

## 2023-2024 School Learning Plan

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### SCHOOL STORY

*With deep gratitude and respect, we are honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7meshÚxwumixw (SquamishNation) & səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation)*

Graham Bruce Elementary School is located on Tanner Street, which is a six-minute walk from the Joyce-Collingwood Station of the Expo Skytrain Line. Parks nearby Bruce include Cariboo Park, Carleton Park and Price Park. Graham Bruce is located in a vibrant multicultural community with a diverse population in diverse housing types, from high-density apartments near the skytrain to a large collection of detached and semi-detached houses with suites. Bruce is part of the Windermere Family of Schools.

We currently enroll 290 students from Kindergarten to Grade 7. Collingwood Neighbourhood School, which is a Kindergarten to Gr. 3 school on Euclid Avenue, is Bruce's annex. After completing Grade 3 at Collingwood, most students transition to Bruce in Grade 4. Collingwood Neighbourhood House provides on-site before and after school care to our students.

There are 40 staff at Bruce, including classroom and resource teachers, collaborative early literacy intervention and literacy enhancement teachers, teacher-librarian, music teacher, youth and family worker, school and student support workers, Indigenous education assistant, office administrative assistant, building engineers, supervision aides, and principal. In addition, our district staff supporting our school community includes, the area counselor, school psychologist and speech language pathologist.

Staff at Graham Bruce Elementary School promote a safe, caring, and respectful climate within a neighborhood rich in multicultural diversity.

At Graham Bruce Elementary School, we strive to maintain an inclusive environment for all our students and celebrate our different abilities and cultures in a variety of ways throughout the school year, providing opportunities for cultural exchange and learning.

Graham Bruce Elementary School is actively involved in the Collaborative Early Literacy Intervention (CELI), which targets support for our early learners in kindergarten and grade one by providing one-to-one support through Reading Recovery, small group instruction, and strong classroom practice. We are also involved in the Levelled Literacy Intervention. We continue to invest in updated technology for student use. Students have utilized technology in their learning by accessing the school FuturePLAY Lab for STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) activities, using laptops and iPads and Smartboards in many classrooms. We work closely with our many and various community partners such as artists who support our Artist-in-Residence Studio Program (AIIRS), Literacy One to One, City of Vancouver School Active Travel Program, and Collingwood

Neighbourhood Society. Our Youth and Family Worker, Indigenous Education Assistant, Literacy Enhancement Teacher and Area Counselor offer ongoing support to students with diverse academic and social and emotional needs. We work closely with our many and various community partners such as artists who support our Artist-in-Residence Studio Program (AIIRS), Literacy One to One, City of Vancouver School Active Travel Program, and Collingwood Neighbourhood Community. Our Youth and Family Worker, Indigenous Education Assistant, Literacy Enhancement Teacher and Area Counselor offer ongoing support to students with diverse academic and social and emotional needs. Some students regularly participate in the hot lunch program. The school has several community sports, recreation, clubs and arts programs for students provided by staff and the Windermere Community schools team (e.g. cooking, sports, arts and crafts, science – through Science World and Arts Umbrella).

At Bruce, there is strong family support for school initiatives and student achievement. We have a very supportive and involved Parent Advisory Council (PAC) that provides financial support for a variety of enrichment activities and programs. They contribute financially to field trips, classroom funds, performances and sport activities. Our PAC is actively involved in our school community, organizing school-wide events such as community potlucks and BBQ gatherings, and holding monthly meetings and a variety of fundraising initiatives.

Graham Bruce Elementary School aligns its goals with the Vancouver School Boards' Education plan, emphasizing student achievement, well-being, belonging, and equity. The commitment to ongoing assessment and monitoring of student performance, along with the recognition of the diverse challenges students may face, underscores the dedication to continuous improvement and development. To achieve our goals, we continue to monitor our students' performance at school using a variety of assessment tools, including our annual MDI and Learning Survey's results, and learning and summative updates throughout the school year. Some of these outcomes clearly highlight our students' voices through their self-assessment in different areas.

