

2023-2024 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

With deep gratitude and respect, Sir Sandford Fleming Elementary School is honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7meshÚxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation). We are dedicated to providing education for 428 students from Kindergarten to grade 7. Approximately 50% of students speak one of over 30 languages as their first language, with Cantonese, Punjabi, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Spanish being the more dominant languages. The Fleming community is proud and diverse in cultural identity. We actively work towards decolonizing our schooling practices to create an inclusive environment for all students.

At Fleming, we prioritize supporting learners by fostering a sense of belonging, generosity, independence, and mastery. By helping students develop these tenets, students develop into developing kind, empathetic, and hardworking individuals, who are encouraged to choose courage over comfort. As Fleming Wolves, students strive to HOWL (Help Ourselves and Others With Learning and Living) on a daily basis. Fleming has a dedicated team of approximately 50 staff members who work diligently to inspire students to thrive both inside and outside the classroom. We are grateful for the support of our various community partners who offer out-of-school programs, literacy support, snacks, and childcare services. These partnerships allow us to extend athletic, cultural, and daycare programming to our families.

The Fleming community cares about students and work to provide a space that is inclusive of neurodiverse, gender, cultural, racial, and ethnic identities.

Teamwork is at the core of our school culture. The school is organized into five learning communities named Maple (Kindergarten), Willow (Grades 1/2), Cedar (Grade 3), Sitka Spruce (Grades 4/5), and Arbutus (Grades 6/7). Each learning community consists of four classroom teachers and support staff who collaborate, share spaces, and sometimes teach together to meet the diverse needs of our learners. Working together towards our collective goals is our strength.

In addition to our learning communities structure, Fleming boasts numerous outdoor learning spaces designed to incorporate land-based learning opportunities that allow students to engage with and learn from the land.

In line with our commitment to student success, we place a strong emphasis on literacy. Sir Sandford Fleming Elementary School is a Collaborative Early Literacy Intervention (CELI) school that prioritizes one-on-one and small group interventions. Our dedicated staff members work collaboratively and engage in shared decision-making within their learning pods, employing a collaborative inquiry approach. By focusing on early literacy intervention, we aim to ensure that all learners become strong readers.

We take great pride in our school community and are committed to providing a supportive and culturally responsive learning environment for all students where they are challenged to do their very best and have a strong sense of community and belonging.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

Sir Sandford Fleming Elementary fosters a vibrant community of approximately 430 students, celebrated for its rich diversity among both students and families. With over 32% of students fluent in multiple languages and 11% identifying as neurodiverse, our community thrives on inclusivity. Additionally, we proudly honor the 3% of students identifying as Indigenous. Our collective commitment to reconciliation, regardless of cultural background, is a cornerstone of our ethos.

Feedback from Grade 4 and 7 students, as reflected in the Student Learning Survey, highlights an overwhelming sense of belonging, with over 80% expressing they are happy within our school's environment. They revel in the plethora of extracurricular opportunities available and demonstrate a keen awareness of Indigenous cultures, acknowledging their importance in our educational journey. Approximately 65% of students report progress in reading proficiency. There are about 50% of our students who are Proficient or Extending in Literacy and Numeracy according to learning update data and Grade 4 and 7 FSA data indicative of our collective commitment to continue to improve academic achievement.

Driven by a passion for involvement and a sense of belonging in the community, students actively engage in various clubs and athletic endeavors, while embracing the POD structure. Witnessing their impact within the school community has empowered many to amplify their voices, advocating for positive change and fostering a culture of active participation.

In alignment with our commitment to reconciliation, we are embarking on regular engagements with our Indigenous community. These dialogues serve to forge stronger bonds between school and home, facilitating mutual understanding and paving the way for collaborative efforts towards reconciliation. Through these interactions, we strive to glean insights into how best to support and honor Indigenous perspectives within our educational framework.

AS A SCHOOL COMMUNITY, WE ARE WORKING ON THE FOLLOWING

To improve student achievement in literacy and increase knowledge, acceptance, empathy, awareness and appreciation of indigenous contributions, histories, traditions, and cultures among all students

GOAL: To improve reading outcomes for students in Grades K-7.

- Administering a universal literacy screener to all students 4-7, a collection of data for reading in grades K-3 and using that data to continue conversations to determine what supports are required for each student to improve reading skills K-7.
- Commit to understanding which students are not at benchmark reading levels and why. Learning what are the specific and targeted skills they require and how can that support be best delivered. Implementing the 5 pillars of reading and how we can implement them across K-7, while continuing to value the work of a wide variety of philosophies as they can all be supportive and effective for some students.
- Teachers participate in a variety of Inquiry Groups with a specific focus on: Reading Simplified, Rime Magic, UFLI, Heather Willms and others. They share their learning with each other both informally and formally. to ensure all student have access to the diverse range of materials and educational supports required to improve reading outcomes in order to reduce gaps in achievement.
- Equity in literacy ensures all students have access to a diverse range of multimedia reading materials to encourage comprehension.
- Equity in literacy provides students with a wider selection of texts and multimedia while ensuring students are deeply engaged with English language skills. We work to ensure staffing is distributed in an equitable way to support literacy development. Our target students for equity are students who are not yet at benchmark. Although many of these students are identified as English Language Learners, we are looking even more specifically at those who are not ELL. The focus group includes students who are Indigenous, underserved and underrepresented groups, and those who have not yet unlocked the key to reading.

