

2023-2024 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

Gordon Elementary is a vibrant and active community of staff, students and families situated in the heart of Vancouver’s Kitsilano neighbourhood. We are grateful to be surrounded by the North Shore mountains and within walking distance to some of Vancouver’s beautiful parks and beaches that connect us to this land. We are honoured to be working and learning together on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the xʷmə θ kʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh Nation). Currently the school enrolls 400 students within 18 Divisions from kindergarten to grade 7. Our learners are quite diverse in their cultural, educational and life experiences.

Our school is part of the VSB Early Literacy Initiative, and we have Reading Recovery and Leveled Literacy Interventions programs to support early learners in the primary grades. Our teachers are committed to deepening our understanding of the curriculum to foster and facilitate an inquiry-based approach to learning. This includes student-centered teaching strategies, collaboration with colleagues in grade groups, across grades, resource sharing and expertise, and providing lessons that extend learning beyond the classroom. Our professional development is aligned with students’ learning needs as well as social/emotional growth. We see learning as a partnership with parents and caregivers, and work to provide meaningful, enriching opportunities to support a child’s learning at school and in the community. With the support of our Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), we recently created an outdoor learning space that complements our commitment to outdoor learning. Several classes do regular outdoor learning workshops, and we have a flourishing garden program where students learn about agriculture, plant species and how important the land is to Indigenous people.

We have recently updated our school Code of Conduct which we have renamed Gordon’s Circle of Care. Our Circle of Care is designed to foster a safe, inclusive, equitable, welcoming, nurturing, and healthy school environment which aligns with the new 2026 VSB Education Plan. This applies to all members of the Gordon community—students, educators, parents, and caregivers. Our Circle of Care seeks to support our understanding of our students’ needs and how we can best teach them the skills they need to thrive both socially and academically. We encourage all students to R.I.S.E. to success through their Relationship and Belonging, Intellect, Spirit, and Emotional Wellbeing. The staff explicitly teach and model what it means to R.I.S.E. in all locations of the school and the community. We have incorporated the Medicine Wheel into our Circle of Care which represents a symbol of healing, growth, life, learning and balance in many Indigenous communities. Through this lens, Gordon’s Circle of Care emphasizes a child’s social and emotional growth. Research shows that children who are both socially and emotionally healthy are the best learners and the most successful in school.

Students at Gordon are engaged in leadership activities such as office and library monitors, playground leaders, morning announcers, and Student Council. We offer a variety of sports and team extra-curricular activities such as volleyball, basketball, badminton, cross-country and track and field. We also have a very dynamic and vibrant SOGI Club that is supported by staff. Parents and caregivers work as active partners within our school by fundraising and volunteering to support and enhance student learning (e.g. Hot Lunch, technology in the classroom, performance and educational programs that support the curriculum), promoting involvement of parents and other community members in providing for the education of children (e.g., Digital Literacy, Body Science, Inclusion education), and the building of our school community. The "Neon Dance Party" and "Spring Fling" this year were a huge success as we continue to look for ways to connect and celebrate within our community.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

Children's sense of safety and belonging at school has been shown to foster their school success in many ways. When children have positive experiences at school, they are more likely to feel they belong within their school, feel more motivated and engaged, and have higher academic achievement. Children who feel a sense of connection and belonging to school have a sense of pride and desire to take care of each other and this place. Students are also less likely to engage in high-risk behaviours. Understanding children's school experiences improves the ability to both create and cultivate school environments that are safe, caring, and supportive. As a school, we are also focusing on the increasing number of English Language Learners (ELL) students in our school and how their cultural differences, new experiences with the Canadian school system and our literacy goals need to be tailored to meet the needs of these students. These students' social emotional learning and sense of belonging will be our focus for next year. This work also aligns with the [2026 VSB Education plan](#) (Goal #1) which focuses on "improving the school environment to ensure they are safe, caring, welcoming and inclusive places for students and families."

