

## 2023-2024 School Learning Plan

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### SCHOOL STORY

*With deep gratitude and respect, (we/I) (are/am) honoured to be learning and unlearning on the ancestral and unceded lands of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), S<sub>k</sub>wxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səlilwatał (Tseil-Waututh Nation).* David Oppenheimer Elementary School is nestled in a serene location, adjacent to beautiful Bobolink Park. We cater to students residing in the River District and the surrounding Fraserview areas. Currently, our school has an enrollment of 425 students, ranging from Kindergarten to Grade 7. Our student body is diverse, comprising learners with a wide array of needs, talents, cultural backgrounds, and language proficiencies, including many newcomers to our province and to Canada. Within this diversity, our students share a common dedication to academic achievement and community involvement in their school. Each day, they arrive at school ready to engage in meaningful learning experiences and pride themselves on doing well at school. The sense of pride within our community, among both students and parents, is evident in the work our students do each day.

With a dedicated team of over 50 staff members, David Oppenheimer Elementary School operates smoothly to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment. Our community is linguistically rich, representing over 30 different languages spoken at home. Given our unique circumstances, David Oppenheimer Elementary qualifies as an Enhanced Services School, allowing us to provide additional resources to support our students. This includes access to the VSB Food for Schools free lunch program and the presence of a Literacy Enhancement teacher and a Community Schools Team (CST) Youth and Family Worker. These resources are instrumental in providing support to students and families in various areas, including attendance, food security, and social-emotional well-being. Furthermore, our partnership with the Community Schools team extends to after-school programming, offering a range of activities such as art and sports clubs, free of charge. These programs enrich the educational experience for our students and promote inclusivity and engagement within our school community.

As a school, Oppenheimer is characterized by a history of excellent teaching, successful traditions, and strong parental involvement. The school location allows for extensive outdoor educational experiences. Oppenheimer teachers and support staff bring a vast array of experience, knowledge, and teaching specialties to share with the learning community. The staff are committed to innovative teaching and Oppenheimer is known for having a strong academic program that sets students up for success. Many teachers make the B.C. curriculum and Vancouver School District Education Plan work in everyday ways in their classrooms by using collaboration, team-teaching and cross-grade and cross-curricular integration as mainstays. We are also proud of our extensive music/band program and athletics teachers who offer after-school sports experiences for a variety of grade levels.

Through the generosity of the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and their outstanding fundraising efforts, Oppenheimer students continue to enjoy enriched programs such as camp, visiting performers, authors and

teachers, field trips, and dance. We have parent participation in many of our school events and parents actively participate in monthly PAC meetings. The PAC have been pivotal in developing and supporting a variety of educational initiatives including shifts in curriculum, communicating student learning, supporting new and emerging technology and resources, supporting new families, and supporting playground and outdoor classroom beautification and improvement plans.

As our student population continues to grow, we have organized classes into 18 divisions, including several combined-grade classrooms. Through collaboration, dedication, and a commitment to excellence, David Oppenheimer Elementary School remains steadfast in its mission to provide a nurturing environment where all students can thrive academically and socially.

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

- **Holistic Education:** We equally value academic achievement, social-emotional development, and physical health and wellness.
- **Diverse and Dynamic Student Body:** Our students are energetic, curious, kind, respectful, and hardworking. They come from diverse backgrounds and cultures, with around 20% having learned English as an additional language.
- **Foundational Skills:** Our students are in the early stages of their academic journey, focusing on foundational skills in subjects like math, language arts, science, social studies, and physical education. They engage in various learning activities, including classroom instruction, project-based learning, and hands-on experiments.
- **Inquiry-Based Learning:** We have a strong tradition of inquiry learning. Students engage in projects driven by their interests, promoting creativity and outside-the-box thinking. They present their learning in various formats and have a voice in their educational journey.
- **Extracurricular Activities:** Our students are known for their curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. We foster cognitive, emotional, and social development, prioritizing creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Extracurricular activities like sports, arts, music, and clubs are highly valued and well attended.
- **Safe and Inclusive Environment:** Our school is welcoming and inclusive, guided by the Code of Conduct including our acronym "ORCAS" (Respectful, Caring, Safe). We encourage leadership and school spirit through various activities, with students taking on roles such as morning announcers, assembly hosts, and student council members.
- **Community Engagement:** Students participate in theme days, fundraising events, and charitable work, supporting causes like Children's Hospital, the Greater Vancouver Food Bank, and cancer research.

