

2023-2024 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

With deep gratitude and respect, we are honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the x̣ṃəθḳẉəỵəm (Musqueam), Sḳwxẉú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & sə̣lilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

Sir Alexander Mackenzie Elementary is in an urban, culturally varied community. The student enrollment for the current 2023-2024 school year is 416 students. Mackenzie has a diverse student population with many different languages being spoken. Mackenzie has a District Life Skills Class, District Gifted Enrichment Centre, Strong Start Program, District Reading Recovery, District Early Learning, as well as the YMCA before and after-school care on site. Mackenzie's staff consists of over 60 staff members. We have two buildings with the beautiful heritage older building being built in 1930 and the lower 'West Wing' opened in 2002. We are all Mackenzie, and we continue to highlight inclusivity at our school site. One of the school goals over the past few years has been to focus on Social Emotional Learning practices in order to increase the sense of belonging within our school population, while also focusing on increasing grit and resilience. We work together with a team approach throughout our staff which includes Administration, Office staff, Teachers, Student Support Assistants, Supervision Aids, Engineers, and District Itinerant staff.

Students in our catchment area continue to enter Kindergarten with some vulnerability as reported in both the Early Developmental Inventory (EDI) and the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI). These areas of vulnerability include social, emotional, physical, language, and communication domains. Mackenzie utilizes a Resource Team Model that successfully reduces these identified vulnerability rates for many students, especially those with more needs. ELL students also receive excellent support in English Language acquisition through collaborative efforts of the Classroom and Resource Teachers.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie is a member of the John Oliver Community School Teams. We offer many opportunities to demonstrate leadership within the school through a variety of monitors and helpers, announcements, School Spirit Club, and assembly leaders.

Mackenzie's Strong Start Program is a Ministry of Education initiative that promotes the integration of three and four-year-old children into the school community with the inclusion of parents as active participants in the daily morning sessions. The Strong Start teacher is a valued team member and works closely with our Kindergarten team. The Mackenzie staff have several committees and student clubs in place that meet regularly to discuss direction, needs, and cooperative teaching practices such as: platooning, team teaching, resource support, curriculum planning, and assessment practices. The School Based Team (SBT) also meets regularly to discuss the learning needs of individual students who have been referred by classroom teachers.

Mackenzie Elementary has been fortunate to have established strong partnerships with our parents. Mackenzie's Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is supportive and actively works with the school, benefiting all

students, staff, and parent/guardian population. Mackenzie also has strong ties to the Community Links Team through John Oliver Secondary, Little Mountain Neighbourhood House, and other agencies who offer opportunities for students. Many parents are involved in volunteering in school activities and with PAC endeavours. Each individual contributes to the bright Mackenzie fabric with families viewing the school as a positive and integral part of the community.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

Over the past few years, we have been working on increasing everyone's sense of belonging. We also have been focusing on developing resilience. These important areas help build a solid sense of self that aids in successfully navigating the world. The core of the B.C. Curriculum focusses on Social-Emotional instruction and we continually work together to strengthen a deeper sense of belonging within the Mackenzie community. The school is a friendly and welcoming place to be. This important work is threaded and woven into all we do throughout the school year.

Several events occur throughout the year that bring our community together such as Meet The Staff, Volunteer Conduct Orientations, Spirit Club initiatives, Book Swap, Valentines Day neighbourhood card delivery, Walkathon (28 parent volunteers and a true celebration of the Mackenzie community this year!), Sports Day, assemblies, PAC meetings, parent education evenings, and PAC movie fundraiser nights in our Auditorium. Mackenzie has an active PAC who have a strong relationship with the school as we communicate and work together as a community to help run and support these events.

Several opportunities exist for students to get involved with clubs and teams. Not only does Mackenzie have the vibrant Spirit Club, we also have daily student announcers, library monitors, cross-country, volleyball, basketball, badminton, and track and field teams. Most classes in the school actively participate in activities with Buddy classes. This emphasizes our sense of belonging as a community, people of all ages can feel comfortable and learn from each other within our building.

Our Library Learning Commons is a vibrant hub in our school and is well utilized by students and staff for team teaching and learning purposes. Our Music room is also a dynamic hub where our students love to go learn a variety of musical mediums and instruments from our experienced Music Teacher. The Grade 7 students enjoy learning new instruments in a band program that our talented teacher provides for them.

