

2024-2025

Graham Bruce 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 xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7meshÚxwumixw (Squamish Nation) & səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation).

Graham Bruce Elementary School, located on Tanner Street, is a ten-minute walk from Joyce-Collingwood Station. Nearby parks include Cariboo, Carleton, and Price Parks. The school serves a diverse population of various housing types, from high-density apartments to detached and semi-detached houses, and is part of the Windermere Family of Schools.

The school enrolls 285 students from kindergarten to Grade 7. Collingwood Neighbourhood School, a Kindergarten to Grade 3 school on Euclid Avenue, is Bruce's Annex. After Grade 3, most students transition to Bruce in Grade 4. Collingwood Neighbourhood House provides on-site before and after school care.

Bruce's dedicated team includes approximately 40 staff members. Additionally, we collaborate with our district staff to address our students' needs.

The school is involved in the Collaborative Early Literacy Intervention (CELI) and Levelled Literacy Intervention, supporting early learners through one-to-one support, small group instruction, and strong classroom practice. They invest in updated technology for STEAM activities and work closely with community partners for various programs, such as artists who support the Artist-in-Residence Studio Program (AIRS), Literacy One to One, Sarah McLachlan School of Music, the City of Vancouver School Active Travel Program, and the Collingwood Neighbourhood Society.

The Area Counselor, Youth and Family Worker, Indigenous Education Assistant, and Curriculum Enhancement Teacher, along with the District Learning and Instruction Lead, offer ongoing support to students with disabilities and diverse needs. The school also offers a hot lunch program and various extracurricular activities, supported by staff and the Windermere Community Schools team.

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) provides financial support for enrichment activities and programs, contributing to field trips, classroom funds, performances, and sports activities. The PAC organizes community events and fundraising initiatives.

Graham Bruce Elementary School aligns with the Vancouver School Board's education plan, focusing on student achievement, well-being, belonging, and equity. The staff collaborates to support the intellectual, social, and physical development of all students, working together to achieve school goals and ensure student success.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS?

At Graham Bruce Elementary, we celebrate a diverse and dynamic community of learners from various socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds. For the 2024-2025 academic year, 4% of our students identify as Indigenous, and 48% are English Language Learners (ELL), representing thirty-three different language groups. Additionally, 8% of our students have ministry designations, and they have individualized education plans to meet their unique needs.

Our school's recent data on student well-being and belonging aligns with the Vancouver School Board's goal of enhancing student achievement, well-being, and belonging. Our understanding of the school's strengths and needs is based on the Ministry of Education and Child Care Student Learning Survey (SLS), conducted annually in BC public schools, as well as The Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI), which is a self-reporting questionnaire that asks children in Grade 4 to Grade 8 about their thoughts, feelings and experiences in school and in the community. Furthermore, our understanding of student performance in literacy is informed by ongoing assessment and regular review of tools such as BAS (Benchmark Assessment System), DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), and competency scales, along with CELI results at the primary level.

In Spring 2024, 84% of our Grade 4 students reported enjoying school, according to the SLS, and 71% felt they could seek help from adults when needed. Among Grade 7 students, 54% expressed that they liked school, and 60% felt they could access additional support when necessary. Additionally, 74% of all students rated their physical health as good to excellent, while 62% gave the same rating for their mental health.

According to the 2024–2025 MDI results, 29% of our Grade 6 students demonstrated a high well-being index, indicating they are thriving, while another 29% showed a medium well-being index. These outcomes are consistent with the district-wide results for all Grade 6 students. Among our Grade 6 students, 49% reported a strong sense of belonging at school, while 32% felt a moderate level of belonging.

Based on this data, while younger students report more positive experiences, there is a noticeable decline in school enjoyment and access to support in the middle years, pointing to a need for stronger transitional support. Although physical health is generally rated positively, mental health and sense of belonging show room for growth. These findings highlight the importance of continuing to build

inclusive, supportive environments and expanding mental health resources to ensure all students feel connected, supported, and ready to succeed—directly supporting the district’s commitment to student well-being and success.

