

## 2023-2024 School Learning Plan

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### SCHOOL STORY

*It is with deep gratitude and respect that Collingwood Neighbourhood School (CNS) is honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7meshÚxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and səliwətəʔ (Tseil-Wauthuth Nation).*

CNS is close to Joyce Skytrain Station, a major transit hub. The neighbourhood is a growing, bustling mixture of new commercial development and tower housing located alongside long-time businesses and single-family homes. The stores and restaurants are diverse in their offerings and showcase the neighbourhood's different cultures. The school makes use of Gaston Park for outside playtimes.

CNS is a Kindergarten to Grade Three school that is an annex to Graham Bruce Elementary School, where most of our students attend for the remainder of their elementary years. Currently, there are 156 students in nine divisions and 23 staff members. The district TEIR (Targeted Early Intervention Resource) program is also part of our school. TEIR provides targeted reading instruction to Grade Two students identified with a significant delay in acquiring literacy skills. Like our neighbouring schools, CNS is part of the Windermere Family of Schools.

Physically connected to Collingwood Neighbourhood House Community Centre, CNS is very much a community hub. We host a very popular Strong Start Program which also runs an I-PALS (Parents as Literacy Supporters in Immigrant Communities) program for 3–5-year-old children and their parents who have permanent residency or refugee status. As many of these students attend Kindergarten at CNS, the two teams work very closely throughout the kindergarten transition. Additionally, CNS is home to an Out of School Care Program whose staff are always willing to collaborate with the school. CNS also has a strong relationship with our local Vancouver Public Library and Public Health Nurse. Relationships and belonging are central to our work at CNS and reflect the First Peoples' Principles of Learning that "learning is not an individual act but happens in relationship with people, materials and place."

CNS has a long-standing tradition of daily runs around Gaston Park. Rain or shine, this fifteen-minute exercise time involves all grades 1-3 classes and contributes to our students' sense of belonging and to their physical and mental well-being. Because of this program, we have many strong runners, many of whom join our Cross-Country running team.

The school garden, enclosed in our back courtyard, is a place for teaching, gathering, eating, playing and learning to be together in community. In our 6 raised garden beds are indigenous plants, a mud kitchen, and edible plants and herbs.

Recently, CNS has re-committed to a school-wide Music program which introduces all students to the fundamentals of Music including rhythm, beat, movement, song and simple instruments. There has also been a commitment to decolonize the school experience through song choice and including student voice.

Student achievement is seen as an opportunity for belonging and celebration. Each Spring all classes engage in an Applied Design Skills and Technology (ADST) project which culminates in a school-wide activity.

Our PAC is a group of parents who meet regularly at the beginning of each month. Recently, the PAC has supported school-wide initiatives including Gymnastics, Bollywood, Hip Hop, School-wide field studies as well as improvements to our school garden. This commitment to providing opportunities for all students works towards our common goals of equity and belonging for all students.

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

Our community of young learners is a diverse population. The majority, 65%, of our students identify as having a Home Language other than English, with the two most identified home languages being Tagalog and Mandarin/Cantonese. Students with diverse needs make up 6% of our student population and fewer than 10 students identify as Indigenous. With such diversity, one of Collingwood's strengths lies in its inclusivity. Students take responsibility for their peers and the sense of community is visible. Additionally, we often have many students joining our school community throughout the school year bringing new perspectives and energy.

Most of our students belong to families with working parents and caregivers so grandparents, extended family, baby-sitters, or Out of School Care support parents and caregivers by caring for our students before and after school. Dental health is a need for our community. Prior to Kindergarten, many of our current students did not receive dental check-ups.

Communication skills and general knowledge are a need for the learners in our community. Students' ability to successfully engage with peers, display expected play skills and participate in group learning have been identified by both teachers and the Early Developmental Index (EDI) as specific areas of need. While teaching problem solving skills and positive behaviour expectations does happen in classrooms, there continues to be a need to broaden and reinforce our school-wide approach.

