

2023-2024 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

Maple Grove Elementary has a culturally diverse student population of 580 students within 24 divisions. Our school offers a K-7 Montessori program in eight of our divisions. The school is located on the traditional and ancestral territories of the *xwməθkwəyəm* (Musqueam), *Skwxwú7meshÚxwumixw* (Squamish Nation) & *səlilwətał* (Tsleil-Waututh Nation). The school seismic project was completed in 2020 and the current building is divided into seven pods where classes of similar age can share space, resources, and learning experiences. Staff collaborate regularly to create varied learning activities for learners. School enrolment has been increasing steadily in the past few years, and currently our Grade Seven pod is located in our portables adjacent to the main school building.

Maple Grove is committed to creating an inclusive community that celebrates diversity. Many students speak English as a second language at home and each year we receive dozens of new students from around the world. We work closely with VSB settlement workers and multicultural workers to welcome and support new families.

The school vision of success in learning for each student is articulated in the school mission/vision statement. We strive to create a safe learning environment so all students can learn and contribute to their community. We support learning in all dimensions: academic, artistic, physical, social as well as emotional well-being. We pride ourselves on the high level of curriculum enrichment we provide through the joint commitment of staff and parents. Our goal is to nurture students not only academically but also as global citizens. We organise some yearly events such as Sports Day, concerts, extra-curricular sports teams and clubs, Scholastics Book Fair and others. This year we added a relationship with the Adams' Apples program. The Maple Grove PAC organises various community events each year, such as BBQs and friendship dances. This year we will be celebrating the school's 100th anniversary and the school community is planning various learning and community events for this celebration.

At Maple Grove, social responsibility is an integral part of the school's philosophy and the school culture is built upon the ideals of respect for people, safety, and the environment. The school Code of Conduct is Respect Yourself, Respect Others and Respect this Place. We encourage student leadership in class as well as through various clubs (Student Council, Volunteer Group and Monitors programs.)

The school is in South West Vancouver, in the neighbourhood of Kerrisdale. We have easy access to several community resources such as Kerrisdale Arena, Kerrisdale Library, Kerrisdale Pool and the Arbutus Greenway

path and gardens. We share our school grounds with Magee Secondary and collaborate on field usages. Our Grade 6 and 7 students are also offered the opportunity to participate in weekly Band lessons with the Magee music staff.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

At Maple Grove, we have diverse, kind and open-minded students who are exposed to a wide variety of experiences and opportunities, both at school and at home. Our learners come from varied cultural and educational experiences. Our staff is working collaboratively with families to support parents with their child's educational new setting, which may be different from their previous educational experiences. Our population is transient compared to most other schools in the district, which can be a challenge in trying to create a sense of community.

Our students are motivated and well connected to their friends and teachers. Scanning from K to 7 generally tells us that:

- our students create a positive learning environment with their leadership skills
- our students are creative, clever, motivated, and energetic learners
- because we have a Montessori choice programme, we draw students from all over the city
- there are many languages spoken in our students' homes
 - we have just over 10% with Ministry Designations that receive support from various specialised staff
 - we have less than 10 students with Indigenous ancestry
- approximately 45% of our students receive English Language support as they speak another language than English at home

In our most recent Student Learning Surveys completed in March 2024, we received some positive data confirming that students at Maple Grove are generally happy and feel welcome at school. Fifty-one percent of our Grade 4 students and 57% of our Grade 7 students noted that three or more adults cared about them at school. For the question "Do you feel happy at school?", 68% of our Grade 4 students and 81% of our Grade 7 students chose "most of the time" or "all of the time" as their answers. Finally, when it comes to liking school, 64% of our students wrote "most of the time" or "all of the time," while 67% of our Grade 7 students did so.

As we continue our commitment to reconciliation, staff is engaged in dialogue to forge stronger relationships between our school and our community, including Indigenous families. Our most recent student learning surveys show that even though teachers are committed to our reconciliation journey, not enough in-class learning is happening in this area. While 87% of our Grade 4 students answered that they sometimes/most of the time/all of the time learn about Indigenous Peoples at school, only 27% of our Grade 7s did so. This will be our continued goal in the next few years.

