

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 xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səliwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh Nation). Renfrew Elementary Community School has been a proud member of the Renfrew Collingwood neighbourhood since 1928. The school is in the heart of a residential community, within walking distance of Still Creek, the Renfrew Ravine and the Renfrew Community Centre and library. Like neighboring elementary schools, Renfrew is part of the Windermere Family of Schools.

Renfrew Elementary has a student body of over 450 students from Kindergarten to Grade 7. Students reflect the rich cultural diversity of our community, comprising of families identifying with Indigenous and settler cultures, from within Canada and our global community. Renfrew families are ethnically diverse and speak a variety of languages including Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Korean, Farsi, Spanish, Punjabi, Arabic and Hindi. This diversity is an asset to the school community, providing a unique and enriching environment for students to learn and grow. It also presents opportunities for cultural exchange, understanding, and appreciation among students, staff, and families.

We offer two distinct educational programs at Renfrew: the neighborhood program, a K-7 program for students residing within the school catchment, and a district Montessori program, a K-7 program utilizing the Montessori approach. At Renfrew, many students receive music education under the expertise of a music specialist teacher. Students and staff are privileged to have a part-time Youth and Family Worker and an area counsellor. These staff members enhance the social and emotional well-being of students by supporting extracurricular activities, fostering social-emotional learning in classrooms and small group environments, and liaising with the Windermere Community Schools Team Coordinator. The dedicated school staff work collaboratively to provide a positive and nurturing educational experience for all students. The emphasis on collaboration and creating an inclusive and equitable environment aligns with best practices in education.

Renfrew Elementary School boasts a large and accessible outdoor area and a school garden. These outdoor spaces provide opportunities for physical activity, recreation, and outdoor learning experiences. School gardens provide a hands-on and engaging way for students to connect with nature and offer students a chance to learn about sustainability, biology, and healthy eating habits while instilling a sense of responsibility and connection to the natural world.

Renfrew School is deeply connected to its community, prioritizing not only the academic development of students but also fostering a supportive and collaborative environment. We have a well-attended Strong Start Program that registers students from birth to pre-Kindergarten. Many of the Strong Start students continue into Kindergarten at Renfrew. The partnership between Strong Start and our Kindergarten program is something we value, and we are committed to strengthening the early years to Kindergarten transition through collaboration and strong relationships. Every spring, our Renfrew staff collaboratively plan a Welcome to Kindergarten event with community partners welcoming incoming Kindergarten students and their parents to the school. We are home to an on-site before and after school program facilitated by Collingwood Neighborhood House that provides care to 61 students. Also, some after-school programming is provided at Renfrew by the Community Links Team (CST) and various community groups.

The Renfrew Parent Advisory Council (PAC) supports many opportunities and initiatives at Renfrew. The PAC is actively involved in our school community, holding monthly meetings and a variety fundraising initiatives to support school priorities.

Renfrew offers students the opportunity to take on many service and leadership roles and provides access to volunteer teacher sponsored extra-curricular activities in sports such as Track and Field, Cross Country, badminton and volleyball. Students are responsible and keen to be involved in initiatives. We have a high level of participation in our Inclusion Club driving many student initiatives in addition to initiatives that are led by students through Student Council. There is excellent student engagement in teacher-sponsored opportunities such as Talent Shows, Chess Club, Running Club, Bookworm Club and fundraising bake sales.

Intermediate students can be counted on to positively contribute to the school and greater community through their participation in service and other leadership opportunities. In their learning, students report enjoying being at school and they understand and follow the school 'Circle of Courage' Code of Conduct, with a focus on taking care of themselves, each other and the community.