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

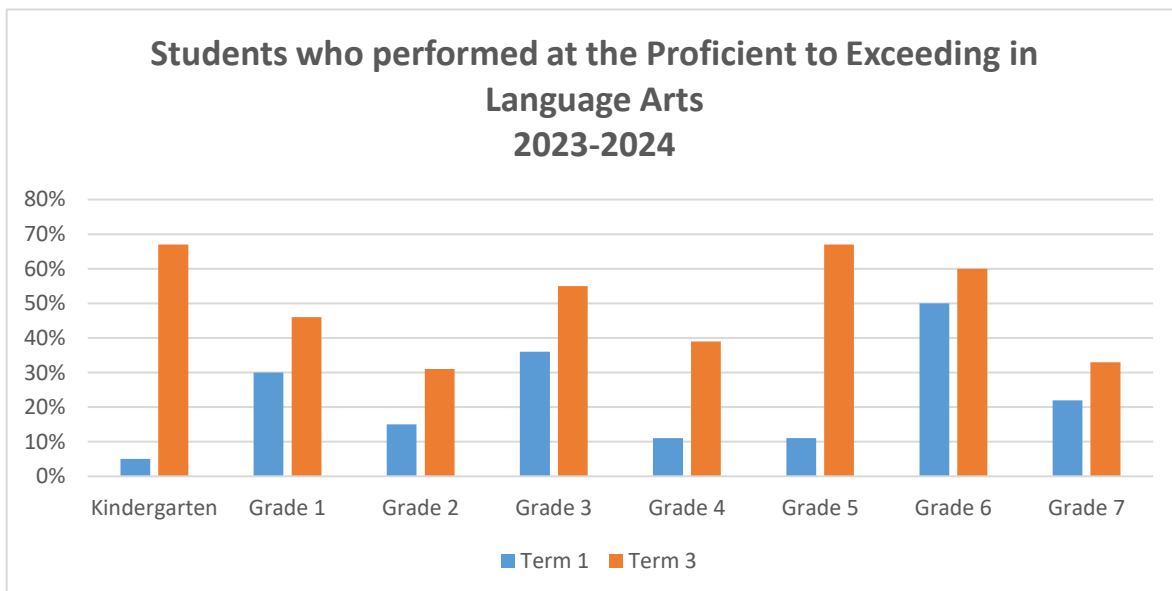
Improve student achievement in literacy and numeracy, physical and mental well-being, and belonging:

### Literacy

Literacy is our main school goal and Language Arts our focus from K-7 for the past two years. This year, we have developed our primary teaching via tools that focus on explicit and direct reading instruction. Our Kindergarten classes use daily Heggerty and add it to a comprehensive literacy program focused on oral language, concepts of print, and letter/sound relationships. In primary grades we use a combination of best practices including Science of Reading and guided reading groups with explicit instruction. Programs used include the Rise program, Jolly Phonics, and Sounds-Write. For writing, teachers in primary use Adrienne Gear's Writing Power and other writing resources to supplement instruction. Overall, results have improved with our school's intensive and direct focus on daily reading and writing. Good assessment practices have also guided teaching in primary and intermediate. Our Literacy Enhancement Teacher (LET) worked closely with classes to close the gap in reading results. We will continue to build our resources and add more to our toolkit for literacy instruction and intervention next year.