The staff members at Bruce visualize success for our students and understand that intellectual development, social skills and physical well-being are all valued as components of a well-rounded whole child. Staff is united in developing and working collaboratively on the school goals.

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## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

At Graham Bruce Elementary, we champion a diverse and evolving community that embraces students from various socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds. In the academic year 2023-2024, approximately 6% of our student body identifies as Indigenous. A notable 58% of our students come from households where English is not the primary language, with approximately 45% designated as English Language Learners (ELL). Bruce Elementary proudly represents thirty-three distinct language groups. About 7% of our students carry ministry designations, guiding individual education plans tailored to their unique learning needs.

Each year, Vancouver School Board participates in the Ministry of Education and Child Care Student Learning Survey, which has been administered annually in BC public schools since 2001. Our Grade 4 and 7 students participated in the survey in the Spring of 2024. Based on this survey, 84% of our Grade 4 students expressed that they liked school and 71% thought they could get the help they needed from adults when having a problem. 48% of our students felt good about themselves. 42% of our Grade 4 students attended clubs, dance sports or music classes outside of school time. 54% of our Grade 7 students expressed that they liked school and 60% felt they were able to get the extra help when needed. 74% of our students described their physical health good to excellent and 62% described their mental health good to excellent. 47% of our Grade 7 students attended clubs, dance sports or music classes outside of school time.

As we are moving from a pandemic era with an impact on the mental health of our population, especially our younger students, we continue to work with our students and families in providing them with the tools and resources that they require to improve their mental and physical health and as a staff, we will maintain our collaborative efforts to offer extra-curricular activities to our students. This school year, we offered our students athletic opportunities such as biking, basketball, volleyball, roller blading, tennis, gymnastics, curling and track and field. Classes are involved in gardening and environmental projects. We have started our student council at the intermediate level to include a stronger student voice in our everyday school life.

In Literacy, when comparing competency scales in English Language Arts between Term 1 and Term 2, we observed a decrease in Emerging and Developing levels, alongside an increase in Proficient and Extending competencies among our K-7 students. This indicates that the strategies and support provided have contributed to enhanced attainment of higher-level competency scales. By March 2024, 11% of our students were at Emerging level, 40% at Developing level, 40% at Proficient level and 7% were extending in Literacy.

Our CELI teacher worked with our Grade 1 students who received Early Intervention (EI) during the 2023-2024 school year. These students were identified as "at-risk" in key literacy areas and were selected based on inclusive eligibility criteria involving understanding of screening tasks. Initially, all students were categorized as Emerging in September. By June, only four remain in the Emerging category, with others progressing to either Proficient or Extending levels. Continued Emerging status prompts advocacy for further support. Students who received EI in Grade 1 (September 2022) demonstrated continued growth into Grade 2 (June 2024), with most achieving Proficient or Extending levels. Our data demonstrated sustained impact of Early Intervention, showing that nearly all Grade 1 students who received EI in September 2021 continued to exhibit reading growth through their Grade 3 year.

At Graham Bruce, our commitment to truth and reconciliation is deeply ingrained in our educational practices through the integration of Indigenous perspectives. Each day, our students begin with a land acknowledgement, demonstrating our respect for the traditional territories of the three nations. We actively enrich our classroom libraries with new Indigenous resources, supported by contributions from the VSB Indigenous department. Collaborating closely with our Indigenous Education Assistant, we continuously deepen our understanding of Indigenous perspectives. We actively participate in Orange Shirt Day, emphasizing its significance in promoting reconciliation and honoring the legacy of residential schools. Indigenous content is increasingly woven into various curricular areas, such as Language Arts featuring First People's Stories. We continue to work on developing an Indigenous food plant and pollinator garden. Our students were also engaged by an Indigenous dance performer who delivered an immersive Pow Wow dance demonstration, imparting cultural knowledge through interactive sessions.