At Gordon, this is what we see in the learners:

Learner Strengths:

- Student participation in leadership (e.g., student council, playground leaders, office monitors), helping adults and other students
- Students present a sense of pride being involved in the life of the school and the community (e.g., spirit days, SOGI activities, school wide assemblies)
- Demonstrating a positive attitude towards school
- Students are accepting of others and show acceptance of different cultures and identities
- Students' literacy skills are strong as a whole because of a strong core literacy program in primary (e.g., Reading Recovery, CELI, phonemic awareness skills)

Areas for Growth/Needs:

- Ability to work through anxious feelings/increase in self-confidence, use of mindfulness
- Developing awareness of surroundings and how behaviour/social interaction choices impact others (students, adults, the community); self-regulation
- Ability to understand and focus using a growth mindset to further develop literacy skills and to support our increased number of ELL learners

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

Parent Surveys

As part of the process to update our school Circle of Care, we strived to incorporate the voices of our whole community. We created a parent survey where 137 parents and caregivers within our community responded to several questions that highlighted what is most important to them, what we were doing well and what we needed to improve on.

The questions below focused on what was important to parents and caregivers at school:

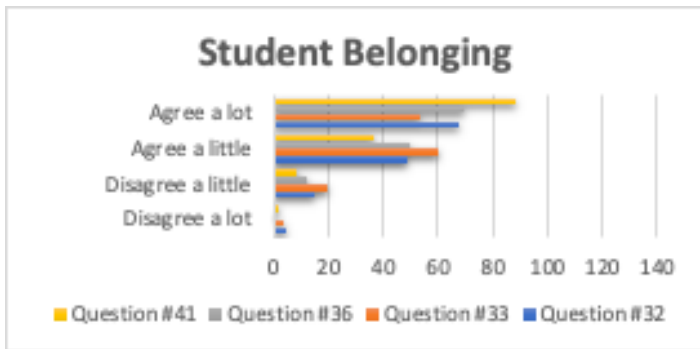
- Question #20 asked: How important is it to you to have your child learn about emotional self-regulation at school?
- Question #21 asked: How important is it to you to have your child learn about solving problems in peaceful ways at school?
- Question #22 asked: How important is it to you to have your child learn about how to care for their mental health at school?



These results show a strong need within our parent and caregiver community for school to not only focus on academics but also the social and emotional growth of their child.

The following questions focused on what was important for their child’s social and emotional well-being at school:

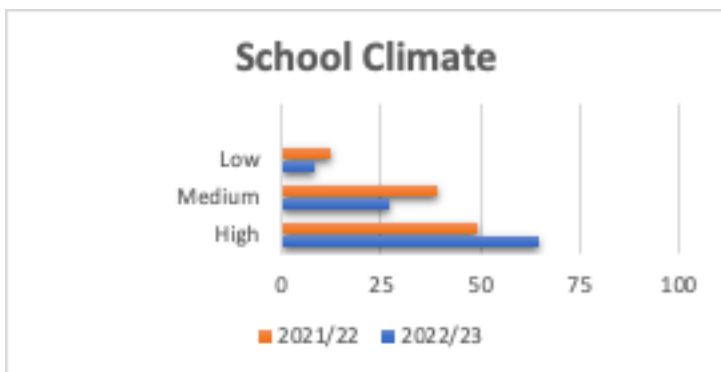
- Question #32 asked: My child feels part of a group of friends that do things together.
- Question #33 asked: My child feels that they usually fit in with other kids around them and this is important to them.
- Question #36 asked: My child feels that they are respected for who they are, and their identity is not only embraced but also celebrated.
- Question #41 asked: My child feels they belong in this school.



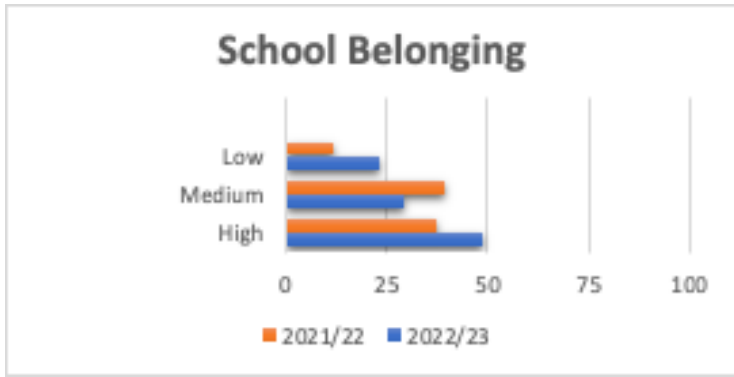
MDI Results

The Middle Years Development Inventory (MDI) is a self-report questionnaire that asks children in Grades 4-8 about their thoughts, feelings and experiences in school and the community. It uses a strengths-based approach to assess five areas of development that are strongly linked to well-being, health, and academic achievement. In 2021/22 we surveyed the grade 7 students and in 2023/23 we surveyed the grade 6 students. Two areas of interest to us are how the students feel about their school climate and school belonging.