At Graham Bruce Elementary School, we strive to create an inclusive environment that celebrates the diverse abilities and cultures of our students, providing numerous opportunities for cultural exchange and learning throughout the school year.

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 year, our team worked collaboratively to enhance student literacy through an equity-focused, inquiry-based approach. Our progress was supported by daily practice, professional development, and learning team initiatives.

Professional development days are centered on literacy through the lenses of inquiry, mindset, and formative assessment. We reflected on current practices, reviewed research, and began shaping a shared Vision of Assessment aligned with our inquiry goals. Primary and intermediate teams set term goals and used reflective questions to guide their work.

Primary teachers met regularly with CELI and CET to explore effective literacy strategies, while intermediate teachers partnered with a literacy facilitator on a new approach in novel studies. Both groups focused on improving reading comprehension and fostering self-regulated learning. We also collaborated with our CET to build story carts that provided a different learning mode to address the needs of different learners in literacy.

Furthermore, with a focus on our math programs, we additionally began working with our Instructional Learning Lead to integrate engaging math strategies, including launching a Math Festival at our school.

Our primary and intermediate teachers had numerous opportunities to collaborate with the Teacher Librarian through scheduled library collaborative inquiry blocks. Our partnership with the Vancouver Public Library, along with the expansion of our library collections, enriched classroom and library resources by enhancing diversity, visibility, and engagement.

Our approach was grounded in formative teaching practices: clarifying learning intentions, setting success criteria, posing reflective questions, providing feedback, and encouraging self- and peer assessment. Our classroom bulletin boards were transformed from simple display boards into learning boards, where the learning intentions behind the showcased work were clearly communicated. This initiative demonstrated that students understood the purpose of their work and could articulate their learning goals.

In Literacy, we observed a positive shift in competency levels from Fall to year-end assessments, with a decrease in Emerging and Developing levels and an increase in Proficient and Extending competencies among our K-7 students. By June 2024, 14% of our students were at the Emerging level, 38% at Developing, 42% at Proficient, and 6% at Extending.

During the 2024–2025 school year, our CELI teacher delivered Early Intervention (EI) support to Kindergarten and Grade 1 students identified as "at-risk" in key literacy areas. At the beginning of the year in September, all participating students were assessed at the Emerging level. By June, however, the majority had progressed to Proficient or Extending levels, demonstrating the effectiveness of the Early Intervention program.

Looking ahead, we continue to aim to deepen our alignment with the district's Responsive Literacy Framework by refining assessment tools and ensuring consistency across all grade levels. We are also exploring more meaningful ways to integrate Indigenous perspectives into our literacy programs.

Improve student physical and mental well-being, and belonging

Based on Hertzman & Boyce (2010), supporting children's physical health and well-being during the middle years is essential for fostering lifelong healthy habits. While genetics play a role in physical health, various external influences—such as family dynamics, peer relationships, and broader social and economic environments—also significantly shape health outcomes.

To enhance our students' sense of belonging, well-being and creativity at school, we placed a strong emphasis on supporting their mental and physical well-being while creating opportunities that made them feel valued. Our dedicated staff offered a wide variety of sports activities, including cross country, soccer, volleyball, basketball, track and field, fencing, and badminton. Additionally, students across all grade levels participated in two-week sessions of rollerblading, gymnastics, and curling, led by certified instructors, to enrich the physical and health education curriculum.

Beyond athletics, we provided numerous clubs and community service opportunities, such as the Earth Club, Gardening Club, Dance Club, Coding Club, as well as roles like Library Monitors and Kindergarten Monitors. Our Youth and Family Worker also provides targeted support through specialized clubs designed for students who benefit from more focused attention. These include the Comic Club, Friendship Club, Yarn Club, and Board Games Club, all of which offer safe, inclusive spaces for students to build social connections, develop interpersonal skills, and engage in meaningful activities.

