

2023-2024 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

With deep gratitude and respect, the students and staff of Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith Elementary School are honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the x̣ṃəθḳʷəj̣əm (Musqueam), Sḳwxẉú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & salilwatał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

The school is in south-east Vancouver with a large outdoor play area with views of the North Shore mountains to the north and past the Fraser River to the south. The school was built in 1955 with an addition in 1958. The building underwent seismic upgrades and was reopened in 2018 and is now wheelchair accessible.

Kingsford-Smith Elementary has 13 divisions with students from kindergarten to grade 7 and has approximately 300 students and 35 staff. Students at Kingsford-Smith come from a variety of cultures and bring with them many experiences to share with the community. Many students at Kingsford-Smith have a first language other than English and are learning English together with the support of our staff.

Students' educational needs are supported in the classroom by their teachers, and outside the classroom by resource teachers. We have an area counsellor and access to an educational psychologist. We have a dedicated group of support workers who help several of our students with special needs.

Upper intermediate students may choose to participate in a variety of before and after school athletic programs, and there is a comprehensive physical education program taught by a specialist teacher for all grades. Every student has weekly access to our school library and is invited to join a schoolwide home reading program.

Our Kingsford-Smith mission statement states that our school is committed to support engaged learners, caring communities, and an inclusive school environment. As a school we are working on the second year of our school goal of belonging. Students and staff are practicing caring for themselves, others and this place.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

Kingsford-Smith staff and students have been focused on student well-being over the past three years. Specifically, mental health literacy; teaching all students strategies to deal with anxiety and stress and working towards an even better sense of belonging and connection to school and to their communities. These skills are applicable and embedded in all BC's core competencies and are undoubtedly the foundational skills to improve academics and flourishing students.

While student well-being will continue to be something we always work toward at Kingsford-Smith, the focus of the new school learning plan will be to align with the district goals of Literacy, Equity and Reconciliation.

Literacy

Based on the Kingsford-Smith FSA (Foundation Skills Assessment) and school-based CSL data (from written learning updates to families) the students at Kingsford-Smith are achieving below the VSB averages for English Language Arts. CSL data shows that 83% of our students were at the Emerging or Developing level in English Language Arts in the first and second terms of the 2023-2024 school year.

When we look at the entire school population, over 53% of the students are English Language Learners (ELL). These students come from many different backgrounds and cultures. Some students have been at Kingsford-Smith for several years and others have just arrived at the school in the last few weeks. Of our ELL students, 63% are at the Beginning or Developing levels in Reading.

After reviewing the schoolwide data, we decided that literacy and specifically reading must be the focus of our next school learning plan.

Equity

We have a diverse community of learners at Kingsford-Smith. Students require a variety of support to achieve their goals. Students are supported by their classroom teachers, resource teachers, support staff and itinerant staff when necessary. Each student is regarded as an individual and their support is based on their individual needs. Resource teachers provide in-class and small group support.

Classroom teachers and resource teachers meet to discuss support in place and support needed for students. Decisions are made to support children using the Tiers of Intervention model. Teachers create lessons that use the Universal Design for Learning model paying extra attention to students requiring additional support.

Kingsford-Smith participated in several programs to improve equity amongst students. The BC Fruit and Vegetable program, the Milk program and the Vancouver Fire Fighter's Charity provided snacks and healthy foods for students in need.

Reconciliation

Kingsford-Smith staff participated in professional development with a focus on the First Peoples Principles of Learning. Staff work to embed FPP into their lesson plans regularly. Classes go to a local creek to focus on the FPP, Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place) Students become stewards of the creek with the support of their teachers.

The Library Learning Commons is a place where students have access to many materials written by Indigenous authors. Our teacher librarian continues to look for new resources to support our path to reconciliation.

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

Improve student achievement in literacy

We must look at learning to read through an equity lens, focusing on our ELL students. We need to ensure high-quality literacy instruction for all Kingsford-Smith students. By doing this, we will combine the first two areas of the district education plan, Literacy and Equity. To ensure an equity lens in our school literacy programs, all children need the opportunity to:

- Read books that mirror their experiences and languages and provide insight into the lives of other students; Share with others what they've learned through reading;
- Read for pleasure and for extended periods of time;
- Use literacy to improve in other forms of communication, such as writing and speaking; and
- Experience supportive reading environments with knowledgeable literacy advocates.

Working with our teacher librarian we will be looking for more books that reflect our students and their backgrounds. We have a great collection of individual novels and picture books, but we need multiples of books with diverse characters for use in the classrooms. Our resource teachers will continue to support the literacy learning of our ELL learners by providing instruction based on the needs of the students. As a resource team, we will review our ELL learners' progress and update instructional plans for unsuccessful students. Classroom teachers will choose books that have characters from diverse backgrounds and will adjust activities according to the needs of the learners. Some intermediate teachers have been experimenting with A.I. in the leveling of class materials for a variety of learners. By doing this they are creating texts that meet all students at their level. Our primary staff are beginning to look at the P3P literacy kit and thinking about how it can be used with their classes, including their ELL students. Primary classes use the *Heggerty* program to develop phonemic awareness and our primary resource teacher helps struggling readers in small groups focusing on the same concept of phonemic awareness. Next year, staff will be looking at the VSB Literacy Framework and integrating the First Peoples Principles of Learning into their Literacy curriculum. So far, as a staff we have only taken a first look at the Literacy Framework and how it connects to the First Peoples Principles of Learning.

Improve equity

See above.

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

At Kingsford-Smith teachers try to integrate the First Peoples Principles of Learning into their teaching. Two of the principles: *Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors* and *Learning is embedded in story* are evident throughout the school every day. Students begin each day by sharing the VSB land acknowledgement as part of the student announcements. Classes are planting gardens, visiting the local creek, and learning in outdoor spaces regularly. Staff participated in a weaving workshop for one of the professional days this year and will hopefully be able to pass on their learning to their students next year.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

We will know if we are successful in our literacy goal by looking at FSA and CSL data over time. This will be a multi-year goal as it takes time to change the outcomes and create success for all students. As the data improves it will also help us achieve our equity goal of ensuring all learners have quality literacy instruction including our ELL learners. Primary staff will use individual reading assessments to identify if we are successful in our literacy goal. Intermediate staff will move toward using a common assessment for reading.

Student feedback about reconciliation will help us move forward. We will survey students individually.

Data from the Student Learning Survey will help us identify areas where our focus needs to move. All of our goals need to be reviewed regularly and we must be open to revising our goals and refining our strategies for achieving them.