- School Climate – the overall tone of the school environment, including the way teachers and students interact and how students treat each other. e.g., “People care about each other in this school.”
- School Belonging – the degree to which children feel connected and valued at their school. e.g., “I feel like I am important to this school.”



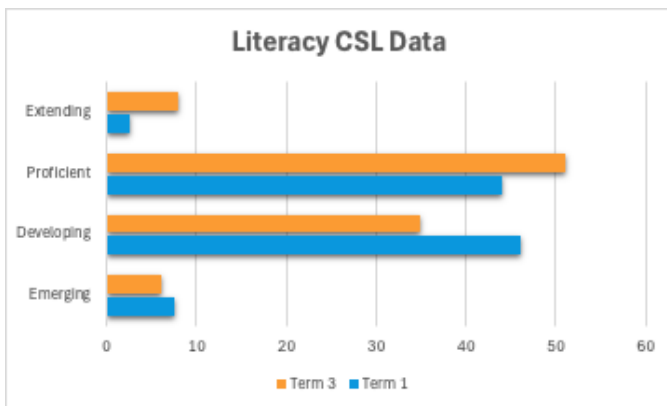
The results show that even though there is improvement from 2021/22 to 2022/23 (e.g., decrease of 4% in terms of how students feel about the school climate, we still have 8% of students that rate our school climate as low and 27% who rate it as medium.



In terms of students feeling a sense of belonging at school, we have only improved by 12% from 2021/22 to 2022/23 with 49% of students rating their sense of belonging at school as high. It is also interesting to note that the MDI also looks at connectedness between students and their school, family, and community.

Equity

Our literacy data shows that our students are performing well in terms of literacy outcomes. Gordon has Reading Recovery and CELI (Collaborative Early Literacy Intervention) which all the primary classes are committed to. Our intermediate teachers also work collaboratively within grade groups to implement best practices like guided reading, literature circles, writing workshop, vocabulary building and spelling and grammar. Our continued focus as a whole school will be providing equitable opportunities for the ELL learners as Gordon’s ELL numbers have doubled from 35 students in 2021 to 75 students in 2024. Our focus will be on providing support within the classroom so these students feel they can be part of the learning outcomes and be successful.



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

As a school we are very proud of the work we have been doing towards our journey of reconciliation. We were able to unveil our new Gordon Logo of the Wolf which was designed by Musqueam Artist, Amber Cornick. The wolf to the Musqueam people symbolizes community, cooperation, and family. The centre of the wolf depicts the sun rising which parallels our R.I.S.E. to success model. Through our Gordon’s Circle of Care - Relationship and Belonging, Intellect, Spirit, and Emotional Well-being are the four quadrants of the medicine wheel. As a

school we have done several activities and whole school initiatives where we have been learning these four areas and practiced their significance in all areas of the school. We have also focused as a school by creating our own Indigenous Land Acknowledgements and telling our own settler stories through the traditional practice of oral storytelling. Gordon students are proud of this work and seek out opportunities to share.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

We will continue to meet as a learning team to reflect and analyze data, information, and observations so that we can determine what is working and what is making a difference for our students.

We will examine:

- Successful rewording and development of our Circle of Care
- CSL report card comments and proficiency scale
- Student engagement in opportunities that provide leadership roles and
- Student self-assessment of the core competencies
- Student goal setting and student-led conferences
- One-on-one parent/teacher or parent/student/teacher conversations
- Our regular meetings through professional development opportunities will allow us to develop responses if we see little change or encounter new challenges
- PAC meetings and GORDTalk sessions that involve parent engagement and feedback