From EDI data collected between 2019-2022 we know kindergarten students in Renfrew-Collingwood are more vulnerable than their average VSB peer. 33.7% of VSB Kindergarten students were identified as vulnerable on one or more of the five EDI scales whereas in our neighbourhood that number is 40.4%. In particular, the area of most need and largest discrepancy from the district average is Communication Skills and General Knowledge which looks at English language skills and general knowledge, such as the ability to clearly communicate one's own needs, participate in story-telling, and general interest in the world. This is reflected in our school data as well. The Kindergarten Screener administered in the middle of the school year tells us that half of our Kindergarten students need targeted literacy support in phonological awareness and oral language.

However, the Kindergarten Screener did indicate that Concepts of Print and Letter Identification are strong. Additionally, according to the EDI, one of our relative strengths is Language and Cognitive Development

which measures children’s basic and advanced literacy skills, numeracy skills, interest in numeracy/literacy and memory.

Reading and writing data are also regularly collected for all our older students (grades 1-3). Reading data from the DIBELS assessment indicates that half of our students are reading well and at negligible risk for future reading difficulties and half of our students are struggling in one or more components of reading. From regular School Wide Writes, we know that most of our students’ writing skills are either developing or proficient. Students not in these categories have emerging writing skills.

At Collingwood, our students are familiar with the land acknowledgement. Each day begins with a school-wide land acknowledgement that students read over the PA and a second one is delivered by students in their classrooms. The classroom delivered land acknowledgement allows teachers and students to discuss various aspects of land acknowledgements and to try their own in a smaller, more familiar setting. All students at Collingwood are familiar with VSB’s current land acknowledgement that honors the traditional territories of our three host nations. Collingwood’s focus was “Learning from the Land” and classroom observations throughout the school year demonstrated that students learned about the connection between land and the four seasons. Classes crafted reflections and created art that reflected their understandings, and the First Peoples Principles of Learning are woven through all teaching. Students know that learning takes time, and this is also communicated in parent conversations. During our Orange Shirt Day Assembly all students learned about promoting reconciliation and the importance of understanding the legacy of residential schools.

While our staff diligently integrate Indigenous ways of knowing into the curriculum, deliver and support daily land acknowledgments, expand library resources, and organize engaging activities, we acknowledge the importance of further enhancing visibility and understanding of Indigenous learning among our students. At Collingwood Neighbourhood 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.

Equity in primary schools is a crucial topic, and there are several key areas where evidence of equity can be observed at Collingwood: inclusive curriculum, teacher-student relationships, equitable leadership, support systems and professional development. Teachers at CNS strive to deliver a culturally responsive pedagogy and implement a curriculum reflecting our school’s diverse cultures, histories and perspectives which helps ensure all students see themselves represented in their education. Strong, respectful relationships between teachers and students are vital. According to data collected through an informal survey, 95% of all Grade 2 and 3 students could identify at least one supportive staff member. We offer a daily lunch program that is accessed by about 15% of our students and which has proven to be a helpful support for our families. We also waive school fees to support families, though that was accessed by fewer than 5% of our families.

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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

A school wide focus on evidence-based practices has been adopted by teachers to improve student achievement. 2023-2024 was a year of many firsts. It was the first year all staff implemented structured literacy and taught reading consistently across all settings. This initiative needed accompanying reading material, and the purchase of decodable readers was financially supported by PAC and school fundraising. It was the first year

using a school-wide reading assessment (DIBELS) to assess the acquisition of literacy skills. This assessment can be used to detect risk and monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills. These scores were collated by grade and shared with the teachers for future planning. It was also the first-year teachers collaboratively planned and assessed student writing samples three times a year and began developing assessment rubrics for these School-Wide Writes.

Collingwood is a diverse community of learners and families. Using culturally responsive pedagogy within the context of literacy is one way we improve belonging. We continually build our collection of books that represent all children in classrooms and in our library. We use literacy to explore identity and have tied this to the common idea of celebration.

This school year we began school-wide assemblies and opportunities to foster belonging and student leadership. Once a month the school gathers in the Gym to listen and learn from (mostly) student presenters. Some of the highlights this year were our Pink Shirt Day Assembly, Indigenous Heritage Month Assembly, and anything that features a practice performance from one of the Music Classes. All grade three students have a School Leadership Role and contribute to the school community. Everything from delivering the morning announcements to recycling to advertising to lunchroom monitors and playground leaders. When writing their memories about Collingwood Neighbourhood School, students often referred to these leadership opportunities.