Renfrew Elementary has a comprehensive set of programs and partnerships to enhance the educational experience and support the needs of its students and families. The combination of traditional neighborhood schooling, Montessori education, early learning initiatives, and community involvement through partnerships contributes to a diverse and well-rounded educational environment for all students.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

Strengths:

- Multicultural and diverse
- Supportive families
- Students actively participate in extracurricular and leadership opportunities
- Students enjoy inquiry, outdoor and hands-on learning
- Students are provided with many opportunities to enact Reconciliation, learn through an Indigenous lens and about Indigenous histories and perspectives
- Students and families understand and follow code of conduct
- Renfrew primary teachers are committed to the Collaborative Early Literacy Intervention (CELI) model; teachers follow the Response to Intervention approach (RTI) where identify struggling learners early and provide effective intervention
- Resource teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to plan and support students in need of literacy intervention
- Renfrew literacy outcomes have improved throughout the 2023-2024 school year: in Term 1 161 students were proficient and 228 developing in language arts; in Term 3 209 were proficient and 179 developing
- Teachers are committed to equitable learning opportunities for all students

Challenges:

- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills for some students
- Student confidence in sharing ideas
- Social skills and conflict navigation
- Resilience, self-regulation and executive functioning
- Media literacy and online safety

Evidence Informing School Strengths and Needs:

- **Staff Observations:** Teachers and staff members actively observe students in various contexts, gaining insights into their abilities, challenges, and interactions.
- **Resource Teacher, Counselor, SLP, Psychologist Caseloads:** These professionals work closely with students, providing specialized support and identifying individual needs.
- **Assets Identified by the MDI (Middle Years Development Instrument):** The MDI assesses students' well-being and developmental assets, highlighting areas of strength and areas that need attention.
- **PowerBI Information:** Analyzing data through PowerBI provides valuable insights into student performance, attendance, and behavior patterns.
- **Meetings with Families (Including the Child):** Engaging in conversations with families, including the child, helps understand their perspectives, concerns, and aspirations.
- **Meetings with Parents:** Regular interactions with parents provide information about home environments, family dynamics, and student well-being.
- **Input from PAC (Parent Advisory Council):** The PAC represents parent voices and contributes to decision-making processes within the school.

Student Voice and Informed Knowledge:

- **Class Meetings:** Students participate in class meetings where they can express their thoughts, share experiences, and contribute to classroom dynamics.
- **Student Learning Survey:** Administering surveys allows students to provide feedback on their learning experiences, curriculum, and overall satisfaction.
- **Student Council Meeting Agendas and Initiatives:** Student Council members actively discuss school matters, propose ideas, and advocate for student interests.
- **Meetings with Student Groups:** Facilitating group discussions with students allows them to voice concerns, collaborate on solutions, and influence decisions.
- **Inclusion Club Meeting Agendas and Initiatives:** The Inclusion Club focuses on creating an inclusive environment, and student input is crucial for its success.
- **Student Voice and Self-Reflection Before Report Cards:** Collecting student reflections before report cards helps gauge their self-awareness and growth.
- **Student Engagement and Feedback During Extracurricular Activities:** Interacting with students during extracurricular, volunteer, and club activities provides valuable insights into their interests and needs.

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

Improving student achievement in literacy and numeracy is a daily focus. Teachers enhance and improve their teaching practice in these areas with professional development and inquiry groups.

Teachers monitor the reading progress of students by using the Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) and the Phonological Awareness, Phonemic Awareness, Phonics Protocol and Resource (P3P).

Kindergarten students receive in-class and small group pull-out support from resource teachers focused on improving phonological awareness and developing alphabetic skills. In January, the Kindergarten Protocol was administered to all kindergarten students. Students deemed "at risk" received small group instruction targeting specific skills.

This year Grade 1-3 teachers focus have a Primary Literacy Intervention block during which homogenous groups of students work on targeted early literacy skills. At the end of each rotation, students were reassessed and offered another round of intervention if necessary.

We will continue to have a dedicated time for early literacy intervention for the 2024-2025 school year as well as an Intermediate Literacy Intervention block will be implemented in the coming school year to support reception level English language learners and students who are two or more years behind in literacy skills.