We are committed to closely monitoring and tracking our progress in Literacy. According to our CSL data, our overall performance in Grades 1-7 shows strong improvements in Language Arts results. Over the school year, our increases (from term 1 to term 3) in students who performed at the Proficient to Exceeding level in student reporting were as follows:

<b>K – 5% to 67 %</b>	<b>Gr 4 – 11% to 39%</b>
<b>Gr 1 – 30% to 46%</b>	<b>Gr 5 – 11% to 67%</b>
<b>Gr 2 – 15% to 31%</b>	<b>Gr 6 – 50% to 60%</b>
<b>Gr 3 – 36% to 55%</b>	<b>Gr 7 – 22% to 33%</b>

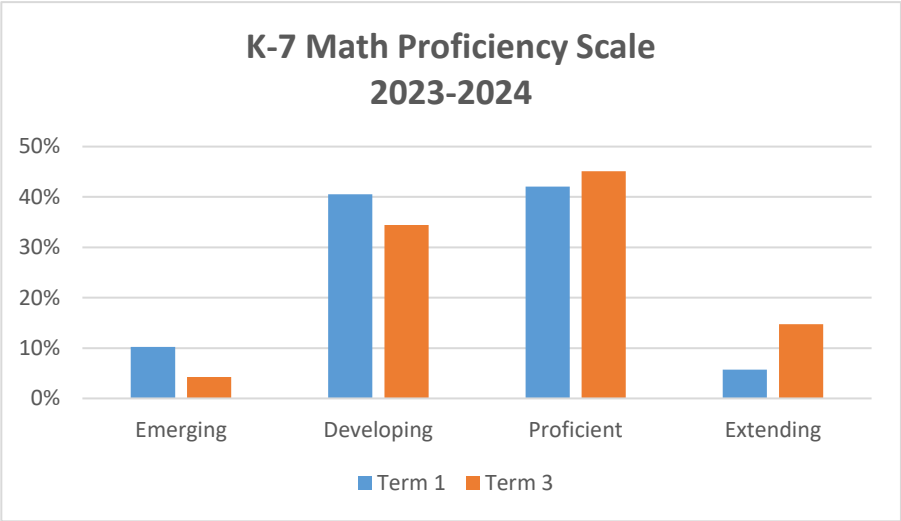


These scores show consistent gains across grade level and classes. In Grade 4 and 5, noteworthy increases in students who performed at the Proficient level is one of our biggest success stories. At these grades, the Rise Up program was used weekly, and the teachers participated in a collaborative inquiry to improve their practice. In intermediate, we have worked together to co-ordinate writing instruction and assessment.

**Numeracy**

To achieve improvements in numeracy, a variety of instructional strategies and resources were employed. Hands-on math activities were incorporated, such as Box Cars and One-Eyed Jacks Math Games, which engage students in interactive learning. The curriculum was supported by resources including Math Power, Mammoth Math, Jump Math, and Mathematical Mindset providing structured learning paths. Mental math strategies were emphasized alongside related games to strengthen students' arithmetic skills. Additionally, math manipulatives were used to help students understand abstract concepts through physical tools. Teachers also created materials tailored to the specific needs of their classes, ensuring relevance, effectiveness, and student-centered learning.

The data shows the progression of students' numeracy skills from Term 1 to Term 3, categorized into four levels: Emerging, Developing, Proficient, and Extending.



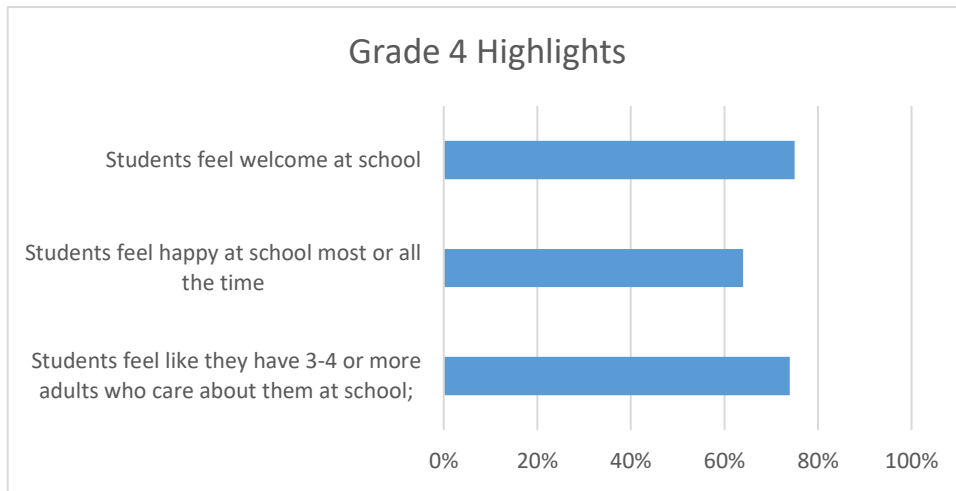
The scores indicate a positive trend with a decrease in the percentage of students in the 'Emerging' and 'Developing' categories, and an increase in the 'Proficient' and 'Extending' categories. The most notable improvement is in the 'Extending' category, where the percentage of students more than doubled, from 6% in Term 1 to 15% in Term 3. This suggests that the implemented strategies have been effective in advancing students' numeracy skills, particularly in helping more students reach higher levels of proficiency.