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According to the 2023-2024 Ministry Student Learning Survey, 48% of our grade 4 students think that they sometimes learn about Indigenous Peoples, with 25% learning most of the time, and 2% always. Among grade 7 students, 31% participate in Indigenous celebrations or activities at school occasionally, 9% do so most of the time, and 5% always. While our staff diligently integrates Indigenous ways of knowing into the curriculum, reinforces daily land acknowledgments, expands library resources, and organizes engaging activities, we acknowledge the importance of further enhancing visibility and understanding of Indigenous learning among our students. At Graham Bruce Elementary School, we strive to maintain an inclusive environment for all our students and celebrate our different abilities and cultures in a variety of ways throughout the school year, providing opportunities for cultural exchange and learning.

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## AS A SCHOOL COMMUNITY, WE ARE WORKING ON THE FOLLOWING TO:

### Improve student achievement in literacy and numeracy, physical and mental well-being, and belonging

This school year, we have worked collaboratively as a team to enhance student literacy achievement through an equity-focused approach, integrating the First People Principles of Learning into our teaching practices. Our progress has been driven by ongoing discussions and collective efforts within our daily routines, as well as through our engagement with professional development and inquiry-based learning team initiatives.

Within our professional development sessions, we have delved into the analysis of our school's literacy objectives, exchanging insights and identifying shared priorities. This exploration has led us to develop tailored inquiry questions for literacy, customized to address the unique needs of students across different grade levels. By crafting sub-questions finely attuned to each group's learning requirements, we have ensured that our objectives seamlessly align with the district's literacy focus, deeply rooted in the VSB Responsive Literacy Framework.

Throughout the school year, our primary teachers met regularly to discuss literacy strategies in meetings led by our Collaborative Early Literacy Intervention (CELI) and Literacy Enhancement Teachers. Simultaneously, our Intermediate teachers collaborated with Yrsa Jensen on a novel approach as part of their inquiry learning team. In both groups, the emphasis was on enhancing reading comprehension and fostering self-regulated learning by equipping students with proven strategies to improve their reading skills and comprehension.

Our approach has been guided by the fundamental principles of formative teaching and learning, with a focus on clarifying learning intentions, establishing criteria, posing reflective questions, providing descriptive feedback, and fostering self and peer assessment. Furthermore, our primary team, along with the Principal, represented Graham Bruce at the district literacy days. During these events, we explored the concept of establishing a common language across grade levels to enhance communication, promote consistency, and facilitate the monitoring and assessment of student progress. As we progress, our literacy goal for the next school year is to further develop our existing initiatives, aligning our practices with the district's Responsive Literacy Framework. Our specific focus will be on refining our assessment methods and tools to ensure consistency across all grade levels.

### Improve equity

At Bruce, our mission centers on aligning with the 2026 VSB Education Plan, with a particular emphasis on fostering equity and diminishing achievement gaps among students. Through collaborative endeavors with educators, support teams, and community stakeholders, we prioritize the active inclusion of every student, regardless of their abilities or socio-economic backgrounds. Our dedicated team comprises classroom and resource teachers, collaborative and early literacy intervention teacher, literacy enhancement teacher, support staff, a youth and family worker, an Indigenous education assistant, a counselor, and a principal. Together, we employ a team approach to cultivate an inclusive and equitable learning environment for all our students.

Our teaching faculty employs a diverse range of strategies to enhance student learning, such as integrating technology, fostering peer collaboration, and providing personalized support tailored to individual needs. We

place a premium on diversity in our instructional materials, incorporate various learning modalities, and conduct ongoing assessments to ensure each student receives the necessary assistance for their academic development.

Moreover, our commitment to equity transcends the confines of the classroom. Our family hub extends to after-school programs to students, while our artist-in-residence initiative offers weekly art sessions, ensuring all students have access to enriching extracurricular activities.

In our pursuit of equity, we actively confront issues of racism and discrimination. This school year, we facilitated anti-racism workshops in collaboration with District Resource Teachers from the District Equity and Anti-Oppression team, observed Black History Month, and honored Indigenous perspectives through daily announcements and special events like Indigenous History Month. Additionally, our library curates a diverse selection of books emphasizing themes of diversity, inclusion, and cultural understanding.