As a school community, we are actively engaged in improving students' numeracy skills. We conduct regular formative assessments to gauge student understanding and identify areas for improvement. To reinforce foundational skills, we incorporate fact practice drills, focusing on times tables and fact families. Our approach includes hands-on manipulatives, particularly concrete Montessori materials in the Montessori classroom, which help teach core math concepts effectively. We also promote cross-curricular learning by integrating art and math, emphasizing patterning and measurement. Daily math activities cover topics in the BC Curriculum.

There are many extracurricular opportunities for students including Run Club, badminton, basketball, volleyball. Many classes use programs such as Zones of Regulation, Second Step, Open Parachute or EASE to teach emotional regulation and support mental health. Primary and intermediate grades have opportunities such as morning meetings, buddy classes and mindful breathing. Renfrew's Youth and Family Worker and Area Counsellor work in classrooms to teach social emotional skills and with small groups of students. The Area Counsellor also works with individual students and families when needed. Our YFW supports after school opportunities (Dance Play, Big Brothers) as well as learning opportunities for Grade 7s to visit Windermere Secondary School and learn about vaping and Sexual Health.

Belonging is an important focus at Renfrew. We have regular assemblies, performances and events such as community runs, a Winter Breakfast and Meet the Teacher Night, to bring our community together. Many teachers provide additional opportunities such as Coding Club, Bookworm Club, choir and Chess Club. We have an active SOGI and Student Council that spearheads initiatives like Spirit Days and fundraising for opportunities to benefit the school community, such as purchasing a Buddy Bench. We have active student volunteers throughout the year to help as Peer Helpers, Office Monitors, Library Monitors and to do morning announcements.

Improve equity

At Renfrew Elementary School, we are committed to promoting equity and ensuring that all students have equal opportunities to thrive. Here are some of the initiatives we have in place to support this goal:

- **Student-Centric Decision-Making:** We prioritize student needs by making well-informed decisions and fostering open communication with all relevant parties.
- **Winter Breakfast Celebration:** Our Winter Breakfast is a community event that brings together families from diverse backgrounds. It's an inclusive celebration that fosters connections and a sense of belonging for all families and students.
- **Diverse Library Collection:** Over the past seven years, we've intentionally curated our library collection to reflect a multitude of cultures, family experiences, and perspectives. This ensures that students see themselves represented in the books they read and learn from a wide range of voices.
- **Inclusive Facilities and Practices:** We have implemented universal washrooms to ensure that all students feel comfortable and respected.
- **Respect for Pronouns:** Our school community actively promotes the use of correct pronouns.
- **Acknowledging Diverse Families:** We celebrate the diversity of family structures.
- **Reflecting Student Identities and Communities:** We aim to incorporate students' identities and community experiences into our curriculum, assemblies and performances.
- **Accessible Playground:** At Renfrew Elementary School, we are committed to ensuring that all students can fully participate in physical activities. Our accessible playground is designed to accommodate students with diverse abilities.
- **Inclusive Sports Programs:** At Renfrew Elementary School, we are committed to providing equal opportunities for all students to participate in extra-curricular sports.
- **Social and Emotional Skills:** Beyond academics, we prioritize social and emotional growth. Our educators foster a positive and inclusive environment where students learn empathy, conflict resolution, and self-awareness. We provide resources for mental health and well-being, ensuring that students feel supported and connected. By nurturing both academic and social-emotional skills, we empower our students to thrive holistically.
- **Meeting Students Where They Are:** At Renfrew Elementary School, we recognize that each student has unique needs and abilities. Our approach involves meeting students where they are in their learning journey. Whether they need additional support or enrichment, we tailor our instruction to address their individual requirements.

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

1. Curriculum and Instruction: Incorporating an Indigenous Lens

Teachers are intentionally integrating Indigenous perspectives, histories, and cultural knowledge into the curriculum. This includes using Indigenous literature, art, and oral traditions to enhance students' understanding of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit cultures. Teachers are fostering critical thinking by examining historical events from multiple viewpoints, acknowledging the impact of colonization, and promoting respect for Indigenous ways of knowing.