### Physical and Mental Well-Being and Belonging

One of the most helpful tools we use to assess in the areas of student well-being and sense of belonging is the Ministry of Education’s Student Learning Survey. The survey is administered to Grade’s 4 and 7 each year and offers insight into how our students are feeling about their school experiences. Some highlights from results this school year include the following:

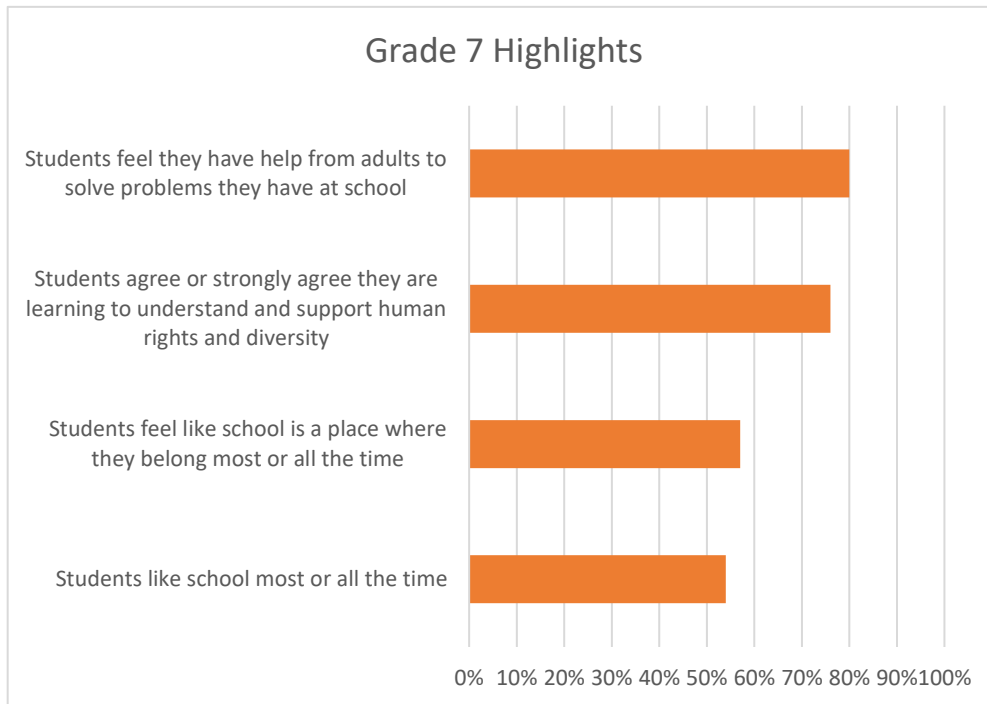
#### Grade 4:

- 74% of students feel like they have 3-4 or more adults who care about them at school
- 64% of students feel happy at school most or all the time
- 75% of students feel welcome at school



Grade 7:

- 80% feel they have help from adults to solve problems they have at school
- 76% agree or strongly agree they are learning to understand and support human rights and diversity
- 57% feel like school is a place where they belong most or all the time
- 54% of students like school most or all the time



Our students are very physically active and enjoy both indoor and outdoor activities. In their spare time, many are involved in sports and other physical pursuits regularly. Through sports, activities and regular physical play, Oppenheimer takes good care of the physical well-being of our learners. We have several events throughout the year where students engage in physical exercise and activity to improve their fitness and participation. Our recurring activities include indoor track, Intramurals, sports and teams including Volleyball, Basketball, Ultimate, Cross-Country and Track and Field, and Sport’s Day. We also host Big-Brother’s Game-On program as an extra-curricular activity for students who need a safe and inclusive environment to be active and burn energy.