Information gathered from schoolwide Sense Of Belonging school surveys, MDI Information, and Ministry Student Learning Surveys have demonstrated that students wanted to have more information about understanding and managing their own mental health. The combined data, along with student and parent street data, demonstrates that students have a strong sense of belonging and a growing sense of ownership within their school.

Our VSB Community School Team has provided several opportunities for after school programming such as Arts Umbrella Physical Literacy, Schools Out!, and Science World Super Science. Our after-school programs are fully utilized. Many of our students also attend before and after school care with the on-site YMCA program as well as privately run after school opportunities that rent after school space.

Our student population is diverse with many strengths and stretches. Mackenzie has several vibrant programs such as our Strong Start program, Gifted Enrichment program, and Life Skills program. We have a cohesive team of 15 Student Support Assistants that help assist our learners. In addition to our three playgrounds and outdoor learning classroom, last spring we were fortunate to have a wonderful adaptive sensory playground installed.

Mackenzie's English Language Learner population has shown to be on the decline in the past few years. Students speak several different languages which makes our collective stronger as we have many opportunities to learn from each other.

Data demonstrates that the majority of our students are attaining the Developing/Proficient level in literacy. Staff have begun actively working together in order identify ways to help support more of our students into the Proficient/Expanding levels in Language Arts.

Each morning, our school starts our day with daily student announcers who begin the morning announcements with the Land Acknowledgement. Our announcers range from Kindergarten to Grade Seven. We strive to have teachings that occur in our classrooms woven into our daily life and embedded into our curriculum. By participating in learning and unlearning dialogues, we help support new and mutual understanding which assists in opening new pathways for collaboration towards reconciliation.

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. We will continue to look for opportunities to embed, deepen, and enrich a sense of belonging throughout these areas.

Improve student achievement in literacy

This year our Resource Team participated in the District Rime Magic pilot program that helps address learners who are struggling with literacy. We analyzed schoolwide writes that occurred in the fall and in May that have helped track literacy development. We have One to One volunteers who regularly come in and work with students to give them extra support with their reading abilities.

A Literacy Committee was formed that consists of Administration, the Resource Team who support all grade levels, and two primary teachers. We were able to attend dedicated District Professional Development mornings that focused on improving literacy in our schools. The Literacy Committee has been meeting to put some whole school directions in place for the coming school year. Staff have dedicated time to work together to create shared understanding of levels of literacy expectations and achievement. Students will have individual folders tracking their literacy data that will follow them from year to year. Dedicated schoolwide literacy time and assessment will be scheduled throughout the school year to identify areas of focus for individual students and group trends in their reading and writing achievements.

Improve Student Voice and Sense of Belonging

We consistently look for ways to provide equity and increase student voice. Some of the areas we have been able to do so this year have been Peer Helpers, Gr. 1 to Gr. 7 daily announcers a Gr. 1/2 class took on the organizational announcements for Bike To School Week, and Staff have an Assembly committee that includes various students from different grades to help host and present to the school.

Students have annually completed a Sense Of Belonging survey which contains a section entitled, "I want you to know...". Students respectfully express how they are feeling and what is on their minds. The data demonstrates that each year students are speaking more readily and the overall data

collected has shown growth that is very positive. This year, students had a contest to submit individual designs for next year's (2024 - 2025) respective Mackenzie Primary and an Intermediate student agenda title covers.

The students in our Spirit Club suggest, create, and run special activities and theme days throughout the year. Several of these special events have a philanthropic component to them. They lead in many areas throughout the year and are amazing Mackenzie Ambassadors at our dynamic Welcome To Kindergarten. The organizations that we raise money for are decided upon by the students. This year we raised money for Terry Fox, SPCA, Canuck Place, and Covenant House.

Students let us know that an area of needed support was learning about their own mental health and online behaviour, responsibility, and safety. We brought in Watari and Children Of The Streets programming into the schools for our Intermediate students. Our PAC also hosted an informative online parent education evening with Children of the Streets to help support awareness and communication. We also brought in a schoolwide yoga program, Yoga Buggy, so that each class participated in learning about mind and body self-awareness and regulation in a healthy way.

Improve Equity Among Our School Community

This year began with an enthusiastic PAC sponsored school Spirit Dance. This helped bring the community together to celebrate starting off the year with a strong sense of belonging.