Two years ago, our primary staff participated in both UFLI phonics and Heggerty professional learning inquiries. Since then, all our primary staff has had the training, and all primary classes use these programs daily in their literacy lessons. For our term 3 CSL reports, 49% of our K-7 students received "Extending" or "Proficient" in Language Arts. This data is consistent across the grades, and we have similar percentages in our primary classes. The staff hopes that by using the same language in primary classes to describe sounds and letter sound recognition patterns will support student in becoming better writers.

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

This is our second year focusing on the goal of improving belonging and mental well-being at our school. In our MDI and Learning Surveys of 2022 and 2023, data showed clearly that our students had a lower well-being index compared to our District's student population. Since September 2022, our staff has focused on two key areas to address this need with our students. This year, we focused on collecting data on our students' social emotional needs.

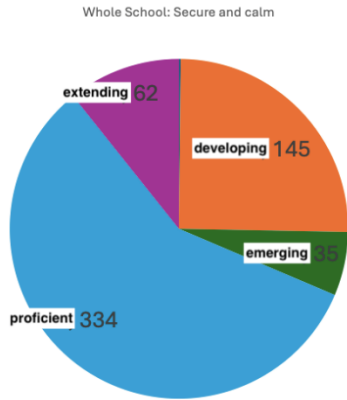
Our first area of focus was to increase belonging in our school. One of the ways we achieved this was by sponsoring several whole school events, which had not re-started since the pandemic. Our student council was instrumental in the implementation of those events. They planned each school assembly for primaries and intermediates. They organised an outdoor talent show for the whole school last May, spreading it out each Wednesday during lunch hour until the end of the school year. They had lunch hour celebrations in December, one for primaries and one for intermediates. Our staff hosted a school Sports Day in June, which had not happened at Maple Grove since 2019, and a primary picnic where all families were invited. Our PAC also sponsored whole family events each term to increase the sense of community at our school, such as dances and BBQs. This Spring, we celebrated two community events: our first Walkathon and our Centennial. For this area of focus, we used our March 2024 Student Learning Surveys as data. The surveys show that most students at Maple Grove feel like they belong: 85% of our Grade 4s and 94% of our Grade 7s say that they feel like they belong at their school either sometimes, most of the time, or all the time. This is a very encouraging trend that we hope to be able to keep.

Our second area of focus was our inquiry question: "How can we empower students to independently care for their emotional well-being?" For the past two years, our staff has been engaged in a four-part workshop with the Dalai Lama Centre for Peace and Education called "Heart-Mind in Schools." Through these workshops, our staff learned the science behind the importance of social emotional learning in schools. They learned strategies to promote well-being in their classrooms. We used two sets of data to find out more about our students' well-being. The first one was a teacher questionnaire, measuring students' progress in five domains. With this data, we will set intentions for our third and final year of this school plan goal. The questionnaire asked teachers to identify where their learners sit in the five domains of the heart and mind index:

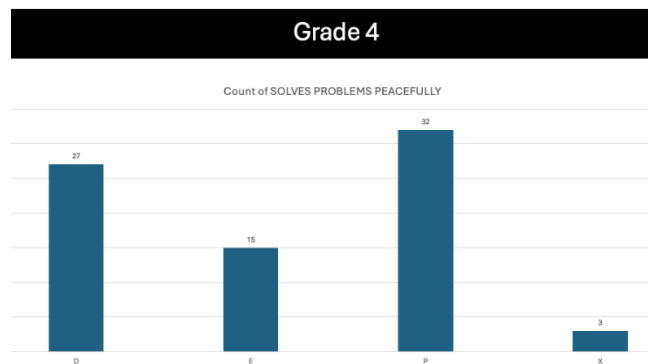
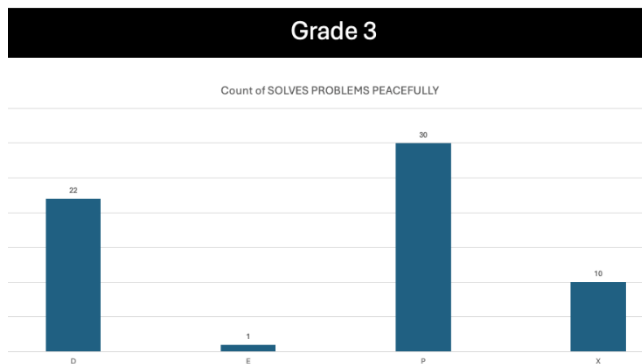
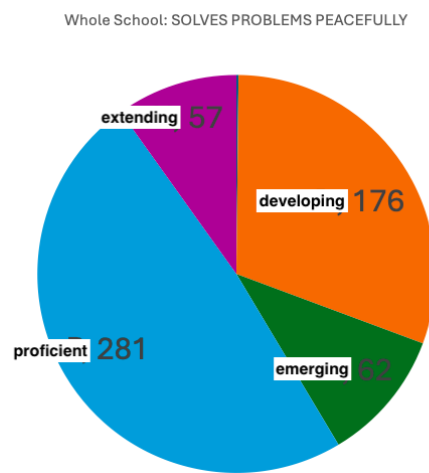
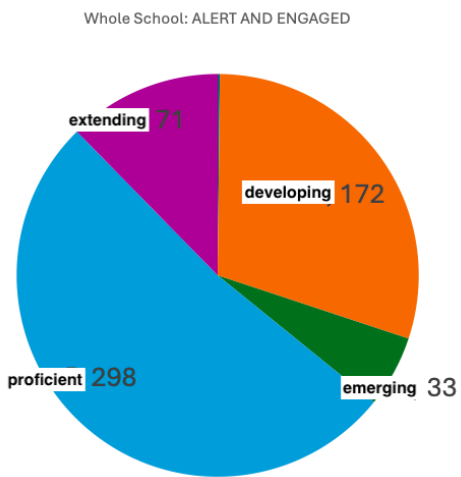
- 1) GETS ALONG WITH OTHERS** - the ability to form positive and healthy relationships with peers and adults.
- 2) COMPASSIONATE AND KIND** - the ability to be aware of other people's emotions and a desire to help when a person is in need.
- 3) SOLVES PROBLEMS PEACEFULLY** - the ability to behave in a peaceful and respectful way in a variety of situations and relationships.
- 4) SECURE AND CALM** - the ability to take part in daily activities and approach new situations without being overwhelmed with worries, sadness or anxiety.
- 5) ALERT AND ENGAGED** - the ability to stay calm, focused and alert; to demonstrate self-control and to slow down and think before acting.

(retrieved from <https://dalailamacenter.org/programs/heart-mind-index>, retrieved February 5th, 2024)

Looking at the whole school data, we see that the strongest domain for our students is the secure and calm domain. This is different from our 2022 MDI scores of two years ago and may indicate that our school wide SEL strategies to decrease anxiety at school are working.



The two areas where our students struggle the most are the peaceful problem-solving domain and the alert and engaged. This is particularly true in our grade 4 and 5 cohort, with matches our street data and anecdotal school stories. This cohort is being supported in various ways by several school staff because of frequent social conflicts resulting in powerful externalisation behaviours. Here is the data for the whole school (first graphs) followed by the comparison of grade 3s and 4s counts of “solves problems peacefully.”



The data shows that we need to continue to support this cohort with further interventions.

For our second set of data on this focus area, we added five questions to our 2024 School Learning Surveys, hoping to get a better understanding of our students' ability to use strategies that have been taught at school. The questions were:

- I can calm myself down when I am excited or upset.
- I can use many strategies to talk about my feelings.
- When I am upset, I notice how I am feeling before I act.
- I feel like my classmates care about me.
- I feel understood when I voice my feelings at school.