### Improve equity

Equity in classrooms and schools means making sure every student has the resources and support they need to be successful. At Collingwood, we strive to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to achieve their full learning potential, regardless of factors such as race, culture, gender, religion, ethnicity, immigration status, individual experiences, or socio-economic background. This commitment drives our approach to selecting instructional tools that accommodate various learning styles, supporting staff in navigating the emotional and cognitive complexities necessary for fostering equity, and making inclusive decisions regarding school resources and funding.

We use data to identify disparities in performance and determine what interventions are most urgently needed. This includes providing targeted support, interventions, and assistance to students at risk of falling behind. Collingwood strives to be an inclusive learning environment and models this early on to the benefit of our entire school community. Accommodations, individualized programming, adaptations, and modifications to support positive behaviour and meaningful school experiences are developed and implemented when needs are identified regardless of diagnosis and designations.

Building equity is a process and staff have taken steps to examine their teaching materials. Conscious and visible efforts to cull classroom libraries and work towards building a more representative collection are underway.

Communicating with and supporting parents are two of our top priorities. We take the time necessary and implement various strategies to reach all parents. Whether that is through Google translate, using our district interpreters and settlement workers, providing multi-lingual links and a diversity calendar in newsletters. We aim to be adaptable, individually focused and fair in targeting supplemental funding to families with our Gift Card and Fresh Produce Backpack Program.

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

Collingwood's journey of reconciliation happens on many levels. There is personal, classroom and school learning that happens throughout the school year. Personally, staff have engaged in understanding proper reconciliation and meaningful land acknowledgements. In our classrooms there have been focused lessons and units of specific topics while weaving the First Peoples Principles of Learning through all units of study. The theme of *Learning From the Land* provided a school-wide focus for student learning. In some classes this looked like learning about the importance of rivers and salmon. In others there was learning about indigenous shapes and totem animals, seasonal rounds, icons and touchstones. There were lessons on taking care of the land using the land and the connection between communities, shared values and understandings. Students applied this learning to written responses, drawings, and projects. We have noticed more students have been independently seeking out and noticing Indigenous books in the library and they are able to identify First Nations art around the school and in the community. Student announcers have been delivering the land acknowledgement daily and classes have developed their own extensions and understandings around land acknowledgments. Students have reported enjoying learning about indigenous cultures, and specifically Coast Salish.

Going forward staff have decided to work towards increasing resources and continue the school-wide focus on *Learning From the Land*. Having a larger and diversified collection of Indigenous Guided Reading books, units of study, multi-media lesson supplements, and workshops/performances will support new learning. The idea of oral storytelling and encouraging students to tell their stories has been explored as a way the First Peoples Principles of Learning can come to life within the context of teaching and learning within literacy. There is also a goal amongst staff to align our school's direction and develop a whole school project with an indigenous focus.

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

Data collection from reading and writing assessments, report cards and student reflections will provide evidence of student achievement.

Implementing literacy supports for our students who need a tier 2 intervention is a priority for the 2024-2025 school year. Currently, we are acquiring a limited number of Lexia accounts to support this. Lexia is a research-proven software that works hand in hand with administrators and educators to help create equitable learning opportunities through the effective implementation of the Science of Reading. Developed with a mission to mitigate the equity gap, it follows an adaptive blended learning model that offers explicit, systematic and personalized reading instruction to students of all abilities.

Collecting student responses to school developed surveys focused on school expectations and current positive behaviour supports will provide information on students' understanding of what it means to be a Collingwood student and where more work is needed.

Evidence of learning from students' work in class on Indigenous teachings, increased library collections and guided reading sets featuring indigenous authors and content, and greater collaboration with Indigenous department will help reach our goal of setting a school-wide goal and project. Dedicated teacher professional development focused on Indigenous weaving led by the pro-d committee has been planned for the 2024-2025 school year. Resource sharing at the beginning of staff meetings has been put into the framework for the 2024-2025 school year.