Staff meet to participate in 'Netting', a process where we communicate with each other by sharing our knowledge about each student in order to set them up for success with appropriate wrap around supports right from the beginning of the year.

We strive to have a school environment that is a safe, caring, welcoming, and inclusive place for students, staff, and families. Every individual is welcome and diversity is embraced. We demonstrate that through our actions, consistent teaching of personal responsibility expectations, visuals posted throughout the school, morning and Assembly acknowledgements, programming modelling, and engagement.

Much attention has been focused on investigating ways to increase equity for all. Staff have participated in learning about and teaching targeted interventions for Social Emotional Learning. As well, staff participated and learned together in sessions regarding understanding trauma-based approaches, VSB's District Principal of Equity and Anti-Oppression presentation of VSB initiatives and resources, District personnel came to speak about self-regulation Ready Bodies Learning Minds and Sensory Rooms. Staff Lunch and Learns occurred that focused on District social-emotional programs for primary and intermediate students. Administration, resource teachers, and SSAs have participated in two District pilot projects this year: RBLM programming (Ready Bodies Able Minds) and Sensory Room initiative training. Both of these Universal Design of Learning programs are meant to help all students in self-regulation.

Our Grade 7s participated in restorative circle practice and sessions with an Own It! facilitator and our VSB District Teacher in regards to gender equity. Most classes participate in Buddy classes which bring Intermediate and Primary students together to learn from each other.

Staff have started learning about proactive classroom circles with a lens on restorative practice. This work will continue in the fall as staff have booked targeted professional development sessions in these areas in September.

Our PAC works closely with school personnel to help and support the school and District directions. Parents are welcome volunteers that assist us in providing important programming for our students. The Mackenzie PAC continually works at actively finding ways to reach out to parents and guardians of the Mackenzie community. We plan and co-create participation and celebrations together such as opening day Meet and Great, Meet the Staff community event, Spirit Dance, Walkathon, and Sports Day. This year, we had 28 parent volunteers out to help with our dynamic annual Walkathon school fundraiser.

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

We continue our work on increasing knowledge, awareness, appreciation of, and respect for indigenous histories, traditions, cultures, and contributions. We consistently evaluate, embed our learning and unlearning throughout our education, and renew plans for the improvement and expansion of our learning of Indigenous cultures. Emphasis is placed on the First People's Principles of Learning and incorporating the Seven Sacred Teachings. Attention is paid to deepening awareness of cultural commonalities and transference of knowledge.

Staff participate in the District-wide Professional Development Day centering on the Truth and Reconciliation process and Indigenous teaching and learning. We work together in staff meetings arranged in a circular format. Teaching staff are creating cross-curricular units in order to team teach in the Learning Commons that focus on embedding teachings throughout curriculum. Our Music teacher works with our students throughout the year teaching Indigenous content and teaching the songs with the drums created by staff that were awakened and gifted back to the school.

As we embed this learning throughout our daily learning in cross-curricular ways, we also seek to bring in Indigenous performances for the school and participate in Orange Shirt Day and Red Dress Day. Field trips occurred to the Camosun Bog, Stanley Park, and the Capilano Watershed to enhance our education. We continue to bring in Indigenous performances for the school. Our Teacher Librarian continuously grows our school collection of books by Indigenous authors and our Primary and Intermediate cohorts continue to add Indigenous content guided reading and novel sets to our literacy program. Classes have increased their place-based and land-based teaching and learning experiences and are accessing Memorial Park more frequently to conduct lessons. Our Gr. 5/6 class was fortunate to attend the First People's Festival this spring and another Gr. 5 class was able to work with Andy Everson about Indigenous musings in the digital world.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

We will know we're on track by conducting, collating, and analyzing student and staff surveys, as well as data from Learning Updates, FSAs, EDI and MDI data over time. Participating in conversations and observing street data is always important to obtain and record immediate direct feedback.

Social Emotional Learning targeted programming has been highlighted and focused on this year together as a staff and in individual classrooms. We have been monitoring situations to see if those areas of direct instruction are being used in the moment. With more time to practice these skills, we should see demonstrated increased self-regulation and self-reflection skills, and a positive mindset in abilities to be able to solve problems in a peaceful manner.

These are multi-year goals as change takes time, attention, and patience. As our data continues to signify progress, it will demonstrate improvements in equity for all throughout the areas.