Support for **all** our students include:

- School wide culture of literacy – all students participate in literacy activities in reading, writing, and oral language every day Decolonization of Assessment Equity in assessment with Universal Design for learning for all learners Assessment screener and reading skills are assessed in a variety of ways for all students K-7 – that data is used to inform teaching practice
- A focus on both the 5 pillars of reading and the necessary skills to decode effectively alongside learning to love literature and increase reading comprehension skills Increased student time with texts Integration of technology supports for students to access a variety of levels of text.

Supports for **some** of our students include:

- Heggerty, Daily Five, Secret Stories and UFLI phonological awareness and phonics programs, Reading and Writing Power to support comprehension, and Words Their Way for vocabulary supports.
- Rime Magic, Guided Reading, Small group CELI support (4 x 4 groups) for Grade 1's, Small groups support for Gr. 2/3, Small group support for K's at risk in any subskill, Small group support for Gr. 4-7 (LAC, ELL).
- Support from a district literacy enhancement teacher Small group work with a Learning Support Teacher to address skills determined from assessments Community involvement to read with our students

Support for a **few** of our students include:

- Specialized reading programs Speech and Language and Psych-educational Assessments

GOAL: Increase knowledge, acceptance, empathy, awareness and appreciation of Indigenous contributions, histories, traditions, and cultures among all students.

The diversity of cultural ways of being and doing in communities is recognized, acknowledged, and sustained via:

- valuing community languages, practices, and ways of being
- school accountability to policies, protocols, curricula, and practices relating to equity and students' achievement and wellbeing
- curriculum that connects to Indigenous cultural and linguistic histories
- sustaining Indigenous cultural and linguistic practices within the larger mainstream context.

What does reconciliation mean to learners at our school and how are we addressing it?

Community Gatherings and Meetings:

- Powerful messages, pictures, and stories were shared during or before land acknowledgements in staff meetings.
- Drumming and Indigenous songs at the beginning of community gatherings, with increasing student participation in singing.
- Monthly assemblies featured the Coast Salish anthem and moving towards transformative land acknowledgements.
- Singing the Canadian national anthem after the Coast Salish Anthem during community gatherings
- Outdoor learning from the land.
- Many classes start and end their day in circle
- Inviting Indigenous performers for school performances.
- Moving towards correct pronunciations of the names of the local nations: xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

- School-wide acknowledgment and learning of the origins of Orange Shirt Day and Red Dress Day.
- Classes participate in Indigenous History Month workshops and activities.

Student Projects:

- Collaboration between students and teachers to rename nearby street signs inspired by natural surroundings.
- Using books and lessons with an Indigenous focus and content.
- Infusing Indigenous stories throughout the curriculum
- Student-led creation of red dress paper ornaments to support MMIWG2S awareness after learning about the Red Dress Project.
- Ensuring research is done to avoid cultural appropriation.
- Highlighting Indigenous brilliance and contributions.

Staff Involvement:

- Staff meetings focused on reconciliation, with discussions about Indigenous ways of knowing and stories shared before land acknowledgements.
- Appreciation for the engagement in reconciliation and learning about Indigenous cultures.
- Encouragement of open discussions about decolonization in the classroom.
- Administration led by example, integrating Indigenous learning and taking risks to try new approaches.
- Admin meetings with our Indigenous Education Worker and Indigenous families for dinner and conversations.
- Unlearning some of the stories and ways of doing that we now know need to be different.
- Having an Indigenous Library within the Learning Commons, making Indigenous learning materials readily available.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

Our goal is to improve student reading outcomes. We will know that we are on track as success will be evident through regular literacy committee meetings focused on teacher learning and meaningful actions, and teachers adjusting their instruction based on student needs. Teachers will increase their knowledge of each other's work, which will influence their perceptions of their colleagues' abilities and motivate them through co-constructing new knowledge. Students will spend more time reading and show increased engagement and joy during literacy activities. Additionally, there will be an increase in students' proficiency in English Language Arts, with more students meeting or exceeding benchmarks on various literacy assessments.

If we do not see any improvements for our students, we must be willing to critically examine our role in this. We must ask what is leading to the present situation and how are we, the professionals, contributing

to that situation. We know that moving from safe spaces to brave spaces means engaging in critical and crucial conversations.

For our Indigenous goal, we will know we are on track through a variety of measures that will reveal individual student progress in academic skills like reading, writing, and class participation. Indicators of engagement, such as increased attendance and participation in extracurricular activities, will become evident. Indigenous students will feel happier and more included as they see themselves reflected in the curriculum. Feedback from students and families will show meaningful conversations and experiences are taking place, though some changes may be gradual and not immediately visible. Overall, a positive environment will be reflected in students' happiness, engagement, and support systems involving connections with adults and peers.

Our next steps are to:

Amplify and do more of the following

- Continue to learn about and amplify the language of appreciation/observation and intentionality during art and nature walks
 - Learn even more about Indigenous holidays and traditions
 - Continue the acknowledgement and appreciation of Indigenous stories
- Amplify Orange shirt day recognition
- Continue with Place based teaching
- Invite more Indigenous voices in the school

Change or Reconsider

- What kinds of ways can we ask less of Indigenous knowledge keepers and provide opportunities for acts of service?
- How to speak about Indigenous issues in young child friendly language
- Replace 'Cherokee' Wolf story with a story from local nations
- Generalizing Indigenous people – there are different nations and cultures

Create

- How to increase personal knowledge and confidence in teaching Indigenous principles
- Incorporate Indigenous games into PHE
- Use more authentic resources
- Ask students to write their own land acknowledgment and read them daily
- Learn about local Indigenous languages- such as phonetics, how do we pronounce the words when written
- Involving our Indigenous Education Worker more in the classroom using her gifts and talents
- Class land acknowledgement
- Opportunities to learn Indigenous ways