For the question "I can calm myself when I am excited or upset," 92% of our Grade 4s and 92% of our Grade 7s answered "sometimes, most of the time or all of the time." The most interesting question for our staff was: "I can use many strategies to talk about my feelings." For this question, 73% of Grade 4 students and 66% of Grade 7 students answered either "sometimes," "most of the time," or "all of the time." This is very encouraging for our staff as it shows that our students are learning strategies to monitor and express their needs and feel confident in using them.

These three sets of data gave us a good understanding of where students are at in their social emotional learning journey. In late June and early September, staff will review and discuss these findings. They will also set priorities and choose a focus area for our third and final year working on this school goal.

Improve equity

Equity for our students is of high importance to our staff. We strive to ensure that all students have access to the same support and opportunities. We encourage collaborative teaching and extra-curricular activities so that more students can access varied activities. Teachers often rotate students through their pods so that they get exposed to different styles of learning and teaching.

Our staff is working hard at creating more understanding of neurodiverse students and eliminating stigma from families and students. Through story time, science lessons, speakers' series and SEL lessons, staff work towards an understanding of differences with their students. When asked if they respect people who are different, 96% of our Grade 7 students indicated in our March 2024 Learning Surveys that they sometimes/most of the time/all of the time do so. When asked if they are learning about diversity and human rights at school, 85% of our Grade 7 students chose sometimes/most of the time/ or all the time. This indicates that our teaching is on the right track in this regard.

We have a wonderful student support staff team at Maple Grove who work in and out of classes to enhance student learning and increase inclusive teaching practices. A lot of the support centres on language acquisition and social emotional support. We also have friendship groups for most grades where students are taught— among many skills— to respect others' differences. Intermediate students are invited to participate in various clubs that support diversity and inclusion, such as the Student Volunteer Club, the Pride Alliance and the Student Council.

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

Our school is committed to support and enhance understanding of Indigenous worldview and knowledge. Students and staff have been engaged in various activities to increase empathy and awareness of Indigenous histories and cultures.

One of the most successful integrations of land based learning this year has been with our outdoor education program. One of our teachers is providing outdoor education lessons twice a week to several classes. As part of these lessons, students have been learning about land-based learning, and how Indigenous people use plants for medicine and diet. They are also learning how Indigenous plants help protect our local ecosystem. Our school has adopted a section of the Arbutus Greenway. Students worked with community members to remove invasive species and replant the area with indigenous

plants. Our Indigenous plant garden will continue to be stewarded by future students and will serve as a site for ongoing land-based learning.

Here is a list of other meaningful learning activities that our students were engaged in this year, providing a better understanding of Indigenous culture:

- Drumming sessions for primary students, learning the Coast Salish anthem
- Decolonising the curriculum through various storytelling and the Turtle Island play recreation
 - Various field trips and hands-on learning around the city centred on Indigenous knowledge, culture and awareness. The Museum of Anthropology's Musqueam kit was particularly meaningful for our classes.
- Working on developing an understanding and a relationship to place through land-based stewardship
- Mapping activities showing pre-colonial land divisions
- Canoe making at the First People's festival
- Various pod activities such as our K pod's Coast Salish Tuesdays

Moving forward, we need to continue to look at whole school reconciliation activities, in and outside of the classroom. Our staff is looking at having professional development days next year focused on developing whole school learning events for our school. Another idea that the staff is exploring is to focus on the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action as a staff, and to make recommendations on what we can do at our school to support these actions.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

We will continue to compare our Student Learning Surveys and MDI data year to year to monitor progress or concerns each year. For our well-being goal, staff will continue to track the five SEL domains with their students and we will keep our five extra Learning Survey questions to monitor the progression from students in Grade 4 to Grade 7. Our professional development committee is currently looking at offering whole school activities for reconciliation. We are also looking at exploring ways of addressing educational aspects of the TRC Calls to Action.