

2023-2024 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

Dickens Annex is a buzzing community nestled in the Kensington-Cedar Cottage neighbourhood of East Vancouver on the unceded lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm | Musqueam, Skwxwú7mesh | Squamish & səliłwətał | Tsleil-Waututh Nations. The school community is comprised of families with ethnic origins including, but not limited to: English, Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Japanese. Dickens Annex maintains an overarching theme of child-centeredness supported by four defined pillars:

- multi-age groupings of students within classrooms and work groups
- differentiated instruction for student engagement and learning
- authentic assessment for learning to monitor individual and continuous progress
- working within a collaborative learning environment

Students are encouraged to develop a growth mindset to extend their knowledge and experiences while contributing to their school environment by being bucket fillers through kindness and care towards themselves and others. Students are provided opportunities to participate in a multitude of leadership opportunities including but not limited to hosting weekly assemblies and leading school singing. The staff, students, and parents value students being active participants in understanding their learning needs and strengths, as well as setting their own learning goals. These elements are reflected in our school Code of Conduct, "Do your best, Help Others, Find Joy".

Dickens Annex shares an active and dedicated Parent Advisory Council (PAC) with Dickens Main. The PAC offers many diverse events throughout the year, culminating in an annual Spring Fling. We welcome parents into the school to contribute to student learning as volunteers, sharing their knowledge and experiences with the students.

The learners, staff, and school community appreciate and value Indigenous histories, cultures, and traditions and are committed to their ongoing learning. This is evident in parent participation for events like drum making, drum awakening, and singing of the Coast Salish Anthem at weekly assemblies. With our ongoing commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, we continue to unlearn and learn through oral storytelling, hands on experience, and personal connections.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

Most learners in our community speak English as their first language, with additional languages including Mandarin, Tagalog, and Korean. Students come to school with a wealth of learned and lived experiences; they have rich vocabulary, sentence structure, literacy knowledge, and an established love for stories and books.

As a school community, we value multi-age grouping to allow familial relationships to develop between students and their teacher, and amongst students. Older learners become “teachers” within their own classes as they take on leadership roles to help and guide younger learners. Learners also demonstrate their desire and comfort to speak, share, and lead weekly, whole-school assemblies.

The Dickens Annex learners have a strong sense of self, their presence in their community, and are budding advocates for social justice. Learners continue to strengthen their self-regulation strategies through Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs, mindful breathing practice, and Zones of Regulation language used consistently throughout the school. The school demographic is representative of Vancouver’s diverse population and the students go out of their way to embrace and welcome all learners in the school community.

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

At Dickens Annex, teachers work collaboratively to offer learners the individualized instruction they need to be successful in school. As part of our literacy program we use a structured and sequential approach to phonics and phonemic awareness instruction. Learners are also immersed in rich literature through well-curated books in the library and Group Language (a whole-school shared reading of a book) followed by discussion and activity. These lessons encourage perspective taking, tier 2 vocabulary, and critical thinking and comprehension strategies.

Improve equity

By providing evidence-based instruction to all learners, we can now identify students who require additional, intensive support and accommodate needs-specific learning strategies and environments. We consider equity the driving force behind our decision-making to ensure that the most vulnerable learners are centered in our decision making so that every student is working toward their own goal, at their own pace, to become proficient in competency-based skills. We continue to learn about how to be better allies and to stand alongside and do the work of anti-racism and reconciliation. At Dickens Annex, we make intentional choices to diversify performers and workshop leaders to ensure they represent the diversity in our world.

