

2023-2024 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

Sir James Douglas Elementary School is situated in the southeastern area of Vancouver, on the ancestral, traditional, and unceded Indigenous territories of the Coast Salish Peoples – the Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. Douglas Elementary is a triple track school with English, French Immersion and Late French Immersion programs. The school currently enrolls 543 students. French Immersion students attend Sir James Douglas Annex from Kindergarten through Grade 3 before transferring to the main school, Douglas Elementary, for Grades 4 through 7. Douglas is part of the David Thompson Secondary Family of Schools for English program students and the Sir Winston Churchill Secondary Family of Schools for French Immersion students. A Strong Start Program opened in September 2014 and is a vibrant part of the school community. Douglas is committed to formulating strong ties with our early learning partners.

In 2013, we moved into a new building which is seismically safe and fully accessible. The school is designed with classrooms that are grouped in six learning communities/pods named after local Indigenous animals/birds- Eagles, Wolves, Hummingbirds, Coyotes, Turtles, and Orcas. Each pod contains 4-5 classrooms grouped together with a common learning space for students to share and engage with other students. This design fosters collaboration and cooperation amongst classroom teachers and students.

The Douglas community, including students, parents, and staff, is eager to engage. Douglas provides many extra-curricular programs and school experiences that are designed to enhance collaboration and student learning. We have a thriving Arts program including music classes with our music specialist, band for students in grades 6-7, and a school-wide musical. Our students are also engaged in art workshops through the Artist in Residence Studio (AIRS) program. Our Community Schools Team is actively involved in providing after-school learning opportunities like Art Classes and Super Science Club. Staff are committed to land-based learning and creating spaces outdoors for connection to each other and the land through the Wild Schools program. The school has a highly active Parent Advisory Council that coordinates many social and fund-raising activities for Douglas and Douglas Annex.

Some of the ways that we celebrate learning that connect to the VSB Education Plan 2026 Goal of improving student achievement, physical and mental well-being, equity, and belonging include: commitment to anti-racism, restorative practices, school-wide themes, events, activities, assemblies, parent teacher conferences, newsletters, social media, PAC meetings, open houses, and celebrations of learning.

Douglas staff strive to build a respectful community of lifelong learners. We work towards both staff and students becoming caring, accomplished, and cooperative citizens. We aim to provide an enriched environment in which children are encouraged to think, question, create and wonder. Together with families and school community we take joy in celebrating their learning journeys!

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

As a triple track school, Douglas has a diverse population of learners. Approximately 9% of our student population have identified special needs and are fully integrated into classes. About 25% of our students are learning English as an additional language and fewer than 10 students identify as Indigenous. The school celebrates and is proud of its multi-cultural school population with families coming from countries all over the world. With the influx of immigration to Vancouver, Douglas has welcomed new students over the past year who are new to Canada and identify as reception level English Language Learners.

Literacy

Term 2 CSL data shows us that 50% of Douglas students are Emerging or Developing in English Language Arts. English Language Arts comprises reading, writing and oral language so we conducted further assessments to narrow our focus.

Intermediate classes completed the DIBELS Reading Assessment which is a screening tool. The results showed that on average, 38% of our students at the Intermediate level are below grade level in their reading comprehension.

Grade	English Classes		French Immersion Classes	
	% at Grade Level or Above	% Below Grade Level	% at Grade Level or Above	% Below Grade Level
7	58	42	67	33
6	61	39	62	38
5	62	38	62	38
4	61	39	66	34

As a Collaborative Early Literacy Intervention (CELI) school, our Primary classes track students’ reading levels using the BAS and DRA assessment kits. Of our Grade 1 and 2 classes, 44% of students were not reading at grade level by the end of term 2.

School wide write data from May 2024 illustrates that approximately 50% of our intermediate students are writing at a proficient level, whereas approximately 23% of our primary students are writing at a proficient level.