To provide students with regular opportunities to interact and foster a sense of belonging, we introduced weekly Friday assemblies. Each week, a different class leads the assembly, helping students develop leadership skills while showcasing individual efforts and talents. These gatherings conclude with 'Fitness Fridays' to encourage active living and joyful participation.

Our full-time music program allows students across all grade levels to grow artistically and develop their musical talents. Additionally, our Artist-in-Residence program exposes students to high-quality art experiences led by accomplished and professional artists, enriching their creative learning journey.

This year, we began a partnership with the Sarah McLachlan School of Music, through which our Grade 4 and 5 students received drumming lessons. The same instructors will continue working with this group over the next three years, fostering continuity and deeper learning. In addition, the school is offering our students access to an outreach program and summer camps during the summer.

With the support of our PAC, several community events were organized to strengthen family connections and foster a sense of belonging. Highlights included a vibrant craft fair and a year-end BBQ, along with a variety of other initiatives that brought our school community together.

Together, these initiatives reflect our commitment to nurturing the whole child—academically, socially, emotionally, and creatively—while building a strong, inclusive school community.

Improve equity

At Bruce, our mission aligns with the 2026 VSB Education Plan, with a strong focus on equity and closing achievement gaps. Our work is grounded in four key areas:

Team Approach: We foster inclusive education through strong collaboration among educators, support staff, and district partners. This includes our Curriculum Enhancement Teacher, Learning and Instruction Lead, and Multicultural Liaison Workers. Together, we ensure every student feels supported in a safe, equitable learning environment.

Teaching Diverse Learners: We use a variety of strategies—such as technology integration, peer collaboration, and personalized instruction—to meet the needs of all learners. English Language Learners and students with disabilities receive targeted support, while enrichment opportunities are provided for gifted students. District specialists also help us explore outreach programs and curricular enhancements.

Equity Beyond the Classroom: Our commitment to equity extends into extracurriculars. Highlights include weekly art sessions with our artist-in-residence, the One-to-One literacy program, and music instruction through the Sarah McLachlan School of Music. Field trips, sports, clubs, and in-school performances further enrich student learning and engagement.

Anti-Racism and Inclusion: We promote a culture of belonging through events like Orange Shirt Day, Black History Month, and Pink Shirt Day. Our library collection reflects diverse voices and stories, supporting conversations around equity, identity, and inclusion.

By embedding equity into all aspects of school life, we aim to ensure every student at Bruce thrives—academically, socially, and emotionally. This commitment will continue to guide our work moving forward. Our literacy outcomes, CELI results for at-risk students, year-end progress reviews for students with disabilities, participation rates in sports and clubs, and teachers' observations of student behaviour and performance all serve as evidence of the high-quality work we do. These indicators reflect our ongoing efforts to reduce achievement gaps and advance both our school goals and the priorities outlined in the VSB Education Plan.

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

Our commitment to truth and reconciliation is reflected in our educational practices, which integrate Indigenous perspectives. Survey results indicate that while some students are exposed to Indigenous content and activities, consistent engagement remains limited. For example, only a small percentage of students report regularly learning about Indigenous Peoples or participating in related celebrations, suggesting that while this learning is occurring, it may not be clearly visible or recognized by students.

This highlights an important opportunity for deeper integration across our curriculum. As part of our Indigenous Success Plan, we monitor literacy and numeracy performance three times a year, alongside discussions about student well-being, transitions, and engagement. Currently, most of our Indigenous students are performing at the emerging or developing levels. We remain committed to strengthening these outcomes through targeted support and ongoing collaboration.

As part of our continued commitment to truth and reconciliation, our school community engaged in meaningful learning and dialogue throughout the year, with a strong focus on Indigenous perspectives and relationships with the land. Each day began with land acknowledgment, grounding us in respect for the traditional territories on which we live and learn. Highlights included our Indigenous Focus Day and classroom-based learning that explored stewardship, sustainability, and the evolving relationship between Indigenous communities and the land.

