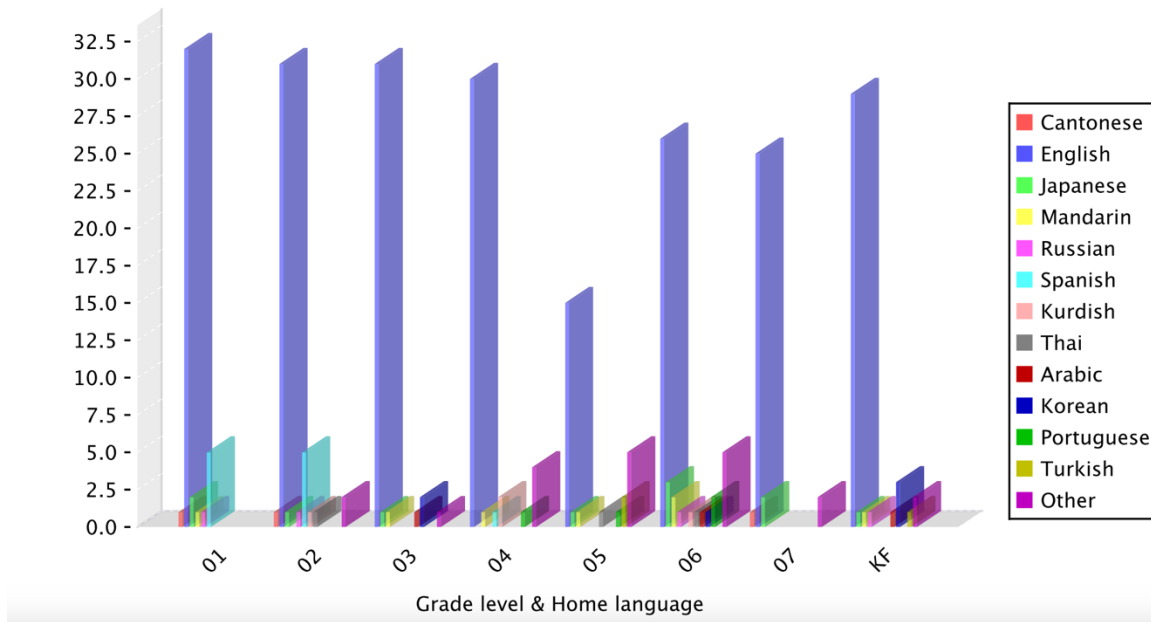
Parents and caregivers are formally involved in our school through an active and supportive Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and with generous contributions to fundraising, organizing school events, and aiding students' academic, social, and cultural growth. The PAC has continued to support in-school programs such as African Dancing and hip-hop dance, several storytelling, music and martial arts experiences, as well as inclusivity and diversity initiatives.

False Creek Elementary is part of the Kitsilano Family of Schools and maintains ties with Kits Community Schools Team and we are grateful for this partnership. For the past three years we have focused on maintaining a strong connection for students transitioning from Grade 7 to Grade 8. We have also focused on applying for sustainability grants which helps shift focus to areas such as outdoor learning and the environment. Achievement, physical and mental well-being, belonging, equity and reconciliation have been and will continue to be a focus at False Creek.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/Fairview-census-data.pdf>

Home language Graph – False Creek Elementary



## 2. WHAT DID WE SEE?

False Creek students reside and attend school in a breathtaking waterfront community situated around a small inlet in Vancouver's city center. They possess a strong fascination with the natural world, evident in their enthusiastic involvement in hands-on projects and clubs that encourage outdoor exploration and experiential learning. The Climate Club, which convenes weekly, serves as a platform for students to discuss ways to improve the school community and has held fundraising initiatives for *Team Trees* and *Team Seas*. The entire school exhibits a growing awareness and heightened interest in environmental initiatives like Bike To School Week, the Shoreline Clean Up, forest walks at Charleson Park and recycling of soft plastics.

To maximize student learning and foster readiness for academic pursuits, False Creek Elementary places a greater emphasis on utilizing outdoor spaces. Strategies such as incorporating Daily Physical Activity (DPA), nature studies, and integrating school gardening activities have been implemented. Kindergarten students engaged in Wednesday Walk and Talks, embarking on nature walks to connect with and understand their surroundings. Moreover, during Earth Week, the PAC organized nature walks and studies. Students and families are consistently reminded to equip themselves with suitable outdoor clothing and footwear, ensuring preparedness for outdoor recess and daily outdoor education. This enables students to engage in place-based learning within their school environment on a more frequent basis.

The school's commitment to student success is further exemplified through Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies (ADST) learning activities, which cultivate social-emotional skills, perseverance, resilience, self-regulation, curiosity, exploration, and problem-solving abilities. False Creek has a dedicated ADST

Teacher who has played a vital role in generating interest and building skills. Students at False Creek have been exposed to a range of educational tools, including Scratch and Scratch Jr., Microsoft hour of Code- Minecraft, Edison robotics - using Blockly and Python, Ozobots- using Blockly and colour code programming. During these activities the students display high levels of engagement, independence, and motivation, with minimal behavioral issues. One student expressed their immense enthusiasm for these activities, describing them as both “enjoyable” and “intellectually stimulating.”

