

## 2023-2024

# School Learning Plan

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### SCHOOL STORY

John Henderson Elementary School is named after John Henderson (1880-1968) who was a Vancouver engineer and School Trustee. With deep gratitude and respect, we acknowledge the school is located on the ancestral and unceded lands of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nation. The school grounds are shared on the west side with Sunset Park, and this allows the students to have access to additional green space, a rock theatre, a larger playground, and a large grass playing field. Also, the school has its own smaller playground on the east side and a space net climbing area.

The school building is mostly one level but has a second floor on the south side and is wheelchair accessible. Henderson school has a population of more than 530 students. The population comes from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and has a multi-ethnic composition with over 31 languages other than English being spoken at home. Henderson has a part-time literacy teacher focusing on literacy development and early intervention. There is a highly active and well attended StrongStart Centre that works with caregivers and children under five. A full-time Youth and Family Worker supports the community with food security, community programming, and social-emotional learning. Henderson is fortunate to have onsite before and after-school care provided by the South Slope YMCA. Many families also use the school-age care program provided by Sunset Community Centre.

Henderson celebrated progress toward the Education Plan goals of student achievement, self-regulation, equity, student engagement, and reconciliation in 2023/2024 by continuing to build community by class collaborations across grade groups and intentionally supporting Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programming and social justice. Research shows that social emotional learning positively impacts the overall well-being of children and youth. There are many events at Henderson that are organized to connect us as a community such as the Scholastic Book Fair, the annual winter concert, the garden club, the drama club, and extra-curricular sports teams, including cross country, volleyball, basketball, badminton, track, and field, and ultimate. Students continue to strengthen citizenship by participating in many of the leadership activities offered which include Student Council, Hawk Helpers on the playground and in the lunchroom, library monitors, and assembly leaders.

Henderson has a devoted staff who provide inclusive, inquiry-based, hands-on learning opportunities for all students to develop their many talents and strengths. Staff also work closely with the community to further connections. The Firefighters Snack Fund and Food4Schools Lunch Program, Little Mountain Neighbourhood House, South Vancouver Neighbourhood House, Sunset Community Centre, the One-to-One Literacy Volunteer program, Arts Umbrella, and the Artist in Residence

Program (AIRS) are well established in the school. Henderson is also supported by the John Oliver Community Schools Team, which provides programs after school and during school breaks such as the Schools Out program. To further build community and connection, the Henderson Parent Advisory Council (PAC) offers many exciting events including pizza days, family movie nights, and seasonal community building activities like a school-wide family skating afternoon at Sunset Ice Rink. We have an active, supportive parent community that volunteers to support school projects such as garden club, the Nest's Story Studio (library) and updated diverse book collections for our primary classes.

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

The Henderson community of 537 learners come from diverse backgrounds with the many being first- and second-generation Canadians. About 57% of our students are English Language Learners, with 28 different languages spoken at home. The multi-ethnic composition of the student population is mostly South Asian (Punjabi being the most common), Filipino and Latino. Approximately 2% of the school population identifies as Indigenous and approximately 9% of our students are ministry designated with special needs. Henderson students are well cared for at home, and school is valued, however as most of our students and their families are navigating a second language and culture, they have an additional layer of complexity to work through that other families do not. Many of our families have students involved in a variety of out-of-school programs within the community. Other Henderson families have less access to programs and for those students, school is their only social connection to their peers and the only place they have opportunities to socialize.

Through anecdotal conversations with students and staff, it is evident that our students are seeking connections, and it is important to them to build relationships with peers and staff. Our students enjoy coming to school to be with their friends. We have been incorporating inquiry, experiential learning, and outdoor education to help engage all learners. Learning is supported at home, but not all Henderson families have the skills or access to resources to support students with English language learning or diverse learning needs.

As we have students entering school with signs of anxiety and trauma because of the pandemic, intergenerational trauma, and trauma from current social justice issues here in Canada and in their countries of origin, we see social emotional issues as frequently getting in the way of learning. We are also helping many new immigrant and refugee families from various parts of the world integrate into the community. We continue to develop the ability to reflect on personal values and beliefs while still respecting those of others. For newcomer families, many students have not had the opportunity to develop school readiness skills.

We know that students need to feel connected and that a nurturing, caring relationship with others in the school is vital to enhance the social emotional well-being, increase motivation and engagement in learning for school to be a success. Based on the recent informal student learning survey, we found that regarding "the number of adults at school who care about you," 93% of students reported having at least 2 adults, and 40% identified 4 or more adults who care about them.

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## AS A SCHOOL COMMUNITY, WE ARE WORKING ON THE FOLLOWING TO:

### Goal 1 - Improve student achievement in literacy and numeracy, physical and mental well-being, and belonging

As our intentional focus on connection is to be moving data in a positive direction, we will continue to refine our inquiry question of increasing engagement in learning, we will modify our inquiry question to: if we focus on building community, will we see increased engagement in learning? In 2024-2025 school year we will track data that reflects the connection to adults in the school.

We are working on using the *Literacy Framework* and *P3P Supports* with our primary team and Literacy Enhancement teacher. We have had the primary team attend Heather Wilms' workshops offered by the district. We have increased our primary team meetings to share our learning and to create a scope and sequence that makes sense for our school. Our entire primary team uses the *Heggerty* program to develop phonemic awareness. We have ordered and implemented *Rime Magic* for the K-7s, a research-based, phonics program that focuses on the rime (the vowel and consonant combination), which helps drive word analysis. Our intermediate team also uses decodable novels which provide age-appropriate and reading-level appropriate opportunities for our struggling older readers. We will add a literacy data set to intentionally highlight the relationship between connection and learning. According to our current Summary of Learning data (report cards) just under fifty percent of our students are 'proficient' or 'extending' in literacy.