Educators integrated Indigenous worldviews across subject areas—science, social studies, the arts, and physical education—through literature, storytelling, and hands-on experiences. Students engaged in activities such as salve-making, tea blending, and learning about the medicinal uses of local plants. Outdoor education emphasized traditional knowledge, including salmon stewardship and the principle of taking only what is needed. Students also practiced hənq̓əmiṇəm plant names and explored Indigenous public art and culturally significant school gardens to deepen their connection to place.

Our library expanded its Indigenous collection, and teachers promoted books by Indigenous authors through read-alouds and thematic displays. Social studies learning included circle conversations, inquiry into current events, and exploration of the First Peoples Principles of Learning. Intermediate students studied the Cree Code Talkers and Indigenous veterans, while primary classes explored Indigenous translations of “In Flanders Fields.”

Our Indigenous Education Worker played a key role in supporting students and collaborating with staff. We held three collaborative meetings during the year to review student progress and ensure support was in place. Celebrations, storytelling, and art projects further enriched students’ experiences and fostered a sense of belonging.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to deepening our understanding of Indigenous perspectives through education, dialogue, and action. In partnership with the VSB Indigenous Education Department, we are planning a professional development day focused on the First Peoples Principles of Learning and their integration into literacy instruction.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE’RE ON TRACK?

Year in Review and Future Planning: In alignment with the Vancouver School Board (VSB) Education Plan 2026, we are committed to monitoring and supporting student achievement, well-being, and belonging by enhancing literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking, while fostering safe and inclusive school environments. We will continue to advance equity by addressing systemic barriers, closing achievement gaps, and ensuring all students see themselves reflected in both the curriculum and school staff. Additionally, we are dedicated to strengthening Indigenous education

and relationships by integrating Indigenous ways of knowing and learning, supporting Indigenous students, and building respectful partnerships with Indigenous communities.

Our efforts included exploring a variety of tools to monitor student performance in Literacy and English Language Arts, as well as implementing new strategies in mathematics. Strengthening reading comprehension was a central focus of our school's literacy goal, with teachers prioritizing strategies to support deeper understanding across all grades.

We are committed to building this foundation through the following actions:

- Identify student strengths and needs through school-wide assessments
- Engage in ongoing staff discussions to evaluate effectiveness and identify areas for growth
- Dedicate professional development to enhancing literacy instruction
- Integrate Indigenous perspectives into our literacy programs
- Collaborate across grade levels (K-7) to assess current programs and determine necessary adjustments

To achieve our goals, we will:

- Use the Formative Assessment principles and shared language to support student learning
- Establish a shared language around formative assessment, grounded in six core principles
- Focus on the First Peoples Principles of Learning
- Explore and implement resources that support Indigenous perspectives in literacy
- Collaboratively review and refine current programs to identify areas for improvement
- Continue staff conversations throughout the year to assess progress and enhance reading comprehension from Kindergarten through Grade 7
- Conduct school-based professional development focused on reading comprehension and integration of Indigenous perspectives
- Participate in district-wide professional development with an emphasis on literacy
- Provide ongoing support for Literacy Enhancement initiatives
- Continue expanding our math strategies working with our CET and LIL
- Explore new Math online programs to support our students at school and home

We will monitor our progress through:

- School-wide assessments to identify student strengths and needs

- Student goal setting and self-reflection activities
- English Language Arts assessment outcomes in Terms 1 and 2, as reported in Learning Updates #1 and #2.
- Comparative analysis of Term 1 and Term 3 outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented strategies
- Observations of students' engagement with literacy, including book choices and responses to literature
- Use of the BAS kit to collect baseline data in reading comprehension in September and March
- A comprehensive review of library resources and collections
- Analysis of results from the 2025–2026 Ministry Student Learning Survey
- Consideration of Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) data
- Monitoring the performance of English Language Learners and students at risk
- Analysis of our Indigenous Success Plan
- Monitoring student participation in extra-curricular activities and programs