- **Language Learning:** In some classes students actively engage in learning Indigenous languages. These classes focus on words, phrases, and expressions from local First Nations cultures. This exploration helps students to understand the significance and connection to cultural identity.
- **Outdoor Education: Learning on the Land and About the Land:** The school community prioritizes outdoor education experiences that connect students with the natural environment and Indigenous perspectives. Students participate in land-based activities, such as guided nature walks, traditional storytelling, and learning about local ecosystems. By fostering a deeper connection to the land, students gain a greater appreciation for Indigenous ways of knowing and the importance of environmental stewardship.
- **Novel Studies:** Students engage in book studies using works by Indigenous authors, such as "Fatty Legs" by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton.
- **Art, Culture and Field Studies:** Classes visit the Bill Reid Art Gallery and the Museum of Anthropology for First Peoples' Festival. Classes study Indigenous artists.
- **Library Enhancements:** Funds are used to purchase books for the school library, enriching the collection with authentic Indigenous voices and stories.
- **Indigenous Land Acknowledgements:** Students lead and write Indigenous Acknowledgements at every gathering and the start of each school day, highlighting conscious reconciliation efforts.
- **Celebrating Indigenous Excellence:** Performances like "Flight of the Hummingbird" (Pacific Opera Victoria) and How Raven Stole the Sun (3 Crows Productions) celebrate Indigenous culture and excellence.
- **Highlighting Important Events:** The community observes Orange Shirt Day, Red Dress Day, Indigenous Veterans' Day, and Indigenous People's Day.
- **Renfrew Drumming:** Students and staff have created at class set of Indigenous drums for use in assemblies and classrooms (with support of the VSB's Indigenous Education Department). Many students learn and lead the Coast Salish Song on the drums following Indigenous Acknowledgments during assemblies.
- **Restorative Discipline:** The First Peoples Principles of Learning and the 'Circle Forward' approach by Carolyn Boyes-Watson and Kay Pranis is used to guide student discipline.
- **Professional Development:** Professional development such as '4 Seasons of Indigenous Learning' support educators in deepening their understanding of Indigenous worldviews and teaching practices, ensuring a more holistic and inclusive educational experience for all students. Teachers share authentic Indigenous education resources

Staff Meetings: The First Peoples Principles of Learning guides our learning during staff meetings

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

Student Voice:

- **Class Meetings:** Regular class meetings provide an opportunity for students to share their thoughts, concerns, and ideas.
- **Student Council Meetings:** Student council members have input into decision-making around issues of importance to them.
- **Inclusion Club:** Meetings and initiatives of the Inclusion Club promote a sense of belonging and equity.
- **Open Door Policy for Students:** Restorative practices are used in discipline, emphasizing dialogue and understanding.
- **Extra-curricular Participation**

Community Voice:

- **Parent Meetings:** Regular meetings with parents to discuss student progress.
- **Input from PAC:** Parent Advisory Council (PAC) agenda items contribute to decision-making.

Assessments and Reporting:

- **Formative and Summative Assessments:** Regular assessments gauge student progress.
- **Communicating Student Learning Reports:** These reports provide insights into student achievement and areas for growth.
- **Celebrations of Learning:** Showcasing student work through displays, assemblies, and in-class sharing.
- **Goal Setting and Student-Led Conferences:** Encouraging students to set goals and reflect on their learning.
- **Staff Observations:** Teachers observe student engagement and progress.
- **Support Services:** Resource teachers, counselors, speech-language pathologists, and psychologists address individual needs; caseloads provide important data on progress and needs.
- **Assets Identified by the MDI:** Utilizing data from the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) to inform support and needs.
- **PowerBI Information:** Leveraging data analytics for insights.