We have started our journey, exploring ways to increase the development of numeracy in our students. This past year, our upper-intermediate students participated in several nation-wide math contests. This ignited a desire in many students to ask for further ways to challenge their math knowledge. Our primary classes have embraced embedding numeracy into daily games to instill a love of math. A cohort of our teachers have started looking at *Mathology*, a Canadian math program which embeds Indigenous learning and stories into the curriculum. Both primary and intermediate teachers attended the *Math Playground* workshop, intending to bring fun to math lessons, to engage all learners. We will add a numeracy data set to intentionally highlight the relationship between connection and learning. According to our current Summary of Learning data (report cards) sixty-five percent of our students are 'proficient' or 'extending' in literacy.

Henderson is a school that embraces improving physical and mental wellbeing. Our committed staff provides opportunities for our intermediate grades to join all district sports teams. Our primary teachers offer students physical education activities such as *Marafun*, *Gardening Club*, and *Arts Umbrella Dance Workshops*. This year our grade 7s are going back to Camp and have embraced outdoor education throughout the year, with some even participating in a weekly Forest School at Central Park. Also, for the last few years, our entire school has participated in *The International Day of Play*, where children learn how to explore and wonder, connect ideas and experiences, and gain a deeper understanding of the world. "When children play, they develop essential life skills, which are fundamental to their own and society's progress." This supports both the physical and mental well-being of all our students. Additionally, Henderson has adopted *Second Step* as a school wide SEL curriculum to help the students develop skills in Social Emotional Learning (SEL). We have also been exploring the Seven Grandfather Teachings and Character Traits.

Henderson is committed to creating an environment where everyone feels that they belong. We have recognized, taught about, and celebrated the diverse community we are in by highlighting the histories, holidays and cultures of all equity deserving groups. We have committed to using story and picture books as described by Rudine Sims Bishop as “windows, mirrors and sliding glass doors.” Children need to see others like themselves and their community within the curriculum. We have spent the last several years acquiring diverse books. Whenever possible, we bring in guest speakers and performers that help us learn more about the various cultures that make up our community.

### **Improve equity**

Our entire staff have attended Sensory Motor Labs workshops put on by the District Inclusion Support Team, with the district team also providing additional school-based support as well as offsite workshops for our support staff. The strategies that our staff have learned and have implemented with our students allow for better student self-regulation, which supports equity in accessing and demonstrating authentic student learning.

We will continue to learn and utilize strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners through the Response to Intervention (RTI) Model and inclusion practices in Universal Design for Learning (UDL). We have utilized the RTI model to inform our decisions around school organization and distribution of support. Next year we are hoping to have more workshops on universal design as we continue to meet the individual needs of our learners.

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

We celebrate diversity and recognize cultural identity. By celebrating the similar but unique aspects of cultures represented in our school, we can relate to the experiences of others. This includes relating our family immigrant history to that of the First Peoples’ experience with Early European Settlers. We can relate, compare, and contrast experiences.

We continue to focus on the First People’s Principles Learning: Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors. Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place.) Learning involves recognizing the consequence of one’s actions. Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities. Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge. Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story. Learning involves patience and time. Learning requires exploration of one’s identity. Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.

All school-wide events begin with the official VSB land acknowledgement, as well as the Coast Salish Anthem at all larger gatherings.

This year, our Grade 6 and 7 students learned about the significance of drums for our host nations and made drums, which were gifted to the school, for all classes to use. The rest of the school is scheduled to make Indigenous rattles to be shared by the entire school.

Several of our classes participated in the First Nations Festival Workshops and brought their learning back to the entire school community. Several teachers at Henderson are currently enrolled in Indigenous online courses through a variety of universities and schools and share their learning with the teaching staff. Carolyn Roberts provided professional development to help our school decolonize and indigenize our practice.

Our intermediate students have been studying land acknowledgements since the beginning of September. Through the year, they have been creating their own, personalized land acknowledgements, deepening their understanding of them. They have added a personal commitment and appreciation for the land. All of this was put into a student-created book that we are having printed for every class to have a copy of and a set for the library to lend to students to take home.

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

Through our monitoring, assessing, and collecting of evidence, we will know we are on track by seeing improvement in the data and through feedback from staff, students, and parents.

We will use qualitative data sets. We will continue to monitor student achievement through feedback from staff, students, and parents. We will continue to look at student self-reflections, stories and anecdotal evidence. We will use the SEL Rubric to assess growth and development over time of student self-regulation and resiliency. The school climate, relationships between students, staff and parents will help provide authentic indicators of how well we are doing to create a positive environment where all are willing and excited to be involved and engaged with learning at school.

We will use quantitative data sets. We analyze FSA (Foundation Skills Assessments), CSL, Student Learning Survey, MDI, EDI and CSL data. We will continue to offer opportunities to strengthen physical and mental well-being and belonging through opportunities to participate in activities and develop SEL (Social Emotional Learning) skills within the classroom and school. We will be celebrating our successes as a community through newsletters, displays, PA announcements, assemblies, PAC meetings, and community gatherings.