Certain primary classes offer students the opportunity to select maker stations such as cardboard, stop motion, Keva planks, Lego, and basic circuits. In another class, students participate in weaving activities using cardboard looms, where they design and create artistic pieces while reflecting on their color choices and emotional impact. In both scenarios, teachers have observed students thoroughly enjoying the diverse challenges, collaborating and exchanging ideas, and continuously reassessing and reevaluating their creations.

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### 3. WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

We will gauge the effectiveness and impact of our efforts on student learning when we witness greater participation in ADST activities from Kindergarten to Grade Seven. This will be evident through collaborative partnerships between intermediate and primary classes, prominently showcased throughout the school. Anecdotal reports should reflect the successful expansion of ADST activities, enhanced staff knowledge, and increased community involvement. Students will showcase their ability to innovate, explain, and reflect on their process of combining new ideas to develop innovative solutions or creations. Instead of giving up at the first hurdle, we anticipate observing students persevering through challenges and evaluating their own learning processes. Overall, we expect to continue to witness heightened engagement and enthusiasm among students throughout the learning journey.

ADST activities will be integrated into the curriculum on a weekly basis, enriching the learning experience. We will continue to provide opportunities for staff to engage in discussions about ADST activities, receive professional development, and share progress.

Furthermore, we will maintain our commitment to fostering broader community and parental support. This will be achieved by actively engaging with parents through the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and working closely with PAC subcommittees to introduce new activities, presentations, and relevant information to benefit our learners. The PAC is also supportive many of the technology needs that the school community has.

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#### 4. HOW HAVE WE SHARED?

Consistently referencing this document and making it available to the community will be key as we want all families to know about it and know how to access it. Our hope is that if students, staff, parents and caregivers, and community members know about it, they might ask critical questions and might gain a greater understanding about what the goals for False Creek Elementary are. Ways to share this information would be through paper communication, email, electronic newsletters, school website speaking directly to a topic at a PAC meeting, parent conference and word of mouth.

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#### 5. WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?

Although the False Creek Community has seen much value in our ADST focus we feel it is necessary to shift our goal. We have had staff-wide discussions and student focus groups and they are in favour of shifting our focus to Literacy. There is still much work needed to figure out specific areas of need when it comes to Literacy but there is a strong desire to improve in this area.

Teachers have noticed that as students get older and the content of interest matures, some begin to lose interest in reading if they are unable to systematically read the content of interest. We also notice that some learners struggle to make the academic gains that are typically expected from year to year in literacy. Reading and writing are fundamental skills that students need to be successful in school and in life.

When comparing initial Kindergarten data with reading/writing results in grades 2 and 3, there is a disparity between students' starting knowledge and their current understanding. This difference is more pronounced among English Language Learners (ELL), but we are also witnessing a rise in English-speaking students facing difficulties in reading and writing. To address these gaps in achievement, it is essential to use ongoing assessment as well as thoughtful interventions in order to respond to the needs of our learners.



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

Our evidence of understanding of Indigenous ways of learning is through experiences for the students and our community. One example is in 2023 we built drums for our school in collaboration with the VSB Indigenous Education Department. It was a hands-on, real life learning situation that had our students excited and curious about Indigenous culture. Our students will participate in a Drum Awakening Ceremony and plan to be drumming from then on. Each time we drum we will try and connect it to stories, or teachings about Indigenous perspectives. Each time we drum we will strive to be able to teach the new students the song we will be gifted and share our learning.

We have also had guests from the Indigenous Community come to our school to share teachings and knowledge around reconciliation and the history of Turtle Island.

Enhancing the understanding of Indigenous worldviews and knowledge at False Creek Elementary is very important. Teaching Indigenous perspectives is important in our journey to reconciliation. We will work to consistently improve in this area and up until this point we have:

- Taken part in several VSB led Indigenous Focus Days
- Interacted with Indigenous leaders, academics and artists (Carolyn Roberts – Squamish Nation, , Debra Sparrow – Musqueam Nation, Chris Lewis – Squamish Nation, Morgan Guerin - Musqueam)
- Initiated a school-wide drum making project with VSB Indigenous Education Department
- School wide and class wide Indigenous Acknowledgements

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

The False Creek Elementary Community will continue to enhance the understanding of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge by continuing to integrate Indigenous literature into our teaching. We also plan to make Indigenous teachings a part of our Professional Development and a part of our regular discussions (staff meetings, PAC meetings and daily announcements and school wide assemblies).

Teaching about ideas of reconciliation take time and involve careful planning, creative and critical thinking and the False Creek Staff is committed to doing this work.