Communicating Student Learning (CSL) data also tells us that 45% of Douglas students are emerging or developing in Numeracy, but teachers noted that this is due to mistakes from poor reading comprehension skills when reading word problems as well as written instructions.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social Emotional Learning continues to be an area of need for Douglas students. During Class Reviews, approximately 20% of all students were identified as needing targeted SEL support. Unstructured times are particularly challenging for student self-regulation and conflict resolution. Supervision Aides, SSAs and Administration are consistently needed to provide support to students of all at recess and lunch. This is consistent with the Student Voice survey, in which students identified “I feel that I know how to solve small problems by myself” and “I feel that I know when to get help from an adult” as areas for growth.

As a staff, we have identified literacy as the greatest area of academic need for our learners. Additionally, Social Emotional Learning continues to be an area for growth. Without literacy, our students cannot access the other facets of learning. Without Social Emotional regulation, students cannot be expected to perform.

Equity

As a triple-track school, Douglas is a diverse community with a wide range of cultures, beliefs and languages spoken. We value our diversity and celebrate the differences that make each of us unique. As a staff, we prioritize relationship building and strive to foster a sense of belonging for all our learners. Our students are also diverse in their learning needs and benefit from having multiple ways to access information as well as demonstrate their learning. Most of our students receive in-class support from their classroom teachers as well as resource or support staff when needed, while some benefit from targeted intervention to achieve progress.

Reconciliation

Many of our classes connected to Indigenous education through the new Indigenous land acknowledgement. They dove into the land acknowledgement and the significance of acknowledging the host nations and added their appreciation of and commitments to caring for the land they live on. Douglas is also a “Wild School” and we have worked with instructors from the Wild Schools organization to provide lessons to students and workshops for teachers around land-based learning and Indigenous plants in our area. Our library has an extensive collection of Indigenous books. When asked whether they feel that Indigenous culture is valued at school, most students in grades 4-7 selected often or always on the Student Voice survey and were able to give examples of what they had learned.

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

To improve student achievement in literacy, we will complete additional formative assessments (School Wide Writes, DIBELS, BAS) to obtain schoolwide data. We will use this data to inform the classroom teaching practices and identify at-risk learners who need more support. We will also use these assessments as opportunities for teachers to collaborate and calibrate proficiency to establish a common standard schoolwide.

To improve student mental well-being, we will continue to focus on Social Emotional Learning through the Zones of Regulation, EASE, Open Parachute, Little Spot series and WITS (Walk away, Ignore, Talk it out, Seek Help) programs. We have introduced Ready Body Learning Minds to our staff and students and will seek to make it a consistent part of our practice. We will continue to use Restorative Practice to build community and resolve conflict.

Improve equity

To improve equity, we will use formative assessments to track student progress and focus our Resource support on the learners who need it most. We will provide time for teachers to collaborate so they can work together to support the needs of the students. Through a collaborative teaching model, students will work in flexible groups with differentiated instruction and the support of our Resource team. We will continue to focus on Universal Design for Learning and adapting materials for all learners.

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

To continue our journey of reconciliation with First Nations, Metis, and Inuit, we will offer staff Professional Development with Wild Schools around land-based learning and creating spaces outdoors for connection to each other and the land. We will continue to feature and grow our collection of Indigenous books in the library

and resources for staff. We will integrate First Peoples Principles of Learning throughout our classroom activities and routines.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

- Review and measure progress in literacy skills through CSL data, School Wide Write, reading assessments (BAS, DRA, DIBELS) and the Foundational Skills Assessment
- Review and measurable progress in Social Emotional well-being through our Mini Dessa Assessment and Student Voice Survey.
- Visible improvement in student regulation and utilization of strategies and tools to calm down. Measurable improvement through DESSA data and teacher surveys.
- Measurable improvement in student ability to peacefully problem solve when conflicts arise through office referral data and teacher surveys
- Visible increase in learning of First Nations, Metis and Inuit culture and language through visual displays and student responses in Student Voice Survey