

2023-2024 School Learning Plan

SCHOOL STORY

Southlands is a school with a vibrant, diverse population. We are a Kindergarten to Grade 7 International Baccalaureate School. As such, we focus on noticing, naming, and nurturing the Learner Profile Attributes. We facilitate learning experiences in which students can become knowledgeable, principled, open-minded and caring risktakers, communicators and thinkers. 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) people and we are proud to be the catchment school for the students from Musqueam.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

Our students are curious, playful, and reflective. They love the outdoors and going on forest walks in Pacific Spirit Park. They want to do well socially and academically. Some are more confident learners than others. Students come from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds and many speak two or three languages. They are welcoming of students who are new to our school and appreciative of differences. Having scanned our community of learners, staff identified three areas for improvement. As a community of learners, our students are motivated to learn, yet some have gaps in their learning and social emotional skills, in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic and/or other reasons. Therefore, this learning plan seeks to address those gaps and ensure that there is equity and service for all students, including the Indigenous students who make up 30% of the student population.

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

Our main school goal is to improve the literacy skills of all of our students, Kindergarten to Grade 7. We will do this by grouping students in a variety of ways, teaching them the skills they are missing, providing them with lots of practice, and by encouraging each individual student to believe in their own potential. We are strategically assessing and targeting instruction for students with lagging literacy skills, which we believe will have a ripple effect, improving their confidence, ability to take risks, and sense of belonging as capable learners. As of June 2024, 70% of the students are not yet reading at grade level.

Improve equity

We will ensure equity by remembering that fair does not mean equal. We will differentiate for students and invite them to participate in their own learning, giving them voice and choice. We will allow for individual differences and celebrate our diversity, for our diversity is our strength. We will do our best to provide learning opportunities that are engaging and meaningful to students, and we will use resources in which all students can see people like themselves reflected. As of June 2024, 95% of students are in regular attendance, participate actively in all school-related activities, and are communicative about their needs.

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

We will continue to build trusting relationships with the Indigenous families and with staff and Elders at Musqueam. We will ensure that our actions are not performative, but rather are authentic and meaningful. For example, the students at Southlands have written their own personalized Land Acknowledgements and take turns reading them during the morning announcements each day. We are committed to ensuring that our actions are not performative, but have an impact. For example, we display the hən̓q̓əmi̓nə́m̓ alphabet to show that we recognize and value the language of the Musqueam people.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE ON TRACK?

We will track literacy skills through assessment tools such as the DRA, the VSB Responsive Literacy Framework, (P3P), Heggarty, DIBELS and core phonics. Teachers will keep anecdotal evidence of improved attitudes and aptitudes, as well as student participation, engagement and identity. We will also use data from report cards and the Student Learning Survey. We have volunteers come from the One-to-One Reading organization, who read with 12 students. Teachers are consulting with District Resource Teachers regarding strategies and resources.

We meet as a whole staff once a month to discuss gaps in learning and equity. We address those needs through explicit teaching, relationship-building, and working as a team of classroom and resource teachers, support staff and others such as the Speech and Language Pathologist, the International Education Department, and the Indigenous Education Department. Additionally, teacher teams are actively engaged in VSB Literacy Inquiry Projects; including prevention programs such as Rime Magic, with regular collaborative feedback. We have literacy programs in primary, junior, and intermediate grades spanning the multiple classes that plan collaboratively, teach and reassess regularly. With strategic literacy assessment and targeted instruction, we have seen a significant increase in the numbers of students in grades 1 – 4 who are at grade level. For example, in Grade 3, there was a 20% increase in the number of students reading at grade level between October 2023 and April 2024, with similar results at other grades.

We will also track and monitor attendance, office referrals, and other indicators of student well-being, such as data from student surveys. For example, we recently surveyed 75 students in Grades 5, 6, and 7, asking them the question, “Can you name two or more adults in the school who care about you and know you will be a success in life?” We learned that 95% of the students can name two or more adults. Attendance rates improved this year with fewer students chronically away, from 6% to 4%, which may not seem significant, but it is to the lives of the students that are not attending regularly.