Our mental health and well-being resources are supported by teachers, counsellor and Youth and Family Worker (YFW). Together, they team-teach or offer support for several SEL programs including Second Step, Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators (EASE), Zones of Regulation, Complex Trauma Resources, as well as teacher created resources for SEL learning.

In classrooms for students, we offered Digital Citizenship programs: Expect Respect and a Safe Education (ERASE) from Grades 5-7. Teachers also supported responsible use of technology and online behaviours in their classrooms through their own teacher created materials and resources. Beginning in January, our Oppenheimer technology policy for upper intermediate included a strict no-device during the school-day mandate that was created by teachers and supported by parents. Students checked in their cell phones and were encouraged to be fully present in class for learning experiences. We noticed a dramatic drop in problematic online behaviour and a corresponding increase in student engagement for the remainder of the year once devices were ‘checked in’ for the day.

### Improve equity:

- **Support for Diverse Learning Needs:** We provide additional support and accommodation for students with diverse learning abilities through individualized and small group assistance from our support staff and resource teachers.
- **Specialized Resources:** With the help of fundraising from PAC, we updated and equipped our POD sensory space with new equipment, sensory resources and adapted learning tools to support our diverse learners who require specialized materials.
- **Community Schools Access:** We have expanded and developed our supports for students in need by accessing CST resources including after school programming (Game On, Science, Art), nutritional supports (hot lunch program, backpack buddies), Youth and family support for community access and programs for many families with imposed circumstances.
- **Affordability Resources:** Our school used student affordability funds to offset costs to families for field trips, school resources, nutrition and clothing for students in need.

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

As part of our ongoing commitment to reconciliation, we are dedicated to deepening our connections and engagement inside and outside the classroom. This year, we are working with local Indigenous leaders to expand our Indigenous Garden, adding informative signage and developing a walking map and guide to enhance the educational experience. Our commitment to environmental stewardship includes collaborating with the a community partner for shoreline clean-up, fostering a sense of responsibility and care for our environment among our students. Additionally, we continue to embrace place-based learning through outdoor school activities, recognizing the land as a valuable teaching resource. Our educational practices are guided by the First People's Principles of Learning (FPPL), emphasizing the importance of oral storytelling and other traditional knowledge-sharing methods. Through these efforts, we strive to honor and integrate Indigenous perspectives and teachings into our school's culture and curriculum.

Furthermore, we are proud to unveil our new school logo, an Orca design created by local Musqueam artist Amber Cornick. This logo not only represents our school but also connects us to the rich cultural heritage of the Musqueam people, "The People of the River Grass." The Orca is significant to the Musqueam, symbolizing their deep ties to the sea, hunting, and fishing traditions. Throughout this journey, we have incorporated Musqueam design elements and drawn inspiration from "Musqueam, A Living Culture" by Julie Gordon.

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

To ensure we are on track with our learning goals, we employ a variety of strategies and tools:

- Intermediate team aligning our sequence of themes and topics in Literacy and Numeracy
- Improved outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy based on CSL reports and assessment data
- Student Learning Surveys to gauge student well-being and belonging (adding specific questions to dig deeper)
- Connection surveys to gauge community and PAC engagement
- Monitoring and goal setting through parent/teacher conferences and Celebrations of Learning
- Continuing our journey to enhance our Indigenous learning through connecting to the land, decolonizing our practice, and embracing Indigenous perspectives and teachings
- Continuing to meet, provide feedback, plan and assess as primary, intermediate and whole-school teams of teachers to improve practice
- Sharing successes and inviting in teams of visiting teachers to observe our literacy programs at primary and intermediate levels
- Engaging in common Professional Development and Inquiry-based learning around literacy and math
- Increase collaboration between staff, including the YFW and Counsellor

At David Oppenheimer Elementary, we believe that collaboration among our dedicated team of teachers is the cornerstone of improving learning outcomes and achieving our school's educational goals. By working together, sharing insights, and supporting one another, we create a dynamic and effective learning environment for our students. Our collective efforts are guided by a shared vision of academic excellence, equitable access to learning, and inclusive education.