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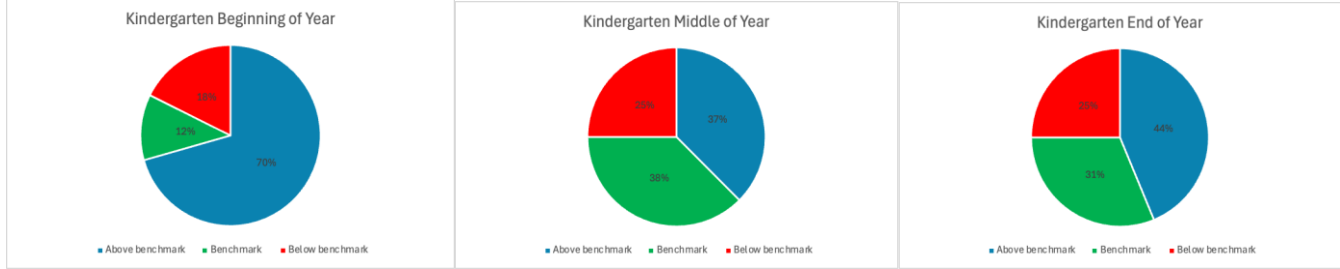
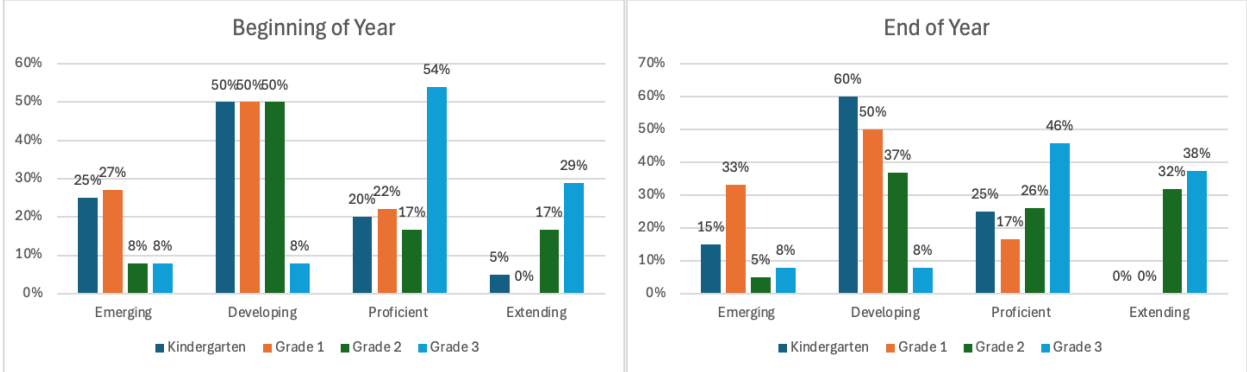
Continue on our journey of reconciliation with First Nations, Metis, and Inuit

As part of our ongoing work towards reconciliation, students participate in weekly conversations that focus on Indigenous histories, celebrate achievements, and discuss current affairs. We continue to

work on being better allies by contributing our time and participation; to not simply learn about but live alongside Indigenous peoples. Taking guidance from Black Excellence, Dickens Annex has been learning and celebrating the contributions and successes of Indigenous peoples in politics, arts, and sports every week. Teachers and staff continue to share their ongoing Professional Development learnings with each other around culturally responsive curriculum as well as First Peoples Principles for Learning. The singing and drumming of the Coast Salish anthem at weekly assemblies serves as a constant reminder of our respect for the local Indigenous cultures. It instills a sense of community and belonging among students, further enriching their educational experience.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

In addition to assessments done by classroom teachers, students are assessed using the Acadience screener three times a year, focusing on phonemic awareness, phonics, and reading comprehension. This frequent and skill targeted assessment allows us to monitor progress and adjust teaching strategies effectively. Acadience, CSL data, student/parental feedback, and teacher observations are the main pieces of data that will show progress.



We are also committed to promoting a culturally responsive literacy program by integrating diverse cultural perspectives to foster an inclusive learning environment where every student feels valued and understood.

With the beautiful Glen Park as our front yard and the Annex Garden in the back, we are incorporating land-based learning into our curriculum and daily living. This hands-on, experiential approach not only

enhances students' understanding of the environment but also fosters a deep connection with nature and an appreciation for Indigenous teachings and histories. Together, these strategies are propelling us towards our school growth objectives, ensuring a holistic and inclusive learning experience for all our students.