

2024-2025 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

Norquay is named after John Norquay who was the fifth premier of Manitoba and of proud Metis ancestry and is located on the ancestral and unceded lands of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nation. Norquay is one of the largest elementary schools in Vancouver with 640 students. The population comes from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and has a multi-ethnic composition with over 28 language groups being spoken at home. The school building is wheelchair accessible and has three District Programs: Elementary Learning Support Program, Social Emotional Learning Centre and the Early Mandarin Bilingual Program. Norquay continues to be a collaborative early literacy intervention (CELI) school that focuses on literacy development and early intervention.

Norquay celebrated progress toward the Education Plan goals of student achievement, physical, and mental well-being, belonging, equity, and reconciliation in 2023/2024 by continuing to highlight community and intentionally supporting equity of access. Research shows that feeling a sense of connectedness to family, peers, school and community is one of the most important assets for a child's well-being, health and success in life (Masten, 2018, Thomson et al., 2018). Therefore, most events at Norquay are by donation, to remove barriers and allow participation by all. Norquay organizes events such as the annual book exchange, Scholastic Book Fair, and extra-curricular sports teams, including soccer, basketball, volleyball, track and field, cross country, and badminton. Students continued to strengthen citizenship by participating in many of the leadership activities offered which include playground leader, office monitor, library monitor, morning announcements and lunch-time buddies. This year the students created a new leadership club focusing on equity and diversity.

Norquay has a dedicated staff who provide an academically and socially rich environment for students by developing and highlighting the many talents and strengths of each student. As a staff we also work closely with the community to further connections. The Rotary Club, Growing Chefs, and the One to One Literacy Volunteer program are well established in the school. This year Norquay added relationships with Adam's Apples, the Firefighters Snack Fund and Lunch Lab. Norquay is also supported by the Windermere Community Schools Team, which provides programs after school as well as during school breaks. To further build community and connection the Norquay Parent Advisory Council (PAC) offers many exciting events including an annual waffle breakfast, pizza days, family movie nights, and the Norquay Spring Fair. This year the PAC organized a Welcome Back Barbeque by donation, which was attended by almost 75% of the school population.

Norquay Elementary continues to have deep connections with the strong group of Norquay alumni. This year's highlight was an evening open house to celebrate Norquay's 110th birthday. Over 400 former students and staff, representing every decade from the 1930's to present, joined together to reminisce and swap stories about the

proud history of this great school and community. Events like this build the connection from the past to the present looking ahead to the bright future.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

Of the approximately 640 students enrolled at Norquay, about 65% are English Language Learners, with 28 different languages spoken at home and school. There is a multi-ethnic composition of students at Norquay, with the major cultural groups being Chinese, Filipino, and Vietnamese. Approximately 2% of the school population identifies as Indigenous and approximately 4% of our students are designated with special needs.

In addition, through anecdotal conversations with students and staff, it is evident that there is still a craving for connection: to self, to each other, to community and to learning. What we see is that Norquay students:

- are thoughtful
- are kind
- want to learn
- are willing to participate in co-creating learning environments when given the opportunity
- advocate for their learning when given the chance to share their voice
- enjoy working collaboratively
- flourish when in strong relationship
- thrive in outdoor learning environments
- come to school with different lived experiences
- respect and celebrate each other's differences

Norquay students are seeking:

- foundational skills
- readiness to learn: connection to self, connection to school, connection to land and connection to learning
- a place and space to share their voice

As we know, for younger students during elementary and middle school years, a nurturing and caring relationship is vital. Connections with warm and accepting teachers and staff enhance emotional well-being, increase motivation, engagement and success in school for children in early adolescence (Oberle, 2018). Using the student learning survey we focused on "the number of adults at school that care about you". In 2023, the number of students who said 'none' was 50%. In the recent unofficial results for 2024 we noticed that this number went down to 5%.

Over the last two years Norquay committed to Call to Action 63.iii. *Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.* To action this, the morning land acknowledgements were transformed. Students from every/some??divisions worked alongside classmates, peers, and staff to create their own land acknowledgement which was then shared in a newsletter and as part of the morning announcements. The intention was to, in the words of Anishanbee scholar Dr. Hayden King, 'breathe life and meaning into the lands and treaties'. All 29 divisions at Norquay co-created a land acknowledgement, an example from a grade 5 class: "With deep gratitude and respect, we are honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation). Our promise is to help make things right, to educate ourselves and others, to rebuild harmony with the land and all people living on it, and to make good decisions for the future".

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 and Goal 2 - Improve equity

As the intentional focus on connection is moving data in a positive direction, we will continue unpacking the inquiry question: if we continue to focus on building community, will we see increased engagement in learning? In the 2024 – 2025 school year we will continue to track data that reflects the connection to adults in the school. In addition, to highlight the engagement in learning, we will add a literacy data set to intentionally highlight the relationship between connection and learning.

Goal 3 - Continue on our journey of reconciliation with First Nations, Metis, and Inuit

This year we learned that the three host nations updated the land acknowledgement, so students and staff have been learning the new pronunciation as well as wording to support language reclamation and call to action 14.iv: *The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.* We commit to updating the land acknowledgements to incorporate this new learning and unlearning.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

School climate and interactions between students, staff, and parents are often realistic and authentic indicators of success. When there is a positive energy in the building, and a willingness and excitement to be involved, it is a signal that we are on the right track.

We will use qualitative data (Safir, 2021) such as anecdotes, stories, interviews from students, staff, parents and caregivers. In addition, as the inquiry question asks if we continue to focus on building community, will we see increased engagement in learning? We will also be looking at these quantitative data sets:

- the number of adults at the school that care about you from the student learning survey
- school wide reading assessment data
- sharing the updated land acknowledgements through newsletters, PAC meetings, community gatherings, assemblies and morning announcements