By nurturing an inclusive learning environment and advocating for equity both within and beyond the classroom, we endeavor to ensure that every student at Bruce has the opportunity to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. In addition, our commitment to equity will remain central to our decision-making process. We will continue to enhance our team approach by closely collaborating with our counseling team, which includes a counselor, youth and family worker, and an Indigenous education assistant.

#### **Continue on our journey of reconciliation with First Nations, Metis, and Inuit**

In our ongoing journey of truth and reconciliation, discussions held throughout the school year, notably on Indigenous focus day, centered around the evolving landscape and its significance for Indigenous communities across generations. Conversations illuminated challenges such as limited access to resources and knowledge, environmental pollution, and escalating land costs, while also celebrating endeavors to restore environments like the Renfrew ravine. Wisdom shared by elders underscored traditions, reverence for nature, and the interconnectedness of all life. Educators deliberated on the integration of Indigenous perspectives into various subjects such as science, math, art, and physical education, striving for a holistic approach to learning.

Recommendations for nurturing students' comprehension of Indigenous perspectives on land included exploring natural spaces, engaging with Indigenous murals, cultivating a deeper appreciation for the land through gardening and planting Indigenous flora at schools, as well as learning and utilizing the original Indigenous names for local places and integrating Indigenous narratives into curriculum materials. Teachers delved into the First Peoples Principles of Learning, reflecting on the principle that struck them the most. They explored how these principles intertwine with their roles as culturally responsive educators and their approach to land-based and place-based learning. Ensuring access to authentic Indigenous knowledge and fostering open-mindedness were recognized as pivotal for students to embrace diverse perspectives on land. In conclusion, nurturing an understanding of Indigenous perspectives on land is imperative for fostering respect, stewardship, and a sense of belonging among all members of our school communities. Through sustained dialogue, education, and action, we endeavor to forge a more inclusive and sustainable future for generations to come. Furthermore, we are dedicated to expanding our collection of Indigenous resources in the library and facilitating the sharing of ideas and resources among staff to maintain consistency across grade levels.

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## HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

We are proud of the intensive work we accomplished this year toward our literacy goals, emphasizing equity and truth and reconciliation. Our efforts included exploring various tools to monitor student performance in literacy and English Language Arts. We focused on establishing a common language of formative assessment based on six major principles. Teachers prioritized reading comprehension in their literacy endeavors.

For the upcoming school year, we will:

- Identify student strengths and needs through school-wide assessments.
- Conduct ongoing staff discussions to evaluate effectiveness and identify areas for further development.
- Dedicate professional development sessions to enhancing reading comprehension.
- Collaborate to assess current programs and determine necessary adjustments, with discussions spanning from kindergarten through grade 7.

In summary, we are planning to reach our goals through the following initiatives and strategies:

- Using the Formative Assessment principles and language to support student learning.
- Collaboratively exploring current programs to identify potential changes.
- Continuing staff conversations throughout the school year to assess effectiveness and areas for improvement, with a focus on increasing reading comprehension progressively from kindergarten to grade 7.
- Conducting school-based professional development with a focus on reading comprehension.
- Participating in district professional development with an emphasis on literacy.
- Providing continued support for Collaborative Early Literacy Intervention (CELI).
- Ensuring ongoing support for Literacy Enhancement initiatives.

We will know we are on track through:

- School-wide assessments identifying student strengths and needs.
- Student goal-setting and self-reflections.
- Assessment outcomes for English Language Arts in Terms 1 and 2 as reported in Learning Updates #1 and #2.
- Observing students' relationship with literacy, including their book choices and responses to various literature.
- Utilizing the BAS kit to inform practice by collecting baseline data in reading comprehension in September and March.
- Reviewing results from the Collaborative Early Literacy Intervention at the primary level.
- Analyzing results from the 2024-2025 Ministry Student Learning Survey.
- Considering MDI data.
- Conducting a thorough review of our library resources and collections.